

Background Document Cossall Neighbourhood Plan

The History of Cossall

Early History

The earliest reference² to the area suggests that it was inhabited during the iron-age and maybe even before. However, its documented history really begins with the derivation of the Parish name which goes back to Saxon times and derives from a settlement made by Cotta³. There have been many different spellings for the parish e.g. Cotesdale, Coshale, Cossale, Cotsahal, Cotsale, Colsol and by the mid-17th Century had become known as Cossall.

At the time of the Norman invasion Cossall consisted of a portion of land owned by the Saxon theigns Leofnoth and Wolfsi.⁴ After the invasion it was shared by Ralph Fitzhubert, son of Lord Hubert, who held lands as tenant-in-chief of the King William in Derbys, Leics, Lincs, Norfolk, Notts, Staffs and Suffolk, and William Peverel, a military follower of William the Conqueror, as a dependency of his manor in Wollaton. The Domesday survey of 1086 refers to Cossall as Cotesdale with Ralph having the larger share - he had three villeins to Peverel's two along with more land.

Peverel's half of Cossall was eventually passed to Eustace de Mortein by King John⁵ and changed hands a number of times depending on the de Mortein's various allegiances to the Crown. William de Mortein, heir of Eustace supported Henry III and was rewarded when Henry III granted free warren in the manors of Wollaton and Cossall to William's successor, Roger de Mortein in 1283.

Part of Fitzhubert's share of Cossall eventually passed to the de Cossale family and part was acquired by the de Morteins. William de Cossale was a baron of the exchequer (a Judge of the English court known as the Exchequer of Pleas) under Edward III and gave his lands at Cossall to the monks of Newstead Abbey hopefully to redeem his 'sinful soul'.⁵ Eventually, both shares of Cossall came into the possession of the Willoughby family. Firstly, a large part of Cossall was gained by a judicious marriage when Sir Richard de Willoughby married Sir Roger Mortein's daughter, Isobel, in 1337. He had already bought the Manor of Wollaton from Sir Roger circa 1317. Secondly, more of Cossall was obtained when he bought Robert de Cossale's lands including the Manor. Sir Richard died in 1362 and was succeeded by his son, also called Richard. When Richard died in 1364 without an heir the ownership of the Manor of Cossall was often in dispute and was held by a number of people until 1586 when it was claimed by Sir Francis Willoughby.

The Willoughby family held the Manor of Cossall until Lord Middleton's estate was sold in 1925 in order to pay for death duties.

¹ Truman Edwin, The History of Ilkeston Together with Shipley, Kirk Hallam, West Hallam, Dale Abbey & Cossall (1880) p.384

² <https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/library/browse/organisationDetails.xhtml?organisationId=4086>

³ <http://www.nottshistory.org.uk/articles/doubleday/cossall1.htm>

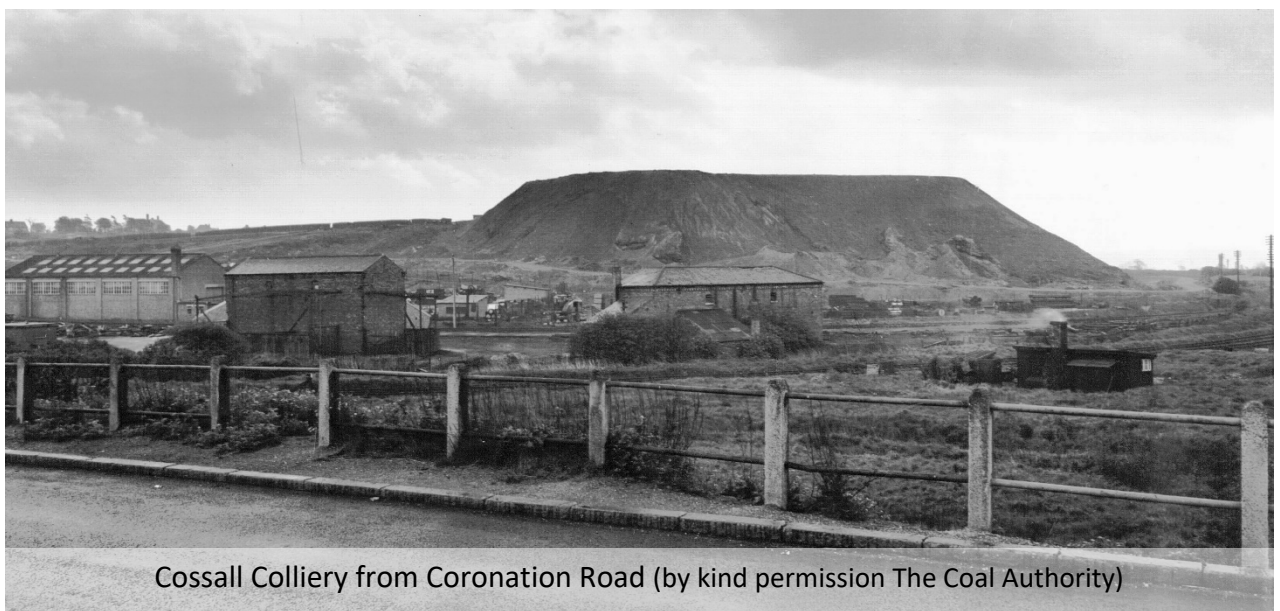
⁴ <https://opendomesday.org/place/SK4842/cossall/>

⁵ Truman Edwin, The History of Ilkeston Together with Shipley, Kirk Hallam, West Hallam, Dale Abbey & Cossall (1880) p.384

Early Map of Cossall Parish



Coal



Cossall Colliery from Coronation Road (by kind permission The Coal Authority)

The coal mining industry has been an important part of the local economy for many centuries-and has been documented in the Cossall parish from the 13th Century onwards, when it's recorded that by 1283 colliers were working "a mine of sea coal".⁶ This is the first reference to a coal mine in Nottinghamshire. It is possible that workings dated to the 16th Century are amongst the earlier exploitation of surface and close-surface seams.

Cossall colliery was sunk in 1878-1879 by the Cossall Colliery Co and was situated to the eastern side of the railway line at Cossall. By 1896 the colliery employed 557 people and by 1937 it employed 1629 people and was producing 300,000 tons year. Lt. Colonel Alfred Hewlett was MD of the Company from 1923 to the nationalisation in 1947. He lived in the Hollies on Church Lane which gave him a good vantage point to observe the colliery. He provided free coal to the church for heating. The pit finally closed in November 1966 and the pit spoil heap would regularly catch fire for a number of years after the pit closed. Since the late sixties the Colliery site has been an industrial estate.



Underground at Cossall Colliery,
kindly supplied by Dave Hill

Coming of the Canal

Most of the coal used in Nottingham came from the mines around the Nottinghamshire/Derbyshire border and was taken overland or by the circuitous route down the Erewash canal and River Trent to Nottingham, which increased the cost. When the Cromford Canal was authorised in July 1789, there was concern that collieries which were located near it would thrive, at the expense of those nearer to Nottingham. There were also worries that the Erewash Canal Company might have a monopoly on coal supplies and use this to increase prices.¹¹

The idea for the canal to join up with the Cromford and Erewash canals at Langley Mill first arose in 1790 and later that year Thomas Oldknow, John Morris and Henry Green lobbied for a public meeting. At the subsequent meeting, held at the Nottingham Guildhall on the

20th November 1790, a plan was devised and approved, and the Nottingham Canal Company was formed, which included two men who were also connected to the company building the Cromford Canal.¹¹

After a suitable route was surveyed by William Jessop the canal was opened in 1796 and ran from Nottingham near Trent Bridge to Langley Mill to meet up with the Cromford canal. It went through Lenton, Radford, Wollaton, Trowell, Cossall and Awsworth to Langley Mill. The canal was designed as a contour canal and it *clings* to the side of the valley following the same level so reducing the need for locks. It was a success right from the start carrying coal was its main purpose, but it also carried many other things including building materials and house bricks from Balloon Woods, lime and timber from Wollaton. There was even a regular passenger service from the Cromford to the centre of Nottingham. By 1832 the canal had reached its peak and was paying out a dividend of 12% but was forced to reduce its costs with the advent of the railway which made transporting coal cheaper. However, this was too little too late and the local colliery owners began to encourage the railways. The Ambergate, Nottingham, Boston & Eastern Junction Railway Company finally took over the running of the Nottingham Canal in 1884. The canal managed to survive for 80 years under railway ownership. Most of the canal was closed by its owner the London and North Eastern Railway in 1937 and the only section which was retained was the stretch in Nottingham between Trent Bridge and Lenton. This section was taken over by the River Trent Navigation and has remained open to the present day as part of the Nottingham and Beeston canal.

Although the canal has been long disused, there are sections in Cossall that still run along the canal towpath which have become a nature reserve with many wildflower species. It is a haven for butterflies, dragonflies and damselflies. The contour following arrangement means the canal offers an easy level route for walkers with spectacular views along and across the Erewash valley.

¹¹ <http://www.canalroutes.net/Nottingham-Canal.html#History>

The Willoughbys

There have been many notable people living in or associated with the parish and without doubt it is the Willoughby family who have contributed most to the heritage of Cossall. The Willoughby family can trace its descent back to Ralph Bugge, a Nottingham merchant, who bought lands in Willoughby-on-the-Wolds, Nottinghamshire, in the thirteenth Century.⁸

The Willoughbys acquired various other properties through marriage and purchase, chief among which were the Wollaton and Cossall estates in Nottinghamshire, in the fourteenth Century, and the Middleton estate in Warwickshire in the fifteenth Century.⁸

In 1676 George Willoughby, nephew of Sir Francis Willoughby the first Baronet of Wollaton, had his seat at Cossall Wood Hall, a medieval Manor house with ancillary outbuildings and laid out in a walled rectangular enclosure surrounded by a moat. Manor Farm is built on the site of the old hall and traces of the moat still remain.⁹

St Catherine's church is the burial place of George Willoughby, who founded and endowed a hospital close by and is better known as the Willoughby Almshouses.

Sale of the Middleton Estate

The slow demise of country houses began in the 19th Century as an agricultural depression reduced farming rents, and death duties on landed wealth were introduced in 1894. The demise accelerated in the 20th Century, especially between the wars, and was brought about by a change in social and political conditions. The most important factor, however, was financial as incomes reduced and costs increased compounded by an increase in taxation, then the running of a large estate became more of a burden.

The 9th Baron Middleton died in 1922 and the family managed to pay the death duty of 25% on the estate. However, when the 10th Baron died just two years later, his son, the 11th Baron Middleton, had to sell a large proportion of the Willoughby Estate in order to pay the death duties. This included Wollaton Hall in Nottinghamshire and Middleton Hall in Warwickshire as well as land and property in Cossall and elsewhere.

The property and land in Cossall was sold at the auction in March 1925 and comprised of 66 lots including 26 dwellings and 6 farms. It is interesting to note that most of the lots still retained their ancient field boundaries. The Parish is defined by these ancient fields and in places causes a complex boundary with its neighbouring parishes especially Awsworth