

**ONE FAMILY, FOUR GENERATIONS, ONE HUNDRED YEARS AS  
FARMERS IN A LINCOLNSHIRE VILLAGE**

***THE STORY OF THE BRUMPTONS OF GRASBY IN THE C19<sup>TH</sup> & EARLY  
C20<sup>TH</sup>***



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### ***Foreword***

*The tracing of family histories through parish records, the census, county records, libraries, newspaper archives and the like is now one of the most popular pastimes worldwide. However, to be able to study a family history by having access also to a substantial family*

archive, particularly when the family concerned would have been regarded in the C19<sup>th</sup> as having very modest standing in the community (below that of the professions, clergy, gentlemen farmers and large scale landowners, who often left written records) presents a remarkable and rare opportunity.

Of greatest interest from the family archive for this period of Grasby's history are: fifteen note or pocket books (1844 -1907) in which the business dealings of three members of the family are recorded in great detail; two Caistor Grammar School exercise books; a Lincoln & Lindsey Banking Company account book (1889-1898); correspondence (in the form of seventy letters) from two landlords and a land agent (1882-1906); several tenancy, land purchase & mortgage agreements; a valuation of live and dead farming stock and tenant rights (1899); family wills; a statement of account detailing the disposal of a family estate (1899); a bond of indemnity (1893); and many photographs from the late C19<sup>th</sup> and early C20<sup>th</sup>. These documents first came to light when a large wooden chest was opened following the death, in April 1970, of Marion Urry Brumpton, daughter of William Thomas Brumpton (1872-1947).

Although never quite rising to the status of "yeomen farmers", the Brumptons of Grasby were clearly well-educated small-scale land owners and tenant farmers, as well as successful entrepreneurs. Their relatively high level of education almost certainly set them apart from their peers and their written records provide, therefore, a rare and detailed insight into the day to day economic realities for small-scale farmers and dealers living in a parish on the western edge of the Wolds in northern Lincolnshire during the C19<sup>th</sup>.

Drawing on all the evidence this study aims to paint as vivid a picture as is possible of the lives of four generations of one family during the C19<sup>th</sup> in Grasby. This will include not just an in-depth analysis of the array of facts and figures available relating to purchases, sales, costs, expenses, wages, rents etc. but also the story behind the extended family; links with the village and wider community; their interests, visits to other parts of the country and even family scandals.

**Dick Pike 2020**



**Examples of a few of the documents held in the family archive**

## **PART ONE**

### **A SHORT HISTORY OF GRASBY**

#### **Early History**

Nothing specific appears to be known of Grasby in the prehistoric or Romano-British periods, although some fragments of Roman pottery were found in the parish in 1962, exposed by deep ploughing. According to local detectorists Roman coins have also been found in several fields in the parish.

The present village lies on the southerly facing scarp face of the Lincolnshire Wolds. A line of similarly positioned settlements runs along the edge of this chalk scarp from Caistor to South Ferriby. A trackway, almost certainly of prehistoric date, joined these settlements and is still followed by the A1084 today between Caistor and Bigby.

The settlements along this spring line created good, viable economic units with easily worked arable land on the chalk Wolds (wold is from the Old English word "wald" or "weald", meaning high forest land), settlement sites at the springs and ample pasture and meadow in the lowland to the south.

The estates into which Anglo-Saxon England was divided were known variously as *scirs*, shires or multiple estates. These shires seem to have been taken over by the Danish colonists, somewhat reorganised and re-named wapentakes. The great estates became known as sokes in which the land (demesne) and peasants (villeins) directly controlled by the lord was known as inland, and that controlled by peasants (sokemen) was known as sokeland. Yarborough wapentake, in which Grasby lies, was very large and included another shire, based on Barnetby. The wapentake had its own court and men from Grasby would doubtless have travelled to its meetings, probably held in Melton Ross parish. Grasby lay within the very extensive *scir* based on Caistor.

Place-name experts are unable to give a convincing explanation of the meaning of Grasby, but it does seem certain to be of Scandinavian origin. The first element may possibly be from the Old Norse *grjot*, meaning gravel or stones. The suffix is the Old Danish *by*, a farmstead or village. Many other Scandinavian names occur throughout the parish – in particular '-gate'; from the Norse *gata*, a way, path or street.

*Grosbei* appears twice in the Domesday Book of 1086; *Grosbi* and *Grossebi* both once. *Grossebi* appears in the Lindsey Survey of c.1115 and then later *Gressebi*, *Gresby*, *Griseby*, *Grisby* and *Grassebi* appear numerous times.

In the early C12<sup>th</sup> Stephen Le Grosse, Earl of Albermarle (and Yorkshire) appears to have been the overlord of Grasby, but Osbert the Priest who, having served Henry I as sheriff, had the under-tenancy of lands which included Grasby. When he died his sons Richard and William Torniant attempted to hold onto these lands by paying Henry money (the

sons of priests couldn't legally inherit). Although this was agreed, they failed to come up with the sureties required and Stephen redeemed the lands.

William Le Grosse succeeded his father, Stephen, but in 1142 he gave the village (with other lands, including Audelby) to Thornton Priory. In 1156 he also gave the "Church of Grosseby and tithes of the demesne to the Canons of Thornton Priory, when first founded". Whether this means when Grasby Church or the Priory was first founded is unclear, but the Priory was founded in 1139, by William, and raised to the status of Abbey in 1148. A church existed in Grasby before this, but whether or not being "given" to the Priory changed its status is not known. William was buried at Thornton Abbey in 1179. Although the title was re-created in 1670, this particular family line of Earls died out in 1439.

The layout of today's village suggests from the distribution of older properties that over time a number of separate or small groups of households have been amalgamated to form a single village by infilling. This historic open nature of the settlement perhaps explains its long standing and complex tenurial pattern.

### ***Medieval Period***

The National Mapping Programme 1992-96, undertaken by the Royal Commission of Monuments in England, has revealed, through the examination of aerial photographs, earthworks of medieval ridge & furrow in three locations in the parish – to the west, south and east of the village. The latter was identified again in 2014 in the field immediately to the east of the properties in Front Street. The alignment in each case is on a south west/north east axis.

The population of Grasby appears to have been relatively stable during medieval times. The axis of the village ran east/west along the line of the scarp with a throughway to Clixby in one direction and Searby in the other, with streets running up and down the scarp. A curve on the east/west street and its intermittent wide sections, particularly where the present Clixby Lane joins Front Street, may indicate a former open green area.

The present Church dates back to the C13<sup>th</sup> and would have been the focus of the local community as the most common and best attended meeting place of the entire parish population. Furthermore, the seating arrangements would have reflected the village hierarchy.

According to Joan Thirsk (1957), Lincolnshire is a county with a deeply rooted tradition of peasant farming and even in the times of the Domesday Survey its population included an

unusually high proportion of free peasants, many communities of whom survived through to the C19<sup>th</sup>

The unanswerable question is did Grasby, at least before the Black Death (1348-50), have a fully-fledged open-field system of agriculture? According to Joan Thirsk (1964) such a system comprised four essential elements: i) the arable and meadow land is divided into strips among its cultivators, each of whom may occupy a number of strips scattered about the open-fields; ii) both arable and meadow are thrown open for common pasturing by the stock of the commoners after harvest and in the fallow seasons, which necessitates some rules about cropping are observed so that spring and winter-sown crops may be grown in separate fields or furlongs; iii) there is common pasturage and waste, where cultivators of strips enjoy the right to graze stock and gather other commodities such as wood and peat; and iv) the ordering of these activities is regulated by an assembly of cultivators – the manorial court or, when more than one manor was present, a village meeting.

There is no evidence remaining of a medieval manor house in the village, although if one ever existed, all trace of it could have vanished. "Manor Farm", a modern house today and a modest sized dairy farm in the late C19<sup>th</sup>, suggests the possible site of a manor house in the past. The name and its site, adjacent to the church, are in its favour; the fact that it is not marked as such on even the earliest OS maps is against the possibility, unless the name persisted long after the manor had disappeared. The evidence above suggests that Grasby was only ever a small part (appurtenance) of large estates that changed hands according to the wishes of the King and was taken away as easily as it awarded to those who gained and lost favour, or simply died. It appears that no family of note ever resided in the village during this period.

### ***1500 to 1800***

Documentary evidence confirms that Grasby in the middle of the C17<sup>th</sup> was still part of the manor or soke of Caistor. How much if any of the parish was demesne land belonging to a lord of the manor resident in Caistor or elsewhere is unknown. What is clear is that the village had two open-fields, largely unenclosed until the C17<sup>th</sup>, which appear to have been divided into the East and West low fields below the scarp (as evidenced by C17<sup>th</sup> enclosure documentation) and fields on the Wold land which remained unenclosed until the C19<sup>th</sup>. Commoners also had access to grazing on Caistor Moor, common land which also remained unenclosed until the C19<sup>th</sup> (this common land was shared with Searby-cum-Owmbly, Clixby, North Kelsey, South Kelsey and Caistor and there must, therefore, have been some level of co-operation between these villages and oversight of the way in which the common was used). What is unknown is whether any of the Wold land originally

constituted waste or furze, or was ploughed and then turned into a sheep walk, before being brought under the plough again at a later date.

There is a little more documentary evidence of life in Grasby from the C16<sup>th</sup> onwards. Probate inventories from the 1500s suggest villages in the northern Wolds were on the whole small, numbering as few as 12 families and probably not exceeding 35. If, as is believed, the population of Grasby changed little between 1500 and 1800, with around 150 inhabitants, the village would appear to fit the upper range of this pattern. This accords with the 1563 Diocesan Return. In this year the Privy Council required from each diocesan bishop a return of the parishes and hamlets of each diocese, with the number of families resident therein. The return for Grasby, in the Deanery of Yarborough, recorded 28 households. The accuracy of this return may be questionable, for instance neither Searby nor the hamlet of Owmbly are included in the return. On the other hand, some fascinating comparative information is revealed. Bigby had 22 households, Bonby 35, Worlaby 48, and Barnetby 30, each of which is a scarp line settlement. "Clixby Chapel", apparently part of Caistor town, interestingly had 33 households, 5 more than Grasby at the time. Somerby, however, had only 5.

The Wolds also had a smaller proportion of waged labourers than the rest of the county (28%) and there were rare examples of extreme wealth. The absence of congested populations and an abundance of grazing land enabled the middling peasant to get a better living in the C16<sup>th</sup> than the peasants of clay and fen lands. Farms on the Wolds were relatively large, perhaps on average 50 acres. The scarp line villages such as Grasby, partly on the Wolds and partly in the Ancholme Valley, may have had smaller farms. There is no way of knowing how the land in Grasby was divided but, with 28 families, the average farm size within the parish would have been 38 acres.

The aristocracy was thin on the ground in Lincolnshire and in Lindsey there was a low proportion of rich tax payers, who were for the most part gentry or yeomen. The nearest families of note to Grasby would have been the Tyrwhits of Kettleby, close to Bigby, and the Ayscoughs of South Kelsey and, somewhat later, the Rossiter family from Somerby who first acquired the status of gentry in the C16<sup>th</sup>. There would have been sharp differences, nevertheless, between the relatively rich gentry and yeomen farmers and the poor in small villages.

The mainstay of husbandry on the Wolds during these times was sheep. Large tracts of waste land were used as sheep walks, at night the flocks were folded on arable fields for the sake of their manure. Grasby had over 566 acres of Wold and scarp land, over half the area of the parish. Sheep were bred for the fine wool in demand by Yorkshire and

East Anglian Clothiers. The size of an average flock on the Wolds in the C16<sup>th</sup> was 34 sheep, the highest in the county other than the eastern marshland. Yeomen farmers had flocks of perhaps as many as 200-400.

On average farms had only 9 cattle, 58% for dairy and breeding, 42% for draught and meat. Pigs were numerous, on average 6 per farmer. Barley and pulses made up 75% of the crops, with only 10% wheat and 4% rye. Barley was sold to maltsters and brewers from outside the shire, both from London and Yorkshire. Pulses were used largely as winter feed for livestock. Other crops grown were oats, hemp and flax. The latter two were used to make, in particular, sackcloth and rope. Ley farming was practised in the open fields to help maintain soil fertility, with some evidence of the use of selected grasses rather than letting the land simply "fall into grass".

Sheep and barley maintained their pre-eminence until the arrival of the turnip in the early C18<sup>th</sup>. There were changes being made, however, chief of which was enclosure. In all probability this was a piecemeal process and the dominant motive until the mid-C17<sup>th</sup> was to increase pasture land for sheep. The full report of the Enclosure Commission of 1607 for Lincolnshire identified 13,500 acres of enclosures and a number of "great depopulations", the closest to Grasby being Searby which, clearly, did not become a classic "deserted village". That said, there were two neighbouring settlements to Grasby, Audleby and Fonaby, which are described today as deserted medieval villages, Clixby was definitely depopulated and by 1600 it is said that much of Caistor's open-fields had been turned over to pasture for sheep. In addition, Richard Rossiter sought permission to demolish the steeple and chancel of Somerby Church in 1603 on the grounds of cost of upkeep and the fact that the church, built for 100s, now had a congregation fewer than 50.



### *North Lincolnshire 1607*

It was during the C15<sup>th</sup> that what had previously been servile tenure was transformed into leasehold and copyhold and much freehold came into the hands of former villeins in an unusually active land market. Grasby, as part of the manor and soke of Caistor, was almost certainly returned to the Crown following, in the C16<sup>th</sup>, the Dissolution of the Monasteries and change in status of Thornton Abbey to Thornton College, a secular college for the training of priests for the new church. The college, however, did not survive for long and closed for good in 1547. How much of and to whom its lands, including Grasby, were sold is unclear, but it is known that Sir Robert Tyrwhitt was granted or bought at least some of the Abbey's lands and it would have made sense to secure land in such places as Grasby which were adjacent to Kettleby Manor. Monastic lands,

however, were also bought up, through land agents, by a new generation of ambitious families without direct links to the Crown and even by wealthy yeomen. The age of the English property owner was well underway.

Inventories for deceased residents of Grasby provide some information about farming in the village during the C17<sup>th</sup>. There were large and small scale farmers and it would be reasonable to assume that the smallholders provided some of the labour required on the larger farms. The main crops appeared to have been barley, rye, lentils (pulses), hemp and hay. Wheat and oats are mentioned only rarely. Every inventory appears to include quern stones for grinding corn (rye was almost certainly used to make bread). Milk and cheese were clearly important parts of the villagers' diet. Both horses and oxen were kept as draught animals, it is possible that horses were already being used in preference to oxen for ploughing the lighter soils. Sheep were kept in significant numbers. Cattle, pigs, geese and other poultry were also of importance. There has been no evidence to date of village farmers owning their own land at this time.

As indicated above, at the time of the dissolution of the monasteries in the early C16<sup>th</sup>, rectories and tithes belonging to the dissolved houses were vested in the Crown, and most were subsequently sold to laymen. Clearly there were lay impropiators in Grasby in both the C18<sup>th</sup> and C19<sup>th</sup>. One assumes that the rectors of Grasby were not resident incumbents or bishops and that the vicar was allotted only a proportion of the revenues of the benefice.

Also, as previously mentioned, it would appear that Grasby had no lord of the manor during this period, but came under the manor of Caistor (documents referring to land rental agreements in Grasby dated 1636 and 1735 state that Grasby is part of the manor or soke of Caistor). In the absence of a lord of the manor in the village it is certain that the vicar would have assumed this role in the community.

It is clear that, apart from home closes (the small areas of land around homes), Grasby had two large cultivated open-fields throughout this period.

An enclosure agreement dated August 10<sup>th</sup> 1649 lists seven people who agree the enclosure of their lands dispersed in the "West low field of Grasby". In total 93 acres were enclosed and divided into 10 plots, the largest two of which together comprised 55.5 acres belonged to "Edward Rosseter esq. of Somerby". Other owners included the vicar, several "gents" and yeoman farmers. Together these formed part of what are described as "ancient enclosures" in later documentation relating to the C19<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary Enclosures. The classic explanation for the early enclosures of the C14<sup>th</sup> to C17<sup>th</sup> was that wealthy landowners converted arable land to pasture for sheep, with legal support from

the Statute of Merton of 1235. As a result many villages were depopulated and several hundred seem to have disappeared. This model does not appear to fit Grasby in that the village seems always to have held its own and was never depopulated. It is possible that most of the land was already owned by a caucus of gentlemen and yeomen farmers who not only enclosed land but also consolidated the strips they owned or bought up from other freeholders.

By the C17<sup>th</sup> there had been a relative fall in wool prices and rising prices for other arable produce. This form of enclosure would establish more efficient and profitable farm units of arable production and new husbandry techniques. The same amount of labour would have been required, hence no depopulation of the village, but this probably involved peasants who had lost their tenancies or had sold up to "engrossing landlords". This also led to the emergence of an "elite" peasant class of tenant farmers paying higher rents, but at the same time making greater profits. These changes would have gradually undermined the medieval machinery for collective determination as one farmer could make his own decisions on the annual programme of planting etc.

What is clear is that Grasby's "ancient inclosures" were far greater in extent (nearly 50% of the parish) than those in neighbouring villages before the parliamentary enclosures where they comprised, for the most part, only small home closes in and around the village. Nearly all the land, however, in these neighbouring parishes was already owned by just a few large scale landowners.

By the end of the C18<sup>th</sup> 22 people still had sufficient claim to lands, within the 500 acres of homesteads and already enclosed land, to be awarded additional land in the proposed parliamentary enclosures of the remaining open-fields and common land from 1801. Admittedly, three landowners (the lord of the manor, the impropiator and the vicar) were awarded 91% of the 521 acres in the open fields, which is an indication of the proportion of the land they had title to which had been previously enclosed in the parish, but nearly 10% of the land was already in the ownership of a further 19 people, which in turn is an indication of the open nature of the parish.

By the C18<sup>th</sup>, therefore, Grasby comprised about 500 acres of homesteads and enclosed fields, 566 acres of open fields and access to 2132 acres of common land on Caistor Moor. It is likely that very little, if any, building had taken place far from the centre of the village, with none, other than of the most temporary nature, in the open fields on the Wolds or on the common land of Caistor Moor.

Whether the enclosed fields were largely pasture and used to graze the cattle (as well as make hay for winter feed) is not known, but the 1762 Terrier suggests strongly that some

cattle were kept only in enclosed fields (were these part of separate, better managed, herds kept by gentlemen or yeomen farmers compared with the cows belonging to the poorer peasant farmers which were grazed on the common?).

In his book *"General View of Agriculture of the County of Lincolnshire"*, published in 1813, Arthur Young makes specific reference to Caistor Moor and to Grassby Open Field. Neither observation was complimentary. His comment on the open fields was:

*"In riding over Grassby Open Field, and observing miserable crops, and horrible management, I inquired the rent; 9s or 10s. The land is good, and therefore such beggardly doings are terrible; the farms are small".*

On Caistor Moor he writes:

*"To the west of Caistor there is a bad moor for some miles extent, which was reported to me so bad as not worth cultivating: on examining it I found it miserably pared for fuel: it is not good; but would pay well for enclosing and cultivating. It belongs to Sereby, Grasby, Clixby, Audleby, Hundon and Caistor; the soil is a peaty sand, on hungry reddish sandstone".*

One can assume that "high farming" was yet to come to Grasby and that the traditional method of fallowing on one of the open fields, as opposed to the new forms of crop rotation involving the extensive use of turnips, was still the normal practice.

According to Joan Thirsk, *"At Grasby in 1801 it (i.e. fallowing) was still regarded as inevitable since the open-field land was in a state of exhaustion"*.

A traditional system on open fields would have been fallow, wheat and beans or manured fallow, barley and beans. What is unknown was the condition of the 500 or so acres of "ancient inclosures" at the time compared with the open fields and common land. Also, whether these enclosed fields were largely pasture or arable land and, if the latter, was any form of crop rotation practised or, at least, "ley farming" whereby grass was put down for several years at a time to rest the soil from cropping? Equally, although owned by relatively few landowners, were these ancient enclosures farmed largely by tenant farmers and, if so, were they for the most part large or small scale farmers?

If, by this time i.e. the late C17<sup>th</sup> and C18<sup>th</sup> only the scarp and Wold land remained as open-fields (the ridge and furrow still visible near to the village would have been within enclosed fields) what is not known is whether they were divided into many narrow strips or much larger blocks. There is no way of knowing whether, in the early period of the village's history, the Wold land remained waste and the two original ancient open-fields

were confined to land either side of the village below the edge of the scarp, with the Wold land being brought under the plough at a later time. What is intriguing is that both Young and Thirsk describe the poor condition of the open fields around the end of the C18<sup>th</sup>, and yet the village was well ahead of its neighbouring parishes in the amount of land already enclosed some, if not most of which, for at least 150 years. One would suspect that only forward looking landowners and farmers would have gone to the trouble and expense of enclosing this land and that their farming practices would have been advanced for the time.

According to Levy, writing at the beginning of the C20<sup>th</sup>, small holders in the second half of the C18<sup>th</sup> never sold corn as there was seldom sufficient to cover their own demand for bread. Pigs and cows were also to supply their own tables with meat and milk. Whatever else needed would come from wages working for farms outside their own holdings. Livestock or its products provided the only surplus to sell. He quotes Arthur Young's 1772 formula *"12 acre plot to provide wheat – bread corn for the year; surplus – dairy produce; 1 acre barley; sow's annual litter, average 10, 8 sold; 2 acres turnips or pease; poultry reared, including geese"* as the minimum for self-sufficiency. *"Smallholders excel in producing beef and mutton, pigs and poultry, fruit and veg., eggs, butter and milk. The wife of the small farmer would go to market with a basket of butter, pork or poultry on her arm"*. It was considered at the time that only small holders would give the time and care needed for livestock. Wives and daughters played a vital role in taking goods to market, and to customers' houses. Often women took sole responsibility for poultry.

Although labourers' wages rose significantly during the C18<sup>th</sup>, a series of poor harvests 1765-1791, a growing population, even worse harvests during the Napoleonic wars (1792-1813), pushed up corn prices even higher. *"The effect on the mass of people was terrible, with prices rising at 130% compared with 60% for wages"* (Levy). This led to the introduction of the *"allowance system"* by which each parish made up the shortfall of a wage based on the price of bread, which was reflected in an enormous increase in the Poor Rate 1801-1811.

Even small farmers were ploughing up pasture to grow wheat with its high price during this period. Often little thought was given to the future fertility of the land, much of which was unsuitable for wheat production.

By 1799 Arthur Young found that a small holding had now to be 20 acres, not 12, to be self-sufficient. Most small holders who were also day labourers couldn't give up pasture to the plough as they didn't have enough time in the evenings to do the work necessary to produce corn. In these circumstances, a wife looks after cows, pigs and poultry while

her husband goes to work. Livestock, therefore, continued to hold first place in the unenclosed parishes, especially with, as in the case of Grasby, access to common land outside the open field system.

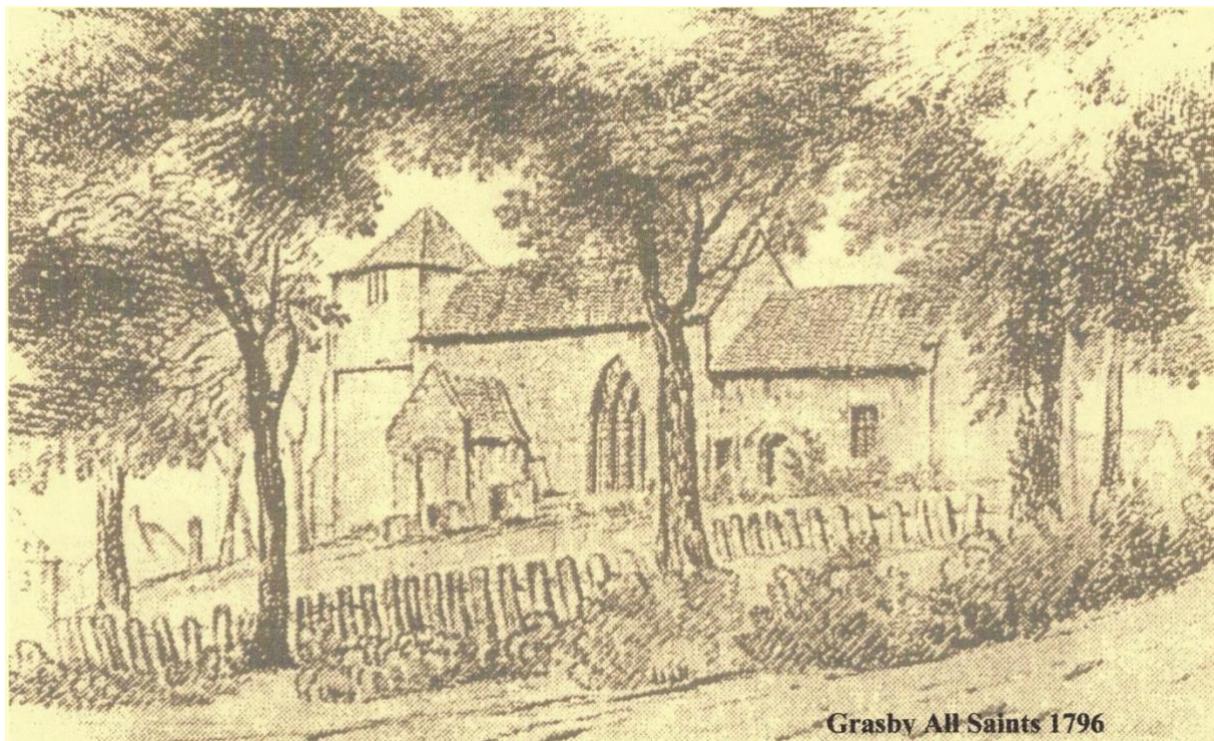
### ***An Open Village***

The population of the village was just 168 in 1801, which increased to a maximum of 433 by 1861. This increase has been attributed to the open nature of the village, unlike neighbouring parishes such as Clixby, a closed (or close) village.

The open-closed village model was conceived by C18<sup>th</sup> poor law writers and attempted to explain behaviour on the basis of the different distribution of power within different types of village. In the closed village land and property ownership was confined to perhaps a single resident member of the gentry who controlled all employment and building in the parish providing, in the case of estate villages, all the housing for its tenants e.g. Great Limber or, where there were just a very small number of, possibly absent, landlords little or no housing was provided in order to keep down the poor rate. In some cases landlords pulled down cottages and drove out inhabitants to other parishes. Labourers may well have been better off in estate villages than in open villages – employment was more likely to be continuous, wages marginally higher for the skilled men who were selected to reside close to their work and cottage accommodation was cheaper and of higher quality, often with larger gardens, than in open villages. Often single men's accommodation was provided to deter potential tenant labourers who might bring large households with them. Where, as in the case of a medieval deserted village, depopulation had already occurred it was much easier to control growth and villages such as Clixby, Audleby and Fonaby appear to fit this pattern. As was usually the case in the non-estate closed village, there was a shortage of labour and workers were compelled to walk to and from the farms from neighbouring parishes or townships, taking as much as an hour out each morning and an hour home in the evening in some cases, covering from 40 to 50 miles a week.

Grasby fits perfectly the model of an open village where property was divided between as many as, or even more than, 40 owners. How this situation evolved in Grasby may never be fully understood but, for whatever reasons (possibly, simply accidents of history), over time a range of people became freeholders of land and property in the village. Some were clearly minor gentry and yeomen, who probably owned the majority of the land in the parish, lived elsewhere and put in tenant farmers, but others were small-scale peasant farmers, artisans, shop keepers, speculative builders etc. who were of sufficient number to influence decision making in the parish and widen its economic base. Given that there were only 168 residents in 1801 it would seem that the number of people owning land and

property rose rapidly in the first part of the C19<sup>th</sup> as the population expanded. The 1826 poor rate for Grasby does demonstrate the open nature of the village by the C19<sup>th</sup>. At this time there were 82 houses (5 uninhabited), 5 shops and one public house in the village. There were 43 owners of property and land, 33 of whom were residents. Of the houses, 24 were owner occupied with 53 tenanted. There were 10 non-resident landowners, with George Tennyson and the Rev. Samuel Turner having by far the greatest acreages, 516 acres in total, with two tenant farmers (F Isles and C R Haddersey). George Tennyson also owned 5 houses. The largest resident landowners were John Burkinshaw (impropriator) and William Barnars with 145 and 83 acres respectively. Other farmers were a mixture of owner occupiers and tenants with farms ranging from about 10 to 25 acres. By this time, as well as farmers and farm labourers, there was a range of tradesmen in the village including a tailor, shopkeeper, cattle dealer, grocer, bricklayer, beer retailer, butcher, miller, potato merchant, blacksmith, fellmonger (=slaughterman) and shoe maker.



*Source: unknown*

## *The Parliamentary Enclosures in Grasby*

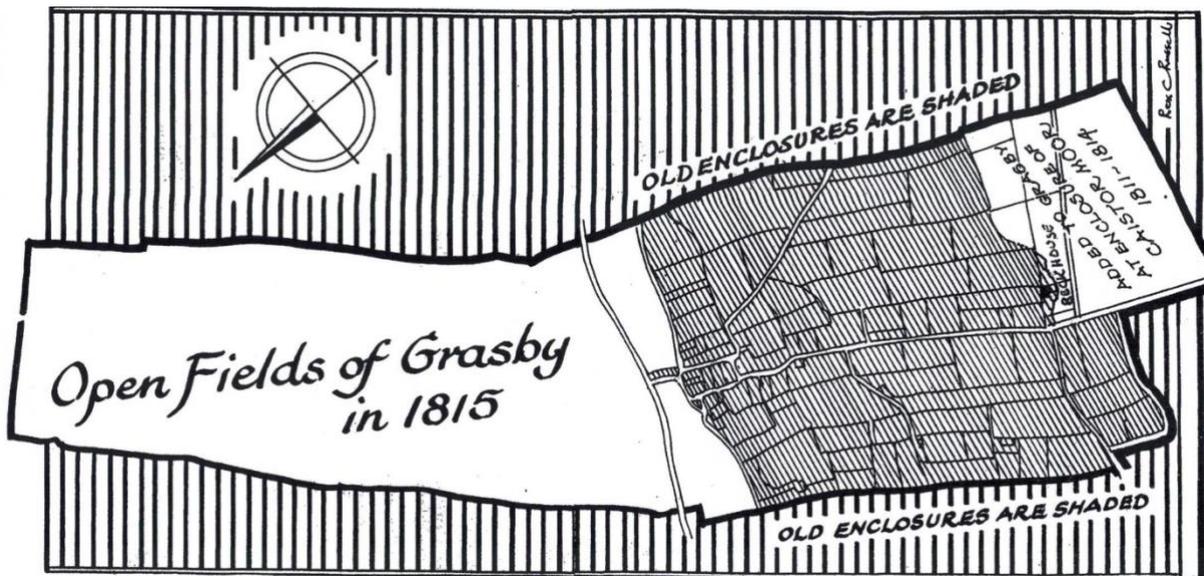
It can be assumed that, as well as replacing the system of tithes, the main driving force behind parliamentary enclosures was the rising prices of agricultural produce. These are largely attributed to the Napoleonic Wars in the early part of the C19<sup>th</sup> (1803-1815) when the price of wheat doubled. Also, the increasing population of urban areas increased the demand for agricultural produce which could now be more easily transported by canal. Following enclosure farms and farm buildings were being built on the newly acquired land, often changing the nature of the previously nucleated villages. Between about 1760 and 1870 about 7 million acres (roughly 17% of the area of England) were changed by some 4,000 acts of parliament, from common land to enclosed land. However necessary this process might or might not have been for the improvement of the agricultural economy, this was theft. Millions of people who previously had access to lands and the basis of an independent livelihood had these rights snatched away by this process.

Barley was the most important crop at this time, followed closely by wheat and oats and then by relatively small acreages of rye grass and potatoes. Turnips and rape were also grown and the proportion of grassland and pasture would have been substantial. Cattle, pigs, poultry, rabbits and horses were produced. Sheep, however, still dominated, extensively bred on the Wolds before being fattened in the lowlands and then sent to major sheep fairs at Caistor, Lincoln and Boston.

In December 1802 an entry appeared in the Stamford Mercury advertising a *"meeting to consider the expediency of applying ... to inclose open and common fields and waste ground within the said parish of Grasby .... And to discuss compensation made in lieu of tithes and other interests"*.

It was signed by John Turner. The Turners were an important "landed family" at Caistor, who it appears had acquired substantial amounts of land in Grasby before the end of the C18<sup>th</sup>. It would, therefore, have been very much in his interest to sign the proposal. He had married Mary in 1747 and they had at least three children, including John in 1747 (who died at just over a month old), Mary in 1753, who later married George Tennyson, and Samuel in 1755 who, as the Rev. Samuel Turner, inherited the estate from his father.

Before, however, the open fields of Grasby were enclosed (a long and drawn out affair) a separate Act was proposed for enclosing Caistor Moor which was successfully completed in just three years. Marmaduke Dixon, as clerk to the commissioners, was a key figure in the process.



***Open fields, old enclosures & new land awarded by enclosure of Caistor Moor (Map by Rex Russell)***

As common land, cottagers and small holders would have access to the Moor for summer grazing and fuel (wood rather than peat one would think). In addition it may have had occupants known as squatters, people who had settled on waste land, built a cottage, got together a few geese or sheep, perhaps even a horse or cow, and proceeded to cultivate the ground. The common pastures and wastelands were the mainstay of the independent poor (when they were overgrazed this was often the as a result of overstocking by the wealthiest commoners who were the people agitating for enclosure). With enclosure, these three groups would have lost their common rights. The small holders received a share of the land, but many were "overwhelmed" by the legal costs and expenses of fencing and ditching, and forced to sell up. For those who survived, the loss of stubble and fallow grazing on the open fields, as well as grazing on the common land, would have made life difficult. The effect on the cottager could be best described by saying that before enclosure the cottager was a labourer with land, after enclosure he was labourer without land. Those who owned their cottages were compensated by a small allotment, considered by most to be infinitely less valuable than a common right (a largish area of allotments was located south of Grasby village, in the fields below what is now the sewerage works, and existed well into the C20<sup>th</sup>).

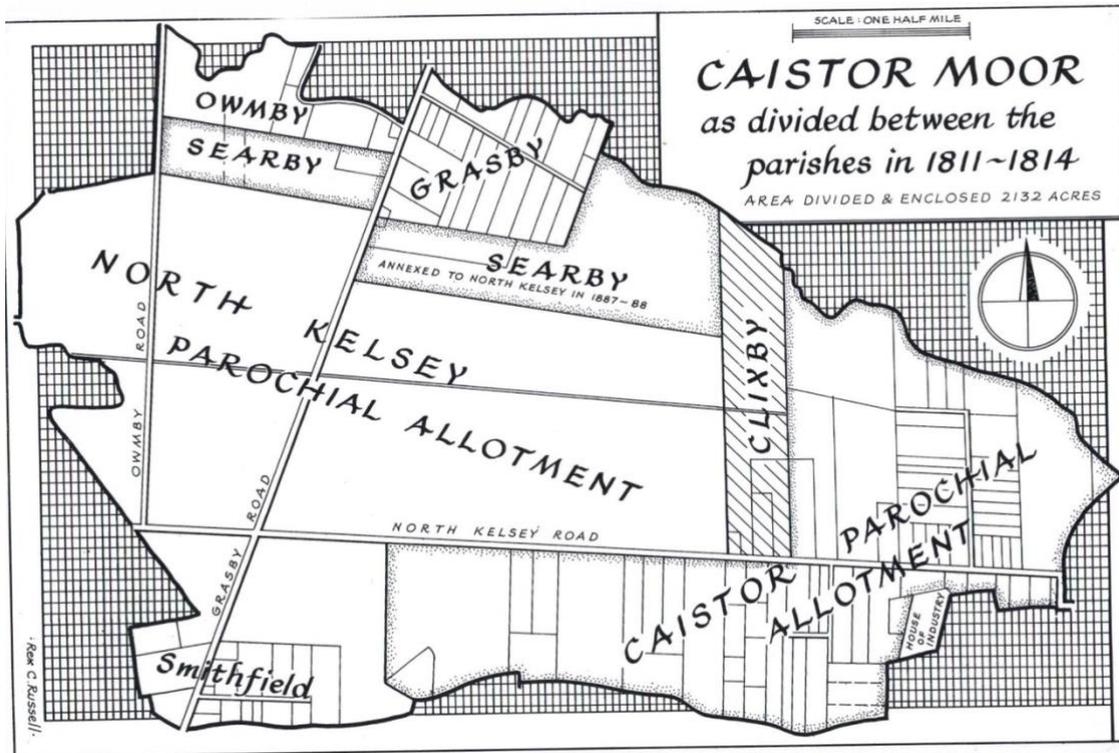
Caistor Moor (2132 acres) was enclosed between 1811 and 1814, with each of the six adjoining parishes being granted additional land (Arthur Young visited the area before enclosure commenced, sometime before he published his original comments). As part of the process, on 17<sup>th</sup> September 1813, the Commissioners posted a notice in the Stamford Mercury for "setting out a drain, commencing at the angle of North Kelsey Old Inclosure,

*adjoining the lordship of Searby, extending along a south easterly direction through part of the lordships of Searby, Owmbly, Grasby and Clixby to the lordship of Audleby*". This was to become part of the upper reaches of North Kelsey Beck, straightening and deepening the channel of the original stream which was previously the parish boundary and, as shown clearly on the enclosure map, ran south of the present stream. A further meeting was held on 5<sup>th</sup> October 1813 at the Angel Inn in Brigg *"at which they will be willing to contract for the cutting and compleating (sic) the said Drain, and also for fencing the tithe and glebe allotments"*. What is unknown at the moment is exactly when the new drain was completed. Entries in the Dixon pocket books refer to a meeting in June 1834 about North Kelsey Beck and on 25<sup>th</sup> November 1834: *"began to cut N. Kelsey Beck"*. This could refer to the section which flows through Grasby parish, or to a section further downstream. An additional 101.25 acres of land south of the Beck was added to Grasby parish from the Moor. The five fields (including Holmes Close), however, south of the Beck in the SW corner of the parish west of Grasby Road were enclosed before 1811 and were not part of Caistor Moor.

The enclosure of the Moor required new roads to be cut and maintained and old field roads to be abolished, as well as the digging of new ditches and planting of hedges along all new field boundaries. On 11 June 1813 a Notice of Public Carriage-Roads and Highways stated: *"And another...forty feet, called the Grasby road, beginning at the end of a lane in the lordship of Grasby, and extending in a southerly direction across the said Moor and Smithfield, till it enters the lordship of South Kelsey, called the Smithfield road"*.

The original bridge over the Beck at this point was constructed of brick, but was replaced in the 1960s by a metal culvert. Two "sandpits" are identified in this area, one opposite to Searby Moor Farm and one next to Beech House (now an allotment): *"for the purposes of getting gravel, stone, sand and any other materials for the repairs of the several public highways and roads within the parochial allotment for the parish of Grasby"*.

The 101.25 acres of new land allotted to Grasby was divided into parcels of land granted to 22 owners. This number of awards would have been unusual and points to the fact that Grasby was an open village with a significant number of independent landowners.



***The 101.25 additional acres awarded to Grasby, south of North Kelsey Beck, by the enclosure of Caistor Moor (Source: Lincoln Archives)***

The village was no larger at the beginning of the C19<sup>th</sup>, before the enclosures, than in the 11<sup>th</sup> Century. The main axis of communication remained east/west, reinforced by the opening of the Caistor/Brigg turnpike in 1765. This changed to some extent with the enclosure of Caistor Moor and the construction of the new enclosure road which runs north/south to link with another new enclosure road running from Caistor to North Kelsey, as well as continuing directly south towards Moortown and the terminus of the Caistor/Ancholme Canal, just 4 miles from Grasby village centre. This canal was begun in 1793 and completed in 1800. It operated for only 55 years, but was a route out for surplus agricultural produce and a way in for coal, agricultural lime and general merchandise. The terminus at Moortown comprised a basin 100 yards long and 13 yards wide and the canal was wide enough to accommodate Humber Keel boats. Although never an entirely successful project, at its height 45,000 tons of coal from the Midlands was distributed annually from the Moortown terminus by the several coal merchants living in the area at the time. The house that stands at the Moortown crossroads was originally built as warehouses to serve the canal basin. There is no doubt that the coming of the railway hastened the canal's demise. North Kelsey Station opened in 1848. It would have been at this time that the road out of Grasby changed its name from "Great Drift" to "Station

Road" and the new section beyond the Beck had already been officially named "Grasby Road".

By 1811 John Turner had died as his awards of land on Caistor Moor, and later in 1818 in Grasby, were made over to his devisees, George Tennyson and Philip Skipworth. The lord of the manor in Grasby and Caistor Moor in 1811 was Philip Skipworth, as he still was in 1818.

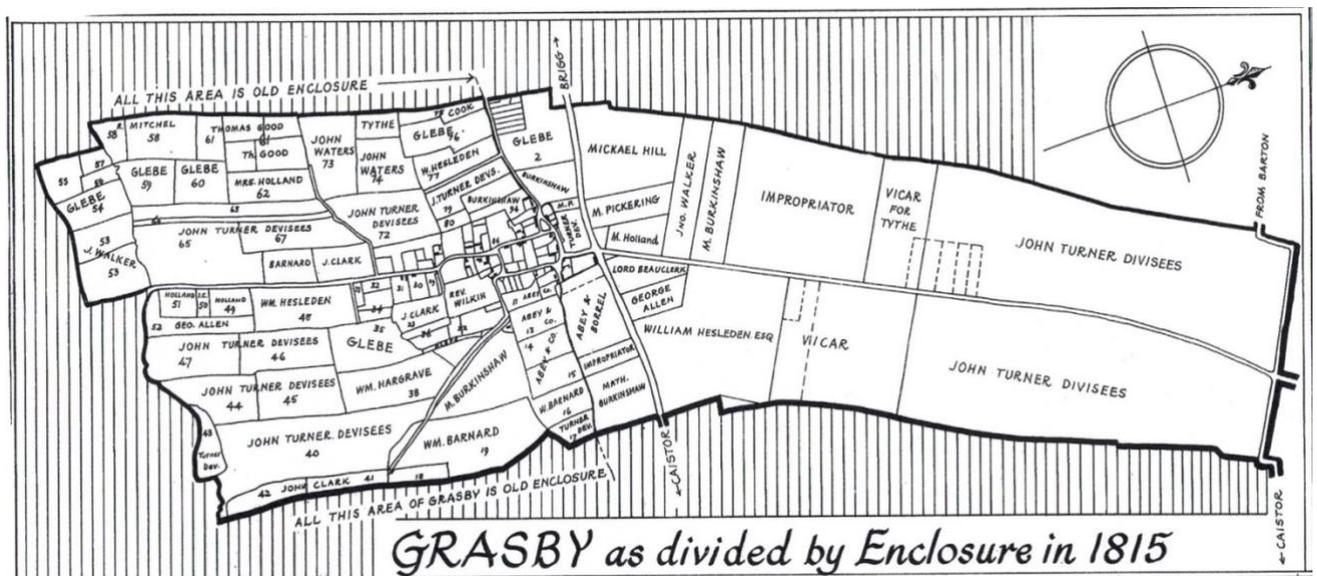
John Turner and George Tennyson were also granted joint awards in the 1796 Caistor Enclosure Act, as well as there being individual awards for John, Mary and Samuel Turner.

By 1835 Charles (Tennyson)Turner, son of the Rev Dr George Clayton Tennyson of Somersby (a village near Horncastle) and brother of Alfred, Lord Tennyson, was lord of the manor of Grasby and was named as such in White's Directory 1856. Charles' great uncle was the Rev. Samuel Turner, son of John Turner and brother of Mary Tennyson, who was the parson and squire of Caistor and Grasby and rector of Rothwell. Charles was named his heir and when his great uncle died in 1835 he changed his name to "Turner", as required by the terms of his inheritance. Before this, Charles had the curacy of Tealby, but on his great uncle's death he moved first to Caistor and then to the old vicarage (next to the present village hall) in Grasby. He married Louisa Sellwood in 1836 (Alfred later married her sister Emily) and had a new vicarage built (The Grange today) on what is now Vicarage Lane. This is the first evidence of a lord of the manor actually residing in Grasby during the C19<sup>th</sup>.

The 1826 valuation of Grasby for the Poor Rate indicated that by far the largest landowners were George Tennyson and the Rev. Samuel Turner, with most of the land let to tenants. (Philip Skipworth isn't mentioned, just George Skipworth, owning just 6 acres "in the Moor". In 1810, however, Philip advertised for sale by auction in the Stamford Mercury: *"150 acres in Grasby, a farm, farm buildings, a cottage and common rights."*) M. Burkinshaw owned in excess of 120 acres – he was the "impropriator" for the allocation of Church lands in lieu of tithes for the enclosures. There were a further 17 or so landowners or tenants of parcels of land ranging from 25 to fewer than 10 acres. The drop from 22 to 17 landowners suggests that some awarded enclosure land did indeed sell up and it is known that George Allen was one of them. Others who put up land for sale awarded to them were Michael Hill, including an allotment on Caistor Moor (1814); John Abey, 35 acres (1826); Wood Walker, 55 acres adjoining for the most part the turnpike (1825).

The 1831 Land Tax Assessment for Grasby identified 46 properties liable for tax to the total value of £40.19.2. With a value of £15.17.4 George Tennyson still stood out as the major land owner. At £4.18.6 Matthew and John Burkinshaw were the second largest land

owners, with Edward Raby, Dixon & Skipworth, John Clark, Thomas Holland, Robert Ward and Mrs Thimbleby (who owned 55 acres in Grasby when she died in 1836, comprising 8 fields adjacent to the north side of the Brigg/Caistor road, either side of the Limber road. She appears to have acquired this land from Michael Hill, William Hesledon, Marmaduke Pickering and J Walker after the original enclosure awards) being the only others with values above £1.0.0. Thirty of the property owners liable for tax in 1831 appeared in the 1826 Poor Rate Assessment.



*The additional 101.25 acres awarded from the enclosure of Caistor Moor are not shown and the course of North Kelsey Beck has yet to be altered. The field boundaries south of the scarp have been fixed, but the awards on the Wolds have yet to be subdivided and hedged (Map by Rex Russell)*

## **PART TWO**

### **THE BRUMPTONS**

#### ***The Brumpton Name***

According to the website "*Surname DB*" Brumpton is an unusual surname of Anglo-Saxon origin and is a dialectal variant of the Old English pre C7<sup>th</sup> topographical term "Brom-tun", which translates as the "dweller at the farm amongst the Broom Bushes". It may also derive from one of several villages, now spelt as Brampton, of which there is one in Lincolnshire near the east bank of the River Trent, south of Gainsborough. The first recorded spelling of the family name is that of Penelope Brampton dated November 12<sup>th</sup> 1588 who was christened in London. On July 1<sup>st</sup> 1655 a William Brumpton was a witness at the Church of St. Martin in the Field in Westminster.

Although villages named Brampton can be found in counties as far apart as Cumbria and Suffolk, the concentration of the family name in Lincolnshire during the C19<sup>th</sup> is remarkable. According to *Ancestry.com* there were 278 Brumpton families living in Lincolnshire, which was about 72% of all the Brumpton families recorded in the UK. Yorkshire had the only other concentration of Brumptions of any note, with 29 families.

The most common Brumpton occupation in the UK during the C19<sup>th</sup> was Agricultural Labourer, followed by Farmer and Shepherd. The most common Brumpton first name during the C19<sup>th</sup> was William.

#### ***The Brumptions of Grasby***

The Brumpton family, prominent in Grasby's community throughout the C19<sup>th</sup>, can be traced back in Lincolnshire to the C17<sup>th</sup> (see Family Tree 1).

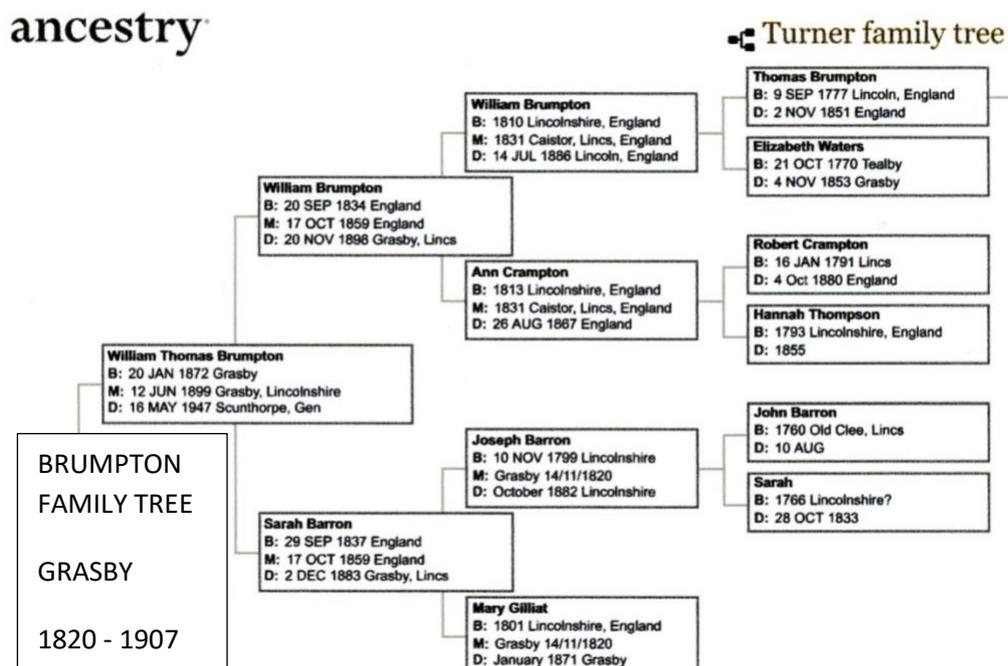
William Brumpton (1628-1706) married Elizabeth (1642-1728), who is recorded as born in Lincolnshire. Their son Anthony (1665-1730) married Ann Wilson (b. 1666 in Lincoln) in 1688. Richard Brumpton, their son (1690-1777), married Mary (b.1711) in 1732. Mary died in Grasby, which is the first evidence of a direct link between the family and the village. Furthermore, their son William (1747-1809) was born in Grasby.

William married Mary Curtis (1749-1782) in 1774 and it is with their son Thomas that this story really begins.

## **PART THREE**

## THOMAS BRUMPTON (1777-1851)

The documentary evidence available to help trace the course Thomas' life is limited, but significantly greater than that for his forebears. He lived through a period during which an increasing number of commoners became landowners, the system of tithes was abolished, large swathes of common and waste land were enclosed and high prices and low rents heralded a so called "golden era" for farming. His life also illustrates that the population at the time was far more mobile than is often appreciated. We know from the *England Select Births & Christenings 1538-1975* that he was born in Tetney in 1777, but nothing further is known about his early life until he turns up in Nettleton (12½ miles from Tetney as the crow flies), where he married Elizabeth Waters (1770-1853) in 1805 (*England Select Marriages 1538-1973*). When he arrived in Nettleton and whether he lived elsewhere than Tetney first, or why he came is not known. Elizabeth was born in Tealby, so how they met is also unknown. Given his later life, logic would suggest that Thomas worked in farming and possibly there was some family link with the village, but again this is a theory unsupported by any hard evidence.

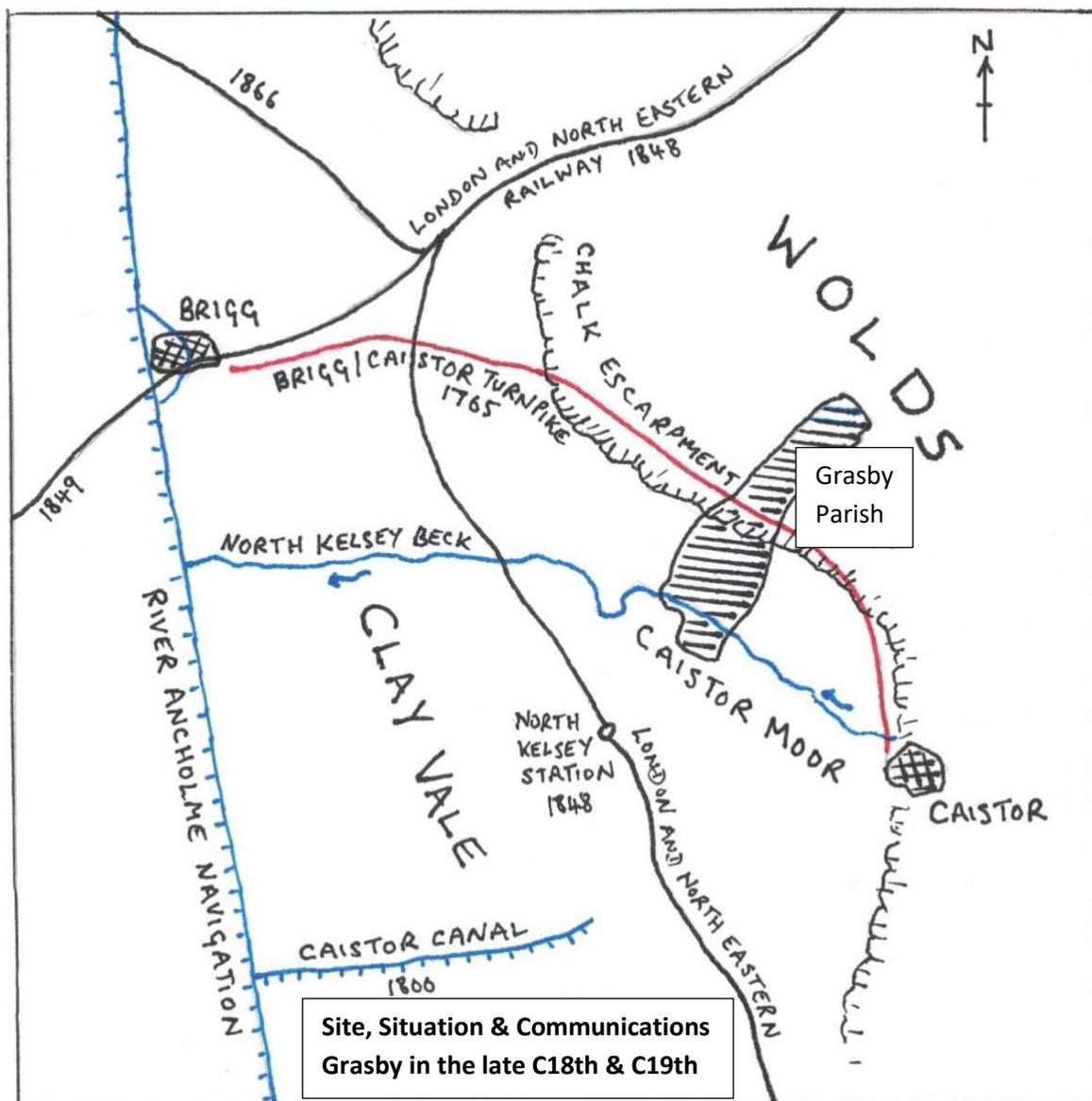


Thomas and Elizabeth continued to live in Nettleton for at least the next five years, where Elizabeth gave birth to Charles in 1806 and William in 1810 (future *census returns* record Nettleton as the place of birth for both Charles and William). *The UK, Poll Books &*

*Electoral Registers 1538-1893* record a Thomas Brumpton, labourer but also a freeholder – hence the qualification to vote, as a resident in Nettleton in 1818, which is a puzzling entry.

### ***The move to Grasby***

According to the *1823 Grasby Poll Book & Electoral Register* Thomas had moved to Grasby (5 miles from Nettleton) to be a farmer and freeholder. This is confirmed by the *Valuation of Grasby for the Poor Rate 1826*, which also provides information for the first time about property and land. It seems that by this time he owned a house, barn, stables and 12 acres of land with a rateable value of £15 10s 0d.



In addition, he was the “occupier” of 1a 2r 0p of the Poor Close, rateable value £1 0s 0d. The origin and purpose of a “Poor Close” is unclear – it may have been part of a village allotment (allotments were sometimes created as part of the process of enclosure, to

make up to some extent for the loss of common land in the parish). Two fields in the parish were owned in 1910, according to the *Land Tax records*, by the County Council and a further 18 ½ acres of Glebe Land were labelled as "Allotment Gardens".

### ***Farming in Grasby***

*The Poor Rate* provides a useful snapshot of farming in Grasby in 1826. There were 13 farms of 10 acres or more in size. Three were large farms of 100 acres plus: one owned (by Burkinshaw, the impropiator) and two tenanted. There were five farms 20-99 acres: two owner-occupied, two tenanted and one part-owned/ part-tenanted; and five farms 10-19 acres: two owner-occupied, one tenanted and one part-owned/part-tenanted (Thomas Brumpton). Six of these farmers were allotted land in the enclosures. During this period the largest landowner was initially John Turner, followed by his devisees George Tennyson and Philip Skipworth. The most important tenant farmer during this time was Francis Isles who was put in by Thomas Dixon of Holton-le-Moor in 1818 (*Lincolnshire Archives ref: Dixon 9/1/18*) to farm 330 acres of George Tennyson's land at an annual rate per acre of 26s/- for grass and 25s/- for arable land. He was based at Vicarage Farm (later to be called Glebe Farm).

The three largest farms were probably practising a form of what has been termed "high farming" at the time. It was based on arable farming with high inputs leading to high outputs. Livestock were still important, particularly sheep, but they were integral to the increased output of root and cereal crops. Improved methods led to shorter rotations (four or five years) with heavy use of manure and, increasingly, artificial fertilizers. Cattle tended to be overwintered in sheds and fed on oilcake to produce rich manure, and then sold on in the spring. Sheep were fed on "seeds" and turnips in the fields, to which they added their droppings. Wool and meat, particularly from the Lincolnshire Longwool, were important sources of income. A large and extremely important sheep fair was held at Caistor. But at the heart of this new approach to farming was the intensive production of wheat (normally sown in autumn) and barley for malting (normally sown in spring).

This was also a period during which new more efficient farm machinery was being developed, although it wasn't until the second half of the century that a wide range of improved and newly invented farm machinery, manufactured by specialist firms rather than local craftsmen, revolutionised farming practises. That said, when Francis Isles gave up farming in 1836 he put up for sale a large selection of farm implements, including 2 waggons, 2 carts, 3 ploughs, 3 pairs of harrows, 1 corn drill, a roller, a dressing machine and a corn blower. He also sold 4 working horses but no oxen. This accords with the fact that oxen were gradually being replaced by the horse on all farms during this century.

### ***Farming on a small scale***

According to available evidence, Thomas never farmed on this scale. He may well have tried to take advantage of the high prices of the time by ploughing up land and growing more cereals but, judging from the known later activities of his son, William, it is more likely that he provided services for other farmers and businesses to supplement his income from the farm. All the evidence, including the education Thomas provided for his sons, points to the family adopting an entrepreneurial approach to making a living rather than, when not tending their own farm, simply labouring for other farmers to make ends meet.

Thomas probably owned a number of farm implements, such as a cart, a plough and a harrow, and could have hired others such as a seed drill. He would have had livestock, including at least one work horse. A significant number of jobs would have been done by hand, such as hoeing (there was no real protection against pests and weeds) harvesting and stone picking.

Hay would have been cut by hand (the scythe had replaced the sickle by this time), led in on high-sided carts, stacked loose and thatched. It would then have been compressed under its own weight, sufficient to need cutting into wedges with a specially designed sharp knife for use as animal feed. Judging when to stack hay was a skilled job, left too late the hay would be dry and brittle, stacked too early and the centre of the stack could heat to a temperature hot enough to cause the stack to self-ignite.

Wheat was ready to be carted in from the fields within days, oats needed to "*stand in stooks for three Sundays*" before being brought in and barley had to be turned like hay in the swathe to dry (as the straw retained sap after cutting).

### ***Life in Grasby in Thomas' time***

It is worth returning here to the question of whether or not Grasby, at least in the early part of the C19<sup>th</sup>, was a classic open village as described by some of the Victorian commentators. Was it overcrowded, insanitary and ill regulated with numerous small proprietors who let tumbledown cottages at exorbitant rents? Was it "*a knot of thatched hovels, all sinking and leaning every way but right, the windows patched with paper, the doorways stopped with filth, which surrounded a beershop*" (Charles Kingsley)? Victorian scandals like the Gang System were the product and symptom of open and closed parishes. This depended upon crowds of women and children, recruited from over-populated villages and put to work in neighbouring villages where there were too few labouring families for the purpose of agriculture. From the Victorian viewpoint, the problem was essentially moral – private squalor was often identified with moral

delinquency, and beerhouses received a large proportion of the blame for rural despair and dissipation. Grasby did have two beerhouses! The fact that the only buildings of any note in the village (other than the Church and Old Vicarage) date from the Victorian period onwards suggests that pre-C19<sup>th</sup> building stock may well have been of very poor quality and fitted the open village model. An article in the *Stamford Mercury* dated 1840 (slated in a written response to the Mercury by a local resident who claimed that outsiders were responsible for the problems) provides some insight into how Grasby was perceived at the time. It reports theft of five sacks of barley and a stack sheet from Mr J Clarke, as well as straw from Mr Burkinshaw's yard. It goes on: "*To mention minor thefts of eggs, garden produce etc. in this depraved village would be tedious and uninteresting*". If this was the reputation of the village at the time it was, as will be described more fully later, somewhat redeemed by the arrival of Charles (Tennyson) Turner, Methodism and the growth of the secondary and tertiary economic sectors during the second half of the century.

### ***A changing landscape***

Although Grasby was a long way from the heart of the industrial revolution (the development of the steel industry in Scunthorpe came somewhat later in the 1860s), the ripple effects caused by urbanisation and the mass production of goods would have reached Thomas. As well as providing a demand for agricultural goods, a new and important method of transport came to within four miles of Grasby. The River Ancholme was made navigable as early as 1625, but in the 1790s a four mile canal was dug from the Ancholme towards Caistor, the intention being to connect the town and surrounding area to the Humber and the whole national waterway system. The intended terminus was originally Caistor, but in the end the canal only reached the Brigg to Market Rasen road at a lonely cross-roads in the middle of an empty moor, two miles short of Caistor. A wharf and warehouse were built here around the "*Riverhead*" where the settlement of Moortown grew up. It is today a rare example in Lincolnshire of a village created from the need to serve a canal wharf. Grasby, however, benefited from the building of new enclosure roads which extended from the end of Great Drift (Station Road today) all the way to the Brigg to Market Rasen road, half a mile from Moortown. The canal was used to carry a wide range of bulky goods, including: cereal crops, potatoes, beans, wool etc.; bricks & tiles; stone flags, slates etc.; cast metal goods; timber and manufactured goods. Its main business, however, was coal and there were four coal merchants based at the Riverhead around 1800, including Nevel Glew who was also the Wharfinger and landlord of the Anchor Inn in Moortown. As we shall see, William, Thomas' son, had a number of dealings with Nevel Glew as late as the 1840s. The canal always struggled to make a profit and only operated for 50 to 60 years, its last recorded use being in the 1860s for coal and

gravel. It no doubt lost traffic to the railway which arrived in North Kelsey Moor in 1848, just two miles from Grasby. This was, however, sometime after Thomas left the area.

### ***Thomas as a land owner***

Thomas described himself as being a yeoman "of Grasby" in his "*Last Will & Testament*", which was dated June 1829. He was still in Grasby in 1831, according to the *1831 Land Tax Assessment*. With a tax liability of 15s/10d which, at 4s/- in the £, his land was valued for tax purposes at a fraction under £4.

How and from whom Thomas obtained his land in Grasby are interesting questions. Thomas' father, William, was born in Grasby and William's mother, Mary, died in Grasby, so it's possible that the family already owned land in the village, which Thomas subsequently inherited. Of equal interest is the location of this land and property in the parish. None of the enclosure awards were allotted to the Brumpton Family and there is no mention of the name Brumpton on Rex Russell's map (see above). The 12 acres in question are likely to be part of the old enclosures i.e. land enclosed prior to the Parliamentary Enclosures, and fields near to the village centre, the owners of which Rex Russell was unable to identify, or at least label, on his map. That said, two fields on the north side of Middleton Lane (never named as such on maps or in the census) were shown by Rex Russell as belonging to a John Waters. John Waters was not allotted any new land by the enclosure awards and he does not appear in the *1826 Poor Rate valuations*, and so appears to have sold his land. These two fields were subsequently subdivided to make five, two of which eventually become part of Pond Farm, leaving three to comprise an 11.574 acre property which became known as Willow Farm. Further documentary evidence, discussed in later sections of this account, suggests strongly that this was Thomas', and later his son William's, farm.

### ***A surprising move to Legbourne***

In his book "*Large and Small Holdings: A study of English Agricultural Economics*", published in 1903, Herman Levy describes the early C19<sup>th</sup> as a period of "*engrossing farms*" i.e. amalgamation of small to make larger farms. He says that the farmhouses of small holders were often allowed to fall into disrepair, let to labourers (often 3 families to a house), or demolished by landlords. The yeomen of England, with relatively small farms, often sold their land in order to become tenants of much larger farms, taking on "improving leases" i.e. they benefited significantly from the improvements they made themselves.

By 1841 Thomas had, according to the *UK Poll Book & Electoral Register and the 1841 Census*, moved to and become a freeholder and farmer in Legbourne, a village just to the

south east of Louth, about 21 miles from Grasby as the crow flies. The closest we can get to being able to identify the location of his farm is that it was in "*That part of the Parish of Legbourne South & West of the Turnpike Road from Louth to Alford*".

His name appears again in the *1849 Poll Book* and in the *1851 census*, named as a farmer of 40 acres. Even if he left Grasby around 1832, he would have been 55 at that time and a decision to move was, therefore, made quite late on in his career as a farmer, but would appear to fit Levy's observations, except that he didn't first sell his land in Grasby. Although the chances are that he was a tenant farmer in Legbourne (originally spelt Legbourn) there is no clear evidence to support this, other than nothing from Legbourne was left to anyone in the family after he died in November 1851.

In 1841 the household comprised Thomas (64), Elizabeth (70) and George Coney, agricultural labourer. Ten years later his grandson, William, aged 16, was living with the family with one servant/agricultural labourer, Daniel Nevill (30). Thomas was 73 and Elizabeth 80. Thomas died in November the same year (recorded in the *Index of Deaths in Louth*) and it looks as if Elizabeth moved back to Grasby where she died in November 1853. One assumes that William was sent to help his ailing grandfather with the work on the farm, which he appears to have managed with help from just one labourer – the *1851 census* normally indicates, as well as the size of a farm, whether or not a farmer employs workers. Apart from naming William and Daniel Nevill as members of the household only the size of the farm, 40 acres, is recorded.

### ***Charles and William stay locally***

In 1832 Thomas' sons, Charles and William, would have been 26 and 22 respectively. One can only assume that one or both were left to run the farm in Grasby when Thomas moved to Legbourne. Charles had married Ruth Curtis in 1827 in Grasby and William married Ann Crampton in 1831. By 1841 William was a farmer in Grasby and Charles had moved to North Kelsey and was described as a grocer. One wonders if Charles had left home before Thomas' move and it had been agreed that, although the estate was split equally between the two sons, it would be William who took over the farm in Grasby.

Charles had become a farmer in North Kelsey by 1851, with 8 children! In 1861 he was farming 577 acres, still in North Kelsey, with 6 employees. He died, however, in January 1865 when just 59. Ruth stayed with her son Alfred who, in 1871, was farming 310 acres in North Kelsey.

## **PART FOUR**

### **WILLIAM BRUMPTON, "OLD BILL" (1810 – 1886)**

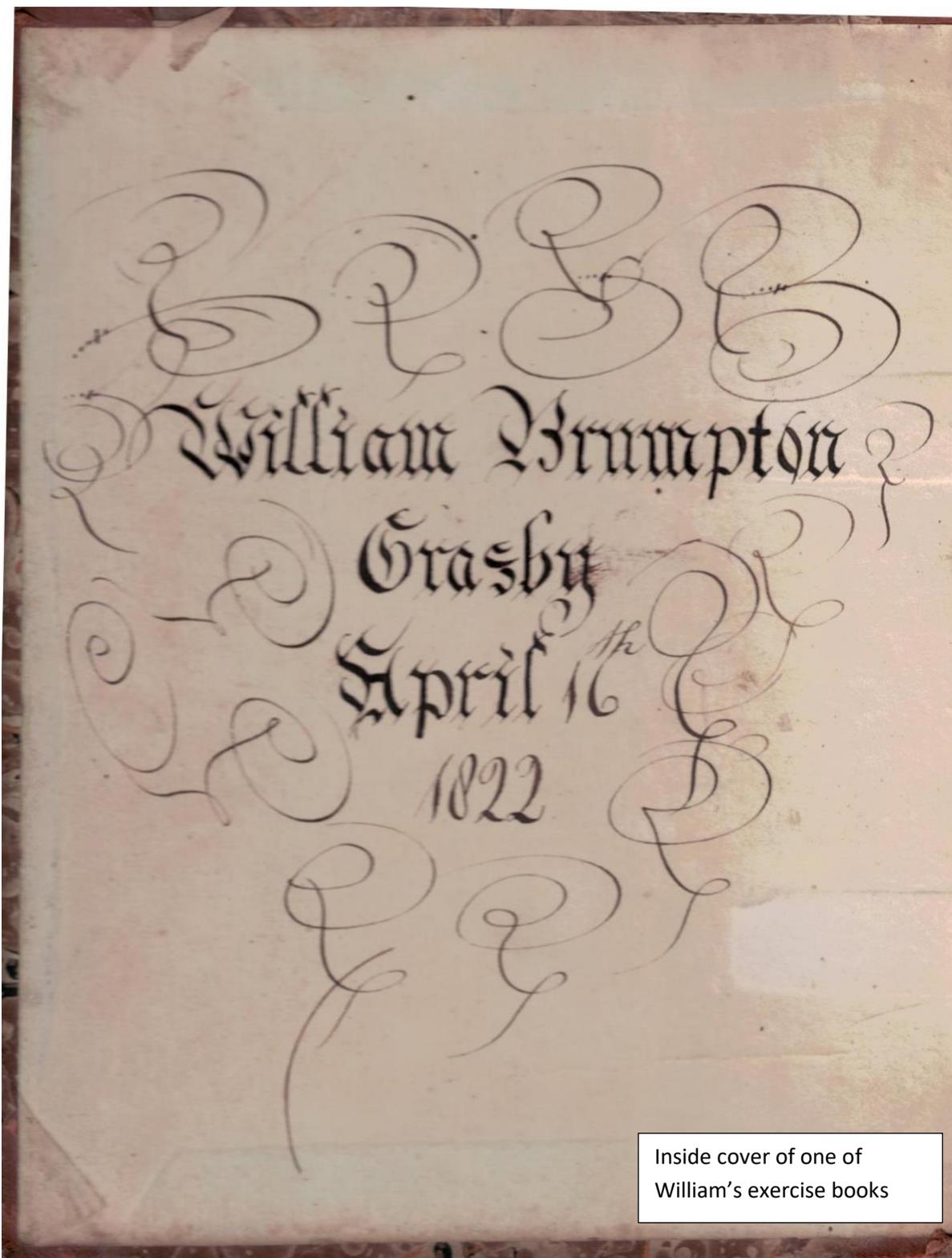
#### *Education*

It seems that William moved with his family to Grasby between 1818 and 1823. In 1822, aged 12 (based on the evidence of two existing exercise books) he was a scholar at Caistor Free Grammar School. How well-educated his father Thomas had been is unknown, but it is reasonable to assume that Charles, William's eldest brother, also received some formal education. It must have been quite unusual for the sons of a farmer/freeholder of a very modest acreage to be educated beyond the age of 10 or 11 years and marked Thomas as a very forward looking father.

Church of England National Schools were only created after 1811. One existed in Grasby sometime before 1855, when Charles Turner rebuilt the existing school. Although the name is difficult to decipher in the census, a school master resided in the village in 1841. William's education, however, is likely to have pre-dated any school in Grasby, before which Church Sunday Schools were probably the only providers of basic education for parish children.

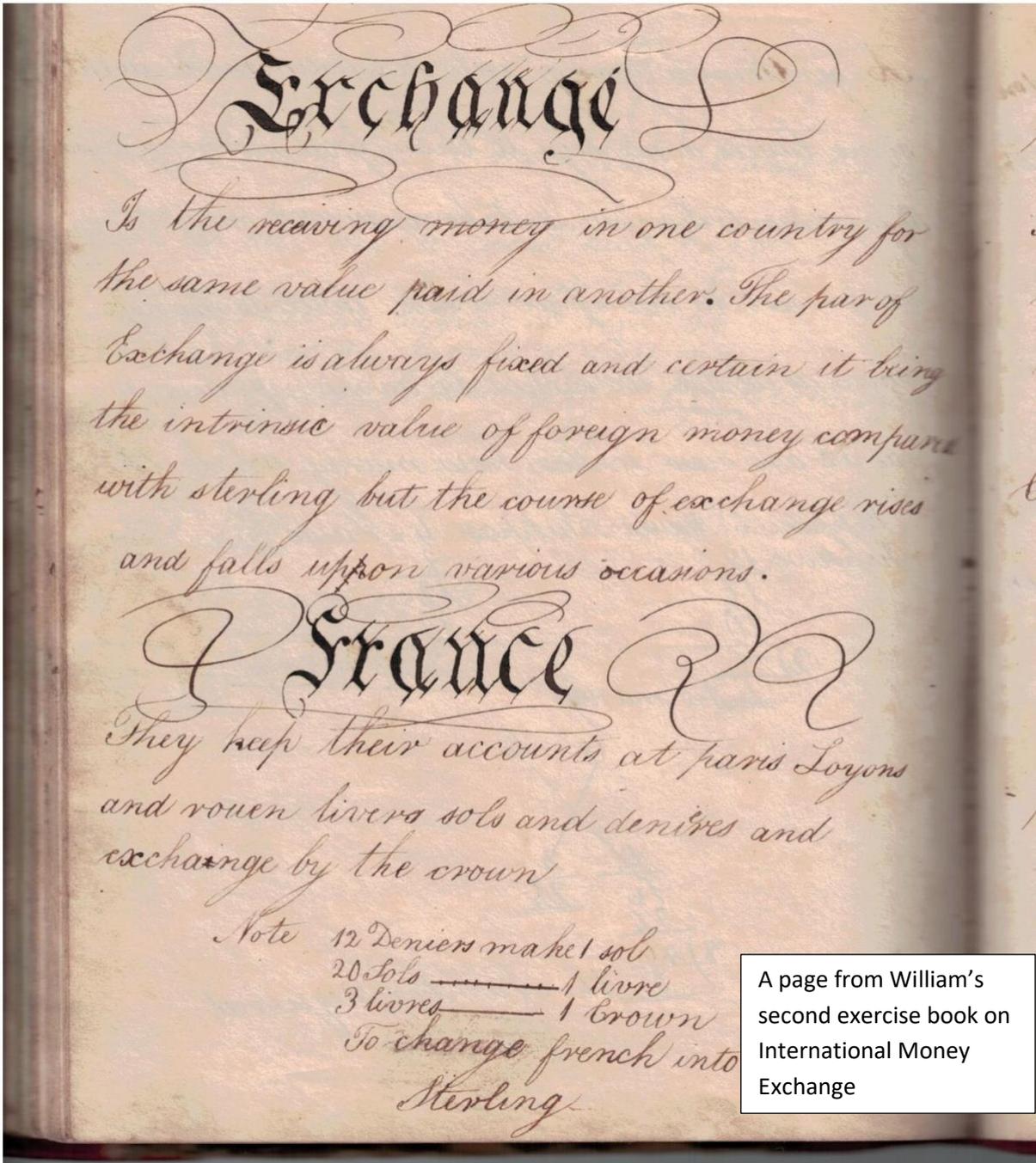
Caistor Grammar School was founded in 1630 by Francis Rawlinson, Rector of St Nicholas, South Kelsey, since when it has had quite a chequered history. Information about the school is sketchy for William's time but, according to the *"Caistor Grammar School Records, 1630-1932, by T G Dixon"* published in 1932, Rowland Bowstead was appointed head teacher in 1808. Mention of the school is made in 1818 in the *"Concise descriptions of the Endowed Grammar Schools in England & Wales"* by Nicholas Carlisle, in which it was stated that *"there is no house attached to the endowment, the present number of boys and girls in the school is between 30 & 40 and there are no boarders as pupils."* Basically, it seems that Bowstead was given a pension of £60 pa to get rid of him when he was in ill health in 1833 (as the school was receiving only £130 pa from its estates, this was a serious drain on the school's finances). The school normally had an usher (deputy head), but the records appear to show a gap in this respect from 1809 to 1826.

The quality of the education William received can only be guessed at. His exercise books, however, provide two clues. Firstly, William's presentation was immaculate and much time must have been spent on perfecting his handwriting. Secondly, he was being introduced to some quite complex mathematical calculations, scientific proofs and even economic theory. It is unfortunate, however, that these have simply been painstakingly copied into his exercise books with no evidence of William testing his knowledge, understanding and problem solving skills by providing worked answers to set questions.



Inside cover of one of  
William's exercise books

Exercise books or paper used for this purpose have clearly not been kept. Equally, it is a shame that nothing survives to show what he was taught in other areas of the curriculum such as English language and literature, History and Geography. William completed his Mathematics exercise book, started April 16<sup>th</sup> 1822, on February 26<sup>th</sup> 1824. This shows that he was still attending school in his fourteenth year. Unfortunately, the exercise book,



comprising for the most part, economic theory, is undated. Although no hard evidence exists today to confirm the belief, information passed down orally by the family leaves them in no doubt that several of William's children and grandchildren also attended Caistor Grammar School.

**Marriage**

Nothing else is known about William's early life until his marriage to Ann Crampton in 1831. Ann was the eldest daughter of Robert Crampton of Caistor who, according to *Poll*

*Book* entries and the 1841 census was, between 1832 and 1841, a freeholder and victualler or publican from Caistor. By 1851 he was described in the census as a landed proprietor and when he made his will in 1872 he described himself as a yeoman and owned a significant number of properties and land in Caistor, as well as the King's Head public house. William's father-in-law was clearly a man of local influence and some wealth. Ann predeceased her father by 13 years.

### ***Changes in Grasby***

By 1835 the Rev Charles Turner had arrived in Grasby living, at first, in the Old Vicarage opposite Glebe Farm. He had a new vicarage built on Vicarage Road circa. 1848, but pleaded with the Bishop of Lincoln not to have the old vicarage pulled down, instead to have it converted into cottages. Fortunately he succeeded as the building still stands today as two cottages.

Charles appears to have been instrumental in improving the reputation of the village. As well as refurbishing the church, he rebuilt the school and even "*.....soon after his arrival, he purchased the only inn in the village and installed a new landlord with express instructions to keep the parishioners sober!*" (*Lincolnshire Life, November 1981; Lincolnshire Worthies by Winstone Kime*). Was it the only inn at the time, as both the Cross Keys and the Blue Bell existed throughout most of the C19th? Probably just as influential, however, was the building of the Wesleyan Chapel in 1840 and the Primitive Methodist Chapel in 1841. Both were well attended and provided education for children. The Primitive Chapel served the needs of the poorer members of the community, whilst the Wesleyan Chapel was favoured by the middle class. The establishment of the latter suggests, as an open village, Grasby was becoming a focal centre for commerce and wealthier – the range of services the village offered was extensive. Village tradesmen readily became property speculators, who exploited the demand for accommodation, but the existence of the petite bourgeoisie of shopkeepers and artisans itself often ensured some additional employment and provision of charities for relief of the poor. Grasby was growing fast at this time, the population increasing from 168 in 1801 to 374 in 1841 and 455 in 1855.

### ***William's place in the community***

As well as being a landowner, William was also literate and numerate.

In 1837 William, as "*Collector of the Land and Assessed Taxes of the Parish of Grasby*" was required "*to attend at my Office in Caistor on Saturday the 2<sup>nd</sup> Day of September next, to receive the Duplicates of Assessment of the same Duties, for the Year ending the 15<sup>th</sup> Day of April 1838, by Order of Geo. Marris, Clerk to the Commissioners under the said Acts*".

Entries in some of William's *note books* list members of the parish and the sums he obviously had to collect. This was clearly a position of significant responsibility within the community.

Notices published in the *Stamford Mercury* between 1840 and 1858 show that William was, throughout this period, a member of the "*Caistor Association for the Prosecution of Felons*" and was called to the annual general meetings to settle the accounts. These associations were formed during the C18<sup>th</sup> & C19<sup>th</sup>, before the creation of a national police force, by rural communities which formed mutual subscription societies to prosecute criminals. They evolved out of resolutions passed at parish vestry meetings to prosecute felons using the public purse. In his younger days at least, therefore, William would have been seen as an upholder of the law and a respected member of the local community. In his later years he was, apparently, known in the village as "Old Bill". His son, William was referred to as "Young Bill" and, eventually, his son, William Thomas, became known as "Young Bill's Son", although more commonly as "Tom". Interestingly, Young Bill was advised by the land agent John Saul Walesby to become a member of the Association for the Prosecution of Felons when he became the tenant of Temperance Cottage Farm in the 1880s (see below).

### ***William's business activities in his own words 1838 -1855***

The first evidence, in William's own words, about his day to day life and dealings comes from his first *note book* (1838-1855):

*September 28<sup>th</sup> 1838, Howdan (sic) Fair; bought a brown filley (sic), 3 yrs, warranted sound, £15 0s 0d (from) John Brown, Thorgangby.*

At the same fair, a year later in 1839 he: *bought brown pony, 4 yrs, warranted sound, £14 5s 0d (from) Richard Whitworth, Hornby; bought brown filley (sic), warranted sound, £12 0s 0d (from) William Beddforth, Wakefield.*

Howden, just north of Goole on the north side of the River Ouse, hosted a specialist horse fair every September, to where buyers came from all over Europe in Georgian times to buy horses for their armies. It was described in an 1807 edition of *Sporting Magazine* as "*the largest fair in the whole kingdom*" where, it was estimated, that 4,000 horses were displayed every day of the fair, valued at £200,000.

According to the *1841 census* William was a farmer (one of eleven farmers in the village at the time) but, as these initial and subsequent note book entries reveal, his business interests were varied and wide ranging – he seems to have been involved wherever there was money to be made in the world of rural commerce. The sums he spent at Howden Fair were not insubstantial, nor was the distance he travelled to be there. Howden is 30 miles as the crow flies from Grasby and the journey there involves crossing either the Humber or the Trent rivers, as well as the River Ouse. Before the railways the links between villages, towns and livestock markets were a network of droves, ancient and mostly un-metalled tracks. It was accepted at the time that to drive livestock to and from a market within a day meant a total journey of no more than 12 miles – hence the average distance between any farm and its nearest market was 6 miles. Clearly, William must have thought it to be worth his while not only to travel well over 30 miles to Howden Fair, but also to lodge, at the very least, one night away from home.

Some examples of William's activities between 1844 and 1847 include contract work for other farmers (ploughing, harrowing, sowing, manuring); selling mutton, a horse (for £7 0s 0d); selling and delivering significant amounts of ale in nine gallon lots (firkins) mainly, in 1847/8, to Chas F Hannan. Charles Fitzwilliam Hannan was the farmer at Manor Farm, Clixby. Was this ale for his farm hands as well as the family? In 1848/9 William sold a number of horses at an average price of £7 0s 0d; sold "turnip keeping" for 165 ewes, 15 days for £16 10s 0d (this almost certainly entailed "hosting" the ewes in one of his turnip fields – perhaps providing whole turnips or just the leaves and tops after harvesting). As is evident from a number of entries, William used his horse(s) & cart(s) to carry loads for other people – normally termed "leading". In 1848/9 he was leading up to 25 loads of chalk a week for Mr Glue (sic), and separately for the parish, and also sand for John Clark. So, William ran a latter-day haulage business on the side and would transport more or less any merchandise as required.

The relationship with Mr Glue (sic) also links William to the Caistor/Ancholme Canal. In 1841 Nevel (sic) Glew was one of four coal merchants living at the Riverhead, South Kelsey (more accurately, Moortown), presumably shipping merchandise in and out on the canal. He was also the Wharfinger (supervisor of the wharf) and the landlord of the Anchor Inn at the Riverhead. William bought "chaldrons" of lime from Nevel Glew (a chaldron is an old unit of dry measurement, usually used for coal) and continued to carry coal and lime for him until at least 1854, as well as chalk for Mr Burkinshaw (Impropiator) during this period, which also saw the coming of the railway and a station at North Kelsey Moor in 1848.

During the 1830s and 1840s there was a lot of "chalking" of strong soils to improve their structure. This was "*achieved at considerable expense by casting and spreading over the land about 100 tons per acre which, when reduced to minute particles by exposure to the atmosphere the melioration of the soil after this process is great and permanent*" (Assistant Tithe Commissioner).

William also paid out for drainage work to be done in his fields (@ 2' 6" & 3' 0" depths) and lime for "Middle Long Close". Evidence of his activity as purely a farmer can be seen in an entry for 1850 in which he records the sale of wheat, barley, oats and turnips for a total of £61 0s 6d. He also paid his taxes, 9d in the £, for the pore (sic) rate, land tax, church rate and hiway (sic).

One set of entries William made is for payments to C Brumpton in 1851/2/3/4, totalling £149 11s 6d, which are intriguing. William and Charles' father, Thomas, died in 1851 and left his estate to both brothers. These entries suggest that either William is paying rent to Charles for his share of the estate in Grasby or, more likely as the payments do not continue after 1854, he was buying out Charles' share. William was 41 in 1851, and recorded in the census as a farmer of 32 acres with one employee. As mentioned above, his son William (16) was at the time living with his grandfather, Thomas (73), in Legbourne. Thomas died in the November and soon after this his wife, Elizabeth (81), returned to Grasby along with, one assumes, William. Did she move in with William's family? Again, as suggested above, Thomas had been a tenant of his 40 acre farm and so it seems that there was nothing to keep any of the family members in Legbourne.

From December to February 1851 William carried 20 x 3 ton loads of gravel for Grasby Parish, presumably for road maintenance – a responsibility of the parish at that time. Between 1852 and 1855 he bought and sold sheep, horses and the odd "beast" (cow).

In undated sections of the note books, written in pencil, William recorded his dealings at fairs in Hull, Market Weighton, Appleby, Beverley and Grantham. He bought and sold cows, calves, drapes (a cow no longer in milk and barren), horses and heffers (sic). His dealings totalled circa £100 in many cases.

William was paid £1 6s 6d, according to one entry, for going to Caistor to get a will proved. Was this an indication that members of the community looked to William, as a literate educated man, to help them deal with such matters?

By 1851 William was one of 19 farmers in Grasby, along with 62 agricultural labourers.

***Where were William's farm and fields?***

We know that William's father owned a house and land in Grasby which William and Charles inherited. Unfortunately the *1841/51/61 censuses* do not provide an address for the farm. There are some clues, however, in that in both the *1851 and 1861 censuses* William's entry is in both cases next to that of George Middleton. Middleton Lane is named after the Middleton family and George's farm was what is called Pond Farm today, located at the end of the lane. There were only two other farms on Middleton Lane – Willow Farm (on the north side) and Long Close (today's name for a converted farmhouse, on the south side). As discussed above, Willow Farm would seem to fit the description and acreage of Thomas' farm and the census returns appear to place William in this area of the village.

An advertisement in the *Stamford Mercury* should be helpful but, in some ways, throws up more questions than answers about the location of William's farm. It states that:

*"3<sup>rd</sup> March 1854 a valuable and tithe free estate is to be sold at auction at the Cross Keys. Lot 1: a farmhouse, barn, stables plus part of the home close 1a 2r 15p, plus the close on the north side 5a 0r 5p = 6a 2r 18p. Lot 2: remainder of home close 1a 3r 5p, plus a meadow to the northwest 2a 3r 35p = 4a 3r 35p. Lot 3: 3 closes "Long Close", barn, stables, outbuildings 9a 3r 35p. Total = 21a 1r 10p. Lot 3, tenant not under notice to quit, William Brumpton, to show property and to see for more particulars or contact Charles Brumpton, North Kelsey".*

This creates a jigsaw with some useful pieces, some missing pieces and some pieces that just don't seem to fit the picture:

- Elizabeth, William and Charles' mother died in Grasby 4<sup>th</sup> November 1853. Did this result in the Brumpton "estate" being put up for sale five months later?
- Lots 1 & 2 add up to 11a 1r 18p. Willow Farm in 1910 totalled 12.17 acres. Thomas' Farm, according to the Poor Rate in 1826, measured 12 acres.
- According to the *1851 census* William was farming 32 acres. The farm being advertised comprises in total 21a 1r 10p. If this was William's farm, where are the other 11 acres – almost the same acreage as Thomas' original farm?
- The census does not provide us with the acreage of William's farm in 1861 but, according to the next census, his son William was farming 11a 3r acres in 1871 and William, now a widower, was living with his son's family, clearly at the same address as shown in the *1851 and 1861 censuses* i.e. adjacent to George Middleton and Stephen Shepherd.
- On the south side of Middleton Lane is a very long, narrow field measuring, in 1910, 9.47 acres. "The Long Close" in the 1854 advertisement measured 9a 3r 35p,

including the barn, stables and outbuildings. The house, adjacent to this field, is called today "Long Close". William paid for lime for the "Middle Long Close" between 1849 and 1852 (*note book entry* above). He is described as the tenant of Lot 3, but not under notice to quit. Only William and Charles are named as whom to contact for more particulars and to see the property. An abstract of title for the Hollands, dated 1833, uses the ownership of adjacent fields to describe the precise location of their lands. One, on Middleton Lane, named interestingly as the "Long Close" in the abstract, was bordered to the west by a field owned by Charles Brumpton i.e. the 9.47 acre field advertised above (see section below on Temperance Cottage Farm). Was William Charles' tenant? If so, how did Charles alone come to own this particular field?

- How does all this tie in with William's payments to Charles 1851 to 1854? In the end, *Lot 3* above must have been sold as Willow Farm never exceeded 12 acres in any future records.

There is a high probability that Willow Farm was the location of the Brumpton 11/12 acre farm, occupied originally by Thomas, later by William and, eventually by William's son. Long Close appears to have been rented to William by Charles. The unanswered questions are - was the farm for sale in 1884 Willow Farm and, if so, why was it for sale and did it sell? If this wasn't Willow Farm its whereabouts is unknown, as is its connection to the Brumpton family.

### ***Family scandals***

The following news article appeared in the *Lincolnshire Chronicle* on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> January 1855:

*"Philip Markham and William Brumpton were drinking with others in the King's Head, Caistor. William and Philip quarrelled & went outside to fight. William struck Philip on the head, who fell down and expired almost immediately. An inquest was held on 8<sup>th</sup> inst. before Geo. Marris, coroner, who gave a verdict of manslaughter. William was fully committed to trial at the next assizes".*

The King's Head was William's father-in-law's public house and was located on South Street. It ceased to be a pub in 1881 after Robert Crampton's death.

Philip, 47, lived in Grasby, was a dealer in coal and skins and was married to Mary with three children. Her son George, who became a butcher and carrier, continued to live at home until he married his mother's namesake, Mary. By 1871 they had two sons, Philip and George, and lived in Butcher's Lane (Front Street today). George's mother, Mary, lived next door, an "annuitant".

Both Philip and George became successful farmers in Grasby. Eventually, Philip married Mary Urry, his cousin. By a strange coincidence Mary's sister, Miriam Ellen, married in 1889 William's grandson, William Thomas, linking the Markhams and the Brumptions again, but this time in much happier circumstances.

William must have been arrested because an announcement in the *Stamford Mercury*, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1855, stated that:

*"The following are prisoners for trial at Lincolnshire Assizes: William Brumpton, 45, charged with the manslaughter of Philip Markham at Caistor....."*

This suggests strongly that William was being held in Lincoln Gaol. Now comes the strangest part of the story. The *Stamford Mercury* reported the following 9<sup>th</sup> March 1855:

*"Crown Court, Lincoln, before Justice Coleridge. (The Grand Jury comprised 22 named magistrates, one of whom was T J Dixon who would almost certainly have known William). Alleged manslaughter at Caistor: William Brumpton, 45, was charged with the manslaughter of Philip Markham at Caistor. The Grand Jury ignored the bill – the prisoner was arraigned upon the coroner's inquisition and pleaded not guilty. Mr Bell, on the part of the prosecution, said that no evidence would be offered. The Judge said he approved that course. The jury would, therefore, find the prisoner not guilty. This being done, he was at once discharged".*

This suggests that the Judge and the prosecution were not happy with the coroner's original verdict of manslaughter at the inquest. The questions remain: was the coroner entitled to pre-empt a verdict of manslaughter at an inquest or was that a matter for the prosecution to determine and, if he was within his rights, did the Judge effectively overrule his verdict?

William was now a free man, but had he been held on remand for two months and, if so, what effect did this have on him and his business, not to say his standing in the community?

The family was subject to another scandal in 1859, this time involving William's eldest son, Charles. Charles had married Catherine Walker on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1855, four months after William's trial. Charles was a blacksmith. He and Catherine had lived locally for the first six months, before moving to Normanby. She returned a short time later, on her own, to live with her mother. Two years later, on 24<sup>th</sup> December 1857, she married John Dixon. A month after that, Charles returned to Grasby. What happened then is unknown, but on 24<sup>th</sup> September 1859 Catherine (23) was indicted for bigamy,

as was John for aiding and abetting the offence. John was acquitted, but Catherine found guilty and sentenced to two months prison with hard labour. This case was reported in both the *Stamford Mercury* and the *Lincolnshire Chronicle* in 1859.

One wonders what happened to both Catherine and John. Charles was, presumably, granted a divorce as he later married Lucy. They had a child, Minnie, in 1877. Charles died, only six years later, in 1883. While all this was taking place, William's second son, William, had married Sarah Barron on the 17<sup>th</sup> October 1859. This was announced in a marriage notice in the *Lincolnshire Chronicle*, 21<sup>st</sup> October 1859.

### ***Grasby in the 1860s***

On census day 1861 Ann (48) was on her own in Grasby, "*Farmer's wife*", with Charles (29) and Robert (12). Charles must have returned to live at home after the debacle with Catherine. Further research shows that William was in a boarding house in Hull on the day of the census, presumably there on business. Their second son, William, had left home and was living with Sarah (a dressmaker) and their one year old daughter, Mary. It seems that, as William was not in Grasby on the day of the census, the size of the farm in 1861 was, unfortunately, not recorded.

In 1861 there were 19 farmers, 78 agricultural labourers, and 10 carters/waggoners resident in Grasby. 18% of its population was employed in occupations other than agriculture (35 people alone were in domestic service).

The village had become during the 1850s and 1860s a minor centre of clothing and shoe "manufacture". During this period there were six mantua makers (by the C19<sup>th</sup>, according to the Victoria & Albert Museum, these were probably just upmarket dressmakers; a mantua was an exotic garment in the C17<sup>th</sup>), as well as ordinary dressmakers, tailors and boot & shoe makers. It would seem likely that the service sector in the village drew on custom from outside as well as inside the parish. Although its population peaked in 1851, before declining by more than 100 people in 1890, it was still a much bigger settlement than it had been at the beginning of the C19<sup>th</sup> and appears to have suffered less from rural depopulation during the agricultural depression and industrialisation than did many neighbouring villages.

1862 to 1874 were not good years for farmers as they suffered a whole series of very cold winters and poor crop yields.

### ***Note Book (2); entries: 1867, 1868, 1869***

The 12 year gap between the last entry in the first *note book* and the first in the second one suggests that there are missing books. Nearly all the entries in this *note book* are

in pencil. Those at the back are undated and the two dated entries are out of sequence. Some sections are illegible and there are a number of blank pages.

In May 1867 William records sales of livestock, mainly lambs, heffers (sic) and cows. The undated entries in the back of the book are mainly for purchases, of drapes, milk cows, calves, steers and heifers. In March 1868 there are records of the sale of cole (sic) to a number of people. In January and May 1869 there are records of hay sales, £76 being the largest single transaction.

It seems that William was also not averse to money lending – in April 1869 he lent £18 (not an insubstantial sum, equivalent to £2,124 in 2019) to E King.

### ***William becomes a widower***

On the 20<sup>th</sup> August 1867 William's wife, Ann, died. She was only 53. It seems that, following her death, William invited his second son, William, to return to the family home to run the farm. According to *1871 census* William (36), with Sarah (32), Mary A (10), Anne E (8), Eliza A (5) and Hannah C (1), was farming 11a 3r 0p. Their nearest neighbours were George Middleton and Stephen Shepherd i.e. this was definitely the family farm. William (61), widower and landowner, was living with them but not, perhaps significantly, as the head of the household.

In 1867 William had his first known brush with the law. According to the *Lincolnshire Chronicle*, 25<sup>th</sup> Oct 1867 William was summoned (with a number of others) to Brigg Petty Sessions "for removing cattle without a license". It's not clear what this actually meant, but William was fined 1s plus costs of 9s/6d.

### ***Sale of household goods and farm implements, May 1870***

A note book, with the dates May and July 1870, record the sale of a full range of household effects and farm implements, with the proceeds going to the Brumptions. In this book various Brumpton names are recorded against many of the entries, including Charles, William Snr, Robert and William. At this time Old Bill (William Snr.) was still living with Young Bill and his family and it wasn't until after 1871 (according to the *census*) that he moved to Vicarage Road. It's possible that, in preparation for this move unwanted effects and implements, perhaps inherited from his mother and father, were sorted and put up for sale. It's also possible that some of his wife's effects, three years after her death, were no longer needed. As far as is known the family owned, apart from the house on Vicarage Road, no other property in the village (the sale took place in Grasby) or that there had been a death in the family at this time which involved another dwelling. It's possible that these effects had come

from a rented property that a member of the family had vacated – but who? The other puzzle is - if the family already owned the sale items, why did individual members have to bid for what they wanted?

In a *note book* dated 1865 to 1877 there is a carefully written list of 116 names of occupiers of property in Grasby with, in each case, information about the owner, type of property (farm, house, land), acreage, value, rateable value and a final, unlabelled, column with figures. This list resembles very closely that produced for the parish's Poor Rate in 1826 and it seems as though the collection of some local taxes, including the Poor Rate and Highway Rate, was the responsibility of the parish. For instance the family archive has receipts for a selection of Poor Rate and Highway Rate demands signed by J Frankish and P Markham.

	A	R	P	A, R, P	R, P	R, P	R, P	
20 Kana Chas	20	4	-	20 4	3	10	10	5 1/2
21 Gellish Tho	3	3	20	10 12	-	9	-	1 1/2
22 Bennard Wm	4	3	-	6 5	-	6 5	-	9 1/2
23 Lacey Geo	2			5 10	not	5	-	10 1/4
24 Green Jas	2			5 10		5		7 1/2
25 Black Wm	2			5 5		4 15		7 1/4
26 Mumbly Jas	2			5 5	not	4 15	paid	10 1/4
27 Brumpton Wm	11	3	-	18 10	-	16 12 6		2 1/2
28	1			3 -	not	2 10	paid	10 1/4
29 Brumby Ed	1			4 -	0	3 10		5 1/2
30 Spindler Jno				2 5		2 -		3
31 Harris Jas	1			2 5		2 -		3
32 King Jas	1			5 -		4 10		10 1/4
33 Milne Tho	1			5	not	4 10	paid	10 1/4
34 Good Geo	1			5		4 10		6 1/2
35 Dixon	2	1		5	not	4 10	paid	6 1/2
36 Brown Jno	1	2		6 10		6 -		9
37 Wilson Jas	1	1	20	13 -		12 -		1 6
38 Lingard Wm	1			1		1		1 1/4

Extract from note book re Poor Rate for Grasby / Wm. Brumpton no. 27

Old Bill must have been charged with this duty around 1870. It is interesting that in this list there are two properties, both occupied by "Wm. Brumpton", one of 11a 3r 0p and one of 0a 2r 0p. If this information was compiled before 1870, the former would have been Old Bill and the latter Young Bill. There is no clue in this *note book* about the reason for the sale of effects in 1870 described above.

### ***Grasby in the 1870s***

By 1871 the number of farmers resident in Grasby had fallen from 19 to 11 and the number of agricultural workers from 78 to 62. Farmers continued to face hard times. From 1873 to 1881 the weather was unusually wet with late harvests and lower yields. In this period wheat prices fell by 29.7%, barley by 17.1% and oats by 15.7%. 1875 was a particularly bad year for falling prices and poor yields.

By 1881 William had left the family farm, was living on Vicarage Road and, at 71, was listed as a cattle dealer. There were no other residents in the household. How soon after 1871 he left his son and family to live on his own is not known. Vicarage Lane today extends from the bottom of Main Street westwards, past the church, to its end on the Owmbly/Grasby parish boundary. In the *1881 census* Vicarage Road seems to include Main Street and Church Side, comprising 28 dwellings. This makes it quite difficult to locate William's new home with any certainty. There appear to be two main possibilities:

1. At the bottom of Main Street, on the corner where Vicarage Lane meets Front Street today, is a small Victorian farmhouse which, within living memory, also had a range of outbuildings. The 1886 OS six-inch map of Grasby (*XXVIII.NE*) shows these buildings and an attached paddock or home close to the south of the buildings.
2. Manor Farm, located at the junction of Church Side and Vicarage Lane today, is not mentioned by name in the *1881 census* and no "farmers" are identified as living anywhere along Vicarage Road, other than the two cattle dealers (one of whom is William) and a poulterer.

It's difficult to see from where else along Vicarage Road a cattle dealer could have operated. Evidence provided later relating to the eventual sale Old Bill's house points strongly to option 1 above being the most likely location of the house.

### ***Did Old Bill become something of a reprobate, or simply a rather sad figure, in his dotage?***

In all probability William was a drinker for the majority of his adult life. He was also likely to have been a hard headed business man who, especially when he drank, could be argumentative and even resort to the use his fists. We can only guess at the culture of the time, but everyday life would have been often harsh and many of the characters with whom William had dealings would have been rough and ready. That said, with his educated background, William may well have been skilled in dealing with people ranging from "ordinary folk", trades people, gentlemen farmers to possibly even the gentry.

The incident in 1855 with Philip Markham shows that, even by that time, William drank plenty. The long term effect on his personality of the fight, his arrest and trial can only be guessed at. Ann's death in 1867 would have been another blow. Perhaps the move, when he left the family farm to live on his own, also affected him but, for whatever the reasons, William's antics resulted in him appearing at Brigg Petty Sessions charged for being drunk at Brigg in February 1875, in February 1878 for being drunk at Grasby, January 1880 for being drunk in Caistor, in June 1881 for drunkenness and finally in January 1881 for drunkenness, both the latter in Brigg. All these cases were reported in the press: the *Stamford Mercury*, the *Lincolnshire Chronicle* and the *Hull Packet*. He was fined between 5s/- and 10s/-, with 9s/6d costs, each time. If these were just the occasions on which he was arrested, one might safely assume that he frequently drank to excess in any one of at least three places in his later years.

### ***Note Book (3); entries: 1874-1882***

William, Old Bill, was 64 when the first entry was made, 72 with the last. There is no evidence that Old Bill was slowing down during this period. The entries in the note book would at times match the activities of a livestock dealer, at others more those of a normal farmer. There are, for instance, six pages of pencil entries relating to the buying and selling of livestock – cows, heifers, steers, ewes, lambs. Some purchases were made from "Rasen Market", others from individuals e.g. Mr Bell. Opposite one entry, in October 1874, there is a list of sales of cows and sheep, totalling £120. There are also charges made for "bulling" cows. Keeping a bull for this purpose would not have been unusual and, of course, would have provided yet another source of income.

There are also indications that William was either incurring or charging for travel e.g. fair (sic- fare?) there and back to Rasen, Grimsby, Hull and carrying e.g. 300 eggs. The term "trucks" also appears in relation to Barnetby – was this a reference to the use of the railway?

Others entries suggest that William is still being paid to undertake contract work e.g. six days cleaning out dikes (backbreaking work); work in named fields e.g. "America" (still the name of a field today), "Briggs Close" and measured in chains – this could be ploughing, harrowing etc.

Finally, there are some detailed entries which, for the moment at least, are a complete mystery. For instance, there are two pages comprising a list of 37 named farmers (one of whom is W Brumpton), against each of whom is a measurement of area (acres, roods and perches). In every case this measurement is either one or two roods. There is no further explanation provided! Equally, there are two pages of information given about lbs per

acre of clover, trefoil and ryegrass – is he buying or selling seed? There is a list of wheat and barley quantities, measured as “sacks”, 32 entries in total, with no costs attached – harvested crops?

### ***Note Book (4); entries 1879-1883***

The later entries in this overlap with dates in *note book (3)*. Everything is in pencil, the writing is less neat and there are many blank pages. These would seem to be Old Bill's last jottings.

Most of the entries record purchases and sales of livestock and hay (quite large quantities of the latter). References are also made to Louth Fair, Brigg Market, Barton Market and Caistor.

The most interesting enclosures, however, are a receipt for the purchase of land and two income tax receipts.

The receipt dated February 6<sup>th</sup> 1880 reads: *“Bought of Mr Thomas Vessey 1A 1R 5P of Paster (sic – pasture) Land situated at Owmbly for £100.0.0 Paid deposit £10.0.0”*. The receipt is signed by Thomas Vessey over an Inland Revenue 1d stamp. It seems that Thomas Vessey was an unmarried agricultural labourer living in Owmbly. In 1881 he was 67 and appears to have been living with a brother. Perhaps he sold his small plot of land to William in order to help finance his old age.

The two separate income tax receipts, both dated April 5<sup>th</sup> 1883, read: *“Mr W Brumpton Snr, £0 3s 3d”* and *“Searby, Owmbly, Mr Brumpton, £0 1s 0d”*. Unfortunately most of the sections of the forms have been left blank, information which would have been helpful in interpreting the full significance of these receipts. It is reasonable, however, to assume that the latter referred to the land bought in Owmbly in 1880.

This means that Old Bill was buying pasture land in the adjoining parish aged 73, so not much sign of him slowing down! He clearly continued with his business activities until his death three years later on the 14<sup>th</sup> July 1886.

## **PART FIVE**

### **WILLIAM BRUMPTON “YOUNG BILL” 1834 - 1898**

### ***The early years***

William was the second of six children – Charles b. 1831; *William b. 1834*; Thomas 1837-1844; Mary Ann b. 1841; Eliza Ann b. 1844 and, finally, Robert Crampton b. 1849.

In 1841 he was living at home in Grasby but, as indicated above, aged 16, he was with his ailing grandfather in Legbourne in 1851. Nothing is known about his education in the intervening years, although it would appear from later documentation that he was at least as literate and numerate as his father and, according to family recollections, also attended Caistor Grammar School.

He married Sarah Barron, the daughter of a Grasby farmer, on 17<sup>th</sup> October 1859, and by 1861 was living with Sarah and their one year old daughter Mary Ann in what would, according to the *census*, appear to be the last dwelling on Vicarage Lane. Was this the house that his father, in his later years, moved to in the 1870s, when described as a cattle dealer? If so, was it just a temporary arrangement when Old Bill was living with Young Bill's family in 1871, and that they were in the midst of a house swap? This might explain why Old Bill was not recorded in the *census* as being the head of the household on that date.

### ***Grasby is notorious for fighting women***

The photograph below is of Sarah Barron, taken sometime during the 1850s, before she married William. It is the earliest known photograph of a member of the Brumpton family; there are none which have come to light of Young Bill. The attractive, demure looking, book-loving image of a young girl, belies, by all accounts, the feisty nature of the personality behind the lens. According to the *Lincolnshire Chronicle*, February 12<sup>th</sup> 1858, "*Ann Byron of Grasby, summoned Sarah Baron (sic) of the same place for an assault, the defendant admitted the plaintiffs charge and was fined 4s/6d and costs*". The report continues "*Grasby is notorious for fighting women*". Young Bill must have been suitably impressed as he married Sarah the following year.



Sarah Barron  
circa 1850s

In 1861 William was recorded in the *census* as being just an agricultural labourer, and Sarah a dressmaker. Whether or not he was working for or with his father at this time is unknown. Charles and Robert were living at the family farm.

Working on the basis that the first four family *note books* were written by Old Bill, we have no clear evidence of Young Bill's activities during the 1860s and the early 1870s, other than his move from Vicarage Lane to the family farm after his mother died. We do know that, in 1871 at least, he was farming just less than 12 acres. One strange and puzzling entry in *note book 6*, assumed to be written by Young Bill, probably in 1881, is what are three copied out rental agreements. One is for:

*W Brumpton, land 11A 1R 35P, rental = £33; house & buildings = £5; rateable value = £29.15.0 & £4.5.0.*

This would make sense if Young Bill was at the time renting the family farm from Old Bill, a more than likely arrangement. The puzzling part is that two further rental agreements have been copied out, one for F Middleton for 17A 2R 0P @ £35 and the other for Richard Cuthbert for 12a 0R 0P @ £20. In 1881 Foster Middleton was farming 28 acres and Richard Cuthbert 12 acres. There is no evidence to date that Old Bill, or any other member of the Brumpton family, owned land farmed by Foster Middleton or Richard Cuthbert. Was this information obtained for comparative purposes – there are no formal documents in the family records of these agreements, as do exist for lettings of the family farm later in the 1880s, after Young Bill had moved to Temperance Cottage?

### ***Note Book (5); entries 1878-1880***

This note book has, inside the front cover and labelled in ink: *Wm Brumpton Junior*. Otherwise all entries are in pencil, but smaller and neater writing than in *note book (4)*.

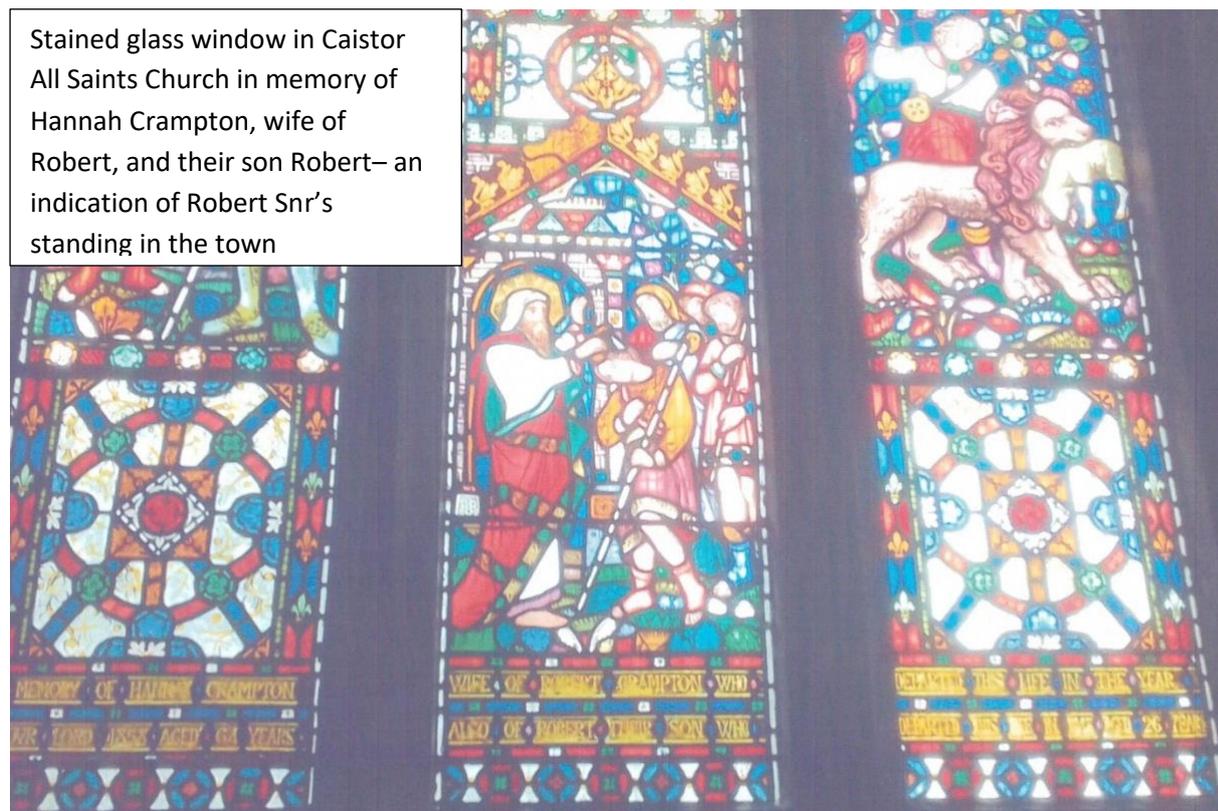
At first there is a clear system of displaying purchases on the left and sales on the right hand page. There are few dates provided. There is evidence of a considerable turnover of livestock, mainly cattle and the odd horse. There is reference to Kirton, Hull, Brigg and Caistor Fairs as well as Gainsborough. The records of purchases, sales, expenses and profits are very detailed, including worked calculations. There are also the first recorded payments "*for luck*" in this note book – a well-known traditional part of haggling. There are records of payments for items such as cakes, harness mending, payments to "*lad*" or "*boy*"- probably for minding animals or even driving them to or from a market. Later in the book there appears to be larger sums of money involved in transactions e.g. in one entry it is noted that £160 is paid for 10 steers.

An idea of the business relationship with his father is shown in two entries, firstly Young Bill: "*lent WB snr £13 0s 0d*"; in another he borrowed £30 from WB Snr. Increasing evidence of money lending activities is to be found in this *note book*. No mention of interest rates is made, either for family members or others.

The expression "*paid for trucks*" appears more and more in the book e.g. from Gainsborough. One assumes that this represents the costs of using railway trucks.

One entry relating to the family is "*Ann Brumpton commenced servis (sic) Miss Brooks, July 13<sup>th</sup> 1880*". One assumes that this referred to Ann Elizabeth, Young Bill and Sarah's second child, who would have been 17 at the time. This information is repeated in *note book (6)*. *The census* shows that their eldest daughter, Mary Ann, was in service in Burgh on Bain in 1881, before she married Francis Cooper Weston in 1885. Ann eventually married John Henry Wright.

One change in the style of entries made by Young Bill is the careful costing of more and even everyday items e.g. *licence for cart; paid boy for droving; from Crowle Fair to Barnetby Station £0 8s 4d; paid for tenting; paid for keeping; 2 shillings luck; 1 shilling treat; beef, tea, sugar; butter bread (a shopping list?); half a ton of swedes; 1 pony shoe; paid for pens; cheese; tobacco* etc. These types of entries continue in *note book (6)*.



Part way through *note book (6)* is marked a major change in Young Bill's and his family's lives in that he moves out of the family home and takes on the tenancy of another farm, although still in Grasby. This decision may have been influenced by the death of Robert

Crampton, Young Bill's grandfather on his mother's side, in 1880. William and his siblings all benefited from Robert's will – money from the sale of all his household furniture, books etc., and two tenements, a tailor's shop and two closes of land in Caistor. This inheritance may have provided William with the capital to expand his business activities.

### ***Young Bill becomes a tenant of the Holland Family***

The Holland connection provides an interesting insight into a pattern of land ownership in rural England during the C18<sup>th</sup> & C19<sup>th</sup>. It also reveals some intimate details of the relationship between a landlord and tenant farmer through 20 years of correspondence between William & the Holland family.

To date it has been possible to trace the Holland story back to Kirton-in-Lindsey in the C18<sup>th</sup>. A Draft Abstract of Title to estates in Kirton, Asterby, Waddingham, Goulceby, Grasby, Addlethorpe, Ingoldmells & Hogsthorpe, (*Lincoln Archives Misc Don 275/1/1*) dated 1833, reveals that *Mary Anderton* of Kirton left, in her will dated 2/5/1760, the above estates to *Mary Francis*, spinster, also of Kirton. This begins a fascinating line of inheritance entirely through women from 1760 to 1890. Recent studies show that about 12% of the land in England was owned either singly or jointly by women during the C19<sup>th</sup>. Where owned singly, women had far more control over their assets than when owned jointly with a man.

Other than a burial notice for a Mary Anderton, interred at Waddingham 24<sup>th</sup> April 1776, which fits the date of May 1776 when Mary Francis inherited these estates, nothing further has as yet come to light about the Anderton family.

A "Settlement" (*Lincoln Archives Misc Don 275/12/20*) dated 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> April 1779 between: "*Mary Francis of Kirton-in Lindsey, spinster, to George Healey the elder of Gainsborough & George Healey the younger of Gray's Inn. All her property in Addlethorpe, Ingoldmells & Hogsthorpe, to hold of herself till her death, then in succession to her brother George Francis & heirs & her sister Elizabeth Marshall of Beverley, Yorkshire & Heirs*". The Healeys were probably solicitors. Only three of the estates in the abstract of title mentioned above are included, but what is most useful about this document is it confirms that George is Mary's brother and tells us that Elizabeth Marshall is her sister. Another document which may prove to be of interest is *Misc Don 275/20/7 "Administrations, with related papers of Charlotte Holland & Elizabeth Marshall" 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb & 11<sup>th</sup> May 1861*.

After inheriting the estates above from Mary Anderton in 1776, Mary Francis married *John Holland* in 1780. There are records of the name Holland in Kirton that can be traced back to 1666 (Henry Holland 1666-1742). John had a contemporary living in Kirton, Henry, a

farmer, who married in 1759 and appears to have been awarded 94 acres in Kirton during the 1793-1801 Enclosure. Whether or not they are related is unknown.

As the Mary Francis who inherited from Mary Anderton in 1776 is named as Mary Holland later in the abstract of titles document, and is widowed by the time a will is written in 1810, the lands specified in the abstract make it certain that the Mary Holland in the abstract of title & the will are one and the same person. At present nothing further is known about her husband, John.

The will initially divided her copyhold estates into 3 equal parts, to George Francis her brother, Elizabeth Marshall her sister and *Charlotte Holland*. Charlotte's father was Vere Dennis and her mother was Sarah Marshall. *John Holland* (b. West Barkwith 1772) married Charlotte Dennis (b. Greetham 1785) 24<sup>th</sup> Oct 1805 in Kirton-in-Lindsey. It seems possible that Sarah was Mary and Elizabeth's sister, but perhaps deceased by 1810, hence Charlotte becoming a beneficiary? Charlotte appears to have married into a Holland family with links to Kirton-in-Lindsey as they married in Kirton 24<sup>th</sup> Oct 1805 – what would seem a strange choice as neither was born in Kirton, unless there was a strong family connection with the village. One wonders, therefore, how closely related was Charlotte, through her mother, to John Holland?

John, a farmer, and Charlotte Holland settled in Skendleby Thorpe, near Spilsby where they had four children, all girls.

The eldest was *Mary Frances Holland* who was baptised in 1807 and married John Mossop Clark in Skendleby in May 1830. John becomes the Rev Mossop Rector of Covenham St Bartholomew. They appear to have had one child, Charlotte Fanny. John died in 1876 (*Louth records*).

The next eldest, *Charlotte Holland* b.1808, married Josias Rogers Woodford (gentleman) in 1833, lived in London, was widowed in 1856 and described as a "gentlewoman" in the 1861 census. They appear to have had no children although, in 1861, Charlotte was living with Ann Holland (44), a cousin.

*Elizabeth Marshall Holland* b.1809 never married. She continued to live at home with her father, after he was widowed between 1841 & 1851, until his death, aged 85, in 1867. His death was registered in Spilsby. He farmed 190 acres in 1851 & 260 acres in 1861, almost certainly as a tenant. *Elizabeth Marshall* is central to the Brumpton story because she was William's landlady from 1881 to 1891, when she died in Worthing.

*Sarah Vere Holland* b.1821, the baby of the family, is equally important because she married *John Ballett Fletcher* at St James, Westminster, 25<sup>th</sup> September 1844. On

Elizabeth's death *William Holland Ballett Fletcher*, John & Sarah's son, became William's, and then William Thomas', landlord from 1891 to 1906.

Mary Holland, having made her will in 1810, died in Kirton-in-Lindsey Oct 1812. The will left equal shares to George Francis, Elizabeth Marshall & Charlotte Holland. On their deaths the estates went to Charlotte's three children – Mary Frances, Charlotte & Elizabeth Marshall. Sarah Vere was not included as she was not born until 1821.

*"An Abstract of title, Miss Charlotte Holland at Waddingham & Hogsthorpe, 1833; Draft abstract of title of Miss Elizabeth Marshall Holland, Miss Charlotte Holland & Rev Mrs Mossop to estates at Asterby, Waddingham, Goulceby, Grasby, Addlethorpe, Ingoldmells & Hogsthorpe, 1833"*, held in the *Lincoln Archives*, is a 44 page document which provides endless information about the ownership of the estates in the parishes above (but, notably, not Kirton in Lindsey), along with the acreages and locations of all the properties and lands within these parishes. Any attempt to untangle the full details of ownership during the period 1760 to 1833 is at present beyond the scope of this article, but information about the extent of the estates within these parishes is easier to extract and provided the following information :-

The properties and lands are described in the first part of the abstract, but acreages and locations are given in general terms only. They comprise, in total, 294a 3r 17p.

The second part of the document provides exact locations of properties and fields (using features such as highways and rivers as well as the ownership of all land contiguous with these lands) and refers constantly to new surveys. These would, in many cases, have been directly linked to the Parliamentary Enclosures and, indeed, a number of the descriptions in the abstract refer to *"staked out"* and recently enclosed fields.

It is difficult to be exact in matching the descriptions of properties and fields with the seven parishes, but it seems as though Waddingham, Addlethorpe, Ingoldmells and Goulceby held the largest acreages. The new total came to 341a 3r 19p, comprising 39 separate pieces of surveyed land, with perhaps half a dozen dwellings or farmsteads. We don't know how much land the Holland family had in Kirton in Lindsey, but this acreage represents perhaps only a relatively modest size of estate. The history behind the acquisition of these widely dispersed lands before 1760 may never be revealed.

Reference to mortgaged land in Waddingham, term 1,000 years, comes up frequently in the abstract. There's a suggestion here that Charlotte had charge of the estates in Waddingham & Hogsthorpe, and she got rid of the Waddington estate for £400? There is no doubt that by 1881 only Elizabeth Marshall had an interest in Grasby.

### ***The Holland story in Grasby***

Mary Holland was awarded 6a.1r.4p in Caistor Moor Enclosure 1811-1814. Mary Holland (devises of) was awarded 5a.0r.14p in Grasby Enclosure 1815-1844. "*Grasby as divided by Enclosure in 1815*" – map drawn by Rex Russell showing fields owned by Mrs Holland in the "old enclosures". The "*1826 Valuation for the Poor Rate*" records *Holland (Owner), Thomas Curtis (Occupier) – arable, pasture, house, barn & stable. Rateable Value £25.5s.0d; Acreage – 24a.0r.0p.*"

One assumes that there was shared interest in the estate at this time, but the Poor Rate reveals Thomas Curtis, and then his son, to be the tenant farmers based at Temperance Farm from at least 1826 to 1881, when William took over the lease.

*The abstract above does provide an exact description of the farm and its fields in 1833 :-*

	<i>A</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>P</i>
<i>Dwelling, outbuildings, yard</i>	-	1	-
<i>Home Close</i>	2	0	19
<i>"Field Piece", new enclosure</i>	3	3	36
<i>Long Close, recently surveyed</i>	7	0	28
<i>1<sup>st</sup> Close</i>	2	3	38
<i>2<sup>nd</sup> Close</i>	2	3	20
<i>Moors, 3 closes, new enclosure</i>	6	3	28
<i>Total</i>	<b>27</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>

Furthermore, "Mr Curtis" is named in the abstract as being the occupier.

Thomas (25), a farmer in Grasby, was married to Elizabeth (20) with two children, Elizabeth (4) & Ruth (2) in 1841 according to the *census*. This must have been the son. By 1851 Thomas (38) had been widowed, and was farming 30 acres and living with his two daughters, Elizabeth and Ruth. All three had been born in Grasby. By 1861 Elizabeth & Ruth had left home and Thomas (49) was living by himself, farming 25 acres and employing one labourer. Elizabeth had married Christopher Shepherd in 1855, a tailor, and they were living in Clixby lane in 1871 with three children – Curtis (13), Ruth (9) &

Harriet (5). Thomas was still on his own at No. 2 Back St., another name for Church Hill today, and still farming 25 acres. In 1881 Thomas (69) was still farming 25 acres and living by himself in *Temperance Cottage*, in Front St. (another name from the past for Church Hill today). This is the first time that the property is given the name Temperance Cottage in *the census*.



It is reasonable to assume that the original farmhouse & outbuildings existed before the C19<sup>th</sup>. It is unlikely that any more information will come to light about its history before 1826 (when the first evidence of its existence was shown in the *Poor Rate Valuation*), but according to Joan Barton (a previous occupant of the Old Vicarage), although from an unknown source, the core of the present house was built in 1866 in brick by Thomas Hollingsworth (a bricklayer & stone mason who lived in Station Road in 1861). Again, according to Joan Barton, Thomas also built the brick barns of Vicarage Farm (Glebe House & restored barns today). The plans for alterations to Temperance Cottage made in 1979 show the existing layout at the time, a rectangular building comprising, on the first floor three bedrooms, a landing and a bathroom; on the ground floor, a living room, a parlour, a pantry, a hall & wash house. What would have prompted whoever in the Holland family was managing the estate at the time to build a new farm house in the 1860s is unknown, but it was not a boom time for agriculture and Thomas, no longer

young, was living there on his own. Also, when, who named and for what reason the farm was called Temperance Cottage is a mystery.

### ***William moves into Temperance Cottage***

One assumes that William, Young Bill (46), took over the tenancy from Thomas Curtis following his death, but that Christopher Shepherd, Thomas Curtis' son-in-law had some involvement with the property in the intervening period (see below). It's interesting to note that, although notices for sales of farms by auction appear at regular intervals in the newspapers of the time, there are few if any advertisements for replacement tenants. How William was made aware of the vacancy, whether there were others interested, if references were required and an interview held are unknown.

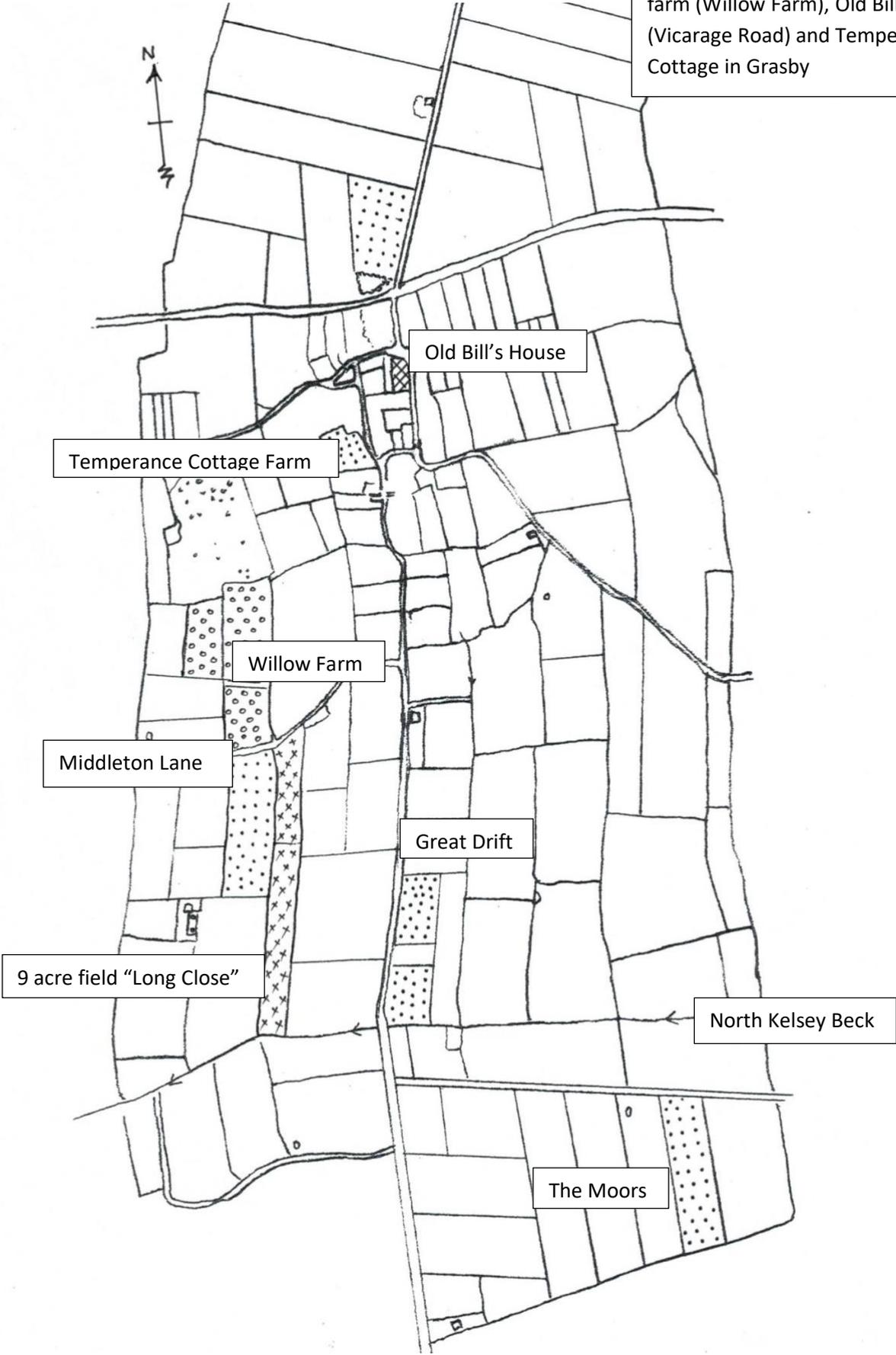
The first documentary evidence showing William's imminent move to Temperance Cottage is in the form of a letter from *John Saul Walesby (JSW)*, land agent for Elizabeth Marshall Holland, dated January 13<sup>th</sup> 1881, in which he states that he has sent William "*the agreement in respect to the farm at Grasby*". This letter is likely to have been sent to William at the family farm as, according to the *1881 census* (information collected 3<sup>rd</sup> April), Thomas Curtis is still living at Temperance Cottage and William is still farming 12 acres.

William's neighbouring farmer of many years, *Stephen Shepherd died, age 67, in 1872*. So the "*Shepherd*" referred to above must be Thomas Curtis' son-in-law. He also makes reference to two outstanding issues to be resolved. Firstly, he agrees to have the house and buildings painted in the spring. Secondly, he advises William to get a written order from the lawyer to plough the land – "*you can tell him that Shepherd is moving the straw? (word difficult to read) from the farm which will come under dilapidations...*".

"Dilapidations" in this context will be a legal issue relating to the end of a tenancy agreement. As a PS he adds "*They had better mind what they are about on account of the dilapidations – Straw, Bricks, Iron fencing, Crop ? ?*" This dispute features again in future correspondence. One can only assume that Christopher Shepherd had been making use of his father-in law's farm, particularly during his later years.

Before his PS, JSW ends the letter with "*When you have seen him (Shepherd) and examined the agreement write to me as you will require a copy and both will want signing – I must have let you the farm cheap as the value to the poor be 50£ - with respects...*" Possibly a typical comment from a land agent!

Locations of the Brumpton family farm (Willow Farm), Old Bill's House (Vicarage Road) and Temperance Cottage in Grasby



Traditionally, Lady Day (25<sup>th</sup> March) and Michaelmas Day (29<sup>th</sup> September) were the two dates on which farms changed hands. In the C19<sup>th</sup> 90% of farmers were tenants. As William had not moved out of the family farm by April in 1881, and Thomas Curtis was still resident at Temperance Cottage, it seems that he took up the tenancy on Michaelmas Day 1881. This would tally with Thomas Curtis' death, registered in Caistor in July 1881. An enclosure with another letter is an invoice for the half year's rent due March 1882. This would suggest that Thomas Curtis had already agreed to surrender the lease a short time before his death.

### ***The land agent***

John Saul Walesby was born in Stenigot, about 1811. Poll Books going back to 1807 indicate that his father was also called John Saul. By 1851 he was farming 450 acres in Ranby and married to Elizabeth with one daughter. In 1863 both he and Daniel Prime Walesby were the main farmers in Ranby. According to the 1871 census he was 60, a widower living with his three daughters and two house staff, farming 500 acres and employing 14 labourers. He gives as his address Market Stainton in all his letters to William 1881 – 1887, which is adjacent to Ranby. In 1887 he moves to Asterby where he dies 30<sup>th</sup> Apr. 1898. His estate was valued @ £943.8s.0d, not a bad sum but nothing like Elizabeth Marshall Holland's estate – see below. Like many, he had probably always been a tenant farmer himself.

John Saul follows a pattern of gentlemen farmers also acting as land agents for landowners. In Grasby, Joseph Burkinshaw was a farmer, impropiator and agent for Charles Turner and J L Fytche, a large landowner in this area and in Derbyshire. How far back the Walesby's relationship went with the Holland family would be interesting to know.

### ***The new farm***

A valuation of the farm carried out before William Thomas (Young Bill's son, always known as Tom) took over the tenancy following Young Bill's death confirms the exact location and size of its fields, bar the home close. A record of the crops grown in the fields during Young Bill's final year is also a useful insight into his farming methods.

In 1881 there were still 11 farmers and 62 agricultural labourers resident in Grasby. The proportion of the village population in occupations other than agriculture, however, had risen from 13% in 1871 to 22% in 1881, 15 of whom were in the building trade.

*Temperance Cottage Farm, fields identified in 1889 Valuation*

<i>OS Field No.</i>		<i>Acreage</i>
142	<i>Near Beck Field (New seeds)</i>	<i>2a.2r.0p</i>
133	<i>Far Beck Field (Barley stubble)</i>	<i>2a.0r.0p</i>
170	<i>Far Moor (Wheat after seeds)</i>	<i>4a.0r.0p</i>
170	<i>Second Far Moor (Seed land)</i>	<i>2a.0r.0p</i>
118	<i>The Seven Acres (Wheat &amp; Barley stubble)</i>	<i>7a.0r.0p</i>
73	<i>Top Close (Turnip land)</i>	<i>5a.2r.0p</i>
	<b><i>Total</i></b>	<b><i>23 acres</i></b>

*Farm house, buildings (OS 49 part) & Home Close (OS 39) not identified.*

The details below, provided for the sale of the farm in 1918, do give details of the home close, farm and garden, with slightly different (more accurate?) measurements for the fields (but extremely close to the measurements taken in 1833 - see above).

***Temperance Cottage Farm, Grasby, as measured 1918 in sales details:***

<i>OS Field No.</i>	<i>1918</i>	<i>Acreage</i>
39	<i>Field (village, home close)</i>	<i>2a. 0r. 2p.</i>
49 pt	<i>Farm house, bldgs., garden</i>	<i>0a. 1r. 2p.</i>
73	<i>Field (quarry)</i>	<i>5a. 0r. 38p.</i>
118	<i>Field (Middleton Lane)</i>	<i>7a. 0r. 39p.</i>
133	<i>Field (Great Drift)</i>	<i>2a. 3r. 37p.</i>
142	<i>Field (Great Drift)</i>	<i>2a. 3r. 26p.</i>
170	<i>Field (Caistor Moor)</i>	<i>6a. 2r. 13p.</i>

***Total 27a 2r 13p***

William's new farm would have been regarded as being of comparable size with the larger farms in the village, but not with those who now lived outside of the parish but farmed land both within and outside its boundaries.

***Note Book (6); entries 1880-1883 and letters to William from John Saul Walesby***

Between 1882 and 1891 a total of 30 (known) letters were sent by John Saul Walesby (JSW) to William. The first few dealt with the letting agreement, the dispute with Shepherd and acknowledgement of the repairs and improvements required. After that it was wrangle after wrangle over the work and its cost. It seems as though Thomas Curtis had allowed the buildings in particular to deteriorate badly. Perhaps he had sublet part of the farm to his son-in-law, Christopher Shepherd, when he was finding the farm difficult to manage in his later years. Christopher Shepherd (46) lived with Thomas' daughter, Elizabeth (45) and their daughters, Elizabeth (13) and Eliza (4) on Little Drift. In the *census* his occupation was given as "higgler" (someone who sells items door to door), although previously he had been a tailor.

In the first letter of 1882, dated January 8<sup>th</sup>, JSW tells William he is unable to come to Grasby this week, but will let him know when he can so that he can pick him up from the station. He then provides "an account of what is due from you", most of which has no cost given. The exception is £9 0s 7d for "The tenant right".

Mr. Brompton Grasby to Mrs Holland

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
1/2 years Rent due Mark 1882.				22	10	0
Rising Grasby.				1	2	0
Dear 7/6 duty 1/6					8	6
Tenants right.				9	0	7
Travellers bill allowed 1/2	5	10				
Rising Iron	5	5	0			
Iron Tools	4	0	0			
Valuation Brass	1	1	6			
Cash due from Brompton	22	8	9			
	33	1	11	33	1	1

Buildings 36-0-0 from days to deduct.

Rent for Temperance Cottage Farm 1882

An enclosure with this, or a later letter, however, provides a full breakdown of costs (see above). The half year's rent was £22 10s 0d. Other charges are more difficult to interpret: "Keeping, Grasby" = £1 2s;(?) 7/-, duty 1/6 = 8s 6d; "Tenant right" = £9 0s 7d; Total = £33 1s 1d.

The account also includes some one-off costs, one of which links to an entry in *note book* (6) i.e. "Paid Mrs Holland to J Ringrose for 250 4 inch (drainage) tiles @6d per hundred £0 15s 0d" March 1883 – a second transaction at a later date, but Ringrose is the same vendor.

"Keeping" may refer to a parish charge. "Duty" suggests a tax. "Tenant-right" could refer to the compensation offered to occupiers leaving their farms, with an independent assessment of the monies to be paid by the incoming tenant. As such this provided financial protection when investment has resulted in improvements to the property, such as the buildings or the land itself through draining, marling etc. Whether these monies went to Thomas Curtis' family is unknown and the evidence suggests that, in his later years at least, Thomas invested very little in the farm. The information about drainage tiles, on the other hand, indicates that William intended to invest in the farm – the custom on the Yarborough estate, also common practice elsewhere, was for the landlord to purchase the drainage tiles and the tenant to bear the cost of laying them (*C Rawding 2001*). Some allowance has been made in this account for a charge by Frankish, in the next for Frankish and Urry, blacksmith – presumably for work on the property.

### ***A very peculiar lot***

JSW wrote again on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 1882, acknowledging William's report that Shepherd had locked the gates of the field to prevent him from ploughing. He continues: "*I have written to Mr Sowter informing him that I shall hold the Committee responsible for waste or injury or dilapidations done upon the premises – you had better get a written order from the Committee signed by all the parties then you will be able to accomplish what you require (either in the House or Land)*". He finished by saying William need not tell Sowter that he had written to him, but to suggest to some in the Committee that he will not proceed against Shepherd but instead against members of the Committee.

William appears to have walked into a dispute before even taking up his tenancy. He seems to have been patient and was not only playing by the rules but also instigating formal action at the behest of JSW. This may, or may not, suggest something about the nature of his character – it would be pure speculation to suggest that his father may have taken matters into his own hands and forced his way into the field in question, lock or no lock on the gates!

No one by the name of Sowter lived in the village. George Shaw Sowter was a solicitor based in Brigg who represented the Brigg Mutual Protection Society, as well as being an agent for Norwich Union. *"The Committee"* referred to by JSW in his letter is a mystery, as was its role and powers. In an undated letter referring to some of these issues, JSW comments *"They appear a very peculiar lot at Grasby!"*

JSW writes again to William on March 14<sup>th</sup> 1882 and advises him that he can buy the iron fencing on his own account if he wishes, but *"iron is much cheaper now"* and he shouldn't have to pay much for it. From whom he is buying the fencing is not clear. Most of the letter is about a visit by JSW to Grasby to meet Mr Briggs and William for a valuation. He intends travelling by train, arriving at North Kelsey Station at 11.20 and returning to catch the 14.52. He wants recording in a book anything they(?) are liable for as dilapidations e.g. stock yard fencing, buildings out of repair, pump, well to clean out, gates ..... He also wanted to know what the fields have been sown with for the last ten years, as well as claims for any gaps in the fencing and whether any straw, hay or turnips have been removed from the pennes (sic – pens?). Finally, if not sold, he offered to buy a grey mare from William, warranted sound – at the right price! In a PS he indicated he didn't want anyone else, only Mr Briggs, to know about his visit. He confirms in a letter dated 21<sup>st</sup> March that his visit will be on 25<sup>th</sup> March.

This correspondence raises several questions, firstly who was still liable for meeting the costs of the dilapidations; was JSW newly appointed as an agent (if not, how had the farm become so run down); and when did William take up residence – was it Michaelmas 1881, in advance of a valuation, or Lady Day 1882?

As an aside, it's interesting that JSW travels by train. The nearest station to Market Stainton was South Willingham, four miles away as the crow flies, on the Lincoln to Louth branch of the Great Northern Railway (opened in 1875/76). Unless he had other business elsewhere, a journey from this station entailed travelling either south west to Lincoln and changing to the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincs Railway to go north through Market Rasen to North Kelsey or, going to Louth and then north to Cleethorpes and Grimsby, then west to Barnetby and, finally south to North Kelsey. A third option would have been to travel by horse or carriage to Market Rasen, ten miles from Market Stainton as the crow flies, and take a train from there, a ten mile journey to North Kelsey. Most of these branch lines and stations are long gone.

In an undated letter JSW advises William, if not already a member, to join an association for the prosecution of felons to help him deal with any trouble! He wants to know if William has anyone who could paint the house *"not at an extravagant rate"* and, finally, he

doesn't want to buy William's horse, at 3 years old it is too young – he is looking for one 6 to 8 years old. In another undated letter, JSW seems to indicate that the trustees (of Thomas Curtis' estate?) are *"in a fix"* about the fencing and the straw being removed from the farm. He says that they must have given him *"a great deal of liberty"*. He wants to know what Shepherd is doing with the straw – selling or consuming it? He ends by saying *"He"* (Shepherd?) has written to Mrs Holland and has got a reply before this about the farm. *"Should you see anything going wrong please to write"*.

One assumes that by April the issues with Shepherd and the "dilapidations" have been resolved as the correspondence now focusses on repairs and improvements to the property. JSW sends William a plan of the privy and coalhouse and asks him to obtain a quote, but adds that he may have to lead the materials himself. He also asks for information about the well – its depth, soil (clay or chalk?), will it need to be bricked to prevent collapse (tubbing). He also wants quotes for painting the house – two coats with boiled oil. His next letter of April 26<sup>th</sup> makes it clear that he is unhappy with the quotes he has received. William has, clearly, raised concerns about the roof of the barn and JSW instructs him to get someone to *"put some iron ties to the Balks to keep them in place until I can see them (directly)"*. One interesting point that JSW makes more than once in his correspondence is that he expects everything to be cheaper than it was three or four years previously. This suggests an economic downturn, locally if not nationally.

JSW writes again on May 1<sup>st</sup>. It seems as though William is finding it difficult to get tradesmen to commit to the building work – JSW is most sarcastic about this, suggesting that they must have *"a great deal of work.....Perhaps they would like to be (employed?) by the day"*. He is equally unhappy about the barn, saying William must get someone to put on some iron ties – *"old tire (sic) from a cart would be better than any tight(?) iron.....and then if you think it will not stand you had better prop it with wood under the Beams for if it falls it will break the tiles"*. He says he is going to Louth Fair, but will write again soon. He is as good as his word because he writes again the next day, sending William two agreements to get signed by the builders and telling him to get the work done as soon as possible. He ends the letter, grudgingly, – *"I think it ought to have been less but must submit to their value this time"*.

### ***Building works and improvements finally begin***

Three weeks elapse before JSW writes asking for a progress report, but then has to write again the next day, May 26<sup>th</sup>, as he has received a letter from William in the intervening hours. He says he is pleased William feels that there has been progress, but not only repeats his instructions about the barn, but goes further in advising him to remove the tiles from any part which might collapse. He's not entirely happy, however, as he

considers the proposed costs for painting too high *"It's only a small House and only six or seven gates"*. He goes on to say what he thinks the costs should be and that he is going to *"advertise the painting"*. He then has a go at William – *"You must be well aware my coming to look at any little job is all adding to the expense of your Landlady – most of your tradesmen I think charge exhorbitant(sic) prices for Work doing, I could have got the building now down for you for less money if I had them to do for me"*.

One has to feel for William. He is clearly very concerned about the state of the barn and wants the rest of the repair work and improvements needed carried out. Whether JSW is a typical land agent, genuinely serving the best interests of Elizabeth Marshall, or did excessive expenditure affect his fees, or was he simply a curmudgeonly Lincolnshire farmer? There can be little doubt but that William's letters were very polite and restrained.

The next letter, dated June 12<sup>th</sup>, asks William for detailed measurements of the barn, the depth of the well and the width of its top. He also says he thinks using stone from the field, instead of brick which would be affected by frost, would be the best idea for the causeway. Where a causeway is needed is not made clear in the correspondence.

After another month, JSW writes in July to tell William that he will see from the Stamford Paper that he has advertised the work to be done on the barn, pump and well and enclosed the specifications for William to show any interested party. He also advises William that until 16<sup>th</sup> August he will be staying in Banstead, Epsom, Surrey and to direct all mail to this address. After some questions about needing to take the stable roof down (JSW makes it clear that if those contracted to do the works do this it must be put back as it was at their own expense) he finally he seeks William's view on whom to award the contract. In the end Mr Charles gets the job (see below), although this is not confirmed until August 30<sup>th</sup>.

Mr John Charles, from North Kelsey, was a 33 year old builder with, in 1881, a wife and six children. In 1871 he had been a builder and grocer, in 1891 a builder and farmer. He then moved to Hull where he was listed as just a bricklayer in 1901 and a builder again, aged 64, in 1911.

**C**ONTRACTORS desirous of TENDERING for taking ROOF off BARN and putting a NEW ROOF upon same, Painting House and Gates, making Causeway and a new Well, and placing a new Pump on same, can see Specifications by applying to Mr. BROMPTON, Jun., of Grasby, near Caistor. Tenders to be delivered before the 21st of AUGUST, 1882. The lowest or any Tender may not necessarily be accepted.

Buildings Grasby

Agreement Mr. Charles  
North Kelsey.

Walls to be repaired in Barn  
Spars.  $1\frac{1}{2}$  by  $\frac{3}{4}$  for tables  
Rals.  $4\frac{1}{2}$  + 3 Plates for tables & principle Rafterns ..  
Common Rafterns 3 by  $2\frac{1}{4}$  - Ridge and Jack 7 x 1  
Lock Beams 9 x  $1\frac{1}{2}$  - Tie Beams 7 x  $2\frac{1}{2}$  properly  
secured to Wall plates with Iron Dogs.  
Door into Coo (New) 3 coats of Paint.  
Granery Tiles to be all painted  
Well.  
5 Yards deep. 4 ft. diameter -  
Pump  $3\frac{1}{2}$  Barrel Pump with  $1\frac{1}{2}$  suction pipe having oak  
standard & Till & deal casing -  
With the Well being altered you see that he get the  
length of the Horse by removing the pump to the Gorden  
of the Locked drain pipes and the drain making  
Mr. Brompton  
I have taken the particulars from the  
agreement and if you want to know any thing more write  
and I am ans  
yours &  
John Saul Walesby

Mr Charles tenders for  
the work at Temperance  
Cottage 1882

In his last letter from Banstead, JSW tells William that he will be seeing his Landlady tomorrow – 25<sup>th</sup> August 1882. On his return to Market Stainton at the end of August he asks William for the bill from the people who built the coal house (clearly not Mr Charles)

so that his Landlady can provide a check (sic) for the completed work. There is then a short hiatus until the 21<sup>st</sup> of November. There is a "told you so" from JSW about how the well needs to be completed and some strict instruction about how the gates are to be painted. The most interesting comment, however, in this letter seems to reveal a sense of humour on both sides. To illustrate the need for improved field drainage William had obviously joked that he had needed to buy a boat to reach his potato crop. Not only does JSW acknowledge the joke, he asks William for details of work that needs to be done – how many chains, number of tiles and depth of the field drains. Perhaps he wasn't so curmudgeonly after all!

The year ends with a letter dated December 12<sup>th</sup> asking about progress and expressing concerns about the pointing of tiles in such bad weather. Pointing pantiles (sometimes called pargeting) appears to have been a common practice in this area of Lincolnshire, making the roof watertight before the introduction of under felt. Modern builders are somewhat horrified by the additional weight pargeting must have added to a roof.

William writes to JSW 1<sup>st</sup> January 1883 to say the work on the buildings has been completed, but not to pay Mr Charles until he can see him – JSW's letter of January 3<sup>rd</sup> seeks a reason for this request. There appears to have been some issues about the pump and drainage (laundry pipes?). There is toing and froing into February with JSW threatening some deductions from Mr Charles' bill. Everything appears finally to have been resolved by February 26<sup>th</sup> 1883 when JSW tells William he will write to Mrs Holland for a check (sic) to pay Mr Charles £34 18s 6d. William also receives his account for a half year's rent due Michaelmas 1882, with a balance of £25 1s 1d (out of a total of £33 1s 1d) to pay into the Lincoln & Lindsey Bank at Brigg to Mrs E M Holland's account at Louth. There is ongoing discussion about the tiles William needs for field drainage.

Other than mention of getting drainage tiles from J Ringrose, none of the above is mentioned in William's *note books*. He does, however, record some expenditure for: "*machine 1 day, 6 men 1 day (18/-), woman & boy, men's meat, 6 meals, coals, beer (sic-beer)*". This could represent some of the cost of harvest e.g. "coals" would have been provided by the farmer for a thrashing machine. William also appears to have invested in some machinery, at considerable expense: "*left-hand bailer with flange face*". Cost between £32 and £35 10s 0d. Was he also at this time travelling by a new form of transport: "*Buss (sic) to Hepsworth, buss (sic) to Crowl (sic)*"? Omnibuses powered by the internal combustion engine didn't come into use anywhere until the 1890s. Was William's *buss* horse-drawn or did "*buss*" have a completely different meaning?

### ***Note Book (7); entries 1883-1888***

Entries continue in the same vein as *note book (6) in 1883*– mainly cattle dealing, the occasional horse, pig and lambs. JSW is having difficulty sourcing the drainage tiles William needs according to a letter from him dated March 3<sup>rd</sup> 1883, and as a PS asks what William has done with his turnips. In his next letter, May 28<sup>th</sup> 1883, he says *"I hope you have a better prospect for this year"*. In November he asks how William's corn turned out, has he any turnips, is the land he drained dry this year and how deep did he place the tiles? Having got through the problems with the buildings etc. the correspondence is more akin to one farmer talking to another. As a PS he asks about *"Smith the miller and Shepherd!"* – quite what he is asking about Smith is illegible, but the former must be Edwin Smith, a miller and farmer, who eventually buys Temperance Cottage farm in 1918?

More importantly, JSW in his letter of November 29<sup>th</sup> 1883, JSW says *"I hope your wife is regaining her usual state of health"*. Sarah was clearly extremely ill as she dies on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 1883. Her death certificate recorded "sugar disease" as the cause of death. Although recognised as a disease from as early as 1500 BCE, the only partly effective treatment by the C19<sup>th</sup> for diabetes was a restricted diet with reduced sugar and carbohydrate intake. We would have to wait until the 1920s for the development of treatment using insulin. Either there is a letter missing or JSW was unaware of Sarah's death when he sent William a receipt for his half year's rent due at Michaelmas.

In 1883 William and Sarah had six children, four of whom were living at home in 1881 – Eliza Ann, Hannah Crampton, William Thomas and Charles. We know that Mary Ann and Ann Elizabeth, the two eldest, were at this time both in service. When Sarah died Eliza would have been 17, Hannah 13, William T 11 and Charles 6. Sarah was only 45.

The only letter in the family archive from JSW in 1884 was in November for receipt of the half year's rent of £22 10 0 paid at Michaelmas. For William it seemed to have been business as usual. He carried out contract work for others e.g. dragging, ploughing, rolling, drilling, hoeing and harvesting, including in "America" for an E Baron. Two fields, previously named Bottom America and Top America, are identifiable today as a single field which abuts the north bank of North Kelsey Beck, the third field along east of Station Road. It was apparently not uncommon to name fields after America, and even different states in America, in the C18<sup>th</sup> and C19<sup>th</sup>.

He continued dealing in livestock, adding ducks to his portfolio, as well as wool. In September 1884 he paid £1 10s 0d to WH Coats for *"1 day thrashing"*. In the same month he had *"53 loads of manure to put on 7½ acres of old seeds for to be sown with wheat"* ("Seven Acres" was one of William's fields). He also *"Bought 3 acres of clover to be eaten"*

off by 11<sup>th</sup> Oct, paid 2s 6d on account". In November 1884 he "Bought of Ch Allison 5 quarters of wheat £7 2s 6d". There are entries recording the sale of wheat and barley, but also more contract work – "Reaping 29 acres @ 1s 6d /acre" and "Leading stone".

JSW's next letter is dated April 30<sup>th</sup> 1885, which is simply a receipt for £22 10s 0d for a half year's rent, at Lady Day 1885. The only additional costs are now Land Tax (£1 0s 0d) and Income Tax (£1 2s 0d), which appear to be included in the rent. Other charges on previous receipts appear to have disappeared. He receives another receipt in November for the Michaelmas payment.

In 1885 and 1886 William records in his *note book* payments he has made into Smith & Ellison Co Bank - £8 5s 0d, March; £35, June; £82, September; £30 March '86; £10, April. Smith & Ellison Co existed from 1775 to 1902. It was a private bank, the first in Lincoln, and issued notes from 1775. A branch was opened in Caistor in 1846, on the site of the old National Westminster Bank in Market Place today – recently closed, of course. In 1902 the bank joined the other Smith family of banks and the Union Bank of London to form the Union of London & Smiths Bank Ltd. This eventually became part of National Westminster Bank. The interesting point here is that by 1889 William was using another bank, with his account based in Brigg (see below).

In 1886 William continued to visit many local markets and fairs – Gainsborough Fair, Newark Fair, Market Rasen and Louth Fair. One wonders whether or not he was increasingly travelling by rail. In his sole letter of 1886 (May 5<sup>th</sup>) JSW informs William of his change in lodgings, moving to Asterby near Horncastle. He also says that he'll let William's Landlady know about some land adjacent to the Grasby farm which has come up for sale, but that she is unlikely to be interested. In addition, he mentions that the weather has been very cold and that they are short of keeping. His final letter, dated November 24<sup>th</sup> 1887, makes mention of a postal order for 50/- that Mrs Holland has sent to William, for which he requires a receipt.

### ***William (Old Bill) bows out***

Early in 1886 W Brumpton advertised in the *Stamford Mercury*, 19<sup>th</sup> Feb, 12 acres of good feeding land, a house and buildings with standing for 8 or 10 horses or cows, a granary over 4 stalls and a barn to be let from April. This must have been Willow Farm and in the family archives is a letting agreement to William Smith, dated May 1886 - "Rent £37, messuage & blds. 3 closes of meadow or pasture adjoining, 12 acres more or less, late in the occupation of Robt. Otter". Unfortunately, there is no other information to hand about Robert Otter, or for how long he rented this farm. His name, at least locally, has not been found in either the 1881 or 1891 census.

Another document in the family archive is very revealing. It is a receipt, dated May 1886, for William Brumpton Jnr. from Chas Brown, solicitor, "*for preparing and completing conveyance from father and completing mortgage for same to Miss Marris for securing £400 + interest*". This was just two months before Old Bill died. What is clear is that by February 1886 Young Bill had bought the family farm from his father, which he then chose to let from April 1886. Perhaps it was Old Bill who had rented the farm to Robert Otter and any supporting paperwork has since been lost. Part of Chas Brown's receipt, totalling £13 15s 0d, was for preparing the letting of the property to Mr William Smith year to year.

Another receipt from Chas Brown, also dated May 1886, is for £13 11s 10d as the charge for "*paying off a mortgage and the re-conveyance of the property to your son*". Also, for "*preparing succession duty accounts payable by your brother and you on the death of your mother*". As William and Charles' mother, Elizabeth, died in 1857 it seems that "Succession Duties" were only payable on Charles' and William's (Old Bill) deaths (or payment up until this point had been somehow delayed or avoided). Charles had died three years earlier in 1883. Whatever the reason, there is a receipt, dated June 28<sup>th</sup> 1886, from – "*Somerset House, Legacy & Succession Duty Dept. Deceased Elizabeth Brumpton. Duty: £4 10s 5d. Legatee, Successor or next of kin: W Brumpton. Description of property: Real. Stated value: £106 19s 1d; Rate of Duty: 1 £1 1s 4d; Int £1 5s 8d. Value £99 13s 1d, Rate of Duty 1 £0 19s 11d. Total £4 10s 5d*". One assumes that this was the value of the family farm in 1857.

Within the family archive are nine receipts, from Chas Brown, solicitor, for interest payments to Miss Marris November 1889 to May 1893. However, on the 18<sup>th</sup> November 1893 William pays Chas Brown the sum of £400 "*in discharge of principal and interest on mortgage of premises at Grasby to Miss M Marris*".

Two bills from *Mr Tom Smith, Physician & Surgeon, Caistor*, trace Old Bill's declining health. "*For Professional Attendance*" in May, June, November and December 1884 William was charged £22 4s 6d. Interestingly this, and further attendances in 1885 and 1886, a part payment of £10 0s 0d made in May 1885, went unpaid until May 1889, three years after his death. The final amount due was £33 18s 6d, less £10 0s 0d. The death certificate for Old Bill provides an answer to what was afflicting him - "*Senile decay*" or, simply, old age. What treatment Tom Smith offered is unknown, but it came at considerable cost. Whether the treatment he received at this time prolonged his life is doubtful, but he was 76 when he died which was more than a good age to reach during the Victorian era, and only a year or so less than male life expectancy in the UK today.

Old Bill made the first part of his Will on the 14<sup>th</sup> of May 1884. Surprisingly, at this point he had cut out William completely. He named his executors as his son Robert Crampton Brumpton and son-in-law, Joseph Good, husband of Mary Ann. Charles (1883), Thomas (1884) and Eliza Ann (1878) had already predeceased Old Bill. This left William as the oldest sibling. The estate was to be sold, either by public auction or private contract, and the proceeds to be divided into four equal parts for Charles' children, Mary Ann, Eliza's children and Robert. Only seven months later, on the 15<sup>th</sup> December 1884, he added a codicil which stated that his first Will had "*omitted the name of my son William Brumpton*" and that now the estate was to be divided into five equal parts, to include William. There is no explanation for his change of heart, but there must have been a falling out on or before May 1884. The only known possible reasons were William abandoning the family farm to take on Temperance Cottage Farm; William and his children benefitting from his father-in-law, Robert Crampton's will following his death in 1880; or something related to the death of his wife Sarah in 1883. This is, of course, pure speculation.

There is in the family archive a statement of account, settled on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1887, from Geo. R F Haddelsey, which details the costs of the Will, the codicil and probate. Taking instructions and preparing the Will cost £1 18s 2d. Sorting out probate etc. came to a further £3 5s 6d.

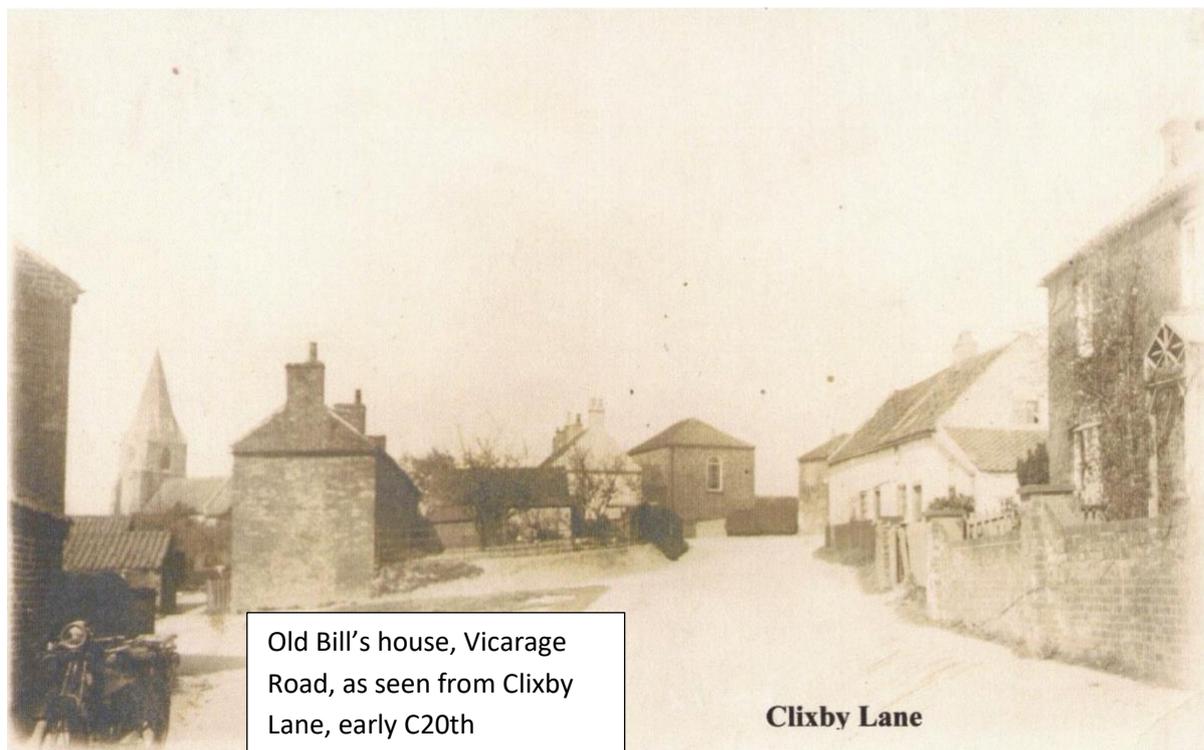
An undated list on a sheet of paper of payments made amounting to £34 2s 5½d would seem to be linked to the settling of Old Bill's estate. A clue is provided by a pencil addition "*Dr Smith £23 16s 6d*", the exact amount paid to Tom Smith in May 1889. The list comprises for the most part names with payments made, but includes information about some of Old Bill's funeral costs e.g. *Coffin £3 10s 0d* (a separate receipt from J Frankish for £3 10d 0d, in payment for the coffin, confirms this sum), *Funeral expenses £1 0s 0d*, *For arranging furniture sale 2s 6d*. There is also what are probably nursing or caring costs – "*From June 23<sup>rd</sup> to July 15<sup>th</sup> 22 days at 2s 6d per day £2 15s 0d*". He died on July 14<sup>th</sup> 1886.

### ***Old Bill's house and lands are sold***

It takes just less than two months before Old Bill's home and land is up for sale – *Stamford Mercury, 10<sup>th</sup> September 1886. "For sale: Lot 1 hse, barn, other bldgs, yard, garden, late in occupation of Mr William Brumpton, deceased, bounded by properties of Thomas Cooks & John Hines on the West of Town St. Lot 2 Paradise Close, 1a 1r 5p situate at Owmbly, in the occupation of Frederick William Stephenson, bounded by John Bennard's land"*.

This advertisement is helpful in locating the most likely position of Old Bill's house, if the street and road names given in different *censuses* can be reconciled. In the *1881 census*

Temperance Cottage is located on Front Street, whilst Old Bill's property is on Vicarage Road. Also on "Front Street", but in another part of the *census*, are: *John Hinds (26), Cattle dealer and Thomas Cook (54), Agricultural foreman*, in adjacent properties. The conundrum is - where is Town Street in 1886? It's more than possible that there were two Front Streets in 1881, one of which became known as Town Street by 1886. This information may still point to Old Bill's property being at the end of Vicarage Road as, what is more often than not known as Front Street, starts at the three-way junction of Vicarage Road, Clixby Lane and Front Street. The property believed to have been Old Bill's, being an end house, would border the west side of Front Street, as well as the south side of Vicarage Road. At the time there was definitely open land, probably comprising both paddocks and farm yards, between Front Street and, what is now, Church Hill. In fact, late in the C19<sup>th</sup>, one of these open spaces became the new graveyard for the village. Old Bill's land could easily, therefore, have been "*bounded by properties of Thomas Cooks and John Hines on the West of Town (Front) Street*". As a cattle dealer John Hinds must have had space in this area to hold cattle, even if only in a crew yard.



A receipt in the family archive from Mr Haddelsey, dated 21<sup>st</sup> May 1887, is for the completion of a purchase to Mr H J Lusby for £111 12s 0d, and a detailed statement of account from Geo. R F Haddelsey, Solicitors, "*As to the Sale of Real Estate*" to the executors of the late William Brumpton dated 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1887, confirms the quite complex arrangements required to complete the sale. These included obtaining the deeds from Miss Dawson and the Kirkbys' executors (where they were held as security),

drawing up the advertisement for the *Stamford Mercury*, selling Lot 1 to Mr Lusby, drawing up an abstract of title, preparing a draft conveyance to Mr Lusby, attending completion and Kirkbys' executors to hand over the mortgage money and interest. Finally, another statement of account shows that Lusby initially paid £12 8s 0d for the house and land in October 1886, and then the balance of £111 12s 0d in May 1887. Miss E Dawson was paid a full year's interest of £3 7s 6d for 1887 and a half year's interest of £1 13s 9d for 1887. The Kirkbys' executors were paid £43 12s 0d, for the mortgage and interest, which left £61 12s 0d for the Brumpton family to share. It's not clear why Miss Dawson had the deeds and was paid only interest, while the Kirkbys' estate held the mortgage.

According to the *1891 census*, Henry J Lusby (49) *Agricultural labourer* was living in a dwelling next to John Hinds and Thomas Cook. It seems that Henry must have bought Old Bill's House. It is annoying that the *1891 census* omits nearly all the road and street names in Grasby. In 1881 Henry Lusby lived on Clixby Lane. One may wonder how an agricultural labourer was able to find the capital to purchase Old Bill's property, but it was quite common for agricultural labourers also to be small holders in the C19<sup>th</sup>.

Paradise Close was clearly the land William purchased in Owmbly from Thomas Vessey in February 1880. There is no information in the family archive about the sale of this land after William's death.

A little black note book in the family archive, although undated, appears to record the sale of Old Bill's household effects, farming implements and livestock. Interestingly the total value of the sales came to £214 7s 11d, somewhat more than that of the house and land. Not only is each item listed, but so also is the purchaser. There are many recognizable local names, such as W Urry, Frankish, Hasnip, J Spilman, Keightely, Brocklesby, Skipworth, Middleton and Wilmore, just to name a few. All the names of the purchasers are written in small case, bar two items – "*Books*" and "*Clock*", purchased by "*W N*" and "*W.M.*" respectively, in *each case*, just the initials in capital letters. If the latter, bought for 15/-, was a longcase clock, W.M. appears to have been a member of the family as this clock has been handed down through Tom and Mirriam, to their daughter Marion Urry Brumpton, her niece Marjorie Elizabeth Scott and finally to her daughter Mary Elizabeth Scott. The clock was made in Caistor by William Pybus and the Arabic hour numbering dates its manufacture to between 1800 – 1825, and so in all probability it was bought originally by Thomas Brumpton.



**BRUMPTON FAMILY HEIRLOOM  
WILLIAM PYBUS LONGCASE CLOCK**

William Pybus, originally from Hull, was a clock & watch maker in Caistor from the early 1800s to the 1850s. Although he remained in Caistor until he died in 1861, he spent his later years as a dealer in flower pots & baskets.

The Arabic hour numbering dates the clock to between 1800 -1825

Intriguingly, the letters "W" and "C" have at some point been scratched onto the back of the clock.

There was a wide range of farm implements sold and the livestock included a cow, heifer and calf, a horse, 40 fowl, and 48 sheep. A waggon went for £7 15s 0d, the single most expensive item, sold to E Smith.

### ***An odd area of business interest for William***

In the *Stamford Mercury*, 20<sup>th</sup> May 1886 appeared the following - "Wanted, apprentice, youth 15 years, for drapery trade. Apply W Brumpton, Grasby". The following year, 20<sup>th</sup> May 1887, the same advertisement appeared, again in the *Stamford Mercury*. Sarah's mother was a mantua maker and, when first married to William, Sarah was described as a dressmaker in the 1861 census, but not again in 1871 or 1881. She died in 1883 and none of her children appear to have had any links to the drapery trade. In 1881 there were two grocery and drapery stores in the village, neither of which seem to be linked to William, as well as a number of dressmakers. Nothing to date has been found in William's *note books* to explain these advertisements. Perhaps he was acting for someone?

### ***More recognizable business activities***

William receives just two letters from JSW in 1887, essentially receipts for Lady Day and Michaelmas rents paid. William notes in his books when rent is due and also lists monies he pays into his bank, in notes and "gold". Gold would almost certainly have been in the form of coins – the sovereign, worth £1 and the half sovereign, worth 10s.

Entries for 1888 provide some detailed information about the breakdown of costs and quantities of goods handled – Young Bill appeared to record business in more detail than did his father. For instance, "Truck to Grimsby 3s 11d; toll 7d; boy 6d; wood 2s 0d; drover home 1s 3d; keeping 15s 0d". Some of these expenses are self-explanatory, others less so! In August 1888 he moved "Stones for the parish: 95 buckets, 3 stone each, 285 stones, ton cut stone £1 15s 5d". He's also leading wheat, barley and clover for J Barron. In addition, William appears to be selling meat by the lb to a variety of customers – one wonders whether he did the slaughtering himself or employed the skills of others for the job.

### ***A new tenant for the family farm***

William Smith's tenancy came to an end in 1888. A new agreement was made with Mary Ann Quickfall on the 6<sup>th</sup> of April 1888 (William Smith is named as the previous tenant in the agreement) for the all the buildings, but only two closes of pasture or meadow comprising 6½ acres. She was responsible for all costs save land tax and the landlord's property tax.

The agreement provides a clear indication of how the farm could and could not be used by a tenant. As normal she was responsible for keeping the buildings, fences, gates and ditches in good order but, in addition, she was not permitted to sell the hay, seeds or any produce from the farm "*but will in barn stack and lay upon the said premises and not elsewhere.....and consume the same upon the said premises*". She was not permitted to plough any of the fields, or even to dig a garden. One can deduce from this that the sole purpose of the farm was to keep livestock. She was obliged to carry out and spread manure on the land – an indication that livestock would have been wintered inside or in a crew yard. The agreement expressly forbade the removal of even dung from the premises. She had to bear the cost of any (cow) cake she used (not surprising) but was also responsible for the cost of any "*superphosphate or any other artificial manures so used*". It is interesting that superphosphates were already being used in Grasby in the 1880s, although the first successful formula, patented in 1842 by John Bennet Lewes, was used as early as 1843 on Rothamsted estate near London. By 1871 there were 80 factories producing superphosphates, mainly centred on Suffolk with exports made from Ipswich.

Finally, the agreement forbade the grazing of horses on either of the meadows – horses are wasteful, fussy grazers eating down some areas of a field and leaving in other parts long, rank grass. Sheep and cattle eat down pasture and spread their manure more evenly.

This agreement was all but identical to William Smith's, other than the new restriction on horses grazing. Perhaps William had learnt from previous experience! It's possible that William was making use himself of the third close or meadow.

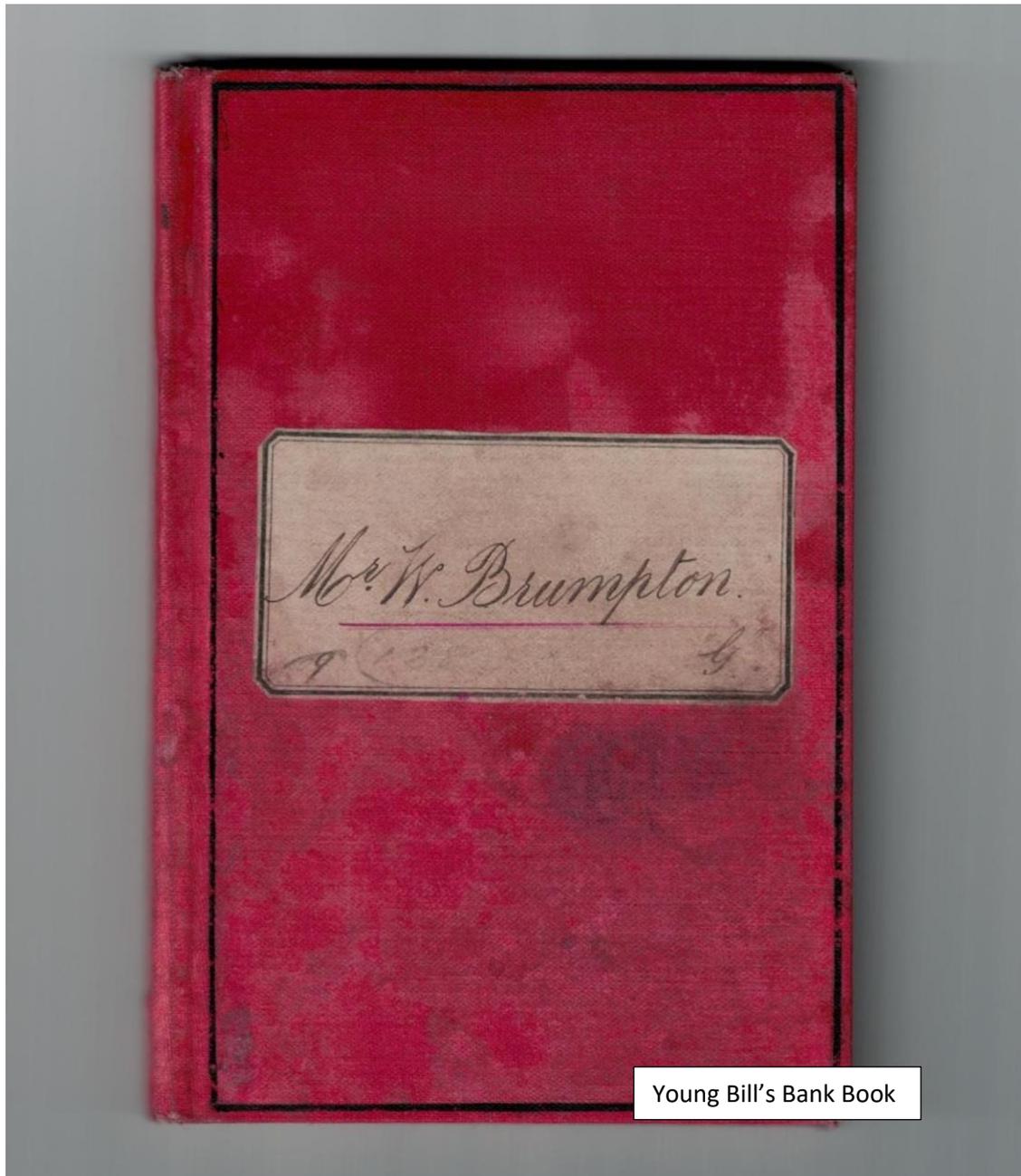
Mary Ann was born in Grasby. She married Francis Quickfall, an agricultural labourer, and they had three children. In 1871 the family was living in Thorganby and 1871 Goxhill. Francis must have died shortly after this and Mary Ann moved back to Grasby, where she took on the lease of William's farm. This was a brave move and we have no way of knowing how successful or otherwise she was, but by 1891 she was living with her children in Barnetby, where she still was ten years later, aged 60, and "letting apartments". Her children were working on the railway (hence perhaps living in Barnetby) and still living at home. They eventually moved on, however, as she was living with her second son (now the head of the household) in Scunthorpe in 1911. He was working as an ironstone miner in Frodingham.

### ***Note Book (8); entries 1888 – 1891***

William is still cattle dealing and making regular visits to markets. Having a new farm does not seem to have reduced his general dealing activities. What livestock he keeps on the

farm isn't clear, but in 1888 he paid £8 15s 0d for one ton of linseed cake. If for his own purposes this suggests that he was over-wintering cattle in a barn or crew yard.

JSW writes on May 21<sup>st</sup> 1888 to respond to a request from William to purchase lime for the fields. He wants to know from where William can purchase it and the cost per chaldron. When he receives this information he says he'll contact William's landlady.



William made regular records in his note book of payments into his bank, as well as having these payments, in and out, recorded in his bank book (see above). This shows

that William had at some point either changed banks, or opened a new account in a different bank.

D <sup>r</sup>		C <sup>r</sup>	
Mr. William Deighton "Grasby" in account with the Lincoln & Lindsey Banking Company, LIMITED. Brigg			
1889		1889	
May 7	Bank	April 13	Balance
	20		226 7 -
22	Paulson	May 16	Chq 10
	36 10		56
30	Craven	June 13	80
	10		54
June 6	Putton	20	80
	16 10		20
12	Marshall	29	Set to 30th
	54		12 4
29	Balance		
	219 19 4		
	<u>356 19 4</u>		<u>356 19 4</u>

Opening balance 1889

The Lincoln & Lindsey Banking Co. Ltd. was based in Lincoln and had eleven branches. It became part of the Midland Bank in 1913.

As the first page above shows, payments in and out are recorded using the double entry system of accounting, with debits on the left and credits on the right. The first entry, made in April 1889, shows a credit payment of £226 7s 0d – a sizeable sum with which to open an account. There is a balance figure at the end of December each year, which is carried over to the following year. His lowest end of year balance was £73 9s 11d in 1893 (the year in which he paid off the mortgage to Miss Marris) and his highest figure in 1898, the last entry in the book, was £526 1s 3d. In today's money (2019) this equates to £64,309, which is a very healthy sum. This would suggest that his wide range of business activities, over and above farming, made him a relatively wealthy man in the village.

An example of where an entry in the bank book can be cross-referenced with an entry in *note book* (8) can be seen below with £20 paid in on January 29<sup>th</sup> 1891.

Jan 19	Staniland	30	10	1891	Balance & Druggo	176	1	2
Feb 5	Quichfall	30		Jan 29	Chq	20		
19	Barin	9		Feb 5	do 10	30		
Apr 12	Knollon	19	12 9	March	Pr Chq	10		
6	Smith	12		21	Chques	112		
.	Gray	12		23	Caister	30	10	
20	Abeg	16	10	Apr 6	do	12	15	
May 12	Hunt	30		23	Chq	6	10	
14	Smith	18		May 7	do	2	15	
19	Atkinson	26		14	Notes	20		
20	Atkinson	3		"	Chq	56	16	
June 8	Hunt	23		June 1	Caister	45		
15	Campbell	88		"	Chq	90		
22	do	27	10	18	do	14	10	
25	Holland	20	9 10	30	Sub	1	11	11
30	Balance	262	16 6					
		262	8 9 1					

Jan 29	1891	Lincoln Lindsey	
Jan 29	Left	Bank	20 0 0
Feb 5	Left		30 10 0
March 12	Left		10 0 0
Caister Fair			86 0 0
Caister Fair			26 0 0
Caister Fair			30 10
Caister Market off 4			12 15
Brigg off 23			6 10 8
Brigg May 8			2 15
Brigg May 14			56 16
Brigg May 14			20 0 0

Note entries in bank book (above) and note book (below) for 29<sup>th</sup> January 1891

One example of where William made money twice over is when in 1889 he sold a pig and a heifer to, as well as collecting rent from, his tenant Ann Quickfall.

JSW wrote to William twice in 1889. On January 25<sup>th</sup> he apologised for not sending him a receipt and that he had been confined to the house recently with rheumatism in his hands, but that he was now feeling much better. In June he sends William a delightful diatribe and warning about a new policeman coming to Grasby.

### ***Without prejudice!!***

It is worth quoting direct from JSW's letter:

*" You have got a policeman come to your place not a deal of use to catch rogues – more adapted for taking beggars that have had very little to eat. I suppose he gets so much per head for them. Very fond of making out ? cases and anything to any (sic) anyone .....I have told you this as a caution". He adds as a PS "of course this is without prejudice. The Policeman came from Asterby".*

The frustrating bit is that he gives no name and there were no likely candidates, either in the 1881 census for Asterby or the 1891 census for Grasby.

### ***Trip of a lifetime?***

The most unexpected entry in *note book (8)* is for Monday 24<sup>th</sup> (?) 1889. It comprises the details of what can only be a visit to London to see the sights.

Monday – The Spanish Exhibition (held at Earl's Court between June and October 1889 and, by all accounts, a bit of a damp squib)

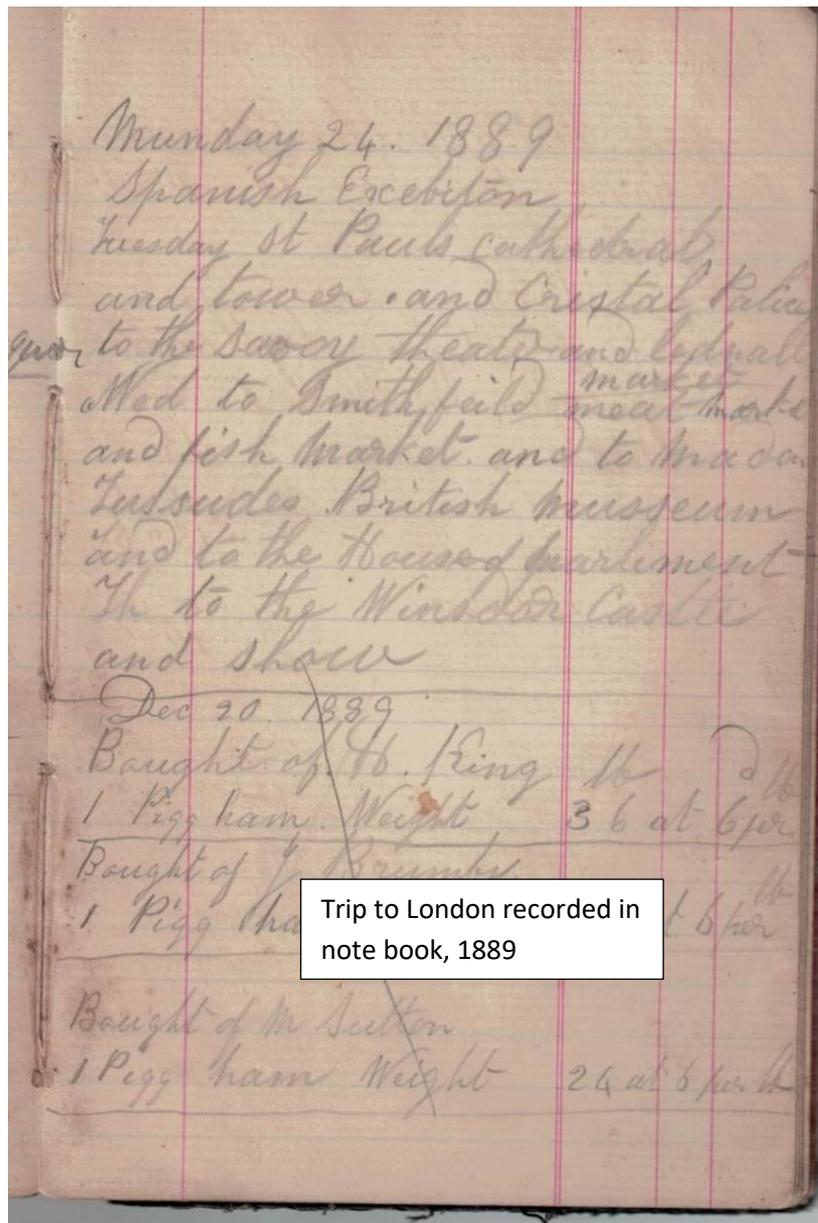
Tuesday – St Paul's Cathedral and Crystal Palace, then to the Savoy Theatre and (?)

Wednesday – Smithfield Meat and Fish Market, Madame Tussauds, British Museum and Houses of Parliament

Thursday – Windsor Castle and Show

This was a very busy schedule and begs the questions – who, if anyone, did William go with; how did he travel (by rail one assumes); where did he stay; and what prompted the trip?

The extract from *note book (8)* below suggests that the visit to London was made quite late in the year, probably sometime after harvest. One wonders how many people in this area of Lincolnshire made such visits in the 1880s.



### ***Young Bill becomes a leading light in the Primrose League***

According to the *Hull Daily Mail, District News*, 14<sup>th</sup> February 1889, William hosted the annual supper of the Grasby Polling District "Primrose League" in his barn, which he does again in 1890 and 1891. Among those present were F Skipworth and "the popular Unionist candidate Mr J Mannsell".

The Primrose League was founded in 1883 to spread Conservative and Unionist principles, and was only recently finally wound up. The primrose was the favourite flower of Benjamin Disraeli.

It's hardly surprising that William was a Conservative and Unionist, but the fact that he was actively involved in local politics points yet again to his undoubted intellect, his standing in the community and an interest in current affairs. It would be surprising if he had not been a regular reader of at least one newspaper.

### ***Elizabeth Marshall Holland dies, JSW leaves the scene and William has a new landlord***

JSW writes four more times to William, in June, July and December 1890 with a final letter in July 1891. As well as sending receipts for the rent he acknowledges William's request to have the house painted. When William sends an estimate JSW, true to form, says it is exorbitant, he could send a man from Horncastle to do the job for half the price and can't he get a wheelwright or carpenter to do it instead. He also tells William he has underpaid the rent by nine shillings. William seemed to take the advice because in his next letter JSW says he can pay Mr Frankish (a carpenter) from the underpayment. JSW remained sharp to the end! In his final letter he is querying the land tax 15s/9d and 8s/10d – "*does William have land in two parishes?*". As a final PS he adds "*I am afraid your Landlady is in very poor health*".

Elizabeth Marshall Holland died on July 14<sup>th</sup> 1891, just after JSW wrote his last letter to William. Elizabeth's estate must have passed to her younger sister, *Sarah Vere Fletcher*, although all correspondence with William from this point onwards is from her son, *William Holland Ballett Fletcher (WHBF)*.

### ***William Holland Ballett Fletcher (WHBF)***

*John Ballett Fletcher*, son of William & Charlotte Fletcher, was born on 13<sup>th</sup> December 1806, at St James, Westminster, Middlesex. John was baptised at St Marylebone, Westminster, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1807. According to the 1837 Poll Book he was living in Pagham, Sussex in 1837. He married *Sarah Vere Holland* at St James, Westminster, 25<sup>th</sup> Sept, 1844. A marriage notice in the Morning Post, 7<sup>th</sup> October 1844, read: "*On Wed 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct at Skendleby Church, by Rev. W Holland, John Ballett Esq of Woodthorpe, Lincs & Pagham, Sussex to Sarah Vere, youngest daughter of John Holland Esq of Skendleby Thorpe, Lincs*"

Woodthorpe Hall is a large brick Tudor mansion, formerly the seat of the Ballett family. It is reasonable to suggest that John's wife's maiden name was Charlotte Ballett, although the family may have no longer been extant by the early C19th. "*A Topological Dictionary of England, 1848*", by Samuel Lewis, makes mention of an inscribed stone in the wall of Strubby Church in memory of Ballot, 1431. There is a monument in the church dedicated to William Ballet, Alderman of London, late of Woodthorpe, died 1648, age 99. There are also effigies of William, his two wives and eight children. Finally there is a tablet in memory of Charles Ballett who died in 1703. According to "*Lincolnshire Pedigees*" A R

*Maddison*, researched during C19<sup>th</sup>, the Balletts had a coat of arms and a family tree which seems to end with John Ballett who died in 1755.

There is no mention of the Balletts in the 1842 White's Directory – the lord of the manor was Robert Vyner Esq and B Fletcher Esq was named as owning a "*great part of the soil*" of a parish of 1700 acres. By 1892 a Gazetteer named WHB Fletcher as the proprietor of lands. This provides the link the Fletcher family had between London and the south east with Lincolnshire and explains how John and Sarah could have met. However, William Kelk, farmer, was the tenant of Woodthorpe Hall 1851 – 1911, so it appears that John never lived in Woodthorpe, at least after 1851.

In 1851 John (44) MA, JP, landed proprietor, was living with Sarah at 2 Tilney St., Mayfair. In 1861 John (54), landed proprietor & magistrate, lived with Sarah (40) and their son *William Ballett Holland* (born 29 Oct 1852, Broadwater, Sussex) in South Berstead, Sussex).

John died on the 20<sup>th</sup> Oct 1863 in Berstead – at home in Bognor. In 1871 Sarah Vere, (50) widow, was living at Berstead Lodge in Bognor, an annuitant. On the, 6<sup>th</sup> May, 1899 Sarah Vere Fletcher of Berstead Lodge, Bognor died. Her estate was valued at £67,877 13s 10d.

WHBF appears to have taken on the duties of the landlord of Temperance Cottage Farm on the death of Elizabeth Marshall in 1891, managing this estate (and probably other estates) on behalf of his mother until her death.

### ***William and WHBF forge a new relationship***

In 1891 William was 56 and he remained a widower (WHBF was only 39). Hannah (21), William T (19) and Charles R (14) were still living at home. Hannah was perhaps running the household. How long Eliza had remained in the family home after Sarah's death is unknown. William was one of 15 farmers in Grasby (up from 11 in 1881), with 52 agricultural workers (down 10 – this suggests the increase in the number of farmers comprised mainly smallholders, some previously agricultural labourers, who ran their farms without the need to employ others). Occupations other than farming had dropped from 22% to 18% in ten years.

In his first known letter to William, dated June 1<sup>st</sup> 1892, WHBF writes from Fairlawn House, Worthing. There must, however, have been some previous correspondence because he agrees to William's request to deduct £3 15s 0d from the rent for tiles (probably drainage tiles) bought with the permission of JSW. He goes on to say that he is only trustee for the property and "*shall have to give an account in due course*". He requests that William send him "*vouchers*" in future for all deductions made. Perhaps some of JSW's final correspondence is missing because WHBF makes reference to the building of a new cart

shed at Temperance Cottage, which he thought JSW had already authorised. He goes on to tell William to get on with the job without delay and find a respectable builder to provide an estimate. Here, there is a noticeable change in tone from JSW's responses to such requests – WHBF is keen to see improvements made and wants the opportunity to provide his own ideas for the plans. He ends with *"Whatever is done I should to have it well done and of good materials, so that the same work may not have to be done a second time"*. To be fair to JSW, WHBF is viewing this work as an investment in the quality of a family asset – the perspective of an owner, not an agent. WHBF concludes by adding *"I suppose Mr Walesby has told you that he is no longer my agent"*. Perhaps JSW simply retired from the role, linked to his move to Asterby, but we'll never know whether the break with WHBF was amicable or not – he died in 1898, six years later.

Although no details are available, WHBF visited Grasby in October 1892 and was shown around the house and farm. Apart from acknowledging the payment of rent in letters in June and November 1892, in the latter WHBF agrees to the builder's estimate for the new cart shed. He also makes reference to the subject of *"returns"* (his quotation marks) – William seems to have suggested that he get something back, perhaps a deduction from the rent, for improvements he is making. WHBF's response is that improvements to the buildings and the land will make the holding more profitable. This issue clearly comes to a head in December 1892 when William threatened to *"throw up the holding"*. In his letter dated January 24<sup>th</sup> 1893 WHBF says he would greatly regret losing William as a tenant. Such matters were difficult for landowners who, if they couldn't find another tenant quickly, risked farms standing empty with untended fields which would deteriorate rapidly, becoming weed infested with overgrown hedges and choked ditches. There's no suggestion that William was being greedy as WHBF acknowledges that *"times are very bad and that last harvest was in many places one of the worst on record"*. Furthermore, he says *"I was much pleased with what I saw of the condition of it when you showed me the farm last October. My impression was that you were doing your best to keep the place in good order"*. WHBF then, one can only guess, appears to omit by mistake "not" from his next comment where he seems to say he does want to charge William a higher rent per acre than his neighbours pay, but then offers to give £10 per annum off his rent of £45 if he should be willing to *"keep on"*. If so he'll send him a cheque for £5 off the half year's rent he's just paid. William writes back on February 1<sup>st</sup> to accept the offer and WHBF encloses a cheque with his next letter dated February 15<sup>th</sup> 1893 and clarifies *"in consideration of the low prices fetched for corn and stock at the present time I will reduce the rent from £45 to £35 per annum"* starting from Lady Day 1892.

All is well when WHBF next writes on May 16<sup>th</sup> 1893, sending a receipt for the new rent of £15 7s 2d and asking if William is going to have the new cart shed built. He also mentions

the dry weather, there having "*not been a wet day since March 1<sup>st</sup>*". There was indeed a serious drought in 1893 which led to a change in growing practice on the Wolds of Lincolnshire, farmers moving from mainly wheat to mainly barley production as barley was easier to grow in adverse conditions. It was also a time when livestock farming grew in importance with, for instance, more sheep being kept for mutton (which was rapidly replacing rabbit meat).

### ***Another business interest?***

In an advertisement printed in the *Stamford Mercury*, 20<sup>th</sup> May 1892, William sought the following – "*Butcher's Business, Apprentice wanted, youth aged 16*". Charles, William's youngest son and Tom's brother, was only 16 in 1892, but on the 27<sup>th</sup> November 1896 he advertised in the *Stamford Mercury* for a position (indoors) as a journeyman butcher, offering good references. Charles must have been trained as a butcher before then – had William been running a butchery service with Charles from Temperance Cottage during this time?

### ***Bond of Indemnity***

One rather puzzling document in the family archive is a bond of indemnity dated 13<sup>th</sup> May 1893. It is from Messrs Benjamin Marshall and George Capes to Mr William Brumpton. It refers back to the indenture of transfer of a mortgage in 1882, value £160, and has been written after the death in April 1893 of the last of those named in the original agreement. The bond appears to provide William with protection to the value of £70 for a mortgage agreement to which his name was attached, either without his knowledge, or the original agreement involved Old Bill and this was insurance against any liability being passed on to Young Bill? One of the original participants was William Harrison Pearson, brother-in-law of Ann Crampton, Old Bill's wife, through her younger sister, Eliza's, marriage. This would explain Old Bill's link to the original transaction and perhaps emphasizes the willingness of the Brumpton family to engage in a variety of financial ventures to supplement their farming incomes. In the view of a local solicitor the bond of indemnity is to cover any risk that the mortgage had not been repaid after the original property concerned had been sold.

William was still involved in winding up his father's estate seven years after his death, shown by a notice published in the *Stamford Mercury*, 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1893, in which all persons having a claim on the estate of William Brumpton, late of Grasby, cattle dealer, were asked to contact his executors, William and Joseph Good (husband of William's younger sister, Mary Ann).

***Note Books (9a); entries 1893 – 1898, (10); entries 1894- 1895, (11); entries 1896- 1897***

Note book (9a) is of a different size, shape and format – a receipt or accounts book with numbered pages, not a pocket book to carry about. All entries are neat and in ink, with carefully itemised lists presented in strict date order, providing an excellent record of all types of work and transactions e.g. 300 drain pipes for Miss Holland's rep at 35/- per thousand; livestock purchases and sales; work in fields, leading manure, hedging etc. It appears to be a complete record of income and outgoings each year, almost certainly kept quite separate from the other note books. Given the writing, it's possible that these entries were made for Young Bill by another member of the family.

The cart shed must have been built (or being built) by September 1893 as WHBF encloses £21 2s 9d with his letter for its construction. He goes on to say that they had finally had some rain the night before last, only 1/3<sup>rd</sup> inch, but that he hopes "*the roots will now grow apace and the progress of the mildew be stopped*". They'd managed to take a second crop of hay in his area, but he said straw was very dear there, he'd heard "*of one dealer having sold 1000 trusses at 1s/3d while higher prices are talked of*". He writes again in November, enclosing a receipt for the half year's rent and comments on the very cold weather, but adds "*it has, however, been a splendid sowing time. The wheat has gone in early and well so that the first step has been taken towards a good harvest next year*". WHBF clearly took a close interest in farming in general.

William had sufficient hay to sell to warrant an advertisement in the *Stamford Mercury*, 15<sup>th</sup> December 1893, "*Hay & clover, abt. 2 tons superior old hay, 6 tons of clover for sale*". A dry year had probably produced a glut of hay, especially if a second cut had been achieved, which is probably why he advertises good old hay again in March 1894 "*2 tons, fit for hunters*" to emphasise the quality.

Note book (10) is a normal pocket book. The entries are mainly for livestock purchases and sales, still largely cattle but with some increase in the number of sheep, as well as the odd horse, pony and even a cart and harness. There are records of bank payments. He is still making regular visits to local markets and fairs – Barnetby, Louth and Brigg. He's obviously making greater use of the railway e.g. "*beast to Gainsborough*", but still using drovers. The entries are nearly all in pencil and not as neat as they were in the past.

The weather doesn't improve. WHBF writes in June 1894 "*We are having equally bad weather with you. There has been no warm weather here to speak of since the middle of April. The pests have done a deal of harm while the heavy rains have made the straw so long that the corn is bound to go down*". In November 1894 he wrote again to say that he is prepared to wait for the rent until the corn has been thrashed "*Times are bad. We had a*

*poor harvest and very wet weather since. Very little wheat sown as yet".* He sends a receipt for in January 1895 for payment of £17 1s 0d and adds *"I do not know that I am likely to be in Lincolnshire just at present as I am now much occupied at home. In any case I will consider carefully anything that you may write to me"*. This suggests that WHBF considers William to be sensible and trustworthy with respect to any requests he makes. Finally, he comments *"Times get worse, not better, wheat @ £1 0 0 per quarter. Fortunately sheep seem to be keeping up in value fairly better"*.

In September 1895 he sends a receipt for the rent and adds *"It is a sad thing for the country that times remain so bad for those engaged in agriculture. Some think they will mend to a very great extent before long. We should all be glad to see the beginning of an improvement. Times are so bad I must meet your wishes again by allowing a further reduction of the rent. You will remember that in 1893 it was reduced from £45 to £35. I am willing to give you another 20 per cent off, thus reducing it from £35 to £28 and shall hope to hear that this will prove satisfactory to you"*. WHBF gives every appearance of being an extremely humane landlord, but also very keen not to lose William as a tenant.

The winter is clearly no better as, when he writes again in March 1896, WHBF states that he is *"very sorry to hear of the loss of stock you have sustained during the past winter. I hope that we have now seen the worst of the bad times and that things will mend a little"*. That said, an entry in *note book (9a)* records on March 27<sup>th</sup> 1896 the sale of 48 hogs at Caistor Fair at 48s/6d - £116 8s 0d. William was keeping his head above water.

Ever resourceful, William records on September 12<sup>th</sup> 1896 *"Sold to Ransley 4 stone of pears @ 10/- a stone; 2 stone of apples @ 9d a stone"*. Earlier, in July, he *"bought of Mr J Feild (sic), Bigby, 8 acres of grass until Apr 1875, £5"*. One assumes for grazing, probably for sheep rather than cattle which tended to be kept off the fields during the winter.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1896 William advertised in the *Stamford Mercury* for *"Housekeeper (working) wanted for widr. Two in family. To manage small dairy"*. Hannah had married Thomas Markham in 1894 and was in Keelby when their son, William, was born in 1898. Tom didn't marry Miriam Urry until 1899. Did *"Two in family"* mean the two boys, or just William and one boy? We know that Charles was looking for a position in November, as a journeyman butcher. Whatever the situation, William was looking for help at home and the *"small dairy"* suggests that he was selling milk, and perhaps other dairy produce, from the farm.

On June 8<sup>th</sup> 1896 William wrote to WHBF to tell him about a proposal by the parish council to fill in a ditch outside his *"Home Paddock"*. WHBF replies, almost by return of post, on the 11<sup>th</sup> June to thank him for the information and let him know that he'd written

to the clerk for information "*as to what it is proposed to do and should his answer not be satisfactory will take legal advice*". One can only assume that this must refer to a ditch running alongside the road (Church Hill today) next to the home close as it is unlikely that the parish council would have any jurisdiction over the other boundaries of the paddock. Why the council wanted to fill in a ditch will remain a mystery as the subject doesn't arise again in any of the correspondence.

### ***The Family Farm is let again***

On the 6<sup>th</sup> April 1897 William made an agreement with Robert Keightley, farmer, to "*take and occupy all that messuage and buildings with one close of pasture or meadow land thereto adjoining situate at Grasby aforesaid and containing three and a half acres more or less*". Either there are other agreements missing from the family archive, or the family farm was unoccupied by a tenant between Mary Ann Quickfall surrendering her lease before 1891 and Robert Keightley taking over in 1897. It is notable that only one field is included in the lease this time, the other two presumably being kept for William's own use. The yearly rent was £16 for the farm and the conditions of the agreement were unchanged from those offered to Mary Ann Quickfall.

Robert Keightley was born in Audleby, near Caistor, in 1853. He moved around working for others, first to Normanby-le-Wold (where he met his future wife, Carolina), then to Searby for five years, before moving on to Great Limber, always working as a herdsman. He was 44 when he took on the lease from William, but within a couple of years he had moved to Beck House, a small farm on the "Moor" in Grasby, where he remained until his death in 1926, age 72.

### ***WHBF's final contact with Young Bill***

WHBF writes on August 2<sup>nd</sup> 1887 to thank William for the half year's rent and agrees to finding him paint for the outside of the house. William's request for new spouting for the buildings is, however, deferred until WHBF has more information about why it is required. This can be cross referenced with an undated entry in William's *note book* which reads "*1 In 80 dipp (sic) spouting for 69 feet*". WHBF ends by being more upbeat than previously about the harvest. The final letter he addresses to William is in December 1897, in which he acknowledges the deductions from the rent of £2 3s 6d for repairs and includes a cheque for £2 0s 0d towards the "*improvements you have effected in spouting the crew-yard and relaying the causeway*". WHBF's next letter is addressed to William Thomas.

Nearly a year after the first advertisement for a housekeeper a second, more urgent one, is placed in the *Stamford Mercury* on September 24<sup>th</sup> 1897 "*Housekeeper (working) wanted at once. Two in family. No milking. Comfortable home. Apply William Brumpton, Grasby*".

One suspects that William was already suffering from failing health and needed more help at home while William Thomas ran the farm and other parts of the business. The entries in *note book (9a)* for 1898 were probably made by Tom. They included records of selling a side of bacon in January; "agisting" (boarding) young horses with Mr Ward in North Kelsey; covering (mating) "Polly" with Spolton's stallion, Dove King; paying a groom's fee; "July 12<sup>th</sup> Lead 1 Truck (No. 6441) of Granite and 15<sup>th</sup> Lead 1 Truck (No. 804) of flag" – do these numbers refer to railway trucks?; two young horses moved from Mr Ward to Mr J Hill, Elsham; "Sept 8<sup>th</sup> Lent C Hall £10 0 0"; "Sept 21<sup>st</sup> Sold to Dr Leakey 12 cwt of Hay at £4 per ton"; "Sept 13<sup>th</sup> Ram to Ewes 4 first week".



Elizabeth Barron "Aunt Bess", Temperance Cottage in background

Several *note book* entries made for November 1898 point to Tom being the author. On November 1<sup>st</sup> he records – "My Wages £1; Aunt Bess Wages for a month 16s 0d; Telegraph Dr Kerr 2s 0d; Telegraph Hannah & Charley 1s 6d". Young Bill must have been very ill, hence the telegraphs to Dr Kerr and members of the family. Aunt Bess was Sarah's sister,

Elizabeth. According to the family Aunt Bess, no longer married, moved into Temperance Cottage to act as housekeeper.

On November 6<sup>th</sup> Dr Cant was paid £4 4s 0d consultation fee. Nurse Chick(?) is paid £3 5s 0d for a fortnight's nursing. Perhaps one of the most poignant entries in the *note book* is for the purchase of grapes and brandy – almost certainly for the patient. Young Bill died on November 20<sup>th</sup> 1898, he was 64.

There are no *note book* entries for 20<sup>th</sup> November, but they continue from 21<sup>st</sup> November recording normal business transactions and arrangements for the funeral, the former including "*Sheep Dipping 5/-*" on 29<sup>th</sup> November, "*Men's Wages for Thrashing 6 men 18s 0d*" and "*J Urry for Thrashing Machine 1 day £1 10s 0d*" on 30<sup>th</sup> November\*\*. There are two final significant business entries for the year "*Dec 1<sup>st</sup> Sold to W G Scholfield, Barton 21½ 2rs of Wheat at 28/6 per 2r, received £30 12s 9d*". "*Dec 8<sup>th</sup> Sold to Sandars & Sons Gainsboro 27 2rs (or 2vs)\* of Barley at 28/- per 2r Received £37 16s 0d*". There can be no doubt that Tom was on top of the business throughout this difficult period.

WHBF wrote to Tom on October 31<sup>st</sup> 1898, just 20 days before Young Bill's death, enclosing a formal receipt for the half yearly rent of £14. He goes on to say "*With regard to the encroachment by Caistor District Council the best thing probably for you to do is to refer them to me. I imagine they will not enter the premises without giving you notice*". One can only speculate about the reason for this "encroachment" – road widening, drainage, a water supply (the village pump was located just outside the entrance to Temperance Cottage)? He ends the letter with "*I am very sorry to hear that your father is in such bad health and hope that he might improve. With respect to your request to become tenant of the farm, I shall be sorry to lose your father as tenant after he has held it so many years. If however he wishes you to become the tenant in his place I think I must ask you to refer me to some one who knows you so that I may have the opportunity of ascertaining that you are as good a man as your father. I suppose you would have capital to carry on the farm with*".

\*The unit here is difficult to decipher, but the average price for wheat 1894-98 was 27s 3d a quarter, so the price of 28s 6d looks about right (the price of wheat had been coming down for years, from 56s a quarter 1867-1871). A quarter = 2 stone or 28 lbs.

\*\*See section below on the use of thrashing machines in the C19<sup>th</sup>.

### ***The Great Depression of British Agriculture***

It is worth reflecting on the fact that Young Bill's entire time at Temperance Cottage coincided with the greater part of the so-called Great Depression of British Agriculture, which is usually dated from 1873 to 1896. It was caused by the dramatic fall in grain prices that followed the opening up of the American prairies to cultivation in the 1870s and the advent of cheap transportation with the rise of steamships. Wheat prices reached rock bottom in 1894-95 at 22s 10d a quarter, the lowest level for 150 years. It wasn't just about grain, during this period the importation of meat increased by 300% and for butter and cheese it was 110%. By 1897 the area of land in the UK under permanent pasture rose nearly 20% and there was accelerated rural depopulation as farm workers migrated to the cities to find employment. Britain and Belgium were the only European countries not to introduce tariffs during this time. Subsequently, Britain became the most industrialised country in Europe with the smallest proportion of its resources devoted to agriculture.

The problems were compounded by a series of poor harvests in the early 1890s caused by droughts and other weather issues, well-illustrated in WHBF's letters to William. In previous seasons of bad harvests, farmers were compensated by high prices caused by scarcity. This was no longer the case when imports flooded in from abroad.

It was not as though British agriculture was behind the curve, the technology employed was superior to most countries in Europe, its animal breeds the best, its cropping the most scientific and its yields the highest. Mechanical reapers had come into general use in the 1870s, self-sheaving reaper-binders and mowers by the 1880s, as well as elevators. These developments reduced the need for as much migrant labour and the work of women and children (making the bands and tying the sheaves). The latter meant the loss of a "double wage" coming into many households.

Stacks were of several designs. "Pike" stacks were perfectly round, with the last course (the "mopin") drawing the stack to a point. The top was thatched to keep the rain from spoiling the crop. Each stack was designed to provide for a full day's threshing work. Other types were "humble-end" stacks, rectangular but with rounded corners, and "gable-end" stacks, with the ends resembling the gable end of a house.

Threshing, a dirty and noisy job, would normally take place between January and March. Threshing (or thrashing) sets would comprise a portable steam engine, the threshing machine, a straw trusser and an elevator. In the early C20<sup>th</sup> the cost of a complete set would range from £460 to £1,100. The provision of coal (8 to 12 cwt.) and water (200 to 250 gallons) were the responsibility of the farmer, with sufficient provided to get the tackle to the next farm.



***Portable steam engine and thresher at work in the old quarry in Grasby***  
***Source: Ifor Barton***

On arrival at a farm the engineer and mate would remove the covers, light the engine's fire and check the set's lubrication and belts. Threshing would normally start at 7.00, with a half hour break at 9.30, an hour's lunch at 12.30 and a 5.00 finish. The engineer stayed with the engine while his mate fed the drum on the thresher. Sheaves were pitched from the stack often to women who cut the bindings and passed the corn to the feeder. The straw could be stacked loose, or trussed first before being put onto the elevator (before mechanised trussers, hundreds of bands would be made in advance by farm labourers when the fields were too wet to work). If straw was to be sold off the farm it may, certainly by the C20<sup>th</sup>, have been baled on the spot using a static baler and wire bands. Otherwise, the straw would be used as bedding for livestock. The grain was bagged, in hessian sacks, and carried away to store. William T spent 1s/10s for the "*Hire of Sacks*" on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1898.

By the turn of the century Grasby had become a local centre for owning, operating and repairing traction engines. As ever, the citizens of Grasby found ways to make a living in a difficult economic climate.

Despite these innovations the UK could still not match the economies of scale created by the rapid expansion of commercial agriculture in the New World. Against this background, however, not only did William survive, but in most respects his business

flourished. When he died the gross value of his estate amounted to £1314 18s 11d, the equivalent in purchasing power to about £167,576 in 2019 (*CPI UK Inflation Calculator*).

### ***Funeral arrangements and evidence of a wake?***

Tom paid 11s/5d for memorial cards and notepaper on the 21<sup>st</sup> November, and on the 23<sup>rd</sup> 15s/- for bearers and 5s/6d burial fees. He also paid "Nurse Stonehouse £1". Payments etc. from November 30<sup>th</sup> all appear under the heading "Account of money paid by W T Brumpton and FC Weston as Exors of the late Wm Brumpton". A total of £38 7s 10½d is paid out in December, including £3 3s 0d to Dr Kerr, Keelby, for Professional Attendance on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and "Beef Father's Funeral 15s/-" on the 26<sup>th</sup>. We have to assume that the burial took place almost immediately after Young Bill's death and that the wake was held at the same time.

William T continues to keep meticulous records of payments out and monies in through to the New Year, including money for his own wages, just £1 each time.

### ***The Will, Probate, Value of the Estate, Estate Duty, Statement of Account shewing the disposal of the Estate of the late William Brumpton of Grashby***

William, Young Bill, made his will on October 3<sup>rd</sup> 1891 in the presence of Chas Brown, Solicitors, Caistor. He named William Thomas and his son-in-law, Francis Cooper Weston, as the executors of the will. Francis, a plumber and glazier, was married to Tom's eldest sister, Mary Ann, and at the time they lived on the Salisbury Estate, Fulham, Middlesex. He instructed that all his real and personal estate be sold and, after debts were paid, the residue be divided equally among all his children. At the time these were Mary Ann Weston, Ann Elizabeth Wright (Ann had married John Henry Wright), Eliza Ann Brumpton, Hannah Crampton Brumpton, William Thomas Brumpton and Charles Robert Brumpton. By the time of William's death, seven years later, Eliza had married Jack Snushall and Hannah Thomas Markham.

Probate was proved and registered in the District Probate Registry of Her Majesty's High Court of Justice, at Lincoln, on the 16<sup>th</sup> February 1899. An Affidavit for Inland Revenue gave the gross value of the estate as £1314 18s 4d and confirmed that the Estate Duty of £36 2s 11d had been paid. Tom visited Lincoln on the 13<sup>th</sup> February 1899 to pay the duty and £3 17s 0d "Judicature Fees". Rail fares to Lincoln were 7s/11d (*note book entries*) – we don't know whether or not Tom travelled there on his own. A notice to creditors etc. was published in the *Stamford Mercury* on the 17<sup>th</sup> February 1899.

## **WILLIAM THOMAS BRUMPTON "TOM" (1872-1947)**



WHBF wrote a condolence letter, on black-edged paper in a black-edged envelope, to Tom on 27<sup>th</sup> November 1898. He must have been happy with any references Tom had supplied as he says *"I shall of course be very glad if we can come to an arrangement for you to take the farm on"*. He then asks Tom if he knows whether or not his father had a lease for the farm, because he can't find one! He suspects that Young Bill *"held the land subject to the custom of the County only"* i.e. a verbal agreement and hand shake. However, we know from JSW's letter to Young Bill, 13<sup>th</sup> January 1881, that he had been sent an agreement, which had clearly been mislaid. WHBF advises Tom that he will consult his solicitor about the matter, not to bother visiting him that week because he is unlikely to be at home, but to let him know if he finds a lease.

After probate was granted the family must have moved quickly to value the various elements of the estate and to agree on how it should be divided. This was complex as Young Bill's estate comprised ownership of the "Old House and Lands" i.e. the family farm, which was mortgaged; the value of stock, implements, fixtures, farm produce and anything else which came under the heading of tenant rights at Temperance Cottage Farm; and monies held in cash and bank accounts. Furthermore, Tom wished to take on the tenancy of Temperance Cottage Farm and Hannah Crompton was living in the "Old House". One can only assume that Hannah and her family moved in after Robert

Keightley surrendered his tenancy and had gone to Beck House, so it can only have been a very recent arrangement.

The first step for Tom was to arrange for a valuation to be made of "*Live & Dead Farming Stock & Tenantrights*", by D G Briggs, of Brigg, which took place on March 3<sup>rd</sup> 1899 for "*Entry April 6<sup>th</sup> 1899*". This document warrants close, if separate, inspection as it reveals in remarkable detail a description of the farm, its lands, cropping, livestock, farm implements, typical farm fixtures as well as providing an insight into what was meant in practical terms by "tenant rights" in a tenancy agreement. Suffice to say, the valuation amounted to £145 6s 6d, less 10s/- for the stamp and award. The valuation was made *from* the trustees of the late William Brumpton *to* W H B Fletcher. The sum was then taken into account in the calculation to determine William Thomas' share of the estate.

WHBF moved quickly after this to prepare a "*Memorandum of Agreement*" dated 18<sup>th</sup> March 1899 for Tom to become the new tenant from April 6<sup>th</sup> 1899 at the yearly rent of £28. Apart from the detail it provides about the way in which a tenancy operated (the agreement runs to 4½ sides of foolscap), it is interesting to note that this is the earliest document held in the family archive that has been typewritten – easy to read but lacks, other than on the cover, the artistry and historical feel of all the previous handwritten items!

On April 10<sup>th</sup> 1899 WHBF wrote to the trustees of Young Bill's estate to acknowledge payment of outstanding rent due (the receipt is made out to Mr F C Weston) and the termination of his lease, replaced by the new let, "*with the consent of all parties*", to Mr W T Brumpton.

### ***The disposal of Young Bill's estate***

In the "*Statement of Assets*" dated April 8<sup>th</sup> 1899, the final value of Young Bill's estate was £1434 3s 9d, nearly £119 more than declared at probate. The breakdown of this sum was given as follows:

*Sale of the Old House & Lands to Hannah Crampton Markham £600*

<i>Value of drain tiles at Old House</i>	<i>£4 14s 6d</i>
<i>Valuation tenant rights to W T Brumpton</i>	<i>£144 16s 6d</i>
<i>Cash advanced to W T Brumpton, Mar 9<sup>th</sup> '99</i>	<i>£21 18s 0d</i>
<i>Amount owing by W T Brumpton for binder</i>	<i>£13 10s 0d</i>
<i>Cash in hand</i>	<i>£7 5s 6d</i>

Cash in bank

£614 19s 3d

Young Bill had a very healthy bank balance at the time of his death.

The sum of £1434 3s 9d was debited by £44 10s 3d to pay for a gravestone, the final half year's rent for Temperance Cottage Farm and executors' fees. This left £1389 13s 6d to be divided six ways, giving £231 12s 3d to each sibling. The awards to Mary Ann and Ann Elizabeth were straight forward. Eliza Ann and Charles Robert, on the other hand, each received the sum of £225 0s 0d in the form of a "*Mortgage Deed on Old House & Lands*" and £6 12s 3d in cash.

Hannah Crompton received £14 7s 6d in payment for solicitor's fees. These were for the conveyance of the old house and lands and the setting up of two mortgages, and an additional 5s 6d for fire insurance. She received "*by interest: property consisting of Old House & Land (in her occupation) less the Amount of Mortgages therein*" a further £150 and £4 14s 6d for the value of the drain tiles deposited at the old house. Finally, she received the balance of £62 4s 9d in cash.

As indicated above, Tom received the value of his new tenant rights - £144 16s 6d; £21 18s 0d cash (already received on March 9<sup>th</sup> 1899); the £13 10s 0d owing on the binder; £7 5s 6d cash already in hand; and the balance of £44 2s 3d, also in cash.

### ***William Thomas marries and there is a new kitchen range for Temperance Cottage***

Tom is quick out of the blocks in requesting a further improvement for the house. WHBF writes on 28<sup>th</sup> November 1899, from a new address – Aldwick Manor, Bognor Regis, to accept an estimate from J Mills of Searby of £5 15s 0d for a new kitchen range. For this Tom will be getting a "*good 4 ft. Yorkshire Cooking Range and a new hearth*". Perhaps Tom thought this was needed for his new wife and baby! Earlier in the year he had married Miriam Ellen Urry, Known as Nellie, daughter of Thomas Knight Urry, formerly just a blacksmith but, by 1901, he gave his occupation in the *census* as a traction engine owner. William Thomas (the 2<sup>nd</sup>) was born on 20<sup>th</sup> November 1899, just before the turn of the new century.



Thomas Knight and  
Miriam Urry,  
parents of Miriam  
Ellen

### ***Tom, interests and hobbies***

Tom had a passion for football. His *note books* are full of results and league tables and he played for Grasby. There is a photograph in the family archive of the team in 1898 with Tom, in his kit, seated on the end at the right of the picture (see below). In addition, he appeared to have an interest in betting on horse races, and even possibly running a book for locals. There is one intriguing entry in one of his *note books*, setting out the odds for



Grasby football team 1898 (Tom second bottom right)

the 1901 Ceasarewitch, a long distance flat race run at Newmarket every year since 1839. He specifically quotes "Scintillant" at 25/1 to win and 6/1 for a place. There's no knowing whether Tom was taking bets from others or simply backing the horse himself. Scintillant was the winner in 1899, but not in 1901 when it was won by Balsarroch. Whether he was placed or not is unknown, as is whether or not Tom won or lost his bet.

### ***Grasby enters the 20<sup>th</sup>***

WHBF writes for the first time in the 20<sup>th</sup>C on January 12<sup>th</sup>, enclosing a cheque in payment for the new kitchen range. He writes again on April 12<sup>th</sup> 1900 to acknowledge receipt of a cheque for rent, but questions the amount as he believes Tom has deducted too much from what he owes for the landlord's tax. He seems satisfied, however, with Tom's explanation in his letter of April 21<sup>st</sup> 1900.

Tom received an interesting letter from WHBF in July 1900 saying "*My son is now of age and ought to go on the Register, Parliamentary and Parochial, of voters for the Parish of Grasby. I am writing to ask you to be good enough to send me the name and address of the Conservative Agent for the District on the Enclosed Card*". Being eligible for the register of voters was, until 1918, based on residence and, more importantly, ownership of property and land. Had WHBF placed the ownership of Temperance Cottage Farm in his son's name, or were they both eligible to be on the voting register? He writes again in October 1900 to acknowledge receipt of the half year's rent.

The 1901 census confirms that William Thomas (29), Farmer, was living with Miriam (26) and William T (1) at Temperance Cottage, and that they had a boarder (and possible employee) living with them – Septimus Middleton (19), Waggoner. Thomas Markham and Hannah Crampton were still at the “Old House” and farming 12 acres.

The census is helpful in that it indicates whether or not someone is an employer (“own account”) or not, which gives at least an indication of farm size. The number of farmers in the parish had increased again, from 15 in 1891 to 18 in 1901. There were also 1 market gardener, 2 farm foremen, 34 agricultural labourers, 4 cattlemen, 1 horseman, 1 groom, 1 shepherd and 1 gamekeeper.

There were 8 farmers in 1901 also listed in 1891:- George W. Markham; Philip Markham; Jane P. Foster; William Wilmore; Foster Middleton; William Brumpton; Edwin Smith (all employers); and George Barker.

New farmers were:- Charles Hall, William Taplin, Samuel Spolton publican (Blue Bell) farmer and stallion owner (all employers); and William King, poultry farmer, Amos Middleton, Charles Coupland, Samuel Clarke, Thomas Markham, Anthony Barker, Robert Keightley, John Lacey, – rabbitier and farmer.

Those missing were:- William Thompson (moved to Alvington as a farmer and employer); Jonathan Barron (moved to Owmbly as a farmer and employer); John Ferraby (now a labourer in a chemical works, living in Barrow-on-Humber); Richard Cuthbert (who would have been 82); Edward Eyre (deceased, leaving widow Harriett); Mary Markham (Philip and George had taken over); John Brighton and George Clark, who do not appear elsewhere in the 1901 census.

Henry Dudding, a new name, large scale farmer and celebrated sheep breeder, was renting over 600 acres of Wold land next to Limber woods, with staff located at Owmbly Top (now completely demolished), Grasby Top and Clixby Top.

The population of Grasby had fallen to 353, 100 fewer than the high point in 1851, but less of a drop than in neighbouring villages. The number of rural craftsmen had remained fairly constant e.g. 2 blacksmiths, 3 wheelrights, and 2 carpenters and there was still a good range of retailers and tradespeople e.g. tailors, boot/shoe makers, butcher, grocer/draper and 2 publicans.

The only letter in the family archive Tom received from WHBF in 1901 was on December 8<sup>th</sup>, in which he acknowledged receipt of rent, but more significantly he says “*I am very sorry to hear that you have had such a bad season and hope that you have come to the end of your ill luck and that you may have more prosperous seasons in the near future*”.

Tom is clearly not having a successful start to his first few years farming on his own. The next few letters from WHBF, August 1902, January, and October 1903 acknowledge payments of rent, but there is no further mention of any difficulties Tom is experiencing.

Two copies of insurance policies are of interest in that they give some insight into the risks to crops against which farmers could insure. Both are for "Hail Storm Damage", one taken out in July 1903 with the Royal Insurance Company, and the other in April 1905 with the Norwich & London Accident Insurance Association. The policies cover 11½ acres of barley and 6½ acres of oats in 1903; 12 acres of barley and 4 acres of clover seed in 1905. The premiums were 9s/- and 12s/- respectively.

WHBF wrote next to Tom on April 17<sup>th</sup> 1904 to acknowledge receipt of a cheque for £25 16s 6d (a full year's rent in a single payment), but advised him that the cheque was uncrossed which was a security issue. Tom had clearly asked WHBF for new crewyard doors and an implement shed because he asked in the letter for an estimate from a carpenter for the doors, but said the old ones should be repaired if possible. As for the implement shed, WHBF said he wanted to consult his son on the matter when he returned at Whitsuntide, but even though he wanted an estimate of the likely cost he did not think all the work would be done in one year. He ends the letter *"I hope you are going to have a better year all round for the land than the last one. We are having splendid spring weather here at the present time and the trees are coming quickly into leaf"*.

Tom was clearly not having an easy time of it. On April 6<sup>th</sup> 1904 he received a reply from his brother-in-law, Frank Weston, to a request for financial help. Frank sends him a cheque for £50 and adds, *"I am sorry to know that you have need of it and hope you will have the productive autumn this year that you anticipate so that you will be able to return it and I am glad to know that you had a good year last. I am afraid there are very few farmers who can say as much."* He also wanted to know how Nellie and the children were as Tom had made no mention of them. That Tom felt he needed as much as £50 was significant, as was the fact that Frank was in a position to lend him such a large sum.

WHBF writes on June 4<sup>th</sup> 1904 to accept the estimates for both the *"fold yard"* doors (£3 10s 0d) and, perhaps surprisingly, a *"Boarded Implement Shed"* (£11 5s 0d) – both estimates from *J R Frankish, Carpenter*, and that Tom can have the work done. On November 5<sup>th</sup> he writes again to say he hopes the work on the cart-shed has been *"carried out satisfactorily and will prove advantageous"*.

A letter from Tom's sister, Mary, sent from Pontypool in August 1905 to Nellie, expresses her concern about the trouble Tom was having with his eyes. This news has been relayed to her by Hannah (it is clear that this was a close knit family that kept in regular touch by

post). She says *"I do hope they will soon be alright again, it is such a bad time of the year for him to be laid up just at harvest time"*. One way or another, things were not going well for Tom at this time. Mary was in Wales with her family for a holiday (there is no mention of whether or not Frank is with them) and says *"I think we are all better for the change"*. Again, this indicates that Frank is doing well in business and that, presumably with ever easier travel by rail, that annual holidays were becoming more popular with those who could now afford them.

On October 3<sup>rd</sup> 1906 Tom gives notice to WHBF to quit the house and farm on April 6<sup>th</sup> 1907. WHBF acknowledges this, says he is sorry that he is bringing his tenancy to an end, and does he know of anyone likely to be willing to take the farm? Tom pays a full year's rent to WHBF due October 1905.

The penultimate letter in the family archive from WHBF was written on October 31<sup>st</sup> 1906, in which he thanks Tom for taking the trouble to find and recommend a new tenant for the farm and would he please *"put me in communication with the gentleman mentioned in your letter and whom you think likely to make a desirable tenant"*. Enclosed is a letter to WHBF from Tom, written in pencil and dated October 29<sup>th</sup> 1906, in which he recommends someone willing to take the farm under the *"same terms and agreement which I have it for, he is already farming about Fifty Acres adjoining the Farm and is a very good Farmer"*. Tom receives a final receipt for a half year's rent due April 6<sup>th</sup> dated April 20<sup>th</sup> 1907.

### ***Temperance Farm is subsumed into a larger enterprise (1907)***

William Thomas recommended *Edwin Smith* to be the next tenant. Edwin was the miller in the village, but he was also a farmer. He added to his land around Mill House by renting fields in Grasby and on Searby Moor, eventually managing a relatively large farm of 191 acres.

Edwin lived with his mother at Mill Farm until she died in the 1880s. He had been married, but was recorded as a widower aged only 28 in the 1871 census. He continued to live at Mill Farm, with relatives, after his mother's death. There is no evidence that he moved to Temperance Cottage and the house was probably rented out during this period e.g. Frederick Fox, a farm labourer who worked for a miller and farmer, was recorded in the 1911 census as living with his wife and children on Back Street (a previous name for Church Hill) in a six room house, almost certainly Temperance Cottage.

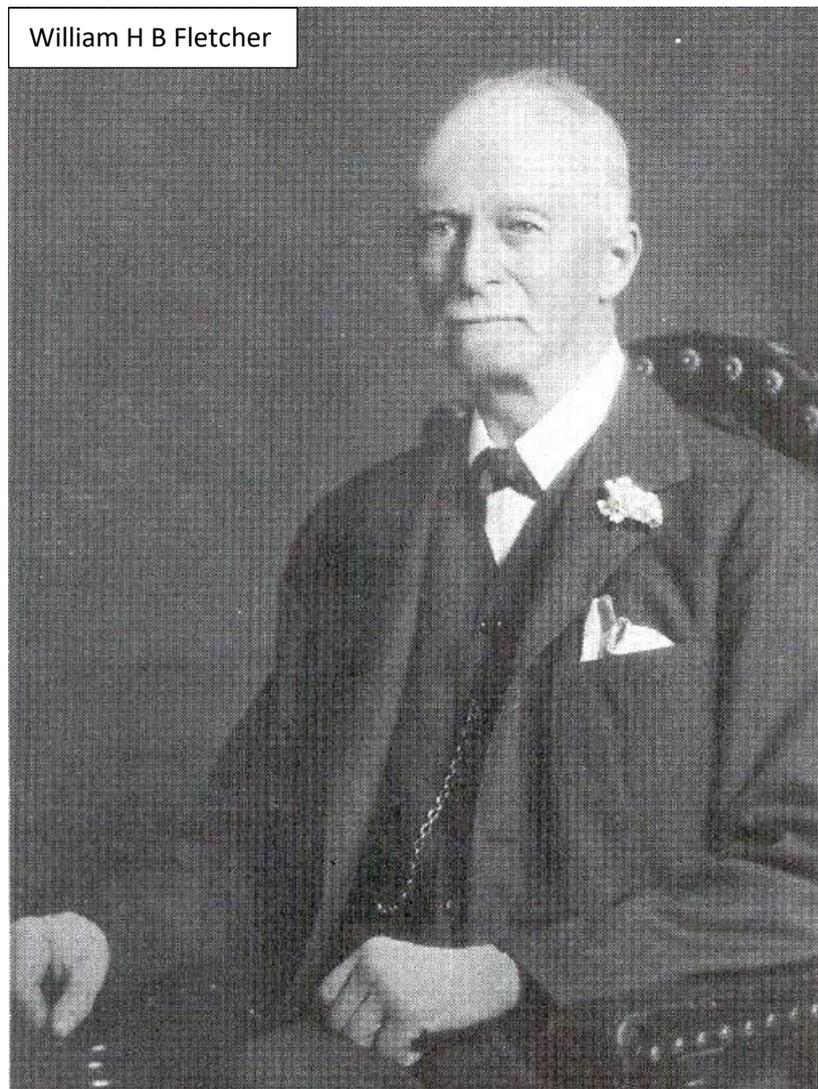
Edwin eventually married for a second time, aged 60, in 1907. His new wife, Eleanor, was only 26. They soon had a son, Alfred. Land tax returns confirm that Edwin was still renting land from WHBF in 1910. WHBF sold the house and lands to Edwin in 1918.

*Postscript - W H B Fletcher (Bognor Regis Post, Mar 2017)*

William was only 11 when his father died. He went to St John's College, Cambridge from where, in 1875, he was awarded his BA, followed by a MA in 1879. While at Cambridge he met and married Agnes Caroline Nichols.

In the mid-1870s they lived in Worthing where their two children were born, John & Edward. Edward died 9 months after his birth. From 1894-96 WHBF was Mayor of Worthing, and was also elected JP for West Sussex.

On the death of his mother in 1899, the family moved to Berstead Lodge – William immediately changed the name to Aldwick Manor as he had inherited the Lordship of the Manor of Aldwick. Aldwick is a seaside parish next to and on the west side of Bognor. Aldwick Manor is Hotham Park House today and has always been in Bognor.



In 1906 William was chairman of Bognor Urban District Council and a County Alderman in 1910. He did much charity work, but insisted on anonymity and never consented to be interviewed about his work. He had a lifelong interest in woodland and planting, working closely with Kew Gardens. Agnes was a life fellow of Zoological Society of London, with a special interest in reptiles – she had a large collection of snakes!

Their son John was killed in France in May 1915. Both William & Agnes became virtual recluses after this. Agnes died in 1939 and William in 1941, which ended the private ownership of the house and park. His estate was divided between three hospitals. He was buried at North Mundham (a parish just to the west of Bognor), without a headstone (one has since been provided in 1980 by Bognor Local Historical Society).

It seems his father originally took over the house, so we must assume that his mother, Sarah Vere, lived there for most of her life and until her death.

The house was built by Sir Richard Hotham in 1792, the founder of Bognor Regis. William developed the park, which was farmland in Sir Richard's time. The park is 22 acres and now belongs to the town – the only large park in Bognor. It was badly damaged by the 1987 hurricane, but the remnants of William's fine tree collection remain. The house is still intact, grade II listed and privately owned.

### ***A new business, a new life, the end of an era for the family in Grasby***

Entries in Tom's *note books* indicate that he was following a very similar business model to that practised by his father. For various reasons, however, things were not working out for him in the way he would have wanted. Farming was still in the doldrums and the evidence suggests that his eye problem was both serious and debilitating.

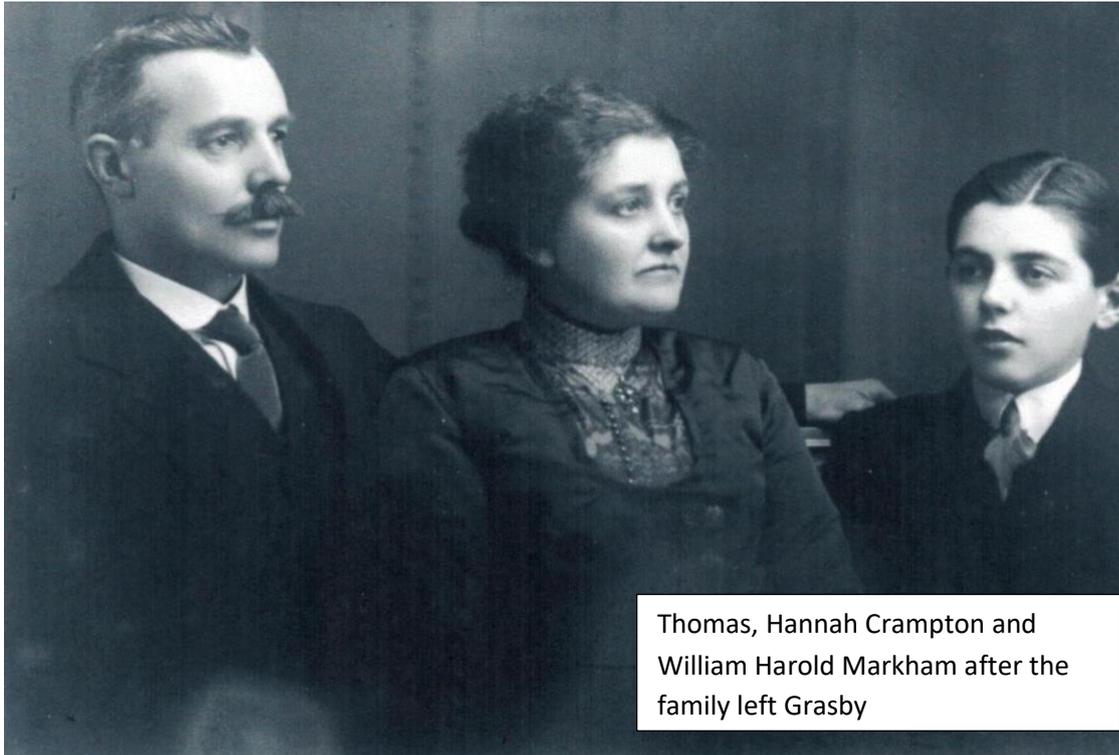
He was under the care of Mr C Rockliffe, Consulting Ophthalmic Surgeon, Hull Royal Infirmary, from 1906 to 1907, and underwent an Iridectomy to treat Relapsing Iritis. He was examined again at some point after he moved to Scunthorpe, where the same surgeon reported that he had had several relapses, of a less serious form, since the operation, whereby the slightest draught caused irritation. He was by this time also troubled by Gouty Conjunctivitis. A remarkable final comment in this report states "*Field (of vision?) contracted below outer side. Corealysis caused by unruly behaviour during the operation*". One assumes that this means that Tom struggled and had great difficulty holding his head still during the operation! There are no recommendations in this report, although there are several copies of prescriptions in the family archive which were probably treatments for these conditions. Being outside, particularly in windy and dusty conditions, would have been particularly difficult for Tom and this is likely to have been a strong factor in his decision to find an alternative occupation to farming.

Before 1911 Thomas and Hannah Markham sold Willow Farm and moved to Queen Street, Gainsborough. The farm appears to have been bought by T J White from Alkborough and, according to the 1910 land tax assessment, was being farmed by William Hatliffe. By the 1940s Mr H O Burnett was renting the 12 acres from Mrs Marshall of Cleethorpes. After the War, Mr Burnett acquired Pond Farm from the last surviving member of the Grasby Middleton family. His son, Tony Burnett, took over from his father on his death where he still farms today (2020).



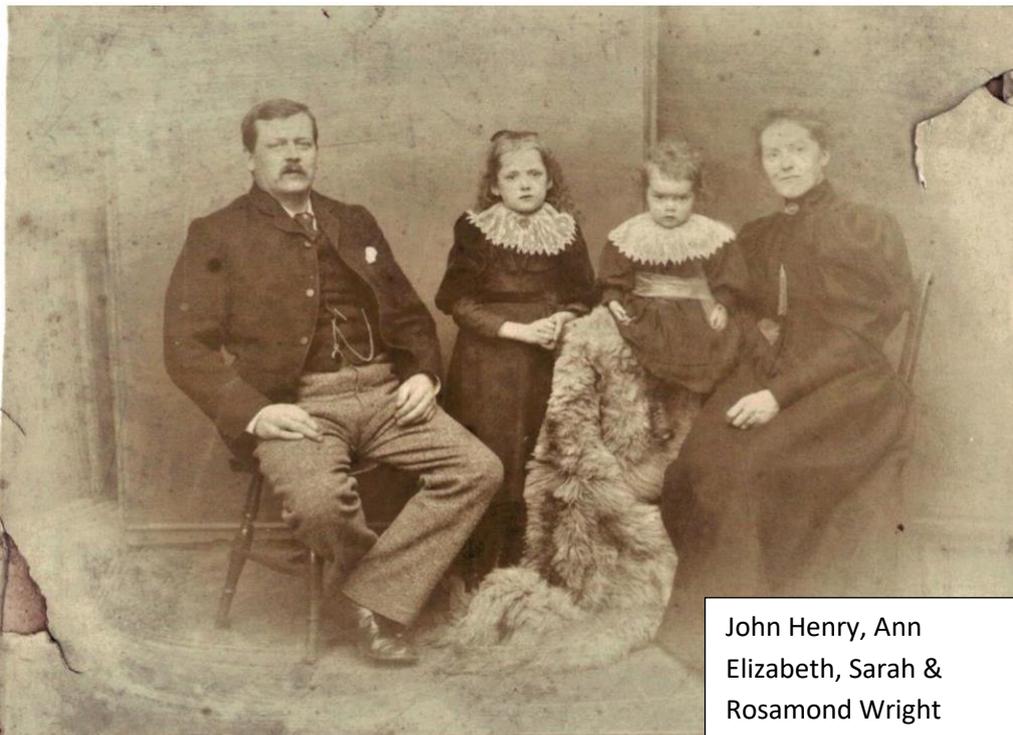
A sad looking Willow Farm, shortly before its demolition early in the C21st

A new private dwelling was built on the site of the demolished Willow Farm following its demolition early in the C21<sup>st</sup>.



Thomas, Hannah Crampton and William Harold Markham after the family left Grasby

Initially, Tom moved with his family to Hove, probably to here because his brother-in-law, John Wright, had a business in Portsmouth. John was already a successful botanical brewer and it was from him that Tom learnt his new trade, whilst still in Grasby.



John Henry, Ann Elizabeth, Sarah & Rosamond Wright

It wasn't too long, however, before Tom moved back north to live in Scunthorpe to allow his wife, Nellie, to look after her ailing mother. He set up "Brumpton's Mineral Waters" in West Street, before moving to Normanby Road in 1938. This proved to be extremely successful and the business was carried on by his son, another William Thomas Brumpton, and his daughter, Marion Urry Brumpton, after his death in 1947. The business was eventually sold to Riley's Crisps in 1963.

