

Ranmoor Society

January 2004

News

2004 Programme

A very *Happy New Year* to all members of the Ranmoor Society. At the end of the year we had 164 households on our membership list. The number has continued to grow steadily over the last three years, and if the trend continues we may even exceed the 200 barrier in 2004. Why not pass this newsletter on to neighbours or friends or bring them along to meetings?

In any event, we hope that the interesting programme of meetings arranged for this year will encourage you to continue to support the Society during 2004.

As a taster, we can promise several talks by experienced and informative speakers on local historically based topics. These will include **David Hey** (Early Hallamshire Cutlers), **John Minnis** (The Architectural Guide to Sheffield Buildings), **Howard Smith** (Sheffield's Turnpike Roads), and **John Clifford** (Eyam Village and the Plague).

We plan to arrange at least one further session at the **Hallam Learning Centre**, to follow up the very successful first session we had there in November.

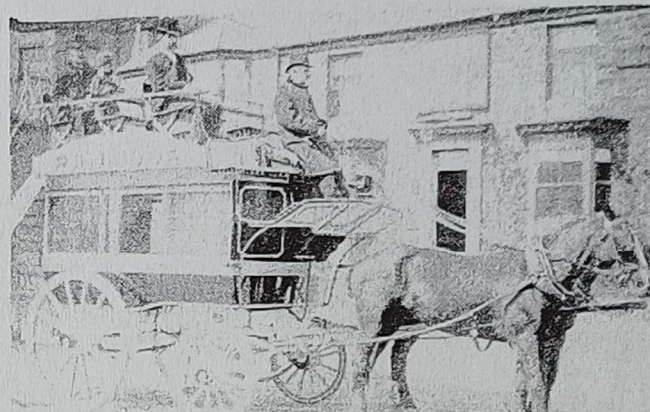
We will be devoting a **Member's Archive Session** to the early history of Ranmoor Road, utilising some interesting material we have recently uncovered. And we are prepared to cover any other detailed local history topics in which members may be particularly interested.

There will be another **Exhibition** of Archive material on 8th & 9th May when St John's celebrates its 125th anniversary. We plan at least one **Guided Walk** on a selected theme, and a warm summer evening for it. And, for any budding researchers in our midst, we have a visit to **Sheffield Archives** in mind.

2004 Subscriptions

Your subscription is now due! As agreed by Society members at the 2003 AGM, the charge for each household increases to £7 per household this year, although this will not apply to *single-person* households where it remains £5 as previously.

Please fill in the slip enclosed with this newsletter and send your cheque to Shelagh McDonald, our membership secretary. You will then receive your new membership card containing full details of the 2004 programme.



The Little Penny Bus (see next page)

AGM Tuesday 20th January

Our Annual General Meeting takes place at the Parish Centre at 7.30 p.m. Please come and perhaps let us know your views on such on issues such as residential development on brown field sites, and Supertram etc.

For those in need of an incentive to coax you out of your armchair on a cold January night, we can offer wine or soft drinks to round off the evening. We will also have a light-hearted quiz with photographs for people to ponder over if they wish.

Although we try to avoid making the AGM too formal, our constitution dictates that the Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Archive Co-ordinator present brief reports on the year past, so members can question them if necessary. We also have to elect our officers.

David Lee has indicated that, after a spell of 3 years as our Chairman, he will not be standing again. David originally agreed to take the chair for one year only, so the Committee feels particularly honoured by his support for such a sustained period. We would like to thank him warmly for his contribution.

Andrew Swift has kindly agreed to stand for election as Chairman in his place. Other members of our committee have agreed to stand again in their current respective capacities for another year. As Andrew is already on the Committee we have space for at least one more committee member. The commitment is just four meetings a year. If you are interested in joining us please contact the Secretary, Gerald Eveleigh.

Mappin's Dip

Some of you may have noticed that during the weekend before Christmas, after a full day's downpour, a large, deep pool formed across Fulwood Road near the Thornbury Hospital entrance. Motor cars were forced to slow down to an uncharacteristic crawl round it and onto the opposite carriageway. The heavy rain had stimulated a temporary re-emergence of the Oak Brook, a small tributary of the Porter Brook that for many years formed the administrative boundary separating Upper and Lower Hallam and indeed now marks the eastern extremity of the Ranmoor Conservation Area. The Oak Brook flows down through the grounds of Tapton Hall and Oakbrook (House) and nowadays is normally confined to an underground culvert and remains invisible to those of us who drive over it on our trips to town.

Back in the middle of the nineteenth century, before Fulwood Road was upgraded for the automobile, the stream appears to have flowed across the road here. We have looked out the following items from the Ranmoor Archive that remind us what Ranmoor, and in particular, Fulwood Road might have been like in the 1860's and 1870's when Ranmoor was poised for a period of rapid residential development.

James Dixon's Childhood Memories

James Dixon, born in 1851, spent most of his childhood at Stumperlowe Hall to which his father, Henry Isaac Dixon, moved in 1854. He recalled in a Sheffield Telegraph article (c.1932), that his father's elder brothers had tried to persuade him not to buy it because it was remote and so far from Sheffield.

He remembers, "*Sheffield did not extend as far west as Broomhill and toll bars stood on each of the roads leading out of the town. Fulwood Road at that time was a country lane from Broomhill. In those days we had to turn down Jenkin Hill at Ranmoor and then, up the lane where the Firth's Almshouses now stand. The stream that flows down through Tapton Hall, ran across the road between Oakbrook and the entrance to Thornbury and there were stepping stones for pedestrians across the stream on the Thornbury side of the road. There was also a high bank with a footpath on top of it considerably above the road. None of the houses had been built except Tapton Hall.*"

Sir Harry Brittain's Memories

Harry Brittain, born 1874, was son of William Brittain of Storth Oaks (229 Graham Road). His recollections of a largely political life (he was a friend of Winston Churchill) can be found in his book *Pilgrims & Pioneers*, published c.1946.

"In the early seventies Ranmoor was a quiet village picturesquely placed on the hills above and beyond this ever growing Yorkshire town (it was not a city

then) and there were few buildings between my old home and the breezy moors of Derbyshire".

"I went to a day school which was situated in a section of the town mostly peopled by doctors. Going to school was quite an adventure. A half mile walk took me to the Ranmoor Inn where a little Penny 'Bus, drawn by a pair of horses and steered by an elderly gentleman in a top hat, bowled us along a good level road to the larger village of Broomhill. Here all the levels ended, the main road to Glossop descending to the centre of Sheffield down a goodly gradient which took four sturdy horses to make the double journey".

Thornbury was originally the home of Frederick Thorpe Mappin and the slight depression near its entrance appears to have been known as Mappin's Dip, at least by local coachmen at the time. During his researches, Michael Gill has uncovered the lines of a song, *the Coachman's Warning*, which we believe, was sung in the local pub into the early part of the last century. The Highland Laddie (later the Bulls Head) was the location of Colliss's Cab Stand and the departure point for a number of horse bus services during these years. Street directories for 1887 to 1910 confirm that 6 or 7 coachmen and their families lived in houses in Marr Terrace, behind the pub over this period. One can imagine the local cabbies and coachmen meeting up in the pub after a long day's driving and the taproom resounding with ditties such as this one. (Does anyone know of any additional verses or the tune to which it might have been sung?)

The Coachman's Warning

There's many a slip
Twixt cup and lip
And many a trip
At Mappin's Dip
When the rain siles down
With a drip, drip, drip
Tha' thinks tha't sailing on a ship
At Mappin's Dip
Don't blow thi horn
At Mappin's Dip
Don't crack thi whip
At Mappin's Dip
Steady up, Monarch, just clip, clip clip
Else tha'll be tumbling arse o'er tit
At Mappin's Dip

Ranmoor Society Committee 2003

Chairman:	David Lee	230 1633
Secretary:	Gerald Eveleigh	263 0937
Membership Sec:	Shelagh McDonald	230 4090
Treasurer:	Gill Battye	230 1596
Archive Coordinator	Peter Warr	230 9174
Planning Matters:	John & Elizabeth Bridgewater	230 5567
General Matters	Margaret Kerry	230 5255
	Andrew Swift	268 5158