

# Millennium 2000

## A History of Great Bradley







## *Introduction and acknowledgement*

**T**his booklet is a written record of the Exhibition held at the Great Bradley Village Hall from the 10th to 18th June 2000.

The purpose of the Exhibition was to demonstrate the history of the village in visual form. It followed a "time line" from the earliest record to the present day. The idea for the event was first explored in the autumn of 1998 so the event was the result of almost two years of research by members of the Great Bradley History Group. We are not trained historians, but we have done our best to record Great Bradley's past. The booklet is by necessity brief and merely summarises the greater detail of the Exhibition.

The initial idea could not have become reality without the generous financial support provided by the Suffolk Acre Millennium Awards Scheme, the help and enthusiasm of the staff of Suffolk, Cambridge and Hertfordshire Records Offices and the

Master, Fellows and Scholars of St. John's College, Cambridge, especially Malcolm Underwood, the Archivist.

### **We would also like to thank:**

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Baroness Dacre, Hampshire  
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Conrad Hawkins, Snap Display  
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Clive Paine, Author and Local Historian  
Paul Whitehead, Michael Manni Photographic  
Jill Wood, J.B. Graphics



*January 1st 2000, gathering at noon to hear the church bells*

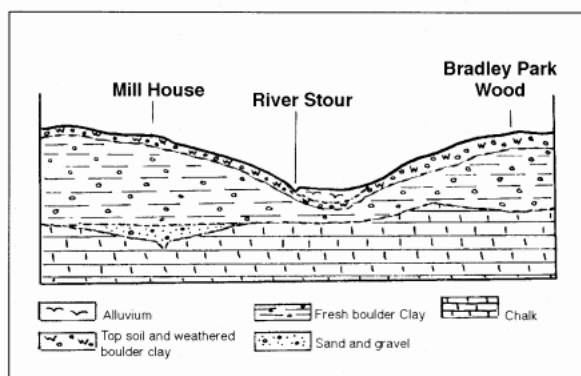
**We dedicate this booklet and our Exhibition to  
the people of Great Bradley, past and present,  
whose contributions have been invaluable.**





## *How our landscape was formed*

The topography of Great Bradley is the result of millions of years of geological activity. The land has spent much of its time under the sea, and the chalk which lies beneath the whole area was laid down there about 140 million years ago. Minute skeletons of lime-secreting algae were deposited forming the white chalk, while mixed in it are nodules of silica, forming flints. Later the chalk came to the surface and was worn into a landscape by rivers and streams. Boreholes have shown that this landscape was rather different from that of today, with a river cutting away the chalk beneath where Mill House now stands. Sand and gravel were laid down in the river's valley. Then came the ice ages from about one million years ago. As the ice sheets travelled across the land they transported large amounts of material caught up in the frozen mass. When the ice melted, these boulders, pebbles and very fine particles together were deposited over vast areas, and formed boulder clay. This boulder clay covered the whole area of Great Bradley. With the increase and retreat of the glaciers, early rivers left gravel patches in areas of the clay. Some of the last of these show on the surface in Great Bradley, for instance near Spring Barn, The Fox and the old Rectory, and also to



the North East where the stream flows from Kirtling to the Stour.

The river Stour has shaped the present landscape. Variations in climate and sea level over the past twelve thousand years or so mean that our river has varied greatly in size, and is possibly as small now as it ever has been. The hills and valleys of Great Bradley, as well as of Carlton, Brinkley, and Burrough Green, have been scoured by rain, stream and river to form the parish where we live.

Since 1954, rainfall in Great Bradley has been recorded at Great Bradley Hall. Annual rainfall has been 20" – 30" per year, with the wettest year being 1987 (32.01") and the driest, 1964 (17.62").

## *Early man in Great Bradley*

About three thousand years B.C., the middle stone age, or mesolithic, period began in Britain, and it is from this time that Great Bradley's earliest sign of man comes. A plough-damaged flint 'pick' was found, close to what is now Bradley Park Wood. During the next thousand years the first farmers, new stone age, or neolithic, man, arrived in Britain. Man was herding his stock, and his food production techniques had replaced earlier food gathering methods of farming. He would still have hunted. The Victoria County History of Suffolk of 1911 records the find of a neolithic arrow head, alas with no recorded location. However, a flint scraper tool of this

time was found in the field just behind the Old Rectory.

Great Bradley has two known Bronze Age (1900 – 500BC) sites. Both command open views across the valley. A single ring ditch, identified from crop marks in an aerial photograph, was recorded in 1980, and is close to the old Mill mound. The second site is near Bradley Park Wood, where scatters of flint have been found at three sites: near the Mill mound, at Long Acre Green and along the terrace ridge in the field parallel with The Street and the Stour, north of Hall Lane, but they are not dated to a specific period. These flint scatters all suggest occupation.





*View from Bradley Hill near the site of the Bronze Age ring ditch*

After the Bronze age came the Iron age, about 500BC. With iron, came ploughs strong enough to work the clay land of Great Bradley, and it is likely that much of the land now cleared of woodland was cleared at this time. Crop marks in fields show trackways in the field south of Bradley Park Wood and a circular ditched feature, possibly the site of a hut. Iron age pottery has been found here.

There is little sign of Roman influence in Great Bradley. The only site of any significance is a

Constantine's time, found in a field near Hart Wood.

During the period known, because of its lack of written and archaeological evidence, as the Dark Ages, Great Bradley must have thrived. It gained its name, Bradley, Broad Ley (or wide clearing in woodland), it had its boundaries laid down, and the Norman survey of land, the Domesday Book of 1086, shows there was an active population using the land, with arable, meadow and woodland mentioned.

multi-occupational one, i.e. a site occupied in more than one period, to the west of Bradley Park Wood. More than 100 pottery finds were made around the area, all of Roman or later periods. Occupation here was across quite a long period, and has been described as that of a rural farm type community. Other evidence from this time is 4th century, being three sherds (bits) of Nene Valley pottery and two sherds of Romano-British ware found near the Mill mound, and a coin of

## *Domesday and the Manor of Great Bradley*

The Domesday Book of 1086 refers only to Bradley, not Great and Little Bradley. Three holdings of land are mentioned belonging to St. Edmunds, Richard, son of Count Gilbert and to Robert of Tosny. It is probable that the manor of Robert of Tosny is that which is now the manor of Great Bradley, held previously by Ulf, the Saxon thane, before 1066. The manor covered 7 carucates – the amount 7 teams of oxen could plough in a season or about 850 acres – plus 13 acres of meadow and enough woodland to support 500 pigs. The size of Ulf's manor was 1 league (about two and a half miles) long and 7 furlongs ( $\frac{1}{8}$  mile) wide, approximately the same as today's manor. Only one Church is

mentioned and, as it is in Ulf's entry, maybe it is the Great Bradley one.

With the holding of a manor there were responsibilities. A duty was owed to the overlord, either financial or in the form of knightly service, in a chain. The Lord of Great Bradley would owe service with other



*Stephen and Margaret Ryder, Lord of the Manor and his wife*







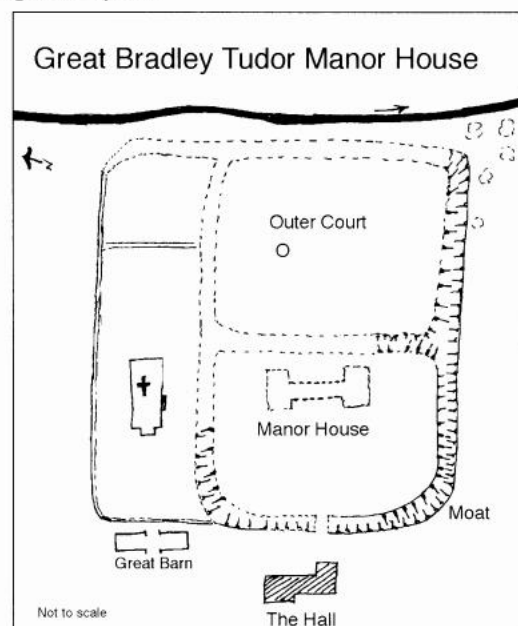
*Great Bradley Hall, the present Manor House*

knights to his overlord, and so on up to the king. In 1288 Great Bradley manor's main overlord was William Bigod. The Bigod family owned vast areas of land in East Suffolk, and built many castles, for example, in Bungay, Orford and Framlingham. This family was influential in court and very ambitious. They eventually became Dukes of Norfolk, and Earl Marshals of England through connections with the Mowbray and Howard families.

In 1307 we know John Boutetourt held Bradley from Roger le Bygod, Earl of Norfolk and Marshal of England. By 1464 the Brokesby family had taken over the manor of Great Bradley, and stayed for the next hundred years. The Peyton family were here next and in 1627 sold to Sir William Soames, of the family which had been resident in Little Thurlow. By the 1680s the Soames family were in some difficulties, and William's son

William put the manor in trust to his wife for her lifetime and then to others of his family, but by 1719 the manor was in the hands of Joseph Brookesbank. In 1753 Thomas Brand acquired the manor, and it passed through many of his family who became first Lords Dacre, and later Viscounts Hampden. In 1920 the manor was sold again, this time to Charles F. Ryder,

father of the present Lord of the Manor, R. Stephen Ryder.



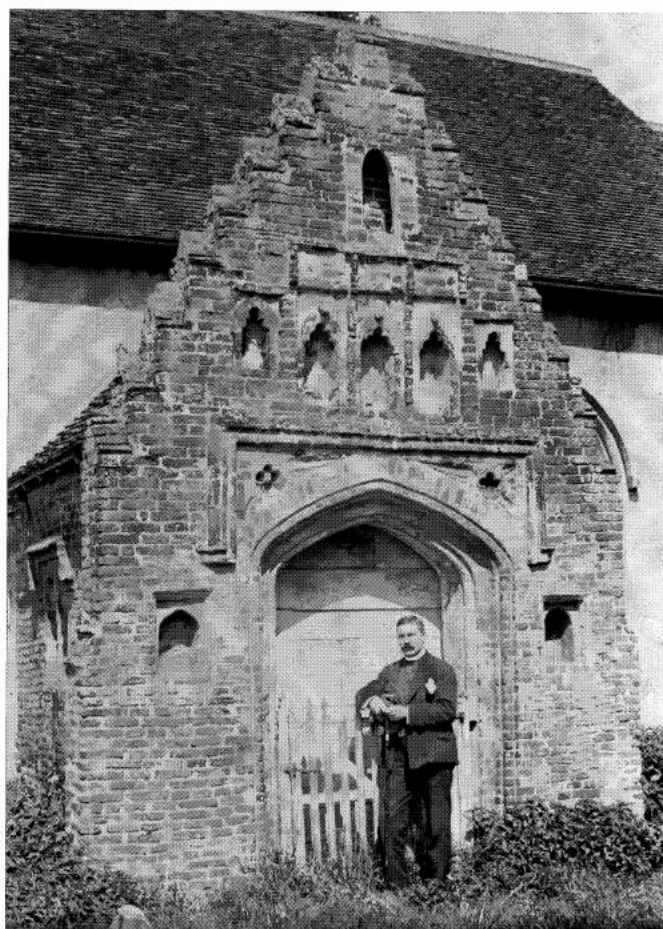
*Conjectural sketch of Great Bradley Manor c.1500*

## *St. Mary's Church*

The Church we see today was built over several centuries, with the earliest part built at the time of the Normans in the 12th century. This is evident from two doorways and the jambs of the chancel arch. The chancel, which was several feet longer at one time, was repaired in 1864. Most of the windows were inserted during the Decorated part of the 14th century. The south porch was

built of Tudor brick during the reign of Henry VIII, probably about 1530, and tradition has it that the bricks were made by the King's own brickmaker. Above the porch door there is a stepped gable with eight niches, three of which have worn stone animal heads. The porch has helped to shelter and preserve the Norman south doorway to the nave. Its semi-circular arch, which is covered with several layers of zig-zag moulding, rests upon tall



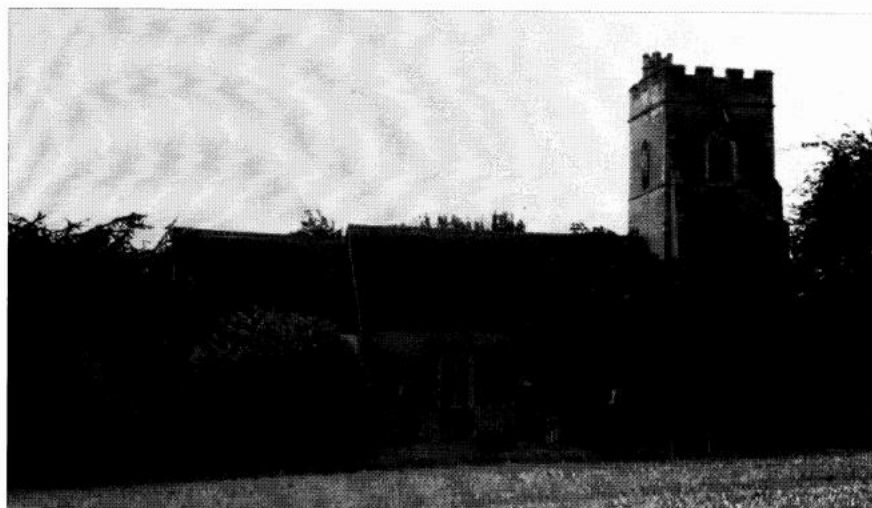


*Rev. Burnard Wilder at the South Porch, early 1900s*

century and was beautified during the 15th century, in the Perpendicular style. Its walls are strengthened by set-back angle buttresses at the corners. The sloping ridges of the buttresses have lions and shields carved on them. The staircase turret extends a few feet above



*One of Great Bradley's C17th skeleton graves*



*North view of church, 2000*

circular shafts with spiral fluting and carved capitals. Beneath the arch is a restored tympanum which is supported by two human heads.

The western tower was built in the late 14th

the parapet in the south east corner of the tower. In the north wall of the tower is a fireplace which may have been used for baking bread for use at the Eucharist, and the outlet for the smoke can be seen in the exterior wall about sixteen feet up and covered with a stone baffle. In the tower hang three bells. The tenor bell, probably early 14th century, bears

the inscription 'Richard de Wymbis Me Fecit' (Wimbish is a village near Saffron Walden). The second bell, according to Raven, dates from 1576, and the treble bell is almost certainly pre-Reformation.

The nave roof contains much of its original







timber framework and is supported by four old tiebeams, with kingposts. Two more old tiebeams help support the modern roof of the chancel. In the northeast corner of the nave is an 18th century pulpit complete with back and sounding board. This was a two-decker pulpit but its lower stall has been removed. The octagonal font in the west end of the nave dates from the late 14th century and has traces of original colour in the stonework.

On the north wall of the chancel there are plaques commemorating four brothers – Charles, John, Burnard and Percival Wilder, who were all in turn Rectors of the parish and held the living for a total of 74 successive years.

Quinquennial inspections are carried out by appointed architects, and the repair work is

prioritised. The first of these inspections was carried out in 1963 and to date, urgent repairs to the grade two listed building have been completed as recommended. The main recent repairs were in 1996 to 1999, covering the south nave roof and window, the south chancel wall and electrical wiring, at a total cost of £31,250. For the repair work, main grants have been received from English Heritage, Suffolk Historic Churches Trust, Historic Churches Preservation Trust and the Diocese. Friends of Great Bradley Church have made significant contributions in recent years.

In the churchyard the earliest legible gravestone is of "Walter Derisley, Gent, who died October ye 19 Anno Dom 1681 aetat 85". There are skeleton graves near the south porch.

## *St. John's College Cambridge and its holdings in Great Bradley ca. 1220-1987*



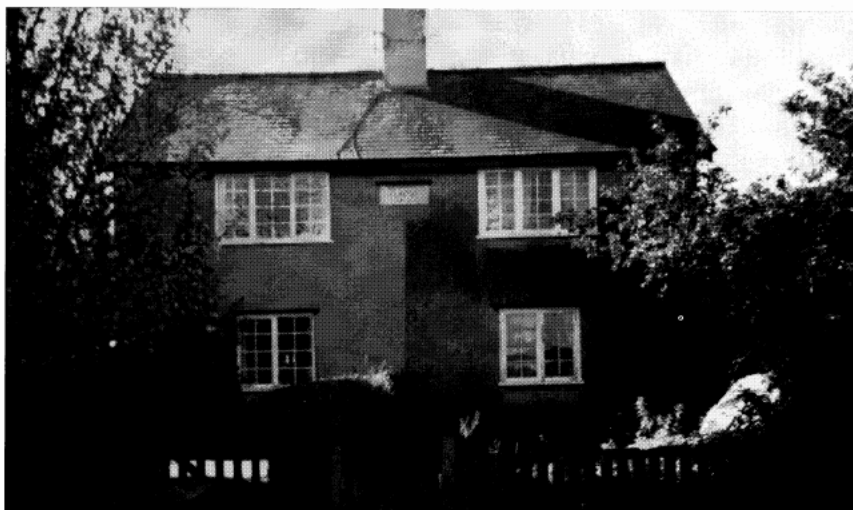
*East Green Farm House*

Around 1208, a monastic hospital of St. John the Evangelist was founded on the site of what was to become St. John's College three centuries later. In 1470, the hospital, which was for the poor and infirm, owned land at Hanley Hill (now known as Bradley Hill) in Great Bradley.

John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, persuaded Lady Margaret de Beaufort (1443 – 1509), mother of Henry VII and grandmother of Henry VIII, to invest her money in another Cambridge College. But on her death in 1509, nothing was said about this and Bishop Fisher had to prove that she made and declared her "said will often and many times by the mouth" to convert St. John's Hospital into a College, of which she would be "chief foundress and patroness". Bishop Fisher, who was also her chief executor, and his co-executors, then purchased out of the funds available 'Knapping', the messuage at the centre of the holding of John Warren (Warren's Farm – the old name for East Green farm) from William Reve. The College then consolidated its lands in the area, evicted the remaining monks from the hospital, and St. John's College was founded in 1511.

Warren's holding was about 400 acres at that time, but during the reign of Henry VIII the St. John's land in Great Bradley doubled to 845 acres, consisting of three farms – East





*St. John's College Cottages*

1987, the remaining 498 acres in East Green were sold by auction to two local landowners. Over the centuries when St. John's were the landlords, East Green was farmed by a succession of tenants, the last being three generations of the Cowans family who, from 1931 to 1987, continuously farmed the land and lived in East Green farmhouse.

Green Farm, Horse Pasture Farm and Evergreen (or Overgreen) Farm. In 1945, 347 acres were sold to R. A. Vestey and, finally, in

The only remaining link today in Great Bradley is in the name of St. John's Cottages at the bottom of Bradley Hill.

## Maps

Great Bradley is fortunate to have several old maps of the area available to us. These are held in the Record Offices of Hertfordshire (1719), Cambridgeshire (1767), St. John's College (1793 and 1814) and West Suffolk (1842).

Maps of the manor lands were surveyed and drawn for the Lord of the Manor, Joseph Brookesbank, in 1719, and again for Thomas Brand in 1767. The earlier St. John's map shows only their land, and it is not until the enclosure map of 1814 that the whole parish appears in detail on one map. The map in the West Suffolk Office is the Tithe-award map of 1842, recognising the conversion of tithes in kind (corn, beer etc) to money payment. There is an apportionment list as well giving details of areas, arable land, pasture and listing landowners, occupiers and tithe agreements. The Ordnance Survey maps of Great Bradley have great detail from the 1885 edition onwards. The 25" to the mile map even shows individual trees.



*Part of John Speede's map of Suffolk, 1610*







## Agriculture



*Harry (Clem) Smith rolling, May 1941*

Domesday, 1086, gives us some indication of how the manor lands of Great Bradley were farmed. The lord owned 3 ploughs, and men working his land another 7, with, of course, the oxen to pull them. There was, and had been for the last twenty years, a cob, that is, a strong horse. The other livestock included 18 cattle, 53 pigs, 63 sheep (a rise over 20 years from 20), 7 goats and even a beehive. There was meadow for making hay, and although it is not mentioned for Bradley (or anywhere else in Suffolk) there must have been pasture for the sheep and cattle. Mixed farming was well established 1000 years ago. Some time after St. John's College acquired



*Hebridean sheep at East Green*

land in Great Bradley, the importance of the wool trade to England's prosperity affected the parish. Land on Hanley Hill, the hill slopes to the south of the road from the mill to Sipsey Bridge on the Burrough Green Road, was enclosed in 1488 to enable sheep to be intensively grazed.

It appears that the rest of the College land was divided into fields, smaller, but rather as we know them today. However,



*Outside the Three Tuns public house*

the manor land was partly pasture fields, and partly larger fields divided into narrow strips worked by different men as tenants of the manor. These fields: Waterfield, Millfield (next to Little Bradley), Sand-pit field, East field, Sink plot (between the river and Thurlow Road) and Grove field, covered about half the manor lands. The strips can be seen on the early maps of the manor.

Around the year 1800 enclosure was practised throughout England, an Act of Parliament being needed for each parish. Farmers and landowners closed off their land with fences





*Harvest 1999*

and hedges to prevent others using their pasture etc. Strips were exchanged, or purchased, so that larger pieces of land could be consolidated, and compensation had to be paid where common rights were lost. The Enclosure map for Great Bradley of 1814

shows how the land was settled.

When the Ryder family came to Great Bradley manor the parish was still a mixed farming area. They had a beef and a dairy herd, a sheep flock, pigs, large flocks of hens and many horses to pull carts, ploughs etc. It is only since the Second World War that tractors have replaced the horses, and gradually all the other livestock has gone, leaving arable farming throughout.

However, there is still livestock in the parish. On land that previously belonged to St. John's College there are now cattle to the west, and to the east, a horse stud and Hebridean sheep.

## Population

*The names off the Inhabitants off Great & Bradley in the County off Suffolk 1696.*

<i>+ M<sup>r</sup> John Mordon - x</i>	<i>+ M<sup>r</sup> John Cooper - x</i>
<i>+ M<sup>r</sup> Martin Sanderson - x</i>	<i>+ Ralph Spacke - x</i>
<i>+ M<sup>r</sup> Sam<sup>l</sup> Turner - x</i>	<i>+ Gilbert Foster - x</i>
<i>+ Rob<sup>t</sup> Marsh - x</i>	<i>+ Rich<sup>d</sup> Hayward - x</i>
<i>+ Rob<sup>t</sup> Mordcay - x</i>	<i>+ Joseph Palmer - x</i>
<i>+ Henry Westly - x</i>	<i>+ Stephen Smith - x</i>
<i>+ Richard Gill - x</i>	<i>+ Jeffrey Barker - x</i>
<i>+ Martin Sanderson Sen<sup>r</sup> - x</i>	<i>+ John Marsh - x</i>

*Extract from a list of inhabitants, 1696*

There are many indicators of the population of the village in past years, but until the eighteenth century, in general, women and children were overlooked, and it is only taxpayers or heads of household who were counted. In a few cases widows were included, occasionally counts were made of all able bodied men, and at times of religious unrest the communicants were counted. At

Domesday time there were 52 adult men in Bradley (which had not yet been divided into Great and Little). In 1539 only 12 men aged 16-60 were counted, but a hundred years later this number had risen to 68. As these were musters (to count up for military service) maybe some were unfit and were missed out, so they cannot give us a real guide.



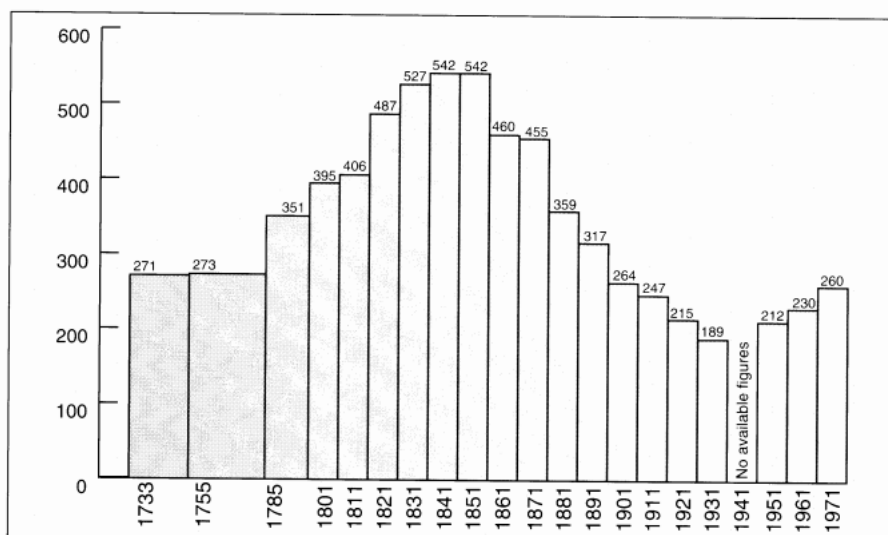




However, in 1733 a count in the Parish Register of the "number of souls" numbered 271. By 1785 this had risen to 351, and the first form of census counted 395 people in Great Bradley in 1801. There was a steady climb to 542 in both 1841 and 1851, and then began a gradual decline, with the figure for 1931 of only 189 as the lowest on record. There has been a steady climb since then, and even with smaller families, the building of the Clarendale and Fox Green housing developments will have increased the numbers in the village further.

5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Number of persons in family	NAME and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	CON- DITION as to Marriage	AGE last Birthday of	Major	PROFESSION or OCCUPATION
	Harriet Gerrith	Head	Widow	69		Living on her own
	Lottie	Daughter	Y	26		
	Math. Dutton Gerrith	Widow	-	73		Scholar
	Marjorie	Daughter	-	5		
	Reuben Radford	Servant	-	47		General Servant
	William Ingham	Head	Widow	47		Groom & Gardener
	Elizabeth Ingham	Wife	M	45		
	Agnes Mary Ingham	Daughter	Y	16		
	Thomas Ingham	Daughter	Y	14		
	George William Ingham	Son	Y	12		
	Nettie Selina Ingham	Daughter	Y	10		
	Samuel Edmund Ingham	Son	Y	8		

Census 1891, an extract



Changes in population 1725-1975

## Houses and Homes

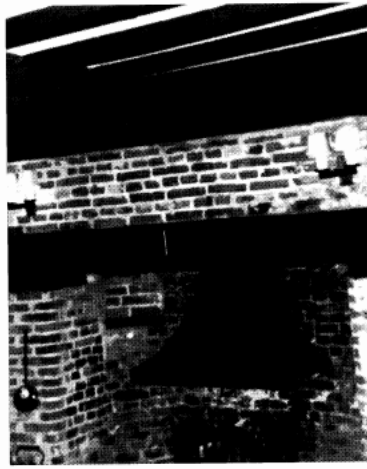
Potentially, and probably, the oldest house in Great Bradley is the Hall. In fact, the present building is the latest in those grounds. The remains of a large moat fit a pattern seen in other places of a double court, the house in the main court and the stables and work sheds etc in the outer court. This is, however, conjecture and further investigation is needed to confirm the theory. The present house is certainly at least eighteenth century, and is known to have been much extended in Victorian times. The Rectory was built in 1876, replacing a previous building in the same grounds.

The known old farmhouses of Great Bradley are those at East Green (East Green Farm and Pettets Farm House), Fox Farm House, Pond House, Mill House and Matthews Farm. All have old features inside, using brick which may well have been locally made. Old maps show three farms beyond the end of Matthews Lane (two owned by St. John's College at Ever, or Over, Green, and one other to the south of the green and owned by the manor), and at Lanacre or Long Acre Green were three more, Lanacre, Galleys and Horse Pasture Farms, but all six of these have disappeared now. The ruin of the old Rectory





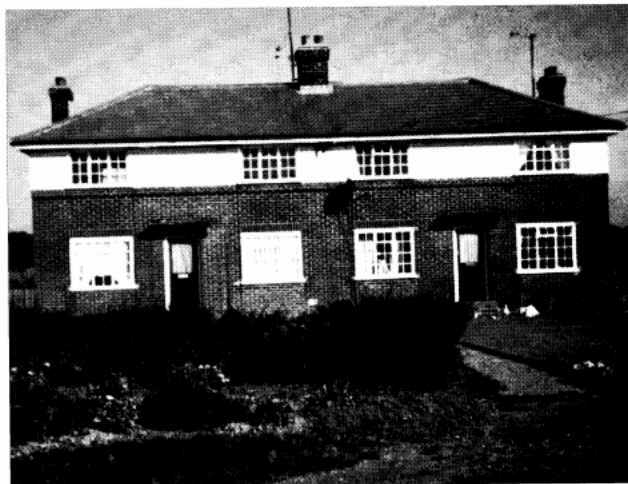
*Pettets Farm House at East Green*



*Inside Pettets Farm House*



*The Old Rectory*



*Thurlow Road houses*

Farm House has recently been dismantled, and a new house is being built on the site.

There are many cottages still standing in the village, and many more have disappeared in the last 100 years. Most remaining cottages have been small one or two "up" places, that have been restored and enlarged, like the Rose Cottages in Evergreen Lane and The Street, Sugar Loaf, Bramblemere and Bluebell Cottage. Yew Tree Cottage is an example of three cottages that have now become one. The three previous pubs in the village, The Fox (or Fox and Goose), the Crown (or Rose and Crown) and the Three Tuns are all old

buildings, but probably The Fox is the oldest.

Other old houses in the village include Old Farm and Quince Cottages in East Green, Fantails, the cottages opposite the Fox, Willow Cottage and Hill House. There were pairs of brick cottages built at the extremities of the village, at Spring Barn, St. John's Cottages, and on the Cowlinge Road, at the turn of the last century. Main developments since then have been council houses in Thurlow Road and Evergreen Lane, and the Clarendale and Fox Green Estates.



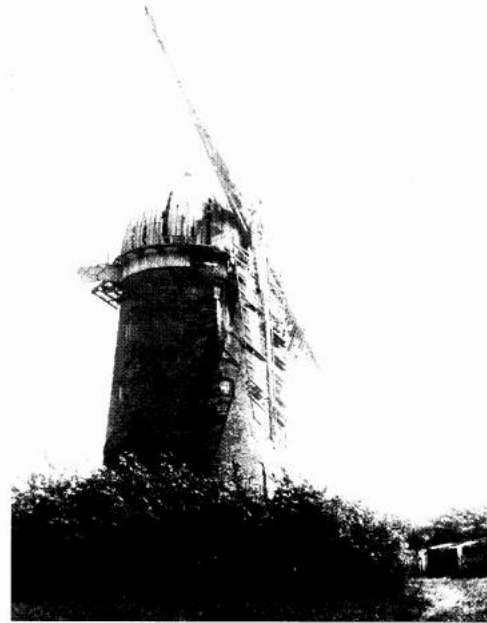




## *The Mill*

Bradley Mill stood on ground across the road from Mill House at the top of Bradley Hill (in ancient times known as Hanley Hill) and was once part of the Manor. Since 1942, it has been in the ownership of Thurlow Estate and was always tenanted.

It is shown on the St. John's College map dated 1793 as a Post Mill and was rebuilt as a Tower Mill in 1839 for the sum of £153. 4s. 2d. In 1908, the miller had extensive renovations carried out but, when the work had been almost completed, a bad thunderstorm occurred and lightning struck the sails causing a tremendous amount of damage. The mill fell into disrepair and was never worked again. By 1949, it had the remains of only two sails and was demolished at that time. Today there is merely a mound covered in shrubs where it once stood.



*The Mill ca.1930*

## *Work and facilities*



*The Shop, corner of Evergreen Lane, 1930s.  
Mrs Ethel Webb, shopkeeper*

At Domesday in 1086 there were 14 villagers, 12 smallholders and 6 slaves. Smallholders were reasonably independent farmers, but still owed service to the lord. We do not know about tradesmen at this time but we do have some information about the seventeenth century. Some mention is made in wills, church records and manor court rolls (the local court business) of occupations: Thomas Fyson was an alehousekeeper and blacksmith; Clement Anderson also a blacksmith; John and Leonard Collier were butchers; the only woman mentioned was Ann Simpson, a spinster and servant. Others were a joiner, cook, bricklayer, two tailors, a shopkeeper and a carbonarius or charcoal burner.

By Victorian times we have much more detail of work. In 1846, 9 farmers, 2 corn merchants, 2 shopkeepers, 2 beer retailers and an innkeeper were present as well as a wheelwright, carpenter, cooper, miller, brickmaker, bricklayer, tailor, bootmaker and one blacksmith. However, these were the





*The old Post Office, early 1900s, now 'Willow Cottage'*

employers, and many had apprentices, labourers or their families working for them.

The 1891 census gives the occupations of all the villagers, and these range from a doctor, teacher, clergyman and policeman through 6 farmers, 72 farm labourers and 13 other farm workers to 3 shopkeepers, 3 innkeepers, 8 servants, a road labourer, a letter carrier and even a grocer's errand boy.

As time has passed and the way of life has changed, Great Bradley has lost its 3 pubs, all

its shops, its post office and its school. There have been many travelling tradesmen, such as the Co-op grocery, a butcher, a tailor, 2 mobile shops for paraffin and hardware, and a baker (who delivered at midnight!) There were 3 different fish and chip vans and 2 ice cream deliverers, as well as a daily milkman – but now this long list is reduced to milk, bread, greengrocery and newspaper deliveries. Almost every resident leaves the village to work, and most people who work here travel into the village from elsewhere.



*The Fox Inn before it closed, March 1979*







## The poor in Great Bradley

The poor laws of the country covered the period from 1601 until 1930 in various forms. During that time there were numerous reviews and reforms. The Acts dealt with the problem of the poor of the nation and how and by whom they would be supported. The aim of the 'Settlement Act' introduced during the reign of Charles II (1660–85) was to prevent labourers from moving from one parish to another as each parish was responsible for the relief of its own poor. The Act was modified in 1795.

In our researches, we found some examples of how the poor laws were applied in Great Bradley.

Settlement Certificates, signed by the Overseer of the Poor, two Churchwardens and



*Turner's (now Bluebell) Cottage, typical of a simple Great Bradley home*

### THE CASE OF JOHN GOODCHILD

A "Settlement Examination" was carried out on 16 October 1823 by Justices of the Peace Magistrates in the case of John Goodchild of Great Bradley when

*"he said he is about 50 years of age, born at Great Bradley where his father was a settled inhabitant. On or about March 1792 he was placed with John Bridge of Borough Green, "Taylor" to learn the said trade and something was signed between the parties but this deponent does not know whether it was an Indenture of Apprenticeship or an Agreement. That no premium was given at the time to John Bridge but agreed that Goodchild should work out £4 to John Bridge after the Expiation of his term which was stipulated to be four years. In August following John Goodchild left his Master because of insolvency. John Goodchild's father took him to Mr. Atkin of West Wickham, "Taylor", and agreed that John Goodchild should work for Atkin for one year for 1s 6d per week. John Goodchild left this place of work after about 6 months because Mr. Atkin died and that John Goodchild had not done anything further to obtain a settlement."*

a Witness, were sometimes produced whereby the right to Poor Relief was established, or Removal Orders were issued (some with examinations endorsed) establishing that other parishes were responsible for the Relief,

e.g. 1801 James Marsh and Elizabeth, his wife, to Little Bradley

1807 Richard Carter, wife Elizabeth, daughter Susan, ten weeks, to Cowlinge.

### INDOOR & OUTDOOR RELIEF

The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 standardized the system of poor relief throughout Britain, and groups of Parishes were combined into Unions responsible for workhouses. Great Bradley became part of the Risbridge Union. The intention of this Act was that 'indoor' relief to able-bodied persons or their families was to be given in workhouses, while 'outdoor' relief was confined to those unable to work, for whatever reason. Such a list exists for Great Bradley, naming those eligible for both indoor and outdoor relief, dated Michaelmas 1849.

Parish Council records reveal that there was a 'poor' house at East Green.





## *Celebrations and entertainment*

Records describe plans for various celebrations in Great Bradley. These included the diamond jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1897, the coronation of King Edward VII in 1902 and the coronation of King George V in 1911.

In 1919, the Declaration of Peace was marked by the purchase of a hand bier, and a Roll of Honour was placed in the Church.

A full programme of events was planned for the Silver Jubilee of King George in May 1935 and Queen Elizabeth's coronation in June 1953. In 1977, the Queen's Silver Jubilee was celebrated over three days.

Various entertainments and fund raising events have taken place such as whist drives, car rallies, sponsored walks and cycle rides as well as village fetes. The Church Fete has

taken place annually in the grounds of Great Bradley Hall since 1982, and in 1999 raised a record sum of £1,774.

Village sporting activities were commonplace some years ago, and in the 18th century the land occupied by the Clarendale Estate was known as a Camping Ground, a name traditionally associated with sports and games. Before Clarendale was built it was used for cricket and football matches.



*King George V's Jubilee 1935: Crown House, the Post Office*



*Queen Elizabeth II's Jubilee 1977, Sugar Loaf*



*A Summer Fête at Great Bradley Hall*



*A Hallowe'en party in the Village Hall*





## *Educating the children of Great Bradley*

During the reign of King James 1, Sir Stephen Soames built a school in Little Thurlow to teach the children of the Thurlows and Bradleys. The first record we found for a school at Great Bradley itself dates from the early eighteenth century.

The Great Bradley school was part of a wider charity movement, founded in 1698 as the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, working at home and in the colonies, to provide free education and sometimes clothing for the children of the poor. The then rector of the parish, Rev. John Cooper, was the driving force behind the creation of a school to teach the poor children of Great Bradley. We have no record of where the Great Bradley school was situated.

The school survived on money donated via subscriptions and Communion collections. In 1709 about twenty-four children attended the



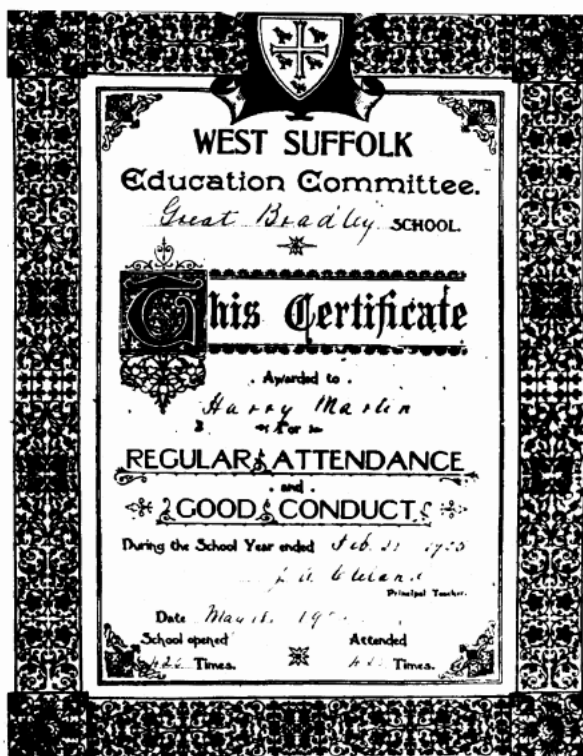
*School photograph (date unknown)*

school where they were taught to read and also taught the catechism. By 1714, the number attending had dropped to about sixteen. It appears that the school initially flourished, but the death of its main benefactor in 1714 saw a downturn in its fortunes.

It was not until the 1870 Education Act which saw the setting up of education boards that plans were made for a purpose-built school in the village. It was proposed to build a school and a mistress's house. In the event, only the school was built. The project was financed by private donations and a parish tax of one shilling in the pound. While work was being carried out, temporary accommodation was found in a farmhouse. The school opened in April 1880 on the site of the present Village Hall, and there were two rooms with the toilets housed in a separate building. When the school closed nearly one hundred years later, little had changed.

Initially it was agreed that the school year would be forty-two weeks long. Several villagers who attended the school remember taking time off to help with the harvest. One headmistress closed the school mid-term so that she could attend the Chelsea Flower Show.

The trusteeship of the school was transferred







to the Diocese of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich by means of a scheme under section 86 of the Education Act 1944, dated February 1961. Because it was a Church school, the children were regularly marched to certain services. The benefit of this attendance was, as one pupil remembers, getting the rest of the day off after the Ascension Day service.

Over the years, the teaching materials changed from chalk and slate to pen and paper. Some villagers remember the use of sand trays in the 1940s for letter writing. Prior to the war, the children had games lessons on a field in Evergreen Lane. After the council houses were built they used the field which is now the Clarendale Estate.

When the school opened in 1880 about forty children attended, but by 1916 numbers had increased to seventy-four. The children were divided into two classes with two teachers

and a monitor. There then followed a general decline in numbers. This was reversed during the Second World War when evacuees from London brought the school to near capacity. However, by 1967 the numbers had dropped to just over a dozen. Those children were transferred to the newly built school in Little Thurlow, and the Great Bradley School closed just twelve years short of its centenary. At the time of its closure, Mrs. I. Rolph had been headmistress for just over fourteen years. Her assistant, Mrs. P. Pearman, who had taught at Great Bradley School for two years, remembers it as a "happy little place". As a teacher at Little Thurlow, Mrs. Pearman was to be reunited with the Great Bradley children and remained teaching at that school until her retirement in 1990. She still lives locally.

The school building and land was sold to the village by the Diocesan Authorities for £1,325 for use as a village hall.

## *Village hall*

Until about 1939, a Church Hut had stood on land next to the school and was used for social gatherings, but the hut was demolished at that time and Prospect Villas were built in its place.

After the war when it seemed that a new school in Thurlow might mean the closure of Great Bradley School, a fund was opened in Great Bradley ready for possible purchase of the school building for use as a village hall. The school closed in 1967, and, since it had been a Church school, the building was to be sold by the Diocesan Authorities. On June 29th, a parish meeting took place when it was agreed to negotiate the purchase. In May 1968, an offer to purchase the school for £1,250 was sent to H. C. Wolton & Son who had valued the property on behalf



*During renovation, 1999*

of the Diocesan Authorities. The fund referred to earlier had risen to £339-12s-10d. In addition to the purchase price, a considerable sum was required for conversion of the school into a village hall. Grants available at the time could be maximised by application from a village hall committee rather than the Parish Council. A Parish Meeting attended by 19 parishioners was held on 27th June 1968, and





*The school bell, renovations completed, 2000!*

the first Village Hall Committee was appointed. Members were: Messrs. R. G. Beavis, W. Cowans, E. May, A. Mills, R. Neal, R. S. Ryder, R. Smith and Mesdames J. Goldsborough, L. Long.

At the time of purchase, there was a covenant on the school which sought to prevent the building being used as a place of entertainment (hardly suitable for a future village hall). This was waived early in the proceedings.

After much discussion on the proposed conversion of the school, planning approval was given by Clare Rural District Council on 26th March 1971. Various fund raising activities had been organised by the Village Hall Committee such as Bingo sessions throughout 1969, 1970 and 1971, and a summer fete held on July 4th 1970 which

raised ca £160. In October 1970, the treasurer reported a balance of £685-5s-6d. In addition, the Parish had received £419 from sale of land in Evergreen Lane (now occupied by 'Ragill' and 'Conways'). The purchase and conversion costs were: £1,325 eventual purchase price, £4,247 building work and £531 architect fees making a total of £6,103. The Architect appointed was John Adams of Ipswich, and the contractor was M. Carrick of Newmarket. To save costs, in August 1972, the existing outbuildings were demolished by voluntary labour and the bricks were cleaned for reuse. Grants were received from West Suffolk Education Committee (£3,196) and Clare Rural District Council (£1,248).

The Village Hall was opened officially by Group Captain Leonard Cheshire, VC, on 30th June 1973. The Hall was filled to capacity for the occasion, with many people unable to gain access and having to stand outside.

The Village Hall was registered as a charitable trust in 1986 and the named trustees were R. S. Ryder and F. Hearn. The registered charity number is 293044.

In May 1999 the Hall closed for major refurbishment. The tender price of £60,224 submitted by P.G. Bailey & Sons was accepted, and the Hall was reopened in March 2000. Grants were obtained from the Millennium Commission and St. Edmundsbury Borough Council. The parish contribution was obtained by a variety of fund raising functions and the Parish Council assisted by obtaining a Public Works Loan of £9,000 repayable over a 15 year period.

## *The village seat, sign and garden*

The SEAT, inscribed "Elizabeth 1953", was donated by Mr. Dalrymple, who lived at East Green, to commemorate the Queen's Coronation in 1952. It was originally sited in what was the W.I. garden at the corner of Evergreen Lane, but was moved to the village garden area when the sign was first erected.

The village SIGN was originally planned to stand outside the village hall but, finally, it was decided that a more appropriate site was on the opposite side of the road, which has since become known as the village garden.

The sign was made at a cost of £375 to





commemorate the Royal Wedding in July 1981 of Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer and planning permission was granted in 1982. The sign depicts:

- A windmill (which existed in the village until 1949).
- An ancient oak tree (in Evergreen Lane and bottom of Bradley Hill – the latter was pollarded just before the sign was made).
- A fox.
- The Church and its much treasured Norman arch.
- Prince of Wales' feathers.
- Coat of arms of St John's College (for centuries, extensive landowners in the village).
- A Roman coin (found locally by Cyril Potter on Mr. Ryder's land and deposited with a local museum).



*Parish Councillors erecting the village sign  
April 1983*

The detail of the design was developed by the Parish Council from an original idea submitted by Mrs. Wendy Mansfield, who unveiled the sign at the official ceremony. It was carved and constructed by Mr. P. Worwicker of Stansted, and painted by Mr. D. Chaplin of Horringer. It has been restored three times since then, and is considered to be one of the finest in the area.



*Planting the Millennium Oak January 2000.  
Parish Councillors again!*

The village GARDEN was proposed by Mrs. Caroline Benet when she first came to live here and formed the Horticulture Club (later named the Gardening Club). Members of the Club raised funds to buy plants for the garden and, with the assistance of an adviser from Bloom's Nursery at Bressingham, plants were duly purchased. Mr. Stephen Ryder arranged for manure to be spread on the site and for paving slabs in front of the seat to be laid, and the garden began to take shape. But no sooner had the specimen plants been set out, than they were stolen, and there was no alternative but to start again. Over the years, plants have been donated until the garden has formed a notable feature in the village.

The MILLENNIUM OAK was planted on the 8th January 2000 in the corner of Orchard field just to the west of the Garden. Mr. Stephen Ryder, assisted by members of the Parish Council, planted the oak at a ceremony attended by 28 villagers.

This was followed by tea and Millennium cake at Crown House (the Village Hall was being refurbished).







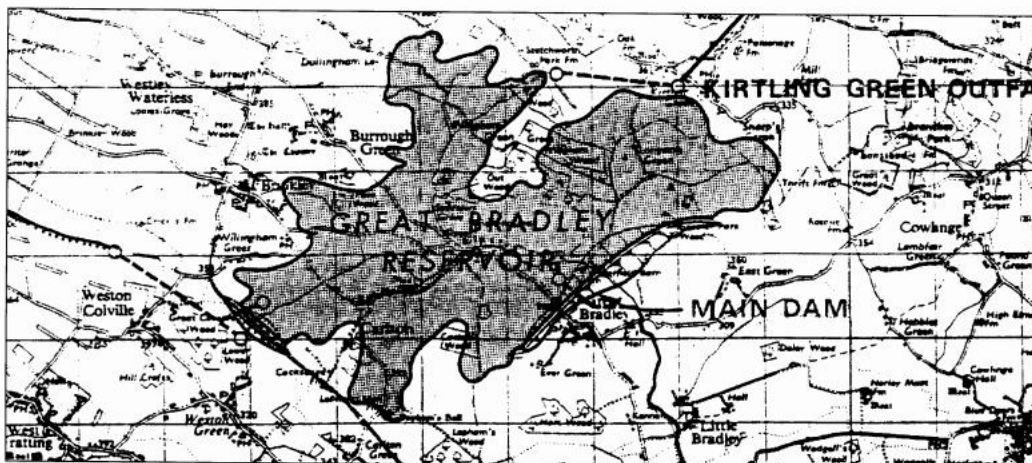
## Parish Council

The Parish Council was formed under the Local Government Act 1894, and held its first meeting on 14th December 1894. The Reverend W. B. C. Wilder was appointed Chairman, a post he held for 38 years until his death in 1932. Parish Council Meetings were held frequently until 1906. From recorded minutes, there were seven Parish Meetings from 1906 to 1930, and at a meeting in February 1930, W. B. C. Wilder was the only person present and he was later informed that "he was the Parish Council!!" The Parish

Council was re-formed in 1946, with the Reverend E. S. Barrington-Barnes as Chairman, but the minutes show that only two meetings were held.

In 1955, what can be considered the current day Parish Council began, with regular meetings held from 1955 to present times. R. S. Ryder was appointed Chairman in 1955, and held this post for the 40 years to 1995. A. W. Knight has been Chairman since 1995. Thus, in the 106 years from 1894, there have been only four Parish Council Chairmen.

## A reservoir at Great Bradley?



In the mid 1960s news leaked out that Essex River Authority (ERA) was considering a reservoir of ca. 1,000 acres at Great Bradley. The reservoir would be fed by rivers in the Ely Ouse area, and would supply water for Essex. Over the next 4 – 5 years the possible reservoir requirement had increased to occupy 3,000 acres. The area was within the 346 feet contour affecting 40 residences housing 90 people, and the B1061 Haverhill to Newmarket Road would have to be diverted.

The ERA sought permission to drill test bore holes over the area to study soil structure. The local landowners strongly opposed these tests and adopted a policy of non-cooperation. However, the ERA obtained a Government order and the test bores were carried out in 1968. The project was abandoned in 1971.

In 1991 the National Rivers Authority (NRA) resurrected the Great Bradley reservoir scheme as an option in a new strategy to meet rapidly increasing demands for water in the Essex and North Thames areas. As in the 1960s, an opposition group 'Residents for Stour Valley Preservation' was formed. The protracted deliberations caused much distress in the area, with a blight on the sale of houses, and residents unsure about the future of their homes.

On 19th September 1995 Anglian Water and Essex & Suffolk Water announced that the Great Bradley site for a reservoir was not ideal in terms of size or position. The NRA identified a potential reservoir site at Feltwell near Thetford, but other short and medium term options were to be considered.





## Clarendale

Woodland Park Estates developed Clarendale Estate over the mid to late 1960s on the site previously used as a cricket pitch. The four basic designs of houses were named Ditton, Kingston, Western and Montcalm.

Tony and Marie Knight recall moving into No. 7 Clarendale in April 1968 when only 12 of the 40



houses had been built. Their house in the mid price range, was bought for £4,050. Some of the 12 houses were rented to Americans from Lakenheath and Mildenhall bases. Development of the site was slow for, in the latter stages, a house was built only when a plot was sold.

In the early stages the site presented several hazards for young children: there were uncovered drains and piles of rubble covered in weeds. This probably was the main reason for the formation of a residents' association. Alec, the brother of the builder Jimmy Miller, moved into No. 2 Clarendale and had to face many complaints concerning the site and individual houses.

Residents of Clarendale quickly integrated into village life and, despite occupying the cricket pitch, received a friendly reception from long time village residents.

## Fox Green

In June 1988, Messrs. R. S. and C. W. C. Ryder of Great Bradley Farms announced the intention to undertake a development at Fox Farm, and to relocate the farming business away from the centre of the village.

It was proposed that 25 houses would be built at Fox Farm, and a separate 3.5 acre recreation ground adjacent to the development would be made available. Villagers were invited to a meeting in the Village Hall on 13th June 1988, at which an outline of the scheme was shown. Local press reported that about 200 attended the meeting.

The main site was approximately 8 acres, and the development was offered for sale by formal tender on 15th October 1993.

Originally, access to the B1061 road was to be limited to four of the houses, with the main access being through Evergreen Lane. Many local residents and the Parish Council stressed preference for the access

to be solely to the B1061. This change was eventually accepted after improvement to the visibility splay, which included resiting the telephone box, and the number of houses was reduced to 23.

The development by H. C. Moss was completed over two years, 1996/98.





## Modern Domesday

History doesn't have a finishing point. We are trying to find out more about the people who live in Great Bradley now, and to see how our lives are different from those who have lived here before us. The children of the village have prepared a questionnaire to help in this, and some early results are interesting. For example, of the first 96 forms returned we find 48 families have lived in the village for less than 10 years, but 9 have been here for more than 50. Although very few people have lived in Great Bradley all their lives, be they 7 or 70 years old,

12 have come here from other countries of birth: 4 from Ireland, and 1 each from Germany, Switzerland, Yugoslavia, Cyprus, South Africa, Singapore, Malaysia and Japan. Completion of this survey is a project for the future.

Great Bradley has been, in the past, a place with links to the surrounding parishes, but has suffered few major changes from year to year. Now, we look across the world for influences on us, and change is rapid in all our lives.

**DOMESDAY FOR  
GREAT BRADLEY**

**1: The Family and Home:**

What are the first names of your family and their ages? (Exact for children, 18-24, 25-39, 40-59, over 60)

Names	Exact	18-24	25-39	40-59	60 +

How long have you lived in this house? \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you lived in Great Bradley? \_\_\_\_\_

Where were the people in this house born? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have relatives in Great Bradley? Y / N If Yes how many Families?.....

Do you live in a? (Please circle)      House      Bungalow      Flat

If you know, how old is it? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a?

Garage	Shed	Greenhouse	Playhouse	Caravan
Kennel	Aviary	Pond	Stable	Hutch

Page 1 of the New Domesday questionnaire





