

Ranmoor Society News

May 2010

What? Motor Cars Made in Sheffield?

Next Meeting on Tuesday May 18th

Yes, Sheffield could once boast several motor car makers. Their models ranged from expensive limousines that directly rivaled those of Rolls Royce to much smaller vehicles competing with the tiny Austin 7.

This was in the days

before and after World War I. Sadly, by 1930 all significant car production in Sheffield had ceased.

The rise and fall of this embryonic industry is the subject of our next meeting on 18th May. It will be introduced by Andrew Swift, who will particularly emphasise

the *social* history associated with Sheffield's early car industry, rather than its more technical engineering aspects.

Andrew will have on view many original period photographs of the cars, their showrooms, and the factories in which

they were made. He will also bring along an extensive collection of brochures, booklets and magazines dating from this period which he recently acquired from a Sheffield archive collection. Members will be free to peruse these and handle them.

How a Bulldozer Led to the Formation of the Ranmoor Society



The Ranmoor Society emerged from a building dispute in 1970. The house shown above, at 35 Ivy Park Road and built in 1909, was scheduled to be demolished and replaced by a five-storey apartment block.

Key protestors included the Bishop of Sheffield (soon to move into Snaithing Lane), Lady Stuart-Harris (who lived in Whitworth Road), and two professors of the University of Sheffield. However, it may have been felt that their high social standing was a disadvantage in dispute with a Labour Council. Indeed at the time the

Council Leader was quoted as saying, no doubt with a hint of sarcasm, *"It's a very nice area and obviously they don't want it spoiled. What do they want? A single-storey block? They should see some of the flats the Corporation has built in less salubrious areas like Norfolk Park"*.

Although many local people objected to the plan to redevelop the site, they eventually lost the battle. However, soon afterwards these influential and concerned residents were prompted to found the *"Ranmoor Conservation Society"*.

What's in a Name?

Soon after its construction, 35 Ivy Park Road became known as Forsbacka, a name which probably mystified many a passer-by. The name was chosen by its first owner, Albert Senior, later also a Justice of the Peace and a Commander of the British Empire – and the Swedish Consul in Sheffield!

He worked for the family firm, George Senior and Sons, which had been based at Ponds Forge since 1872. The firm concentrated on importing Swedish charcoal iron for the production of steel, and worked closely with an iron works in eastern Sweden – in the town of Forsbacka. Presumably Albert Senior was a frequent visitor there, and liked what he saw.

Ranmoor was designated a Conservation Area a few years later, and for some time the new Society saw its job as being entirely to resist new building in the locality.

Eventually we realized that this was not a sufficiently broad platform on which to maintain extended interest, and gradually the society was remodeled into the one that members will now be familiar with.

We now regularly bring people together for talks about the area and related topics, and furthermore we have created a valuable archive that allows us to better measure and assess the value of our Victorian and Edwardian architectural heritage.



Members will recognize the 16 apartments that replaced 35 Ivy Park Road, known as Ivy Park Court. Were the local residents right to object 40 years ago?

Fun Day with the Ranmoor Society

St John's Church is holding its annual Fun Day on Sunday 11 July at the bottom of Ranmoor Park Road and also in the Parish Centre there. From about noon, there will be music, stalls, art displays, games for children, a bouncy castle, refreshments and a beer tent. And also the Ranmoor Society.

We'll have a stall to tell people about the area's history and to encourage people to join. For that, we are seeking assistance from members for periods of up to an hour – simply being there and being friendly. Could you help on that day, please? Gerald Eveleigh would be happy to hear from you and can explain more (230 1992 or g.eveleigh@talktalk.net). Thanks.

Ranmoor Summer Walk

June 3rd, 6.00pm - 8.00pm

Our aim is to devise a not-too-strenuous walk with the object of uncovering some local history on the ground. If we are again blessed by a warm summer evening, then so much the better! If not, then we should reach our end-point, the Ranmoor Inn, a little earlier.

The walk will focus partly on the large mansions and their manufacturer and merchant owners that have contributed so strikingly to Ranmoor's present character.

These mansions were, by and large, built in the thirty years between 1860 and 1890, in what was then still open countryside. Their owners, members of a newly emerging industrial aristocracy, were well placed to impress visiting royalty and to ride into their place of work on horseback or by carriage. Such houses and their owners soon gave rise to the sentiment that "*Ranmoor is evidently the favourite suburb in Sheffield*" and to the creation of a residential district characterised by fine detached and semi-detached

"villas" whose very names are redolent of the countryside setting which they once enjoyed.

We will begin our tour of Ranmoor's mansions and villas at 6.00pm from the wall below St John's Church. Those of you unable to make such an early start might like to contact Gerald Eveleigh beforehand for his mobile telephone number.

Ranmoor Society Committee 2010

| | | |
|------------|------------------|----------|
| Chairman | Andrew Swift | 268 5158 |
| Secretary | Gerald Eveleigh | 230 1992 |
| Treasurer | Gill Battye | 230 1596 |
| Archive | Peter Warr | 230 9174 |
| Planning | David Barber | 230 4717 |
| Membership | Carolyn Feely | 230 7421 |
| General | Hannah Swiffen | 230 8477 |
| | David Everingham | 230 6041 |