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Ramsbottom Heritage Society

Public group · 126 members



How to become a member of Ramsbottom Heritage Society Facebook.

Open up Facebook and use the Search box top left.

Type in “Ramsbottom Heritage Society”. Click on “Join Group” button.

You will not have access straight away, I will need to approve your request (I usually do this very quickly) but bear with me. This will give you the ability to post to the site if you want too. I still will need to approve the post, this stops people just wanting to advertise a product or service, plenty of sites for that.

Across the top you can see the following headings:

About Just a few lines about the site.

Discussion This is where you will see all the posts – you can search this by using the search button on the right near the Invite button.

Members Lists the members (1437 as at 28th November)

Events will usually have the time and dates of the Wednesday talks, Summer Walks, Exhibitions etc.

Media – Photos All the photos that have been uploaded to Albums

Albums – 1. Ramsbottom Signs, 2. Front Cover Photos
3. Exhibition Posters, 4. Local Blue Plaques
5. Ramsbottom Pub Signs.

Files – 14 PDF documents that you can download.

I hope you will enjoy using Facebook.

Keith Burroughs.

Ramsbottom Heritage Society

News Magazine No 59

Autumn/Winter 2020

The objects of the society shall be:-

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

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The River Irwell in the Gollinrod Gorge: deflector walls associated with the mills upstream at Nuttall - Photograph by Ian Smith

SECRETARY'S REPORT

In my last report, I mentioned that I was converting 50 of the magazines to be available on the website. This was completed, and I also mentioned that I would split the articles by topic. I did start this, but then was asked to edit the new book, so this is still on the 'to-do' list. The committee have met a couple of times using Zoom, but with the current restrictions, there is still no prospect of resuming the monthly meetings in the next few months, so each speaker will be asked to move their talk to the same month in 2021 or 2022. There is also a review of Bury Venues, including Ramsbottom Civic Hall, which didn't re-open in July, even though community centres were allowed to.

It was agreed that there wouldn't be a photographic competition this year, but photos taken this year are still welcome, and will be posted on the website. Contact details are on the inside cover.

Keith Burroughs, one of the committee members, and our Facebook administrator, has been researching the history of Bridge Street and Bolton Street shops, and has been posting his research regularly. If you are not already a member of our Facebook group, Keith explains how to access it on the inside cover. Keith has also been promoting the new book Nuttall: Ramsbottom's Lost Village, which is already such a success that 600 copies were initially printed.

There is also no prospect of the Heritage Gallery re-opening at the library until the present restrictions are lifted. The Conservation group has been active, as you will read in the Latest News.

In summary, even though we cannot meet at present, members of the Society have been active in the background, including John Tomlinson, who is producing a book that you can read about on page 24.

I hope you are in touch with each other through telephone calls and social-distanced walks.

We thank you for continuing to be a member of the Society.

NUTTALL: RAMSBOTTOM'S LOST VILLAGE

I knew that Brenda Richards had been leading for some time a group who were researching the history of Nuttall, as each time an query about the area came in via the website, I passed it on to Brenda. It was in May when Brenda first asked me to put captions on an old map, that I knew she was thinking of collating all her research into a book. Janet and Ian Smith were also researching the history of Ocean Chemicals and the water power used at the old mill. With the lockdown easing in July and August, there wasn't much progress on the book, apart from a social distanced visit to the area with Mark Fletcher, an archaeologist, who helped Brenda, Janet and Ian to confirm some ideas, including the existence of a tailrace tunnel which crossed to the opposite riverbank under the river and continued downstream to the Gollinrod Gorge tunnel exits. As a result of Mark's visit, several aspects of the book were amended.

Work continued with Brenda and Janet producing the text and photos for the book, and when it was mentioned that they would like to get it published before Christmas, I started looking at how to get a book published, including through Amazon, going to an established publisher, or self-publishing. It was decided, due to costs and time-scales, to self publish, and Orbital Design, based on Silver Street in Ramsbottom was chosen as being local. They would require the finished book by the end of November, so Brenda and Janet gave me their latest versions of the two parts of the book, and I started to format the layout. This process continued throughout October and November, with emails and telephone calls, and others reading the book and checking that the facts were correct, and also the grammar. I checked that dates and numbers were in a consistent format across the two parts. It would have been much easier to have met to discuss the final text and location of photographs, but this was not possible.

The book, which retails at £9.99, will be available via the website, and in local shops, including Hearts for Home and Olchon's Gallery, both on Bridge Street. Details of the book are on the back cover.

John Leyland

LATEST NEWS

RAMSBOTTOM TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA 2020

Yellow line road markings update

Following John Ireland's request, on behalf of the Society, to Bury Council, that conservation area guidelines be followed, the narrower, primrose coloured style of yellow line has now been used on some of Ramsbottom's recently resurfaced streets. Hopefully, the more obtrusive, wide, bright yellow lines, which have often appeared after resurfacing work in (or within sight of) the conservation area, will be avoided in future.



Near the Rose and Crown



Carr Street

The following are the subjects of planning applications not yet decided (November 2020):

Former Mondri/Holcombe Mill, Bridge Street (application number 65844)

Proposal: Erection of 72 no. dwellings including the retention and conversion of 2 existing buildings to residential use (5 no. units), the retention of a chimney and the demolition of a derelict building, together with engineering operations to create a development platform and associated parking, landscaping, drainage, the layout of internal estate roads and footways and other associated works.

(As a Society we were initially delighted to hear of plans to redevelop the long-abandoned Mondi Mill site, part of which is in the conservation area. However, having reviewed the application, members voiced their concerns, because what is being proposed would not take advantage of the opportunity and potential this site has to improve the centre of Ramsbottom for generations to come, in terms of offer, design and density. In our response to the Council on behalf of the RHS, we detailed these concerns. We also expressed our sincere disappointment in the lack of communication and public consultation that has been presented by the applicant to ourselves, local businesses, residents and the wider community of Ramsbottom to discuss the proposals for the site.)

St Paul's Church Memorial Gardens, Bridge Street (66011)

Proposal: a new war memorial including rebuild/repair of the boundary stone walls and landscaping work

(A very welcome development. Realising how frustrating the delays have been, not only for the Ramsbottom War Memorial Project Group but also for the public, including our Society and many other local groups who supported them, the project group have put information about progress on their website. They have also thanked everyone once again.)

The Former Grant Arms Hotel (65739)

Proposals: Change of use and listed building consent for rear of building from hotel/public house (Class A4) to financial and professional services (Class A2) including changes to the external appearance, internal modifications and the creation of new car parking to the rear yard area. New bollards to existing parking spaces.



Rear of former Grant Arms Hotel

(The Society's conservation group has submitted comments to Bury Council welcoming new proposals for the Grants, as they will complete the restoration of the building. There are concerns about parking areas and access roads around the site.)

The Former Ramsbottom Cooperative Society stores, 51-53 Bolton Street

An application for the listing of the premises has been submitted to Historic England by the Theatres Trust, and their assessment is underway. As a result of this the local planning authority has served a Building Preservation Notice (BPN) which temporarily gives the building listed building status for 6 months from the date the BPN was served which was the 18th September 2020. This meant that the planning application could not be supported by the Council and was therefore withdrawn. Readers will find an article with more details about the building, its history and the Theatres Trust application in this newsletter.

BURY COUNCIL'S PROPOSALS FOR RAMSBOTTOM

Statements from the Council - November 2020

Proposals are being drawn up to ensure Ramsbottom continues to flourish as a main visitor destination over the next 10 to 15 years. The impact of Covid-19, and continuing changes to the retail and leisure sector, has prompted council leaders to examine how best to improve and promote the town.

The Leader of Bury Council, Councillor Eamonn O'Brien:

- We need to make sure that Ramsbottom can adapt and respond to these changes by further improving the quality, appeal and range of attractions in the town to ensure that its economy thrives and remains attractive to visitors.
- Initial ideas will focus on the town's public spaces and infrastructure, traffic and parking, leisure and co-ordination of visitor attractions, while identifying sites for development opportunities and ways to attract external investment.

- We'll be having extensive engagement with local businesses, the community and wider stakeholders because it's important that we all work together to sustain the town centre's vibrancy for generations to come.

The above statements were extracted from a Bury Council press release dated 24th November. It was found online via the home page of www.bury.gov.uk, search for "press releases" and then choose News Desk. Hopefully, in the light of what they say about Council proposals for Ramsbottom, councillors and their officers will make sure they examine the planning application for the former paper mill site, which is right in the town centre.

THE FUTURE OF RAMSBOTTOM CIVIC HALL - UPDATE 24.11.20

I am writing to let you know that our group, the Friends of Ramsbottom Civic Hall (FORCH), has had verbal contact from Bury Council following an expression of our continuing interests in the future of the Civic Hall.

I am advised that measures to cope with their financial problems are due to be considered by the Council in the immediate future. The issues facing the Council, made stark by the effects of the pandemic are both problematic and long lasting. Decisions and planning for the financial year commencing in 2021 will need to be determined in the next few months. One of the options the Council are considering is the complete closure of Bury Venues, including Ramsbottom Civic Hall.

In the past FORCH has been approached with the option of managing Ramsbottom Civic Hall, but has not adopted that course. It is now clear that such an option is one which would still be available to the Friends Group, subject to the Council's agreement to a Financial and Management plan. For this option to be considered the community, not just the present FORCH members, would need to come together and there would have to be commitment.

In order to promote discussion and test if there is a viable way ahead to preserve the interests of Ramsbottom, I now share the news with Friends

members, users of the Hall, local figures, businesses, key contacts and organisations including the Heritage Society and the Business Group.

Yours sincerely,

Edward Jones (Chair, Friends of Ramsbottom Civic Hall)

Other news : A recent enquiry

I am contacting your Society to enquire whether you have any information or records regarding children that were evacuated to Summerseat during WWII.

My mother (Irene Cornes dob 9.4.31) and her brother (John Cornes dob 26.1.30) were evacuated to Summerseat for about 2 years although they were placed with different families. The only information I have regarding my mother's stay is that she was placed with the "Co-Op" Manager, his wife and their daughter (who I think was approximately 20 years old). However, I don't know their surname. She attended the local school. Apparently, her brother was placed with a family on the opposite side of the river in a less affluent area.

If you can help, please let the Society know. We would then contact the lady who wrote to us. She told us she would be very grateful for any assistance.

THE PORRITT LEGACY TO RAMSBOTTOM AND BEYOND

The Gift of Nuttall Park ~ The Wider Picture

Many of our newsletter readers will remember how Lt Col Austin T Porritt, of Stubbins Vale Mill, handed over Nuttall Park to Ramsbottom in 1928 “as a free gift for the recreation of the inhabitants and as an open space forever”. He had borne the cost of the land and everything necessary for the completion of the park. By the time of these, and other generous donations locally, he had apparently, for health reasons, made his home at Yewbarrow Lodge, Grange over Sands, but he continued to be committed to his business and his other interests

in Ramsbottom. At Grange he provided money for extending the gardens and parks and when Lord Derby opened the lido in 1932 it was Colonel Porritt who handed over the keys. (*During World War II, he and his wife Annie also took in evacuees at Yewbarrow Lodge. See WARTIME MEMORIES below – Editor*)

In providing a range of outdoor public facilities locally, Colonel Porritt followed a family tradition. At Grange over Sands his cousin Harold Porritt (1855-1910), who was a director of a Sunnybank Mills at Helmshore, had been one of that town's most prolific benefactors. Harold had lived in Grange over Sands from 1895, was elected on to the council and became Chairman of the Highways Committee. He defrayed the cost of planting shrubs and evergreens along the promenade and of "refreshment rooms and other conveniences in the locality" (*shelters and public urinals – Editor*). At the time, Grange attracted day trippers. Some of them, until about 1910, came from Morecambe by steamer as part of their holidays. The railway to Grange had been completed in 1857 so visitors came from the Lancashire and Yorkshire mills as well as from Glasgow.



Gifts from Harold Porritt to Grange also included the cast iron bandstand, with an unusual zinc pagoda roof and ornamental ironwork. It was originally built around 1901-1904 on the promenade, where early Edwardians would enjoy their Sunday afternoon stroll, next to his tea rooms. (Ladies had protested to the council about soot from passing steam trains ruining their dresses whilst they sat near the bandstand and listened to the music, so it was later moved to Park Road Gardens as the park's central feature. It was extensively renovated in 1990, and is listed by English Heritage.)

The first bandstands in Britain were built in the Royal Horticultural Society Gardens, South Kensington in 1861. Their introduction into public parks became a significant aspect of their reforming potential encouraging "a better use of Sundays and the replacement of the debasing pleasures". The bandstands quickly became hugely popular, many of them originating in the Victorian era as the British brass band movement gained popularity. Considered a necessity in parks by the end of the 19th century, in their heyday there were over 1,500 in Britain, in public parks, on piers and seaside promenades. (Colonel Porritt installed his bandstand in Nuttall Park in 1929, the year after the opening of the park itself.) Many fell into disuse in the post-World War II period and were in a state of disrepair by the late 1940s and 1950s. The present revival of bandstands dates from the late 1990s and many of the old structures have now been repaired and renovated.

References

- Paul Rabbitts *Pavilions for music, entertainment and leisure*
published by Historic England in 2018
- Dr Ruth Hughes *Grange Over Sands – Heritage –*
c 2006 unpublished work in progress

Work continues behind scenes by the Friends of Nuttall Park on their daunting project to try to replace the ironwork of Nuttall Park's bandstand. (it had been deemed unsafe and removed in the 1950s.) As we reported in Spring 2019, the

Society played an important part in the restoration of the bandstand's plinth and three of our Society's members also belong to the Friends group. We are retaining an interest in the bandstand - an interest which we know is shared by a large number of local people. In their latest report the Friends group tell us that the relevant permissions are in place and that the professional people to carry out and monitor the bandstand construction are waiting to start. They are now hoping that grant funding will become available soon.

WARTIME MEMORIES RELATED TO YEWBARROW LODGE

In September 1939, I was evacuated to Grange-over-Sands, on Morecambe Bay, from Salford, near Manchester. My first new home was on the outskirts of the town, so after 4 months, I moved into a house near the school, in the town centre.

After a few more months, I moved to a large house in its own grounds, called Yewbarrow Lodge. There were 8 other evacuees there and I enjoyed my stay very much. My parents took me home for Christmas 1940, but it was the time of the Manchester and Salford Blitz. After spending all night in a cupboard under the stairs, my father drove me back to Grange the next day.

In May 1941, Grange was bombed and our house was burnt out. We were carried out of the adjoining shelter by fireman, as the fire spread. All I was wearing was a vest. The next day we searched in the debris but all I could find was my tin hat. My father took me back to Salford, then after a few days, he took us to Seascale in Cumbria, where we spent the rest of the war.

I found the experience of being an evacuee scary, but exciting. My time at Yewbarrow Lodge was very memorable and I enjoyed it very much. It was so sad to see the house ablaze, but I will always be thankful for Colonel and Mrs Porritt, who looked after us and the friends I made there.

Douglas Trevor Nuttall, *WW2 People's War* (2003)

(*WW2 People's War* is an online archive of wartime memories contributed by members of the public and gathered by the BBC. The archive can be found at bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar)

THE GRANT ARMS (RAMSBOTTOM) & THE GOODRICKS

The following article was kindly written for us in response to our information request by a descendant of George Goodrick (landlord of the Grant Arms for over fifty years from 1834). We had asked him about the Goodrick family's link to the Grant Arms and about the large silver tree, known also as the Grant Arms Trophy, which had been mentioned in an earlier RHS newsletter.¹

Since we received the article and a copy of a family photograph of the silver tree, an internet search has revealed fascinating news. The silver tree was listed (as a Victorian Silver Plate Tree-Form Three-Light Centerpiece), with its photograph, as having been sold in 2015 at Christie's in New York. According to the sale details it had come from the collection of Richard Mellon Scaife. (In an obituary he is described as an influential but reclusive American billionaire who died in 2014 aged 82.)

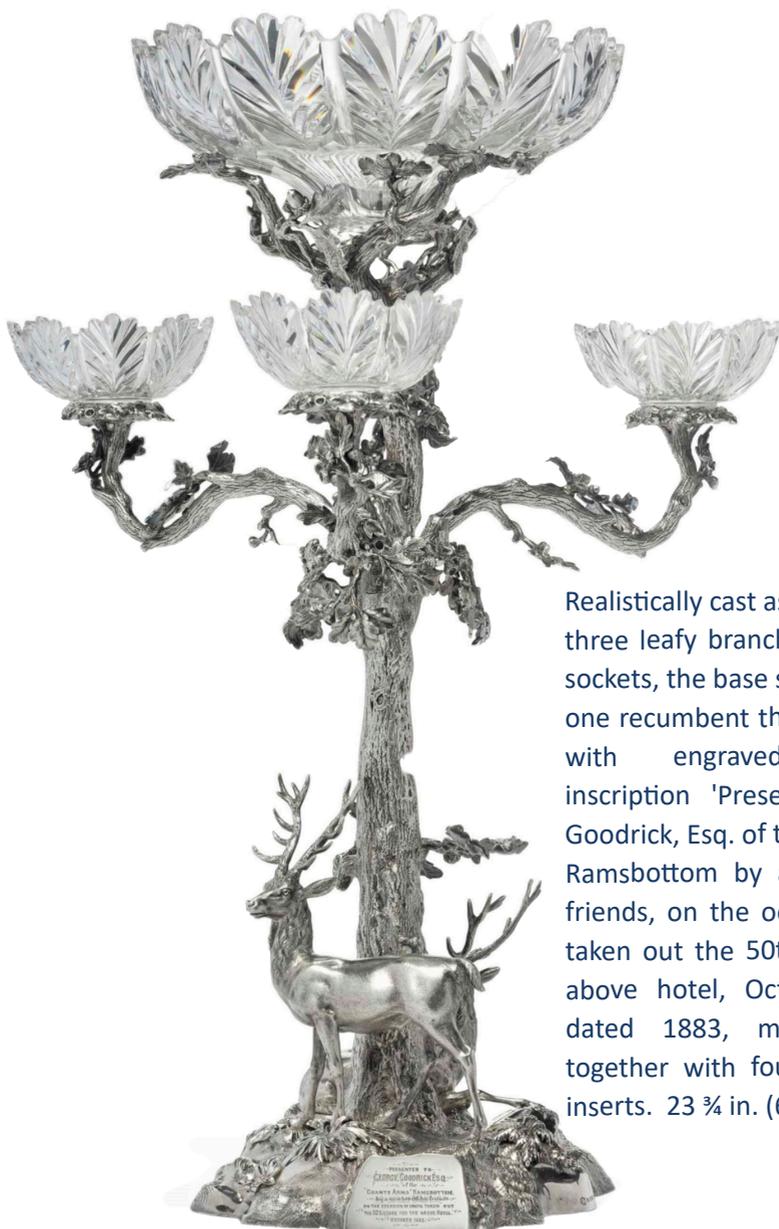
Did fine dining at the Grant Arms in George Goodrick's day feature the silver tree at the centre of his dinner table?

My earliest memory of 'the silver tree' dates to January 1949 when as a six-year old I was taken to visit my maternal grandfather on the occasion of his eightieth birthday. The trophy was displayed, in its glass cabinet, in the front room of my grandparents' Victorian house in Longsight, Manchester; this room, of course, only to be entered on high days and holy days! As I got older I began to be aware of the existence of the Grant brothers, the Grant Arms in Ramsbottom and the Cheeryble brothers although, at the time, I never really understood the exact relationships – it was just a part of "family lore". Now, in the 21st century with the availability of internet search engines I have been able to further explore those tenuous links with the past.



A VICTORIAN SILVER PLATE TREE-FORM THREE-LIGHT CENTERPIECE

MARK OF ELKINGTON & CO., CIRCA 1883



Realistically cast as an oak tree with three leafy branch-form arms with sockets, the base set with two deer, one recumbent the other standing, with engraved presentation inscription 'Presented to George Goodrick, Esq. of the "Grants Arms" Ramsbottom by a number of his friends, on the occasion of having taken out the 50th license for the above hotel, October 1883' and dated 1883, marked at base; together with four cut-glass bowl inserts. 23 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (60 cm.) high.

Four hundred years ago the Goodricks were an established family in the area to the north-east of York known as the Yorkshire Wolds. They lived for many years in and around the small village of Terrington, close to the Castle Howard estate, and most of the male members were employed as agricultural labourers. The earliest family member identified is William Gooderick, born in 1619.

At some point William Gooderick's descendant, George Goodrick (b:1805), moved west across the Pennines to Ramsbottom in Lancashire where he found employment as butler to the Grants. On 29th October 1834 in the parish church of St Mary in Bury, George married Matilda Carr (b: 14th April 1805 in Bury) and his occupation at that time was still recorded as a butler, although by the time of the 1841 census he was recorded as being a publican, having taken over the Grant Arms in 1834. As well as his wife, also resident in the Grant Arms in 1841, were three other members of the Carr family viz: Mary (aged 25yrs) and twins Fanny (dressmaker) and Robert (pattern maker) both aged 20yrs, perhaps implying that the parents of Matilda viz. Robert & Ellen Carr were already deceased. Ten years later in 1851 George and Matilda are recorded as employing the same three members of the Carr family as cook, barmaid and ostler respectively. In addition living there was a niece of George Goodrick, also named Matilda Goodrick, aged 7yrs; she being the daughter of his younger brother Robert and deceased first wife, Jane (also née Carr). This Matilda does not appear at the Grant Arms in 1861 but ten years later she is back there and recorded as being in employment at the inn.

It seems that George and Matilda did not have children of their own but within the local community they must have been well respected for the work they did at the Grant Arms, so much so that on reaching fifty years as the licensee George Goodrick was presented with an impressive Elkington Plate² table-centre piece (known to the present-day family as the 'silver tree'). On 28 January 1890, George Goodrick, the licensee of the Grant Arms for more than half a century, died aged 85yrs; probate records indicating that he left an estate to the value of £3206.6s.8d a sum equivalent to approximately £400,000 today.

The Grant Arms Trophy passed to his nephew George Goodrick (1833-1911) and subsequently to his son, also named George (1869-1957)³, a lithographic artist living in Longsight, Manchester. Finally on the death of this latest George Goodrick in 1957, aged 88yrs, the trophy passed via two of his three daughters and into the following generation. (After some thought and discussion with my brother we would suggest an estimated height for the trophy at around 2 feet to 2 feet 6 inches.

Sadly, I note that the Grant Arms closed as an hotel in 2017 but recent media reports suggest that this “listed” building is to be authorised for redevelopment and future commercial use (*Bury Times* 19/12/2018). It is to be hoped that the name may be preserved in some form in whatever use the site finds for itself in the coming years.

John Goodrick Mitchell

Notes

1. Andrew Todd, RHS News Magazine number 23 (Spring 2002), *George Goodrick, the Grant Arms and the Truck System*

2. Elkingtons was one of the prime producers of silver plating, receiving various royal warrants of appointments, and also an Imperial and Royal Warrant of Appointment from the Emperor of Austria. One of their most famous pieces is the electrotype copy of the Jerningham Wine Cooler, at the Victoria & Albert Museum.

The company was founded in Birmingham by George Richards Elkington and his brother, Henry Elkington in the 1830s as silversmiths. The company, originally G R Elkington & Co, was founded in 1840 after devising a new method of electro-plating one metal on to the surface of another. Their 1842 advertisement reads, “PATENT ELECTRO-GILDING and SILVER PLATING. Manufacturers and others are informed, that the Patentees, ELKINGTON and CO., have OPENED a MANUFACTORY for the above process, at 45, Moorgate-street, where articles of every description, and in all kinds of metals, are gilt and plated. Old Sheffield plate and ormolu work replated and regilt.”

The company exhibited at the 1851 Great Exhibition with great success and by 1885 Elkington were registering designs by Christopher Dresser which included tea services, sugar bowls, claret jugs, kettles, cruet stands, baskets, a tureen and a tankard. His models are recorded in Elkington's silver and plated ware pattern-books. The firm operated independently as Elkington & Co. from 1861 until 1963 being taken over by British Silverware, Ltd. in 1971.

3. Maternal grandfather of the writer of this article.

RAMSBOTTOM MUSIC HALL

This venue has been disused for so many years that we believe most of the local community are unaware of the existence of “Ramsbottom Music Hall”, locally known as the Co-op Hall. Records suggest it was last used just after World War II and its condition has been deteriorating ever since. The Hall occupies the top storey of the three-storey extension (nos 51,53 and 55, Bolton Street, Ramsbottom). The extension was added by the Ramsbottom Industrial & Provident Society to its earlier (1863) two-storey building (nos 45,47 and 49). The buildings eventually became Ramsbottom Central Co-op, which closed in the 1980s.

Memories of the Ramsbottom Central Co-op by George Ashworth is one of the items in RHS News Magazine no 21 (Spring 2001) and in issue no 22 (Autumn 2001) is another article *Ramsbottom Central Co-op: a Postscript* by Andrew Todd. Both magazines are on our website

www.ramsbottomheritage.org.uk.

Today, at street level, the occupants of the buildings are:

Lacy Days (Bridal shop) at 45, Bolton Street

The Mouse Trap (Cheese and Wine) at number 47

San Leonardo (Italian restaurant) at number 49

Indian Lounge (Restaurant and takeaway) at number 51

Posh Chops (Barber shop) at number 53

On 7th July 2020 Bury Council received a planning application (no 65698) for the conversion of the first and second floors of 51-53 Bolton Street to provide eleven apartments with alterations to external elevations and dormers at the front and rear.

The Theatres Trust response of 25th August 2020 to Bury Council points out that Ramsbottom's Co-op Hall is a rare early survivor and represents a historically significant building type. They say that very few other examples around the UK of the numerous halls built between 1850-1880 are known to remain and also believe that it is important in terms of the history of the Co-Operative movement. The Trust concludes that the proposed development would result in the loss of the Co-op Hall as a currently undesignated heritage asset but one with great local and potentially national significance. They consider that statutory listing is merited and they have submitted an application to Historic England on that basis. They have kindly provided us with a selection of their photographs of the Hall's interior, presumably taken when it was visited by their Architectural Adviser in 2017 and allowed us to reproduce text from their listing application, as follows:

THE THEATRES TRUST LISTING AND DESIGNATION APPLICATION TO HISTORIC ENGLAND

There is a current planning application to convert the first and second floors into apartments with alterations to external elevations. This will involve the complete removal of the interior which includes an early music hall. These types of buildings are rare in the UK and this is an intact and well-preserved undivided example. It retains nearly all its original features including paintwork.

The Ramsbottom Co-op Hall was built in 1876 when the Ramsbottom Industrial and Provident Society built a three-storey extension alongside its existing (1863) building. The new extension was constructed to house shops on the ground floor with offices, stores and a music hall above. It was designed by Bird and Whittenbury* of Manchester and was the chief theatrical and social venue in the town. The hall was to seat 800 people and cost £4300.

The upper floor hall was originally used for variety entertainment of the kind commonly associated with music halls of the period as well as lectures, Guild meetings, Temperance Services and grand concerts. Adverts at the time support these activities. During the 1920s the hall was used by travelling theatre groups and players. The Co-operative Wholesale Society (CWS) ran promotional films and smoking concerts in the 1930s. During World War II it was used as an army training centre and the seating removed. In 1944 it was taken over by the Labour Exchange and has remained unused since.

Externally the building is constructed of Ashlar, a three storeyed range facing Bolton Street with five original uniformly placed timber sliding sash windows at first floor and second floor features including roundals over casement windows. An eaves cornice and blocking course, along with quoins, chimneys, pitched slate roof and shopfronts across ground floor (later) are all features. The entrance to the Hall features a gabled cornice, corbel, circular fanlight and original timber doors.

The Hall was approached by a stone staircase directly from Bolton Street featuring a decorative metal scrolled balustrade and a stained mahogany handrail. The auditorium had a full gallery around three sides, the side tiered ranges with arcades of decorative cast iron columns with moulded arch braces to hammer beams carrying basket-arched roof trusses and a boarded upper ceiling with ornate cast-iron ventilator sunburners. The balcony had gilded panels of open ironwork (now stored on site). The fourth side contained a stage area. The hall was 54 feet x 51 feet x 50 feet high. The original decoration was a French grey colour with the walls stencilled with co-operators' symbols and mottos – the beehive and the wheatsheaf etc. The furniture was pitched pine which was stained and varnished. The hall was lit by two gas sunburners.

At first floor level the original mahogany panelled offices survive featuring glazed and timber partitions. The ceiling was finished in tongue and groove panelling and supported by cast iron columns. The doors feature leaded glass work.

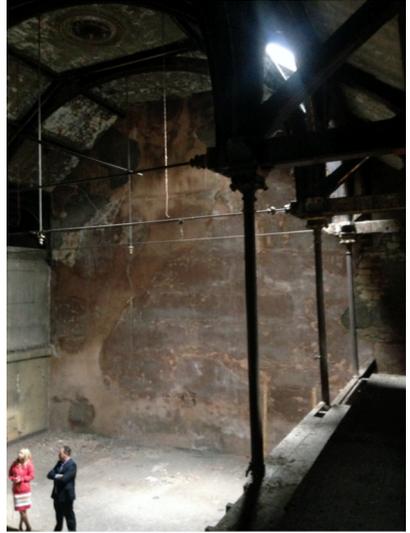
Rarity

The room itself was typical of smaller music halls, in that it was a long rectangular flat-floored room. In the 1870s music halls were steadily moving away from the 'supper room and promenade' style, with an open concert platform, to a more theatrical configuration with rows of benches and a simple proscenium stage and galleries. It is known that the Co-op hall had a portable proscenium and scenery, which suggests a mid-point transitional form. Music halls were once numerous everywhere, but only a handful of those of the 1850 to 1880 period now remain to be seen. The Co-op hall is not as decorative or grand as the handful of listed examples such as Wilton's or the Glasgow Panopticon but it represents a historically significant building type of a provisional nature. It must also be important for the history of the Co-op.

The Building News of 1874 describes it thus:

The Ramsbottom Industrial and Provident Society have commenced the erection of a new Co-operative Hall to seat 800 persons, together with increased cellarage and butchers' and grocers' shops. The architects are Messrs. Bird and Whittenbury*, of Manchester, the principal contractors being Messrs James Garnett and Robert Crowshaw, joiners and slaters' work; Mr Schofield, plumber, glazier, etc; and Mr. Rothwell, painter. The total cost will be £4,300.

The Theatres Trust is the national advisory public body for theatres. They were established through the Theatres Trust Act 1976 'to promote the better protection of theatres' and provide statutory planning advice on theatre buildings and theatre use in England through The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, requiring the Trust to be consulted by local authorities on planning applications which include 'development involving any land on which there is a theatre'.



Photographs taken in July 2017 and kindly provided by the Theatres Trust -



As well as applying to Historic England for the listing of Ramsbottom's old Co-op building, the trust has submitted a detailed response to Bury Council about the planning application. It concludes:

“...this proposal would result in the loss of the Co-Op Hall as a currently undesignated heritage asset but one with great local and potentially national significance without evidence that restoration to facilitate a more compatible use cannot be achieved. Therefore the Trust strongly objects to this proposal and recommends the refusal of planning permission.”

*Bird and Whittenbury

Clifton Wilkinson Whittenbury joined George Oliver Bird in partnership in 1874 under the names Bird and Whittenbury and continued the firm as sole representative following the death of the latter in 1878. Their address in 1876 was Bird & Wittenbury, Town Hall Buildings, 74A, King Street, Manchester (Slater). Other buildings by the practice include: The New Jerusalem Church, Ramsbottom Lane, Ramsbottom (1874) demolished 1971, St Pauls Church, Heaton Moor, Stockport (1875 -1877) Listed Grade II and the Church of St Joseph (RC), Ramsbottom (1879 – 1880).

WORRALL's Trades Directory of 1871 lists a Robert D Wittenbury at Square Lodge, Ramsbottom. Andrew Todd's short item in RHS News Magazine 24 (Spring/Summer 2003) entitled Robert D Wittenbury: Ramsbottom's Unsung Architect is based on the probability that Robert Wittenbury was one of the Bird & Wittenbury's partners.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES 1884-5

A CONCEALMENT OF BIRTH IN VICTORIAN RAMSBOTTOM

Prior to the New Poor Law reforms of the 1830s, an unmarried pregnant woman, abandoned by the putative father, would receive outdoor relief from her home parish, thus enabling her to raise her child within the community. However, the

reforms put an end to this tradition and henceforth, the woman's plight was to be regarded as the result of her own promiscuity. The father was absolved of all responsibility for the child and furthermore, the parish would no longer offer financial support automatically.

If her family could not help her, she faced destitution and the dreaded workhouse. An abortion was expensive and dangerous, so she might consider simply abandoning the baby. However, some chose infanticide and several women were hanged for murdering their newborn. This resulted in juries becoming increasingly reluctant to convict these desperate women and perhaps send them to the gallows.

The government therefore decided to address this issue with the passing of the Offences Against the Person Act of 1861, which created the crime of concealing the birth of a child. This was a non-capital offence, for which the woman and anyone who helped her, could be imprisoned for a maximum of two years and it was usually necessary for the accused to persuade the authorities and juries that the child was stillborn. In the mid 1880s, a Ramsbottom couple was accused of such a crime.

On the afternoon of January 6th 1885, Tom Kay was walking across a field belonging to local farmer Samuel Preston, known as Preston's Meadow and he noticed a patch of disturbed ground. He went to investigate and saw that it was a shallow grave, in which he could see a baby's body. He immediately sent a boy in search of a police officer and the youngster found Sergeant Preston and Constable Thomas Bush at Fletcher Bank. He told them of the find, but it would soon emerge that this came as no surprise to the constable.

The body was taken to the Eagle and Child Inn, where an inquest was held on the following Thursday. A post-mortem was performed by Dr. W. Deans, who confirmed that the baby was a fully developed girl, but he was not prepared to swear that she was born alive.

A short time later, thirty-five year old Nancy Hutchinson, who had a grocer's shop on Bank Lane, Walmersley-cum-Shuttleworth, a few hundred yards from where the grave was found, called at the police office. She admitted giving birth

to the baby and in view of the testimony of Dr. Deans, the police had no option other than to accept her claim that the child was stillborn.

She explained that she was at home alone on the afternoon of October 28th 1884, when she gave birth. She fainted and on coming round, realised the baby was dead. Fearing she would not be believed, Nancy placed the baby's remains in a box, which she hid under the bed. She named Constable Bush as the father, who when told of the birth, had said he would bury the body. However, this was not done until two weeks later, after Nancy's lodger Sarah Hall discovered what had occurred.

After he had done so, he suggested Nancy should leave the district, but she rejected the idea, insisting she would remain in Ramsbottom. The constable was a married man and responded by saying he would deny being the girl's father if details of the birth became known.

The police interviewed Sarah, a winder in a local mill, who had lodged with Nancy for two years. She confirmed that on November 10th she became aware of a dreadful stench emanating from the box. She opened it and was horrified to find the decomposing corpse. She confronted Nancy, who paled visibly on realising her secret had been discovered. She begged Sarah not to inform the police and she did not do so, but moved into new lodgings that night.

Hartley Farrell, a carter, reported that he was visited by Thomas in July and he told him that Nancy was six months pregnant and he was the child's father. However, she had promised not to name him on the birth certificate, nor make any financial demands of him. Thus, when the trial took place at the Manchester Assizes on Friday, January 30th, he did not deny being the father. However, he pleaded not guilty to concealing the birth and Nancy pleaded guilty.

Having listened to the evidence, the jury found Thomas not guilty and the judge said he would consider Nancy's fate over the weekend. When the hearing resumed on the Monday morning, she was sentenced to one week's imprisonment, which meant she was released immediately because of time already served.

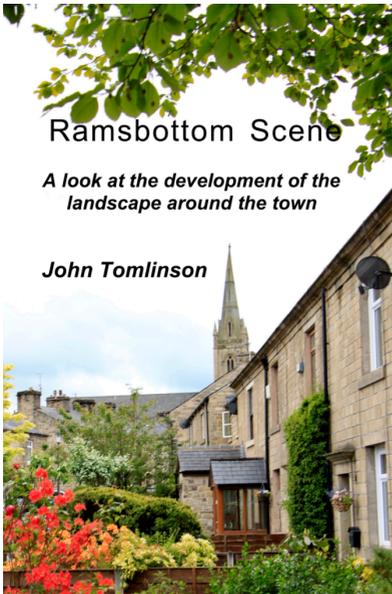
Martin Baggoley

COMING OUT IN THE NEW YEAR ~ A NEW BOOK

Ramsbottom Scene

*A look at the development of the
landscape around the town*

by John Tomlinson



The author was born and bred in Ramsbottom, attended Peel Brow Primary School and Haslingden Grammar School. After studying geography at Liverpool University his career was spent in a variety of posts in education. He is a member of Ramsbottom Heritage Society and has a lifelong interest in the development of landscape and the history of education. He says,

“It is not a history book but does deal with some history. It is mainly a look at the landscape around Ramsbottom and looks at the background to it using local planning department reports and other research. It is

illustrated by numerous local photographs of my own and other photographers. Any profits will be donated to Ramsbottom Heritage Society.”

Mr Tomlinson hopes to complete his book in the next few weeks and aims to get it returned from the printers early in 2021. He thinks the price will be about £12. He has put several photographs on the Ramsbottom Now & Then Facebook page, and we will advertise the book on our Facebook page when it is ready.

Ordering can be done by email to airevillepublishing@gmail.com

LOCAL RESEARCH UPDATE

The Heritage Society cannot offer a research service. The following could be approached:

Bury Archives and Local Studies, Moss Street, Bury, BL9 0DG

IMPORTANT: Bury Archives hope to re-open their appointment only service on 2nd December 2020. You can still contact them with your enquiries via archives@bury.gov.uk or 0161 253 6782.

Collections held include records relating to local authorities, public bodies, schools, churches, businesses, trade unions, political parties, sports clubs, social organisations, family papers, deeds, maps and plans and indexes to local parish registers including Ramsbottom. Catalogues are online at <http://archives.bury.gov.uk> as 'Bury Archives Catalogue'. The Ramsbottom Heritage Society's Collection, including photographs, is on permanent loan to Bury Archives.

The local studies section has publications on local history, historical printed works of local interest such as trade directories, older OS maps for the whole of Bury MBC (including Ramsbottom), microfilmed copies of local newspapers, thematic collections of news cuttings worth pursuing for local biographies, census returns and parish registers (microfilm). Indexes for local church registers, including Ramsbottom are also held. A direct link to Bury Libraries catalogue (which lists local history items held in all the borough's libraries) is at <http://library.bury.gov.uk> – follow 'Libraries and Archives' and then 'Search the library catalogue'. Free access to the Ancestry database is available in all Bury Council's libraries.

The Wordpress Blog (<https://buryculture.wordpress.com/>) offers lots of news, information, events and articles on all aspects of our service.

Lancashire Family History and Heraldry Society, Bury

The Trustees of the Society have suspended most activities for the time being in line with government guidance. Visit www.lfhhs.org.uk for details. The Society's research centres at Chorley and Oswaldtwistle and at the branches have been closed since 18th March 2020 until further notice. Bookshop orders may be delayed if volunteers are not available to carry them out.

Ramsbottom Library and Adult Learning Centre, Carr Street BL0 9AE

email Ramsbottom.lib@bury.gov.uk

Important information: Services during the Covid 19 situation

An Order and Collect service for books (catalogue access via www.bury.gov.uk) and limited public access to computers are available. Computer access must be booked by calling 0161 253 5352 and customers can order books online at any time or by telephoning the library on 0161 253 5352 at the following times:

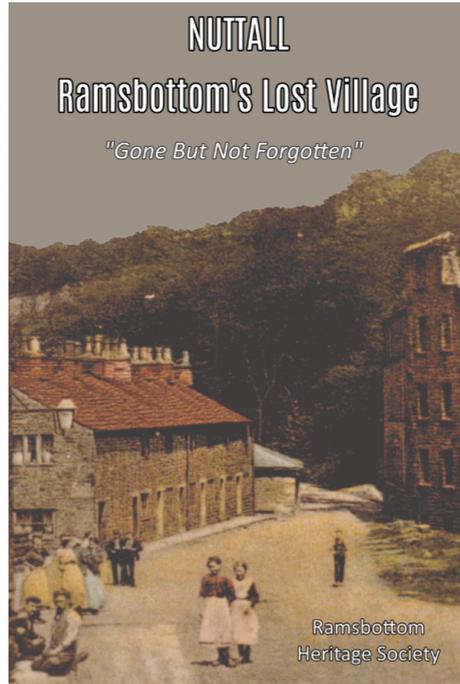
Tuesdays, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 10am to 12noon and 1pm to 4pm

Introducing
**RAMSBOTTOM HERITAGE SOCIETY'S
NEW PUBLICATION**

150 pages with over 100 illustrations,
including recently donated photographs

Meticulously researched by Brenda Richards in collaboration with ex-Nuttall residents and Society members, this book is much more than a history of a once-vibrant village, now hidden beneath undergrowth. It brings to life a busy 19th century mill community, the days when a chemical factory caused villagers much concern and Nuttall's dying days in the 1940s and 50s.

Essentially, it is a story about people, with emphasis on the living memories of some of the last people to live there.



ON SALE FROM EARLY DECEMBER 2020

How to get your copy of the book

Please go to page 3 for information.



A Christmas gift idea

