

John Ramsbottom

**Banker, Brewer, Member of Parliament and Freemason
(1777 – 1845) — a Vignette**

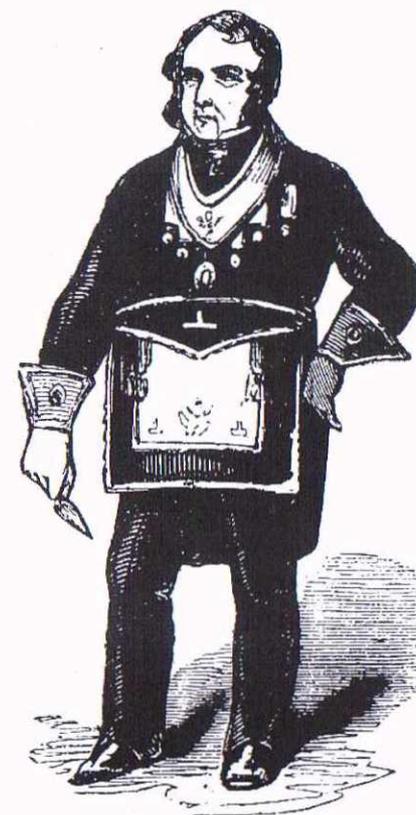
John Ramsbottom was born in 1777 and was educated at Eton College. After leaving Eton he joined the cavalry regiment of the 16th Dragoons in 1798 and was the regimental ensign or 'cornet'. He was promoted to Lieutenant in 1799 and retired in 1801. His association with the military continued when in 1803 he was appointed Major and Commandant of the 'Clewer Volunteers'¹ a militia regiment raised during the French Peninsula Wars. In 1796 he went into partnership with William Legh² and took over the running of a Windsor brewery and bank known simply as 'The Windsor Bank' and 'Brewery'. This brewery was previously owned by Henry Isherwood³ who stood as Member of Parliament for New Windsor between 1796-7. This brewery was bought in 1780 by John Ramsbottom's uncle, Richard Ramsbottom, and his partner, James Baverstock.

The Ramsbottom brewery and banking businesses appear to have been in existence until 1837 when they were taken over by the rapidly expanding brewery and bank Nevile Reid and Co⁴, which, during the same year, had purchased the Cookham Brewery.⁵ After selling the brewery and bank John Ramsbottom and his family moved to the outskirts of Windsor to a house called Clewer Lodge.⁶ Ramsbottom's original brewery headquarters became the offices for the Neville Reid bank and brewery. Although the bank was run by Nevile Reid and Company, it was actually owned by the partners of the London bank, Williams, Deacon, Labouchere and Company, which was established in 1771.⁷ A further branch of Nevile Reid & Co. opened in Datchet in 1909. The bank was acquired in 1914 by Barclay & Co Ltd, (established in 1896), a City of London bank.⁸

In 1918, the brewing portion of the business was sold to the London brewery, Noakes and Company, which was purchased by the Southwark-based brewery, Courage and Company, in 1930. The Windsor brewery finally closed in 1962, marking an end to over 180 years of brewing on the site.

The original house and headquarters of the bank and brewery built by the Ramsbottoms, still exist in Thames Street, Windsor in a fine late eighteenth century building⁹ built in the classical style known as the Old Bank House¹⁰, a name acquired during the ownership of the brewery by Courage & Co. Bank House is pictured on page ii of the colour insert.

Apart from his brewing and banking businesses, John Ramsbottom was a greatly admired and respected public figure.¹¹ In 1810 he had become



*John Ramsbottom in full
Masonic regalia as
depicted in the
Illustrated London News
in 1845*