

# LOVE, LIFE AND LAUGHTER



Despite the hard work and discipline required in domestic service, life downstairs at the “big house” at Normanby was remembered with warmth and affection by staff. The Hall was regarded as a “homely place”, no doubt due to the friendliness and kindly interest of the Sheffield family.

In the 1920s, Hall staff had half a day off a week and every other Sunday. On their working Sundays they were expected to worship at St Andrew’s Church in Burton-upon-Stather.

To reach Normanby village the staff used a special pathway known as the ‘servants’

walk’. This walk ran between the southern wall of the kitchen garden and a hedge of rhododendrons to a small wicket gate near the main gate pillars. The hedge ensured staff were not seen by the Sheffield family and their guests.

“We used to have a little narrow walk, what they called the ‘servant’s walk’ at the side of the drive. We never walked up the drive.”

The staff could also take the bus in to Scunthorpe to enjoy the shops, cinemas, dance halls and roller rink. A highlight of the year, the Christmas Ball, was hosted in the Servants’ Hall and was held for all of the domestic staff and estate workers.



Domestic staff on a staff picnic at Loch Morar in Scotland. The Sheffields owned an estate in Meoble Forest, and domestic staff accompanied the family there each August.



It wasn't all work, work, work for the household staff. Housemaids Mary Gunn and Lena Ripley play leapfrog in the Hall's garden in 1937. Kitchen Maid Hilda Brunt catches a lift in a wheelbarrow in the mid-1920s.



MAIN DRIVE, NORMANBY PARK  
The main drive to the Hall with the servants’ walk hidden to the right behind the bushes.



Household staff team up for a cricket match on Normanby Hall’s main lawn. The match was held as part of the celebrations for the coronation of George VI in 1937.



Household staff left to right: Frances; Hilda Brunt, Kitchen Maid; Charles, Footman and Frank. Hilda Brunt is sat on the donkey that was used to carry the Hall’s rubbish away each day.