

## Brampton

Brampton dates back to at least the 7th century. Its name might derive from the Old English words from brambles or broom. It's a small market town- the first market was in 1252- on the Carlisle-Newcastle road. Brampton is close to Naworth Castle, the home of the Howard family – the Earls of Carlisle – who have a strong influence on the area. Brampton prospered in the Georgian and Victorian years: some cotton weaving and coal mining, south of the town on the fells, brought prosperity. The railway bypassed Brampton – it still does – but a branch, at first horse-drawn, was opened, mainly to handle the coal traffic, in 1775. Passenger steam services started in 1881 but closed in 1923. The 'dandy' [a type of horse-drawn cart] line is now a pleasant footpath down to Brampton station.

The present Moot Hall, in the Market Place, dates from 1817. Markets took place beneath the hall. Nearby are iron stocks, last used as a punishment in 1836. The bull ring, set in the cobble, was where a bull was chained to it and set up by dogs. Bets were taken on the fiercest dogs.

The Nag's Head is one of several pubs. Brampton had 63 beer houses, taverns and pubs in mid-Victorian times. There was one licence for every 93 inhabitants, including women and children. Lady Rosalind Carlisle, wife of the Earl who was chairman of the licensing authority, took the temperance pledge at Lanercost in 1881. She then began a vigorous campaign to close pubs on the Naworth Estates. By 1903 the number of licensed premises in Brampton was reduced to 10. "The Radical Countess" was interested in art, politics, feminism, temperance and estate management. She regularly dressed in blue –Liberal colours. In her old age she was described as cantankerous and embittered: 'able to make or mar happiness'. Her influence was strong in Brampton.

Brampton had a brief appearance in British history when Bonnie Prince Charlie stayed there in 1745 during his siege of Carlisle. The Mayor and Aldermen of Carlisle were required to attend him in High Cross Street and, on their knees, hand over the keys of Carlisle. The Jacobite rebels were defeated. Charles fled to France but 6 rebels were executed at the Capon Tree, Brampton. The French Ambassador accompanied the Court; he stayed in Half Moon Wholefoods shop, originally an inn.

Brampton's parish church of St Martin's was designed by Philip Webb in 1878. It's nationally famous for its arts & crafts interior and stained glass windows and furniture designed by William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones. The vicar in 1878 was Rev Henry Whitehead. He and Webb, Morris, Burne-Jones, and George Howard, 9th Earl, were all at Oxford together. The Earl was a talented artist. Whitehead worked in London in 1859 with Dr Snow who identified polluted water as a cause of cholera which was a scourge of the time. A visit to the interior of St Martin's is impressive.

The Howard Arms (over 220 years old) was a coaching inn. In those days it was like a service station and garage today but for horse traffic: blacksmiths, livery stables, coach house, and post office. It was also a social centre: Jane Austen-style balls, dinners, assemblies, dancing, even a County Court. The Howard motto "Volo non valeo" [I am willing but unable] was granted by Charles II as a condition of the Howards keeping their titles and estates after the Restoration: a mild but firm rebuke to them.

Brampton's mote (artificial hill) –complete with an 1870 statue of the 7th Earl on top – was part of a 13th century castle. You can walk up the spiral path to the summit. In theory there are fine views across the Solway Plain – if it weren't for all the trees growing on top.

The old 1785 brewery now houses small businesses and the Royal Mail. It's home to Brampton's Geltsdale Brewery [www.geltsdalebrewery.com](http://www.geltsdalebrewery.com) which was started by Fiona Deal in 2006. Their bitter beer is called 'Brampton'. Nearby are the remains of the Tweed Mill, burnt down in 1960.

Millfield is a small estate of early 1950s houses built for the higher ranks of staff at the Spadeadam Research Establishment. Spadeadam was where the UK's Blue Streak ballistic

missiles were tested until the project was cancelled in 1960. The huge, concrete, remains are now relics of the Cold War.

Stagecoach 685 buses from Carlisle to Brampton (**Sundays 2015**) leave at 13:07 & 14:07, arriving at 13:29 & 14:29. Return buses to Carlisle leave at 14:32, 15:32 & 16:32 (arriving at 14:54, 15:54 & 16:54). The Hadrian's Wall AD122 bus, via Lanercost, no longer runs in Cumbria.