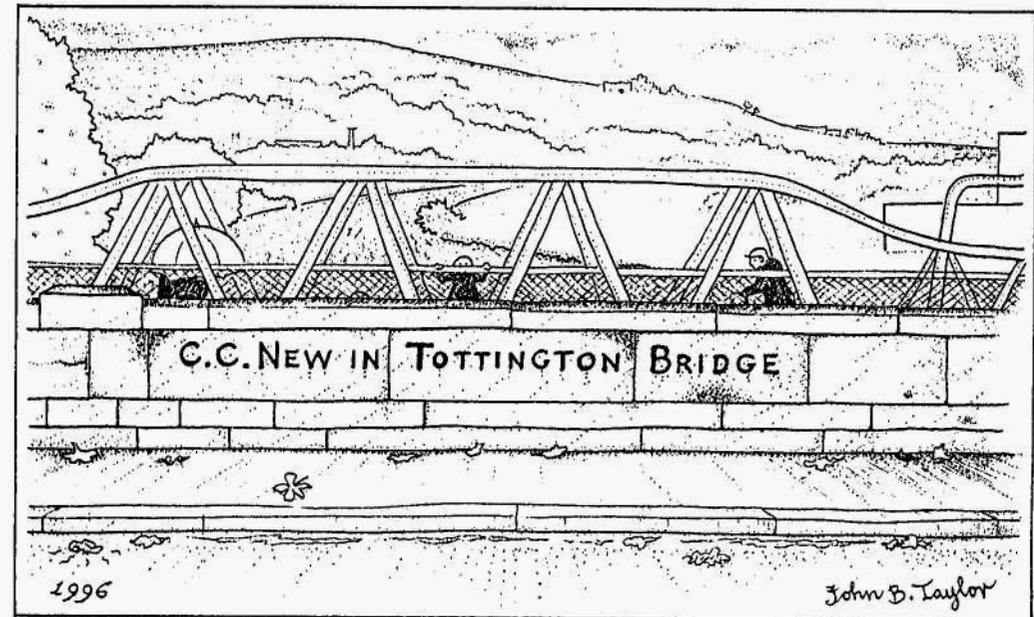


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NEWSMAGAZINE

**RAMSBOTTOM HERITAGE SOCIETY  
THE HERITAGE CENTRE**

**CARR STREET, RAMSBOTTOM, BURY BLO 9AE**

**Membership Enquiries please ring (01706) 828705**

**Other enquiries (01706) 821603**

The objects of the Society shall be:-

- a) To advance education of the public, by creating an awareness 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 artifacts. To retain, catalogue and/or copy them where possible, and to operate as an
- c) To seek to protect the heritage of Ramsbottom.

**1997 PROGRAMME**

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| Apr 16  | TENTH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION -<br>Andrew Todd, Brenda Decent and Barbara Park,  |
| May 21  | <i>Around Ramsbottom</i> (illustrated)<br>John Ireland, <i>Tales of Holcombe</i>                                      |
| June 18 | Winifred Rohmann, <i>The History of Freetown, Bury</i>  |
| July 16 | Terry Phelan, Guided Walk around Haslingden Grane   |
| Aug 20  | Tony Sprason, Visit to Bury Regimental Museum   |
| Sept 17 | Derek Mills, <i>The History of Hallith' Wood Museum</i>   |
| Oct 15  | Harry O'Neill, <i>Rawtenstall Past and Present</i> (illustrated)  |
| Nov 19  | (illustrated)<br>Nick Grimshaw, <i>Conservation in Bury and Districts</i><br>Miss D Fawell, <i>Christmas Memories</i> |

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

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Hillis 14	Oral History
Taping Project	Barbara Park

*FRONT COVER* - New in Tottington Bridge, Bolton Road North, Stubbins, drawn  
by John Taylor

**RAMSBOTTOM MISCELLANEA**

**George DAVENPORT** - we were sorry to hear of the death, on Boxing Day, of member George DAVENPORT of Whalley Road, Shuttleworth, aged 90. Very knowledgeable, and an inhabitant of the Ramsbottom district for most of his life, George moved to Shuttleworth in 1938. His help is acknowledged by Ian GOLDTHORPE, who wrote *Further Rossendale Rambles* in 1991.

A very active man, his extensive interests were widely reported in the *Bury Times* and *Rossendale Free Press* in the New Year. He had, until his death, been chairman of the Bank Lane Friendly Burial Society, an intriguing local survival of a type of self-help mutual society once very common in industrial areas. It is based at the Mechanics Institute, Spring Street, Shuttleworth where claims for Death Benefit can be made by members on the first Monday of each month, between 7pm and 8pm. It would be fascinating if someone could give us further details of the origins and activities of this intriguing society.

Cliff GASKELL of Elgin, Scotland, formerly of Dundee Lane and Summerseat, died in September 1996 aged 75. Members will remember his recollections which appeared in the last issue.

**Eric ROSTRON** of Bury New Road has also died recently, aged 78. A former laboratory worker and chemist at TURNBULL & STOCKDALE, he spent all his life (with the exception of war service with the RAF) in the town. Though not a Society member, he was a source of answers to many of our archives team's queries, particularly about locations and subject matter of photographs of the textile industry. He also worked extensively on his own ROSTRON family tree. A keen walker and bird watcher, he was a gifted artist, especially as a sketcher of birds.

Our thoughts and condolences are with the family and friends of these departed local people.

Oral History Taping Group - so far, two people have responded to my suggestion that, we must resurrect this important recording activity. Both non-members, they read Dorothy MOSS's account of our Christmas meeting in the local newspapers, proof that our press releases do gain us publicity. I would very much like some members to be involved in the group, whose inaugural meeting I hope to arrange soon. We particularly need someone with local contacts to collect names and addresses of Ramsbottom and district people willing to be taped. Anybody interested in any of these tasks - taping, name collecting or actually being taped - please drop me a line at the Centre, or telephone me on 01706 824511. For more on the importance of this project, see Barbara PARK's article on page 14.

Heritage Society News Magazine - but for the efforts of three unsuspecting contributors, impressed into authorship in the last few weeks, this issue would never have existed. Virtually no new items have been offered for publication since early 1996. Can I appeal to members to help - most of us have some reminiscences of the town, or small items of family or personal history.

Publishing in the Spring has given us a little leeway to make up content - it also removes typing, proofing and printing from the manic pre-Christmas period when everyone is so busy. The corollary - an Autumn edition - also makes sense, since it can be produced over Summer, when there is a little more leisure time for most of us. Perhaps this will be the best arrangement.

Do please contribute - the next solution will be dropping down to an annual issue, whilst the final one can only be suspension of publication.

Pinner's Close - The North British Housing Association's low cost housing project, which prompted so much controversy in the town (including a poster campaign against a ward councillor) is virtually complete. Late in 1996 its nameboards appeared. The Local Authority had approached our Society, in view of our providing names for *Ashton Lodge* and Great Eaves Road some years ago. The Reverend HUME ELLIOT provided the historical association of this northern end of the town in his book *The Country and Church of the Cheeryble Brothers* (1893) on page 112, and on his plan of the Old Ground, he refers to Chapel Field, which lay behind what is now the *Grant Arms*, and to Callender Yard (now the site of the Health Centre). 'A long building, wrote HUME ELLIOT, 'still existing as cottages between the yard and Carr Street, was occupied by those engaged as pinner's - ie, in putting pins in blocks and rollers. Thence the old name of the spot at the entrance from Carr Street to Callender Yard [viz now the opening into Central Street] - "Pin Roller Nook". This long building was described by Margaret FERGUSON in her piece in *Ramsbottom Reminiscences 11* - her mother's shop was at the Central Street end. Evidently, Pin Roller Nook though historical, was deemed a little too twee, whilst Chapel Field a touch too saintly - so we have Pinner's Close!

Christchurch - the communion service on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> January was the last time the Baptist/Methodist congregation will worship in this building, and the last hymn, appropriately, was *Guide me oh thou great Jehovah*. Soon, the building will be converted into luxury apartments, and fresh activity at the old Baptist chapel at the corner of Cross Street suggests that this too will soon undergo a similar conversion.

In contrast to Patmos and New Jerusalem, both will at least survive.

Andrew Todd

**Roy FISHWICK's valued donation to the Society** - Roy has given over 70 of his brilliant photographs to the Heritage Society. He lived in Ramsbottom after his marriage to Joan in 1944. They are now happily settled at *Porritt House*. After World War II he chose photography as his career. Much of his work was done from home.

He joined Bury and Bolton Photography and Camera Societies and was well known in his field and entered, successfully, many of his photographs in competitions. He became an Associate of the Royal Society of Photographers c1960.

We are planning an extensive display of Roy's work for the 1997 Centre Display, which opens on Easter Saturday 1997. You must see the photographs to appreciate the eye, sensitivity and mastery of his photography. We value him also as our Tuesday colleague, working with Joan to sort out the archive. (No small job!). His quiet humour and teasing helped to keep us going.

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## ARCHIVE ACCESSIONS, 1996

What a year! We have been given some fascinating photographs (filed in PHOTOARCH) and other items, not photographs (filed in MAINARCH) on the computer.

I'd rather not name the donors here as in the Christmas rush some may be left out; but all described here will be on display when the Centre opens on Easter Saturday - the donations, not the donors!

PHOTOARCH - we have two photographs of Edwardian Bolton Road West, one taken from Holcombe Methodist Chapel looking north and one from Hazelhurst looking north. How quiet the road seems, before the advent of motor vehicles; just the occasional horse-drawn vehicle, the clip clop of horses' hooves and workers' clogs, possibly taken on a Sunday as the ladies snapped seem to be in their best outfits. Also, same period, Bolton Street looking north from the Baptist Church.

At last we have a photograph of the Cycle Club so often mentioned, so little seen, also Edwardian.

Rose Queen or Ramsbottom Hospital Festival photographs of the 1905 and 1908 processions, hitherto unseen, have been given. The 1908 Rose Queen is seated on a 'throne' with a canopy above her on a horse-drawn cart passing St Andrew's (Dundee) Presbyterian Church on Bolton Street.

A postcard, very popular, with two pictures shows on the left Card Room No 1 Lancashire Cotton Mill and on the right a gorgeously dressed smiling lady, a millgirl on a Sunday. The caption is OH WHAT A DIFFERENCE! Dorned forged yo-or ow d pals; see you on Monday, eh?

There are a lot more 1995 photograph accessions better seen with their descriptions than without them. See the *Midland Hotel* Manchester in early 20<sup>th</sup> Century with a row of houses where the Central Library, built in 1934, now stands. We have copies of two coloured Victorian postcards 'Greetings from Ramsbottom' which we would

MAINARCH - of special interest is a postcard written 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1939 by Mrs MORRIS of 2, Major Street to the father of three evacuees. She assures Mr B HILL, 2, Leonard Street, Manchester: Your little boys, Alan, Benny, and Brian are at my house.

Mr Tom JACKSON, well known and popular performer in RADOS (Ramsbottom Amateur Dramatic and Operatic Society) gave us a valued collection of programmes and show reviews. We do not have a complete collection yet but hope to do more detective work in 1997 and will be grateful for further donations

Another postcard reads: Bonzo brings some lovely views from Ramsbottom. Attached to the card is a set of 12 tiny photographs of Ramsbottom in multi-folded strip format, c 1920s.

We do receive occasional donations of artefacts, though we have no room for any but the smallest. Recently, we have gained a wooden potato masher at least 100 years old and a reel of wire made by SIMMS Wireworks, Regent Street, now GEC.

Thank you very much to donors of all accessions and to members, especially Barbara

All offers of help welcome. Happy New Year

Brenda Decent, Can Bank Drive, Ramsbottom

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## THE TOTAL ECLIPSE OF THE SUN, 29th JUNE 1927

*Most eyes are on the millenium (either 1<sup>st</sup> Jan 2000 or 2001, depending on your viewpoint) as the next big calendar event, whereas in fact we are about to celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the last total solar eclipse visible from Ramsbottom. Barbara PARK has pieced together the story, with technical help from Joe CROMPTON, an eye witness account from Mrs Florrie BENNETT, and a contemporary report published in the Bury Times [Editor].*

As dawn broke on Wednesday 29th June 1927 crowds of people gathered on Holcombe Hill their faces turned expectantly towards the sky. The reason for their early morning vigil was a total eclipse of the sun which was expected to be visible from this vantage point. Although partial eclipses occur fairly frequently, they are only visible from a narrow strip of the earth's surface which is different every time which makes seeing a total eclipse a rare event.

The *Bury Times* of 2nd July 1927 included extensive coverage of the eclipse. 'Bury is situated . . . in the direct route from East and South for both Southport and the other towns on the western side of Lancashire which were suitable places from which to see the eclipse and those lying to the North - Clitheroe, Stonyhurst, Giggleswick, Settle, etc. As a consequence there was little rest the night before for those inhabitants who live on the main roads. Motor traffic was busy . . . both before and after midnight and did not cease until the period of contact drew nigh. Then, and only then, was there quiet on the King's highway.

The report also stated ' . . . Holcombe Hill offered a good view of the sun shortly after the commencement of contact. This was maintained, but not without occasional greatly to the disappointment of the spectators, the clouds closed over the sun's

position and obscured both the sun and the shadow which had come over it. The rush of shadow at the moment of greatest obscuration, and the hush which it set up, were very impressive, and when this was over the crowd began to disperse. The general feeling was that in spite of disappointment due to the withholding of the full spectacle, the sight had been worth the early rising and the stiff climb.

One of the spectators on Holcombe Hill that morning was Mrs Florrie BENNETT who vividly remembers making the ascent with her mother and aunt. Florrie recalls the scene: 'There were crowds of people there, all waiting for the eclipse . . . some of us were a bit nervous . . . we really did not know what to expect . . . they said if those two had collided it would have been the end of the world. As the moon covered the sun completely there was a strange atmosphere . . . everything went very quiet and the air was cold . . . it went pitch black . . . then it gradually came light again and we began to make our way down the hill. It would be about half past six by then. Florrie went home to breakfast but many people went straight off to work, some of them travelling by the electric train from Holcombe Brook station to Bury and beyond.

Florrie's apprehension about the eclipse was not unique. Historically many cultures have regarded eclipses as ill-omens and have associated them with natural catastrophes such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and famines.

The *Bury Times* also printed a statement from the Astronomer Royal, Sir Frank DYSON, which was issued within two hours of the eclipse. Sir Frank and his team were based at Giggleswick which had enjoyed the best view of the eclipse. He was sorry to hear of the lack of success at Southport and other places and had received information that nothing had been seen by the Greenwich observers in the North Sea. They were awaiting news from Sweden where Belgian, Russian, Dutch and German expeditions were stationed. The most striking thing about the spectacle as observed from Giggleswick had been its extreme brightness. The red flames were very noticeable. His party's observations had gone very satisfactorily and the film from the big camera had been developed and come out very well. The other photographs, so far as they knew, were all right but until they had been got home and developed, and their measurements made, they would not find out what the negatives had to show them.

The Astronomer Royal said that other expeditions would have been trying, like themselves, to get as good a photograph as possible of the eclipse and to do spectroscopic work. He also said that though the films taken at Giggleswick might not have much scientific value they had educational interest and he was pleased to see many boys and girls actually watching the eclipse. The *Bury Times* reported that parties of local school children had travelled by train and charabanc as far afield as Southport, Grindleton and Barton to observe the eclipse.

When a partial eclipse of the sun occurred recently it appeared on our television screens as it happened and even featured on the Internet, neither of which existed in 1927. As I write this (on my word processor!) the radio is announcing the departure of yet another space probe - this time to Mars - where it is due to arrive next July.

Ramsbottom Heritage Society has not missed out on the new technology. Our archives and membership details are now all on computer and one of our members,

Joe CROMPTON, has devised a computer programme which predicts both lunar and solar eclipses for any site in the world which, when checked against recorded eclipses in the past, has proved accurate to within a few minutes. Joe informs me that the next total solar eclipse visible from this country will occur on 11th April 1999 but those wishing to see it 'live' will have to travel to the far south of Cornwall. The observation and reporting of this eclipse will surely be a far cry from Sir Frank DYSON'S big camera at Giggleswick.

Barbara Park, Bolton Road West, Ramsbottom

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#### **A MEMORABLE SUMMERSEAT CHRISTMAS - 1944**

The most memorable Christmas for me remains that of 1944. Each year as Christmas Day approaches my thoughts invariably return to that particular special war time one - my final in Summerseat - and one I feel sure will never be surpassed. By luck, coupled with coincidence, the family was almost complete for that short period. Travelling up from war torn London came my eldest brother Dick with his wife, accompanied by another brother to be with us over the holiday. Two more brothers serving in the army managed to get leave thus, for the first time since 1939, we were together with the exception of brother Albert, also a serving soldier unfortunately unable to get leave.

The defeat of Germany to our minds loomed on the horizon, so we were determined to have a great time now that we had this grand opportunity of again being united - if only for a few short days. Sadly our planned re-union celebration was interrupted about six o'clock on the morning of Christmas Eve by the wailing of air raid sirens bringing with it the unexpected arrival of a flying bomb which, we learned later, demolished a row of houses in Chapel Street, Tootington, causing a number of casualties.

Came the morning of Christmas Day and whilst my sister with our mother remained behind to prepare and cook the Christmas dinner the rest of us donned our top coats and made our way up the slope to Higher Summerseat and entered the *Hamers Arms* where we appeared to create some considerable amusement to the village regulars. Dick had brought his accordion along with him and having made friends with the locals, was soon belting out some popular old tunes to the delight of all and soon we were dancing and singing and generally enjoying ourselves, although our dancing was somewhat restricted due to the shortage of space in the pub's tiny room. After an hour or so it was time for our return home, so with much slapping on backs and handshaking all round we said our farewells to the landlord and his merry customers who having recovered from their initial surprise were rather reluctant to let us depart and tried to persuade us to stay a while longer. But with our dinner awaiting us we bid them a merry Christmas and with some regret left the *Hamers Arms* with its hospitality and made our way back down the steps of the slope to Railway Street with Dick struggling with his bulky accordion and becoming a little unsteady on his feet having consumed a few jars. None of us were really habitual drinkers and having left the warm interior of the pub and coming into sudden contact with the cold fresh air it was obvious that the drink was having its effect, especially on Dick who had overdone his alcohol intake and upon reaching the house it was clear that,

for the time being, dinner would have to wait. The call went up for strong black coffee and a chair was placed outside the house for Dick and there he sat munching on a crust of dry bread which someone had recommended. However, he later recovered sufficiently enough to have at least a spot of dinner.

As evening fell, our party soon began to get lively with Dick, his accordion once again strapped to his chest, setting the pace for some good old style singing. The front room was even more crowded now as we had invited our next door neighbours Mr and Mrs DEWHURST to come and join in the fun. Doris DEWHURST, a jolly humorous woman with a heart of gold, had been exceptionally kind and considerate by volunteering to accommodate some of our guests in her home thus saving some of the revellers a possible cramped and uncomfortable night as we ourselves lacked sufficient accommodation for so many in our tiny house.

Our party continued well into the late night. Parties such as ours did not seem very commonplace in Railway Street because during the celebration there came a knock on the front door and outside stood two fellows. Complete strangers to us, who had the cheek to ask if they could come in to the party! We were somewhat surprised by this and our first reaction was - perhaps - this self invitation attempt was some kind of an ancient Lancashire custom! Somehow we managed a little tact and some gentle persuasion, to send these would be gatecrashers on their way.

It was indeed a great party and I thought at the time what a contrast compared to our first dismal Christmas in Summerseat four years previous when there were just the four of us then with very little in the way of food and drink because of war time shortages and restrictions.

But I'm sure our mother must have been very pleased and proud to have had her five sons and daughters with her once again on the Christmas Day 1944, 52 years ago.

Jack Whitford, Rydal Gardens, Wembley, Middlesex HA9 8SA

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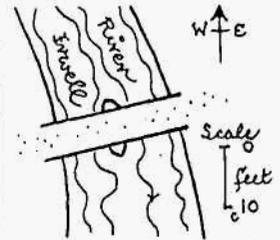
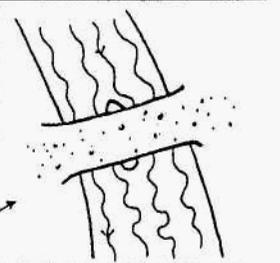
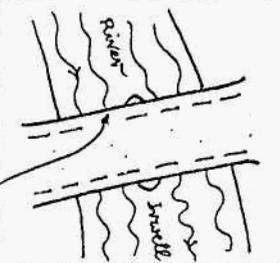
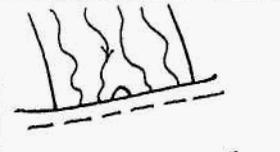
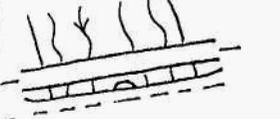
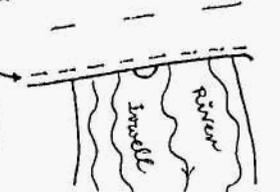
#### **NEW IN TOTTINGTON BRIDGE, STUBBINS**

George SCHOFIELD of Nuttall Lane wrote to John TAYLOR of Stacksteads last November with a query about the name inscribed in the bridge over the River Irwell at Stubbins, by Rose Bank. George wondered whether John's researches into such local inscriptions had uncovered why a bridge some three miles from Tootington village should carry the name 'C C NEW IN TOTTINGTON BRIDGE'. Many road bridges were widened and strengthened by county councils in the 1920s and 1930s, on account of the appearance (particularly after World War I) of motor lorry traffic. The reference in the bridge's name is to the township, Tootington Higher End, which encompassed Stubbins, Edenfield and much of the moorland to the east of the Irwell. John suggests that the name 'L C C NEW BRIDGE OR STUBBINS BRIDGE IN TOTTINGTON HIGHER END' might not have fitted on the parapet - hence the abbreviation.

John has used map evidence to illustrate the bridge's development (see overleaf). Can anyone add to its history?

Andrew Todd

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DATE ⑮ up to ⑲	Wooden bridge on stone pillar	
c1830 rebuilt 1844 O.S. map	two stone arches named ~ New Bridge or Stubbins Bridge Toll Bar nearby	
c1892 rebuilt 1893 O.S. map inscribed ~ C.C. NEW IN TOTTINGTON BRIDGE	two stone arches named ~ Stubbins Bridge	
	Look underneath. Compare upstream and downstream arch facing stones.	
c1910	bridge widened footpath reduced	
1964	iron footbridge	
1996	narrower footpaths	

The Development of Stubbins Bridge

John B. Taylor

### THE ORIGINS OF LANCASHIRE S WHIT WALKS

Few of us realised that our archivist, Brenda DECENT, has been a columnist for an eminent national broadsheet. Whilst acquiring a postgraduate library qualification she researched the above topic in the Central Reference Library in Manchester, and the following piece, reproduced verbatim, was published in the Manchester Guardian of 8<sup>th</sup> June 1957 [Editor].

### WHIT WALK AS A HOLIDAY FROM THE 'MANUFACTORY'

Thriving Sunday School anniversary by Brenda M WALKER

Whitsuntide means to many towns and villages of South-East Lancashire and its borders that the season of the "walks" is at hand.

I am Lancashire born and bred and have grown up with these elaborate street processions, a familiar annual event. I remember that as a child "walking day" was one of the days, akin to Christmas Day, a birthday, the first day of the annual holiday - great events by which the passing of the year was measured. I imagined that everyone shared the Whitsuntide festivity, so my disillusionment was severe when I moved to a county nearby and found incomprehension the main reaction to my description of the "walks", tinged with a tendency to regard the whole idea as rather quaint. Since then I have realised how limited the occurrence of these processions is, and how generally unheeded they are.

The "walks" sprang from the Sunday School movement, which was not limited to any part of the country but which caught on particularly in the Manchester area.

After the first enthusiasm for the schools in the 1780s had died down in many places, the Manchester ones went from strength to strength because there could be found, probably in greater numbers than anywhere else in the country, working-class children of the kind which had first given Robert RAIKES his idea.

These children, who worked under wretched conditions during the week in the "manufactories", were almost all completely uneducated, and on Sunday, the one day when they were allowed to run wild and free from all restraint, it is not surprising that they were lawless. To remedy this lawlessness, "to teach the children their duty to God and man" and not least to preserve their property, the clergy and leading citizens of Manchester and Salford started Sunday schools in 1784, which, with so much raw material to work on, were a great success.

By 1800 there were about 2,500 scholars in Manchester and Salford and the movement was spreading all the time. Up to that year the schools had been managed by a joint committee of Church and Dissent, but in May the alliance broke up and two committees were formed. On the evening of February 24, 1801, in the Star Inn, Manchester, the gentlemen of the Church of England committee came to a decision the results of which would stagger them today. To celebrate the first and subsequent anniversaries of their committee as an independent body they resolved "that all the children of the Sunday schools be called together to go to hear Divine service at St Ann's Church on Tuesday in Whitsun week yearly".

Later the details were altered and final arrangements are contained in a Sunday School Anniversary Committee Circular of May 15, 1801, in which

"The public are respectfully informed that it is the intention of the Committee of the Sunday schools in Manchester and Salford belonging to the Established Church to celebrate their first Anniversary on Monday the 25<sup>th</sup> instant, on which day the Children from all the schools will be assembled in the morning at nine o'clock in St Ann's Square and parade thence through the Market Place to attend divine service at the Collegiate Church."

This parading through Market Place was the first of the Manchester "walks". They began quite prosaically as an anniversary celebration, but there is shrewdness in the Rev C W BARDSLEY's description of the first walk in his "Memorials of St Ann's Church". He calls it "a very politic movement". There was quite keen competition with the Dissenters and a procession of 1,800 children formed a spectacle which attracted much public attention.

If the anniversary had been celebrated, as it may well have been, by a special religious service, then not much notice would have been taken of it. But the procession captured the imagination from the first and was remembered and talked about, and during the nineteenth century came to be imitated by schools in neighbouring towns and villages which had no possible connection with the Manchester anniversary celebration, but which chose to have a procession of scholars at Whitsuntide as a demonstration of faith and solidarity, because it was such an effective method and so popular with the people. It gave the schools tremendous publicity.

The fact that the "Walks" are held in such a small part of the country is, I believe, because they developed as a result of the direct influence of the Manchester walk in areas where the social conditions of the children were similar. In Manchester, when the committee was dissolved in 1839 and the schools were controlled by the individual churches, the walks went on, most people having forgotten the reason for their beginning.

The circular of May 15, 1801, also contains the following paragraph: "It will be esteemed a particular favour if such gentlemen as employ any of the above children in factories or in any other business will dispense with their attendance at the morning of the anniversary." This half holiday, which was generally given, was extended as the years went on. In 1813 the first Whit Week excursion of the Sunday school children took place and cheap trips to the sea and the country became as accepted a part of Whit Week in Manchester as the processions. A contributor to "FRASER'S Magazine" in the 1850s, a rather droll Southerner, describes a Whit Week visit to Manchester. By this time it had become the workers' annual holiday week. "The spindles are mostly standing in Manchester, and the heads are spinning instead". He writes of the morning of the procession:

"Here am I, a layman - one who never before in my life saw a Sunday school containing more than fifty children - here am I in some square or other, surrounded by clergy in canonicals, churchwardens with their staves of office, vergers in their gowns, and teachers and scholars innumerable. This is the gathering point for all the schools: fresh divisions all trooping up: banners are flying; bands are playing; bells are ringing. March is the word: we fall into our ranks, and away we move six abreast. Now the crowd thickens; enormous lorries are waiting on each side of the street till the procession has passed, while their burly drivers are looking on with

sullen resignation."

To-day the "walks" are not regarded so much as the harmless junketings of the working class and the children do not have to return to the grimness of factory life.

The processions are more splendid, in many ways, too, more artificial, as the children with the ribbons and flowers are arranged as a tableaux. The main features of the "walks" remain as they were a hundred years ago, however, and the drivers still have to wait.

The Church of England procession was the first in Manchester; the Non-conformist schools came to have the processions at an early date, but never with such united organisation. The Roman Catholic schools first "walked" in 1834, five years after the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Act, but it was not until 1844 that it was decided to hold an annual procession which is now held on Whit Friday and unrivalled in magnificence. To-day schools in the city suburbs hold their own "walks" as there is a limit to the number of children which can be accommodated in the main city processions, which now take more than three hours to pass. The "walks" are held by the various schools on different days in Whit Week in the towns and villages near Manchester. They have spread to the Cheshire border, to towns like Hyde, to the West Riding border, north to Bury, and west to Wigan and St Helens. In Widnes they have, surprisingly never become an established event, and in some towns, Warrington for example, Sunday School processions are held later in the year, sometimes in the wakes weeks.

*Brenda would like to bring the history of the Walks in the Ramsbottom Urban District Council area up to date for the next Newsletter. Some have declined since the 1950s, some still go on. Information from readers will be greatly appreciated. If you have any photographs of a 'last Whit Walk' we would be grateful for a loan of them for copying [Editor].*

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## HOLCOMBE HUNT

Members may recall references about six years ago to John JACKSON's silver hunting horn. JACKSON was huntsman to the Holcombe Hounds from 1867 to 1899 and his son, Samuel, from then until 1926. (See Kenneth BEETSON and Roger SHILTON, *Lets Look at Ramsbottom* (1987). Father and son are buried in Holcombe churchyard. The history of the Hunt is fascinating but beware, it is a minefield of mis-information, tradition, folk tales and plain romance.

The Holcombe has the distinction of being one of the oldest, if not the oldest pack of harriers in Britain. The earliest records date back to 1617 when on 12<sup>th</sup> August King James I, a keen and knowledgeable huntsman, arrived in Lancashire to see what sport the County could offer. He was the guest of Sir Richard de HOGHTON, of Houghton Towers, near Preston where he was entertained in a lavish and extravagant manner. All the gentry from miles around were invited to attend the celebrations and each arrived with his best horses, his retinue of servants and the pick of his hounds to provide sport for the King.

Amongst these knights was Sir Thomas BARTON of Quarlton and it is said that the Holcombe Hounds from the manor pack so pleased the King that they were sought out for special notice and their owner graciously given the Royal Warrant to hunt

over twelve townships, including the Royal Manor of Tottington and the privilege of wearing the scarlet and gold livery of the King.

That is why the Hunt staff and members still wear the scarlet coat today although in more recent times the gold lace has given place to buff cloth on the collar and waistcoat for the members evening dress. It is the usual tradition for harrier packs to wear green and the Holcombe wear their scarlet with great pride, an honour dating back for over 300 years.

Past masters of the Holcombe include John and Lawrence BRANDWOOD of Holcombe Hey (which is at the top of Hawkshaw Lane) and Robert Holt BROWNE of *Hey House*, Holcombe. This similarity of names has led to some confusion as to the siting of the early kennels although the first record of hounds being kennelled in Holcombe Village is in 1772.

John JACKSON was born in 1835 near Ashton-under-Lyne, his father Peter also being a great huntsman - all work was dropped to follow hounds. In those days the huntsman always went off on foot running with the hounds and JACKSON, when interviewed by Mr George ASHWORTH of Birtenshaw, Master at the time, boasted that he could run any mon i Lancashire!

It was during the mastership of Mr Walter MUCKLOW that John JACKSON was presented with the silver horn to commemorate his having been huntsman for 25 years. The presentation was made at the *Nab Gate*, Harwood, by Lord STANLEY.

JACKSON retired in 1899 with a pension of one pound per week.

Hounds were kenneled at Holcombe until 1925 when the present kennels at Kirklees, Brandleshome, were purchased.

The Holcombe Hunt country of the present day covers an area south of the Ribble and north of a line running through Rochdale, Bury, Bolton and Ormskirk. To the east the boundary is Whitworth and to the west almost to Southport. It is a large country of great contrasts, varying from the moorland of the east to the flat, arable lands of Tarleton and Much Hoole, an area of plough and deep ditches. A Holcombe horse has to be clever and very adaptable.

This area is the amalgamation of a number of hunts including the Rochdale Harriers, the Bury Hunt, the Bolton Hunt and the Aspull Harriers.

Whatever your thoughts about hunting, and it is easy to condemn, it was a way of life for many people in the area and it is part of our heritage and a tangible link with the past.

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Jan Barnes, Hawkshaw Lane, Hawkshaw

## CHILDHOOD MEMORIES OF EDENFIELD

I was born in Edenfield in 1923 at *Bank House*. My parents were Tom and Lena HILLIS whilst my elder sister Jennie still lives in Holcombe Brook. I have no memories whatsoever of *Bank House* except subsequently to discover its location. It stands at the top of Bury Road just after Bolton Road begins its descent to Stubbins and Ramsbottom. I remember that the row of terraced houses which stood between *Bank House* and George ALTEY's Mill was called for some reason, Nimble Nook. I have never discovered why. Perhaps other members can throw some light on

this?

The reason I have no recollection of *Bank House* is that shortly after I was born we moved to *Greystones*, a large stone house at the end of Eden Bank on Bolton Road.

exactly opposite TURNBULL and STOCKDALE's famous Rosebank fabric factory alongside the river Irwell.

My childhood at *Greystones* was a very happy one. I recall those days as being very much influenced by the activities at the Primitive Methodist Chapel on Rochdale Road. Both my father and my Uncle Alec were local preachers and much in demand on the local circuit. My father was the superintendent at the Sunday School, whilst my Auntie Alice who lived with my Grandma HILLIS at Eden Bank was in charge of the Primary. That is enough family background for the moment, enough I hope to give me an identity.

So much I remember about those early days in Edenfield. I made friends with the milkman, the butcher Edgar TAYLOR who used to delight me by giving me a little run in his van. His shop was in Stubbins. Going up the road towards Edenfield there are two housing estates on the left and I have very vivid memories of the old bone shaker trolley buses which rumbled up and down. You reached the Bury Road and continued up to the Market Place, passing *Acre House* on the left where the doctor lived and had his surgery. In my day it was Dr STRUTHERS. You finally reached the Market Place dominated by the *Rostrons Arms* (a prohibited area to nonconformists). I think there was a bowling green behind the public house. Next was a very posh sweet shop, HELSBEYS and then, much later, Melvin CRAWSHAW opened a pharmacy which was run by a gentleman called BARNES who had a speech impediment and could only whisper! Next to him was the butcher's shop which belonged to Willie ELTON. His shop was on the corner of the street that led to the recreation ground and to my Uncle Alec's house, *Chatterton Hey*. Carrying on up Market Street was Jim HOWARTH's shop where it was always a pleasure to watch this stately artisan attired in a long white apron and displaying his very waxed moustache, sharpening his knives prior to slicing the cold meats in a manner which I have never seen equalled since. Behind Jim HOWARTH's shop was Jim HOWARTH's bottom, so called because it was about two feet lower than the shop and where, if you had a penny or two spare you could get a delicious glass of sarsparilla, a real mecca for youngsters like us.

Further up the road the next shop was the greengrocer and I cannot remember who ran this but it might have been ONSLOWs. Then came the bakery, WHITTAKERs, followed by MAGNALLs, the fish and chip shop, a favourite haunt.

There were two fish and chip shops in Edenfield, the other one being HARTLEYs just opposite Edenfield church. Next to MAGNALLs was the newsagent where I eventually was allowed to buy the *Weekly Adventure* which came out on Monday and cost 2d. Beyond the newsagents was a haberdashers run by the sisters CHATTWOOD. The village constable lived almost across the road from them and lower down, coming back to the Market Place, there was a tiny little sweet shop. Gincroft Lane was next which housed the Working Men's Club. Back in the Market Place was HAYES, the grocers (Mr MEEKS?) and a little lower down FISHERs who made such excellent pies. Just before you reached the Wesleyan Chapel was the

cobblers, run by an excellent shoe repairer called LORD, who was also deaf and dumb. In the middle of the Market Place was Fred DEWHURST, the plumber, an imposing building, and behind him going down Rochdale Road was a remarkable string of cottages called Bacup Row.

John Garnett Hillis, 23, Fairfax Road, Bedford Park, London W4 1EN

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### ORAL HISTORY TAPING PROJECT

The Heritage Society is currently trying to revive the oral history group which recorded on tape people reminiscing about days gone by in Ramsbottom.

Some years ago a group of members made a number of recordings which have provided a mine of information about various aspects of life in the town. Memories of childhood and schooldays, life at home and at work even in recent years indicate how much life has changed, whilst our more senior citizens who can go back even further paint a picture of a very different town - both in the way of life of the people of Ramsbottom and changes in the landscape and the town itself.

At the Christmas meeting of the Society one of the tapes was played. At the time the recording was made the memories probably went back about 30 years, which may not seem a lot in historical terms but it is now already ten years since that tape was placed in the archive and in another ten years the memories recorded will be of a time half a century ago. Additional references were made to the parents and grandparents of the interviewee and other more elderly, even deceased people, and events that they had experienced.

In the past decade alone Ramsbottom has changed almost beyond recognition - old mills gone, houses modernised inside and cleaned up on the outside revealing stonework which has been hidden under the grime and soot of the industries which have now disappeared or, like many of our churches and chapels, converted to other uses. The railway which played such an important part in the industrial development of the last century is now revived as a tourist attraction. Many people who have lived and worked here all their lives still find it hard to comprehend that their town is now a tourist attraction and many of the shops where they bought their everyday necessities now replaced by craft shops and cafes.

People who can remember Ramsbottom 20 or even ten years ago have an invaluable store of information to pass on to future generations and those who can remember the war years, and earlier time such as the 20s and 30s have even more interesting tales to tell. As important as the major events are the recollections of games played as a child, the sorts of food people ate, the clothes they wore, where they went on holiday or what they did instead when this was not possible during war time or times of depression.

To preserve all this information on tape requires time and effort on the part of both interviewer and interviewee but it is a very worthwhile task. As a member of the original taping group (but unfortunately with insufficient time to carry on due to other Society duties) I can say that every time I have taped anyone I learned something new about life in Ramsbottom. Many of the people have later said that photographs and documents and donate them to the archives as an additional

reminder. Some have even been inspired to contribute to our *Ramsbottom Reminiscences* or this Magazine. But this is a bonus for posterity! Right now we would just be so pleased to hear from anyone who is willing to record or be recorded. If you would like to help to put Ramsbottom on the record either by taping or remembering or would like more information please contact Andrew TODD on 01706 824511

Barbara Park

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### SOME RECOLLECTIONS OF LOWER BRIDGE STREET

With reference to the article in News Magazine no 13, Mary Jane Cissie LOMAX, Milliner of Bridge Street - in 1931 my father, Arthur CHADWICK, took over the business at 16, Bridge Street from the HOLDEN family. It was a News Agent Stationer but later he sold Sports and Fancy Goods as well. At no 18 was a Chemist, no 14 was a Baker and Confectioner owned by Miss Polly BARLOW, and I well remember the Milliner's at no 12 owned by Mrs LOMAX. In the small side window there was always a selection of black hats suitable for funerals, but in the large window a varied selection, some designed and made by Mrs LOMAX herself, was displayed, straw hats in summer and felt or fur in winter. A curtain was drawn behind the hats in the large window, which made the shop rather dark I remember. When one pressed the latch and pushed open the door there was a jangling sound and then Mrs LOMAX would appear. There was a daughter, Connie, and as a child I would sometimes go to play with her. We enjoyed dressing dolls from a wardrobe of clothes she had made from remnants of material.

In those days the Post Office was next to Martins Bank across the road, and a public house the *Railway Hotel* was on the corner. At the back of our shop, not very far away, were Union Street and King Street, a row of back-to-back terraced houses, which were occupied until a new estate was built on Peel Brow Playing Fields in the later 1930s. Our shop premises had interesting features such as the attic in the eaves where I sometimes did my sewing, and the two cellars. One cellar was for storing coal delivered through a man-hole in the pavement outside, and the other was referred to as the Ink Cellar as it contained shelves of large earthenware jars and smaller bottles of ink. The larger jars would be used for supplying schools in the district. At the beginning of the War the Ink Cellar was cleared and became the Air Raid Shelter with bunks installed by my father. The living room has now become part of the extended shop area but the frontage is much the same, although perhaps the stone step of the doorway is a little more worn.

Edna Collier, 61, Caughall Road, Upton Heath, Chester CH2 1LP

*No 16 Bridge Street has an interesting history. It was a traditional newsagents as recently as 1991, run finally by the DAWBERS, and (until 1989) by AE and MV HOLMES. Now 'Card Talk', it has had continuity of usage since at least c1851, when the highly respected and one-armed James HOLDEN, schoolmaster at St Paul's, began a newsagent's and stationery business. His son, Thomas, later of Callender Street, wrote of his boyhood at no 16 in the Ramsbottom Observer in 1924, and commented - even then - that their shop had been 'about the only one in the town which for so long has been conducted by the same firm and on the same premises.' (Editor J.)*

### COMPOSITION AT ST PAUL s, 60 YEARS AGO

*Edna Mary HOLDEN, who died in 1983, was a sister of member Doris HIBBERT and was born in 1928. These are extracts from her St Paul's Day School Exercise Book. These essays were written when she was eight or nine years old in handwriting. She is pictured as a baby in 1928 posing on her father's motorcycle in Crow Lane, on page 36 of our book Around Ramsbottom [Editor].*

#### 15 " January 1937 MY CHRISTMAS STOCKING

I like Christmas, do you? I was so excited when Christmas Eve came. I hung up my stocking and went to bed. I slept until a quarter to seven. Then I switched on the light and found that Santa Clause had been. Then I called to mother and asked her if I could look at them. She said that I could. There were a lot of presents, two books, two pet stories, a manicure set, a pair of gloves, a fountain pen, a milk churn filled with chocolate drops, and many other things. My mother got eight boxes of chocolate, and my dad got cigarettes.

#### May 27"1937 CORONATION DAY

On Coronation Day I had on one of my print frocks. After breakfast I washed myself and brushed my hair. Then I went to church with my Daddy. When we came out, I went to school for my dinner. I had two helpings of potato pie, a cake, and a cup of tea. After dinner we went to the park. We saw Punch and Judy, and had ice-cream and dandelion and burdock. Then we had our tea. We had a bottle of milk each, and a parcel which had in it a cake and a meat pie. After tea we did a country dance. When we reached home it was eleven o'clock. My Auntie Maggie slept with me that night, and altogether I had a very happy Coronation Day.

Edna Mary Holden

