

1987 - 2017

THE SOCIETY'S 30TH ANNIVERSARY

NEWS MAGAZINE

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**RAMSBOTTOM HERITAGE SOCIETY, C/O RAMSBOTTOM LIBRARY,
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 an information centre.
 - c) To seek to protect the heritage of Ramsbottom
-

PROGRAMME 2017:

- May 17 **Annual General Meeting & Members' Night**
- June 21 Martin Baggoley - *Murder in the Victorian Lancashire Family* with cases from around Greater Manchester in the context of changing social attitudes, 1830s new Poor Law reforms and introduction of Burial Clubs and insurance
- July 19 Private guided tour of the Greater Manchester Police Museum, **2pm** at 57a, Newton St M1 1ET. (1½ - 2 hr, admission free). Allow time to travel: tram to Market St or Piccadilly Gdns or bus 135 (from Bury). Please contact us if possible for coordination and advice. Places in Northern Quarter for lunch or drink after.
- August 16 **2pm** visit to Smithills Hall, Smithills Dean Rd, Bolton, BL1 7NP A Grade 1 listed building, full of history and drama, set in formal gardens next to the West Pennine Moors. Tea room available.
- September 20 Steven Halliwell – *Moses Holden (1777 – 1864): Self-educated Genius*
- October 18 Kate Slingsby – *Ramsbottom Market Place* (illustrated) - the many changes during over 120 years of its history
- November 15 David Joy – *Liverpool Cow Keepers – A Family History*
Pennine Dales farmers who relocated to Liverpool in the mid-1800s
- December 13 **Christmas Social Evening in the Main Hall** (advance ticket)

Unless otherwise stated, meetings are held in the Holcombe Room at Ramsbottom Civic Hall, Market Place, Ramsbottom, commencing at 7.30 p.m.

Entry: visitors- £2, members - £1.50, includes refreshments.

Ramsbottom Heritage Society News Magazine No 52

Spring/Summer 2017

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

Cover Caption "from a picture in the possession of Daniel Grant Esq^{re}".
The picture is described as a hand-coloured lithograph of Grants Tower painted and on stone by George Hayes c1850.

Website - www.ramsbottomheritage.org.uk

Email via website

SECRETARY'S REPORT

As the Society celebrates 30 years, I decided not to review the activities over the years, as these were covered after 20 years (Issue 32 - Spring 2007), 25 years (Issue 42 - Spring 2012), and in the news items in subsequent magazines. When taking over as secretary in May 2016, I was handed the minutes of all the meetings held since 1987, so I will review some of the early minutes. The inaugural meeting was on the 8th April 1987 when approximately 80 members were present. The public meetings were held on the 2nd Wednesday of the month, switching to the 3rd Wednesday in 1989, where it has remained. The first speaker was Rev. Roy Carmyllie, who was introduced as the Chairman of Ramsbottom Local History Society until 1980 and a past vicar of St Andrew's Church. He advised the attendees to 'Don't sit and study, go and look and discover your heritage, but above all, enjoy what you do. The second speaker was Hugh Linney of the East Lancashire Railway Preservation Society who talked about the upcoming return of steam to Ramsbottom, which was due on the 6th June 1987. The audience then split into 3 groups and talked about 'Photography as a record', 'Town Activities' and 'Historic Research'. As a result the Annual Photographic Competition started, there were plans for a stall to promote the Society's activities on the Market, and names of speakers were suggested for future meetings. The early public meetings were much more interactive, with monthly raffles to raise money, the audience splitting into groups to discuss topics, and much longer than the present meetings, often finishing after 10 p.m. In July 1987, Chris Johnson of the Village Restaurant spoke about the proposed Ramsbottom Trust (now Ramsbottom Business Group), and how they didn't want Ramsbottom to become a tourist town of cafes, take-aways, tatty souvenir shops, with litter ridden streets. He also reported that a group were interested in converting the old co-op building into a heritage centre, a space for local crafts-people to make and sell their goods and a theatre for hiring out. In the early days, the committee meetings were recorded on cassette tape, but were not kept as written minutes, whilst the public meetings minutes were kept. Today the public meetings minutes are not taken, but a summary of the talk is sent to the Bury Times and Rossendale Free Press, but the Committee Meetings are kept and are available for members to read. If a member would like a copy of the committee meeting minutes, just let me know

John Leyland - Secretary

NEWS

Lt Col A T Porritt's portrait In the last issue of the RHS magazine we reported the excellent news that the flood-damaged portrait had been fully restored and it has now been framed. The Society has arranged for it to be permanently displayed in Ramsbottom Library. Progress has also been made with our research. (see "Bunty Miller" article).

Ramsbottom Police Station, Bridge Street, has been demolished and the empty site is now looking neat and tidy. Permission has been granted for a building which will be in character with the surrounding area. The owner has retained the reproduction Victorian-style lantern which is to be displayed at the East Lancashire Railway museum.

THE SOCIETY'S INVOLVEMENT IN PROJECTS AROUND RAMSBOTTOM MARKET PLACE:

The Ramsbottom Urban District Council commemorative stone has had its faded RUDC emblem repainted. The stone was placed near the traffic lights in Market Place following local government reorganisation in 1974. The emblem is composed of a ram's head over Grants Tower, a weaving machine, a printing machine and a view over Ramsbottom of Holcombe Hill with Peel Tower – all enclosed by a blue circle.



Market Place's heritage board On 13th March local handyman Chris Mayfield installed a new Ramsbottom's Heritage information board in the Castle, Market Place. The original, provided by Bury MBC some years ago, had informed

visitors about the town's history, and illustrated with line drawings some of our more important buildings. Unfortunately, one of Ramsbottom's more modest life forms had cracked the board with its fist, and we have had to admire this damaged and graffiti-ridden survival for some years. Through the generosity of



Jenny Beech, a longstanding member who left the Society a substantial legacy some years ago, we have been able to step in where a financially straitened Council could not. We have provided a rather more substantial board,

with tiny amendments, and a very solid wooden frame on which to attach it.

The Society is grateful to Councillor Robert Hodkinson for kickstarting the municipal machine, Chris Wilkinson of Planning for navigating us through the complexities of amending the sign's content, and for Chris Mayfield for such a sterling job.

The telephone kiosk outside Market Chambers is not included on BT's list of call boxes for possible removal. In 2015 one of our members reported serious damage to the door and it was repaired. The Society's interest in the kiosk actually dates back to 1987 when the work done achieved its Grade I



The Society would welcome more information about Market Chambers, formerly Ramsbottom Urban District's Council Chambers from 1912 to 1970 (when a new Council Chamber was constructed at 2 – 4, Bolton Street). The building is one of Market Place's listed buildings. We published our research in Spring 2015 in RHS News Magazine 48. Briefly, it was built between 1842 and 1847 but so far we have nothing about its history until 1912 when RUDC bought it from Mrs E A Wild of Shuttleworth. We have been told that it was sometimes known as "Wilds' Buildings".

Ramsbottom's Lost Generation Part 2 1916 by Duncan Francis

A meticulously researched record of Ramsbottom's involvement in the Great War, told through the lives of those from the town who made the supreme sacrifice

NOW ON SALE

(Published by Ramsbottom Heritage Society)

This book costs £10 and is on sale at Ramsbottom Library, including on the second Sunday of the month, in the Ramsbottom Heritage Gallery, or direct from Duncan.

For details, please go to www.ramsbottomheritage.org.uk

Ramsbottom War News

Life in Ramsbottom during WW2

Available in seven separate parts featuring the years 1939 to 1945
ONLY £1 each or the complete set for £5

Published by the Society using information from
The Ramsbottom Observer and our archives

On sale at Ramsbottom Library
and via the Heritage Society website.

***War News* issues 1-7 have been our most popular publications ever.**

BUNTY MILLER

In Spring 2016, a portrait by Bunty Miller of Lt Col A T Porritt was donated to Ramsbottom Heritage Society by Voith Fabrics, Stubbins Vale Mill, Ramsbottom. (It had been badly flood-damaged along the lower edge.) Because of the Colonel's important legacy to Ramsbottom, the Society has had the portrait restored and arranged for it to be permanently displayed in Ramsbottom Library.

Only part of a signature could still be seen on the portrait but Society members soon established that it was painted by Bunty Miller (1919-1989). Via the internet it was discovered that there was a biography of this artist and we were then able to contact her son, Colin, who is a sculptor. He has kindly contributed to the following article and given us permission to publish his mother's portrait.



Bunty Miller in 1949
"Portrait by Lenare"

Colin Miller was born in 1943 in Simla, the second child of his parents who were in India, where his father was in the Indian army fighting the Japanese in Burma. The family returned to England in 1947. He seemed very pleased to receive our message with a photograph of Colonel Porritt's portrait attached. Surprisingly, he actually recognised it from his childhood days. His best guess is that he saw it in his mother's studio when he came in from school to the family home at Hynings, near Kendal. Sometimes his mother stayed at the sitters' homes for a few days and the studio was where she would often work on the background to her portraits. From the age of seven Colin was at boarding school sixty miles from home which may mean that the

portrait dates from around 1950. He suggests that the sittings for the portrait could have taken place either at the studio at Hynings or possibly at the Grange Hotel, Grange-over-Sands about seven miles away. (Apparently, it was for health reasons that Colonel Porritt, as he was known in Ramsbottom, moved away to live at Yewbarrow Lodge in Grange but it was closed up after suffering terrible bomb damage during World War II. It is reported that when he died in 1956 he was resident at the Grange Hotel.)

When she was born at her grandparents' house in Rhanikhet, a hill station high in the Himalayas, Bunty was christened Suzanne. Her father was Captain Guy Pearson and his father was an army general, both serving in India. Like most children whose parents served in India, Bunty was sent to a boarding school in England along with her younger sister Pamela. In 1937, aged seventeen and a half she was a debutante being presented at court by her mother and later that year she attended a Royal garden party at Buckingham Palace. After that one glimpse of the London season she returned to India. Her biography describes a beautiful fun-loving young lady who enjoyed the privileged domestic life of the Raj with riding, swimming, tennis, parties, balls, shoots, amateur theatricals and vice-regal ceremonies during her first thirty years.

It was when she was at Mount Abu hill station ball with a party of young people that she first met James Miller who was on leave from his regiment on the North West Frontier. In 1940 their marriage took place in Jaipur and was attended by many distinguished military and diplomatic guests. The Maharajah of Jaipur lent them his lakeside lodge for their honeymoon and afterwards they drove to a shooting lodge kept for the use of the Viceroy of India. Their first year of married life started in Delhi in a home consisting of two large tents with smaller tents for their four Indian servants and they moved to other army tents or bungalows, wherever her husband was posted. A daughter, Undine, was then born so Bunty and the baby lived with her parents in Simla.

Bunty Miller had only decided to paint professionally when she was a thirty year old housewife and mother of two children. This was after her husband, as Major James Miller, had retired from the Indian Army in 1947, India's year of independence. So many soldiers were coming out of the army that it was not easy to find a job. Bunty arrived in 1948 to live in England to face domesticity and a dramatically lower standard of living than she had enjoyed as the daughter and wife of Indian Army officers in the last years of the Raj.

In 1950, having lived in a small flat near Liverpool, the family's lifestyle suddenly improved when James's company promoted him to represent Guinness in an area from Liverpool to Scotland. Their new home at Hynings was where, finally, Bunty resolved to become a professional artist. Colin remembered Hynings clearly as a big house standing next to a meadow which could be crossed to reach Levens village. Its large windows had views across to Morecambe Bay. There was a separate farmhouse which was not close. Later the family moved to Witherslack between Levens and Grange.

Encouraged by local art collector Robin Bagot, owner of Levens Hall where she enjoyed viewing a wealth of fine paintings, Bunty exhibited in Kendal Art Society's Annual Exhibition in the Town Hall in 1951. The *Lancashire Evening Post's* critic chose her portrait *The Girl in the Green Scarf* as one of the finest paintings in the exhibition.

Bunty became a successful self-taught artist who was recognised for her wide-ranging talent: portraits, still life, fabric designs and book jackets. In the foreword to her biography, Sir Hugh Casson confirms that her favourite subjects were studies of still life and quotes her as saying, "A bowl of flowers doesn't chatter and has no relations saying 'It's lovely but there is something wrong with the jug handle.'" Her work was exhibited uninterruptedly for twenty nine years in the Royal Academy's Summer Exhibition and as a non-academician her pictures always had to come before a selection committee to compete against some twelve thousand entries for less than two thousand places.

Other subjects of her portraits include the Earl Peel (a great grandson of Sir Robert Peel) painted in 1950 and Countess Peel (who wore a magnificent set of emeralds valued at over £40K. They were later stolen from a safe deposit in London, never to be seen again). For Bunty's eighty fifth birthday portrait of the Earl of Lonsdale, who lived in Lowther Castle, sittings took place after lunch. One afternoon, holding his cigar, he was soon fast asleep and she had to act quickly to save the day. It was around this time that she had a stream of commissions.

We are very lucky that Colonel Porritt commissioned such an excellent artist to paint his portrait.

References:

Jean Goodman, *With Love From Bunty* (Parke Sutton Publishing Limited 1992)
Ramsbottom Heritage Society, 2008 *Nuttall Park and the Porritt Legacy to Ramsbottom*

GRANTS TOWER AND AREA

(written anonymously around 1992)

When I was a child I lived at Hoof Farm below Grants Tower. The next door farm, only a path and a field away, was Top o' th' Hoof. I wonder if today anyone knows that the knoll on which Grants Tower stood and the small area surrounding it was the shape of a horse's hoof, hence the name of these two properties.

In my day Grants Tower was open to the public at weekends price 2d, 1d for children, to enter and go to the top of that beautiful tower. The key was kept at the Top o' th' Hoof and the Turners who lived there were in charge of it; one of the sons, Ernest, was interested in electricity and used one of the rooms at the foot of the stone steps as his den. We children were not allowed inside that room but I now presume he used batteries – then I wondered how he could make the marvellous bright light that shone in that room when all we had were oil lamps and candles.

At weekends lots of people came up to the Tower bringing their children on picnics, even though Mrs Bertha Turner did serve teas in a large wooden shed near to her home. Also there were swings and a see-saw outside the farm and, up at the Tower, lovely woodlands. My father used to tell that when he was a child in the 1800s no-one was allowed to go into the woods. Woodmen lived in the Tower and were employed to keep things in order.

A friend of mine told me that her grandmother, who was called Nightingale, was the last child to be born in the Tower. One very stormy night when her father, who was the 'Woodman' was afraid that the Tower was unsafe, he took all his family down to Nuttall Farm, by way of Gollinrod, to his relatives who farmed there, and no-one ever lived in the Tower again.

On Good Fridays Grants Tower was open to the public and what a crowd would be there always, quite as popular as Holcombe is today. Of course people had to walk from the farms at Walmersley or up Jacob's Ladder or Bury New Road, or coming from Ramsbottom and surrounding areas. On this and other special days Mrs Turner had an old tramcar in the field above the swings and here sweets, pop and ice cream were sold. We as children were not allowed to go to the Turners on these special days as they were too busy serving teas etc.

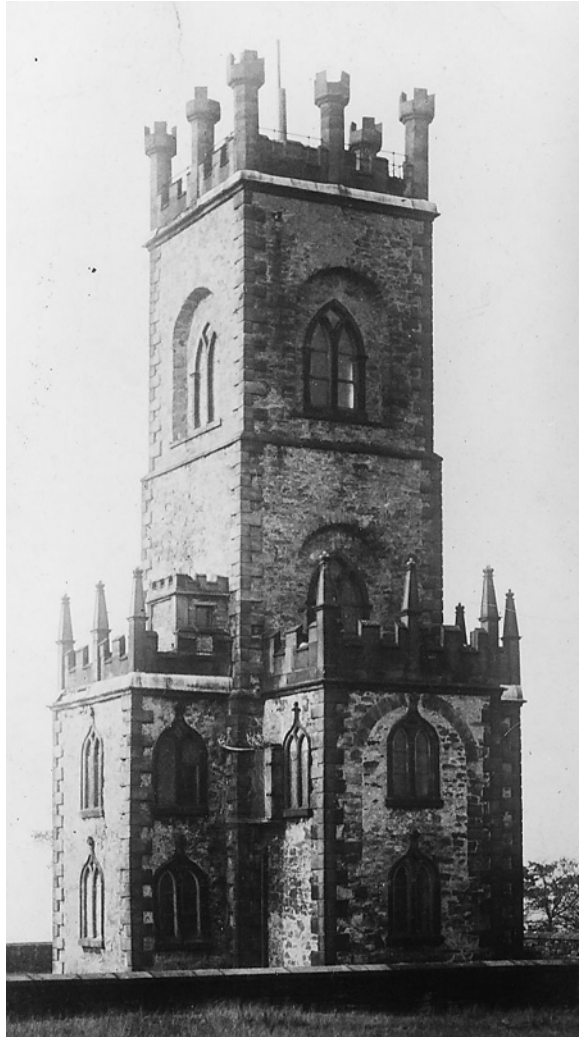
Now I am sorry to say the lovely Tower is no more and even the footpaths and cartroads seem to have been closed by one means or another so to get to the Tower

It is not too easy. I last went up the Tower in 1940 and I think that was the last time it was considered safe for use by the public.

The demise of the woods was put down to the fumes from the then Chemical Works, certainly the beautiful woods that I knew are no more and the tower a heap of stones.

Ramsbottom Heritage Society's "Ramsbottom Reminiscences" competition was launched early in 1992 with a view to attracting memories of the town and its surroundings from the "more senior" inhabitants. The "Ramsbottom Reminiscences" booklet was published by the Society in December 1992 and was reprinted a year later. The "Grants Tower and Area" piece which we reproduce above was a competition entry, among thirteen featured in the booklet, which is unfortunately no longer available.

In 1996 there were more "Ramsbottom Reminiscences" in Volume 2. In the fore-word editor Andrew Todd invited future chroniclers to send in articles, however brief, to be included in our twice-yearly news magazines. Over the years we have been very grateful to our contributors and we are always keen to welcome items for the magazine.



ANNUAL PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

The Annual Photographic competition has been running for 30 years, having been at the inaugural meeting on 8th April 1987, and this year 12 entrants entered a total of 502 photographs in 4 categories, one person entering one photograph, which won a prize, and one person entering 182. The judge was Barry Aldous who presented the awards on the evening. Barry started by describing how he had to sift the entries first into a shortlist of 10 for each category, and he had produced a slideshow of these entries which he showed to the audience. The competition winners were not necessarily the best quality photographs, but ones which reflected Ramsbottom in 2016, as all the photographs had to have been taken last year. There are now over 3,300 photographs on the Ramsbottom Heritage website which have been taken by 132 photographers.

The overall winner of the Dickensian Trophy is John Leyland for his photograph of Holcombe Hill taken on October 31st. This photo also won the Town and Country category.



The Town and Country category certificates went to Lynda Pedley for the Flying Scotsman in January in the snow and Alan Seymour for a view of the back of Holly Street and Beech Street.



Buildings winner is Ian Chapman for Nuttall Cottage – Highly Commended – Alan Seymour for a photo of scaffolding on a house in Holcombe Brook and Ian Summers for a Christmas lights shot of the old Co-op building in Edenfield.





The Events and Daily Life Highly Commended certificates went to Anne Shortt for a picture of the Flying Scotsman in January and Ian Chapman for the War Weekend. The winner is Daryll Spencer for the Flying Scotsman when it returned in October.



The Themes category (up to 5 photos on a theme). The winner is Ian Summers for 5 images of St Paul's Jigsaw Festival, with Highly Commended certificates to Daryll Spencer for 5 photos of Grants Tower being restored and John Leyland for 4 photographs of Ramsbottom Festival. There is only enough space to show 2 photographs from each theme.



GRANTS TOWER – A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Grants Tower on the eastern hills above Manchester Road, Ramsbottom was built by Daniel and William Grant in 1829 but this fifty foot high structure has been reduced to a ruin for seventy two years.

Whilst it will not be returned to its full height as the cost and the removal of much of the stone make this impossible, we are indebted to the current owners, Gary and Fiona Buckley, for undertaking work to reveal and stabilise what is left of the tower. Gary has dug away a huge pile of earth and stones from in front of the tower and cleared out the main ground floor room, where original flag floors, a fireplace and a staircase up to the first floor were found. Amongst the stones lying around the building he found enough suitably carved stones to recreate the lancet window to the right of the front door. The intention was not to rebuild the tower as too many stones have been removed over the years and it would be far too expensive. However Gary has rebuilt small sections of wall, just to stabilise parts of the original that were in danger of further collapse. Gary, a roofing contractor, has chosen to put a transparent roof over the central room to protect it.

There had been previous plans to look after the tower during the last 100 years. In 1914, after its first 85 years, it was still standing but considerable deterioration had taken place and a restoration fund had been set up. Unfortunately, two world wars prevented any progress. In 1943 Ramsbottom Urban District Council approached owner Sir Peter Grant Lawson with a view to taking over the tower and restoring it. The matter was left to be settled after World War II ended. However this opportunity was lost because the tower suddenly collapsed the following year on 21st September 1944.

GRANTS TOWER (Manchester Guardian 22.9.44) Famous Landmark Collapses

Grant's Tower, moorland landmark between Bury and Ramsbottom, which for the past two years had been closed to the public, collapsed yesterday afternoon.

The tower was erected in 1829 to commemorate the first visit to Ramsbottom of the Grant family, one of its industrial founders. The Grant Brothers, the originals of Dickens's Cheeryble Brothers in

“Nicholas Nickleby”, were supposed to have halted on the site of the tower when they came to the district for the first time.

Mr William Rothwell, a Walmersley farmer, (*of Bent House Farm – Editor*) was resting a hundred yards away on his way home when he saw the tower topple and fall with a great crash. “The whole tower collapsed into the courtyard, and huge clouds of dust poured down the hillside into the valley,” he said, “I was the only person around at the time and no one was injured.”

In the early days of the war the Home Guard had a post in the tower, which was closed by Ramsbottom Council in September 1942, until repairs could be carried out.

In 2006 there was concern in Ramsbottom following the news that the then owner of Top o’ th’ Hoof Farm, which includes the tower was removing stone, from Grants Tower. Tony Murphy, then Chairman of Ramsbottom Heritage Society, approached the owner who promised not to take any more. The *Rossendale Free Press* carried the story on 10th February 2006:

Derelict tower ‘part of heritage’

Ramsbottom councillors are hoping a derelict monument to one of the town’s founding fathers will be turned into a heritage site similar to Peel Tower.

Grants Tower, which was built in the 19th century and is located behind Manchester Road, has been in a state of disrepair for decades.

In recent weeks, Bury Council has been investigating the site following a report that a significant amount of its stonework had been taken.

A letter was sent from the Council to the owner of the tower to inform him of the possibility that the tower was an historic monument and that the stones were being taken without permission.

The incident has prompted the council to apply to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and English Heritage for listed status for the tower..... Mr Murphy said,

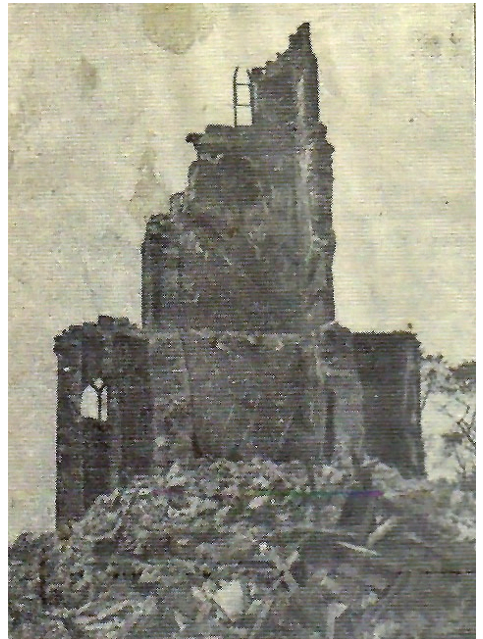
“It’s important as one of the town’s original developments and the society would like to see it properly preserved, and ideally, rebuilt.”

(More recently The Grants Tower Restoration Group – have started a petition to restore Grants Tower. On their web page they, say, “We believe that this important piece of Ramsbottom’s history deserves to be restored to its former glory.”)

Luckily, after buying Top O' Th' Hoof Farm, Gary and Fiona Buckley became intrigued by the ruin on their land and after investigating its history decided to do what they could to renovate it. It is thanks to them that Grants Tower will continue to commemorate the spot where in 1783, the Grant family first looked over the Irwell Valley after travelling from Scotland, and decided that one day they would return to Ramsbottom to create their textile empire.



2013



C 1944



2017

PORRITT & SPENCER'S WORLD WAR I MEMORIAL PLAQUE

Regular readers of our news magazines will remember that this memorial was erected in appreciation of those employees of Stubbins Vale Mills, known as ‘Porritt’s’, who served in World War I. In recent years the plaque was stored in the cellar of the remaining large mill building which now belongs to Voith Fabrics. It seems that it had been moved from its original position, believed to be on the wall inside the mills’ gatehouse, which is on the other part of the site now occupied by TNT (Thomas Nationwide Transportation). The plaque was donated to the Society in 2016 and we are seeking funding to restore it so that it can be put on permanent display.

On the basis of information and photographs we submitted with our pre-application, the potential funder advised that our project to restore the wooden memorial might be eligible for a grant. Demand for grants is high but we are hoping our full application will be successful. The list of names on the plaque is a Roll of Honour, which means that we can hope that many of those on it survived the war, as did **A T Porritt** himself.

R S QUINLAN

Sadly, research by Duncan Francis for his books (see our advert *Ramsbottom’s Lost Generation*) has established that **R S Quinlan**, who is named on the Roll of Honour, did not survive the war.

Slightly different versions of the man’s name have also been found:

War records have Private **Richards Quinlan** who was killed in action on 19th July 1915. He was born and lived in Ramsbottom and served in the 2/5 Battalion of the Lancashire Fusiliers.

St Paul’s Church memorial plaque, which is at the base of pulpit, bears the following inscription:

“This pulpit was erected in 1920 to the Glory of God and in loving memory of the men from St Paul’s Church and Schools who laid down their lives in the Great War 1914 –19” and lists twenty four names including **Richard S Quinland**.

The 1911 Census has **Richard Smith Quinlan** aged 21, who had been born in Ramsbottom, was single man boarding at 10, Dale Street, Stubbins. His occupation is given as a presser in a cotton manufacturing warehouse.

B. WILD



**PTE. BENJAMIN WILD,
5, The Park, Stubbins.**

Lancashire Fusilier Private **Benjamin Wild** (reg no 30043) of 3, The Park, Chatterton, Stubbins joined up in May 1917. He went to France in September 1917 and was wounded in April 1918. A press report of 3rd May places him in hospital in France and states that he had been employed at Messrs Porritt Bros mill, Stubbins. Although it had been decided that his injuries were “not sufficiently serious to permit of his coming home”, he died on 6th September aged 27 years. (*Ramsbottom Observer* 3/5/1918 and 4/10/1918)

The 1911 census has a **Benjamin Wild**, born in Ramsbottom, as a lodger with the Fraris family on Chatterton Lane. Earlier censuses suggest that he was staying in Ramsbottom itself: in 1891 Benjamin

Wild aged 3 months was with his aunt's family at 83, Gutter and in 1901 he was with the same family but at 55 Back Ramsbottom Lane.

A. DUCKWORTH

“Official news from Berlin” reported the death of Private **Albert Duckworth**, Farm Cottage, Stubbins. He was employed as a warper at Stubbins Vale Mill before enlisting in the Lancashire Fusiliers in January 1917. Later he transferred to the Motor Trench Battalion and was wounded and taken prisoner between 21st and 29th March in the big push. On 2nd April he died of his wounds in a military hospital at Brieg which is on the Russian frontier about 600 miles away. (*Ramsbottom Observer* 6/9/1918)

INCOMPLETE RESEARCH

D GREENWOOD

“Pte David Greenwood, Lancashire Fusiliers, son of Mr and Mrs David Greenwood of 2, Peel Street, Ramsbottom, has been wounded and gassed. Pte Greenwood worked at Porritt & Spencer Ltd., Stubbins.” (Ramsbottom Observer end 1917 eg November)

There are also War Records which need further investigation. They show a David Greenwood, Lancashire Fusiliers, Labour Corps Regiment Nos 14897 and 589763 was awarded the Victory Medal.

Also, in the Ramsbottom Observer (28/6/1918) is the following report:

“Bombardier J Lomas RFA, 8, Mint Street, Chatterton has been gassed and shell-poisoned and is in the 2nd Australian General Hospital, Boulogne, France. He was formerly employed at Porritt’s.” Again, more information is needed.

WE WOULD WELCOME ANY INFORMATION ABOUT THE FOLLOWING PORRITT & SPENCER EMPLOYEES WHOSE NAMES ARE ON THE PLAQUE.

J Ashton	J H Ashton	F Bentley	J Brennan
R Clegg	T Crabtree	T C Crawshaw	G Crook
J Day	E Diggle	A Duckworth	G A Duckworth
J W Duckworth	J Eland	J Facitt	C W Foote
D Greenwood	A Hargreaves	E Hargreaves	J Hawkins
R Hawkins	H Haworth	H Heyworth	J Holden
G H Horrocks	H Horrocks	J Horrocks	S Horrocks
S Howson	T Hoyle	A Hutchinson	J A Hutchinson
E Lomax	J Lomax	H Moore	G D Pearson
S Platt	A T Porritt	R S Quinlan	H Rushton
J Rushton	S Savage	T Savage	R Schofield
H E Scott	S Sergenson	A Smith	H Smith
W Smith	B Starkie	W Turner	J A Wade
A Warwick	F Westwell	B Wild	H Wolstenholme
Ellen Hartley			

MEMORIES OF RAMSBOTTOM'S PICTURE PALACES

George Ashworth (1902 – 1994) was a well-known local figure, working for the Ramsbottom Industrial and Provident Society from April 1916 and eventually becoming its secretary until he retired in 1967. He was one of our Society's earliest reminiscencers, committing his memories of our town to paper in a series of episodes. These were placed in various local history collections and we have recently uncovered the following item in the Society's own archive which is stored in state-of-the-art conditions at Bury.

At the time of writing, in 1989, Mr Ashworth had retired to Grange-over-Sands where he recalls some of the entertainment on offer about a century ago - the Ramsbottom 'scene'.

Listening to my taped version of the hymn "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord" by the Treorchy Male Voice Choir I was reminded of an event, many, many years ago when I was a young boy. (I shall just have to make a guess as to which year it was so I will say that it must have been between 1912 and 1915 when I was aged 10 to 13.) It was the very first time I saw "pictures" screened in a public hall. There was an admission fee but I cannot remember how much we had to pay, nor can I remember whether anyone else had gone along with me. The hymn was being projected, verse by verse on to a white screen in Ramsbottom Liberal Club. Many people attended the event which greatly impressed me and, I believe, the others in the audience. The hymn has always been a great favourite of mine since that time. I have no idea what kind of machine was used or what sort of power was used to light it.

Previously I had only seen the magic lantern, as it was called, in the Sunday School. Its slides were made of glass and the coloured ones must have been hand-painted. In the early days magic lanterns had oil lamps but later on the lights used were carbide (also known as acetylene and used for lights on cycles).

In 1910, the Blakeborough family built the Empire Picture Palace near to Ramsbottom railway station on Railway Street. I remember this building, known as the "pictures", being in use before the end of the First World War. In the early days the "films" consisted of stills and only black and white but before long they showed movement. Going to the pictures was very popular – people had nowhere else to go for this kind of entertainment. On Saturday afternoons there had to be special shows for a few coppers for children only. The great attraction was the

exciting music played by Charlie Heys to accompany the pictures on the screen. Many of the showings ended on a thrilling scene and “to be continued next week” and the story carried on week by week. The Empire was also the largest place for all kinds of meetings and was soon in great demand. It was used by Ramsbottom Amateur Dramatic and Operatic Society for stage plays, Gilbert and Sullivan, opera and similar types of show. From 1928 I took part in many of these shows. The amount of room backstage was very limited and the stage was narrow as the building was for showing films. Several years after the Empire was built a second picture palace was built just off Bolton Street in Smithy Street. Previously the site had been occupied by A B Duckworth’s funeral services. (I remember Mr Duckworth had some very smart “turn-outs” with black horses with long black tails.) The family continued to own and run the Royal. As time passed the type and quality of the films greatly improved. Along came “talkies” and then the “all colour” films and a new breed of people “film stars” came into being. The shows were changed halfway through the week. These early cinemas were having a high time and were well-supported. We had some wonderful films like “The Sound of Music” but after colour television came into being audiences gradually dwindled. Eventually Ramsbottom lost both of its picture palaces, as did many other towns. Later there was a fire at the Empire and it became a pile of stones. The Royal still stands and it has been used for various purposes over the years including a snooker hall and a club.

More of George Ashworth’s memories are available on www.ramsbottomheritage.org.uk (Follow link to Magazines). The articles are:

My Operation for Appendicitis, 1919 Ramsbottom Heritage Society News Magazine No 18, Spring 1999

Memories of Ramsbottom Central Co-op Ramsbottom Heritage Society News Magazine No 21, Spring 2001

Mr Ashworth’s article, *Memories of the Zeppelin Attack on Holcombe and Ramsbottom*, appears on page 20 of Ramsbottom Heritage Society News Magazine No 42 Spring 2014. This issue has not yet been put online but a few copies are still on sale (12 noon to 3 p.m., 2nd Sunday in the month at the Heritage Gallery).

(Ramsbottom is rightly proud of its Theatre Royal, home of the Summerseat Players. Their theatre is the original Royal picture palace, now transformed and extended into a very superior venue for the Players' widely acclaimed live performances. – Editor)

REAL2REEL CINEMA AT THE "ROYAL"

About 2010 cinema returned to the (Theatre) Royal when the Summerseat Players began to host Real2Reel Cinema's monthly showings with six films a season. The R2R team's film choice was based on whether the films sounded interesting and were well made. Unfortunately the last ever Real 2 Reel showing took place on Wednesday 25th January 2017 when "friends, supporters and even those who'd never attended before" were invited to take advantage of free tickets for the send off.

LOCAL RESEARCH

The Heritage Society cannot offer a research service. The following could be approached: **Bury Archives, Moss Street, Bury, BL9 0DG** email: **archives@bury.gov.uk** or tel: **0161 253 6782**

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

Tuesday	10 a.m. - 5 p.m.	Wednesday	10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Thursday	10 a.m. - 5 p.m.	Friday	10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
2nd Saturday of the month 10 a.m. – 4.30 p.m.			

Visitors are free to use finding aids, online archives resources or to speak to a member of staff but are advised to make an appointment if they wish to consult archive documents. Collections held include records relating to local authorities, public bodies, schools, churches, businesses, trade unions, political parties, sports clubs, social organisations, family papers, deeds, maps and plans and indexes to local parish registers including Ramsbottom. Our catalogues are online at **<http://archives.bury.gov.uk>** as 'Bury Archives Catalogue' We run an enquiry service, offering 15 minutes staff time free. For longer enquiries we charge £15.00

hour. The Ramsbottom Heritage Society's Collection, including photographs, is on permanent loan to Bury Archives.

Bury Local & Family History Service, Moss Street, Bury, BL9 0DR: information@bury.gov.uk or tel **0161 253 7047** has publications on local history, historical printed works of local interest such as trade directories, older OS maps for the whole of Bury MBC (including Ramsbottom), microfilmed copies of local newspapers including the Bury Times from 1855 to date, thematic collections of news cuttings worth pursuing for local biographies, census returns and parish registers (microfilm). Indexes for local church registers, including Ramsbottom are also held. A direct link to Bury Libraries catalogue (which lists local history items held in all the borough's libraries) is at **<http://library.bury.gov.uk>** - follow 'Libraries and Archives' and then 'Search the library catalogue'.

Free access to the *Ancestry* databases is available in all Bury Council's libraries. Please phone for details of other family history advice services.

Lancashire Family History and Heraldry Society; Membership entitles you to 4 magazine issues, an opportunity to publish your research queries and findings, and meetings each month with speakers at venues all over the county, including Bury and Rawtenstall. Also one branch in London. More information is available on **www.lfhhs.org.uk**.

Ramsbottom Library and Adult Learning Centre, Carr Street BL0 9AE tel 0161 253 5352

email: **Ramsbottom.lib@bury.gov.uk**

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

DANGER,

DEATH &

DISEASE

in Ramsbottom mills

*Textile Mills could be
dangerous places to work*

Exciting Exhibition

**Heritage Gallery,
Ramsbottom Library
During library opening hours
& 2nd Sunday of the month
12-3pm**

RAMSBOTTOM HERITAGE SOCIETY

WALKS PROGRAMME 2017

Guided circular walks held on the third Sunday of the month, see individual walks for the start times. The walks are led by volunteers with a particular interest in and knowledge of Ramsbottom and district, and are taken at a leisurely pace and are suitable for reasonably fit adults and children, dogs welcome. Sensible footwear and waterproof clothing is recommended. Please note that paths may be uneven. Be prepared for sun, rain or cold weather.

All walks start at 2 p.m. and will finish between 4 and 4.30 p.m.

Sunday May 21st	An Historical Saunter around the Centre of Ramsbottom. Learn about the development and changing face of Ramsbottom. Leader Andrew Todd, local historian. Very informative and entertaining. Meet outside the Grant Arms, Market Place, Ramsbottom.
Sunday June 18th	No walk due to lack of volunteers to lead
Sunday July 16th	Village link walk via Nangreaves and Grants Tower ruin. 2 mile walk via Mount Pleasant 'factory village' and remains of Grants Tower, ending at Park Farm. Lift back to start or circular walk. Leaders Barbara & Jon Williams . Meet at the Junction of Rowlands Road and Walmersley Road, Bury.
Sunday August 20th	Ramsbottom Mill, The largest in the Irwell Valley, Guided Walk by Kate Slingsby. An in depth historical walk looking at the history of the earliest mill in Ramsbottom built in 1802. Meet outside Ramsbottom Railway Station.
Sunday September 17th	2-3 miles Village link walk Greenmount to Walshaw. Country walk using part of Kirklees trail looking at the heritage of railway and mills. Lift back to start available . Leader Barbara & Jon Williams. Meet at Greenmount Old School, Brandlesholme Road, Greenmount.