

## SCENES FROM THE COUNTRY

### Skyrack historian John Gillegan visits Bramham

THE village of Bramham was known as Braham in the Domesday Book, referring to the presence of broom in the area.

The oval churchyard is unique in West Yorkshire and indicates a very early origin. There was probably a wooden church in Saxon times followed by a Norman building. There is a remnant of a Saxon cross on the south-west window ledge in the church.

The dog-tooth mouldings of the Norman-style doorway were probably completed in the late-13th century. The north arches date from about 1150, built into a small aisle-less church and tower.

The 13th century saw the addition of a spire with longer chancel and

south aisle; the tower's embattled parapets were added in the 15th century.

Church revenues were granted to Nostell Priory after the Conquest and the monks built a small house where Bramham Biggin followed in the 17th century — the prior presented priests for All Saints' Church, Bramham.

The east ends of the aisles had chantries to St Nicholas and St Peter; and there is a list of chaplains in St Peter's Chantry between 1393 and 1528. The south chapel was dedicated to the memory of those men lost in the Great War and features St George and St Nicholas.

Victorian alterations were carried out in 1853 followed by further restorations in 1866 and 1927. On Christmas Day, 1874,



a fire damaged the tower and clock and the church was twice struck by lightning in 1827 and 1902.

All Saints' Church has many memorials to members of the Lane-Fox fam-

ily of Bramham Park. The north wall of the chancel has one to George Fox, later Fox Lane, who married Harriet Benson — the heiress of Lord Bingley who created Bramham Park. George was the son of Henry Fox and Frances Lane, daughter of Viscount Lanesborough.

The chancel also has a memorial to James Fox, nephew of George Lane-Fox, who willed the estate to James. He was born at Bingley House, Cavendish Square, London, and died at Bramham Park in 1821 at the age of 63.

The recently-revealed crypt contains the tombs of George, who died on November 15, 1848, and his wife Georgiana Henrietta Buckley, who died aged 78 in March, 1874. George was the son and heir of James Fox. He and his wife also have a memorial on the south wall. He was known as the Gambler and was involved in a disastrous marriage and the fire at the mansion in 1828 which destroyed many of the Benson treasures.

There is a memorial on the south chancel wall to Charlotte, daughter of the seventh Duke of Leeds,

who married Sackville Lane-Fox, brother of Gambler George (he died in 1836). In the north aisle is a stained-glass window to George *The Squire* who inherited Bramham Park in 1848 from his gambling father. George died in November, 1896, aged 79 and the east window was given in memory of his wife Katherine Mary, who died in 1874.

#### Restored

The marble plaque on the west tower wall remembers James Thomas Richard Lane-Fox, Captain in the Grenadier Guards (1841-1906).

He was known as the Soldier and inherited the estate in 1896, having had it signed over to him by elder brother George.

Bramham Park was to be restored from 1906-1914 by the Soldier's son George Lane-Fox, Lord Bingley, who married Agnes Wood, daughter of the second Viscount Halifax (who is remembered by the rood screen).

□ Bramham Church

Sketch by SIMON DACRE

There is a restored memorial in the church to Baron Bingley, who was a Privy Councillor and the MP for Barkston Ash from 1906 to 1931. The statue of the virgin and Child was presented in his memory — he died in December, 1947, and was succeeded by his daughter Marcia, who married Colonel Francis "Joe" Jackson. He later changed his name to Lane-Fox and it is their eldest son who now lives at Bramham Park.

On the south nave wall is a memorial to Benjamin Eamonson, who was a landowner in the Bramham area and came from Roundhay. He was born in 1753 and died at Bramham in 1805; his wife Eleanor died in 1855 and their son Peter had died aged seven in 1794.

On the north nave wall is the plaque to John Smyth of Bowcliffe House who completed the 1800 building started by William Robinson. In this century Bowcliffe Hall became the home of aircraft pioneer Robert Blackburn and he died there. It is now used for conferences.

John Smyth (1777-1840) was the son of John and Lydia Smyth of Holbeck — his parents were buried in the old St Paul's Church, Leeds.

The graveyard has many men killed at the battle of Bramham Moor (1408) and Towton in 1461 and there is a large Lane-Fox family plot. Other graves include members of the Taite family, one of whom built the present Boston Spa Church, and William Vincent of Boston Lodge