

## Broomhill : origins of a Sheffield suburb

"Broomhill" was first mentioned by Fairbanks in his 1790 map of the Parish of Sheffield but for some time this area would remain largely agricultural and was often referred to as "land formerly part of Crookesmoor". It was a good mile from the centre of the town and probably rather better known to its citizens for the racecourse that provided a good day out for them between years 1708 and 1781. The oval course, about one and third miles in length, stretched roughly between Lawson Road and where the Hallam Towers stood on Fulwood Road. The 1788 Enclosure Acts, in reallocating common land to new owners effectively ended horseracing here. Because neither the Duke of Norfolk or Philip Gell, the key landowners, showed any immediate interest in Broomhill the land only gradually became available for development after 1800.



Broombank House, a regency residence 7 Clarkehouse Rd

Even by 1850 there were few other properties here apart from a few large houses built by individuals who bought the land and then leased out adjacent plots for others to build on.

Broom Hill House was one of the earliest buildings on what is now Watson Road. William Newbould (1749-1802) built it on land he leased from James Wilkinson, Vicar of Sheffield who lived at Broom Hall. He was a merchant and plated silver-button manufacturer on Sheffield Moor, with his father in law, Thomas Holy. His son William junior commissioned William Flockton to redesign the family house in 1809 and over the next ten years bought the land and increased his holding to over 30 acres which he probably rented out as pastureland. Broom Hill House was demolished and sadly no photographs of it exist.

Little building took place until 1821 when the Sheffield to Glossop turnpike road was opened. It cut through the Newbould land and gave the impetus for plots to be purchased and developed over the next thirty years. Although not resident in Broomhill, Robert Brightmore had purchased the land to the west of Newbould Lane from the Duke of Norfolk, and began offering smaller plots without placing any restrictions on its development. By 1850s he had set out Peel Street and Chandos Street and made provision for Nile Street, although this is still not evident in the 1851 map. Early

shops included grocers Robert Hancock, The Fox and Duck on Fulwood Road, and the Broomhill Tavern on Glossop Road.

The turnpike road had created triangular plot on Newbould's land which William Flockton bought in the early 1830s and on which he built The Mount. It became known as Flockton's Folly because the townspeople thought it too far out of town for anyone to be interested in living here. On the contrary it proved to be a very desirable place to live. James Montgomery, poet and editor of the Sheffield Iris lived there from 1835-1854.



### The Mount

c.1835

A palace-fronted terrace of eight mansions built shortly after the Sheffield – Glossop turnpike opened

Flockton was then engaged as the architect for the construction of the Wesley Proprietary Grammar School on more of Newbould's land to the east diagonally across the junction. This was funded by Wesleyan Methodists as a boarding school for the sons of Wesleyan laymen, the money being raised by the issue of £50 shares. The school opened in 1838 with 161 pupils registered for the first term, only 29 of whom came from Sheffield. It was renamed as Wesley College in 1844 and became the King Edward VII School in 1905.

William Butcher, a partner in W & S Butcher, steel, cutlery & edge tool manufacturers, had also purchased land from Newbould and this was the beginning of the Broomfield development. Broom House (now The Physios, at 1 Beech Hill Road) was one of the first properties to be built here in 1840 for Joseph Wallis, an ironmonger from Handsworth and his family. Broomfield (2 Newbould Lane) and Broomspring (5 Broomfield Road) were designed by Flockton. Road names would not be fixed until the late 1870s.

Samuel Parker, a horn and bone merchant living at Pigsaw House, had also at this time bought land from William Newbould. This higher land sloping from Crookes down to the town had been named Mount Pigsaw, apparently as a tongue in cheek reference to the fact that much of it belonged to the family of Thomas Holy thus "holy land". Ultimately Parker's Road would be developed linking it to the present Whitham Road.

John Shepherd, an iron and wood merchant, purchased 8.5 acres from Brightmore in 1838 and by 1840 had built himself a large house, Ash Dell, on the other side of the access road he had built from Glossop Road. Shepherd lived here until 1860 and then moved across to Ashdell Cottage where he remained until he died. It was after his death in 1871 that the properties were developed along what is now Ashdell Road.

The development of Broomhill was thus piecemeal and largely the result of the individual actions of these various

landowners who bought plots of land primarily for their own houses and then sold off the remainder to others. The result of this ad hoc development is a chequer board effect without the homogenous appearance that is characteristic of Broomhall Park or Endcliffe Crescent.

*Judith Pitchforth provided much of the above information in her talk to us in September*

## George Senior & Sons: a strong family business



### Forsbacka

A huge Edwardian arts and crafts house set in extensive grounds at 35 Ivy Park Rd. The house earned a fabled place in the history of the Ranmoor Society when, in 1970, a threat to demolish it and build a block of 16 luxury flats in its place resulted in a petition to block the move. It had been empty for several years.

The Bishop of Sheffield and several other concerned local residents were involved and it led to the Ranmoor Conservation Society being founded. Unfortunately they were unable to prevail against the Labour planning committee of the time and the flats we now know as Ivy Park Court were built.

It had been the family home of Albert Senior, whose father George (1838-1915) had founded Sheffield steelmaker George Senior and Sons in the 1870s. The company imported high grade iron, especially from Sweden, for the production of crucible steel at its Ponds Forge works and by 1901 was thought to be largest importer of steel in the country. The strong links between Sheffield and Sweden warranted the appointment of a Swedish Consul in Sheffield and several members of the Senior family were to hold this position. The unusual name, Forsbacka, a town in Sweden reflects these ties.

The company supplied the needs of most of the staple trades in Sheffield and its success led to honours for George. He had entered local politics as the council member for Park in 1889, became Lord Mayor in 1901 and Master Cutler in 1910. He was particularly interested in local parks and open spaces and by virtue of his position as chairman of the General Purpose and Parks Committee is said to have persuaded the Duke of Norfolk to donate Norfolk Park to the city.

George was a self made man and began his career, aged eight, helping his father making nails in Bradfield. After an apprenticeship in George Parkin's forge in Middlewood he moved on in the 1860s to

manage the Neepsend Rolling Mills of Joseph Peace & Co. He then became manager of the Ponds Forge works of George Davidge and was eventually able to acquire the premises and launch his own company George Senior and Sons in 1872. Forging had previously had taken place here since 1737 and this would remain his company's home for another 100 years.

When George married in 1860 his first home was back in Bradfield where apparently he and his wife narrowly escaped death in the great Sheffield flood of 1864. By 1871 they had moved to Broomhill eventually settling at *Elmfield* in Northumberland Road. Both their sons Albert, born in 1868, and George, born in 1871, entered the business in their teens and spent their working lives there. Albert became the principal director on the death of his father in 1915.

After Albert's first wife sadly died he remarried in 1899. They had five children between 1901 and 1909. It was perhaps partly the need for a larger home for his growing family that led Albert to settle in Ranmoor. In 1908 he submitted a planning application for a substantial dwelling on a large plot on laid out by the South View Estate Land Society. It would include a "motor house", billiard room and large separate flat for domestic staff on the second floor that was reached by its own external door and internal staircase. The family lived here from 1911 until 1929.



George Senior JP  
1838 - 1915



Company gateway demolished and later re-erected

The 1970s brought difficult trading conditions for many of Sheffield's steel companies. Recession and increased competition from foreign suppliers resulted in closures amongst which was George Senior & Sons, the firm founded by George a century before.

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