

Ramsden Heritage Trail

About the Ramsden heritage trail

William Ramsden purchased the Manor of Huddersfield from Queen Elizabeth I in 1599 and his descendants continually increased their ownership in the town until they sold out to Huddersfield Corporation in 1920. Over those three centuries they had a profound influence on the town's development.

This trail, developed by Huddersfield Local History Society, www.huddersfieldhistory.org.uk, takes you to some of the key sites which tell that story.

Information

For more information about Discover Huddersfield or to learn more about the project and how to get involved, please get in touch through the following media:

www.discoverhuddersfield.com

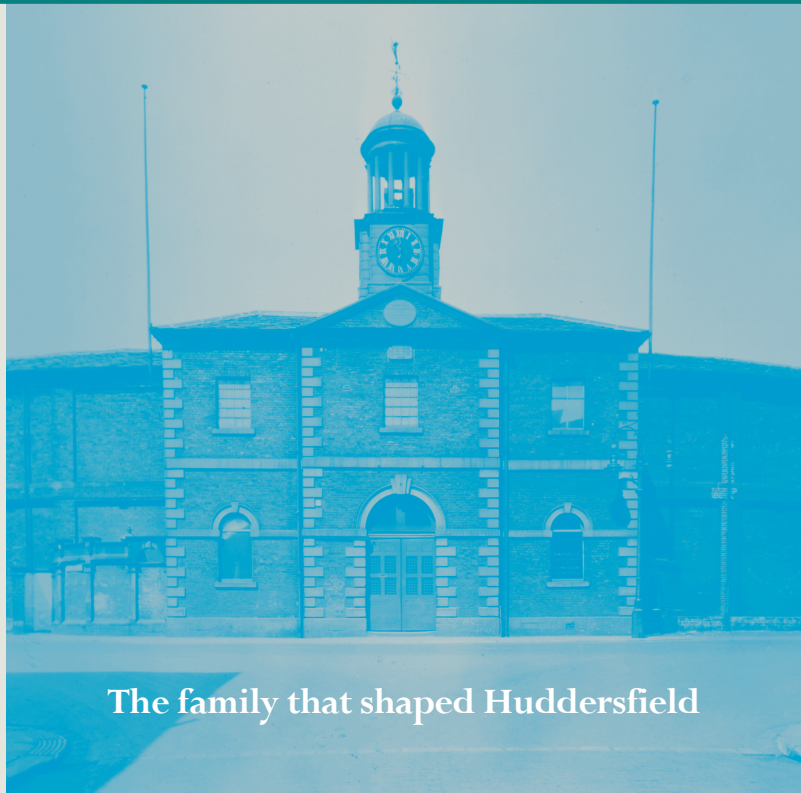
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The family that shaped Huddersfield

Ramsden Heritage Trail

Key:
 Pedestrian area
 Parking
 One way traffic flow



Discover Huddersfield offers new ways to experience this amazing Yorkshire town, through guided walks, talks and trails. See Huddersfield at its very best: grand listed buildings and small independent shops; a place for radicals from the Luddites to the Sex Pistols; birthplace of Rugby League; a town rich in creativity, stories, heritage and the odd ghostly encounter.



1 Market Place

In 1671 John Ramsden (who became the first Sir John in 1689) secured the right to hold a market in Huddersfield. The market cross, bearing the Ramsden arms, was erected here, close to the Parish Church and on the main route through what was then a small village. Although much renewed, the cross has stood here ever since - except for the years 1812-52, when it was removed to Longley Hall for safe keeping during years of sometimes riotous political conflict. (Sir John is pictured on the heritage trail signboard.)

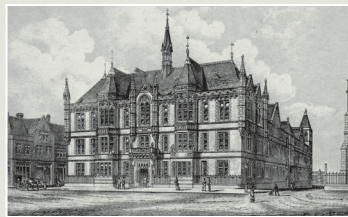


2 Site of Cloth Hall

At the top of Cloth Hall St, where Sainsbury's is today, stood the Cloth Hall, where local clothiers brought their products to market. The Cloth Hall was built by Sir John Ramsden, 3rd baronet, in 1765/6 and stood until 1930; its portico (see cover image) and an entrance arch stand today in Ravensknowle Park, Wakefield Rd. The imposing warehouses in nearby Dundas St (named after the family of Isabella, mother of the 5th baronet) were a mid-19th century Ramsden development, as cloth manufacturers came to require more exclusive accommodation to market their wares.

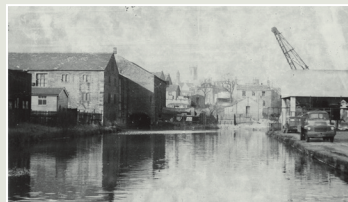
3 Ramsden Street & Town Hall

As lords of the manor, the Ramsdens controlled the naming of streets, so this name is no surprise. Inside the Town Hall, on the first floor, is a memorial to the Corporation's purchase of the Ramsden estate in 1920, and the key part played in that by Samuel Copley. The estate had grown throughout the 19th century to more than 4300 acres. When it came to market, the Corporation needed a wealthy intermediary to buy the estate while they obtained the necessary powers. Locally-born Copley, who had made his fortune in Australia, put up the money - £1.3 million - while a Bill went through Parliament.



4 Ramsden Building

Now part of the University, this was opened in 1883 as the Huddersfield Technical School and became Ramsden (Technical) College in 1963. It was opened by the Duke of Somerset, father-in-law of Sir John William Ramsden, 5th baronet (remembered in John William St).



5 Aspley Basin

In 1775-80, a few years after the 3rd Sir John had built the Cloth Hall, the 4th financed the Sir John Ramsden (or Huddersfield Broad) Canal, linking the town to the Aire & Calder Navigation and thus to the coast via the Humber. This was a key step in the town's economic development and an inland port developed at Aspley, with boat-building, rope-making and similar industries.

The trail returns to the town centre via the 1865 Locomotive Bridge.



6 Beast Market

While cloth was sold in the Market Place, Parish Church yard and later in the Cloth Hall, this was where sheep and cattle from the surrounding area were traded. A house here, owned by one Thomas Firth, features in a well-known anecdote. It was said to be the only house in town not in Ramsden ownership, and in the early 19th century the 4th baronet offered to buy it for as many sovereigns as would cover the floor area; *only if they're end-up*, Firth replied, and retained the ownership. (In fact Ramsden ownership of the town was never as complete as the story suggests, and indeed Thomas Firth owned a good deal of land, on which for example Firth Street was developed.)

7 Parish Church & Byram St

After their big initiatives of the later 18th century, the Ramsdens took little part in the town's development in the first half of the 19th century, viewing it at a distance from their country seat at Byram Hall (near Pontefract). All that changed from the mid-1840s with the development of the grid-pattern 'new town' on open fields north of Kirkgate/Westgate. Byram St was part of this plan, with its handsome office buildings all put up for rent by the Ramsden estate around 1880. Long before that, as lords of the manor, the Ramsdens had appointed the vicars of St Peter's from 1554.



8 Railway station and St George's Square

The Ramsden Estate agent George Loch, and local businessmen, were

instrumental in bringing a through railway to Huddersfield in the late 1840s (previously the estate had resisted the railway to defend their canal profits). The town's authorities won an argument to leave an open square in front of the station, providing a fitting centrepiece to the 'new town'. The imposing buildings around the Square were all put up by the estate.



9 Estate Buildings

The Ramsdens' Huddersfield business was managed from Longley New Hall until 1870, when they opened new offices here at Estate Buildings. The architect W H Crossland, a local man who gained a national reputation, designed many of the estate's town centre buildings, in a wide variety of styles. Coats of arms on the facade are those of other wealthy families linked to the Ramsdens by marriage.



10 Byram Buildings & Arcade

Making reference again to the family seat at Byram, this retail development of 1881/2, with the Ramsden arms above the entrance, was also designed by Crossland, and shows the Ramsdens still furthering the commercial development of the town - and their own income from rents - as they had done, if intermittently, for over two centuries.