

THE BRASNETT FAMILY

Described as 'major' landowners in Bilney in 19th Century Gazettes the Brasnetts were never apparently gentry but yeoman farmers. One branch of the family owned West Bilney Hall, but a lot of money went out of the family to Australia and they got into financial trouble in the 1890's depression. They sold the Hall to the Allenbys.

David Brasnett believes that the new owners wanted to convert the 2 storey building into a 3 storey. They took the roof off, someone died, and there wasn't enough money and the house fell into ruin.

After the 19th Century the Brasnetts continued to farm in Norfolk but not in East Winch till David returned from Blackborough End in the early 70's. As a boy he lived at High House, Fordham.

There was from childhood a close link between Jean and David's family.

When Jean's father married David's aunt Gladys in 1932, Gladys became Jean's stepmother. Gladys' new husband, the Scottish Mr Cuthbert, had got to know her through friendship with David's father.

Gladys nursed David's grandfather till he died. Mr Cuthbert would come to see her then, with a bunch of flowers incongruously clutched in his fist.

Gladys refused to meet any of Mr Cuthbert's four children while they were courting, except for Bert, the eldest, then aged 12. Jean thinks Betty was bridesmaid at the wedding - the rest of them met their new step-mother along with her new piano, only on the couples return from honeymooning in Scotland.

On marrying Gladys retired from playing the organ at East Winch Church. This put the PCC into a tizzy. What on earth were they to do without an unpaid organist. The vicar's daughter Miss Gray stood in for a while at £12.00 per annum.

Prior to her marriage Gladys used to take David to church on the back of her bike so that he could pump the organ for her. He was so small that when the pump handle was raised he was almost lifted off the floor. Some times something would come unhooked inside the organ and David had to squeeze into the organ case to fix it.