



# MILTON KEYNES AT WAR

CRUSADES, CAMPAIGNS AND CONFLICTS

## ‘BREAD OR BLOOD?’

The crusading Captain Swing Riots in 1828...



*‘The labourer was poorly paid and overworked when in employment, but when he was out of work, his condition was one of misery.’* Sir Frank Markham

Hayrick burnings at Stony, threshing machines smashed at Brickhill and Fenny, riots in Bletchley, Wolverton and Newport, incendiary fires at Wavendon – when farming revenues fell in the 1820s, our forebears of the new city area hit out at being ‘desperately poor, oppressed, helpless and almost hopeless’. Hundreds of people paraded through villages yelling ‘Bread or Blood!’ At special trials at the County Court to combat these ‘Captain Swing’ riots, the 163 people who were tried were given little leniency. Although 41 were acquitted, 46 were jailed, 32 sentenced to be transported to Tasmania, and 44 were sentenced to death.

*From History of Milton Keynes & District Vol. II Pp 34-8 by Sir Frank Markham*