

Malton Co-operative Society

Introduction

The roots of the Co-operative Movement lie with the Rochdale Pioneers in the mid 1840s. Malton may well have been a comparatively late starter (a society was formed in Settrington in 1874), and there is evidence of a failed attempt to form one in Malton.

Late in 1884 a meeting was held in the Corn Exchange to consider the desirability of forming a Co-operative Society, Mr. Barker, an employee at Mr. Yates' foundry was appointed Chairman, Mr. Briddon, kitchen range fitter, of Malton, Mr.

Dowson, goods guard and others addressed the meeting before it was adjourned . . . [1]. It would appear that local tradesmen were apprehensive about the Co-operative Society becoming successful, and an interesting court case was heard in the summer of 1885 when Mr. Briddon claimed he had been illegally dismissed by his employer, Mr. Yates, iron founder, without notice 'because he had been instrumental in forming a Co-operative store in the town' He was claiming £26 damages for unfair dismissal and won the case. [2]

Successful First Year

In May 1886, the Malton Co-operative Society held a public 'knife and fork' tea in the Corn Exchange for 230 men and their wives in celebration of their first year of existence. The Chairman referred to the fact that the society had been successful even though there was opposition. Initially the business was grocery and butchering. Profit in the first year was about £109 and members received 1s 6d in the pound dividend. [3] They operated from small premises in the Market place. In the first six months they sold only groceries, then adding the butchering business.

The Malton & Norton Co-operative Society came into being on 21st March, 1901. The initial premises were the rental of an old brewery at 56 Castlegate (these were later purchased in 1908). A Mr. G Hillman was appointed manager, and Mr. G. Watson, a signalman, secretary. A dividend was paid in the first quarter. Sales during the first year were £3,769 and the membership was 285. In 1903, the range of goods offered was extended to include drapery, boots and hardware.

Expansion

In 1908 a collective life assurance scheme was offered. In 1915 there was amalgamation with the Settrington society. Late in 1918 a further shop was acquired in Castlegate to house a boot and shoe department [5]. Also in 1918 premises were acquired in Rillington and Norton.

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NEW PREMISES?

Much interest has been evinced in Malton during the last week by the news that the Malton and Norton Co-operative Society were contemplating purchasing large and extensive premises in the town.

At a meeting of members on Friday night of last week the committee were empowered to complete negotiations for the purchase of the property subject to the approval of certain of the officials of the York society. The latter visited the premises on Saturday, and, we understand, expressed their approval of the proposed purchase.

The premises in question comprise the buildings known as the White House, where Messrs. Taylor and Rowntree have carried on business for many years, and Mr Robinson's pawnshop adjoining. The whole of the 21 houses in Wheelgate Square, or Wright's Yard, as it was formerly known, are, we understand, included in the lot.

On Thursday morning we were informed that whilst the contract had not been definitely signed by the respective parties, there was every likelihood of negotiations being completed at an early date.

The premises are eminently desirable for the business of the Co-operative Society, and we understand that they intend to extend their business and make it up-to-date in every respect. Should the negotiations be concluded it is the intention of the Co-operative Society to secure possession of the new premises at an early date.

In 1921 the warehouse at the back of the Castlegate premises was destroyed by fire and when considering the options for continuing the business, rather than re-build, the society purchased property in Wheelgate including 21 cottages known as Wheelgate Square. Further

information can be had in the society's Jubilee Souvenir 1901-1951 booklet. Editorial from the Malton Messenger, 25 March 1922 summarises this.

MALTON & NORTON CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY,
 LIMITED. REGISTERED OFFICE,
 Telephone No. 22. 56, CASTLEGATE, MALTON.

Owing to rapidly increasing Business, extensions are necessary,
 AND WE ARE OPENING
On TUESDAY, APRIL 18th, 1922,
Wheelgate House, Wheelgate, Malton
 (Late Messrs. Taylor, Son, and Rowntree.)

Their Stocks of High-class Groceries and Provisions are being taken over and we shall continue to supply the same class of Goods.

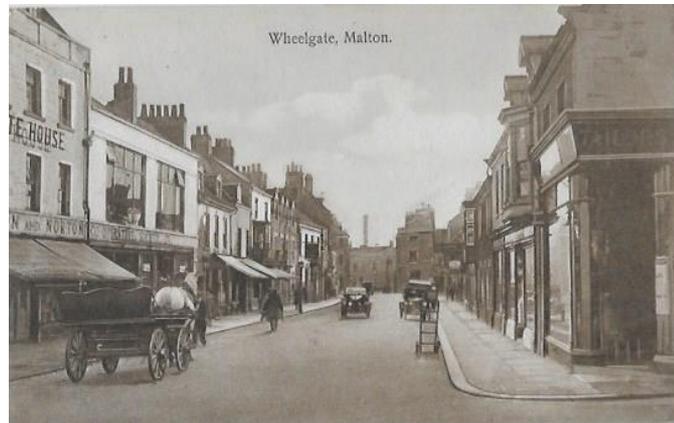
The CAFE will be run on Up-to-date Lines
 All Classes Catered for throughout.

Under the New Management all Profits are Divided amongst the Members
JOIN THE SOCIETY AND PARTICIPATE.

A Post Card will bring our Representative to your door. 518

From the advertisement above, (Malton Messenger, 22 April 1922) it seems likely that the Co-op purchased the building occupied by and the business of Taylor & Rowntrees who had 'Stores & Cafe: Wheelgate House, Malton'. This is confirmed in a report covering the opening of the new Wheelgate store on Saturday 7th October 1923 [6].

This refers to the buildings having previously been occupied by Messrs. Taylor and Rowntree, grocers, and by Mr. J.W. Robinson, pawnbroker. In opening the premises, Mr. George Cartwright said that "He was looking forward to the time when their premises would extend right down to the Butcher Corner"



Above: The Co-op Buildings in Wheelgate, postmarked 1927.



Above: A crowd outside the Co-op in Wheelgate, reason and date unknown.

FREEHOLD.- For Sale, 56, Castlegate, frontage 32 ft. x 230 ft.), known as the Old Griffin Brewery, on main Yorkshire-Scarborough Road; suitable for cinema, motor or other engineering works.- Particulars on application to the Malton and Norton Co-operative Society, Ltd., Malton
 Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer, 29 July 1922

Early Photograph



The picture here is believed to have been taken outside the Castlegate premises in the early 1900s

References

- [1] York Herald, 20 December 1884
- [2] York Herald, 25 July 1885
- [3] Driffield Times, 8 May 1886

- [4] Richmond & Ripon Chronicle, 8 May 1886
- [5] Yorkshire Gazette, 8 February 1919
- [6] Malton Messenger, 13 October 1923