

THE PARK & THE PONDS

THE PARK

In the early 19th century, Wentworth Park enclosed over 1500 acres, and the park wall was over nine miles in circumference; and, although this was protected by gates and lodges (see chapter 5), it was impossible to deny access to the determined trespasser. In 1787 the 4th Earl Fitzwilliam (d. 1833) had declared himself in favour of vigorous action to protect his property and 'deter the Neighbourhood from coming into the gardens'; but this was a Canute-like endeavour. In 1810, one of his own employees, Smithson the blacksmith at Lawwood colliery, was committed to the Wakefield House of Correction for stealing wheat and flour from Fitzwilliam's barn.¹

So in 1818, there was nothing to stop a gang which had burgled Cliffe House in Ecclesfield earlier that night, from climbing the wall of the Park, and making their way to a rendezvous in a barn inside the perimeter. It was about three o'clock when they met there, and fell to discussing what had occurred. One member of the gang was worried about what had happened, not because he had a guilty conscience, but because he thought that he had been recognised by one of the maids. As he explained to his fellows: 'She would not have known me had it not been for the mask falling from my face'; but the real purpose the meeting was to divide the spoils. Clearly, there was no honour among thieves, and the question of what should be done with the motley collection of items which they had come away with proved to be a vexed one.

One of the burglars was in favour of selling their ill-gotten gains. Another thought that to do so would surely lead to detection and arrest. A third member of the gang made the extraordinary suggestion that they should break the watch 'in bits'; and a fourth proposed that they hide it in the barn for the time being (presumably until the heat was off) and then sell it. Before the problem was finally resolved, one of those present noticed that they were not alone. There were no less than three other people in the hay-loft, who had overheard the entire conversation!

The burglars discovered one of these right it away. This was Mary Ann Keyworth, who came from Rotherham. One of the burglars asked her what she was doing in the barn. She replied, that she might very well ask him the same question. The burglar did not like her tone, and began to handle her roughly; but Mary knew very well that she was in a strong position. She told her assailant to leave her alone,

¹ Mee (1975), 162. Smithson was still employed as a blacksmith at Lawwood in 1812.

or she would 'let the cat out of the poke.'²

For the time being, though, she agreed to keep quiet; and the robbers split up soon afterwards and made their separate ways home in the dark, three going down Wentworth Park and then climbing up again to Thorpe Hesley, two slinking off in the opposite direction towards Greasborough, and one going home to Elsecar.

Some time later, Mary Ann Keyworth told the authorities all she knew; and Sarah Oxley did the same. Their evidence as to what was said in the barn in Wentworth Park on the night in question was crucial at the trial of the burglars at York Assizes in July 1818.³

A different picture of Wentworth Park is painted by a newspaper report in the *Leeds Mercury* for Saturday 18 July 1846. By this date a large number of Mechanics Institutes had been founded and built, including one in Wentworth itself:

EXCURSION OF MECHANICS' INSTITUTIONS TO WENTWORTH PARK

A special pleasure excursion took place on Wednesday last, to Wentworth Park, the seat of Earl Fitzwilliam, that liberal minded nobleman having kindly given his permission. The trip was made under the auspices of the Leeds Mechanics' Institution, and comprised the members of that, and of the neighbouring institutions of Bingley, Bramley, Kirkstall, and Garforth. To the members and friends of the societies 1800 tickets were sold, at the respective prices of 4s. for the first class, 3s. for the second, and 2s. for the third. 1,890 persons can by no means be taken as indicating the whole number who wished to participate in the excursion....

At nine o'clock, a [second] train, consisting of 31 carriages, chiefly of the first and second class, left [Leeds] station. This train was accompanied by [a band] and there were also, as in the former train, a few flags exhibited. In about an hour and a half after the departure from Leeds, the trains reached the Darfield station. Here a great proportion of the visitors alighted, in order to make the remainder of the Journey on foot; whilst a considerable number of other visitors proceeded forward (a distance of nine miles) to the Masbro' station, some intending to travel thence on foot, and others to avail themselves of conveyances which had been previously arranged for.

The shaded walks of the North [of Wentworth] Park are remarkably fine, affording a natural screen from the rays of the sun for a distance of about two miles. Passing through this park, an object of attraction is an arabesque monument, called the Needle's Eye - an appellation suggested by its form. It is surmounted by an earl's coronet, and in the "eye" of the monument are

² Dialect for 'bag'.

³ For the full story see *Burglars & Sheepstealers*, originally published by Rotherham MBC 1992, but now on my website chivalryandwar.co.uk.

seats for the accommodation of travellers. Wentworth Park (properly so called) is about four miles from the railway station. Soon after entering it, the splendid mansion of Earl Fitzwilliam presents itself. The route from the Masbro' station was less pleasing with regard to the scenery, but the difference in distance between the two is not considerable.

In Wentworth Park, the Leeds visitors were joined by a numerous party of members and friends of the Holmfirth Mechanics' Institution. Probably altogether there were not less than 5,000 persons in the grounds. When the band drew up in front of Wentworth House, the Mayor and the President of the Leeds Mechanics' Institution entered the house and came out upon the stone flight of steps, when the latter shortly addressed a considerable body of the visitors, explaining the arrangements for the day, giving a few particulars concerning the Marquis of Rockingham and the Mausoleum, and concluding with a just compliment to the liberality of Earl Fitzwilliam.⁴

Shortly after arrival, on looking round, a hundred lively picnic parties might be observed. The picnic concluded.... some directed their course towards Hoover Stand, a monument raised by the late Marquis of Rockingham, in commemoration of the termination of the rebellion of 1745. From this monument, which is ascended by 150 steps, may be seen, on a clear day, York Minster.⁵ A more numerous party went to visit that equally interesting object, the Mausoleum; while many found ample entertainment in observing the wild pranks of the herds of bison and deer, in the less remote parts of the park.

The house was not, as a matter of prudence, thrown open to the excursionists, though the Mayor and several members of the Committee were admitted to view the interior. From two to three o'clock the gardens, aviary, and menagerie, were thrown open for general admission, and thousands during this short interval thronged to witness them. The Mayor and Committee subsequently dined together at the George and Dragon Inn, in the village of Wentworth. Several hundred persons also partook of tea in an elevated part of the park, in-the open air..

Between four and five o'clock, people began to leave the park, some in order to partake of tea at Brampton, in returning to the Darfield Station, and others at the Inn at the Masbro' Station; and before six o'clock, the music and the remainder of the visitors had also moved off en route for the railway stations. At ten minutes to seven o'clock the first train left Masbro', and shortly after seven it was followed by the other train, each stopping at Darfield to take up passengers. The first arrived in Leeds at nine, and the second in about a quarter of an hour afterwards.

⁴ For the Rockingham Mausoleum see chapter 4.

⁵ For Hoover Stand (and Keppel's Column) see chapter 4.

These intrepid Victorian visitors evidently thought nothing of several long walks in a single day, for they would probably have walked to the station at the beginning of the day, just as they probably walked home again afterwards, as well as walking to and from the Park, and within it several times during the course of the visit!

We have seen there were both deer and bison in the Park; and we shall hear more of the bison later; but the following story relating to the deer appeared in several newspapers, including the *Yorkshire Gazette*, 16 October 1852 citing the *Doncaster Chronicle*, and also the *Limerick and Clare Examiner* for Wednesday 27 October 1852

AN EXTRAORDINARY SHOT

A few days since Mr Palmer, head park-keeper to Earl Fitzwilliam, Wentworth Park, accompanied by his son, the under-keeper, was out for the purpose of killing a stag. In consequence of the deer being very wild at this period of the season, the son took a shot at a stag at full speed, the ball penetrating behind the ear, and passing along the neck bone through the stag, killing at the same time, a fine old buck (through the head) out of a herd following the stag. What makes the shot more remarkable is that the buck was at least from ten to fifteen yards behind the stag in rather an opposite direction.

We have heard how, in the gardens at Wentworth House there was an aviary and a menagerie when the mechanics visited in 1846; but there was also a stable block and a stud farm in the Park. The Stables, sometimes mistaken for the house itself, were built in 1768 by John Carr of York for the Marquis of Rockingham and described a hundred years later, in the *Barnsley Chronicle* for 13 March 1875:

We afterwards⁶ had to look through the hunters' stables, an immense establishment, built in the form of a square to the north of Wentworth House. Somewhere about one hundred horses, most of them up to weight, and nearly all thoroughbred, were located therein, and most of all them appeared to be very valuable. An outward view of the buildings would little lead one to suppose them to be stables, with their white curtains, clean windows, and an air of elegance and neatness pervading the whole place. Appliances for providing hot mashes and food are fitted up, while in the wash house, which is fitted with patent drying pipes, great piles of clean bandages, ready for use when the stock reach home, are in constant readiness.

⁶ That is, after they had visited the stud farm!

The stud farm had been described a few days earlier in splendid detail in an article dated 6 March 1875 in the *York Herald*.⁷ The writer started with a description of the 2nd Marquis of Rockingham's career in racing:

THE EARL OF FITZWILLIAM'S STUD AT WENTWORTH PARK

It must have been such places as Wentworth House, the seat of the Earl of Fitzwilliam, that Mrs. Hemans had in her mind's eye when she composed her poem, *The Stately Homes of England*. ...A century will have sped in 1876 since Lord Rockingham — one of the family — won the first St. Leger with *Allabaculia*, by Sampson, and thirteen years later Lord Fitzwilliam again came to the front with *Pewet*, by *Tandem*. This horse only come in second to the colt by *Laurel* out of *Moorpout*, but a jostle being proved on the part of *Mangle*, the rider of the latter, the stakes were awarded to Lord Fitzwilliam's horse. A greater than either of these, however, was destined to carry the Wentworth green to victory, in the shape of *Oroville*. Bred in 1799 by Lord Fitzwilliam, this famous son of *Benningborough* beat six opponents for the St. Leger in 1802...

In recapitulating the horses that have been located at Wentworth I have strayed away from the connection the stud has had with the Turf. This, however, has only been slight, and has only resulted as a rule from the production of youngsters by the hunting mare that appeared to possess a degree of racing merit. With a pack of foxhounds and another of harriers connected with the establishment, a large stud of horses is unavoidable, and the soundness of the policy of breeding their own stock I fully endorsed, after looking through the stables and marking the difference in favour of the home production over the nags purchased from dealers. Thus, the whole breeding establishment is necessary for home use, and beyond the letting of the spare services of the sires located there, and the occasional draft out of a portion of the young stock when the stalls begin to be over-crowded, there is no further dealing with the outside public. Thus, now and then, something is found amongst the young stock that can gallop, and these are put into training for a trial of their merit...⁸

The breeding establishment at Wentworth is situated about half a mile from the house on an eminence, and commands a beautiful view to the southward, with the lengthy sheet of water, forming a great lake, stretching along the valley below.⁹ Rich woodland caps the opposite heights, and through the south-east end of the valley the smoke from the furnaces at

⁷ The account is greatly abbreviated here. There is also a shorter article about the stud in the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* for 9 September 1907, when the Master of the Horse was Captain North, who had not long returned from the 7th Earl's expedition to Cocos Island (see my account of the voyage in *Earl Fitzwilliam's Treasure Island* (createspace, 206)).

⁸ This paragraph emphasizes the importance of hunting at Wentworth - see further chapter 12.

⁹ It is clear from this that the stud farm was not located in the Stables, as one might have expected. Rather, it must have been somewhere near Peacock Lodge; but there is little or no trace of it now[?]

Rotherham, four miles distant, shut out the view. Wandering amongst the pastures close at hand, herds of deer cropped the herbage, but not a hoof was visible in the bright green pastures, which had just thrown off a thickish covering of snow, and, consequently afforded deep "going" for both horse and man, as we picked our way towards the stud-groom's house.

The stud-groom is Mr E. Oates. He commenced his stud career with Mr H. S. Thompson, and was an attendant on Sheet Anchor and the other horses located at that gentleman's place at Rawcliffe. Nine years were passed in this service. Twenty-nine years ago he took service with Earl Fitzwilliam, and for some years had charge of the whole establishment, both of brood mares and of hunters. "It was no joke. I can tell you," he remarked, "I have to look over the whole of such a stud, and to turn out fit, fresh, and well for the field as many as 130 horses in one season." The hunting stables are now in the charge of another man, who, if I may judge from the good, hard condition of the stock under his care, is fully up to his work. Mr Oates has now the charge of the breeding establishment, which is a source of good employment for him. [There follows a detailed description of a large number of individual horses.]

The bison referred to above appear in several newspaper reports, including one in the *Cheltenham Chronicle* for Tuesday 31 August 1880¹⁰:

The thunderstorm which swept over Sheffield yesterday, did great damage at Wentworth Park belonging to Earl Fitzwilliam, where six stags and three buffaloes were killed by lightning.

These 'buffaloes' (strictly speaking, American bison) feature in another alarming report in the *Sheffield Independent* for Saturday 17 December 1881:

ENCOUNTER WITH BUFFALOES NEAR SHEFFIELD.

On Sunday, a series of exciting scenes took place near Sheffield. It appears that Mr. Helliwell, local agent to the Duke of Norfolk, and Mr. Vowes, of Sheffield, were walking down Cowley Hill, when they met two powerful white buffaloes. The animals, on seeing the gentlemen, made a rush at them, and Mr. Helliwell jumped over the wall into Smithy Wood, but Mr. Vowes took his hat off, and tried to frighten the animals. On they came, and the gentleman stepped on one side. One of the brutes rushed at him again, and

¹⁰ See also the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* for the same date. There is a bison's head in the entrance hall to Wentworth Woodhouse; but I am reliably informed that this was acquired by the late Clifford Newbold, owner of the house between 1999 and 2015.

tore off his hat with his horns. Mr. Vowes then also jumped into the wood.

Sergeant Wilmot, of the West Riding Police force, stationed at Chapeltown, accompanied by Police-constables Booker, Ellerby, and Cathews, set off to Cowley, and found the animals near Cowley Manor, the officers succeeded in getting one of the beasts into a narrow lane, near Harcourt Lodge, where they left it, and went after the other, which had made off for the wood. They found him at the bottom of the wood, and on seeing his pursuers, the brute made a terrific rush at them, but the officers succeeded in getting behind the trees.

After a while the brute espied Police-constable Ellerby behind a large tree, and, with a roar, the beast made a violent rush at the tree. The force of the attack was sufficient to throw the brute on its haunches. A large Newfoundland dog, the property of Mr. Helliwell, next tackled the buffalo, but the latter caught the dog on his horns, and threw him a considerable distance into the wood. The brute then tried to get at the officers, but the latter kept dodging behind trees. Jesse May, game-keeper to Newton, Chambers, and Company, then discharged his gun at the buffalo. The first and second shots had no effect, but at the third shot he turned tail and tore down the wood at a terrific rate.

In the meantime the other animal had got out of the lane, and rushed along the road, roaring fearfully. Mr. A. M. Chambers, of Thorncliffe Collieries, and another gentleman were on the road, and had to beat a precipitate retreat, or there was little doubt the animal would have attacked them. At last both animals were secured in the wood. Mr. O. Ramsden, of Cowley Manor, then proceeded on horseback to Wentworth House to make inquiries, and was informed that the animals were the property of Earl Fitzwilliam, and had escaped from Wentworth on the previous day.

Another correspondent, writing from Swinton, says: — On Saturday afternoon a most exciting incident occurred on the Midland Railway at Swinton. On the arrival of one of the express trains from Sheffield at Swinton Station the driver reported to Mr. Carroll, the station master, that a white buffalo was on the line, running towards Swinton. It appeared that the beast had escaped from Wentworth Park, the seat of Earl Fitzwilliam, and when in the neighbourhood of Rawmarsh it got on the line, making in the direction of Swinton.

It ran past Kilnhurst at a rapid rate, though attempts were made to stop it; and one man had a very narrow escape, as the beast rushed at him fiercely. The animal's arrival at Swinton being expected, preparations were made to receive it. Most of the passengers retired into the waiting room, and then, armed with all kinds of weapons, the railway officials waited the arrival. In a few minutes the animal was espied coming at a furious pace up the line, and when at the platform end several of the men attempted to strike it, but

the animal rushed wildly at each of its assailants in turn, and they speedily retreated.

The beast chased Mr. Carroll on to the platform, and if its attention had not been suddenly arrested, he would doubtless have been injured. A lady, however, who had remained on the platform, with a perambulator containing a child, attracted the beast's attention, and it rushed at her, its horns catching in her dress. The perambulator was overturned in the scuffle, and before any further injury was done, some men came behind and strongly attacked the animal, which once more proceeded on its journey up the line. After running as far as Wath road junction, a train which was standing there apparently puzzled the buffalo, and he turned back, scattering his followers in all directions. On again reaching Swinton Junction, it rushed violently with its head against a standing locomotive. This performance stunned it a good deal, and being greatly exhausted with its previous exertions, it was evidently much distressed. It staggered round the train on to a bank, where it was immediately followed, and, a favourable opportunity occurring, it was despatched with a hammer. The carcass was conveyed on a lorry to Swinton station, and later in the evening was fetched by one of Earl Fitzwilliam's servants, and taken to Wentworth.

These are extraordinary stories, so extraordinary that they attracted the attention of local newspapers far and wide, including in Leeds, Bury and Henley; but we do not know the eventual fate of the 'buffalo' which was re-captured at Swinton.

The Stables were the scene of an horrific suicide seven years later, reported in the *Durham County Advertiser* for 17 November 1882:

SUICIDE AT WENTWORTH HOUSE STABLES

During Monday night, John Puddyfoot, 38 years of age, employed at Wentworth House Stables, committed suicide. The deceased, who has been suffering from erysipelas in his thigh, has been confined to his bed since Saturday. He slept in the same room Geo. Nickleson, John Price, and George Palmer, and when they went to bed on Monday night they spent some time talking to him. They awoke shout midnight, when they were horrified to find that Puddyfoot had cut his throat with razor, which was lying close his side. Dr. Clarke, of Wentworth, was summoned, and the man died in his presence at a quarter past one o'clock on Tuesday morning.

Wherever there are horses in such numbers, there are bound to be riding accidents; and in particular there was one disastrous one, involving one of the 6th Earl's younger sons, in 1889, which was reported in the *Sheffield Independent* for 11 September 1889:

SERIOUS ACCIDENT TO THE HON. J. W. FITZWILLIAM, M.P APPREHENDED FATAL RESULT

The Hon. J. W. Fitzwilliam, MP. for Peterborough, sustained a serious accident on Monday evening, about half-past seven o'clock, the news of which was received with very general regret yesterday throughout South Yorkshire. The hon. gentleman was born in 1852, and was educated at Eton and Magdalen College, Cambridge, where he took the B.A. degree in 1874. He is a Lieutenant of the West Yorkshire Cavalry, and has sat as member of Parliament for Peterborough. He is the fourth son of the present earl. About two years ago he was appointed a magistrate for the West Riding of the County of York,

The first reports of the accident showed it to be one of a most serious character. Mr. Fitzwilliam was riding from the direction of Sheep Cote Hill to the front of Wentworth House, when was seen by Police Constable Titcombe, who is employed on the estate, to pass over the carriage drive.¹¹ The hon. gentleman was returning from a conference with Mr. Dickie, the outdoor steward. He had traversed about 20 yards on to the lawn in front of the house, when the pony he was riding, which was only going at a walking pace, stumbled and fell to the ground. Police Constable Titcombe and two workmen named Arthur Burgon and George Wood ran at once to Mr. Fitzwilliam's assistance. They found him unconscious, but except for a slight bruise on the left forehead, he had no sign of serious injury, and had an expression as though he was asleep. He was lying with his face downwards. Burgon took charge of the horse, and Police Constable Titcombe went for assistance, and the hon. gentleman was immediately conveyed to Wentworth House to his bedroom. Dr. Clarke, of Wentworth, was quickly in attendance, and as the injuries were of a serious nature Mr. Favell, of Sheffield, was telegraphed for, and he arrived shortly before midnight.

The Earl and Countess Fitzwilliam, who were in Ireland at their seat at Coolatin, were at once communicated with, and are expected to arrive at Wentworth early this (Wednesday) morning. Other friends and relatives were also telegraphed for. At the time the accident occurred there was a large party at Wentworth House for the Doncaster Races, and several more visitors were expected yesterday. Of course, the untoward event upset the arrangements, and most of the visitors left as soon as possible under the distressing circumstances.

Yesterday was the anniversary of the golden wedding festivities at Wentworth, which were succeeded shortly after by the death of one of the earl's daughters-in-law, Mrs. Thomas Fitzwilliam, who died of typhoid fever.

¹¹ P.C. Titcombe and his family lived in Doric Lodge (see chapter 5) for some years: see photo of them in BHLV 127 (2000); 28 (2010). See also chapter 2 for a further reference.

A telegram despatched from Wentworth Woodhouse at midnight says Mr. Fitzwilliam had not regained consciousness, and no hope was entertained of his recovery.

The gentleman died soon afterwards, and the Inquest was reported in the *Sheffield Independent* for Saturday 14 September 1889:

THE INQUEST

The inquest upon the body of the late Mr. Fitzwilliam was held yesterday evening at the Rockingham Arms, Wentworth, before Mr. Wightman, coroner for the district. The jury were formally sworn, and then proceeded to Wentworth House to view the body, afterwards inspecting the place where the deceased gentleman's horse stumbled and fell. On their return, Mr. Wm. Dickie, clerk of the works to Earl Fitzwilliam, was sworn. He said he had known the deceased gentleman over 20 years. His name was William John Wentworth Fitzwilliam.

The Coroner. He was not in the army, I think? Mr. Hans Hamilton said he was a captain in the Yeomanry.

The Coroner: Not very lately, I think, was he? Mr. Hamilton: No.

The Coroner. He was now a gentleman? Mr. Dickie, Yes.

And the coffin that has now been shows to the jury contains his remains? Yes. Police Constable James Titcombe, who is stationed at Wentworth House, was examined.

The Coroner. Did you know the deceased by sight? Witness: I did, sir.

What time of the night or day did you say it was when this happened? Half-past seven in the evening, sir.

Of what day? Monday, the 9th September.

Where were you? - I was standing just outside the estate offices.

In front of the house is that? — Yes, at the end of the building.¹²

What did you see first with regard to the deceased? I saw someone riding on horseback.

You did not know at first that it was the deceased, but you know now? I saw the deceased riding down what is known as Sheepcote hill on horseback.

In the park? — Yes, he was riding very steadily.

What pace? Was he walking, trotting, or cantering? Just a gentle trot.

The horse was trotting? — Yes, I noticed that in particular.

Well, how did he go on? — He crossed the carriage drive.

How far would he then be from you? About? — About a hundred yards as near as I can say.

¹² Evidence that the Estate Offices were in the House itself (I believe in the east wing), whereas they are nowadays in Wentworth village, in Clayfield Lane.

On to the lawn in front of the house?— Just so, sir; after he had got a few yards on the lawn I heard the horse's hoofs sound as if stumbling. It sounded with a clip.

As though the shoes had hit one another?— That was the sound, sir— a sort of clip-clap. The horse immediately fell to the ground.

Did you see him going any distance blundering *and trying to recover himself?— No, sir.

That would be five or six yards from the carriage drive?— Yes, sir.

Is it your opinion that the horse caught his foot against the edge of the grass on the carriage road?— Well, it is not my opinion.

How do you account for the horse stumbling?— If you wish my opinion, my opinion is that the horse caught his foot in some way, either in the ground, or, as you say, one foot caught against the others.

You cannot tell how it was, then?— No, sir I cannot.

Now, when it fell, did it fall on the deceased, or roll on him, or what?— That I cannot say.

Did you go to him?— What I saw then was a kind of dark shadow on the ground.

You went to him at once?— I did, sir.

And found him where, lying on his side, or on his back, or on his face?— I found him lying straight out on his face.

And the horse stood beside him?— Yes. The horse's head was down over him.

Are you quite sure you saw the horse on the ground?— Yes, sir, perfectly.

You got assistance, and he was taken into the house. I suppose?— Two men were talking with me at the time, and they ran at the same time as I did. I said, "Come on, he is down," and we all ran.

And he was carried into the house?— Yes, sir.

Did he ever speak at all?— No, sir. I spoke to him twice.

He was quite insensible, in your opinion?— Quite, sir.

You are of opinion that the horse never got into a canter or a gallop coming down the hill and across the road?— No, sir. I saw him distinctly. I was watching him, and so were the other men.

Had you seen Mr. Fitzwilliam go out on this day?— No, sir.

You had not seen him before this occurred?— No, sir.

He had been somewhere and was returning, but you had not seen him go?— No, sir.

Mr. William Clarke, surgeon, Wentworth, was the next witness.

The Coroner. Were you well acquainted with the deceased?— Yes.

Was he a fairly healthy man before this happened?— He was; only some years previously— I should think four or five years— he had got injured about his head.

Do you think those injuries contributed to his death at all?—I think it possible that this last accident may have proved more certainly fatal on account of the previous injury received.

It aggravated his injuries? - Yes.

What time were you called in on the 9th— I was called in immediately it happened.

Directly after the accident - Yes.

Did you go?— I went at once. I think I should see him within 20 minutes afterwards

And found him how? I found him quite insensible.

He never recovered consciousness? - Never.

He died on what date? - He died on the morning of Wednesday, the 11th, at one o'clock after midnight.

The actual cause of death, in your opinion, is what? - Injury to the brain.

Concussion of the brain? - Laceration of the brain.

Was there any outward wound on the head? There was a puffy swelling on the right temple, and some scratches on the forehead close by, and swelling and discolouration of the right eyelid.

Any bones broken? None that we could discover, but the symptoms raised a strong suspicion that there might have been a fracture at the base of the skull.

My reason for saying that is that the pupil of the right eye was very much dilated, and he had swallowed a quantity of blood.

Which came from where? It probably came from some fissure at the base of the skull - some fracture.

In your opinion was the skull fractured? Yes, at the base of the skull; and that is not a position in which any depression could be felt or seen.

Still, from what you saw you believe that the base of the skull was fractured? - Yes.

That may have been fractured by a blow received in front of the head, may it not? It may have been.

Fracture at the base of the skull does not necessarily prove that there had been a blow at the back of the head? It may have been done by a blow in the front of the head? - It may. It may have been caused by his being pitched on his head.

The Coroner said some of the jury might find it difficult to see how a man falling forward could fracture the base of his skull. It might have been fractured, he knew, by a blow in front.

To the witness? — Fracture might be caused at the opposite part of the skull from where the blow is inflicted. — Yes.

The Coroner: I have had a case myself when a blow on the left side of the head caused a fracture to the right side. Witness - By what we should call a *contre coup*.

The Coroner: Exactly. Were these injuries, such as the deceased may have received by a fall from horseback? Witness: Yes.

Even on grass? — Even on grass.

I believe you have no other theory to account for those injuries than what you have heard Titcombe say about this fall? — No.

There is no supposition that they were caused in any other way? — None whatever. Before you finish I omitted to mention one thing — that there was a fracture of the right leg just about the ankle and extensive discolouration at the back of the leg above the heel.

It almost looks as if the horse rolled over him a bit? — That is the idea I formed of the cause of that. I think the horse must have rolled on him when his foot was in a particular position...

The Coroner: Then you are all satisfied, gentlemen, that the deceased came to his death by injuries received by accidentally falling from a horse. Is that your verdict?

The jury acquiesced, and a verdict to that effect was recorded.

The arrangements for the funeral were reported in the *Sheffield Independent* for Saturday 14 September 1889:

THE DEATH OF MR W. J. W. FITZ WILLIAM, M.P. THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE FUNERAL.

The painful event continues to excite the deepest sympathy for the bereaved Earl and Countess, and the family at Wentworth House, and in the village... It is not generally known that Mr Fitzwilliam personally provided for the maintenance of a number of orphan children from Wentworth and the locality. The interment is fixed to take place this afternoon. The funeral will leave Wentworth House at two o'clock, arriving at the church about half an hour later. The remains... were last evening enclosed in leaden and oak coffin, and removed to the private chapel at Wentworth House, where they will remain until the hour of the funeral. They will then be conveyed upon a bier with wheels from the house to the church, most of the mourners following on foot, although one or two of the family carriages may be in attendance.. Mr. Fitzwilliam's remains will rest in the large family vault constructed in Wentworth Churchyard in 1824 by the fourth earl and his eldest son, for the Wentworth branch of their descendants, "in the hope that they may so pass through things temporal that they may lose not the things eternal." In this burial place have been already interred William Charles, Viscount Milton, by whose death in 1835, without male issue, the present earl became the heir to the peerage; and also the late Viscount Milton, eldest son of the present earl, and his widow, Laura Viscountess Milton, besides other younger members of

the family. Lady Milton's burial in 1886 was the last occasion on which the vault was opened. The vault if entered from that portion of the ancient parish church which has been preserved for use as a mortuary chapel, the remainder of the building being in ruins.¹³

This sad event led to the establishment by the Fitzwilliam family of a school for boys at what is now 14, Cortworth Lane, although this was closed in 1900?, when the pupils were transferred elsewhere- see photos below. There is an inscription on the building, which cites Matthew 25, 40 "For as much as ye have done it unto the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Note that the deceased was also known for his philanthropy towards orphans (see extract re funeral arrangements above).

Ten years later there was another accident, involving a Chesterfield man from a very different background, who was in Wentworth Park on business at the time:

THE WENTWORTH FATALITY¹⁴

Yesterday afternoon, Mr. Wightman, coroner, held an inquest at the Rotherham Hospital, relative to the death of Robert Jarvis, aged 33, waggoner, 8, Knivesmith Gate, Chesterfield, who was fatally injured in the Wentworth Park on Thursday. Mr. H. H. Hickmott appeared for Mr. Wm. Toplis, timber merchant. Chesterfield, in whose service Jarvis had been for 5 ½ years; and Mr. Dungworth (from the office of Mr. Wilson) was present on behalf of the widow. Evidence of identification was given by Mrs. Jarvis, who said her husband on Thursday week came to Wentworth to remove timber. On Friday last she heard he had been injured, and a friend made inquiries for her through the telephone.—Robert Clarke, timber loader, of Chesterfield, said he was in the service of Mr. Toplis. On Thursday week witness and Jarvis left Chesterfield with two drags and five horses, and came to Greasborough. On Thursday last they left Greasborough to go to with two empty drags. At Parkin Wood they loaded up and went to the Elsecar Colliery, belonging to Lord Fitzwilliam.

In returning to Greasborough they passed through Wentworth Park, and Jarvis was run over. Witness was first with a drag and two horses, Jarvis following with a second drag and three horses. When near the Peacock Lodge witness stopped to open the gate, and then saw Jarvis lying the side of the road. Witness went to him. He said thought his leg was broken. He afterwards said one of the wheels had passed over his body: and the shaft horses started kicking, got master of him, and tipped him off. Witness raised

¹³ This is an interesting account of the subterranean (and seldom visited) vault to be found at the rear of Wentworth Old Church.

¹⁴ *Sheffield Independent* 21 November 1899.

alarm. A Wentworth doctor saw him, and ordered his removal to the Rotherham Hospital.

[Cross-examined] By Mr. Dungworth: The same horse had previously injured another carter by breaking his collar bone. The animal ran him into a wall. Witness knew that complaints had been made to Mr. Toplis as to this horse being dangerous

By the jury: The horse had not kicked or run away since they left Chesterfield. Mr. J.S.Martin, house surgeon, stated that Jarvis was admitted into the institution Thursday last. He was suffering from a wound on the left-leg, and certain internal injuries. The injuries were the cause of death, and for anything witness could see, might have been caused by the accident described.

Mr. Hickmott said Mr. Toplis had no knowledge that the horse was dangerous one.

The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death".

THE PONDS

There were several ponds in the Park, including Morley Pond, Dog Kennel Pond and the Mill Dam, at the bottom of the Park in the Greasbrough direction, as well as the much smaller Betty Gills Pond near the House, and Glasshouse Green Pond, just outside the Park wall, on the Hoover side. As we shall see, fishing, both legal and illegal took place there; and people sometimes went skating on the larger ponds.¹⁵ At other times, suicides resorted to these cold sheets of water.

Glasshouse Green lies to the east of Wentworth, on the road to Brampton Bierlow and Doncaster. There is a house there and a pond, associated with a glass industry in the 17th century. One morning in 1840 something was found floating on the water, something which turned out to be at the same time sinister and tragic.

The following report, which appeared in the *Sheffield Independent* for Saturday 2 May, provides an explanation:

CHILD FOUND IN A POND AT WENTWORTH

In a field of Mr. Biram's,¹⁶ Wentworth, there is a reservoir or pond, called Glasshouse Green Pond, which partly supplies Wentworth House with water. On Friday morning, the 24th instant, whilst John Kingstone was employed in the above field, ¹⁷near the pond, he observed a bundle floating on the surface

¹⁵ See also chapters 6 & 12 below.

¹⁶ Presumably, this is Benjamin Biram, the superintendant of mines at Elsecar.

¹⁷ Helen Jones comments: I've come across John Kingston too, while I've been looking through the stables staff. A couple of years before he died he broke a leg while exercising the Wentworth Harriers.

of the water, which he drew to one side with a spade. The contents of the parcel were sewed up in a wrapper, in which he cut a hole, and it contained something like a child.

He immediately went to fetch Elizabeth Gothard, who lives near, and they opened the bundle a little more, and discovered a child. They then took it to Mr. Biram's laundry, and on further examination, it was found to be a new born female child, full grown.

The news soon spread, and created considerable sensation in the neighbourhood; and, as is generally the case, whenever any painful circumstance of the kind occurs,¹⁸ many rumours were in circulation, as to whose child it might be, who was the father, &c. Some innocent persons, of course, had to bear the effects of the scandalising propensities of others, who go about, not "doing good," but seeking to gratify their immoral and animal passions, by wounding the feeling of those who are the objects of their curiosity or malevolence. It was soon, however, satisfactorily ascertained, that a woman named Martha Worrall, 25 years of age, of West Melton, but who has lived as servant, since Martinmas, 1838, with Mr. Thomas Binks, plumber and glazier, Glasshouse Green, Wentworth, and near the above pond, had had some suspicious appearances of pregnancy, but a few weeks ago they had disappeared.

On Sunday evening, the 26th instant, an inquest was held at Mrs. Tyne's, Rockingham Arms Inn, Wentworth, by T. Badger, Esq., coroner, and a respectable jury. After the jury had been sworn, and the body viewed, Ann Trickett, a girl nearly 16 years old, who also lives at Mr. Binks's, was examined. She said she slept with her fellow-servant, Martha Worrall, who, she remembered, went to bed on Wednesday afternoon, March 25th, rather poorly, and did not get up again, to her knowledge, until the following day, about three o'clock; and that her person was less in appearance than on the previous day, when she went to bed. She also stated, that on Thursday evening, the 26th ult., during her master's and mistress's absence, she had seen Martha Worrall wash some body linen, &c, which bore suspicious marks; but she had neither heard nor seen a child

Martha Worrall was next called, and strictly examined by the coroner, who stated that she went to bed ill on Wednesday afternoon, the 25th of March, and got up about three o'clock on Thursday afternoon; and that she had been large in her body, but was then less, owing to the nature of her disease; but denied having had a child at that time.

The coroner then ordered her to be examined by Mr. Shearman, surgeon, Rotherham, whom he brought with him, to ascertain whether she had recently given birth to a child. She and the surgeon left the jury room, but

¹⁸ A cursory glance at the newspapers of the time would suggest that it was only too common, in every region.

before the examination took place, she confessed to Mr. Shearman, in the presence of Mrs. Tyne, that she had had a child a few weeks ago.

This information was communicated to the Coroner, who recalled her, and she then stated to him and the Jury, that during the night of Wednesday, the 25th of March, she delivered herself of a child, which she thought, at the time of its birth, was alive, as she heard it make a gurgling noise, but she could not render it the least assistance, as she was in such a weak state, and her mind so agitated and confused, indeed, she scarcely knew what she was doing. When, however, she was able to take up the child, it was dead.

She declared no one knew of the circumstance but herself, although Ann Trickett was lying in the same bed, at the same time, but she was soundly asleep. She put the child in a drawer, which was unlocked, in the same room; sewed it up in the cloth in which it was found, on Thursday evening, the 26th ult.; and kept it in the same drawer till Monday, the 30th ult.; and then threw it into the pond. After some further investigation of little consequence, the inquest was adjourned to Thursday, the 30th, and in the mean time, Mr. Shearman, surgeon, was to make a post mortem examination of the body, then lying in Mr. Biram's mangle room.

ADJOURNED INQUEST, THURSDAY 30TH.

At the adjourned inquest, John Kingstone was sworn, and then stated the particulars of finding the body... John Sykes was then called, who said he had no knowledge of Martha Worrall having had a child, but a few months ago he did suspect she was in the family way, and said so to a woman in the neighbourhood.

Mr. Shearman then reported the result of his examination of the body: He had not discovered any marks of external violence; indeed, the body was in the stage of incipient putrefaction; so that it would have been difficult to have discovered any bruises if there had been any, but he believed there had not. On opening the body the lungs had not begun to decompose; they were florid, and had the usual appearance of having been inflated. The liver, heart, and other organs were in such a state as to leave no doubt of the child having been born alive, which was further proved by there having been an evacuation of faeces. He believed that the child had not died of strangulation, or any other violence; but that it had been suffocated, in consequence of the mother not being able to render it proper assistance at the time of its birth. Ann Trickett was again called, and affirmed what she had before stated.

Martha Worrall was also again examined, and confirmed the evidence she had before given, of having given birth to a child, and throwing it into the pond. She also swore that John Hobson, glazier, who had been apprenticed to Mr. Binks, was the father of the child.

Mr. Binks gave her an excellent character as a servant, and was surprised that she had so conducted herself. She had always shewn great attachment to their children. The Coroner then summed up, and the Jury returned a verdict of "Concealing the Birth of a Female Bastard Child." The prisoner was then sent to Rotherham, to be committed by a Magistrate to Wakefield House of Correction, there to await her trial, if bail could not be obtained for her, which would take place at Rotherham Sessions, in July.

The sequel was reported in the *Sheffield Independent* for Saturday 11 July 1840, the result may surprise many of us, who have been brought up to believe in the unrelenting severity of the Victorian machinery of justice:

ROTHERHAM SESSIONS. MARTHA WORRALL pleaded Guilty of concealing the birth of an illegitimate child. The prisoner was servant to Mr. Binks, plumber, of Wentworth. The body of a child was found in the Glasshouse Green pond, and it afterwards appeared that the prisoner had been delivered of the child, still-born, several weeks before, and had concealed the body as long as she could, and then put it into the pond. She was strongly recommended by her master to the favourable consideration of the Court, and was sentenced to three months' imprisonment.

On Saturday 5 July 1884 the *Sheffield Weekly Telegraph* reported as follows:

THE DROWNING CASE IN WENTWORTH PARK

An inquest was held at the Milton Arms Inn, Greasborough, on Monday, on the body of man found drowned in the Kennels Pond, Wentworth Park, on Friday. The body was identified by William Davis, ironworker, of Elsecar, as that of Joseph Spinks, labourer at the Elsecar Ironworks. The deceased had lodged with Davis the Tuesday morning of last week, when he left his lodgings early to go to work. On Thursday morning drink of water was given to the man by Mrs. Courtney, of Morley Lodge. No reason could be assigned for the sad occurrence, and a verdict of 'found drowned' was returned.

On 16 August 1893 the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* reported on another suicide, which is remarkable in that it involved the same John Kingstone who had given evidence when an inquest had been held 53 years previously, into the death of Martha Worrall's baby (see above). Both inquests were held at the Rockingham Arms.

SUICIDE AT WENTWORTH

Last night Mr. Wightman, deputy coroner, held an inquiry at the Rockingham Arms, Wentworth, touching the death of John Kingstone, labourer aged 52 years, of Wentworth, who was found drowned in a sheet of water known Betty Gill's Pond, Wentworth Park on Saturday afternoon. The deceased was well known in Wentworth, having in former years been employed by Earl Fitzwilliam at the Wentworth stables as a stable man, but for the last three years he has had no regular employment, and during the last few months has suffered great deal from indigestion and rheumatism and has been very depressed spirits. After hearing the evidence, the jury returned a verdict of suicide whilst temporarily insane.

Sometimes there was no explanation for what happened. Take the case of Miss Dora Willie, in 1925:¹⁹

MISSING TEACHER.

Discovery of Body in Pond at Wentworth. The mystery attending the disappearance of Dora Willie, aged 21, school teacher the Netherfield Main Council School, Rawmarsh, was solved by the finding of her body yesterday morning. A man walking in the vicinity of Morley Pond, in Wentworth Park, discovered the body about 10 o'clock. Miss Willie left home at 8.20 on Monday morning, the 14th instant, to attend to her scholastic duties, and nothing was seen of her until the body was found. The fact that she was missing caused very great consternation in Greasborough, where she was very well known, and organised search parties had spent great deal of time trying to discover her fate

The report in the Lincolnshire Echo for Friday 25 September 1925 added a few details:

TEACHER DEAD IN A POND

The discovery the body Miss Dora Willey, aged twenty-one, Greasborough, near Rotherham, a teacher employed at Parkgate, has ended the search that has lasted since September 14th. She disappeared on her way to school, and parties of police, keepers, and boy scouts failed to find a trace of her. Two searchers yesterday, however, discovered her body in a pond at Wentworth. There was no indication of foul play. Her sister says that she was a first-class tennis and hockey player, cheerful in disposition, and without any cause for worry.²⁰

¹⁹ *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* - Friday 25 September 1925.

²⁰ See also the *Belfast Telegraph* and the *Gloucester Citizen* for the same date.

Although we are not much the wiser as a result, there was an inquest, as reported in *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* for Saturday 26 September 1925:

**TEACHER'S DEATH.
Open Verdict at Greasboro' Inquest.**

At the inquest at Greasborough yesterday on Dora Willey, the 21-year-old school teacher, of Main Street, Greasborough, her brother Thomas said that she had been studying botany and probably she thought of taking a specimen to school. With this object she might have gone into Wentworth Park and fallen into the pond. Little more came out than what is generally known. The girl left home on Monday morning, September 14th, to go to school. She was going to go out with her bicycle, but evidently changed her mind, for the machine was later found at the rear of her home. Until Thursday, when the body was found in the Dog Kennel Pond in Wentworth Park, her whereabouts had been a mystery.

The last time she was seen was by her niece, Irene Smith, who saw her walking on a by-way leading to Wentworth Park.

From the evidence of the sister and brother, it was elicited that the girl had taken an examination recently and did not know the result, but she did not appear to be worried.

Dr. G. L. Lafferty, of Rotherham, said the cause of death was asphyxia, by drowning. There were no external marks of violence.

In summing up, the Coroner said he doubted whether there was sufficient evidence to bring in a verdict that the girl committed suicide while her mind was deranged, or that she had got in the pond by accident, and he was of the opinion, that the best verdict was "Found drowned."

The jury agreed.

Finally, after recording these dismal stories of death and suicide, it is refreshing to record that there is something positive to record. On Saturday 21 June 1890 the *Leeds Times* reported:

BARNSELY SWIMMING CLUB

The annual gala of the Barnsley Swimming Club and Humane Society was held at the Corporation Baths, York-street, on Monday evening. There was a large attendance. The Mayor gave an address. He also presented a silver medal, on behalf of the club, to Mr. Deane, of Wentworth, for bravery displayed in saving the life of a

child in Wentworth reservoir, on the 3rd January last. Mr. Deane had already received a certificate of the Royal Humane Society and a silver watch from the inhabitants of Wentworth. Likewise, the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* for Friday 20 December 1912 reported:

ROTHERHAM BOY SCOUTS INTERESTING PRESENTATION OF MEDALS

The Rotherham Boy Scouts' concert in the Westgate Mission Hall, Rotherham, last night was invested with special interest for the reason that recognition was made of the life-saving services of two of the members.

Mr. W. Dyson, J.P., chairman of the Association, presided, supported the Mayor of Rotherham (Alderman P. Bancroft Coward), Canon Goodall, Mr. E. J. Parker, Mr. E. J. Cheesewright, and Mr. W. Waters.

The Mayor had now to present three recognitions, viz.: —Silver medal to Clifford Tagg (11), and bronze medal to Albert Roebuck (17), of the 5th (Rotherham) Rawmarsh troop for life saving; and the Donegal badge to G. R. Ball, of the 1st Rotherham troop, for shooting.

The life-saving took place on August 19 from a pond in Wentworth Park. A learner found himself in difficulties, and Roebuck and Tagg went to his assistance. The rescue was reported to headquarters, and they had awarded the medals. With regard to the shooting, G.R. Ball obtained 85 points out of possible 100, and the National Rifle Association had given the badge. The Mayor expressed the pleasure his visit gave him and was delighted to hand over the medals for the bravery displayed in helping a comrade who was unable help himself. The Mayor concluded by wishing the members a merry Christmas and a happy New Year. The concert programme included items by the Clifton Minstrels, conjuring by Marshall Bros, recitations by the 1st and 5th Rotherham troops, single-sticks and fanfare of bugles by the Westgate troop, and a comedy act by Scoutmaster J. A. Young, and Scout Jinks.