

### **The Ranmoor Walk**

This is planned for Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> May. Meet below St John's Church at 6.00 pm. We expect a warm and balmy evening (as usual!).

We will look at those Ranmoor's roads and buildings that pre-date the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century; then see how the area changed when the steel and cutlery barons decided to move west out of central Sheffield to enjoy the clean air and rural delights of Ranmoor. Following on from this we will check out how the formation of several Land Societies made their everlasting mark on the area's roads, buildings and individual character. En route we will visit a farm (now residence) which dates back to the 1600s. All in less than 2 hours!

### **Ranmoor Grange**

One of the items we may spot on our walk is a plaque still displaying the Bishops' coat of arms on the gatepost at the end of the drive opposite the Ranmoor Inn. The drive leads to *Ranmoor Grange* on Ranmoor Road, which, from 1939 to the late 1970s was the home of the Anglican Bishops of Sheffield (Bishops Leslie Hunter and Bishop Taylor).

It was originally constructed in 1876 by Frederick Leggoe, an accountant, property developer and local councillor for his own use. He also built Marr Terrace next to the Bull's Head. However, within a couple of years Frederick Leggoe was declared bankrupt and he was forced to sell the property and move out. Subsequent occupants of the *Grange* included John Brailsford, of printers and publishers Pawson and Brailsford, Albert Bingham, of silversmiths Walker and Hall, and William Hart Sheffield's Town Clerk from about 1916 to 1925. In the 80s it became a nursing home but more recently was converted to the current apartments.

### **Our Meetings in 2017**

If the attendances at our meetings this year are anything to go by members seem to like our eclectic mix of subjects. The only downside has been that we have struggled to find enough chairs, or at least the space in which to put them!

At our next meeting, on May 16<sup>th</sup>, we will be reserving imaginary seats on the train as it travels between Sheffield and Hope in the company of our speaker Stephen Gay.

### **Mrs Findlay's Piano**

In February we heard the fascinating story of the 200 year journey of a Broadwood Square "spinet" piano; from its purchase in London in 1804, through ownership for many years by a Mrs. Findlay of Glasgow, its re-emergence in 1977 at a sale in County Antrim, to its current resting place in Michael Hannon's home in Ranmoor.

When Michael (our speaker) inherited it from his mother, the Broadwood was in poor condition. However he judged it to be worth professional restoration, and consequently can now be played as it was in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century when such pianos were popular and affordable by the emerging middle classes.

Certain elements of his piano's story revealed by his research so intrigued Michael that he felt it warranted a book to record it. One of strands recounts how Mrs. Findlay's daughter, Dorothea caused a scandal by falling in love with, and indeed eloping with, her music teacher John Donaldson, who subsequently became Professor of Music at Edinburgh University. Michael also discovered the amazing coincidence that Thomas Findlay, Mrs Findlay's grandson, went into business with a notable shipbuilder Peter Denny of Dumbarton; he turned out to be the grandfather of Hilda Denny, Michael's mother!

### **Peak District Landscapes**

In March we once again welcomed Peter Machan, this time to examine how the geology of the Peak District results in quite contrasting landscapes. Indeed, to illustrate his talk he actually brought some of it with him in the form of piles of rocks and fossils!

He contrasted the "Dark Peak" with the "White Peak". The Dark Peak forms a horseshoe-shaped rim of millstone gritstone uplands on the, east, west and north sides, rising to around 2000 feet as Kinder Scout and Bleaklow. That provides a rugged landscape of stark edges and windswept heather moorland and peat bog, parts of which have been settled since the Bronze Age. It is now colonised mainly by cotton grass and other plants that survive in the acid soils. Trees are largely absent except where the steep valleys offer some shelter.

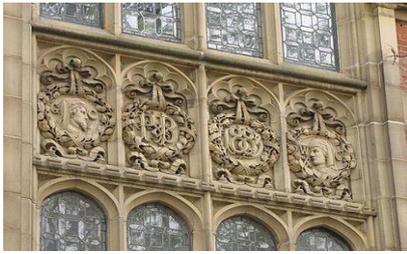
The White Peak is the central limestone plateau about 1000 feet high, characterised by farmer's fields enclosed by a patchwork of ancient dry-stone walls. The land is dissected by steep-sided dales which are often dry, as many of the tributaries of the Wye, Lathkill and Dove rivers have disappeared underground. Here on the lower slopes we find ancient ash woods above which are cliff

ledges and scree where lime loving-plants abound. Most of the old lead mines and spoil heaps betraying the area's industrial past have now been returned to nature.

## Frank Tory and Sons

Before our March meeting we wonder how many members had paid more than scant attention to the fine and intricate carvings which enhance the exteriors of many of Sheffield's public buildings? Examples include:

- Sculpted portraits of Geoffrey Chaucer and William Caxton either side of the Pawson & Brailsford emblem on the façade of their Parade Chamber building in High Street seen below.



- Carvings depicting literature, drama, painting, chemistry, astronomy etc. that decorate the entrance to Sheffield's Central Library seen below.



- Two friezes over the doors of the original Mappin Art Gallery, one depicting the shrine of knowledge and the other illustrating several of Sheffield's archetypal trades seen below.



- Carvings which depict Sheffield trades on the faience façade of the "White Building" in Fitzalan Square, including the two examples below.



- John Wesley's portrait on a gable of the Victoria

Hall as well as the tower itself.

- The decorative stone carvings adorning the capitals in the nave of St John's Church Ranmoor together with the marble reredos behind the altar enclosing a depiction of the Last Supper.

These works represent merely a fraction of the work by architectural sculptors Frank Tory & Sons, who were extremely active in Sheffield and South Yorkshire in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The sculptures in St John's are the work of Frank Tory senior, created in 1888 after the church was rebuilt following the disastrous fire.

In March, we were pleasantly reminded of these and other examples of their work by Sylvia Dunkley who has been meticulously researching the contributions made by Frank and his twin sons Alfred and Frank to Sheffield's architectural heritage and which most of us have perhaps so far overlooked. Thanks are also due to members Gina and Bob Hodges (Gina is Alfred Tory's granddaughter) for first suggesting this subject. They have recently produced a booklet (£3.00) that gives a more detailed guide to the works of Frank Tory and Sons.

## What's happening to the Plough Inn?

The Plough Inn at Sandygate was closed by Enterprise Inns in 2016, and Sainsbury's applied to convert the building into a supermarket. Local residents campaigned successfully to have it designated as an 'asset of community value' – one whose use cannot be changed unless planning permission is granted by the City Council.

When the Council subsequently rejected Sainsbury's application, the company decided not to appeal. Enterprise Inns then offered it for sale and a local brewery *True North* has expressed some interest in operating it. However other options include ownership and management by the community, and a local committee, which has obtained small grant to assist planning, is at present considering the best way forward. A decision is expected before long.

## Committee 2017

Chairman	Anthony Riddle	230 1114
Secretary	Gerald Eveleigh	230 1992
Treasurer	Mike Killingley	263 0454
Archive	Peter Warr	230 9174
Planning	David Barber	230 4717
Membership	Peter Marrison	230 3238
General	Wendy Woodhouse	449 5777

We are keen for someone else to join us. The committee meets only occasionally, and discussions can be very interesting. Perhaps you would like a provisional try-out before deciding whether to proceed. Please contact any of the people above.