

1. WOOLLY CHURCH, ACCRINGTON

NEWS MAGAZINE

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**RAMSBOTTOM HERITAGE SOCIETY, C/O RAMSBOTTOM LIBRARY,
CARR STREET, RAMSBOTTOM, BURY, BL0 9AE**
Contact number: 01706 82 7245

The objects of the society shall be:-

- a) To advance education of the public by creating an awareness of and interest in the study of the history and heritage of Ramsbottom (as defined by the boundaries of the pre-1974 Ramsbottom Urban District Council.
 - b) To locate relevant documents, records and artefacts. To retain, catalogue and/or copy them where possible, and to operate an information centre.
 - c) To seek to protect the heritage of Ramsbottom
-

PROGRAMME

2009:

- November 18 Mr K. Warrender - *Underground Manchester* (illustrated)
- December 16 **Members' Night** - Social evening, with talk by Mr R Bolton:
Christmas Past and Present

2010:

- January 20 Mr I. Molyneaux - *All about Bees* (illustrated)
- February 17 Mr G. Atkinson - *Barton Bridge is Falling Down* (illustrated)
- March 17 **Photographic Competition** - judge - Mr Alan Seymour
Miss Margaret Curry - *Beatrix Potter - part 1* (illustrated)
- April 21 Kate Slingsby - *Ramsbottom Market Place - 260 years*
(illustrated)
- May 19 **Annual General Meeting and Members' Night**

**Unless otherwise stated, meetings are held at Ramsbottom Civic Hall,
Market Place Ramsbottom, commencing at 7.30pm.**

Entry by donation, please.

The Editors welcome articles for inclusion in the News Magazine. These may be handwritten, typed or on disc (in "Word") and sent to the Heritage Society. Please include your full address and a contact telephone number.

Contents

Page 1	Chairman's report	Tony Murphy
Page 2	Obituaries	Nancy Martin Elizabeth Morris Ernest Greaves
Page 3	Conservation Group Report Autumn 2009	Kate Slingsby
Page 5	Harden Moor	David C Hill
Page 7	Memories of Peel Tower and Top'o'th'Hill Farm	Margaret P Vickers
Page 14	Dr Rhodes Boyson	David McKie
Page 15	Shaw's Grocers (60 Bridge Street) before the Second World War	
Page 16	Civic Year of Ramsbottom Urban District Council 1972-73	
Page 19	Memories of life on Gollinrod Farm during World War 2	Bryan Walsh
Cover	<i>Gas lamp standard, Edith Street, Shuttleworth</i>	John B Taylor 2009
Centre pages	<i>Two Towers Walk</i>	John B Taylor 2009

Chairman's Report

Much of the Spring and Summer now past have been occupied by consideration of an invitation to partner Bury Archives Service in a bid for HLF funding to augment the planned Heritage Society accommodation at Ramsbottom Library with display equipment to allow the mounting of displays and exhibitions, together with the provision of assistance to a team of Society volunteers, by a qualified archivist, in the cataloguing and preservation of the existing Society archive, and the collection of new material. Concerns over risks to ownership of, and control over, collections having been raised and discussed at great length, and reassuringly addressed, I pay tribute to fellow team members Brenda RICHARDS, Kath and Dave HADDOCK, and Jack KENNEFORD, for their commitment and tenacity in ensuring the preservation of the interests of the Society. Satisfaction of other criteria necessary to support the bid having been fulfilled, submission to HLF has been made. We hope for a successful outcome. Work on re-developing the Library began early in September, with completion planned for February 2010.

Meanwhile, other regular Society activities have continued, and you will read about some of them elsewhere in this issue. Outdoor meetings and walks enjoyed fine weather, as did the Ramsbottom Churches Together Summer Fun Day held in Nuttall

Park in June, which was a great success for all who took part. Unfortunately, structural work at Ramsbottom Library prevented a repeat of last year's Open Day activities during Heritage Open Week-end in September. However, on 6th December we plan to have a sales table at the first of Ramsbottom's Christmas Street Markets, which return this year in their traditional form, and I hope we shall meet some of you then.

Good wishes to everyone for a happy Christmas and New Year.

Tony Murphy

Obituaries

Nancy MARTIN

In early summer we learned of the death of Nancy MARTIN, of Bolton Road West, a member from early days of the Society. Nancy was born in Accrington in 1939 and schooled at Peel Park Junior, and Accrington High, schools. She graduated from Bishop Lonsdale Teacher Training College, Derby, in 1960, returning to Accrington to teach; there she met her husband to be, Stuart, whom she married in 1971. Subsequently retiring from teaching in order to look after her family, Nancy came to live in Holcombe Brook in 1976.

Free from the disciplines of employment and with children at St Mary's school Hawkshaw, she was able to take part in local community affairs, serving on the board of Governors of St Mary's for many years, and pursue several interests. Developing a keen interest in family and local history, extensively researching her own family history, and working as a volunteer with local historical archives at Accrington Library, Nancy joined the Lancashire Family History Society and Ramsbottom Heritage Society; she also found time to serve for some years as a member of the committee of Tottington Horticultural Society. Worshipping at Holcombe Brook Methodist Church, Nancy was a valued member of the Choir and Worship Group; she also served as a Church Steward, being appointed Senior Steward during the final year of her life.

Tony Murphy

Elizabeth MORRIS

In early summer we learned also of the death of Elizabeth MORRIS, of Summerseat Lane, a member of some years standing, of whom, sadly, we do not have details of history.

Tony Murphy

Ernest GREAVES

Ernest, fondly known as Joss, was born in 1916 and sadly passed away last April. He lived all his life in Ramsbottom and as a boy attended Peel Brow and Bury Grammar Schools. During wakes weeks he serviced the machinery' in local mills and he went to night school to study for engineering qualification exams. He was one of the sons in the Ramsbottom firm Joshua GREAVES and Sons. Eventually, in 1935, his parents bought the works in Square Street, opposite Scotland Place - the very distinctive small, stone building with the ventilator and weather vane. The firm later moved to its present position on the site of the former Ramsbottom Mill, at the end of Garden Street. The works were Ernest's life.

During the War he enlisted for the Home Guard, patrolled all the moors, and played cards with the other men. He always knew what you'd got in your hand! He was a keen swimmer at Ramsbottom Baths, went regularly to the Summerseat Players and was made an honorary member at Ramsbottom Cricket Club. Loving his food, beer, wine and whisky, he went to local places such as Park Farm, Red Hall and the *Red Lion* at Hawkshaw.

He enjoyed reading about local history and joined the Ramsbottom Heritage Society many years ago. He was a very generous man, donating monies to charities, including the Heritage Society and as a bell ringer contributed to St. Paul's bell restoration. He rang in the bells for New Year in 2000. A real local lad.

[Editor - We were very sorry to hear of the passing of Ernest GREAVES, a longstanding member We are indebted to Diana JONES and Bill GREAVES, the daughter and son of Ernest, for this obituary and for their continuing support of the Heritage Society. /

Conservation Group Report - Autumn 2009

Shop Signs

This year shop signs seem to have been the main focus of our dealings with the Bury Planning Department. Morrisons currently have at least 40 signs on their land, although admittedly most of these are to do with parking and are necessary if we are to avoid being fined £50 for staying too long. We have objected to the brightness, size, colour and proliferation of signs both on the Morrison's site and Aldi's. Other problematic signs, which tend to appear around the town and for which planning permission is seldom sought, are the large promotional banners draped permanently over buildings.

Our representative for Planning Applications

Sadly, Dave HADDOCK feels he must give up his role in dealing with planning

applications. He has done a great job for the last couple of years and we are enormously grateful to him. We will miss his rather unusual expertise in the intensity of light, which may be emitted from totem and other signs!. Anne MORTIMER and John IRELAND have both kindly agreed to be involved with planning and again we are grateful to them.

Archaeological Survey

Because the Aldi store is being built on the site of at least two mills in the centre of Rams bottom, we had asked that an archaeological survey be done before building work destroyed all evidence of them and Bury Council agreed to this. It was expected that the dig would take two weeks, but in fact archaeologists were on site for 5 1/2 weeks. We will get a copy of their report when it has been completed, but this may take some time.

Kibboth Crew

The report from the community archaeology dig at Kibboth Crew has now been published. Since the report was written more by myself than by the University of Manchester Archaeology' Unit, we have the copyright ourselves. A copy of the report will probably be given to the library but you are welcome to get in touch with me if you would like to read it.

Gas Lamps

We have several original gas lampposts in the district, but only one that is likely to be returned to use. Graham TWIDALE has dismantled and is renovating the lamp in Edith Street, Shuttleworth and we hope that it will again be lit by gas. It will of course have automatic ignition, Graham is not offering to go round with a pole to light it

Public Gardens in Ramsbottom

You will be aware that we have been trying to upgrade site of the New Jerusalem Church on the corner of Factory Street and Ramsbottom Lane, so that we can erect an interpretation board giving the history of the church. Brenda RICHARDS has been badgering the council about this for two years without success. However following a recent meeting with the local councillors and Neil LONG, Head of Leisure Services, more progress has been made. Whilst the council do not have extra funds for Ramsbottom, they are willing to support any local groups who would take over the management of gardens here. Brenda, Anne MORTIMER and others are working with the councillors to facilitate this. This will go far beyond the work of just our own society, but we hope that the New Jerusalem site will be upgraded soon, along with the site of St Andrew's (Dundee) on the corner of Bolton Street and

Kay Brow. There are also current discussions about a small area that could be looked after by the RHS.

Brenda and Anne would be very pleased if any member would like to help with this project.

They can be contacted by telephone 829819 or email brenrichards@tiscali.co.uk

If you have any news or comments about developments in the town, do please get in touch.

Thanks Kate Slingsby

Harden Moor

I have been exercising my dogs on the moors near or above MARSHALL'S quarry at Fletcher Bank, Ramsbottom for as many years as I can remember. I normally start at approximately 6am every weekday and go up Bury New Road, across to Whitelaw Road, leading to Bury Old Road (now reduced to a track which diverts round the extended quarry and usable only by farm vehicles) and then on to open moorland.

My walk of two to three miles (measured with my pedometer) takes about an hour. On a clear winter morning when the frost is down and the air is still I might see the occasional fox going back to its den after being out all night. If there is snow, even when it is dark, the moor is a beautiful sight and it is very invigorating to walk in fresh clean snow with newly laid tracks of animals such as rabbits, foxes, badgers and cats which have been out searching for food. The beef stock are in the field most of the time and in snow or hard weather they keep close together for warmth and comfort. Sometimes there is the unexpected: couples in cars, and often burnt out or abandoned vehicles.

Once, in Springtime, I saw a fox killing a lamb but I was too far away to do anything about it. Around February and March the hares are on the move and I sometimes see them boxing as courtship begins. Other times they remain motionless, with the field as camouflage, hoping not to be spotted. Quite often in Spring or early Summer, the lambs and their mothers are out in the fields and I have pulled many a lamb or half grown sheep out of a wire sheep fence in which it has become untangled. If this is not done the fox will come and have its breakfast, dinner and tea.

On one occasion I came across a cow that was actually giving birth. As the calf was stuck I immediately notified the farmer who came to help with the birth, so mother and calf survived. Another time I found a yearling (young sheep) with a broken leg at the bottom of a disused quarry. Having carried the animal on my back and shoulders to the road, I telephoned the farmer who collected it. After having its leg in plaster, this animal also survived.

The horses in the field know me so most will come to the gate, wall or fence to be stroked and I usually manage some titbits for them. For most of the year, in one

particular spot, I see a lone heron, it lives among the deep marsh grass and my dogs usually disturb it, so I watch it fly gracefully away. Mallard, teal and other birds are generally moving in the morning and it is common to see a flight of early morning ducks passing over and occasionally I see a skein of geese as well. Over the year all kinds of flowers grow: snowdrops (only a small clump) bloom on one particular part, in Spring all the fields have daisies and buttercups and the moorland heather in Summer is deep purple, The whinberry grows along the edge of the moor, fruiting in July and later the amount of blackberries on the bushes is incredible.

The views from the trig point on top of Harden Moor are breathtaking, especially on a still clear morning. In different directions you can see as far as Derbyshire, the Welsh hills and to the Yorkshire Dales. Many a time, I stand beside Grants Tower looking over Ramsbottom and the surrounding area thinking how peaceful it is. From this position you can look down on to Ramsbottom or across to Holcombe and beyond to Winter Hill What a privilege to live in such a beautiful area. With mist in the valley, Peel Tower is clearly visible. At times the top of the mast on Winter Hill is clear while the base is hidden by fog or cloud. On a clear day I see on the mast the red lights, which warn incoming aircraft. In both winter and summer, I have been able to watch aircraft stacking ready to land at Manchester Airport and have counted between nine and twelve at different altitudes.

You can tell the time of year by the people and activities you see on the moor. For about a month, during and after Christmas, people come to walk off their Christmas pudding and some try to lose weight with more vigorous exercise such as cycling or jogging. Spring brings out more joggers, but again it lasts only a few weeks, liere are, however, two ladies that I have met regularly in all kinds of weather over the years. In the early mornings, they speed-walk from Walmersley Road and Buckhurst and around Nangreaves and back on to Manchester Road. I hear them coming and wonder how they can talk while walking at that speed.

A sad reflection of the times we live in is the increase in fly tipping, the amount of rubbish on the moors and the feet that those responsible appear to give no thought to the danger it poses to the animals. Also, on numerous occasions, I have had to round up sheep, horses and cows after gates have been left open, or worse still when someone has decided to steal some stone walling, removed it and allowed animals to escape.

Some time ago, one very dark, cold morning when I was on a very quiet part of my walk, I heard unusually heavy footsteps approaching. Feeling apprehensive, I called in my dogs. Gradually the footsteps grew louder and louder until suddenly, out of the darkness, an enormous Shire horse appeared. With the dogs keeping close, I walked slowly past him to inform the farmer of the escape

(Since this piece was written the oldest dog, Max, has passed away at 16 years of age.

A truly super dog whose ashes ! have since scattered near the trig point, he had done his last driven shoot only three weeks before. He had been very slow but when the pheasant were flying and the guns firing, his head and tail were held up high.)

David C HILL June 2009

Memories of Peel Tower and Top o' th' Hill Farm

[On 6th September 2009,, visitors flocked once again to Ramsbottom's famous Peel Tower; this time to mark 150 years of the police force. An officer had dressed in traditional Peelers' uniform, the Tower was open and among the other attractions was a demonstration of old-fashioned policing equipment, including an original lead- filled truncheon. The festival was the latest of the many celebrations which have taken place at the monument over its lifetime. We are very grateful to Mrs VICKERS, the author of the following account, parts of which featured in the Bury Times in 1985 and we are delighted that she has let us borrow the original and reproduce it in full]

My parents, Mr and Mrs Percy NEESHAM VICKERS held the key to Peel Tower for many years prior to World War II, The then Ramsbottom Urban District Council gave us a thousand 3d tickets for adults and a thousand 2d tickets for children. My parents took the money they collected to the Council Chambers where they were issued with new rolls of tickets each time they were running out.

The Tower was a great asset to the catering trade that we had begun to establish at Top o' th' Hill Farm. Besides the many local people, there were also many foreign tourists. They could climb the Tower and then go to the farm for a home-made meal. Everything was our own produce: we even grew Royal Sovereign strawberries which were always topped with our own fresh cream. Good Friday was the greatest day of the year: an annual pilgrimage of thousands, young and old, climbed the hill that day.

What I must now relate is the preparations for reopening the Tower ready for Good Friday. Two weeks in advance father, my two brothers and I used to begin our work at the top of the Tower. Snow and rain blowing through the slot windows would have done a lot of damage. We sandpapered both handrails which were like 2 ½ inch drainpipes placed one above the other with the lower one for children. They spiralled around the meshed wire that ran through the centre of the Tower. It was very hard work but we removed every bit of rust. We wire-brushed the metal steps and swept all the rust and dust down to the bottom. As the basement of the Tower is very dark and the majority of first time visitors liked to have a ramble around, out came the extension ladders and the whole of the inside walls was whitewashed. We swept the wide stone steps, which led to the first floor balcony, and finally cleaned the white

marble plaque which almost every visitor would stop and read before they left. We did not receive any remuneration from the Tower's trustees for the work we carried out but we had a thriving catering trade. Mother Superior used to bring schoolchildren from Holly Mount several times in the summer and rambling and hiking clubs from all over Lancashire booked lunches. Foreign tourists also called for lunch or dinner and we would escort such parties and open up the Tower for them regardless of the day or time of the year.

I've spent many hours, days and even weeks selling tickets at the Tower, on a cold day wearing three heavy coats. If it was a quiet day I could keep a check on how many people were inside but if it was busy, when it became dusk, one of my brothers, David or Peter, would come and say, "You've got to close up now, Pat," so I locked the pair of heavy iron doors and climbed to the top to tell the people it was time to leave. I used to make the short trip to the right of the Tower entrance and have a final check by walking round the first floor balcony. I used to read the white marble plaque on the wall just inside the entrance over and over again. It features an extract from a 1846 speech made by Sir Robert PEEL in the House of Commons. I sometimes test my memory of the words now and I am willing to stand corrected. I now quote:

It may be that I shall leave a name sometimes remembered with expressions of goodwill in the abodes of those whose lot it is to labour, and to earn their daily bread with the sweat of their brow, when they shall recruit their exhausted strength with abundant and untaxed food, sweeter because it is no longer leavened with a sense of injustice.

House of Commons January 27th 1846

We used to pray for fine weather for Good Friday because mother used to order five hundred Hollands pies, a thousand muffins, a hundred loaves, a hundredweight sack of sugar, a hundred tins of Smiths crisps and boxes of chocolate bars by the hundred. Two hundred cases of minerals came up from Giles TAYLOR's Mineral Water Works in Ramsbottom. (We had no refuse collection and most of the bottles had the glass alley in the top so bottle collectors might like to take their spades to our tip which was about 200 yards from the farm gate.) Finally, we stocked four wooden cigarette machines which were about two feet six inches high by 18 inches wide and six inches deep. Ten or 12 of our dear ladies from the village came to help. Many of their sons and daughters, who still live locally, can probably remember their mothers at the Farm on Good Friday. Two of the ladies managed a stall at the back of the Farm which had a cigarette machine and also sold crisps, chocolate, pop and pies. There was a second stall outside the Farm gate with two more ladies 'on hot waters'

which meant supplying people who carried up with them their own tea and sugar with the water. This involved, for a small deposit, our huge white jugs and cups. Meanwhile, mother and the rest of the ladies were busy in the farmhouse serving full teas and father was busy everywhere replenishing the stalls, but mainly occupied with his last, replacing heels on ladies' shoes. My two brothers (David and Peter) almost wore out their clogs fetching spring water from the well and carrying buckets of coal to feed the farm fires and boiler to keep the hot water going. I myself was at the Tower with a good supply of tickets. I can remember the local policemen being kept busy with lost children. The Red Cross and local ambulance teams spent their day bandaging cut knees and there would even be the occasional fractured arm or leg, often caused by venturing too close to the edge of one of the many small quarries on the moor.

Another memorable day was the annual Grand National Motor Cycle scramble, known as one of the toughest in Britain. The Tower and the Farm played their parts in the same way as on Good Friday, making it a great day out for everyone.

When World War II began, the War Office commandeered our saddle and harness room and installed four bunks and a stove. Eight members of the Home Guard then came every evening at 7.30pm. Four stayed at the farm whilst the remaining four kept watch from the top of the Tower for enemy paratroopers. They changed watch sometime during the early hours and left at 8.00am to then begin a day's work, later resuming their Home Guard duties once again.

Father had seen active service in the 1914-18 war and at the age of 16 was wounded in France but he was away during most of World War II driving excavators building and repairing aerodromes, Hendon and Croydon amongst others. We did have a visit from him sometimes at six or eight week intervals. We never did receive much national news on our Pennine farm but we did have a radio with a large dry battery and two accumulators. One day, excitement spread through the farm when we were told that we were going to see Dad *"on the pictures"* \ Clothing coupons were spent on suitable clothes and we all left for the cinema where we saw Father on the Pathé News. He was driving an excavator that had come over from the USA and I remember very well that I suddenly felt six feet tall on seeing him on the newsreel. We were told that a Swedish man had accompanied the machine to instruct Father about how to drive it. [If my memory serves me correctly, it had a 120 foot jib and one could have driven a caterpillar tractor into its bucket and still walked around it. I cannot remember how many tons of earth it could lift but at the time it was the largest in Britain.] Father and the Swede decided that they would correspond afterwards but sadly, we learnt that his ship was torpedoed on the way back to the States with everyone on board lost at sea.

While Father was away, my mother, my young brothers and I had to carry on with the farm work: we 'mucked out', milked, chopped wood and carried in the water

TWO TOWERS TOUR

Robert Peel 1788 - 1850

Prime Minister 1834 & 1841-6

Founder Police Force 1829 - 'Peelers', 'Bobbies'

Repealer Corn Laws 1846

Opened 9.9.1852. Cost £965

Closed 1947

Reopened 12.11.1985

Floodlit

1935 & 1989

Nat. Trust
316 acres

Park your car behind the Grant Arms
or near the Library or near the Station
or in Nuttall Park

Choose a good day for the views

Do you know 'Ramsbottom's Duck Trail'?

John B. Taylor

'Stories in Stone.'
Dates in Ramsbottom

RAMSBOTTOM

Time ~
2 to 4 hours
Distance ~
6 miles or 10 km.
Height climbed ~
1247 feet or 380 m.

GRANT'S TOWER
or Grant Memorial Tower 80'



128'

Owned by
Bury M.B.
+ 21 acres.
Open when
flag flies
Admission
free
174 steps

PEEL

PEEL
TOWER

or Holcombe Tower
or Peel Monument

Top of the Moor Farm
Simon's Seat
2000

Hay House

Ramsbottom's finest big house

1616 RB

1851 T.E.G. 1857

Daniel-Uloom Islamic College 1975

former Arithon Hospital, Sanatorium, Holcombe Hall

Dawes Bank

Dawes Bank House

1783

Lumb Carr Farm

Woodhey Sch.

Redisher Woods

Local Nature Reserve

HOLCOMBE BROOK

PEEL APPEAL

Do you know?

Peel Street
Peel Arms
Peel View
Sir Robert Peel
Peel Brow

Peel Park
Peel Holdings
Peelers cafe
The Peel Walk
Peel statue

Peel Drive
Peel Chapel
Orange Peel
others

Name the marked Churches

Can you name the initialled public houses?

Isn't it time for a rebuild or a New Tower?



Built in 1829
by the Cheongle Brothers
Daniel & William Grant
1783-1835 1769-1842
Calico printers

84 steps

825'

from photo, 1910

Grant's Tower & Peel Tower were like book ends
at the entrance to Rossendale.

Grant's Tower collapsed 21 Sept. 1944.

Isn't it time for a rebuild or a New Tower?

Do you know?
'Grant Arms Hotel'
Grant's Nursery
Grant's Church
Grant's Alley/Entry
Grant's Works
Grant's Wood
Grant's View
Grant's Lane
Grant's aid
... others ...?

TAKEN FOR GRANTED

Scale
1/2 mile

SCALE

before we left for school carrying our gas masks. (The farm had no gas, electricity or mains water.) We were given until 9.30am to get to school because of the work we had to do beforehand but if we had rushed out, maybe cleaning off our clogs on the way, and forgotten our gas masks we were given the cane on both hands and sent back for them, % mile each way. During the war we had to declare at the office of the Ministry of Food in Bridge Street, Ramsbottom how many acres of land we had. We were then ordered to put so many acres into potatoes, turnips and kale. They also wanted to know how many head of cattle, horses, sheep, pigs and poultry we kept. Whatever the animal - beast, cow, pig, horse or sheep, if one died and had previously been recorded one had to produce the carcass for the Ministry. I remember once even having to dig up some sick calves which had died and been buried to have them crossed off the stock list. We also had various goats whose milk we delivered to the AITKEN Sanatorium for the tuberculosis patients there. As well as local butchers, 'black marketeers' called constantly for meat and poultry but we couldn't supply them. Our geese, which we kept in the yard, were our best watchdogs. There was many a thief trying to steal a turkey or even a young lamb.

On one occasion we had a sow which farrowed ten piglets and I was duly sent down to Ramsbottom to inform the Ministry that there were nine. Afterwards, when the day came for the visit of the 'Ministry Man'⁵ my younger brother David kept watch from the top of the moor to the farm. This visitor would be easy to see as he was always on foot because of petrol rationing. (Also they stood out because they wore long black coats and bowler hats and carried briefcases.) David was to signal to my other brother Peter stationed on the paddock wall. At the alert, Mother dumped a piglet into a sack and I set off with the squealing pig over my shoulder through the big meadow to the far pastures. After what seemed like hours of holding my hand over a squealing snout one of my brothers came to report that the 'Ministry Man'⁵, having counted and recorded nine piglets, had departed. Our contraband piglet reached six months old before we smoked or salted the pork, some of which we exchanged for veal from a nearby farm. There a cow which twinned but was reported as having only one calf, with sentries being set up in a similar way. Sheep were different because their skins were marked but they often got lost or died in the winter so we were able to arrange swaps for mutton too. Farmers throughout the country 'helped' one another in this way.

Huge stumps about eight feet above ground had been placed over most of the moor stretching from the Tower to beyond Pilgrims' Cross in order to prevent enemy planes from landing. On many evenings we watched the German Luftwaffe fly overhead and start to bomb Manchester. We saw searchlights weaving their beams in the night sky and heard the sound of *ackack*. The planes were returning over the Tower again leaving Manchester with one huge glow in the distance as we watched from the farmyard feeling helpless and anguished but with our Home Guard

constantly on the alert for parachutists from those same planes. On a number of occasions, we did see parachutes floating down beyond our pastures but they were our own RAF, practising drops in daylight. The War Office had asked for the use of our back pasture to carry out manoeuvres so once a week on average we received a letter from the War Office telling us a certain date and time to close indoors all our livestock. Tanks and bren-gun carriers would come rumbling up the side of the hill and past our farm to the pastures and then all hell broke loose! Closeted in the farmhouse with Mother, we sometimes wondered whether the Germans really had landed. Hours later, when we heard that familiar rumbling again, we used to go to the farm gate to see the cheery wave from 'our Tommies' and know that all was well. The war made a great difference in many other ways, of course. Many of the cottagers in Holcombe Village took in evacuees. They had never even heard of swedes, never mind eaten one but we soon 'broke them in'. I remember one day when Mother and I were milking in the shippon a group of evacuees had walked up the moor and called at the farm. They were amazed to see where we got our milk from.

The war over, bonfires were lit and we had fireworks instead of ammunition on the hill. We had saved enough money to have a telephone installed so the Germans we then saw on Holcombe Hill were the ones from Warth Prisoner of War Camp. Watched over by two Lancashire Fusiliers and supervised by men from the GPO they dug the holes and put in our telegraph poles from the AITKEN Sanatorium to the farm. They had their own rations but we made them all a jug of cocoa from time to time. The bunkhouse became the saddle room again and, despite Britain still coping with food rationing, our catering trade gradually began to flourish once more. Eventually Father had to inform the RUDC that the Tower staircase was becoming unsafe. He had attached metal plating to many of the steps that had worn or rusted dangerously thin but during the war years our pride and joy had not received its annual spring clean. No agreement could be reached with the trustees about my Father taking responsibility for the Tower and they decided to close it down. Our family were very sad about the whole matter because we had strong feelings of belonging, or rather that the Tower belonged to us. We knew it didn't of course, but we had an affection for it as the basis of our livelihood. The inevitable happened and as the Good Friday pilgrims dwindled, so did our catering business and we had to close down too. It was never an easy task trying to make a living as a hillside farmer with sheep losses particularly heavy in a bad winter so we started a boarding kennels for dogs and cats. We found that the kennels was only busy during the Bury or Bolton Wakes weeks. All the time we were watching the Tower becoming more dilapidated and thinking she might suffer the same fate as Grants' Tower across the valley.

I was in Canada when, in November 1983, a friend sent me a cutting from the *Bury*

Times reporting that the Peel Tower Monument was to be restored. Most local people must have been delighted at this news and I know my joy that it has been repaired is shared with my remaining family.

Margaret P. VICKERS 1985 (revised 2009)

Dr Rhodes Boyson

David McKIE, who wrote to the Society while he was gathering information for a gazetteer, contacted us again with details about the recently published book. He also speaks of the possibility of Ramsbottom's William and Daniel GRANT being the prototypes of characters in Charles DICKENS novel Nicholas Nickleby. Mr McKIE ends his message and adds an amusing anecdote:

Although I know this is impossible, I used to think that some of the aspects of Josiah Brouderby in the same author's *Hard Times* (though not of course his invented hard childhood) must have been modelled on the mutton-chopped former pedagogue and straight-out-of-the-catalogue right wing Tory MP Dr Rhodes BOYSON; and BOYSON, I discovered after my visit, has Ramsbottom connections too, having been a teacher in the town. In a rather wandering Commons debate in March 1994 he gave this rather wandering account of his time there:

Sir Rhodes BOYSON: Those pupils, some of whom are still my friends, were the most awkward characters that I had ever met, and their big concern was to get out of school. The headmaster's job was similar to mine - to get them to a technical college three miles away, driving there in the morning, returning in the afternoon. I was allowed a full curriculum, anything that I wanted as long as those pupils did not return to school. They nearly drove me out of teaching. After my first two months I decided that I could not control one of them.

That year the first snow came in November to Ramsbottom, from where Albert came and was eaten by the lion. At that time, his was the only name on the honours board of that school. I had to teach the class in a laboratory and the gas and water taps added to the excitement, I blew the whistle for the class to come in but nobody appeared and when I went out the pupils were pointing not to the Archangel Gabriel, but to the second-floor roof on which was a boy whom I called 'C' and he was the most difficult boy in the class. They said, 'What are you going to do about him, sir?' Fortunately I had been trained in the navy and I climbed the drainpipe all the way. This is all public knowledge because I have written it up. I got hold of the boy and brought him down, kicking him as we came. There was no corporal punishment, of course. When we got to the bottom there was a great cheer and the class said, 'Good old sir. That was good, sir.' They ran in like a set of whippets and I had no more

trouble with them. One must pay attention to great philosophy, but one must also be sure that one can climb the rigging.

(Sir Rhodes BOYSON, born 1925, who was a Minister of State at the time of this speech, taught at Peel Brow Secondary Modern School during the early years of his career - Editor)

Shaw's Grocers (60 Bridge Street) before the Second World War

Memories of a local resident, who was born in 1923, from a taped interview by Kate SLINGSBY and transcribed by Kathy STOTT

I worked for SHAW's the grocers as a boy. If it was school holidays I worked all day on Mondays but usually I worked every Thursday evening. I used to take out orders to houses, which were nearly all up Victoria Street, Albert Street or Tanners Street. I got a shilling a week, which helped me to buy my bicycle (on hire purchase). Mr SHAW got really cross with me when it was the elections because I had been recruited by the Conservative party to gather people's numbers at the polling station. This involved asking people for their numbers before they voted and the information was booked so party officials knew who'd been to vote. Voting was on a Thursday, so I got into trouble because I should have been delivering goods, but for the polling station job I got half a crown, which was big money then. I can always remember trying to find someone to pay the half crown afterwards which was always difficult because I knew who engaged me, but not who should pay. Eventually, I had to go all the way up to Dundee Lane to find the person who was responsible for the money, to get my half crown.

At SHAW's grocers the butter used to come in big chunks in a wooden box with paper inside. It was not British butter but came from Denmark or Northern Germany. Empire butter was looked down upon, as it was rather yellow. The most popular one was Danish which came in big squares that you used to cut up into whatever weight was wanted, such as half a pound, six ounces or four ounces. I remember that when Charles SHAW became annoyed or indignant he used to hit his butter and he used to say they can have it like the Maypole (a shop at the top of Bridge Street), because the Maypole used to pat the butter they sold with wooden butter pats that left a design on it.

Biscuits didn't then come pre-packed to the shop but in a 71b tin. All round the shop were tins, pound tins with their lids on so if you wanted assorted biscuits you took some out of each of a number of tins. You didn't use tongs, you used your fingers to do it and there was no sell-by date! You put the tins away at night on a shelf that ran

round the counter. A lot of confectioners sold eggs - they'd have a big bowlful in the window which I presume came from local farmers, but I never was a buyer. They definitely had the lion on them. In SHAW's we sold cheese and bacon so we had a bacon sheer.

Sugar and flour were brought up from the railway station in two hundredweight (cwt) sacks. They were terribly heavy (1 cwt = 8 stones) so I couldn't lift a 2cwt sack of sugar. That was one of the jobs I used to do on a Monday, weighing sugar out, and it was always put in a blue bag made from very stiff paper. Sugar, raisins and currants were all weighed out in 2lb or lib bags. Tea arrived in big tea chests with the foil lining and was weighed out too. I can't remember how the coffee beans came. You didn't have a choice - different types of coffee such as Colombian, they were just coffee beans. Coffee had to be ground as there was no instant coffee of course so all the grocery shops had a coffee grinder. Assistants would grind it as you waited, and then put it in a bag, which I never could master. The bag had to be formed by rolling it up, so that it tapered and was conical. Sweets were sold like that, too, and when they had been filled the bags were twisted round and then the knot at the top end was twisted. Everything was manual.

We sold all the main groceries, the basics you see nowadays, but obviously we didn't have the range of a modern supermarket. Everything was sold from the counter and an assistant served you. Also people used to send a grocery list into the shop and, once their order had been 'put up', shop staff would deliver the groceries to their home. Their lists were nearly the same every week. It didn't vary much, because there wasn't a lot of variety.

The Civic Year of Ramsbottom Urban District Council 1972 – 73

In our archive we recently found a scrapbook of news cuttings, mainly captioned photographs, related to civic activities during the penultimate year of the Ramsbottom Urban District Council before reorganisation in 1974. We are grateful to the family of Mrs Mary⁹ MILLS, the RUDC's Chairman's Lady who compiled the scrapbook, for giving us permission to use it to highlight a few of the civic events of 1972 - 3. We hope to bring back happy memories to some of our readers.

The 1972 - 3 civic year began when retiring Chairman of RUDC, Cllr Albert LITTLE, placed the chain of office on the shoulders of the new Chairman, Cllr Herbert MILLS. *(We are pleased to note that the present Mayor of Bury, Councillor Sheila MAGNALL wears this same RUDC chain when she is carrying out her duties in Ramsbottom. - Editor)* A civic service took place at Rowland's Chapel, Summerseat after which Ramsbottom UDC Chairman and his Lady, Cllr and Mrs Herbert MILLS, the vice-chairman and his wife, Cllr and Mrs Albert LITTLE, and

the Mayor and Mayoress of Bury, Cllr and Mrs D O DAVIES were photographed. Alderman and Mrs CONNELLY and the Town Clerk (Mr W B WOLFE) were also pictured with the Bishop at the entrance to the church. One of the first functions was the Chairman's party for housebound people, which was held at St Philip's Church, Stubbins.

Cllr MILLS attended many fundraising events, including the annual Spring Fair run by Shuttleworth Women's Institute at St John's Church, Shuttleworth. He was photographed at one of the busy stalls with his wife and Mrs B RAMSBOTTOM, Mrs J M DRAPER and Mrs R FRAIN. Entertainment was by the local Women's Institute choir and around £90 was raised for church funds. At a coffee evening in the Civic Hall, which was opened by local model and beauty queen Miss Elaine FARNWORTH, Ramsbottom Ladies' Lifeboat Guild chairman Mrs Marjorie ALFEROFF gave a brief outline of the 50 years that the Ramsbottom Branch had been in existence. There were stalls selling toys and Christmas gifts, a raffle, a bring and buy stall and a tombola. £140 was raised. At another function to fund raise for Holcombe Brook Methodist Church visitors to Ramsbottom library admired a painting by local artist Mrs Margaret BELL. The painting "was in an exhibition of local paintings by local artists ~ including Fred HOWARTH and Yates HEAP. Later on, Mrs Mary MILLS was the main guest at an American Tea organised by the Ladies' Fellowship of the same church. The event was opened by Mrs Edith HOLLAND and a total of £53 was raised for the Ladies Fellowship Fund. Also present were Mrs Sandra HOLT, Mrs Sarah JONES and Mrs Barbara ASHBURN. "All the works were donated," said the Methodist circuit minister, the Rev J PALMER. "They have been selling quite well. It's surprising how much talent is available when you need it." The exhibition had proved so popular that it was extended for a further week. The money raised was to go to the church's appeal for funds for an extension. This was already within £5,000 of the target figure of £22,000. A bring and buy sale at Summerseat Sunshine Club and a £66 Easter effort at Rowlands also get a mention in Mrs MILLS' scrapbook.

There was a *White Ensign and Social Dance* at the Civic Hall which was also the venue when about 250 people joined the Chairman and Lady of RUDC at the Ramsbottom Civic Ball. Among the guests were Rossendale's MP and his wife, Mr and Mrs Ronald BRAY, the Mayors and Mayoresses of Rawtenstall, Haslingden, Bacup, Radcliffe and Prestwich and the Chairmen and Ladies of Tottington, Whitefield, Turton and Farnworth. Music for dancing was provided by the Assembly Dance Band. There was a tombola stall and a supper. Later in the year, the Caledonian Society's St Andrew's Day Dance was also attended by Cllr and Mrs MILLS as was the Rotarians 19* Charter Dinner, when the club president was Mr Harrison M HADDOCK and their vice-president was Mr F BELLIS. At another function the Union of Soroptimists received a civic welcome.

A special day for 11 years old Susan NISBET was when she was crowned rose queen by Mrs MILLS at Rowlands Methodist Church, Summerseat. Susan's retinue included Julie and Sally Ann MOORES, Christine and Carol PEMBERTON, Sarah WALMSLEY and Simone BOARDMAN. Flowers were presented to the main guests by Kate NISBET, Alison and Karen McDONALD and Nicola WEBSTER. A vote of thanks was proposed by Timothy WALMSLEY. The church members organised stalls, and entertainment was provided by Mr K FLETCHER on the electric accordion. The pianist for the afternoon was Mr D MOORES.

A most important legacy to Ramsbottom from the year 1972 - 3 is the town's new swimming pool. On 22nd July 1972, the Council Chairman cut the tape at the official opening ceremony. The occasion was commemorated with a plaque. (One of the two plaques which Ramsbottom Heritage Society arranged to be cleaned and reinstated at the pool early this year. The other plaque, as it states, places on record the RUDC's sincere appreciation of the subscriptions, donations and efforts of: the Miss K L PORRITT Trust, the James ASHWORTH Trust, A H GODWIN Chairman's Swimming Bath Appeal Fund, the Ramsbottom and District Sports Advisory Council and the ratepayers and organisations of Ramsbottom. Editor).

There was also a sponsored swim which raised £150 for the hospital. Later in the year Cllr and Mrs Herbert MILLS joined civic heads at a festival ball at Whitworth Civic Hall following the opening of that town's £75,000 swimming pool.

Another highlight of the civic year was when the Fusiliers' Band performed in front of the Town Hall', now Council Chambers. The *Cemetery Hotel* was renamed *The Fusilier* as drummers stood at either side of pub doorway with union flags in groups of three at first floor window-sill level. Afterwards other band members mingled with the crowd.

Eight teenagers of Ramsbottom Secondary School including Jeremy CHEW and ten youngsters of Stubbins Primary School received cycling proficiency certificates from Cllr MILLS when he handed out the awards at the two schools. At Stubbins he gave a road safety talk as well. During his year of office he also presented cycling proficiency certificates at Rowlands School, Holcombe Brook Primary School and St Joseph's. Road safety organiser Mr J RILEY had set up Ramsbottom's first Tufty Club to cater for around twelve children between ages of three and seven and this was the reason for a visit to the Summerseat School for Delicate Children (Headmaster Mr G SIDERY), The town's cycle rally, with seventy competitors that year, was also part of Mrs MILLS' programme of events. Under the heading *Golden Wedding of a Great-Gran* there is a photograph showing Cllr MILLS visiting friends. Mr and Mrs Charles ISHERWOOD with some of their cards and gifts on their Golden Wedding Day. Cllr MILLS, an Independent, eventually joined the Liberal party and one of the last cutting in the scrapbook shows him standing with Alderman Cyril SMITH.

Memories of life on Gollinrod Farm during World War 2

My father rented Gollinrod Farm in 1939. About 20 to 30 families lived in the little hamlet close by. There was a 'toffee' shop which opened at weekends and holidays and did a roaring trade selling sweets and ice-cream to people walking up to Grant's Tower. Mr DAKIN, the tenant at Hoof Farm, also ran amusements like swings and roundabouts at the Tower.

Ours was one of the oldest farms in the Ramsbottom area. It was a beautiful house with mullion windows. It had been extended and the kitchen was divided by steps leading from the old to the new part. The cooking was done on the open range in the living room. This also heated the water. We used fresh spring water from the hills near Grant's Tower but as it came through lead pipes to our house we had to run the water for sometime before we could drink it. We did not have electricity so used gas mantles for lighting in four rooms and hurricane lamps and candles upstairs.

The house was very cold and I remember the upstairs windows were always a bit open as my dad believed in fresh air. I slept in a room with my two brothers, sharing a bed with one while the other, the tallest, slept in a bed near the window. We had to go through our parents' room to get to ours. My sisters had a bedroom on the north side of the house. On cold nights the girls used to creep out of their beds, pass through our parent's room without waking them, and get into bed with us. Our mother was always surprised to find us all cuddled up together for warmth. I went to Peel Brow School. One thing that was a source of amusement amongst the classmates was that all the boys and girls had to learn to knit. We knitted little squares of 30 stitches of plain knitting by 30 lines. The teacher then with the help of some of the girls stitched them together to make blankets to send out to the soldiers. We had a few sheep, pigs and chickens but it was mainly a dairy farm and the milk was sold to the Co-op in Bury. We took the chums to be collected from top road but the snow was so deep in the winter of 1940 that we had to use a horse and wooden sledge to take the milk as far as Robinson Kay Home. We found a baker's van there and took all the bread he could spare back to Gollinrod in an empty chum. We left home at 10 a.m. and did not get back till 5 p.m. We distributed the bread around Gollinrod hamlet that evening lighting our way with lanterns.

We used a horse and cart to deliver the milk in Shuttleworth and part of Ramsbottom. I used to help out at the weekends. Our dairy herd, and hence our supply of milk, was reduced during World War 2 as the Ministry of Agriculture made us grow vegetables and cereals on 20 acres of the land. Many customers were unhappy, particularly a lady in Crow Lane who said she was not getting enough milk to make the rice pudding on a Sunday because she lived the furthest away from the farm.

We sold the vegetables locally but some also went off to Manchester and other places. Growing vegetables as well as milking cows made life very hard for my

parents and they were offered prisoners of war to help with harvesting of crop, both Italian and German. The army did not bother to guard the Italians as they did not expect them to try to escape but the Germans had to be accompanied by guards with guns.

My father was a bit concerned about having armed guards around us children so instead opted to have British soldiers who were recuperating in Bury' from injury, disease or shell shock after Dunkirk.

The soldiers were billeted in homes nearby and worked on the farm during the day. We were assigned four men for one week but they ended up staying for 10 weeks. The army told my father to pay the soldiers sixpence or 1 bottle of beer per day but my father did not think that was enough and gave them a shilling and 2 bottles of beer per day. They used to store up their beer allowance for the Friday night festivities at the farm when there was a get together with the locals and my mother played the piano.

All four soldiers returned to the front and only one, Taffy, survived the war. He came back to see us afterwards.

We used to cut the grass on part of Nuttall Parie - where football fields are now- for hay for the cattle. The area was very polluted by the railway and the mills and all of us as well as the hay were covered in soot.

I remember seeing train loads of evacuees passing through Ramsbottom on the way up the line to Colne. There were 16 stops between Manchester and Colne and the children were dropped off at various places on route. We had evacuees ourselves. I remember one girl from London was placed with us whilst her brothers were at nearby Red Hall Farm. The poor girl was terrified of the country life and had to be resettled in a house in Shuttleworth.

We also had land girls and I remember looking across to the field next to our farm and seeing the most beautiful 18 year old girl dressed in a green jumper, jodhpurs and khaki overcoat. Aged 9, I thought I would never see such a vision of loveliness again. She is now in a nursing home and still teases me about it when I visit her.

We also had the help of a man and a tractor who went from farm to farm helping with the ploughing. He allowed me to ride with him one year. I loved the tractor more than the land girl.

Bryan WALSH talking with Brenda RICHARDS 2009

[Gollinrod Farm was demolished to make way for the M66 motorway in 1970s. Editor]

The editors welcome any contributions about life in the Ramsbottom area, from single paragraphs to life histories.

LOCAL RESEARCH

The Heritage Society has no staff, and cannot offer a research or query service. The following institutions could be approached:

Bury Museum and Archive, Moss Street, Bury, BL9 0DG tel: 0161 253 6782

Email: archives@bury.gov.uk Website: www.bury.gov.uk/archives

Opening Hours:

Tuesday	1pm - 4pm	2nd Saturday of the month 10am - 4pm
Wednesday	1pm - 4pm	
Thursday	10am - 4pm	
Friday	10am - 4pm	

(We ask that people get in touch to make an appointment in advance of any visit to the archives as these opening hours could be restricted at short notice due to staffing levels)

Our new searchroom features large reading tables, computer and internet access, microfiche readers and access to Picture Memories. Paper catalogues are available in the searchroom and in Reference and Information Services, Bury Library. We run an enquiry service, offering 15 minutes staff time, and we hold details of researchers in the area who offer fee based services. The building has lift and ramp access, lockers and public toilets. The Ramsbottom Heritage Society's Collection, including photographs, is on permanent loan.

Bury Central Library (Reference and Information Services), Manchester Road, Bury, BL9 0DG – tel 0161 253 5871 has publications on local history, historical printed works of local interest such as trade directories, older OS maps for the whole of Bury MBC, including Ramsbottom, copies of local newspapers, thematic collections of news cuttings worth pursuing for local biographies, census returns and parish registers on microfilm.

Lancashire Family History and Heraldry Society; membership secretary David Burgess, 10, St Andrew's Drive, Alwoodley, Leeds, LS17 7TR – Tel 01132695512, email membership@lfhhs.org.uk. Ordinary membership is £12 per year (concessions £9.50) and this entitles you to 4 magazine issues, an opportunity to publish your research queries and findings, and 14 meetings each month with speakers at venues all over the county, including Bury and Rawtenstall. More information is available on www.lfhhs.org.uk.

Ramsbottom Library and Adult Learning Centre, Carr Street BL0 9AE

tel 0161 253 5352 (IT -tel 0161 253 5354) email Ramsbottom.lib@bury.gov.uk

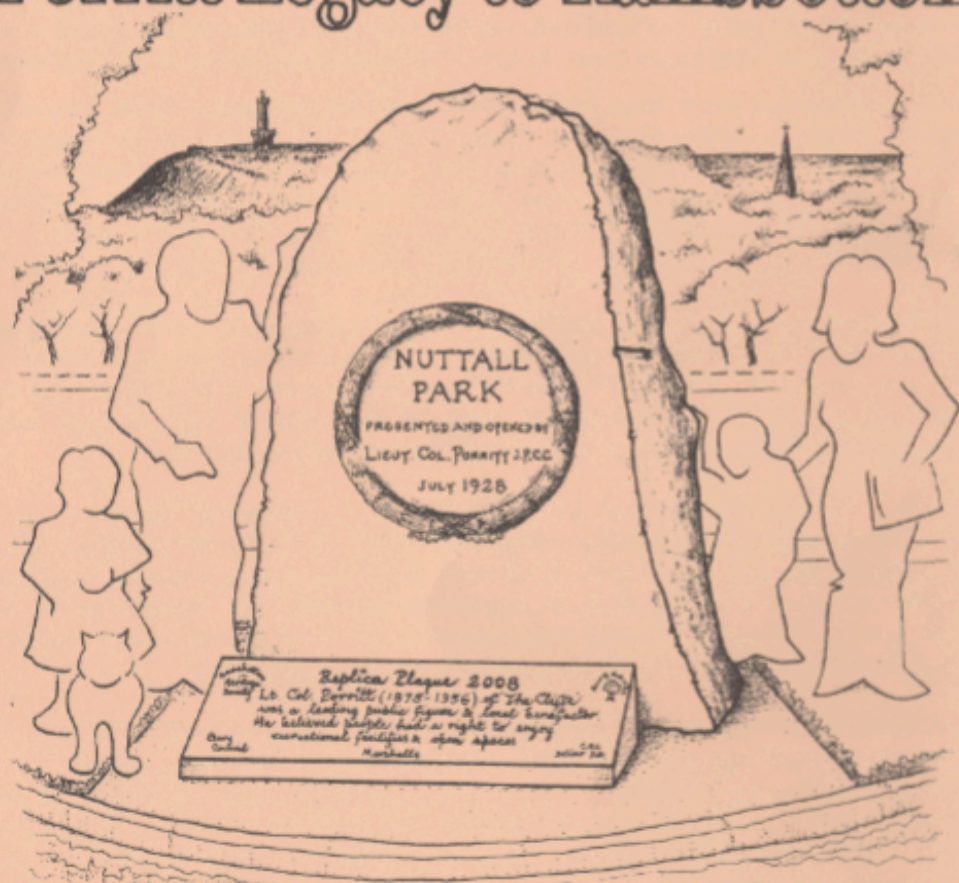
The library boasts a state-of-the-art IT suite, with a visually impaired and disabled friendly workstation, back copies of the *Ramsbottom Observer* 1890-1950 on film and microfiche reader. Much of the Ramsbottom local collection of the late Rev R R Carmyllie, local census returns and several filing drawers of local newscuttings and booklets and Hume Elliot's history are also available. Family history help sessions are held on the last Thursday of every month (except December) from 3pm to 7pm.

A new souvenir booklet from Ramsbottom Heritage Society

NUTTALL PARK

and the

Porritt Legacy to Ramsbottom



48 pages ~ Price £3

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History of the Park

Memories of Stubbins Vale Mill