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John B. Taylor 2004



NEWS MAGAZINE

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

- a) To advance education of the public, by creating an awareness 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 as an information centre.
 - c) To seek to protect the heritage of Ramsbottom.
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PROGRAMME

2004

21 st April	Mrs M M Gilbertson <i>Votes for Women</i> , an illustrated talk
19 th May	Annual General Meeting and Members' Night
16 th June	Mr R Wilshaw, <i>Gawthorpe Hall, a National Trust property</i>
21 st July	A visit to Gawthorpe Hall, guided by Mr R Wilshaw. Car-sharing, departure time to be announced
18 th August	Guided Walk around Crawshawbooth led by Mrs K Fishwick Car-sharing leaving Heritage Centre 6.30pm
15 th September	Mrs K Mulholland. <i>The King's Shilling</i>
20 th October	Mrs M Oliver, <i>The Good Old Days</i>
17 th November	Members' Night
8 th December	Christmas Celebrations

**Please note that all indoor meetings except December are held
on the third Wednesday of the month in the Civic Hall, Market Place,
Ramsbottom, at 7.30 for 7.45pm**

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

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Front cover Irwell Bridge Mill, Kenyon Street, Ramsbottom 2004 - John B TAYLOR

RAMSBOTTOM MISCELLANAE

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

In this, my last Chairman's report for the Society's News Magazine, I am very glad to be the bearer of good news.

Firstly congratulations to our Vice-Chairman, Jack KENNEFORD, who won the Bury Man of the Year award in January. This recognised his many years of charitable work. Nominated by our local Area Board, where he represents both our Society and Tottington Civic Trust, Jack has worked in the voluntary sector since he joined the Bury Young Farmers Association. He became involved in other organisations including Bury Lions; Hospital Radio; Tottington School where he is a Governor; Speakeasy and driving for Meals on Wheels. A modest, unassuming man, whose pleasure is in helping others, the award was a complete surprise to him. We in the Heritage Society consider that it could not have been given to a more worthy person — we are very proud of you Jack. Next, the Society has commissioned a video of Ramsbottom which will be on sale in the autumn, an attractive Christmas present. And finally, because of the concern of many members and residents about the increasing amount of new building and rebuilding in the area, a Conservation Group has been set up, hopefully to liaise with Bury Metro Conservation and Planning Officers. (See articles on St Paul's School and Irwell Bridge Mill later in this issue, Editor) Some of the newly built properties are in keeping with those around them but many planning applications are now being made for blocks of flats three or four storeys high and sometimes in red brick, which is quite inappropriate within or outside the Conservation area in our small town. Perhaps there is a case for extending the present Conservation Area and we hope to discuss this and others matters with the specialist Council officers.

Dorothy Moss, Chairman

(Do you know anything about Ramsbottom's existing mill buildings? We would welcome information or articles for inclusion in future issues of the Magazine. Editor.)

SOCIETY SKETCHES - Dorothy MOSS

An ever diminishing band of survivors of the initial 70 who attended that public meeting at St Paul's School on Thursday 260 February 1987 will remember how Mrs Dorothy MOSS had written to the Bury Times that month, suggesting that the town's moribund local history society needed a successor. At that time and since, she has been the prime mover of our society as its very effective secretary until May 1998, and ever since as its chairman.

Dorothy and her husband David had been members of Ramsbottom Local History Society which, until its demise about 1980, had met upstairs in the Grant Arms. It was through their invitation that Rev Roy CARMYLLIE, its former chairman and minister of St Andrew's Church, was speaker at our inaugural meeting in April 1987. Dorothy and David have been great travellers — whether on cycles, a BSA 350 or in a 1932 Ford 8 — and Dorothy has always been interested in the origins of place.

Their involvement with both the local historical societies was inevitable — and possibly unique.

Born in Camberwell, Dorothy married Royal Navy pen pal David, a fellow Harrow resident, in 1951. They came north in 1966, living first at Greenmount and then moving to Carr Bank. David was Sales Director at the Car Plan at Tetrosyl, Walmersley. Few people can boast so wide a range of interests our chairman! Like her husband, she attended Speedway, and, was a youth hosteller, Whilst their joint interest in travel led to involvement in that post-war phenomenon of town twinning. Her musical tastes range from ballet through Chopin to jazz. But it has been Dorothy's close involvement in the Ramsbottom community which has made her so well known in the town. Quite from the Heritage Society, she has been an active member of the local Women's Institute, St Paul's Ladies Group and the Recorded Music Society. A devotee of public speaking, she has used her talents on many occasions and in many venues to represent and promote our town and society.

Dorothy stands down as chairman of Ramsbottom Heritage Society in May. Her contribution has been unique — it is no truism to say that without her our society would simply not be where it is today. It may not even have come into existence. Those who have worked with her, as I have had the privilege to do since 1987, will remember her quiet courteous efficiency and her overriding desire to put the Society above all issues of personality.

When she and David came to Ramsbottom in 1969, she expressed the view that there should be somewhere to find out about the history of the town. Thanks to Dorothy (and more than to anyone else) there is such a society and centre, dedicated to educating resident and visitor alike about the unique and captivating heritage of our town

Andrew Todd

FILM CELEBRATION OF RAMSBOTTOM

The Society is engaged in promoting the production of a video film celebrating Ramsbottom — its industrial, commercial and domestic past. Stemming from an idea mooted by Derek ROWLEY, following a chance meeting with the producer of a similar film celebrating Horwich, the proposal was introduced to the Society by Andrew TODD at the Society's open meeting in November 2003. So with the aim of completion of production by late autumn 2004 (in time for Christmas) a small group of facilitators and co-ordinators met at the end of November to determine sequencing and locations for shooting. Working to a script by Andrew, filming actually began in December to take advantage of pre-Christmas town centre opportunities — decorated streets, markets. Churches and the East Lancs Santa Specials. Script writing continues apace, locations are determined and refined. archive material is being sought (see Bury Times February 13th) for possible incorporation into the video.

If anyone is aware of the existence of, or has access to archive film that could be made available, please call me.

Tony Murphy

THE HERITAGE CENTRE - THE DISPLAYS FOR 2004

As a new venture for 2004, we have invited other local groups to join RHS and Edenfield Local History Society in contributing to the exhibition. Responses were received from the following Bury Local History Society; Rossendale Civic Trust; Tottington and District Civic Society

We thank them and look forward to their displays, which will be on view when the centre opens at Easter until Christmas. Subjects for panels/displays by our own members include: Hazlehurst School; Local Industry, Turnbull & Stockdale; Crow Lane; Local Maps; Photographic Competition and a selection of recently donated documents and artefacts.

NB: Douglas Hartley compiled a 2003 Centre display about local buses, which created a lot of interest. He follows it up in this magazine with an article on the subject.

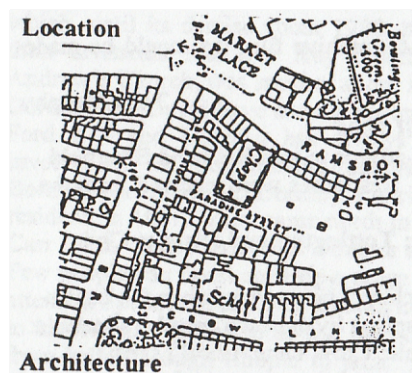
Janet Smith

THE CASE FOR LISTING:

ST PAUL'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL, CROW LANE

Members will recall the vigorous but ultimately unsuccessful campaign which parents, former pupils and townspeople fought in 2002-3 to prevent the closure of our town's oldest school. Mrs Margaret CHAMBERLAIN, St Paul's last head teacher, presided over the final day on July 2003, and having chalked up emotional messages of farewell and good wishes to their school, the pupils who had stayed to the end rather than leave early for other schools walked out into Crow Lane for the last time. For the first time in about 162 years, there was no longer a school on Crow Lane. And thereafter, the building, which may in parts be over 150 years old, has been almost completely neglected, an internal alarm ringing undisturbed for months, and a symbolically incomplete downspout spitting rainwater onto the pavement. Apart from housing the annual supply of Christmas trees prior to above the town's shops, the school has been left to its memories. There is much concern locally that the building will be used in an inappropriate way, hence my attempt to obtain listing. My application was submitted last June to the Listing Branch of the Architecture and Historic Environment Division at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2-4, Cockspur Street. London SW1

Protesters had been reassured by none other than the Rev Dr John FINDON, Rector of Bury, that the school was not simply being closed to sell it off so the Diocese could make a few bob on a flat conversion scheme - tidying up the property ownership issue could take 10 years' he told me. Perhaps, though, no one was surprised to hear in January 2004 of the planning application to demolish the building, other than the facade, and to erect an additional storey as part of the inevitable apartment conversion. I have since tried to invigorate the pedestrian procedures of Whitehall, and have been promised that the caseworker from English Heritage will visit soon. The following notes are an extended version of what I submitted to the Department in June 2003.



The school stands on Crow Lane, Ramsbottom, map reference SD792170. It is part of an architectural unity, only 50 yards from its mother church and churchyard, and surrounded by terraced cottages on Crow Lane which have furnished it with many of its pupils throughout its history. These buildings form an unusual chronological and geographical concentration which, with the exception of the removal of the vicarage, has remained unchanged in over 150 years.

Like all the buildings in the vicinity, which date from the 1840s-60s, the school is constructed of locally quarried sandstone. The architectural unity is further emphasised by the common style of Gothic Revival architecture employed in the school and its adjacent ecclesiastical buildings the school has very distinctive lancet windows, complementing those of the church; and on its south side is a house which shares the Pennine style hooded moulding dripstones over the windows. This house was erected and occupied by the HEAP family, local farmers, quarriers and builders, who developed one field to create this urban landscape in the mid-19th Century.

The building carries a datestone: 'St Paul's Church Schools 1868'; but it is clear that the 1868 expansion incorporated much earlier work. Watershot stonework, common in the Pennines up to the 1840s, is evident not only on the south side of the building (non-public wall use seems to have been associated with cheaper stone) but on the very fine frontage as well. There is an early slate roof, its crudity reflecting the lack of mechanised slate production of the later century. The interior is almost certainly barely altered since its earliest days, apart perhaps from the erection of partitions at some time before 1910 - if 700 pupils were catered for in the 1870s, it may be that they were taught in one huge room in accordance with the monitorial system - only a master and mistress are mentioned in the trade directories. A board school was erected a mile away in 1903, and this may have allowed overcrowding to be reduced.

History

A small Sunday school was opened on Crow Lane in April 1841 by the ASHTON Brothers, owners of Ramsbottom Mill. It was grandly known as the 'Athenaeum School', despite modest accommodation in a pair of cottages, probably because it doubled up as a reading room! Church services were also held here until St Paul's church opened in 1850.

At some stage, a day school began in the building, prompted by the Factory Acts which required employers to provide some schooling for their child workers. Initially not intensive (two hours a day under the 1833 Factory Act) many employers hired in a master to teach on site. But the 1844 Factory Act made 'half-timer' schooling compulsory the school appears as the 'National School, Ramsbottom' on the First Edition of the Ordnance Survey map, surveyed at six inches to the mile in 1844-7, and in HEAP's 1850 Bury trade directory.

Initially, the Athenaeum School catered exclusively for boys. The schoolmaster was the one-armed Mr James Holden, his wife Rebecca acting as 'mistress'.. Population growth soon outstripped the Athenaeum's humble facilities, and in 1868 the Parish bought the building, extended it to form junior and infant sections and adopted the name St Paul's National Schools. By 1872, according to trade directories, St Paul's had room for 700 scholars. Photographs from 1910 show classes of 50 crammed into classrooms which now comfortably accommodate just 20.

Special Qualities

South East Lancashire was unusual in that a number of its towns did not need any board schools to fill the gaps' in voluntary provision under the 1870 Education Act. Local Anglicans were concerned that their children might be schooled in the new board schools alongside the Catholic Irish, whom they disliked on both counts! There was therefore a flurry of church school building activity in the years immediately before and after the Act's passage, with the result that in Ramsbottom, no board school was ever required in the town. I suspect that given some of its 1840s lineage, St Paul's School is one of the earliest surviving church schools in the area. It has been the longest serving educational institution in Ramsbottom, possibly one of the longest on one site anywhere in the Metropolitan Borough of Bury, and the public building with the longest uninterrupted use in the Ramsbottom and district, apart from three public houses. In those 162 years, it has had thousands of the town's children in its classrooms.

St Paul's and no 27, Crow Lane

We have early references to the school as initially occupying a pair of cottages in Crow Lane, and if the opening date of April 1841 is correct, this can only have been what is now no 27 Crow Lane, the only cottages in existence on the Lane according to the Tottington Lower End Tithe Map of 1842. Interestingly, no 27 was a double cottage, occupied then by Thomas LORD and Robert HOPKINSON. In the 1851 census returns, the pair were still the only cottages on the lane, cotton workers Robert MILLS and Thomas LORD being their occupants The Rev Tom MARTIN, vicar of St Paul's, writing in the 1950 centenary booklet of his church, states that:

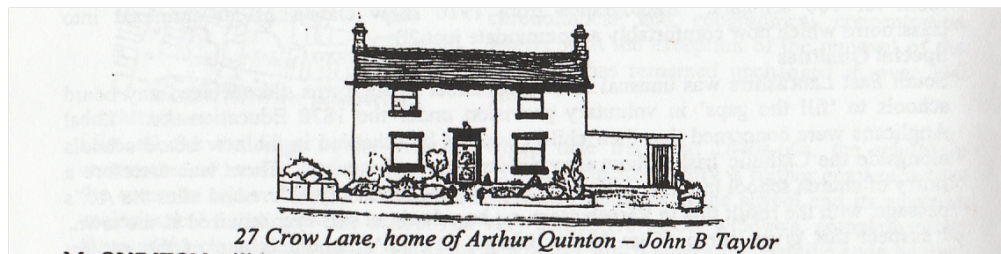
in April, 1841... the Brothers ASHTON, proprietors of Ramsbottom Mill... erected a small school on Calf Bank in Crow Lane, and encouraged the use of the premises as a Sunday school and for Church services.

This intriguing reference cannot refer to the school building that was in existence by the time the First Edition OS map was surveyed (1844-7) since it does not figure on the 1842 tithe map. The conclusion must be that the 'small school' was indeed that pair of cottages - now 27, Crow Lane. Calf Bank is mistakenly rendered Carr Bank in the 1842 Tithe Schedule. To clinch the connection between the school and this pair of cottages, we need some reference from the records of the ASHTONS, the deeds of no 27, or the court books of the Manor of Tottington. It would shed light on an intriguing transitional stage in the development of Ramsbottom's educational provision. Andrew Todd

OBITUARIES

Arthur QUINTON

Sadly we note the death on January 13th 2004 of Arthur of Crow Lane. Last year, along with his family, he was especially helpful to our Crow Lane Project team and made interesting and valuable contributions, even though he was not a Society member.



27 Crow Lane, home of Arthur Quinton – John B Taylor

Mr QUINTON will be remembered with affection by countless local people and visitors as the gentleman with the pony and trap giving rides to children, usually from outside the E L R station or at events in Nuttall Park. He was born on a farm in Norfolk where he met his future wife, Jennie, a Land Army girl from Ramsbottom. In 1950 they married at St Paul's Church and in 1957 they moved to Ramsbottom. Both Mr and Mrs QUINTON were porters at the railway station. [We have been told about the fry-ups, done on a shovel over the waiting room fire!] They worked different shifts to enable them to look after their young family. During Mr QUINTON's funeral, his pony, Jade, and the trap full of flowers waited in Crow Lane outside the Church. Jade had a black plume and a black drape over her back and afterwards led the cortege all the way to Ramsbottom Cemetery. I'm sure the family would want everyone to know that both Jade and the trap have gone to a good home. [Barbara PARK recalls another link between Mr QUINTON and the Society - one Sunday morning several years ago, he drove the trap up the back lane behind her house to visit one of her neighbours. This caused great excitement among the local children, who all rushed out, many still in pyjamas and dressing gowns. Arthur

good-naturedly allowed them to climb up into the trap and gave them a ride down the lane. Hearing all the excitement, Barbara also rushed out with her camera to record the event and the photo was entered in the Society's annual photographic competition and won a prize! The photograph is therefore in the Society's archive.]

Janet Smith & Barbara Park

Mrs Evelyn WAITE; 26th October 1921-16th December 2003. The Heritage Society was deeply saddened to learn of the death of our Honorary Life Member, Mrs Evelyn (Lyn) WAITE on Tuesday 16th December 2003. Committee members attended her funeral at the Church of St John-in-the-Wilderness, Shuttleworth along with over 100 friends and colleagues, paying respect to a very fine lady. She had the care and well-being of the community that she had served so faithfully over many years, foremost in mind despite ill-health and much pain during her last weeks.



The Mayor and her consort - Mr and Mrs Harold Waite

Throughout her life Mrs WAITE took her mother as her inspiration, always thinking of those less fortunate than herself, especially the young and the very old. Many people still have good cause to bless her name. She helped in so many capacities, as District Nurse, Meals on Wheels organiser, Youth Leader, local Councillor then Mayor of Bury and to the last she remained Secretary to the Ramsbottom Aid in Sickness Fund. This is but a short selection from the imposing list of her humanitarian interests from the time she came, as a bride in 1946, to live in Edenfield.

She is already greatly missed by so many in the community where she served so well and

we will remember her with much affection.

Dorothy Moss, Chairman.

In June 2003, on receiving Honorary Life Membership of the Society (report News Magazine 25), Mrs Evelyn Waite emphasised the importance of the part other people played in her dedicated work for the people of Ramsbottom and Edenfield. She used as her example what she described as the "wonderful help from Bert Hinchliffe" 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 so that wheelchair users could go on the trips.) We reproduce here one of three articles which formed part of

a 2002 Heritage Centre display about the Hinchliffe transport businesses. The other articles will appear in a future issue.

J & H HINCHLIFFE LTD - THE COACHES

In 1946 the brothers John and Herbert HINCHLIFFE started their haulage company and sister Edith became book-keeper in 1947. Only three years later they began to expand into coach travel. Three coaches, with licences, were purchased. The first trip was a New Year's Eve booking in 1949. The fleet was gradually expanded, and more coaches were purchased from Walter BOOTH of Moorside. HUTCHINSONS (Coaches), in Dundee Lane, Ramsbottom, were bought out around 1952. A travel agency, with coaches, called PICKWICKS was purchased about 1954. The work was very varied. Edith was very involved in the coach side of the business. All the year round there was a daily contract with Joshua HOYLE, Ramsbottom, to pick up workers for a 7.30 am start, and collect at 5.00 pm; at one time there were as many as seven coaches involved. Later, the job became complicated as a shift system was introduced; there were penalties for late arrival; also Ramsbottom workers were taken to work at PORRITTS of Broadway, Haslingden. For a number of years, transport was provided to take Ramsbottom pupils to Bacup and Rawtenstall Grammar School. The firm successfully tendered to take schoolchildren to swimming baths, and to special schools; there were contracts with De la Salle Training College; also with the army, involving movement of personnel from camp to camp, including Holcombe Moor, and bomb disposal units to their site of operation. At Christmas time, coaches were used to distribute Royal Mail personnel and parcels. At holiday times there was a regular programme of excursions to Southport, Blackpool, Morecambe, etc, and most of these trips also ran on Sundays. There was a regular clientele for the 'Sunday evening' run; this was something of a mystery tour, and cost 4/6d. At Wakes Weeks, and the September break, excursions were more varied - the Wye -Valley, Windermere, even London Airport. A service was also provided for people who were going on a week's or fortnight's holiday; these were known as long dates. An annual excursion was the Holcombe Hunt Races. Also very popular were outings to shows, pantomimes, and 'blockbuster' films in Manchester. A variety of tours took place, mainly in the summer. John, and his nephew John, were regularly drivers-cum-couriers on these tours. Coach drivers were often on hire to other companies. The coaches were also available for private hire outings, to various organizations: churches, schools, local mills, clubs, pubs, etc., the team coach for Ramsbottom Cricket Club away matches, and for supporters of Burnley FC, including the FA Cup Final against Spurs, in 1961.

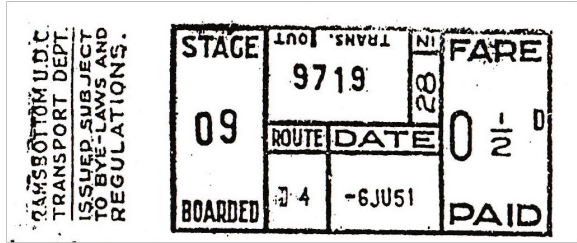
There was a network of agencies in shops throughout Ramsbottom, Edenfield and Summerseat, for bookings and for picking up passengers. Cleaning of coaches was a job undertaken by family, pensioners and drivers - not always a pleasant task! The coach drivers could be full time, or lorry drivers doing part time coach-driving, according to need; other coach-drivers did driving as a second job.

In the 1970s, the advent of more universal car ownership led to a dwindling demand for excursions, and the termination of the coach business in 1975.

Joan Young and Joan Murphy

A SHORT HISTORY OF RAMSBOTTOM'S BUSES 1913-1969

Do you remember these?



A Ramsbottom bus ticket issued on machine number 28, for a halfpenny ordinary (O) fare, boarding at stage 09 on route 4 (Bury to Rawtenstall was always route 4, although the buses themselves did not carry any route number), for a journey on 6th June 1951. Ticket number 9719.

Anyone who lived in the Ramsbottom area prior to 1969 will certainly remember the red Leyland buses operated profitably (most of the time) by Ramsbottom Urban District Council, with their friendly conductors/conductresses and drivers. In 1969, all this came to an end, with the amalgamation of Ramsbottom's bus fleet into SELNEC (South East Lancashire North East Cheshire) which subsequently became Greater Manchester Transport, Greater Manchester North and now First Manchester Buses. Although the present daytime service is actually more frequent than it was up to 1969 (a bus every 10 minutes as opposed to every 15 minutes before 1969) in every other way a deterioration has taken place, with different drivers every time you travel (no conductors of course), an inferior evening service, and very much higher fares. For example, soon after the SELNEC takeover, the single fare from Ramsbottom to Holcombe Brook was 3p (and only 2p off-peak). It is now 85p (unless it has gone up since this was written).

The story begins in the early years of the 20th Century, at a time when many towns already had tramway systems, often in the process of conversion from steam to electric operation. So, in 1903, Ramsbottom Council began to consider the provision of some form of local transport, and were empowered by the Ramsbottom U D C Tramways Order 1903, confirmed by the Tramways Orders Confirmation (No 2) Act, 1903, to construct, within the district:

Tramway No 1 from Holcombe Brook to Edenfield via Ramsbottom

Tramway No. 2: from Edenfield to Ramsbottom via Shuttleworth (conditional upon the construction of a bridge or subway to cross the railway line in Ramsbottom

Although the date for commencement was extended from time to time by the Board of Trade, the powers were never exercised (owing to the high capital outlay involved) and instead Ramsbottom U.D.C. decided to apply to Parliament for powers to construct a railless trolley system over parts of the routes along which trams had been authorised. The outcome was the Ramsbottom U D C Railless Traction Act, 1912, by which the

Council was empowered to construct overhead equipment and to run trackless trams (trolleybuses) between:

- 1) Holcombe Brook and Edenfield via Ramsbottom
- 2) Ramsbottom Market Place and Ramsbottom Railway Station

In 1913, a trolleybus shed (always known as *The Tram Shed* or *The Depot*) was constructed in Stubbins Lane (where the Esso petrol station now stands) at a cost of £1,898, overhead lines were erected and orders for vehicles placed. The first trolleybus arrived on Sunday, 9th August 1913, having been towed all the way from Leeds by a steam wagon. Following testing trips and a Board of Trade inspection, car number 1 ran the first public service to Holcombe Brook at 6 pm on Friday, 14th August. The local newspaper carried an account of the first journey under the headlines '*First Cars Make Their Appearance. Packed Cars to Holcombe Brook*'. One account of the opening night read:

When darkness descended, the electric light was brought into use and the car presented quite a brilliant spectacle. As it passed through the lampless streets, it made Ramsbottom people realize how far behind the times the town actually is.

Mrs Alice O'DONNELL on a tape for our Oral History Group says:

I went on the very first tram to Ramsbottom. I can remember mother taking us all down. We'd walk it down to ride all the way back and that was a treat, an afternoon treat.

Five trolleybuses were purchased in 1913 and a further two, slightly more modern ones (nos 6 and 7) in 1915. These seven trolleybuses provided the sole means of transport until 1923, but, owing to the experimental nature of the equipment (breakdown were extremely common, and individual trolleybuses could be out of action for months on end) coupled with the First World War, substantial losses were shown. In 1920, Mr S PARSONS became General Manager, replacing Mr J WILD, and in 1922, a scheme was submitted to the Traction Committee of the Council for the introduction of motor buses. The Committee did not approve this scheme, but in 1923, a second approach was made and accepted by the Committee. Three motor buses (nos 8 to 10) were purchased and in August 1923, services were commenced between Edenfield and Rawtenstall station and between Edenfield and the *New Inn* tram terminus in Bury. In April 1925, a motor bus service was commenced

between Shuttleworth and Holcombe village, and in November 1926, a half-hourly bus service commenced between Edenfield and Bury via Ramsbottom. At about this time, Ribble Motor Services applied for licences to run buses in the area, and, after various legal battles, Ramsbottom Council agreed not to operate between Ramsbottom and Bolton, in exchange for a similar undertaking by Ribble not to operate between Ramsbottom and Bury.

Further purchases of motor buses took place throughout the 1920s: nos 11-14 in 1926, nos 15-17 in 1927, no 18 in 1928, nos 19-21 in 1929 and no 22 in 1930. As the motor bus services increased, so the trolleybus service declined until, during the last few years of its existence, it operated only at peak times. Eventually, as the vehicles and equipment became obsolete, the trolleybus system was finally abandoned on 31st March 1931. During the years leading up to the Second World War, services were increased to cater for rising

demands, and further motor buses were purchased: no 23 in 1932, no 12 in 1933, nos 10 and 11 in 1934, nos 13 and 14 in 1935 no's 8, 9 and 15 in 1937 and nos 6 and 7 in 1939. Profits were achieved from 1934 onwards.

Following the outbreak of the Second World War, fuel rationing was introduced and services drastically reduced. Problems were also caused by blackout operation, staff call-up, and unavailability of spares and replacements. As had happened during the First World War, conductresses were again employed.

No new buses were obtained during the Second World War, with the result that, by the war's end in 1945, the Council owned a rapidly ageing fleet of buses. So, in the next two years, 10 new buses were purchased: four rear-engined single-deckers (nos 16-19) in 1946 and six open-platformed, rear entrance double-deckers - the first double-deckers in the fleet (nos 20-25) in 1947. Motor cars were still very much a luxury, so demand for the buses was high and a period of expansion followed the end of the war. The peak mileage of 619,721 was reached in 1950, with 5,371,995 passengers carried and income of £42,740. Because of the low railway bridge at Stubbins, the double-deckers could not operate beyond this point, and journeys from Rawtenstall to Bury often involved a change of bus at *The Depot* from single-decker to double-decker.

In 1950, Ramsbottom helped to pioneer the operation of the first Leyland underfloor-engined single deck 44-seater buses, taking delivery of four of the first 12 vehicles manufactured. (The present First Manchester buses on routes 472/474 are simply a fifty-years-later version of this design.) Three buses (nos 26-28) were obtained in 1950 and no 30 in 1952. A further double-decker of essentially the same design as the 1947 (no 29) was purchased in 1951. The fleet now remained unchanged for the next nine years, except for the withdrawal of the last four pre-war buses, nos 8 and 15 in 1958 and nos 6 and 7 in 1960. General Manager Mr S PARSONS, who had held this post since 1920, was replaced in 1951 by Mr L T MERRALL (who combined this post with that of General Manager of Rawtenstall and Haslingden Corporation Transport Departments). During the 1950s, discussions took place with a view to the formation of a joint transport undertaking comprising Ramsbottom, Rawtenstall, Haslingden and Accrington, but nothing came of these discussions. Throughout the 1950s, increasing car ownership, increasing costs of operation, rising wages and higher costs of materials led to a decline in passengers, and this inevitably led to reduced services and higher fares - a vicious circle. In 1956, British Railways introduced a diesel passenger service between Manchester, Bury, Rawtenstall and Bacup. This service was frequent, fast and comfortable, and proved a very serious competitor to Ramsbottom's bus services.

In September 1960, the carriageway under Stubbins Bridge was lowered, thus enabling double-deck buses to operate to Stubbins, Edenfield and Rawtenstall. Almost overnight, the basic service was changed from single to double-deck operation, and in 1961 and 1962, seven of the eight single-deckers in the fleet were disposed of. The 1946 rear-entrance buses went for scrap, except for no 17, which has been preserved (and also no 19, which I think has been preserved, although I have no confirmation of this). The first batch of pioneer underfloor-engined buses were only 12 years old, and were sold to Rawtenstall Corporation Motors (no 26) and Haslingden Corporation Transport (nos 27 and 28) for

further use locally. At the same time as the operation became virtually double-deck only, a decision was made to replace the current fleet with yearly purchases of new buses. This commenced with no 1 in 1961 and no 2 in 1962, both of which were of basically the same design as the 1947 buses, open-platform rear-entrance. 1963 saw the introduction of the first front-entrance double-decker in the fleet (no 3), and all subsequent purchases were of this design. Although Leyland introduced their *Atlantean* double-deckers with rear engines in the late 1950s, and Ramsbottom bought all their buses from Leyland they never purchased any of this design. Purchases continued with no 4 in 1965, no 5 in 1966, no's 6- 9 in 1967 and nos 10 and 11 in 1969. A small single-decker (no 12) was obtained second-hand from Warrington Corporation, mainly to operate the Holcombe Brook to Holcombe village service. The 1947 batch of double-deckers was scrapped in 1965, together with no 29 of 1951. The last of the pioneer single-deckers (no 30) was withdrawn in 1966 and sold on for future use in another part of England. The final two purchases (no's 10 and 11) actually arrived after the takeover by SELNEC in 1969, and no 11 holds the distinction of being the very last traditional front-engine front entrance double-decker to be constructed. This bus is now preserved in Manchester Transport Museum. After the SELNEC takeover, the fleet of 12 buses (11 double-deck and one single-deck) was renumbered by adding 6400 to the number (so, no 1 became 6401) and were gradually repainted in the orange SELNEC livery. Fairly soon, these buses were employed on other routes, and most were disposed of by SELNEC within a very few years. The buses of Ramsbottom might seem, to a non-Ramsbottomian, to be without a great deal of interest. However, the Transport Department and its buses held several 'records'

1. Ramsbottom was the only Urban District Council in England to run its own bus service.
2. Ramsbottom ran the smallest municipal bus undertaking in England.
3. Ramsbottom took delivery of four of the first 12 underfloor-engined buses ever manufactured.
4. Ramsbottom took delivery of the very last traditional-style front-entrance front-engined double-decker ever to be manufactured.
(Rumour has it that it was made up of spare parts which had been left over.)

So that is a brief history of Ramsbottom's buses. I have taken much of the information from a booklet produced by Ramsbottom U D C in 1963 to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the Transport Department. Finally, I hope that the dates and other information given in this article are correct, but I can't guarantee this, as I found some information very hard to come by. If you know of any major errors in the article, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Douglas Hartley 64 Summerseat Lane, Ramsbottom, BLO 9RQ.

PARISH ACTIVITIES AT ST JOSEPH'S BETWEEN THE WARS.

"*There's nothing going on in the parish*" my wife would be told whenever she telephoned her aunt or when we called to see her. Aunt Helen was referring to the secular activities of the parish, not to the religious ones with which she was content. She had lived in the Ramsbottom area and been a member of St Joseph's parish throughout her life. Having been born during World War One, she had grown up when many churches were also

centres of social activity, with their members organising concerts and dances and performing plays. Those were the days of wind-up gramophones, radio in its infancy and although the cinema was developing and growing in popularity, many people still provided their own entertainment. During the 1920s and 30s, working hours were long for those with jobs (48 hour, five and a half day weeks) and time passed slowly for the unemployed. Parish social activities were not only as source of great pleasure but provided a welcome break in what could be dreary and *difficult* times. St Joseph's parish was fortunate in having a new school opened in 1926. It had been designed with social activities in mind, with a kitchen/dining room and teachers' room in the middle with classrooms on each side. These were divided by partitions that allowed each half to be opened up into one large hall. In the northern half, provision had been made for a substantial sectional stage, designed to fit at one end of the opened-up hall. When dismantled the stage was stored in the loft above. All the floors were of smooth wood which, when waxed, was ideal for dancing.

Although half a generation younger than her aunt, my wife and I can remember much of the annual timetable of parish social events that continued throughout the 1930s and which she looked back on with such happy memories in her later years.

The New Year Party is a good place to begin, starting the year with an event that was popular with parishioners of all ages. Planning the party and' rehearsals for the concert began well in advance and early in December a poster would appear on the Church notice board advertising the *New Year's Tea Party, Concert and Dance*, something to look forward to after the Christmas festivities. Demand for tickets was always brisk, even though the cost for adults was two shillings or more - a high price in those days when a meal at the Midland Hotel in Manchester would have cost little more. Even with half the school opened out, when the stage was in place there was little room to spare for all the tables needed. Cold meats and salad was the typical fare at large parties, but in this case the variety and quantities provided were exceptional. Then there was such a selection of fruit, cream, custard, jellies, trifles, scones and cake that the choices became difficult. Even Billy Bunter would have been satisfied. Service was quick and there was no delay in clearing the tables and moving them into the other half of the school; chairs were put in rows and we were ready for the concert.

Over the years many parishioners took part in the concerts, some only occasionally and reluctantly; others were enthusiastic and welcome regulars. Among these favourites was Teddy McINTYRE, a fine and versatile musician. Singers owed much to his piano accompaniment, he could enhance the performance by giving support without overpowering the singing. After listening for a few minutes he could pick up a tune and adjust his playing to fit in with the singer's interpretation of it. However, his main instrument was the violin on which he could play anything from classical music to the popular music of the day. Norman BIRCH had a range of ballads and operatic solos that were always well received. I picture Alex FEARFULL wearing a sou'wester, his strong and confident voice was well-suited to his favourites such as *The Fishermen of England*.

The well practised duets of Mr and Mrs John HALL were performed with enthusiasm and

obvious personal enjoyment that carried the audience along with them. Leo LYONS was popular with everyone, a whimsical, very friendly character with a range of comic songs *such as Paddy McGinty's Goat*. He had a distinctive style, hands folded and rocking backwards and forwards he sang in his mixture of Lancashire and Irish accents, and the audience could hear every word clearly. Forty years later, he could have rivalled Val DOONICAN but would have needed a personality change to become EMINEM. The musical content of the earliest concerts I attended was largely influenced by popular operettas and by the shows put on by Ramsbottom Amateur Dramatic and Operatic Society at the Empire Cinema. Among those were *The Mikado*, *The Gondoliers* and *The Desert Song*. Later the influence of films like *Rose Marie* and the shows of Ivor NOVELLO and Franz LEHAR was evident, with songs by Vera LYNN being introduced during war-time. By the end of the 1940s musical tastes had changed and schoolchildren sang *Pedro the Fisherman from The Lisbon Story* at one of the last concerts I attended. When the concert was over and chairs pushed back to the wall, Billy HOWARTH, the caretaker, would shake wax polish on to the floor and after a few tuning-up noises the band started to play and the dancing began. Mixed in with the waltzes, quicksteps and foxtrots were barn dances, St Bernard's waltzes and novelty dances like the one to the tune of *Under the Spreading Chestnut Tree* so everyone joined in. Grandparents directed children in *The Lancers* but sadly now many only remember this intricate dance as performed by Billy DAINY or Richard HEARNE in their comic versions in later years. The New Year Party was a fitting end to the Christmas season. Within a day or two the stage was dismantled and stored away in the loft and the school made ready for the re-opening after the holiday.

Soon would come the Shrove Tuesday Dance, during which were competitions for tossing or eating pancakes. Once, when lengths of elastic had been included in the pancakes, Billy KAY the winner complained "*It was stretching a joke too far.*"

St Patrick's Day Party, Concert and Dance was especially significant for families with Irish connections who had been exposed to the songs and stories of elderly relatives. (In recent years as interest in family history has become widespread, we have found that it was the grandparents of these elderly relatives who had come to England and many of the memories and images of Ireland passed on to us were a romantic mixture many years out of date.) After the remains of the tea had been cleared and chairs rearranged the serious business began. The content of the concert may have been predictable, but it was what the audience expected and enjoyed -- Jack DUNNE singing *The Minstrel Boy* and Leo LYONS singing *Delaney's Donkey* and similar items. Ensemble performances by singers and dancers were a feature, *Kerry Dances* and *Phil the Fluter's Ball* were old favourites, often augmented by the fiddle of Teddy McINTYRE. There were reminders of all parts of the country - from *Danny Boy* of Londonderry through *Galway Bay* and *Killarney* to where the *Mountains of Mourne* sweep down to the sea. We learned more of the geography of Ireland than in any school lesson. It is strange that most of the songs were about emigrating or dying or being far from home yet the tunes were pleasant and memorable and often light- hearted and in the traditional jigs the twinkling legs made intricate patterns of steps while

the rest of the body was kept rigidly straight. Recently the highly popular *Riverdance* introduced a much greater freedom of movement into these dances.

The Whitsuntide Walks were a long-standing custom in Lancashire and many of the churches and chapels of Ramsbottom arranged their own processions through the streets; the Friday following the Whit weekend being the most popular day. These were traditional religious celebrations with a social element. Crowds of local residents lined the streets, wearing their new clothes, and as the separate processions passed by there would be many friendly waves and exchanges of greetings between friends and acquaintances. St Joseph's procession took place on Whit Sunday. With brass bands playing and banners flying it set out led by the clergy, followed by the splendidly-dressed queen with a long train held by a retinue of maids of honour and page boys chosen from the younger schoolchildren. Then came large numbers of parishioners, the girls wearing white dresses and carrying flowers and the boys smart in grey flannel trousers and white shirts. (The boys' knees were well scrubbed as short trousers were worn until the age of about 14 in those days.) The route usually included Bolton Street and Ramsbottom Lane, turning at the New Jerusalem Church to come back along Factory Street, Crow Lane, Bridge Street and Bolton Street to St Joseph's. Even though it was early in the year, it was often warm enough for the tar on the roads to melt and stick to our shoes. [The New Jerusalem Church was demolished years ago and recently, when passing the site, I wondered how what had seemed such an imposing building had been built on such a small space. The she comment applies to the former Patmos Chapel site at the bottom of Peel Brow.] When at school Aunt Helen joined in the Field Days, arranged on a Saturday close to Whitsuntide. I remember Field Days on Comrades' Field, land on which houses have been built behind the school. The children of the parish would assemble in the afternoon (bring your own mug) and there would be organised games and races followed by refreshments and ice-cream from a large tub from BROOKS or MATHERS or other local suppliers.

Many parents and other relatives attended, an opportunity to get up-to-date with the latest gossip. Joe BARRETT would be in attendance (as he was during the processions) in his St John Ambulance uniform to deal with any casualties. Joe was also the Scoutmaster and full of community spirit and always ready to volunteer his help. From Whitsuntide the timetable became less rigid, varying from year to year. The operetta *Babette* with Mary BARRETT in a major role, and *Giant's Castle* with Norman BIRCH as the giant, were put on in the early 1930s. Mr BIRCH had a deep voice and commanding stage presence and made a convincing, frightening giant. Occasionally my father would get (from Abel HEYWOOD & Co in Manchester) a small parcel of plays printed on thin paper, with red covers and costing only a few pence each. Sometimes a full-length play was chosen or maybe a short sketch for a concert. Though not qualified to comment on the technical ability of the actors, I can confirm that the plays were always entertaining and greatly enjoyed. Even now, on reading the words clergyman or curate, I have a picture of Harold COLLINSON as a nervous excitable curate. One occasion when things did not go exactly to plan was during a production of the melodrama *The Monkey's Paw*. At a critical point an atmosphere of menace and foreboding was developing and one character drew

attention to a brewing storm - "*Hark at the wind*" he said, but had to repeat it several times before someone backstage switched on the Hoover that made the wind noises. The Grand Celebrity Dance was another event which did not run smoothly. Jackie BROWN from Manchester became World Flyweight Boxing Champion and an international celebrity. It was a great coup for the parish when Mark KERRONE, a Rossendale promoter, arranged for Jackie to make a personal appearance at a dance at St Joseph's. On the day of the dance my father, who had been involved in organising the event, telephoned to check on Jackie's expected arrival time and was told that there must have been a mistake as Jackie BROWN had gone to visit local clubs with his friends and was not expected back until late evening. On my arrival at the dance, I was told that my father had gone to Manchester to try to find Mr BROWN and persuade him to come. By the interval there was growing concern about the absence of the celebrity, then we were told that the Champion had been delayed and was on his way but as time went on those who had bought their tickets in the hope of meeting him were complaining of being let down. It was a great relief when at about 10.30p.m. he arrived, flanked by two "*supporters*." He was not very steady on his feet and looked as if the towel would have to be thrown in if he had another round to box. However his professionalism took over as he was introduced as World Champion and he clasped his hands above his head and acknowledged the applause. He mumbled a few words, shook some hands, scribbled some autographs and left. Honour was satisfied but only just; there were no more Celebrity Dances but we had met a World Champion and few of those came to Ramsbottom.

Several different bands played for dances. In the early years *George GRAY's Band* performed but *The Rhythm Boys*, who were younger and better equipped to provide the music of the day, gradually replaced them. Then *The New Florida Dance Band* was used. Some former St Joseph's pupils played with this band, including Joe SIMPSON who could play trumpet and piano; Kevin GAFFNEY on drums and (I think) Gerald QUINLAN on base fiddle. Kevin became a professional musician with his own band and appeared on television in *The Six-Five Special shows*, using the name Bobby KEVAN. During and after the war, we had Alma HARRISON's band with Jim BAILEY on drums. A regular autumn feature was The Old Fashioned Tea Party, followed of course by the concert and dance. The ladies who prepared and served the tea wore period costume and some brought their own crockery and cutlery to augment the school's institutional supply. I remember teaspoons with coloured thread tied around the handles so that the owners could identify them afterwards: At major parties there were families with three or four generations represented and many of them took part in the entertainment. Among these families were the ASHES; BRENNANS; GALPINS; GROGANs; HANKINSONs; HENRYs; HOYLEs; KELLYs; KENNEDYs; McCORMICKs and RUSSELLs. Concert items included *Genevieve* and *Oft in the Stilly Night*, and *Brotherly Love* was a regular by the Glee Club singers. On occasions Leo LYONS sang *The Sweet Rat-Catcher's Daughter* which I recently learned was an English folk song, not Irish as I had supposed. Except for the Nativity Plays and entertainment for the schoolchildren, the final event of the year was The Christmas Fair which usually featured a short concert but the big stage was not used. Again this was an occasion for a chat over a cup of tea, together with a few

purchases from tables displaying goods made or supplied by parishioners. There was also the satisfaction of helping a good cause. During the War, members of the Youth Club gave two performances of a concert featuring music popular at the time such as *Don't sit under the apple tree*. New talent emerged and continued to entertain us for years. The Secretary of the National Association of Boys' Clubs, who travelled to Ramsbottom to see the show, congratulated all who had taken part and made special mention of the tap-dancing expertise of Laurence MORRIS, who for months had been spending all his time practising his steps. Over the years the cast of characters involved in these activities changed and I cannot now remember all of them but Wilf LLOYD who moved to Ramsbottom around 1940 made a big impact. He was an experienced producer of and accompanist for musical shows and generated a great deal of enthusiasm. He had a flair for choral work and items like *The Anvil Chorus* were well received by the audience. Bill DAISLEY was married to one of the KENNEDY girls and he joined the parish at the end of the war. In the forces he had served in Italy and taken the opportunity to develop his singing and knowledge of popular operatic songs, learning English words to many. With his excellent voice he raised the standard of performance to a new level particularly in a memorable version of *Torna A Surriento*. On the occasions when John KAY and Robert HANKINSON sang, they also kept up a high standard and John continued to develop his singing technique and later won prizes at many amateur music festivals.

This regular programme of parish social events continued with little change until 1939, when it reduced and became less regular because of the war. There was a revival after the war but it never achieved the level of pre-war years and has since declined again. This is no doubt because of the changed pattern of life with increased personal mobility and the growth in TV, video and other home entertainment. Pre-war communities had stayed together and most people worked close to home and these social occasions gave them an opportunity to keep up with gossip and to see how the younger people were developing and how older people were progressing. I suspect that it was this element, as much as the entertainment, the my wife's aunt and others of her generation miss in more recent years as re-housing and better travel facilities have led to a more widely dispersed and mobile population. The widespread use of telephones and *e-mail* make it much easier to keep in touch with friends and relatives and there is no longer any need to rely on parish social events to exchange news and gossip. I can not imagine that parish events in the form recalled by Aunt Helen will make a come-back; perhaps my wife and I are the last generation to remember them but it is always pleasant to do so.

Norman Kay, Sheffield

IRWELL BRIDGE MILL, RAMSBOTTOM

The First Fifty Years

When Irwell Bridge Mill was built around the 1860s (at the south end of Kenyon Street on the bank of the River Irwell) by Messrs WILD and BRIGGS, it comprised a three storey mill with an office, boiler house, engine power and a chimney. They also had a 202 square yard cellar, which must have been a problem during floods that blighted the site until

recently. Before this mill was built, the only industrial buildings east of the river had been a carding mill (dating from some time after Old Ground days; considerably further south, and marked *as the old engine* on the 1908 OS map) and a farm, to be occupied by John Kenyon in 1888 and 1893.

By 1871, Irwell Bridge Mill had been acquired by the STEADs, whose business at that time also included Hope Mill, and they had added a substantial two storey extension. (Lawrence STEAD is recorded as being a linen and woollen draper of Ramsbottom in 1850. Lawrence STEAD & Brothers Ltd was established in 1854 and they were cotton spinners and manufacturers at Garden Mill. This partnership was dissolved in 1870 when all but Lawrence and Henry STEAD retired, being replaced by Lawrence STEAD & Brother Ltd.) Lawrence STEAD (d 1891) and Henry STEAD (d 1892) were trained under the GRANTs at Square Works. By 1884, when it had been built up further into a large business, STEADs' premises included Garden, Hope, Railway and Irwell Bridge Mills and there was a warehouse at 31, York Street, Manchester. At the founder's death the business had been expanded to five mills and 2000 looms by his grandson (also Lawrence), and it employed over 1000 people. As businessmen the STEADs ranked in importance with the PEELS and GRANTs of former generations. The period 1880 - 81 was a disastrous time at Irwell Bridge Mills, which at the time is described as a spinning mill and a weaving, winding and warping shed connected with each other by the one storey boiler house. They were twice flooded when the River Irwell overflowed and worse was to follow. In the *Bury Times* of 3rd August 1881, a fire on the previous Tuesday is reported to have destroyed the stone built spinning mill, then described as three storeys high, 14 windows in length and six in width. The first alarm had been given at 2.30am. Factory hosepipes failed so a messenger was sent on a railway locomotive to summon the Bury firemen, who arrived about two hours later, too late to save the spinning mill. The reporter continues:

The scene at this period was extremely grand, the flames darting through the roof and windows and illuminating the surrounding hills with their lurid glare.....

When the fire had burned itself out ... the scene presented by the gutted building was of the most melancholy description. Not a vestige of the roof remained, and no portion of the flooring stood: the large beams which supported the upper floors were burnt through. Only two small portions of the beams which supported the topmost floor were to be seen, but the blackened and charred beams upon the massive iron pillars, on which the floor of the first storey rested, still maintained their position, although they appeared to be burned through. The whole of the machinery was fallen and was mixed in inextricable confusion, and the ironwork was twisted in all directions by the intense heat....

The cause of the fire is a matter of conjecture only. It is supposed to have originated in the spontaneous combustion of some cotton.

The flames did not spread to the weaving shed where work was resumed after repairs to the engine. About 50 people were out of work but there was insurance and rebuilding

eventually took place to restore/rebuild it as a two storey building. The rate book of March 1882 shows a substantial reduction in the amount payable. There appear to have been only minor alterations to the mill since, including improved WCs in 1905 and the addition of a small office at the front in 1907, both for Messrs, The Irwell Bridge Company.

An advert in the Festival Souvenir Handbook (1951) for Lawrence STEAD & Brother Ltd, Cotton and Rayon Manufacturers, Irwell Bridge Mill, lists their products as spun rayons, hair-cords, humbrics, slub cottons, cambrics, pillow cottons, tailors' linings, book cloths, surgical dressings, industrial cloths, bleaching cloths, printers etc for home and export. Memories of a Mill Girl at Irwell Bridge Mill Another source is former employee, Joan BARCROFT who writes:

I started work at STEADs in November 1952 after four years at PEMBERTON'S mill just a few yards further down Kenyon Street. (I had left PEMBERTON'S because they were already on "short time"- a three day week that they had been on for several months.) STEADs, which had been bought by ROBINSONs of Chesterfield were on "full time". ROBINSONs had also acquired another mill (in the Wigan area, I think). Their Chesterfield business was large with several departments and it employed several hundred people. I was once part of a group of Ramsbottom employees who had an interesting visit--to the Chesterfield site, where workers had a canteen and a social club with various activities, including bowls and an amateur dramatic society. For a few years the men from STEADs paid an annual visit to play bowls and, no doubt, to enjoy a pint or two. Our management arranged day outings in summer and a dinner and dance at Christmas when some of the directors from Chesterfield would join us for a few hours. Sometimes at Irwell Bridge Mill when the river was in flood, work would stop if the water affected the steam boiler system. Looms would gradually slow down and weavers would be dashing along their "alley", "knocking off" looms, trying to avoid shuttles "trapping". This was often accompanied by a few choice words!

In time the system was electrified, though we still had the old looms from the beginning of the 1900s. These sometimes caused problems for tacklers and weavers as spare parts became difficult to obtain and a lot of improvisation was called for. In the 1960s the cotton industry was in serious decline so staff was difficult to recruit as young people refused to "enter the mill". When STEAD's did finally close in December 1972, I think I may have been the youngest employee (in my late thirties). Over the years we'd had a lot of laughs, some tears at times, and lovely companionship. Even though in 1976 I went on a business studies course at Bury College and started working in an office (another mill!), first on production then in accounts on computer, I still remember my almost 30 years as a mill girl.

(See also News Magazine 12: In her report, Joan said that she thought an Irwell Bridge Mill loom had gone to Helmsshore. On checking, we were told that it is in store there and, although it is not in working order and very hard to reach, it still has some cloth on it)

Since textile manufacturing finished

Irwell Bridge Mill has been owned and used by The Parker Box Company Ltd for high volume processing and manufacturing of cardboard packaging boxes. It now consists of two large single storey, northern light weaving sheds with a core of two storey office and storage buildings. The attractive front elevation is of coursed natural stone with ashlar stone lintels and cills to the windows and the mill walls along Stead Street and Kenyon Street are random stone. Irwell Bridge Mill is now one of only three stone built textile- related buildings in Ramsbottom, the others being Field Mill, Kenyon Street and Cobden Mill (which is a large site at the junction of Square Street and Kay Brow).

Janet Smith

(Although the recent application for outline planning permission to demolish Irwell Bridge Mill and build 30 apartments has been withdrawn, the building may still be under threat of redevelopment. At the second of only three remaining stone-built, textile related buildings in Ramsbottom, Cobden Mill on Square Street, there are already twelve new apartments and a current planning application is for 39 more. Under this latest proposal, the Cobden Mill building on Square Street itself would be converted into 24 apartments but its large weaving shed alongside . Kay Brow would be demolished and replaced by new build apartments and car parking. Editor)

MEMORIES OF CROW LANE

Alan RICHARDSON describes facilities at 17/19 Crow Lane:

We hada three piece suite, large sideboard, table, four dining chairs, two bentwood chairs and the heating was what they called a Bungalow Range..... coal fired of course with a good oven, and the fire provided all the hot water ever needed. There was also an outkitchen which had an old Victorian cast iron fireplace with a very large oven. Then there was the back yard consisting of outside toilet and coal shed. The toilet, by the way, was a proper WC.

Doris HIBBERT describes facilities at 10 Crow Lane:

We had a very tiny kitchen and that had a gas boiler, a white sink and some The gas boilers were a bit lethal looking -- with the flame underneath. The living room was our main room where everything happened. We had a clothes rack hanging from the ceiling and I vaguely remember a large black fireplace range with its oven and side boiler. You scooped the water with a ladling can ...later we had a Bungalow Range (there was the fireplace and to the right an oven so the fire fed the oven) which had four mottled tiles on the door and we thought we were so posh. The outside toilet was a tippler and once our cat fell down and Mother rescued it on a mop and plunged him into a bucket full of water to clean him up.

LOCAL RESEARCH

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

1 Bury Archive Service - Edwin Street (off Crompton Street) Bury BL9 0AS; tel: 0161 797 5897 - preserves the historical records from the 1650s to the present day of a wide range of organisations and private individuals from all parts of the Metropolitan Borough. There are over 30 tons of documents, maps, plans and photographs, almost all of which are available for consultation in the public reading room. Holdings include the records of local authorities (eg Ramsbottom Local Board, and UDC, including many building plans) schools, churches, businesses, trade unions, sports clubs, charities, political parties and other social organisations. The Heritage Society's Collection, including photographs, is on permanent loan there.

The service is in Edwin Street (off Crompton Street, next to Plumb's Hi-Fi shop), and entrance is via the yard at the far end of the street on the right-hand side. The reading room is open from 10am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm every Tuesday; and at the same times on other weekdays Monday to Friday, but please make an appointment in advance by ringing archivist Kevin Mulley before any visit. Group visits (minimum six persons) on evenings and weekends are available if booked in advance.

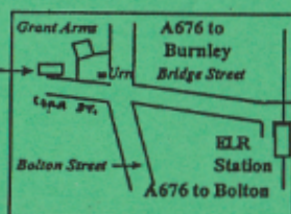
2 Bury Central Library (Reference and Information Services Department) Manchester Road, Bury, BL9 0DG; tel: 0161 253 5871 - has publications on local history, historical printed works of local interest such as trade directories, older Ordnance Survey maps for the whole of BMBC, including Ramsbottom, copies of local newspapers, thematic collections of newscuttings worth pursuing for local biographies, census returns and parish registers on microfilm.

The library is open from 9.30am to 5.30pm each weekday (open until 7.30pm Wednesdays), and from 9.30am to 4.30pm on Saturdays.

3 Ramsbottom Library, Carr Street, Ramsbottom, Bury; tel: 01706 822484 - has much of the Ramsbottom local collection of the late Rev RR Carmyllie, local census returns and several filing drawers of local newscuttings and booklets, as well as Hume Elliot's history.

4 Lancashire Family History and Heraldry Society; membership secretary Vicky Barlow, Bob's Ley, 6, Mowbreck Lane, Wesham, Preston, Lancs PR4 3HA; tel: 01772 687234 - membership is only £9-00 per year, and this entitles you to four magazine issues, an opportunity to publicise your research queries and findings, and 14 meetings each month with speakers at venues all over the county, including Bury and Rawtenstall.

Visit us at Ramsbottom Heritage Centre



Ramsbottom Heritage Centre, Carr Street, Ramsbottom,

Bury BL0 9AE (opposite the Library)

NOTE OUR WEB SITE:-

www.ramsbottom-heritage.fsnet.co.uk

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Telephone 01706 82 1603 (weekends only).

To arrange group visits outside the following opening times
please ring 01706 82 2620

Sales counter with good selection of Local History books, details of town and
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