

Next Meeting: Tuesday September 15th *History of the Rivelin Valley*

This year the Society's meetings have already covered the Porter Valley, and Martin Olive will begin our autumn schedule with an illustrated talk about the Rivelin Valley. This has now largely returned to nature, but it once played an important role in the development of Sheffield's industry, with no less than 20 water wheels and dams being used by a variety of trades.

Last Meeting *Ranmoor's Vanished Buildings*

Several members have kindly said how much they enjoyed the evening in June which, attracted lots of comments, reminiscences and contributions. That meeting highlighted the results of some of the Society's research over recent years, including what has been learned about the following buildings.

Tapton Grange

In our last newsletter we showed a photograph of the front façade of *Tapton Grange*. Even with additional help no one could identify that correctly until we showed this photo from a different angle – with the spire of St John's in the background!



The gate posts are still there adjacent to the lodge in Tapton Park Road. Its grounds extended all the way down to Fulwood Road.

Tapton Grange was demolished in 1970, about a century after it had been built by James Harrison, partner in the

then renowned cutlery firm Harrison Brothers & Howson. He lived here until he died in 1897. It was then occupied by his nephew John Brocksopp Wilkinson for 30 years. In 1927 it was acquired by

the National Union of Teachers Benevolent Fund for use as an orphanage

We were able to show several photographs of both the exterior and interior of the building through the kind courtesy of Lucy Williams, who was a resident of the orphanage in the 1940s after her father, a headmaster, died. After living abroad she had returned to Ranmoor to find that the building had disappeared. Lucy now lives in South Wales, but contacted us via Sheffield libraries with her thought that she "had been unexpectedly saddened to find the building gone and that it was a shame to have these photographs of such a graceful looking building and not share the memories with anyone else who remembers it."

Ranmoor College

The College's site on Fulwood Road is now occupied by housing association flats, *Ranmoor View*. The building also had a life of about 100 years, opening its doors in 1864 to 16 students training as ministers for the Methodist New Connection. It was funded mainly by Thomas Firth, one of several brothers who played an important part in Ranmoor's development.

The building was demolished in 1965, after serving for its last 16 years as a men's hall of residence for Sheffield University. In between it



had been a Royal Hospital Nurses Hostel (1917-40) and an Air Raid Precautions Headquarters during the Second World War. We discovered that over this period Frank Atkin had worked here and had lived at the lodge (number 412 Fulwood Road) which was demolished around

1950. Reproduced on the left is a photograph provided by Roger Atkin of his grandfather in front of the College.

Firth's Almshouses

These almshouses for poor elderly people also enjoyed a lifespan of approximately 100 years. They were opened in 1870 by steelmaker Mark Firth (the builder of Oakbrook) who had donated £30,000 for this purpose, and they were eventually demolished in 1969.

The replacement complex of 4 bungalows, 28 flats and a warden's house is currently known as *Firth's Homes*. Member David Everingham is a trustee and showed us a remarkably fine reproduction rescued from the original building and subsequently cleaned. This may have been



the original architects' impression of what they envisaged prior to the project being approved, as it contains certain details that failed to make their way into the final design.

Burntstones Hall

This was believed to have been built c.1833 on Burntstones Common high above Rivelin, by the Holy family. George and Daniel Holy were merchants who lived there between 1841 and 1860. The house was demolished soon after 1965, when it and its 17 acres were sold to a developer for housing. There is now no trace of the house itself although the name is preserved in nearby residential roads. However its lodge once commanding the long drive to the house still stands at the far end of Moorbank Road.

The fact that we have several photographs to show is thanks to member Hannah Swiffen whose family lived at the Hall in its latter years. Hannah remembers "*the large brass bell above the house that could be tolled by a rope from the downstairs*



cloakroom or from the family bathroom upstairs"

Which Field is Yours?

The Ranmoor Archive has acquired several maps dating back to the 1700s, which give fascinating details of early field names.

Some of those names have an obvious meaning:- Cow Pasture, Four Days Work, Broad Field, Broom Field, Upper Oat Field and so on. Others were more understandable in times gone by:- New Ing (an ing was a field carved out from woods or other land), the Pingle (a little ing), and several Storths (areas of managed woodland). The name Green Lane Field came from an adjacent footpath leading to High Green (previously on the south side of Sandygate Road near the Plough Inn).

Other field names were linked to current or previous local farmers – Webster Field, Wilson's Field and Fox Croft, for example.

Others remain a mystery. Where might these names have come from: Ramscar Bottom, Dog Field, Homer Field?

A Book about Ranmoor History

We hope that *The Growth of Ranmoor, Hangingwater and Nether Green* by Peter Warr, will be published shortly. This covers particularly the period of greatest development – from the early 1800s to the early 1900s – and contains more than 100 photographs, maps and drawings.

Chapters describe the shift from a rural setting to a prosperous Victorian suburb. Key people are presented (often with pictures), together with churches, schools, pubs, shops and other buildings. And, of course, there are pictures of trams!

We'll let you know about availability as soon as the production schedule is fixed. Copies will be available at meetings and from other sources.

Ranmoor Society Committee 2009

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