

Short History of the Firm now known as Carfrae & Morrison, C.C.E.

NOTE: The dates should be taken as approximate only as it is not possible from the surviving Records to give the exact dates at which changes in the personnel or the Firm's name took place.

The Firm was founded in 1829 by Thomas Carfrae under the title Thomas Carfrae, Land Surveyor, and operated from 1 Erskine Place which, at that time, was Mr. Carfrae's own residence.

It would appear that Mr. Carfrae continued to practice until 1888, both as a Land Surveyor and a Civil Engineer. During that period he had several partners, viz. A.G. Geddes, Wm. Clouston and A.W. Belfrage. From about 1850 - 59 the Firm was known as Carfrae & Geddes; from about 1860 - 69 as Carfrae & Clouston; and from 1877 as Carfrae & Belfrage. (It is interesting to note that A.G. Geddes was the father of Sir Eric and Sir Auckland Geddes, both of whom held high posts in the Government during and after the First World War).

In 1888 the Firm's name was changed to Belfrage & Carfrae, C.E. and it is presumed that Thos. Carfrae retired, or died, about that time and that Mr. Belfrage assumed as his Junior Partner Thos. Carfrae's son George Carfrae who had been an assistant from about 1870.

This continued to be the Firm name until about 1903 when Mr. Belfrage retired or died and Mr. Carfrae carried on under the title of G. Somervel Carfrae, C.E. In 1922 he assumed as partner Wm. Morrison and the name was changed to Carfrae & Morrison, C.E. Mr. Carfrae retired in 1927 and died not long afterwards. As far as can be ascertained Wm. Morrison was the first partner to be a Member of the Institution of Civil Engineers.

In 1926 the practice removed from 1 Erskine Place to 4 Hill Street but continued under the same name.

Wm. Morrison assumed his son Wm. Morrison Junr. as partner in 1932 and himself died in 1942.

Wm. Morrison Junr. assumed as partners in 1951 A.G. Ingham (formerly Chief Engineer, Architect and Surveyor to the Department of Agriculture for Scotland) and A.P. Bryce and in 1958 Adam Parker. Mr. Ingham died in 1966 and Mr. Parker retired in 1975.

As mentioned above Thos. Carfrae was primarily a Land Surveyor and a large part of the Firm's work in the early years was surveying, particularly the preparation of plans of Farms and Estates (there being no Ordnance Maps at that time). One branch, which persisted until about the time of the First World War, was the measuring of growing crops for sale by auction and the preparation of the relevant 'Roup Rolls'.

The Firm soon branched out into various branches of Civil Engineering. During the boom in Railway Construction in the middle of the nineteenth century they were engaged to prepare and give evidence in support of, or in opposition to, the promotion of many Parliamentary Bills authorising such projects and in connection with subsequent claims under the Land Clauses Acts. They were involved in many schemes of Water Supply and Drainage and the partners, as individuals, were also appointed by the Local Government Board (the predecessor to the Scottish Development Dept.) to report on proposals for such schemes put forward by various Local Authorities. The Firm were also responsible for the erection of several bridges, e.g. at Haddington, Cockburnspath etc.

In the early part of this century the Firm were responsible for the development of many Feuing Estates, around Edinburgh and elsewhere, including laying out the ground for building, preparing plans for individual feus, constructing roads, sewers etc. This type of work continued until the Second World War.

During and after the War the Firm carried out several river surveys for the Department of Agriculture and were responsible themselves for the carrying out of schemes of river improvement and protection. They also carried out the construction of Air Raid Shelters for the City.

Since the War, the Firm's work has been mainly in the sphere of Public Health Engineering, viz. the construction of sewers and sewage purification works for Local Authorities but they have also been responsible for a considerable amount of road construction and of several small reservoirs for Farm irrigation schemes.

In the earlier days the Firm, as part of their general Estate work, were responsible for the erection of Farm Buildings of various kinds and this has continued. Between the Wars they carried out improvements to numerous Farm Cottages under the Rural Workers Housing Acts and during Mr. Ingham's period as a partner carried out a considerable number of Housing Projects in Edinburgh, notably for the Viewpoint Housing Society.



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With Compliments