

NEWS MAGAZINE

No 47 Autumn/Winter 2014

ISSN 0960 - 1244



The objects of the society shall be:-

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

PROGRAMME 2014:

November 19 Lizzie Jones – *Rogues and Vagabonds* – the theatre and actors in Elizabethan times

December 10 **Christmas Social Evening**

2015:

January 21 Tony Hodbod – *Imperial Policeman –the Colonial Career of the East Lancashire Regiment 1881-1958* (Illustrated)

February 18 John Sagar – *The History of Birtle*

March 18 **Photographic Competition** – judge Barry Aldous, who will present a digital show of competition entries and an illustrated talk

April 15 Veronica Walker – *Nelly, Dickens's Mystery Woman* – the writer and his times

May 20 **Annual General Meeting and Members' Night**

Unless otherwise stated, meetings are held at Ramsbottom Civic Hall Market Place, Ramsbottom, commencing at 7.30pm.

Members £1.50, non-members £2 to include refreshments

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

Ramsbottom Heritage Society News Magazine No 47

Autumn/Winter 2014

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Front Cover – We are grateful to Mr Donald Fenton for his 2014 drawing of Market Chambers (formerly Ramsbottom Urban District Council Chambers). The building is very important as part of the central Ramsbottom group of Grade II listed buildings.

Website - www.ramsbottomheritage.org.uk

Email via website

Chairman's report

We are coming to the end of 2014, the hundredth anniversary of the start of World War 1. There has been huge interest in the Great War on television and in commemorative events around the country, and as you know Ramsbottom Heritage Society has played its part. This summer the British Legion asked the Society to take part in two commemorative events and we felt privileged to do so. The ceremonies took place at the War Memorial outside St Paul's Church: on 6th June the names of those who were killed during the D Day Landings in 1944 were read out and on 4th August the Ramsbottom men who served and died in World War 1 were remembered in the same way. It was moving to hear the names of those who died, in both wars, but many WW1 casualties have become familiar through our exhibition. Many of you will have seen our fascinating exhibition, *Ramsbottom's Response - World War I* upstairs in Ramsbottom Library, recalling not only those who died, but also those who supported the war work here at home. The exhibition booklet, also called *Ramsbottom's Response*, has been very popular, as has part one of *Ramsbottom's Lost Generation* written by Duncan Francis. The 1914-15 edition was on sale at the opening of our exhibition and 1916 is nearly ready for publication. Work is also underway for 1917 and 1918, which will be published separately.

The exhibition will remain open until 2016, which has given us time to continue an ongoing project, which started seven years ago with the re-cataloguing of our collection of documents and photographs and with making them available to the public. We are trying to complete this work with our maps, objects, paintings, framed photographs and recordings. Together the entire collection totals around an amazing 7,000 items, the bulk of which have been in our possession for many years. However, all the time new donations are arriving and we are happy to receive or copy any items, which you feel belong to Ramsbottom. You will remember from the Spring magazine that a group has been working on the map collection. These have all been scanned and will be made available online. Whilst we do not currently have anyone who wishes to take on reviewing our oral history tapes, our new recordings are also being put online. Another task, which started in October, is the safe storage and re-cataloguing of our art collection. Advice is being sought from Bury Council's art curator and two early 19th century paintings acquired this autumn will need some renovation. It is hoped that photographs of all our artworks will go online during 2015. As with the rest of our collection, our artwork is very important historically and we are lucky to own it. As always your Society owes you all a debt of gratitude for your support and for all the hard work so many of you are undertaking. During the six months since the last news magazine we have had some fascinating and informative talks on Wednesday nights and with the guided walks and visits over the summer months these attracted many non-members to the Heritage Society. We were also pleased to receive invitations to events at Tottington High School and Ramsbottom Community Fire Station. We were able to attend both, helping the

Society to keep in touch with local people, and one of our members even took along a Series 1 Land Rover fire engine as part of the display.

This magazine goes out to 143 members, many of whom live many miles from Ramsbottom, including one in each of Northern Ireland, New Zealand, British Columbia and South Australia. We hope that the news magazines and the website between them keep you up to date with all that is going on. Please let us know if there is anything more we can do to keep you informed or if you have any suggestions which would further the work of the Society.

Very best wishes to you all.

Kate Slingsby

Ramsbottom Community Fire Station Open Day 10th August 2014



The Land Rover, displayed at the Open Day by a member of the Ramsbottom Heritage Society was manufactured in 1955 and dispatched to the Army Research and Development Establishment, Shoeburyness, Essex. It served on Potton Island until it was disposed of in 1973. In November 1977 it was bought by Johnson Matthey Colours, Stoke-on-Trent who used it as a fire engine and also for watering the gardens and lawns around the factory. The present owner purchased it in May 1993.

News from the Archives

This year we will be adding:-

1. 50 documents
2. 150+ old photographs, including
 - 17 photographs for King George VI and Queen Elizabeth's visit to Ramsbottom in March 1945.
 - 18 photographs of Ramsbottom Amateur Dramatic and Operatic Society shows. Scenes from their 1955-57 productions of 'Lilac Domino', 'Oklahoma' and 'Zip'.

Accessing the Archives

Our Archives are kept in Bury Archives.

The Archive can be accessed on line either via the Ramsbottom Heritage website by entering:<http://www.ramsbottomheritage.org.uk/> then clicking on Bury Archives.

or by going directly to the Bury Archives website by entering:

<http://archives.bury.gov.uk/>

You can then search for a particular document or photograph by entering a keyword or browse the entire catalogue by selecting **Browse Catalogue**.

To just look at the RHS part of the Archive, select **Browse Catalogue**, scroll down to **RHS** then click on **RHS**.

Bury Archives are open Tuesday to Friday, and Saturdays once a month. It is kept in the basement of Bury Museum on Moss Street, Bury Telephone number 0161 253 6782.

The Gallery Collection

We also have a number of duplicate items which are kept in the Gallery of Ramsbottom Library. They can be viewed on the second Sunday of the month from 12-3pm. Please ask the RHS volunteer to show you the catalogue and to find the item you require.

Donations are always welcome.

Please contact members of the Society or

Brenda Richards 01706 829819/ mail@brenrichards.plus.com

News and Updates

Church Activities

Along with many other local groups, organisations and individuals, the Society contributed to St Paul's Church Flower Festival in June. The wonderful arrangements and displays of flowers really brought in the crowds and were captured on a video which is now on sale in aid of Church funds. We have been asked to mention that the Church is very grateful for all the hard work and support and that most pleasing was the feeling that the wider Ramsbottom community had truly come together for this event. Another successful event, *The Ramsbottom Jigsaw Festival* organised by Edenfield Parish Church and St Paul's Church in September, was also the focus for community involvement.

St Andrew's Church Fields

Sadly, the Society's campaign to have the field registered as a village green was unsuccessful. As we write this update mechanical diggers are working on the land. Press reports quote the spokesman for owners Peel Holdings as saying, "The works taking place are routine drainage maintenance."

St Andrew's Church - Good news about the Church Fields' neighbouring Grade II listed building which was extensively damaged by a lightning strike in 2013. Repairs to the main roof and the tower's large pinnacle are complete and the church is nearing its reopening. Work continues on the interior, rebuilding the balcony and creating a new kitchen and toilets which will result in a much improved building.

Incredible Edible Ramsbottom In Bloom July 2014

We congratulate Incredible Edible Ramsbottom on their work in improving the horticultural and environmental quality of Ramsbottom, thereby winning a fantastic silver gilt award in the Royal Horticultural Society's North West in Bloom competition. Displays on view for the judges included the ones at Ramsbottom Station, Memorial Gardens, Market Place and the Civic Hall. Plots at The Eagle and Child, The Hearth of the Ram, Nuttall Park and Ramsbottom Fire Station were also judged.

"A Monster Calls"

Over the weekend 25-26th October, film crews headed to Ramsbottom centre to film car chase scenes. Floodlights and diversions were put in place for the action to be filmed through the night in Bridge Street and along the railway and level crossing where a special train moved back and forth. The fantasy film, based on a novel by Patrick Ness, stars Liam Neeson and Sigourney Weaver. Unfortunately, neither of the stars seem to have been spotted by anybody in the crowds that gathered. (report - *Manchester Evening News*)

Ramsbottom Heritage Society's Photograph Competition

The annual photographic competition is now open until the 31st January 2015. Entries must have been taken in 2014 in the Ramsbottom area, and are retained by the Society as a record of the year. Therefore, photographs of buildings that are changing, or unique events, are of particular interest. There are 4 categories, Town and Country, Buildings, Events and Daily Life, and Themes. The photographs will be stored on the photograph database on the website, which has 2500 photographs from the 27 years that the competition has been running, and also has 1700 older photographs from our collection which is held at Bury Archives.

This year, digital entries only can be accepted. They can either be emailed to john@ramsbottomheritage.org.uk, submitted via an online Photograph Competition Form or handed in on a memory stick or CD at one of the monthly meetings. All the details are on the website, www.ramsbottomheritage.org.uk.

The winner, who will hold the Dickensian Trophy for a year, will be announced at the meeting on Wednesday March 18^h 2015

Ramsbottom War News

Life in Ramsbottom during WW2

ISSUE 5 : 1943 THE TIDE TURNS

TWENTY A4 PAGES ~ STILL ONLY £1

**On sale at Ramsbottom Library
and available via email (for details see the Society website)**

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

***War News* issues 1-4 published 2010-13, have been our most popular
publications ever and are still available.**

**DON'T MISS YOUR COPY OF THE NEXT ISSUE
Date of publication May 2015, ready for the 1940s Weekend**

THE BELGIAN CONNECTION

This is a story of uncanny coincidences, devotion, perseverance but most of all of people whose lives were touched by the First World War. We are indebted to Doris Hibbert for sharing this fascinating historical link between Ramsbottom and Belgium.

This search was set in motion when Jack Holden died in Canada and his nephew discovered a letter among his belongings which had been written in 1921 to Jack's mother, Pollie. It was from Pollie's niece, Doris Alice Holden (née Hall). In June 2001, eighty years after its composition, Ramsbottom resident Doris Hibbert received this letter from the family in Canada. They sent it to her because it had been written by her mother and they knew she would treasure it. It vividly described a holiday enjoyed by Doris Holden and her husband Richard in London and Belgium. This letter is particularly important and poignant to Doris Hibbert as, sadly, her mother died giving birth to her and her twin Richard.



In the letter – dated June 21st. 1921 – Doris Hibbert's mother (Doris Holden) enthusiastically described the first week of her holiday spent visiting the sights of London. In the second week, she and her husband travelled by ferry and train to Bruges where she was met by Madame, who treated them to tea and the cinema and was delighted to see them. The next day, at the insistence of Madame, they motored around – lunch at Ostend, tea at Ypres and back to Bruges. Doris cried at the devastation of the Belgium countryside caused by the war and described it as, “just

a wilderness". She described Madame's home as, "the loveliest home I have ever seen. She has every little detail of the very best". Doris was impressed by the richness of the home and the maid, but most of all by the kindness and hospitality of Madame when she only called to bring kind regards from Ramsbottom!

Doris Hibbert began a quest to discover more about "Madame". When she was informed by elderly relatives that she was Madame Sebrechts, being of an enquiring mind, she wanted to know more. She began by appealing for information in the *Bury Times* and Belgian newspapers. Then, with the help of Mrs Marcia Fletcher, Doris traced one of the children in an old Belgian telephone directory owned by the Fletchers who had coincidentally spent time from 1964 until 1976 in Belgium due to Mr Fletcher's work. Madame Sebrechts' daughter-in-law replied to her enquiries – giving much information and put her in contact with Thérèse, the youngest and only surviving child of Madame and Dr. Sebrechts. Thérèse Marelle (née Sebrechts), now living in France, exchanged information and photographs with Doris.



Many Belgians fled to the UK at the outbreak of WW1, many came to the Bury area and some to Ramsbottom. Several families were sent to Holly Mount in Tottington. The Sebrechts family, the mother, Jeanne, and three children, Maurice- born 1912, Frans- born 1913 and Joseph - born 1914, were sent by their father Joseph, a doctor, to England for safety. Jeanne's mother accompanied them. Because he was a medical doctor, Dr Sebrechts had to stay in Belgium. The family received support from local churches, St. Paul's Church "Belgium Home Fund," schools and the local community. Considering the position of people at this time, affected by the war, with husbands and sons fighting overseas and many organisations such as "The Overseas Club" and other groups supporting soldiers,

hospitals and homeless French and Belgians, this was very generous. They lived at 91 Bolton Street, Ramsbottom, now the home of the Fletcher family.

After the war, Doctor Sebrechts became a renowned surgeon, professor and principal of the Royal Flemish Academy for Medicine in Bruges. A street and a park (incorporating what had formally been the garden of their home) in Bruges are named after him. The couple had another five children, the first one they called Paul, perhaps in memory of St. Paul's Church Ramsbottom which played a significant part in supporting them during their time of need. Their youngest child Thérèse, born when Jeanne was forty five, took care of her mother after her father's death in 1948 until Madame Sebrechts' death in 1961.

Another Belgian family, Van Elyken, father, mother and 4 children aged 6 to 13, from San-u-liet near Antwerp also came here and lived in 3 Rock Street, Nuttall Village. More Belgians were housed in Stubbins.

Anne Shortt and Kathleen Husband 2014

RAMSBOTTOM URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL ENTERS THE 20TH CENTURY (1914 – 18)

Ramsbottom Market Chambers (see front cover drawing) in Market Place used to house the Ramsbottom Urban District Council offices and Council Chambers. The RUDC was created in 1894 and we are looking at evidence that the Council may have acquired the building in 1912. Because it played an important part in Ramsbottom's history, we are anxious to gather more information and hoping that people will get in touch. The RUDC was abolished by the Local Government Act of 1974, forty years ago. In the following article we have extracted a few snippets from RUDC minutes about Council activities in earlier times.

On 23rd April 1914 the various committees were set up at the Annual Meeting for RUDC's three wards, Central, North and East. The Finance and General Purpose committees were each constituted of the whole of the members of the Council. The Streets and Buildings, Health, Lighting and Fire Brigade, Traction, Higher Education committees each had its own chairman and there were also three sub-committees: Small Holding and Allotments, Horse and Byelaws. Additional RUDC sub-committees, Recruiting, After Care and Hospital Charges were announced at the April 1916 Annual Meeting.

In addition there was a County Council Scheme with RUDC representatives on various elementary education committees and representatives were also nominated to be eligible to attend the Annual Meeting and Conference of Urban District Councils at Westminster.

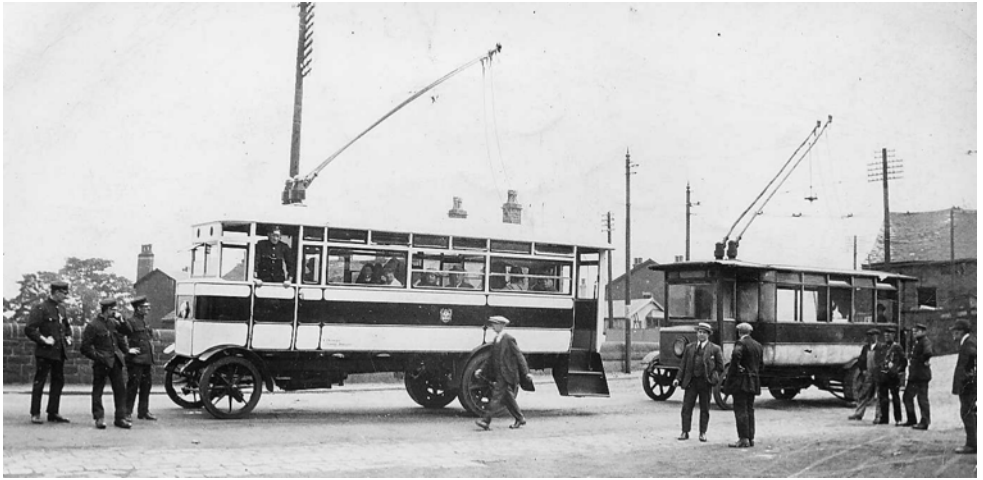
Barwood Bridge

In September 1914 it was reported to the Council that the old Barwood Bridge over the River Irwell had been demolished and a new steel bridge structure with a width of 12 feet was being built by Sir John Grant Lawson in conjunction with the owners of Holme Mill. *(The mill was built in 1910 and presumably needed better access. It is now Cormar Carpets.)* The abutment walls were sufficiently advanced for the girders (nearly 65 feet long) to be on site in readiness for erection.

The Lighting and Fire Brigade Department of the RUDC was making arrangements during 1914 for the Lancashire Electric Power Company to install street lighting. They approved a plan showing the positioning of lights on the new “Railless Traction Route” where the first public service had run on 8th August 1913. *(The route ran between Holcombe Brook and Edenfield via Ramsbottom and between Ramsbottom Market Place and Ramsbottom railway station.)* The Ramsbottom Gas Company would supply these lamps until the Lancashire Electric Power Co were ready to light them by electricity. In July the Council was notified that the Lancashire Electric Power Company intended to open up road and footpath surfaces in Bolton Road West at Holcombe Brook for the purpose of laying cables and boxes in order to supply electricity in that portion of the district. *(Sounds familiar?)* By the end of November 378 lamps, including all those on the main roads were “on the incandescent system”. However, tenders were invited from local tailors to supply lamplighters’ jackets as hundred of lamps were still gas lit. During the course of the year, four lamps had been knocked down by luries, three of which had been detected and damage paid for by lurry owners.

By October 1916 more stringent regulations were in place to restrict street lighting so the Council gave instructions for corners, kerbs and posts, where considered advisable, to be whitened.

The Traction Committee ordered two new trolleybuses, known as trackless trams, in 1914 from R E T Construction Co Ltd, of Leeds to add to the fleet of five which they had bought from them in 1913. There had been no local public transport on Ramsbottom’s roads before that date and the new trams with their vermilion and cream livery picked out in gold were very popular. Transfers were being obtained for the recently designed coat of arms.



(The photograph is an early shot of two buses outside the Hare and Hounds. The rear antique may be one of the August 1913 couple. Note the Great War uniforms.)

A private telephone connection was made in 1914 between the Council Offices and the Tramway Depot (also known as the Tram Shed, on Stubbins Lane - where the petrol station now stands), and a letterbox was installed.

Unfortunately, some of the experimental equipment on the vehicles made them unreliable. The Transport Manager and Councillors, including on one occasion the Chairman himself, made numerous visits to Leeds and the tramcars were regularly discussed at Council Meetings. By 1914 R E T needed to carry out maintenance on four of the original five vehicles, with the council paying £60 per car as part of the cost. The work included replacing bodies, springs and wheels. Problems had also arisen with the solid rubber tyres so using "Plascom" or another method of improving the surface of the main road along the traction route was being considered for, as the *Ramsbottom Observer* said, "the setted roads were not in any sense to be compared to a billiard table". Referring to the earliest Ramsbottom trolleybuses, one man remembered, sixty years on, "You used to step off them and you'd be shaking!"

All the men who had "joined the colours" were allowed to travel free on the tramcars. In 1916 it was also agreed that tramway staff going to or from work, policemen in uniform, wounded soldiers would also be carried without payment.

On his promotion from Manager to Depot Foreman Mr Sydney Parsons' wage was 7d per hour. In 1916 an application was made to the Local Tribunal for exemptions from Military Service for S. Parsons, Depot Foreman and J Holt, Driver. In 1918 Mr Parsons was working a sixty hour week for £2 5s plus a war bonus of 25/- per week. From 1920 he was General Manager, remaining in post until 1951.

Horse Sub- committee

A Public Health Act of 1875 made it compulsory for every household to put the weekly waste in “movable receptacles” for disposal and made councils responsible for servicing these containers. The kitchen fire was seen as the safest way of destroying waste so ash made up almost all the rubbish to be collected. Overall responsibility for its removal then rested with the Health Committee and their “scavenging department”.

Early dustcarts were open-bodied and pulled by horses. For the financial year ending 31st March 1914 the RUDC scavenging department lists expenditure totalling nearly £1500. Expenses included provender and bedding, shoeing and vet’s fees, wages, repairs to carts, gears etc, insurance of horses, new carts and new horses (£55).

In May 1914 an application was to be made by the RUDC Finance Department to the Local Government Board to sanction a loan of £250 to purchase from Messrs Platt & Castle premises off Stubbins Lane for use as the Council’s new stables. Later, a tender from Mr George E Warner for slating and repairs to main roof of the stables was accepted and other repairs were being arranged. The stables would have needed stores for tack, fodder and bedding straw.

A tender from Ramsbottom Industrial & Provident Society for the supply of provender - best English oats and best broad bran - for three months had been accepted but later, in March 1915, Messrs Haslam Ltd took over the contract. Mr E H Greenwood provided a supply of meadow hay at £3 16s 8d per ton. In 1918 a record appears of arrangements that were made with Mr Miles Eccles of Nuttall Hall Farm for pasturage for the Council’s horses during his tenancy of the farm.

Messrs James Whittaker & Son’s tender for removing manure weekly at the new stables for twelve months commencing 1st January 1915 was accepted. (Even though the RUDC and some of the larger businesses had their own horses and wagons, there were opportunities for local people to make a living as carriers. In 1885 Whittakers, one of the most successful carrier locally, had “upwards of a hundred of the finest draught horses in England”.) At one point later on in the war in 1918 the manure was made available to the Ramsbottom and District Allotments Association once the Council’s requirements were satisfied.

There are few references in RUDC minutes between 1914 and 1918 to the Health Committee buying or selling Council-owned horses. On 29th October 1914 the sale of horse ‘Poll’ for £8 10s is mentioned. By April 1916 another of the Council’s horses had been sold to the Military Authorities. (In 1900 there were about a million working horses in Britain but by 1914 the number had fallen. World War 1 had a

devastating effect on the horse population as thousands were drafted for the war effort.) Later in 1916 a dark bay shire mare called Kitty had been bought from Mr George Nuttall for £78. A few weeks later the Sanitary Inspector reported that Kitty had become lame in her off hind leg. Five working days were lost but the veterinary surgeon had been called and Kitty was soon quite well and working satisfactorily. In July 1918, subject to the granting of a licence, the Horse sub-committee was to be allowed to purchase a brown shire gelding for £105 from Messrs Terry Bros of Sheep Hey Farm. One brief mention of an accident to old horse Duke in the Edenfield district gives no more details.

Work at the RUDC stables would probably have involved long hours caring for the horses. The wages of the carters were increased to 50/- per week in 1918, including a war bonus of 25/-.

References:

Ramsbottom Urban District Council minutes 1914-15, 1916-17 and 1918-19
Ramsbottom Heritage Society, *Around Ramsbottom* (Chalford 1995)
Douglas Hartley, *A Short History of Ramsbottom's Buses 1913-1969*
(Ramsbottom Heritage Society News Magazine No 26 Spring/Summer 2004)
John Simpson, *A History of Edenfield and District*

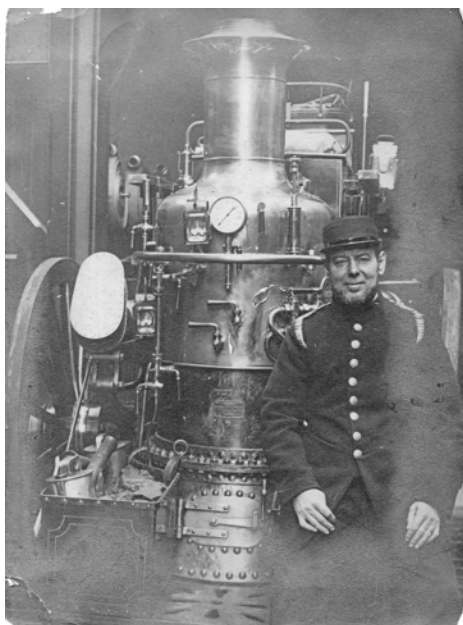
THE EARLY YEARS OF THE LOCAL FIRE BRIGADE



Thanks to the Kenneth Beetson collection for allowing the use of the photograph

Taken outside their Central Street Headquarters the photograph shows Ramsbottom's Fire Brigade on what was obviously deemed an important occasion. It features smartly turned out firemen and a beautifully polished fire engine with its brass boiler and funnel. The brigade, possibly photographed to celebrate the arrival of their new fire engine, are LW Preston, George Starkey, Sam Westwell, George Brooks, Jacob Lord, Robert Stansfield, Jack Hamer, William Ramsbottom, Arthur Coulson, Jack Pycroft, George Smethurst, Jack Tattersall and James Taylor. They all had jobs with Ramsbottom companies and their various skills came in handy in running and maintaining the engine and other equipment. The immaculately turned out horses are reminiscent of the "vanner" type - tough, sturdy, hard-working animals, usually bred with some pony and some heavy horse blood. Apparently they were kept at Central Street and also available for the horse drawn ambulance.

On display at the Greater Manchester Fire Service Museum in Rochdale is an engine with all the characteristics of Ramsbottom Fire Brigade's appliance. Information we have received suggests that they are probably the same make. With the museum's kind permission we reproduce their modern photograph, a photograph to show a fire pump boiler and the description on display there:



1910 Shand, Mason Steam Fire Engine 'George V'

This light, horse-drawn steam fire engine was built by Shand, Mason & Co of London for the Skelmersdale Fire Brigade. The boiler is designed for the quick raising of steam and could be got fully to work in minutes, supplying 300 gallons/minute (1360 litres/minute) through two deliveries. To help achieve this, some stations kept the boilers warm by means of a gas ring before lighting the fire, whilst the movement of the engine at speed would help to create a good draught.

After passing to the National Fire Service in 1941, the museum's appliance was owned by Manchester Fire Brigade until 1974. It is in full working condition and has appeared in several television productions including *The Adventure of Sherlock Holmes* and *Smokescreen*.



*Photograph reproduced with the kind permission of
The Greater Manchester Fire Service Musuem collection*

Ramsbottom Local Board had formed the town's first fire brigade in 1887 before the days of the Ramsbottom Urban District Council (RUDC). In those days, although the earliest steam fire engine in Greater Manchester was supplied to Bolton Fire Brigade in 1868, some fire pumps in common use were hand-powered and belonged to local mills and factories. Most brigades, except for the smallest, acquired steamers and they became the mainstay of fire fighting fleets in towns and cities.

Ramsbottom's own brigade was eventually disbanded and in 1919 the RUDC (which had been set up in 1894) came to an agreement with the Rawtenstall Fire Brigade regarding fire-fighting services in the Ramsbottom District.

Fire At Stubbins School And A Fireman's Fatal Collapse, May 1915

The *Bury Times* reported the details of this incident saying that Ramsbottom Fire Brigade was out on a practice run when a telephone call was put through to the Fire Station at about 7.30pm. One of the members of the brigade was William Proctor, aged 55 years, of 25, St Paul's Street, Ramsbottom, a plumber by trade and employed by the Railway Company at Ramsbottom. Apparently, he had recently been ill. As the brigade responded to the call from Mr Robert Holden at Stubbins Council School, William Proctor took his place on the back of the horse-drawn steam engine. After about half a mile, when the brigade was along Stubbins Lane, he spoke to a fellow fireman, "I shall have to get off. I'm jiggered." He dropped off the engine and went to Albert Jefferson, a night watchman at Stubbins Paper Mill and asked for a drink of water. Jefferson got him a drink of water and brandy but Proctor became worse. Dr Crawshaw was summoned at 8.40pm, and Proctor died a few minutes later. He left a widow, two sons and two daughters.

William Proctor's position at the back of the steam engine was just behind the boiler. Underneath it, and according to normal practice, the fuel in the firebox would have been lit at Central Street ready to provide the urgently needed steampower for the engine's water pump. Perhaps William Proctor, following his illness, was affected by fumes from the firebox. His name appears on the Roll of Honour at Ramsbottom Fire Station, Stubbins Lane.

The Stubbins Council School fire had started in the cellar part of the building at about 7.15pm. The caretaker, Leonard Grange, gave the alarm and started to throw buckets of water on the smouldering beams above. With assistance the caretaker continued his efforts to put out the fire but it was well alight before the brigade arrived. Water then had to be pumped from Rose Bank and Edenwood mill lodges because the water main from Scout Moor had been turned off for the night. About two hours later the fire was well under control but the brigade had to continue spraying water until about 1.30am next day.

Stubbins Council School was in the care of Lancashire Education Committee from 1902. It had opened in 1868 as Stubbins Congregational Day School and shared the Sunday School building. The cost was largely borne by Messrs Porritt and it was often referred to as Porritt's School. Before passing to Lancashire it was taken over in 1883 by the newly-formed Tottington Higher End School Board. In 1914 plans to rebuild the school came to nothing but almost became necessary after

the fire. It destroyed most of one wing of the building but the County Council had insurance and, following repairs, it continued to house the school for more than fifty years. Work on Stubbins County Primary School on the adjoining site began in 1967 and the old building closed in 1970.

References:

Ramsbottom Volume 2 by Kenneth Beetson 1978

Greater Manchester Fire Service Museum, Maclure Road, Rochdale, OL11 1DN

Bury Times 19th May 1915

A History of Edenfield and District by John Simpson, pub 2003 by *Edenfield Local History Society*

PRIVATE HAROLD MONKS (1897 –1915)

Harold was born in Ramsbottom on 4th August 1897. He was the eldest child of Abraham Monks and Mary Annie Mallery who had married the year before at St John's in Shuttleworth. His sister Edith was born just over a year later on 11th August 1898. Harold started at St Paul's School on 27th August 1900 aged just three, followed by Edith on 15th January 1901.

In the 1901 census taken on Sunday 31st March, Harold was living with his parents and Edith at 7, Wallis Street, Ramsbottom. Both his parents worked at a paper mill. His father was a callender man whose job it was to look after the mill's big rollers which were used to flatten the paper fibres. Mary Annie worked as a rag sorter.

Abraham Monks	Head	M	33	Paper Mill Callender Man	Worker	Lancs Ramsbottom
Mary A. "	Wife	M	27	•Paper Mil Rag Sorter	Worker	Lancs Bury
Harold..... "	Son	S	3			Lancs Ramsbottom
Edith..... "	Daur	S	2			Lancs Ramsbottom

In 1902 Harold's brother, Robert, was born followed sometime later in October 1908 by twins, Edwin and Jennie. His family was now complete, but unfortunately not for long, as little Jennie died the following year before her first birthday.

By the 1911 census, Harold and his family were living at 11, Wallis Street (perhaps this was a slightly larger house or perhaps the street had been renumbered). He was thirteen and already working as a weaver. His father still had the same job at the paper mill, but his mother no longer had an occupation listed. This is perhaps not surprising, as Edwin, the surviving twin, had died aged two years shortly before the census was taken. It must have been excruciatingly painful for Mary Annie who filled in and signed the census form to complete the columns about the number of children born alive in the marriage and the total number surviving at that date. I hope at least that at this sad time she had the support of her mother and two of her sisters who lived close by in Derby Street.

An old photograph of Ramsbottom shows Patmos Church on Peel Brow where the twins were christened and where Harold worshipped and attended Sunday School as a child. The last two houses of Wallis Street, since demolished, can just be seen jutting out on the left. So, Harold certainly did not have a long walk to church!



In 1913, Ramsbottom Urban District Council started running a trolley bus service. Harold left his job as a weaver and got a job as a conductor on the new buses. This was a wonderful opportunity for a young man. As a learner conductor, he earned 18s 0d per week in 1913 and there were opportunities for promotion. In his new role, he would become a familiar, friendly face to many local people.

On 31st August 1914 Harold enlisted in the machine gun section of the 7th Battalion of the East Lancashire Regiment. After eleven months of training, his battalion was sent to France on 17th July 1915. Harold was involved in a number of engagements against the enemy, but ironically his death on 16th October was a result of injuries sustained when a rifle grenade burst near him when he was standing at arms. A comrade confirmed to his parents that he did not suffer, as the blast immediately rendered him unconscious and he died without regaining consciousness. He was just eighteen years old. His parents had to console themselves with the fact that “his death came whilst doing his country’s work as a soldier of the King”.

Harold was awarded two medals – the Victory Medal and the Star – for his service. His grave is in Le Touret Military Cemetery, Pas de Calais. I do not know whether his parents or any of his family ever visited his actual grave, but he was also commemorated locally on the Patmos Sunday School Roll of Honour and on his

parents' gravestone at Park United Reform Church, Ramsbottom. Sadly, in this year of remembrance, nobody seems to know the whereabouts of the Patmos memorial and his parents' gravestone has either been removed or turned over in the graveyard.

Six months after Harold's death, his sister Edith married Private William Howarth at Park United Reform Church on 8th April 1916. Their daughter, Mary, was born shortly afterwards. William survived the war and he and Edith went on to have at least three other children. They named their third child Harold and I like to think that this was in memory of a much-missed brother.

Cathy Armstrong-Bell, September 2014

THE DIAGONAL ENGINE BY JOHN WOOD OF RAMSBOTTOM

The Society's research on John Wood continues. With the kind permission of staff at the Museum of Science and Industry, Manchester, we reproduce the following article from their Collections and Information Department. Interestingly, in the Heritage Society's collection is a photograph showing a similar engine which has been loaded on to a trailer. The two horses yoked to the trailer are presumably ready to be taken on a delivery by the workers standing beside them.

The double diagonal steam engine displayed in the Museum's Power Hall was made from their 1890 design by John Wood of Ramsbottom, a well-known maker of textile finishing machines. The working exhibit was made in 1910 and operated by Frankenstein Rubber Generators of Newton Heath, Manchester, which used it to drive a calico printing machine. It was presented to the Museum in 1970 when it was decommissioned by the company.

The diagonal engine was first patented in 1823 by Isambard Kingdom Brunel. It consists of either one steam-driven piston cylinder or a pair of cylinders inclined upwards at 45° driving a flywheel. The double diagonal engine was very popular for driving textile-finishing and rubber-callendering machines, where fine speed variation was needed. The position of the cylinders at 90°, with the connecting rods driving a common crank, meant that one piston was always ready to work with steam at full pressure.

The diagonal engine is a very neat and compact design, showing how much technology had advanced since the large beam engines of previous years. Diagonal engines tended to be small, up to 25 horsepower, and used almost exclusively in the

textile industry. They reached their peak, however, in paddle-boat production when huge engines of 11,000 hp were used.

Although the double diagonal engine has two cylinders it works on the same principles as most other steam engines. Steam from a boiler is admitted to each cylinder via a slide valve which is inside the box-like structure attached to the side of each cylinder. The slide valve, which is driven by an eccentric from the main shaft, ensures that steam is alternately admitted and exhausted from either end of the cylinder in turn. This drives the piston both forwards and backwards. The reciprocal motion of the pistons is converted to the rotary motion of the flywheel by a crank.

To control the speed of the engine, there is a small centrifugal governor, which varies the amount of steam that is admitted to the piston cylinders from the boiler. If the engine rotates too fast, the spheres of the governor are thrown outwards by centrifugal action closing the steam valve and cutting off steam from the boiler, hence slowing the engine down.

Your King & Country Need You! **Warning To Slackers.**

Dr. Macnamara, Parliirmentary Secretary to the Admiralty, says—

"IT IS NO GOOD MINCING THE MATTER. THERE STILL REMAIN MANY THOUSANDS OF YOUNG FELLOWS WITHOUT DEPENDENTS WHO HAVE NOT ANSWERED THE CALL. THE SOONER THEY MAKE UP THEIR MINDS TO ANSWER IT THE BETTER.

IF THEY THINK THEY ARE GOING TO ENJOY LIFE AND FREEDOM UNDER THE BRITISH FLAG AT SOME OTHER FELLOWS EXPENSE—IF THAT IS TO BE THEIR LINE—THEY WON'T ENJOY IT VERY LONG.

"I SAY THIS IN A MOST DELIBERATE MANNER. THAT THE MAN WHO IS PREPARED TO ENJOY LIFE UNDER THE BRITISH FLAG, WITHOUT HAVING THE GRIM DETERMINATION THAT HE WILL HAND ON THAT FLAG AS FREE AS HE FOUND IT, IS NOT WORTHY THE NAME OF BRITISH CITIZEN."

**ROSSENDALE MEN Should Apply To
The Recruiting Offices,**

**CONSERVATIVE CLUB, HASLINGDEN.
LIBERAL CLUB, RAWTENSTALL.
MECHANICS' INSTITUTE, BACUP.
CONSERVATIVE CLUB, RAMSBOTTOM.**

LOCAL RESEARCH

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

Bury Archives, Moss Street, Bury, BL9 0DG email contact: archives@bury.gov.uk or tel: **0161 253 6782**

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

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

Visitors are free to use finding aids, online archives resources or to speak to a member of staff but are advised to make an appointment if they wish to consult archive documents.

Collections held include records relating to local authorities, public bodies, schools, churches, businesses, trade unions, political parties, sports clubs, social organisations, family papers, deeds, maps and plans and indexes to local parish registers including Ramsbottom. Our catalogues are online at <http://archives.bury.gov.uk> as 'Bury Archives Catalogue'. The Archive photograph collection can be browsed on the Bury Image Bank website at www.buryimagebank.org.uk. We run an enquiry service, offering 15 minutes staff time free. The Ramsbottom Heritage Society's Collection, including photographs, is on permanent loan to Bury Archives.

Bury Local & Family History Service, Moss Street, Bury, BL9 0DR: information@bury.gov.uk or tel 0161 253 5871 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 'Bury Libraries Catalogue (Local Studies)'. Free access to the Ancestry and Find my Past databases is available in all Bury Council's libraries. Please phone for details of other family history advice services.

Lancashire Family History and Heraldry Society; membership secretary Steven Benson, 32, Slater Lane, Leyland, PR25 1TN, email: membership@lfhhs.org.uk. Membership entitles you to 4 magazine issues, an opportunity to publish your research queries and findings, and meetings each month with speakers at venues all over the county, including Bury and Rawtenstall. Also one branch in London. More information is available on **www.lfhhs.org.uk**.

Ramsbottom Library and Adult Learning Centre, Carr Street BL0 9AE
tel **0161 253 5352** (IT - tel **0161 253 5354**) email: Ramsbottom.lib@bury.gov.uk

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

Ramsbottom Heritage Gallery

RAMSBOTTOM'S



RESPONSE

WORLD WAR I EXHIBITION

Location: upstairs at *Ramsbottom Library and Adult Learning Centre*, Carr Street, Ramsbottom, BL 9AE. Tel: 0161 253 5352

Gallery opening Times:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 9.30am – 7.30pm
Saturday from 9.30am – 1pm

2nd Sunday in the month 12 noon - 3pm (side entrance only)
with extra displays and the Society's bookstall

More copies of the very popular exhibition booklet, also called
'Ramsbottom's Response', are now on sale



Bury
COUNCIL