

NEWS MAGAZINE

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The objects of the society shall be:-

- a) To advance education of the public by creating an awareness of and interest in the study of the history and heritage of Ramsbottom (as defined by the boundaries of the pre-1974 Ramsbottom Urban District Council).
 - b) To locate relevant documents, records and artefacts. To retain, catalogue and/or copy them where possible, and to operate an information centre.
 - c) To seek to protect the heritage of Ramsbottom.
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PROGRAMME 2006/2007

November 15	Miss Margaret Curry - <i>From Tyne to Tweed</i> (Illustrated)
December 13	Members' night - Christmas social evening: Barry Aldous - <i>Ramsbottom; Another Dimension</i> (a stereoscopic presentation and demonstration)
2007:	
January 17	Mr P. Watson - <i>Stranger Than Fiction</i>
February 21	Jonathan Ali - <i>History of a Village</i> (Illustrated)
March 21	Mr T. Ashworth - <i>Return to Lancashire</i> (Film – ELR) Photographic Competition - judged by Mr T. Ashworth
April 18	Jackie Ramsbottom and Michael Hiluta - <i>Haslingden Roots</i> (researching family history)
May 16	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING and MEMBERS' NIGHT

All indoor meetings except December are held on the third Wednesday of the month in the Civic Hall, Market Place, Ramsbottom, at 7.30pm for 7.45pm. All welcome.

Entry by donation, please.

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

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<i>Front Cover - 'The Brook', a public house known as 'The Waterloo' until the 1990s. The original name, carved into the door head, awaits rediscovery when more historically-minded proprietors remove the current name board!</i>		
Drawing by John B TAYLOR		

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I am delighted to report that work has at last resumed on the refurbishment of Ramsbottom Library building, the proposed completion date being 15th December, with re-opening to take place on 8th January 2007. Despite previous setbacks, we are hopeful of a return to the Heritage Centre early in the new year, 12 months later than originally envisaged, but in time to allow an opening at Easter, and preparation for a 20th anniversary celebration.

Despite not having had a permanent home for a second year, Society activities have continued, with every opportunity being taken to promote them. The joint venture between the Editorial Team and the Rossendale Free Press, which resulted in a 4-part feature, evoked much interest, both locally and overseas; a series of monthly Summer Rambles, designed to introduce townspeople and visitors to historical features in and around the town has been a great success, the programme of monthly open meetings.' has continued' in popularity, and membership continues to rise.

Behind the scenes too, a great deal has been going on. A small team has been reviewing options for the future development of the Heritage Centre. Tape recording reminiscences is going on. The web site continues to be maintained and attract interest. The Conservation Group, in addition to its successful monitoring of planning activities, has undertaken a survey of areas of the town which are of historical or architectural interest not included in existing conservation areas, and is in liaison with Bury MBC in an endeavour to provide for eventual inclusion. It has embarked on a programme of recognition of former individuals and buildings of historical importance to the town, by provision of

blue plaques and interpretation boards - the first will commemorate Chartist

leader Dr Peter McDouall, who lived in the town for some years from 1835. The Holcombe Moor Heritage Group, in which the Society has representation, has won a prestigious award from Defence Estates, (against international competition) in recognition of an outstanding conservation project, benefiting wildlife, archaeology, and community awareness of conservation on MOD land. So, members have been busy indeed.

In addition, the film, continues to sell, both at home and abroad, and the approach of Christmas provides an opportunity to remind everyone that now is the time to buy that present with a difference for the former Ramsbottom resident friend or relative.

Finally, one very recent happening. The Spring 21005 edition of the News Magazine contained a piece about the retirement of Ken Rose, and closure of his footwear business. The premises at Bridge Street have remained empty until recently. When refurbishment began work revealed what has been described as a 'Time Capsule' of memorabilia, hidden away by previous owners in November 1952, and bequeathed by them to the finder; present owner Nick Hitchin, of Weale C Hitchin, Estate Agents, who was kind enough to advise the Society of the find, which has since been listed and photographed. The decidedly mixed content, some of which was in poor condition, is presently being assessed for historical worth by Alison Green and colleagues at Bury Museum. More news in the next issue.

My good wishes to everyone for a very happy Christmas, and a prosperous New Year.

Tony Murphy

OBITUARIES:

FRANK WARWICK :HALL -1920-2006

The society was greatly saddened to hear of the death of long-time member Mr Frank HALL in July. We send our condolences to his widow Irene and all the family.

Born in Crow Lane to a family well known for involvement in musical activities, from the age of nine he took a keen interest in drama and entertainment, later writing and producing plays and appearing in pantomime, concerts and revues locally and as far afield as Ashton-under-Lyne (where he spent some time doing War service). He was a life-long member of St Paul's Church where he was a chorister along with his three brothers, and in 1943 was married there to Irene NORRIS, daughter of local Police Sergeant Richard NORRIS. Mr HALL was a well-respected, quietly spoken gentleman who is greatly missed by his many friends. He took a keen interest in the heritage of Ramsbottom and

his, many other activities involved local politics and varied church activities (he was for a number of years a lay preacher at Dundee United Reformed Church). He was a member of the Heritage Society from its early days, always available to pass on his knowledge of the town, and had recently donated an oil painting, by local artist the late Joe BARLOW, depicting buildings and characters as they were seen in the 1920s.

SHEILA KENNIFORD -1932-2006

The death in September of Sheila KENNIFORD, wife of our esteemed Vice-Chairman, Jack, has deeply shocked and saddened the Society. She was a most kind and caring person with a ready smile.

Born in Accrington she met Jack, who was, farming in the area. They married in 1951, and enjoyed very many happy years together, both giving tirelessly of their time, joining in and becoming involved in so many local activities. They moved to Hollingbrooke Farm, Holcombe Brook in 1959 where Sheila became a member of Hawkshaw Womens institute and was an invaluable committee member.

Always ready to help when needed and having a strong social conscience, she was a volunteer for Meals on Wheels. In 1976 the family, now with young children, moved to Tottington. Sheila began work at a Manchester loss adjusters, became involved in the community mid qualified as a youth worker, working at the youth club. She was also a member of Tottington High School P.T.A. After retiring from Bury Metro in 1996 Sheila became, if possible, even busier.

She acted as treasurer to Greenmount Discussion Group and Fairfield Hospital Patient Service Group. Painting, embroidery travel and music were a large part of her, retirement and her early musical talent and interest led her to the Holcombe Brook and District Recorded Music Society where she became Programme Secretary and then Vice-Chairman.

Our sincere condolences go to Jack and all the family.

ROSEMARY MORLEY

It is with much sadness we must report that Rosemary MORLEY passed away in May this year, a few months after her eightieth birthday. Rosemary was a keen member of Ramsbottom Heritage Society and her enthusiasm was infectious.

Although born in Keighley, West Yorkshire in 1926, Rosemary grew up in Daventry, Northamptonshire, before moving to Bury in the 1950s with her husband Ted, when he took up a position as an English teacher at Bury Grammar School. Having lived in Bury, for nearly fifty years, Rosemary had a genuine passion for local history and the preservation of all that is good about our local heritage.

She will be greatly missed by all who knew her,

“ FIRSTS” FOR THE CONSERVATION GROUP

The Conservation Working Group attempts to fulfil the wide remit of conserving the historical aspects of Ramsbottom. The work is interesting as members of the group are continually suggesting new *projects*, and Ramsbottom Heritage Society's first archaeological dig is currently being planned.

Plaques and Information Board At last Ramsbottom Heritage Society's first blue plaque commemorating 'the Chartist Peter McDOUALL has now been ordered and should be in place above the door of GREENLEES jewellers on Bolton Street before Christmas, The first Information or interpretation Board, with pictures and historical detail of the Swedenborgian New Jerusalem Church at the end of Ramsbottom Lane, and Factory Street, is also under way. If there is an historical figure or building in Ramsbottom you feel should be brought to public notice with a plaque or interpretation board, please let us know.

Planning Applications The group make submissions to Bury MBC about any planning applications which affect our more historic buildings.

In Bridge Street and Bolton Street, two of Ramsbottom's oldest streets, applications have usually been for changes of use, with one or two houses becoming offices, which require signs to advertise their business. The Clarence Hotel, in existence since 1871, has now become Callenders, with a much larger and more modern sign, The, betting shop at 11, Bridge Street, previously the Station Hotel, applied to have a full length window., which would have completely changed the appearance of this symmetrical building, and fortunately this application has been rejected, The fact that The Pack Horse Hotel in Shuttleworth is to be demolished and replaced with houses shows how vigilant we need to be. This public house, which had been in existence since at least 1361, had many interesting architectural features and was an integral part of the village with mainly 19th Century housing.

Areas of Historical Interest The group has produced a report on areas of Ramsbottom which are not currently within the conservation area, This supplied information to the Bury Conservation Officer whose review of the Conservation Areas should give more protection to our traditional town. Part of our report, which dealt with Bolton Road West, is reproduced in this magazine. [See *Ramsbottom's South Western Approach*]

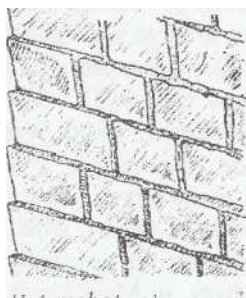
Archaeology. Over the years Ramsbottom heritage Society has rediscovered much of the history of Ramsbottom through documents, such as property deeds and maps. We are hoping that this work can be taken a step further through archaeology, It is hoped to uncover the remains of a mill dating back to 1710, which was referred to in the Society's new video Ramsbottom's Heritage. This work should be undertaken next spring and we will be looking for volunteers. So

let, us know if you would like to help with the dig. You bring your boots, we can supply the trowel!

You would be welcome to get involved with the Conservation Group, just get in touch with Kate SLINGSBY

RAMSBOTTOM'S SOUTH WESTERN APPROACH

Bolton :Road West from the Nuttall Lane-Dundee Lane intersection, nearly to Holcombe Brook, features terraced housing of virtually every decade in the 19th Century.



Watershot



Pitch Faced

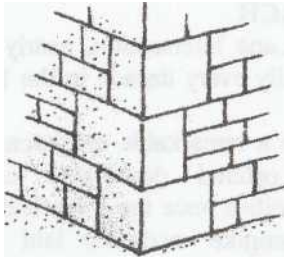
It is nevertheless a remarkable architectural unity, having offered developers easy building opportunities once the Edenfield & Little Bolton turnpike road was laid out around 1800 to 1801. The court books of the Manor of Tottington show how, over time, copyholders leased out strips of adjacent land to a range of builders, so that the wealth of styles developed piecemeal.

One of the first developments was the public house (now *The Brook*) and terrace (nos 332-338) adjoining to the south, the whole area being known as Waterloo. This name implies a date of build of 1815 or just after, and rate books confirm this early date.

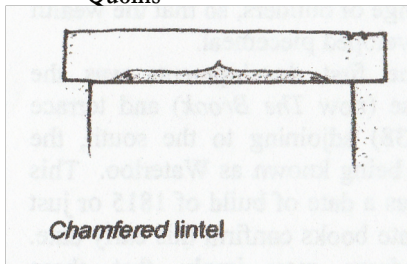
Large windows may imply that these properties were purpose built for handloom cotton weaving. The large extension to the front of no 336 is itself very old and was a shop until around a decade ago. The next Oldest terrace (nos, 226-240) was constructed progressively by a terminating building society in the 1820 and 1830s, as an extension of the self-help activities of The Female Union Society, Holcombe Brook (datestone on no. 238), and is much cited as evidence of proto-feminism.

The adjacent block of housing (210-224) was built in 1829. These houses are of watershot construction and some between 208 and 240 have flag fencing between the front gardens. The former Hazelhurst Engraving Works with a square

chimney (now SpencerDs), which is a grade 2 listed building built around 1840, is adjacent to a terrace of cottages which dates from about 1820.



Quoins



There are other terraces of cottages of similar age. Shops and houses on both sides of the road, near to traffic lights with Dundee Lane, also appear on the 1842 Tithe Map. Whilst these older properties are small scale and built of watershot stone, there are several pitch-faced terraces dating from the mid- to later.

There is a wide variety of housing from such early stone cottages to large prestigious villa type detached (no 207) and a pair of 3 storey semidetached houses (301-303).

The side streets running off Bolton Road West are also of importance and reflect a similar range of dates and social status. To the west there is a small group of streets, which vary from Annie Street with an unusually well preserved sett roadway, to Mary Street, only partly paved. To the east is Hazel Street and Cemetery Road, at the end of which is Ramsbottom's 1875 cemetery with its imposing Victorian gateposts and former lodge house/office.

Some of the larger Victorian houses on Bolton Road West, including Andertons terrace (1871), nos 302 - 314, were built to an exceptionally high standard and have outstandingly decorative features such as ashlar quoins, chamfered lintels and jambs, cellars, attics and bay windows. Some have original sashes and coloured leaded windows. Some of 1880s and 1890s high quality houses, along with the United Methodist Chapel dated 1885, are built of Yorkshire parapoint. Thus Bolton Road West and its environs is a microcosm of the full range of 19th Century Ramsbottom society

Andrew Todd

CORMAR CARPETS 1956 - 2006

On 18th June 2006, Cormar Carpets, celebrated its Golden Jubilee with a, Golden Anniversary Family Fun Day for all its employees and their families at its Holme Mill premises in Ramsbottom. The event, with a barbecue, the Lancashire Fusilier Band, traditional dancing by the Britannia Coconutters, a bouncy castle, a tug of war and many other attractions, was attended by over 400 people. There

had also been a special luncheon for key customers, suppliers and friends of the chairman, Neville CORMACK, on the previous Friday.

Many Lancashire spinners, following the rundown of the cotton industry, gained a new lease of life by switching production to spinning carpet yarns. In this countrytufted carpets were first made with machinery developed by Stanley SHORROCK

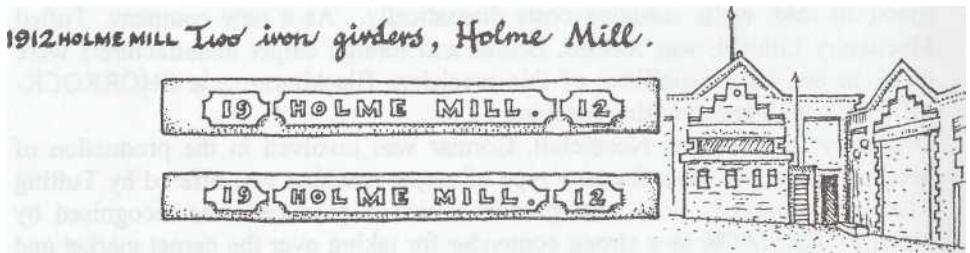
and Brian MERCER in Blackburn. In an article in *The Blackburn Times* (19th Nov 1954) Mr SHORROCK freely admitted that the idea first came from America with a piece of carpet Mr MERCER brought back. The sample fitted in with a pattern of development which had been going on at their works, and over a period of about a year their own prototype machine was built secretly. The process as carried out by its 1000 needles is described as like that of a gigantic sewing machine and was said to be capable of stepping up carpet production speed 20 fold, while reducing costs dramatically. As a new company, Tufted Machinery Limited, was formed. British and foreign carpet manufacturers were quick to see the possibilities of this precision, Blackburn-made SHORROCK-MERCER high-speed tufting machine.

Originally, as Tunstead Needlefelt, Cormar was involved in the production of needleloom carpet when the new type of carpet machine was offered by Tufting Machinery Limited. The new product which it produced was recognised by Neville CORMACK as a strong contender for taking over the carpet market and so, in October 1955, he ordered a 60 inch Tufting machine at a cost, of £3,800. It was delivered to Nunn Hills Mill, Stacksteads seven months later, starting up in June 1956, the first year that tufted carpets were made in the UK. At that time the company was just GREENWOOD and COOPS, originally a textiles accessory supply business started in 1924.

With its total workforce of twenty employees, Cormar moved in 1959 into Brookhouse Mill, Greenmount, a larger factory bought for £6,000. The company expanded and soon outgrew this building. From 1963 the developments at the Greenmount works included a new office block, increased production areas and a new warehouse extension. In 1969, to increase capacity, Cormar purchased the production unit of Walkden Carpets (Warrington). Two low points during this period of expansion were the 1964 flooding of Brookhouse Mill to a depth of two feet of water, with machinery and some stock damaged; and worse, the fire in 1970 which wiped out the entire stock and destroyed the main warehouse. It took quite a few weeks to build up the stock. In 1971, rebuilding was completed and work began on improving production capacity, including that of the backing plant.

On 1st June 1973 Cormar purchased Holmbury Carpets, production and offices, at Holme Mill, Railway Street, Ramsbottom from Bury and Masco Industries

Limited., (Holme Mill, also known as Holme Shed, was built in 1912-13 and the lease sold to Messrs, T H & F G HOLDEN in 1916. The brick-built, single storey building with its northern, light roof is, a good example of a weaving shed; looms were much heavier and created more vibration than spinning frames, and weaving needed good light, so single storey sheds were favoured. From 1925 the Rose Manufacturing Company (Ramsbottom) Ltd made a variety of cloths at Holme Mill, including winceyette, pure shirtings, cambrics, hair cords and cloths for bandages, and dye. From 1956 until about 1966, it as owned by the Bury Felt Manufacturing Company, who merged with MITCHELL, ASHWORTH & STANSFIELD to form Bury Masco.)



Soon Holme, Mill was extended and tufting was transferred from Brookhouse Mill. The Warrington Production unit was closed in 1975 and transferred to Holme Mill, By 1976 all other tufting, operations had also been moved and centralised there along with transport and repair workshops. A new 25,000 square foot warehouse for storage and unbacked carpet opened on the site in 1988 and Holme Mill's new 50,000 square foot extension was completed in 2003. The packing plant, updated in 2004, is at Greenmount.

The independently owned company trades from its two manufacturing plants at Ramsbottom and Tottington and sells residential wall-to-wall carpets to retailers and wholesalers throughout the UK. All carpet supplied by Cormar is produced in Britain. Over the years the firm has regularly introduced new ranges and its carpets have won many prestigious awards. Neville CORMACK, was awarded the OBE in 1987 and became Chairman of the company in 1994. Cormar is now the largest tufted carpet manufacturer in the country, employing 230 people nationwide, and ranking amongst the world's largest carpet producers. Apparently there are only small number of places that have the knowledge and expertise to produce top quality wool /nylon yarn, principally in the UK and

Australasia. Once, you turn that yarn into carpet, it is heavy and difficult to ship around the world and when it is moved there is a risk it will be damaged. The big challenge is to stay ahead of the far East.

[Our thanks to Cormar for information in this article, much of which was taken from the Cormar Carpets 50th Anniversary issue of "CormaReview" June 2006. We also acknowledge the help of Diane RUSHTON Community history Manager at Blackburn. a

F D SIMS AFTER 1945 - A CHRONOLOGY

After the War over 200 people were employed by F D SIMS, .Practically every TV, washing machine, electric light and plane produced in this country contained electric motors using SIMS' wire. A motor car contained approximately 80 lbs of wire. F D SIMS and F W BARNES, who provided finance, were Nottingham lacemakers and friends of Kurt ENGEL. (German-born ENGEL had started his own company producing insulated wires and strips. Known as the Boss, he set up and ran the business and also designed and built the machines) During the War a number of F D SIMS workers had been called up for service in the ,;farces, including Stewart SIMS, the son of the director whose name the company bears, ,another SIMS servicemen was Tom BOOTHMAN , who was released in 1945. Throughout the War years and during the period of rehabilitation, workers could not change their occupations without permission from the Ministry of Labour . Such were the good relations between Kurt. ENGEL and the Ministry that Tom was able to return immediately to SIMS. Eventually a canteen was provided prior to which, dinners (pie, peas) were purchased from SPENCER's pie shop on Bolton Road West. Dances and other social events were held regularly " many of the dances at the Old Astoria Ballroom in Rawtenstall,

After the War it was obvious to industrial companies that machines needed to be redesigned. At SIMS there was the possibility of producing silk covered wire. The only answer was to purchase new machines but there was no space and no Capital. Matters worsened at the latter end of the year when the fuel crises shut down machines and reduced production. In January 1947 things were very grim. Severe power cuts meant that all sources of heat were cut off for quite a, time. In order to keep warm the workers wore their topcoats and gloves, Out of doors, snow lay thick on the ground. Life was also grim at home with a coal shortage and poor electricity supply. Queues]Formed outside coal merchants for buckets of coal. The local baker and fish and chip shop could not cope with the demand as they too were on a shorter working week.

[NB On page 15 of our last News Magazine we mentioned another heavy snowfall of January 1940, saying that the Durham Light Infantry cleared the

main roads. Alan HIBBERT tells us that it was in fact the Duke of Lancaster's Yeomanry who did this.]

After growing from strength to strength for 10 years, SIMS was practically forced to close down. It was a sad day when the "Guaranteed Week", which previously had been a simple agreement, became the real thing. Ministry of Labour officials made temporary arrangements enabling the workers to draw unemployment benefit. Staff men were reduced to doing labouring jobs such as cleaning machine parts and reels and related tasks which would enable a rapid rise in production when power was restored. When limited power supplies were available, the wire drawing machines were the first to go into production at 4 pm.

When production recommenced, the company was beset with problems from all sides. Orders could not be met, copper supplies were difficult but worst of all was that linseed oil, one of the basic materials in SIMS' enamel, had been diverted for cattle cake and the substitutes seriously affected the quality of the finished product. By the middle of 1947 orders were being received at an alarming rate and delivery rates were quoted for 18 months ahead, or 2-2½ years for finer gauges. Copper had become as scarce as gold owing to the USA cornering the world market, and some customers were willing to pay two or even three times the price. One of the original members of the team, Denis FREARSON, worked conscientiously in the background travelling two or three times a year to London to maintain contact with customers. It was Denis's suggestion that Warburton Bros of Tottington carried out the transport requirements, proudly displaying the F D SIMS Ltd headboard above the cab. It was now considered desirable to appoint an office manager due to present and future expansion of the business. Kurt ENGEL endeavoured where possible to employ ex-servicemen and Bill TRAINOR was appointed. He arrived early in February to the unheard-of Ramsbottom with the snow lying thickly on the ground. As Bill lived in south Manchester, journeys by public transport took 21½ hours so he travelled on an ex-WD 750cc American Harley Davidson. One morning he turned the sharp left hand bend into Regent Street totally unprepared for the change in road surface to setts - they were greasy as it had been raining. The motorbike ended up on the far pavement and Bill landed at the front of the steps of the Co-op shop. It took two men to lift the bike and Bill - he recovered. More office space was now urgently required but due to the shortage of building materials plans for a new building had been rejected. However, a proposal to convert the *Old Slaughter House* was approved. The temperature in this building never exceeded 55⁰ and it was used for storing packing cases and bulky items. The apparatus for the slaughter of animals, including hooks, pulleys and iron

baths, was still there, Although the architect had to adhere to the existing structure outside, a start on the conversion was made in January 1948 and by May the girls moved into their light, spacious office with a delightful view of Holcombe Hill. Denis FREARSON was accommodated in a small office directly facing the hill with grazing land behind occupied by cows and poultry. His phone conversations with London customers were often punctuated by farmyard noises. They must have wondered what a strange place they dealt with. Growing workload prompted the appointment of a sales manager for London and the Home Counties and a production engineer for the works. In July 1949, James GREGORY arrived and was given a free hand to develop his ideas. Eventually, he was replaced by Ken EDWARDS as the London Sales Manager, and GREGORY stayed in the north. By this time the number of invoices being typed and the amount of book keeping had increased considerably so mechanised accounting was introduced.

In 1950 a further wire drawing machine was purchased. This was a Farmer Norton which enabled a new range of sizes to be drawn. It was this year that Mrs ENGEL's businesses, The Temple Manufacturing Company and the Manor Trading Co Ltd, located at the Bury works, were taken over by SIMS as it was imperative that additional space was acquired. All her workforce were sacked and immediately taken on by their new boss Mr ENGEL. Another ex-serviceman, Cecil GOLDING, was appointed as chemist in order eventually to produce enamels in-house instead of having them supplied from outside. One of the problems was the supply of reels. Copper was in such short supply that customers were carrying as much stock as possible and not returning empty reels. The cost of purchasing extra reels was staggering and suppliers could not meet demand. Kurt ENGEL decided to make them as part of the plant at Bury works (Grecian Mill, off the left hand side of Bolton Road travelling in the Bolton direction). Tom ROBINSON was told that, as there was now no money left, he would have to dream up a machine to cut the flanges and drill holes in the reels. Towards the end of the year there was a major breakdown in the National Power supply due to worn-out equipment which could not be replaced during the War. Load shedding became common throughout the winter of 1950/51 resulting in loss of output and short time working.

In 1951, the Festival of Britain was celebrated in London. Many exhibitions were staged up and down the country and once again, Kurt ENGEL gave his blessing for SIMS to participate in a display of Ramsbottom Dsindustry in the local parish hall. At this time two far-reaching developments within the company were made. One was the perfection of dies, initially made with brass pellets, then steel and finally with tungsten carbide pellets. The second was the building of the varnish

plant for the manufacture of enamels and varnishes, which could save the company money in the future. There were changes in the trade regarding the use of synthetic enamels and Formvar was becoming essential. Kurt ENGEL started to manufacture this particular brand which was given SIM's trade name of Simvar. This type of enamel was covered by dozens of different patents, which were later extended, and during the period of their existence SIMS paid over £20,000 in royalties.

In 1952, the first long distance lorry was purchased and after several months travelling to and from London, the question of an alternative petrol supply was investigated. To this end the old petrol tanks by the side of the office, which had been used by the former occupant W ECCLES C Co, were examined and found to be serviceable. There was some conjecture as to whether or not they contained any petrol. One of the boys making the examination knew very well that they did not as, 12 years before, the "gold" had been discovered by himself and another motor cyclist, who adopted the ingenious practice of driving a car over the petrol tank cover, lifting out the floor boards and, using a stirrup pump, one of them filled up a number of drums whilst the other had his head under the tank tinkering with the engine.

The same year Kurt ENGEL consolidated his position at the Bury works and set up a small enamelling plant to take some of the backlog of orders from the Ramsbottom works. Carrying out all the experimental work in his own home and garage, Tom ROBINSON developed strip and adjustable dies, which was quite an achievement. This was reminiscent of the early struggles of Kurt ENGEL who had set up a small lathe in his front room to make parts for a new type of spinner whilst Mrs ENGEL acted as his labourer.

In ,Coronation Year, 1953, the monogram FDS was at last recognized by the Board of Trade after many applications. This had been embossed on all products and stationery from day one but was now copyright and a recognized trademark. By 1954, plans were well advanced for the extension of the works and building work was progressing according to plan, when Kurt ENGEL became seriously ill and Denis FREARSON was hastily recalled from London. Prior to this illness, ENGEL had been studying mechanical handling of loads delivered to the works and shortly afterwards a forklift truck was purchased. The new extension was completed in March 1955. Jack COPELAND and George WIMBUSH made heroic efforts to program the job and worked continuously through the Easter holiday. When the works reopened after the break, to much pleasanter working conditions, a major upheaval had taken place. The enamel shop had been extended, the wire drawing department transferred upstairs, and its place taken by the fitting shop. The winding and dispatch departments had also been extended.

This mammoth undertaking was achieved without loss of production and as a memento of this splendid achievement, George and Jack both received a silver plaque inscribed "*For Outstanding Service to F D SIMS Ltd 1953*", presented to them at the Annual Christmas Party. With the increase in production, it was necessary to have some control over customersDordersso that those who shouted the loudest did not get priority. Tom BOOTHMAN, who from the mid 1950s was General Foreman at the Bury works, returned to Ramsbottom in 1955, as Production Controller, later to be Production Manager/ Sales Manager and on Denis FREARSON's retirement in 1972, Sales Director.

For the first time F D SIMS Ltd exhibited at the Radio C Electronics Component Manufacturers Federation, very successfully, being praised by customers and suppliers who valued their personal touch and excellent delivery times.

In 1955, more ground was purchased fronting Ada Street. There had been many complaints from local residents regarding the smell from the varnish kitchen so arrangements were made to have a catalyst installed to burn the fumes before they escaped. At 3.30pm on Friday, 6 May 1955, the Chief Chemist Cecil GOLDING set the new gadget into operation, jokingly saying to his assistant,

"Here goes, now wait for the bang," On a visit to the Ramsbottom works just at this moment, Tom BOOTHMAN and Tom ROBINSON entered the yard and reached the Kestner plant. There was a terrific explosion and the corrugated iron roof shot up into the air about three feet. A few seconds later, Cecil staggered out minus his eyelashes and brows with his hair singed and curled. It was discovered the suppliers had sent the wrong drawing and the fitting had caused the exhaust gas to ignite. Later everyone saw the funny side of the incident although at the time Cecil had a lucky escape. Also in 1955, Stewart SIMS was appointed representative for the Midlands area, having returned to SIMS after war service with the RAF. (Stewart had been shot in the back the day after the War in Europe ended and he later took early retirement due to ill health. He died in 2004.) As more and more customers were visiting the works Kurt ENGEL decided to instigate a clean-up operation which lack of space had previously prevented. The laboratory, which for years had been in the boardroom, was removed to the works and the boardroom was reinstated to its former glory. Kurt ENGEL's office was revamped and modern lighting and heating installed. A new test room was installed and money invested in measuring instruments to ensure strict quality control.

In 1956, Gordon MARTIN was promoted to Fine Wire Foreman as a reward for his diligence and loyalty. During this year the son of one of the ENGELDs friends in Austria who owned a business similar to F D SIMS visited on an educational tour. Hans George FUCHS stayed with them and Mr ENGEL provided the boy

with pocket money (0 per week), whilst he was working at the company. The company pension scheme was inaugurated this year through the Norwich Union and heavy premiums were paid in order to give employees the benefit of a pension for their past services. At the foremen's Christmas party an award for outstanding service to F D SIMS Ltd was presented to the Chief Chemist Cecil GOLDING as he had successfully formulated a new type of oleoresinous wire enamel which did not require "cooking", thus avoiding the troublesome fumes about which the local residents had complained.

In 1957 when the Company attained its majority, Frank PITHERS who had been the Company Secretary since its inception, was made a director. Denis FREARSON, who had been in charge of sales since the first reel of wire left the works, was made Sales Director. (Denis had only 10 days sickness in all his time at SIMS). Kurt ENGEL also came in for recognition when the directors, managers, foremen and representatives subscribed towards a silver cigarette box presented to him at the party by Ifor DAVIES (the boy who was always last in the air raid shelter) who had just been promoted to foreman.

Production was constantly stepped up and in January 1958, the London depot at Sydenham was opened in order to supply the many smaller customers in the area who preferred to buy off the shelf and not stockpile. Also in January William ERICSSON was appointed Export Manager as Kurt ENGEL firmly believed in the "we must export to live" creed. A new reel was produced which was silky smooth, highly varnished and labelled in attractive colours, and the sales overseas steadily built up. The top customer of FD SIMS was Laurence SCOTT C Electromotors of Manchester. The fourth "Oscar" was awarded that year to Tom ROBINSON who had done some remarkable jobs at the Bury Works using antiquated equipment furthering development as economically as possible.

In 1959, the Boss and his co-directors decided to go ahead with the installation of a Cost Office. A firm of consultants was given carte blanche and a Mr ROOKE arrived to make investigations. A cost accountant was appointed and after some months of what he described as brainwashing, Kurt ENGEL was reported as saying to friends, "This new system is marvellous. Before I had it I could run my Bentley, maintain my home and generally live it up not knowing how I did it, Now, I make a loss, and can account for every penny of it."

The dirt road which formed the main entrance to the works and offices was levelled, drained and tarmacaded at the company's expense. This was a tremendous improvement on the streams and pools of water after rain or the swirling dust on a windy day. Just prior to this the wooden garages and hen cabins were demolished. In March 1959, the old stables were demolished, but no matter what steps were taken the smell of horses could not be eliminated despite it

being 25 years since a horse was kept there. The bricks were used to fill in and level off an old lodge which was between the stables and BROADLEY's house. (In past years biology students from Manchester University had sought permission to collect frogs from the lodge on a Saturday morning and travelled back to Manchester on the electric train with a bag full of writhing, squirming amphibians.) June saw the return of Hans George FUCHS, the Austrian, who had accepted a short service appointment and took up residence in Holcombe Brook. He made a number of changes designed to improve the quality of SIMS' products and was responsible for increasing the test room facilities.

In March 1960, SIMS' all-British Vacuum Annealing Plant was officially opened by the council chairman, J H PARKINSON, together with all involved in the construction, including architects, builders, the County Surveyor, North Western Gas Board, representatives of the Electrical Resistance Furnace Company (who made the plant), Lancashire Constabulary and Dr C J CLOHESSY the factory doctor. The *Bury Times* published in their issue of 26th March 1960, that Kurt ENGEL had said, *"I don't believe all this nonsense about American, French, German, or what have you being the best. Ours are the best, and I always say, keep the money in the country; British products will beat any others"* When asked about the cost, he said that there would be few pounds change out of £25,000.

On the 1st May 1960 F W BARNES and F W SIMS, two of the founder directors, retired as F D SIMS had joined the WINTERBOTTOM Industries Group. A reconstituted board appointed Mr ENGEL, chairman while Frank PITHERS and Denis FREARSON served with him. A young graduate Keith McCANN joined the firm about this time and quickly proved his ability to understand the operations of wire production.

The new owners agreed with Kurt ENGEL that extensions to the works were urgently required and in October 1960 a draughtsman, Alan CLOUGH, was appointed to assist with the building design and the relocation of various departments. The architects appointed were Richard BYROM and Fred HILL. After many, traumas the building work was completed, departments moved and new machinery purchased.

Take over bids were never out of the news and on the 21st November 1960, it was announced that VENESTA Ltd had taken over the WINTERBOTTOM Group and its subsidiaries. Some time earlier, Councillor Albert LITTLE of Ramsbottom U D C was advised that VENESTA Ltd had planned to take over SIMS and close the firm down. He arranged a meeting with the directors of VENESTA at the Normandy restaurant, Birtle, where they were strongly advised not to close the firm down as this would have a disastrous effect on the local

economy and that the firm was highly efficient, employing a hard-working loyal workforce. At the end of this year, the old house wedged between the annealing shop and stables belonging to BROADLEY's was purchased thus giving the company control over Mill Lane and the ability to close off the entrance when desired. In mid-January, local builders T C J FOSTER started work on the new buildings. At the same time Ada Street was levelled, drained and made-up completely at the Company's expense to enable a more convenient exit from the works. Despite many frustrating delays, the new building work was completed and the loading bay roof raised to enable the use of a crane to speed up loading and palletisation. The original company secretary, Frank PITHERS retired and on 1st April, James Frank BRIGHOUSE was appointed in his place. A further London representative L CONROY-FINN was appointed to deal with the increasing orders.

In October 1961, the first 25 years of the incorporation of the company was celebrated privately in Nottingham where Frank PITHERS made history by receiving the first gold watch to be awarded for 25 years of loyal service. Shortly after, in November at the *King William Hotel*, Bromley Cross, the second gold watch was awarded to George WIMBUSH for his 25 years service and loyalty, Kurt ENGEL expressed the wish that all employees would retain the family and team spirit and their pride in the company and its products, despite the fact that thousands of shareholders were now interested in results. Hardly any of the workers left the company and this was in part due to paternalism and thoughtfulness of Mr ENGEL, his fellow management and the family atmosphere which prevailed. In 1970 the Company was taken over by GEC Ltd. who appointed Denis FREARSON Managing Director. (He retired on the 31st December 1978.)

In 2001 SIMS became part of the TTi Group - Irce spa of Imola Italy. Some of the workforce were relocated to F D SIMS at the Shadsworth Business Park, Darwen, Lancashire. The land forming the entire site of the Ramsbottom works was sold to Persimmon Homes by TTG Electronics Ltd part of TT Electronics Plc. Clearing the site began in Spring 2005 and the first few detached houses were sold off plan as soon as they were advertised. 90 houses and apartments are planned for this site known as the Tagwood Estate, Regent Street, Ramsbottom.

Our grateful thanks to the following for their invaluable assistance in producing this article and for supplying documents, many photographs and memories:- Mr Denis C Mrs Nancy FREARSON, Mr Tom C Mrs Ann BOOTHMAN, Mrs Edith WOOD and Mrs Elsie COPELAND

E.R.P. - SIGN FROM VICTORIA STREET/ROSTRONS ROAD

This sign is painted on the terrace end of 1, Victoria Street facing **Rostrons Road**, Ramsbottom.



Please make contact with the Ramsbottom Heritage Society if you know what the sign is.

BURY ARCHIVES SERVICE IN 2006. Who do *we think we are?*

The Archives re-opened in *April* 2006 to a full service and since then things have been progressing quickly. Past visitors to have returned and we are seeing a lot of new faces too. This is due in part to the monthly talks being held:

"Introduction to Archives". At these sessions visitors see a variety of archives documents, learn how to access the service in Bury and find out about online archives resources - there is even time to look around the stores.

New opportunities are available in the archives to study family history as the Service, along with all Bury MBC libraries has subscribed to Ancestry.com. This allows visitors to access census returns (1841-1901) and birth, marriage and death indexes (1837-2002) for free. We will be running a family history event on Saturday 18th November in conjunction with Manchester and Lancashire Family History and Heraldry Society (Bury Branch). Visitors will be able to book a 20 minute session with a family history expert in the library and a series of talks will be *running* in the archives. This will be a good opportunity for anyone starting out on their family history or wanting to solve some of the bigger hurdles they have come across.

Now that the archive is based in the museum (in Moss Street) we will be presenting changing displays of documents on a bi-monthly basis, starting in October. This will allow museum visitors to learn about historical documents that they may never have heard of before and hopefully will encourage further document exploration with the collections.

We have some very keen volunteers working in the Archives, helping to process documents and create catalogues. Volunteering opportunities are available for a

range of projects and time periods - if you are interested in local history and archives and think you would like to get involved please get in touch with us to discuss the possibilities.

We are increasingly working with local schools and next year we will be doing a range of projects that will promote the bi-centenary of the abolition of slavery. Using the HUTCHINSON family papers in the Archives and objects in the museum we will explore the links between Bury, New Orleans USA and the transatlantic slave trade. If you have any information that you could share with the Archives about links between the local area and slavery we would be very interested to hear your story - and to see the evidence!

This autumn we will be promoting our database of photographs Picture Memories. We want to improve the database information and so would like local people to tell us anything they know about the images. So are the photographs *Up Your Street?* We would like to hear from you with any information you may have!

Joanne Fitton, Archivist, Bury Archives Service, Moss Street, Bury MBC BL9 ODR

The Archives are open: Tuesday - Wednesday 1pm-4pm, Thursday - Friday 10am-4pm and every 2nd Saturday of the month 10am - 4pm

HERITAGE CENTRE - re-opening 2007

Please contact Janet SMITH or any committee member if you have any ideas for the new displays in the Heritage Centre. You do not need to do the display yourself, both "brain and brawn" are needed and very welcome.

RAMSBOTTOM CEMETERY, some inscriptions from non-conformist plots

Plot NC 13 In loving memory of JOHN CHARLES, son of ROBERT F. & MARGARET M A SKELTON who died May 19th 1900 aged 4 years. Also of

ROBERT FRANKLIN the dearly beloved husband of MARGARET M A SKELTON who died June 16th 1916 aged 42 years. Also of THOMAS their son who died November 29th 1905 aged 9 months. Also of the above MARGARET ALICE SKELTON, who died January 13th 1953 aged 78 years. [*Second stone nearer to plot 28*] Erected as a token of esteem to ROBERT F. SKELTON by the employees of

Ramsbottom Paper Mill

Plot NC 51 Thy will be done In loving memory of HELEN HANNAH, wife of FREDERIC KENYON ASPINALL, of Bolton St Ramsbottom, who died March 7th 1890, aged 34 years. Also JOHN, their son who died Sept 12th 1881, aged 4 days. And is interred at St Andrew's Church. Also MARTHA HELEN, their daughter who died Decr 10th 1888, aged 4 years & 5 months. Also WILMA GWENDOLEN

daughter of FREDERIC K & ELIZABETH ASPINALL who died August 18th 1901, aged 7 weeks. Also of the above FREDERIC KENYON ASPINALL, who died July 6th 1931, aged 76 years. Also Pte. FREDERIC ERNEST ASPINALL, son of FREDERIC K & ELIZABETH ASPINALL, who was killed in France Sept 4th 1918, aged 22 years.

Plot NC 71 In loving memory of JOSEPH STRANG, who died Dec. 30th 1924, aged 44 years. "Peace perfect peace with loved ones far away In Jesus keeping we are safe & they."

Plot NC 75 Union is strength. *Eendracht Maaict Macht.* 17235 Private R.H.GASKELL 4th Regt. South African Inf. 1st February 1918 aged 40. "True to his

post.D" *[C W G C grave]*

Plot NC 145 In loving memory of GEORGE CUSSONS, of Bolton Street, Ramsbottom, who died April 23rd 1894, in his 86th years. He lived in the village over 70 years and was connected during that time with many social movements, he was one of the founders of the Ramsbottom Industrial and Provident Society. Also Mary, his wife who died March 20th 1889 in her 78th year. They died trusting in the merits of Christ, and of entering into eternal rest. Also MARY ANN, their daughter who died Feby 7th 1924, aged 86 years. (145)

Plot NC 177 WILLIAM HUME HUNTER ELLIOT born 29th Nov 1879 died 16 Oct 1902, ELIZABETH BURROWS ELLIOT born 18 April 1871 died 4 Nov 1919 *[Isaiah XL 30] [second stone]* WILLIAM HUME ELLIOT died 13th June 1927 aged 90 years. Minister of St Andrews (Dundee) Presbyterian Church. Also EMILY ELIZABETH MacTAGGART, his wife died 2. January 1927 aged 79 years. Interred in Wandsworth Cemetery.

Plot NC 213 ELIZA ANNE MATHER formerly missionary in the Zonanas - daughter of the late Rev, Dr. COTTON MATHER missionary Mirzapore India - who died May 6th 1912 aged 72 years. Matt XXVIII 19, 20

Plot NC 312 Per Ardua ad Astra 1497144 Aircraftman I" cl. H. HAMER Royal Air Force 16th June 1943 age 39. Memory is our greatest treasure in our hearts he lives for ever. (312 *[C W G C grave]*)

Plot NC 421 G Vi R Military Police 13100193 Private J, LEES Corps of Military Police 8th February 1946 age 42 Your star of hope will be my guide till we meet you at eventide. *[C W G C grave]*

Plot NC 435 Thy will be done. In loving memory of RICHARD HENDERSON, died Nov. 10th 1945, in his 90th year. Also MARY ANN, wife of RICHARD HENDERSON, who died May 23rd 1910, aged 53 years. Also BETSY ALICE, daughter of the above who died August 25th 1884 aged 7 years. Also of SAMUEL, son of the above who died November 23^d 1886, aged 2 years. The above children were interred in St Paul's Churchyard. Also of ALICE, beloved daughter of the above who died April 10th 1973, aged 83 years. *[second stone]* In loving memory of ERNEST HENDERSON, L/Cpl Scottish Fus. killed in action in France, June 16th

1915, aged 22 years. Also of RICHARD HENDERSON Pte Lanes. Fus. killed in action in France Sept 20th. 1917, aged 36 years. Also of WILLIAM W. HENDERSON Pte Lane. Fus. killed in action in France March 31st 1918 aged 26 years.

Plot NC 466 3452013 Fusilier T. JONES the Lancashire Fusiliers 25th, October 1941 aged 23. *[crest]* The Lancashire Fusiliers Egypt Silent thoughts true and tender just to show that we remember (466)

Plot NC 512 In loving memory of Pte JOHN TAYLOR, S.W.B, the dearly loved son of GEORGE WILLIAM & GERTRUDE TAYLOR died July 3rd 1943, aged 24 years. Also GERTRUDE the dearly beloved wife of GEORGE WILLIAM TAYLOR died June 26th 1976, aged 80 years. At rest. Also GEORGE WILLIAM TAYLOR died July 24th 1985, aged 87 years. Also their daughter HILDA, died March 22nd 1992, aged 71 years. Treasured memories. *[vase]* Erected as a token of esteem to Pre, JOHN TAYLOR by his fellow workmates & friends of Hope Works 1943.

Plot NC 562 In loving memory my dear husband JOHN H KIRKBRIGHT, died April 25th 1923, aged 66 years. Also of ELIZABETH, his beloved wife died Novr 23rd 1939, aged 67 years. Also of JOHN WILLIAM, son of ALICE ANN TAYLOR, died Novr 21st 1940, aged 61 years. Also of ALICE ANN TAYLOR died March 11th 1956, aged 97 years. "At rest." *[small stone]* Erected as a token of respect to the memory of JOHN HENRY KIRKBRIGHT, by the employers & his fellow workers of the Ramsbottom Branch of Painters. (562)

Plot NC 603 A T S W/105270 Corporal MARIAN DEWHURST Aux. Territorial Service 19th, December 1944 aged 23 To live in the hearts of those we love is not to die (JD 603)

Plot NC 1026 In loving memory of the Rev. GEORGE HOWELLS, Baptist Minister, born at Caerwent, Mon. March 15th, 1827 died at Ramsbottom, Oct. 2nd 1890. For 14 years he was Minister at Whitebrook, Monmouth, & for 21 years at Coniston, North Lancashire. "He sleeps in Jesus & is blest." Also MARY HOWELLS, of Bury widow of the above who died October 19th 1914 aged 82 years. Also ARTHUR ERNEST, youngest son of the above who died at Bacup March 7th, 1902, aged 37 years.

Plot NC 1050 Erected as a token of respect to the memory of RICHARD CARTER by the employees of J. R. CROMPTON Bros. Paper Mill Stubbs 1925

Plot NC 1068 South Lancashire Prince of Wales's Vols. Egypt. 44700 Private J.H.BROOKS South Lancashire Regt. 29th December 1917 age 19 *[CWGC]*

Plot NC 1141 Thy will be done. In loving memory of CAROLINE, the dearly loved wife of the Revd N.W. STAFFORD, of Ramsbottom, who entered into rest 12th December 1886, aged 58 years.

Plot NC 1294 To the memory of JOHN GORTON from his fellow workers & friends, at Nuttall Mill, 1914.

LOCAL RESEARCH

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

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

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

Opening Hours:

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

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

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

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

Lancashire Family History and Heraldry Society; membership secretary Pip Cowling, 33, Windhill Old Road, Bradford, BD10 0SE – tel 01274 611087, email membership@lfhhs.org.uk. Ordinary membership is £12 per year (concessions £9.50) and this entitles you to 4 magazine issues, an opportunity to publish your research queries and findings, and 14 meetings each month with speakers at venues all over the county, including Bury and Rawtenstall. More information is available on www.lfhhs.org.uk.

Ramsbottom Library, Carr Street

The news on the library refurbishment is that new contractors are progressing with the work both inside and outside the building. Meetings have resumed and final touches (counters, desks and shelving) are being discussed with a company who are designing, making and installing the furniture on the library side. Bryan FARLOW has had his latest stained glass window fitted and it looks fantastic.

Thanks to everyone for their patience. We look forward to seeing you in the new building.

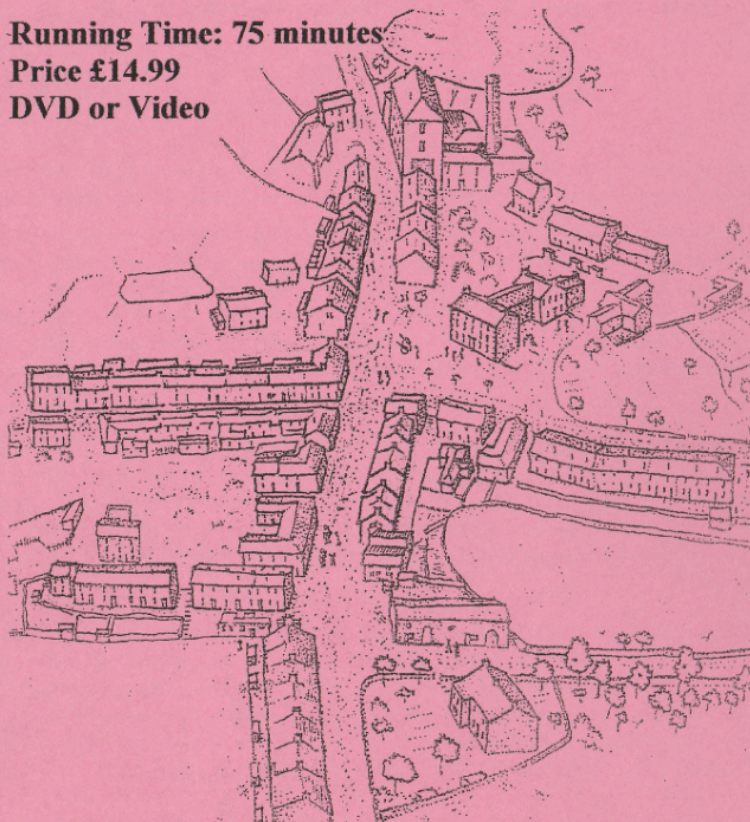
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