



**NEWS  
MAGAZINE**

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# Ramsbottom Heritage Society

## News Magazine No 63

### Autumn/Winter 2022

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#### Front Cover

Photo by Gary Pemberton - part of the collection of photographs documenting the construction of the War Memorial in St Paul's gardens in 2021 and 2022.

The collection is on the RamsbottomHeritage website

<http://www.ramsbottomheritage.org.uk/cpg/index.php> under 'Special Collections' and 'War Memorial Project'

## **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

The committee have decided to remain at Christ Church Neighbourhood Centre for the monthly public meetings, rather than return to Ramsbottom Civic Hall. This was based on the cost of hire, a proposed switch to a Monday evening, and the reduced numbers attending meetings since lockdown. For those members who have not returned or have not been before, we encourage you to come. The evening starts with the latest news, usually followed by the first part of the talk, then a break for refreshments and a chat, and then the second part of the talk. All are welcome, with a discount for members. There is a Christmas social evening on Thursday 8th December, with a pie and peas supper, and if you would like to attend, contact John Leyland before Sunday 4<sup>th</sup>, using the details on the inside front cover.

John Leyland

## **SOCIETY NEWS**

### Facebook

There are now 2,496 members on the Facebook page, and members are starting to post their own queries and research. Committee member Keith Burroughs approves these posts, and doesn't allow any promoting their business.

### You Tube videos

There are now 86 subscribers to the YouTube channel with 37 videos, which have been viewed over 8,000 times. Keith is working on a Heritage Trail, which will link to the videos and also include the street signs and blue plaques. He is looking for a map of the town that he can use without any copyright issues.



## Blue Plaques and Lost Street Names Project Phases 2 and 3

We now have a further three in the offing. Two have been delivered and we hope they will be erected before the end of the year:

- A blue plaque is ready to go on the Apprentice House on Crow Lane. This records the carting of pauper children from city workhouses to work in Ramsbottom mills in the early 1800s.
- A plaque for Dungeon Row, so called as it was near Ramsbottom's 'lock-up', will go above a shop front on Bridge Street.
- The other plaque has still to be approved by the owner of the building.

More sites for street signs and blue plaques have been identified for Phase 3. Further details will be available in future magazines once our research is complete, and we have the approval of both the Council and householders.

Meanwhile we would be pleased to hear from anyone who has a suggestion of other places we could commemorate.

## Ramsbottom Reminiscences – Volumes 1 and 2

Published November 2022, a combined new edition of our original Ramsbottom Reminiscences newly formatted and now with many unpublished photos.

See back cover for more details and how to buy a copy.

## Ramsbottom Reminiscences – Volume 3

Hard on the heels of the combined new edition of Volumes 1 and 2, we are keen to collect contributions for a further collection of local memories. As you will see from the reprint of 1 and 2, there is no stricture with regard to length. Nor are we prizing academic polish!

Do you ever marvel at how little youngsters know about 'the olden days' –

when there were no smart phones, and people looked things up in books; when there were only four TV channels; when you could get a train from here to Accrington or Manchester; when there were cotton mills in the town; when children played out all day; when you could buy virtually anything locally, including ham sliced by the butcher; when there were no supermarkets; when the river and air were filthy; when we still had two cinemas?

We have already got three or four contributions, including superb memories from a conductor in the very last year – 1969 – of Ramsbottom’s tiny fleet of damask red and cream buses which operated from Stubbins Lane garage. This site is now occupied by the Esso garage. His account is full of tales, hilarious and poignant . . .

As with the new reprint, we have access to lots of photos that we can integrate into each submission. Better still if you have your own!

If you have anything, however short, or want to ask questions and float ideas, please email me (none of that in our day!) at [aatodd1846@gmail.com](mailto:aatodd1846@gmail.com).

Andrew Todd



## **CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEAS**



Our publications will be on sale  
at

Ramsbottom Library

on

Saturday 10th December from 9.30am - 1pm

at the

## **SOCIETY’S BOOKSTALL**

There will be a selection of books, plus some leaflets about  
Ramsbottom Victorian shops - as stocking fillers.

## CONSERVATION GROUP NEWS

2022 has already been an interesting year with the Society responding to several major planning and new development proposals.

### **1. Ramsbottom Town Centre Plan -**

Approved by the Council 9th March 2022.

Despite our many misgivings and constructive suggestions expressed to the public consultation, only two of our ideas were taken on board: to redevelop the long-neglected Bridge Street Gardens and to recreate the old footpath to the cricket ground beside the River Irwell, adding a footbridge across to Nuttall Park. The most disappointing aspect of the approved plan was the complete absence of anything to do with preserving/enhancing any aspect of the Town Centre Conservation Area, which gives the town the attractiveness and character it enjoys today.

### **2. Mondi Mill - Planning Application 65844 -**

Still to be decided by Bury Council.

The saga of this proposal to build on the site rolls on. It started in February 2020 as a revised application to build 73 houses (not 85 as originally planned), which finally appeared before the full Planning Committee for approval on June 7th. Although Council officers had recommended approval, after the Society and two councillors had spoken against, the Committee voted to refuse. Eccleston Homes, the developers, have appealed the committee's decision, and the jury at national level are still out.

From day one, we have felt strongly it's absolutely vital that, standing as it does beside a key gateway into Ramsbottom and located partly within the town centre conservation area between the river and the ELR station, the design, type and number of new houses in any planning proposal, must compliment and blend seamlessly with the rest of the conservation area surrounding it. The current undecided application proposes a style of housing completely and

utterly inappropriate for this location. We believe it would do irredeemable damage and be a hammer blow to the heart of town.

In the event that the application fails (for this site with potential and permanent flooding problems that should preclude any future new housing prospects), we believe the greatest legacy with which Bury Council could endow Ramsbottom would be to buy the empty Mondi site. As a huge open green space it could offer endless exciting possibilities: sporting activities, riverside access, big car parking capacity and an impressive view of the town over the bridge of remains of Ramsbottom's industrial heritage, a glimpse of the river, steam trains, the mill chimney and Peel Tower on the hill above— a fantastic introduction to Ramsbottom.

### **3. Eccles Street - Planning Application 68526 –**

Withdrawn by the applicant.

Ramsbottom Heritage Society's objection was one of 39 submitted.

We believe this application failed the fundamental remit (of any new development in both a Conservation Area and within Green Belt), that it must respond to its surroundings in terms of height, scale, design and choice of materials. The proposal's oversized building, with less than 20% of the external walls in natural stone and the remaining 80% (plus roof) clad in timber and zinc panels, was a world away from the existing predominantly mid-19th century sandstone, terraced cottages with their natural blue slate roofs.

### **4. No 2 Tanners Street – Application 67553 -**

Approved April 2022

This is one that got away, because if there was ever a more inappropriate structure built in a Ramsbottom conservation area, we would be amazed. Members of the Society and the wider public were convinced that the unsympathetic design in terms of size, choice of materials and features such as the flat roof, rendering and garden walls, smoked glass floor-to-ceiling windows, balconies and balustrades would be completely incongruous and out

of character with the well-proportioned, traditional, stone houses that make up this corner of the Tanners Conservation Area. We submitted our objection on the 7th November 2021 and spoke against it at the full planning committee meeting.

### **5. New Dwellings off Spring Street - Application 68578 -**

Still to be decided by Bury Council.

As this development would adversely affect one of the few remaining wildlife corridors between the River Irwell and the West Pennine Moors beyond Holcombe, the Society objected to the application.

A couple of applications for sites within the Holcombe Conservation Area are currently under discussion regarding their choice of materials and design.

John Ireland

## **UNITED UTILITIES' PROPOSED WORKS IN NUTTALL VILLAGE**

During 2022 our interest in the site where Nuttall Village once stood has taken a new turn with United Utilities' proposals to carry out works to improve the River Irwell's water quality. If you have been in the area you may have noticed surveyors and excavations.

Since January the Society has been invited to several on-site visits with United Utilities. At an initial meeting we were told that two sites were being considered, one near the chimney and one nearer the river, which was the old loom shed. In the light of what a group of our members had discovered and recorded in our publication *Nuttall: Ramsbottom's Lost Village*, it seemed there was a possibility of an archaeological survey, so Ian Miller from Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS) was contacted.

In April Ian Miller attended a second visit when we located the houses, loom shed and old spinning mill. United Utilities told us that the old loom shed was



Field above site of Nuttall Village during United Utilities' excavations - Ian Smith

their desired location. After purchasing the land from Peel Holdings, a tank would be installed at a depth of 20 metres underground, with a diameter of 17 metres. There would also be an above ground “kiosk” for control equipment. They had read our book and were very sympathetic to the archaeology in the area.

On 13th April Ian Miller sent the following message.

Thank you all very much for your time yesterday and for making what I found to be a very useful, informative and enjoyable meeting and site walkover. It was great to meet you all, and have a guided tour of the proposals and the wider site. I thought it might be useful for me to summarise what I brought away from the meeting.

The proposed scheme, which is likely to be brought forward ‘on the ground’ in 2024, will involve the construction of a new below-ground attenuation tank and associated infrastructure (including a new access





1893 OS MAP superimposed with United Utilities infrastructure locations

road) that will be aimed at improving the water quality in the River Irwell. The construction works required to deliver the scheme is likely to remove some surviving below-ground foundations and other remains of the former Nuttall Mill and associated workers' housing that formed the late 18th- / early 19th-century 'factory colony' of Nuttall. In particular, the proposed scheme will impact on the footprint of a weaving mill that was added to the Nuttall Mills complex in the c. 1830s(?), although some of the below-ground remains of this mill will have been impacted on in the 20th century when the existing sewer system was installed. The proposed scheme will also necessitate some clearance of trees / vegetation, and especially those that are contributing the instability of the extant walls of the former weaving mill – these currently act as retaining walls for the raised ground to the rear, and will be subject to some consolidation works as part of the proposed scheme.

It is GMAAS' view that the impact on the potential archaeological remains of the mill can be offset by an appropriate level of mitigation and, as such, GMAAS does not, in principle, have any issues with the proposed scheme,

not least as there is considerable public benefit to be gained from its delivery. It is also GMAAS' firm view that the proposed scheme presents a rare and exciting opportunity to help to 'celebrate' the immense historical importance of the site, and build on the excellent work carried out to date by members of the Ramsbottom Heritage Society and the publication of their book on 'Ramsbottom's Lost Village', which has been of huge value in highlighting the importance and local interest in Nuttall village. With this in mind (whilst acknowledging that the design proposals are at an early stage), GMAAS recommends consideration of the following as a mitigation strategy to be delivered in advance of / during the proposed works:

- Measured survey of the above-ground structural elements of the former mill (preferably including the riverside wall beyond the 'red-line boundary' – this could be captured efficiently and safely by laser scanning) following any vegetation clearance work. Ideally this survey would extend beyond the limits of the 'red-line' to allow any remains uncovered during intrusive investigation to be placed in context;

- An initial stage of limited further investigation. This could comprise the (hand) excavation of a small number of trial pits just to confirm that structural remains of the mill do survive as below-ground remains, and gain a handle on their extent and depth below ground. I'm trying to avoid the use of the word 'evaluation' as that can imply a larger piece of work than I think is required in this instance, although I am essentially talking of a small-scale evaluation;

- Assuming that below-ground remains do survive (to be confirmed via initial trial pits), I would suggest that the site is a perfect target for a community-based excavation, i.e. an excavation overseen / facilitated by professional archaeologists providing guidance and tuition for any members of the local community that wish to participate in an archaeological excavation, coupled with engagement with local schools and a public open day. It is GMAAS'

considered opinion that this would represent the ideal mitigation strategy, as it enable any archaeological remains to be recorded whilst engaging the local community in this important site.

-Pending the results obtained from the above, it might be beneficial to maintain a limited watching brief during construction works to resolve any questions that arise from the community excavation.

I hadn't fully appreciated the importance of the site to the area's early cotton industry, and just how much stone fabric of the mills and associated housing is still visible. The river elevation of what I assume is the early spinning mill (just north-east of your 'red line') is particularly intriguing, and inspired me to have a quick scan for anything I have on file / can find pertaining to its early development. This can be traced to 1791 when the absentee landowner of the Nuttall Hall estate, Rev Richard Formby, advertised the lease of part of the estate with 'a fine stream of water...together with any quantity of land' (Manchester Mercury, September 1791). This lease was taken some 12 months later by a Manchester-based cotton merchant and manufacturer, Richard Alsop. The terms of the lease allowed Alsop to make a carriageway, erect buildings, divert the Irwell and build a bridge across the river, enabling him to set about erecting an 'Arkwright-type' water-powered cotton spinning mill. This five-storey mill was extant by January 1794, when it was insured by a partnership between several members of the Alsop family and James Diggle. Samuel Crompton's 'survey' of 1796 accredited the mill with housing 5,656 mule spindles (but no throstles). The original mill was thus amongst the first wave of textile mills to be built in the region, with added historic interest deriving from the associated 'factory colony' settlement.

I haven't found a date for the erection of the weaving mill that occupied the proposed scheme area, although it is shown on the tithe map of 1839, and the site is described as a 'manufacturing establishment' in a newspaper article of 1839 (the term 'manufacturing' implying that both spinning and

weaving was being carried out). This is a relatively early date for powered weaving mills, and the evidence available indicates that this was a steam-powered mill. Given the early date of the weaving mill, a key research objective for the archaeological excavation will be to determine whether the building had a north-light roof (which could possibly be determined by the presence and spacing of internal columns) together with the location and layout of the steam-power plant – this will have been a beam engine initially, although it is possible that this may have been superseded in the second half of the 19th century by a horizontal engine.

All in all, I feel that this is a very exciting project and I look forward to discussing it in more detail in due course.

With kindest regards Ian

**UPDATE 28th JUNE 2022** - United Utilities reported on progress with the project.

**Land Ownership:** The company were days from purchasing two small areas of land from Peel 1) land above proposed new tank and surroundings 2) land at junction of pipes (near present grid) and were hoping to submit a planning application by Christmas 2022.

**The kiosk** will be hidden by “stone walls” in keeping with surrounding masonry i.e. retaining wall to Nuttall Road (ex loom shed wall). Depending on a survey this wall may have to be rebuilt.

**Vegetation:** All trees on the old loom shed site and surrounds are to be removed. To compensate for tree removal, new trees could be planted elsewhere. On completion of the works on the tank etc (taking e.g. 18 months), United Utilities owned site(s) may be seeded with wild vegetation which could include some trees.

**Nuttall Road** will not be urbanised but edges will need to be strengthened to enable access by large equipment.

**Archaeology:** When the site has been cleared off a decision will be made about an excavation near the loom shed. United Utilities would use professional archaeologists. Ian Miller hopes that this isn't at the preclusion of any of the local community that would like to be involved. Please let us know if you are interested in engaging with the archaeological work.

## **UPDATE OCTOBER 2022**

United Utilities are planning a public exhibition to share up to date plans with the public.

## **WE WILL REMEMBER THEM**

On Sunday 7th May our family went to St Paul's Church gardens for the re-dedication of the Memorial Cross and the War Memorial and the dedication of

the new War Memorial.

It is inscribed with the names of the Ramsbottom people (i.e. of the old Ramsbottom Urban District) who gave their lives in the two World Wars. In the crowd were lots of people from near and far who had come to our



[Ian Chapman](#)

little town to take part in the celebrations on this special day.

Ramsbottom British Legion member Mr Martin Wiggam's welcome was followed by the Boomerang Brass Band from Haslingden playing a selection of old songs which we all joined in, having a "right good sing". An army veteran with a chest full of medals sitting in his wheelchair by us sang his heart out. The music obviously brought back many memories of his days serving King and



Ian Chapman

country in the Second World War. We later found out that he was 90 years young and was remembering his fallen comrades whose names are inscribed on the new memorial plinths.



Maureen Dalliday - Photo by Ian Chapman

We enjoyed more singing from Rossendale Male Voice Choir until it was 14.00hrs and time for the re-dedication service to begin. It was taken by the Venerable Jean Bulges. After prayers and the dedication, the Last Post and Reveille was played by Maureen Dalliday, a local lass who has lived in Ramsbottom all her life. What an honour it must have been for her.

After the two-minute silence we had the National Anthem, which must have been heard up the Rossendale Valley as the whole crowd sang out. The Standards from all the different British Legions and military units present were lowered. There were fourteen in all and they were led by Ramsbottom British Legion's Standards. It was a spectacular sight and a very proud moment for all.



Martin closed the event by thanking everyone for attending and making the day so memorable. He invited everyone to the Royal British Legion Club on Central Street for refreshments and to listen to the brass band in the upstairs lounge. Finally, he led the three cheers for our Queen and another special cheer for the people of Ramsbottom. A very special day was had by all.

We would like to thank all who have been involved and have worked so hard to make the new memorial possible. It has been a long hard slog for the Ramsbottom War Memorial Committee with ten years of fundraising and jumping through hoops and red tape. Well done to each and every one.

Betty and Ian Chapman (members of the Ramsbottom Royal British Legion and Ramsbottom Heritage Society) 2022

## **OUR PLATINUM JUBILEE WEEKEND**

By Wednesday 1st June, I had planned to be at Hinchliffe's yard to see the jubilee beacon being lit on Holcombe Hill opposite. My grandson Harrison was keen to join me and had a bright idea. "Let's go up the hill to watch it properly. We'll never see anything like this again in your lifetime – and I can't imagine me seeing anything like it in mine." (He's only fourteen!) One quick phone call was all it took for my daughter Holly to agree to come with us so the stage was set.

The following evening, Thursday 2nd June, at 19.30hr I picked up Holly (and a bag packed with drinks, snacks and our torches). As we drove from Bury to Holcombe Holly told Harrison about the last time, at the age of nine, she went up Holcombe Hill to see the beacon that was lit there on a very exciting millennium night.

After parking outside Holcombe School we began the climb beside the school up the very uneven path, which was a task in itself. We had plenty of time for a rest and a chat with other people walking past, and for stopping to admire the views of Ramsbottom as we turned the corner at Whirlwind. Then it was the last push and Holly and Harrison raced ahead because they wanted to have a

look at the old quarry. I plodded on, stopping at the stile to lean on the iron gate and watch the horses and sheep and the world go by. They caught me up and



Ian Chapman

we soon reached the tower where hundreds of people, young and old had already gathered. There was a fantastic atmosphere with plenty of the “old Ramsbottom faithfuls” and much reminiscing, especially about the millennium event.

The event had been organised by the Greater Manchester Army Cadet Force and, as well as hundreds of members of the public, Sir Warren Smith, the Lord Lieutenant of Greater Manchester, Commandant Colonel Catherine Harrison, cadets and staff were there.

The celebrations were started by the Cadet drummers and the National Anthem was sung. How great that was, with the sound echoing around the tower and across the hills. Holly and Harrison managed to get in front of the crowd as the beacon was lit. Hundreds of mobile phones captured the moment, lighting up the sky and reminding us how times have changed since

the year 2000. After another rendition of the National Anthem the crowds started to make their way down the hill. We hung back for twenty minutes or so, just looking up the valley and over towards Manchester and beyond, enjoying the sight of other beacons flickering in the distance. It was time for our torches to be switched on for a slow walk down with everyone saying how much they had enjoyed the event. It was nearly midnight when we arrived home.

### Nuttall Park Jubilee Celebrations Friday 3rd June

For this very special event, more Platinum Jubilee celebrations in Nuttall Park, there was a feeling of real excitement. My granddaughter Amelia's hair was in a pony tail plaited with red, white and blue ribbon by her clever Mum. "Is there anyone here that you don't know?" she said after we had made our way round the stalls.

Harrison piped up, "If Great Grandma were here we wouldn't get round, as she really does know everyone."

We made our way over to where crowds had gathered to listen and join in the singing of Lee Grant, a great rock and roller. Afterwards it was off to the funfair. We were soon laden with doughnuts for Amelia's dad and other goodies that the grandchildren had won. One of Amelia's prizes was a goldfish and she was over the moon. The life-saver, a plastic bag for the goldfish, was given to us later by my cousin Karen back at the Heritage Society's stall.

Over at the Friends of Nuttall Park's pavilion we sat down and had a cup of tea. The ladies were lovely and asked Amelia about her hair. We then returned to the bandstand to join in with the sing-song which was led by Haslingden and Helmschore Brass Band.

(The family had another great day on the Saturday at the celebrations at Redvales playing fields, Bury.)

Ian Chapman

## **HOLCOMBE ROVER SCOUT CREW 1936 – 39**

(Rovers were the older branch of the Scouts, with a minimum age of 17.)

The log book belonging to the Holcombe Rover Scout Crew on their formation on 10th February 1936 up until October 1939 has recently been donated to the Society archives. The donor, Mrs Christine Bristow tells us that her father, Andrew Hayhurst, who was one of the first Holcombe Crew members, appears to have been the writer of the final logs so the book was in his possession when they disbanded at the start of World War II. Mrs Bristow explains briefly that the log book contains the minutes of the Rovers' weekly meetings, describing how the first members were invested and reports weekly on their activities connected to the scouting movement, Holcombe Church and the village.

A news cutting inside the log reports that the Holcombe Rover Crew were the second to be formed in the Ramsbottom Association. Although "the weather invited no one to turn out" there was a very good attendance at the opening ceremony of their meeting place, the Rover Den, for their formation. "After literally battling against the wind, and precariously picking one's way along the icy footpaths through the fields to the Den, it was a comfortable feeling to find oneself in this cosy lamplit room, with a combustion stove roaring up the chimney."

Following a few introductory remarks by the Rector of Holcombe Church, the Commissioner formally declared the Den open and gave a short address before investing four Rovers of the new crew. They were S Clive Butterworth, Herbert Slater, John Taylor and Edwin Towers. After formal proceedings ended "the assembly 'fell to' to enjoy refreshments". Crew members who joined later in 1936 were Andrew Hayhurst, Eric Rostron, and Ernest Hutchinson. Vincent Booth, Tom Rostron, Harold Howarth and Richard Wilson are listed in the log as joining in 1937 and Henry Entwistle and Gilbert Dewhurst in 1938.

The group was run by Mr Vernon Booth, whose name appears in a list of Peel Brow Primary School headmasters. (Records show him living in Holcombe in

1939, aged 60 and his occupation as School Master, Elementary School.) Interestingly, there is a 1961 letter inside the log book written by Mr Booth regretting that he hadn't been able to commit fully to the group, as he had a young family at the time. (*Entries in the log book suggest that his contribution to the group was much appreciated by the group at the time, however.* - Editor)

Much of the early logs cover the setting up of "The Den", to which the Rector and also the school held keys. Soon the Rovers had provided various sundries including paint, a wick for a lamp and two cwts (hundredweights) of coke for the stove. Records show they also sawed logs and lit the stove before many of their meetings. (Later, on 16th July 1937, each Rover paid ½d towards a tin of black lead for the stove.) After correspondence between Mr Booth and Mr G Turnbull, cloth was donated for wall decoration and a screen they were making. At the end of July 1936 "the den was presenting a habitable appearance" and had a billiard table courtesy of Reverend Scarlin. By the end of the year Mr and Mrs Beasley had presented the Rovers with a table tennis table.

Many hours seem to have been spent over the years making improvements to the Den, "a fine example of team spirit". The Rovers' work on the fireplace involved buying stones and cement and two rotten joists had to be replaced



Holcombe Rovers took the scouts and cubs on Summer camp 1939



when they put in a new tongue and groove floor. The total cost of materials for the reflooring was £3-3-2d. One 1937 project was the building of a small altar. In November 1937 work began on installing electric lighting after J Woods' tender for the work was accepted. The rate per unit, (which reads as either 5d or 8d) was agreed with the electric company.

### **MORE DETAILS OF THE HOLCOMBE CREW'S ACTIVITIES EXTRACTED FROM THE MEMOIRS OF ERNEST HUTCHINSON**

During my time in the building trade, I joined Holcombe Rover Scout crew along with Eric and Tom Rostron, Eddy Towers, John Taylor, Andy Hayhurst, Henry Entwistle, .... And Vernon "Dinky" Booth (a schoolmaster) was the crew leader (called Dinky because he wasn't very tall, in fact he refused to wear short pants in case he was mistaken for a boy scout and he always wore long trousers). We used to meet on Friday evenings in the then Holcombe Rectory Barn. The Barn was just a large one storey building above the rectory (the parson at that time was the Rev Scarlin). It was empty but hadn't been used for ages so we set about and cleaned it out. At our first meeting we were frozen so, as there was no heat and the roof was so high, I suggested putting in a false roof and a partition to make the place a bit smaller inside. Being the only one in the building trade I took all the measurements and worked out the quantities of materials required and arrived at a cost. At our next meeting it was decided to run a few dances at Holcombe School to pay for it.

About this period Summerseat was included in Holcombe C of E parish and at our first dance some girls came up from Summerseat. Tom, Eric and myself couldn't dance and I was busy taking money on the door, looking after the refreshments and making sure no drunks came in so didn't really notice who was there. Hearing about the first dance Hilda, Tom and Eric's elder sister, said it was time we learned to dance and she taught us to do the foxtrot and waltz in their front room at Rostron Road with her mum and grandmother looking on whilst doing the family clothes mending.



Dances or similar events could only be held once a month so we continued working on the inside of the Rover den, building a stove and making the walls reasonable with a rough pointing of cement and then a couple of coats of distemper. At the next dance some of the older men and women of the church helped us with the doorkeeping and refreshments so Tom, Eric and I could have a go at dancing.

The Rover crew all attended Holcombe Church and Sunday School and took the scouts and cubs on summer camp. This was always held at Grange-over-Sands and one of my jobs was to take them for P.E. Holcombe School also had a P.E. night class for parallel bar, horse work and a horizontal bar. The classes were instructed by a man from Edenfield who was top class in this field. I was part of the team giving displays around Summerseat and Holcombe.

Sometimes in the spring the Rovers would go to Lower Odder Bridge after the dances, camping there by the river. We all used bikes and after pitching our little tents we would walk the woods and lanes in the moonlight till about 2am. Sunday morning we rose, had a plunge in the river, which was always hellishly cold, and a run about to get the feeling back in our legs. Then out with the primus stoves and cooked bacon and eggs for breakfast and another walk through the woods amongst the smell of wild garlic then back home for about 2pm.

## **HOLCOMBE ROVERS LOG BOOK EXTRACTS**

**12<sup>th</sup> May 1937:**

Coronation of their Majesties King George and Queen Elizabeth

The Crew paraded with the School down to Ramsbottom to take part in the town's celebrations, Rover Edwin Towers having charge of the Summerseat scouts in the Summerseat parade. Later in the evening the crew joined with the rest of the scouts in the torchlight procession to the bonfire, the whole evening being a complete success.

*The Crew had made an illuminated box with suitable lettering for the procession and had decorated the Den with red, white and blue streamers and a large Union Jack. After their 14th May meeting, to celebrate the Coronation, they "tucked into a huge supper of sausage and mash kindly cooked for us by Miss H Rostron".*

**July 21<sup>st</sup> 1938:**

Unfortunately, the chief Rover (namely 'Hutch') responsible for this work (on erecting a false roof in the Den) is leaving us to take up a fresh job and although we wish him well, we also have very great feelings in losing such a good Rover and pal. Next week we hope to have a farewell supper and presentation for Ernest."

*Ernest Hutchinson had been offered a post as a trainee surveyor at the Ordnance Survey office in Southampton in June 1938. (Being under 21 years old and a trainee his 'princely salary' was £120 per year.)*

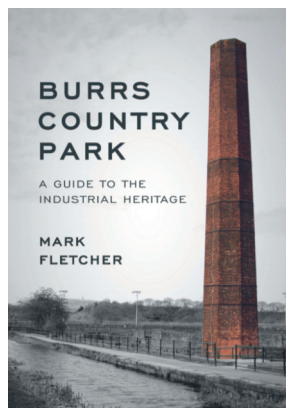
*He was able to come home from Southampton at Christmas that year for the holiday and on 30th December was present with the Rovers at The Den tucking into a potato pie supper made by Mrs Entwistle. Later, back in the OS drawing office in Southampton, he gained a transfer to the Tunbridge Wells Survey School. It was then 1939 and he received a call up letter. The last time he is recorded in the minutes as attending a Rovers meeting was on August 4th? 1939.*

**October 1939:**

Eric, Eddie and Ernie have been called to the colours. Mr Booth being occupied with the ARP. We, the remainder, rather dispirited, are not carrying on as we should do, and are given to spending the evening in discussion. As the Den is about completed, it is rather hard, as some earnest Roving could have been done. If the War should spare us all, the Crew will carry on again, and may the end of it come soon.

## **BURRS COUNTRY PARK – A GUIDE TO THE INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE**

by Mark Fletcher



Burrs Country Park – Thirty Years On was the title of Mark Fletcher’s very interesting talk at the Society’s February 2022 meeting. At the end of the meeting I bought a copy of this recently published book. The book builds on his talk and gives more details of the site as it is now. You are advised to allocate 2 hours for a visit to the site which is perhaps a conservative estimate depending on your interests.

I would strongly advise reading the book before going, taking it with you and consulting it as you walk around. The contents page is detailed and comprehensive. There is a detailed plan of the overall site at the beginning of the book with further “expanded” plans of Calrows village, Calrows Mill and Burrs Mill. The text is supported by photographs, both historical and contemporary, diagrams and sketches and the author has provided a “what 3 words” reference for each point of interest for those with the app.

Calrows village was established in 1793, with the 1801 census listing 204 residents within 31 households. It consisted of three streets, a chapel, school and shop. The original mill, established in 1793, was a water powered cotton spinning mill, being converted for the manufacture of paper in 1871. Sometime in the late 1920s a glue works was established before it was finally demolished in the 1940s. The author highlights and describes 15 aspects of the mill including a gas holder tank, waterwheel pit, tailrace, counting house, beam engine, chimney, bywash and warehouse. There are a couple of biographical pieces on people who lived and worked in the village and at the mill.

Between the 1820s and 1870s there was a spindle mill on site providing spindles, bobbins and skewers for both Calrows and Burrs Mills. Burrs Mill had begun life in 1791, constructed by innkeeper Robert Bridges, who decided to

capitalise on the economic benefits of the Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal, which gave Bury access to the canal and river networks of Salford and Manchester for the transport of raw materials in and the distribution of finished products. The mill was owned, briefly, by Peel, Yates and Co before being sold to the Calrow family in 1808 who added a steam engine. In 1870 it was operated as a cotton mill, being converted to papermaking in 1882. This appears to have been short lived as by 1884 it was converted to a bleachworks. The mill closed in 1933 and was finally demolished 1956 leaving just the chimney standing. The author describes 11 aspects of the mill site including manager's house, blacksmith's shop, engine house, boiler house, chimney stack, turbine house and well.

The book also describes bridges, viaducts, aqueducts, millponds, weirs, fords, headraces, canal feeders and finally last but not least the 'middens'. All structures required to operate a mill in the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries.

The site is relatively small and compact. However, it must have once been a 'hive of activity' with 2/3 mills and 250+ people living and working on the site in the mid-19th century. Many structures have now disappeared, but the remains of many and the footprints of others are still there to be seen and give an idea of what the site consisted of. Today the site also has a showground, a caravan park, a railway halt, pub and a café. Plus as part of the Irwell Sculpture Trail it has several modern sculptures and many lovely walks through the surrounding countryside and along the canal and riverside.

I thoroughly enjoyed reading the book and found it a good reference whilst wandering round the site exploring the industrial heritage of a small corner of our town.

Mildred Bootland 2022

*The book costs £10 and is on sale at Burrs, at both the Lamppost Cafe and the Caravan Site Shop; and it is also selling at the Fusilier Museum, in Bury town centre. To buy one directly from Mark, you can email [burrsheritage@gmail.com](mailto:burrsheritage@gmail.com).*

## LOCAL RESEARCH

The Ramsbottom Heritage Society's Collection is on permanent loan to Bury Archives. The Heritage Society cannot offer a research service.

Free access to the Ancestry database is available in all Bury Council's libraries. Ramsbottom Library's family history help sessions have restarted – every 3rd Thursday of the month 1pm – 4.30pm.

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

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

### **OPENING HOURS**

Monday – Closed

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

Every Saturday – 10.00am-1.00pm

Catalogues of collections and the extensive range of records, (including Ramsbottom's) held at Bury Archives are at <http://archives.bury.gov.uk> as 'Bury Archives Catalogue'. A direct link to Bury Libraries catalogue (which lists local history items held in all the borough's libraries) is at <http://library.bury.gov.uk> – follow 'Libraries and Archives' and then 'Search the library catalogue'.

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

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

Meetings and activities are starting to resume and the Oswaldtwistle research centre has re-opened (Thursday 1 to 5pm). Visit [www.lfhhs.org.uk](http://www.lfhhs.org.uk) for details and updates.

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

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

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

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

Saturdays from 9.30am to 1pm

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

Back copies of the Ramsbottom Observer 1890-1950 on film for use on a microfiche reader. Much of the Ramsbottom local collection of the late Rev R R Carmyllie, local census returns and several filing drawers of local newscuttings and booklets and Hume Elliot's history are also available. The IT suite, boasts a visually impaired and disabled friendly workstation.

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IDEAL PRESENT FOR CHRISTMAS

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## **RAMSBOTTOM REMINISCENCES**

Well over 100 pages

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### ***Ramsbottom Reminiscences***

**Volumes 1 and 2**



**Recollections of our town in the  
Twentieth Century,  
collected in the 1990s**

Long out of print, our original Ramsbottom Reminiscences came out in two volumes, in 1992 and 1996. They comprised 20th Century recollections of the town, written by 21 residents, some born before the Great War.

These gems of memory increase in historical value as each year passes. The Ramsbottom trackless trams and buses, mill work, the Home Guard, living conditions in 18th Century terraced cottages, fetching water from wells, extreme poverty, school gang fights between Catlicks and Prodigogs on Church Fields, snow drifts 15 feet deep, shopping when you could buy virtually anything in the town.....these writers truly bring the old town back to life.

Available at meetings or our usual outlets

and on

**SATURDAY 10TH DECEMBER from 9.30am to 1pm**

at

**RAMSBOTTOM LIBRARY**

when the Society's bookstall will be open with more stocking fillers.