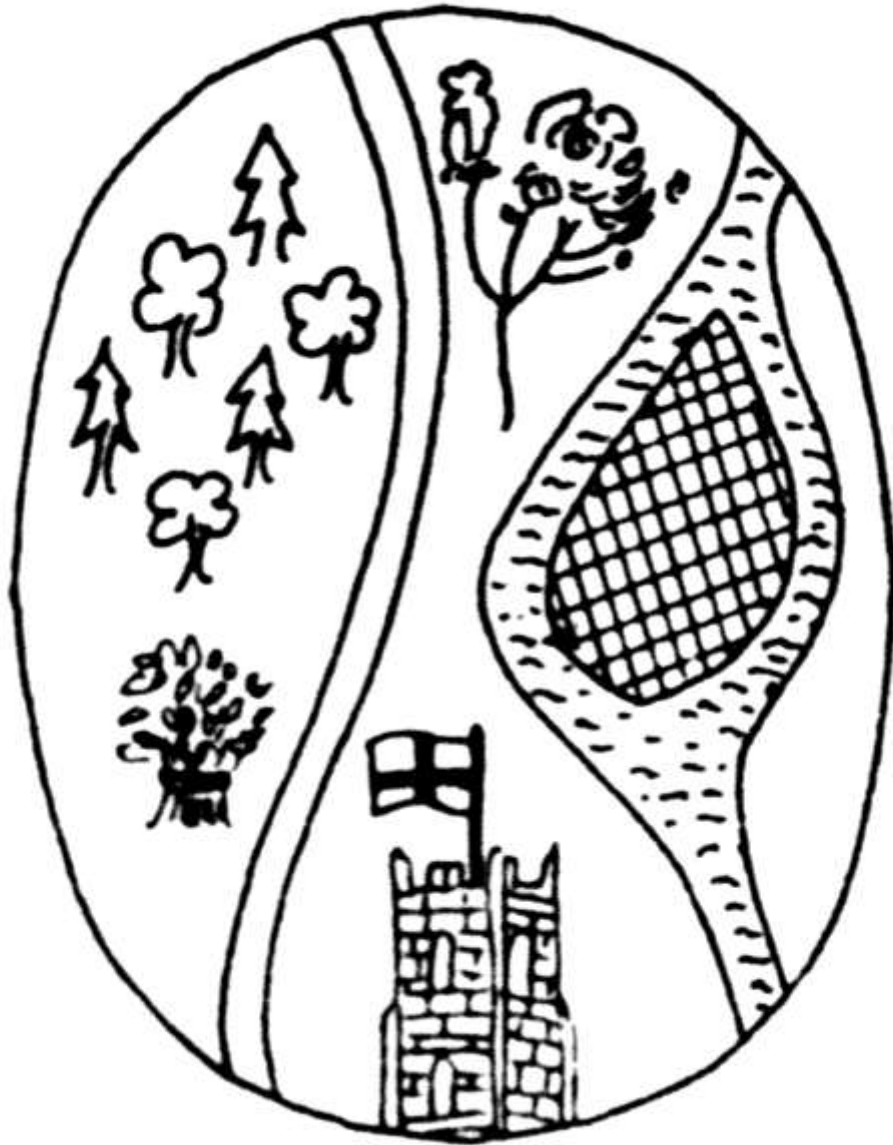


# BRAMPTON



*Portrait of a Village*

*By R. F. Baker (1983)*



# ***BRAMPTUNE***

## ***The portrait of a Village.***

By

R. Frank Baker

Churchwarden

Parish councillor

School manager

one-time clerk to the Brampton Parish Council  
one-time Treasurer to the Hospital contributory Scheme before the National Health Service  
One-time clerk to the Brampton Cemetery Committee  
one-time Hon. Secretary to the Brampton Branch of the Baden Powell Scout Guild  
past president of the Huntington District of the Ely Diocesan Association of Church Bell Ringers

“It is that corner of the world, above all others, which has a smile for me”

‘Horace’

These notes were made over a period of 10 - 12 years. I began to compile them when I retired as Clerk to the Parish Council in 1968 but since then further changes have taken place and some of the information written by me in these notes may already be out of date. I trust you will accept this as evidence of a thriving community in which change is continually taking place.

R.F.B. January 1983

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# ***OUR BRANTUNE***

## ***INTRODUCTION***

James Hadfield of Huntingdon in his "History, Gazetteer and Directory of the county of Huntingdon" of the year 1854 declares that "Brampton is a large and respectable village". When the 'mansion', presumably Brampton Park, was offered for sale in 1812 it was claimed on the sale note that Brampton "is universally admired for the richness of its soil: the excellence of its roads and the beauty and healthfulness of its situation". If this description reaches such a high standard we will, dear reader, leave you to assess. Suffice to say that the parish extends to an area of 3312 acres, or 27 1/2 hides, or just over 5 square miles. The soil is of a gravelly nature and is blessed, to the elderly, of a reasonably flat surface. Here, indeed, the lover of rural beauty will find ample opportunity to gratify his taste. The fertile meadows include that of Port Holme Mead which, encompassed by arms of the river Great Ouse is well known for the rare flora, thought not now in abundance, that can be found during the months of May and June.

In the early days, the village was known as Brantune, a rough translation of which means a clearing in the forest where 'there is a settlement and where the brambles grow'. Blackberries still grow in profusion and there are many bushes in the wood but those, not getting much sunshine are rather tasteless.'

The geographical situation is Longitude West 0°. 11<sup>1</sup> and Latitude North 52°. 17<sup>1</sup>, and if, perhaps, susceptible to an early frost, the rainfall is average and we do not seem to get extremes of nature's torments.

Thunderstorms coming from the south-west, the prevailing direction, usually split and pass via Brampton Wood to the north or follow the course of the river to the south and east of the parish. This latter course is over the Ballast Hole where sand and gravel were extracted for the building of the railway bridges in the early part of the last century. Later on, in the war years sand and Gravel were also needed for the making of runways on airfields and the area now appears to be totally worked out Much to our dismay it is now used as a refuse tip.

The village is a loveable place of some importance and which, in the prevailing circumstances could quite easily lose its former identity.

The five approaches to the village have a water view soon to be joined by another from the north-westerly, one of the two leading off the A604. The eastern approach passes the church giving its blessing to the parish but the most pleasing are the two from the south-west for after meandering through narrow and winding rural road ways they eventually bring the traveller into full view of the Green.

## ***THE ROOTS.***

Some twenty two years after he had defeated Harold at Hastings and after giving a good part of the new empire to his followers, William Duke of Normandy declared that a survey would be made of the country the object being to find out what or how much each landowner held both land and livestock and what it was Worth.

William was a very thorough man and later sent out a second team to check the first and to report any culprits to him. The second survey was done on a regional basis and the one from the abbey at Ely tells us that they were to ask the following questions:

- The name of the place; who held it, before 1066 and now; how many hides?
- How many ploughs, both those in Lordship and the men's?
- How many Villagers, cottagers and slaves? How many free-men and Freeman?
- How much woodland, meadow and pasture? How many mills and fish-Ponds?
- How much has been added or taken away? What the total is and was.
- How much each free man or Freeman had or has?
- All threefold before 1066, when King William gave it, and now; and if more can be had then than at present?

The findings of the courts and his Commissioners are all recorded in the Domesday Book and the following, after translation, is the entry relating to BRANTUNE HUNTEDUNSCIRE.

“In Brampton King Edward had 15 hides taxable. Land for 15 ploughs. Now 3 ploughs there. 36 villagers and 2 smallholders have 14 ploughs. A church and a priest. Meadow 100 acres, woodland pasture 1/2 league long and 2 furlongs wide; 2 mills which pay 100 s. Value before 1066 and now £20 Ranulf brother of Ilger has charge of it”.

The Jurors of Huntingdon claim in the second survey:- “They state that the 36 hides of land in Brampton which Richard the Artificer claims to belong to the forest, was of the King’s household revenue and did not belong to the forests.” Also in the second survey we find, “Alric, 1 hide and 1 virgate<sup>1</sup> taxable. Land for 10 oxen. 3 small holders, 1 plough. value 30s.

No mention is made of Porthholme. Perhaps being swampy and traversed by water-courses it could not be farmed and may have been waste land of the manor or Brampton, although we must not forget the two mills. There was probably marshy land in the area from the river along the banks of the brook, which crosses the Buckdon Road and particularly that part between the road and the river. This would not be included as pastureland or even meadow.

Harold only reigned for a few months before Hastings and so his predecessor, Edward the confessor is the Edward referred to as the previous owner of the demesne<sup>2</sup> lands and Alric was one of his Thanes or chief officers.

Reckoning 120 acres or 4 virgates, each of 30 acres, to equal 1 hide then the kings demesne lands of 15 hides together with Alric’s 1 1/4 left the villagers with about 11 hides and the remaining 9 of the 36 hides mentioned by the Jurors must have been from adjoining parishes.

The woodland pasture land with the 100 acres of meadowland is about 3 hides and so it would seem that the forest land in the parish amounted to 24 1/2 hides. What is most evident is that a large proportion of the present village must have been covered by the forest.

## ***THE WOOD.***

Brampton wood, situated on the high ground to the west of the village is one of the few remaining parts of the great Forest of Wabridge, which at one time stretched from Stamford in the north down to Oxfordshire and now chiefly remembered by Weybridge Farm on the west side of the Great North Road midway between Brampton and Alconbury.

Measuring one mile from north to south and just over half a mile from east to west, it is approximately 550 acres in area. At one time there were many oaks but much felling has been done in recent years and the wood is getting much thinner. It is good to see some re-afforestation taking place but sadly it is the quick growing pine, which is more profit making than the longer maturing oak and beeches. The wood area is the highest land in the parish being just being over 100 feet above sea level; the greatest part of the Parish being 50 - 60 feet. The main ridings from north-south and east-west were originally 20 feet wide and are now quite overgrown with brambles and there are lovely names to the secondary ridings such as High Harbour Ride and Homing Ride.

Henry of Huntingdon, a noted scholar and writer of the 13th century writes,

“that the King, rejoiced by his successes over his rebellious noble Baldwin de Rivers went to enjoy the sports of the chase at Brampton, which is about one mile from Huntingdon and there he held pleas of the forest with his Barons, that is, concerning their woods and hunting; in violation of his promise and vow to God and his people”.

During the reign of Henry III in 1217 a Charter of the Forest was brought in, having for its object

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<sup>1</sup> Virgate: a former English unit of land measure varying greatly in size, but most commonly equal to about 30 acres

<sup>2</sup> Demesne: a piece of land attached to a manor and retained by the owner for their own use

the preservation of certain animals "ferae naturae". Most people did not have the right to hunt and kill or to cut wood, and there were courts to enforce these powers. The highest court, held twice a year north and south of the river Trent, at which the King presided or the Justices of the Forest in his absence. were known as the Justices in Eyre. Next in rank was the Court of Swanicote or Suanimota held three times a year "to enquire of vert and venison" and to assess the taxes. They were held at "the beginning of the 15 days before the Feast of Saint Michael when the assister assemble to agister our demesne woods and about the Feast of Saint Martin when our agisters ought to receive our pannage", and the third "at the beginning of the 15 days before the Feast of Saint John the Baptist, for the fawning of the beasts".

The lowest court was the Court of Attachment which sat every 42 days and could only adjudicate when the value of the trespass did not exceed fourpence.

The most common offence, of course was that of poaching, the punishment for which was one year and a day in prison unless the King felt there were mitigating circumstances, when he would commute the sentence. Therefore when the court found the prisoner guilty the sentence was that "he be in mercy" and would serve his full term unless the King set him free. Fines were known as ameracements and we note that "at the Huntingdon Eyre of 1255 Brampton was amerced two marks for failing to attend six times"

The Charter of 1217 decreed that the hart and hind: male and female of the red deer, the wild boar and the wolf were beasts of the forest and the fallow deer, marten, fox and roe deer were beasts of the chase. There was a doubt about the hare and wolf as there would be no inquest on a dead body.

Among the officers of the Forest were the Verderers responsible to the King who were not unlike coroners and held office for life unless removed by the crown. There was usually one Warden or Bailiff to each forest and in June 1275 Edward I granted the Bailiwick of the Forest of Wabridge to John of Fransham. The Forester was similar to the modern gamekeeper and worked in groups of five walking, one riding and one page to do the office work. A Woodward was a private forester employed chiefly to protect The King's interests. The Agisters were collectors of Taxes on cattle and pigs in the King's demesne. Hounds such as the Foxhound that hunt by scent were known as bercelet hounds and were under the charge of a berceletus. Greyhounds hunting by sight were in the care of a fewterer.

In the records are several references to Brampton and the Forest of Weybridge as it now came to be known. It would seem that food was fairly difficult to come by and poaching was common. One item refers to an inquest held on an animal in the year 1248 during the reign of Henry III (1216 - 1272),

"In the 32<sup>nd</sup> year of the reign of King Henry on Ash Wednesday an inquisition concerning a fawn, which was found dead and wounded in the Wood at Brampton was made by four townships, to wit, Brampton, Ellington, Grafham and Dillington, which all say that they know nothing thereof. In the same year on the Thursday next after the Feast of Saints Tybursius and Valerian an inquisition concerning a beast, which was taken in the meadow and of which the entrails were found, was made at Webridge by four townships, to wit, Alconbury, Woolley, Ellington and Brampton which all say they know nothing thereof. It happened on the Sunday next after the Feast of Saint John the Baptist in the 33<sup>rd</sup> year at daybreak that when the foresters of Weybridge and Sapley made watch at Weybridge they came upon two greyhounds which followed a beast. And afterwards they went into the open field and found Stephen Foot and a certain Geoffrey the son of Osbert, reapers. And the foresters took the two greyhounds and the aforesaid Geoffrey and Stephen and brought them to Alconbury to await the coming of the verderers. And in meantime Geoffrey escaped from the custody of the foresters. And the aforesaid Stephen was brought to the prison at Hartford. The chattels of the aforesaid Stephen were a cow, and an ox and a bullock. The price of the chattels was eight shillings. The aforesaid Geoffrey had no chattels. Upon this an inquisition was made on the Tuesday next before the feast of the Translation of Thomas the martyr by Alconbury, Brampton, Wooley and Buckworth. All are agreed and say they suspect no one of the aforesaid matted, nor do they know whence the greyhounds came"

Also very interesting is the following concerning a dispute with the King over his beasts eating crops,

"The townships of Ellington, Brampton, Little Stukely and Alconbury come and say that they are accustomed and ought to have common of herbage in Weybridge for all their beasts on the ground their arable lands and their meadows which are fit to be mown extend to and abut upon the lands and meadows

are wasted by the deer of the Lord King; so that they have not nor can they have any profit there from and on that account they had the aforesaid common in the time of the predecessors of the Lord King who now is; and also in the fifth year of the reign of the King who now is they were in seisin until a certain Walter the son Robert of who was then Steward of the Forest in the County of Huntingdon ejected them and kept them out of that common all the time and every Steward one after another until now kept them out of the way”.

And so it goes on. The King Henry, being a good King, discussed these matters very sensibly with the people, frequently giving in to their requests. I imagine they worked very hard for long hours to provide food and fuel from the wood for the winter.

### ***THE MANOR OF BRAMPTON.***

The manor of Brampton before 1066 was one of the royal residences of Edward the Confessor and remained so until the 13th century. Stephen spent one whole autumn hunting at High Harthay and stayed at the Manor House. Later, Henry II visited the manor as did also King John on the 4th February 1213 and Henry III on the 12th November 1227. Presumably these visits were made to attend the Justices in Eyre of the Forest of Weybridge. In 1203 John granted the Manors of Brampton and Alconbury to David Earl of Huntingdon and after the family line had died out in 1241 Henry of Hastings received the manorial Rights from Henry III and the rentage of the manor lands was increased to £30 a year. The villeins resented this and refused to pay. When the bailiffs arrived to collect their dues bringing with them the sheriff's men there was much hue and err with the result that the bailiffs and their men were driven back to Huntingdon. Upon Judicial inquiry it was adjudged that Hastings could tallage his men but only when the King did this on his demesne lands.

King John alienated the Manor Principal Lay consisting of fifteen hides of land from Royal holding and granted the rights of the Manor to the bishops of Lincoln in 1215 and soon after, all royal visits ceased.

The “Hall” was said to have been destroyed by floods in 1348. Was this the Manor House? Being built on rising ground then I can only assume there must have been a cloudburst or heavy storm and water came in through the roof causing so much damage that it had to be pulled down and rebuilt.

At the beginning of the 16th Century the Manor of Brampton was possessed by Richard Earl of Kent, for in February 1512 it is recorded that he sold it to the Cromwells who, in turn, transferred the Manors of Brampton and Hemingford Grey back to King Henry VIII in exchange for the site St Neots Priory and other property. In 1627 Sir Oliver Cromwell, father of the more well known Oliver sold all his lands in Brampton to Sir Sydney Montague, father of the First Earl of Sandwich.

The house was rebuilt in 1877 previous to which it was a fine old plaster house, some views of which appeared in “The building News” of 18th October 1887 and is said to have been mentioned by Charles Dickens in one of his works.

The Burnaby family, one of whom was the vicar of the Parish from 1755 to 1770, occupied the house for some 300 years and there appears to be a connection in the 17th century between them and the Hetleys of Brampton Park.

In 1910, the house was occupied by Mr. J.E. Cole, Duke of Polignano, an Austrian title. He was followed by Mr. C. Scholefield and the Mr George Beaton, becoming headquarters of the Huntingdon Division of the Hunts Police in 1966.

### ***THE FACE OF BRAMPTON PARISH.***

The Earls of Sandwich were the Previous Lords of the Manor and held their courts annually up to the middle of the last century. The rights, of which amount to little nowadays, but including ownership of the odd pieces of waste lands, have recently been purchased by the Parish Council. The Prebend of Brampton attached to the Diocese of Lincoln enjoyed manorial jurisdiction over other parts of the village and his court was held occasionally at the Black Bull Inn. He received tithes which provided for the stipend of one of the Canons of the Cathedral. The prebendal and vicarial tithes were commuted for land in 1772, the former about 457 acres and the latter about 90 acres in extent.

Robert Morden on his map of 1695 shows another village or hamlet near to Brampton known as

Crane Street. We do not really know where this was situated but I believe possibly the area around the Green, Brook End and now Park Road, and West End could be Crane Street which gradually became merged into the remainder of the settlement, becoming Brampton as a whole. Recently I have acquired another survey map of the county by Emanuel Bowen, dated 1720, which shows Crane Street to be the road from Huntingdon passing through Brampton to Buckden and Kimbolton.

This disagrees with Morden's map and perhaps it is a more likely explanation as it could be that Church Street and Buckden Road were a street village and the area around the Green was a 'ton' or 'tune' type of enclosed settlement. It is all very confusing, but as there are mistakes on the positions of other places on his map it is likely that Morden's map is the inaccurate one.

Documents preserved in the County Archives and elsewhere refer to the 'open lands', being those along Brooke End and West Town's End (West End). If you look at a map of the village you will see that these fields are allotted in smallest portions of one or two acres and could have been smallholdings of the villagers which were given to them by the King and his Barons. So we get the church and the Green, three-quarters of a mile apart and joined by a track now known as High Street. Probably the inhabitants held their meetings in the open air, on the Green and one can imagine what arguments there must have been between people living at opposite ends. The roughly pear shaped Green suggests that the art of archery was practised there, and no doubt, other sports as well. The question now arises as to whether the pond was there at the time. Could there have been a spring as a forerunner? We know there was one behind the bakery in West End and it has been said that there was one in the pond itself which dried up as did others when sand and gravel was extracted all round the parish. I believe that sand and gravel were extracted from the Green at one time and when it was reinstated at its present level about three feet below the surrounding lands then the pond was made as a watering place for horses and cattle. The pond had a gravel bottom upon which there was a layer of mud and I well remember the baker on his rounds allowing his horse to paddle through and have a drink. There was a low bank all around the pond in except for two places which seemed especially designed for this purpose and, indeed, for other horse and cattle traffic.

Another matter for speculation is the original site for the 15th century village cross of which only the base remained. Up to a few years ago it served a useful purpose as the cover to a spring on common land (part of the village green) in the West End behind the Harrier Public House. This was one of the springs which dried up and became choked with rubbish. The Parish council rescued the stone, restored it, and placed it on the small green near the High Street – Grove Lane corner but it is not claimed that it is the original site. It is my opinion that the site was either at the junction of the High Street with Buckden Road or at the interception of the Huntingdon to Buckden and the Huntingdon to Thrapston roads near the obelisk at which point there is currently a roundabout.

I favour the latter which may seem unlikely in view of the present day traffic but it was not like this when the cross was standing. For instance at the other end of the High Street at its junction with Grove Lane you will recall there were two lime trees and a seat. In those days the High street would have had green fields on either side with perhaps only The Old House (No 48), Vine Cottage (No. 57), and Mrs Haylock's Thatched Cottage (No.91) between Crane Street and Brampton.

## ***ANCIENT MONUMENTS AND BUILDINGS***

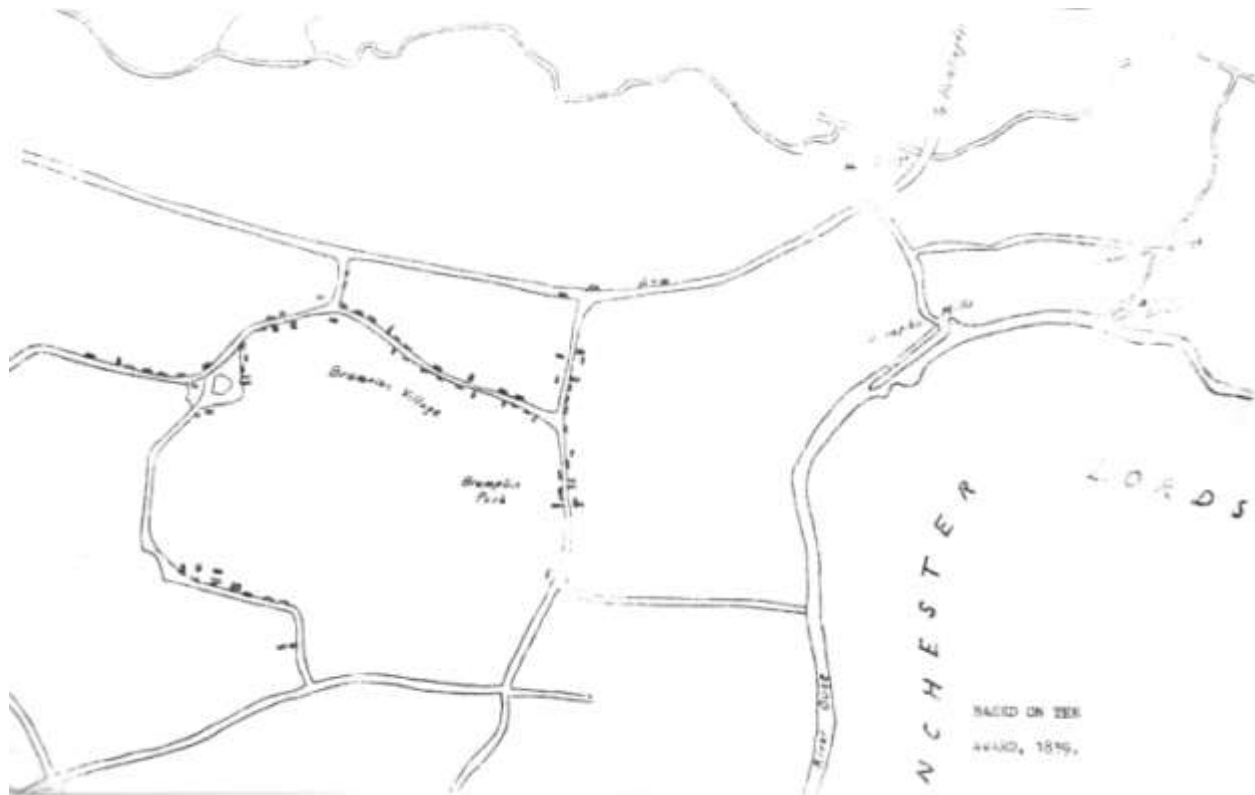
The village rejoices in a number of ancient relics and lovely old buildings. Walk from the Dragoon Inn on the Buckden Road, down through the High Street and on to the end of Grove Lane and you will be surprised at the number of houses of character worthy of a second or more detailed study. Pride of place must surely go to the base of the 15th century cross, previously mentioned. It must not be confused with a directional indicator such as the obelisk at the roundabout and was not necessarily sited at the road junction. It would be interesting, dear reader, if you could suggest a more likely site.

The road to Huntingdon crosses the Alconbury Brook by a stone bridge of great charm known as Nun's Bridge. Obviously, the connection here is with the nunnery at Hinchingsbrooke. There were many ghostly tales of nuns and others being seen here at midnight on the bridge. On plan the bridge is bent as the shape of an arc, quite unsuitable for modern traffic so a concrete bridge has been built contrasting the old



with the new, side by side.

There is much evidence that Brampton Mill played an important part in the life of the village when the river was navigable, at least as far as River Lane. Between River Lane, marked on the Enclosure as South Lane, and the site of the bathing place where there was a crossing and the towing path which up to that point had been on the Godmanchester side, now continued on 'the west bank to Offord. At the crossing was a landing stage on both banks and River Lane provided the main access for the river traffic owned, I believe, by a private company. The Mill was a private residence and has not been used for trading as such for a number of years. However, the old workings including the position of wheel can still be traced and there is a very complicated waterway system. The mill race is really frightening in its power during the rainy season when the head of water, about five feet, becomes a noisy and raging torrent. In summer, the grounds take on an idyllic look and is a paradise for the angler who now reigns supreme.



Entering Brampton from Huntingdon the second house that we meet on the south side is the lovely old Pepys House. The residence at one time of the historian, diarist and President of the Royal Society, Samuel Pepys, Secretary to the Admiralty. Like most of us Pepys had his faults but he was a good businessman and did an excellent job at the Admiralty; was responsible for improving the conditions of work in the navy as well as sorting out many other problems. His diary illustrates the life, manners and conduct of those in authority of the period and gives a true picture of his own affairs. When an invasion was threatened by the Dutch he panicked and buried £2,000 in gold "under the wall" There is a lovely story of how, he and a friend, digging by moonlight recovered most of it.

It is said that a few coins, about 40, were never found but I have my doubts for our friend Pepys was a shrewd man. Many people have since looked for them but without success. It is said that he visited the Black Bull on many an occasion having a liking for a glass of ale.

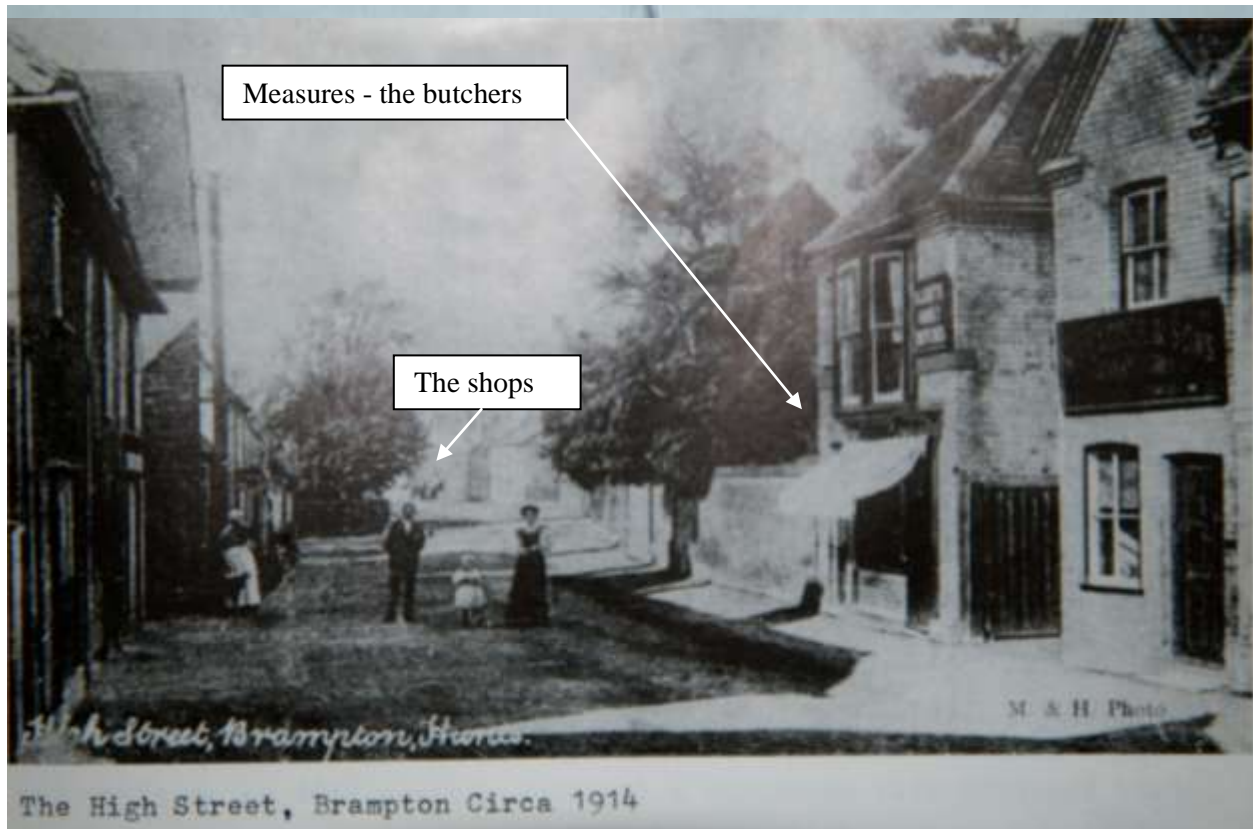
He died in London on the 26th May 1703 leaving his diary, manuscripts, papers and prints of his old college of Magdalen, Oxford.

At the roundabout, the Junction of the A141 with the A604 stands the obelisk, an 18th century

triangular milestone with pointing hands carved on the three sides directing the way to Thrapston, London and Huntingdon. It is said that the Cardinal Pole when he made his visitation in 1554 ordered four village crosses to be built or rebuilt and it is quite possible that the site of the Obelisk marks the site of one of them

The bridge over the brook at Buckdon Road has recently been rebuilt and widened, its predecessor - again not the first was built upon earlier piers and was found to be incapable of coping with today' heavy and persistent traffic. So it went the way of so many of our links with the past.

Other buildings of note in the village -are the Old House and Vine cottage in the High Street, Bridgend House on the Buckdon Road - all of which date back to the 17th century, and several thatched cottages on the Green. In Grove Lane and in the High Street, all of which have much character and charm. Unfortunately, over the last forty years several have been demolished to make way for more liveable properties. Such is progress!



## ***THE RIVER***

Once you have strolled along the river bank you have the desire to experience again its subtle and elusive charm. To the Bramptonian it has been a centre of art and civilisation but whether the attracting cause be the glamour of its romantic movement or the physical enjoyment of what it contains or the fulfilment of aquatic pleasure but generation after generation is irresistibly drawn to it.

The historical and geographical interest is apparent to all and each year many flock to the riverside, some to make their first enthusiastic excursions, others to renew their acquaintance with scenes already familiar.

Generally speaking, all, whatever their temperamental or mental endowment, are alike charmed , though appealed to in different ways.

Putting aside all questions of scientific research with which, indeed I am competent to deal, it is easy to determine wherein lies this power of attraction which the river possesses. It can be said to be the water power. Analyse the countryside in the Ouse valley and you will find plenty of its inherent beauty and

charm. Its life is picturesque and the wild life of absorbing interest.

On a dull grey day, how dull and depressing it all is! But, glorified by the wonderful sunlight of June – July it sparkles with colour, while the capacity of the water serves more perfectly to repeat the coloured waterside it reflects. The atmosphere is peculiarly soft and luminous, clear to a remarkable degree yet with a mellow warmth which takes away any sense of hardness.

There is also the element of surprise. Most people go with a preconceived idea of what they are going to see, and then find something different. Yet how exhilarating is this first introduction to the river. The air is fresh and sparkling, the watercourses are fringed with rushes and reeds interspersed with the purple loosestrife and the brilliant yellow lilies scattered over its surface give a chromatic scale to distances which seem immeasurable. Here and there is a flash as a ‘billy bleak’ jumps pursued by a bigger fish, and if you are lucky, you will see a grass snake thread its zig-zag course across the river. Otherwise, each hour of the day as the light changes, the horizon widens and the vistas become wider, there is no sense of movement except the sluggish drift of the water downstream. No matter what your lifestyle you are inevitably drawn to the ethereal beauty of the idyllic water view. The vegetable life on the banks is a verdant green and you recognise many familiar while others are strange. Swallows skim the surface,, the reed warbler is twittering in the reeds, and songbirds proclaim their evening song in the distance.

Pass under the Iron bridge which carries the branch line of the Midland Railway from Huntingdon to Thrapston and the heavily populated midlands and ‘Hark’ you may hear the twin-engined fruit train which pulls its way up the steep gradient to Brampton road and Grafham. It is evening and the fruit must be on the early morning markets of Birmingham and elsewhere.

Yet there is a discordant note. A monotonous “Cha-cha-cha-cha-“ of a train a mile away on the line from King cross to Edinburgh, and you suddenly find it is time to hurry home for supper and time to leave this pastoral panorama to its quiet industry and mellow contentment.



## ***INNS AND PUBS.***

A number of pubs and inns have gone the way that goes with lost trade and excluding Brampton Hut now the Brampton Motel, there are only three remaining. The remainders are the Black Bull next to the church, the Dragoon Inn on the Buckden Road and the New Inn now called the Harrier, facing the Green. The Black Bull is certainly very old being a coaching inn.

The Bell on the Huntington Road; the Royal Oak facing the roundabout the Windsor Castle and the Three Horseshoes in the High street with the Prince Albert and the Lord Nelson at West End have all gone in living memory. In the last century, there were also the Chequers at the corner of the High Street and Buckden Road, the Crown at number 35, High Street and the White Hall where the Institute now stands. Ale for these was brewed in the Maltings at the bottom of the private road between the butcher's shop of Mr. Jack Measure and the corn merchant's premises belonging to Mr. Arthur Measure. James Hadfield refers to 'The Light Horseman' which I assume to be the Dragoon Inn.

The White Hall was the headquarters of the "Amicable Society". This society was established in December 1825 and consisted of tradesmen and other self-employed for their mutual benefit and, indeed, to have a good boozy tine at each meeting. These were held on alternate Tuesdays. "Every member shall pay one shilling and six pence; whereof one shilling and three pence shall be put into the box and three pence is to be spent" (on ale?). Two stewards were appointed at the annual feast held on the first meeting in January, with two assistants who were to be the succeeding stewards. There was an entrance fee of one pound and sick pay was given according to how much was in the box of which each steward and the landlord held a key. Rules were made pertaining to membership and eligibility for benefit, members not being eligible for certain things such as "lameness occasioned by quarrelling" or through "being disguised in liquor". Seven pounds was allowed for funeral benefit. At a death, a levy of one shilling was made and each member, after providing for himself at his own expense, a pair of black gloves and a black hat-band attended the funeral on forfeit of one shilling except if his residence be more than two miles from the deceased residence. The list of members forming this society was as follows:

"Robert Perrin, George Purser, Joseph Abbott, James Lucas, Robert Peace Snr. James Fox, Richard Fox, John Allen, Robert Peace Jnr., William Gumbley, Thomas Sawyer, John Stokes, James Abbott, James Stokes, Samuel H. Emery, Mathew Allen, Joseph Hopkins."

The working class men, not eligible for membership were cared for by the poorhouse, provided from the rates and administered by the Churchwardens and the overseers at the Select Vestry meetings. There were also cottages in the grounds attached to the poorhouse which were let at a rent of sixpence per week.

## ***HARD TIMES.***

Life at the beginning of the twentieth century was not all 'milk and honey'. There was a lot of poverty as can be seen by looking through the minute books of the Select Vestry. It was a world dependent upon humanised muscular power with that of the draught animals. Gradually, as time went on this became a more cultured society as the power of education began to make its mark on the working classes. The internal combustion engine took the people away from the countryside but strangely enough it has been used, now, to bring them back. Sadly the old traders have gone and there are few wheel-wrights, shoeing smiths and thatchers left. These contributed by their very deeds to a way of life cherished by country folk which is also enjoyed by others. Today, we live in a computerised world where the brain does the work previously done by the hands and I very much doubt if we shall ever return to the 'status quo' of yesteryear.

The powers and duties of the Select Vestry were for the future and better regulation and management of the concerns for the poor of the parish and they were appointed by the Justices of the Peace. One of their chief concerns was the administration of the poorhouse. At the Annual Meeting in 1819 it records the appointment of William Lindsell and Abraham Smith, the Churchwardens, Edward Martin and Joseph Huddle the overseers who collected the rates, James Buchanan for the Lady Olivia Bernard Sparrow, Stanford Greene, George F. Maule, Edward Wood, Hugh Horton, the Curate, John Hull and the warden of the poorhouse, Mr. E.T. Bayley.

Among the many items of interest are the following:

1. "Mr E, (who evidently farmed the parish field in the West end) produced bills for a bridge over the brook into the close in his occupation", belonging to the Churchwardens and Overseers amounting to £11.10s.0d. This sum was allowed, he to repay at the rate of 10 shillings per year;
2. "B of Eaton applied for money to purchase shoes and coats. Allowed one Pound on condition no further claim was made before Lady Day";
3. William S will have a loan of 10/- provided he keeps off the parish for three month's.";
4. Emmanuel S applied for 5/- towards a new pair of wheels for his cart. Allowed";
5. "D's wife applied for a loan to purchase a bed etc. for her daughter who is coming out of the workhouse. She is confined with an illegitimate child";
6. "Emmanuel Suter applied for assistance for his wife and seven children and it was ordered that the Overseers should pay his 12/6d but if that he was again seen in liquor he would not be assisted by the parish";
7. "Mrs. T applied for a pair of shoes and it was ordered that the Overseers should purchase her a pair at 5/6d and that the customary allowance of 2/- should be reduced by 6d. per week until one half of the value of the above pair of shoes should be repaid";
8. William R applied for relief but in consideration of Mr Hu11 having agreed to employ him at good per week at 3/6d per week it is disallowed except the sum of two shillings to pay his last fortnightly lodgings which the Overseers paid";
9. On the 30th March, 1824, "It was ordered that the Overseers withhold John P's allowance next week in consequence of him being drunk last Saturday and yesterday's".

Also of interest are the following:

April 4<sup>th</sup>, 1823, at this meeting it was agreed that one of the almshouses on the Thrapston Road should be taken down and rebuilt after the same plan as those erected in the workhouse yard". Where the almshouses on the Thrapston Road were situated I do not know, but the site of the poorhouse in West End is now occupied by the premises numbered 20, 22 and 24. Prior to the modern construction there was a row of 4 or 6 thatched cottages. These were propped up with timbers, presumably on account of their age, to prevent collapse and were let at a rent of 6d per week. They were demolished about 1920.

"January 24, 1838, at a Vestry Meeting for the purpose of considering the encroachment lately made on the Green by David Sharpe and others ... it was unanimously resolved to oppose the said encroachment by David Sharpe it was agreed that the expense of such opposition should be paid by a Surveyor's rate to be paid to the parish". The above supports a theory many of us hold that the Harrier, previously the New Inn, and the adjoining property built on a portion the Green. There is no further entry relating to this matter so it would appear that the Lord of the Manor did, in fact, allow this encroachment, if it was an encroachment to stand.

The poorhouse with the garden and cottages was sold in 1838 and the entry relating to it is as follows:

"Description of premises. A Copyhold Message, large garden and premises with the appurtenances belonging thereto situate in West End, Brampton used as a workhouse for several years past subject to a quit rent of 6d per annum together with two cottages with the appurtenances belonging thereto in the occupation of John Peach and John Dixon. Two freehold cottages by the side of Thrapston Road in the occupation of Thomas See and John Linford. A piece of freehold land adjoining Brampton Street in and the occupation of George Purser. It was resolved unanimously by such ratepayers and owners present or as respects owners by proxy at such meeting. That this meeting do consent to the Guardians of the Poor of the said Union selling the premises described under the provisions of the Act passed in the 5th and 6th years of the reign of His Late Majesty King William IV entitled "An Act to facilitate the conveyance of workhouses and other

property of Parishes and Incorporations on Unions of Parishes in England and Wales” in such manner and subject to such rates, orders and regulations touching the sale and conveyance of such property and the application of the produce arising therefrom for the permanent advantage of this Parish as the Poor Law Commissioners of England and Wales shall in that behalf direct. Signed Charles Holsworthy, Presiding Officer, William Dent and Saville Middleton, Churchwardens, Robert Peace and Saville Middleton Overseers, William Morgan, William Wilson.”

The large garden is described later, as being 2 acres of arable land and 1 acre of sward.

There were many others matters with which the Vestry were concerned and on which decisions were not unanimous. Although the Overseers were responsible for the collection of the rates there was an assistant to do the work who, as a paid officer, was answerable to them. He was appointed by the Annual Assembly, a meeting which is still held, but in those days only residents who paid rates and were present or those who were able to use a proxy had a vote. There was an appointment in 1839 which must have sauced quite a furore.

“27th September, 1839. Purpose, electing Assistant Overseer. The Reverend James T. Brown, Chairman. It appears that on the first vote of a non-resident being tendered by Lord Manderville on behalf of William Newberry it was agreed on by the respective parties that all votes should stand recorded subject to a scrutiny of the poll. At a quarter past nine the chairman declared John Hopkins to be in the majority of three in the poll.”

“At a Vestry meeting hold on Thursday, October 1839 (pursuant to notice given) in the vestry room or the parish church of Brampton aforesaid for the purpose of inspectors the revised lists of voters for the office of Assistant Overseer of the said parish and of specifying the duties and salary of such office. On a scrutiny of the said list of voters it appears that William Newberry is returned by a majority of six in the revised poll. The said William Newberry of Brampton having been elected Assistant Overseer of the Poor of the said parish, is to collect the rates and expend the same under the directions of the Overseers and to execute and perform all the duties relating to the office of Assistant Overseer. Resolved that thin sum of £20 be the salary of the Assistant Overseer for the year ensuing, to be paid quarterly and the money to be raised for the relief of the poor of the said parish. James Thomas Brown, Clerk, Chairman.”

“Vestry, 25th October 1839. At this meeting William Dewberry of Brampton was proposed Assistant Overseer by General Greenstreet and seconded by William Dent. And John Hopkins of Brampton aforesaid was proposed by Mr. Richard Martin and seconded by Reverend B. See. On the show of hands being taken and declared in favour of William Newberry a poll was demanded by Mr. Martin for John Hopkins. The salary and duties of the Assistant Overseer were specified and it was agreed to allow half an hour only for each vote and to close the proceedings of this day at five o'clock this evening. The list of voters to be subject to a scrutiny by two friends of each candidate and the Chairman. William Newberry named Godfrey Morlin of Little Stukely as his security for the sum of £250. John Hopkins named Richard Martin for a like sum all of which was approved by the Vestry. Adjourned until 9 am. Tomorrow”.

26th October 1839, Polling was resumed at 9 a.m. and continued until 1 p.m.. Adjourned until Monday next at 9 am.

28th October 1839, William Newberry was declared duly elected by a majority of 42 votes. The scrutiny of the lists of voters was declined by John Hopkins”.

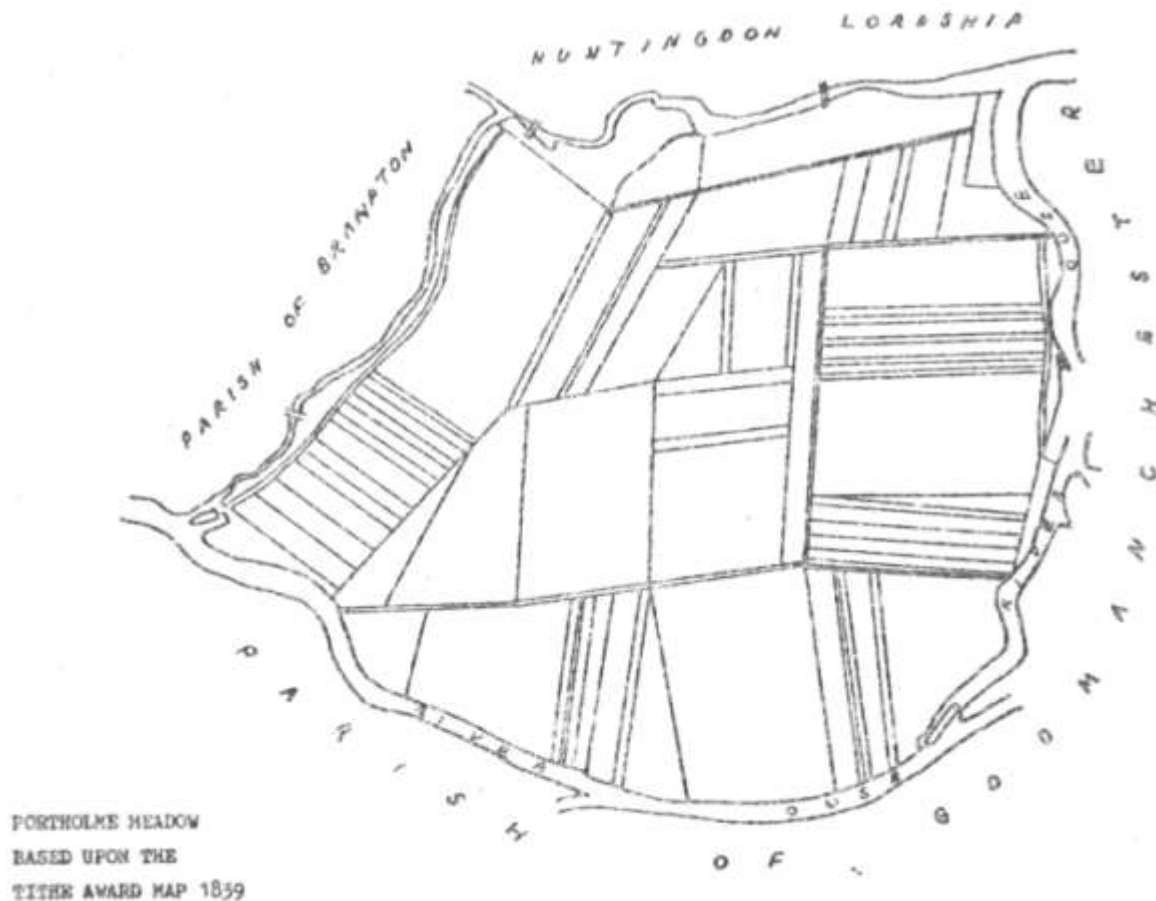
## ***PORTHOLME MEADOW***

Portholme Meadow, previously mentioned must at one time have been very marshy with rivulets and water courses crossing its extent. I am told that the name means “an island where the river meets the road”. The ‘road’ being the old Roman Ermine Street stretching from London to Lincoln and Warrington running through Godmanchester and Huntingdon to Alconbury Hill. The ‘porte’ refers to a road leading from a town while the word ‘holme’ refers to low-lying land near a river. So Portholme is low-lying land near to one of the exits from Huntingdon. Today, the meadow is noted for its wild flowers, some of which are quite rare. Amongst these can be found the Fritillary or Snake’s Head Lily, which is maroon coloured and hangs its head like a snowdrop, and a very rare albino Sneezewort that is related to the Yarrow but with pure white

flowers. We are familiar with the Great Burnett, belonging to the rose family, from which gallons of wine have been consumed by Bramptonians during the cold winter months. There are also many varieties of sedges and grasses to be found on the meadow.

The rights of Portholme have a curious turn. The meadow is an enclosed common, which is a contradiction. There is only one other parcel of land, in Yorkshire I believe with a similar distinctive as this. Common land is usually open land but in this instance the owners are entitled to make the public keep to the footpaths of which there are three, connecting Brampton with Huntington and Godmanchester. After the cattle are taken off the meadow or during the time it is laid down for hay, no countryman would dream of straying from the paths. However, there are other rights of common, one of which is the right to graze cattle, no sheep on the eddage. The eddage is the grass that grows after the hay has been cut in May or June. The meadow was owned mainly by the Overlord but it was subject to the rights of owners of land in the parish where it is situated. The more land an owner had, the more cattle or sheep he was allowed to graze. Meadowland was always valuable and in those days was in short supply for grazing or for hay. You will see, therefore, that this was a valuable right and there remain many owners of land in the village with rights to graze half a sheep or one third of a cattle or some such quaint portion according to the size of his land. There were 133 plots which the Lord of the Manor let out to tenants. These were known as 'Doles' and 'Lottings'. The meadow was divided into furlongs and subdivided into smaller areas representing the doles. A dole represented approximately one acre.

In law a right of common is generally taken to mean a right which a person may have to take part of the natural produce of another man's land.



We have already seen the right to herbage There is also the right of 'estovers' - to take trees loppings, gorse, underwood etc.

The Doles and Lots on Portholme possess some beautiful names and are as follows:-

Black Pool Furlong	Little Bonust
Ford Furlong	Little Bonust Gore
Milking Corner	Dam Furlong
Turnpool Furlong	Whip Top Gore
Shipping Dole	Middle Dole
Bands Gore	Seven Hurdle Acre
Harris Acre	Castle Gore
Thatching Dole	Mill Pitts
The Barrs	The Arters
Haddon Dole	Axe and Halve
Steeple Furlong Gore	Gammons Gore
Steeple Furlong	Bailey Gore
Elmon's Dole	Turn Pool Gore
Nine Acres	Gurriers Holme
Five Head Acres	The Swathes
Shorn Dole	The Roundabouts
Pedlar's Dole	Five Huxters
Great Bonust	

Some of the names are self explanatory. Obviously, at some time, Harris, Elmon, Gammons and Bailey were tenants. All the lots could not be regular in shape because of the shape of the meadow and so we find gores and steeples. That piece known as the Axe and Helve on the plan bears a strong resemblance to an axe and its helve while at Turn Pool Gore there is a bend in the river near Sandybanks where there is also a ford. Castle Gore is situate near Castle Hill and could the Arters have been named after 'afterthoughts' or plain 'afters' ? Could Bonust have been a bonus? Swathes or Swarthes were so designed to allow people to get to their own piece of land without going on that belonging to others. It is plain to see how difficult this could be and to find your own plot as none of the individual pieces were fenced off on account of the rights of grazing. At strategic places stones did indicate the positions but it is now difficult to find them due to the continual flooding of the meadow. But they must still be there.

It appears that there is a lot of good gravel under the surface and it may be that one day the need for it will be so great that some extraction will be necessary. Then the meadow will return to the days of reeds and marshes. Some of us do not find this a pleasant prospect and I hope the meadow will be spared and maintain its rightful place in the rural scene. William Cobbett in his "Rural Rides" described how he came upon it when passing through Godrnanchester and declared that "it is the fairest meadow that I ever did see".

Environments change but life remains constant. We have a 'spectacle of natural countryside brimming with beauty, vitality and strength. Let us not lose this charm.

## ***THE CHURCH***

"Long may the Church 'Set upon a hill' stand in all the beauty of its stately dignity to the Glory of God, Landmark to the countryside, a memorial to the generosity and piety of past generosity and piety of past generations of men, who, in their day strove with heart and soul to promote the worship of the Almighty in the Beauty of Holiness".

Whether there was a church on the present site in the Saxon days is not known, but when the Domesday Book was written in 1088 there was a mention of a church in Brantune. Little remains of this building and all that one can find, is a few pieces of chevron and other dog-toothed norman stones built into the walls of the tower which had been used from a previous building.



he oldest part of the church is the Chancel built, or rebuilt, in the early 14th century during the reign of Edward III. His sculptured head can be found on the north wall at the base of the intersection of two arches. It seems to me that the infilling of these two arches was found to be necessary when a planned extension to the Chancel on that side was not built. The nave, aisles and porches are in the 'perpendicular' style of the mid-15th century and five lofty arches on each side- show to advantage a light and airy church with a fine roof, especially to the nave. There are no horizontal beams to strengthen and support the walls; it is a low-pitched roof with trusses, purlins and some fine old bosses at the intersection of the timbers. To view these through binoculars when the light is good will be found to be very rewarding. There are many of foliage design; the usual man's face peering through the foliage while others show the man's face with his tongue hanging out. All in all, they total eighteen in number.

About the year 1850, plans were drawn up for the extension to the small gallery at the west end of the nave next to the tower, probably with a view to the installation of a new organ there. This was a line of thought which at that time arrived, and indeed still carries much weight but the idea came to nothing. The small gallery was taken away and the new Stringer Organ was installed in its present position.

Looking towards the chancel there is a doorway on the left of the screen and fairly high up. This led to a rood, which is a loft or balcony on the nave side of the screen. Behind the organ there is short stair-case of six steps leading to this doorway. The steps are very much worn and start about two feet higher than the present floor level which suggests there must have been a platform of sorts when the loft was in use. It would seem likely that as the chancel screen has no cresting and the doorway is approximately level with it after making due allowance for the thickness of the floor, then it rested on the screen and was supported on pillars independently of any wall fixings as no marks on the nave side are visible.

The purpose of the rood loft was to provide accommodation for musicians and possibly ringers before organs were introduced. Some churches would have had panelling above the loft with the great crucifix supported on either side by St. Mary the Virgin and St. John the evangelist. This would be the central point upon which the eye would be focussed and was one of the first parts of a church to be destroyed during the Cromwellian period. Frequently there would be a canopy above called a celure, meaning ceiling, and the first bay of the roof to the west would be coloured and gilded. Of course, before the wind works to the organ were electrified there were great hand-bellows in this corner and none of the steps and its stonework were visible. In the twenties, the pulpit and the lectern were changed side to make access to the side chapel more convenient. It matters little, I suppose, but the south side is usually the place for the pulpit.

I believe the loft pulled down at this time, together with the figures of the Virgin Mary and St. John Henry VIII had broken with Rome in 1536 and during the following unsettled and turbulent twelve years before his death, the English translation of the Bible was ordered to be used in church. The loft, to many, may have had catholic associations. It seems significant that in 1554 there was a change of Vicar when William Hawkins but we do not know how or why he went. It was not by death or resignation; perhaps he had leanings towards the Papacy bringing with it, particularly in Cromwellian country, much trouble for the parish.

The first bay on the north side-where the organ now stands could have been a side-chapel or prepared for one as there is an aumbry opening in the north wall and what appears to be an Easter Sepulchre with carved headstones on the south side. In addition, at the bottom of the steps leading to the rood is a squint or hagioscope, an oblique opening giving a view of the altar. This may have been used in connection with the ringing of the Sanctus Bell so that the ringer could see the altar.

The south aisle is rich in its architecture and furnishings. Some years ago the main entrance to the church was by the south door and the main entrance from the highway was by a gate at the end of the wall near the Black Bull. When the graveyard became full and an extension to the south was obtained, the entrance was closed and a new one in its present position opened up. The line of the old churchyard can easily be traced by the difference in construction of the wall and by the line of lime trees which originally formed the boundary. The south porch is very fine and has a magnificent old oak door with beautiful tracery panels on the outside and braces on the inside. Unfortunately, but quite necessarily, these are covered by a curtain on account of the draught. On the outside and over the centre of the outer doors there is a pot of lilies

and because of this many people felt that the Patron Saint was the Virgin Mary. The Patronal Festival, known as Feast Sunday, falls on or within the octave of the Feast of St. Mary Magdalene, the 22nd July. Thus our dedication is to the latter saint.

Inside the church at the western end of the south aisle near to the font there is a wall panel. This once used to be set in the floor nearby and was the tombstone of Paulina Jackson, youngest sister of Samuel Pepys. The panel, which was removed for preservation, is inscribed,

“Here lyith ye body of Mrs Paulina Jackson, Wid. Ye last of ye PEPS in this parish. Dyed November ye 17 1689”

At the east end of the aisle there is a fine modern screen enclosing a sidechapel, and of all the furnishings in the church none stands out more boldly or is more admired. Erected by the Ninth Earl of Sandwich in memory of his mother, Agnetta Harriot, wife of the Honourable Victor Alexander Montagu, it was designed by Sir Ninian Comper, a leading church architect of his day and made by local craftsmen in oak. The chapel was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary by the then Archbishop of York, Dr. Cosmo Lang on July 25th 1920. The shields on the panels add a touch of colour which is very pleasing and record the history of the Montagu family from the early days of the Norman Conquest down to the Ninth Earl who was a Churchwarden for a number of years and a great benefactor to our church.

On the east wall of the aisle in the chapel are memorials to the Lady Olivia Bernard Sparrow, her husband Brigadier-General Robert Bernard Sparrow, her son Robert Acheson Bernard St. John Sparrow, who died in France at the age of 19 years and her daughter Millicent, Duchess of Manchester who pre-deceased her, having died in 1848 and who is buried in Kimbolton Church. A very ornate memorial is affixed to the wall on the south side opposite the Sparrows and is dedicated to member of the family of Richard Shukburgh who died. in 1643. The ‘bear rampant’ on the shield at the top of the stone is the bear now taken by our school’s shield to show the connection with the Lady Olivia.

As you go into the chancel you pass through a 14th century screen, simple but of beautiful lines and in remarkable preservation for its age. The hinges and fastenings on the doors are of wrought iron and of good workmanship. The screen between the tower and the nave, installed in 1924 is an exact copy and it is difficult to realise, when comparing the two, that there is a difference of 550 years between their ages.

In the sanctuary there are three ancient misericorde seats of the mid-fourteenth century. This is very early and it has been said that rarely is carved woodwork to be found of an earlier age. The craftsmen were very skilled indeed considering the limited range of tools available at the time. The figures on the lift-up seats are as follows:

1. A knight and a lady with a shield;
2. A Couple haymaking. A cloth shearer. A carpenter (self portrait?);
3. 3 A man reaping. A woman with a sickle. A man with a horn. A woman gleanng and sheaves of corn.

Mr. Dickinson thought these seats were originally placed against the chancel screen facing east ‘but there are no marks to substantiate this theory. For many years the seats were in the chapel at Hinchinbrook but were returned in 1925.

The floor of the sanctuary is of black and white marble and follows a design to be found at Ypres Cathedral, France.

The great east window of the chancel is geometrical design in which all the lines above the springing line can be obtained by the use of compasses and the tracery is very delicate and well cusped. The whole is light and airy and shows, to advantage, the barrel roof which, again, is a good example of its type. A similar roof can be found in the chancel of St. Mary the Great at Cambridge. The stained glass depicts Jesse and the tree of life. Jesse is generally supposed to be the founder of the family passing through the Kings of Judah and ultimately to our Lord. In the glass the thick stem of the vine is shown coming from the heart of Jesse branching out to frame the Kings and culminating in figures of the Virgin Mary and Child.

The five panels each have three figures. Jesse is in the bottom centre while immediately above is

David with the harp. On David's left is his son, Solomon "of the wise and understanding heart", with the staff of office but without, as his reign was peaceful, a sword. Beyond Solomon is his son, Roboam. To David's right is another father and son, Jehospat and Joram. Top left will be found Asa a good King and a builder while next to him is Ezechias. On the right are Abias and Joatham. Each King is seated on a throne and surmounted by a canopy. In the top centre is the Virgin and Child and note the brilliant gold of the aureole. In the bottom left will be found Edward the Confessor with St. George and the Dragon. On the right are St. Hugh of Lincoln, with the swan, in whose Diocese we were at one time, you will remember. Finally, there is St. Etheldreda, First Abbess and Founder of Ely eleven hundred years ago. There are models of Lincoln and Ely Cathedrals in the arms of St. Hugh and at the feet of St. Etheldreda. The stained glass of the window was inserted as a memorial to the Eighth Earl of Sandwich in 1918. The whole work, by Kempe and Towne whose mark, a sheaf of corn with Mr. Towne's castle superimposed can be found at the bottom of the second left panel, is executed in the modern translucent style and is seen at its best in the early morning sun.

Other stained glass in the chancel are all two-light windows. On the north side, there is one Isabella Susan, wife of the Reverend H.S. Budge depicting our Lord appearing to Mary in the garden on Easter Morning with the Angel Gabriel and the Magi. The other, on the south side is a Flint Memorial on which is seen Joseph, Mary and Child with the shepherds and Saints Luke and John below. Nearer the Nave and behind the Rector's stall is a memorial window to the Reverend Simcoe Budge who died in 1911 after 30 years as Rector of the parish. This window illustrates Simeon who, according to St. Luke, wrote the Nunc Dimittis. Finally, in the little low side window directly behind the Rector's seat is a memorial window to Ethel Mary Burnaby whose ancestor, Andrew Burnaby Prebendary of Brampton in 1755 and whose descendant was the well known Davy Burnaby of the Co-Optimists fame in the 1920 s. Originally there was no glass here, just a wooden shutter which the server would open and ring a handbell to let the people outside know when the most solemn part of the Holy Communion was reached.

In the south aisle are four stained glass windows. The one facing east is a memorial to Admiral the Hon. Victor Alexander Montagu, younger brother to the Eighth Earl of Sandwich and father of the ninth Earl. The panel portrays St. Nicholas, the Virgin Mary, the Crucifixion scene, St. John and St. Christopher the patron saint of travellers. The first window on the south side follows the style of William Morris or is it Burne-Jones?, and is in memory of Mary, Countess of Sandwich, wife of the 7th Earl. The four panels depict Catherine with the wheel on which she was martyred, an angel with lily, another with roses and St. Cecilia the patron saint of music. The second is dedicated to another brother of the 8th Earl, the Hon. Sydney Montagu and we find Mathew, Mark Luke and John, the writers of the four books in the New Testament. The third window commemorates Colonel the Hon. Oliver Montagu, died 1894, and was erected by his sisters Emily Dyke and Florence Duncombe. Joshua in the battle scene, Gideon with the fleece, a centurion at the Crucifixion and St. Mauritius are the central figures here.

In the north aisle we find the War Memorial window flanked by two flags. One is that of the local branch of the Royal British Legion, while the other is the silk Union flag awarded to the branch in 1940 for being the most efficient small branch in the United Kingdom.

The window bears the inscription, "Remember ye those men of Brampton who died for Righteousness, Freedom and Peace in the Great War honouring whose Memory their relations and friends have dedicated this window A.D. MCMXIX".

The stained glass, again by Kempe and Towne, shows various wartime scenes below the central figures of Richard I the Lionheart, the young Mary later to become the mother of Jesus, St. George with the Dragon, with the fourth figure I believe to be the Maid of Orleans - Joan of Arc. They are all surmounted by a canopy, as is usual from this factory, but the figures in the two central panels do not have angel wings but instead very beautiful peacock feathers.

The window to the right of the memorial window is one of the two Wady Memorials in the church and on the four panels we find a female saint with a scroll inscribed "Sanctus, Fides and Virgo. Could the saint be St. Agatha? Next to her is St Peter with the keys of Heaven followed by St. Stephen who was stoned to death and finally St. Perpetua, an African missionary who also carries the frond of martyrdom. Still in the north aisle and to the west of the north door there is the second Wady window and is easily recognisable.

There is Hannah with the boy Samuel, David the Shepherd, Joseph with his coat of many colours and lastly Ruth the Moabite holding in her arms the gleanings of the wheat.

The tower, dated 1635 in two places and similar in Gothic style to that of Godmanchester dated 1632, is not the first but follows one that boasted a spire. It is of good solid construction with double piers at each corner and is of three stages. The tower contains seven bells, six hung for ringing and one little bell known as the Priest's Bell which was originally intended for use as a Sanctus Bell. Indeed, it was so used by Archdeacon W.A. Uthwatt in the late thirties but the timber hangings are in such a bad condition that it is now unsafe to swing the bell. Three of the ringing bells are of great antiquity. Number four carries the name 'AMBROSE' on the sound bow. There are only four known bells in the country dedicated to St. Ambrose, a Bishop of Milan and the patron saint of church music. These are all dated between 1525 and 1550 and have Lombardic lettering. It follows then, that the bell which came from the Leicester foundry of Robert Newcombe, was cast in the reign of Henry VIII (1509 1547). The church and the state were linked together so much in those clays that it seems fairly certain that this bell, on of a ring of five, was rung for the Coronation of Elizabeth I. This is the only one of the five remaining and although we have no record, it is quite possible that the others were damaged when the spire fell down and the metal reused to cast others. The tenor bell, number six, measures forty-two inches across the soundbow, has the note F Sharp and was cast in 1630 at the Woodstock Foundry of James Keene. The inscription around the bell reads, 'All Glori be to God on Hi', insufficient space caused the abbreviated spelling. The third ancient bell was cast by Watts who followed Newcombe at Leicester. It is the second bell in the ring and bears the inscription 'Praise the Lorde'.

Of the remaining three, the third was cast by Tobias Norris of Stamford in 1674 and the fifth by Thomas Russell of Wootton in Bedfordshire. The modern hell, the treble, was cast by Messrs. Mears and Stainbank of the Whitechapel Foundry in 1962 and is named 'Magdalene'

The little bell referred to earlier is mentioned in the Register of 1552, "Tempore Regis Edwardi". It is 18 inches in diameter and weighs about 11/2 cwts. There are certain features of the bell and its canons, loops of metal for fixing to the main stock, which point to it being cast at a date earlier than 1552. I like to think that here we have a genuine antique.

In the tower there is a modern clock, a memorial to the Lenton family, made by Messrs. Dents of London also in 1962.

The Reredos on the north wall of the tower porch was moved from behind the altar in front of the great east window of the chancel in the 1920's. It is made of alabaster inlaid with mosaics of lovely colourings with gold and blue predominating. It displays the Crucifixion scene with Mary and the young St. John in the centre panel supported by saints and other figures including a Roman Centurion on the side panels. There are exquisite carvings of weeping angels and poppy head finials on the canopies above, the steep sides of which are crocketed not with dolphins as on the font cover but with what appears to be water lily flowers. The ball flower is a favourite subject in church carvings. The whole is executed in the ornate Victorian style and is perhaps not seen at its best in its present position. A brass wall plate near the organ console informs us of its history and purpose and that Blanche, wife of the 7th Earl of Sandwich, installed the Reredos in memory of her husband who died in 1884.

The brass plate on the south side of the chancel arch in the nave behind the lectern tells us that the window over the west door was erected as a memorial to Lt. General Phillip Smith C.P. by his friend Edward, Earl of sandwich on All Saints Day 1894. It depicts the Benediction and has St. Phillip and the Centurion in the side panels.

Up to the year 1912 the church was lighted by paraffin oil lamps but then a system of gas lighting was introduced and the small chamber outside, near the vestry door was built to house the apparatus which produced gas on a similar principle to the carbide gas lamp. A lot of voluntary work was done by men of the parish in building this place and for a certain sum you were allowed to lay a stone. One of my earliest recollections is one of doing this and even today I recognise the stone laid by my parents. The system did not last many years but during that time gave us boys in the chair much amusement. Mr. William Allen who looked after the apparatus changed the carbide containers when necessary. He would try to make the container last over the Sunday evening service. However, sometimes the jet would get lower and lower and

just as everyone thought they would go out he would rush out. The jets would then suddenly jump up to their full height - much to the relief of the Rector as this usually happened during the sermon. I believe there was a general sigh of relief when the electricity arrived.

In the church there is a list of Vicars, Justors and Patrons, mostly with dates. You will find that first was Osmund who was followed by Theodore or Thomas but there is no mention of Patron or date. Next comes William son of William de Insula who took office in 1232. The Patron was the previous Theodor, now Rector. From then onwards it would appear that we became attached to the Diocese of Lincoln for the fourth Vicar was Peter de Lincumba under the patronage of Galfred Pollard, Prebendary of Brampton.

I have no idea who compiled this list but the Keeper of Records at Lincoln cannot find any reference to Brampton prior to Peter de Lincumbe so the earlier years are shrouded in mystery.

Salisbury Cathedral was built in the 13th century by a St Osmund and it occurs to me that it is quite likely that he built other churches, possibly some in this locality and for which he may have been sanctified as was the custom among Roman Catholics for good work done by one of their numbers. I wonder if he was instrumental in building our church and although not necessarily the resident priest, the local ones were, perhaps responsible to Osmund as a kind of Archdeacon or Patron. Brampton is just off one of the main tracks to the north and within a day's ride from London or even Winchester. It would be interesting to know if there are other churches locally with Osmund connections.

The Victoria County History for the county states that there is a mention of a Guild of Our Lady of Brampton in 1531 and that there was a Brotherhood Priest here in the 16th century. Lands called Brotherhood Lands or Lady Lands or Lady Brotherhood Lands were dealt with in 1628 and 1629 which doubtless were those of the Guild and were later to become Glebe Land.

Osmund the builder was a nephew of William the Conqueror who was also a devote Catholic and it may have been about this time that the Guild of Our Lady of Brampton came into being. But we must not forget that Brampton was one of the royal residences of Edward the Confessor before the Normans arrived and the mind boggles when considering how many of these important personages could have worshipped in our church or its forerunner.

If my calculations are correct and Osmund did start the building then the date was approximately 1100 - 1150. The present chancel, being the earliest part of the church is of the Decorated 14th century period during the reign of Edward III so there is a period of 100 150 years for which I cannot account. Perhaps Osmund's church was too small or unsuitable as the size of the parish increased in population and so gave way to a third or perhaps fourth church on the site.

Henry VIII finally broke with Rome in 1536 and it is quite likely that the Guild was disbanded at the same time together with all the other visible signs of the Papacy when the Church of England was recognised by the Throne as the true religious authority. Some might see this as determining the true Patron saint of our church to be Mary the Virgin but this is not so, even though the pot of lilies over the south porch indicates a connection with the Virgin Mary.

As you leave the church, pause for a moment and reflect on its appeal, built up through a long history and tradition. Most churches portray a piquant mixture, of sadness and joy set against a background of pastoral tranquillity. And so it is with ours. The lofty arches and graceful lines of the roof and furnishings matured over the years give a striking air of peacefulness. We should "think and thank" Think of the effort put in by those in the past who built and developed it into a wonderful building today and thank God that we have a place such as this in our village. The building with its predecessor has served the needs of the Christian community in this village for 900 years during which time there have been many political, economic and social changes. Every generation should seek as its first priority to protect and preserve this marvellous heritage, for it is a treasury house, a museum of art and architecture of local history and craft. The antiquarian, the architect, the historian, the priest and the ordinary man in the street can find here much to gratify his taste. It has often been said, and how true it is, that the church is the crowning glory of the village.

The Methodist church is situated in a prominent position facing the village green and was erected by public subscription in 1889. Well attended services are held on Sunday evenings and the building is kept in very good repair by a dedicated band of worshippers.

There was at one time a Congregational Baptist Church in the High street but through a lack of following the church became redundant, a condition much found today unfortunately, and was bought by the Huntingdonshire County Council in the sixties and is now a Youth and Community centre. Many uses are put to the building including two nights of the week for Youth Club activities. Girl Guides and Brownies meet there and nowadays except for possibly Saturdays, the hall is fully booked up.

## **BRAMPTON PARK**

I suppose any historical note on Brampton Park would eventually evolve around the life and good work of the Lady Olivia Bernard Sparrow, but we must not forget that the estate was there before she arrived as a bride from Ireland where her father, the Earl of Gosford, had large estates. It is on record that the Park was possessed by Thomas Hetley in 1634. His descendent sold it in 1657 to Robert Bernard Esq., Sergeant at Law, created a Baronet by Charles II, evidently for being a royalist. The estate passed in regular descent to Brigadier General Robert Bernard Sparrow who contracted a tropical disease in the West Indies and died on his way home. He left a widow, the Lady Olivia, one son, Robert Acheson Bernard St. John Sparrow, who died at the early age of 19 near Nice in the South of France and one daughter, Millicent, who later became Duchess of Manchester. Lady Olivia outlived her daughter by 15 years and when she passed away on the 12th February 1863 there was much sorrow in the village. She was a great philanthropist and friend to all classes. Mrs. Hannah More wrote this of her:

<p>“Examine life with all its toys          Its nimal, its real joys;          Exhaust enquiry, still you’ll find          Friendship’s the medicine of the mind;          But what is friendship - ask the gay?          A mutual scheme to lead astray;          Ask the ambitious? He replies,          A stop by which I am to rise:          Ask the voluptuous? there you’ll find          Friendship has naught to do with the mind:          The selfish - How can he impart          That he possesses not a heart.          The careless ‘Tis with him no crime          By social league to murder time.          What’s friendship on the Christian plan?          (Heaven’s dearest gift to man);</p>	<p>It is to weep with them that weep,          A watch reciprocal to keep;          Its strength alternate to impart,          To fix the vacillating heart;          It is to soothe, infirm, amend:          To guide and guard the feebler friend;          To point with emulating love,          Each others views to things above;          To stretch the consecrated tie          Till it embraces eternity;-          But where such friendship shall we find          Compounded thus with heart and mind;          Where feel this vivifying spark,          This balm of life?          At Brampton Park.”</p>
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The Lady Olivia was a deeply religious person who, as shown by the dealings with her architect, Mr. W.C. Habershon of St. Neots, also had some business acumen. Amongst her many philanthropic works was the purchase of Houghton Mill tenanted out to Messrs. Brown and Goodman. When they did some Sunday trading or work of some sort on a Sunday she took sabbatarian court action against them and won the day.

Later, the Park house was occupied by Ben Beasley who was quite interested in speech therapy and many of his wealthy friends benefited and received great help from him in this direction. In the winter of 1901 1902, tragedy struck the house in its most vicious form. On a January night when there was a severe frost, the building caught fire and by morning little was left of the lovely east wing with its semicircular window. Photographs show huge icicles hanging from the burnt out remains. Some repair work was done but the house never regained its former glory and is now only half its previous size.

Mrs. Senior who lived in the house about 1912 was also a devout lady and had a great affection for children. The Sunday Feast Treat was held there with tea and races on the lawns.

The Park was well afforested with many cedars lining the main drive. On the secondary and parallel

drive there were beech and oak, while evergreens and shrubbery were also in profusion. In the orchard-at the south-west corner not far from the west lodge, I well remember a medlar tree, quite a rarity. There was also a great snowstorm and blizzard towards the end of the 1914 - 1918 war and many trees, chiefly cedars, were blown down. All the men left in the village were then busy sawing and chopping up the wood for fuel as supplies were very slender in those days.

After a short occupation by Mr. H.D. Walston, Viscount Mandeville took up residence but he soon moved on to Kimbolton Castle, the home of his father, the Duke of Manchester. On the outbreak of war in 1939 the Ministry of Defence took over the estate and the Royal Air Force moved in.

The American Air Force occupied the Park for a short while but the R.A.F. moved back again. A lot of building has taken place and I believe this is a popular posting for members of Her Majesty's Forces, but the estate is completely unrecognisable to one who would have only known it at the turn of the century. Happily the east lodge has been renovated and retained in its 18th century thatched roof-one storey high condition and is there to remind us what life could have been like in those days.



The Green at the turn of the century



### ***PARISH ADMINISTRATION .***

Before the Local Government Act of 1894 became law a village was administered by the Overseers. It was found, however, that a more intimate and democratic approach to rural life was required so local people were given a say in local matters. Hence, parish pump politics came into being. The immediate result was a great feeling of pride in being a countryman and much good came of the experiment; an experiment which has stood the test 1f nearly ninety years and today, although being the lowest tier of government, is recognised as being a major force in the countryside. Only recently, Parish Councils have been given wider powers and their ranks have been swollen by the inclusion of many town councils.

After a poll the first meeting of the Brampton Parish Council was held on the 13th December 1894 at the small school now the Church Hall and the following thirteen members were present: -

The Earl of Sandwich, who was elected Chairman,  
The Reverend H.S. Budge Vice-Chairman,  
Messrs, W.H. Armstrong, Thomas Stokes, Martin Haynes,  
John Bird, John Suter, Henry Dixon, Harry Heathcote,  
Benjamin Bull, Charles Wright, and the Rev. J. Parr.

They decided on their plan of campaign, as it were, and made their standing orders, notices of motion and order of debate with Mr. Sim Croot as their Clerk. On the 6<sup>th</sup> February 1895 they really got down to business by recommending to the District Council that the footpath on the Huntingdon Road be raised to allow pedestrians to get to Huntingdon in the event of the road becoming flooded. Next they asked questions about the charities and requested a second member to sit on the District Council. In rapid succession the Parish Chest was inspected and a discussion arose on the provision of a reading room. At the March meeting a resolution to introduce street lighting (oil, of course ) was

page 34 missing

Every man may impound on his own land provided the place whether a barn or a stable or open



piece of land is fit for the purpose or he may impound in other fit and proper place within the hundred.”

It was unanimously resolved that the council take no action with regard to the appointment of pindar. You will recall the pound was a small parcel of land about twenty yards square and fenced all round. It was situated near the now demolished public house, “The Royal Oak” which stood at the roundabout.

The next business of note concerned the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee. Mr. John Newberry had built the Institute in 1896 but had not given it to the village while Mr. Temple Layton had intimated that he would provide a bathing shed to celebrate the occasion. Mr. Berry Beasley promised to donate a lifebuoy. Mr. John Bird cleaned out the pond on the Green which was beginning to draw complaints as to its repugnant odour and Mr. C. Newberry asked permission to plant trees on the Green to commemorate this happy event. To this the council unanimously agreed but the shock came later when the Earl of Sandwich wrote that his, “attention having recently been drawn to certain dealings with the waste lands within the manor by the levelling of such waste lands and planting of trees thereon without any previous application or permission being granted.” The council apologised for this omission and permission was immediately and readily given. Some excellent byelaws were prepared on the conduct of persons using the Green but no action was taken on receipt of a copy of a letter to the District Council from the Local Government Board which jealously guarded the rights of the individual.

At a specially convened meeting on February 8th, 1899 a resolution was passed “that this council heartily congratulate Baron Brampton of Brampton, previously Sir Henry Hawkins, upon his elevation to the House of Peers and to express their gratification that he should have taken the title from this parish with which he has been so long connected as an owner of property”. A suitable reply was received wherein his Lordship sent every good wish for the happiness and prosperity of the people of Brampton. His death was recorded in October 1907.

Among interesting items recorded about this time were:

The District Council agreed to the provision of a scavenging cart.

The Technical Education Committee were asked to give prizes in Brampton to agricultural workers for stacking, thatching and hedging. To this they agreed and there was also a ploughing competition,

A third delivery of letters in the afternoon of each day except Sundays was asked for but the Postmaster-General regretted that he was unable to agree and he also stated it was not the practice to place a lamp outside the local post office. At a later date he did agree to a delivery of letters on Sundays to callers at the post office; that the office would remain open for one hour between 9 and 10 a.m.; and that a collection would also be made on Sundays at 8 p.m.. The Parish Council retaliated by agreeing to the closure of the post office at midday on Whit Monday, August Bank Holiday and Boxing Day but requested that no alteration be made on Easter Monday.

The three brick piers retaining the wall to the churchyard on the road side were built by Messrs M.J Allen at a cost of £11.10s.

These and many other matters of equal importance were dealt with. During the Great War and in the interest of food economy, rats and sparrows were caught. Fourpence a dozen was paid for fully fledged sparrows and threepence for unfledged ones. Old rats made twopence each and young ones a penny. Sixteen wire cages were bought and a total of 1409 sparrows were killed and 370 eggs destroyed. The minute book does not state how many rats were destroyed but the boys must have had a time with the sparrows.

A major development during the war years was the extension of allotment gardens. The Lady Olivia had started these many years ago but the land was sold to Messrs Wood and Ingram, the forerunners of the Brampton Nurseries, for £660. The Council dreamed of a loan, stopped bidding at £600 but the County Council, now seeing the need, bought some land off the Green and about eight acres were readily taken up. This area is now the Grove Housing Estate comprising Bernard, Olivia and Mandeville roads

The present Council, as befits a leading village where the product of the penny rate is currently running at £4,500, is following a similar pattern on many counts and has recently been increased in number to 15 members with an increase in its powers. Among its many activities are the provision of street lighting and bus shelters. What is perhaps of the highest importance is the way in which the Council plays its part and has its say in the matters of planning.

## **THE CHARITIES**

### **THE O. B.S. FOUNDATION**

When the Local Education Committee purchased the School site in 1968 for the sum of £1,650 it was agreed that the money should be retained in Brampton for the purpose of education within the framework of the extract of the Lady Olivia's will. The Department of Education and Science formulated a scheme to be known as the Lady Olivia Bernard Sparrow

Educational Foundation. The money is invested in long-term Treasury Stock and the income is distributed twice-yearly to those young people of both sexes resident in Brampton to assist in their further education including such things as protective clothing, assistance towards the provision of tools for a trade books and the like. The Trustees are the Rector, the Churchwardens, the County Councillor for the Parish, one member appointed by the Parish Council and two co-opted members. We feel that this is a good scheme: in the first seven years of its life over £700 had been distributed in this manner and we are sure that the Lady Olivia would have approved. A small framed inscription recording the charity can be found in the church on the wall near to her memorial.

### **THE MILLER CHARITY.**

I suppose one of the most devout and kindly men who ever lived in Brampton was Thomas Miller, who died in 1689. We do not know the exact whereabouts of his residence in the village but he was a large landowner not only in Brampton but also in the county of Huntingdon. He was a remarkable man as can be seen by his lengthy and very clear and concise will, now the only means we have of judging his character.

He was a most God fearing man as is shown by the first paragraph in his will. This reads as follows:-

"I, Thomas Miller of Brampton in the County of Huntingdon Gent. being of sane and perfect memory and of good health, praised be God, but mindful of myne own mortality do make and ordain this my last Will and Testament in a manner and form the following I give and yield up my poor soul into the hands of Almighty God who did at first breathe into man the breath of life most humbly and earnestly beseeching him to allow it a place in His glorious Kingdom for His own mercy sake and for the merits and intercession of our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ the Righteous.

Item.- I give up my corruptible body to the ground to be decently buried and for that end I allow fifty pounds for my funeral expenses. As for my estate and worldly goods which God has blessed me with I give and bequeath them as followeth".

There follows bequests of money and land to many people. All his fields carried lovely names such as: Pinshedge Furlong which was near the wood, the Stye Brownes Baulk next to Redditch Furlong in the Budgen Field, Peggs Hedge Close abutting on Nun's Causeway (probably the field we know as Whiteman's Meadow or, as the old maps call it, Nun's Meadow). There was Banbury Close, Short Broom Common Baulk, the Chocroft Furlong and the Long Anbeona along with others with captivating names long since lost.

As tangible proof of friendship he left gold rings to the value of twenty shillings each to ten highly esteemed friends including the Lord Bishop of Lincoln and Mr. Samuel Pepes. A number of lesser acquaintances 35 in all, received rings to the value of ten shillings each. There were seven people staying at Inns in London or who were landlords, namely: Mr. & Mrs. William Green at the Seven Stars and Porters, Billinter Lane, near Fenchurch Street; Mr. Robert Channell at the Peacock in St. Paul's Churchyard; Mr. Thomas Simmons at the Princes Arms in Ludgate St., Jonathan Robinson and John Cheney at the Golden Lyon in Gt. Paul's Churchyard and Mr. Thomas Clark at the Frying Pan in Holborn.

There are also two other items of interest:

"Item I give unto the town of Brampton one close at the West Town's End to pay the money that Mr. Phillips gave to the town of Brampton and to excuse all the rest of the land and houses that my father had of Mr. Phillips". The purpose of the item is obscure as the Close remained in the ownership of the parish

but the income was always included in the charity mentioned in the following:

“Item I give unto the town of Brampton in the county of Huntingdonshire four acres of meadow in Portholm viz. In the milking corner two acres the Earl of Sandwich on the south, Mr. Merritt on the north being freehold. In Haddon Dole five roods Mrs. Bernard on the north the meare or Great Swarthe on the south. In Thatching Dole three roods Edward Lindsay east and Mrs. Bernard on the west to the use and purposes hereafter named. viz. Ten shillings of the rent to be paid to the minister of the parish every year to preach a sermon on New Year’s Day for ever and the rest of the rent to be faithfully distributed to the poor in Easter Week by the hands of the minister and churchwardens according to their discretion. But if the rent of this meadowing be put to any other use whatsoever then this legacy shall be void and ineffectual shall John Dalton my kinsman or his heirs forever possess and enjoy”.

There are no poor in the parish now as Thomas Miller knew but the Trustees faithfully distribute the income to those considered to be most in need. Part of the Close at West End has now been sold, the proceeds have been invested and the income, now considerably increased, will be allocated by the Parish Council in due course.

Thomas Miller's name is perpetuated by the naming of a road leading from Grove Lane to the West as Miller Way.

### ***CLARE COLLEGE GOOD FRIDAY CHARITY***

There is a parcel of land, numbered 255 and 256 on the Ordnance Survey sheet, originally owned by Clare College of Cambridge, situated on the Nurseries Land at Buckden Road. This land is subject to an annual fee farm rent charge of 13s 4d which sum is to be spent on bread to be distributed to the poor of the parish on Good Friday. Nowadays, and certainly within memory, Hot Cross buns are given to any child who cares to come and collect one. I hasten to add that the rent charge cannot be increased and that the 13s 4d will not buy many buns so that the charity has become a liability and we are unable to fully carry out the requirements. This is one of the many small charities, which may be called in by the Charity Commissioners as being unable to fulfil its obligations. It is interesting to note that a similar charity exists at St. Bartholomew the Great, Smithfield in London. In their case it is said that there is difficulty in collecting enough beneficiaries.

### ***BARNABY TEA CHARITY***

Mrs. Emily Burnaby, a member of a much esteemed family who lived at the Manor, in her will proved at Peterborough on the 15th November 1893, left £100 to be invested and the income to be distributed under the trusteeship of the Rector and the Churchwardens, to widows living in Brampton. Again, because of the high cost of tea it is unable to distribute this annually and is usually done every second year. One can imagine how useful a half pound of tea was at Christmas to the widows in those days and it was a kindly thought.

### ***THE SCHOOLS.***

There is little doubt that no educational facilities were available in Brampton before the grand old Lady Olivia Bernard Sparrow built the school facing the pond on the Green in 1855. Even then the school was for boys only. The duty of a girl was evidently to stay at home and learn to cook and sew, surely a tenet, which deserved some praise. On the 28th May 1855 Indenture, under the School Sites Acts between the Lady Olivia and Messrs Alexander Haldane & John S. Reynolds conveyed and covenanted one acre of land with a school and master house for the education of the poor children of the parish and under her control during her lifetime. After her death it was to be under such management and inspection as she should by deed appoint. The system apparently worked very well with the Lady Olivia keeping a close watch but when she died on the 12th February 1863 changes were necessary. Her Son in Law, the Duke of Manchester, together with Messrs Haldayne and Reynolds took over the trusteeship and followed the instructions as laid down by her will that religious instruction be given as interpreted by the Homilies and 39 Articles of the Church of

England. She also had the girls in mind because in her will the Model Lodge House, previously known as Brampton House and now the Grange, was bequeathed to the parish of Brampton for use as a school for girls. Before this the house was used to provide accommodation for unmarried farm labourers coming into the parish on seasonal work but apparently the scheme fell through. However, it was more proof, if any were needed, of her philanthropic work in the village.

There is also evidence of another site for a lodging house, which seems to bear some authenticity. In 1848 her architect, Mr. W.B. Habershon drew up plans for a lodging house with accommodation for 16 people and a superintendant 'near the farm' together with those cottages bearing her initials (O.B.S.) for the permanent married workers, on the Green and, indeed, at other places, for example at Wyton opposite the airfield. I do not believe the plan of the lodging house came to fruition but the pair of semidetached cottages at Brook End, flow Park Road, much smaller than the proposed lodging house, may have been used for a time for this purpose. However, only for a short time as there is definite proof of the Grange being the lodging house prior to its use as a girl's school.

At a vestry meeting in May 1863 it is recorded that His Grace the Duke, now the sole surviving executor gave orders for the conversion of the Model Lodge House into a schoolroom, to form a Committee of Management with power to appoint a Master and Mistress, to raise funds needed for this purpose and to make the rules and regulations. The Committee was to obtain subscriptions from parishioners and owners of land for the maintenance of the schools. The following were as the first committee: His Grace the Duke of Manchester or in his absence Mr. Hill, his Steward, The Right Hon. the Earl of Sandwich, Messrs Parsons Wood, Achurch, Ladds, Purves, James, H. Bird, Bowyer, Stokes, Armstrong, and the Vicar. At a meeting of the Committee on 13th August 1863 they reported that they had promises of subscriptions and donations amounting to £84.

The following resolutions were also passed:

"That Peter Purves Esq. he requested kindly to undertake the Office of Treasurer.

That a salary of £60 per annum be offered for the services of an efficient Master for the boy's school together with the use of the rooms attached to the school with fuel and lights, and that the Chairman be empowered to intimate to the Master the Committee's intention to give a prospective increase of salary in proportion to the Master's success in teaching and the funds at the disposal of the Committee.

That John W. Sandy be appointed Master of the Boy's School, his duties to commence on the 1st September next and the engagement to be subject to determination on either party giving two calendar months notice in writing.

That no child be admitted into the school under the age of seven years.

That the sum of two pence per week be charged for each child's tuition unless more than one 'child belonging to the same parents be sent, in which case the sum of one penny only shall be charged for each additional child."

And so the Model Lodge House became the Girls School and the girls took their rightful place in society making inroads into the mysteries of the three 'P's. This school came to be known as the Dame School and it is said that all the girls were dressed in print frocks and that the boys at their school wore corduroys all provided from the funds. A Miss Archer was appointed School Mistress at the Girls School but she resigned in April 1866 being followed by Miss Best of Godmanchester on the same terms as her predecessor. Miss Best was expected to give her utmost attention to the Sunday school, both morning and afternoon and to conduct the children to church. This was all in accordance with the terms of the Lady Olivia's will. In March 1868 the Duke of Manchester informed the Committee that the Girls School was settled by the Lady Olivia for educational purposes upon similar trusts as the Boys School.

There now followed a period of some slackness and in July 1869 a report was received from the National Council on Education which had adopted the Boy's School on 15th February 1868, as follow:

"I regret to find this school in a depressed and unsatisfactory state, The attendance is low. The present teaching is unskilful and spiritless. I should recommend the Managers to engage a trained and certificated Master. The school rooms and premises very much need repair. The books are old and worn. The stock of slates and apparatus is deficient. Renovation on all points is to be desired."

The Committee took due notice of this report and discharged the Master. In September, Mr Arnis was appointed at a salary of £75 for the first year and that he be requested to attend all the services of the church with the children and in all things conform to the requirements as laid down 'by the Committee of the National Council on Education.

In January of the following year, the new Rector, Rev. Herbert Bree, was appointed as a manager of the school and the Inspectorate approved a grant of £22 8s 0d for the past year. The Master as directed 'to provide two paid monitors for the school, one boy and one girl, and they he allowed £1 each per year. In the meantime Miss Best had resigned from her position as Mistress of the Girl's School and it was found that the Model Lodge House was not a suitable building for a school. A Sub-committee was directed to procure a certificated Master to open the Boy's School as a Mixed School. The Committee requested the Trustees to apply to the Charity Commissioners to sanction the sale of the present Girls School, the proceeds to be applied to the provision of a Girls and Infants School more suitable to the parish. In the meantime, the Duke of Manchester wrote to the Commissioners intimating that he wished to relinquish his office of Trustee and asking for new ones to be appointed. On July 9th 1870 the Commissioners ordered that the Rt. Hon. John William Earl of Sandwich, of Hinchinbroke House, the Reverend Herbert Bree, present Vicar of Brampton, and William Henry Armstrong be appointed Trustees for the administration of the said charities In addition to and jointly with the surviving and continuing Trustees. The Earl and Mr. Armstrong were the current churchwardens.

The negotiations for the sale of the Girls School were very protracted but eventually a satisfactory agreement for the disposal of the property was arranged. In a letter dated 2nd March 1871, from the solicitors to the Rev. Bree it records the sale by auction of the School House to Dr. Hodgkinson for the sum of £670. The letter continues:

"We understand the house will be put into proper order forthwith and will be occupied by Dr. Hodgkinson's mother who is a widow and has a nice income. The old name was changed and since that time has been known as 'The Grange'

In April 1871 the Rev. H. Bree., with the consent of the Bishop of Ely, conveyed a piece of Glebe land to the Rector and Churchwardens and their successors part of a close known as "Church Londes" for the erection of a church school., A new appeal for funds resulted in a sum subscribed of £123. 3s from 23 persons. This, together with the £670 provided the nucleus for the new Infants School.

In February 1872 the Managers of the now mixed school terminated the services of the Master and engaged Mr. and Mrs. John Driver Master and Mistress at a joint salary of £110 and a sum of £2. 10s. per year was allowed for the services of a cleaner. The following year the Master applied for an increase in salary. It was resolved that he be offered £90 for himself and his wife and half the grant from the Education Board and that he be allowed five shillings per week for night school with no payment for instructing pupil teachers.

Many old pupils will remember Mr. E.J. Emery who was appointed in October 1894 after a Mr. Parkinson had resigned. Mr. Emery was a fully qualified and certificated teacher passing through Battersea College in 1884. A likeable sort, he had many interests in the parish, particularly any in the church and parish administration. No cultural activity was held that did not bear the hallmark of his forward thinking.

On the 18th July 1929 the Huntingdonshire County Education Committee realising that for many years there had been no trustees that could be regarded as technically the owners, reappointed the Rector and Churchwardens to that office. There was evidently some unwillingness to cooperate because in October Lord Sandwich sent a letter urging the Rector and Churchwardens to take up the appointment as Trustees otherwise the parish risked losing the property altogether. This, they then did agree to do and continued to hold the office up to 1968 when the Education Authority purchased the property for a sum of £1650.

And so we come to modern times. Our school has become one of the most up to date schools, both in buildings and in teaching methods. The school population has, grown from tens to hundreds and many pupils have gone on to University and college. We are, indeed very proud of our school for undeniably it is the combination of the school with the church which makes the village.



### ***SPORTING ACTIVITIES***

In the first quarter of this century the main sporting activities were football, cricket, swimming and, I believe, some cycling - all for men, of course. A part of the river frontage was converted into a bathing place complete with diving board, Mr. Temple Layton, previously mentioned, presented the village with a wooden shed to serve as a changing room for men and later for the 'with it' ladies, all to commemorate the Old Queen's Jubilee. This amenity, something few villages had, was received with much enthusiasm and many fine swimmers were produced. Water sports were held on the morning of Feast Tuesday and were a great attraction.

Brampton footballers were a force to be reckoned with and drew a crowd of a hundred or more, particularly when playing a match in the Hunts Senior or Scott-Gatty cups. Later, it was found difficult to maintain this high standard and the club was forced to confine its activities to a junior league. There, it continued to meet some success, Mr. R.C. Evans who lived at the Grove, now demolished to make way for another of the residential developments, was a very popular President of the club for many years and was a regular attendee at the home of matches played on his field. The club colour was blue and this continued to be so until recent years when more exotic and patterned shirts became fashionable.

Cricket also had its followers and the teams won several trophies. The Smith-Barry Junior Knock-Out Cup came our way twice when I was a tail-ender in the batting. The game was played on Mr. Lenton's field south of the brook behind the school, the access from the eastern end of the village being through the Crofts or 'Cravves' as we knew it, and over the Brew Bridge. Nowadays both these sporting activities are to be seen on the more congenial atmosphere of the playing field but I doubt if there is more enjoyment than when we played on the ups and downs of the football field or the rough fielding under the oak tree in the long field.

Tennis now has a foothold on the playing field much to the ladies who are perhaps a little harshly treated on the sporting front of the village. Ladies, however, are a great source to be reckoned with on the Bowling Green and for the competitive element, are supreme. The Bowls Club is enjoying a great period of

prosperity and success and is among the leading clubs of the county. In these days of high pressure to relax on the Bowling Green with a pint of beer is most refreshing.

We cannot finish with sporting activities without mentioning horse racing. On Waterloo Meadows we have in Brampton a very fine steeplechase course, rapidly gaining favour with the racing fraternity, with increasing attendances resulting in increased stake money. Meetings are held about eight times a year at Bank Holidays and on certain Saturdays as well as mid-week. The course is all grass and the whole can be viewed from the stands, of which there are three. Crowds of up to 10,000 are expected on Easter Monday,, the most popular day when some of the best horses in the country are on view.

## ***I REMEMBER***

In the 1920's and '30's the blaze of colour in June when the fields of the nurseries on the Buckden Road and on both sides of the Thrapston Road were in bloom with floribunda and tea roses. At this time the firm of Wood and Ingram, later Henry Perkins and later still, Brampton Nurseries, supplied rose bushes all over the world and were the largest employer of labour in the village. Among the new roses brought out was the well-known Dorothy Perkins, a rambler and still a firm favourite. One year a quarter of a million bushes were supplied to local authorities in Canada and many skilled hands were busy budding these in the previous hot August weather - and what a back-aching job it was. The men worked in pairs budding and tying up and there was much competition and a deal of dispute between them as to how many were done in a day by rival pairs. There were all shades of pink, red and yellow. This most colourful picture will never fade from the memory of those whose privilege it was to live in the neighbourhood at the time.

The threshing tackle coming to Mr. William Wright farmyard, next to what is now the Community Centre. Between the Baptist Chapel as it then was and the grocer's shop, also owned by Mr. Wright, there was a farmyard in which, strangely enough, were three pear trees growing in front of rows of pig sties, stables and other farm buildings. They managed to squeeze two stacks on each side and this just allowed room for the engine, drum and elevator for making the straw stacks. Many seasonal men were employed or perhaps some kind of co-operative scheme was used. There was mud underfoot and the air was full of dust. What a time we had, especially when the men came to the bottom of the stack and the rats which were disturbed were running around. The belt from the engine to the drum was flapping up and down and the governors on the engine going round and round, and how you must not go anywhere near them what a time!!! We shall never see the likes again.

The old fiddler who came to village busking when I was a small boy. He was a tall bearded figure with a violin case strapped to his back and was a great favourite with the children. Many hard earned pennies he gave to us for sweets. Although I did not appreciate it at the time, I believe he was very skilled as a musician and I seem to remember snatches of Hungarian Rhapsodies in between stopping to render his thanks for coins dropped in the hat. He must have been in his seventies and then, suddenly he stopped coming. We all missed him, I am quite sure, and mourned his passing.

Among others, Sir Alan Cobham coming to Brampton with his flying circus using the Waterloo Meadows as his landing ground at the time when the races were held only at Easter Monday and Whitsun Monday. He had a small biplane and made a charge of five shillings to take you up and fly around the field. Other aeronauts provided similar entertainment at Portholme and many people enjoyed their first flight with some apprehension in this manner.

The afternoon of Feast Tuesday when we had the children's tea party and sports. Assembling at the school, we would walk in procession behind the Buckden Brass Band all in our best clothes carrying Union Jacks and march down the High Street to a church service. This was followed by a tea, sometimes taken on the forecourt of the Old Rectory where the Rector then lived, followed by sports on the Coronation Field behind the church. Several offshoots of Thurston's Amusements would be present including swings and miniature roundabouts. A real good time was had by all. Everyone had the day off work on the Tuesday and that, in fact, with the exception of Bank Holidays and a possible day trip to Skegness or Great Yarmouth was the holiday of the year. It was only the much better off who had more. The Feast period commenced with the Buckden Band playing selections on the small green, now turned into a roundabout, on the Sunday



evening after the church service. Thurston's Fair was in the village for three nights at some convenient place - not always on the green. I have known it in the field near the Old Bell public house on which there is now a garage, one house and two bungalows and also on the field now developed for housing with Pepys Road.

Shaking hands, left of course, with Sir Robert, later Lord Baden Powell. It was about the year 1919 when he visited some North London scouts who were camping in a small field at the entrance to Park Lane. We, in the local troop, also lined up and were privileged to be received by the great man. The Rev. Knowles was our Scoutmaster and the meetings were held in the parish room at the Old Rectory where he lived. There were two patrols, the Bullfinch with red, yellow and black as the colours on the shoulder and the Stork with blue and white, which was my patrol. Arthur Crack was my first Patrol Leader. Looking back we had a wonderful time, camping out over the weekend in an old bell tent on the lawn of the Manor which was unoccupied at the time. There were a number of Lord Lilford Little Owls about at the time and sleep was difficult. Another thrill was the Jamboree at Olympia in 1920 at which it was my good fortune to visit with the Huntingdon Scouts under their Scoutmaster Mr. Brown. I remember him as a large man and a good swimmer. He would take us in the proficiency badge and would swim out into the middle of the river, pretend to drown and, w, individually, would go out to rescue him. Imagine a 12 or 13 year old trying to turn this 16 stone man over on his back. He finished up by rescuing most of us. Another excitement was the bugles. Some of the boys were quite good but I could only manage a wail like a donkey. Camping was great fun, but again, I was never really good at it. I could not cook and was delegated mostly the cleaning up jobs. I thought I was better at signalling, semaphore not morse, but often got the flags twisted. However, it was great fun and something which will never leave my memory.

Possibly the most rural of the 'I remember' scenes was that of Mr. Reuben Shepherd riding his wife to work in a wheelbarrow. They lived in a small cottage at the West End and although her feet were bad she had the most important job of 'laying out' at a death. She once told me that a nurse did the 'comings in' and that she did the 'goings out' They were a very devoted couple and a model of contentment and to see their joy and gratitude when receiving five shillings as the beneficiary from the Miller Charity gave me a tremendous uplift.



Farm labourers on the Green, 1910 (Courtesy Mr F. Rosamund)



## **LET'S TAKE A WALK**

The year is 1920 and the church still stands boldly on its hill plainly displaying the date 1635 in two places on the tower and supported by the yews on either side. I wonder? Could these have been planted at the dedication some 340 years ago? The Reverend K. D. Knowles, later Archdeacon, lived opposite at the Rectory and rejoiced in a choir of 10 men, 12 girls and about 18 boys. Electricity and sewerage had not yet reached us and, as there was no television many and varied ways were found in which to spend our leisure time.

Down the hill at the High Street junction the village pump was standing, doing its duty but only just. William (Daisy) Bell kept the shop on the corner. A little further on Miss Hilary Layton Blunt, founder member and first President of the Over 60's Club, Cub master and holder of the special acorn badge given for years of service to the movement lived. A highly respected member of the community she is remembered by the naming of Hilary Lodge, built by the Rural District Council as a home for the elderly, retired and single people. A little further on the bake house was still baking and next door was a small farm holding and buildings occupied by Mr. Martin Haynes. In the house and the workshop beyond lived Harry Heathcote carrying on his business of undertaking. Opposite, at the Elms, renamed from Prebend House, were three sisters, the Misses Flint, whose claim to fame in the village by their means of transport, a pony and four wheeler.

Another highly esteemed lady, Mrs Rose, lived at 'Umvoti' behind the wall upon which the man from the circus on stilts rested awhile under the gaze of the old man's face over the door of the Windsor Castle public house opposite. A building of much charm and, to the antiquarian, worth preserving, is the forge. At the time of the walk the back wall inside was covered with horse shoes, large and small, heavy and light. The blue smoke found its way out through the gaps in the pantiled roof. The High Street reverberated to the sound of hammer on anvil most days but this, alas, is something we have lost. It is said that the days of the countryman are numbered and it may be true but I sincerely hope that the countryside remains. At the moment, the idea that the country side will be swallowed up by some great giant may 'be also laughable, but many changes have taken place since we last sat up and took notice.

There were rows of cottages at 'Crarves Lane', a corruption of Crafts Lane, and on the corner in a small thatched cottage Mr. William Johnson carried on his business of cobbling. He would hand sole and heel a pair of boots for four shillings and six pence. What days they were... I recall one interesting feature hereabouts. Between the building which now house a branch of one of the Big Four and the cottage before Mr. Allen's house was built is a low wall about three feet high and which was a meeting place for all the boys in the High Street. We sat on this wall and watched the world go by but Mr. Hampton, the occupier of the cottage had other ideas. He tarred the back half of the coping bricks thus changing the colour of the free seat. I do not recall any complications but traces of his handwork can still be seen.

Further down the High Street, passing the double fronted small general shop stood the Baptist Chapel resplendent under its short spire and with its brick wall in the front with two pairs of double gates. A goodly number of people attended and my memory takes me back to the Hand of Hope meetings and even before then, there I was, a little Blue Ribboner. There was also an orchestra composed of young people playing violins which was very popular

Of course, Horse Shoes Way had not been thought of but instead, at this point, there was a pond known as St. Luke's Pond from the house opposite. I have a faint recollection of floods across the road here in the very wet spring of 1912 and seeing my father wade through on his way to work. The public house, the Three Horse Shoes, which surrendered its name to the road, stood a little further at the end of the present row of shops.

Before reaching the green we pass three large houses, the first being the Grange mentioned under 'Schools'. The Reverend Thompson, a retired clergyman, lived here. The Limes, now Drovers, opposite is a house full of character being a typical yeoman farmer's house of the 16th 17th century. The third of the trio is the Grove, sadly pulled down later to make way for residential development. Mr. R.C. Evans lived here and being a hunting man, had stables and two grooms.

So we come to the green. The view from the north-east corner is of a triangular grassed area at the

end of which is a round pond about thirty yards in diameter. This had to be circumnavigated to reach the school. The eye travels on to the large white painted octagonal roof lantern light, a feature of the school which must have pleased the Lady Olivia, no doubt.

Brampton and Crane Street are united and never again will be parted.

### ***WHAT OF THE FUTURE?***

It is fair to say that there is no clamorous anxiety about the future of Brampton, yet there is certainly no case for complacency. Apathy and complacency are the bugbears of life in any atmosphere and sour the palate. It must not be scoffed at and used as a blind for economic movement. Self interest is the normal mainspring of human endeavour and if it is sometimes the worse, it is also sometimes the better for not recognising itself and occasionally the modern interpretations of its motives would be incomprehensible. There is no reason to think the worse of our forbears because their actions, like our own, sprang from highly complex causes. The duty of those who take an active part in the management of any section of life in the village is to see that country folk get full advantage of the amenities that accrue from the countryside.

The next 10, 20 or 50 years will be exciting yet possibly perilous years for villages. Everyone desires a life in the country and should be able to have it.

We are reaping the benefit of that which has been done through the years, by people such as Thomas Miller, the Lady Olivia Bernard Sparrow and their kind as well as the members of the Parish Councils when the product of the penny rate was £10 or less. Whilst we have men and women of vision in public administration and other bodes, I am confident that Brampton will take its full share in providing what the countryman lives for and for what the townsman is joining us in ever increasing numbers.

I feel sure that there will always be a Brampton and hope that it will never be part of the fashionable phrase - the conurbation, To be a Bramptonian is something of which one can be justly proud and if I have done anything to awaken this interest in our village then, I am sure, it has been worthwhile.

Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,

Who never to himself hath said,

This is my own, my native land.

Sir Walter Scott

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