

BRADING TOWN POUND

The survival of small historic structures is often down to pure chance. They can be altered out of recognition, be swept aside in town 'improvements', or ignored until demolished as dangerous. Our Town Pound in Quay Lane was redundant by the end of the 1800's and yet it still survives (picture below).



16th century Brading sat within a rural English landscape of open field farming with its residents (commoners) owning or renting a small piece of each field and living on the produce of their labour. Animals were a big source of food for every family and they were allowed to graze their chickens, geese, pigs, sheep or cattle on communal Common Land. The Borough of Brading made its own local laws, and some of the records they have left behind, now belonging to the Brading Town Trust, show how fines were used to enforce some order on the town's residents use of the streets, highway and churchyard for grazing their animals.

In Brading, the Bailiffs employed a Hayward with powers to round up stray animals and secure them in the pound until claimed by the owner upon payment of a fine. The pound was part of a field enclosed by a stock-proof wooden fence or brick or stone walls.

Sometime a "pound" was called a Pinfold and both words are Saxon in origin, pundfald and pund both mean "enclosure". The person in charge of the pinfold would be called the 'pinder'.

Brading Bailiffs also imposed fines for a 'pound rescue' where the owner forcibly retrieved his animals from the Hayward as they were being led to the pound, or a 'pound breach' where the owner broke into the pound to recover his animals.

The earliest record of the Brading pound that we have in the Town Trust archives is from the Town Book of 1550 to 1642, and dated 18 October 1564:

Allso at this corte it was decreed that Thomas Kendall should be the heardman of this Towne for the impounding of Cattell or hogges which he should find wandering in the streete or the Churchyard unlawed or stalling the highe waies, and that he should take of the owner of every such beast or hogg unlawed, wandering in the streetes or lanes without a driver, a peny, whereof the one halfe should be to the Queens majestie, the other to himself.

Note that Thomas Kendall, the Haywain of Brading in October 1564 was allowed to keep half of the fine paid for himself.

Throughout the 1550 – 1642 Town Book we find frequent records of the use and misuse of the town pound:

Here an example of a Pound Rescue from a View of Frank Pledge court held in Brading on 9 May 1593:

We present Rafe Tagg for taking his sheepe from Joane Bryan who was driving of them to the pound and offered to beat her and daylye menaceth her for the same by reason whereof she is unwilling to do her fathers business in the field without any company for which we amerce [fine] him __ 20d.

This example of a Pound Breach is from 29 May 1594:

We present Elizabeth Bull for taking certaine swine out of the pound who were impounded for tresspassing Cordrey, and we amerce [fine] her therefore __ 5s.

A reminder from 19 October 1619 of the importance of maintaining the pound:

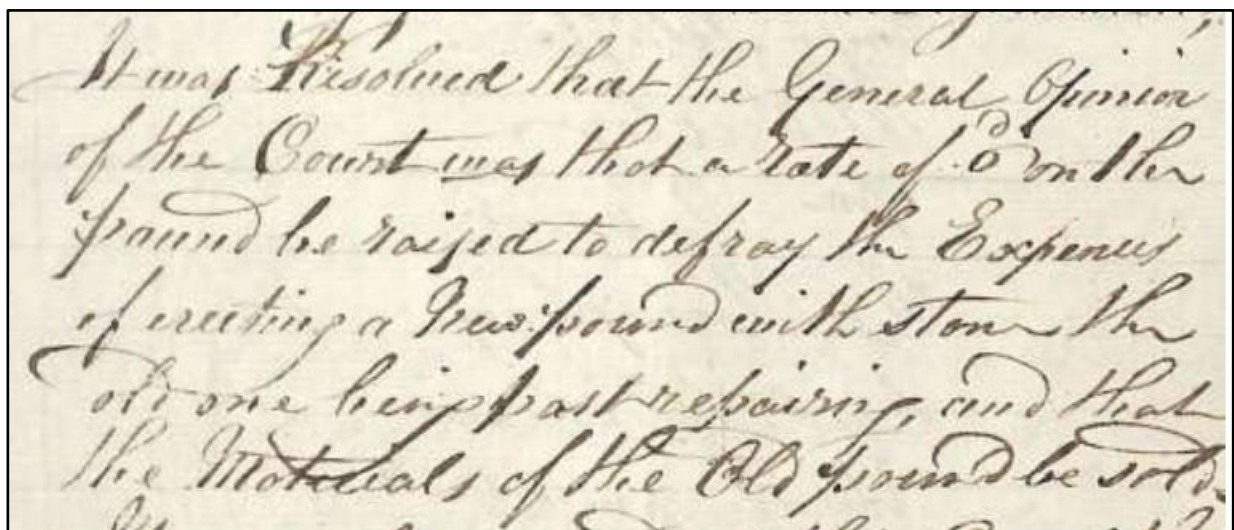
We present Ann Lavender widow because she does not repair the common pound, in English called the Pound, and she is therefore amerced[fined] 12d., and is ordered sufficient time to repair the pound under payne, if the pound is not sufficiently repaired, of 6d.

From 5 October 1590, a general charge for upkeep to the pound:

Also we agree that according to our custome for the Towne charge, there shall be a collection of 2d. upon the noble rent through the Towne, toward the amending of the pound.

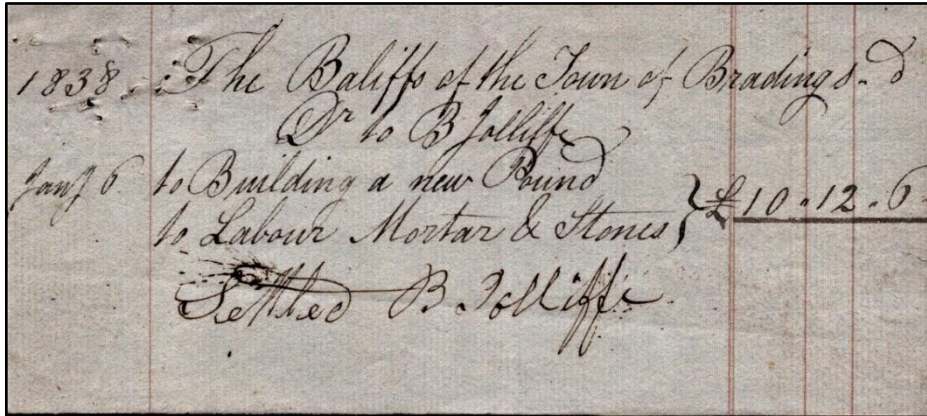
From the 1750's however, the open field system of farming was coming to an end with the start of the Industrial Revolution and the decrease of the communal common land which was slowly being enclosed, so that by the mid 1800's the need for Town Pounds was reducing and they began to fall out of use.

The building of Brading's current pound begins with this entry on page 301 of the Brading Town Book on the 13th of November 1837 (full translation follows):



It was Resolved that the General Opinion of the Court was that a rate of 0 on the Pound be raised to defray the Expenses of erecting a New pound with stone the old one being past repairing, and that the Materials of the Old pound be sold.

At a Court held in the Town Hall of the said Borough on Monday the 13th day of November 1837 before Mr Henry Newman and Mr Henry Rawkins Bailiffs and other Burgesses then and there assembled, it was Resolved that the General Opinion of the Court was that a rate of 6d on the pound be raised to defray the Expenses of erecting a New Pound with stone, the old one being past repairing, and that the materials of the Old Pound be sold.



1838 The Bailiffs of the Town of Brading & Co.
Dr to B. Jolliffe
Jan 6 to Building a new Pound
to Labour Mortar & Stones } £10.12.6
Signed B. Jolliffe

In the archives we have the receipt (shown left) dated 6th January 1838 and signed B. Jolliffe for building the new pound for the Bailiffs of the Town of Brading, for Labour Mortar & Stones at a cost of £10 – 12s – 6d.

This is the pound we still have today, with walls of stone rubble about 6ft high with red brick quoins and a flat stone coping. Brading still had a need for a pound as late as 1838.



to the Board of Town of Brading
 George Kemp

1888

To New 2 nd Advanced Place	
Door put in with 1 st Board	7 9
for the Pound 1/4 th 26	2 5 6
4 Capping to do 9	8
to Pointing to do	2
	<hr/>
	2 10 6

Wm G Kemp
 July 29 1888

Even in 1888 it was still thought necessary to keep the pound in good condition. We have a receipt from George Kemp dated July 1888 showing that £2 – 10s – 6d was spent on repairing it with a new framed and braced door.

However, by 1894 a letter recently discovered in the Town Trust archives show that the Trust Committee resolved to demolish the pound:

viz. That in the opinion of the Trustees
 "the pound being of no further use
 " should be dismantled, the materials sold,
 " and the ground levelled, And that
 " the consent of the Charity Commissioners
 " be asked to carry out this Resolution"

The letter is being sent to the Charity Commissioners who had oversight of the workings of the Town Trust. The full text is as follows:

I am requested by the Trustees to forward you the following resolution which was carried unanimously at a meeting held on Tuesday 4th ultimo being "That in the opinion of the Trustees the pound being of no further use should be dismantled and the materials sold, and the ground levelled and that the consent of the Charity Commissioners be asked to carry out this resolution". I may mention with regard to this Resolution the pound is very much out of repair and has for some years been a receptacle for all kinds of refuse".

We have a letter from the Charity Commissioners reminding the Trust that the demolition would have to meet with the general approval of the inhabitants of Brading, and another noting that an objection to the demolition has been received from Mr A. Austin of Ryde. Perhaps the Charity Commissioners were uneasy with the demolition, or the small amount of land gained was of little value, but against all the odds the historic pound was reprieved. It is now Grade II listed and is valued as one of the few remaining town pounds on the Isle of Wight.

Other Isle of Wight Pounds.

The pound illustrated below is near West Court, Shorwell, and is similar to the one at Brading. It is a square enclosure with walls of Isle of Wight stone rubble to a height of about 5 feet with brick quoins on the north side. It was restored in 1951.



The third Island pound is the circular one at Pound Green, Freshwater (below). It dates from the 18th century, has walls 5 feet high and was restored in 2008. It sits within the Pound Green Conservation Area. The 1861 Ordnance Survey map labels this structure as 'Pinfold', although the 1909 map reverts to 'Pound'.



Another view of the Pound Green pound:



Sources: Brading Community Archive website www.bradingscommunityarchive.com, catalogue numbers BTT 1086-1 (1838 receipt), BTT 1023 (Town Book 1550 to 1642), BTT 1281-1-50 (demolition), BTT 1086-3 (1888 receipt), BTT 1016A (Town Book 1813 – 1839).

<http://www.poundsandpinfolds.co.uk/>

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