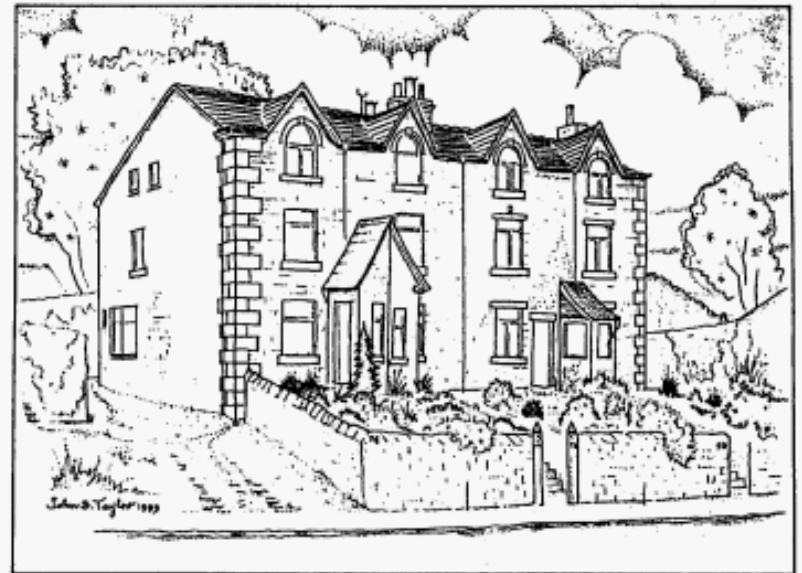




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RAMSBOTTOM HERITAGE SOCIETY

THE HERITAGE CENTRE

CARR STREET, RAMSBOTTOM, BURY, BU 9AE
Telephone: RAMSBOTTOM (01706) 821603

The objects of the Society shall be:-

- a) To advance education of the public, by creating an awareness of and interest in the study of the history and heritage of Ramsbottom (as defined by the boundaries of the pre-1974 Ramsbottom Urban District Council).
- b) To locate relevant documents, **records and artefacts. To retain, catalogue and/or copy** them where possible, and to operate as an information centre.
- c) To seek to protect the heritage of **Ramsbottom.**

1999/2000 PROGRAMME

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 16th June | Mr Melvin Magnall - <i>To America (Bury - Woodbury Project)</i> |
| --- 21st July | Mr Terry Ashworth - Guided Walk around Burrs (meet at Centre in Can St at 6.45pm prompt or at Burrs Country Park at 7.00pm) |
| o 18th Aug | Mr Kevin Mulley - Visit to Archives now housed in Bury Meet in Edwin St at 7.00pm |
| 15th Sept | Mr Ian Toothill - The Lighter Side of Policing |
| 20th Oct | Mr Ken Craven - Tom Dobson, Salford Artist (Illust) |
| 17th Nov | Miss Margaret Curry - In the Steps of the Brontes (Illust) |
| 8th Dec | To be arranged |
| 2000 | |
| | Mr Barry Aldous - Ramsbottom's Bronze Age Cemetery (Illust) |
| 19th Jan | Mr Dave Edwards - The Art of Bird Ringing (Illust) |
| 16th Feb | |
| 16th Mar | Photographic Competition judged by Clare Altham Also short talk on Roy Fishwick's Ramsbottom (Illust) |
| | Mr Alan Seymour - Pace Egging in Lancashire |
| 19th Apr | Annual General Meeting |
| 17th May | |

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

Entry by donation, please.

CONTENTS

Page

1	Ramsbottom Miscellanea	Andrew Todd
2	A Rough Summary: 2: Play and Work	Frederick Ashworth Hanson
5	The Nightingale Family of Tockholes and Shuttleworth	David E Jackson
9	Chapel Houses, Shuttleworth: the Mystery of the Lost Graves	Andrew Todd
13	My Operation for Appendicitis, 1919	George Ashworth
15	The Hospital Experience, 1937-48	Doris Hibbert
16	The Children of Queen's Place, Summerseat	Eileen Collier

FRONT COVER - Bank Lane Chapel, Shuttleworth, converted to private housing in the last century. Sketched by John Taylor

RAMSBOTTOM MISCELLANEA

Demolition of the Prince's Foundry - by January 1999, after attention from several earth movers, the site for the future North West Co-op was as clear and flat as it was in the middle of the last century when it constituted the north west corner of Great Meadow, and accommodated Richard SCHOFIELD and son's cows from Crowtrees Farm (see William Hume ELLIOT, *The Country and Church of the Cheeryble Brothers*, pages 107-9).

It will be interesting to piece together the progress of work on this Prince Street/King Street/Palatine Street/Irwell Street plot of ground from entries in 1998 and 1999's photographic competition. In mid-November, METCALFE Brothers' hideous corrugated brown plastic shed which for years has scarred the corner of King Street and Prince Street started to come down. Unfortunately, what I and probably a lot of others had not realised was that the North West Co-op plans did not envisage any role for the original STRANG Foundry building next to it. The roof was off by 15th November, and the whole site completely cleared by early December. Fortunately, one or two local minds reacted quickly - Ken BEETSON reminded us of the lintel over an internal doorway (see our News Magazine, Winter 1994-5, No 10, Page 10). This dates the building exactly:

JOSEPH STRANG ENGINEER RAMSBOTTOM 1882

Via Nick GRIMSHAW, the Conservation Officer, I contacted the project manager, Ratcliffe-Groves, of Prestwich, who assured me that the lintel would be reused in the new building. Subsequently, they confirmed by phone that it was in store awaiting the new use.

But it is a sad loss of one of Ramsbottom's older industrial buildings. Many of us thought that the foundry was safe, after Peel Brook Development transformed it into Peel Mill, aping the very successful Ponden Mill near Haworth. Unfortunately, management was distinctly unimaginative - you could pass through Ramsbottom Station on the train without knowing the place was there, and the original idea of coaches running there specially, as at Ponden, never happened.

METCALFE Brothers, incorporated on 18th May 1938 (according to their audited accounts) had traded as a wood mill producing baking trays. As plastic replaced wood, METCALFEs moved around 1985 into making pasting tables, delivering to a buyer at Downham Market, Norfolk. The company ceased trading in 1991, making about 50 workers redundant. Despite a brief renaissance as Ableaim, the enterprise sank without trace in 1992.

Our society was delighted at the prospect of the building's proposed 'heritage' use as a retail mill, and a lot of money was invested in 1993-4, not least on recobbling Prince Street! We were less pleased at the planning application including use as a heritage centre, and inspired by the late Mavis HOMEWOOD, our vice-chairman, we rebuffed the possible challenge to our position!

The society needs to be vigilant about the diminishing architectural heritage of the area. Other buildings may be threatened, especially if the immediate town centre enjoys the economic benefits associated with similar regeneration. We need to consider how we are to keep a check on future planning applications, to ensure that we can lobby for preservation.

Two Gates, **Nuttall Lane** - thanks to Tom BARRETT, who has told me that this field, the site of the town's first floodlit football match, in 1878, was in the vicinity of the Ramsbottom Cottage Hospital. See the last News Magazine, pages 5-6.

The Committee - new members are welcome. If you would like to discuss what is involved, please ring the Chairman on 822620. The Committee meets every two months, the next dates being 26th May and 28th July 1999.

Andrew Todd

A ROUGH SUMMARY: 2: PLAY AND WORK

Fred HANSON's recollections of his childhood in Ramsbottom in the inter-war years appeared in our last issue. In them, he concentrated particularly on his schooldays at St Andrew's. Here, he describes two traditions which do not seem to have survived the War years - Pace (ie Peace) Egging, and the Holcombe Fair,

which has degenerated into a residuum. Of fast food stalls at Holcombe Bank, where the main track up the hill meets the foot of Moorbottom Road. Then he explains how he was introduced to the world of work in the shape of the little known Ramsbottom Relay Company - Editor.

Play

Nicknames - I was 'Stonewall' - bat all week for 50 runs; my brother Tom was Calamity - always in trouble; Tom BROOKS was 'Brooky'; Jack HOWARTH was 'Boot Lace'; Jim MILLS - 'Millie'; James Aubrey Greswell PENNY was 'Shorty';

Bill HARRUP, an Everton supporter, was 'Toffee'; Fred KNOWLES used to plonk (ie box) and was 'Crackers'; and Paddy KAY was the junior gang leader - 'El Cid'. In the 'Gutter Gang' was Harry KNOWLES - 'Froggy'; Harry HITCHEN - 'Tadpole'; Jack LEDGER was 'Legs'; Bill MARKHAM - 'Garth'; Harold LODGE - 'Distant Drums'; Mary POWELL - 'Delilah'; Winnie Fox - 'Tommy'; and A HEAP was

'Piles! Margaret WESTWELL always called for my sister Florence on her way to school, and she went on her own. Upper crust, she lived up the Gutter, only child her Mother and Father were weavers, both working.

From about nine years old, on Friday before Good Friday we used to go pace-egging. Friday was pay day! We blacked our faces, got or scrounged old clothes, hats, howlers, straws etc and dressed in same. A mouth organ if we had one, music on one level flat and a semblance of rhythm. We all sang after knocking at the doors. Various songs:

We're coming round a Pace-Egging,

To see what you will give,

And if you give us nothing,

We'll wonder how we'll live.

We've been to the East

We've been to the West,

We've been to the Isle of Man-o etc

Also I'm a Collier by trade, 'Hop, hop, hop to the Butcher's shop, 'When it's Springtime in the Rockies and lots lots more!

Start about 7pm and do the topside of Ramsbottom - the raised houses at the top of Rostron Road, and worked our way to Tanners and the Foot of the Rake, big houses

up Holcombe Village on Monday and Tuesday; Wednesday Cunliffes; up Springwood opposite Top Lodge and through the wood, an odd farm like Rawcliffes, drop onto Stubbins Lane and this side of the tram shed working our way to Can Street. There'd be five or six of our gang. We'd miss out Saturday and Sunday (a lot out). Most places we were made welcome, and given 2d to the odd shilling. Threepenny bits or a tanner. Big houses back door - the maid gave us cakes and pop, and occasionally boiled sweets. We split the money each night about half nine, as if one kept it he might need a pair of clogs. We all had our own hideaway. Even though we were all honest. Mine was under a sod in a Bruno tin. We did about 10 nights and finished up with about 5s Od each, this was to spend at the fair at the foot

of Holcombe Hill on Good Friday, all along the path and hillside. Roll-a-penny, roundabouts, ring board, darts, Find the Lady, crystal ball, boxing booth, ice cream, sweets, home made pies, muffins, cakes, hot potatoes, black peas, bottles etc. Then up to the Tower and to the top for 2d, 1d for children. We all used to spend up. Saturday, get on the Hill early and if you didn't find 20 pennies you were unlucky. People were going up Carr from 9 o'clock to the Hill. They came from Bury on the electric train to Holcombe Brook. We came this route from Salford in the 1950 and brought a couple of Salfordians who thought the Hill, the Fair and the Tower were wonderful. From the War years the custom of the Holcombe Fair faded away, probably

due to the car. When did they cease? No sign or trace of the Fair by the 1960s.

In the 1920s and 1930s, clog dancers came to Holcombe Hill from Britannia, Bacup, clog dancing for miles, travelling between the towns by horse and cart, and later by an old bus or charabanc. They came through Edenfield and Stubbins and Ramsbottom, and were known as the Bacup to Ramsbottomers. They'd come up Carr Brow about 1 o'clock, up to the *Shoulder of Mutton* for dinner, prior to the Hill.

Flying a kite off the hill, seeing Blackpool Tower from the top of the tower, all simple things but far more attractive than present day so called pleasures. Other attractions were camping and catching trout by tickling.

Work

At school were me, my sister Florence, and my brothers Tom, Peter and William. Another brother was Maurice who caught measles on 16th October 1932. Tom, Peter, William and myself were collected by Mr BOARDMAN and sent home! I never

went back - I was 13, and had to leave school This enabled me to get a job before Christmas doing eight weeks at the Radio Relay Station, a cabin at the bottom of the Rake. Inside were two large bench-like tables, each about six by five feet, with a radio receiving and sending set on each, a mass of valves, condensers, resistors,

wires, amplifiers etc. Wires ran from these to poles outside and from there via poles down to Bridge Street, covering Ramsbottom, Shuttleworth, Edenfield, Ewood Bridge, Helmshore and Summerseat. We put a speaker in a house and ran two leads in from poles to a two way switch on your window sill with your speaker, provided for your choice - Home Service and one other, charge one shilling a week. Good money from here, 15s 6d a week and 5s Od extra for every customer you got. I got a shilling a week pocket money. I started work here in November 1932 and worked for

10 weeks.

Ramsbottom Relay Station was managed by a Mr MONKS, who supervised twice a week. There was him and I and four polemen, and a Mrs KAY who collected round the area. Wireless sets were in their infancy in the 1930s.

It was a short walk from Carr Fold - I kept the cabin clean, supplied wire, poles, nuts, bolts etc to the workmen as required. Kept records of same and when Australian cricket was on, was there before lam. An interesting job.

At this time, actually from being 10 after school and during school holidays I went to Granddad s and wrote postcards and letters and cheques for him to carry on his business, also working in his shed and sometimes going to Shudehill on train from Ramsbottom to see Jacob RAINES, a Jew who said Fred HANSON was the most honest man he knew.

After Christmas 1932 and the relay station, Squire WEBSTER, a railwayman, came to 7, Can Fold and said they wanted a lad at Bury South signal box. Probably a mate

of my father - he lived in Back Can Street and had an allotment which I helped him with and when in season we got the odd lettuce, spuds, tomatoes and onions. So I started there in January 1933. The railway, the LMS - a job for life in that era. 15s Od a week; six days, 6 - 2 then same 2 -10, so soon got used to working Saturdays. Stoppages Id hospital fund and 2d national insurance. Early turn, catch the 5.47am train from Ramsbottom. With 10 or 11 in one bedroom, the alarm at 5.00 woke

everyone, pot of tea, cold water cat lick and off.

Working shifts on the railway, one gradually became accustomed to being free all morning or afternoon and evenings and to work 9 to 5 would be a bind. You could do half a day s work before going to work. At the age of 14/15 one could learn anything.

In the Rossendale Valley, at Rochdale, Bury and Middleton, one of the signalman s jobs on the 6am to 2pm Saturday shift was to empty the chemical toilet. You did this by digging a hole about three foot deep, about 50 yards away from the box, at the side of the track. There was not a great deal of enthusiasm for the Saturday early turn. A further advanced toilet was the tippler - about three foot below the seat was a see-saw, which tipped as used! Ilex Hall Carr signal box tipped into the River

Irwell, Smedley Viaduct box tipped into the River Irk. I sat on this toilet late one night stroking the cat, sat at the side of me. After a few moments, it turned its head - I was looking into the eyes of a large rat. I jumped off the seat, fell over my trousers. The rat panicked and over my back etc and down the steps into the River Irk. I shot

Fred A HANSON, 50, Central Avenue, Birkdale, Southport PR8 3EQ

It seems possible that the Mr MONKS who managed the Ramsbottom Relay Station was the James MONKS of 236, Whalley Road who, according to KELLY's Lancashire

Directory of 1924, was Income Tax Collector for Ramsbottom, Walmersley and Tottington. Perhaps somebody could write in to explain what they know of the collection system at that time - if it involved any degree of house to house work, then this could explain how Mr MONKS became involved in collecting subscriptions for the youthful wireless service in Ramsbottom.

Coincidentally, Bury South Signalbox, where Fred began with the London, Midland and Scottish Railway in January 1933, is about to enjoy full scale restoration at the hands of the East Lancashire Railway. The 65 lever frame box will operate semaphore signals and points to control all train movements into and within Bolton Street station.

It is a condition of the grant package that the ELR is receiving in connection with its Heywood Extension that signalling is reintroduced to Bury by December 2000. Currently, Ramsbottom is the only portion of the line to have been signalled. Editor

THE NIGHTINGALE FAMILY OF TOCKHOLES AND SHUTTLEWORTH

I thought Grants Tower was a folly! said a gentleman to me during one of my genealogical fact-finding visits to Ramsbottom and Stubbins. Folly or no, Grants Tower, built in 1828 on a bluff behind and above Park Chapel by William and Daniel GRANT following their journey to England from their Scots home on Speyside, was the home of my great great grandfather Edward NIGHTINGALE, woodman to the GRANT brothers, and the birthplace of his eldest son.

The NIGHTINGALEs, however, did not originate in the Ramsbottom area, but can be traced back to one James NIGHTINGALE of Lower Knowe (or Knowle) Farm, Rivington. James, born in 1737, moved to Hollinshead Hall, Tockholes. He died in 1793 and was buried on the 24th April at Chapel Street Independent Chapel, Blackburn. The NIGHTINGALEs were members not of the Established Church but of the Independent denomination (later called Congregational, and, later still, United Reformed).

With the family established at Tockholes, their numbers grew rapidly. James s eldest two (of six) children were girls. Mattie married into the BRINDLE family of Tockholes, and Betty into the LEIGH family, also of Tockholes. John, the fifth child, married Rachel LEIGH and died at Lyon s Den on Darwen Moor. We shall return to him presently. The youngest child was Benjamin, who, in spite of the family connection with Tockholes Independent Chapel, became the leader of the Methodist Society in Tockholes. His home was Weasel Farm, which is still in existence.

John, of Lyons Den, had five children, all sons, the youngest of whom was Benjamin, born at Tockholes in 1784. He was ordained an Independent minister at Newton in Bowland (near Slaidburn) in 1820. He had charge of the churches at Newton and Wymondhouses (near Pendleton, Clitheroe), and also at White Hall (Grindleton), Wiswell and Martin Top (near Rimington) before arriving as minister at Park Chapel,

Walmersley-cum-Shuttleworth, on 19th May 1832.

My great great grandfather Rev Benjamin NIGHTINGALE, did not find life easy at Park. His sermons were frequently interrupted by an element of the congregation who were of a stricter persuasion, and, after three years, Benjamin and most of the congregation decided to close down Park Chapel and to build a new recorded that Benjamin was a `racy, homely, speaker and an enthusiastic supporter of the Temperance movement in days when it was not too popular. It was whilst collecting funds for Bank Lane Chapel, and on a journey to London, that he caught English cholera, which had a marked effect upon his health.

He died on 11th April 1847 and was buried in the area at the front of his chapel. Following his death, the congregation removed themselves back to Park Chapel, and the Bank Lane Chapel was purchased by Messrs WILD of Shuttleworth, who converted it into cottages. The cottagers evidently did not appreciate a graveyard in their front gardens, and, after a short time, Benjamin was disinterred at dead of night, according to custom, and reburied inside Park Chapel, in front of the pulpit!

This exact burial spot is now lost, owing to the rebuilding of the chapel in 1898. Rev Benjamin NIGHTINGALE married, firstly, Nancy GREGSON of Tockholes. They had seven children, of whom the third, Edward, lived in Grants Tower. Their sixth child, Elizabeth, was buried at the Bank Lane Chapel, under what became the hearthstone of the cottage numbered 72, Whalley Road! However, she, also, was disinterred and reburied at Park Chapel. Benjamin's first wife predeceased him, and was buried inside Park Chapel.

Benjamin remarried, his second wife being Nancy GRIME, by whom he had six children. The eldest, Thomas, was born in 1836 at Bank Lane (ie Shuttleworth), and lived at Strongstry. He was a tackler in a woollen mill. He and wife Elizabeth were buried in Stubbins Congregational Chapel yard, where their grave can still be seen. Of the other children, Lydia Nancy (born in 1840 at Bank Lane) and another Elizabeth (born in 1844 at Bank Lane), were cotton weavers. They never married and lie buried, together with their mother and uncle William GRIME, a few yards away from their brother Thomas.

The aforementioned Rev Benjamin NIGHTINGALE is not to be confused with his brother William's son, also Rev Benjamin NIGHTINGALE, Minister of Congregational Churches at Oldham, Farnworth (near Bolton) and Preston, and author.

Referring again to Edward NIGHTINGALE, one time occupant of Grants Tower, he was born in Blackburn about 1811. He married Elizabeth ODDIE of Clitheroe at Clitheroe Parish Church on 10th September 1836. He lived for a time in Cateaton Street, off Walmersley Road, Bury, but by 1881 he was living at Lower Nuttall. His second wife was Mary.

Edward and Elizabeth had seven children. Benjamin was the eldest, born in Grants Tower on 20th September 1837. He and his wife Margaret (nee GRIFFITHS) emigrated to Kansas, USA in 1859. They had seven sons and one daughter. They returned to the Bury area for the first time in 1909, on the 50th anniversary of their emigration, and gathered together all the NIGHTINGALES at Bury Football Ground at Gigg Lane for a photographic session. The resultant sepia prints are still in existence, with names of the various characters on the reverse of the large prints being helpful for purposes of identification!

The second child of Edward and Elizabeth was Sarah Ellen, known as Ellen. She was born in Ramsbottom, and married William H LUND, a print works manager of

Tottington. Their eldest son, Thomas, also emigrated to America.

Nancy NIGHTINGALE, born in 1842 in Ramsbottom, was their third child. She was my great grandmother and married Robert TAYLOR, a clogger, of Bury. Their third child, Edward Nightingale TAYLOR, born in Bury on 10th April 1875, was my grandfather. He was a pawnbroker, and had a shop at 49, Blackburn Street, Radcliffe. Edward's elder brother, Croasdale, did not live with the rest of the young family at 30, Haslam Street, Bury, but with his grandparents at 22, Walmersley Road - a practice not uncommon in those days.

The fifth child of Edward and Elizabeth was John, born in 1844 at Nuttall. He was a clog and shoe maker, and lived at 198, Bolton Street, Ramsbottom, with his wife Priscilla (nee BLUNT).

The sixth of the seven children was Edward NIGHTINGALE. Born in 1848 at Nuttall, he became a foreman millwright and later lived with his wife, Sarah Ellen from Burrs, at Lower Nuttall, a few doors away from his father Edward and stepmother Mary (with whom lived one of his own children, Emma). Edward and Sarah Ellen moved to Chatterton Lane, Stubbins. Later, the family moved to Chatterton House. Most of the 19th Century NIGHTINGALES were born in Tockholes. Many remained there, being occupied on the land, but others migrated to adjacent townships such as Lower Darwen, Over Darwen, Livesey and Withnell. Several moved to Blackburn, and some to Bolton. Of the NIGHTINGALES who came to the Ramsbottom area, descendants still live in Bury, Rossendale and Burnley. NIGHTINGALE graves are to be found in Park Chapel yard, Stubbins United Reformed Chapel yard and in Bury and Bacup Cemeteries, but the majority were buried at Tockholes Chapel. Here are to be found many examples, one notable of Thomas NIGHTINGALE, musician, whose self-composed words and musical notation are inscribed on his headstone. Close by, at Bethesda Chapelyard, Tockholes, remain a couple of identifiable graves. The migrants to nearby Darwen were connected with the Belgrave Chapel there.

Five NIGHTINGALES are commemorated on the Great War Roll of Honour inside Tockholes Chapel. The lych-gate here was erected in memory of those who gave their lives, including one Fred NIGHTINGALE.

It was not uncommon to find the 19th Century NIGHTINGALES as emigrants to foreign lands, the most popular destination being USA, followed by Australia and New Zealand. Alas, several of the clan met an untimely end, such happenings being recorded as: `killed by a tram in USA c1866; drowned in a pit in a field 1805; accidentally shot at Pickering Fold, Tockholes; drowned in Jack KAY's lodge,

Darwen; died from a snake bite in Australia; died in Zulu Wars in South Africa. On a happier note, several were ordained, and they ministered at such places as Witton, Elswick and Horwich.

To bring this story to the end of the 20th Century, it must be recorded that my great great grandfather's house, Grants Tower, latterly unoccupied and in a ruinous state, fell down in September 1944. What is my connection with the NIGHTINGALE? My mother Helen was the daughter of Edward Nightingale TAYLOR, mentioned previously, making me the great great great grandson of Rev Benjamin NIGHTINGALE of Park, Chapel, Walmersley.

Whilst researching this article, I have discovered and met several members of the NIGHTINGALE family previously unknown to me. If you consider that you might be related to the NIGHTINGALE family, I invite you to get in touch via the Ramsbottom Heritage Society.

- 1 There is a well known account of the night when Edward NIGHTINGALE and family fled their home for the safety of Nuttall, on account of the Tower's feared disintegration in a violent storm. I would be very grateful if someone could remind me where I read it! - Editor.
- 2 Judging from the reference to William GRIME, Nancy was possibly related to John and Susannah GRIME, they being referred to in the Edenfield parish register as of Red Lees, Broadwood and Stubbins. According to HARDING (pp29-32), who quoted from the Old Park Church Book, dating from c 1816, Susannah GRIME had the distinction of being 'one of the five persons who formed the Church at Park' being church member no 1. No 50 was Nancy GRIME, admitted around 1828-32, and presumably the young lady who subsequently became Mrs NIGHTINGALE the Second - Editor.

References

Rev WE HARDING, *The History of Park Congregational Church Ramsbottom* (Bury, 1931)

Rev Benjamin NIGHTINGALE, *History of the Old Independent Chapel, Tockholes, near Blackburn* (John HEYWOOD, Manchester)

Rev Benjamin NIGHTINGALE, *Lancashire Nonconformity* (John HEYWOOD, Manchester, 1892). This was a history of the Congregational and Presbyterian churches in the county

The author of these two works was nephew of Benjamin NIGHTINGALE of Park Chapel, Walmersley

Census Returns, 1881; trade directories; registers of Tockholes Chapel

CHAPEL HOUSES, SHUTTLEWORTH: THE MYSTERY OF THE LOST GRAVES

Opposite the Shuttleworth landmark of LEACH's Wine Cellars on Whalley Road stands an imposing terrace of four three-storey cottages, set back behind neat, sloping gardens. Unusual in appearance, they are however not out of place in a village with widely varying styles of architecture from the 18th and 19th Centuries.

These houses, nos 70-76, have attracted some attention over the years, not least because Howard DONALD, formerly of pop group *Take That*, was until about 1997 a resident at no 76. Passers-by could count on seeing a clutch of adolescent girls hanging around the adjacent grass patch, or perching on the wooden fence, and often equipped with cameras. Mrs Cheryl MAUDSLEY, a nearby newsagent, told the *Ramsbottom Free Press* of 9th August 1996 how the shop was regularly visited by fans from as far afield as Continental Europe and even Australia, looking for intelligence on Mr DONALD's movements! 'One German lady who had brought her daughter to see Howard's house, explained Mrs MAUDSLEY, 'came in the shop to write a postcard and ended up stopping for four hours. I couldn't get rid of her.

Local folklore suggests that these houses might better suit members of sinister 70s heavy rock group *Black Sabbath* rather than teeny bopping *Take That*. 'Any serious offers considered for this "Character Home", declared the Cornerstone Estate Agents flier for no 72 - 'formally [sic] a Chapel dating from 1710 [sic]. What the bump omitted to mention was that the 'good sized lawn front garden was originally the graveyard, and possibly still occupied!

Well, we had a fourth addition on the way, and were needing to move from Tory Town, so on the evening of Monday 19th April 1993 we were shown round. Beamed ceilings, fine arched windows in the neat dormer, panoramic views over Ramsbottom, but no extra space to what we already had. The chap was remarkably frank about what we would now call the house's change of use, and indeed disarmingly candid about how the uncomfortably near, if quiet, neighbours could occasionally impinge on the terrace's current denizens. Somebody's wife was under the hearthstone, he explained, and I *think* he said that one of the flagstones was a reversed gravestone. Mercifully, there was no cellar. Bones, he had been told, had occasionally surfaced when people tended the four gardens. These were returned to the ground promptly, to avoid fuss! Estate Agentese, renowned for drafting carefully around difficult domestic features, had reached new heights of euphemism when referring to this property as 'full of character and charm!

In fact, the terrace was originally Bank Lane Chapel, reflecting the old name for the site. A 19th edition six inch Ordnance Survey map, dating from the mid-1840s, shows the building as 'Independent Chapel', and the graveyard is clearly shown, though of course not captioned as such. It was converted to houses some time after 1847.

By one of those strange coincidences which often crop up when one's interest in a town spans many hundreds of years and many generations of inhabitants, I received a letter the following day from one J HENAUGHAN of Blackburn Road, Edgworth, a descendant of the TAYLORS of Edenfield, Scout and Fecit (near Turn). One of them, Shuttleworth woollen manufacturer John TAYLOR, died of cholera in 1849. He had married Elizabeth, daughter of the Rev Benjamin NIGHTINGALE, minister

of Bank Lane Chapel. She had died at the early age of 27 and been buried under the hearth stone of no 72, Whalley Road. Mr HENAUGHAN s family history subsequently appeared in this magazine.

The fullest account of this bizarre quartet of houses is, as far as I know, contained in the Rev HARDING s well known history of Park Chapel, from whose congregation NIGHTINGALE and his adherents seceded to Bank Lane about 1835. HARDING had been minister since 1925, long enough to pick up oral recollections of the Bank Lane chapel and graveyard.

Benjamin NIGHTINGALE (1784-1847) had been appointed minister at the Congregational Park Chapel, Manchester Road, Walmersley-cum-Shuttleworth in 1832. Weary of the dilapidated state of the building and of regular heckling by those of the Calvinist persuasion, NIGHTINGALE took the bulk of his congregation ^{1/4} mile up the road to an entirely new chapel, funded by local wellwishers (including three members of the GRANT family and Thomas AITKEN of Chatterton) and sympathetic clergymen and respectable friends from around the country. NIGHTINGALE died in April 1847, and the Bank Lane congregation returned to a reopened Park .

Writing in the 1890s, Rev William Hume ELLIOT suggested that NIGHTINGALE left Park in 1835, so Bank Lane Chapel was probably built in the late 1830s, and certainly not in 1710, as Cornerstone seemed to think! He had no successor, Hume ELLIOT continues, and the building was purchased from the trustees by the Messrs WILD of Shuttleworth, who transformed it into cottages. A graveyard also was formed, and some bodies were interred. They were, however, subsequently removed. The late Mrs Leonard WILD used to tell how Mr Leonard, then her *f. ancee*, on his way home from her father s at Nuttall Lane, found on one occasion near midnight an eager and awestruck group engaged in removing one of these bodies to another resting place."

The last resting places of Benjamin NIGHTINGALE and his family were described by Herbert RAMSBOTTOM, one of Rev HARDING s informants:

It is stated that Mr NIGHTINGALE was buried in the burial ground attached to the Bank Lane Chapel, but some short time after, his body was removed and buried at Park Chapel."

According to local tradition still current around 1930, Mr NIGHTINGALE s body was not the only one which was removed from the burial ground at Bank Lane to Park after his death. "Elizabeth," daughter of the minister, was buried within Bank Lane Chapel "under the hearthstone of the second house," ie, no 72, Whalley Road, and her body too was disinterred and removed to Park. There were two or three more as well. Their bodies were removed at dead of night, and the operations must have presented a gruesome and unnerving spectacle. ⁵

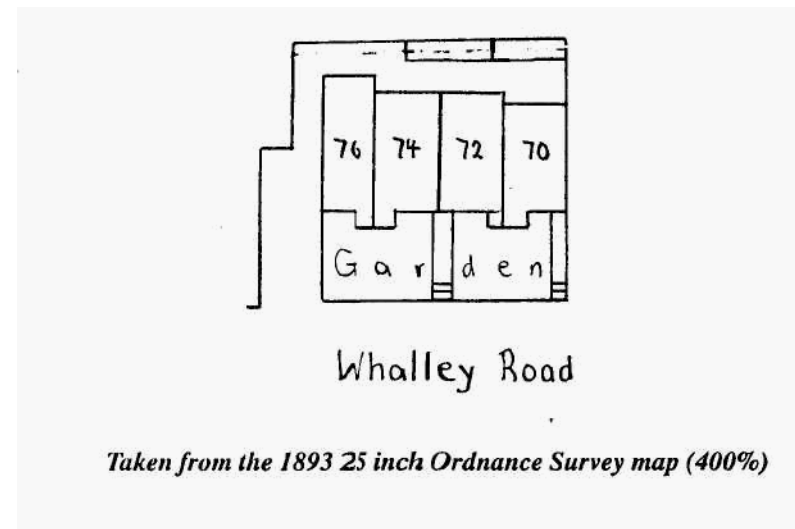
The bodies were presumably removed from inside the house to appease Messrs WILDs potential tenants. What is currently unclear is how many bodies had actually been placed under those flagstones, and indeed whether the front gardens had been used systematically for burials over the decade or so up to 1847 when the chapel was in use. Perhaps a careful use of burial register evidence (assuming registers One other mystery is the extent of Bank Lane Chapel. HARDING, writing in 1931

presumably on the authority of local recollection, claimed that the building had been extended when the change of use occurred, ie some time after 1847. Messrs WILD built an additional cottage on the north end, he wrote. The original Chapel is now represented by three cottages. It is roughly 18 yards in length and 12 yards in depth. These cottages still stand, raised above the road and go by the name of "Chapel Houses". Between these and the road is an open space some 23 yards in length and 13 yards deep. This was the burial ground. ⁶

Field evidence does not support this extension account. Looking at the four houses today, one is impressed by the classically symmetrical frontage, so typical of pre-Gothic Revival nonconformist architecture. Presumably, the lie of the land dictated that the chapel frontage paralleled the road, though we do not know the layout of the pews. The four distinctive dormer mini-gables, each topping an identical vertical line of windows, are in perfect balance. (The arched upper windows resemble those on the nearby Swedenborgian chapel, built on Stubbins Lane in 1831. ¹) There is no vertical building break between nos 74 and 76.

The 1893 25 inch Ordnance Survey map (see below) shows two porches. One survives in front of the doorways of nos 74 and 76, whilst contrastingly discoloured stonework at the front of nos 70 and 72 reveals where the other stood. It is unclear whether these were part of the original 1830s design, though that outside no 74 looks original. It was not uncommon for dissenting chapels to have two entrances. Each opening could readily have been converted into two adjacent doorways for the new cottages, producing in the terrace a reflecting rather than the more typical repeating frontal aspect. Ornamental gateposts, now (February 1999) sadly scarred with *Take The* graffiti, must represent the original chapel gateway. Significantly, they stand in front of the precise midpoint of the *c en* building.

As if the terrace did not have enough history, John TAYLOR, who sketched it at short notice for the cover illustration, points out that [according to](#) SLATER s 1888 directory, no 70 was then Shuttleworth s police station, Thomas JACKSON being its one constable. Interestingly, there was a no 72 and a no 74, but no 76. Is it possible



Taken from the 1893 25 inch Ordnance Survey map (400%)

Given the confetti-like abandon with which this small sect disposed of its dead one and a half centuries ago, it could come as a relief to Howard DONALD and his successors, that his own house, no 76, may never have been part of the Bank Lane Chapel. It could constitute an interesting research project for some member to compare census returns and maps (particularly the 1838 Walmersley-cum-Shuttleworth tithe map and schedule at Lancashire Record Office, DRM 1/ 102) with current field evidence.

I would be most interested to hear from anyone who has further information on this intriguing building. And if, as a result of this article, the Home Office comes and digs up all four gardens, then please, residents of Chapel Houses, accept my apologies!

Post Script

Since writing this article in February, Rita HIRST, former reference librarian at Bury, and no mean authority on local genealogical issues, has informed me of an uncannily similar circumstance in Haslingden. Here, one James BILLSBORROW had come from Darwen and bought land and property in High Street. Around 1775, he had started the town's first Independent Chapel in an upper room in this house. The first proper chapel building was in Lower Deardengate, erected about 1786. By that time, James had become 'disaffected' - ie he had fallen out with the congregation. A newspaper report of 1899 relates how he had used his property in High Street for a personal crypt. Headed 'Gruesome find at Haslingden', the article reported how workmen excavating in Back High Street had broken into a cavelike structure in which they found, lying on iron shelves, the skeletons of four adults and a child. The coffins were broken and crumbling and the bones clearly visible.

The local people had been quite aware that a private graveyard occupied part of the garden. **BILLSBORROW** had had a gravestone erected, listing himself and members of his family, though this was clearly overgrown by 1899. (He had died in 1823 at the age of 89). Presumably the family were reinterred in some other churchyard or cemetery, as NIGHTINGALE and his family were.

There is of course no legal requirement for corpses to be buried in consecrated ground, and there are many local examples of eccentrics, often of the Old Dissenting persuasions, being interred quite literally in odd nooks of land. Roger WORTHINGTON is our best known example, and his burial site near Longshaw Head, Hawkshaw Lane, is much visited. Less famous are the solitary graves of Cloughfold minister Richard ASHWORTH (died 1751) in the front garden of Can House, Balladen; of James ORMEROD (1817) in a hen pen at the top of Peel Street, Higher Cloughfold; of James HAWORTH (1772) in the path at 2-, Orchard Terrace, Crawshawbooth; and of Thomas HAWORTH (1800) who lies in the garden of his farm at Edge End, above Constablee.

Nearer home, we have at least one other graveyard in a garden - the dozen or so gravestones in the garden of no 100, Dundee Lane belong to the Presbyterian (later Congregational) Chapel which stood there until 1978. It would be interesting to hear of other non-churchyard resting places!

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- 2 Rev WE HARDING, *The History of Park Congregational Church*
- 3 Rev William Hume ELLIOT, *The Country and Church of the Cheeryble Brothers* (Selkirk, 1893) pp224-5
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- 6 HARDING, p49
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MY OPERATION FOR APPENDICITIS, 1919

George ASHWORH (born 1902) was a well known local figure, working for the Ramsbottom Industrial and Provident Society from April 1916, and eventually becoming its secretary. In this capacity, he wrote in November 1958 for its centenary the well known historical outline, Working Men of Ramsbottom Founders of our Society, copies of which are available in the Ramsbottom and Bury library collections, as well as in our own collection, now at Bury Archives, Edwin Street.

He retired to Grange-over-Sands, where he died earlier this decade. Fortunately, he was one of our earliest reminiscencers, committing his memories of our town to from 80 years ago - Editor

birthday party at a house in Peel Brow, Ramsbottom. After the meal I felt an unusual pain in my stomach. I had never had this sort of pain previously. I retired, without telling anyone of my pain, to the 'closet' as it was generally called at that time. It was in the backyard.

That was where my elder brother John found me and he managed to drag me home to Callender Street. I remained in bed all day on the Sunday, but the pain was getting worse. On the Monday morning Dr Charles CRAWSHAW was called in, and at once diagnosed advanced appendicitis, and also said that I must be taken without delay to Bury General Hospital. At the time this was quite a serious operation, such operations had only been carried out in a child's first ten years.

At this time it was a horse-ambulance, the horses being kept available in the Fire Station in Central Street. Whilst crossing the railway lines at the bottom of Bridge Street, the horse lost a shoe, so there I had to remain until another horse was available.

It was quite cold for there was no heating in the ambulance and it was in December. On arrival at the hospital, preparations were made for an immediate operation. It was getting serious. The operation was carried out by a black gentleman, Dr NIGHTINGALE. (I read in *be B Time* a few years back, that he had died, a very much loved and respected doctor.)

At this point I feel that some comment is needed respecting the general attitude towards coloured people coming into this country for various reasons. It was not until my second operation some 50 years later that coloured doctors and nurses were serving in our hospitals. I think of the period of about 12/13 years later when Leary CONSTANTINE from the West Indies came over to play cricket at Nelson, as their `pro` in the Lancashire Cricket League. He and his wife were then living in Nelson and were well treated in that town. He was most popular on the cricket field. However, when he moved into other places, where he was not known, he was treated most unkindly. Coloured people were not made at all welcome.

I would also remind you that the time I was in hospital was not long after the end of the 1914-18 War, and many restrictions were still in force. In any case the hospitals could not find the money to serve selected meals and the many `extras` that we have at this time. Patients were only provided with the basic foods, such as porridge, bread, potatoes, milk, and many things were still in short supply. Relatives had to take in all other foods that might be required and there were very few luxuries.

I cannot remember much about the period immediately after the operation, but every day for many weeks I had to endure painful dressings. The wound had to heal from the bottom of the deep incision, and had to be kept strictly clean to avoid any infection. I was in the hospital for five weeks. After leaving hospital, I had to attend as an outpatient. I had to wear a special body belt for two years in order to give support to my stomach. I was absent from work for three months. Compare this with the same operation today, which only takes a few days and there is almost no scar to mark the spot. On my recent visits to hospitals the staff have always been interested to see my very large scar and the lines of the stitching - a relic of the past.

The patients able to get out and about were expected to do any small jobs that required doing, one of them was making toast each morning for the ward, kindly note that none of the various `gadgets` of the present time had even been thought about, so it was toast by the fireside. Every thing was much different in 1919.

Christmas Day in hospital was a very special day. I enjoyed the experience. For many weeks the staff (and others) had been collecting money in advance so that those who had to be away from their own family circle would be given a wonderful time during the Festive Season. I had not had much to eat since my operation so it was that my Christmas meal was the first for some time so you can guess that I enjoyed it. All the wards had been well decorated, and Father Christmas also came to visit us. In the afternoon my bed was wheeled into another ward. A group from Bury came in to entertain us. One particular item gave me much pleasure, and have never forgotten it. It was many years later that I discovered that it was a song from one of Gilbert and Sullivan operas. It was the song *Ti Willo* from the comic opera

The Mikado. Many years afterwards I actually made contact with the gentleman who sang it for us, Mr Will WOODHEAD, a very well known singer. I have often looked back to that experience I had in December 1919 with pleasant memories of my Christmas in hospital and so many kind, caring people.

Operations to my hip in more recent years have been so very much different!

My second was in Fairfield, Bury, almost 50 years later. Let me compare the tremendous difference prior to the coming into being of the Health Service more or less as we know it today. Then every local hospital was erected at the expense of the

people, or given to the town by some local person (in the case of the one in Ramsbottom, the AITKEN Memorial Cottage Hospital was given to the town in 1900 by Mr and Mrs Thomas AITKEN - the same person who gave the AITKEN Tuberculosis Sanatorium, formerly Holcombe Hall, in 1909.

Quite apart from other efforts, year by year we had The Rose Queen Festival and Procession. The `Committee` owned a large number of dresses of all descriptions, the Sunday Schools and Day Schools were asked to nominate a number of their children, these children joined the procession in their various groups, selection was considered a great honour. About 1910 I was dressed as a Jockey. I have a few photographs taken in 1910, one of them shows me so attired. *Allo* at this time there was a group of local men and ladies who had decorated their cycles to make a wonderful display. This was one of the highlights of the year when the local people gave most generously for the upkeep of their own hospital.

I observed, as a young lad, some ingenious ways devised to collect coins from the people looking through the open windows of shops on the second floors up.

Hospitals of various types in Bury and Manchester had devised a system whereby employers and others were invited to make an annual donation, and in return they were given `recommends` for In or Out patients, which were of different values. I became well versed in this system, on account of being employed at the local co-op society, where these `recommends` were in great demand by members of the Society. In my opinion this was a very good system, and worked well. In addition, at this time, individuals had to pay fees to their doctor who treated them, and also to pay for the medicine which he prescribed and also supplied to them. I can only remember liquid medicine being supplied, not the sort of pills supplied at this time.

George Ashworth, Grange-over-Sands, 31 May 1988

THE HOSPITAL EXPERIENCE, 1937-48

My first taste of hospital was when I was attending St Paul's School in the 1930s. My sister Edna contacted Scarlet Fever and she was taken by ambulance to Florence Nightingale Hospital, in Bury - I cried and cried - I thought she had gone forever!

Of course in those days no one was allowed to visit her, though we could see her through the corridor window. I was heartbroken. I remember the children in the class sent some fruit when she came home.

The house had to be fumigated and when Edna came home - looking very thin - she told us that she hearing g the trains passing the hospital had made her homesick! We lived on Crow Lane and so heard the trains constantly. She also said how much she had enjoyed the chocolate cake that Mother had sent her. Imagine how I felt when soon after she came home I caught Scarlet Fever and it was my turn to into hospital! How much better it is that parents can stay with younger children.

In 1948, just prior to the formation of the NHS, I was a patient in Ramsbottom Cottage Hospital. My father, who worked for the LMS, was a member of some kind of Saturday Hospital Fund, which paid for the operation.

Matron LEES - a formidable character - was ably assisted by Sister SMITH, and any operation was performed by our local Dr CLOHESSY, a lovely man. When the doctors did their morning rounds, we were always thrilled to see Mr FORD and Dr

CRAWSHAW who were both quite handsome!
We always knew when Matron was having her day off - then she would wear fawn stockings in stead of black ones.

The ward I was in was quite small, with a pleasant view of the fields beyond. I think my mother brought my tea every day.

Doris A Hibbert, 17, Carr Bank Avenue, Ramsbottom BLO 9DW

THE CHILDREN OF QUEEN'S PLACE, SUMMERSEAT, c1937

When we were on holiday in 1997, we met a young woman, Dorothy FARROW, who now lives in Australia, who was born and brought up in Summerseat. Her father, James FARROW, was a manager of Brooksbottoms Mill, together with Messrs

BARLOW and HOLLAND. He and his wife Constance came out to Australia soon after his retirement in 1969, where he died in 1994 at the age of 92. Dorothy sent us copies of eight photographs taken in Summerseat in the 1930s, of which this is one. Taken in about 1937, it shows the FARROW family's 1935 Hillman Minx on Queen's Place, with the following children:

Back row, left to right: Joan FARROW, Alice HOLGATE, Eileen BARLOW, Marion HOLGAIE.

Front row, left to right: June BARLOW, Dorothy FARROW, Marjorie FROST.

