

W.E.A.

UNIVERSITY ADULT EDUCATION CLASS

A wide variety of historical material can be used to study the development of the contrasting communities of Bramham, Clifford, Boston Spa and Thorpe Arch. In this fertile district, agriculture was always important, but other factors gave distinctive features to each of the communities.

BRAMHAM was important as a centre of road transport on the old Roman road running northwards from Castleford (Watling Street) and the east-west road from York to Ilkley (Yorksgate). In the coaching age it was well-known to travellers on the Great North Road.

Although CLIFFORD was essentially a farming township, the development of two large flax mills in the nineteenth century brought new inhabitants, and changed the social structure of the community.

In contrast, BOSTON SPA (discovered in 1744) became a well-known spa in the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

It is hoped that the work of the class will be written up.

DATE AND ORIGIN OF BOSTON

Know then the town, whose fame we'd
celebrate
In glowing terms, is but of modern date:
A hundred years have scarcely passed away
Since its first mansions saw the light of
day;
Ere then, the very site on which it stands,
Was merely tillage fields and pasture-lands,
From Clifford-Village to the river's brim,
Devoid of stately house, or cottage trim.
Nay more than this, - the age was still so
rude,
No arched bridge then spanned the rapid
flood:
A stone-laid ford was then the only road,
O'er which the pack-horse bore his cumbrous
load:
No carriage then, no cab, no draper's wain,
Marked with its fervid wheels the rugged
plain

From Boston Spa: A Poem by Rev. William Bownas (1858).

WEDNESDAY

THIS IS TO AQUAINT THE PUBLICK

This is to acquaint the Publick that there is lately found near Thorpe Arch in the Ainsty of York, two miles from Weatherby A FAMOUS SPAW which hath done great cures to people in several Disorders as the Gout, Rheumatism, Palphrey, Surfeits, Strains, Ulcers, Sore Legs, Weak & Sore Eyes.

There is at the place above mentioned a House of Entertainment, The sign of the Black Bull kept by John and Mary Wright where Gentlemen and Ladies may have Water brought to them either for Drinking or Hot Baths.

York Courant 19 April 1748

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY TRAVELLER'S ACCOUNT

...Thorpe, where a spaw water has been lately found. I went over Clifford Moor or Down, and passed through a large camp, which has a wood to the north-west, where the Earl of Northumberland, in Queen Elizabeth's time, encamped his army in favour of Popery. The people tell you the King's army was encamped here in the time of the rebellion. We descended to the river Wharf, and crossing it on a bridge came to Wetherby, a poor town very pleasantly situated; they have a chapel of ease here to Spoford, of which the present Archbishop of York was minister. To the east of the town from the hanging ground is a fine view of the bridge and waterfalls, and on the rising ground covered with wood on each side of the river. The town subsists by being a throwfare, and a small trade in coarse linnen, with which they supply themselves and some neighbouring places

-Dr Poccocke's Journey, 1750

HORSE RACING

1748

ON MONDAY 1st AUGUST there will be a main of cocks each morning during the races betwixt the Gentlemen of Wetherby and the Gentlemen of the West Riding Mr William Beeston and Mr Henry Whitfield feeders. Mr Platts company of Comedians will be at the Town Hall during the races. No persons shall erect a tent or sell any sort of liquors upon the course, unless he subscribe 2/- to the above prizes, Clifford excepted. By Order of Sir E. Gascoigne, Lord of the Manor.

York Courant July 1748

EVENINGS

HOUSEHOLD BREWING IN YORKSHIRE IN THE 17th CENTURY

An extract with a reference to the Brewhouse at Bramham Park.

(kindly supplied by Leeds City Museum , Archives Dept.,)

..... sites of former gardens, that at Shibden Hall having been discovered from the ruins of a cottage on the nearby hillside for example. It is more likely, however, that most of the hops were brought up from more fertile counties of the south and midlands for sale in Yorkshire. This is certainly suggested by the inventories of such traders as Edmund Bothomoly Slaithwaite chapman, who held twenty-four quarters of hops worth £9.00 in his shop in 1668, or as John Webster, a Doncaster grocer, who stocked 'an Hind of Hops' in 1674. For the eighteenth century the evidence of this trade is much more common, requests for consignments of hops frequently being made by numerous Yorkshire household to their relations, masters or agents in London; 'I wish you would send a hundred weight of hops next Friday per the Carryer' wrote Mr. Sparks of Brainham Park to his colleague Mr. Coulter of London on October 14th, 1727, and these arrived a few weeks later having been deposited for him in a Leeds warehouse.

Having assembled the essential ingredients, brewing could commence, the brewhouse itself would be equipped with a full complement of the exquisite vessels, these including a copper, a gutter or gantry, a niuskfat, a tense, a lead, a cooler, a gylefat, and a tunel or tundish. Fortunately it has proved possible to establish the use and construction of these various pieces of equipment from contemporary account books.

The most important item was undoubtedly the copper. This was a huge open-topped pan mounted inside a substantial sheath of masonry above a fire-grate or 'furnace'. As the name suggests, it was usually constructed from plates of copper rivetted together and hammered to the required shape, but some were made with leaden upper sections as at Bramham Park where The Diameter of the Copper at the bottom is 3 foot: 7 Inch, at the Nails i.e. rivets that nails the Lead and Copper together 4ft: 11 Ins. The Depth from the Nails to the Bottom 1ft: 5 Dons. The Diameter at the top 4 ft: 6 1/2 Ins. The Depth of the Lead to the Copper Nails 2 ft: 31 Ins.

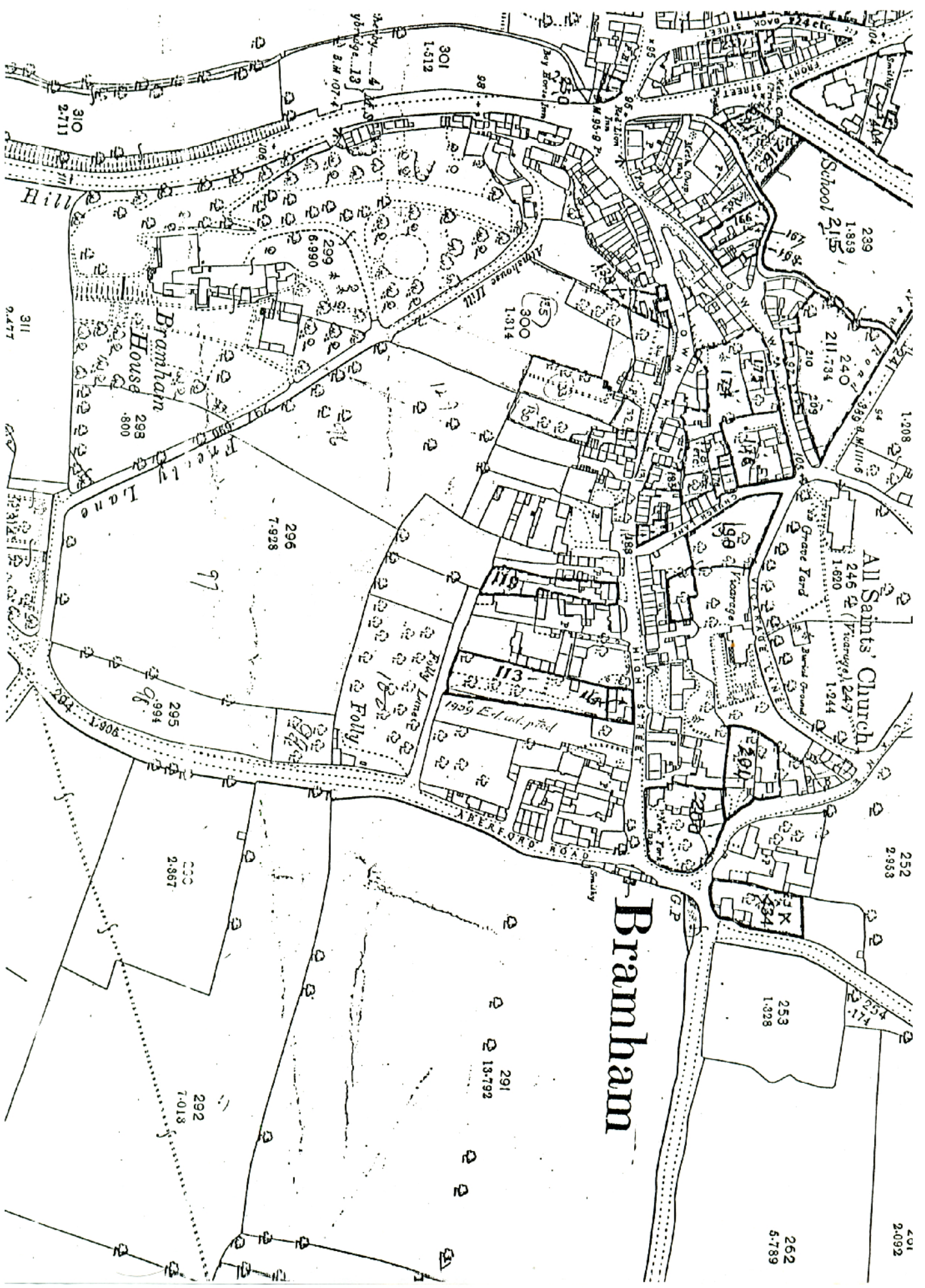
The water for brewing was either pumped directly into the copper through a wooden gutter running from the pump-head, or else laboriously raised bucketful by bucketful from an open well. When the copper was about half full a fire was kindled in the grate, and the water heated almost to boiling point. A tap at the bottom of the copper was then opened and the contents run off into the maskfat. This was a wide cooper-made tub ('at the top the diameter is 4 ft; 3 ins. and the Depth is 3 ft. '), which contained the malt which had been rendered down to a meal-like texture by means of a domestic malt grater or by the services of a professional grist miller. Using a paddle, the malt and water were thoroughly mashed together and allowed to stand for an hour or more to allow the water to absorb the sweet soluble elements of the malt. The maskfat was then tapped and the

liquor drained off into 'The lead under 6 ft: 4 ins. Long and 3 ft: 5 ins. Deep. From this trough the liquor was raised back into the copper where it was boiled with hops to impart a characterislic bitter flavour and to improve its keeping qualities. After one hour's eareful boiling the liquid, now called wort, was run off through a horse-hair temse or sieve into the wooden 'Cooler 13 ft: 9 ins. long, 5 ft: 8'3- ins, broad and 94 ins. deep, Where it rapidly cooled in autumn and winter to between fifty five and sixty degrees fahrenheit. At this temperature it was finally drained off into the gylefat, a further wooden tub into which the yeast culture was introduced to start the fermentation. Slowly a light flowery head appeared across the surfact of the wort, this gradually thickening to form a yellow-white crust which subsided over the next two days. The beer was now ready for casking, a baler and funnel being used to transfer it into the barrel, great care being taken not to disturb the sediment remaining at the bottom of the gylefat. Fermentation often continued for a while after the beer had been tasked, and for this reason a small spouted tub called a tun-dish was placed under the barrel to collect the overflowing beer, this later being poured back into the barrel through a bung-hole at the top. When fermentation had finally ceased a bung was driven tightly in place, and the beer left to mature for a period ranging from a few weeks to a few years depending on the nature of the brew.

These basic methods of brewing were seldom written down, for brewing was a regular seasonal occurrence, and anyone living in a large household would have been able to learn the techniques simply by observation. Even so, the ability to brew was an art, not everyone being equally successful. Thomas Fleming gives a good illustration of this in a letter Written from Bramham Park to his master, Lord Bingley, in London; am afraid of Venturing Sarah to Brew' he writes, ' for a week after you were gone she had all her Brewing things to .wash up. Margaret says you promised her she could Brew, but I fear she is as bad as Sarah. If you think fit I will send for Marjery again for she understands Brewing the best of them all. Perhaps she could also brew some of the more specialised beers and ales recorded in Yorkshire receipe books, these including rook or cock ale, for which the entire bird was skinned, pounded, and added to the wort, dock ale and orange small beer, containing herbal or fruit flavourings, or even bragget, a strong ale enriched with honey, liquorice, anniseed, cloves, pepper and nutmegs.

Unlike these famous ales, Yorkshire cider was of little repots, even though it had certainly been made here during the, medieval period, as shown by the huge circular pressing-trough in the mielle of the cloisters at Fountains Abbey.

Probably the earlier ciders took the form of a sour extract of crab-apples known as -,erjuice, this being occassionarily mentioned in local inventories. The first part of the cider-making process consisted of crushing the apples to extract their juice, but there are very few documentary references to cider presses. The inventory of William Myddilton of Stockeld of 1578 included 'one apple crusche', arid a 1683 receipe from Methley for grape wine instructed that the fruit should be put into



310
2.711

301
1.512

School 215

239
1.889

Bramham House
298
1.800

Folly Lane

296
7.928

All Saints' Church
245
1.620

113

295
1.994

290
2.967

Bramham

252
2.953

253
1.928

291
15.792

292
7.013

261
2.092

262
5.789