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NEWS MAGAZINE

**RAMSBOTTOM HERITAGE SOCIETY**  
**THE HERITAGE CENTRE**  
**CARR STREET, RAMSBOTTOM, BURY BL0 9AE**  
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The objects of the Society shall be:-

- a) To advance education of the public, by creating an awareness 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 artifacts. To retain, catalogue and/or copy them where possible, and to operate as an information centre.
  
  - c) To seek to protect the heritage of Ramsbottom.
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## **1996 PROGRAMME**

- Jan 17      Mr Andrew Todd - *Basic Sources for Family History* (illustrated)
- Feb 21      Mrs Brenda Decent - *An Evening with the Archives* (illustrated)
- March 20    Mr James J Francis - *The History of Affetside* (illustrated)

All indoor meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month in  
the Community Education Centre,  
2-4, Bolton Street, Ramsbottom, 7-30 for 7-45pm.

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**THE HERITAGE CENTRE CLOSSES ON CHRISTMAS EVE, AND  
SHOULD REOPEN AT EASTER, 1996. PLEASE WATCH LOCAL  
PRESS FOR DETAILS.**

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*FRONT COVER* - The Heritage Centre, Carr Street, Ramsbottom, drawn by John Taylor

### **RAMSBOTTOM MISCELLANEA**

*Around Ramsbottom* - our book was published by Chalford Publishing of Chalford, Stroud, Gloucestershire on 20th November and has already sold very well in the town. Its public launch took place on Saturday 2nd December at the Heritage Centre. Bury's Mayoress, Peta SINGER, attended, along with Ramsbottom's councillors (the Mrs BECKETT, GUNTHER and LONG WORTH) and ex-councillor LITTLE. It was a happy occasion - and we had, by midday, sold around 50 books in total!

A project of this kind had to be a communal effort, as Barbara PARK makes clear elsewhere in this issue. We should be grateful to the many members (and non-members) who chipped in. Delving into our great horde of prints over summer, however, in the company of Barbara PARK and Brenda DECENT, brought home to me the debt that we owe to the donors of all those photographs; to the team of people who, since 1987, have patiently chivvied accurate descriptions out of depositors; and to those who have catalogued and stored away the collection.

As well as giving the Society a boost in reputation and finances, the publicity should attract new members and new donations of photographs (and do remember that we are happy to laser-copy and then return prints). Also, the book must surely generate anecdotes and associated memories, and do please forward them to me, c/o the Heritage Centre, for inclusion either in any future reprint, or in this magazine. There will be mistakes - some the result of careless editing by me, some the result of publisher error (like the omission of the photograph on page 2) but many will be the inevitable result of memories playing tricks - and much of this book consists of undocumented information, preserved only in local folk memory. The best story I've heard so far came from a lady who saw the 1930s St Andrew's school photograph (page 75) and exclaimed: That's the youngest photo I've ever seen of my Dad! And that boy next to him is actually buried in the adjacent grave! I must buy a copy for my Mum.'

How to buy *Around Ramsbottom* - there are several shops in the town selling the book. If you buy via them, the Society gains only an 8.875% royalty on each book - 82p. If you buy direct from us at the Centre, we make a special author's discount of 50%, and receive a royalty of 3.5% - £4.77 in all.

If you live out of town, or out of the country, please order direct from us, by post. For each copy required, send a cheque payable to Ramsbottom Heritage Society for £10.30 (including postage and packing) to:

Brian HODGKINSON,

Copyright - despite rumours to the effect that your chairman is about to disappear to Bermuda with the book's proceeds, I can confirm that he has no intention of laundering £8.99s into an offshore account! Chalford automatically give authors copyright over their Archive Photographs series. In most cases, the author is either a society like ours, or a member of the society who edits/writes the final draft. Originally, I suggested that the book should go out under the name of the Heritage Society only, but my co-authors insisted that my name should appear - hence in accordance with their standard policy the publishers have given me a share in the copyright. This has no bearing upon who derives the profit from sales, or upon who has publishing rights, since the contract that we entered into with Chalford in May was exclusively between themselves and the Heritage Society - so the Society alone gains all profits and royalties. I have suggested that my claim to copyright should be taken out of any future reprint. The Heritage Centre, Carr Street - thanks to John TAYLOR of Stacksteads for our cover drawing. I suspect that his representation will be around rather longer than its subject matter - at the time of writing, we had an interesting culture of moss on the northern roof, and dampness in a corner of the interior. In 1951 our pre-fab was described as 'a new temporary library', and I am told that its life expectancy was then put at 10 years! I seriously doubt whether it will see many years beginning with a 2, though someone might confound me by getting it listed! The local authority has to address this issue soon - they did invest in a refurbishment five years ago, but ever since they have had a visitors' centre in the tourist honeypot of the borough on the cheap.

Membership Renewals (due 1st April 1996), Standing Orders and Deeds of Covenant - enclosed with this issue are:

1) Renewal forms - please complete and send/take with your subscription to the Heritage Centre or a monthly meeting, unless you already pay by standing order. This can be done from now onwards for 1996-7. Membership/programme cards will be issued in due course. If in the meantime you require a receipt for your payment please enclose an SAE.

2) Standing Order Authority forms - clearly it is better for a society run entirely in people's spare time if members do pay by standing order. If you are willing to do so, please complete the enclosed order and pass it directly to your bank. You will also

need to let us have your renewal form, so that we know you are now opting to pay this way.

3) Covenant Forms - if you pay UK tax, please consider covenanting. This allows us as a charity to recoup money from the Inland Revenue. You need only sign the enclosed form in front of any witness, inserting your subscription fee figure (£3 or £6) in the appropriate space. New and existing members can covenant, although there is no need to complete a fresh form annually - just every four years.

**Photographic Competition** - please note that the closing date for 1995 entries is now January 1996. Please see the enclosed entry form.

**Material for Publication: an Appeal** - please consider putting pen to paper, no matter how short your reminiscence or item, for this magazine or for the second volume of Ramsbottom Reminiscences (due out in 1996). Don't worry about presentation, spelling or grammar!

**Heritage Society Meetings** - attendances have declined this year, and as well as reviewing our meeting venue, we must reconsider what we use meeting nights for. I know a number of members hark back to our earliest months, when more activity (as opposed to passive listening to a speaker) seemed to take place. Do please let any of the committee know of your feelings on this issue - it will be discussed at public meetings in the New Year.

**Society deaths** - we will remember 1995 as a year in which we lost some friends - Vernon SANDIFORD in February; Trevor PARK in April; Mavis HOMEWOOD in June; and Fred ENTWISTLE in September. Many of us, I'm sure, will be thinking of their bereaved friends and loved ones over the Christmas period.

AAT

### **PRIDE IN ACHIEVEMENT: BUILDING IN RAMSBOTTOM BETWEEN THE WARS**

Ramsbottom was not on a main route for the traveller whether travelling east/west or north/south. The Ribble bus service could transport you the 12 miles to Manchester in one hour, slightly less time to travel to Bolton. Since most Rammy folks worked at one or other of the 20 odd factories in the town these bus services for most of us were for the special occasion. A great many people walked to work, a few cycled and in the mid-'30s some fortunate ones even has motorbikes, Norton's, AJSs, yes British made bikes.

The nearest traffic was the A56 Manchester to Burnley route passing through Walmersley, Shuttleworth, Edenfield. Between the Wars few families moved in or out of the town and the population remained fairly static around 15,000. 'The Building Fraternity' was perhaps the most insular group within the community. I intend to confine my jottings to the general builders, I leave it to others to write about carpenters and joiners, painters and decorators, and plumbers.

If we take 1930 as a central date something like this was happening: 'Young' Tom ROGERS had just joined the family firm of PLATT and ROGERS. I think that 'Tom'

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Senior was the sole proprietor and that the PLATT person was not involved with the day to day running of the business. They were a small organisation, building mainly in the Dundee Lane region and living at the bottom end of Major Street. I recall seeing Old Tom walking home quietly from work and always dressed in moleskin trousers. Then there were the brothers FOSTER, Tom and Henry. They had started their business partnership just before the first World War. Their business premises were near the bottom of Peel Brow. In 1930 they were building houses at the junction of Bury New Road and Nuttall Hall Road. I recall reading the site sales board which gave the following information:

Houses Prices - £495, repayments 13s 4d per week (ie 67p)

Interest rate - 1 3/4%

Deposit - £10

Perhaps better to put this into perspective, houses on the Edenfield Council Estate in 1920-22 had cost as much as £1,300 each. From this high point the prices began to fall and despite many types of government subsidy continued to do so until the early 1930s when they 'troughed' around 1932 which the sum of £495 represents. Later, around 1935, FOSTER Brothers built *the Royal Cinema* in Square Street. I think Tom BENNETT, who was one of the tallest men in the district, did most of the brickwork. Some time later I worked with him: we were an ill matched pair! When I was at a comfortable height of work Tom was complaining about being on his knees. When he felt the height of the wall was comfortable I couldn't see what we were doing. (A small present to the reader who guesses my height correctly.)

Two other brothers carrying on an active business were George and Lester HILLARY. Apart from house building they seemed to be almost permanently engaged building new, renovating, and repair work at the works of PORRITTS and SPENCERS at Stubbins. They were also monumental masons and I think their base for this latter activity was in Cemetery Lane. A number of sons followed the two principals into the business and unusually, one daughter. Building was very much a man's world. Two other relatives, John and Walter CASTLE, operated separate businesses. John was busy building in the Longsight Road area and I think did not stray from this 'patch'. Walter built in the Edenfield area and closed his business in the early part of the 1939-45 War.

It was around 1930 that Abraham WARBURTON and Fred HAWORTH started the business of WARBURTON and HAWORTH, Builders and Contractors. Both men were over 40 years of age then and each had considerable experience of building, craftsmen with the ability to carry out a very wide range of work. This was deemed to be right and proper in that era. The words apprentice, journeyman, tradesman, master had more meaning than now. Despite the difficult times the firm grew quite fast. Soon Fred's son Richard joined, completing a shortened apprenticeship as a bricklayer before joining the management. Around 1935 Richard's elder brother Thomas Randolph, formerly an engineer, joined the firm. He was a later chairman of the Ramsbottom Urban District Council. About 1936 Abraham WARBURTON's only son, Thomas, joined. The firm tackled a wide variety of work, including factory

building and private housing

In 1934, I had left St Andrew's School and begun as an apprentice bricklayer with WARBURTON and HAWORTH. At the time they were engaged in rebuilding the *Old Dun Horse Hotel* at the junction of Dundee Lane with Bolton Street, a most interesting project because to satisfy the licensing laws pub trade had to continue uninterrupted. The whole business had to be contracted into that half of the building fronting onto Bolton Street. The rear half of the building was then demolished and rebuilt. The final phase was to transfer trade into the new rear half, and then to demolish and rebuild the front half.

I realise now that a good deal of thought was given to the training of apprentices. Firms were judged to some extent by the competence of the apprentices that they 'turned out'. So, whilst the training was not carried out to a formal programme, firms tried to ensure that on completion of the seven year apprenticeship, the young tradesman would have a breadth of knowledge. Apart from Mr Richard HAWORTH who had followed an apprenticeship before progressing into management I was the first apprentice from outside the family to join the firm. Others soon to follow were William SNOWDON, Albert FREEMAN, and John BROOKS. Looking back on the experience I believe that we were well trained. Our employers and almost all of the craftsmen took an interest in showing us the best way of approaching the work. There was a good sense of pride in achievement.

The 1930s was very much a period of fast transition from stone to brick building. Some of the older men were stone masons with very limited skill at brick work. Others were said to be 'mixed hands'. Apprentices in the '30s were trained in brickwork. The work was much more physical than now - cranes and hoists were very rarely seen. Concrete was all site mixed, often completely by hand - concrete mixers were one of the few mechanically operated pieces of equipment. We seldom used electric tools. It was the era of the trowel, hod, pick, shovel, hammer and chisel and wheelbarrow. The prevailing philosophy was that everything should be built to last, so that as well as the buildings even scaffold trestles, scaffold boards and ladders were made durable - all were strong and heavy, and they had to be manhandled. No job for the weak or fainthearted. As a result, it was not unusual for men of 40-50 years of age to leave the industry, tradesmen looking for factory maintenance jobs.

Nowadays, there are many special aids to get work done in adverse weather - additives for mortars and concretes, blower heaters to dry work, special sheeting to protect new construction, better site hutments for men (often with canteen facilities) and last but by no means least protective clothing and footwear.

The work was not only physical but labour intensive. I recall working on a large extension at the Bus Depot on Ramsbottom Lane [presumably Stubbins Lane - Editor]. Here, somewhere in the region of 15 to 20 navvies were employed in digging the foundations. Today, a mechanical excavator could do the work of 20 men. There were no packaged bricks - if you had a load of 7,000 Accrington bricks they were handed in twos, usually thrown by a man on a truck to one on the ground who would carefully stack them. They played havoc with the skin on the forgers and palms. On one warehouse at the then CROMPTON's Paper Mill [now Fort Sterling - Editor]. Some 200,000 bricks were unloaded by this method. Another adverse practice was

the tendency for firms to reduce activity at the approach to Christmas, opening up new jobs around March - it wasn't sensible or economically viable to have buildings unroofed in the depth of winter. Men were usually glad to work overtime in the summer months to compensate.

There seemed to be little paper work on sites then. Not all sites had a telephone and for a long time the firm had only one lorry. I remember one occasion when the limited transport caused a problem. We were building some houses at Baldingstone, there was an urgent need for a long ladder and the lorry was not available. Bill SNOWDON and I were sent from the site to the firm's yard in Square Street to get a ladder. We walked to Square Street then started the return journey with the ladder by the same route, through Nuttall Park to the lower part of Nuttall Village thence to Gollinrod. Unless Jacob's ladder has been altered it is a dreadful mistake to think that it is easy to take a 22 stave ladder up there. We struggled with the wretched ladder, backward and forward, inclined at a steep angle then horizontal. We finally sat exhausted in the field at the top. Bill said: 'Jacob's going to be quite confused by this lot'.

The work was not confined to Ramsbottom. We worked as far afield as Bradford and Lancaster. Lancaster was deemed a long way then and we only came home once a fortnight. Nevertheless, because we didn't have motor cars or go frequently on holidays we spent almost all our time in the town, we knew each other better and had a much greater sense of belonging to the town. Also we were involved in fewer activities and spent a greater proportion of our time at work and I think perhaps took greater pride in doing it.

Gordon White,

### **AROUND RAMSBOTTOM: THE INSIDE STORY**

When it was announced that the Society had been approached by a firm of publishers to produce a book of photographs of Ramsbottom everyone thought it a brilliant idea - helpers at the Heritage Centre are frequently asked for such a book by visitors, especially former residents who now live far away. It would also raise money for the Society and, best of all perhaps, it would provide an opportunity for people to see some of the hundreds of photographs which have been donated to the archive over the years. It was quickly agreed that the project should go, ahead and Brenda DECENT, Andrew TODD and myself set about the task enthusiastically. At this point we were informed that the publishers would require the whole thing - photographs, text, and the order in which they were to appear - to be completed in a matter of weeks! After some negotiation by Andrew this was extended slightly but speed was of the essence if we were to meet the deadline and have the book on sale by Christmas.

The long hot summer of 1995 with its record breaking temperatures was perhaps not the ideal time to embark on our first attempt at such a project. The heat outside was matched (at least) by the sweat of brows inside the Heritage Centre as the entire photographic archive was carefully scrutinised. Many hours were spent discussing each individual photograph - was the quality good enough to reproduce? Did we have, or could we obtain, enough information about the subject? Was it an interesting



photograph with some special historic or general interest? And so on and on, through about 800 items until eventually we had selected the 200 or so needed for the book. But this was just the beginning!

We now had the task of supplying a caption for each one, deciding how to arrange them in the book, choosing a cover picture, writing a foreword and material to link up the various sections. It was decided that the best arrangement would be to divide the book up into geographical areas with a separate section for photographs of people. Andrew, an experienced author of local and family history books (and probably the only one who realised the size of the task we faced!) agreed to edit the book, write the introduction and make a detailed plan of where each photograph and its caption should appear. He also transferred all our information onto his computer so that it could be submitted to the publishers on disc, thus gaining a little more time.

Every item in the archive is catalogued by Brenda (hitherto the only person who could claim to have seen every single item we possess!) and listed on the Society's computer. So the first thing was to print out all the information we had on each photograph. In many cases this was sufficient for our needs but often we had little or no information to start with - understandable I suppose when photographs were only taken on special occasions and extended families tended to live in the same area for generations. Everyone knew this was Aunt Mabel outside her front door or Uncle Bill outside the mill where he worked. A treasured photograph of a Rose Queen procession doesn't have the date on the back or the name of the Rose Queen because she is a sister or cousin and everyone knows what year she was chosen. Surely a lesson here for present day photographers?

The help of Society members, friends, neighbours and relations was crucial at this stage and I should think half the population of Ramsbottom must have had their memories jogged and their brains picked during those few weeks. People were visited, telephone, even waylaid in the street. Senior citizens who have lived in Ramsbottom all their lives were especially in demand and when they did not know the answers to our questions they usually knew someone who did. Fortunately, the people of Ramsbottom are famous for their good humour and kindness and took it all in good part. Indeed stories still keep coming back to us of the discussions, arguments, and reminiscences that have taken place as a result of our enquiries - perhaps some of them will get written up for the Magazine or another *Ramsbottom Reminiscences*?

The information we acquired came to us in many different and sometimes surprising ways. For example, the couple standing outside the School House on Dundee Lane (page 79), dressed in turn of the century clothes, were thought to be the parents of Melvin CRAWSHAW, the chemist - but this was contradicted by my next door neighbour, Mrs Edith ROBINSON, who had worked for Mr CRAWSHAW many years ago. However, Mrs ROBINSON telephoned one of her friends from the Age Concern Day Centre, Miss Eveline WALKER, to see if she could help us. On being shown the photograph, Miss Walker immediately identified the couple as grandparents Joseph and Sarah WALKER who had indeed lived in the School House. Armed with this information we were then able to find out more about Joseph and Sarah. Joseph

is listed in an 1888 Directory as a dyer at 85, Dundee Lane (the School House) and, more interestingly, Andrew also discovered a *Bury Times* article of 1893 which records that 'the lady of the house', almost certainly Sarah, told the writer of the article the reputed history of the house - that it was built in 1664 in Holcombe churchyard as the Tottington manor courthouse and parish school. When the Church Schools on Helm shore Road were built in 1864 *Ellis* HOWARTH bought the structure for £11 and carted it down to its present site. The stone carvings came from Manchester Cathedral and/or Clitheroe. The house was originally known as Well House because of the well at its front which was used by local residents until the mid 1920s. In addition to helping us with the photographs Miss WALKER has now given the Society a 1960s painting of the School House for our archives.

An amazing stroke of luck gave us the story behind the photograph of a man standing beside a horse and cart. We knew that the man was George Edward WARNER, a slater, and assumed that the model roof on the cart was an example of his work. What was not clear was the purpose of the display - advertising perhaps? or a carnival entry? Eventually, Brenda contacted the donor of the photograph, Mr Neil BUTTERWORTH, Mr WARNER's grandson. Shortly afterwards Mr BUTTERWORTH arrived at the Centre with a card which read:

'Ramsbottom Rose Queen Festival, Cycle Parade, Trade and Tradesmen's Demonstration, Saturday July 16th 1910. First Prize, Class 6, Best Display of Local Industries (on cart or lurry)'.

He then indicated a small white square under the horse's neck, barely visible in the small photograph. Not only did we discover the reason for the display we now had in our hands the actual card which had been presented to Mr WARNER in 1910 which Mr BUTTERWORTH has now donated to our collection.

The archive contains a number of photographs of Cycle Parades and for quite some time we were mystified by the fact that not one of them featured a cycle. We now know that these parades were organised by the Cycle Club as charity fund raising efforts.

Another query concerned the Ramsbottom Gas Works. We were told that after production ceased the offices were opened up once each quarter for local people to go and pay their gas bills. The person who was asked about this was George KAY who had worked for the Gas Board for many years - and was the man who collected the payments!

George and his wife Margaret were two of the people who checked through the proofs of the book and on seeing the picture of the Amazon Lancers dance troupe (page 29), Margaret produced a photograph of her mother wearing an identical outfit. They had puzzled over the strange costume for years not knowing what it was until they saw the photo in the book.

Eventually our time ran out and the photographs were sent off to the publishers amid sighs of relief all round. 'Demob happy' was Andrew's description as the three of us sat amongst the VE and VJ displays at the Centre and celebrated with a cup of tea and a piece of Brenda's birthday cake.

The respite did not last long - the arrival of the proofs within a very short time sparked off another round of checking and many people were asked to read through the book, mostly at very short notice as it had to go back to the publishers within a few days. Brenda was away on holiday happily unaware of what was happening and I was due to go away within a couple of days. This was when Tom BARRATT stepped into the breach and took over the task of showing the proofs to as many people as possible in the very short time available. As an example I believe Bill BENNION received the proof on Wednesday afternoon and returned it to Tom the same evening at the monthly meeting. This was the same day that Andrew collected the draft index from my letterbox at 6 o'clock in the morning on his way to London, and that I had delivered the proofs to Tom on my way to the Lake District!

We hope *that Around Ramsbottom* will be favourably received and sell many copies. If so, all the effort will have been worthwhile and it will be a great tribute to all those people in Ramsbottom and beyond who helped to produce it whether by donating photographs, supplying information or just encouragement when we thought it would never get finished in time.

Barbara Park

## **THE ST ANDREW'S REFURBISHMENT - AND NEW LIGHT ON SOME OLD MYSTERIES**

St Andrew's Church closed on 24th Feb 1993 for a major refurbishment planned in association with the architectural practice BYROM CLARK ROBERTS of Bury and Manchester. The cost of £108,000 was mostly met by church members. The congregation used the adjacent school for worship until the church reopened on 15th May 1994.

There have been substantial internal changes, but these have been preceded by a lot of thought and discussion - 'a church is not like a lounge which you can change if you don't like it,' Rev Ian ROGERSON said as he showed me around in summer. The pews have gone (many bought by parishioners) and have been replaced by 160 chairs; the choir stalls have been relocated in the gallery, next to existing pews inscribed Nuttall Hall' (for the servants?); the floor has been levelled, the old heating system has been replaced by modern central heating; there is a disabled toilet, a creche, an upper room and a sound system; the building has been carpeted throughout; and the pulpit has been removed and is now 'somewhere in Italy', Dave the antiques dealer, from Ramsbottom Market, having found a buyer!

In the process, attention has been drawn to a number of original features of the church. John BUCHANAN's clock is well known and much described, its four faces now once again showing the time of day. I can vouch, however, living within earshot of its sonorous and considered chimes, that it runs a few minutes fast - the specialist Leeds firm William POTTS, who maintain elderly clockwork throughout the country, provides remedial servicing. Their engineer rates the clock very highly, pointing out that it is several times larger than systems in much more substantial churches - 'like keeping an elephant for a family pet', he quipped! To assist

adjustment, the 29'6" pendulum oscillates in front of a scale from 7 to 0 to 7, this being visible behind a glass pane in the vestry. At rest, the pendulum should align with the 0, but actually stops midway between 0 and 1- the tower leans into the main building on account of the historical subsidence which affects many properties in this area, ascribed by local tradition to movement in the Pendleton Fault in 1924. As well as the tower faces, BUCHANAN placed a brass clock in the parapet of the gallery, and this was originally operated by rods from the main mechanism. The face, much blackened over the years, was cleaned during the restoration and the inscription *J. Buchanan 1834* (with thistles) is once again visible to prove its originality.

Charred timbers, found over the old south porch during the refurbishment, are evidence of an event calendared laconically in postman Richard BARLOW's diary: 'Oct 20 1918 Sunday - Fire at St Andrews Church, Ramsbottom. Estimated damages £2,480'. Thought to be the result of a fused electrical wire, the fire damaged much of the west end, including the organ chamber and the gallery. A replacement organ was bought from St Andrew's abandoned Presbyterian namesake at the top of Kay Brow. This became redundant in 1981 when a Makin electronic organ was installed. The pipes and associated works of the former organ have now been removed from the gallery to create seating space.

A fresh, glazed doorway, approached by a new gently sloping path, has been inserted at the west end, in the base of the tower. As result, the weight for BUCHANAN's clock has had to be moved over 12". A stone quatrefoil, visible on all photographs of the church, had to be removed to make way for this door, and this has been buried in the graveyard. It was a relief to Rev ROGERSON that the carving came away in its original one piece. A record of its subterranean location has been kept, in case future restorations require it. Above the new doorway on the first floor is the vestry, its adjacent frosted lancet window having a small rectangle of clear glass at its foot. This was inserted in Rev Roy CARMYLLIE's day to allow the minister to spot approaching wedding and funeral parties.

At the east end, the stained glass window made in 1966 at Buckfastleigh Abbey is now fully visible, the central section of the reredos having been dropped. Formerly, the saint's name was obscured.

Visitors to St Andrew's, 'the Grants' Church', are impressed by the memorials to the GRANT family, several members being interred and/or commemorated here. Wall memorials were erected for some who were buried elsewhere - for example William and Grace, parents of the 'Cheeryble Brothers', and Charles of Barwood House, younger brother to the 'Cheerybles', all three of whom died before the church was opened in 1834. The 'Cheerybles' themselves, William and Daniel, and other brother John (of Nuttall Hall) are 'in the vault' under the church, according to Rev David LEWTAS's jubilee booklet of 1925, though their precise locations have for some time been unknown. Anyone wanting to know the site of the 1842 burial of William, the church's founder, for example, was directed to the space 'between the choir stalls'. In fact, the two wall memorials at the east end, to William (died 1842) and his brother John (died 1855), were originally located there as headstones - for directly under each has been found an incised 8' by 4' stone slab, clearly either gravestones or vault entrances. The stones lay beneath raised flooring which supported the choir stalls, and

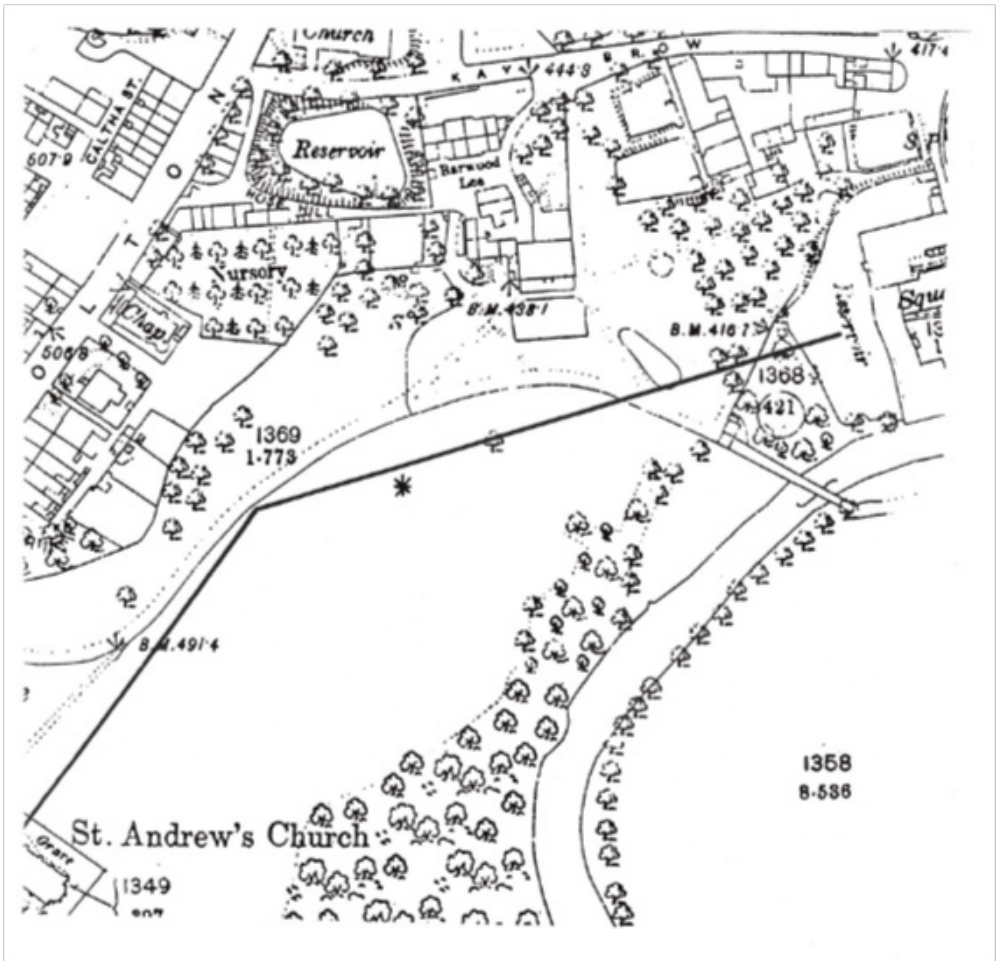
were only discovered as a result of the refurbishment.

William, the church's founder, evidently went to some considerable trouble to ensure that future generations were not to be deprived of an exact knowledge of his appearance. During the recent work, it was discovered that his memorial bust carries a small inscription *London 1839*. Clearly, the sculpture was done from life, three years in advance of his death, and presumably by the best that money could buy.

The original ceiling, with its plaster moulding pattern of St Andrew's crosses, has been retained. There are small quatrefoil openings at each crux, these being part of the ventilation system - each has a grill which can be opened and shut. John BUCHANAN's scheme of obtaining hot air from the nearby Square Works, of which he was engineer, is well known local lore - but finding any documentary evidence of how it was engineered has proved difficult. The only written reference I have found is in the commemorative booklet published in 1925 to mark the 50th anniversary of its consecration as an Anglican church. The hot air; wrote Rev David LEWTAS, 'was conveyed by means of a brick tunnel, a tunnel through which a man could walk upright.' The exact line of this tunnel, however, remains something of a mystery. Periodically, it is sighted - Gordon WHITE, now living in Guildford, remembers as a 13/14 year old in 1934 'roller coaster' racing with bogeys down from the church and across Church Field to the bridge by The Square. He saw brickwork, recently caved in, some 4" below field level, and blackness inside'. It was about 100 yards or so up the path from the bridge over the Irwell to the Lodge House and about ten yards into the scrub land that the head of the ducting fell in,' he writes. 'It might have been as few as ten bricks. The section of the ducting was flat bottom, vertical sides, semicircular head. Memory is obviously a treacherous companion but I think it was no more than 3' 0" wide and 5' 0" high.' [The spot is marked, according to Gordon's memory, by an asterisk on the map opposite -Editor.] Ken BEETSON records that the tunnel was exposed by workmen in 1958, whilst Norman ECCLES of Thelma Street, who died in 1991, recalls it being exposed in 1978, when the brickwork seemed still in good condition. Octogenarian members of St Andrew's congregation recall a large entrance to the duct in Square Works, probably to facilitate maintenance.

It seems likely that the tunnel entered the church in the cellar which lies under the tower, and from which two underfloor ducts ran throughout the building. Set in the floor above these ducts were six-leaved foil-shaped grills which allowed the admission of the heat into the church to be regulated. A flue, discovered during the recent work, probably original, is set into the north side of the tower and may have acted as a by-pass to dispose of the hot air in warm weather. Alternatively, the flue may have been used as part of the coke-fired central heating system installed in the 1920s - it is certainly blackened internally, though if built earlier this could have been a result of the 1918 fire. Oddly, there is no evidence of the tunnel entering the cellar, though this may be because it was blocked off when the 1920s system was put in. Altogether, the removal of this system in 1993-4 involved the disposal of 31/2 tons of radiators and piping, and a six ton cast iron flue which ran from the boiler in the cellar up the south side of the tower, and was capped with an earthenware cowl.

Rev Ian ROGERSON suggests that the circular depression in the churchyard opposite the north door may represent an access point to the tunnel. Certainly, the view from this spot down towards the site of Square Works indicates why there is some doubt as to its precise location. The land falls away quickly, and then more gradually, so that a direct line would have involved the tunnel having a very steep gradient, followed by a very gentle one. This lower section may have been susceptible to flooding. Gordon WHITE, who recalls seeing the tunnel exposed in 1934, suggests that the line was approximately as shown by the solid line superimposed on the 1893 25" Ordnance Survey map reproduced below. This, he points out, would have permitted a consistent gradient. There were, he suggests, bricks and broken bricks in its vicinity in his day.



If anyone has more information on the mysterious St Andrew's tunnel, we would be delighted to hear from them - a heating duct may not quite have the historical romance of those mythical secret passages (used by recusant priests) that some more ancient churches claim, but at least we know it is there - somewhere.

I am grateful to Gordon WHITE, Rev Ian ROGERSON and Steve BOOTH (who installed the new heating system) for their help in researching this article.

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### **MELVIN CRAWSHAW: 'THE CHEMIST ON THE CORNER'**

When I left school in 1923 it was very difficult to find employment. At that time the premises at 9, Bolton Street were occupied by Mrs Melvin CRAWSHAW who ran a business selling fancy goods, cut glass and toys etc, including scooters, dolls' prams and elegant babies' prams. The latter, even the not-so elegant, were very important in family life, as, apart from doctors and a few wealthy people in the town, no one owned cars. Whenever mother wanted to go out she had to take the baby in the pram; also when going to the shops she had to carry her shopping bags on the pram handles or on the tray underneath. There was no lending library in Ramsbottom, so Mrs CRAWSHAW ran her own at a charge of 2d per book per week. When she offered me temporary employment from September to Christmas. I was pleased to accept it and enjoyed the work.

As Christmas approached, her husband, Mr Melvin CRAWSHAW, 'The Chemist on the Corner' (nos 1-3, Bolton Street) as he was known and advertised, asked me if I would like permanent employment as assistant in his shop. He said he would also teach me the art of dispensing medicines. This offer also I was pleased to accept, though I had no idea of how much there was to learn and the job was certainly much harder and different from today. In addition to dispensing I was also taught to make pills and ointments and other things. There were many more medicines and comparatively very few pills and tablets, just the reverse today. Almost all the shops in the town were open from 8.30am to 8.00pm except early closing on Wednesday at 1.00pm. On Saturdays we stayed open until 9.00pm. Shops had to stay open late because so many people worked in the factories from 6.00am to 5.30pm Mondays to Fridays and until 12 noon on Saturdays - so they had to do their shopping in the evenings.

I worked a very long day with a one hour break for lunch and half an hour for tea. I lived at Edenfield and as the buses only ran every half hour I couldn't go home for lunch or tea, so every day in my lunch hour I walked up The Rake to have lunch with my sisters who lived in Holcombe village. I wish I were able to do the walk today! I had one week's holiday a year plus Good Friday, Whit Friday, Trinity Monday, Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day. On Christmas Eve we stayed open as long as there was anyone in the street, sometimes until 10 or 11pm!

At that time there was National Insurance for male manual workers only. Men and women workers were mostly very poorly paid - average wages for a labourer were

under £2 per week and for cotton and towel weavers (mainly women) £1 10s or even less. Consequently, many people couldn't afford to consult the doctor for minor ailments and had all kinds of remedies of their own. To quote just a few: for constipation - syrup of senna, senna pods and leaves, epsom and glauber salts, liquorice powder, cascara tablets (there must have been many sufferers from this complaint judging by the quantities sold); for coughs - raspberry vinegar and olive oil, 'all fours', 'three in one' (made up by the chemist), flagroot for rheumatic pains and nitbone for sprains; ABC liniment, spike oil and aspirin tablets for rheumatic pains; golden eye ointment and many other drugs and herbs. People bought camphor squares, lit one corner, allowed it to bum for a few seconds, blew out the flame and inhaled the vapour to relieve a stuffy nose. They also put a few drops of eucalyptus oil on a handkerchief and inhaled the vapour for nasal catarrh.

When the customers' own remedies failed they consulted the chemist and he advised and prescribed treatment. Usually they asked for 'a bottle' for their complaint. There were many 'bottles' and each had to be dispensed individually, as required, for colds in the head, influenza, coughs (children and adults), diarrhoea, constipation, 'nerves', neuralgia, sore throat, stomach ache, pick-me-up and tonic, pick-me-up after alcohol, fever cure, headache, backache, rheumatism, blood, asthma (I still have copies of the prescriptions though many of the ingredients are no longer obtainable).

There were lotions, medicines and ointments for pimples, ointments for piles and ringworms; inhalant and drops for catarrh and drops for wax in the ears.

We also sold all kinds of surgical dressings including cotton wool, gauze, white lint, boracic (pink) lint bandages (1", 2", 3"), crepe, elastic and elastic adhesive.

Most of the old home remedies have been replaced by patent medicines. Amongst the earlier patent medicines advertised which I remember were Fenning's Fever Cure - medicine and powder, Dr William's Pink Pills for Pale People, Venos Lightning Cough cure, Beecham's Pills worth a guinea a box, De Witt's Pills, Kruschen Salts (which consisted mainly of Glauber and Epsom salts), Owbridge's Lung Tonic, Sloan's Liniment and Carter's Little Lever Pills. Years later the introduction of the National Health Service changed all this as people could not consult the doctor whenever necessary and receive free treatment but there has always been and still is a demand for patent medicines.

We also made up prescriptions for treating dogs and the many horses in the area. In addition to those belonging to the farmers and the Holcombe Hunt, many horses were used for drawing lorries to transport goods. People even brought in old or sick dogs to be put down with a dose of prussic acid - a quick death but the worst thing I ever had to do was to administer the dose whilst Mr CRAWSHAW held the dog. I only ever did it once.

Apart from the medical side of the business, Mr CRAWSHAW had many sidelines - to quote a few: baking powder and pepper (both of which made us sneeze when we were weighing them out!), bicarbonate of soda, honey, dried cloves, ginger and rhubarb (root and powder), starch, borax, etc. All were either weighed and sold by the ounce or multiples. We also sold butter, treacle and herbal toffees manufactured by Mr CRAWSHAW's cousin, Mr Jack CRAWSHAW at his works in Ramsbottom.



We also sold malt and hops for home brewing of beer and had a licence to sell wines but only between 11am and 3pm and after 5pm. I can only remember the most popular one which was Sandeman's Port Wine - one star and three star. Dog biscuits and a motor van which his cousin Mr Billy CRAWSHAW drove and delivered weekly orders to Helmshore, Holcombe, Summerseat and any outlying places making requests. The advent of the privately owned car and electricity in the home changed all this.

As I said previously I had much to learn and remember: all the Latin names of the drugs used in dispensing and the corresponding English names, of the drugs and herbs, etc sold over the counter, also the prices. The patent medicine prices were easier to remember as most of them were 1 s 3d or, as an inducement to buy the larger size, three times the amount for 3s 0d.

In those days before supermarkets, each customer was served individually and each article carefully wrapped. I can't think of any business which had such a variety of goods for sale, taking into account the very many drugs, herbs, etc. Yes! the hours were long and it was hard to work but I enjoyed it as we were always busy dispensing, selling goods, making up the orders, window dressing etc.

There were two other chemists in the town. Mr CATLOW had his shop in Bolton Street, later taken over by Mr Stanley CLARKE and later by Jack and Barbara PALMER who moved the business to Market Place. The other one was Mr BRACEWELL whose shop was on Bridge Street. On his retirement it was taken over by Timothy Whites & Taylors who later closed the shop. Mr CRAWSHAW's business was taken over by his eldest son, Roger, who, on the opening of the Health Centre, moved across the street to no 6, a much smaller shop.

In the 1980s nos 1-3, Bolton Street became *Present Corner*, and extended into no 5. I believe Roger retired, but the business at no 6 still trades under the name of Melvin CRAWSHAW. It is interesting to note that not only was Mr Melvin CRAWSHAW a pharmacist and a good business man, but also a qualified optician and an astronomer. He occasionally gave lectures on astronomy - a very busy man.

After all these years it seems strange in 1995 to see nos 1-3, Bolton Street empty, as they now are. It was a chemist's shop for many years [since Jamieson MORTON instigated the business there, probably in 1853 - Editor] before becoming *Present Corner*, but it is only one of many changes which have taken place in the town over the years.

Edith Robinson, Bolton Road West, Holcombe Brook

### **GAS LIGHTING AT IRWELL BRIDGE MILL, KENYON STREET**

The weaving sheds at Lawrence STEAD and Brother Ltd's Irwell Bridge Mill, Kenyon Street were still gas-lit in November 1952, when I started working thereafter four years at Pembertons Mill, also in Kenyon Street. There was electric lighting in all other departments of the STEADs' mill.

When the gas was due to be turned on, an electric light bulb (above the door leading to the warehouse) was switched on. Each weaver at the end of the 'alley' went out to

their tacklers' bench where matches and tapers were stored to set off the chain. They passed the taper along their alley as each weaver lit their gas mantles. Electric lighting was installed about 1953/54. A few years later electricity replaced steam to power the looms, then about 100 years old. STEADs had sold the mill around 1951 to T ROBINSON and Co Ltd of Chesterfield. The mill closed at the end of December 1972. I think one loom is at Helmshore Museum, one in Bolton, one in Bury.

Joan Barcroft,

### **A SUMMERSEAT AVIATION MYSTERY**

During my early teenage years whilst working at the Joshua Hoyle Mill in wartime Summerseat I was, from time to time, transferred from one department to another and for some months worked alongside my old chum and workmate from Bury Len BARLOW in the cotton chamber where apart from feeding the cotton into the teeth of these every hungry machines our other responsibility was operating the joist and hauling up the bales of raw cotton from the backs of the lorries down below where they were manhandled into convenient areas ready - once the covering sacking was removed - to be torn off in strips and fed into the noisy monsters! One fine and sunny day as we were unhooking the hook and chain from a bale there came upon us a sudden roar and to our amazement an RAF aircraft, seemingly at eyelevel with ourselves, flashed by at a most dangerously low height! For the moment we were both spellbound as this plane circled the mill where after performing a couple of laps sharply shot off over the nearby wooded gorge, almost clipping the tree tops. Recovering from our initial surprise we both pondered on the question 'Why?'

There were not many witnesses to this strange phenomenon and most workers would have been unaware of this plane as the loud noise from the machinery would have drowned the noise from the plane's engine - or engines as I cannot quite recall whether it had been a single or twin-engined aircraft. Later a rumour was circulating as to the identity of the culprit of the buzzing of the mill and words reached my ears that it was - or could have been, an ex-employee 'showing off to his mate and pointing out where he once had worked before becoming an airman. I would appreciate it if any member could enlighten me a little more on this happening.

PS My old workmate Len BARLOW mentioned above would now be the same age as myself - 69. My attempts at trying to trace his whereabouts after so many years have proved fruitless. I would be most grateful for any information regarding him.

Jack Whitford, Wembley, Middlesex



