

Ranmoor Society

July 2005

News

Walking Carsick Hill

It was a perfect warm summer evening for this year's walk on 23rd June. In the past we have traditionally tended to start from St Johns Church (c. 550ft above sea level), but this has restricted our radius of operation because of the challenging Ranmoor topography. We were unsure whether our decision to assemble at the top of Ivy Park Road (c. 827ft above sea level) would dissuade some members from participating. However the anxieties of Lower Ranmoorians were easily overcome by judiciously leaving our cars parked at intermediate altitudes, readily accessible for the homeward journey!

The walk was primarily guided by information contained in the recently published Pevsner guide to Sheffield and its architecture, written by John Minnis and Ruth Harman, both of whom have talked to the Society in the past.

Many of the buildings we looked at had been influenced by the Arts and Craft period. The first was the half-timbered, roughcast **Pembury** (on the left at the top of Ivy Park Rd), built in 1924 for Albert "Bertie" Bassett, the sweet manufacturer. The architect (Arthur Nunweek) also built the new George Bassett factory at Owlerton around this time.



We then proceeded to **Bishopscroft** (see above), current home of the Bishop of Sheffield, a house rather hidden from view unless you are able to walk up the drive. We had been invited to do so by Bishop Jack's wife, Judith, and were allowed full access to its magnificent grounds, from which we were able to view the architecture of this fine house in detail.

When built in 1912-13, it was originally called The Côte, and later Molescroft. It is described in the guide as "an Arts and Crafts villa in random rubble with a turret and leaded lights". It was difficult to drag ourselves away, but we had other houses to

see and far too little time to do them credit. For example, we would have liked to have spent more time viewing the other early 20th century houses towards the top of Snaithing Lane, including **Tainby**, built in 1909 by architect W J Hale for his own occupation, **The Croft**, also 1909, **Springfield** and **Snaithing Garth**.

Instead, we had arranged to meet Elizabeth Norman, a key member of the Quarters Action Group, which has, so far, saved it from the demolition hammer and successfully extended the northern boundary of the Ranmoor Conservation Area. She had kindly contacted the current residents to permit us to wander around its grounds and to see inside as well.



Quarters (see above), in Carsick Hill Way, has a fine tile hung façade with timber clad gables, mock Tudor beams and massive brick chimneys. It was until recently the home of Sheffield's Catholic Bishops. Originally designed by Hickton & Farmer in the Arts & Craft style, it was built as **Carsick Hill Court** in 1914 for Bernard Wragg, a firebrick manufacturer. His family monogram "W" has been incorporated on many of the interior fittings, including the brass window catches. Inside there is some fine panelling and other decorative detailing in oak, all in first class condition, hardly altered over the last 90 years. This is set off by some wonderful stained glass clearly influenced in Arts and Crafts style, which includes naval scenes and a memorial dated 1915, incorporating Royal Field Artillery guns and regimental colours.

Since our visit, Rita Redford has begun researching those fallen during the First World War, and found several Sheffield Wraggs (one also named Bernard) who died in this war and might be related. This could be a poignant reminder of the troubled history of this time

preserved in Carsick Hill. Does anyone have any firm information about the Wragg family?

The property and adjacent land are still owned by the developer Ackroyd and Abbott, who have recently submitted plans to demolish the separate library building and erect a house on the corner site (near the line of the old water conduit). It was most valuable to be able to inspect the proposals on the ground and to appreciate why it is so important to Ranmoor to preserve fine buildings of this quality.

For the next house on our itinerary we were indebted to Wendy Jenrick who invited us to view the imposing **Carsick Grange** from its large sloping grounds to the south. This not exactly pretty house in "neo-Tudor" style was originally built c.1881 for Mrs Elizabeth Hedgeland Birks, who was only 36 years old. The coat of arms above the front porch bears her initials. We believe she was the widow of Edward Vaughan Birks of Fairfield House, Fulwood Road, who had died some 7 years earlier when aged only 34. It would be interesting to know more about the basis of this family's undoubted wealth. Perhaps someone out there can tell us?

For much of her time here Elizabeth Birks lived with her several daughters in Carsick Grange. She died in 1923, and it was then bought by Peter Boswell Brown, managing director with a steel manufacturer, in time for his election as Sheffield's Master Cutler in the following year. Michael Gill recently obtained a series of photographs of the house dating from Brown's time, which are now in the Ranmoor Archive.

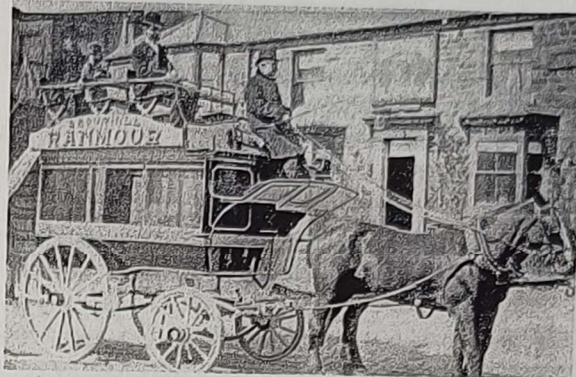
Down the hill along Stratford Road we walked past **The Croft**, "a large Arts and Crafts style house designed by Briggs Wolstenholme and Thornely in 1909 for James Neill the tool manufacturer". Then down again along Snaithing Park Road, making our way towards the original gates and Lodge of Carsick Grange, we passed **Rydal**, built in 1921 by architect W J Hale for his daughter when she married Maurice Cole.

Finally we arrived, via the ancient footpath that once led down to Nether Green, to admire "**Snaithing Farm**, according to the Pevsner Guide "the long combined house and barn range - a rural survival dating from c.1700". Thanks to Roy and Gill Stanley for again inviting us in to their garden.

There was just one further building left to investigate, described by the Guide as part of "a harmonious assembly of buildings, although with few having great individual architectural interest". However it was still a beautiful, warm summer evening and a particular interest of those returning via Lower Ranmoor was alcoholic rather than architectural. **The Ranmoor Inn**, built c.1830 was an ideal place to quench our thirst and round off a very pleasant evening!

Next Meeting: Tuesday September 20th

We will be hearing about the different **Modes of Transport between 1870-1970**, and the influence these had on the Ranmoor area. This of course takes us from the period of the horse and cart, when most ordinary people walked to school or work, to the era of traffic jams on Fulwood Road.



The picture above is taken from "**Pilgrims & Pioneers**", by Sir Harry Brittain of Storth Oaks, Graham Road. To get to school he would "walk half a mile 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".

The horse bus service was extended from Norfolk Market Hall to the Ranmoor Inn in 1856. In 1874, the Ranmoor Crescent Estate prospectus states that "omnibuses run close to the Estate 8 or 9 times a day". Replacement of horsepower by the electric tram in 1901 had important repercussions for the area's residential development. However by 1936 the tramlines along Fulwood Road had been pulled up, as were in 1952 those terminating at Canterbury Avenue via Rustlings and Nethergreen Roads, to usher in the decades of the motor car.

If you have information or memories of how some of these key changes to the modes of transport affected Sheffield, or better still the Ranmoor area, could you please let us know? **Andrew Swift** (268 5158) will be drawing the information together, and we will have another opportunity to look at brochures and photographs of trams, buses and horses we have gathered together in the Ranmoor Archive. In any event make sure you join us on September 20th.

Ranmoor Society Committee 2005

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