

BRADWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER No.27 May 2023

Up-coming events

Once again, for our May talk, we are able to introduce a member of our Society. At 8 pm on Tuesday 17th May in the Methodist Hall Richard Cornish will be telling us *Tales From the Toy Box – The Stories Behind Some of the Most Popular Toys and Games*.

A Nineteenth century turf war

In an amusing newspaper cutting sent to this month's speaker by Tim Bradwell we read about a turf war waged at Dale End. The cutting was in the collection of Cyril Evans and dates from 1883. It reads:

SINGULAR PROPERTY DISPUTE. On Thursday evening last, a somewhat singular dispute about property took place. Everyone acquainted with the district will know that the late Mrs Hannah Darnley (*sic*) for many years kept a school at Dale End and occupied as a residence and school room some pleasantly situated property, which was elevated a few yards higher than the road. For a number of years after the death of Mrs Darnley, her daughter the late Mrs Maltby, kept a boarding school there up to the time of her death which took place in 1876 (1874? - See below), and since then has been unoccupied. It has lately been pulled down by Mr Darnley of Hull, who is the owner, and a very pleasant gentleman's residence erected on the site of the old houses which is now almost completed, and will be occupied by Rev Shenton who is Mr Darnley's brother-in-law. Adjoining this house is a garden belonging to other parties who have right of footpath in front of Mr Darnley's residence to a stile leading in to the garden. This footpath, before the property was pulled down, was about a yard wide, and a few days since Mr Shenton planted some shrubs by the side of the footpath, but left about 5 feet of a walk. These shrubs were all pulled up during the night and on Thursday evening Mr Shenton engaged a man to plant some more, but no sooner had he commenced work, than up comes the woman belonging to the garden, who snatched the tools away, and a regular *melee* followed, in the course of which the shrubs were again set, and immediately pulled up by the infuriated woman in the presence of Mr Shenton and scores of spectators. We

are informed that legal proceedings will be taken by Mr Darnley. Mr Clegg, who resides only a few yards distant, will probably be consulted on the matter.

Views of Dale End Cottages before and around the time of the cutting.



The new looking Whiterock House on the far left is dated 1862.



Artist's Impression dating from 1875?



Main rebuilding of cottage complete by 1883?

Commentary on *dramatis personae*: The lives of some of the characters referred to in the cutting have been described in the life of [Oswald Hugh Baskett Darneley](#). Of the rest the Revd Robert Shenton is a major player. He was born in 1801 in Ashburton, Devon. He is mentioned several times in *Bradwell Ancient and Modern*. Seth Evans notes that '(he) came to Bradwell as a mere stripling of a youth to do missionary work for the Primitive Methodists, quite a new organization (*at the time*). He preached at the opening sermons of the Primitive Methodist Chapel at Little Hucklow in 1826, In the same year he married Maria Worrall of Hope. Soon after that he became pastor of the Unitarian Chapel at Flagg and later he was appointed to that post for Bradwell and Hucklow. In 1863 his wife Maria died and a year later he married Selina Darneley of Bradwell. Selina's sister Mary (Mariah) had married Isaac Maltby of Hope to become the Mrs Mary Maltby, school mistress, whose death was in 1874 according to the register of Deaths (but 1876 according to the cutting). Mary and Selina's parents where John and Hannah Darneley (also mentioned in the cutting).

Can we piece together any information about the identity of the irate women who pulled out the shrubs? The nearest documentary record we can find is the census for 1891 collected when Selina was living at 'Dale Head'. The only nearby neighbours were Joseph and May Sidebottom and Robert and Sarah Pearson but whether May or Sarah was the shrub tearer has not been ascertained.

Robert Shenton retired from active work as a pastor in 1873 and in his farewell sermon he took for his text 'Call to remembrance former times' and in Robert's case this ran to over half a century so it is not surprising that the sermon extended well over an hour. To commemorate his retirement Robert was presented with a gentleman's Gold Geneva watch inscribed 'Present to Rev Robert Shenton 1874'. The watch later appeared in the *Police Gazette* of 29th September 1880 as being stolen from a person at Chapel-en-le-Frith. Sadly its recovery appears not to have been recorded.

Both Robert and Selina were interred in the graveyard of the Unitarian Chapel in Great Hucklow and inside the chapel is a handsome marble scroll that reads:

Sacred to the memory of the Rev. Robert Shenton, of Bradwell minister of the Old Chapel at Great Hucklow for upwards of 33 years and for half a century a devoted eloquent preacher in this district. An earnest advocate and faithful worker in any cause having for its object the welfare of the people. His labours in the interest of education were recognised by his election as the first chairman of the Bradwell School Board, which office he held till a short time before his death. This tablet, together with the stone in the adjoining graveyard, are intended as a testimony to the esteem in which he was held by Peer and Commoner alike, by whose united efforts these memorials were erected. Died January 5th, 1889, aged 83 years.



Rev Robert Shenton



Selina Shenton died 2 years after Robert on Christmas day 1891

Of the Mr Clegg who is said to live 'a few yards away' no one of that name can be found as residing in Bradwell in the censuses around 1883. On the other hand a Dr Joseph Clegg (said to be a surgeon – so Mr Clegg?) does sign the 1911 census return for the occupants of Eden Tree House in Bradwell. Dr Clegg was not himself in residence on census night, being at his home in Urmston, Manchester with his wife Emily and four of their children. His youngest child Robert Miller Clegg was at Eden Tree House with maternal maiden aunt Fanny Pearson Eyre. In the gazette White's directory for 1879 Miss Fanny Pearson Eyre is listed as a resident of Bradwell. Fanny died at Bradwell in August 1911 and probate of her will showed she left £458 3s 8d to Emily Castleton Clegg her sister. Joseph Clegg died three years later in April 1914 and towards the end of that year Eden Tree House (referred to as the house of the former Dr Clegg in a newspaper cutting) was made available to a family of Belgian refugees possibly Cajetan Cöet and his two daughters. Cajetan was a railway worker from Antwerp.