

Dalebrook and Carsick Grange

In 1867 when the Carsick Hill Land Society was offering its land for sale the prospectus trumpeted that it was *"well worth the attention of capitalists, gentlemen disposed to build and others"* However it proved to be one of the less successful of Ranmoor's seven Land Societies. Initially it had divided the land into 39 plots but in the end it attracted only 2 takers. Both of them appear to have had larger than average pockets and in neither case did the money come from steel or metal working but from brewing beer and from selling wine and groceries.

Elizabeth Birks came from a family that had inherited and then operated the old Rawson's brewery in Pond Street, founded in 1758. She and her husband, Edward Birks, a director of the company, had previously lived at Fairfield House on Fulwood Road. On Edward's death in 1874 she found herself in a position to purchase six of the Land Society's plots on which she built Carsick Grange and added another five to provide the grounds to surround it. Carsick Grange was a substantial property boasting eleven bedrooms that catered for her large family (she had five daughters) as well as for the six domestic servants and groom she employed to look after them. The main entrance (marked by her initials "EHB" carved above the door) was from Carsick Hill Road. A long driveway guarded by a lodge on Snaithing Park Road, provided the southern entrance to this 2 acre estate on which could be found greenhouses, a cucumber house, stable, carriage house and a small lake.



Carsick Grange

Carsick Grange still stands, having been converted into apartments in the 1950s after the death of its previous owner, Sir Peter Brown (Sheffield's

Master Cutler in 1931-2) and Managing Director and later Chairman of Hadfields Steel Co.

Three more of Carsick Hill Land Society plots, this time on the south side of Belgrave Road, were purchased by Edward Porter in the late 1870s. He was part of Porter & Newton, grocers and wine merchants, a successful family business in King Street, Sheffield established by his grandfather in the mid 1700s. Apparently the firm had *"acquired a reputation for fair dealing and honest goods which compelled the custom of every self-respecting house-wife"*. So we can assume that this was the source of finance which allowed him to build Dalebrook, a "desirable stone-built family residence with 8 bedrooms set in some 3 acres of gardens and grounds. After his death in 1882 it was occupied until 1919 by his unmarried brother Charles and then subsequently by Frank Atkin, a manufacturer of silver plate at Truro Works in Matilda Street.



"Dalebrook" Belgrave Road

Today most local people will be unaware of what the original Dalebrook looked like as unfortunately it was demolished in the 1960s. However we have recently unearthed several splendid photos of Dalebrook which nicely evoke some of its mid-Victorian splendour probably taken shortly before its demise. Today the site is occupied and the name commemorated by Dalebrook Court, a residential apartment block facing Stumperlowe Park Road.

W. J. Hale - Master of Arts & Crafts

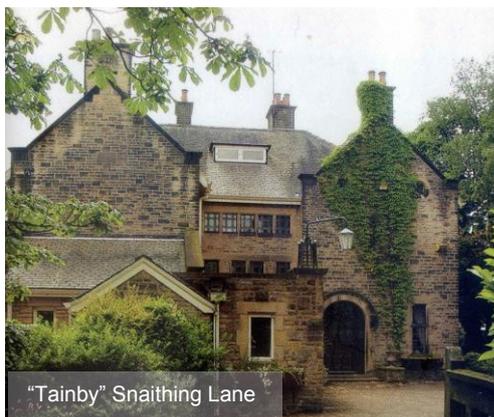
The architect WJ Hale created a portfolio of schools, churches and other buildings that are still enhancing Sheffield his home city. Indeed the Pevsner architectural guide to Sheffield rates William Hale as having produced Sheffield's *"most striking early twentieth century architecture"*.

You don't have to travel far to see some of Hale's

most original work. Take a look at his octagonal Wesley Hall at Crookes (1907) approvingly described by the Sheffield Daily Telegraph at the time as looking "more like the Hippodrome than a place of worship" Nearby there's another Hale masterpiece: the Crookes Congregational church (1905) in Springvale Road with its carvings by Frank Tory. Here we find another octagonal structure cleverly constructed on a sloping site and topped by a majestic roof lantern.

Hale's family were non-conformist Wesleyan Methodists, a fact that influenced him throughout his working life. He was born in 1862 and after attending the Wesley College in Glossop Road Hale was articled to the Sheffield architects Innocent and Brown whose specialty was the design of the council's Board Schools. Both these factors helped when Hale set up his own practice in 1896. In 1891 he married Edith Toothill, member of a prominent Fulwood Wesleyan Methodist family involved in property development and this led to a steady stream of commissions mainly for Methodist churches and also for schools.

His first church commission was for the Stephen Hill Wesleyan chapel at Crosspool (1896), followed by the major project of the Bole Hill School (1898) in Walkley; an imposing building standing high above the Rivelin valley. In the years up to 1908 he designed other schools including Hammerton school in Darnall (1904), possibly his finest school, and Lygate Lane school (1907). Churches and chapels, all with a Methodist connection, were his forte; besides the two in Crookes already mentioned examples included the chapel at Lower Bradfield (1899), St Luke's in Crookes (1900). Hale had submitted designs for the new Victoria Hall but had come second to the firm of Waddington, Son and Dunkerley. However, following the death of Waddington in 1907 Hale was asked to complete the project. He reworked the designs and made a significant contribution to the resulting building completed in 1908.



"Tainby" Snaithing Lane

Hale cemented his connection with Ranmoor when, in 1909, he designed his own house, "Tainby", in Snaithing Lane.

When his daughter Doris married Maurice Cole (one of the owners of Cole Brothers) in 1921 he designed for them "Rydal" on Snaithing Park Road. This was his only other domestic project. Both houses demonstrate his attachment to the Arts and Crafts style.



"Rydal" Snaithing Park Road

His excursion into industrial building resulted in Rutland Works a superb example for the steel manufacturer Samuel Osborn which can still be seen on Rutland Road.

He returned later in life to church building, but with a different style. Previously he had followed Arts and Crafts principles in his designs adding Gothic or Art Nouveau elements, and even Italianate flourishes such as on the tower at the Victoria Hall. His last works were in a much more severe style exemplified in the Banner Cross Methodist church on Ecclesall Road South. The monumental appearance of this building (likened to the Cenotaph in Whitehall) with its lack of decoration is in marked contrast to his earlier work.

Hale maintained that good architecture does not "lie in pinning ones faith to any particular style to the exclusion of all else but rather in admitting that there is good in all". Hale died at "Tainby" in November 1929 aged 67. He had enriched the architectural landscape of his home city and we must be grateful that a good number of his creations are still with us today.

Note for your diary:

Ranmoor Society AGM January 17th 2023

Committee

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|------------|-----------------|---------------|
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