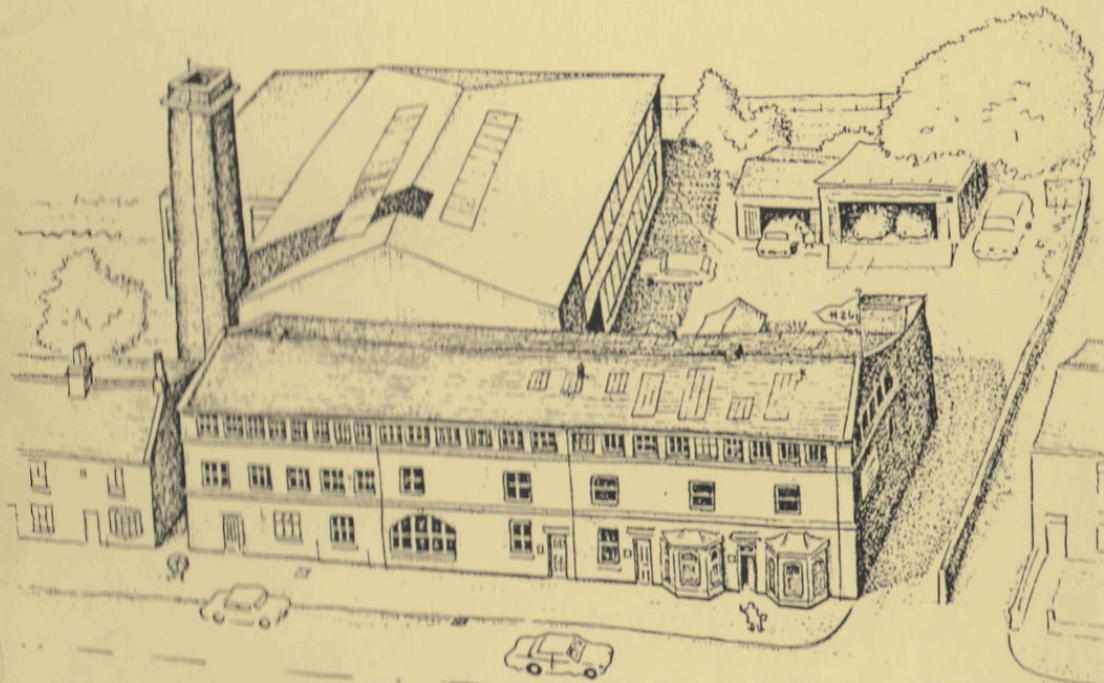


# RAMSBOTTOM HERITAGE SOCIETY

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*John B. Taylor 1993*

## NEWS MAGAZINE

**We at the Royal Bank of Scotland in Ramsbottom are happy to continue our support for the Ramsbottom Heritage Society by sponsoring this edition of their News Magazine.**

**With Best Wishes for continued success in 1993 from everyone at:-**



**The Royal Bank of Scotland plc  
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**RAMSBOTTOM HERITAGE SOCIETY**  
*THE HERITAGE CENTRE*  
**CARR STREET, RAMSBOTTOM**

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*FRONT COVER - Hazelhurst Engraving Works, Bolton Road West by John B Taylor*

**WELCOME to our seventh Ramsbottom Heritage News Magazine**

Despite the recession and general financial uncertainty the Society continues with its various projects and its programme of monthly meetings. The Centre has a new exhibition on the theme *Ramsbottom Past and Present* and continues to attract both local people and visitors to the town, including a number from overseas. Parties of schoolchildren have also enjoyed visits.

1993 is Industrial Heritage Year and since Ramsbottom's existence as a town is based on its industrial heritage several items which reflect this have been included in this issue. Our cover is a drawing, by local historian John Taylor, of Spencer's Engraving Works at Hazelhurst and on page 14 architectural historian John Smith gives us detailed information about this very interesting building, which is also the subject of an ongoing project by a group of members. Clyde Tweedale's *Turnbull Tale* and Hilda Barrett's recollections of her first day as a mill girl provide some indication of the effects of industry on people's lives, and of some of the changes to the appearance of the town. Similar items about the changes brought about by the recent development of the tourism and house building industries would be very interesting to read in the future - but that is another story.

The Royal Bank of Scotland has sponsored this issue of the Magazine and the Society is most grateful to them for supporting us once again.

Thanks also to everyone who has contributed in any way to this issue. Without your

efforts there would be no Magazine!

I took forward to receiving ideas, articles, reminiscences, illustrations etc for future editions. The next issue is planned for October/November 1993 and contributions for this should be sent to the Editor at the Heritage Centre by the end of August. Barbara Park, Editor

### **SOCIETY NEWS FROM THE SECRETARY**

Despite the financial problems caused by increased running costs, the Society continues to offer its usual varied and interesting programme of meetings. The 1993/ 94 programme is now finalised and Members will find it on their membership cards as usual. For the benefit of non-members who are most welcome to attend, details will be found inside the back cover of this magazine.

The Heritage Centre is now open for the summer. The new display illustrates various aspects of the history of Ramsbottom and surrounding areas. Work and play, religion, family history are featured as are various districts. Granny's kitchen and bedroom give us some idea of how people lived in bygone days, evoking much nostalgia among our older visitors and some amazement among the younger ones.

An interesting feature of this new exhibition is that it consists mainly of items from the Society's own collection, thus showing how much this has grown since the Society was formed in 1987. To the people who have so kindly loaned additional items to complete the displays, to Roy Fishwick for his excellent photographic display, to Turton Tower and Edenfield Local History Society for their special contributions, we say a sincere thank you.

At this point I would like to express the Society's appreciation of all those people who regularly, or even occasionally, help to keep the Centre open and also to appeal to anyone who is willing to help in the future to please contact the Secretary on 0706 82 2620. Ideally we should have three people on duty either welcoming visitors, selling publications or serving refreshments. Whichever you prefer, you will be warmly welcomed and have an enjoyable time - whether for an hour or two or a whole afternoon.

It is estimated that last year around 4,500 people visited the *Schools* exhibition, many of whom wrote some very kind comments in our Visitors Book We hope that in 1993 we will surpass that number. To ensure that they are all made properly welcome we need all the help that we can get!

The Centre will be open on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays from 1.00 pm to 4.30 pm and on Tuesdays from 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm. Group visits can be arranged by telephoning the Secretary on 0706 82 2620 and can take place outside normal opening hours, including evenings.

Dorothy Moss

### **THE TURNBULL TALE**



Following *The Stockdale Saga* in the Summer 1992 (No 5) issue of this magazine, I must now add the Turnbull side. My researches led me first to Miss Joyce Turnbull, who amazingly lives next door to Mrs Alferoff of the Stockdale side, in Edenfield. She is the 17th grandchild of the co-founder William



Turnbull (only four others survive). Space forbids a full family tree, but on page 4 is one confined to my other main contacts with strong local links today, namely Edward Turnbull and Philip Dunne (Councillor for Eden Ward and Mayor of Rossendale 1990- SI). I propose to deal with their personal memories, the changes in Turnbull and Stockdale Ltd since 1931, their local houses, churches and societies, some effects of wars, and the situation today.

Miss Joyce TURNBULL lived in *Crossmoor* (between Stubbins School and Church), but worked for a private solicitor in Manchester. Her sister Dorothy, Councillor Dunne's mother, worked as a designer for Rosebank Mill and at Chatterton Mill, served in the ATS and later lived on Parson's Row, near the large roundabout on Bolton Road North. Joyce recalls that founder William Turnbull lived at *Feams Hall*, Stacksteads, and died in 1915 at *Femclough*, just above Rosebank Mill, Stubbins. His widow, Mary, moved to *Newlandson* Market Street, Edenfield. With justified pride in the traditional block printed fabrics created by T & S Ltd, she also recollects that many were used in the Cunard liners, that Queen Mary (wife of George V) liked the delphinium pattern especially, and that Prince Philip appropriately had the Queen's Navee design in his study, whilst the cottage in Windsor Great Park given to Princess Elizabeth by the Welsh people also used some.

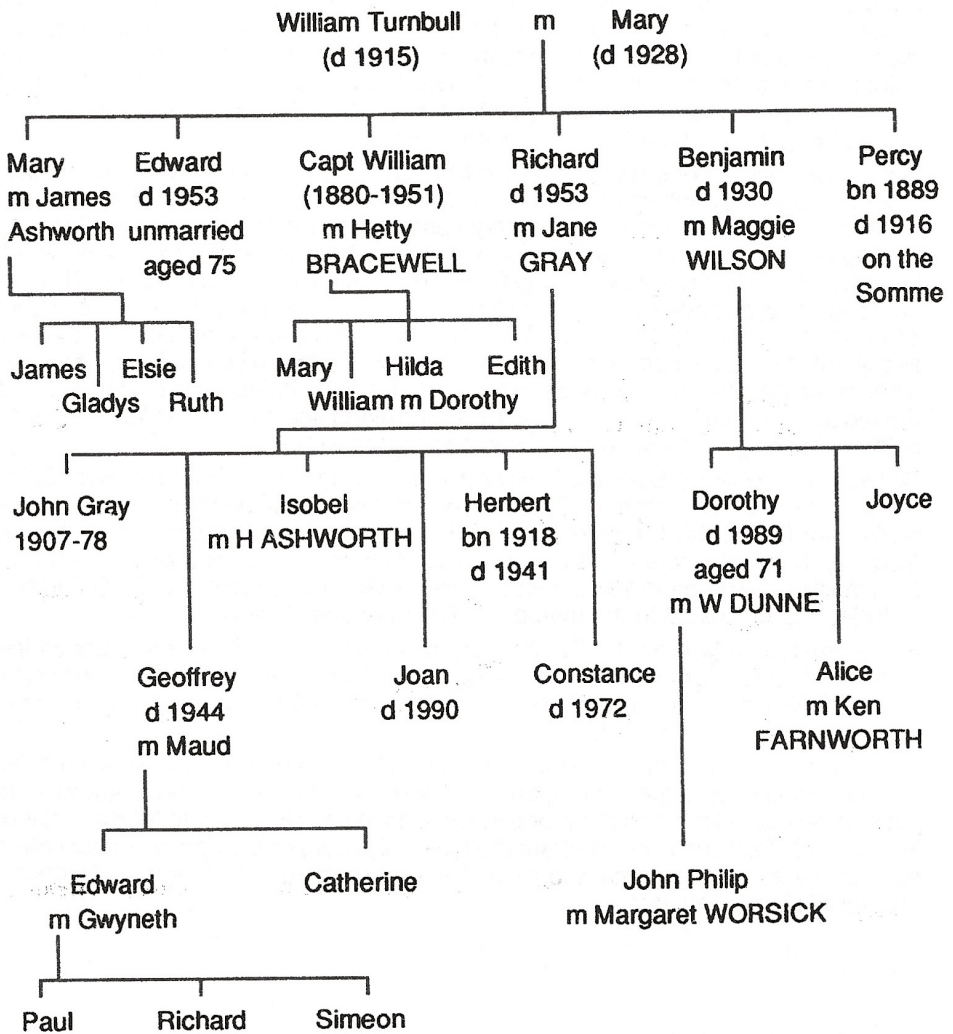
Councillor Philip Dunne recalls that the founder William Turnbull was the practical process developer, whereas William Stockdale was his financial and commercial partner. The firm did have a subsidiary company until c1950 called the Woodhey Dyeing Co, (*not* connected with the present Hawkshaw one ) situated below Woodhey school and managed by Tommy Cain, grandson of William Stockdale. This mill has long gone, and other changes in 1992 have been the erasing of the Rosebank Mill site and an addition to Chatterton Mill. The latter was a weaving mill (the only mill totally built by T & S) managed by Joyce's father Benjamin in its T & S days, but kept a separate identity, "running its own Christmas Dance". In Stubbins since 1931, T & S used the Cuba Mill, gutted by fire in 1974, and alongside it the Union Mill. Only part of these buildings remain and are used as garages today.

Rosebank had the T & S head offices added to the original mill, but there were Sales Offices in London, Birmingham, Glasgow, Belfast and Manchester where Tom Barrett worked for four of his 29 years with T & S. Edward Turnbull notes that his father, Geoffrey Turnbull, wrote a *History of Calico Printing in Great Britain* for his MA at Manchester University in 1936. It was edited by Geoffrey's brother John G Turnbull in 1951, and dedicated to the memory of Geoffrey and Herbert.

In the previous article on the Stockdaies, the growth of T & S was evident as the number of mills multiplied. What caused its decline after the Jubilee Brochure of 1931? Obviously the conditions of world trade altered, with India and Japan developing rapidly before 1939.

1992's recession is perhaps small compared with the depression of the late 1920s. I am not qualified to judge the reasons. Did we export machinery and "know-how" to developing countries? Did the World Wars deprive us of key men to lead and follow in industry? Perhaps I can illustrate the national picture of the decline of our cotton industry by extracting some figures of UK exports quoted in Geoffrey Turnbull's *History of Calico Printing*:

		Yards of plain piece goods	Yards of printed & dyed piece goods
Rosebank began	1896	1,300 million	c1,800 million
World War I	1916	c1,800 "	c1,800 "
	1936	almost 600 "	c950 "
Post World War II (the last figures quoted)	1949	c230 "	c550 "



Obviously T & S were affected by this dramatic decline, and not surprisingly were taken over by someone bigger, ie Sanderson's in 1964. Rosebank continued to produce goods, however, and they in turn were taken over by the Reed Group in 1967, when printing ceased. Under Edward Turnbull, the Edenwood Mill alone survived this trauma and the Croftend Mill by the River Irwell Bridge at Stubbins joined it in the 1980s - their red van may be seen there to this day. A mill at Stormer Hill, Tottington, completes this group, in all now employing about 70 on shifts. Handblock printing and screen printing are still the methods used at Edenwood, and screen printing at Croftend, with almost a third of production going abroad directly, plus a similar figure indirectly. Hopefully this group will long continue to provide work locally and carry these prestigious Turnbull goods throughout the world. Edward Turnbull's eldest son, Paul, is aiming to continue this tradition. Wars may have contributed to the downfall of T & S, and certainly the Turnbull family lost valued members, mainly from the Lancashire Fusiliers.

Founder William's son Percy was killed on the Somme in 1916. His grandson Herbert survived Dunkirk in 1940 but was killed on manoeuvres on Salisbury Plain in 1941 and awaits a War Gravestone in Edenfield. Geoffrey was killed by a sniper and buried near Caen, Normandy, in August 1944, both of them sons of Richard Turnbull, who lived until 1953, having served as Chairman of Ramsbottom UDC. Many of the family are buried in Edenfield Churchyard, but there are memorial windows to founder William and son Percy in St Paul's Church, Ramsbottom. In happier vein there are other interesting connections. In 1943, Ernest Topper of Stubbins was billeted in Cuba Mill with the Queen's Royal West Surrey Regiment, met and married a local girl and never returned to the South. Ernie was a batman to the Officers living in *Greenmount*, (a former Porritt family house below *The Cliff*, now demolished) and he arrived the day that an officer named Dirk Bogarde left (to join a film unit!).

Other social effects of the firm abound. A cluster of distinctive houses adorns the area. *Crossmoor* was built in 1914, by Joyce's father Benjamin Turnbull, born at *Greens House*, Stacksteads. The family lived there until 1973, although he died in 1930. *Highbury*, near the top of Chatterton Old Lane, was erected in 1912 by Richard Turnbull. A similar house, *Croft Hey*, off Bolton Road North (now a residential home) was built by founder William. Geoffrey Turnbull designed *Lane End House* in Edenwood Lane in 1935 and his son Edward lived there until 1977. *Moorganh* on Whalley Road was built about 1932 and looks down on Edenwood. St Philip's Church School at Chatterton is oddly the only building to bear a Turnbull datestone, laid by Captain William Turnbull in 1933, after he had been Treasurer of the Building Fund. On a smaller scale the dutch barn style houses on Woodlands Road were built for employees, and the semi-detached *Inglewood* and *Edenholme* on Water Lane for the Hutton family, who were related to founder William Turnbull's wife, Mary.

Local life was influenced in other ways by the T & S Directors. Founder William was a member of Ramsbottom Conservative Club, St Paul's Church, Bury's Palatine Club and a committee member for the Aitken and Ramsbottom Hospitals. John Gray Turnbull played hockey for Lancashire and was a JP from 1951 -74. Every August, Edenfield & District Horticultural Society (founded in 1914) presents the Stockdale Cup (for most points in Flower Classes) and has done so since 1922, when William Stockdale JP CC, donated it. Similarly, the Turnbui! Cup (for most points in Vegetable Classes) has been presented every August since 1924, when it was given by Captain W Turnbull. Instruments were also given to local bands. St Philip's Church has an oak reredos in memory of Benjamin Turnbull, erected in 1935 by his widow, and other

oak panels and the choir stalls.

The original Community Centre building in Edenfield was a wartime hut moved from Cuba Mill, through the help of Richard Turnbull, and Philip Dunne is the Trustees' president now.

This complex social fabric must have been the pattern of life in many other textile areas, but here there is much to admire in the manner and style of T & S's rise and fall. Really it needs a book to record it all, together with their links with the Porritts, but that's another story. It has been an intriguing challenge to try and make a coherent account of it, but I am most grateful to my informed guides, Mr Edward and Miss Joyce Turnbull, and Councillor Dunne for their help.

CL Tweedale

#### MEMBERSHIP 1993/4

Membership subscriptions for the year 1993/4 were due on the 1 April 1993. The good news is that there will be no increase and rates remain the same as last year £4.50 (£2 concessionary). All members receive a free copy of each News Magazine so membership really does represent excellent value for money! Unfortunately, the bad news is that owing to increased costs, the entrance donation to the monthly meetings will in future be increased to 50p. Whilst this is very much regretted it also represents very good value for an interesting talk, a cup of tea and a chance to meet people with a shared interest in Ramsbottom and its heritage.

Subscriptions may be paid at the monthly meetings, at the Heritage Centre when it is open or by post to the Membership Secretary, The Heritage Centre, Carr Street, Ramsbottom. Cheques should be made payable to The Ramsbottom Heritage Society.

Barbara Park, Membership Secretary

#### STARTING WORK

On the Thursday before Good Friday 1938 I left school which I had attended from the age of three to 14. Weeks before, with my Dad, I had made the short journey to the Chatterton Weaving Company's mill to see if any workers were needed. Great news - one girl was ready to move on to be a trainee. I was told to be at the works at 7 45am on the Tuesday after Easter. As I had never been inside a mill before, I was wondering what it would be like. I was all agog - I would be a wage earner at last. The night before the 'big day', as for the rest of my working life, I laid out my clothes ready for the morning. As a mill girl, which is what I was going to be, these consisted of a jumper and skirt, printed overall, black woollen stockings, and of course my clogs - well polished and newly shod (i.e. irons, front and heels). On the day itself my mother awoke me and my brother. He was older than me and so already working. After breakfast, which we all had every day before being allowed out



of the house, I finally set off fully equipped with tea, sugar, a pot, spoon, milk in a small bottle and some sandwiches for the morning break. On my way I was to meet some women who already worked at the mill. I had never been out so early before and was surprised to see so many people about. In 1938 most people walked to work, although some came by bus or bike. There were very few cars in those days. As we walked along Chatterton Lane we were joined by others at the Mill who encouraged me by saying "Don't worry love the first week is always the worst - but never be late". When we arrived we went through the door in single file. Standing just inside was the foreman, Mr Howarth, who was there to make sure everyone "clocked on". Each worker had a number and the big, round, iron clock had an arm that swung round to punch each number, a bell rang and the exact time was recorded on a continuous sheet of paper. We clocked on when we arrived in a morning, off at 12.15pm for dinner, on again at 1.15pm and off again at 5.30pm when we finished for the day. Being new I was taken by a woman weaver to the place where I was to work. There I met two girls I already knew because we had been at Stubbins Council School together. The whistle was blown by Mr Howarth and the weavers went to their looms. The electric motors were then switched on - what a NOISE as the looms started up. This was my first minute of work. For the first hour I just watched the girl I was going to take over from. Then we had fifteen minutes break for tea. Then it was my turn. The work was in the first stage of weaving, the warps sized and put into beam, a long comb held the threads which were picked out in twos and put on to a double reed hook. The man called a drawer-in had got the healds four staves, narrow 36" ready and proceeded to draw in (1-3,2-4, plain cloth) left to right. This was a slow process. I was very nervous and glad when 12.15pm came and I could go home for dinner. At one o'clock I set off to join all the others walking back to work. The bell at Rosebank rang as we approached the mill so we knew we had five minutes as the bell was always rung to warn the workers to be in ready to start work. In the afternoon I seemed to work a little faster, hopefully making progress, and at three o'clock we had another break. By 5.30pm my back was aching, my fingers were sore and I was half asleep. When I finally reached home the big question around the tea table was "How did your first day go?" my reply was "I think I'll get used to it". After tea I was let off the washing up, but "just for today". "Don't think you will get out of it because you are now a worker" warned my Mum as I rushed off to see my pal who was waiting to hear all about my first day at work. She was younger than me and still at school.

By 9.30pm I was off to bed my last thought before sleep: "is this the start of my life to come?"

Hilda Barrett

## TEAM PHOTOGRAPH

I must have been about nine years old that memorable year in the early 1930s when giants walked the corridors of St Joseph's School. Though known to us for years their

special qualities only became evident during the Ramsbottom schools football cup competition that Spring. When Miss Mahoney told her class that St Joseph's had entered a team for the competition, and asked us to support them when they played at Peel Brow recreation ground, our hopes were not high. The school was not noted for sporting ability, and Peel Brow and some other schools were renowned for always entering strong teams. Holcombe could also call on the mighty Markham boy, already around six feet tall, broad in proportion, and still growing. With him in midfield who could hope to get through to score? Shame on us for such lack of faith! Our team emerged from the first game not only victorious but also as a strong and talented force. Hitherto unremarkable boys had increased in stature and confidence: we knew then they could win the cup for us. The next game brought further success and the whole school was caught up in the excitement. After morning prayers in the hall the headmistress, Miss Isaac, urged us to cheer on the team in the semi-final. When she said we should be proud of them for bringing such credit to the school I recognised the situation straight away. From my reading of school stories in 2d magazines, which I could occasionally buy secondhand for 1/2d, I knew the importance of 'The honour of the school'. There could be no greater achievement than helping the school to win a trophy. It was then I realised that members of St Joseph's team were the equal of those sporting heroes I read about in the *Magnet* and the *Gem*. The 'Comrades Field' behind the school had not been built on in those days and, watching training sessions there with such admiration, we wondered how any team could withstand the expertise of our champions. When calling for Bill Brennan on the way to school I used to hope we would be honoured by his older brother, Wilfred, the team's goalkeeper, walking along with us. After another victory in the semi-final nothing could have kept us from the final match. Both sides were well supported and greeted with shouts of encouragement as they strode out onto the field. Most of the players would be leaving school to start work at the end of the Summer term, and to boys of my age they were an awesome sight as they lined up looking so strong and determined.

Almost every kick of the hard fought battle of the giants was loudly cheered as they thundered up and down the field. Chris Kennedy added to his legendary exploits: brought down in a midfield tackle he climbed up through the legs of his towering opponent, retrieved the ball, and carried on down the field. Harry Hoyle, Ellis Timlin and John Earnshaw were an intrepid and energetic trio, and the rest of the team played with great skill and commitment throughout. Finally our heroes prevailed. The game was over and the match was won. All Ramsbottom could hear the shouts and cheers when the cup was presented and when each member of the victorious team received his medal.

A keen sportsman in his younger days, Father McGuinness seemed as excited as the rest of us when he arrived at the school the following morning. He had come specially to congratulate the team and the trainers on their sterling efforts, which he said had brought honour to the school and enhanced its sporting reputation. Later he was photographed with the team and their trophies.

Truly an outstanding occasion in the school's history and one of my strongest memories of schooldays. In the years since then I have never met any of that formidable team without thinking of their cup victory.

Visiting the Heritage Centre recently I examined St Joseph's School's display in the Local Schools Exhibition. It was some time before I noticed somewhere in the middle the photograph of a football team with their cup and an array of medals. Looking more closely I quickly identified Father McGuinness and Mr Barratt, one of the trainers.

But this group of happy yet ordinary twelve and thirteen year old boys could surely not be the awesome team that had won victory for the school all those years ago. Who says the camera doesn't lie? What trick of photography had sought to diminish those champions of my schooldays and make them seem so unexceptional?

I shall try to forget the photograph and continue to remember those superstars as they really were.

Norman Kay

## THE MYSTERIOUS DOCTOR M'DOUALL

In 1835 a young Scottish doctor called Peter Murray McDouall arrived in Ramsbottom and set up his surgery. He was born in Newton Stewart, Galloway in 1814 and educated at the Edinburgh University School of Medicine. His stay in Ramsbottom, although quite brief, appears to have had a quite traumatic effect on his life.

His experiences in looking after the sick amongst the factory workers and their families led him to undertake the first social survey of the area. The information he gathered on the living conditions in and around Ramsbottom he delivered as a paper to a meeting of the British Association at Newcastle in 1838.

In his own words "I did not take the complaints of the people as my guide nor did I trust to their assertions, I wanted truth and I examined it for myself."

He found "In 137 houses out of 309 only 137 bedrooms were provided for as many families. There were 24 families of five persons each in one bedroom, another 24 families with seven in a room, four with ten, two with 12 and one with 14."

It was around this time that McDouall must have met up with Dr Matthew Fletcher, a Bury surgeon and a Chartist. He was converted to the Chartist cause, although unlike Fletcher who favoured the constitutional approach, McDouall supported the physical force brand of Chartism.

In 1839 he was supporting a programme of General Strike followed by armed insurrection and in August of that year he was arrested for sedition and imprisoned for a year. Whilst in Chester prison he met the daughter of one of the warders, courted her and, on his release, married her. By 1840 he had become a nationally known leader of the Chartist movement. He toured the country as a Chartist lecturer and as a result spent less and less time in Ramsbottom, although he still appears to have maintained a residence here. Around this time he was also publishing and editing his *Chartist Journal* which advocated his own revolutionary views.

In 1842 McDouall gave evidence to the Parliamentary Select Committee investigating the truck system by which factory masters paid out wages in goods from their own shops rather than in money.

Although illegal since 1831, McDouall found that in Ramsbottom the system was still widespread eleven years later. Under it the workpeople "found themselves denied all choice in the necessities of life." Prices in the truck shops were invariably more expensive than in other shops whereas quality was uniformly lower.

'There is a difference of 3d upon every 20 pounds of flour; the difference is between

the mill shops and those where there is a free system of trade ... Tea is 1d to 1 i/2d an ounce dearer in the truck shops than amongst the general dealers, butter is 3d a pound higher and cheese 1d and 2d a pound” The problem was that whilst the 1831 Act had declared truck illegal it had not established any system of independent inspection or enforcement. Workers who attempted to sue their employers were immediately dismissed, stated McDouall. “There is such a communication between the masters that I have known a messenger sent to the various mills with the name of the man discharged”. Even if the worker persisted with his case in the face of this kind of intimidation “a great majority of the magistrates are factory masters and it is quite useless to bring a case before them”. McDouall went on to describe an interesting variation of the truck system which applied in Ramsbottom. Not only did the Grants own their own shop, they also owned their own pub. The wages of Grants’ workers were paid there by the pub landlord in exchange for tickets provided by the employer and there was a compulsory deduction of three pence (3d) from the wages to pay for the exchange. For the landlord there were, of course, advantages. The presence on his premises of large numbers of thirsty workmen with money newly paid out to them must have boosted his sales to no small degree. McDouall describes how some of the workmen remained in the pub “until they had exhausted their credit and their money. ....I have seen little boys come down drunk”. Since the pub remained open until midnight and beyond on the days when wages were paid, one can well believe it. In September 1842 the Manchester constabulary issued a warrant for McDouall's arrest and he now disappears from the Ramsbottom scene. To avoid arrest he went into hiding and spent some time in exile in France. By 1844 he had returned to Scotland and was heavily involved in Scottish Chartist politics. In 1847-8 there was a revival of popular support for Chartism, and McDouall returned to England and resumed his speaking tours. By this time he was based in the Ashton under Lyne area and it was here that he was once again arrested and charged with sedition, illegal assembly and riot. He was tried at Liverpool Assizes and again imprisoned, this time for two years. On his release from prison he found Chartism once more in decline. He was by this time destitute and having a wife and four small children to support he attempted to revive his medical career in Ashton. His efforts were unsuccessful, being fiercely opposed by his political enemies in the town who denounced him as a notorious criminal. He and his family were only saved from starvation by Chartist public subscription.

Like many other defeated Chartists McDouall, still only 40 years old, resolved to emigrate to Australia in search of a new life. It was not to be. The boat in which he and his family were sailing was wrecked in a violent storm off the Australian coast and he was drowned.

His widow and children who were rescued returned to England destitute and were forced to live in a workhouse at Everton. Eventually, they were assisted by Nottingham Chartists who helped Mrs McDouall set up a successful stationery business in the city.

Details of McDouall’s life in Ramsbottom remain scarce. For example, although we are told he lived in Bolton Street, most probably at No 18, we do not know why he came to Ramsbottom in the first place. If anyone has any further information I would be

delighted to hear it. I am sure there is much more to be discovered about this strange and extraordinary man.

Trevor Park

*RAMSBOTTOM REMINISCENCES*

36 pages, A5 size, (published by Ramsbottom Heritage Society, December 1992 ) £2.50

Did you get your copy for Christmas or just after? There aren't many left.

"*Ramsbottom Reminiscences*" is the condensed cream of a competition set up by the Society to revive the memories of people who lived and worked and holidayed around Ramsbottom in the early years of the twentieth century.

Fourteen persons have thoughts in print and they range back almost 90 years and collectively over 500 years.

I had heard a little of the three prize winners as a taster at the pre-Christmas meeting in the Civic Hall but the booklet gives a fuller flavour which can be read at leisure and analysed and read and savoured again.

It is a fine collection which helps us understand what Ramsbottom and its surrounding area was like in the past.

It is full of people, places, schools, shops, churches and war. A soldier's return after years in a POW camp had a lump in my throat.

If you know Ramsbottom of yesteryear or think you know Ramsbottom today, you will enjoy *Ramsbottom Reminiscences*.

If you have any stories to tell, get that pen to paper and send it to the Society. I am already looking forward to *Ramsbottom Reminiscences Number Two*.

John B Taylor

[John is clearly too modest to take credit for the drawing on the cover of *Ramsbottom Reminiscences*. Inspired by a photograph taken by David Moss and drawn by John Taylor it is an evocative scene of old fashioned cottage chimney pots (with some modern day appendages!) with the moors and the familiar tower in the background.]

**RAMSBOTTOM - What's in a Name? *Explored again***

After reading John Sykes' article on the origin of the town's name, in the Winter 1990 issue of this journal, I invited the comments of a friend, a distinguished archaeologist. My friend jotted down a few points light heartedly in a letter. Sadly he died before we had the chance to discuss them. On re-reading his letter recently I felt that members of the Society would be interested in his off-the-cuff thoughts. The following paragraphs are based on what he wrote, with minor adaptation and some simplification.

The first known example of the name, spelt *Romesbothum*, is in a court roll of 1324. The principal writers on Lancashire place names, Eilert Ekwall and David Mills, and the general editor of numerous volumes of the English Place-Names Society, AH Smith, agree that the second element in the name is from the Old English *botm*



meaning valley. The problem is the first element. Ekwall writing in 1922 thought that it was a form of *ramm*, 'a ram'. Later however he thought a form of *hrams*, 'wild garlic' (ramsons), was more likely, but commented on the difficulty of distinguishing not only between *ramm* and *hrams* but also between either and *hraefn*, 'a raven'. Smith in 1956 made the same point. Mills in 1976 thought that the etymology could equally be either *ramm* or *hrams*. So, on the basis of the earliest spelling and the best philological opinion, the meaning of the name could be: the valley where garlic grows' or the valley where the rams graze', or less likely, the valley where the ravens fly'; or even the valley belonging to someone called Ram, Raven or, less probably, Garlic.

John Sykes very reasonably turned to topography. If the local soil doesn't produce wild garlic except sparsely, then garlic is probably out as an explanation of the name. John's view is that *Ramsbottom* means 'valley of stiff clay'. John is by admission a Yorkshireman and came to this view after reading *Round about Bradford* (published in 1876) by William Cudworth, doubtless a Yorkshireman also. According to Cudworth, *Ramsbottom* has a similar meaning to the name *Leagrams*, near Bradford, which he derives from *ley* meaning 'low-lying' and *ram* Norse for 'strong'. From personal experience of digging his garden and his allotment John has confidence that this theory is well-grounded.

There are several reasons for doubting the theory. First, *Leagrams* is explained by the leading authority on Yorkshire place-names, the aforementioned AH Smith, as from the Old Scandinavian *leio-grima*, meaning 'a track-marker'. Ekwall has the same meaning for the Lancashire *Leagram*. Cudworth it may be noted takes no account of the 'g' in *Leagrams*. Secondly, in the earliest record of 1324, and even as late as 1560, the first element of the name, *Romes*, is a noun in the genitive case (ie of garlic of a ram or of a raven) not an adjective.

My friend then went on to make an interesting suggestion. The meaning of the first element (garlic or ram or raven) would probably not be in doubt if the second element were regarded not as Old English *botm* but as from the Old Danish *both* (Middle English *bothe* (North Country dialect *booth*) meaning 'a herdsman's hut'. The dative plural of *both* would be *bothum* thus *Romesbothum* would fit, *Ramsbottom* would then mean 'at the ram herd's huts'. The fact that *Ramsbottom* lies in a bottom would readily lead to the modern form, *Ramsbottom*, rather than *Ramsbooths*. "It looks very much," wrote my friend "as if - as so often with place-names - you takes your choice. Is there any legend in your parts of a giant garlic eating ram who founded the town, first frightening away the ravens with his breath, and then building a series of shepherds' huts in the valley bottom, which was unsuitable for agriculture because of its rank cloggy soil?"

My friend was of East Anglian stock. He had the good fortune to live and work in York for much of his life. However, his earlier good fortune was that he had a Lancastrian upbringing. This last fact, together with his professional eminence, make his views worthy of respect. His authority on the subject of these notes is confirmed finally by his name, which was - Herman *Ramm*.

The works on which views expressed above are based are as follows:

E EKWALL      *The Place Names of Lancashire* (Chetham Society, 1922; reprinted by EP Publishing Co, 1972)

*The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names* (OUP, 4th Edition, 1960)

- AH SMITH      *English Place-Name Elements: Part 1 (CUP, 1956)*  
                   *The Place-Names of West Yorkshire: Part 3 (CUP, 1961)*
- D MILLS        *The Place-Names of Lancashire (Batsford, 1976)*

## POSTSCRIPT

1. I have recently been informed of two fairly recent books on place-names. They are: A D Mills, *A Dictionary of Place-names* ( OUP 1991 ; to be issued in paperback later in 1993) and Adrian Room, *A Dictionary of Place-Names in the British Isles* (Bloomsbury, 1988; and subsequently in paperback). I understand that both books follow the authorities referred to in the text above in offering either 'ram' or 'wild garlic' as a possible derivation, with a preference for 'ram'. Mr Room adds that the *ram* could arise not from the animal itself but from a rock formation resembling a ram or a ram's head. Any identification of this feature from local topographers?

2. I have now seen a copy of *Round about Bradford*, courtesy of the library service. It appears that the chapter on place-names was written not by the author, Mr Cudworth, but by 'a gentleman well versed in word-lore'. The author expressed confidence that this could be a valuable addition to the volume, though possibly exception may be taken to some of his conclusions'. Mr Cudworth showed a proper Yorkshire caution, which has turned out to be well justified.

Stuart Jackson

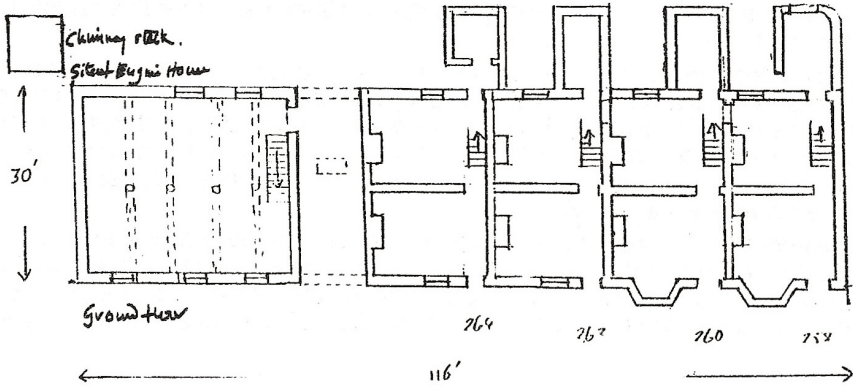
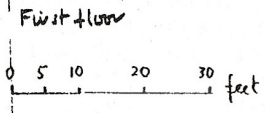
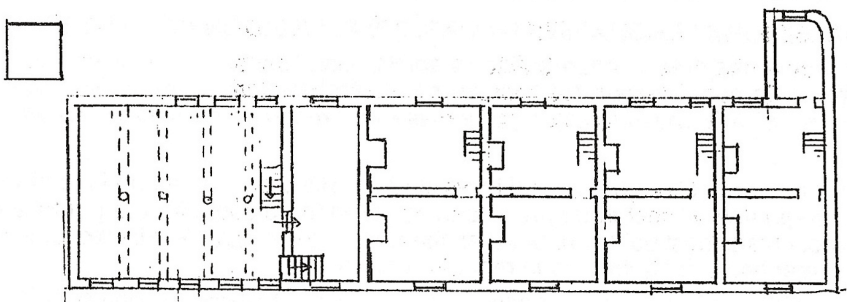
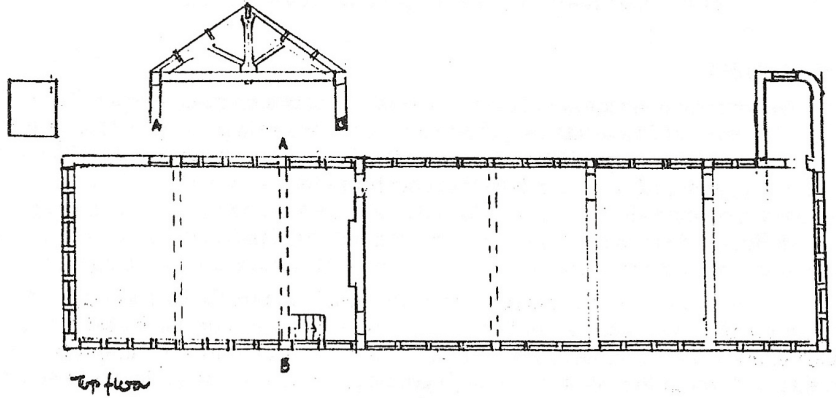
## HAZELHURST ENGRAVING WORKS, 258-264 BOLTON ROAD WEST

*Readers may recall Andrew Todd's article, John Spencer's Hazelhurst Engraving Works, in our Summer 1991 issue (no 3). Architectural historian W J Smith has surveyed this unusual building, and has kindly recorded his findings for us.*

This is a large stone building of three storeys, 61/2 bays measuring in total 116 feet in length and 30 feet in depth. The front (taken to be south for the purpose of this account) and east gable are of water shot coursing in regular 91/2 inch courses, while the rear and west gable are in random coursing. It was built c1848 as an engraving works, a highly specialised building for its period incorporating four two-storey houses (rather than cottages); an internal loading bay and workshops on the ground and first floors of the 21/2 bays at the western end, and a series of workshops along the whole of the top floor. This top floor has a run of continuous windows all round the building - including the gable ends, except for a small section in the north west corner where the original boiler and engine house may have been located. The surviving tall stone chimney stack for this remains, but is detached from the main building. The four houses each originally had a small projecting wing at the rear which would have served as a scullery. The wing of no 258 rises to the full height of the building and has rear windows on the first and top floors, suggesting that this was the main house. Staircases in the rear room lead to the first floors. All the rooms have - or had - fireplaces, the chimney stacks once having four chimney pots each. The stacks were taken down after 1974. The front of this row of houses is now distinguished by two bay windows, at nos 258 and 260, added to the latter c1900, and to the former a little later. At this time, the doorway to 258 was blocked up. Thus nos 258/60 became a double fronted house and were then used perhaps as the works offices. There was apparently never any

Hazellhurst Engineering Works

Bolton Road West, Ramsbottom



access from the houses to the top floor.

Between no 264 and the end two bay workshops is the loading bay which runs from front to rear and in which is a trap door to the floor above. The front arch has long been partially filled in and is now an arched window, but the rear arch remains open. It now leads into the later extensions to the rear. This loading bay accounts for the half-bay. The two western bays accommodated workshops on ground and first floors access to the latter being by a wooden staircase alongside the party wall of the loading bay. A row of four hollow cast iron pillars support the main floor joists to the floors above including the top floor. The ground floor workshop has three windows on the front and two to the rear; the floor above has five windows to the front and three to the rear and the half-bay over the loading bay has one window at front and rear. The ground floor workshop still retains some power shafting and pulleys and the remains of shaft bearing boxes and quadrant gear boxes. This would have been driven by the steam engine to provide power for the specialist lathes and milling machinery used in making printing rollers. All this relatively heavy work was done on the solid ground floor. In the deeds to the property, a covenant of 13th September 1855 contains the earliest description of industrial equipment in the building: '... the Steam Engines Steam Boiler Shafts Wheels and going Gears Gas Pipes Gasometers and] Retorts ..The gas was used for lighting; indeed, the domestic part of the building retained gaslights as late as 1953. The top floor is distinguished by the range of windows that runs continuously all round the building except for the small area where the engine house may have been. The windows are not all the same in width, those in the two west bays being the smallest with four windows per bay and two over the loading bay. Thereafter, the bays are wider, conforming to the width of the houses, three having four windows and one having three (see plan).

The problem of chimney flues passing through the top floor has not yet been solved owing to difficulty of access. The present window frames are relatively new, replacing what were 24 pane windows probably of cast iron. They did not open. These are shown on a faded photograph, taken of the rear of the building of 890. Two trusses are visible in the two west bays. They are king post tie beam trusses with twin angle struts running up to the principal rafters. These in turn support two sets of purlins per pitch and a ridge purlin.

Making copper rollers for printing cotton/calico calls for absolute precision at all stages of production and tolerance must be absolute from the very outset. It is probable that several forms of making printing rollers were carried out here - straight forward engraving or acid etching direct onto copper rollers by hand in addition to the milling method (see O Ashmore, *The Industrial Archaeology of Lancashire* (1969) p 66). The well lit upper floor would have accommodated the skilled engravers and die makers and possibly the designers, ail within the various divisions of the floor. The ground and first floors at the west end would have accommodated the heavier processes needing steam driven power to turn the lathes and milling machines. There would have also been an acid bath for etching. On the first floor was provision for an annealing oven to harden the completed mills. In later years, the rollers were made more durable by chromium plating the surface. This was done by an outside contractor.

The process of making printing rollers would start at the top of the building and end at the ground floor, a very logical arrangement! The finished rollers would then be dispatched from the loading bay.

It is worth recording that according to Charles Tomlinson (ed) *Cyclopaedia of Useful Arts*. .....etc Volt (1854) p28G, a 36" roller cost between £5 and £7 to make including the cost of the copper cylinder: by today's equivalent value that would be £600-£800, a sum which would support the specialist quality of printing rollers.

It is doubtful whether a similar engraving works survives in the North-West in such a complete state as this one at Hazelhurst. We must be grateful to the company for having maintained the building and contents.

W John Smith

### ***RAMSBOTTOM REMINISCENCES: A SECOND VOLUME?***

Those of us who were involved in the competition last year have been pleased to see how much enjoyment it generated - both for the authors of the entries, and for their readers. Having spoken to, or corresponded with, several of the contributors, I personally know how proud they were to share their memories, and I've met at least one reader who found these quite moving.

I think it would be a fine achievement if we could make *Ramsbottom Reminiscences* an ongoing project. It would mean that in the next century our town would have one of the best records of ordinary life in the early to mid 1900s. Perhaps we could seek as wide a variety of contributions as possible - from all manner of occupational backgrounds including millworkers, publicans, railwaymen, doctors, nurses, teachers, policemen, vicars, night-soilmen - and, of course, their families.

We cannot promise prizes, nor are we sure when a new volume might appear, but there is an excellent chance that any reminiscences sent in will be in print eventually - perhaps in our magazine. They can be typed, handwritten or even written up for you by a neighbour. There is no need for you to be a society member - just a holder of memories from the old Ramsbottom UDC area.

Entries can be sent to me at 9 -11 Square Street, or simply handed in there - it is the Printers & Stationers shop, Allen & Todd.

Alternatively, if you would like simply to talk about your recollections, and let these be taped, please contact Judith Appleby through the Heritage Centre. You can write, or leave her a phone message.

Andrew Todd



**RAMSBOTTOM HERITAGE SOCIETY**

***THE HERITAGE CENTRE***

**CARR STREET, RAMSBOTTOM**

**Telephone: Ramsbottom (0706) 82 1603**

**Open**

***Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays***

**1.00 pm - 4.30 pm**

***and Tuesdays***

**2.00 pm - 4.00 pm**

*Special arrangements can be made for group visits*

*Please contact the Secretary - tel: 0706 82 2620*

**1993/94 PROGRAMME**

**1993**

Jun	16	Mr Terry Ashworth - The Industries of the Kirklees Valley - Illustrated
Jul	21	Mr Terry Ashworth - Guided Walk in the Kirklees Valley
Aug	18	Mr Richard Burns - The Wrigley Collection - Illustrated
Sep	15	Mr Tom Fish - A Century of Transport in Bury - Illustrated
Oct	20	Mr Peter Watson - Lancashire Lore and Legends - Illustrated
Nov	17	Mr M Robinson-Dowland - Turton Towers and the English tradition
Dec	8	Mrs E Graham - A Lifetime in Edenfield and Photographic Competition

**1994**

Jan	19	Mr Andrew Todd - Packways and Turnpikes
Feb	16	Mr Tom Wightman - The Growth and Demise of Ocean Chemicals
Mar	16	Mr Ron Varey - Wildlife and N W Water Ltd - Illustrated

**All indoor meetings are held in the Civic Hall, Ramsbottom at 7.45 pm**

