

VCH Nottinghamshire

On-line Texts in Progress

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VICTORIA
COUNTY
HISTORY



Nottinghamshire

BRAMCOTE

MANORS AND OTHER ESTATES

Before the Norman Conquest Bramcote was divided into four small estates, which after 1066 were consolidated into one. The later history of this estate is unclear, but the main landholder in the parish from the 12th century was Sempringham priory. After the Dissolution their estate remained largely intact in the hands of a succession of local families until the early 20th century. In the Middle Ages Sempringham's estate was generally regarded as a moiety of the manor; the other moiety appears to have become divided into several small estates, lay and ecclesiastical, at an early date. None of these is well documented, but their existence probably explains why there were a number of small owners in Bramcote in the 19th century alongside the Bramcote Hills estate.

Tenancy in chief

In 1066 there were four manors in Bramcote, held by Ulchel, Godric, Alvrice and Levrice, containing in all 12 bovates of land.¹ There were also 6 bovates of sokeland in Bramcote belonging

¹ *VCH Notts.*, i. 284.

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to the king's manor of Arnold,² and another 6 (which were waste) among the sokeland belonging to the manor of Wollaton,³ making a total of 3 carucates for the vill as a whole. After the Conquest the four manors were granted to William the Usher.⁴ The tenancy in chief later passed to the honor of Mortimer, of which in 1284–5 the prior of Sempringham held half a knight's fee in Bramcote.⁵

Sempringham Priory lands and the manor of Bramcote

In c.1175 Geoffrey son of Swein of Brinsley granted to the church of St Mary in Sempringham (Lincs.) 4 bovates of land in the territory of Trowell, with all the common pasture of Bramcote and Trowell which pertained to his fee.⁶ At about the same time Henry II granted the Gilbertines full manorial rights throughout their lands, and thus a number of smaller manors were created, although except in royal charters these retained the name of granges.⁷ In 1189 the possessions of Sempringham included a grange at Bramcote, the church at Broxtowe and a moiety

² *VCH Notts.*, i. 252.

³ *VCH Notts.*, i. 271; below, this section, for the possible later history of this sokeland.

⁴ *VCH Notts.*, i. 284.

⁵ *Feudal Aids*, iv. 93–4.

⁶ NUL, Mi 2/71/1.

⁷ *VCH Lincs.*, ii. 181.

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of the church at Trowell.⁸ As already noted, in 1284–5 the prior held half a fee in Bramcote;⁹ his successor in 1316 was certified to be one of the lords of Bramcote¹⁰ and in 1329–30 the prior claimed free warren in his demesne lands in Bramcote, Trowell and Chilwell.¹¹ The prior was returned as one of the lords of Bramcote in 1346¹² and 1428.¹³

In 1395 Sempringham leased to Geoffrey Abbot of Trowell and his wife Alice a messuage with adjacent croft and 9 acres of 'mensal' (i.e. demesne?) land with appurtenances in Trowell which Robert Brown once held of the priory. The lease was for 24 years, at a yearly rent of 7s. 6d. and two appearances at the great court held at Bramcote.¹⁴ Immediately before the Dissolution in 1538 the priory leased the whole of the manor of Bramcote with all messuages, lands etc. belonging to it, including Chilwell meadow in Attenborough, to George Pole of Shepperton (Mddx) gent.¹⁵

⁸ *VCH Lincs.*, ii. 181.

⁹ *Feudal Aids*, iv. 93–4.

¹⁰ *Feudal Aids*, iv. 110.

¹¹ *Plac. de Quo Warr.* (Rec. Com.), 649–50.

¹² *Feudal Aids*, iv. 116–18.

¹³ *Feudal Aids*, iv. 129–30.

¹⁴ NUL, Mi 2/55/21.

¹⁵ NUL Mi D 298.

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In 1561 Alice Lewes of Shepperton, widow of George Pole, assigned her interest under the lease of 1538 to William Bolles of Osberton esq.¹⁶ Three years later the Crown made a grant in fee to Charles Jackson of Firbeck (Yorks.) and William Mason of Egmanton and the heirs of Jackson of the manor of Bramcote, with lands in Attenborough, previously in the tenure of George Pole and before him of Sempringham. The estate was said to be worth £6 11s. a year.¹⁷ In 1565 Richard Hanley and Alice his wife acquired from Jackson and Mason the manor, together with 7 messuages, 3 cottages, 500 acres of land, 200a. of meadow, 400a. of pasture, . 10a. of wood, 200a. of heath and furze, 600a. of moor and 10s. rent in Bramcote, Chilwell, Attenborough, Wilford and Barton in Fabis.¹⁸ Richard Hanley settled his eldest son Henry at Bramcote, and Gervase, his second son, who married Anne daughter of Jerome Brand of Staunton, at Wilford.¹⁹ Henry and Gervase Hanley made a settlement of the Bramcote estate in 1593.²⁰ When Henry died in 1603 the manor passed to his son Henry,²¹ who in 1612 was granted (or allowed) arms: *argent, a fess gules between three goats*

¹⁶ Notts. Archives, DDE 34/1.

¹⁷ *Cal. Pat.* 1563-6, 155.

¹⁸ Notts. Archives, DD/E/34/1; NUL, W 44; G. Fellows, 'The family of Hanley, or Handley, *TTS*, xxi (1917), 96-7.

¹⁹ Thoroton, *Notts.* (ed. Throsby), ii. 186.

²⁰ TNA, Feet of Fines, Divers Cos., Mich. 34 & 35 Eliz.; Notts. Archives, DDE 34/1.

²¹ Borthwick Inst., York Wills, vol. xxix, f. 367r.-v.; Fellows, 'Family of Hanley', 97-8.

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*courant sable armed and unguled or.*²² The younger Henry Hanley made a settlement of the estate in 1618.²³

In 1624–5 Sir George Goring and his brother Edward brought an Exchequer action against the younger Henry Hanley, claiming that Bramcote was not a manor of itself but

parcel of the honor of Peveril and disputing their right to dig for coal on Bramcote Moor.²⁴ The Gorings obtained a decree in their favour in 1629–30.²⁵

When Henry Hanley died in 1650 without surviving issue he left the estate 'to pious and charitable uses', including an almshouse in Nottingham.²⁶ In the event his kinsman Robert Harding, a barrister of Gray's Inn with lands at King's Newton (Derb.),²⁷ kept the estate in his possession, although Gervase Hanley of Wilford made an attempt to obtain it before he died.²⁸ In 1652 Robert Harding of Bramcote married Anne, daughter of Sir Richard Sprignell (or Spigurnell) Bt of Highgate

²² *Visit. Notts. 1569–1614*, 156.

²³ TNA, Feet of Fines, Divers Cos., Trin. 16 Jas. I.

²⁴ TNA, E 134/22 Jas. I/Mich. 12; below, econ. hist.

²⁵ NUL, Mi E 5/4-5.

²⁶ TNA, PROB 11/217, ff. 109v.–112.

²⁷ *Visit. Derb. 1662–4*, 100-01.

²⁸ Thoroton (ed. Throsby), *Notts.*, ii. 187.

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(Mddx).²⁹ Samuel Kendall, rector of Wollaton, claimed in c.1670 that a moiety of the tithes of Sempringham's lands (said to amount to 5,000 acres in Bramcote) in the tenure of Robert Harding should be paid to him and that the tithes had not been paid during the years 1661–8.³⁰ At about the same time Harding sought and obtained a fresh grant of the manor of 'Bramcote cum Trowell and Chilwell', and other lands in Nottinghamshire, late of Sempringham, since the writings by which he held the estate (i.e. the grant of 1561) had been lost or spoiled during the Civil War.³¹ Harding was knighted in 1675³² and died four years later.³³ His heir, also Robert Harding, remained lord of Bramcote until his own death in 1709, when his estates passed to his son John.³⁴

At some date between 1719, when his father John Sherwin of Nottingham died, and 1725,

²⁹ R.E.C. Waters, 'A statutory list of the inhabitants of Melbourne, Derbyshire, in 1695', *J. Derby. Archaeol. & Nat. Hist. Soc.*, vii (1885), 28–9; *Cal. S.P. Dom.* 1658–9, 292; *Visit. Derby.* 1662–4, 100-01.

³⁰ Notts. Archives, DDE 17/1; *HMC Middleton*, 323; TNA, E 134/21 Chas II/Mich. 29.

³¹ *Cal. Treas. Bks* 1668–9, 23, 24, 27; *Cal. S.P. Dom.*, 1668–9, 211; TNA, C 66/3107.

³² *Shaw, Knights*, ii. 249.

³³ *Visit. Derby.* 1662–64, 100.

³⁴ NUL, Mi 6/173/240; Lichfield Record Office, B/C/4.

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John Sherwin of Nottingham acquired the Bramcote estate.^{35, 36} In 1726 Sherwin married Barbara Needham of Wymondley (Herts.) at St Paul's cathedral.³⁷ They had eight children, all baptised in Nottingham: Barbara (1728), Anne (1729), John (1730), George (1732), Robey (1733), another Anne (1735), Sarah (1737) and Martha (1738).³⁸ John Sherwin's youngest sister Martha married Francis Longden of Ashbourne (Derb.) in 1766.³⁹ Sherwin was succeeded by his eldest son John, who executed a recovery of the estate in 1796.⁴⁰ He died without issue in 1800, when Bramcote manor passed to his nephew John Longden, the son of Martha and Francis.⁴¹

John Longden married Charlotte Mettam in 1800.⁴² Their first child, Charlotte Sherwin Longden was born in 1802,⁴³ their second John Sherwin Longden, was born in 1803⁴⁴ and their

³⁵ Lincs Archives, Kirkby on Bain PAR/23/1.

³⁶ *Notts. County Recs. 18th Century*, 65.

³⁷ J.W. Clay (ed.), *The Registers of St Paul's Cathedral* (Harl. Soc., 1899), 79.

³⁸ Notts. Archives, DR 1/5/138/1728–38.

³⁹ *Phillimore's Parish Reg., Nottingham St Mary, Marriages*, ii. 15.

⁴⁰ TNA, CP 43/851, rot. 23.

⁴¹ TNA, PROB 11/1341, ff. 000–000.

⁴² Notts. Archives, PR 2040.

⁴³ Notts. Archives, DR/1/5/138/438.

⁴⁴ Notts. Archives, DR/1/5/138/454.

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third, Frances Jane, in 1804.⁴⁵ Longden died in 1818, leaving as heir J.S. Longden,⁴⁶ who adopted the surname Sherwin in place of his own.⁴⁷ As John Sherwin Sherwin he married Catherine Holden of Nuthall Temple in 1829.⁴⁸ In 1854 J.S. Sherwin inherited Harlaxton Manor (Lincs.) and changed his name once more, to John Sherwin Gregory.⁴⁹ He died without issue in 1869.⁵⁰ Both Bramcote and Harlaxton remained in the hands of his widow Catherine until she died in 1892, when Bramcote passed to her youngest brother Captain Henry Holden as tenant for life under a trust established by her will.⁵¹ After Henry died in 1900 the estate continued to be held in trust for the benefit of his grandson Millington Elmhirst Holden, born in 1892.⁵² Millington died in a motor accident in 1911. When the estate passed to his father's third brother Frederick William Holden, also as tenant for

⁴⁵ Notts. Archives, DR/1/5/138/154.

⁴⁶ TNA, PROB 11/1615, f. 183r.–v.

⁴⁷ *London Gaz.*, 23 Aug. 1825.

⁴⁸ *Burke's Landed Gentry* (1921 edn), 907–8.

⁴⁹ *London Gazette*, 18 Sept. 1860.

⁵⁰ *Burke's Landed Gentry* (1921 edn), 907–8; will proved Principal Registry, 22 July 1869.

⁵¹ Notts. Archives, P/ND/1/35.

⁵² *Burk's Landed Gentry*, 1969, 304.

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life.⁵³ When Frederick died in another motor accident in 1913, the next tenant was his brother Ernest Frank Holden.⁵⁴

The Holden estate in Bramcote and Stapleford was offered for sale in 1919, when about 920 acres were acquired by a number of purchasers.⁵⁵ After E.F. Holden died in 1937 the remaining estate passed to John Alfred Edwin Drury-Lowe of Locko Park (Derb.), the second son of William Drury Nathaniel Drury-Lowe, who was himself the eldest son of William Drury-Lowe, the eldest brother of Catherine Sherwin Gregory.⁵⁶ After this, Bramcote became an outlying part of an estate centred some miles away and the mansion ceased to be occupied as a residence. The lands were gradually sold over the following decades.⁵⁷

Lands of Religious Houses

⁵³ Burk's Landed Gentry, 1969, 304.

⁵⁴ *Burke's Landed Gentry* (1969 edn), 304.

⁵⁵ Notts. Archives, DD 546/6.

⁵⁶ *Burke's Landed Gentry* (1969 edn), 304.

⁵⁷ M. Kempson, 'The state and the country house in Nottinghamshire, 1937–1967' (Unpublished University of Nottingham Ph.D. thesis, 2006), 383–4.

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Lenton Priory

At some date, presumably in the 12th century or early 13th, Herbert of Bramcote confirmed to the monks of Lenton the gift which Axor son of Ulfac made to them of 2 carucates of land of the fee of Arnold which Herbert held in Bramcote. Henry de Neville confirmed to Lenton 8 bovates in Bramcote and 4 in Sutton, of his soke of Arnold, concerning which there had formerly been some controversy in the king's court, reserving 12s. yearly rent to himself and his heirs.⁵⁸ The second of these estates (and possibly also the first) presumably formed part of the 6 bovates of sokeland in Bramcote which belonged to the manor of Arnold in 1086.⁵⁹

Felley Priory and the Strelley Family

When Sir Robert Strelley died in 1488 he was found to have held a messuage and three bovates of land and meadow in Bramcote of Felley priory,⁶⁰ which at this date held the advowson of Bramcote.⁶¹ He was succeeded by his son John, who died in 1502,⁶² whose own son John died

⁵⁸ Thoroton, *Notts.* (ed Throsby), ii. 186.

⁵⁹ Above, this section.

⁶⁰ *Notts IPMs 1485–1546*, 4–5; C. Kerry, 'Notes to the pedigree of the Strelleys of Strelley, Oakerthorpe, and Hazlebach', *J. Derby. Archaeol. & Nat. Hist. Soc.*, xiv (1892), 86–9.

⁶¹ Below, Religious History.

⁶² Kerry, 'Notes', 89–91.

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without issue, as did his brother George, leaving their four sisters as coheiresses.⁶³ The eldest, Isabel, married as her first husband Clement Lowe of Denby (Derb.), with whom she had a daughter and heiress Mary, who married William Sacheverell of Morley (Derb.).⁶⁴ In 1525 Isabel was pardoned for alienating portions of a number of manors, including Bramcote, to feoffees, who regranted the premises to Isabel for her life, with remainder to William Sacheverell and Mary Lowe⁶⁵ Isabel later married Richard Paynell.⁶⁶ When John Strelley's estates were divided between his coheiresses in 1535, premises in Bramcote were assigned to his second daughter Margaret, the wife of John Powtrell of West Hallam (Derb.), who died in 1543, and Isabel Paynell widow, her daughter Mary and her husband William Sacheverell received lands elsewhere.⁶⁷

Darley Abbey

Darley abbey (Derb.) held lands in Chilwell, Bramcote and Attenborough, given to the canons in the early 12th century by Ralf fitz Odo as an appendage of his manor of Pentrich (Derb.).⁶⁸ After the

⁶³ Kerry, 'Notes', 91–3; Thoroton, *Notts.*, 230–1..

⁶⁴ Kerry, 'Notes', 91; Thoroton, *Notts.*, 230.

⁶⁵ *L. & P. Hen. VIII*, iv (1), 499.

⁶⁶ Kerry, 'Notes', 91.

⁶⁷ Thoroton, *Notts.*, 231.

⁶⁸ R.R. Darlington (ed.), *The Cartulary of Darley Abbey* (1945), xvii.

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Dissolution, in 1567 all the lands and tithes in Chilwell, Bramcote and Attenborough, late of the Darley abbey, was leased to Francis Willoughby for 21 years for 101s. a year.⁶⁹ In 1580 Sir Francis Willoughby of Wollaton was granted a new lease of the earlier premises for his own life and those of his daughters Bridget and Dorothy at the same rent of 101s. a year and a heriot of his best draught beast. Willoughby must have surrendered his grant, since in 1598 a new lease was made at the same rent to Henry Handley for a term of 21 years. Although the above are described as all the lands and tithes in Chilwell, Bramcote and Attenborough, late of the Darley abbey, another part of this estate was leased in 1576 for 21 years at 33s. 4d. a year to Richard Elston. In 1585 the premises leased to Elston were leased in reversion to Rowland Ashley for 21 years from the expiry of Elston's lease. Also in 1585, yet another portion was leased for their lives to Anthony Cooke, Richard Cooke and Alice Cooke for 22s. a year and a heriot of their best beast. In 1599 the Crown sold all of the above in fee simple, together with a number of other pieces of former monastic property, mostly in Yorkshire, to Hercules Wytham and Francis Theakston of London, when the former Darley lands were valued at £10 10s. 8d. a year.⁷⁰ Nothing further is heard of the Bramcote portion of this estate as a separate entity, which suggests that the purchasers sold it on to Henry Handley, as the sitting tenant resident locally.

Lay Estates

Several families held fractions of a knight's fee in Bramcote or were returned as tenants of part of the manor in the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries, although it is difficult to trace any of these holdings through more than a couple of generations, if that. For example, c.1201–12 Richard of

⁶⁹ *Cal. Pat.* 1566–9, 6.

⁷⁰ *Cal. Pat.* 42 *Eliz.* (LIS 332), 131–2.

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Trowell held a quarter of a knight's fee in Bramcote and Robert son of William of Alfreton half a fee,⁷¹ but neither holding can be securely connected to later references to portions of the manor.

In addition, a family (or families) which adopted the surname Bramcote were freeholders there for several generations. In c.1200 Robert son of Herbert of Bramcote granted land there to Silvester the son of Robert the chaplain of Beeston.⁷² Either the same or another Robert served on an assize jury in 1230–2.⁷³ In 1329 Henry son of Henry Bramcote gave Henry, John, Agnes, Isabel, Joan and Idonea, his and his wife Amice's children, a 'grange' and sheepcote, along with six acres of arable land in Bramcote and a rood of meadow.⁷⁴

When Nicholas Purefoy gent. died in 1546 he held land and other premises in Bramcote of the heir of William Hastings as of his manor of Arnold,⁷⁵ which may be another echo of the existence of sokeland belonging to Arnold in Bramcote in 1066.⁷⁶ In the same year premises in Bramcote, previously held by an unidentified religious house, were included in a large grant of

⁷¹ *Red Book Exch.* (Rolls Ser.), i. 183, ii. 583.

⁷² *HMC Middleton*, 41–2.

⁷³ *Curia Regis R.*, xiv. 94.

⁷⁴ NUL, Mi 1/2/1/7.

⁷⁵ *Notts. IPMs 1485–1546*, 312–13.

⁷⁶ Above, this section.

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former monastic estate to Trinity College, Cambridge.⁷⁷

Risley fee

In 1242–3 William of Risley held half a knight's fee in Bramcote of the fee of Mortimer.⁷⁸ Forty years later Herbert of Risley held the same estate, when the prior of Sempringham was said to hold the other half of the fee and the two were returned as lords of Bramcote.⁷⁹ This moiety of the manor appears to have passed by 1315 to Robert of 'Byley' (i.e. Beeley, Derby),⁸⁰ although whether this was a permanent alienation is unclear. In 1330 Robert Beeley claimed assize of bread and ale from his tenants in Bramcote,⁸¹ while John Beeley of Bramcote witnessed two local deeds in 1348⁸² and was a victim of theft in 1356.⁸³ In 1346, however, William Risley was recorded as one of the former tenants of the manor; the otherwise unidentified 'John de Wyleye' listed on the same

⁷⁷ *L. & P. Hen. VIII*, xxi (2), 342–3.

⁷⁸ *Book of Fees*, 996.

⁷⁹ *Feudal Aids*, iv. 93–4.

⁸⁰ *Feudal Aids*, iv. 109–10; cf. *PN Derby*, 44.

⁸¹ *Plac. de Quo Warr.* (Rec. Com.), 618.

⁸² NUL, Mi 2/55/6 and 9.

⁸³ *Cal. Pat.* 1354–8, 381.

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occasion may be an error for John Beeley.⁸⁴ Both John Risley and William Risley were recorded as recent and former landholders respectively in Bramcote in 1428.⁸⁵

Birchwood fee

In 1242–3 Henry of Birchwood held a sixth of a knight's fee in Bramcote of the 'honor of Alfreton' (Derb.).⁸⁶ What may be the same estate was described in 1250 as a quarter of a carucate held of the honor of Peveril, worth 41s. a year.⁸⁷ Nicholas Birchwood held eight bovates of the Honor in Bramcote in 1293,⁸⁸ by 1346 Richard Willoughby held a sixth of a knights Fee in Bramcote which Henry Birchwood had formerly held.⁸⁹ In 1428 Richard Willoughby was described as formerly tenant of the same estate.⁹⁰ In view of the reference to Alfreton, in which there is a tenement

⁸⁴ *Feudal Aids*, iv. 116–18.

⁸⁵ *Feudal Aids*, iv. 129–30.

⁸⁶ *Book of Fees*, 996; the manor of Alfreton was not generally described as an 'honor'.

⁸⁷ Kerry, 'Survey', 49.

⁸⁸ *Book of Fees*, 1320–1.

⁸⁹ *Feudal Aids*, iv. 116–118.

⁹⁰ *Feudal Aids*, iv. 129–30.

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named Birchwood,⁹¹ this estate may have originated in a grant by Robert son of William of Alfreton (or a successor) of part of the half-fee which Robert held in the early 13th century.⁹²

Kerr fee

In 1319 or 1320 Richard son of Richard Willoughby released to John del Kerr of 'Rotington' 9s. 8d. rent out of 10s. 4d. which John was to pay to Richard as part of 29s. 4d. which Richard held by the grant of John Thornton, issuing out of a messuage and four bovates of land in Bramcote, which John was to hold of Richard.⁹³ John Kerr witnessed a local deed in 1353.⁹⁴

When William Babington died in 1454 he held a manor in Bramcote called Kerr Manor, which was not held in chief but of whom it was held or by what service the jurors were ignorant. His heir was his son, also named William.⁹⁵ Five years later the younger William gave 16 bovates of land and 4 acres of meadow in Bramcote to a chantry in the chapel of St Andrew in the church of St

⁹¹ *PN Derb.*, 188.

⁹² Above, this section.

⁹³ Thoroton, *Notts.*, (ed. Throsby), ii. 186.

⁹⁴ *Cal. Close 1349–54*, 607.

⁹⁵ *Notts. IPMs 1437–85*, 42.

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Peter, Flawforth.⁹⁶

Willoughby estate

In addition to the family's holdings already mentioned, in 1362 Richard Willoughby the elder held of the king, as of the honor of Peveril, 40s. rent in Bramcote by the service of doing suit to the honor court twice a year.⁹⁷ In 1528 when Sir Henry Willoughby died, he was found to have held a messuage, three virgates of land and meadow, and 9s. rent in Bramcote.⁹⁸ These lands could conceivably represent the 6 bovates of sokeland belonging to the manor of Wollaton recorded in Bramcote in 1086.⁹⁹

In the 18th century the Willoughbys of Wollaton claimed manorial rights in Bramcote,¹⁰⁰ apparently as lords of the honor of Peveril. In 1848, when the last of the common waste of the manor (i.e. Bramcote Moor) was enclosed, Lord Middleton made an exchange with John Sherwin by

⁹⁶ *Cal. Pat.* 1452–61, 476; *ibid.* 1476–85, 104–5.

⁹⁷ *Cal. Fine R.* 1356–68, 221; *Rot. Orig.*, ii. 270–1.

⁹⁸ *Notts. IPMs 1485–1546*, 171.

⁹⁹ Above, this section.

¹⁰⁰ NUL, Mi 1/22/49/1.

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which he gave up his rights in Bramcote in return for land in Beeston belonging to Sherwin.¹⁰¹

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¹⁰¹ Notts. Archives, EA 36/1/2.