

# The Ranmoor Society

May 2015

## Memories of Whitsun in Ranmoor

Not so long ago Whitsuntide was an important part of the Christian church calendar, when the death and resurrection of Jesus were commemorated on the seventh Sunday after Easter. This period of fifty days between Easter Sunday and Whit Sunday is referred to as Pentecost. And the name "Whit" (white) supposedly derives from the white robes traditionally worn by those baptised on that day.



Whit Monday was a special day in Sheffield, and this was true in Ranmoor where the Wesleyan Chapel on Ranmoor Road (see above) held a service on this day each year up to the middle of the last century. Carol Hancock, who used to live in Marr Terrace and attended the Sunday school (behind the Chapel) remembers these occasions when white dresses were worn for the Whit Monday service, after which the May Queen was elected and crowned. She recalls that the congregation would then form a procession behind the church banner and follow the May Queen, enthroned on a decorated lorry, to Endcliffe Park where they joined the congregations from other local churches for the communal "Whit Sing". After the formal proceedings the many Sunday Schools would disperse and return to their own churches where a special tea would often be laid on.



We think that this photo of Hangingwater may well have been prompted by those new Whitsun outfits early last century. In Sheffield it was customary to celebrate this time

by buying new clothes for children to wear on these Whit Monday occasions. This seems to have happened regardless of whether or not they attended Sunday school or whether their parents were churchgoers. Children were encouraged to show off their new clothes to relatives and neighbours and sometimes were rewarded with a few pennies. Once home, some children from poorer families were told to take off their new coats and dresses which would be carefully folded and stored for another special occasion.

## ..... and from other parts of the city

*"At Whitsuntide, it was traditional for boys and girls to get new clothes; suits, dresses, shirts, blouses and shoes, and on Whit Sunday we would go round to the neighbours and show our new clothes off. Then she would say the magic words 'I'll just go and get my purse', which was the object of the exercise of course. It was usually a penny, but to us it was a fortune!"*

*"We were the same, lads all dressed smart with little caps on. The clothes were from Burgesses down Attercliffe, and I'm sure our Mum took all year to pay for them. After the Whit walk in Hillsborough Park we would go home, get changed and then go to a field up Ben Lane with the Sunday school and have a sort of sports day. Funny how the weather always seemed to be sunny!"*

*"I remember we used to walk from Parkwood Springs to Weston Park via the Royal Infirmary where we sang a couple of hymns standing outside the windows of the wards on the way. There was always a May Queen and a banner - we kids used to think it great if we were allowed to hold the strings on the banners. I always had new Whitsuntide outfits - my mother made them - they were beautiful - often a dress and matching coat. I got to choose the little bag and shoes to match."*

*"I was in the 1st Sheffield Girls Life Brigade based at Gleadless Congregational Church at the bottom of Gleadless Common. I remember taking part in the parade every year. We formed up in the road outside the church and then marched all the way down Hollinsend Road, up Mansfield Road to Manor Top, then down Ridgeway Road to the park, where the Whit Sing took place. It was a long way for some of the tiny cadets to walk. I was always jealous of the Sunday school children who weren't in the GLB and got to wear their nice new clothes while I just had to wear my GLB uniform."*

*"I was born in Derbyshire Lane in 1947 and then lived on Albert Road Meersbrook. We used to get the whole new Whit outfit and flit from house to house on the terrace before traipsing up to the bandstand in Meersbrook Park for the sing. Banners were proudly held aloft and as children, my sister and I thought it was magical!"*

## Some Subscriptions Still Outstanding!

Please check to see whether you have paid your 2015 subscription! If you haven't done so yet, we would be grateful if you would send your cheque to Peter Marrison, our treasurer, or give it to him at the next meeting.

## A Reight Good Talk

Members enjoyed an engaging session recently learning about Sheffield dialect. Our speaker, David Battye, talked about words and phrases which he has heard used in his lifetime. He explained that dialect is a variation of a language, with most of the main elements of that language still being used. The growth of Sheffield over many centuries was achieved by absorbing people from different places, and some of those have left their mark on the dialect words of the area. Indeed, the words themselves indicate wide variety of origins.

The Viking invasions have left us with 'gate' as a word for road (Fargate, Waingate and Castlegate). None refers to a gate in the sense of a barrier; the name for that would be 'bar' as in Hunters Bar.

*Laik*, meaning "to play", was used widely until the 1960's and is of Danish origin (providing the first part of the name Lego, meaning play good).

David went on to give many examples of words, using them in phrases and sentences that stirred many memories amongst his audience. Words such as:

*All reight?* – a general greeting to which only a positive response is acceptable. The normal reply is something like, "Aye, I'm all reight, are tha?"

*Nadden!* Another greeting.

*While* – meaning until; the cycle shop at the station lists its weekday opening hours as "7 while 8".

*Mash* – when you make tea, even bread cakes, but definitely not buns.

*Clarty* (sticky) this is what you get if you cover your bread cake with too much butter or jam!

*Lend* – borrow. For example, if you want to lend a copy of David's book please contact Mike Killingley. *Tha might learn summat!*

## Jabez Shipman, a Ranmoor Steel Pioneer

The mid-1800s steel and related businesses Sheffield expanded hugely to meet a growing international demand. Several manufacturers became very wealthy and followed a growing trend to move their families out to the developing suburbs. There they built the grand houses which still dominate areas such as Ranmoor.

One of these was Clevedon House which was built in 1871 on a large plot of land in Ranmoor Road which had previously been owned by Trustees of the adjacent Wesleyan Chapel. It became the home of Jabez Shipman (1822-1893) – a Town Councillor until 1884 and an extremely successful manufacturer of steels and wires of many kinds. He moved from smoky Brightside to fashionable Ranmoor in 1871 with his wife and six children, and lived here until 1886 before moving to Southport.

Clevedon House was then rented until 1902 by William Edgar Allen – another notable Sheffield steel-maker and founder of the Edgar Allen Institute for physiotherapy in Gell Street.

Jabez's company continued to flourish into the 20<sup>th</sup> century led by his son John William Shipman – another Ranmoor resident who lived with his family in 13

Ranmoor Crescent between 1887 and 1898. But almost unknown is the story of his father's early career as a manufacturer – and how he contributed to the creation of one of the city's truly great companies.

Around 1860, manufacturer Jabez Shipman entered into an unlikely partnership with Robert Hadfield, then an Assistant Collector of Rates, Property and Income Tax in Attercliffe. Robert was a second cousin of John Brown, and may have provided finance for their new company – Hadfield and Shipman.

The new company became extremely successful, with control largely in Jabez's hands. Before long Robert Hadfield left his previous work and joined him, although after a period of joint control he left to establish a separate and independent company. In 1868 Robert Hadfield took over the Continental Steel Works in Bessemer Road and the rest as they say is history.

Whilst Jabez's company thrived on its own, Hadfields became a world leader, expanding widely beyond an original wire-based product range. By 1905 it boasted the most extensive steel foundry in the world. It became internationally renowned as a manufacturer of artillery and naval gun projectiles of all sizes. Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, its Sheffield workforce exceeded 5,000, with a powerful research and development team.

After Robert died in 1888 at the age of 57 his company was headed by his son, also named Robert. But it is worth remembering that the firm's enormous and long-term impact on the steel industry and on the city of Sheffield had been based on the initial contribution of manufacturer Jabez Shipman of Cleveland House in Ranmoor Road.

## Programme for the rest of 2015

### 16<sup>th</sup> June

Beer & Brewing in Sheffield 1750-2000

### 22<sup>nd</sup> September

Sheffield Castle and its History

### 20<sup>th</sup> October

The Victorian Country House

### 17<sup>th</sup> November

Kelham Island and Sheffield Museum Trust

## Ranmoor Society Committee 2015

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	Margaret Ward	327 0065