

September 1917...

Colonel Edward Mackenzie has served as Justice of the Peace for Brandon since 1872. He wields much influence over the town, which was recognised five years ago when he laid a large plaque into the wall of the new infants school to much pomp and ceremony. Today Mackenzie sat as a magistrate in the court room of Brandon's Petty Sessions, passing judgement on Frank Coleman from Feltwell, who rode a cycle through town without lights, and Alfred Norton who wants to evict his tenant, Charles Aldous, so he can move a family member into the property. Following the conclusion of today's business Mackenzie turns to his fellow magistrates and announces his intention to resign, going on to explain that he is looking to sell up and move out to the Sussex coast. It seems years of declining health have taken a toll and his hopes are the sea air will aid his recovery. He goes on to reminisce about the early years of being a magistrate. The long days of riding on horseback between his home at Downham Hall, Santon Downham, to Mildenhall because Brandon had no court of its own. He remarks that most Brandon people, when faced with the journey to Mildenhall, were reluctant to pursue cases or be a witness due to the resulting loss of income. So he welcomed the progress made when Brandon received its own court and could prosecute offenders in the town, ultimately leading to a reduction in crime.

Colonel Boyd Cullen Poley Hamilton, of Brandon House, also announces to his peers that he will be winding down in his duties as a magistrate. Having been a magistrate since 1888, he feels he lacks the energy he once had. Another influential magistrate, Lieutenant-Colonel Spragge, of North Court, is currently away on war duty, thus begging the question of who will replace them.

Reverend Joseph Light Wyatt, took up the position of Rector of St. Peter's church in 1899, but he and his wife have announced they too are looking to move on and have put some of their possessions up for sale. In these times of austerity there are some bargains to be had - silver vases from India, a writing table from France and many oriental carvings; but top billing must go to the Bengal tiger skin, a snip at nineteen shillings! Add to this the death of Palmer Lingwood, co-owner of the fur factory on Thetford Road, and you can see the influence of Brandon's powerful elite hangs in the balance.

It has been generally accepted other wealthy people will move into Brandon and take on their positions. However, change is in the air. Just recently locals questioned why our lads could not return home to tend the fields, they then refused to billet soldiers sent from the city to take their place. Trade union membership is in the ascendancy, much to the joy of William Mutum the Labour representative for Brandon. Women are working in the factories and many are demanding equal rights. It is clear townspeople, more than ever, want influence over decisions being made, but rest assured for now there are no rumblings of revolution unlike in Russia.