

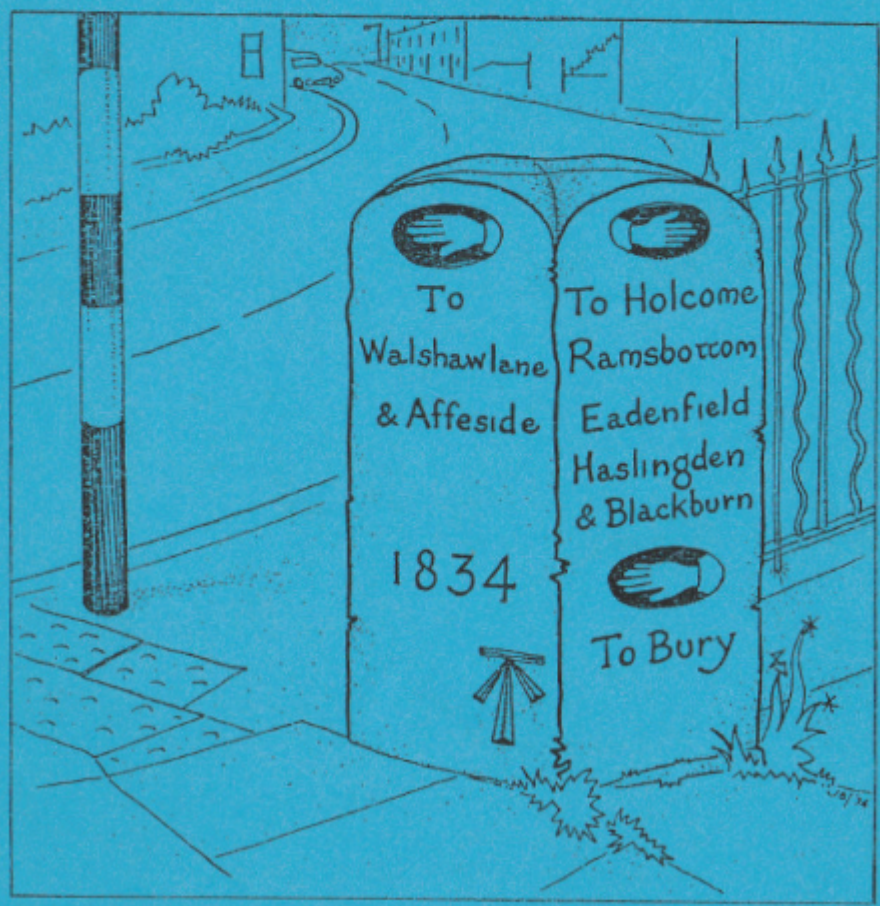
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No 11

Summer 1995

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**NEWS MAGAZINE**

**RAMSBOTTOM HERITAGE SOCIETY**

***THE HERITAGE CENTRE***

**CARR STREET, RAMSBOTTOM**  
**Telephone: Ramsbottom (01706) 821603**

***Present exhibition:***  
***50 Years of Peace in Ramsbottom***

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**Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays**  
**1.00 pm - 4.30 pm**

*Special arrangements can be made for group visits.*  
*Please contact the Secretary - tel: 01706 822620*

**1995 PROGRAMME**

- July 19 Mr T Ashworth - *The Forgotten Valley* - 7.00 pm  
Venue to be arranged
- Aug 16 Mr W Bennion - *From Old to New*
- Sept 20 Mr T Foster - *The Life of a Lancashire Non-Conformist Minister  
250 Years Ago*
- Oct 18 Miss M Curry - *Cotton Wool Country* - Illustrated
- Nov 15 Mr J B Taylor - *From Back-to-Backs to Mansion Houses*
- Dec 13 Mr I Summers - *The Edenfield Village Trail* - Illustrated

**All indoor meetings are held in the Community Education Centre,  
2-4 Bolton Street, Ramsbottom from 7.45 pm**

**RAMSBOTTOM HERITAGE SOCIETY**  
**THE HERITAGE CENTRE**  
**CARR STREET, RAMSBOTTOM**  
**Telephone: RAMSBOTTOM (0706) 82 1603**

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*FRONT COVER* - The turnpike direction stone by *The Dusty Miller*, at the junction of Tottington Road and Crostons Road, Elton, drawn by John TAYLOR. This 'finger post', carrying, unusually, a date of erection, achieved Grade II listed status in 1994.

## RAMSBOTTOM MISCELLANEA

**Photographic Competition** - 1994 was the eighth year that the photographic competition had been held, and over seven hundred prints are now kept in the Society's collection. The building of this ongoing record of modern Ramsbottom is the main purpose of holding the competition. Last year, there were 61 photographs from 10 entrants in the four available categories. The overall winner of the Dickensian Trophy was Dorothy MOSS who also won the *Town and Country* and the *Event* categories. Andrew TODD won the *Interiors* category and Jenny JOHNS the *Open* category. Highly commended were entries from P BOOTH, Frank WOODS, Fred ENTWISTLE, Joseph CROMPTON and Tom BARRATT. The competition was judged by Jack PALMER who presented his reasons for his choices - he drew attention to Francis FRITH who, recognising the accelerating pace of change of his century, took nearly 250,000 photographs of British cities, towns and

villages in the years following 1860. Jack had not been looking for perfectly composed photographs, but rather for photographs which, as FRITH might have said, aimed to record that which will eventually change. Thus the winner of the *Town and Country* category (and the overall prize winner) portrays CLARK's drapers on Bolton Street, a business run for over 20 years by Mrs LOMAX, 'Inchey' to her acquaintances, a type of shop which has long disappeared from most towns and cities. The shop has been on the market for over a year, and its format is unlikely to survive the present year.

As a result of comments received from Jack and also from previous judges, it has been decided in 1995's competition to abandon the existing four categories of entry, and return to the original format of all entries being judged equally in a single category. The closing date will now be in January 1996, allowing photographs taken up to the end of 1995 to be included. The prizes will be presented at the March 1996 meeting. Entries will be accepted throughout the year. An entry form, which includes a full copy of the rules, is included with this issue of the magazine. Thanks to John LEYLAND for organising the competition, and for his work in planning these future alterations.

**Ramsbottom in Old Photographs** - it is the work of earlier generations of photographers which has begun to concern a small but enthusiastic group of members. Approached by Chalford, publisher of 'The Old Photographs Series' of town and village historical views, the Society has been asked to select about 240 black and white prints, previously unpublished, from which a Ramsbottom volume could be assembled. We need to caption them, determine layout, and Chalford's will do the rest. The Society stands to make money from each book that it sells, and with a strong likelihood that we will sell many of the proposed run length of 2,000 this is not an opportunity that our straitened finances can resist. Less mercenary, it is a grand chance for us to show more widely the fruits of our Society's well known collecting policy, adopted from the very earliest months of its creation in 1987. Of course, the scale of sifting six large boxes of prints, despite each item having been captioned by the Centre team, is daunting - most will not be appropriate for inclusion, either because they are technically unpublishable, or because the subject matter is of insufficient interest. To deepen the pool of talent, and to enhance therefore the quality of the finished product, we are appealing to members (and non-members) to donate old prints. Some description of the subject matter is vital. Anyone who wishes only to loan prints for possible inclusion can do so. Please present loans or donations of prints at the Heritage Centre on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon.

**Manning and Womanning the Centre** - members will be aware from recent press reports that the small group of regulars that volunteer to keep the Centre open some 80 days a year is finding the burden too great. If we do have to give up the Centre, we will cease to have a focus for our activities - no more displays, no more contact with townspeople and visitors dropping in for a chat, no more collecting of photographs (where could we keep them?), just the monthly meetings. Without the appeal of richer activities and interests, I think that many of the activists would fall

away, and our Society would go the way of the town's local history society which folded about 1980. We have made appeals, in consequence, for extra helpers - about four have kindly come forward. We must do our best to make them welcome. Please, if you do have a little spare time on a weekend afternoon, come along, and put your name on the rota for an hour or two. Unless we can increase our team of helpers, the Centre will not be reopening after Christmas.

**The Diary of Jamieson MORTON** - longstanding members may recall the Rev Roy CARMYLLIE, vicar at St Andrew's until 1988, and our Society inaugural speaker in April 1987. At the time of his death in August 1989, the Rev CARMYLLIE had just begun a book on the GRANT family, having spent much of his spare time during his 18 years of ministry in our town collecting material on this pre-eminent family of early 19th Century industrialists. In the process, he amassed and copied a good deal of local source material. One such gem, now in the possession of his widow, is a typed transcript of some 119 pages of a volume of diary entries, made by the Ramsbottom chemist and druggist Jamieson MORTON, and covering the period March 1863 to January 1865. The original diary is now in the possession of one of our members, Mrs Pat MANNING of Altrincham, granddaughter of the diarist. It is as a result of help from Pat and from Mrs CARMYLLIE that the Society now has in its collection a photocopy of this typescript.

**The Future for Market Place** - members will have seen very recent press coverage of the alleged availability of £50,000 in 'European Money' for some revamping of Market Place, for some years now a target for youth ball games and worse. Town centres of course are made for congregation, and it was the purpose of a recent meeting in June at the *Grant Arms* of the town's great and good to debate how best to make use of this prime site. Viewed from three of its four approaches, Market Place occupies a commanding position. If we could envisage the spot stripped of all buildings and tarmacadamed roadways, as it must have been in the 18th Century, we can see how it stands on a natural eminence, and why Ramsbottom's one Great House, Top o' th' Brow (later Grant Lodge, and after 1828 the *Grant Arms Hotel*) came to be built there, probably shortly after 1783. Market Place, of course, was the site of the town's market until well into this century. In consequence, it was a large, setted, open space, ideal for any kind of mass event. Probably the largest took place on 13th October 1838, when about 5,000 attended a Chartist meeting. Temperance recruitment drives were staged there in the late 19th Century. Tetley Brewery, however, donated what has become the garden area, together with the famous 'Castle', to Ramsbottom UDC about 1951, and mass meetings have ceased. The car parking area immediately to the fore of the hotel remains *Grant Arms* property. The return of the railway in July 1987 brought the prospect of a revival of Market Place's historic role as a focus for popular activity. In the early years of the town's

tourist role, local traders and Bury MBC jointly funded a number of entertainment events. In the cash struck '90s, neither can continue to be so munificent. The growth of 'out-of-town' shopping since 1987 (malls, ring road hypermarkets, and in 1995 the Internet) has threatened Ramsbottom's renaissance as a shopping centre. So many bright business ideas, on Bridge Street and Bolton Street, have simply not survived, and there is now the worrying sight of a string of shops unable to find buyers or tenants. To get by in the future, town centres must make their shopping experiences 'pleasurable and entertaining', or they will go under. Hence the interest in Marketplace - could it be a new well lit forum for entertainments, performances and events, traffic noise permitting? Not, certainly, on the 1838 Chartist rally scale - too many people spilling out onto the A676! And a return to the pre-War open space is unlikely - simply a grand floodlit football ground for the local lads! What emerged from the meeting organised by Bury MBC on 9th June was a broad agreement that we must make the most of this central feature, and so reduce its current role as part-car park (most able bodied motorists will be able to walk from the planned car park to the rear of the *Grant Arms*). Flower beds are too vulnerable in a decade when gardeners and policemen are needed elsewhere, so 'up poles' and 'planters' will raise the flora from ground level, and, incidentally, into better view. Cast iron lamp standards would be in keeping with the ambience of the buildings. Terracing may offer performance facilities, and simultaneously nobble the footballers! Closed Circuit TV, about to be introduced to Bury town centre, offers an Orwellian, but apparently effective antidote to vandalism. All this will go through the normal planning procedures, so you can have your say. But remember, as one council officer at the meeting put it, this is the last time money will be available for Market Place for 50 years. Most of us won't be around in 2045 - let's hope that a tasteful, attractive, popular, widely used and motor-free Market Place is.

**The STEAD Family of Ramsbottom** - I would be especially interested in hearing from anyone with information on this famous textile manufacturing family. In the last century, three STEAD brothers - Lawrence, Henry and William - ran six mills in the town, and members lived at a variety of plum addresses - *Bank House, Hope House, Riversdale, Irwell Mount, Carr Bank, Albert House* and *Holcombe Bank*. I am interested in any aspect of the STEAD family history, or recollections of their houses and mills. I can be contacted via the Heritage Centre, or on 824511.

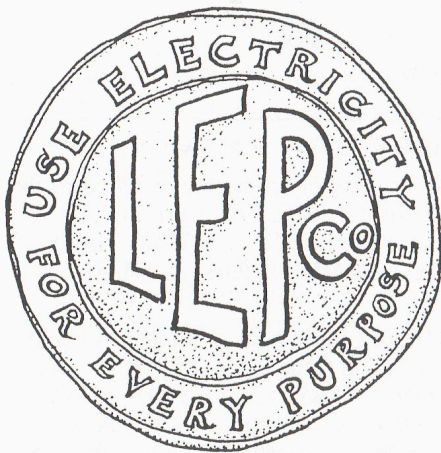
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## **RAMSBOTTOM LIGHTS UP: OUR TOWN'S ELECTRICAL CENTENARY**

*Amidst no acclaim, Ramsbottom passed a complete century with electricity earlier this year. John Simpson tells the story. [Editor]*

If you had been alive a century ago and had chanced to pass the Ramsbottom Paper Mill Company in late January 1895, you would have seen one of the most important 19th Century inventions making its first appearance in the town. On 24th January

1895 230 electric lights, which had taken four months to install in the mill, were switched on. They ranged from 16 candle power to 50 candle power (on the outside of the building) with two arc lights in the colour mixing department which, according to the *Ramsbottom Observer* 'gave an illumination almost equal to daylight'.<sup>1</sup> This occasion was not the first on which the townspeople had had the opportunity to see the new invention. As early as 1864, the electric light had been demonstrated in Rawtenstall and no doubt some Ramsbottom people were among the crowd of more than 8,000 spectators who had gathered to watch floodlit rugby and football matches in Haslingden in 1878.<sup>2</sup> Nearer home, the honour of having the first electrically lit mill in the district had gone to Edenfield. In February 1894, Alexander BARLOW invited members of the Ramsbottom Local Board to inspect the electric lights which had been recently installed in Bridge Mills on Rochdale Road. The reporter who accompanied them found the light 'a splendid improvement on gas', while Mr H L SLADIN, chairman of the Local Board, 'thought he might say he had never seen anything in his life like it before.'<sup>3</sup> In 1896, with the example of the electric lights at Edenfield and the Ramsbottom Paper Mill Company before them, the newly-formed Ramsbottom Urban District Council decided to apply for powers to 'generate, store, supply and distribute electricity for public and private purposes'.<sup>4</sup> Although powers were granted in 1897, no practical progress was made until July 1899 when a committee was appointed to engage an engineer and search for a suitable site for the electricity works. The *Ramsbottom Observer* commented somewhat acidly: 'Now that the Council have put their hand to the plough it is to be hoped they will not look back, and that we shall have an electric lighting scheme in operation without any unnecessary delay - it will be some years at the soonest - so that Ramsbottom shall not be behind neighbouring towns in electric lighting as it now is in certain other matters that can be mentioned.'<sup>5</sup>



Logo on the box at Edenfield (JBT)

As things turned out the Council soon found they could hand on the responsibility for the electricity supply to another body. In December 1900 a letter was received from the Lancashire Electric Power Company stating that they were preparing plans to distribute electricity throughout the area and offering to include the district from Holcombe Brook to Edenfield.<sup>6</sup> Terms were eventually agreed with the company and the work of laying high tension mains began in the autumn of 1905. In the next few years, power was supplied to TURNBULL and STOCKDALE's at Rose Bank and the Chatterton Weaving Co, both of which had their own transformer, but it was not until August 1910 that a general electricity supply for

the town was begun. The opening of the 'transforming chamber' in Paradise Street on 20th August 1910 was heralded as 'a new era in the social and industrial annals of Ramsbottom'.<sup>7</sup>

Low tension mains from the transformer were at first carried along both sides of Bolton Street as far as Cross Street, down both sides of Bridge Street to the railway station, and up Carr Street to the works of the Shuttleworth Weaving Co which were to be driven by electricity as well as having electric lights. The first premises to be actually lit from the new supply were the shops of John Ormerod HAWORTH, ironmonger, at 15, Bolton Street<sup>8</sup> (who was appointed the power company's district agent) and James SCHOFIELD, watchmaker and jeweller at 52, Bridge Street<sup>9</sup> The *Ramsbottom Observer* noted that 'those premises were, during the evening, the rendezvous of a large number of people who exhibited no small interest in the advent of the new illuminant.' The paper went on to say 'we are pleased to learn that a number of other business firms in the town have placed orders for the electrification of their premises.' Clearly electric light had come to stay, but gas put up a determined fight: many of the Council's street lights continued to be gas-lit until the 1950s.

John Simpson, Tor View Farm, Helmshore

#### References

1. *Ramsbottom Observer*, 26th January 1895
2. Chris Aspin, *Surprising Rossendale* (Helmshore Local History Society, Helmshore, 1986) p 1
3. *Ramsbottom Observer*, 3rd February 1894
4. *Ramsbottom Observer*, 27th November 1896
5. *Ramsbottom Observer*, 14th July 1899
6. *Ramsbottom Observer*, 14th December 1900
7. *Ramsbottom Observer*, 26th August 1910
8. Now Midas Business Services/*Clique* Dress Agency
9. Now Elisabeth Sykes' Children's Books

#### **VE DAY IN SUMMERSEAT AND OTHER WARTIME MEMORIES**

As we approached the 50th Anniversary of VE Day my thoughts returned to the 'celebrations' in Summerseat on that momentous day. A few days prior to this, and as it was obvious that the end was near, I decided to take 'French Leave' from my employment at the colliery in Derbyshire so as to be with my family for this historic occasion. On arrival at the village railway station, and turning into Railway Street I saw in the distance that one of the houses was flying a flag, a rather large one, from its top window and upon drawing nearer I realised that, as I had rightly guessed, it was our house, and it struck me as a little odd because it was not the Union Jack but the Tricolour, the national flag of France! This naturally caused some amusement especially when my mother told me that it was the only flag they could lay their hands



on at a moment's notice, but of course with the Free French I cannot recall noticing any other types of flags fluttering from the other houses in the street, but at least ours added a little colour to the neighbourhood. Actually I found VE day rather a dull one, it was more like an average typical Sunday than a very special day for celebrating and rejoicing - how I envied those vast crowds in the heart of London. The evening before this found me at the Odeon Cinema in Bury watching a film, suddenly interrupted by the appearance on the stage of the manager who informed the audience that it had just been announced that the following day, 8th May, would be regarded as the official VE day and was to be a public holiday. A short time after VE Day came VJ Day which marked the ending of the war with Japan and within a few weeks my family returned to London thus bringing to an end five years of life in a Lancashire village. An experience which remains with us, often in conversation, all these years later. Thinking back to our early days in the village I remember how kind and friendly our neighbours near and far were. One thing we lacked and urgently desired was the luxury of a bath and things were becoming rather frustratingly difficult when suddenly out of the blue a bath appeared - one of those old style zinc variety. This had been generously donated by some kind lady living on the far side of the village and if that lady still lives and chances to read these lines I would like to say a big thank you to her. The locals were indeed most helpful, especially our immediate neighbour in the next house, a large jolly woman by the name of Doris DEWHURST who often popped in for a natter. Doris would occasionally provide accommodation for our relatives during the holiday periods when they came up to visit us and to enjoy a short respite from the air raids. It must be remembered that we had very little with us on our initial arrival in Summerseat, but thanks to the consideration shown towards us it certainly helped a great deal. Another person, completely unknown to us, kindly presented us with a portable, wind-up gramophone, with a few records included, whilst yet another gave us a cat which we desired as a pet. This attractive tabby stayed with us for a few months until it suddenly went missing - not to be seen again. For our main entertainment in those pre-TV times, like millions of others we relied on the radio, one of those hired relay radios with a choice of just two stations, either the 'Home' or 'General Forces' service.

Itma' and 'Happidrome' were two top programmes to be listened to in our household whilst on Sunday evenings during the regular religious 'Sunday Half-Hour' programme we all kept perfectly silent so that mother would not miss a single word of the broadcast. She was the most religious of us all and suffering badly with arthritis and confined to a chair all day, she was therefore unable to personally attend any church service so the radio was to her second best. During the War a visit to the barber shop usually meant a journey by train or bus to the nearest town but I was fortunate in knowing only a few doors away from us in Railway Street, Summerseat, a gentleman who would most obligingly perform such

a service at sixpence a time - in old money of course. His name was Harry but alas I cannot recall his surname. He was a sergeant in the village Home Guard platoon and a particularly nice sort of fellow. Whenever my hair required cutting I would trot along to his house, rap politely on his front door which would be opened by Harry and then I would request a haircut, if convenient, although Harry would invariably guess exactly your reason for calling and in response give a pleasant smile, nod his head and invite you in. The first part of the operation was the spreading of sheets of newspaper over the floor, which was to prevent hair from falling on to the carpet, then a chair would be placed for me, a towel round my neck, and the cutting of hair would commence. Now Harry - as you have probably already guessed - was not a professional hairdresser - this was simply a sideline which I suppose added a few bob to his income, but he was quite capable of doing a pretty professional job of work and surprisingly, where Harry differed from the experts was the fact that he only possessed one hand, having lost the other in some accident, and yet with this disadvantage he was competent in giving one a satisfying hair cut. He would somehow wedge a comb into the stump of his lost hand, which was covered with a woollen type of glove and do the cutting with his good hand holding the scissors and using the comb when required and I cannot remember any occasion when that comb was jerked or fell loose from his grasp.

Harry wasn't the talkative type of hairdresser and would remain mostly silent whilst snipping away, he would usually have his radio switched on for the latest news from the war fronts and apart from this the only other sound was that of his scissors and clippers. His hair cutting instruments were those of the non-electric variety. Sadly, I believe in 1943, this amiable and well-liked man suffered a severe heart attack which proved fatal and he died tragically young, I doubt whether he was much older than 50. At the funeral he was given a grand farewell by us, his Home Guard comrades, dressed as we were in full uniform. The service was held at the Summerseat Methodist Church and I can still remember the hymn we sang at that service, *Abide With Me*.

Harry was well respected by the community and his demise was indeed a great loss to us all. After this my future haircuts were performed by a mill worker in Wood Road who also dabbled in the art of hairdressing but unfortunately he could not be compared to Harry's expertise and after a couple of visits I decided to make the journey to Bury for this chore.

Jack Whitford, Wembley, Middlesex

## **EDWIN F PARKINSON: LYTHAM'S PACKAGE TOUR OPERATOR**

*Several Society members attended the Lancashire Local History Federation's AGM last October. It was hosted by the Lytham Heritage Group, and its archivist, Mrs Janet Kitchen, passed on this little gem of research about her*

*grandfather, Edwin F PARKINSON. It is likely that there are descendants of this family still in the town, and we would like to hear from them if there are. [Editor]*

The Development of Britain's rail network in the 19th Century meant that travel for both business and pleasure became increasingly possible for more people. The coming of motor transport in the 20th however enabled people to travel to an even greater variety of destinations. Edwin F PARKINSON of Ramsbottom moved to Lytham in 1915 and set up in business as a newsagent and tobacconist at 44, Clifton Street. His shop also sold sweets, biscuits, medicines and many other items. After the First World War he embarked on a new venture - the organisation of tours in which the client paid a lump sum for both rail travel and hotel accommodation. Mr PARKINSON usually accompanied these early package tours himself. With the invention of the motor char-a-banc, which could take its passengers right up to the hotel where they were staying, the type of tour in which the clients stayed in two or more different locations during their holiday became possible. Mr PARKINSON received his char-a-banc licence from Lytham Urban District Council Licensing Committee on 26th May 1921.

The Highlands of Scotland were a popular destination for Mr PARKINSON'S char-a-banc tours, although in 1925 he took a party of Lythamers to the Empire Exhibition at Wembley.

Janet Kitchen, Warton Street, Lytham

## **THE PORRITTS OF MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA**

*In our last issue, Clyde TWEEDALE sketched an outline of the history of the PORRITT family, and its involvement in the textile industry. So many well known families of our district threw out cadet branches into British colonies in the last century, and this article shows how the Australian descendants of just a single emigrant PORRITT have proliferated in only 109 years of residence. It is interesting to see how family names associated with the 'main line' of the PORRITTS have also been perpetuated on the other side of the world. [Editor]*

James PORRITT, the second son of Joseph and Naomi, was born in 1810. He married Mary Hannah AUSTIN in 1833. James along with his brothers Joseph Junior and Samuel built Stubbins Vale Mills in 1851, James being the architect. He then built his home, *Stubbins Vale House*, as well as two other substantial residences - *Greenmount Lodge* and *The Cliffe*. In the 1860s James, his wife Mary Hannah, brother Samuel and his wife Elizabeth along with several others founded the Stubbins Congregational church and school which James built and founded, on their completion he handed the deeds over to the then Trustees and waived any outstanding debt. He also built the residence occupied by the minister the Rev Thomas CAIN, his son in law. James taught at the Sunday School until he was 70 years of age. He was also a Magistrate.

James was a great benefactor to the people, often finding employment for them and assisting in many ways, not only with his money but also his time and physical effort. His health began to fail around 1884 after sustaining injuries due to a bad fall at Stubbins railway station after which he withdrew from public life. He died on 21st April 1896. His wife Mary Hannah had died on 24th November 1877.

James Edward PORRITT was born in 1855 the 14th child of James and Mary Hannah PORRITT of *Stubbins Vale House*. He grew up to be a Professor of Music, playing both Organ and Piano. In 1878 he married Amelia KELLY whose father Thomas was a calico printer. However, I don't think this union was looked on at all favourably by the rest of the family as James Edward only notified his father of the marriage as a postscript to a letter, which read:

'I am now married to Amelia KELLY with whom I am happy and most comfortable.'

James Edward went on to start a brewery with a partner. This venture did not succeed and they went bankrupt in 1883. James Edward together with his wife Amelia and their three children, James Austin (seven), Edith Adeline (three), and Arnold Clement (seven months) boarded the Orient Steamship line's *Chimborazo* at Tilbury on 22nd July 1886, arriving in Melbourne, Australia, on 4th September. They took up residence at 60, Brighton Street, Richmond for about one year, after which they moved to *Byron Villa* in St Kilda, just to the south of Melbourne. He, James Edward, was a remittance man. The family sent him £25 per quarter and Amelia took in gentleman boarders of good breeding and served an excellent table to supplement the family income. James Edward obtained a part time clerical position with J DALE and Co's *Atlas Works*, a position he held for a period of three years. He also gave music lessons on organ and piano. From the time he arrived in Melbourne, James Edward succumbed to respiratory illness and fevers. He was not a robust man and became very seriously ill in 1889 and was hospitalised several times during that year, the last being in November. He died on 17th November 1889 aged 34, thus leaving Amelia almost destitute with three young children. She was also ill with an abdominal condition requiring urgent surgical intervention. She wrote a beseeching letter to her father-in-law James Senior requesting the remittances be continued, a request granted on certain conditions. Of James Edward and Amelia's three children, James Austin never married - he died in March 1940 aged 59 years. Edith Adeline married William BYSOUTH - they had one daughter Alma. Edith died in the 1970s. Alma married very late in life having looked after her mother for years. Alma had no children and died in 1979. Arnold Clement married Ethel Winifred DARKER-SMITH they had four children - Phyllis Olwyn, Arnold Clifford (known as Clifford), Neil Austin and Avis Winifred.

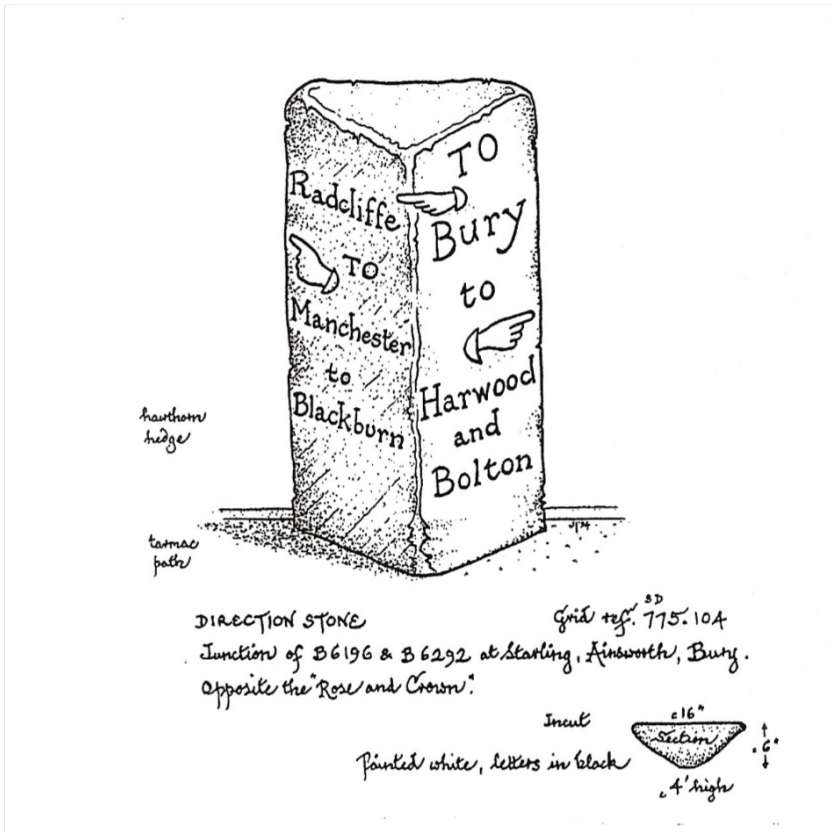
Arnold and his son Clifford PORROT were very active in the formation of the Fitzroy City Brass Band. Arnold played the comet and Clifford the trombone. The band was well known throughout Victoria, having entered and won many competitions. Music has always been intertwined throughout all the Australian branch of the PORRITT

family, producing many singers and musicians. From James Edward and Amelia PORRITT there are 85 descendants of which 77 are still living in 1994.

Lynne Porritt Newton, Statesman Crescent, Mill Park, Victoria, Australia

## TURNPIKE FINGER POSTS AT BRADSHAW, AINSWORTH AND ELTON

Readers may recall my attempts to chivvy Bury MBC into investigating the disappearance, sometime in 1993, of the two-century old boundary stone which used to mark the A676's transition from a Bury to a Bolton highway at Hawkshaw/Higher Waives. The Chief Executive instigated the issue of a press release appealing for information as to the whereabouts of the missing stone, presuming that it was now ornamentally keeping the company of assorted gnomes in some miscreant's garden. I'm afraid that this sounds like a smoke screen. There were no traces of any substantial hole after the disappearance - the boundary stone must have been securely set into the ground to a depth of feet rather than inches for it to have stood there so long. An opportunist thief would never have left the surface so smoothly rendered.



I believe that more fruitful lines of enquiry might be ( 1) to determine exactly who had cause amongst the council's staff, or its contractors, to be engaged in engineering work in the stone's vicinity at the time of its disappearance (summer 1993); (2) to make identical enquiries of Bolton MBC; and (3) to dig in the immediate area to determine whether the stone has once again been buried either whole or in bits. Perhaps in a future issue of this news magazine someone will be able to report Bury's response to these suggestions.

It looks like we have lost this piece of heritage for all time. And this thought prompted me to tour the area with a camera to record other 'roadside furniture'. There are just three such items of the turnpike era, all finger posts:

1. at the junction of Cockey Moor Road with Starling Road, at the eastern edge of Ainsworth (illustrated on the previous page).
2. at the junction of Tottington Road with Crostons Road, and outside *The Dusty Miller*; Elton (see front cover).
3. at Bradshaw Chapel, protruding from the corner building at stage coach driver height, with other directions incised into the walls.

The latter two, unusually, are dated (1834 and 1838). The lettering of the Starling stone closely resembles that on the vanished Hawkshaw boundary stone, suggesting a date nearer 1800.

I sent photocopies of my prints in July, together with what history I knew of the posts, to The Department of National Heritage, Third Floor, 2-4 Cockspur Street, London SW1Y 5DH. In the middle of November they informed me that they had taken advice from English Heritage, and were willing to list (at Grade II) the Starling and Elton finger posts, on the grounds that each is 'an early C19 directional sign of vernacular quality which predates the manufactured street furniture of the mid-C19' The Bradshaw Chapel example, however, was part of a building which was not of listable quality, though at 15 feet or more above street level the post should be safe from even the most determined 'developer'.

So two at least of our local turnpike stones are statutorily protected against alteration or demolition. This *should* keep the council workmen in order, and the garden gnome brigade would need a JCB at the very least, or semtex, to dislodge these monoliths!

Andrew Todd, Bolton Street, Ramsbottom

## **ROGER WORTHINGTON (1659-1709)**

On most pleasant evenings and at weekends I can look out of my kitchen window and see the brightly coloured anoraks of walkers at Roger WORTHINGTON'S grave at the top of Hawkshaw Lane. I wonder if they are aware of the interest he has created over the years or why he is buried alone in such a beautiful place?

Roger WORTHINGTON was born in 1659, just before the restoration of Charles II. These were troubled times and for many reasons, mainly political, there was much religious persecution despite Charles' promise that 'there should be liberty to tender consciences and no man should be disquieted because of differences in matters of religion so long as he did not disturb the peace of the Kingdom'! In 1662 the Act of Uniformity was passed. Amongst its provisions was a requirement that 'all ministers who had undergone ordination according to the Presbyterian form should submit to reordination' - thus publicly acknowledging the irregularity of that form of ordination. Those who did not submit to this were deprived of their living. About 200 clergymen refused to conform, amongst them the Rev Richard GOODWIN and the Rev Robert PARK of Bolton and the Rev Henry PENDLEBURY of Holcombe. The Rev PENDLEBURY, although evicted, continued to hold services in private houses throughout the area and it is quite likely that WORTHINGTON was influenced by his teachings. It was generally believed that WORTHINGTON was the son of a Roman Catholic family who broke with them for religious reasons and wandered the hills preaching. A very romantic story which doesn't seem to be true for in his will, proved at Chester in 1709, he is referred to as 'yeoman'. He was married and had two children, John and Mary. He was living at Holcombe Hey at the top of Hawkshaw Lane (not to be confused with Holcombe Hey House on the side of Holcombe Hill) and his inventory lists possessions to the value of £150 13s 10d (quite a large sum). This inventory was signed by Richard ROTHWELL, John KAY and Simon BARLOW. ROTHWELL and KAY both appear in the list of freeholders who were members of the Dundee Chapel congregation dated 16th December 1717. Simon BARLOW seems to have been from the BARLOW family who were at Simon's farm on Reddish Lane (was he the original Simon?). One of his descendants was James BARLOW, founder of the Edgeworth Children's Homes, born at Simon's in 1821. There is nothing in WORTHINGTON'S will about himself or any indication of his religious conviction. Nothing is mentioned either about the grave or of the 'yearly pound' (see extract from JF SKELTON's poem, overleaf). There is mention of a bargain already made of the estate on 'Howcome Heigh' but no details of the nature of that bargain. He appointed his wife and one Nathaniel BLINCKHORN, hosier of Broughton as his executors and he left money to his sisters' children and to his brother Thomas. The estate at Holcombe Hey he left to his wife, Martha.

Roger WORTHINGTON'S original stone was, it is said, broken in the 19th Century by a harnessed horse falling upon it. Grass grew between the fractures and the inscription is difficult to read:

*Here lies the body  
of Roger Worthington  
who departed this life  
the 9<sup>th</sup> day of July 1709  
about the 50<sup>th</sup> year  
of his age*

*They that serve Christ  
in faith and love  
shall ever reign  
with him above*

This solitary stone still created great interest for in the 1870s John Fawcett SKELTON wrote the following verse:

Next to Holcombe Hey a good farm appears,  
A fine substantial house in former years,  
When Brandwood, with his hunters and his hounds,  
Ran till the sunset o'er his own good grounds;  
A fine old fellow (as traditions say)  
As true and open as the shining day,  
And round whose cheerful, blazing Christmas logs,  
Feasted his friends, his farmers and his dogs,  
A field away, below the Broadstone Delf,  
In an unbounded cemetery to himself,  
Lies Roger Worthington, an old divine,  
Whose gravestone bears the date of 'seventeen-nine'  
A baptist preacher he, who bought the ground,  
And left to somebody a yearly pound,  
To keep his lonely tombstone nice and neat;  
But that somebody has proved a cheat,  
For now moss-grown fragments sad to see,  
Old Roger's tablet lies upon the lea,  
Yet antiquarians, Hold his memory dear,  
Find out and tell why he was buried here.

Mr BARLOW of Edgworth and the Rev WT KERSHAW of the Baptist Church, Ramsbottom tried in 1909 to erect a more enduring gravestone in place of the broken one, but Mr BARLOW died before this could be done. It was 1934 before a committee was formed to renovate the grave. The local clergy were the driving force although many local people were on the list of subscribers. A total of £9 14s 6d was raised and copies of the above poem were printed on cards and sold to help.

HILARY Bros Ltd, of Stubbins Lane, Ramsbottom, provided the new stone at a cost of £918s6d less their own subscription of half a guinea Mr Carl LUCAS of Graining Farm carted the stone from a local quarry gratis, and Mr James ENTWISTLE of Three Acre Farm built the surrounding wall for £2 0s 0d, whilst two seats were provided for 9s 0d.

The rededication ceremony took place on 13th July 1935 when over 200 people



attended a service conducted by the Chairman of the restoration committee, Rev ET ARMSTRONG of St Mary's, Hawkshaw. The Rev W T KERSHAW, who must have been an old man, was there to see the fruition of his plans.

Recently the grave and its gardens has been maintained by the South East Area Countryside Ranger, Ian HART and a picnic bench has been provided by the East Lancashire Long Distance Walkers Association. In fact, the grave is a focal point of an eight mile ramble from the Jumbles reservoir, and a certificate is available, the proceeds from which are used to maintain the garden.

Roger WORTHINGTON'S memory is still with us almost 300 years after his death and I hope that his grave will continue to be a popular stopping point for the many visitors who are asked, at the entrance of the surrounding enclosure, to:

‘HONOUR THIS SACRED SPOT’

Jan Barnes, Boardmans, Hawkshaw Lane

### **AN ACROSTIC ADVERTISEMENT: YATES BROTHERS, IRONMONGERS**

At the beginning of 1903, YATES Brothers, the ironmongers who used to have a shop at 52A Bolton Street, Ramsbottom held a competition for their customers to compose an advertisement in the form of an acrostic. The winning entry was submitted by 16 years old Jane HARGREAVES of Loe Farm, Holcombe Brook whose poem ran:

YATES BROS' goods are the best in town,  
 A nd those who buy them will never frown;  
 T o prove, just call and have a peep,  
 E verything is good and cheap.  
 S omething sure to please you'll see.  
 B uy it, try it, and satisfied you'll be;  
 R emember, 'tis a fact that's true,  
 O h don't forget to call and view.  
 T hey have ranges, fender kerbs and brasses,  
 H eating and cooking stoves, lamps and glasses;  
 E namel dishes, and frying pans,  
 R oasters, kettles and lading cans.  
 S aws and hammers, screws and nails,  
 I ron grates, pincers, and pails;  
 R akes, forks, garden shears, and spades,  
 O il bottles, fencing wire, and scythe blades.  
 N etting and felting, and galvanised sheeting,

**M**akers of which will want some beating;  
**O**ven shelves, loaf, cake, and tart tins,  
**N**uts and bolts, and flour bins.  
**G**ood wringing machines, and window syringes,  
**E**very description of locks and hinges;  
**R**iddles, paving hammers and picks,  
**S**hovels, fireguards, and candlesticks.  
**R**azors, penknives and cutlery in cases,  
**A**ugers, smoothing irons and coal vases;  
**S**tepladders, clog irons, and shoe soles.  
**B**rushes, and braces and bits, and tacks,  
**O**il reading lamps and letter racks;  
**T**ool chests, boxes, hooks and tiles,  
**T**rowels, spring scales and files.  
**O**bserve the address, 'tis Bolton Street,  
**M**ay I tell you, wherever you buy, you'll never beat

### YATES BROS.

Photographs of YATES' window display taken at about the same time that this poem was composed show that Jane's list of the goods they stocked is no exaggeration.

John SIMPSON, Tor View Farm, Helmshore

### RALPH ROONEY

Perhaps some of you will remember Ralph ROONEY who wrote *The Story of my Life* in 1947. ROONEY was well known in the hiking circles of the time. He walked from Lands End to John O'Groats as well as leading walks and rambles locally. His great interest in the countryside and his fellow man comes across in his book which he wrote when he was 85 years old. He begins with his memories of school and life in the mill and he goes on to describe his walks and his life in Hawkshaw Lane. People even now call to tell me how they used to walk up Hawkshaw Lane to his cottage at Boardmans when they were children, sometimes being allowed to ring a set of handbells which were kept on an upstairs window ledge. A lady, now dead, who used to 'do' for him said that his front room was full of 'damn clocks' which she had to clean and wind.

I would love to hear any memories you may have of Ralph ROONEY but if you don't remember him, his book, available from Ramsbottom Library, is a delight to read.

Jan Barnes, Hawkshaw Lane, Hawkshaw



