

5. VILLAGE EMPLOYMENT II: Diversity

Bramham like many 19th Century villages is characterised by a wide range of occupations which provided goods and services to the community. It is evident though that agriculture was the economic basis providing the stimulus for craftsmen and traders. Little was manufactured for sale commercially outside the village. The relatively large number of non-agricultural occupations seems due to three reasons:

- (i) The large village population meant a greater market.
- (ii) The prosperity of agriculture supplied work for subsidiary trades as well as some wealth for the upper levels of village society.
- (iii) As yet industrial expansion and factory production were not affecting village craftsmen and traders.

By looking at the type and scale of employment in Bramham it is possible to see that there was diversity and that the 1850s probably marks the high point of a village based economy.

All the needs of the village with regard to building and metal working [Table 18] were met by local craftsmen. The number of blacksmiths and wheelwrights is a reflection of the continued dependence of farming on the horse and that farm machinery would have had little impact as yet. Thus their skilled work was still in demand. It is likely that those working in building and associated trades would have been involved in farm improvements and George Lane-Fox certainly placed regular demands on carpenters, painters, glaziers and builders for work on his own house and on his farms. Limestone was quarried locally and provided employment for a number of stone masons [Table 19] but the small scale of production indicates that most stone was used in Bramham reflecting the local basis of the economy.

Manufacturing in the village was largely concerned with shoes and clothing which employed 8.5% of the working population. Clearly there was a local demand for their services and it seems that most people were still getting clothes locally questioning whether cheaper goods sold in towns were having an effect. The existence of a breeches maker, glover and a saddler show that there was sufficient call for such specialisms and these trades in particular reflect the importance of the farmers and 'middle class' who provided a market for such luxuries.

The diversification of the village economy can be further exemplified by considering traders and those offering services. The mid century saw a growth in the establishment of shops within villages and the improvements in transport were crucial to rural traders. The number of local tradesmen can be seen in Table 21 and illustrates that dealing was both widespread and specialised in 1851. This was probably due to the relatively large population, the number of wealthy people, and some rise in standards of living.

Village shops depended upon country carriers who benefitted from the railway boom, because not every village had a station thus local transportation fell to them. Bramham seems well served with a carrier going to Leeds twice a week and York once, an omnibus which met every local train and a coachman(1). This reflects the impact of communications but seems to have little affected Bramham's localised outlook [Table 22].

The second half of the 19th Century marked the demise of the village based economy with the widespread availability of cheaper factory produced goods and in Bramham by 1897 there were 44% fewer traders. But in 1851 these changes were not yet evident and even food processing was still undertaken locally with both a water and windmill, 6 butchers and a baker [Table 23].

There was no prominent rural industry in the village which would usually employ women and this is reflected in the female employment pattern [Table 24]. But there was a Flax Mill just inside the parish producing "patent yarn and shoe thread"(2) [Illus 34]. It employed 300 people predominantly from the next village [Clifford] though 22 people from Bramham worked there. This is a good example of a rurally sited mill located by the power source which shows that country industries were clearly still doing well but its effects on Bramham were limited due to its location.

In turning to more professional occupations an interesting feature of Bramham comes to light and that is the large number of teachers which is partly due to the existence of a private school. It catered for 127 pupils aged 9 to 18 and was described as of "scholastic reputation and known by the rather ambitious name of Bramham College"(3) [Illus 37]. It was a Victorian School concerned with a classical education and was largely isolated from the village. But it did employ a shoe black, charwoman and 7 servants. Its own market garden and small farm would have created some employment and the village traders cannot have been unaffected by the demand it created. This points to the individuality of villages each affected by its own local conditions and anomalies.

As well as Bramham College there was the Village School which employed 8 teachers. It too had the capacity for boarders [17 in 1851] and as a village institution it must have had some importance within Bramham and the surrounding area from which children were sent. This also reflects that village employment had an element of professionals not a part of the landowning, farming and annuitant set.

It should be noted that there was a Wesleyan and a Primitive Methodist Church, though the Census did not note this fact because both Ministers were away. Non-conformity was stronger in open more mobile villages and this is a reflection of Bramham. These chapels were important because with the Inns and beerhouses they provided "a good part of the social life"(4) within the village. They were key institutions which shaped the character of the village with intense preaching and hymn singing. Also there must have been some sort of rivalry between the Anglican minister who as a landowner was closely tied to the traditional society of the squire-vicar monopoly over the community. But non-conformity in Bramham is a reflection of the wider picture of religion in England, for in 1851 only 25% of the country attended an Anglican service. It should be stressed though, that the inn was still the most important centre for business and leisure for all members of society.

Clearly the village with its three denominations, large school, post office and great variety of tradesmen represents a community largely self sustaining. It obviously enjoyed closer links to urban centres brought by the expansion of communications but in the final analysis the village served its own needs.

By way of conclusion it can be seen from the small number of unemployed and paupers, the village was not particularly burdened with a large group of dependents.

No. of Paupers	10
No. of unemployed male Household Heads	5
No. of unemployed female Household Heads	12
	27

[4.4% of Household Heads]

Many of the poor would have been supported by offspring or relations while the village provided two almshouses and £62 5s 8d was given away in bread(5). Thus in 1851 the pattern of rural life seems to be one of prosperity which must represent the height of the village orientated economy. Change would come by the 20th Century which resulted in the demise of this local structure and the dependence on Leeds for goods and services. It is enough to point to the diversity of

village occupations to show that in 1851 in Bramham the rural community was still independent of external change and essentially locally based. Though the employment pattern by this time was somewhat more complex than in the past it was merely an expansion of a traditional structure.

Footnotes:

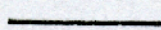
- (1) Post Office Directory of Yorkshire, London 1857, P-156.
- (2) Goodchild, J, 'Clifford Mills', Old West Riding - A Collection of Original Articles, Vol 2 No.2 Winter 1982, Huddersfield, P-29.
- (3) Wheater, W, Some Historic Mansions of Yorkshire, P-135.
- (4) Malcolmson, R. W, 'Leisure' in Mingay, G.E. [ed], The Victorian Countryside, London, 1981, P-612.
- (5) Post Office Directory of Yorkshire, 1857, P-155.

Fig.16. Map of local industry in Bramham 1851.

Base Map: Enlarged 1:25,000 Ordnance Survey
Sheet SE 44/54, 1961-66 Survey.



Limestone quarries.



Parish Boundary 1851.

Note:

The brick and tile works are located by two small clay pits. But the census only shows four men employed there and this would seem to follow the pattern that any industry was on a small scale and locally based.

Table 18 Village Craftsmen 1851

	No. employees
Blacksmiths	7
Wheelwrights	4
Basket Makers	3
Carpenters	6
Joiners and Builders	5
Painters	3
Plumbers & Glaziers	6
Blue Slater	<u>1</u>
TOTAL	35

No
Thatchers?

Table 19 Number employed in working with stone and brick

Stone Mason	8
Tile Maker	1
Quarry Labourer	1
Brickmaker	2
Brick Yard Labourer	<u>1</u>
	13

Table 20 Number concerned in Clothing and Shoe
Manufacture

Dressmakers	13
Tailors	11
Boot & Shoe Makers	9
Seamstress	3
Journeyman/Shoemaker	2
Journeyman/Tailor	1
Breeches Maker & Glover	1
Saddler	<u>1</u>
	41

Table 21 Traders and Dealers in Bramham 1851

Grocers [and Drapers]	5
Innkeepers	5
Beerhouse Keepers	1
Confectioner	1
Teadealer	1
Wine and Spirit Merchant	1
Seedsman/Corndealet	1
Potato Dealer	1
Coal Contractor	1
Coal Porter	1
Sheepdealer	1
Licensed Hawker	1
Shopkeeper	<u>1</u>
	21

Table 22 Those employed in Transport related occupations

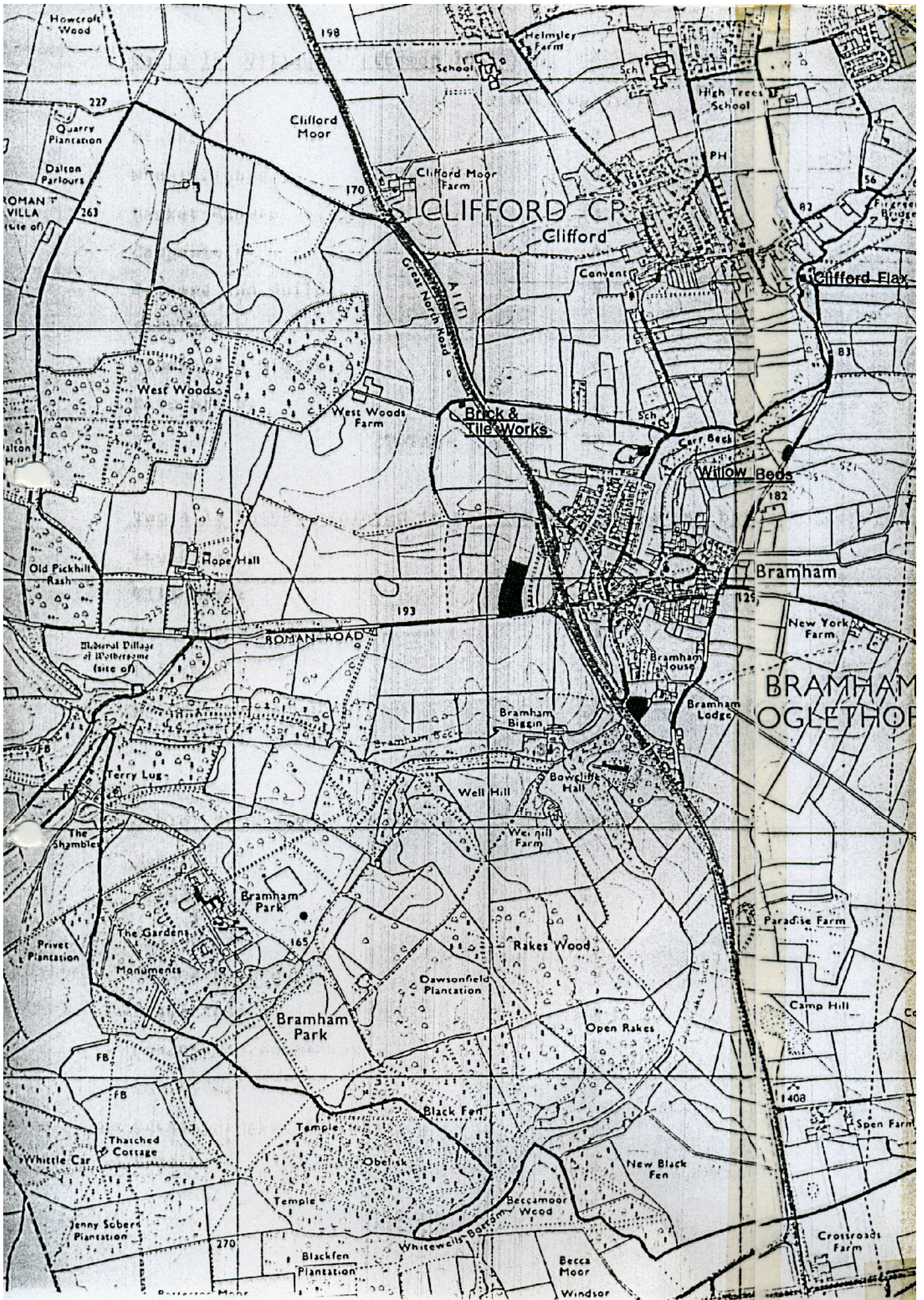
Carriers	2
Bus Driver	1
Coachman	1
Toll Bar Attendants	2
Road Men	5
Rail Labourer	<u>1</u>
	12

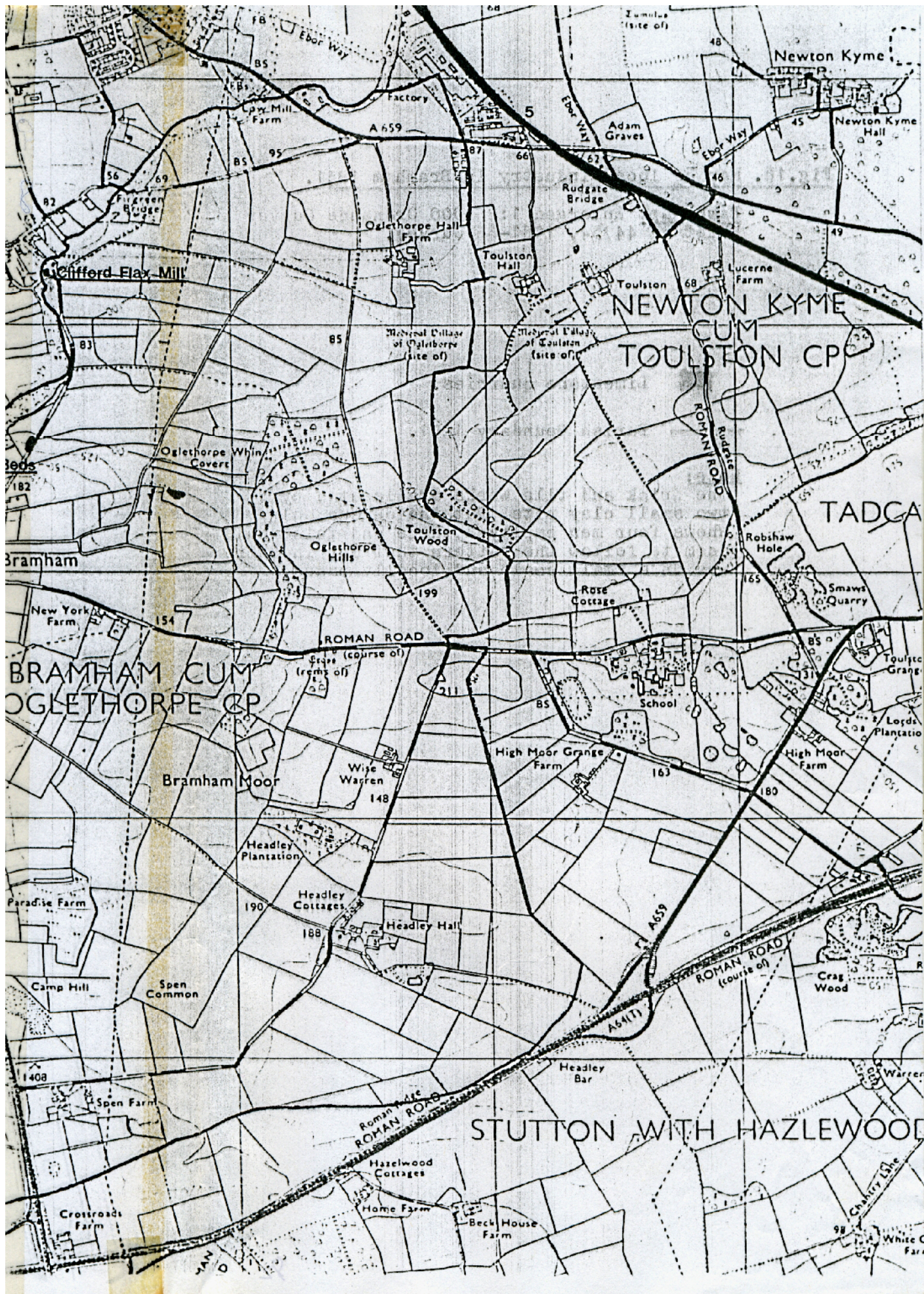
Table 23 Those employed in Food processing

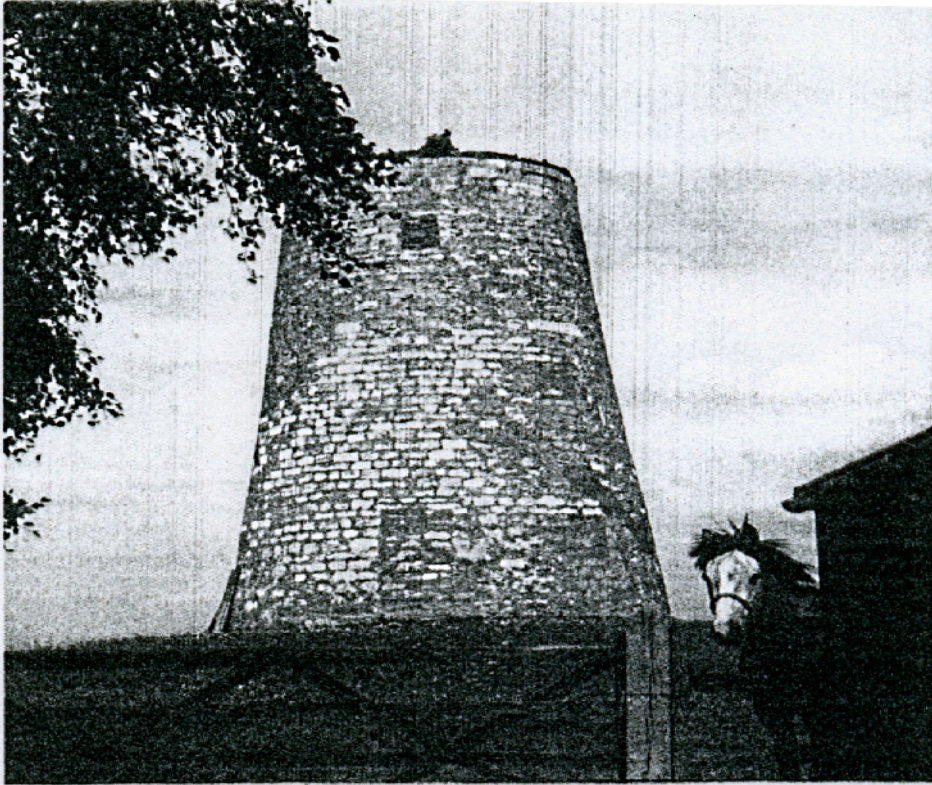
Butchers	6
Corn Millers	2
Baker	1
Maltster	1
Pigman	1

Table 24 Female Occupations in Bramham 1851

Domestic Servants	61
Dressmaker	13
Laundress	10
Teacher	8
Flax Worker	8
Agricultural Labourers	5
Charwomen	4
Landed Proprietor/Annuitant	4
Grocer	2
Seamstress	2
Others	13
	130





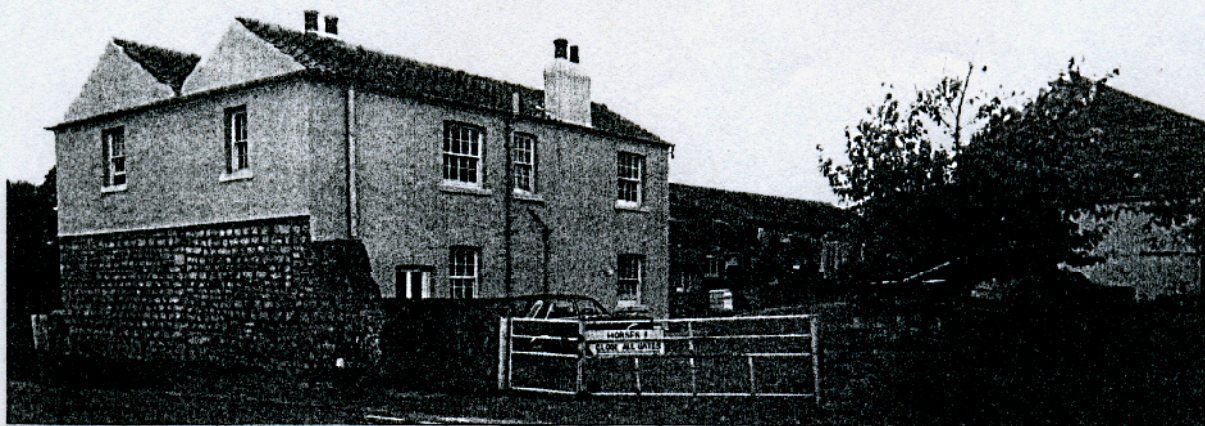


Illus.28. The milling of corn was still undertaken locally in 1851 and this can be seen in the existence of a windmill.



Illus.29. Close to the village was a willow bed which is largely undisturbed today. But only one man was employed in basket making and this suggests that as a village industry it was on a very small scale, though it does indicate some diversity in the local economy.

The village inn was a key institution for all members of society as a place for leisure and business. In Bramham there were 5 inns and a beerhouse in 1851 all of which were located on the Great North Road pointing to the importance of passing trade to the village. A feature of 19th century inns was that their owners often had another occupation. In Bramham the Red Lion was owned by a farmer and the woman who ran the Fox Inn was described as a 'plumber, glazier and pankeeper'.

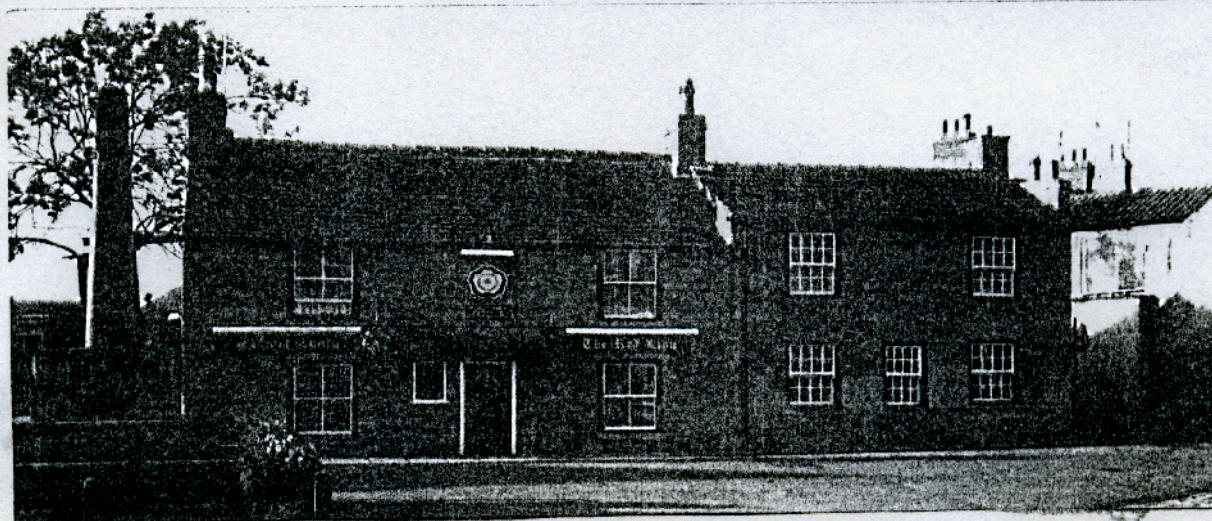


Illus. 30. The Fox Inn

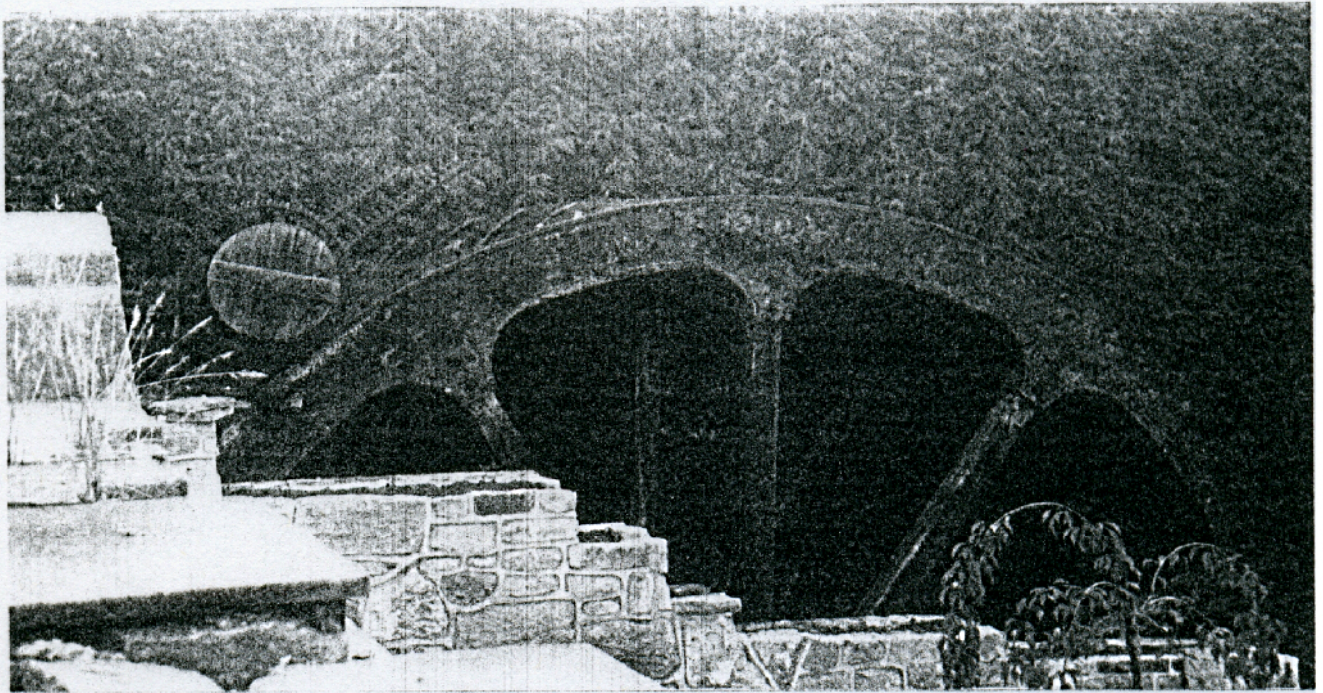
Illus. 31. The Bay Horse



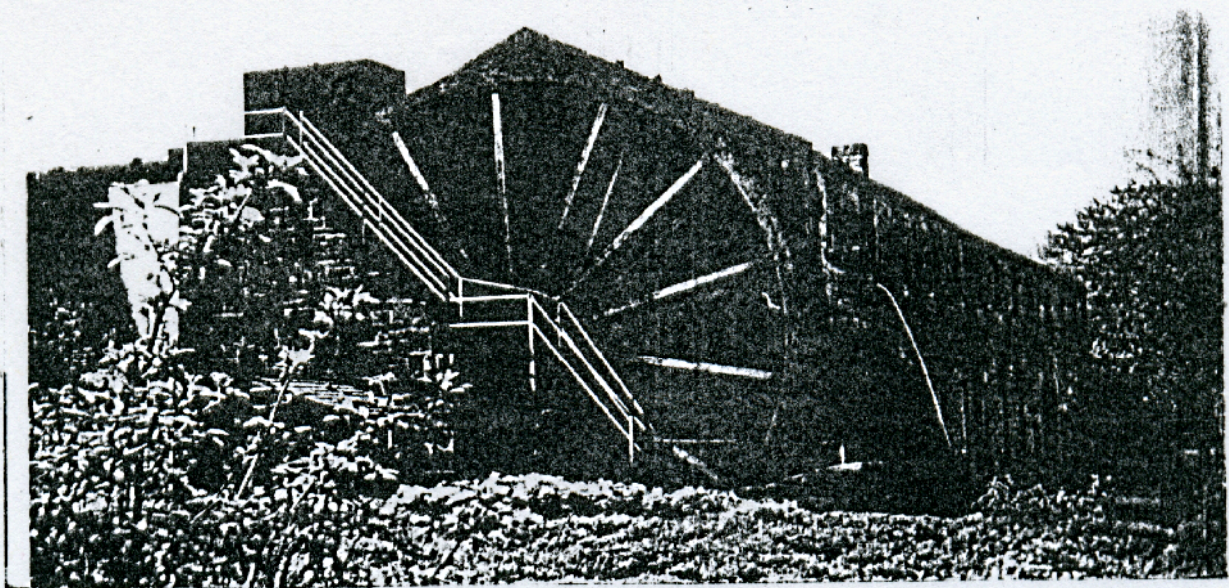
Illus. 32. The Red Lion.

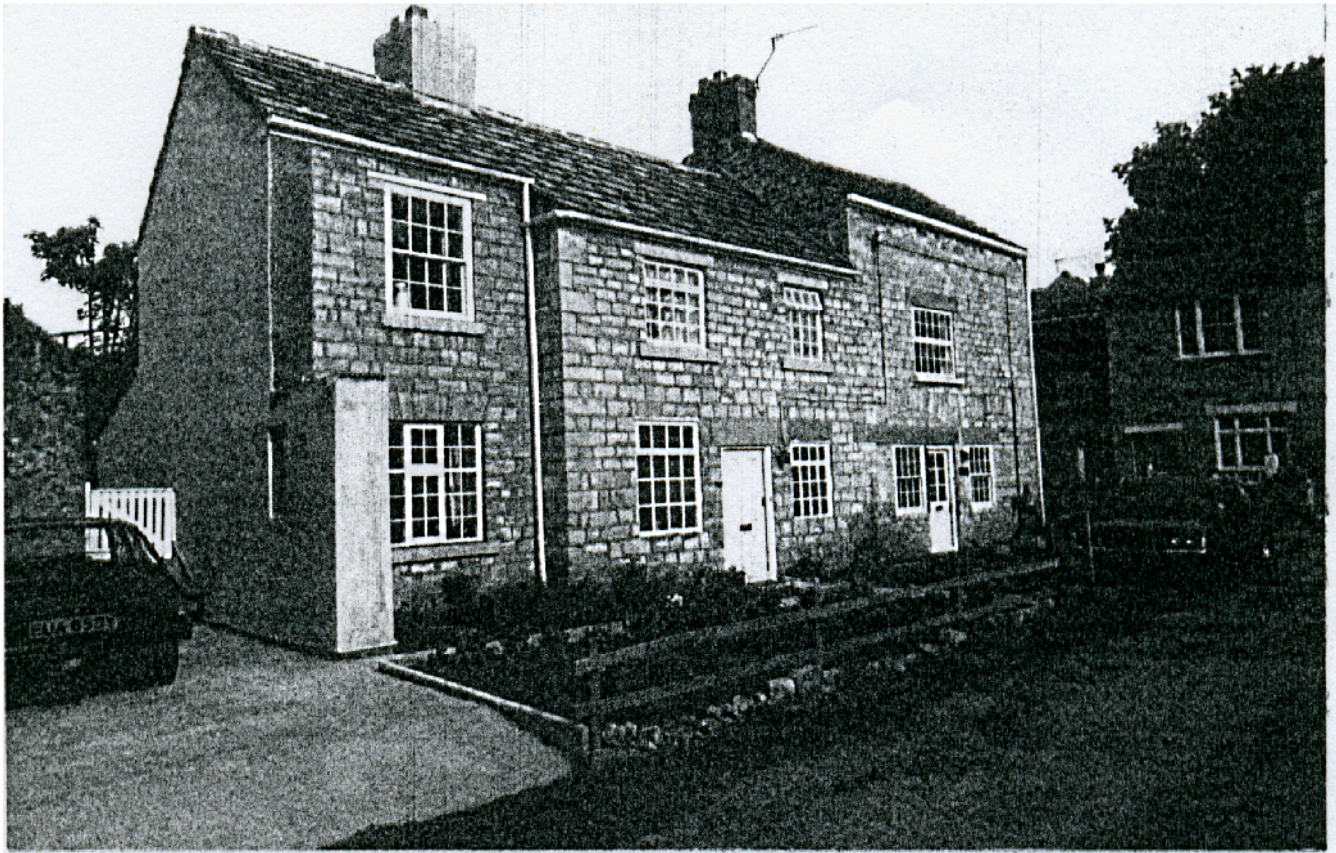


The Flax Mill. The actual mill was destroyed by fire and all that remains is the mill wheel. (Illus. 33.)

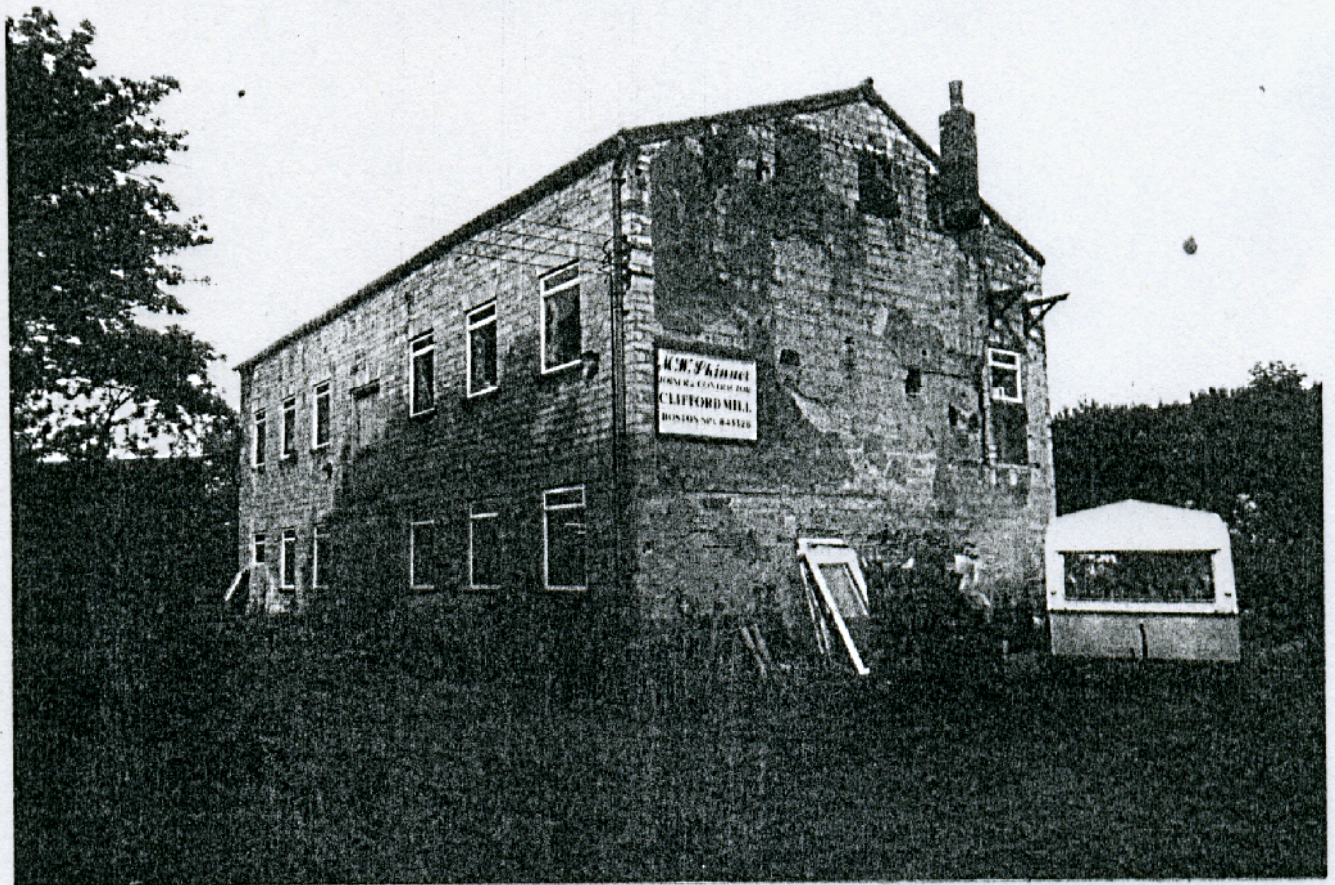


Illus. 34. A rurally located flax mill in Nidderdale which probably represents the type of mill which existed at Bramham. Despite its rural location the problems of transportation were overcome by using a steam engine to take the spun flax to the nearest railway at Thorp Arch. This shows that industry could still exist in the countryside despite competition from urban based production.

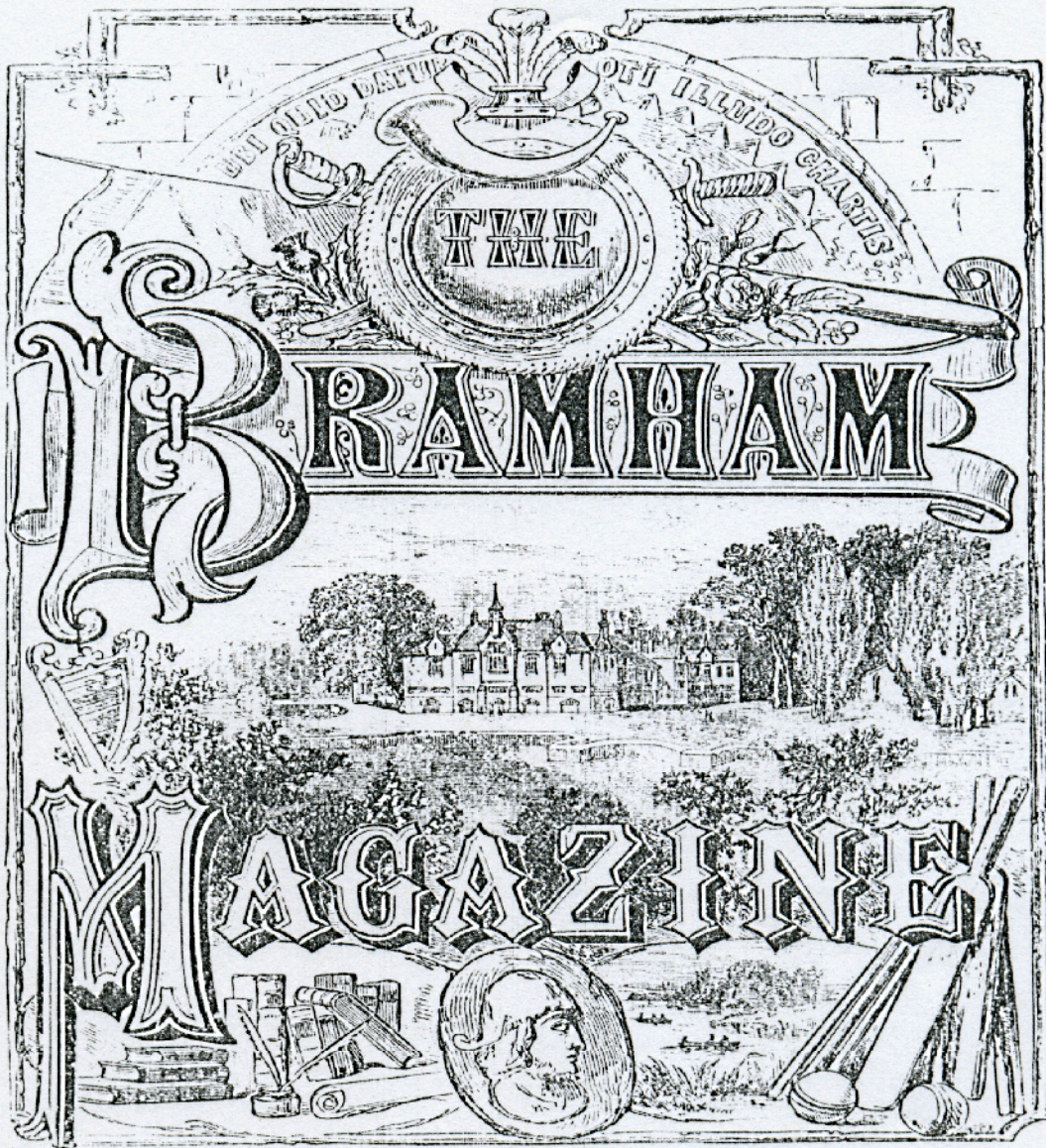




Illus.35. Mill workers cottage.



Illus.36. A mill building, a warehouse now converted.



Illus. 37. The college magazine cover reflecting the type of Victorian education it practised. The large 19th century building was destroyed after a typhoid outbreak and only the old building stands today.



Religion in Bramham in 1851:

Top. The 13th century parish church of All Saints set in a Saxon churchyard representing traditional and established religion.

Middle. Nonconformity, the white building was a Wesleyian Chapel.

Bottom. On the left is the rebuilt Methodist Chapel c.1920.

