

Ramsey Mortuary Chapels Heritage and Archive Centre

By Jane Yardley – Chair, Friends
of Ramsey Mortuary Chapels

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy New Year from everyone at the chapels.

At the time of writing this, it seems that cases of Covid-19 and Omicron are at last on the wane and let's hope that this trend continues and we can all get back to leading some kind of normal lives this year.

Despite everything, restoration work has continued apace at the chapels, thanks to the splendid effort and hard work of Kevin Colam, who has been busy painting and varnishing even in the damp and cold. Also, a big thank you to Gary Judd for putting up our 2 new chandeliers, by no means an easy task, one of which has been generously paid for by Rotary Club of Ramsey and also to Pete Simpson for other electrical work. We are very lucky in Ramsey to have such wonderful tradesmen who really care about doing a good job.

Other good news is that at last the plans for our new toilet facilities have now been passed having been lost at Huntingdonshire District Council. Our sincere thanks to Simon Lemmon of Distinct Designs UK Ltd for providing us with another set at no extra cost.

As many of you will know, we have 2 stalls where we sell bric-a-brac, one in Ramsey Indoor Market and the other at Home and Vintage in Bury. During these challenging times these have been an invaluable source of income for us and we would like to thank everyone at these venues for their support and a big thank you to all of you who have generously donated items for us to sell. All the money raised goes towards the restoration of the chapels and we are very grateful.

We hope that this year we will be able to get out and about with a stall at various events and we hope to start by having a jewellery stall at the village hall in Ramsey Mereside on the 5th of March, 1pm to 4pm. We have had some lovely items donated to us, so fingers crossed!

Now to continue Beryl Perrin's memories of Ramsey when she was young -

"I remember that a pub called the Horse and Gate with an archway to the right was just down the road from GB Hyde and Son and that next to that was Goodall's which was a confectioners and green grocers. The outside was painted a lemon yellow and the windows reached nearly down to the pavement. When you entered there was a counter with stands of sweets on top and behind this were rows of shelves with jars of sweets. When you chose your sweets, they were taken out of the jar by a small scoop and then shaken into a small white paper bag, I can still remember the sound. The grocery side of the shop was on your left, but I don't remember much about the grocery side of things as when I was young all my interest was in the sweets! But I remember Mr and Mrs Goodall, he was quite tall and she was quite petit and they were very nice people. The shop was taken over by the Payne family when the Goodall's retired and when the Payne's retired it became a dress shop for several years ran by a very nice lady called Betty Thompson. Alas like so many other places in Ramsey it has now been turned into flats.

The next shop was Hildreds. The building was painted white and again it had very large windows. The first part of the shop sold china and ornaments and after a slope in the floor it turned into hardware shop which had a lovely smell of creosote. The lady assistant was called Miss Bullock I think and she again was very nice. My mum had some birthday and Christmas presents from there, including a brass horse and cart that she was very fond of.

Hildreds eventually moved to other premises along the High Street and the shop was bought by a young man called Nicholas Wattiez and became a secondhand shop which sold mostly furniture to start with but eventually he sold all sorts of odds and ends, a bit like a Pound Stretcher. Later it was demolished and became Hildreds Court (more flats again!) with a small, very interesting shop fronting the pavement selling cards and unusual gifts.

The next shop was Mr Crisp's Pork Butchers Shop. When I went shopping for mum I had to go there for bacon as she said that it was the best in Ramsey. Mr Crisp's wife was the Secretary at the Junior School

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and they were both very nice people too.

Next to Mr Chrisp's was a chemists known as Turners I believe. It wasn't a large shop, it seemed about the same size as a living room and the shelves were filled with all sorts of pills and potions and I think I remember a baby weighing machine against the wall. Behind the counter at the far end was the dispensary which was run by Mr Nichols who was tall and slim and his wife was small and plump. Another shop with lovely smells!

This shop, together with next door was eventually turned into a pet shop and then into an indoor market."

More from Beryl next time.

Let's keep our fingers crossed for a good year and look after yourselves.