

The story of Upperthorpe and Netherthorpe

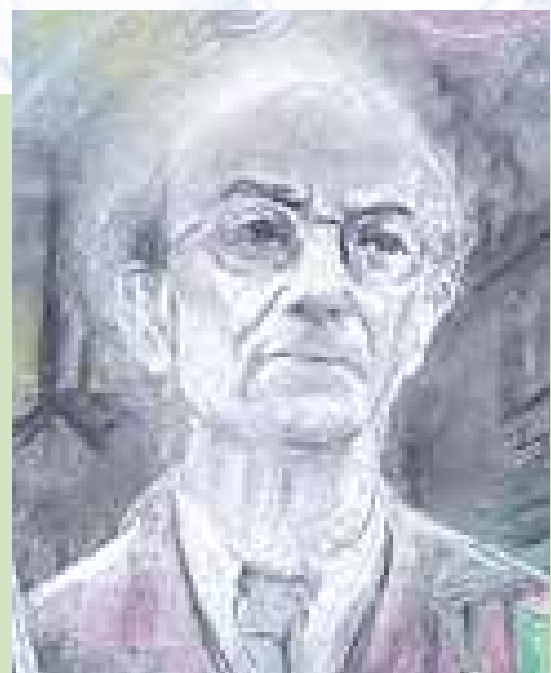
INTRODUCTION

A community transformed

In 1801, Sheffield was a growing town of around 45,000 people. Over the next 150 years, the Industrial Revolution transformed it into one of Britain's great industrial cities. Its population soared to almost half a million as people arrived in search of work, opportunity and a better life.

Upperthorpe was one of the communities created by this rapid expansion. Once open countryside beyond Sheffield's town boundary, it became a densely populated neighbourhood of homes, workplaces and public institutions.

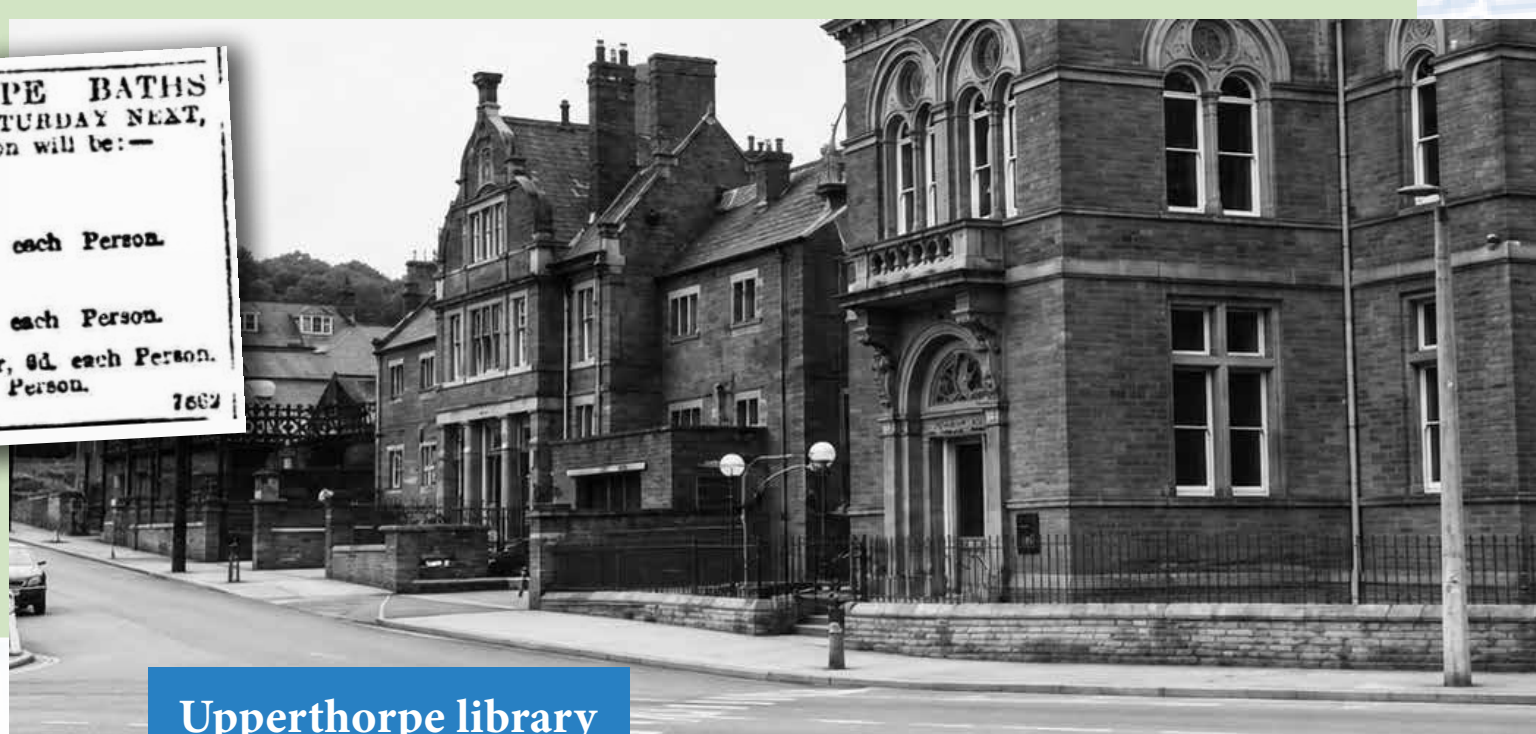
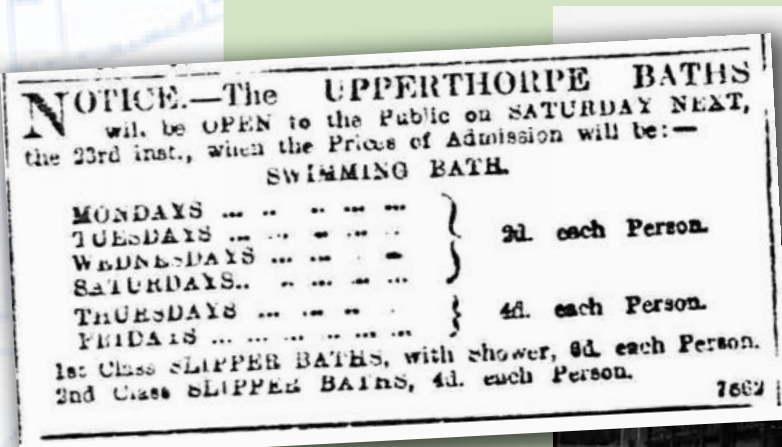
Sheffield's growth was powered by water from the River Don, new machinery and the increasing mechanisation of metalworking. Workshops gave way to factories, while canals and railways opened routes to markets across Britain and overseas. At the same time, changes in agriculture and the enclosure of common land displaced many rural workers, pushing them towards industrial towns.



Arnold Freeman

At the heart of Upperthorpe's community life was Arnold Freeman, who established the Sheffield Educational Settlement. His approach placed local people at the centre of education and community development. Through learning, drama and activities such as the Little Theatre, he encouraged people to become active citizens and community leaders.

Freeman also left something remarkable behind: a record of Upperthorpe's people—their lives, hopes, struggles and aspirations—bringing this once-vibrant community back to life for future generations.

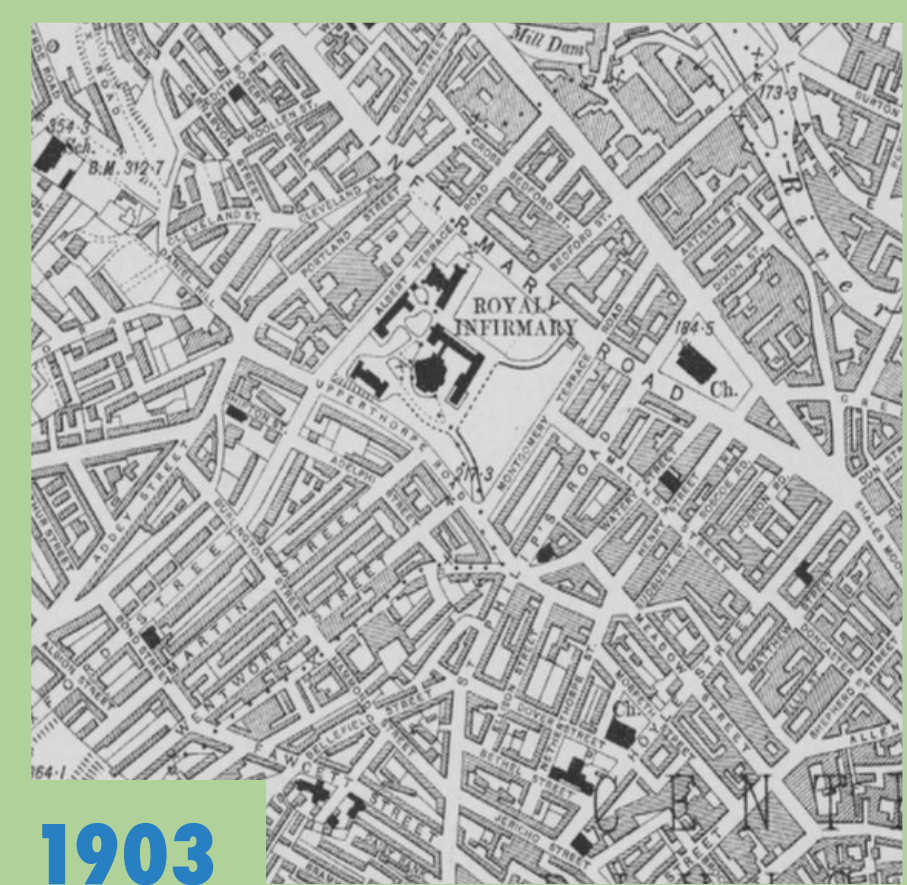


Upperthorpe library and baths.

A key development in Upperthorpe was the construction of Sheffield Infirmary on Upperthorpe Meadows – then open countryside.



1823



1903

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As Upperthorpe grew, so did its community life. Schools, places of worship, the library and baths joined the Infirmary. Trade unions, friendly societies, co-operatives and religious organisations provided support, friendship and a collective voice for residents. Political rights also gradually expanded, with voting reforms in 1867, 1918 and 1928.



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Sheffield Infirmary

One of Upperthorpe's most important landmarks was Sheffield Infirmary. Plans for a subscription-funded hospital were proposed in 1792, and Upperthorpe Meadows was chosen as its site. The foundation stone was laid in 1793 and the Infirmary opened in 1797. By 1880, the surrounding fields had disappeared beneath streets, terraces and larger houses. Yet rapid growth brought problems too: much working-class housing was overcrowded, poorly built and lacking proper sanitation.

Find out more

To find out more about the project scan the code or visit www.principle5.coop

