

## **Development of Bramhall**

My interest in Bramhall's development is in how it came to be as we know it today, so the timeframe I am looking at is from the mid-1800s to the present.

The original medieval manor of Bramhall covered more than today's Bramhall and extended to London Road, so included Hazel Grove. It is speculated that the Davenports, owners of the estate for 500 years, first sold land on the outskirts of the estate to the north and by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century this was "free" land. The part adjoining Stockport which is modern day Davenport had a railway station on the London & North Western Railway line and quickly became part of Stockport. Development south of Davenport was fast as Stockport needed to expand and in 1895 and 1901 further portions of northern Bramhall were ceded to Stockport. For much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Bramhall and Hazel Grove were combined for local government purposes. They were governed by the Hazel Grove and Bramhall Urban District Council from 1902 until 1974 when they were both incorporated into Stockport Metropolitan Borough.

Hazel Grove became a centre for the textile industry and allied trades, originally with the cottage industries of silk weaving and hatting, later extended to silk and cotton mills and latterly to engineering.

By contrast, Bramhall was a group of scattered hamlets around farms and therefore mainly rural. The fields were mainly arable, meadow and pasture. Silk weaving was carried out in some of the cottages. The manor was under the control of the Davenports for 500 years until 1877 when the last lord, John William Handley Davenport, sold 1918 acres of the manor to the Freeholders Company for £200,000. Much of the land was sold as farms or as building plots.

The original Bramhall was centred round the Bramhall estate with its Hall, with the main habitation in Bramhall Green. The centre shifted with the opening of the railway station in 1845 which encouraged commuters to live close by. The main transport route to Stockport was Bramhall Lane running from the intersection of Woodford Road, Ack Lane and Moss Lane to London Road (Wellington Road South/Buxton Road) and initial development was mainly along this road. At some point the southern end of the road became Bramhall Lane South.

The population of Bramhall in 1901 was 1371; today it is about 22,000. There were four "districts" in the old Bramhall – Bramhall Green, Pownall Green, Kitts Moss and Syddall

### **Bramhall farms**

*Syddal Farm* – West of Woodford Road, present day Syddal Park

- farmhouse on site of present PO sorting office, demolished in 1920s to build Syddal Road
- Browne family lived there in 1623, Downing family in 1880
- Cookson family, 520+ acres
- extended from Downings Farm to the Lamb Chapel (formerly the Lamb Inn) and to the far end of Highfield Parkway westwards to

present day Glendene Avenue; also from Lumb Lane to the Woodford Boundary (Meadway, Queensgate, Shell oil depot field)  
- largest farm in the district in 1900

*Ashbrook's Farm* - Syddal House (residence of Syddal family) originally on the site of the old Woolworth building  
- John Barlow was tenant in 1871 and farmed 130 acres  
- followed by James Cookson

*Patch Farm* – owned by Norbury Church Trustees, farmed by Mr Owen

*Kitts Moss* – moorland used by local people for grazing

*Chip Hill Farm* – on Cheadle Hulme border south of Moss Lane  
- owned by Samuel Clarke in 1792, sold to William Worthington with 9 Cheshire acres (approx 9 hectares) in 1801 for £915, remained in Worthington family until 1930s. A Mr Arthur Worthington lived in the house which is now the Abbeyfield Home on Moss Lane until the 1980s. He had a dairy and a milkround.

*Tan Pits Farm* – Cheadle Hulme, adjoining Chip Hill Farm, the farm buildings were on the bend in Moss Lane just before where Hall Moss Road is now. The farm was owned by the Worthingtons of Chip Hill Farm (current building is a modern reproduction although the cobbled path is believed to be original to the farm, 1750s). Tan Pits means a tannery.

*Mount Pleasant Farm* – north side of Moss Lane (past the fork where Acre Lane starts), farmhouse (built about 1725) still stands

*Lumb Farm* – Lumb Lane, owned by William Adkinson, farmer and builder

*Hardy's Farm* – Ack Lane, west of Robins Lane. Farmed by Margaret Hardy in 1694 and remained in the Hardy family until at least 1822. James Henderson shot in bed in 1857. His eldest son (James) charged but acquitted. The farm was sold in 1858 and the family went to Australia. Henry Barlow was there in 1881. Farmed by Joseph Holland from 1882 until his death in 1929 and then by his widow, Ann, until her death in 1934. The land was gradually sold for building finishing about 1980.

*Robins Lane Farm* - Also known as Brentnall's Tenement, Ridgway's Tenement then Huxley's Tenement, now Old Timbers Cottage. Farmed from about 1662 to 1710 by the Brentnall family, then Peter Ridgway till 1721, followed by Thomas Huxley and by Sarah Barrett from about 1842 until 1849. After Sarah's death the Turner family were the tenants until George Holland took over in 1901 until 1949, followed by his son, Hector, until 1971.

*Pownall Farm* – east side of Bramhall Lane South in Pownall Green. The Pownall family also owned much of the land around the village (176 acres) and where the railway is now. Their land extended from Damery Road to Lumb Lane on the east of BLS and from Robins Lane to opposite Lumb Lane on the west. On the

death of the last Peter Pownall in 1858, the land and the house (Pownall Hall) passed to his nephews (sons of his late sister, Sarah Brocklehurst, and her husband, John). The Brocklehursts leased the hall and the land. George Leech was there during the First World War and during the Second World War German prisoners of war worked on the farm.

The Grestys (who had previously farmed Millbank Farm, Chester Road, part of the Lyme Hall Estate) tenanted the farm from until 1962. It was a mixed farm, corn, hay, dairy, vegetables, ducks, chickens, geese, potatoes etc. They sold pigs to a bacon factory in High Lane, owned by the Simpsons (who had a German name but changed it during WW2). Jean Gresty delivered milk around Ladythorn Road in a pony and cart. The Grestys rented the farm and Pownall Hall from the Brocklehursts. The Hall had six bedrooms, three entertaining rooms, three pantries and a sitting room. There were two staircases. The War Office used one room as a Food Office during WW2. Outbuildings included a dairy, washing up shed, shippens and hay sheds. There were two farm cottages on the land. The farmland was all bordered by houses as far as Happy Valley and what is now Bramhall Golf Course. After WW2 Mr Gresty was offered the chance to purchase the farm for about £10,000 but as he had bought his sister's share of the farm he could not do so. The Brocklehursts then started to sell the land for housing. The first houses to be built on the land were on Pownall Avenue and the first builder was J. Andrews. Northcote Road was built in the early 1960s.

*Clarke's Farm* – Both sides of Bramhall Lane South near Bramall Hall extending south to Damery Road and adjoining Peter Pownall's land. The farm barn was on the site of the flats at corner of Carrwood Road and Bramhall Lane South. Randle Clarke was there in 1717, Matthew Clarke is on the 1842 tithe map and Henry and Mary Clarke, brother and sister, continued the farm until 1914. The farmhouse was demolished about 1920. The roundabout was built in the 1960s

*Lodge Farm* – or White Lodge Farm, overlooked Bramhall Green on east side of Bramhall Lane South

- given to Samuel Hunt, husband of Anne, natural daughter of William Davenport X in 1806,
- later farmed by the Garner family (incl. William Garner)
- 66 acres sold in 1922 and Broadway and other nearby roads were built

*Grange Farm* – west side of Bramhall Lane South north of the Park

*Yew Tree Farm* – on Bramhall Lane south of Woodsmoor Lane

- tenanted by William Chatterton in the 1870s
- farmhouse demolished in 1901 to build the road bridge over the Midland Railway line (1902-1968)

*Wallbank Farm* – near the top of Bridge Lane. A Davenport jointure house

*Pepper Street Farm* - off Bramhall Moor Lane. c70 acres.

- Farmed by the Bradleys until he shot his wife and children.  
Taken over by Harry Moss and his wife, Jean (née Gresty of Pownall Farm). Owned by Mirrlees Bicton Day.

*New House Farm* – east of Bramhall Lane south of Midland Railway line

*Dairyground and Further Dairyground* – east of Bramhall Lane South

*Ladythorn* – just north of L&NW Railway Macclesfield branch

*Damery Farm* – by Damery Road

*Worthington Farm* – by A555

*Woodend Farm* – on east side of Woodford Road

### **Other notable buildings**

*Bramall Hall and Park* – owned by the Davenport family for 500 years until 1877 when it was sold to the Freeholders Company Ltd. of Manchester, a speculative building company. They sold plots of 6 acres but purchasers were slow to buy. The Hall was purchased in 1883 by Charles Henry Nevill, cotton baron, who restored and altered the Hall and Park. On his death his adopted son, Tom Nevill, sold the Hall to J.H.Davis in 1925 and on his death it was purchased by Hazel Grove & Bramhall UDC in 1935 for £10,000. There had been a possibility that it would be bought by Americans and shipped to the USA.

*There was a hotel* on the corner of Ladybrook Road and Bramhall Park Road owned by the Staverdales where Peter Scott, the naturalist, was a frequent visitor.

*Ridgeway's Tenement*, formerly Huxley's Tenement – now called "Old Timbers", a 17<sup>th</sup> century farmhouse on Robins Lane

*Cash's Smithy* – on the site of Barclay's Bank, Woodford Road. The Cash family owned a row of thatched cottages with long gardens at the corner of Woodford Road and Ack Lane. James Cash was there in 1841, his son Thomas in 1871 and his son, John in 1901. The last smith was Leslie Jackson who retired in 1962.

*Hillbrook Grange* – Ack Lane, owned by Sir Thomas Rowbotham (engineer and twice Mayor of Stockport). His daughter, Florence MA JP, gave the house to be used as a home for the elderly. Originally owned by the Carr family and known as High Bank House, followed by Thomas Addyman in about 1895. Thomas gifted Carr Wood to Bramhall.

*Pownall Hall* – east side of Bramhall Lane South opposite Robins Lane, owned by Peter Pownall of Pownall Farm. Demolished in 1968. Sunrise Residential Home is now on the site

*Pownall Green Cottages* – east side of Bramhall Lane South, possibly restored by William Brocklehurst in 1895 (son of John Brocklehurst of Macclesfield, largest silk cloth manufacturer in England, son-in-law of Peter Pownall)

*Benja Fold* – west side of Bramhall Lane South, opposite present day railway station. The three cottages are still occupied. The name is thought to have come from Benjamin Birchenough who was the owner in the mid 1700s. “Fold” means a number of closely packed cottages fenced round for safety. It was later owned by Peter Pownall who was a Unitarian and refused the Methodists’ request to use his barn as a chapel. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century Sir Thomas Rowbotham bought the Fold to save it from demolition.

*Lumb Cottage* – Lumb Lane, originally a loom house beside Lumb Farm. Parts date from 1600. Still occupied.

*Silk weavers’ cottages* – 11 cottages on Moss Lane

*Victoria Hotel* – first hotel was built pre-1857 (James Hough, landlord). Second hotel was built in 1905 ((James Cottrill, landlord), demolished in 1967 to build the shopping precinct. Third hotel was built slightly further along Ack Lane

*Police Cottage* – Pownall Green. The village constabulary was moved into this cottage from Bramhall Green in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The house is still standing

*Semi-detached cottages (one named Primrose Cottage)* – north side of Kitts Moss Lane. Home of the Rhodes family with several generations of postmasters/mistresses in Bramhall; the first was Peter Rhodes with Benjamin Rhodes as the postman. Peter’s daughter, Miriam, succeeded him, followed by Cephas who built a new sub Post Office and sorting office in Maple Road

*Village Hall* – built in 1894, on south side of Ack Lane, just past present-day Denham Drive

*There were several large houses on Bramhall Park Road and Carrwood Road in 1910* – The Mount, Clysbarton, Woodroyd. The Park extended as far as Ladybrook Road and Arden Grange and The Woodlands stood in this part of the Park

## **Miscellaneous**

The lack of pubs in Bramhall is possibly a reflection of the restraining influence of the Davenports who were the largest landowners in the district. The earliest pubs were the Leg of Mutton on Bramhall Green and the Lamb Inn on the edge of the manor on the Woodford boundary. The Victoria Hotel and the Jolly Sailor, Davenport, were only established in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. This sparsity compares with Hazel Grove which had at least 20 public houses due to the coach routes and the demands of industrial workers and navvies.

A horse-drawn fire engine was kept in a shed on Lumb Lane and Mr Pridgeon, the ironmonger, lent one of his horses if they were free at the time of a fire. The volunteer firemen in 1900 included John Corrie, Harry Leah, Walter Seed and Mr Whitehead.

## Development timeline

- 1845 - Bramhall Station opened on the Macclesfield branch of the Manchester & Birmingham Railway encouraging Manchester business men to commute from Bramhall
- 1856 – Baptist Chapel built on west side of Woodford Road and enlarged in 1888. Also known as the “Lamb” Chapel after the Lamb Inn on the opposite side of the road. Built on manor boundary because the Davenports were not in favour of non-conformist chapels.
- 1871 – first Methodist Chapel said to have been built with the help of Sir Thomas Rowbotham however he was 19 years old in 1871, but he may have helped with the extension. Later became the Sunday school
- 1877 – 1918 acres of the Bramhall Estate, including Bramall Hall, was sold to the Freeholders Company Ltd., a new speculative building company in Manchester, which planned to build villas for the new wealthy businessmen from Manchester
- Freeholders laid the first roads through the Park – Bramhall Park Road (extension of Tenement Lane) and Carrwood Road (“the new road”)
  - development was slow as there was little interest from prospective purchasers due to the remoteness and lack of amenities
- 1877 – Bramhall Board School was built by William Adkinson (following 1870 Education Act’s grants for new schools so that all children could go to school). It started with 19 pupils and the first headmaster was Robert Buckley. It was demolished in 1996 and the site is now School Mews
- ?1870s - “Bramhall Villas” built. A row of 3 tall houses which were the first houses built on this part of Bramhall Lane South, on the west side
- ?1870s – Ford’s Lane Smithy opened by James Ford on corner of Ford’s Lane and Moss Lane.
- 1890s – 2 rows of 4 houses built along each side of Bramhall Lane South in the centre of the village. These were converted into shops in the 1900s. One on the west side was named Albert Terrace after the late Prince Consort (1894) (Essentials, Britannia BS). The others were also connected to Queen Victoria - Windsor, Osborne and Balmoral
- 1884 – Evangelical Church built on Ford’s Lane by John Porter, later bought by the congregation. His two daughters ran the Sunday School. Now used as the church hall.
- 1886 – Bramhall Football Club formed by Dr WE Bond, the first village doctor. Played at Lumb Farm. Joe Ford and A. Corrie were team members around 1900.
- 1886 – Bramhall Cricket club formed. Played on a field beside the present-day Queensgate.

- 1888 – Meeting in Mr TA Addyman's house, Hillbrook Grange, setting up the Bramhall and Woodford Horticultural Society with Charles Nevill as president and TA Addyman as chairman, to organise an annual Bramhall Show.
- 1889 – First Bramhall Show held in a tent in a field off Ack Lane.
- 1889 – "Wood Lea" built for John Galloway on land surrounding Potts's Cottage on the north side of Ack Lane between Hillbrook Grange and Robins Lane opposite Kitts Moss Lane
- 1890 – Mission Church built (Anglican)
- 1893 – the block which is now shops (RBS, pharmacy etc.) north of Lumb Lane on Bramhall Lane South, built by William Adkinson. On the corner was the post office run by Peter Rhodes in the front room of his cottage, also selling stationery, flowers, crockery. Next door was Corrie's the greengrocer.
- c1890s – 4 pairs of semi-detached houses built on the east side of Woodford Road (on 1896 OS map)
- 1894 – Bramall Park Golf Club formed. Rented Mari Field (corner of Park Rd. and Ravenoak Rd.) for £30 per year – 9 holes. The first round was played within five weeks of the first meeting forming the club held at Benjamin Ashwell's house.
- 1896 – 10 (5 pairs of semi-detached) houses built on Bramhall Lane South, south of Ladythorn Road. All built within a short period after the sale of the land
- Between 1890 and 1910 – Lees Rd, Ogden Rd. and Thorn Road (Syddal) developed
- Between 1896 and 1910 – houses built on both sides of Bramhall Lane South from Carrwood Road to village centre except between station and Lumb Lane
- c1898/1900 – Row of 16 tall houses known as the "Twelve Apostles" built on the east side of Woodford Road
- 1901 – "Convamore" built for John Pettigrew at the corner of Ack Lane and Convamore Road. He was a yarn agent (cotton) and a British Guianian resident. Several other houses in the same row.
- 1900s – houses built along southern end of Bramhall Lane South
- 1903 – Bramall Park Golf Club leased a further 19 acres and the course was extended in 1905. New clubhouse built on Ravenoak Rd. in 1910
- 1904 – shops built on south side of junction of Bramhall Lane South/Woodford Road/Ack Lane (now Corry's, Timpsons etc)
- 1904 – houses built in Convamore Road
- 1904 – Methodist Chapel built by William Adkinson

- 1904 – Congregational Church built (corner of Robins Lane/Bramhall Lane South), replaced early 1990s
- 1905 – Bramhall Golf Club opened with 9 holes. Founder was Mr. Ramsdale
- 1907 – Bramhall Lane Lawn Tennis Club formed with 28 members and two grass courts in a field off Bramhall Lane. The name became official in 1924.
- 1910 – St. Michael's and All Angels Anglican Church built to replace the Mission Church
- c1910 – Grange Farm sold for development and houses built around Grange Road and Midland Road
- 1912 – trees on south side of Ack Lane felled for building
- c1905-1920s – shops beside present day Boots on Bramhall Lane South built
- 1914 – Bramhall Golf Club was extended to 18 holes and a new clubhouse built
- post 1918 – Bramall Park Golf Club purchased 99 acres and designed a new 18 hole course.
- c1920 – Clarke's Farm sold for development
- 1920s – Syddal Farmhouse sold for development of Syddal Road
- 1922 - Lodge Farm sold (66 acres) and Broadway and surrounding roads laid and developed
- 1923 – present day clubhouse for Bramall Park Golf Club built
- 1924 – Houses built in Convamore Road adjoining John Pettigrew's "croft"
- 1926 – Bramhall Park Tennis Club founded by Walter Warren Stansby
- 1927 – Bramhall Lane Lawn Tennis Club moved to present-day site.
- 1928 – Congregational Church hall built as a "temporary structure" but not demolished until 1996
- c1930 – Bramhall Swimming Pool built by Walter Warren Stansby on Bramhall Park Road adjacent to the Bramhall Park Tennis Club. He lived in a house on a hill overlooking the site. The pool was added to over the years but the site was sold in 1971 to extend the tennis club and for housing development.
- 1930 - Houses built in Queensgate by G.Lorrie & Son Ltd.
- 1930s – Chip Hill Farm and Tan Pits Farm sold for housing development (?Glendene Ave., Ogden Rd., Moss Lane)
- 1930s – Thornway, Elmsway, Larchway, Birchway houses built



- 1930s – Corrie's the greengrocers expanded by adding two neighbouring houses.  
Business later taken over by another poulterer and greengrocer, Cyril Swindells
- 1935 – Tudor Cinema opened (demolished 1961)
- 1938 – Ladybrook Hotel built on Fir Road
- c1939 – Syddal House demolished
- 1950s – housing development on Whitehaven Rd., Dalston Ave. ? remains of Chip Hill Farm land
- 1946-1960 – rapid development of Kitts Moss, Ridge Park, West Park, further Moss Lane, Lumb Lane, Meadway, Ridgmont, Syddal Park, Brookdale, St. Michael's, Carrwood
- 1953 – new post office and sorting office opened by Cephas Rhodes in Maple Road. He retired in 1962, aged 75.
- 1950s – Parkside (Little Switzerland) estate built for Manchester overspill
- 1960s/70s – Pownall Farm land sold for development of the Dairyground estate
- 1963 – St. Michael's and All Angels Church extension and tower completed
- 1960/65/70 – Ashley Drive estate developed
- 1960s/early70s – "Little Australia" and New House Farm estates built
- Late 1960s – development of Hursthead estate by George Wimpey on Hursthead Farm land (Cheadle Hulme)
- c1980 – Remainder of Hardy's Farm, Ack Lane, sold for housing development
- 1987 – Bramall Park Golf Club sold spare land beside Robins Lane for housing development (Forbes Park)

## **Sources**

Bygone Bramhall. Eveline Barbara Dean, 1980, updated by T.D.W.Reid, Stockport Libraries, 2000

Images of England – Hazel Grove and Bramhall. Compiled by Heather Coutie, 1997.

Bramhall and Bramall Hall 1910-11. Stockport Heritage Map No. 7 (based on Ordnance Survey 6in maps of 1910 and 1911.

Looking backward – old Bramhall. Alexander Corrie, 1879-1968.

Tithe Map of Bramhall, 1842

Cheshire O.S. Maps, 1910 and 1911

Jean Moss (née Gresty), personal communication

*Janet McMurray, June 2010, updated February 2011/April 2012*