

Sandygate's Pleasure Ground c.1850

The 1850 Ordnance Survey map intriguingly describes a small area in Sandygate, no more than 5 acres in extent as a "Pleasure Ground". It was near where Sandygate Road joins Coldwell Lane. We might assume that it was open to the public but there are few clues as to who it might have been designed for or when it first opened.



As Britain became urbanized during the early 19th century urban parks and gardens were promoted as places where the working classes could relax, enjoy the open air. Incidentally these provided safe places for social mixing. London's Vauxhall Gardens enjoyed great popularity as a pleasure garden between 1785 and 1859 particularly during the Regency. Sheffield had nothing similar until the Botanical Gardens opened in 1836 (but only to subscribing members). The Duke of Norfolk donated land for Norfolk Park in 1841 but this was not acquired by the Corporation for public use until much later. The Sandygate Pleasure Ground was on a far smaller scale and far from the City centre.

The land on which the Sandygate Pleasure Ground was laid out was owned by the Duke of Norfolk and the 1791 Enclosure Survey records it was then occupied by a tenant named George Woollen. He must have subsequently purchased the farm from the Duke who was divesting much of his property in the early 19th century as George appears on the voting register by virtue of his ownership of the freehold of the farm at Sandygate.

Had the farm proved unprofitable? Was farming his primary purpose or had he been inspired by the opening of the Botanical Gardens in 1836, to build his own Pleasure Garden? The one and only description we have derives from Joseph Creswick of Snaithing Farm who appears to have visited the Pleasure Ground and in 1917 was reported as remarking that George had laid it out in a "very tasteful and ornamental fashion" by

creating caverns, a grotto, terraces, sunken gardens, woodland walks and the like with, as the pièce de résistance, a castellated structure called "The Roundabout" that included a castle-like retaining wall and two small stone turrets.



The name George Woollen of Bradfield also appears on the lease of the Rivelin Corn Mill when he took it over in 1790. The mill with adjacent cottages and outbuildings stood close to where the Rails Road car park is situated today and was built around 1600 by Gilbert Talbot, the 7th Earl of Shrewsbury. By 1830 the Duke of Norfolk was now the mill's proprietor where two water wheels powered 6 millstones and his tenant was still George Woollen. However we must assume he was related to the first George as the occupier is now named as George Hawke Woollen. This remains so as until 1856 when the lease was sold to the Sheffield Water Company. George as the sitting tenant was offered a paltry £2,700 in compensation but he countered with a demand for £6,000. The figure settled on was £5,500, (in terms of purchasing power the equivalent to about £740,000 today).

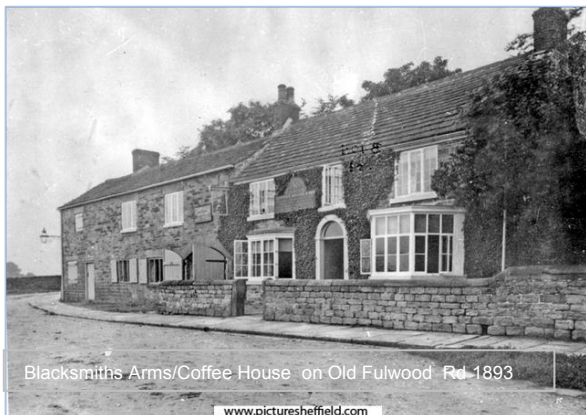
In addition to being a corn miller at Rivelin Mill the 1825 City and County Directory George had opened a business in Sheffield and is listed in as a "Miller and Flour Dealer" at 19 Church Street. By 1851 he had moved to 33 Church Street and White's Directory for 1852 describes him as a "Baker, Corn and Flour Dealer". A final entry in the City and County Directory for 1862 describes him as "Gent" with addresses at both Church Street and Rivelin Mill.

Corn miller, flour dealer, baker, and (we assume) pleasure ground proprietor, George Hawke Woollen had clearly become a prosperous citizen with entrepreneurial instincts. He died in Marylebone, London on the 5th of November 1862, and aged 65. At probate his effects were recorded as "under £18,000". His legacy just a few remnants of a mysterious Pleasure Ground in Sandygate still survive in some of today's gardens.

The Blacksmith's Arms & Coffee House

Our article in the last issue on Frederick Mappin's Coffee house referred to the influence of the National Temperance movement during the Victorian era when it developed an almost religious fervour. The dominance of public houses and the working class drinking culture was then a problem for the church leaders, politicians and business leaders who wanted a healthy and orderly society and this became a hot issue even in Fulwood when it became focussed on the Hammer and Pincers public house on Old Fulwood Road.

Farewell Harrison, a farmer and blacksmith bought the land at Goole Green in 1808, together with a barn which became his smithy. In the following years he built a house adjoining the smithy, acquired a licence, and was soon described as a "victualler, blacksmith and farrier at the Blacksmith's Arms, Goule Green."



After he died in the 1840s the licence was transferred to his widowed daughter and her husband later became the landlord. However when, in 1888 the licence lapsed the vicar of Fulwood, the reverend John Hewlett, who was much influenced by the temperance movement and had already fostered the opening of a small coffee house on Brookhouse Hill, now saw the opportunity to assemble strong opposition to the reopening of the public house. He was close to Henry Dixon of Stumperlowe Hall, who was not only his church warden but had become the owner of the property and the surrounding land too. With the support of key local individuals such as Frederick Mappin and Alderman William Clegg, Mayor of Sheffield, (and later chairman of the British Temperance League) there was never going to be much difficulty in pressing the local magistrates to veto any new licence application for the Hammer and Pincers. Also there had been some history; a previous landlady had been fined for permitting drunkenness back in 1871 and was thus deemed a person unfit to conduct a public house. The proposal

to surrender the inn's lapsed licence was accepted and on the 30th July 1888 and the Hammer and Pincers reopened as a Temperance Inn, thereafter generally known as the Coffee House. The house and adjoining buildings on Old Fulwood Road remained a Coffee House until 1936 after which it became a private residence still bearing the name on a plaque by the door. The other buildings house the Ranmoor Motor Company.

Sale of the Century!



Grade II* listed

Architect designed: Flockton & Gibbs

Original Cost £100,000 (in 1865)

36 rooms

Two careful owners: Sir John Brown (27 years) and the British Army (110 years)

Last placed on the market 1913

Secluded position in Ranmoor

Endcliffe Hall is currently the headquarters of the 212 Field Hospital, one of ten Army Reserve field hospitals and is currently run by the RFCA (Reserve Forces and Cadet Association for Yorkshire and Humber).

The (RFCA) have submitted plans to sell the Endcliffe Hall site, including all land and buildings. Because it is Grade II listed it is required to ask for permission to remove works of art from the site. These are framed works of art and display cases and their removal apparently could result in some minor damage to part of a wall that is assessed as likely being a later 20th Century (1990s) addition to the ballroom.

Committee

Chairman	Mike Killingley	263 0454
Secretary	Gerald Eveleigh	230 1992
Treasurer	Nick Morris	07515 889 394
Planning	David Barber	230 4717
Membership	Peter Marrison	230 3238
Archive	Sharon Forde	07563 249838
Support		