



# NEWS MAGAZINE



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# Ramsbottom Heritage Society

## News Magazine No 61

### Autumn/Winter 2021

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#### Front Cover

David Malin taken in 2000 and Bird Hall in 1978 . A recent photo of Bird Hall is on page 16 . The three photos are courtesy of David Malin.

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

In issue 60, I appealed for a new Programme Secretary to organise the monthly meetings. I am pleased to announce that Linda de Ruijter has taken on this role, and had organised speakers for 2022, although the speakers for each date haven't been confirmed at the time of writing. The committee has also decided to restart meetings, but as the Ramsbottom Civic Hall is still be used for Covid-19 vaccinations, we will temporarily move to Christ Church Neighbourhood centre on Great Eaves Road. We are unable to book Wednesday evenings, so the meetings will be held on Thursday evenings at 7.30 p.m.. The first one will be a members' social evening on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> December at 7.30 p.m, which will include a Christmas buffet. We will also use the meeting to hold a short Annual General Meeting to confirm the appointment of Linda and the rest of the committee.

I have recently received a request from Kathy Fishwick :

Maybe you remember a talk I did for you some time ago on Henry Hargreaves' Diary? Well, like many other people I found time during the lockdown to do things I haven't got round to before, and this includes a study of the diary and filling in background information. I would love to publish this as a book, but there is a snag: the owner of the actual diary always (quite rightly) kept it very precious, and I do not know who it is. I feel that it would be only right to ask the owner's permission before going into print, although it would be done purely for academic purposes and any profits would, as from the other books I have done, go to a Charity. The contact I had was Barbara Horrocks, who is now sadly suffering from dementia, and can't remember. I know the owner lived in the Ramsbottom/Bury area and wondered if you had any contacts who could shed light on this. I really don't want to push ahead without asking, so your help would be very much appreciated.

If you have any information, please contact me using the details on the inside front cover

I also received these comments about living in Nuttall village, by an anonymous correspondent who wishes to be known as “Starling Street Ghost ?”.

A friend has kindly lent me his copy of the book about Nuttall, the lost village. I must thank the people who took time and trouble to research and publish said book. Being an "Owd Nutterite myself" it has brought back years of dear fond memories of childhood in the village. I would like to make reference to the "round hole in the field near the big chimney". This was indeed to hold water as sometimes the soot at the base would catch fire and had to be extinguished by going into the tunnel ( which access point is very close by) to put out the fire. This is the tunnel we used to store our bonfire wood in and have a crafty "woodbine or two in" so as not to be seen by our parents. (sorry boys, the truth slipped out). I was sad to see the Bridge of conquest had fallen down (Gollinrod Footbridge) as this took with it many,many "Bragging rites" of some of the boys, at the time. We played all the usual games kids played in the 1940s and 50s, a favourite being "kiss catch", once you had received your kiss you could, at a later time add a notch to the girl's initial on the bridge. This was done by laying flat on the decking and hanging out over the water to cut a notch in the downstream side "at the side of the girl's initial". This could only be seen by walking along the "iron bridge" mentioned by Jim Isherwood in the book and looking up-stream at Gollinrod Bridge. I hope nature has been kind and the "tree of love" is still growing strong. This is a tree which grows near where the Natives called "the big hill" where we spent many happy hours sledging down in winter. It can be found at the top of the cliffs overlooking the second iron bridge. By the way both iron bridges were not footbridges, but large sewer pipes. On this tree was carved a heart with a girl's/boy's initials (of which there were many) to who one had a teenage crush/puppy love on. Most of the village girls had their initials on the tree. The one who had the most admirers was almost on the top branches.

This was an insight into the the innocent side of wartime village life.

## **SOCIETY NEWS**

### **Nuttall Mill Chimney Remains**

In December 2020, and again in May 2021, using some of the profits from our book “Nuttall: Ramsbottom’s Lost Village” a tree surgeon was employed to remove some of the trees which had been hiding the remains of the chimney, an important reminder of the old village of Nuttall. Treatment to prevent regrowth has now been carried out and trees discovered growing inside the chimney have been removed.



**Before the first tree felling**

**After**



A second tree felling removed the trees on top of the chimney. The photo on the left was taken by James Leyland using a drone, and the montage on the right, which highlights the red circle, was extracted from a video taken by the contractors Tower Forestry.

## The Signage Project

Brenda Richards' research into old street names led to proposals being put forward for brand new street signs at four local sites identified as being of historic interest: Grant's Entry, Draba Street (*Draba Brow*), Gutter Lane, and Chapel Gate. A firm decision was made to go ahead and we are delighted to report that, all being well, the installation of the four signs may be completed by the time members receive this newsletter.



**John Ireland and Andrew Todd**

We are giving you a chance to discover the signs for yourselves when you are out and about around Ramsbottom. They are aluminium and painted white (black text and border) with the Ramsbottom Heritage Society logo in full colour.





Background information:

“**Carriage drive to Carr Bank**” exists today as a wide footpath/track leading from the gatehouse on Ramsbottom Lane but was originally access to Carr Bank House. In his 1893 book, “The Country and Church of the Cheeryble Brothers”, Reverend Hume Elliot noted that the house was originally called Carr Barn and writes:

**“the house was built and its grounds admirably laid out and planted in 1850. It was prepared for Mr John Grant, the younger, of Nuttall Hall, who, however did not live to occupy it. It was occupied for a time by his brother the late William Grant...”**

*(RHS Newsletter no 56 has an article about Carr Bank House which was demolished in the 1950s - Editor.)*

**“Other land the property of J G Lawson Esq”:**

this site includes the present Ramsbottom Civic Hall garden



**“CONTENTS 850 Sq. Yds”:** now the site of Ramsbottom Civic Hall

**“Land leased to the late MR JOHN WILD”:** now the site of the Grade II listed Market Chambers, and which has been known locally as “Wild’s Building”. Built between 1842 and 1847, it housed Ramsbottom Urban District Council Offices for about 60 years.

*(Since our research for a Newsletter 48 article we are still hoping to receive more information, particularly about the use of the building before it was bought from Mrs A E Wild by RUDC in 1911 – Editor)*

## ST PAUL'S SCHOOL IN THE 1920s



An unusual St Paul's classroom view C1928

Photo taken from page 38 of *Around Ramsbottom*, Ramsbottom Heritage Society 1995.

I started school at 5 years old at St Paul's School in Crow Lane opposite St Paul's Church. All I remember about the infant class was the teacher Miss Hasell giving me a slate to draw on with chalk crayons. I took a red chalk and covered the slate in red. She asked me what I had drawn and I said, "A house on fire." We played musical chairs and all the kids sang 'Poor Cock Robin' and other ditties.

On moving up to Standard 1, I was taught by my cousin Lucy Hutchinson, the daughter of my Father's brother Louis. I think she tried to discipline me, as my mother was ill and my Grandma hadn't much time to manage me. She would take me to task over the least misdemeanour and also inform my father about it as well - so I was punished at both ends! Looking back, I think it did some good, anyway it taught me to take

the knocks of later life. One episode was when she was reaching up high on the blackboard to write something, her knicker elastic broke and her knickers dropped down to her ankles. I was the only one who laughed out loud and of course I was chastised and my father informed later, so I got another telling off.

Cousin Lucy was a favourite of my Grandma's, she used to collect rents from houses my Grandma owned in Wallis Street which was a street off the bottom of Peel Brow now demolished and part of The Good Samaritan car park (now The Hearth of the Ram - Editor), and houses in Shuttleworth, some of which are now demolished. She came to Callender Street regularly. I remember her coming once to tell Grandma that she had met a young man, Norman Metcalf, and they had started courting. I thought this was one of her good turns to me, because he and his brother were pork butchers in Ramsbottom and they had a pig slaughter house. Later, when I knew Norman, he said I could visit the slaughter house, which I did and he gave me some pigs' bladders. When blown up and tied to a stick, we lads had some fun having bladder fights until they wore out and burst. Eventually Cousin Lucy married Norman Metcalf and they had a house in Dundee Lane near to the junction with The Rake and next to her mother's house.

The next class at St Paul's was Mrs Cook's, and after that Mrs Burton's, (Penny Burton). She had a large cupboard at the back of her classroom about 5ft high and any misdemeanour meant a spell in the cupboard for the culprit. However, I had one moment of glory in her class, I was good at making clay models and one day, the owner of a chip shop in Bridge Street and his wife, visited our classroom on a visit to the school. (I think he was a school governor or something.) He said he would give 6d to the best clay model when he came back later in the afternoon. I won the 6d with a model of a bunch of grapes. After school, I went to the little shop behind St Paul's Church and bought a large stick of liquorice root to chew and had some money left to save.

The next class was Mr Lindley's (Stink). I remember it was the first time I heard the poem "The Highwayman". We enacted this poem in class, Harry Williams was the Highwayman. I was one of the soldiers who shot him using a broom shaft for a gun. When I was in Lindley's class, I had a fight with another boy who had started to bully me. It was the custom to hold fights at the back of the 'Tubbers' (a works in Paradise Street where they made wooden barrels for beer etc). The lads would congregate there to shout support for their pals in the fight. It was known for the tubber to come out and throw a bucket of water over the fighters if things got too rough. Luckily, this didn't happen to me, the lad knocked me about but I didn't do so bad myself and knocked him about too. He never attempted to bully me again.

My next class was Miss West's (Cocky West). She looked 90, but dressed like a young flapper! Her geography lessons appealed to me and I really enjoyed her classes. Then it was Mr Harry Price's class (Old Harry). He was a strict disciplinarian and was the one, as Headmaster, who administered all the corporal punishment. You were always given the choice of the cane on your hand, or bent over and have it on your backside. I had it a few times, and always on my hand. The older lads used to say if you lay a long hair on your hand, it wouldn't hurt as much, but I had trouble trying to keep a hair on my hand when he held it to deliver the cane, and it always hurt like mad.

Mr Price's class was held at the end of the main hall, and one day, Arthur Young and I were fooling about before class making little ink bombs with modelling clay and ink from the ink wells in the desks. A tiny cup was fashioned from the clay and a little ink poured into it, then the cup was sealed and it was ready to be thrown. I threw mine at Arthur, missed him, and hit the hall and left an ink blob on the wall. Then Mr Price came in to take the lesson, during which we were sure he would see the ink blob on the wall. However, he never noticed it, and when he had finished the

lesson, he left the hall to take a class in another room. We then found some coloured chalk which was a close match to the colour of the distemper on the wall and disguised the ink blob. In time, this wore off, but when Mr Price did notice it, he was assured it had been there for ages and had been noticed by others. So to our relief, it was properly removed and forgotten about.

I think my one moment of fame in Mr Price's class was when he was teaching us about circles and areas, and he put the sign of  $\pi$  on the blackboard and asked if anyone knew what it meant. Having travelled to and from Bury many times with Grammar School lads doing their homework on the train, I knew all about Pi and gave him a full explanation. He was impressed, but my pals just said "swot" and pulled my leg unmercifully.

At St Paul's, we had weekly woodwork classes at Ramsbottom Technical School (this was a building on Stubbins Lane opposite the present fire station) and the girls had cookery classes. Our teacher was a Mr Camme, a red-haired disciplinarian who issued strict instructions which had to be obeyed for obvious safety reasons. It was my first encounter with really sharp and dangerous tools. He was a fine teacher and I always remember his 'face side, face edge' and the mark on the wood to be planed – face side face edge.

I was never much impressed with school, it tied me down too much but I enjoyed the companionship of my pals. I played football and was in the cricket team. However, I was an avid reader and read lots of books from the little Ramsbottom library, travel and adventure, Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines*, Aesha, Rudyard Kipling's books on India and all the Dickens books.

Ernest Hutchinson 2005

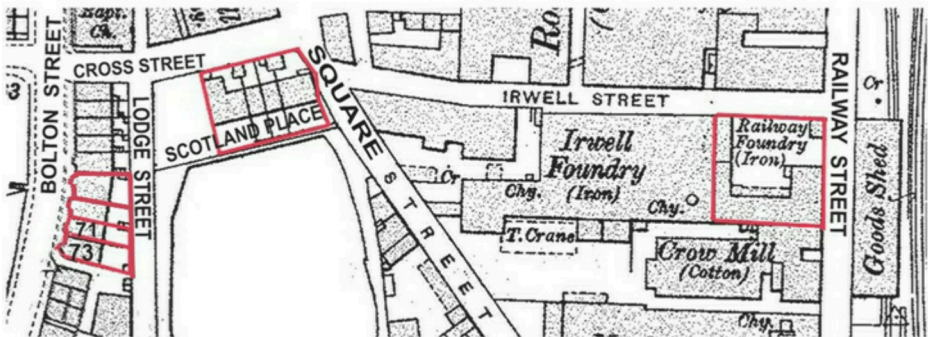
*(RHS news magazines nos 58 and 60 also featured extracts ("Dealings with the Butchery Trade" and "A Young Boy's Recreation in the 1920s") from Ernest Hutchinson's fascinating memoirs.*

## Arthur Bentley – Iron Founder and Builder

In 1851 Arthur Bentley was the first Iron Founder in Ramsbottom. He had learned the skills of an iron moulder as a young man and later owned Railway Foundry where Clarke's Crafts is today. This was conveniently near the railway station and goods sheds and a very short walk from his home.

When Arthur and Sarah Bentley first moved to Ramsbottom, they lived in Back Bridge Street but later moved to Scotland Place, off Square Street. It was from there that Arthur must have seen building work going on up above them on Bolton Street and decided to branch out into property himself.

In 1868 Arthur leased land from William Grant, on which he built the four houses 67 to 73 Bolton Street, calling them Lodge View. From Bolton Street the houses appear to be only two storeys high, but because of the steep slope they had three or four storeys at the rear overlooking John Gray's Lodge, now a development of flats. They also had cellars and attics and five or so bedrooms. Lodge View 1868 is carved in stone on the terrace beneath the gutter.



*Railway Foundry, Scotland Place and Lodge View, Bolton Street, are in red.  
1892 OS map*



*Lodge View, 67-73 Bolton Street houses built by Arthur Bentley*

Initially the Bentleys, a family totalling eleven, moved into number 67, the largest of the four houses. However, the oldest children, already in their twenties, soon left and by the time Arthur had died in 1876, there were only six people left at home. Sarah, his widow, then installed the family at no. 73 and then, inexplicably, moved again to no. 71. The houses they were not occupying were always let to tenants, which would have given Sarah an income. Interestingly Reverend William Hume Elliot was once one of their lodgers in 1901, and knew them well. 73 Bolton Street was sold to a printer in 1919, but it is not known how much longer the Bentleys owned the other houses.

The lives of Arthur and Sarah Bentley's children were as fascinating as those of their parents. Whilst three of twelve babies died in their infancy,

the other nine children and their mother all survived into the 20th century and their stories will be published later.

I am grateful to the current owner of 73 Bolton Street, who kindly lent me his deeds and to Keith Burroughs who placed information from censuses and trade directories on Facebook.

Kate Slingsby 2021

*(In the later 19th century several iron foundries were established near Ramsbottom centre to be close to the railway. Regular readers will know that outside Morrisons, proudly reminding us of Ramsbottom's manufacturing history, stands an old lamppost. In 2018, an RHS member, enlisting the generous support of Bury Council and Morrisons plc, had it "brought home" to the supermarket site, which was once occupied by its manufacturers, Joseph Strang, Prince's Foundry, Prince St, Ramsbottom. The Society installed an information board beside the lamppost.)*

## **BIRD HALL, ROWLANDS ROAD, WALMERSLEY**

*David Malin, the author of the article below, was born at Bird Hall, near Summerseat in 1941, but now lives in Australia, and has done since 1975. He has contacted the Society via our website and kindly sent extracts from the memoirs he is writing about his eventful life, telling us that access to the RHS bulletins has been very useful to him in filling out many details, especially of Summerseat. We are keen for our readers to have access to his interesting local research, so we are very grateful that he has allowed us to create two separate articles.*

*(A future issue of our newsletter will feature his memoirs of Summerseat itself.)*

*A quick internet search reveals that after graduating from technical college in Bury, Mr (now Dr) Malin began his career as an assistant in a*



*pesticide laboratory. Within a decade he was head of the electron microscopy laboratory of the research department of Ciba-Geigy. One of his main interests at that time was scientific photography as a research tool.*

*It was in 1975 that he became a scientific photographer and later an astronomer with the Anglo-Australian Observatory (AAO), now the Australian Astronomical Observatory, near Coonabarabran in outback New South Wales. He is principally known for his spectacular colour images of astronomical objects. A galaxy is named after him, Malin-1, which he discovered in 1986 and which is the largest spiral galaxy so far known.*

I was mainly brought up by my grandparents, Tom and Florence, and spent the first 10 years or so of my life living at Bird Hall, a grand-sounding place, but in reality a terrace of three isolated 2-up, 2-down cottages. Bird Hall, high on the eastern edge of the village of Summerseat, is likely to have been the adjoining district of Walmersley, though that's not clear on the first map that mentions the place, Greenwood's map of 1818. This location may have had an earlier name, Bridhole, and it is mentioned in *Bygone Bury* by John Lord (1903). The exact quotation is:

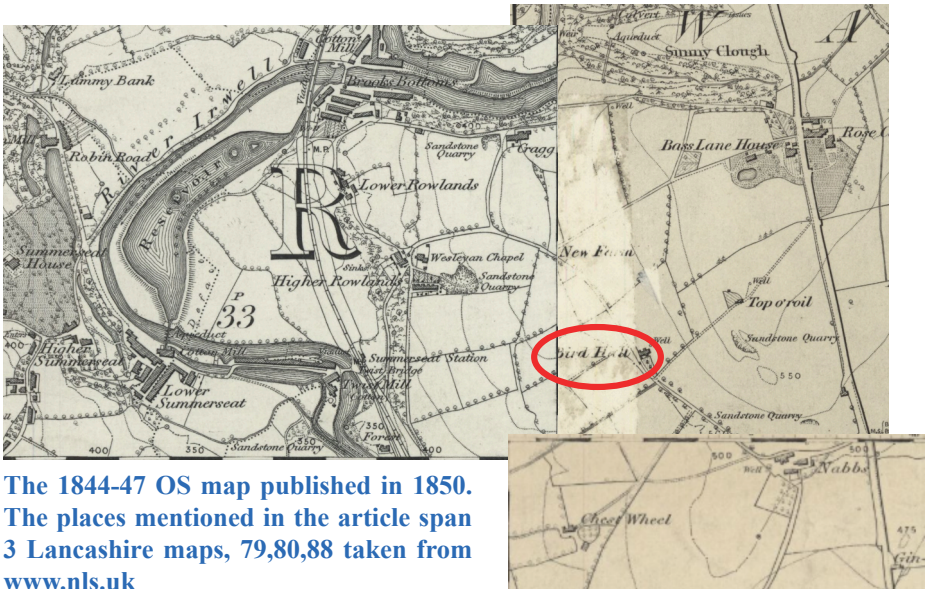
**"Thomas Kay de Bridhole buried his wife Ann, 13 December, 1613 and himself was buried 6 December, 1614"**

The Kay family have long been associated with Summerseat, and there's more about this on the Kay Family "homes" website, including a commentary on the row of houses itself.

Over the years the name of the place seems to have evolved into Bird Hall, but what stood there until recently was a terrace of three modest and remote cottages on the unmade part of Rowlands Road that runs south-west to join Walmersley Road at Nabb's Farm — this is just noted as 'Nabbs' or 'Nabs' on the 1851 Ordnance Survey and earlier maps.



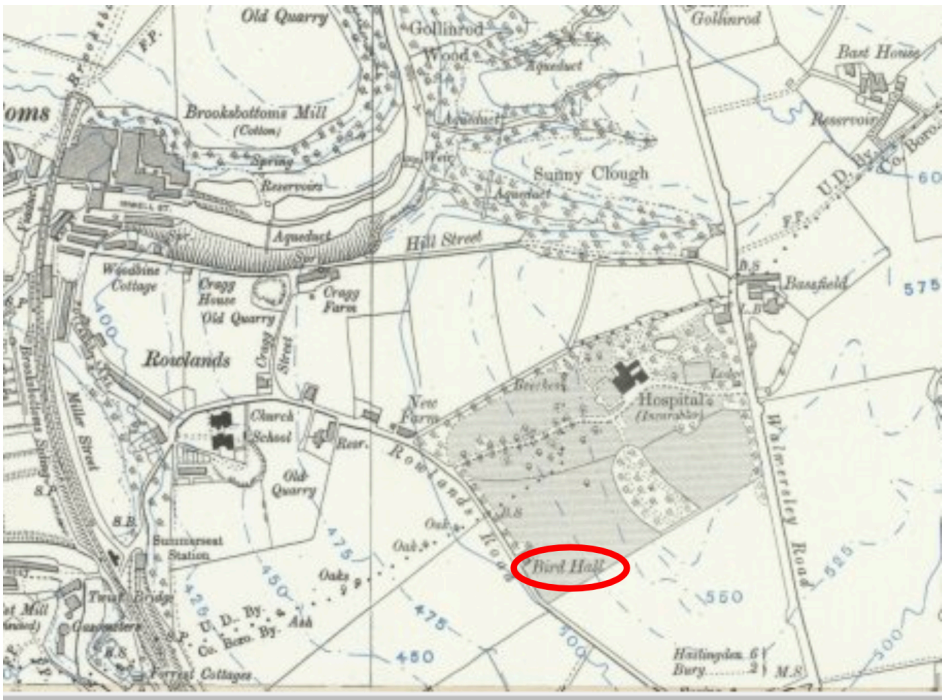
*Bird Hall after its conversion into one dwelling*



The 1844-47 OS map published in 1850. The places mentioned in the article span 3 Lancashire maps, 79,80,88 taken from [www.nls.uk](http://www.nls.uk)

More recently the three cottages have been tastefully amalgamated into a single dwelling.

Almost exactly half-way between Bird Hall itself and what are locally known as the 'Home Gates', originally an entrance to what was once a hospital, The Robinson-Kay Hospital for Incurables (*now The Priory Highbank Centre – Editor*), is a triangular boundary stone against the south west wall along the highest part of the road. I recall from my youth that it has carved lettering on two sides but don't remember the inscription. However, an 1893 map has 'L.B.D. Bdy.' on its northern side of a dotted boundary line and 'Co. Boro. Bdy.' on the other. I assume this means Local Borough District boundary and County Borough (i.e. Bury) boundary, in



Bird Hall highlighted on the 1893 OS Map taken from [www.nls.uk](http://www.nls.uk)

which case Bird Hall is in Bury/Walmersley district, not Ramsbottom or Summerseat, though Summerseat had the nearest shops (and the railway). This is confirmed by a historical description in the UK Genealogy Archives, which says,

**"Summerseat, a village in Walmersley township, Lancashire, on a section of the L. & Y.R. [Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway], 2¼ miles N of Bury. It has a station with telegraph on the railway, and a post and money order office under Manchester. There are cotton-spinning mills and a Wesleyan chapel and school."**

The Robinson Kay Home was a five-minute walk from Bird Hall across the fields. It was also a five-minute level walk from Bird Hall to Walmersley Road, but much further to the railway station near the valley floor. I remember that the train to Bury took four or five minutes from Summerseat station but from Bird Hall it was just as easy to catch a bus to Bury from Walmersley Road, or when I was very young, the tram from the New Inn at Walmersley.

Bird Hall's three terraced cottages were well-built. Each one had the normal two-up, two-down layout for such houses, and when I lived there little had changed in the 100 years or so since they were built. They were small by modern standards, each major room probably about 4 metres square—I don't know the exact dimensions. It was an idyllic place to grow up, but very isolated and completely lacking in modern amenities. There was nothing modern about them, the houses were without electricity, or gas, there was no sewerage system, and the tap water likely came from a spring or a well. It seemed normal to me, not knowing anything else, but in hindsight, daily life was difficult, and belonged to another era.

My grandparents had lived in Bird Hall since the early 1930s, at number three, at the SE end of the row, and were used to, and probably preferred

its isolation. However, the low rent was likely the main attraction, and a reflection of the lack of town gas, sewerage and electricity to the premises, and absence of street lighting along the potholed and unpaved Rowlands Road. There's no indication anywhere on the structure as to when it was built. In researching this bit of history, I was able to download sections of old Ordnance Survey maps, which proved very revealing. The maps and the Kay website mentioned earlier suggest there was a dwelling there in the early 1700s, and that the Bird Hall I knew was probably built 200 years later in the mid-19th century. It's possible that the current dwellings were built as homes for the workers at the nearby Robinson Kay Home. However, they were not the first dwellings to be built there. The 1844–48 OS survey map reveals an earlier building a few metres south of the current structure, it was smaller and oriented at right angles to the existing houses.

This map also marks a well close to the houses but not shown on the 1892 map. Gone, but not forgotten. In the same location when I lived there in the 1940s was an old ceramic kitchen sink at ground level, fed from an underground source, and it was used to water the cattle in the field. More mundanely, I never did find out where the water to the only tap in the house came from, nor did it occur to me to ask, but it was always slow in arriving, so I suspect it was also spring water.

The other feature of note on the 1844–47 map is the line of three trees indicated in an enclosure to the SE of Bird Hall. Its boundary appears to be identical to the tapering footprint of a smallholding of fenced land that our nextdoor neighbour at Bird Hall had turned into a fruitful vegetable garden, likely a wartime necessity. At the southern end of that area a lane (dotted line) runs NE from Bird Hall, towards something marked as 'Top o'roil' on the 1840s map, where another well is indicated. On the earliest OS maps this place is marked as 'Top of Rye', names I never heard of in the years I lived there. Alongside the 'Top of Rye' name, the older map also shows a delta-shaped hatched region that I took to be standing water,

perhaps some kind of underground reservoir (see above). But that hatching seems unique to that feature; there's nothing else like it on this or adjoining charts. Standing water is marked quite differently all over the map, like the oval pond near Bass Lane House. I've never heard of Top o'roil or Top of Rye, but up there today is a large clump of trees and the 1890 map shows a looping pathway or a track, leading to the Robinson Kay Home.

We called this dense clump of trees 'The Wilderness' when I was a youngster and it was much more extensive then than it is today, running to the eastern fence line. Sometime in the early 1960s, high tension power-lines cut cross the landscape near Bird Hall running roughly NE to SW, and half of the clump of trees was cleared. But as a child I remember that the heavily wooded area hid some substantial sub-surface, brick-built rooms with arches as their roofs. Some had fallen in over the years and I never knew what they were for, being in such a remote spot. Bricks were expensive, so I now think they could have been large underground water tanks, and that's perhaps what the diagonal hatching on the map indicates. However, the tanks were at essentially the same level as the hospital, while Bird Hall is 20 to 30 metres lower, according to the contours, so they could possibly have been the source of Bird Hall's water after it was rebuilt. My other memory of "The Wilderness" is seeing two tall, rectangular stone gateposts at the hospital (NW) end, probably at the end of the oval shaped track shown on the 1890s map mentioned above. I don't recall seeing any traces of that track as a child, and the Google satellite image of the area shows that if it was there, it's now been flattened.

This was the magical landscape I enjoyed as a child, living at Bird Hall in the care of my grandparents. I loved the outdoors and the freedom I had in those years, and was able to wander wherever I wished without constraint. It's wonderful to relive it here and with the benefit of many years and the internet, to reconstruct the rural landscape from the old maps. Of course, it wasn't always summer, and it was often raining or

worse, being Lancashire, so there was an indoor life as well, which was much less entertaining. There was no TV in those days, and the battery radio was used sparingly.

David Malin 2021

## **SIGNS OF THE TIMES**

*An item entitled “The Rose & Crown Inquests” was published in our last issue. Readers have responded with copies of 1893 news cuttings about two more local tragedies. The venues for two separate inquests were the Rose and Crown, Carr Street, Ramsbottom and The Clarence, Bolton Street (now The Cardamom Cream Restaurant).*

*Ramsbottom Observer 1893*

### **TERRIBLE FATALITY AT RAMSBOTTOM**

**A CHILD CRUSHED BY A 7 TON WEIGHT**

#### **THE INQUEST**

The inquest on the body of the child Ward (George Ward, son of John Ward, a paper-mill labourer - Editor) was held before Mr. J. W. Barlow, deputy coroner, at the Rose and Crown public-house, on Monday afternoon.

The first witness called was Margaret Ward, 53, Tanners-street, the mother of the child, who said (he) was 1 year and 8 months old. The child died in the cradle about 2 o'clock. She saw him alive just after eleven o'clock, which was about 3 minutes before she heard him crying. He was then playing about two yards from the window of her house with a little girl named Nora Duckworth. She did not see him again until she heard him crying, when she ran out and found him lying in the road, about a yard from the lurry, which

had come downhill, with his feet towards the wall. He was in a sitting position as if he was trying to get up. The road was a straight one, and nothing to obstruct the view. The child Nora was sitting on the floor also. The deceased was crying and she picked him up, and gave him to her husband, who also ran out of the house. Dr. McCleod and P.C. Callister attended to him, and Dr. McCleod told her to keep the child by the fire until it died. .

*(An earlier news report stated that the lurry weighed two tons and was laden with five tons of paving-stones. It was being drawn by one horse, owing to the gradiency of the street, while a chain-horse walked behind the lurry.)*

Joseph Hamer, carter, residing in Tanners-street, said he was going up Tanners-street, on Friday last about half-past eleven. He did not see the deceased in the road, but he saw the little girl Duckworth. He saw the lurry laden with stone coming down at a slow pace. The driver (Whewell), was at the brake at the time. The brake was worked by a wheel, and was in the middle of the lurry. Whewell was on the proper side of the road, and saw the child Duckworth on the other side of the lurry, being about four yards at the back. He did not see the deceased at all. The child Duckworth was lying on its back, as if it had been knocked down. The previous witness had described to him where she picked up her child, and the place was the same spot where he saw the child Duckworth. He did not see the children before the accident occurred. Witness repeated that Whewell was at the brake of the lurry, and said it was proper for him to be there at the time. He had his horses under control and he was sober. Witness had known Whewell several years. He seemed to be an experienced driver.

Thos Whowell said he lived at Little Holcombe. He was a carter for Messrs. Wild. He was driving his horse down Tanners-street, on Friday, it being attached to a lurry laden with stone. There was one horse in front and another behind. He came down the hill very



gently and easily. He was walking (sic) at the brake just before he stopped and had been at the brake from Mr. J--. Booth's shippin, about 100 yards further up. He heard a shout and saw a man put his hand up and at the same time felt a "chock" to the lurry. He looked around and found the child lying on the floor. The off hind wheel had gone over it. He was on the left hand side of the lurry and looking in the forward direction when proceeding down the hill. The child was lying face downwards when he saw it. The child seemed to have been dragged a little before being run over. He only felt one chock and would have doubtless have felt two, had two wheels passed over the child. If the front wheel had passed over the child, the shaft horse would have been sent to one side. He had not seen the children before the accident, and only a little before, he had been round by the lurry and found the road was clear, with the exception of a man coming up. There was a garden gate opening into Tanners-street, just at the point where he felt the chock, but everything was clear until he got up to it. The child Duckworth seemed to have been under the lurry, for the chain-horse, which was walking behind the lurry, swerved round and caught him, when near the brake. He only felt one chock, he again repeated, and he concluded that through that the deceased must have got under the lurry, between the front and hind wheels.

The deputy coroner, in summing up, said he did not think there was any culpable or criminal evidence as to the action of Whewell, and the jury signifying their approval of this idea, unanimously returned a verdict of "Accidental Death".

*(The name of the driver is referenced as Whewell and Whowell in the original newspaper. Research on Ancestry shows the correct name is Whowell - Editor)*

*Ramsbottom Observer 14<sup>th</sup> April 1893*

## **THE SAD DROWNING AFFAIR AT RAMSBOTTOM**

### **AN OPEN VERDICT**

The inquest on the bodies of two children of Thomas Walters, slater's labourer, lodging at 10, Back Silver-street, Ramsbottom – John aged three years and four months, and Sarah Ann, aged two years and four months – who were missed from home on Wednesday morning week last, and whose dead bodies were found in the Ashton Mill lodge, Ramsbottom, on the afternoon of the following day, was held before Mr. S.F. Butcher, coroner, at the Clarence Hotel, Bolton-street, Ramsbottom on Saturday. The foreman of the jury was Mr. Robert Crowshaw.

The first witness was the father of the unfortunate children, who gave evidence of identification.... They lived with witness at the house of a man named James Clegg. He (witness), was a widower, and Clegg's wife took charge of the children, while he was at work. He last saw them alive about twenty minutes to six, on the Wednesday morning, at home. The children were insured. He had no reason to think that any violence had been used towards them. He was not present when the children were found. He and others searched for the children on Wednesday night, until one o'clock on Thursday morning.

James Nuttall, 23, Stubbins-lane, coal agent, said he saw the children playing among the dirt at the railway coal siding in Stubbins-lane, about 12 o'clock (noon), on the Wednesday. The siding adjoined the lodge of water, in which they were found. He had sometimes seen children playing about there before. Children were not allowed to go into the coal yard. There was no rail separating the lodge from the yard. Witness in answer to the foreman said there was nothing to protect anyone from walking into the lodge from the coal yard, on a dark night, and the foreman said there ought to be some protection.

The Coroner: Have there not been several other fatalities in this similar lodge?

Several jurors made an observation in the affirmative, and witness said that one night a woman was going off the end of the bridge, at the place, when she walked straight into the water, and so the railway company had railed that portion of the place off. Witness explained that there had previously been some dispute between the railway company and Messrs. Rumney, whose mill premises were next to the lodge, as to the railing off of the lodge, and a juror remarked that the lodge ought to be fenced off. Witness explained that there had previously been some dispute between the Railway Company and Messrs. Rumney, whose mill premises were next to the lodge, as to the railing off of the lodge. Witness continuing his evidence, said that a man on the Wednesday heard a little girl crying, in the direction of the lodge, and he took it away from the place, but could not get any information out of it, the child being so young. The child was taken across to Mr. Thomas Kay's, where it was washed, and a person who came by owned it, and took it home. A man named Ralph Entwistle, was going to his dinner on the Thursday, when he saw what he thought was a child's hand above the surface of the water in the lodge. He knelt down and got hold of the object, and upon shouting to witness to go to him, he (witness), saw it was the deceased girl. Entwistle was holding the child by the top of the head and witness got hold of its hand. The water where the child was found would be about two to three feet deep. That would be at 12.30. Part of the water was run off, and the little boy's body was found about 1.30, at a spot where the water had been about two yards deep.

A Juror: Did the father know they were drowned? – The Coroner: No, he was at his work.

Sarah Ann Clegg, residing at 10, Back Silver-street, said that these children were left in her care. She saw them between eleven and a quarter past on the Wednesday morning, in the street near her house. She missed them about two o'clock. She had not looked for them before then, as she had a little baby to look after, and washing to do. Besides, the children

had been accustomed to going out and staying away an hour or two at a time. She was not paid to look after the two children.-

These were all the witnesses called, and the coroner in summing up, said they had not any evidence as to exactly how the children came into the lodge. His opinion was that under such circumstances as these it was quite as well to leave the means whereby they came into the water an open question, and simply return a verdict that they were found drowned. At the same time he thought it was pretty certain that the children wandered into the water. It was a very great reflection on the railway when, seeing that children went into their yard, they allowed the lodge to be unfenced. He would write to them and point out that fact. ... It was one of those unfortunate cases that arose through the necessities of our Lancashire life. People like Mrs. Clegg were bound to let their children run loose in the streets; they could not keep from doing so, and they had to look after their own work, and Mrs. Clegg was doubtless doing her best to look after the children while at the same time attending to her household duties. He did not think there was any blame to be attached to Mrs. Clegg. His suggestion was that the verdict be one of "Found drowned"

The Foreman: I feel certain in my own mind that it is a pure accident.....

A juror observed that there was as much blame in respect of the railing of the lodge to be attached to Messrs. Rumney as the railway company. It was a place where children constantly played about, and he thought Rumney's side of the lodge was much more dangerous than the company's side.

Another juror said the "fair" was held on the spare ground near the lodge and children were attracted to the place. Then it was the only playground children had in Ramsbottom, and great care should be taken in respect of the lodge.

The jury then returned a verdict in accordance with the coroner's suggestion, and the Coroner intimated that he would make inquiry as to

who was responsible for the fencing off of the lodge, and then write to the party concerned.

*The third news report (below) was discovered while carrying out research for our recent publication about the lost village of Nuttall.*

*Bury Times February 1875*

### **A TACKLER'S TALE**

From information forwarded to us by a correspondent it would appear that a tackler, whose web of life is being woven in a village not a hundred leagues from Nuttall, experiences considerable difficulty in getting home in an evening. One night shortly before Christmas he was "making tracks" homeward by way of Gollinrod, but, being overweighted with "cheer", he tumbled into the Irwell. He managed to scramble up the bank, where he laid hold of a tree, and with all his might shouted for help. After he had shouted for some time, two women came up, and attempted to bring him safely to terra firma, and in this they at last succeeded - not, however, without great difficulty, for the ill-fated fellow, either fearing their ability to help or by reason of the intense cold, clung to the tree like a barnacle, and such was the tenacity of his grasp that some of the bark came off in the struggle.

In New Year's week, when returning from Ramsbottom, he found one of these women lying drunk and asleep in the ditch, and, on the principle that one good turn deserves another, he reared her up, took her on his back, and set off with her towards her home. Before he landed there the woman rewarded him for his pains, and the wetting he got on that occasion will no doubt make him question the propriety of acting the part of the "good Samaritan" to inebriate females in future.

Last Sunday week the ill-starred tackler, along with one male and three female acquaintances, patronised a hostelry vulgarly known by the title of "The Kicker," and as it was dark - closing time, in fact - when they found it desirable to make the return journey, the males thought it would

conduce to the safety of the party if they paired with the women. In this order they started out. Whether owing to the sweet seductiveness and obliviousness of the outside world which attend on "whispering nothings," or whether it was that the parties were "three sheets to the wind," we do not pretend to say, but certain it is that No.1 pair went on the wrong track and tumbled in a heap into the goit which supplies the wheel at Nuttall Mill. The tackler and his fair companion were behind, and, discovering the plight of the preceding couple, he went into the village for some assistance. By the aid of clothes props and coal rakers pair No.1 were fished out - not, however, before the Neptunian tackler, in his efforts to bring them to bank, had himself received a considerable "ducking". At this, it is said, he bellowed like a bull and his partner consolingly told him he ought to stop there, for he appeared capable of living either in or out of the water.

## **LOCAL RESEARCH UPDATE AUTUMN 2021**

The Heritage Society cannot offer a research service. The following could be approached:

**Bury Archives and Local Studies, Moss Street, Bury, BL9 0DG**

**Access to archive material is now BY APPOINTMENT ONLY.** Please contact us in advance to arrange a visit on 0161 253 6782 or email us via [archives@bury.gov.uk](mailto:archives@bury.gov.uk)

### **OPENING HOURS**

Monday – Closed

Tuesday-Friday – 10.00am-1pm and 1.30pm-4.30pm

Every Saturday – 10.00am-1.00pm

The website address for our image website is [www.buryarchivesonline.co.uk](http://www.buryarchivesonline.co.uk) and our blog is at [www.buryculture.wordpress.com](http://www.buryculture.wordpress.com)

**Collections held** include records relating to local authorities, public bodies, schools, churches, businesses, trade unions, political parties, sports clubs, social organisations, family papers, deeds, maps and plans and indexes to local parish registers including Ramsbottom. Catalogues are online at <http://archives.bury.gov.uk> as 'Bury Archives Catalogue'. The Ramsbottom Heritage Society's Collection is on permanent loan to Bury Archives.

**The local studies section** 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), microfilmed copies of local newspapers, thematic collections of news cuttings worth pursuing for local biographies, census returns and parish registers (microfilm). Indexes for local church registers, including Ramsbottom are also held. A direct link to Bury Libraries catalogue (which lists local history items held in all the borough's libraries) is at <http://library.bury.gov.uk> – follow 'Libraries and Archives' and then 'Search the library catalogue'. Free access to the Ancestry database is available in all Bury Council's libraries.

### **Lancashire Family History and Heraldry Society**

Most activities have been suspended and the research centres are closed for the time being. Visit [www.lfhhs.org.uk](http://www.lfhhs.org.uk) for details and updates.

### **Ramsbottom Library and Adult Learning Centre,**

**Carr Street BL0 9AE**

#### **LIBRARY OPENING HOURS – now back to normal:**

Tuesdays from 10am to 4.30pm      Wednesdays from 10am to 4.30pm

Thursdays from 12.30pm to 7pm      Fridays from 10am to 4.30pm

Saturdays from 9.30am to 1pm

An Order and Collect service for books (catalogue access via [www.bury.gov.uk](http://www.bury.gov.uk)) and public access to computers are available. Customers can order books online or by telephoning the library on 0161 253 5352. Computer access may be booked by calling 0161 253 5352 but booking is not essential.

The library boasts an IT suite, with a visually impaired and disabled friendly workstation, back copies of the Ramsbottom Observer 1890-1950 on film and a 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. Possible restarting of family history help sessions will be looked into shortly.

# ★ Latest Society News ★

## OUR MONTHLY MEETINGS RESTART

*We look forward to welcoming everyone.*

### Venue

## CHRIST CHURCH

Great Eaves Road,  
(off Stubbins Lane) BLO 0PX



*Until further notice our meetings will be at Christ Church. This is because no date can be set for Ramsbottom Civic Hall to be available while NHS staff still need the building to carry out vaccinations. The car park is at the back of the church off Great Eaves Road*



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**9<sup>th</sup> December 2021 - CHRISTMAS GET TOGETHER**

### 2022 MONTHLY MEETINGS:

**13<sup>th</sup> January**

**10<sup>th</sup> February**

**10<sup>th</sup> March,**

**7<sup>th</sup> April**

**12<sup>th</sup> May**

**9<sup>th</sup> June**

(For more details about the talks - see the inside of the front cover)