

The ancient parish of Bramham - cum - Oglethorpe occupies a strategic position where the Roman Stony Gate crossed the Great Road to the North. Surrounded by estates for centuries owned by prosperous landlords , and twice by - passed in modern times , the village has been much protected from urban sprawl , though not from exposure to warfare. Its open , low moorlands have often served as battlefield and military training ground over the ages --- the death of Henry Percy , Earl of Northumberland in battle here in 1408 is commemorated with a memorial along the Toulston road ,near to the 1916 - 19 site of one of the world 's earliest military airfields.

The Roman legions marched through , and settled hereabouts , building country villas like that at Dalton Parlours just outside the parish boundary. Saxons established the huge oval churchyard , erecting a church pre - dating the present All Saints , built later around 1150 and extended to its present dimensions in the next century. With magnesian limestone for the construction of York Minster quarried around the village and at neighbouring Toulston , ecclesiastical links were strong in medieval times ; much of the village was owned by one branch or another of the Church , with the site of one of its oldest buildings , the Biggin , in the hands of the monks of Nostell Priory who used it for rest on their journeys to York.

Much later , after a succession of wealthy owners, the Biggin became, in Victorian times , the home of Bramham College , a public school closed by an outbreak of cholera . Bramham has a rich heritage of grand houses , created mainly for the scions of the Lane - Fox dynasty at Bramham Park. This Queen Anne Palladian family house , with gardens by Le Notre after those at Versailles , is certainly Bramham ' s grandest , though not its oldest , for Headley Hall and Hope Hall are certainly older , Bramham Old Hall and the Old Vicarage date in part from Stuart times, and some of the village cottages are very ancient. Notably, the barn across the Beck , next to the garage , is said to be Saxon. Perhaps the oldest domestic building , of which only the gateposts remain , was the home of the great Oglethorpe family , in medieval times the King 's Reeves for the county , whose most notable member , Owen Oglethorpe , Bishop of Carlisle , crowned the first Queen Elizabeth at Westminster in 1559 , having previously founded Oglethorpe Grammar School , Tadcaster .

At the Millennium , on the outer perimeter of Leeds Metropolitan District , Bramham remains protected so far, with the Lane - Fox estates to the west and south , and those of the John Smith brewery and the University of Leeds to the east. Nevertheless , government edict and the decisions of urban planners have seen the village housing up by over 40 % in the decade before the Millennium , with several new estates filling what were once open spaces within the village , though not the full parish , boundaries. Stable , with fluctuations , at around 1200 for 150 years , the population has now grown to around 1600 in 683 dwellings. Though this additional housing has not brought extra facilities [one shop / P.O. alone remains] significant efforts have been made to retain the village 's character.

Thus it is that successive A1 bypasses have taken passing traffic further from the village , masked by embankments from which the stone buildings with their pantile roofs , set in a rolling landscape , retain their picturesque charm . Situated just off the Plain of York , not far from the river in Lower Wharfedale , and crossed by the great routes which have lasted from pre - medieval times to the present day , Bramham - cum - Oglethorpe provides ample evidence of an attractive , modern community with a colourful , varied past.