



Cam and the Winterbothams



A 2 mile local history walk on pavements and footpaths exploring the parts of Cam and Upper Cam associated with the Winterbotham family (See 12 points of interest described in the text and indicated on the map on the back page).

The Winterbothams were one of the most influential families in Cam during the late 19th and early 20th century. They made their mark not only on the community and the economy but also in terms of the many buildings associated with their business and charitable work which still stand today. The family no longer owns the local Mills which have been part of WSP textiles since 2011.

Start the trail at Tesco Car Park in Cam; proceed on foot to the High Street, turning right to see the Arthur S. Winterbotham Memorial Hall ¹ on your right, after a row of shops. The Hall dates from 1937 and is a memorial to the son of Arthur B. Winterbotham. Leave the Hall and turn left, retracing your steps back towards Chapel Street where the circular part of the walk begins. The trail is 2 miles long and takes just over an hour.



Inside the Winterbotham Hall

At the end of Chapel Street, on the corner of Spouthouse Lane there is a building which to all intents and purposes looks like an ordinary house. This was at one time a coffee house named the 'Welcome Tavern' ², constructed in 1896 through the initiative of Emily Page Winterbotham. Emily was born in 1866 and grew up at Norman Hill House. During her life she gained a reputation as a philanthropist and a leader in the temperance movement. A plaque on the side of the building gives her initials; EPW.

The facilities at the Welcome Tavern were aimed at countering the negative influences of over indulgence in alcohol and emphasised the constructive use of leisure time. A library, skittle alley, games room, concert room and temperance café were all provided alongside an ongoing programme of Temperance Meetings and a much needed 'Girls' Club'. *For further information on the Welcome Tavern and the Temperance Movement in Cam see the articles by David Evans*



Cam Welcome Tavern

in the *Dursley Lantern* for 2004 and 2014, available from Dursley Heritage Centre.

Continue the route, crossing Station Road into Everlands. On the opposite corner to the Welcome Tavern stands a pebble dash house, once the local Post Office ³ and, in the 1881 census home to George Steele, postmaster, photographer and assistant overseer at the Mills.



Cam Mills aerial photograph

Shortly afterwards, the impressive former office building of Cam Mills ⁴ can be seen on the left with the names of Hunt and Winterbotham both evident in stone relief. Thomas Hunt arrived in 1857 and took over what had formerly been known as Corriet's Mill, a five storey building dating back to 1815 which has since been demolished along with its clock tower. Thomas Hunt was in debt to Mr Lyndsey Winterbotham of the bank in Stroud, who in 1859, sent his son, Arthur Brend Winterbotham, to safeguard his interests and thus the partnership of Hunt and Winterbotham began.

In the subsequent decades Cam Mills ⁵ expanded and business flourished. New buildings were constructed, some of which are still standing and can be seen as you continue to make your way along Everlands with the Mill on your left. Cam Mills became noted for a range of products as

business developed in the later part of the 19th century. Not only were the famous scarlet cloths for military tunics and hunting jackets woven here but so were greys and blues for beaver hats, tweeds for suits and bagatelle cloth. In 1892, on his death, Arthur Brend Winterbotham's two sons, Arthur Strachan and Herbert inherited their father's enterprise with Arthur taking over the worsteds and Bertie the woollens. The former office boy, Clifford Hill, who joined the firm in 1911, later wrote of how Arthur and the worsted designer 'Pa Wise' created a cloth known as Indian Whip which was widely and profitably used in the uniforms of many of the officers in the First World War.

The Mill building flanked by cherry trees was constructed during the Second World War using hollow bricks in order to save on vital materials. It was requisitioned for the duration by the Admiralty and added felts for shell casings and tank linings to the Mills' output. Nowadays the Mills exclusively produce tennis ball and billiard table cloth.

Opposite the mill buildings is the cricket pitch ⁶ which was laid out as such in the 1920s on the initiative of Herbert Winterbotham who became its President and provided a team coach plus boots and flannels for the players.



His brother Arthur played for Gloucestershire three times under the captaincy of W.G. Grace and opened the batting for MCC at Lord's in 1866. The Winterbothams generosity to their workforce did not extend to them being able to watch cricket during working hours. Those weaving sheds dating from the Winterbotham period have no windows on the side facing the cricket field. From this point, looking beyond the cricket pitch



Norman Hill cricket team

you can see the trees which once lined the drive to Norman Hill House, the family home of Arthur Brend Winterbotham. The house is no longer standing.

For further information on Norman Hill House visit www.dursleyglos.org.uk

As the trail continues along Everlands it runs parallel with the former railway track on your left, which once connected Dursley and Cam with the railway network at Coaley Junction. Cam Mills had its own siding which was made redundant in 1959 when Cam Mills began to use road transport for both raw materials and finished products.

As you continue towards the end of Everlands, just past the disused footbridge ⁷ take the footpath which emerges in St George's Close. Turn left here and eventually right, taking another footpath adjacent to tall hedges which leads into the churchyard of St George's ⁸. At the point where the path divides with the right hand fork leading to the church porch are two Winterbotham graves. A memorial in a pink coloured marble shaped like Cleopatra's needle commemorates Emily Page Winterbotham and her husband Hiram Hague. After the death of her parents, Emily and her husband continued to live at Norman Hill House. Emily died in 1932 when she was knocked down at Sandpits by a lorry on her way home from a Mothers' Union meeting. Adjacent to this memorial is the gravestone of Emily's elder brother, Arthur Strachan Winterbotham. The grave of Thomas Hunt who died in 1888, is in the nearby graveyard of Cam Congregational church should you wish to divert to see it.

Continue towards the iron gate exit from the churchyard with the former National School building on your left. Turn left along Hopton Road, passing Church Farm and eventually Cam Hopton School. Shortly before the junction with Uphorpe, note eight semi detached villa style houses on your left. These were built to house the managers at Cam Mills ⁹ as it prospered at the end of the 19th century.

Continue down the hill into Station Road. On the right hand side there are some iron gates and a flight of steps which are disused and in a poor state of repair. These once led to the Winterbotham Memorial Gardens ¹⁰, which were laid out in terraces with a pavilion at the top and fine views across the valley. These public gardens commemorated Herbert Winterbotham and

his wife Blanche and were constructed in 1937, although Herbert had died in 1925. *There is an article about the Winterbotham Memorial Gardens in the 2015 edition of the Dursley Lantern.*

Station Road crosses both the river and the route of the former railway track and at this point you can get further glimpses of the extent of the Mill buildings on your left. Almost immediately opposite the Railway Inn stands the former Cam Institute ¹¹, built at a cost of £500 raised from public subscriptions in 1871. The Institute was a centre for the education

and improvement of workers from the Mills and followed the same principles as the network of Mechanics Institutes which had been growing nationwide. Cam Institute housed reading, recreation and lecture rooms. From the outset anyone could be a member for 6 shillings a year but women were excluded 'the benefit of the Reading and Recreation Room'. Lectures and concerts were open to all at reasonable cost, with special trains laid on for those needing to return to Dursley in the evening. There was also a shop, which continued in business until the arrival of the Co-op stores many decades later.

Past the Institute is a terrace of Mill workers' cottages ¹² (named after the Liberal Prime Minister, W.E. Gladstone), also built in 1871 for the employees of the Winterbothams in Cam. From here, turn right back into the Chapel Street and continue straight until you return to the bottom of Cam Pitch and the entrance to Tesco Car Park.

This leaflet has been produced by Dursley Welcomes Walkers. For more information please contact www.dursleywelcomeswalkers.org.uk. We would like to thank Jenny Parsons for the text of this walk and David Evans, Andy Barton and Roland La Porta for the pictures and Cam Parish Council for their support.

