

# PARKS

## HEADINGLEY

### **New Grange**

A History in Maps

Following the Dissolution of the Monasteries, Thomas Foxcroft bought New Grange in 1583. It was bought by his brother-in-law Anthony Wade in 1596; the Wade family remained at New Grange for 200 years. In 1626, Anthony's son Benjamin Wade rebuilt New Grange. It was rebuilt again by Walter Wade in 1752. The Wades lived at New Grange until Walter's grandson Benjamin died in 1792; thereafter, the family leased out the estate.

**Map 1711** The map of the Earl of Cardigan's lands in Headingley, of course, shows the New Grange lands as a large void between Headingley Moor and Spen Lane.

In 1776, Walter Wade commissioned a Plan of New Grange.

**Plan 1776** The New Grange estate comprised some three dozen fields to the north (with another half-dozen beyond Otley Road); nine are tinted the same green as the park (worked from the home farm?), those beyond untinted (leased to the outlying farms?). There is a park to the south, developed by the Wades [not by the monks!], with a half-dozen fields beyond to the south. All was surrounded by 'Lord Cardigan's Land', except Headingley Common to the east.

There were several farms around the estate, Old Oak Farm to the north on Spen Lane (with Spen Lane Farm opposite, on Cardigan land), Ivy House Farm to the east on Otley Road, Grange Farm to the south, on the edge of the park, and Kepstorn to the west (presumably a farm as it was on the estate? it had only a track to Spen Lane).

Cowgill Wood stood among the fields to the north, next to Ox Moor Wood [inaccurately shown], with Hell Wood to the west, and Morris Wood beyond Kepstorn, and Batcliffe Wood within the park to the south.

In 1832, William Beckett bought New Grange; he remodelled the house and renamed it Kirkstall Grange.

**OS 1851** The same farms and fields and woods are shown, and another wood to the west of the house has been planted, leading to Hanging Plantation. A track leads from Old Oak Farm to Cowgill Wood.

**OS 1909** The fields to the north have been halved in number, to fifteen or so, through the merger of small fields. (Beyond the fields, the development of West Park has begun, south of Spen Road.)

Old Oak Farm (and Spen Lane Farm) and Kepstorn remain; Grange Farm has been renamed Parkside Farm; and Ivy House Farm has been demolished, to make way for a school on Otley Road.

A drive now clearly extends from Spen Lane (north of Old Oak Farm) via Cowgill Wood to the house. The gate at Spen Lane may have been part of the general

refurbishment of the estate by the Becketts, who remodelled the house and renamed it Kirkstall Grange and built a lodge at the Otley Road entrance.

Cowgill Wood, Hell Wood, Morris Wood and Batcliffe Wood remain. Ox Moor Wood has been renamed Church Wood, following the building of St Chad's Church in 1868. And the wood west of the Grange has been named Queen's Wood, after the memorial arch there, apparently built at the time of Queen Victoria's visit to Leeds in 1858.

Kirkstall Grange was bought by Leeds Corporation in 1908, as the site of a Teacher Training College, officially opened in 1913.

**OS 1938** Kirkstall Grange, now just The Grange, has been absorbed into the College buildings, and fields to the north have been incorporated as playing fields. A new road, Church Wood Avenue, provides access to the site.

The fields further north have been reduced again; seven have been taken, to the east along Otley Road, leaving nine, one of which has become a playing field. On these fields, housing has been built on either side of St Chad's, and West Park has continued expanding southwards. Between these two developments, in the intervening field, the western extension of Weetwood Filter Beds has been dug.

Cowgill Wood has been felled, and the drive to the house lost.

Old Oak Farm survives. Parkside Farm remains, but has lost all its fields to the development of the Beckett's Park housing estate, except for the southernmost, which is now allotment gardens. Kepstorn is now a Home for Mentally Defective Girls

**OS 1956** Three more fields have been taken along Spen Lane for housing, and a fourth to the north, for West Park School. The remaining fields have become playing fields. Old Oak Farm remains.

Down the west side of the estate, Queenswood Drive has been laid out, connecting the new housing beside Spen Lane, with new development built over Kepstorn (the name survives in a couple of streets), and with the new Foxcroft estate and a new school, which have even encroached on the park.

**OS 1968** Little has changed – except for the loss of Old Oak Farm at last (though again, the name survives in a couple of local streets).

Today (2020), New Grange estate, much diminished, survives in West Park Fields to the north, the campus of the training college (now part of Leeds Beckett University) in the centre, and Beckett Park to the south.

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