

Fulwood – From Village to Suburb

During the second half of the 19th century plenty of high quality housing suitable for the middle classes and above could be found Broomhill and Ranmoor following the stamp of approval from Mark Firth, John Brown and the other industrialists who had moved westwards from the noise and grime of central Sheffield. But even here, apart from sites accessible from the Fulwood Road, (Gladstone Road, Graham Road, Tapton Park Road) the original expectations of the Land Societies were by no means being met.



Cottages on Brookhouse Hill c. 1890

For most of the 19th century Fulwood was certainly too far from the city centre to make it attractive to Sheffield's industrial population. Land that in the 1880s that had been hopefully advertised as suitable for a "Gentleman's Residence" had attracted no interest. Fulwood was characterized by scattered farms such as Slayleigh Farm, Brookhouse Farm, Goole Green Farm and School Green Farm. Most of its population could be found between the lower part of Brookhouse Hill and Goole Green where the Hammer and Pincers pub and adjacent smithy were. There were a few cottages on Crimicar Lane and the two rows of cottages (Brookhouse Hill and Chorley Road) were new and only partially occupied.



New houses near bottom of Crimicar Lane c.1905

The first major building activity took place at the

junction between Brookhouse Hill and Crimicar Lane around 1905. This 'estate,' built by Samuel Hancock included Silver Birch Avenue on the three acres that had been first advertised 30 years earlier. Further up Crimicar Lane Frederick Young built houses above the entrance to Gilchrist Woods. Further up on the left-hand side the terrace was built in 1909. Around 1912, Hancock was building the semi-detached villas on the left-hand side of Crimicar Lane (above the Coop) whilst William Ainsley was building further up.

Henry Isaac Dixon of Stumperlowe Hall laid out *Oriel Road* and then sold plots to individuals, hence the variety of house designs. Houses built during the decade showed a complex pattern of land ownership, house ownership and occupation. At the time none of the house owners actually lived in their properties.

The Town Trustees laid out the *Machon House Estate* (Belsize, Clarendon Sefton roads) in 1912 and leased individual plots. Most of the houses here are detached and individually designed. The estate was developed over many years – some of the newer houses being built in the last 10 years.

It was after WW1 that the pace of building picked up. The semi-detached houses on Brookhouse Hill below the shops date from 1919. Brooklands Avenue was developed with building beginning in the 1920s and continuing into the 1930s. Brooklands Avenue is a later development being primarily built from 1930. Meanwhile, Walter Sivil was busy creating "*Fulwood Residential Estate*" – Canterbury Avenue, Slayleigh Drive and Slayleigh Lane – a mix of detached and semi-detached houses. Stone Delf and Slayleigh Avenue also date from this decade.

The last estate to be developed was the *Arthwadson Estate* bounded by Fulwood Road, Slayleigh Lane and Stumperlowe Hall Road with most of houses on Fulwood Road built by 1939. By the outbreak of WW2, Fulwood had become the suburb we can recognize today.

Once the tram network had reached Nether Green (in 1904) and subsequently Canterbury Avenue (in 1923), Fulwood became accessible to the burgeoning class of non-manual workers providing them with an opportunity to move away from the lower parts of Sheffield. Hitherto it had been seen as too far from the city centre. As in many other parts of the city much of new housing built between the wars catered for this aspiration. The attributes of semi-detached housing – two storeys with no basement built on a plot that provides privacy at a modest cost – were ideal.

Fulwood however had not just become the land of the semi-detached house; there were also developments of detached housing from the modest to substantial (although not in half an acre). Development continued

after WW2 with the Hallam Grange Estate, Hallamshire Road and later Moorcroft (1990s) along with smaller plots for individual houses. It is the variety of type and age of housing that gives Fulwood its character.

Many thanks to Keith Pitchforth who traced the story of Fulwood's transformation in his talk at our meeting last April

Childhood Memories of Stumperlowe

Tucked away in the Ranmoor Archive is an article written by James Dixon for the Sheffield Telegraph in 1933 when he was about 82 years old. It reminds us of the relative remoteness of Fulwood in the 1860s. In recounting details of his life as a small child at Stumperlowe Hall he discloses that when his father Henry Isaac Dixon purchased the property in 1854 his father's elder brothers considered it so far out of Sheffield that they tried to persuade him not to buy it.

His comments continue: *"in those days Sheffield did not extend on the west side, even as far as Broomhill, and on all the main roads leading out of the town there were toll bars including one at Hunters Bar, one at Broomhill just below where the Wesleyan Chapel now stands and two at Pitsmoor which we used to pass on the way to visit my grandfather and uncle when they lived at Page Hall".*

"Going back to my younger days each spring we used to drive over to Wincobank in a waggonette pulled by a pair of horses to see the bluebells in the woods there. In those days we had to turn down Jenkin Hill at Ranmoor and then up the lane past where the Firth's Almshouses now stand. Fulwood Road at that time was a country lane from Broomhill. The stream that flows through Tapton Hall grounds ran across the road between Oakbrook and the entrance to Thornbury and there were stepping stones on the Thornbury side of the road. There was also a high bank with a footpath well above the road. None of these houses had been built except Tapton Hall".

N.B. Thornbury, Moordale, Tapton Grange, Tapton Park and Tapton Edge all date from about 1865 and Firth's Almshouses from 1870

His father Henry Isaac (1820 -1912) had moved from Page Hall in Pitsmoor after building James Dixon and Sons into a substantial Sheffield company employing some 700 people in 1870. It manufactured Britannia metal products and was based at Cornish Works.

Henry was responsible for rebuilding and extending Stumperlowe Hall which had apparently been occupied by several families simultaneously before he became its owner. He also financed the planting of trees in the Fulwood area and was also closely associated with the Parish Church which also benefited from his largesse.

His son James, whose memories are related above, moved into Stumperlowe Hall shortly after his father's death in 1912 after previously living at Tylecote in Gladstone Road. He had taken over the running of the family firm in 1877 and was elected as one of the youngest ever Master Cutlers in 1887 at the age of 36. He moved out of Stumperlowe Hall in 1924, at the age of 73, although lived until he was 96.

The Guild Hall at Goole Green

The large building known locally as the Guild Hall was originally part of Goole Green Farm, then a typical farm of the area. The census records Thomas Andrews, farming 11 acres at Goole Green in 1851 and again ten years later. Other farmers succeeded him there until the turn of the century. The farm buildings were demolished c.1968 after being condemned as unfit for habitation although the barn itself survived and today it is a private house and is Grade II listed.



The Guild Hall Goole Green c.1975

Thomas Kingsford Wilson acquired the property in 1907 after purchasing the land on which it stood from his father-in-law Henry Isaac Dixon, then a large landowner in Fulwood. Wilson provided much of the finance for renovating the barn and converting it into a social hub for Fulwood which included tiered seating, a stage, catering facilities and toilet. It opened as the home of the Fulwood Social Guild in 1908 and the building seems to have been known as the Guild Hall from about this time.

A newspaper at this time tells of "an evening of song, sketches and a cinematograph show". At some stage the hall also played host to the Fulwood Musical Society. Thereafter concerts became a regular feature along with children's parties at Christmas and dancing classes. Occasionally it acted as a venue for wedding receptions. At some point before the start of the First World War the facilities were upgraded to a proper cinema and film shows took place during the winter months. This would have been the era prior to the introduction of sound films in the late 1920s.

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