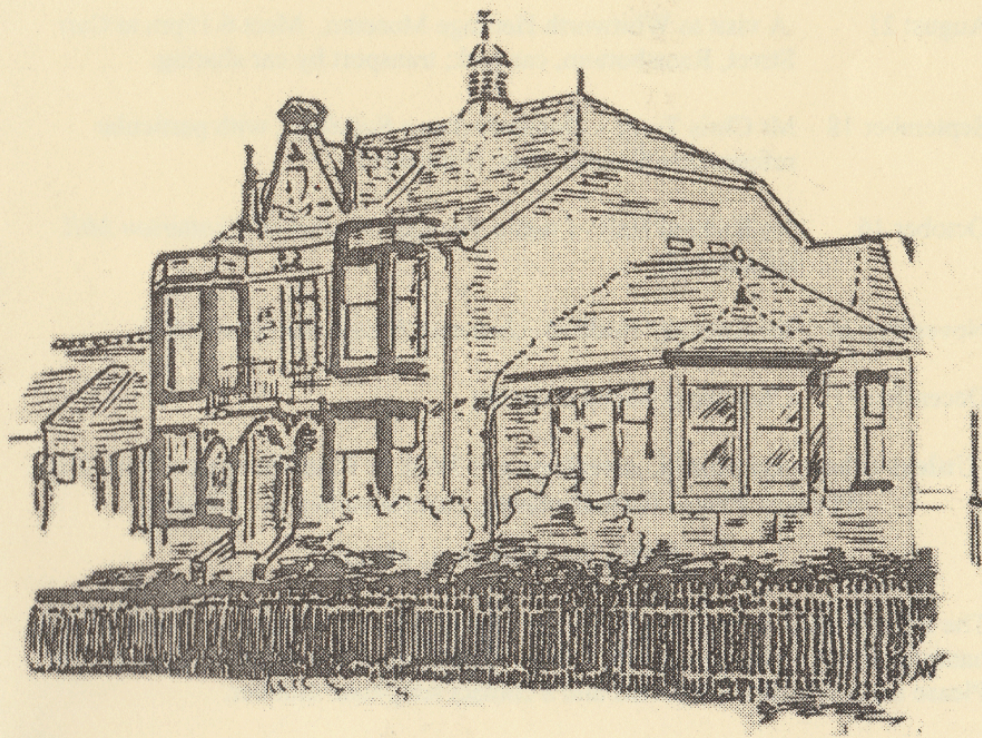


NEWS MAGAZINE

No 44

Spring 2013

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**RAMSBOTTOM HERITAGE SOCIETY, C/O RAMSBOTTOM LIBRARY,
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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
-

PROGRAMME 2013:

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| June 19 | Mr Glen Atkinson – <i>The Manchester Ship Canal</i> (illustrated) |
| July 17 | Mr Peter Bone – A walk along the Rochdale Canal towpath from Littleborough to the hamlet of Durn. Meet 6.15pm at Carr Street, Ramsbottom, car park; transport by car sharing. |
| August 21 | A visit to Whitworth Heritage Museum. Meet 6.15pm at Carr Street, Ramsbottom, car park; transport by car sharing. |
| September 18 | Mr Chris Terry – <i>Domestic Stone Buildings</i> , with particular reference to Ramsbottom. (illustrated) |
| October 16 | Mr Richard Hall - <i>I was a Teenage Weaver at Chatterton Mill</i> (illustrated) |
| November 20 | Mr Anthony Hodbod – <i>Imperial Policemen</i> (illustrated) |
| December 11 | Christmas Social Evening |

**Unless otherwise stated, meetings are held at Ramsbottom Civic Hall,
Market Place, Ramsbottom, commencing at 7.30pm.**

Entry by donation, please.

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

Ramsbottom Heritage Society News Magazine No 44

Spring 2013

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Front cover - Ramsbottom Cottage Hospital by Andrew Todd

Website - www.ramsbottomheritage.org.uk

Email via website

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The period since the last magazine has been quite eventful and surprising. In the last magazine we sadly reported the death of Jenny Beech, and since then we learnt that she had left the Society a most generous bequest. The money will be added to our project fund which has been raised by our *War News* publications. This is a big opportunity and a big responsibility so we must discuss ideas for using this money at the AGM in May.

Recently Norma Mills has retired from the role of Society secretary while Dave and Kath Haddock, who headed up the Society's archiving team, doing a wonderful job re-cataloguing our collection and making it available online, have also stood down from their task. We express our gratitude to them all and are glad they are still staying on as members. We are also very grateful to Barbara and Jon Williams for taking over as organisers of the guided summer walks.

The new exhibition in the Heritage Gallery, which will open on June 2nd (the 60th anniversary of the Queen's Coronation) is appropriately entitled *Regal Ramsbottom, Nine Monarchs and Seven Coronations*. Viewing the display of coronation memorabilia of the current and previous sovereigns and learning about the events in Ramsbottom which coincided with coronation of each monarch since George III, will make clear the meaning of this cryptic title.

One great disappointment recently has been the failure to save *Ramsbottom Cottage Hospital* from the bulldozer. We had hoped that the very attractive 1898 part of the building would be adapted into two dwellings and incorporated into the planned housing development. Despite our submissions to the Bury Planning Control Committee and speaking out at the planning meeting itself, the idea was rejected. The Heritage Society now has the responsibility of finding homes for various fascinating features of the building, including the weather vane, stained glass windows and foundation stone, with a time capsule beneath it.

We fight on to preserve the heritage of Ramsbottom and will report back again in the next magazine. In the meantime, I thank you all for your support for the Society, which enables us to have so many great successes.

Very best wishes Kate Slingsby

NORMA MILLS – AN APPRECIATION

At the turn of the year Society Honorary Secretary Norma Mills stood down from her duties, after almost 14 years in the role. Born in Walshaw, coming to Ramsbottom at age 18, Norma had lived for many years at Bradshaw, Bolton, but had recently moved to the Sharples area of the town, from which she had found travelling difficult. She reminisced about her period in office, having been inspired to become a Society member by husband Walter after a meeting at Ramsbottom

Civic Hall on 20th January 1999 at which Kate Mulholland gave a talk about the Pendle Witches entitled *A Cry of Innocence*. (Apparently Norma had a ‘thing’ about witches, and had at one time lived at Higher Tops Farm, Holcombe, which, as many people who know the area will agree, is a pretty scary sort of place, where one might encounter a witch, especially after dark.) At the meeting Dorothy Moss, then acting Chairman and Hon. Sec., announced she was looking for an assistant. Norma offered, was accepted with open arms and very quickly – Dorothy being very supportive - became embroiled in Society affairs. Looking back at milestone events during her tenure Norma’s first recollections were of the Millennium Celebration Event, when she and daughter Alison, then an undergraduate, worked closely with Linda de Ruijter in finalising arrangements, and recalling also the torchlight procession to the Peel Monument, Holcombe Hill. There soon followed arrangements for the Lancashire Local History Federation ‘At Home’ event 2002, hosted by the Society, when she, husband Walter, Dorothy, and LLHF officers worked closely to ensure its success. Her fondest memories however were of working with Walter at the Heritage Centre, on displays featuring the former Peel Brow School, which Walter had attended, Hope Mill, and Higher Tops Farm; also, afternoon visits to the Centre by schoolchildren, and Brownie groups, when Walter would give out sweets – that would be frowned upon these days – decorating the Centre at Christmas, carol singing, and Tom Barrett’s mince pies. More recently there have been the more businesslike 20th and 25th anniversary celebrations, and the trauma of Walter’s last illness. Throughout, Norma has remained good-humoured, and unstintingly supportive of three successive chairpersons, with their differing ways of working, bringing to meetings and events always a greeting and cheery smile. We wish Norma well in her retirement.

RAMSBOTTOM HERITAGE SOCIETY 2012 PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

Judge – Andrew Todd

Events and Daily Life

Winner:

Joyce Sellers

Edenfield Cricket Match

Highly Commended: Alan Seymour

Remembrance Sunday

Buildings

Winner:

Joyce Sellers

Stubbins Paper Mill

Highly Commended: Ian Chapman

Back Yard, 12, Bolton Road West

Town and Country Landscapes

Winner: Ian Chapman *Looking Up Bolton Street*

Themes

Winner: Alan Seymour *Five Signs*

Highly Commended: Ian Smith *Reinstating the Lamppost Outside the Civic Hall*

Dickensian Trophy Joyce Sellers *Stubbins Paper Mill*

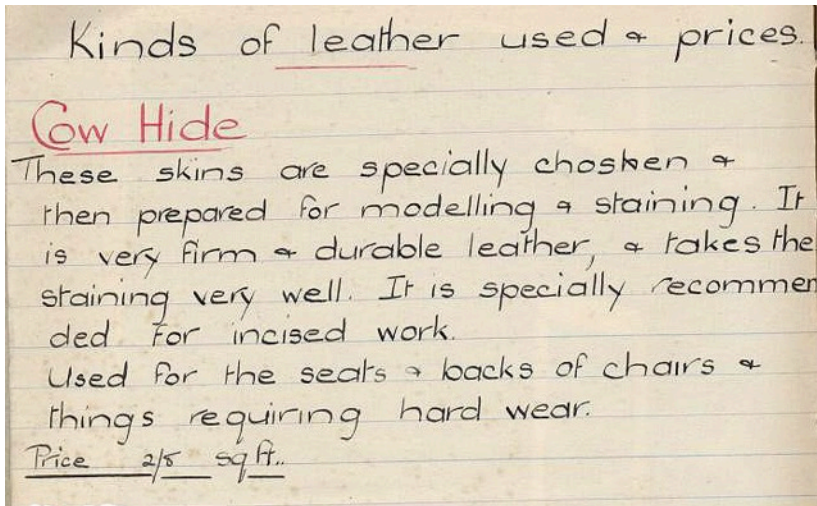
All the entries from the 25 years of the competition and 2000 older photos at Bury Archives are available on the RHS website: www.ramsbottomheritage.org.uk
The deadline for entries to the 2013 competition is January 31st 2014. Entry forms are available on the website. You can also collect an entry form from the Heritage Gallery when members are in attendance (2nd Sunday 12 noon – 3pm) or at monthly meetings.

The Dickensian Trophy winner - Joyce Sellers - Stubbins Paper Mill



MISS MINNIE HASSALL

Miss Hassall was my first teacher in the 'baby class' at St Paul's School when I started there at three years old. I understand that she had been trained as a pupil teacher, ie at school under the supervision of a trained teacher. My friend Joan Barcroft (younger than I) recalls the Reverend Tom Martin telling us of this. Joan and an older friend of mine remember that the little ones had a nap, on folding cots, in the afternoon. One little girl whose mother worked in the mill, therefore having to get up very early, was always allowed by Miss Hassall to sleep the longest and was probably wakened by the noise of classmates. Miss Hassall's classroom was a wooden structure adjoining the small hall at St Paul's. In it were the usual little desks, a lovely old rocking horse, a sandpit (which always had a peculiar smell about it), toys and books. She always wore a long-sleeved floral overall, as did all the infant teachers. She was kind, gentle but firm and dearly loved by all the children. Shown here is an example of her handwriting photocopied from her exercise book – maybe done during her 'teacher training'. How neat and tidy it is – I applaud her.



(On the first page of the exercise book is the title "Leatherwork" and her address 51, Queen Street, Ramsbottom. Inside the exercise book was a magazine clipping dated 1923 with instructions for upholstering a fireside stool.) I have many happy memories of my time at St Paul's. Four generations of my family attended and I was devastated at its closure in 2003 due to falling numbers.

Doris Hibbert

AN INTRODUCTION TO LAVENDER HILLS (PREVIOUSLY THE CLIFFE) AND SOME OF ITS PEOPLE



Its magnificent location is why 160 years ago Samuel Porritt had *The Cliffe* built there in the first place...close to the family mill in the valley below and only a few hundred yards from the homes of his brothers, James and Joseph. Their mansions, *Stubbins Vale House* and *Green Mount* were within easy distance of each other. They were built from millstone grit quarried nearby on their estate and were close to their various mills making felt, cotton and woollen products for a demanding and growing market. *The Cliffe* was a grand family home as befitted a prominent industrialist. A visitor described her experience of a garden party at *The Cliffe* in 1900:

"A charming country estate an orchard in the dell to the left and the circular lawn bedded over with a thousand plants and bordered by blue lobelia and standard roses. The approach along the sweep of the gravel drive is avenued by copper beeches and silver birches in rare profusion."

So much for the fine impression but it seems that the famous stage and screen actor Dirk Bogarde was not so thrilled when he was billeted at the nearby *Green Mount* at the start of World War Two. He wrote about the area in his autobiography: **"I was billeted in a cotton millowner's abandoned mansion on a hillside in a suburb of Bury called Ramsbottom, locally known as Tups Arse because it was the end of everything. From the terrace of the house, grimed with soot and wind, one looked down into a grey, fogged landscape of endless slated**

roofed back-to-backs and soaring mills throbbing with trundling looms, glittering with acres of lighted windows and huge chimneys belching smoke endlessly into the curdled air which loitered over the spoiled valley until eventually it was dispersed across the distant moor. It was sad, cobbled, drab and poor.”

Now we have clean air, no mill chimneys, no cobbles, few trundling looms and, despite the recession, a much better standard of living. We do have wind turbines of course...what would Dirk Bogarde have said about them?

The Porritt family were philanthropic industrialists with a conscience about the environment long before such thoughts were fashionable. It was said of them that they had not desecrated the landscape as had so many industrialists. Their mills and houses were unobtrusive and well built. They planted trees along the Irwell Valley and helped maintain the predominately rural atmosphere. Industry obviously needs labour and in the 19th century the Porritts built terrace houses and cottages for their workers. This benevolence had a practical side. If the workers lived close by they had less excuse for being late at the looms but the houses were neat and well liked by the tenants. It is interesting to note that *The Cliffe* was the cheapest of the Porritt brothers three houses. It was built at a cost of £1750 in the early 1850s which can be compared with the £1500 it cost to build 14 workers' cottages and a shop in nearby North Street to appreciate it was and is a very fine house indeed. Incidentally, James Porritt who lived at Stubbins Vale House was also the architect for Stubbins Vale Mill and used to stand on the roof to check on what was going on.

For more than 100 years the family were also generous benefactors. They recognised their responsibility to the community and not just to those who worked in their mills. They were also highly regarded for their many kindnesses to their work force in sickness and, over the period of two World Wars, in bereavement. The Porritt family was quite a dynasty. Twelve sons had taken over the work and industrial legacy of James, Joseph and Samuel Porritt. One of them, a grandson of James was Austin Townsend Porritt, later Colonel A.T. Porritt who came to live at *The Cliffe* with his wife Annie. Their only child, Richard Porritt became one of the youngest MP's to be elected to Parliament when was elected the member for Radcliffe and Heywood in 1935. In those days the constituency included Ramsbottom. He was just 24.

But tragedy struck when Richard was killed in the British retreat to the Normandy beaches in 1940. He was 30 years old and the first MP to be killed in World War 2. There is a stone memorial to him and all the Porritt employees who died in both World Wars near the remaining parts of *Stubbins Vale Mill* below *The Cliffe* and there is also a shield of remembrance to the right of the Speaker's chair in the House of Commons which bears his name. By way of tribute, *The Ramsbottom Observer* (there was such a newspaper in those days) described a brilliant future cut short and

said, "his sterling worth shone through a mantle of modesty". On Richard's death, Colonel Porritt gave the 436 acres of moorland and farmland to the National Trust. He had already donated the land for Nuttall Park and Chatterton playing fields as well as building St Phillips Church and the Village Hall. Colonel Porritt's grieving wife died in 1943 and by that time the Colonel, for health reasons, lived in Grange-over-Sands. He never returned to *The Cliffe* and the house became the directors' residence. It was a demonstration of the respect and gratitude felt for Colonel Porritt that while his funeral service was held at St Paul's Church Grange, simultaneously, to the very minute, an identical service with the same hymns and prayers was held here in Stubbins.

The mansions *Stubbins Vale* and *Greenmount* are no more but thankfully *The Cliffe* has been preserved and is now restored. Memories remain. A lady of my age I spoke to remembers the main hallway when she visited as a girl more than 60 years ago. She told me the hall floor was beautiful terracotta tiling in blue, white and black. (Is it still under the carpet now?). In the Ramsbottom Heritage Society's collection of papers in the Bury Archive there is a flyer and auction catalogue for the sale of the house together with two acres of land in 1981. Also included at the auction were 350 lots of furniture, pictures, porcelain and silver. The name remained after the sale and it became a care home as *The Cliffe*. The present owners renamed it the *Lavender Hills Care Home* and carried out the extensive restoration.

Martin Henfield

Having read in Col Porritt's letter (see article "Colonel Porritt's Support of a Soldier and his Family") that in 1919 he had some of James Hargreaves Morton's drawings, we checked our archive. The 1981 auction catalogue that Martin mentions lists the lots for sale, describing The Cliffe and its contents. Unsurprisingly, after the passing of over sixty years between the two records (Col Porritt's 1919 letter about the drawings and the 1981 auction catalogue), of over twenty five pictures listed in the catalogue, none was Morton's. The household goods in the sale may not even have belonged to Col Porritt as he died in 1956 having lived elsewhere for many years. The Cliffe itself was also to be sold in the auction which was taking place on the instructions of Scapa Porritt Ltd. The description of the house (comprising twenty rooms) mentions a hall, back hall, dining room, lounge, morning room, kitchen, sitting room, butler's pantry, butler's flat, basement and a telephone room with a four foot wide oak table. (In 1919, The Cliffe's telephone number, shown on Col Porritt's stationery, was simply RAMSBOTTOM 57.)

COLONEL PORRITT'S SUPPORT OF A SOLDIER AND HIS FAMILY

Lt Col. Austin Townsend Porritt is remembered with great affection in the Ramsbottom area. He will also be remembered in Darwen for a kindly gesture to a soldier from the town and a moving letter which he wrote to the lad's sisters after his death.

Col. Porritt was an influential Territorial officer whose family had been textile manufacturers for many years. He raised the 2/5th East Lancashire Regiment and took it to France early in 1917. The History of the East Lancashire Regiment was warm in its praise: "He had the none too light responsibility of working utterly inexperienced civilian material into a military organisation. ... It was his reward that he was permitted to accompany his command as a unit to France." It was unfortunate that he wasn't able to stay long with his men as he was invalided home later the same year. However, he kept in touch with his old comrades and was able to assist his successor, Col. Hector Fraser Whitehead, who had asked him to send out crayons and drawing paper for a Sergeant James Morton who had been posted to his Regiment. Whitehead said he had discovered Morton to be "a capital artist".

He certainly was! Morton had spent five years at the Royal College of Art in London and was becoming recognised as a post-Impressionist painter when he went off to war. He was killed just north of Pont-sur-Sambre as the Germans fought desperately to slow the rapid advance of the Allied forces. His death came just five days before the end of hostilities. He was thirty seven. Before he joined the Army in 1916, confident of his return he asked his four sisters to look after his collection of more than 450 paintings, pastels and sketches. And that they did – until the last sister, Alice, died in 1967. Four years later the whole collection was sold piecemeal at King George's Hall, Blackburn. The sale raised more than £10,000.

"Col. Whitehead obviously thought a great deal of Morton and considered that he could easily have made a name for himself as an artist," wrote Col. Porritt in a kindly letter written in February 1919 to John Yates, the Blackburn solicitor who had been a long-standing friend of James Morton. Col. Porritt, of *The Cliffe*, Stubbins Vale, told Yates that he had received some of Morton's drawings in return for the crayons and paper and would forward them to Mr Yates for him to show to the sisters with whom, he said, he had "the greatest sympathy." He asked Mr Yates to pass on his "heart-felt regrets at their brother's untimely death." And he asked them to select two or three drawings from the handful he would be sending and return the others. Several of those drawings of the area around Cayeux-sur-Mer on the Somme estuary were discovered at the Queen's Lancashire Regiment Museum in Preston. Curator Jane Davies, who found them, said: "One of the beauties of this job is that you sometimes come across things that have been overlooked or filed in the 'wrong' place. I recognised them straight away." They are dated 1918 and one is dated



Colonel Porritt

Colonel Porritt's Support of a Soldier and his family 11

summer 1918. They were drawn towards the end of Morton's time with the 2/5th and before he was transferred to the 1/5th Battalion.

Col. Porritt's letter concluded, rather sadly, "My dear old Battn is now extinct and the N.C.Os and the men are scattered amongst the other Battns of the East Lancashire Regiment." The 2/5th had suffered horrendous casualties and the lads who were left were merged into the 1/5th. Col Porritt didn't know Morton personally, but he did know Yates through their interest in archery and they often competed against each other between the wars. A former High Sheriff of Lancashire, Col. Porritt died in 1956. His son, Richard, one of the youngest MPs in the House of Commons, was killed during the retreat to Dunkirk in 1940.

Col. Whitehead went on to command the 1/4th Royal Berks Regiment. The Royal Berks had fought right through the trenches of the Great War and was moved to Italy late in 1917. He returned home with the Royal Berks in 1919. A history of the Royal Berks describes him thus: "He was a brave man, but of a narrow and unsympathetic school, staled (*made stale*) by continuous service throughout the war." It is difficult now to imagine the heavy burden of responsibility which officers carried with them, day after day, although in his request for crayons and paper for one of his sergeants he showed that he had managed to keep an interest in a life far removed from all the death and destruction around him. The History of the East Lancashire Regiment refers to his "devoted persistence and tireless effort." It added: "His it was to inculcate the spirit of offensiveness in attack and doggedness in defence" – a task he was "obliged to accomplish under difficult conditions in a short space of time." Col. Whitehead was well known in the Burnley area and he often attended Regimental reunions. Curiously, he was Secretary of the Cairn Terrier Club and an authority and early pioneer of the breed. His great niece Mairi Macdonald recalled: "Uncle Hector was a 'character' of strong views and my memories of him as a child are of a tall whirlwind descending on us each February when he came to judge at Cruft's Dog Show. We spent some of our summer holidays with him and Aunt Elsie (they had no children) in Edinburgh, and it was always a highlight." He was killed, aged 89, in a car accident near Perth in 1968.

Harold Heys 2013

The story of artist James Hargreaves Morton's life and times is being told in a new book to be published in April 2013 by the Friends of Darwen Library where several of Morton's painting and pastels are on display. It includes the story of the two colonels and the support they gave to Morton amid the wholesale slaughter of the Great War trenches. Harold Heys, who is editing the book on James Morton, says: "Looking back, it's rather touching to find that in the middle of all that industrial carnage two officers could take a bit of time out for a kindly gesture to an artist who was hardly cut out for the horror of war but who was bravely doing his best."

RAMSBOTTOM COTTAGE HOSPITAL

Lord James of Hereford, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, performed the official opening ceremony of *The Aitken Memorial And Jubilee Cottage Hospital*, Ramsbottom on 18th April 1900, paying tribute to the public spirit and generosity of the donors Mr and Mrs Thomas Aitken. The whole district had been given a public holiday and tickets had been sold for a public luncheon at 1pm. Afterwards, at 2.30pm, Lord James opened the four-day Grand Bazaar which was held in St Paul's Schools to raise funds towards an endowment fund for the new hospital. The first day's bazaar Chairman was Mr Thomas Aitken, local millowner and philanthropist. *(His wife's unstinting work and most generous donations were crucial to the provision of the new hospital. Her work is described later in this article - Editor)*. Other important guests would perform opening ceremonies at 3pm on each of the remaining days, the 19th, 20th and 21st April.

A commemorative bazaar programme had been printed listing about a hundred participants (names included many well-known local people), their stalls and their contributions to the entertainment. Each stall had its own secretary, treasurer and team of assistants, mainly ladies, and a designated colour scheme (Mrs Aitken's was heliotrope and the crockery stall's was butcher blue). The entertainment committee alone was ten strong and included a Mr M Birtwistle, Mr W Turnbull Jnr and Mr R Turnbull. The *Cheeryble Quartet* was conducted by Mr J Wolstenholme (Jnr) and Mr Joshua Knowles conducted the pierrots. There was palmistry by Madame Celeste, a Grand Scenic Shooting Jungle and a Café Chantant (originally an outdoor café where small groups performed lighthearted music and popular at the time). There was singing and music by local musicians and pupils of distinguished music colleges. In the evenings the bazaar was open until 10pm.

The *Ladies' Sunlight Soap Washing Competition* was in three rounds spread over the days. It promised "a novel, healthy, instructive and exciting form of amusement". Competitors paid a 3d entrance fee with a view to be obtained on payment of 1d. Mr S Lord provided each competitor with a pail, two pegs, a tea cloth, a small tablet of Sunlight soap and a chair. First prize of a set of teaspoons (value £1 1s) and second prize of a large case of different soaps were offered by Messrs Lever Bros Ltd of Port Sunlight, Cheshire and were to be awarded for speed and correctness of detail by efficient judges of known repute. On the word, "Go", all washed the cloths and first prize went to the competitor who showed the cleanest cloth in three minutes, the same being correctly pegged on the line. Points would be deducted for irregularities.

Ramsbottom Cottage Hospital 1 3



AITKEN MEMORIAL & COTTAGE HOSPITAL, RAMSBOTTOM

Origins Of Health Services In Bury And Ramsbottom

Back in the 18th century medical care in the area had been provided only by visits to the doctor's surgery or by home visits by him to more serious cases. Even major operations had to be performed in the home, although these were rare, and of course all care had to be paid for. Between 1750 and 1790 a complex of hospitals developed in Piccadilly, Manchester: the infirmary for in-patients and out-patients, a lunatic hospital, a lying-in hospital, an isolation hospital and latterly a dispensary to deal with out-patients and home visits. The origins of a health service in Bury and Ramsbottom date back to the first half of the 19th century:

“A dispensary to deal with outpatients and home visits recently established at Bury, by public subscription, has commenced its operations in a building rented for the purpose (in the Hope and Anchor on the corner of Bury Lane and Bolton Street). It is hoped, however, that funds for the institution will shortly be sufficient to defray the expense of erecting a suitable building for that purpose. Several munificent donations have recently been made for this purpose: amongst which was one of £100 from W. Grant Esq.” (Manchester Mercury, 1st August 1829)

Along with William Grant, The Earl of Derby, Sir Robert Peel, The Rt Hon R Peel MP and Edmund Yates Esq were responsible for over 70% of the entire cost of the Bury Dispensary Hospital. By the end of the 19th century it had become a worthy institution and money was forthcoming for extensions in later years. Ramsbottom doctor, Dr Benjamin Crawshaw of 179, Bolton Street, Barwood Mount was an Honorary Surgeon there. He would have been familiar with the importance of the work of the District Nurse employed by the Bury Dispensary. However, it was Mrs May Aitken of Holcombe Hall (President of the Nursing Association, and wife of Mr Thomas Aitken) who made an appeal to the people of Ramsbottom for contributions towards the cost of employing Ramsbottom's first nurse. It is clear that she had the support of local medical men when she wrote the following letter to the *Ramsbottom Observer* but there is no evidence of particular pressure from Dr Crawshaw.

I should like to explain, for the benefit of those people in Ramsbottom who are wishful to understand the duties of the nurse we aim to have for the town, what those duties are. The object of having a qualified woman is that she will be able to nurse people at their own homes. Visiting from house to house, she will urge upon the members of the family the necessity of cleanliness, advise them in the importance of sanitary arrangements, and instruct them as to the requirements of the patient and the observance of due precautions during her

own absence, at the same time impressing upon them the importance of strict obedience to the doctor's orders.

She will be expected to devote her whole energy and skill to the work entrusted to her the relief of suffering and the promotion of recovery from sickness ... and to treat all patients with equal assiduity, without distinction of religious persuasion, only giving, as is natural, her first attention to the more serious and pressing cases. She will not attend fever or smallpox cases. She will not cease to visit a patient assigned to her, until the superintendent takes the case off the register.

NO PAYMENT IS NECESSARY FOR THE NURSE'S SERVICES, but I think that when the Ramsbottom people understand the good a nurse would do, and learn that the doctors are anxious we should have one, they will come forward, one and all, and give what they can towards her salary. I should like everybody to helphowever little.

Contributions should be given to a Minister of the Church the contributor attends, or paid into either of the Banks.

Yours very truly, MAYAITKEN, President, September 1894

The appeal was obviously successful as two months later Nurse Waring was appointed. Her first year was, according to her supervisor's report, a remarkable success in terms of the 3349 visits she paid to her 237 patients who were "appreciative and grateful". Mrs Aitken gave 44lbs of beef and mutton, tea, Bengers Food and Chicken jelly to supplement the diets of the weak and ill. She also provided materials for dressings. The work was so successful that the need for a small hospital was constantly urged on the visiting committee. This seemed to be an impossible dream, but three people offered most generous help. A house was secured in Dundee Lane by Mr Thomas Aitken and furnished by Mrs Aitken and Miss Horsefield, a London trained nurse, offered her services free for one year. The subscribers' list was headed by Mr Thomas Aitken, Grant Lawson MP, G Kemp MP, Mr and Mrs Porritt, Mrs Gray and Mr L McCarthur and included many well-known local residents.

Ramsbottom's First Hospital 1896

Just over a year after the inception of Ramsbottom's nursing service, an announcement appeared in the *Ramsbottom Observer*:

The house in Dundee Lane which has been taken by the Ladies of the District Nursing Committee as a Cottage Hospital is now being prepared for the reception of patients. Most of the rooms have been furnished and Nurse Waring, the District Nurse, and Nurse Horsefield, the Cottage Nurse, have taken up residence there. The female ward is on the ground floor and contains

two beds and a child's cot. The men's ward which is upstairs has beds for two patients.....There is a room which will probably be used in cases where a surgical operation is required

Cottage hospitals had begun to appear from about 1820 and in 1896 Ramsbottom's first hospital fulfilled exactly the title and definition - a small rural hospital having several beds. By 1897, when there were about three hundred cottage hospitals nationwide, the little hospital had become very successful, already proving itself to be too small. There were obviously many patients whose ailments required a better medical environment than their crowded homes could provide. Limited funds had not allowed for a larger project until, prompted by the recovery of her husband from a serious illness, the ever-generous Mrs Aitken decided to build and furnish a new hospital in Nuttall Lane.

The Aitken Memorial and Jubilee Cottage Hospital, Nuttall Lane, Ramsbottom

At 10.30am on 5th May 1898, Mrs May Aitken laid the foundation stone. Underneath was a cavity containing a silver penny, a sixpence and a threepenny piece to represent the current coinage of the realm and a copy of the *Ramsbottom Observer* dated 19th November 1897 with an account of the cutting of the first sod for the hospital. Mrs Aitken was presented with a silver trowel to mark the occasion. The architect was Mr Charles Spencer Haywood (1878 – 1927) of the firm Haywood and Harrison, Accrington. Specialists in the construction of hospitals and workhouses, their work had included Accrington Victoria Hospital (1894) and from 1903-7 they designed and carried out on the Fylde a workhouse complex on a pavilion plan with all amenities and accommodation for 300 persons. The Ramsbottom hospital was to be built to a double-fronted symmetrical plan with its bay windows extending to above the eaves line in Edgar Wood fashion and was, in common with many other cottage hospitals, reminiscent of a house. The front elevation was enhanced by the use of Accrington brick and Yorkshire stone dressing and had a timber porch entrance. One of the stylistic additions was a gable in the Jacobean style with strapwork finials after Hans Vredeman de Vries. The many decorative architectural features included several stained glass windows, one of which incorporated the Aitken crest, and an internal glass panel featured a portrait of Queen Victoria. According to the newspaper report of the laying of the foundation stone, it was to have male and female wards, nine beds each to the right and left of the front entrance, and a centre ward for isolation cases. The floors of the wards were to be of polished oak and also the kitchen, sculleries and operating room. In the operating room walls were to be painted up to 6ft high and the walls of the wards to 6ft 6". Internal corners were all to be rounded to prevent the accumulation of impure matter. The staircase hall would be built with ample

windows and ventilation with warming of the building via a system of coils and radiators. On the first floor would be rooms for the matron, nurse and servants and also bathroom, box and linen rooms etc. A scullery, pantry, stores and would be on the ground floor with a tradesmen's entrance.

Commemorating in its name Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee of 1897, the *Aitken Memorial And Jubilee Cottage Hospital* first opened its doors to patients on 13th November 1899 as a voluntary institution designed to relieve the suffering of the working population. At the time, it had seven beds and one in a private ward. It was staffed by the Matron, Miss Horsefield and the District Nurse, Nurse Dight (salaries £35 per annum), a probationer nurse, a cook and a housemaid all of whom lived in. They were helped by a manservant and a washerwoman. The hospital's object, stated in its Constitution and Regulations, was to be used "at the discretion of the Committee of Management for the reception and treatment of such persons resident within Ramsbottom and District suffering from accident or illness as cannot be efficiently treated at their own homes provided no case of incurable, chronic infectious, or contagious disease, or of maternity or insanity shall be admitted." These restrictions applied in most charitable hospitals, not just in Ramsbottom. Separate developments were occurring in these specialities, mainly in rooms set aside in the workhouse at Jericho, Bury (the origin of Fairfield Hospital).

Ramsbottom Cottage Hospital's first annual meeting placed on record that the very successful Grand Bazaar had raised £1640 2s 5d for the endowment fund augmenting a legacy of £1000 from the estate of Mr Harling of Manchester. Also recorded was the generous donation from the Ramsbottom Cycle Club, who had contributed over £110 to the maintenance fund from their Cycle Parade of 30th June 1900. (The Cycle Club continued to be active in raising money for the hospital by organising an annual Rose Queen Festival with parades of people from Sunday and day schools and local industry with floats – no cycles!) Thanks were expressed to local people who had supported the hospital: the Saturday and Sunday Funds Subcommittee, formed after a meeting of the representatives of various local mills, workshops and places of worship (£71 had been raised in 1900 by this sub-committee in the places of worship alone), the Ladies Visiting Committee for their work collecting subscriptions, the subscribers and donors themselves including the congregations of various places of worship. People who paid £10 became life governors, individuals who paid 10 shillings or more became annual subscribers and clubs or congregations paid £2 or more. (*We are told that the Hospital Saturday Fund was still paying for operations at the hospital for its members and their families in 1948, just before it became part of the NHS – Editor.*)

During World War I, with Miss E Hand as matron, convalescing soldiers were received at the hospital. For eleven years Mr Aitken had held the presidency and after his death in 1911, he had been succeeded by Mrs Aitken until she died in 1915. Unlike some of the other local hospitals, Ramsbottom's was very fortunate in the

interest and generosity shown to it by succeeding presidents including Miss Gray whose appointment followed the Aitkens. The hospital saw none of the controversies faced by some of the other hospital charities. This was due to the dedication and generosity of a succession of benefactors. In 1937 the facilities were expanded with a new operating theatre, children's ward and sun lounge being provided by Lt Col and Mrs A T Porritt, who also provided an endowment.

(The photographs on page 13 show the hospital before and after this extension was built - Editor) The hospital was brought up to modern standards to serve more as a general hospital than a cottage hospital. With more patients being admitted money to help with the running of the hospital also continued to come from regular appeals, charity events and donations.

The National Health Service 1948

Ramsbottom Cottage Hospital was handed over to the Bury and Rossendale Hospital Management Committee and is reported by them as being in an excellent state of repair, undoubtedly the best in the group (out of eight hospitals). The hospital was designated as a General Practitioner unit at first. It had seventeen beds for acute medical and surgical cases and possessed a small casualty department. This system of medical staffing did not work out in practice so eventually it was decided to restrict the number of beds available for GPs and use the remainder for special purposes. For two years it was used to treat ophthalmic cases (children) who required minor surgery. It was then given over to medical cases. In 1964 the hospital group had its own full-time orthopaedic surgeon who started a self-contained orthopaedic unit at Ramsbottom Cottage Hospital. The building was upgraded, including rewiring, removal of old fireplaces, improvements to the heating system and the theatre. It was completely redecorated with the provision of new furnishings. All the group's minor routine orthopaedic work was carried out at Ramsbottom (over five hundred cases annually).

In 1974 hospital services were reorganised nationally so it was the last year of the Bury and Rossendale Hospital Management Committee. By that time an orthopaedic unit had been set up at Fairfield General Hospital, Bury and the Cottage Hospital's role had changed. In 1991 it was a geriatric hospital for up to sixteen persons. It closed in 2008.

(Since the inception of the NHS there had been an organised role for volunteers and much voluntary work was carried out for the patients of Ramsbottom Cottage Hospital. At present we have not been able to gather sufficient information to do justice to the hospital's dedicated volunteers so we would be very grateful to receive material for a future article about their activities. The following details may jog a few memories. – Editor)

Mrs Evelyn Waite was instrumental in setting up Ramsbottom Cottage Hospital League of Friends and for some years, including 1986, was their Chairman/President. On receiving Honorary Life Membership of Ramsbottom Heritage Society on 10th June 2003, Mrs Waite emphasised the importance of the part others had played in her work for the people of Ramsbottom and Edenfield. She used as her example what she described as the wonderful help from Bert Hinchliffe (J & H Hinchliffe Ltd, local coach travel operators 1950 - 75) when the elderly residents of Ramsbottom Cottage Hospital were taken on outings. One of the things he did was to remove some of the seats of his coach so that wheelchair users could go on the trips. Mrs Waite was still visiting as Secretary of the Ramsbottom Aid in Sickness Fund in 2001 and remained in that office until her death on 16th December 2003.

A presentation to Mrs Lucy Butterworth, a founder member of Ramsbottom Hospitals Voluntary Services Committee, to mark her 20 years as Chairman took place in 1976.

After the 1981 Whit Walk procession and hymn singing led by the Band of the Lancashire Fusiliers, walkers from St Andrew's Church went to the Cottage Hospital where traditionally they sang hymns.

References:

Origins of The Health Service in Bury and Ramsbottom Part 1– Faith Hope and Medicine in the 18th and 19th Centuries by Barbara Palmer for the Ramsbottom Heritage Society published in 1989 pages 3, 6, 7, 21-3 and 25-27

Bury and Rossendale Hospital Group – a 1974 report marking the 25th anniversary of Bury and Rossendale Management Committee and the last year of its existence

Ramsbottom Observer September 1894, 17th January 1896, 6th May 1898

Accrington Observer 14th May 1927

Bury Times 12th June 1981

Stories in Stone - Datestones in Ramsbottom by John B Taylor pub1991 p 38

Ramsbottom Heritage Society news magazines No 18 Spring 1999, No 25 Autumn/Winter 2003 and No 26 Spring/Summer 2004

OBITUARIES

In early autumn we learned of the death of Peter Morries, of Summerseat Lane, Holcombe Brook, a member of the Society from its early days; we are grateful to his widow Joan and son Geoff for the following details.

Peter Morries and his wife Joan, came to live in Ramsbottom in 1986, and joined the Society soon afterwards. Born in north Staffordshire in 1925, Peter was educated at Hanley High School for Boys, and Birmingham University where he read Chemistry. His professional career as an analytical chemist included a period as Public Analyst for Bolton, before moving to North West Water (now United Utilities), where he was responsible for laboratories throughout the North West. Colleagues remember him as an inspiring leader and a good friend. Outside work, he had exceptionally wide interests including music, literature and theatre, religion and politics, freshwater biology and wildlife conservation, and the history of science and industry. Peter was Chairman of the Croal-Irwell Group of the Lancashire Wildlife Trust and the Summerseat Nature Reserve (formerly a sewage works!), for which he received an Award for Voluntary Service to the Community from Bury Council in 1999. He was particularly interested and knowledgeable about the history of railways and engineering, and of the chemical industries in the region. As a member of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), Peter's memorial is at Colthouse Quaker Burial Ground (Hawkshead).

As the Autumn 2012 issue was in print we learned of the death of Clyde TWEEDALE, of Edenfield, who had been a member of the Society from its beginning. He contributed a number of well-researched articles to our news magazines and gave several talks to the Society. We are grateful to his son Mark for the following details.

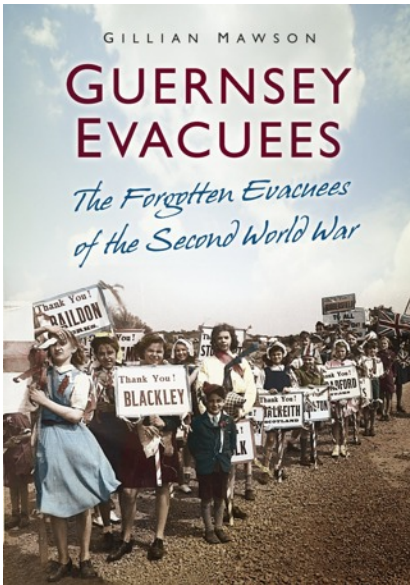
My father had many interests in the local community and was heavily involved with the Edenfield Local History Society and Ramsbottom Heritage Society. He was also a keen gardener and was a committee member in various roles in the Edenfield Horticultural Society. My father was born on 27th October 1933 in Rochdale and attended Rochdale Grammar School. After completing his A levels, he then studied English at King's College, London, and obtained his degree there. National Service followed with the East Lancashire Regiment where he also went through officer training at Eaton Hall College. He subsequently spent a year or so teaching at the Marion Military Institute in Alabama, USA. Back in the UK, he gained employment as an English teacher at a school in Lichfield, Staffs and then after meeting my mother at a dance in Bolton gained employment at Edge End School in Nelson as

an English teacher – later becoming head of department. My mother and father were married in 1970 at Edenfield Parish Church and spent 3 or 4 years living in Brierfield near Nelson. My parents then came to live in Edenfield where they settled for good. As well as the gardening, my father was also a keen rugby fan and supporter of Rochdale Hornets who he often went to see. In his earlier days he also played rugby for Littleborough Rugby Union Football Club and the Old Rochdaliens. My father's military service also generated an interest in the history and exploits of the East Lancashire Regiment and as a member of the Friends of the East Lancs Regiment Association he made several trips to some of the war sites in Europe.

The new year brought with it news of the death of Jean Greenhalgh, a member who had lived for a number of years at Matthew Haygarth House, Bolton Street, Ramsbottom, before moving to Lavender Hills; we are grateful to her daughter Lynn Gilmartin for the following details.

My mum (Jean) was born Jean Kirkpatrick on 22nd January 1927. Her mother, Amy Taylor, was a Landlady and she was brought up in the “Seven Stars” Public House in Bury; she had two brothers, Sam and Donald. The war was still going when she was called up at 17 ½ years for Nursing in Liverpool; she stayed there for 18 months until the war was over. My mum married my dad, William Gant, known as Bill, when she was 20. (I was her 21st birthday present). She went on to have four more children, losing the last one shortly after birth. My parents had a corner shop in Hardman Street, before moving to Holcombe Brook; during that time she worked at Aitken Sanatorium, and as a Dinner Lady at Hazelhurst School. Jean was widowed at 47 years, but found happiness again years later with Fred Greenhalgh. Mum had lots of interests, including being a member of Bury Operatic Society; both she and her brother Donald sang in many of the shows at the ‘Art Theatre’ in Bury; she had a lovely voice, and at a young age won the Carol Levis award. Her other interests included Art classes, Reading, and travelling. Mum retired early from being a Care Home Warden at Peel Brow. She loved living in Ramsbottom, and her flat on Bolton Street; she had lots of friends, and was enjoyable company; she was a very independent woman, going out and about most days. The last 12 months her health started to deteriorate, and she was also diagnosed with vascular dementia. Jean went into care at Lavender Hills Care Home in June 2012, where she died on January 7th 2013, surrounded by her loved ones.

Guernsey Evacuees: The Forgotten Evacuees of the Second World War by Gillian Mawson



For four years, the author of this book interviewed two hundred surviving evacuees about their experiences during the war when the Germans invaded France and the Channel Islands. Whilst the emergency decision to evacuate was being made the Guernsey inhabitants could even hear the explosions from Cherbourg and see the city in flames at night. Altogether, about 20,000 of Guernsey's population of nearly 44,000 left and most of them were transported to towns in northern England. In October 2010, as part of a three-month project undertaken with Bury Archives, an Open Day was held by author Gillian Mawson in the Heritage Gallery at Ramsbottom Library. Ramsbottom Heritage Society's visitors to the Open Day included Mrs Patricia Locus, who was accompanied by

her two sisters. They remembered the Guernsey evacuees as neighbours in the then newly-built houses on the Chesham Fold (Dicky Bird) estate in Bury. One of the ladies even recognised herself in a photograph on display. She told us that the Guernsey families were good neighbours and often helped others with gardening. This 192 page book, which was published in November 2012 by The History Press, is available online through Amazon.co.uk or you can buy a signed copy directly from Gillian for £15 which includes postage and packing and recorded delivery within the UK. Cheques should be made payable to M and G Mawson and sent to her at 28b, Hill Drive, Whaley Bridge, Derbyshire, SK23 7BH. If the book is a gift, please let Gillian know if you wish to have a specific message written next to the signature. A lending copy is also available at Ramsbottom Library.

(Taping by the RHS Oral History Group recorded the reminiscences of Elizabeth/Betty Haworth, a long-serving Society committee member who, as an eleven year old, had been evacuated from Guernsey just before the German invasion. She came to Ramsbottom and, having obtained her mother's permission, stayed on after the war. Sadly, Betty died in 2005 and so she does not feature in the book but an extract from her reminiscences was published in RHS news magazine No 29, Autumn 2005. It is available on request at Ramsbottom Library – Editor.)

A small part of Ramsbottom's past brought back to life:

In December 2012, the Civic Hall's original cast iron lamppost was reinstated around the back of the building. The post had been removed from its previous position during Hall improvement work in 2009. It was in excellent condition but without its lantern and had no maker's name on it. Although it is old, it is thought that it was never powered by gas and probably dates from the early 20th century.



Now completely restored and fully functioning with a new Victorian-style lantern, the lamppost is a focal point in the Civic Hall's garden/courtyard area, a new facility for hall-users. The Mayor of Bury, Cllr Joan Grimshaw unveiled the lamppost when she attended a function at the Hall on

7th December.

Ramsbottom War News

Life in Ramsbottom during WW2

ISSUE 4 1942: THE END OF THE BEGINNING

TWENTY A4 PAGES ~ STILL ONLY £1

On sale from the 2013 ELR War Weekend

May 25th, 26th and 27th

Published by the Society using information from editions of *The Ramsbottom Observer* and our archives.

War News issues 1, 2 and 3 published 2010-12, have been our most popular publications ever.

DON'T MISS YOUR COPY OF THE LATEST ISSUE.

Ramsbottom Heritage Society's

SUMMER WALKS PROGRAMME 2013

Led by volunteers with a particular interest in and knowledge of Ramsbottom and district.

2 – 3 hours in duration over distances between 3 to 5 miles; taken at a leisurely pace, the walks are suitable for reasonably fit adults and children. Dogs on a lead are welcome.

We hope everyone will enjoy an afternoon out and benefit from the exercise and friendly company. Stout footwear and waterproof clothing is recommended. Please note that paths may be uneven.

Sunday 19th May *Nuttall – The Village That Vanished*

3-4 mile circular walk, via St Andrew's Church, Nuttall village and Nuttall Park
Meet at Ramsbottom Station 2pm. Leader - Kate Slingsby 01706 281998

Sunday 16th June *A Summerseat Stroll - Through Time*

looking at the industrial history, housing, railway and pubs. Meet at entrance to Waterside Inn car park, Waterside Road, Summerseat.
Leaders - Barbara and Jon Williams - 01706 559074

(July - No walk)

**Sunday 18th Aug *An•Historical Saunter Around
Ramsbottom Town Centre***

Meet by the Grant Arms at 2pm. • Leader – Andrew Todd – 01706 822730

Sunday 15th Sept *The History of the Greenmount Trail*

Meet at Greenmount Old School opposite The Bull's Head at 2pm.

Leader – Christine Taylor

For more details contact Barbara Williams or Kate Slingsby
(Contact numbers as above).

LOCAL RESEARCH

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

Bury Archives, Moss Street, Bury, BL9 0DG

email contact: archives@bury.gov.uk or tel: 0161 253 6782

Opening Hours

Tuesday to Friday 10am - 5pm

2nd Saturday of the month 10am - 4.30pm

Please note that the Archives are closed each day between 1pm and 2pm and that the latest time to produce records is 4.30pm (weekdays):

Visitors are free to use finding aids, online archives resources or to speak to a member of staff but are advised to make an appointment if they wish to consult archive documents. Collections held include records relating to local authorities, public bodies, schools, churches, businesses, trade unions, political parties, sports clubs, social organisations, family papers, deeds, maps and plans and indexes to local parish registers including Ramsbottom. Our catalogues are online at <http://archives.bury.gov.uk> as 'Bury Archives Catalogue'. The Archive photograph collection can be browsed on the Bury Image Bank website at www.buryimagebank.org.uk. We run an enquiry service, offering 15 minutes staff time free. The Ramsbottom Heritage Society's Collection, including photographs, is on permanent loan to Bury Archives.

Bury Local & Family History Service, Moss Street, Bury, BL9 0DR:

email information@bury.gov.uk or 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), microfilmed copies of local newspapers, thematic collections of news cuttings worth pursuing for local biographies, census returns and parish registers (microfilm). Indexes for local church registers, including Ramsbottom are also held. A direct link to Bury Libraries catalogue (which lists local history items held in all the borough's libraries) is at <http://library.bury.gov.uk> - follow 'Bury Libraries Catalogue (Local Studies)'. Free access to the *Ancestry* and *Find my Past* databases is available in all Bury Council's libraries. Please phone for details of other family history advice services.

Lancashire Family History and Heraldry Society;

membership secretary David Burgess, 10, St Andrew's Drive, Alwoodley, Leeds,

LS17 7TR - Tel 01132695512, email: membership@lfhhs.org.uk.

Membership 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 and Adult Learning Centre, Carr Street BL0 9AE

tel 0161 253 5352 (IT - tel 0161 253 5354) email: Ramsbottom.lib@bury.gov.uk

The library boasts an IT suite, with a visually impaired and disabled friendly workstation, back copies of the *Ramsbottom Observer* 1890-1950 on film and a microfiche reader. Much of the Ramsbottom local collection of the late Rev R R Carmyllie, local census returns and several filing drawers of local newscuttings and booklets and Hume Elliot's history are also available. Family history help sessions are held on the 3rd Monday of the month 1pm to 5pm and advice is available at other times by appointment.

Ramsbottom Heritage Gallery

A NEW exhibition in the Gallery, upstairs at Ramsbottom Library and Adult Learning Centre.

Open to the public from June 2nd 2013,
the 60th anniversary of our Queen's coronation

Regal Ramsbottom

Nine Monarchs and Seven Coronations

Including:

- An amazing collection of Coronation memorabilia and photographs going back to Queen Victoria's reign
- A map of Ramsbottom Market Place, dating buildings erected in the reigns of kings George III and George IV and Queen Victoria
- If you have memories of Coronation celebrations in Ramsbottom, come to the Gallery and tell us about them or phone 01706 28 1998.

Location:

Ramsbottom Library and Adult Learning Centre, Carr Street, Ramsbottom, BLO 9AE. Tel: 0161 253 5352

Opening Times:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 9.30am – 7.30pm

Saturday from 9.30am – 1pm

2nd Sunday in the month 12 noon - 3pm (side entrance)

Ramsbottom Heritage Society:

www.ramsbottomheritage.org.uk

