

Ranmoor Society News

January 2014

A Very Happy New Year!

Thank you for supporting us during 2013. At its close there were 146 members on our database, and most meetings this year have recorded average attendances of about 40. An exception was the very popular Wentworth Woodhouse talk which saw us sailing close to the wind in comfort terms, but we have not yet been forced into searching for a new venue in order to meet local fire regulations!

The start of another year means that subscriptions are again due. But they remain unchanged from last year (at £6.00 and £8.00) and we hope that you still feel that this is good value. We offer an interesting range of meetings and several newsletters. **Please ensure that you promptly return the attached slip (with your cheque) to our membership secretary.** If not there is a danger of dropping off our mailing list. There may be some people who have realised that they are no longer receiving our newsletters; please remind anyone you may know in this category.

Annual General Meeting

As usual the first meeting the year is our AGM – on the 21st January. As our constitution dictates, there will be brief formalities such as the election of your officers, and **we would earnestly like to encourage someone additional to stand as a committee member.** All the current holders (listed overleaf) have agreed to stand again, but if you would like to join them next year please think about putting yourself forward. If you might be interested please contact the Secretary or a member in advance for more details. After the formal proceedings we will serve drinks to toast the New Year, and then introduce a BBC video about preparations the Sheffield Pals were making in 1914 before they left for the battlefields.

2014 Meetings

You are certain to find something to interest you amongst the meetings arranged for 2014. We will reflect the national commemoration of the outbreak of the Great War with not only the AGM item on the Sheffield Pals but also in an examination of the role of women workers during this period. We will also feature a "Woman of Steel" who made her mark in a Sheffield steelworks during the following world war. We will learn about Sheffield Cathedral's role in the City's history and will also have a closer look at the living conditions that Sheffield people coped with during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. J G Graves, the entrepreneur who established his huge mail-order business in Sheffield in the early twentieth century, also makes an appearance, as does the Hallam Football Club and the story of those ancient packhorse routes that were once vital throughout the Peak District.

Memories of the First World War

On 15th October 1915 the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* ran this article entitled "Ranmoor Children Remove to New Quarters"

There was considerable excitement at Nether Green yesterday afternoon. About a quarter-past four two long processions of children emerged from the Ranmoor Council School, one of boys, the other of girls. Many carried parcels containing their books and apparatus. At the end of Storth Lane they formed up into a compact mass, and at the suggestion of the headmaster gave a final glance at the school which they were handing over to be transformed into a hospital for wounded soldiers. Then they sang "God save the King."

This concluded, the Master suggested that, if they were willing and glad to give up their beautiful school and to take up less convenient quarters in order to help the wounded fighters, they should give three cheers for the brave men who were to occupy their classrooms. These were given with a will, and followed by cheers for the old school.

Then the girls marched off up Storth Lane, the boys giving them a cheer as they went. The lads then proceeded in fours to the Parish Room which is to be their quarters for the term of the war. The girls are to occupy the Ranmoor Wesleyan Schoolroom. It will be no light burden that will fall upon teachers and scholars in this case. To leave a beautiful and beautifully equipped building in a most delightful position, and to conform to these new conditions, will be a great trial. Luckily the school gardens will be retained, and when the weather is favourable, it is hoped to continue and extend the open-air instruction which has been so marked a feature of the school's work during the past eleven years.

The Parish Hall's Role during WWII

On reading our article on the Parish Hall in last January's newsletter David Schofield, who now lives in Grantham, was moved to write to us about his wartime memories. He was just 10 when his family moved to 29 Ranmoor Crescent and he recalls his mother's involvement in providing billeted soldiers with some home comforts in the Parish Hall, located at the bottom of Ranmoor Road.

He tells us that "in the early days of the war large numbers of soldiers were posted to the RASC unit at Endcliffe Hall where they underwent 'driving and general transport training'. Hundreds of men were billeted in the large houses nearby. Two of these were near the top of Ranmoor Road and housed 20 or perhaps 30 men. Each man was supplied with a straw-filled palliase and three blankets which served as a bed on the bare floor boards. They were also given a ration of coal, a trestle table and a few wooden chairs".

"However the local ladies from Ranmoor's Parish and Methodist Churches soon decided that something had to be done to improve the soldiers' conditions and persuaded the St

John's authorities to let them use the Parish Hall. Soon, with help from ladies from Nether Green Methodist and Fulwood churches, the hall became a well-run canteen seven evenings a week with easy chairs, letter-writing facilities, good cheap food and warm comfortable conditions".

David continues, *"My mother's duty night was Thursday and often she would chat to the servicemen (and sometimes women) and often invited one or two of them to come back to our home for supper at the week-end. Eventually we bought a visitors' book for the individuals to enter their names. We have been in touch with a few of them over the years and a year or two ago I came across this book and counted over 100 names!"*

More Memories of the Parish Hall

The same newsletter sparked off further memories from another of our far-flung members, Alan Day, who now, aged 88, is settled in Kirkby Lonsdale, but used to live on Carsick Hill Road.

He also recalls the Parish Hall: *"As a boy I used to help during the war when it was a Forces Canteen; so well organised by Miss Blanche Lockwood". This was "after I attended the primary school at Ranmoor Wesleyan Methodist Chapel in the 1920s where I recall being taught by Miss Nowill"*

Alan kindly enclosed a Whitsun hymn sheet published in 1954 by the Sheffield Sunday School Whitsuntide Council and remembers: *"In the old days Mr Broften (from Walkley) taught the Whit Hymns at Ranmoor and also conducted the anniversary services for many years. I vividly remember him flinging his arms about so much that he knocked the hat off Mrs Grayson (Margaret Hannay's Grandma)!"*

The article about the "Father Willis" organ reminded him that *"the organists at the time were Mr Manterfield followed by Mr Roebuck".*

The Ranmoor Flower Show

Can anyone remember when Ranmoor ran a flower show? It used to be a big event in Sheffield's calendar, usually held on Bank Holiday Monday. There were different attractions provided each year such as bands, roundabouts and Punch and Judy Shows.

Flower shows were well established in local towns by Victorian times when there was huge interest in improving varieties, creating hybrids, unusual colours and out-of-season flowering. The rose particularly became the object of much experimentation. The Horticultural Society of London had been founded in 1804 but was renamed the Royal Horticultural Society in 1861 by Prince Albert, its then President, and the following year the Great Spring Show (now the Chelsea Flower Show) was born.

Locally it was the Hallamshire Floral and Horticultural Society, formed in 1871, that created the Ranmoor Flower Show. The Society included many of the area's prominent people, who added prestige, money, plants to exhibit and sometimes the venue itself. In 1892 the field ("in Fulwood Road near to Ranmoor College") was loaned by Mr C. H. Firth. By 1914 it was "in grounds

kindly lent by Mr George Addy" who lived in The Bungalow behind 383 Fulwood Road.

But gradually fields in Ranmoor were becoming scarce as they became built on, and in 1922 the show took place at Hallam football ground at Sandygate. That year's event was very grand, opened by Major General Frederick Sykes and attended by the Lord Mayor, several members of parliament and "big names" from the city. These guests were treated to lunch in the Plough Inn.

Less exalted people travelled to the Ranmoor Flower Show from all over Sheffield, (even though trams did not reach the area until the turn of the century), and then had to pay an entrance fee. Local gardeners also paid a fee to exhibit their produce that was then assessed by expert judges who awarded prizes. For many years separate competitions were held, for "cottagers", "amateurs" and "gentlemen's gardeners". The last category was for full-time gardeners employed by Ranmoor's "gentlemen" and sometimes also included professional nurserymen. "Cottagers" were gardeners who did not have a greenhouse, and "amateurs" were presumably greenhouse-owning gardeners who did the work themselves. Winning a top prize was a matter of considerable pride and status in the neighbourhood.

There were also competitions for table decorations – with entries expected from ladies – and for entire gardens in the area. Exotic greenhouse plants were of great interest, and for the Show as a whole newspaper reports tell us about the quality of a particular year's begonias, ferns, fuchsias, geraniums, lilies, pansies, roses and other flowers, and about wonderful cabbages, cauliflowers, celery, cucumber, grapes, marrows, onions, parsley, plums, potatoes, tomatoes and turnips.

The Annual Dinner was another important event for the Hallamshire Floral and Horticultural Society. During the 1890s this was held in the Bull's Head, and was attended by nearly fifty members – all men. Toasts were drunk, speeches were made, songs were sung, and the year's events were reviewed. Robert Colver, a member and official of the Society, who lived in Rock Mount next to the Bull's Head, was one of the speech-makers in 1896. That year he expressed his unhappiness about the possibility that electric trams might in future run along Fulwood Road – local people *"neither wanted the tramway lines or the granite setts, as they are better without them"*.

Does anyone know what happened to the Society during the twentieth century? When did the last Ranmoor Flower Show take place? If you can help with this kind of information, or might be interested in researching the Show, please contact *Ranmoor News* through www.ranmoorsociety.org. Thanks.

Ranmoor Society Committee 2013

Chairman	Anthony Riddle	230 1114
Secretary	Gerald Eveleigh	230 1992
Treasurer	Gill Battye	230 1596
Archive	Peter Warr	230 9174
Planning	David Barber	230 4717
Membership	Peter Marrison	230 3238
General	Mike Killingley	263 0454
	Margaret Ward	327 0065

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