



Kemp's Cottage situated at the Bushway entrance to The Dales

The other property recorded on early maps on the Dales was known as Kemp's Cottage and was located at the top of Bush Way. We believe that the name came from William Kemp (1798–1863). Kemp was a butcher and lived there with his wife Jane whom he married in 1821. We think she was the daughter of Joseph and Edith Barlow, a very common surname in Heswall at the time. Many old photographs exist of the cottage as this was a popular subject for postcards sent from Heswall in the early 1900s and presumably the smallholding and common grazing rights provided him with livestock to pursue his trade. William and Jane had 14 children, which must have been a tight fit in such a small cottage. Small wonder that Jane died before William, at the age of 51. The cottage was demolished some time before the 1950s. In 1981, 2.4 acres of the land was acquired by the council from ABC Builders Ltd in exchange for a plot of land in Brimstage Road. This part of the Dales is outside the SSSI designated area, but has been given the status of Special Biological Interest. No trace of the cottage remains although a meadow marks where it used to stand.

The house called The Cave in Thurstaston Road has an important place in the history of the Dales and of Heswall itself. It was built in 1873 on just over an acre of land purchased in 1872 by James Adam, who owned a successful fruit business in Liverpool. The wooded site was previously rented from the Lord of the Manor by Joseph Smallwood, who no doubt used the timber in his work as a wheelwright. He also owned the sandstone quarry on Telegraph Road. The house was designed by John Francis Doyle, who was

also responsible for the new St Peter's Church when the old church was badly damaged by lightning in a storm in 1875. The building of The Cave reflected a trend for rich merchants to build residences for themselves away from the polluted air of Liverpool, where their wealth was created. Initially such houses were only occupied in summer, as transport links were too difficult in winter before the railways were built.



The Cave

The grounds of The Cave incorporated a man-made cave which had been linked to smuggling. Readers interested in learning more about smuggling and The Cave are referred to Greg Dawson's excellent book on the subject *Wirral Gleanings*. Gradually more plots of land around The Cave were purchased by the Adam family and by the time the last of the Adam family to live in the house died in 1959, the total area of the grounds was about 21 acres. The house was sold at auction in September of the same year for £12,700 to the 'Dales Syndicate', a group of 20 local residents who wanted to prevent the development of the site by builders. The Cave with two acres of land was sold separately, as was the old lodge and stables called Palfreyman, and the old gardener's cottage called Cave Cottage. Some of the residents purchased further plots of land adjoining their gardens for additional protection.

# The Friends of Heswall Dales

Formed in 2017 and now with over 130 members, the Friends of Heswall Dales was set up to support Wirral Council, Natural England and other statutory bodies in the conservation work needed to preserve The Dales' status as an SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest), to raise awareness amongst present and potential visitors of the unique features of The Dales and to selectively improve the visitor facilities within The Dales, whilst preserving its existing character and nature.

Membership is free and can be obtained by contacting the secretary on [secretaryheswalldales@gmail.com](mailto:secretaryheswalldales@gmail.com)

The Group is seeking a replacement for the current Secretary who needs to stand down. If any reader is interested in this very rewarding role, it has four main parts:

1. Arranging and recording the FOHD committee meetings, roughly every six weeks
2. Managing the membership communications including keeping and updating the membership list, sending out newsletters, and arranging the Annual General Meeting (and any other member meetings that may arise).
3. Keeping the data base of internal and external communications of FOHD.
4. Taking part in FOHD events such as Open Days (two or three times per year)

Time needed? A couple of days per month. Familiarity with Microsoft Office or equivalent very helpful. Please contact the current Secretary if you are interested in more details.