

#### 4. EMPLOYMENT I - AGRICULTURE AND DOMESTIC SERVICE

In looking at the occupational structure of the village the idea of a traditional community is most clear. By classifying occupations into both social and industrial classes it is evident that the village was dominated by agriculture which created work directly and indirectly providing the foundation on which the local economy was based. Yet it would be wrong to say that agricultural employment was all that existed, the census returns show a considerable diversity of occupations. What seems prevalent though, is that the village was to a great extent inward looking, providing for itself all the necessary services to maintain the community. In 1851 despite the massive urban growth to the west, the village was largely unaffected. The depopulation of the countryside, the demise of village craftsmen and the general decline of rural areas as noted in the second half of the 19th Century were as yet absent in Bramham. This suggests that even by 1851 the processes of industrialisation which are said to be so influential were hardly touching village life which begs the question of how far has industrial development gone by the mid century and how influential was it on rural communities. Certainly in Bramham in 1851 a healthy village based economy was in existence.

In laying out the salient as well as the small scale features of village employment an initial consideration of social stratification shows the nature of village society. [Table 14 and Fig 14]. Essentially it was a working class community with the unskilled and partly skilled workers amounting for 63.5% of the classified population. The middle order of skilled occupations made up a quarter of the working population while at the top of the social scale was a relatively large group of farmers, landowners, annuitants as well as a number of teachers [10]. Apart from the village curate and George Lane-Fox there was an absence of a Class I. Thus three tiers can be seen in society; the labouring class, craftsmen and traders and a more wealthy group of those employing local labour and living from rents and annuities. This traditional structure was common in English villages though the relative sizes of the groups were dependent on local conditions.

A more detailed picture is obtained by using an industrial classification [Fig 15]. The main feature is obviously the large number of people involved in agriculture [38% of the workforce] but what is interesting is that domestic service employed nearly a quarter [24.4%] of those working which is a good indicator that wealth was available to employ servants. It is necessary to look at these two groups in greater detail.

(i) Agriculture and Agricultural Employment

Farming in the 19th Century was organised on the basis of three main groups; the landowner, the farmer both tenant and freehold and the labourer. In Bramham the "Parish was intermixed with freeholders"(1) with 71 landowners in 1843(2). But 65 held under 30 acres and by far the most important farmers were those holding tenancies from George Lane-Fox and Lady Headley.

There was a certain degree of continuation in farm holdings as the five main tenant farmers under Lane-Fox in 1843 were still farming in 1851 and only one had changed hands by 1857. In England at this time the typical farm unit was between 100 and 300 acres(3) and in Bramham the mean farms size was 100 acres and only two farms were over 300 acres. The landlord-tenant relationship is important because it allowed the farmer flexibility to respond to the growing market and price changes. Into this system must be fitted the Land Agent whose role in agricultural development "has not been sufficiently appreciated"(4). They were generally men of ability and often the driving force behind agricultural improvements. Thomas Kell, Lane-Fox's Land Agent certainly fitted this mould in the mid century(5).

The development of mixed farming on lighter soils like those of Bramham allowed a diversity of products, greater yields and falling costs. Caird noticed the higher rents and agricultural prosperity of these areas while those dependent on arable farming were facing difficulties(6).

Into this picture of agricultural development must be fitted those who worked the land. The farmers [21] as a group seem wealthy with large households on average of 5.5 persons. These were swollen by the continued existence of farm servants and 71% of farms had a total of 28 live-in labourers who tended to be young, 60.7% were under 19.

By far the most important farm workers were the day labourers who accounted for 23% of the total workforce. Predominantly they were men of a variety of ages [Table 16] with labourers of 60 not uncommon while only 9 women and children [under 14] were stated as labourers. These workers would have been amongst the poorest in the village for as long as there was a large labouring population wages were low. But there is evidence to suggest that agricultural labourers in Yorkshire were better off than their counterparts elsewhere. Certainly wages were amongst the highest in England at about 14s while in Wiltshire they were only 7s(7). Caird observed this in 1851 and pointed to northern wages being 37% higher than elsewhere.

Mixed farming was good for the labourer because it provided him with more constant employment throughout the year and the availability of alternative farm occupations to supplement his income. The absence of women and children working as labourers is misleading because it is likely that they would have worked on a seasonal basis and at harvesting the rural labour market completely changed as whole families took to the fields. Children were employed on a casual basis for menial tasks supplementing the family income. Generally it was noticed in 1867 that child and female employment existed in Yorkshire but was localised and not prominent(8).

There are many other variables than income to be assessed when looking at labouring life. Certainly in Bramham, cottages were built of stone and generally the area was noted for "vastly superior" dwellings than those in the south. "Universally" in Yorkshire allotments were available for labourers(9) and in 1852 it was recommended to George Lane-Fox that "1/4 acre be given to each labourer" and that no cottage should have "less than two sleeping rooms"(10). Diet is rather hard to determine but from the evidence of a labourer at Bolton Percy [4 miles from Bramham, in 1842 meat and milk were available to add to the staple diet of flour and this was some what better than in other areas of

England(11). Despite this conditions of the labourer would have been very meagre with poverty prevailing. Yet mobility of labourers [68% were born outside Bramham] shows they were relatively free to move around and seek better employment and that the village economy must have been healthy enough to absorb this migrant labour.

Thus it can be seen that Bramham was a traditional agriculturally based community which would have been affected by changes in the market demand due to population and urban growth and this it met by versatile mixed farming. But the relationship between landlord, farmer and labourer remained unchanged, any agricultural developments were occurring within the customary social structure based on cheap available labour.

#### (ii) Domestic Service

This group accounted for 24% of the workforce and is a good indicator of the wealth of those living in the village. Table 17 shows that it was not just social Class I and II who would employ servants, 6 Class IV households also had someone. Some 20% of households had at least one servant compared with only 10.3% in Tadcaster(12) and this is an indication of some degree of 'middle classness' in Bramham. The income needed to employ servants was:

£100 per year for a maid

£300 per year for a second maid

£400-600 per year for a cook, parlour maid and housemaid(13)

Those who had domestic servants fall into three groups; 6 annuitants and landed proprietors, 10 farmers and then tradesmen and wealthy craftsmen. This suggests a village with a degree of affluence though the majority of people would certainly not have enjoyed this.

Domestic servants hired at local fairs in Wetherby and Tadcaster were predominantly female [67%] and unmarried [67%], the fact that there was a number of male servants is another indication of wealth because they were a more expensive commodity. As a low paid mobile group, only 10% were born in Bramham they represent traditional society where employment in country service was still strong especially among women.

Footnotes:

- (1) Leeds City Archives, Lane Fox Deposit, L F LXXXIII 6, Estate Survey 1852.
- (2) Leeds City Archives, Bramham Tithe Award and Map 1843, RD/RT/30.
- (3) Chambers, J. D, and Mingay, G. E, The Agricultural Revolution 1750-1880, London 1966, P-133.
- (4) Chambers, J. D, and Mingay, G. E, The Agricultural Revolution, P-202.
- (5) Ward, J. T, 'The Saving of a Yorkshire Estate: George Lane-Fox and Bramham Park', Yorkshire Archeological Journal, Vol 42, 1967, P-66.
- (6) Caird, J, English Agriculture in 1850-1, London, New Ed 1968, P-480.
- (7) Caird, J, English Agriculture, P-512.
- (8) British Parliamentary Papers, Commissioners Report on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture 1867-8, Vol 10, P-206.
- (9) British Parliamentary Papers, Agriculture, 1867-8 Vol 10.



- (10) Leeds City Archives, Lane-Fox Deposit, LF LXXXIII  
6, Estate Survey 1852.
- (11) British Parliamentary Papers, Report on the  
Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture,  
1843, P-302.
- (12) Brewster, B. M, 'Tadcaster 1857', P1-23.
- (13) Banks, J, 'Prosperity and Parenthood', London, 1954,  
P-76.

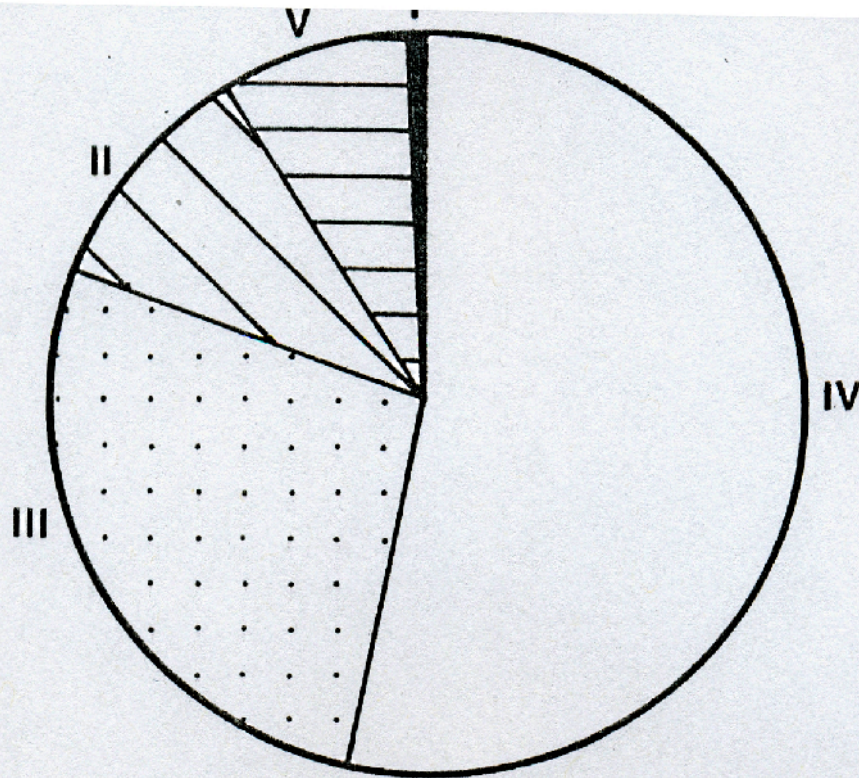


Fig 14. Social Classes in Bramham 1851

Table 14. Registrar General's Social Stratification for Bramham 1851

Social Class	Number of those Classified	%
I	2	0.2
II	50	10.6
III	123	25.6
IV	266	55.4
V	39	8.1
	480	

Fig 15. Graph to show Industrial Groupings in Bramham 1851

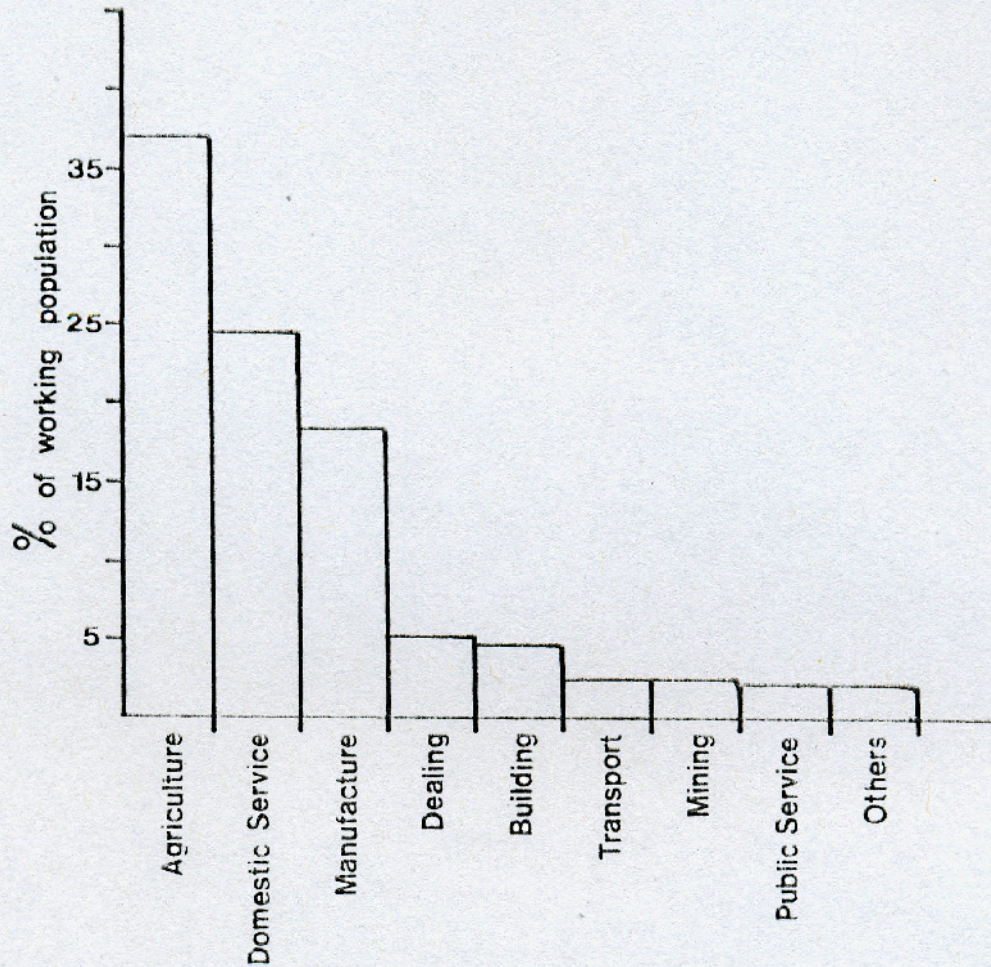


Table 15. Industrial Classification by Occupation

	Number	%
Agriculture	176	37.6
Mining	12	2.5
Building	22	4.7
Manufacture	86	18.4
Transport	12	2.5
Dealing	24	5.1
Public Service/Professional	11	2.4
Domestic Service	114	24.4
Others (Property Owners)	11	2.4
	468	

Table 16 Age Structure of Agricultural Labourers - 1851

Age	Number	%
10-19	12	10.9
20-29	25	22.7
30-39	25	22.7
40-49	17	15.5
50-59	15	13.6
60+	17	15.5

Table 17 Households with Domestic Servants by Social Class of Head 1851.

Class	No. of households with at least one servant	% of all households
I	2	100
II	22	52
III	6	8.9
IV	2	1.8
V	-	-

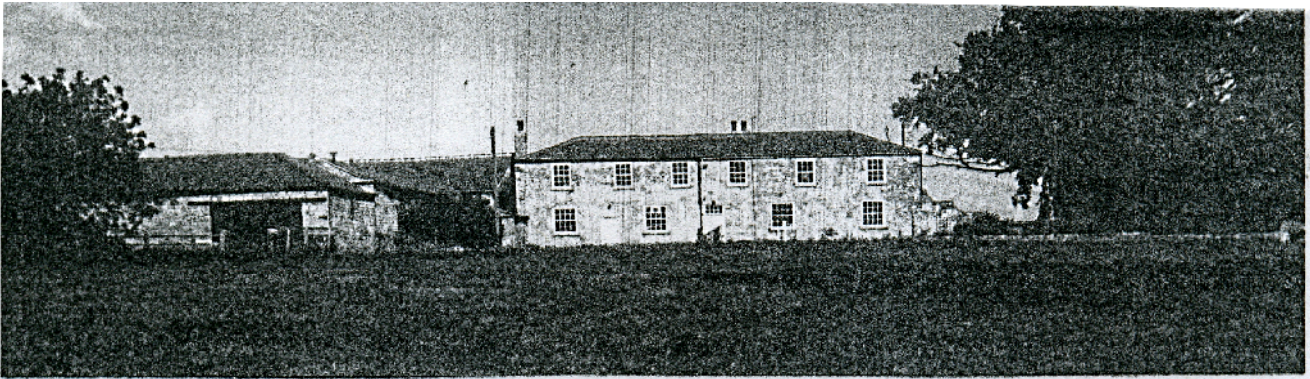
The principle farms. The illustrations below show those farms held by tenant farmers which made up the greatest acreage and were situated in the fields. Freehold farms tended to be located in the village.



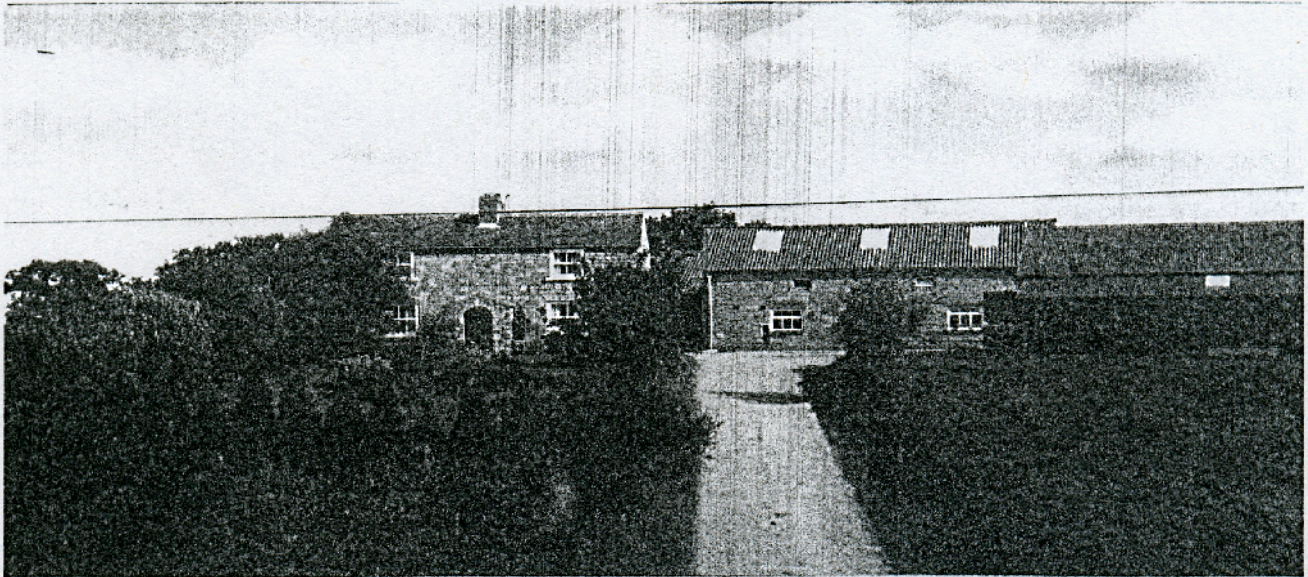
Illus. 14. Wise Warren Farm.



Illus. 15. New York Farm.



Illus. 16. Headley hall.



Illus. 17. Paradise Farm.

Illus. 18. Well Hill Farm.

Note. All the farms are still utilising old farm buildings and farm architecture has changed very little since the mid 19th century.

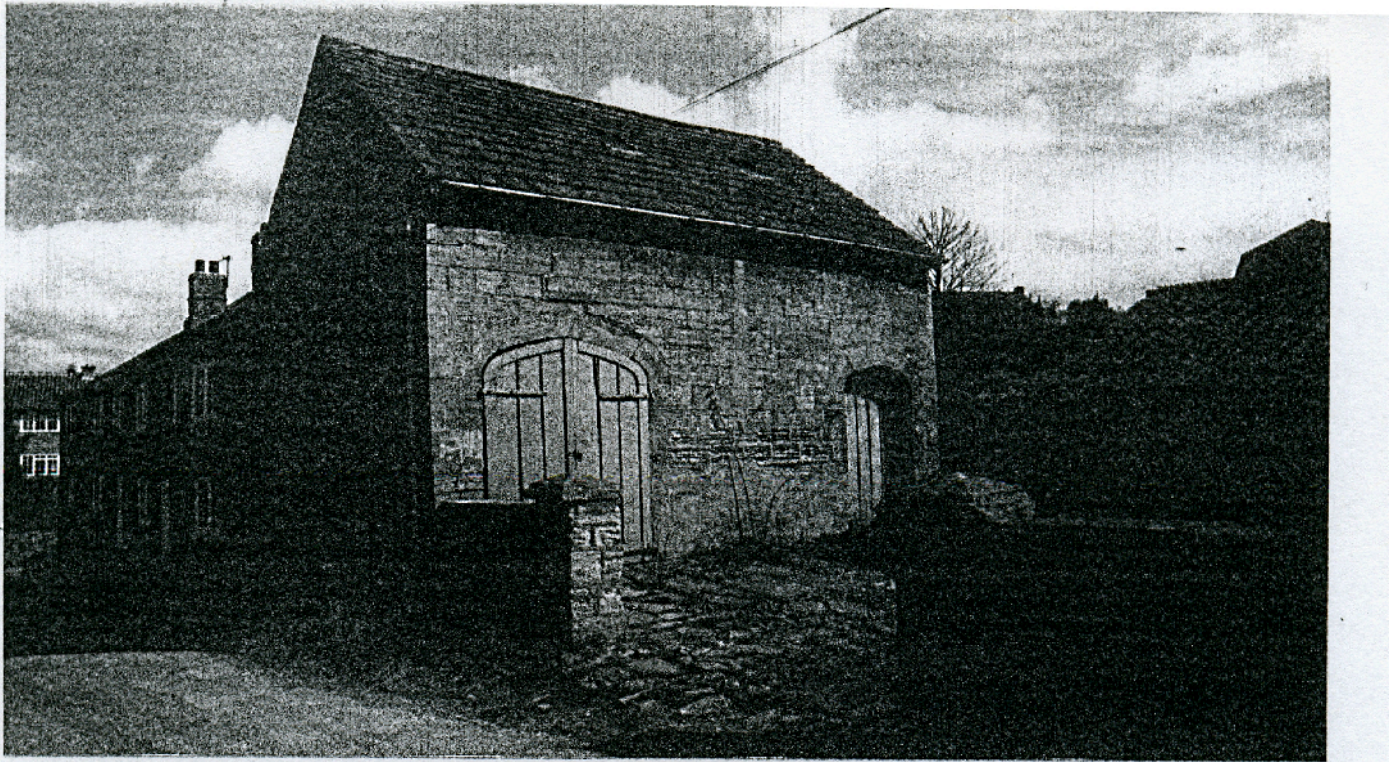




Illus.19. Labourers cottages in the village. The two end dwellings had just two principle rooms, one upstairs and one down. This is a reflection of the sort of housing conditions in the mid-19th century. But allotments for the growing of vegetables to supplement the labourer's meagre income did exist in Bramham, either attached to a cottage or in divided plots in the village. There was no running water and even in 1903 communal pumps and washing facilities were in use. These are the sort of conditions that most people in Bramham lived in at the time of the 1851 census.

Illus. 20&21. Further examples of the type of housing conditions which predominated in 1851 within the village.





Illus.22. A particular feature of Bramham is the number of barns actually in the village adjoining cottages. Known locally as 'mowstoads' many still survive while others have been converted into houses (Illus.23.). These small barns would have been used to store agricultural produce as well as to house animals. Their large number reflects the relatively high standard and availability of agricultural buildings to both farmer and labourer in 1851.

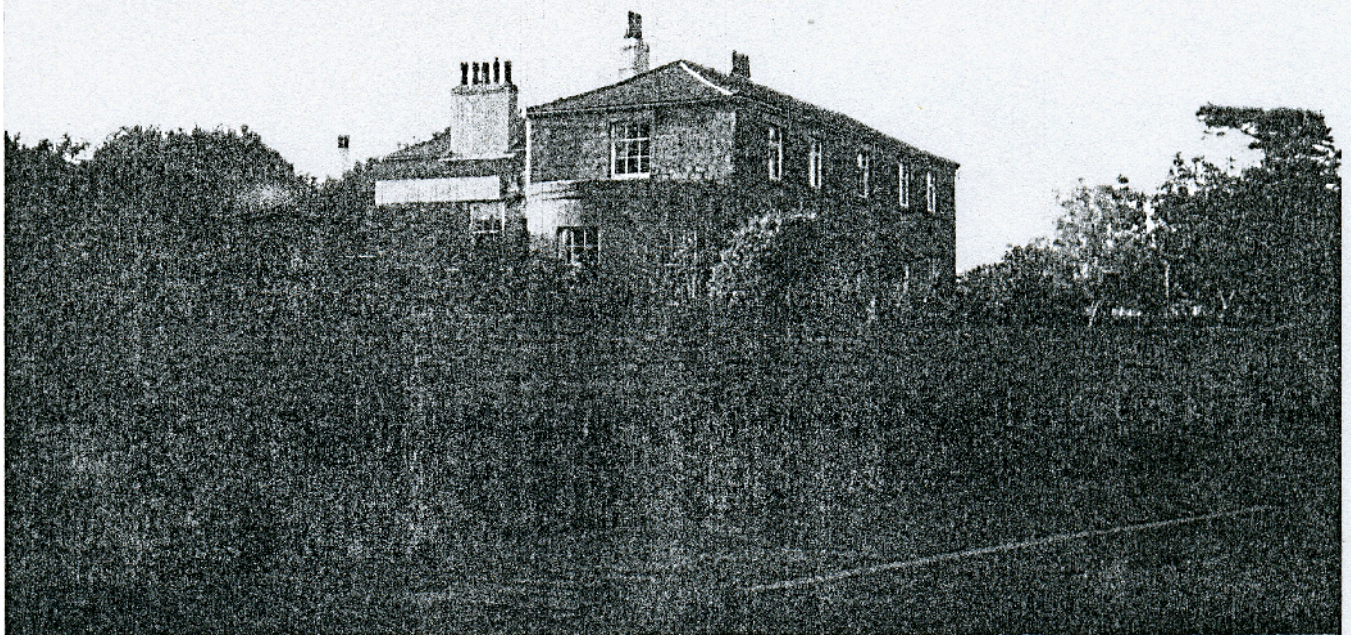




"Bramham has a number of minor but sizeable houses"  
(Pevsner N. Yorkshire, West Riding, 2nd edition, 1967.)  
The illustrations below show that there were, in the  
parish some larger residences. The owners of these would  
have provided employment for local men and women as  
domestic servants and gardeners as well as demand for  
local tradesmen. These buildings also reflect the  
existence in Bramham of a class of more wealthy people  
and shows that village society was relatively diverse.  
Illus.24. Hope hall



Illus.25. Bramham Lodge





Illus.26. The Land Agent's house.



Illus.27. A large residence of 17th century origin facing the church.