

'Housing the Upwardly Mobile' A Nether Edge History Walk around the Montgomery Estate.



The walk starts on Brincliffe Edge Road, opposite the gas lamp at the top of Union Road. There are no steep sections after the initial ascent to the meeting point. Our route covers the area around Brincliffe Edge and the Montgomery Land Society Estate, which was developed on the slopes down to Glen Road in the late nineteenth century. The walk ends at the foot of Union Road. We'll cover a range of themes and also share some quirky bits of information that we hope will be of interest.

There are 12 stops and the duration of the walk is approximately 90 minutes.



Walk route based on Godfrey Map from 1903 with stop 1 to 12 marked in red

Stop 1. Introduction

Sheffield in the 19th Century:

This was a period of **industrial growth and very rapid population increase**: from 60,000 in 1801 to 161,500 in 1851 and 451,000 by 1901. A plentiful workforce enabled Sheffield's industries to expand; the city became wealthy and internationally famous for its wide range of high quality metal goods - steel, tools, cutlery, rails etc. Sheffield was the fastest growing town in England; it became a city in 1893.

A much larger middle class emerged from the thriving economy -These people were not necessarily the very rich but the 'rich enough', creating a demand for good quality housing. They wanted to live away from the dirt and smoke, hence the expansion of housing into the farmland around the town.

However, **an acute shortage of housing** led to the substandard, overcrowded development of many areas – jerrybuilt courtyards and tightly-packed terraces spread up the hillsides. This walk sheds light on how this part of Nether Edge was developed more successfully, not necessarily for the very rich but for the 'rich enough'.



This William Ibbitt painting of the Sheaf Valley shows what the area looked like in 1857. The building in the centre of the painting is the work house on Union Road. Note the beech wood plantation, farms and hamlets, industry.



Sharrow 1795, from the map of the Parish of Sharrow by Fairbank. Spot the home of the original landowner Samuel Broomhead Ward of 'Mount Pleasant'.



Map 2. The Area of Nether Edge and Sharrow taken from The O.S. map of Sheffield, 1851.

Stop 2. Brincliffe Edge Houses



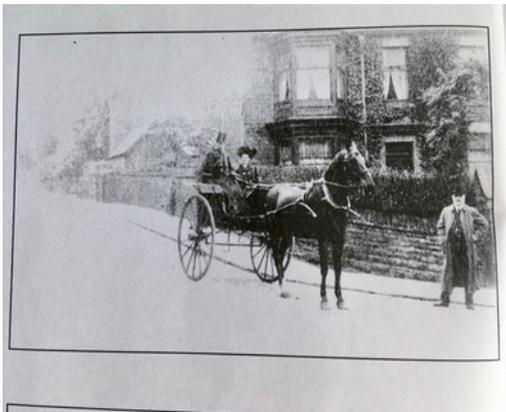
Nos 74-78 were once referred to collectively as Brincliffe View. **No 76** has a stone plaque saying 18 Brincliffe View 58. It is most likely these houses were all built by William White. They share the same design features.

The plaque on **80** Brincliffe Edge Rd, refers to William White the builder who built this house for himself in 1860.

The actor James Fox lived at **No. 62** (pictured) and married Mary Piper.

The land below remained pasture for the next 20 years until the estate was built up.

No 60 was built later and over an ancient bridleway.



No 58 There is a photograph of its proud owner, the manager of an iron foundry, Richard Fisher, his family and their horse and carriage.

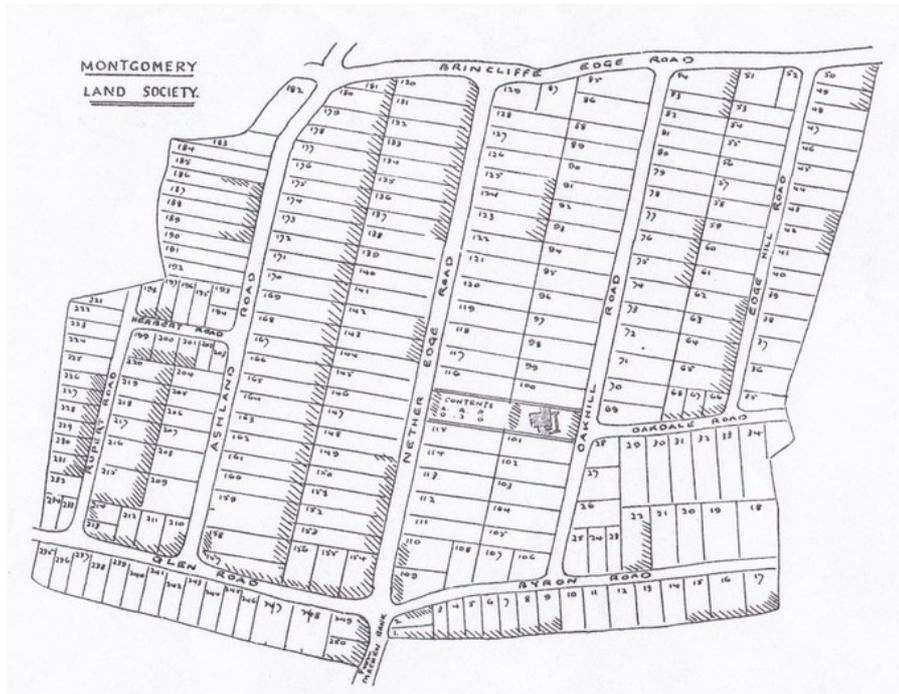
Notice the Victorian letter box in the wall



No 24 James Gould who lived here created a woodland Pleasure Garden through the metal gates across the road.

Stop 3. The upper boundary of the Montgomery Estate. Ashland Road

Land Societies, such as the Montgomery Land Society, were established to control suburban building. They were very significant in the development of Nether Edge and other suburbs like Endcliffe, Ranmoor and Broomhall. Society members invested in land purchases, plans were drawn up, plots of different sizes were bought and paid for in weekly instalments and builders were employed to create houses which met land society standards. The purchasers of the plots often retained the freehold, giving them a lucrative financial return.



Building standards were often specified in strict covenants, detailing the minimum size of plot, house style, building materials & house value, which typically ranged from £120 to £500 depending on the location and size of the house. Restrictions on the use of premises were also part of the covenant. The societies took responsibility for the roads, walls, fences and drains.

The franchise. Ownership of property and/or land also gave men the right to vote following the 1832 Reform Act. In the 1852 election only 5,322 Sheffield men out of a population of 161,500 were entitled to vote - and only 3,353 voted. By the time of the 1874 election 36,701 men had the vote and almost 20,000 used it.

Plots on this part of the estate vary in size, style of houses and status of occupants.



No 71 Grange Court with its very impressive gate was built by Louis Henry Osbaldiston, saws, edge tools and file manufacturer. The 1883 offices of his Challenge Works at 94 Arundel St. are still in use – as modern student flats! No.71 is on a much larger plot than others on Ashland. It originally had a very big garden bordering Brincliffe Edge Rd. and its stables were at the top of Sandford Grove Rd., where there are now garages.

No 82 The home of local historian John Cornwell. It was built around 1900 at the same time as the other 4 in the terrace but severely hit by an incendiary bomb in 1940. Rebuilt in 1948 to a much smaller imprint and size but retains the larger hall of the others. The stick of incendiaries dropped also knocked out houses in Nether Edge Road. The blast was seen by occupants of 196 Sandford Grove Rd, who in their turn had an incendiary land in their bath. A quick turn on of the taps saved the day. (*Quirk 4.*)

Stop 4. Ashland Road



No 41 'The Towers' was built by Edward James Woollen in 1912. He watched it being built from his previous home at **no 44**. He was a signmaker but went into advertising. Woollen had a huge personality and was said to be *'energetic to a degree which makes the average man uncomfortable'*. He was a pioneer of the early cinema in Sheffield and owned a picture house 'The Tivoli' in Norfolk St. (p40 TL). Note the difference in the building styles. His first home is solidly 'heavy Victorian'; 'The Towers' has lighter Art Nouveau/Arts and Crafts glasswork and roofing.

No 40, Ashland Rd, 'Rye Lodge' but now shown as 'Ashland House' was built about 1878 by William Ryland who ran Ryland's Electroplating Company. His house was filled with paintings, and when the collection was sold in 1887 it included works by Constable and Landseer. (p41 TL and Aspects)

Round the corner on Herbert Road lived Sheffield MP Bill Michie. It was his home for 30 years and prior to that the leader of the Deep Purple Fan Club is reputed to have lived there!



Stop 5. Lower section of Ashland Rd and Glen Rd.

Using the Godfrey map of 1903 (the map with the route on page 1) we can see large sections of open land and greenhouses here. There were many market gardens and nurseries in the area, supplying plants, fruit and vegetables to local residents and shops.

No7 Glen Rd 'Edge View' This was named after Glen Cottage, formerly the only house in the area. The 'glen' was the valley between Brincliffe Edge and Machon bank. 'Edge View' was built in the 1870s as a double fronted villa. The original owner was John Biggin a silversmith. When he died his widow Louisa, described as a 'robust woman', took over the business of 13 men and four boys, a reasonably large establishment for those days. The house was bought in the 1880s by George Tandy a comb manufacturer. It had various business people living in it but towards the end of the century was described as being inhabited by a succession of 'shadowy widows'. -See 'They Lived' p47.



No 5 'Glen Lea' was built in the 1880s of Aberdeen granite, not the local sandstone. The granite is the same as that used on Wostenholm's Kenwood house but there are no other granite homes in Nether Edge. It was lived in by Samuel Smith, a cutler, who had a factory on Carver Street.

Stop 6. Nether Edge Road

The old narrow dog-legged Charley Lane, which ran from Machon Bank up to Brincliffe Edge Road, was straightened out by the Montgomery Land Society and renamed Nether Edge Road in 1854.



Nether Edge Supply Stores- Nether Edge Road
This shop later became a chemist which, as late as the 1970s, had large coloured glass bottles in the window.



No 9 Guzarat House

Thomas Nash lived here. He was born in 1837 in Swindon, where in 1843 Brunel opened the first railway depot for the Great Western Railway, which ran between London and Bristol. Nash got caught up in the railway excitement and became a railway engineer. He and his wife travelled to India where the British were building thousands of miles of railway track. He eventually came to live in Sheffield and named his house after the place where he had lived in India. His engineering knowledge was used to open The Sheffield Testing Works. It devised new testing methods for all types of metals and became very important for the growth of Sheffield's steel industry. Nash's engineers checked all the rolling stock that went out to South America. –See p48 and 49 TL and Grace's Guide to British Industrial History.

It was a chemists and a grocers shop before becoming a café.

To the left and across the road one can see The Nether Edge Bowling Club. Established in 1867, this club has a well documented history of being host not only to prominent snooker players of today, enticed by the beautiful upstairs snooker tables, but as a dining club for the up and coming gentlemen of Victorian times – See Aspects p191 RT and IG

Next to **No 11** was the Nether Edge Hall with tennis courts and a pavilion. A barrage balloon was flown above it in the Second World War and the WAAFS who ran the unit were billeted in the Hall. It also had fame in the 1970s as the local night club 'Turnups'. It was demolished and Birchcroft retirement flats were built.

Stop 7. Byron Road

The Byron Hotel on the corner began life as a grocers shop that sold ale as a sideline. Eventually the grocery business diminished and it became a public house. The origin of the name is unknown.



No 6 was a market garden. There were many in the area supplying fresh produce not only to the locality but the city.

However the beautiful natural environment must have been somewhat diminished by....



No 3, a butchers and slaughterers. Waste from both operations ran out from the back of the premises onto the road outside.

At the top of the road was stabling for the tram horses. –See People and Places p 138 JB
The local artists Richard and Edwin Smith both moved to this road from grander abodes when their fortunes fell. (you will hear more about them at Union Rd.)

Stop 8. Oakhill Road



Before the present housing development, almost opposite Oakdale Road, this was the site of **The Brincliffe Oaks Hotel**.

In its 20th century heyday this was the place to go for music, dining and dancing. It even had its own bowling club. In the 19th century the hotel had a moment of fame when it hosted a demonstration of the new electric light. - See People and Places p 169 JB

The hotel was on the footprint of the original **Nether Edge**

Farmhouse which went through to Nether Edge Road, and there was

much concern about its conservation when the building of the new housing went ahead. Part of the old farm was retained in the wall of the new development.

The farmhouse had been rented for a considerable time by **James Poole**, a painter and drawing master, and his older brother **William** who was a portrait painter. They came from Aston in Birmingham. Both men had considerable standing in the artistic community and had commissions to paint many of Sheffield's 'great and good'. The farming continued with the tenant farmer living in the cowkeeper's cottage. See p41 TL and Aspects p20.

The Brincliffe Oaks were situated on the corner of Oak Dale and Oak Hill roads. The ancient trees were a much loved local feature. However a picture of one shows it in a romantic light whilst another shows it to be almost dead! In 1874 some members of the Land Society Committee had wanted to have the 2 oaks felled and uprooted for 30/-. Fortunately they were outvoted. There was huge opposition to their removal but the deed was done in 1922.



Stop 9. Oakdale Road



William Poole's family had a new house built at **No 5** Oakdale Road, still known as 'Oakdale Cottage'. Its design differed from others in the area and may have been influenced by William's memories of rural Warwickshire.

Stop 10. Edge Hill Road

No 13, built in 1863, was where Lucy Sanderson aged 21 worked as a servant according to the 1881 census. She was a local girl, her father being a fork grinder. The owner of the house was Joseph Bateman, a silver buffer and widower. Lucy married him and they had three children. When Joseph died she owned the house. Lucy married again and had another child. She was buried at Ecclesall All Saints with both of her husbands, Joseph's first wife and several Bateman relatives.

Stop 11. Returning to Oakdale Road

No 10 is a modest but handsome double fronted house and was lived in by a potato merchant. He had stabling at the back for his horse and potato cart. Yet again this demonstrates how Nether Edge was becoming a mixed area of trades and professions.



No 20 'Fountside' is a private residential development with '**Manor House**' carved into its original stone gateposts. The original Manor House was built in the 1850s, near to the site of Upper Edge Farm. It was used as a school in the Second World War until it was damaged in the Blitz.' A former pupil, Jimmi Eldridge, remembered, '*Here we revelled in having our lessons in the Edwardian luxury of the conservatory*'. There is part of the original stone farm wall in its car park round the back of Fountside. (See p61 TL).

Stop 12. Union Road

This was known as part of Cherry Tree Hill until the Ecclesall Bierlow Union workhouse was built in 1841-3.

In the mid 1800's the Church of England had not thought it necessary to build churches in the area as so few people lived there. Folk tended to worship as non-conformists in their own homes. Methodism grew, in part due to John Wesley being a popular speaker in Sheffield, drawing many crowds. The Montgomery Methodist Chapel on the corner of Union Road and Oakdale Road was opened in 1867. It is still now a place of worship, the Kings' Centre. See Aspects p169 JR.

94 and 96 Union Road were built together in 1857 for Richard Smith. He was a portrait painter and commercial artist who had exhibited at the Royal Academy when he was only 20. The family lived in one part, 96, and received rental income from the other, 94. Later, when he was struggling to keep up the mortgage payments the family moved to 26 Byron Rd.



Richard's sculptor brother Edwin lived in Edgebrook Road. Though very talented and at first successful he too had difficulties and was forced to sell the Edgebrook house and move to 10 Byron Road. By 1881 he had moved out of Nether Edge. His son Theophilus became a famous photographer. Sadly after a serious accident he was unable to continue his career and in 1870 put all his photographic equipment up for sale. However Theophilus managed to continue working in marble and plaster and in 1877 moved into 'Lea Hurst' the new house he had built on Oakdale Road just a few doors away from his friend William Poole. It has since been demolished. Sadly the good times did not last and

Theophilus died in 1882 in poverty and estranged from his family. –See Aspects p 203 SG and p 33 They Lived..

References to Nether Edge History Group publications:

TL = *They Lived in Nether Edge*

Aspects = *Aspects of Nether Edge*

P&P = *Nether Edge People and Places*

Initials after title links refer to the names of authors/contributors.

This completes the walk. We hope you've enjoyed it. If you're interested in finding out more about the history of Nether Edge we have books and walks for sale at the Farmers' Markets and in 'Wickwire'. More local history information and news of upcoming History Group events can be found on our website. www.netheredgehistory.co.uk

Thank you for joining us.