



NEWS MAGAZINE



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WELCOME to the fourth issue of the Ramsbottom Heritage Society News Magazine. Our contributors have once again provided articles on a wide range of subjects. Topics this time vary from the Bury Archives, childhood games and pastimes, computerisation of our archives, the Ramsbottom trolley buses, even a tongue in cheek speculation about the famous Ramson flowers! We also have news from Ramsbottom, Australia!

The cover picture of School House, Dundee Lane is reproduced by kind permission of John B Taylor. It is from his book *Stories in Stone - Datestones in Ramsbottom*.

The Heritage Centre continues to attract many visitors. If you have not seen the present display there is not much time left. In the New Year the Centre will be closed for a while to allow the Display Team to mount a new exhibition. (For dates and details please see notices or contact the Centre.) If you would like to help the Display Team please contact them at the Centre. You will be very welcome!

Once again we thank the Royal Bank of Scotland who, for the second time, have sponsored our Magazine. Their continued support is much appreciated by the Society.

Many thanks also to all who have contributed to this issue and especially to Irene Todd for her continuing efforts to turn me into an Editor!

To those who are still thinking about writing or drawing something for the Magazine please do it soon. The next issue is only a few months away and, as yet consists of blank pages!

Contributions can be handed in at the Heritage Centre or at the monthly meetings.

Barbara Park
Editor

RAMSBOTTOMAUSTRALIA?

A very interesting letter recently arrived at the Heritage Centre. The writer, Mrs Joy Bussem (nee Whittaker) lives in Australia but was born in Tottington and lived in Carlton Place, Ramsbottom until she was seven years old when she moved to Bury before emigrating to Australia with her parents over thirty years ago.

In her letter Mrs Bussem describes how, after she recently moved to the area of Victoria where she now lives, she discovered places bearing the names Tottington, Ramsbottom and Holcombe. Further investigation revealed that the 164,000 acres which make up the Ramsbottom and Tottington estates in Australia were once owned by a Lawrence Rostron jnr who was born in Manchester in the 1800s and whose father Lawrence Rostron Snr owned a cotton mill and traded between Rio de Janeiro and England. Mrs Bussem also adds that her mother's home in Geelong is named Hazelhurst. An amazing coincidence but not the end of the story by any means.

In a later letter Mrs Bussem, who is researching into her family's history, asks if we are able to help with any information about some of her forbears and lists several well known local names such as Whittaker, Carr, Barnes, Spencer and Forshaw. She also gives brief details of those she has already traced including her grandmother May, the daughter of one Charles Cunliffe Spencer 'master engraver, calico printer.'

Readers of the Summer 1991 Magazine may remember the article by Andrew Todd about the Spencer's Engraving Works project which he and a group of members are working on. Mrs Bussem's Charles Cunliffe Spencer born in 1854 is the son of the John Spencer who founded the firm in the 1840s.

The coincidences may not end there! In this magazine, in her article about the archives, Brenda Decent refers to Lawrence and James Rostron, joint owners of the Gutter estate and Clyde Tweedale mentions Richard Rostron of Acre House, Edenfield. Could any of these be related to the Rostrons of Australia? Too much of a long shot, perhaps, but we can be sure that someone, somewhere, will be checking them all out.

Anyone who has any information which might help Mrs Bussem may contact her via Mrs. Dorothy Moss at the Heritage Centre, Carr Street, Ramsbottom. Telephone Ramsbottom (0706) 821603.

Barbara Park

RAMSBOTTOM FROM THE BOROUGH ARCHIVES

The borough archive service was established in 1986 to bring together the large quantity of both official and private archives held by the authority and make them more accessible to the public. The current holdings of more than 25 tons of material are at premises in Edwin Street in Bury, which is located behind the Derby Hall, with access from Crompton Street. The archives are open to the public 10 -1 and 2 - 5 on Tuesdays, and at the same times on other weekdays by prior appointment. The material held consists of anything kept as a record by local organisations or individuals in the course of their daily activities, everything from photographs to maps, tax returns to love letters.

The largest group of archives relating specifically to Ramsbottom is, as one would expect, the records of the former Ramsbottom Urban District Council, and its predecessor, the Local

Board of Health. The Board was established in 1864, initially under the chairmanship of William Grant, with the task of implementing the provisions of the Public Health Acts in what

was then referred to as 'the village'. Until it became an Urban District Council in 1894, it had no permanent offices, and many of its earlier records have not survived, but there is a complete set of manuscript minutes, mostly concerned with efforts to improve the sanitary state of the area.

to the back doors of houses', made worse at night by the almost total lack of street lighting. The Board began to tackle these problems, putting up a grand total of 25 new gas lamps in 1864, hiring a nightsoil man to clear the cesspools and privvies, and ordering the removal of the worst hazards like the urinals attached to the front of the numerous pubs, which frequently overflowed into the streets. Ironically, however, their major sewerage scheme was thought to have caused a typhoid fever epidemic as it involved clearing many obsolete old drains of impacted sewage! This was just one of seven major epidemics to hit the town in the period between 1864 and 1873, and the total of 116 deaths (62 under five years old) listed in the Medical Officer's report for 1874, in a population of about 4,500, gives an idea of the grim facts of life and death in the late nineteenth century.

On a lighter note, the minutes also refer to the leisure activities of the inhabitants (especially those of which the Board did not approve) like the swing boats on the market place in front of the Grants' Arms at fair times, the wooden theatre in Stubbins Lane (said to be crowded with young people) and the baked potato carts standing on the town streets.

The Board also passed building byelaws to improve the layout and construction of the many new buildings going up, banning items like cellar dwellings and non-watertight cesspools. The byelaws entitled them to require deposit of plans before construction commenced, and the earliest surviving ones date from 1877, although they form a continuous series only from 1902. These are nearly 1,700 in all for the period up to 1948, and given that many relate to alterations of older buildings, or to buildings no longer in existence, they constitute a very useful source for the architectural history of the area. Even where plans do not survive, their deposit was recorded in the minutes, giving a good idea of who was building what, and when. Unfortunately there are no surviving rate books, which would have given useful lists of properties, owners and occupiers, although there are valuation lists (in similar format) for 1910, 1920, 1929 and 1934. Another source of information on houses no longer standing is the series of slum clearance files, which often contain plans, photographs and detailed descriptions of properties pulled down from the 1930s onwards. These are part of the series of over 500 files of the town clerk, which date from the 1880s onwards. Because of the clerk's position as chief officer, these files cover the whole range of the council's activities; there are, for instance, extensive series on individual highways and bridges, and individual files relating to Peel Tower, the opening of Nuttall Park, and the Holcombe rifle range. Other council officers have not left such a large volume of records, although there is a series of diaries of the surveyor, Thomas Bell from 1899 to 1928, which mentions, among less dramatic incidents, the bombing of Holcombe by a Zeppelin in 1916, and also various plans of council building projects.

Anyone wishing to see these, and the various private deposited records, is welcome to pay us a visit on any Tuesday, or to ring me on 061-797-6697 to make an appointment. We have also from time to time arranged evening visits by local groups. Details of latest accessions and other developments are given in our newsletter, the next issue of which is due out in January, and is available at local libraries.

Kevin Mulley, Borough Archivist, Bury M B C

OUR FIRST HONORARY MEMBER

Monday, 22nd July 1991 was a memorable day at the Heritage Centre when Mrs Maggie Oates was enrolled as the Society's first Honorary Member.

Three generations of her family were present to hear Society Chairman, Andrew Todd extend a warm welcome to Mrs. Oates and thank her for her many local community commitments and congratulate her on the distinction of being the one and only lady Chairman of the R U D C. To mark the occasion, Mrs Oates was presented with a hand written scroll, penned by David Moss on hand made paper brought back from Bury Metro's twin town of Angouleme.

In reply Mrs Oates said that she was very honoured to receive the invitation to be the Society's first Honorary Member, as were her family who had originally settled in Ramsbottom over 140 years ago.

Remembering the old Library building, she realised how much work had been done to transform it into the Heritage Centre and considered it was a credit to the Society and a worthy addition to the town.

Refreshments were served and a tour of the Exhibition concluded a happy, memorable and unique occasion.

Dorothy Moss

~~RAMSBOTTOM - VALLEY OF THE RAMSON FLOWERS~~

(a chemical

reaction?)

Ramsons, Wild Garlic, Stinking Onion Flower, *Allium ursinum*, call it what you will, this plant is common in moist woods. In past centuries there was an abundance of moist woods in the valley and more Wild Garlic than we have growing nowadays, although on the "Church Fields" there is some still. The plant flowers from April to June and produces a "clove" or bulb as do all members of the Liliaceae.

I have often wondered what use this plant was put to by the valley inhabitants in years gone by and I would very much like to know if any reader of this article can help. My own presumptions are set out here. It is possible to obtain garlic oil and this is of some medicinal value if the manufacturers of garlic pills and garlic oil capsules are to be believed. I must say I have no reason to doubt their claim. Certainly garlic is used throughout the world in many culinary masterpieces.

What of the wild garlic and its implications for Ramsbottom?

It may be possible for an oil to be obtained by standard pharmaceutical methods from Ramson bulbs by a process of maceration, i.e.. mashing up, and subsequent distillation of the pulp. This process may have been known to the valley inhabitants. So what could they use the oil for? Certainly cooking and medicine cannot be ruled out. Was it used to bring out the subtle flavour of black puddings and was Charles Dickens served this delicacy by the Grant brothers? Can we assume a local garlic bread was produced in the valley? Did the illustrious Drs Kay prescribe it for their patients? Their diaries do not tell us and we do not have any of their prescriptions, but maybe the diaries of Jamieson Morton, that celebrated Chemist and Druggist of 19th century Ramsbottom, will shed some light on this puzzle.

Some evidence of the medical use of wild garlic can be deduced from the local nursery rhyme:

Megan' Bill climbt 'Olcum 'Ill wi' a bucket went a clatter. T'yung
cracked 'is 'ed, bi gum it bled, an' t' bucket went a clatter. T'yung
man back 'ome he ran, an' bit' leet o' a stinkin taper,
'is main 'ad a job t' plaister 'is nob wi' alliker an' breawn paper.

4

Older readers will know alliker is "Lancashire" for vinegar, i.e.. ale liquor, which could have been spiked with wild garlic. We do have lots of springs on Holcombe Hill and we know - Ramsbottom produces brown paper. A stinking taper would have been used to keep away the boggarts.

There could have been many other things for which the oil was used. There are no tales of boggarts or goblins around Ramsbottom and, when added to the tallow from which candles were made or added to the lamp oil, the burning of a small quantity of Wild Garlic oil would certainly have

kept them away. We have heard it said that garlic could ward off evil spirits or vampires. And with what did John Kay lubricate the Flying Shuttle? He had to leave in a hurry because of local complaints about his invention. He could have used up the entire output of Nuttall Village

leaving no oil to keep the goblins at bay.

Why did the loom breakers of Rossendale by-pass the Grants' Ramsbottom Mills on their way to Summerseat? Perhaps they thought that the Grant Brothers used this same lubricant and that made

them wary of being caught in the days after the riots with the lingering odour to identify them. Could it be that the infamous riflemen of Chatterton Field greased their cartridges with garlic oil, much the same as the sepoy of the Indian Mutiny were asked to grease their cartridges with some

peculiar lubricant?

Wild garlic could be an aphrodisiac. Perhaps someone could look into the records of births in Ramsbottom around the turn of the century to gain evidence of this possible use?

Meanwhile I am hoping soon to extract a small quantity of this peculiar oil and perhaps by April 1st 1992 we could go into production and have another product to sell in the Heritage Centre. Jack Palmer

~~USING THE PRESENT TO PRESERVE THE PAST~~

Ever since its formation, the Society has gathered and maintained an archive of material about the local area. We have tried to keep the actual objects in a systematic way, using separate labelled boxes for various Districts, Churches, the Co-op etc.. However, as the number of items grew to nearly 2000, the problems increased out of proportion, and no matter how many boxes we started, we kept getting new materials which couldn't reasonably fit into any category. Recording the donors became a necessary, but increasing, chore.

Details of each object were kept on a file card. Such cards are excellent for *keeping* information - you can write as much as you wish about any item (even on the back if you run out of space), anyone can be pressed into producing them, and they cost very little. But as the pile grows into hundreds, the main

disadvantage becomes clear: *retrieving* information is very difficult. It is a real pain to have to thumb through the stack every time you want to find out what we have on, say, Grant's Tower. In fact, because it is *difficult* you try to avoid doing it, and eventually the whole point of having an archive becomes lost.

It seemed that a computer might help, however alien to our heritage such an object might be! Computers are good at boring jobs: they are quite happy searching through all their records looking for "Ramsbottom", and if you ask them repeatedly how often that word occurs they will give you the same answer every time. Unfortunately, although they do this kind of thing much faster than people can, they also lack imagination, so if sometimes the word is typed just slightly wrong then they can completely miss the reference, and will never tell you about the air raid on Ramsbottom, something which our eyes would detect instantly.

5

Nevertheless the Committee decided to take the plunge and buy an Amstrad PCW. The choice was easy - it was the cheapest. I was co-opted to the "Working Party" which was set up; a strange term for something which turned out to be all work and no party! However, we persevered, and after some experimentation, and much frustration, eventually achieved a computer system which seemed to do the job we wanted. Although a little slow by professional standards, it could still sort through a thousand cards in much less time than it takes to boil the kettle, a time standard which became of great importance to us. Now all we had to do was to enter information on to about 1500 cards, and we should have a Database! So we did it.

"Database" is the buzz word name, designed to confuse the uninitiated, which graces a card index stored on a computer. It is still just a stack of individual records. When designing our own, we were careful to make the screen entries *look* much like conventional file cards, so that people coming to use it are not frightened off. Just like real cards, the individual entries can be rearranged into different orders, if that happens to suit our purpose, and a new blank card can be produced very quickly (by typing N - for New - in fact).

To ease the classification of material, we divided the whole diversity of living into a list of 30 simple subjects, giving examples which serve to define and illustrate the scope of each. This was because we decided that 'Subject' should be one of the 'fields' in the Database by which the cards can be sorted, allowing the Amstrad to collect together related information for our use. For example, supposing that we wanted to mount an exhibition on "The Churches of Ramsbottom", we should first want to know what material was already available. By using the computer to sort the archive by Subject, all the cards related to "Religion" would be brought together. This would make it easy to look through them, marking any which seemed likely to be useful for the display.

Perhaps the most valuable feature of the system, though, is that we can choose a word or words - say "Redisher Woods" - and ask the computer to scan the Archive for the words of our choice, mark matching Cards for us to inspect at leisure, and tell us how many matches it has found. It can also do "fuzzy" searches, where near-matches, such as "Redisher Wood" (no s) or "Redisher's Wood" will be captured. Scanning a thousand cards will take only a minute or two, after which, by repeatedly pressing a single key, we can call up each of the marked cards in turn. If it looks interesting, we can print that card for further study. Alternatively we can print the whole list of marked cards, including as much detail from them as we choose.

All of this has involved us in many hours of work, but we hope that it has been worth the effort, and that it will make the Archive so much more useful. Anybody who can type a word with one finger should now be able to use the Amstrad to make an Archive search.

It is our dream that one day we shall have the Computer on display in the Centre, so that a visitor can be told in reply to a query: "Yes, we have two pictures of your Street, one taken in 1910, showing a coalman delivering, and the other taken during the 1937 Coronation celebrations. Would you like to see them?" First we must re-file the collection to make it easier rapidly to find items; but that isn't quite as big a job as making the original computer cards. If the demand is there, and if we have the will to meet it, then that dream is a practical possibility.

Geoffrey Johnson-Brett

NEWS FROM THE ARCHIVE

Many thanks to all donors, whether their gifts are mentioned here or not. *I.*

Plan and index of the graveyard of Emmanuel Church, Holcombe.

This was made by a community task force of the Manpower Services Commission in 1983. It is an excellent piece of work with a map of the graveyard divided into lettered sections. Each section draws to scale the graves with inscriptions and the coded graves. There is an index which shows how to find a specific grave. I have taken a fascinating tour of the graveyard with the plan. If you are interested please make your request known at the Centre. (403)

2. A piece of core from approximately 4,000ft down at FletcherBank Quarry brought up when drilling for oil in 1953! (455).

Hope seems to spring eternal in Ramsbottom that mineral resources will be discovered. When my house in Carr Bank was leasehold the Lord of the Manor of Tottington even had the mineral rights of our tiny plot. With the core, from the same donor, came a pencil stamped in 'gold' Porritt and Spencer. (456). We were also given the Nuttall Park Plaque which commemorates the magnificent gift of Nuttall Park and Hall to the town by the Porritt family in 1928.

3. A New and Actual Survey of the Township of Tottington Lower End in the Parish of Bury and the County of Lancaster taken in the year 1794 by Robert Smith, John Kay and John (altered by hand to James) Brandwood wherein is shewn the yearly value of every farm, building, cottage and field together with the owners and occupiers names to which is added an Appendix spewing at one view the total value of every estate. Printed in the year 1795. Price 2s. 6d. Sewed. This is the most valuable accession from an historical viewpoint. It divides the township into numbered estates. For example Gutter estate is divided between two owners Lawrence and James Rostron. There are six cottages valued between £1.10s and 10s. Widow Hamer's cottage with a garden is valued at 15s. The richest estate is Higher Ramsbottom, the part belonging to R Peel and Co including Caldo Mill and the Wash, valued at £21215s. (106)

4. This accession couldn't be more different from the others. It is a postcard. On the front is *Greetings from Ramsbottom*, with an illustration, a bunch of roses and a verse; 'I haven't time to write a lot, but still this card will do. To bring the love I've always got my dearest friend for you'.

This beauty was found in a museum in Skye and brought to the Centre by a visitor there. Unfortunately the stamp and the datemark have been torn off. It was sent to Mrs G Baldwin at St Annes. The writer mentions 'Trusting your dear boy is alright'. It looks pre-World War II. Will we ever know? I trust the CIA of the Heritage Society who help so much with identification and dates may come up with the answer! Will we ever know who signed himself 'Love and wishes true from your dear ChappY ? (451).

Although I am no longer officially Archivist to the Society I cannot help but be unofficially interested. Thanks very much to all who help with the archive and so share the responsibility.

Brenda M Decent

The numbers in 0 with each item are the numbers in the new computer databas, described by Geoffrey Johnson Brew elsewhere in this magazine.

CAN YOU REMEMBER? A New Competition

At the October meeting of the Society, Chairman Andrew Todd announced a competition to find the most interesting reminiscences about Ramsbottom. There will be prizes for the winner and runner-up. All the entries will become the property of the Society and will be placed in the archives. The memories need not necessarily be about long ago, although, of course, these are always welcome, but present day events should also be recorded. After all when people read them in a 100 (or even 10) years time 1992 will seem like ancient history.

In addition to the winners, a selection from the other entries will be included in a book of Ramsbottom Reminiscences which the Society is hoping to publish in 1992. In any event you will have taken part in a project that will literally 'go down in history'.

Length is not of major importance, in fact some quite short items could be very useful for the book. It is not neeces'nry__ for entries to be typed (although reasonably legible handwriting would be appreciated!). Entries should be sent to Andrew Todd at the Heritage Centre, Carr Street, Ramsbottom, or handed in at the monthly meetings. The closing date is the February 1992 meeting. Any further information may be obtained from Andrew on 0706 824511.

DIARY OF A DEDICATED GARDENER

This year the garden has had traumas and dramas.

The pundits predicted a plague of crane flies (daddy long legs) which would result in their larvae, the leatherjackets, eating the roots of plants. But what I found on lifting pots and boxes was a moving carpet of wood lice, with millipedes spring-coiled feigning death. This was the result of heavy snow in the winter followed by a cold wet spring.

It was after the snowfall that a walk through Nuttall brought us to Peel Bridge where we had the fine sight of a kingfisher flying from under the arch and perching on a bush by the Waterside Mill. From the bridge we watched it dive and catch a fish by the weir before proceeding on its journey upstream.

On returning home the pristine snow of the garden had captured the footprints of a heron as it investigated the pond. The giant footprints ambled round the paths before vanishing by the gooseberry bushes. It returned several times after that - giving me quite a fright as it took off from outside our living room window.

After this, the weather was wet and cold until July, with plants as much as four weeks behind schedule - if they survived at all. But a small forest of oak trees grew from the bonanza of last

Autumn - no doubt to the satisfaction of the grey squirrels whose habitat is much extended in Ramsbottom.

We watched the rooks, too, at Kay Brow Lodge, fording that they had indeed moved on, many

deserting the trees within sight of our garden. The result, if you remember, of felling several trees - their rookery - during their nesting time last year. However they have not gone far so may yet return.

The warm weather was back with us by August and things hotted up in the garden. In quick succession we ate strawberries, raspberries, black and white currants and gooseberries

followed by the glut of beans, peas, cabbage, carrots, beetroot, etc. We became very regular in our habits and soused with Vitamin C! But something dreadful has happened to the plum tree - not pollination when all sensible insects took shelter or carried on hibernating, or just died. We await results from the corn, maybe this wonderful early September sun will allow it to surprise us all.

The late summer sun brought the unusual sighting of a large Peacock Butterfly on the phlox, but the amazing numbers and varieties of last year have not yet appeared. Along with other places we report that the spotted flycatchers have not arrived.

Another event occurred that will remain for ever in our memory bank. In the July dusk we sighted two baby owls in our dead elm tree. Great bundles of squeaking fluff, almost unable to flutter from branch to branch. How did they come there at all was our question. Each evening they were there calling for their food and sometimes the parent Tawny owl arrived with a small bird or animal. It was weeks before we actually saw the arrival of the young. Then, later, we had sightings of all three on the telegraph pole outside our window, or again, the two babies on the greenhouse roof. Now it is September, they have extended their territory and they come less frequently.

We have also enjoyed regular visits from the hedgehogs. At one time there was a large one (daddy?) in our back yard, a medium sized one (mummy?) with two small offspring in our front garden. But the slugs will win over these odds I think.

A wonderful year you will agree.

Anon. September 1991

GAMES AND PASTIMES OF A RAMMY CHILDHOOD

When I was a child in the 1920s I lived in Carr Street where my mother kept a shop. There were quite a few children around about my age and after school and in the holidays we all used to play out. We

had very little in the way of actual toys, and what we did have seemed to be played with in seasons. First it was tops and whips, the tops either carrot or turnip shaped. Whoever was lucky enough to own a packet of chalks shared them around and patterns were drawn on the tops, which, when they were spun looked beautiful to us. The whips were a piece of coloured stick with a leather thong, which broke after awhile and was replaced with a piece of thick string, or failing that several lengths of thin string plaited. Chalk was also used to mark out a hopscotch patch on the pavement and a piece of flat stone was used as a scotch.

After this came skipping, individually or together. If you had a birthday and were lucky you got a new pair of skips. Why the description "a pair of skips" heaven knows, as what they actually consisted of was a length of rope with a wooden handle at each end, the handles were painted or carved, or sometimes quite plain, depending on how much they cost. If you didn't have a birthday you prayed for your Mam's clothes line to wear out, and then you got the good bits to use as skips. Pieces of old clothes line joined together were also used for communal skipping, and the variations on this were endless. Six or seven of us would play together, with a girl at each end turning the rope, first we would run through the rope, then do one jump, then two and so on in a sort of relay. Then someone would shout "let's do pepper, everybody in" and the cry would go up "salt, mustard, vinegar, pepper" and the rope would be turned as fast as the end girls could go. This usually ended in chaos as someone got a foot caught in the rope, and one or two of us got a clout in the face with one of its many knots.

We nearly all had a ball of some kind, the best bouncers usually being the solid rubber ones which were our favourites. I never remember girls playing group games with a ball. I don't know why, we left that to the boys, but you could play on your own for ages with a ball. I used to start to bounce the ball with my right hand, then swap to the left, then put my right leg over it, then my left, then do a spin round, but that was where I usually came unstuck, and the whole thing started all over again. All this could be done by bouncing the ball against a wall, usually whilst chanting some rhyme or other.

Sometimes one of us might have a balloon to play with if the rag and bone man had been round whilst we were on holiday. *More* usually your Main swapped her rags for a donkey stone with which every proper Lancashire housewife outlined her doorstep after its weekly scrub.

When May arrived we usually had a Maypole. This consisted of a broom with the bristle end covered with crepe paper, paper flowers, and any bits of greenery we could find. Old ribbons, tape, or even string with bits of coloured paper tied round it, were used for the streamers. A little stool, an old lace curtain draped around the chosen queen, and we were ready, not forgetting an old tin for the collection. We used to sing something that started off with "Round and round the maypole merrily we go....." (what the rest was I can't remember!) and dance round for a bit until we had collected a few pennies. We then moved on a few yards and started all over again, until we had more or less covered our patch.

When summer arrived, and it really did arrive in those days, weeks of scorching weather were only punctuated by July thunderstorms when suddenly the wind got up and the heavens opened and it absolutely poured down for about an hour. Then just as suddenly the skies cleared and the sun was back and the rooftops and roads literally steamed until everything was dry again.

After I was seven my play area extended quite a bit. In summer my playmates and I used to go round Ox Hey for picnics with jam butties and a bottle of kali water. Coming back we filled our bottles with spring water from Judy's Spout and took it home for our Mams. It was considered much better than tap water, or "corporation pop" as Dad used to call it. Judy's Spout was actually the main water supply for several old cottages round Springwood, just as the old well in Dundee Lane supplied several cottages there. We also used to play further along the back of Carr Street, past the Council workshops, and on the little square outside the mortuary. Quite often there would be a body in there. We knew because somebody had always seen it being put in, and this added a macabre thrill to our games of monsters and ghosts.

In winter we still played out unless it was raining very hard, the bitter cold didn't bother us at all. A favourite pastime was to go down Bridge Street and on to the bridge over the railway line at the side of the level crossing. The trains of course were steam, and in those days very frequent. We used to stand on the bridge and wait for a train to go underneath, especially the ones going north. As they pulled out of the station they chuffed out great bursts of steam which completely enveloped the bridge, and us if we didn't dash out of the way quickly enough, and that was the game.

If the weather was very bad I stayed in painting or reading or doing bobbin work, which was an empty cotton reel with four small nails in it. Wool was wound round the nails and passed over each previous winding, resulting in a long roll eventually emerging from the base of the cotton reel. I used to do yards of this, and sometimes join it up to make little mats.

When it snowed we spent hours making snowmen and snowballing or sledging. We used to play out until we couldn't feel our hands and feet, and then go home to thaw out, leaving a wet mess all over the house, and wet woolly gloves and socks to be half dried and then put on to go out and start all over again.

We always seemed to have snow in winter, sometimes to a depth of several feet. It was quite common to open the door and find deep snow and have to dig paths through it to wherever you

wanted to go, including the WC! Modern conveniences were few and far between in those days and television and hi-tech computer games not even thought of!

Ferguson hopes will eventually be published as a book.]

Margaret Ferguson

GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

Since moving to Edenfield thirteen years ago I have become increasingly interested in Local History and aware of the changes taking place as some older buildings have disappeared. I decided to record details of some of them.

ACRE HOUSE: I chose this as our house was built on its site in 1978. It was probably built in the early 1800s and occupied by Richard Rostron ('Pinch Dicky') who owned Bridge Mills. In 1871 its owner was Mrs Margaret Rostron, but by 1880 it was Jane Wilson's ladies' boarding school. On the 18910 S Map it was named as ACRES HOUSE. By 1930 it had changed its usage to become Dr Struther's home, followed by the Drs Ford (before they moved

to Market Street). A Mr and Mrs Bone inhabited it later, before it was turned into flats, prior to its demolition in 1976. The entrance was originally opposite the bus bay, but a new road was made onto the present site of eight houses off The Drive. Only the wall of the original coach house remains, but there was earlier a rear lane to Exchange Street through tennis courts and shrubbery.

STUBBINS UNITED REFORMED CHURCH: I chose this as the church our children attended and as the venue of Edenfield Horticultural Society's Shows. Its datestone was 1865, but it opened as a Congregational Church for 750 people in 1867. The spire was 120' high and its style perpendicular with carved capitals and stained glass donated by James Porritt. From 1871- 80 the minister was the Rev Thomas Cain. Problems with its wood caused its demolition in 1983 and the adjacent Sunday school and lodge are for sale in 1991.

CHAPEL HOUSE FARM: I chose this as it was on the lane to the Parish Church and vicarage (now a nursing home), and we were married there. There were cottages attached and it was built before 1800, housing a James Whittaker around 1850, whilst a Robert Holt was prosecuted in 1880 for allowing horses to stray on to the road. Later George Holt and his son farmed it, but it was demolished and redeveloped as Church Court in 1984.

ROCHDALE ROAD CORNER: My only link here was that I originated from Rochdale! Its origins are hard to trace as it was never owner occupied, but in the hands of solicitors in Colne and London. However, it is remembered as Fred Dewhurst's Plumber's shop from about 1916/36. It was altered into a house in 1989 leaving a stone feature on the corner.

DEARDEN CLOUGH MILL: My wife's father, Percy Isherwood, managed this for many years until c1976. The original 1767 mill was water-powered. In 1826 the looms were attacked as a prelude to the intervention of the military at the Chatterton Riots. In 1833 the cotton works was owned by Thomas Booth, but occupied by James Stott and Thomas Smith. By 1861 James Emmett was the owner, and later Clegg and Brierley operated it, followed by Joseph and James Porritt. A Mr Bealey also owned it before George Clegg's name was linked to it until its demolition in 1990, which revealed the hollow remains of the swimming pool across the stream and the steep waterfall.

I should like to thank my sources in Edenfield Local History Society, plus John Simpson's book *Edenfield 1500-1770* and Andrew Todd's *Trade Directory Reprints 1818-1888*. Please contact me with any further details via Ramsbottom Heritage Centre.

Clyde L Tweedale

CHILDREN AT THE HERITAGE CENTRE

Tuesday 14th May 1991 was to prove a very unusual day at the Heritage Centre. A visit from a party of schoolchildren was expected and as many helpers as could be mustered were on hand for the event. It was decided that the children would be admitted in small groups so that everyone could have a good look round and the helpers would be able to explain things to the children. A wise decision when it turned out that the whole party numbered around 200!

But what a surprise when the first group arrived with their teachers! The children had travelled on the train and were all dressed up in "Railway Children" costumes, which we were later told they had made themselves. Each child had a paper with questions about the pictures, maps, drawings, models, etc on display which they had to answer. They were also allowed time to browse around the sales counter. We could certainly have done with some extra pairs of hands as the children queued up to buy pens, postcards and other mementoes of their visit to the Centre and their ride on the train. The children were eager to learn about the things on display and behaved themselves marvellously. After a most amazing two and a half hours the last of

the children left to rejoin the train.
There was yet another surprise a few days later. Letters were received and each child had drawn a picture of their happy day. Some of the drawings were displayed in the Centre later. Many happy hours are spent at the Centre by the helpers. We have met people from many parts of the world, also people who are looking for help in tracing the history of their houses or families. Others seek information about Ramsbottom, past and present. With more helpers we could do a lot more to assist them. So think it over all those who read this magazine - young ones as well as older ones. A little time goes a long way and you never know who you might meet - maybe a long lost relation.

Hilda Barrett

NEWS TRAVELS

From the Kent County News, 9 December 1876:

"DR CRAWSHAW

Our readers will, we are sure, regret to hear that this gentleman will in a few weeks leave Margate. Few medical practitioners have succeeded in so short a time in becoming so deservedly popular and highly esteemed as he was. To the poor especially he has ever been a warm and sincere friend."

From the Bury Times, 13th January 1877:

"A DOCTOR COMES TO RAMSBOTTOM FROM MARGATE

Mrs Smith begs to state that Dr Crawshaw has succeeded to the practice of the late Dr Smith, Barwood Mount, Ramsbottom."

Dr Benjamin Crawshaw practised in Ramsbottom for many years and was followed at Barwood Mount by his son, Dr. Charles. His other son, Dr George Crawshaw, was a well known GP in Greenmount. Dr Charles' son, another Dr Ben, emigrated to Australia after the Second World War and was later joined there by his father, who had retired, and in turn been succeeded by Dr Harry Kelsey.

RAMSBOTTOM TROLLEY BUSES

Parliament granted Ramsbottom Urban District Council permission to start a tram service as early as 1903, but the cost of providing the overhead cable and the road works, the tramsheds and the electricity supply, as well as widening Peel Bridge, meant that the work was deferred year by year.

The following persistent correspondence occurred between one objector and Whitehall.

Gent'm, I wrote to you eight days ago and got no answer to my query re this UDC's reason for extension of trams time.

I have a right to know it as no doubt you have informed the other side my reason for objecting, for which they advertised your meeting. Thus I think it is neither business polite or gentlemanly.

Yours respectfully, R.Wallwork. Bolton Road West. 12

July 15th 1908

Dear Sir, We beg to acknowledge receipt of your annual protest against the extension of time for the proposed tramways.

No doubt you have communicated with the Board of Trade.

Yours faithfully,
Baker & Co, Parliamentary Agents. Westminster

From Mr. Walwork:

B.O.T. sent me word that they have granted an extension of time to the above UDC on the ground that they see no sufficient reason not to do.

I would like to know what is considered sufficient reason, more than it is NOT needed and WONT pay.

Beside what I said, in 1895 Bury opposed it on that ground and I may say that since then, rerouting it from Edenfield to Holcombe Brook is, in a way of speaking, from nowhere to nowhere and worse.

P.S. It is all very fine for a local paper to boom it, a few private folk to engineer it and after failure to get the UDC to take it up, these long heads to have been paid for their failures out of the rates, and lawyers to line their pockets too from the same source.

July 18th 1911

Dear Sir, Ramsbouom Tramways. We enclose another communication we have received from Mr. Wallwork.

Can you not provide adequate accommodation for this harmless imbecile in the County asylum? Yours faithfully, Baker and Co.

A further riposte from the agents in Whitehall to Bury Council.

Dear Sirs, You will remember that Mr. Wallwork objected to the extension of time for the tramways. He has since been sending in letters of complaint which we are forwarding to you as they may amuse if not interest you.

Although he complains of incivility on our part in not answering his letters he does not think it necessary to put postage stamps on his.

Yours faithfully, etc.

Since the Act was to expire in 1913, the council was prevailed upon to use trolley buses instead, so that less extensive roadworks would be needed. So it was that Ramsbottom became the only town relying exclusively on trolley buses.

A pamphlet was published by the council outlining their proposals and a poll of electors was taken, the result being 999 votes for the trolley buses, 407 against.

But Mr Wallwork's objections proved well founded, when over the years the service never made a profit. A 1Rd in the £ rate became 10d in the £ by 1920.

Rail-less Electric Traction Co of Leeds supplied two buses in August 1913 and the service began with all speed. The first bus arrived on Sunday, 9th August 1913. It was tried ostt on Monday, passed its official inspection on Thursday, 13th August and hook on board its first paying passengers that same evening.

The following people were employed in 1913:

James Wild, Inspector in Charge £2.2.0d

John Walsh, Learner Driver, £1.7s.6d

J.R. Law, Experienced Driver, £1.12s.6d

James Hitch, Learner Driver, £1.7s.6d 13

Ashton Seddon, Learner Driver, £1.7s.6d
Harold Monks, Learner Conductor 18s.0d

John Keefe, Learner Conductor 18s.0d

Frank Ribchester, Learner Conductor 18s.0d

Sydney Parsons, Overhauler £1.7s.6d
Herbert Williamson, Labourer £1.0s.0d

John Beswick, Clerk £1.5s.0d

The total wages bill was £14.3s.6d per week.

The outbreak of war the following year caused many problems, well illustrated in the letter from James Wild in 1916:

To Chairman and Members of the Traction Committee

Gentlemen, in laying an appeal before you for an increase in my wages, kindly permit me to give some of my reasons for so doing.

I have now been in your employ for a period of three years during which time I have endeavoured to fulfil my duties to the best of my abilities. The work has generally been carried out under adverse circumstances as you are aware. You will remember that I undertook certain work which should have been carried out by your consultant Mr. Hamilton and I believe this work has been carried out to your satisfaction.

During the last two years the difficulty experienced by everyone in obtaining supplies has increased my work considerably and it has entailed long hours of labour in order to keep any service whatever. The work as you are aware is much more difficult owing to existing road conditions and far in excess of what was expected at the outset. The call of the army has caused additional work for me in the shape of having to attend either early morning or late at night until new men could be left in charge of the depot.

Some twelve months ago our linesman left us and since that time I have undertaken these duties and have carried out most of the work between midnight on Saturday and Sunday noon in order to reduce expenses and keep the line in good order.

There is every possibility that future calls will be made upon me in the near future as both depot and traffic men will be called to the colours.

I may say that this is my first application for an increase, although you were good enough to grant me an increase of 10/- per week after six months service.

The present high cost of living has compelled me to make this application mainly as with the present wages I am in worse circumstances than when first employed by you.

For your guidance as to what is paid by other towns I can assure you that I am paid less than an ordinary Traffic Superintendent, who does not have any repair work of any description to do or supervise. At Haslingden the Manager is paid £3.10s. per week and has not any cars to look after, as these are supplied by Accrington and Rawtenstall Corporation. At Rawtenstall the Tramway Manager recently had an increase in salary and in addition I am given to understand that each officer receives a war bonus of 10/- per week.

I shall be glad if you will kindly give this application your careful consideration and I ask that a substantial increase be granted, such as you may consider sufficient to meet the claims of the position.

Thanking you in anticipation, I remain, Yours faithfully, James Wild, Manager. Mr.

Wild got his rise - to £3 per week in April 1917. 14

The following extract from the Ramsbottom Observer of 6th April, 1917 is the evidence that six buses were in service by that time. The first two arrived in August 1913 and the second two shortly afterwards. Numbers 5 and 6 began operating 1915.

Interest in Ramsbottom Trackless trams can be gathered from the fact that the passengers average 10,000 per week.

Nos. 5 and 6 cars have been in "hospital" for the last twelve months, waiting for castings, which cannot be got out owing to the war and labour conditions.

It is a pity that these two cars are the newest and most up to date of a fleet of six which the council possess. Everybody says they are "beautiful to ride in". "It is like being in a motor car" remarked one young lady the other day.

No.2 was last out four months ago, and is still docked for parts, which also cannot be obtained.

Nos. 3 and 4 are doing the work of the fleet, and it is reckoned that if only two others could be released and put into regular use, the rate against the cost of the system would go down with a bump in a reasonable time.

No. 3 is a fine service car. It has run 21,000 miles since August 12th last. This is real testimony to the thoroughness with which it was overhauled at the Ramsbottom depot under the direction of the tramways manager (Mr. J. Wild)

As any of the other cars overhauled elsewhere have not done more than 10,000 miles, it is obvious that in future all overhauling should be done at Stubbins Lane.

As for No. 1 car, it has just been overhauled at Leeds and should be in service again before long?

When it is remembered that the roads were made from stone setts and the tyres were solid rubber it is no surprise that the shaking these vehicles endured made sure that they spent most of their lives being repaired and rebuilt. They were simply not up to the job.

Repairs had already been needed in 1913 but by May 1914 the four cars supplied needed to have new bodies, springs and wheels at a cost of £60 per car.

In spite of this two new cars were ordered which were delivered in 1915 after several visits to hurry things along.

A meeting of the RUDC Traction Committee in March 1916

"resolved that having heard a report on car service generally and the position with regard to no.2 car now undergoing repairs at Leeds, a present payment of £175 be made to RET Construction Co. in order to secure the delivery of this car, on the understanding however that £125 is in respect of the car and £50 in respect of retention moneys on cars 5 and 6. The delivery of the side member to be made forthwith. That repairs on no.3 car now at Leeds and the delivery of materials for execution of necessary work on cars 1,4,5 and 6 be proceeded with as quickly as possible.

Also resolved to send Mr. Wild to Leeds to arrange delivery of car no.2".

So the service staggered on through the post war years until 1922 when Mr Sydney Parsons became general manager. They decided to buy a new tram (no7) and have nos 1,2,3,4 and 6 cars reconditioned. However the Traction Committee was persuaded at the same time to place an order for the first petrol driven bus.

Several more petrol buses were purchased over the next year and by 1928, as the trolleys became decrepit, it was decided to phase them out completely.

In that same year the Ministry of Transport planned to allow an increase to 16 mph in the speed limit, providing the vehicles had pneumatic tyres and improvements were made to the electrical system. Ramsbottom council said they would stay with solid tyres as they were planning to stop using these vehicles.

Twice yearly thereafter the Ministry wrote asking if all trolleys had ceased to which Ramsbottom replied "No -they could not fix a definite date". Eventually one remaining trolley ran for 40 minutes a day at rush periods.

Finally, ON 1st April 1931 the Council wrote to say that this last trolley bus had been withdrawn. A fitting date to end the era.

Sources : RUDC Minutes of Traction Committee, Correspondence and Documents.
Ramsbottom Observer Reports (at Bury Archive)

Barbara Palmer

ANNUAL PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

The 5th year of the Society's photographic competition has produced a record number of entries, with 124 photos being submitted. Many thanks go to the 16 entrants who have donated their pictures taken in 1991, thus enabling an archive to be kept of modern - day Ramsbottom.

This year, the competition reverted to its original format by having four categories.

The most popular category was EVENTS which attracted 52 entries. One of the major events of the year was the extension of the East Lancashire Railway to Rawtenstall. Other events included the Whit Walk, the Market and The Bank Holiday Weekends.

The TOWN AND COUNTRY category had 29 entries depicting landscape scenes, and pictures of buildings being demolished, one example being the old bus depot on S tubbins Lanemaking way for a petrol station.

The OPEN category also had 29 entries which included many from Mr Tom Barrett of a school visit to the Heritage Centre.

A special category this year was INTERIORS as the society does not have enough pictures of the inside of buildings. This category attracted 14 entries, which included the churches of St Paul's and Christchurch, both of which were renovated during the year. This year's competition was judged by one of our members, Mr W M Bennion, who had the very difficult job of choosing an overall winner of the Dickensian Trophy, and the four category winners. Highly Commended Certificates were also awarded.

Overall winner: Robin Sharpies Ramsbottom Station

Events:

Winner Mr I G S Summers
Highly commended John Leyland, Tom Barrett

Town and Country:

Winner Robin Sharpies
Highly commended Alan Hibbert, Mrs Dorothy Moss

Interiors:

Winner Mrs Patricia Greer
Highly commended Alan Hibbert, Mrs Dorothy Moss

Open:

Winner Jack Palmer
Highly commended John Leyland

RAMSBOTTOM HERITAGE SOCIETY

THE HERITAGE CENTRE

CARR STREET, RAMSBOTTOM

Telephone: Ramsbottom 821603