

Recollections.

About the year 1818, John Tuke, a member of the prominent York Quaker family and steward to Lady Headley, persuaded his brother William and brother-in-law David Priestman to enter into a farming partnership at Headley Hall. William and his wife continued to live at Thirsk but their daughter, who was then in her late twenties, moved to Headley as house-keeper. "She had refined tastes and was fond of having pretty surroundings....very clever and well-informed though rather romantic." Although popular with her friends and relations, she outraged them by marrying a man outside the Society Of Friends. Her husband was George Riccalton, a dark handsome Scot who was some years younger than herself. Despite the wedding taking place in Bramham church "...which in that day was regarded with horror by the Quakers," the couple were not cut off by the family, as was usual in such cases. They lived at Headley Hall, where three of their children were born. The farm was not a financial success so Priestman withdrew after six years and the Tukes moved down from Thirsk to help Riccalton, who now took on Toulston Farm too. His second daughter, Gulielma, has left a delightful account of her birth-place and childhood there. The Riccaltons moved to Toulston but the children spent most of their time with their grand-parents at Headley. The house was old and plain, with very thick walls, dark floors and beams. There were six rooms on the ground floor although the two rooms at the back were only one storey high. The front door, then in the middle of the front, opened into a passage. The two rooms on the left

were kitchens; the first on the right was panelled and painted green. Through it was a larger room with a stone floor, known as The Stone Parlour. "It had niches in the walls and had been the chapel of the monks." The entrance to the kitchens from the outside was through a very old door studded with nails. An old, solid oak staircase led up from the kitchens. The two ponds were opposite the front door and at the side of the house were the kitchen garden and a large orchard, all surrounded by an old stone wall "in which were some steps, probably the only entrance originally." The orchard was full of fruit trees, mistletoe and daffodils in spring.

"There was a hedge almost entirely overgrown with ivy, the stems of which must have been extremely ancient, they were so thick. At the foot of this hedge was the most wonderful growth of blue columbines. My grandmother and I once took shelter from a storm under this thick ivy, and I remember what a pattering the rain made upon the leaves and her pasteboard bonnet..... Our friends from York used to think it was a most beautiful and curious place."

Within a few more years the Tukes had divided Headley into farms and let one to Jonathan Gibson. The house, too, was divided with the Stone Parlour becoming part of the servant's quarters. The elder Tukes moved to Strensall, in the firm but mistaken belief that money was to be made from 'improving' marginal and waste land. They then took Gulielma to live there with them: "This was my first visit to York, indeed I had never seen a town before, having always lived in the country," she explained. She also recorded many reminiscences of Toulston, including a visit made there by the Duke of Wellington and her parents rushing off to watch Bramham Hall (now Park) burn down.

Ecclesiastical District of

City or Borough of

Town of

Village of
Bramham

Name and Surname of each Person who abode in the house, on the Night of the 30th March, 1851	Relation to Head of Family	Age of		Rank, Profession, or Occupation	Where Born
		Males	Females		
Johnathan Gibson	Head	Man	65	Farmer of 32 8 ac Employ ^d 6 Labourers	Durham Bellingham
Mary D ^o	Wife	Man	57	Farmer's Wife	D ^o Staindrop
Jane Hammond	Visitor	Widow	72		D ^o Bellingham
Mary Nicholson	Servant	U	53	House Servant	D ^o Staindrop
Sarah Conell	D ^o	U	17	D ^o	Yorkshire Aberford
Thomas Luty	D ^o	Man	30	Farm Servant	D ^o Garforth
William Hawkin	D ^o	U	24	Blacksmith	D ^o Thiburn
Matthew Stead	D ^o	U	19	Farm Servant	D ^o Tadcaster
Henry Cundle	D ^o	U	18	D ^o	D ^o Bramham
George Mannes	D ^o	U	17	D ^o	D ^o Baildoy
Thomas Stead	D ^o	Man	24	Shepherd	D ^o Tadcaster
Elizabeth Stead	Servant	Man	21		Yorkshire Torsval

From the Census Return of 1851: Headley Hall occupants.

Gibson remained at Headley until 1859, having taken both parts over when the Tukes left. Full details of every-one living there are to be found in the 1851 census returns. The number of workers is surprisingly small, but there was probably a good deal of seasonal labour, too.

When the Gibsons retired and moved to Bramham a new family came to Headley Hall and this, too, is charmingly recorded in a letter:

"...then in the process of time Uncle Frank took Harold Strickland to Epworth to help to fill the gap that death had made in his house, then a lapse of about four to five years and Uncle Frank began to contemplate matrimony and had found a bird ready to share the nest with him....and then Headley Hall came into sight, the result being that on October 2nd 1859 he brought....a poled wagon and four horses -a pair of grey wheelers and a pair of blacks - loaded with seed-corn, a few farm implements and tools and a small chest of drawers containing his wardrobe....the journey was of about 40 miles....then on the 9th November the valuers valued Headley Hall and passed it over from Mr Jonathan Gibson the tenant to Mr Samuel Strickland, your grandfather, who put down a four figure instalment of valuation....we i.e. grandfather, grandmother and I came to Headley Hall and brought a domestic servant, Mary Gillian....."

The exact relationships of those mentioned are not clear, but it seems that Strickland took Headley so that his brother and his second wife would not have to share the family farm with him.

The place passed from tenant to tenant but remained in the hands of the same landlord until 1903, when the Headley family sold out. They had given up the Biggin estate many years earlier and they now disposed of their remaining properties in the Bramham area. Apart from cottages,

smithies and allotments, there were Manor Farm, Wise Warren and Headley Hall. The most recent tenant had been Henry Elvidge, who had just died. The farms were auctioned at York Station Hotel on 8th August, when they were described as 'safe investments.' They were bought by the Bramham Park Estates and again let out to a succession of tenants.

The sale catalogue provides much information on the buildings and land, including the old field names. There was a great deal of stabling, of course, including stalls for ten cart-horses. The house had been modernised and now boasted a bathroom, whilst the cottages had outside closets.

COMMODIOUS OLD-FASHIONED FARMHOUSE,

of stone construction, with ivy-clad, rough cast front elevation, having an extensive Southern view over the undulating park-like country towards Hazelwood. It contains

On the UPPER FLOOR,—Six Bed Rooms, large Attic Store Room, and Bath Room.

GROUND FLOOR,—ENTRANCE HALL, DRAWING ROOM, 19 ft. by 17 ft. 6, with South aspect and fitted with white marble chimney-piece and large cupboard; BREAKFAST ROOM, and GOOD DINING ROOM, LARGE KITCHEN, Pantry, Coal-house, Beer Cellar, good Store Room, Dairy with stone floor and shelving, and a smaller ditto.

In Yard, is Wash-house with tiled floor, copper, sink. On the South Front there is a

VERY PLEASANT GARDEN,

Laid out with Tennis Lawn, Flower Beds, &c., while in addition there is a Capital Orchard and Kitchen Garden, and at rear of House there is a Range of 5 brick and tile Poultry Houses, and a large timber Fowl House.

Wise Warren was described as a sporting estate; apart from its 'fertile arable' and 'rich pasture' there were three plantations of 'thriving woodland.'

THE VALUABLE
COMPACT FREEHOLD PROPERTY,

KNOWN AS

HEADLEY HALL FARM,

Situate in the Parish of Bramham, Yorkshire,

The FARM LANDS, which lie well together, comprise

GOOD ARABLE AND RICH PASTURE LAND,

With a small Area of WOODLAND,

and altogether comprise a Total Area of about

329 a. : 2 r. : 24 p.

as set out in the following Schedule:—

No. or Plan.	Description.	Cultivation.	Area.			
			A.	R.	P.	
378	Bramham Field and Top Rowlands.....	Arable.....	37	0	10	Far Rowlands.
416	Moor Close.....	Ditto.....	18	3	4	Egerton - arable.
420	Back Moor, Allensby, &c.....	Ditto.....	29	3	24	- Back Moor.
421	East Moor and Hall Field.....	Ditto.....	37	2	2	- East Moor.
422	Kiln Garth.....	Ditto.....	6	1	20	- Kiln Garth.
423	Ditto.....	Pasture.....	5	3	10	
424	Headley Hall, with Buildings, Yards, Gardens, &c.....		1	2	10	
426	Cow and Little Pasture, with Garth.....	Pasture.....	22	2	37	
427	Old Headley.....	Arable.....	21	2	19	
428	Eleven Acres and Old Headley.....	Pasture.....	34	0	23	
429	Fourteen and Eighteen Acres.....	Arable.....	34	3	16	
430	Spou Allotment and Intake.....	Ditto.....	37	0	21	
431	Wood Field and Rowlands Close.....	Ditto.....	41	0	0	- Fish Rowlands.
455	Cocked Hat Spinney.....	Wood.....	1	0	29	
Total.....			A. 329	2	24	
Arable.....			272	32		Local with Wether Farm

379. Line Kiln 10x Field

With the exception of Cocked Hat Spinney, which is in Hand, the whole of this Farm, with other Land comprised in Lot 12, is let to the representatives of the late HENRY ELVIDGE, on a repairing lease for a term having five years unexpired at Old Lady-day, 1904, at a total rent of £350, which, for the purposes of this Sale, has been apportioned at the sum of £325 in respect of this Lot.

From the sale catalogue, August 1903.