

History of Woodside



The earliest record we have is the sale of "Woodside" by Messrs Matthews & Wilkinson to Mr James Randles Esq on the 19th February, 1886.

Mr James Randles then later sold the property to The Reverend Henry Cunliffe, after whom our bar is named.

A few years later, we discovered that "Woodside" was to be sold at auction at sales rooms in New Street, Birmingham on Monday 24th June, 1889.

The paper produced by the auctioneers described "Woodside" as a small residence, adjoining the Stoneleigh Abbey Estate, which is the seat of Lord Leigh. It also had a entrance lodge (house) which used to be located at the top of the main drive and this comprised of six spacious rooms. The outbuildings in the grounds, also described in the paper, were a Stable, Saddle Room and Coach House. This is now where our "Parson's Folly" bar is situated.

Also in the grounds was Victoria Spinney. This still exists. This is at the rear of the property and is a line of trees which were planted to celebrate the coronation of Queen Victoria.

Reverend Cunliffe then sold the property to Mr Albert Cay for £5,750 in 1889. Mr Cay was a Glass Manufacturer from Birmingham and his wife, Annie, was the last person to use the property as a private residence. Annie Cay was the daughter of Sir John Jaffray.

Albert Cay died in 1903, leaving Woodside to his wife, Annie. Annie Cay died on April 6th 1941 and the property was left to Mr Hubert Kenwick Beale who was the sole surviving Executor of Albert Cay then deceased. Mr Hubert Kenwick Beale agreed to the sale of the property to Courtaulds for the price of £5.500 in 1941.

Courtaulds plc acquired Woodside to house their office staff for the Central Accounts Department during the war years. The property was bought when the Blitz was occurring in Coventry and it was a safe haven for the company records. In 1952 it became the Courtaulds Staff Training Centre and was used to train staff in Management and Supervisory roles. It was also used for meetings to discuss company affairs. The first training course ran at Woodside in 1952 and each course was opened by Mr J. E. Pedder who was the Director in Charge of Yarn and Staple production.

Woodside was sold by Courtaulds in 1997, when it was purchased by the Chudley family and opened in 1998 as the Sundial Group brand was launched.

