

BRADWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER No.31 September 2023

Upcoming events

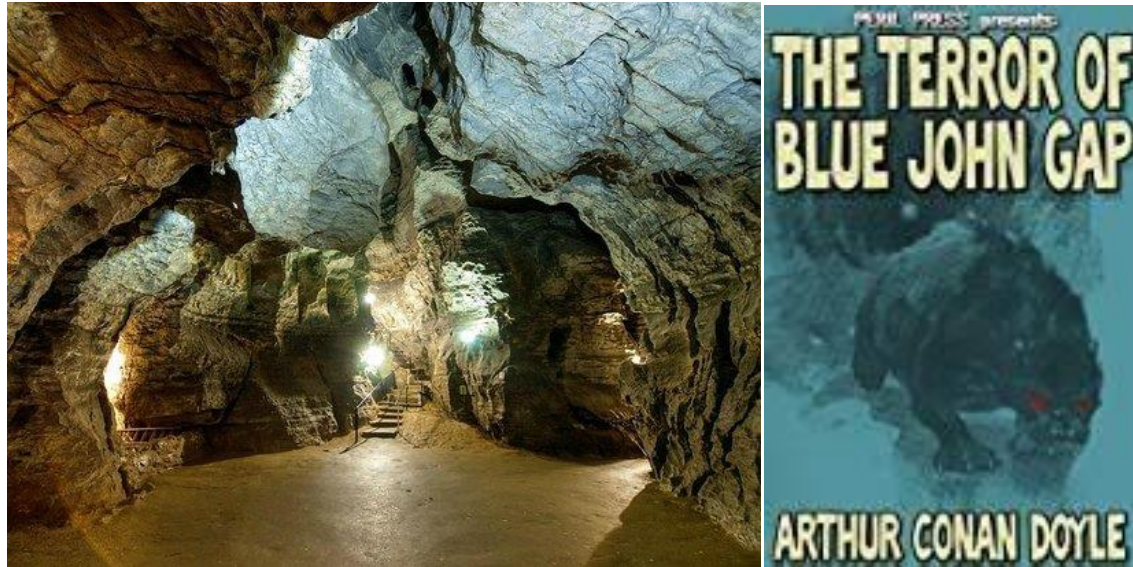
This month sees the recommencement of our talks on Tuesday 19th September. Jerry Youle will be telling us about *Archaeological Digging in a War Zone – Iraq, 1988*. Others have described the scientific basis of the dig but Jerry will be drawing on the diary he kept at the time to focus on the more practical day-to-day events. As usual we will meet at 8.00 pm in the Methodist Hall.

The Community Action Plan (CAP)

A few years ago a group came together to plan the way forward for the War Memorial Hall. Several initiatives flowed from this group. The first decision was to hold an open day in the Hall when all of the Groups in the village were invited to show what they were doing. This proved to be a very successful venture with the Hall crowded with stands where activities were shown. Leading on from this a Community Library and a Lotto draw were established. If one looks at the fiction shelves in the library it is clear that crime fiction is very popular. Perhaps that is one of the reasons why crime novelist of the Peak Stephen Booth was asked to open the CAP day. The BHS stand had a display that focussed on crime novels set in the Peak with an historical background. Here we reproduce the display we put on at that time. Note there are no 'spoilers' – you won't be told 'whodunit'.

Scene of the Crime

Crime novels set in the Peak with a historical background



Author, previous careers and where they live(d)

John Buxton Hilton: Inspector of Schools, Buxton

Celia Harwood, (Margaret Foster) Family Solicitor, Buxton

Sarah (Rhiannon) Ward: Blogger, Reviewer, Chelmorton

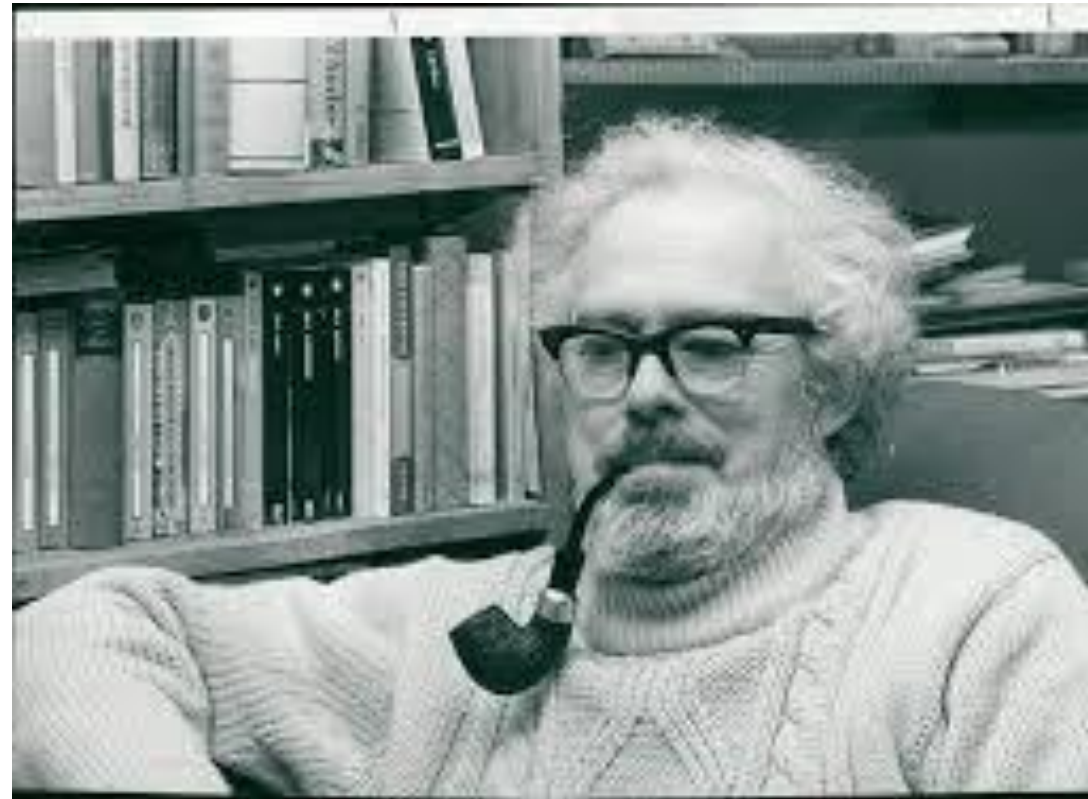
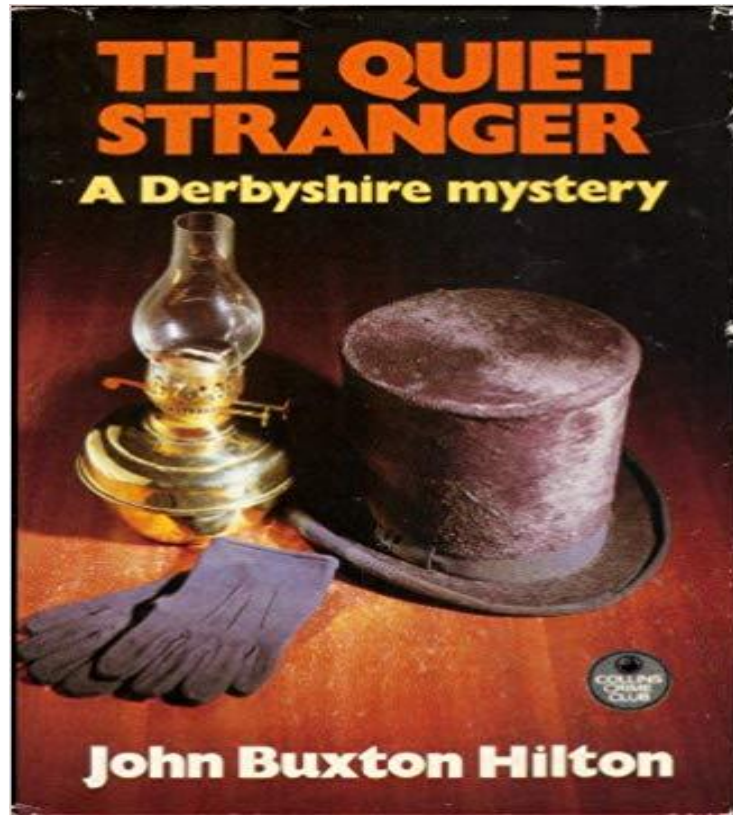
Stephen Booth: Journalist, Nottingham

Priscilla Masters: Practice Nurse (now retired), Leek

Helen Mort: Past Derbyshire Poet Laureate, Sheffield

Roz Watkins, Patent Lawyer (Derby) Alderwasley and now
Falmouth, Cornwall

All of the authors – except Helen Mort – have written several novels set in the Peak, but only one for each is reviewed here.



John Buxton Hilton

Date published: 1985 by Collins Books. **Date of setting:** 1880s and back to 1820s.

Detectives: DC Thomas Brunt, DS Jimmy Nadin (calls himself a 'deflective') and Inspector Captain Pickford.

Major Crime:

The crime at the heart of the story is the murder of a **Litton** farmer's wife.

Historical Background:

- Cruel mistreatment of London 'Poor Law' children at Ellis Needham's **Litton Mill** in the 1820s.

- Subsistence living of villagers in [Litton](#) as lead mining was coming to an end.

Other crimes investigated:

- Suspected cattle theft at [Earl Sterndale](#) (poor maintenance of boundary walls)
- Theft of fishing rods at [Taddington](#) and [Tissington](#).
- ‘Larcenous wiles’ at [Flagg](#) point-to-point races.
- Theft from a railway wagon on the [Cromford and High Peak Railway](#).
- Lady suspected of gaining the ‘sympathy of men’ at a [Darley Dale](#) rest home for gain (she is to be ‘deflected’ from her ways).

Set piece description: A railway journey from **Matlock** to **Miller's Dale** followed by a walk up **Litton Slack** to the 'Cordwainer's Arms' (probably what was the Windmill Inn)



Celia Harwood (no photograph found)

Date published: 2015 by Neuf Neznairs . **Date of setting:** 1920

Investigating solicitor: Eleanor Harriman of the Buxton family firm of Harriman & Talbot.

Major Crime:

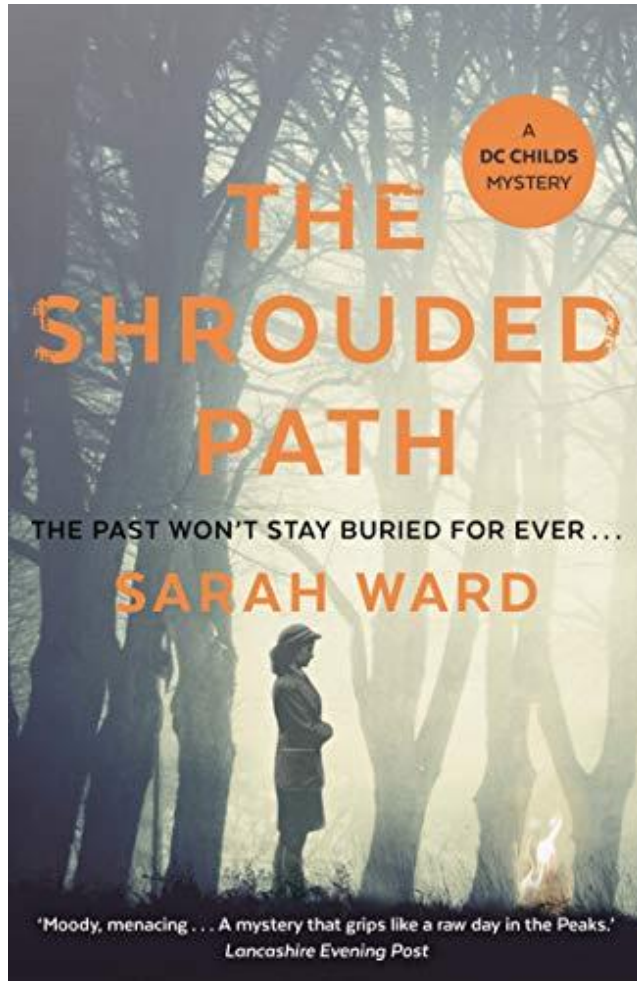
The crime at the heart of this story is the poisoning of Mrs Giffard (pronounced Jiffard). Eleanor's client is Major Giffard.

Historical background:

- Life in Buxton during and immediately after the Great War.
- Rivalry between 'great' ladies' in the houses of The Park overlooking the Pavilion Gardens.

Set piece description:

A car chase out on the Macclesfield Road up past the [Cat and Fiddle](#). Philip and Eleanor overtake their quarry by turning left at [Clough's Brook](#) towards the [Trentabank Reservoirs](#) and then right at the [Stanley Arms](#) on Askers Lane.



Sarah Ward

Date published: 2018 by Faber & Faber. **Date of setting:** 1957 and 2014.

Detectives: DC Connie Childs and DS Francis Sadler. Working from the fictional 'Bampton' police station – based on a mixture of **Buxton**, **Bakewell** and **Cromford** (for the canal) and that is 'a 20 min drive' from **Hathersage**.

Major crimes:

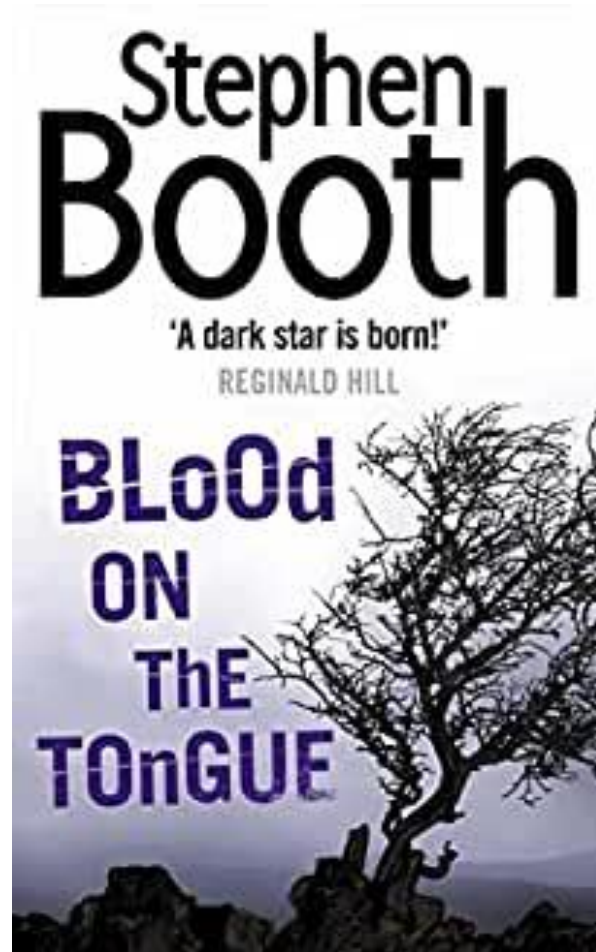
Morphine poisoning of a woman in hospital.

Disappearance of a girl in 1957. Six girls enter the '**Topley Tunnel**' but only five emerge at the other end.

Historical background:

- The poisoning of her patients by a nurse at [Stepping Hill Hospital, Stockport](#) who injected insulin into their drips.

Set piece description: Francis Sadler's drive out to [North Lees Hall](#) via [Hathersage](#).



Stephen Booth

Date published: 2002 by Sphere. **Date of setting:** 1940s and to date.

Detectives: DC Ben Cooper and DS Diane Fry. Working from the fictional 'Edendale' police station – based on a mixture of **Buxton**, **Bakewell** and located south of **Bradwell** in the direction of **Tideswell** and **Millers Dale**.

Major crimes:

Several suspicious deaths including that of a baby found under the wing of a crashed Lancaster bomber and a body uncovered by a snow plough.

Historical background:

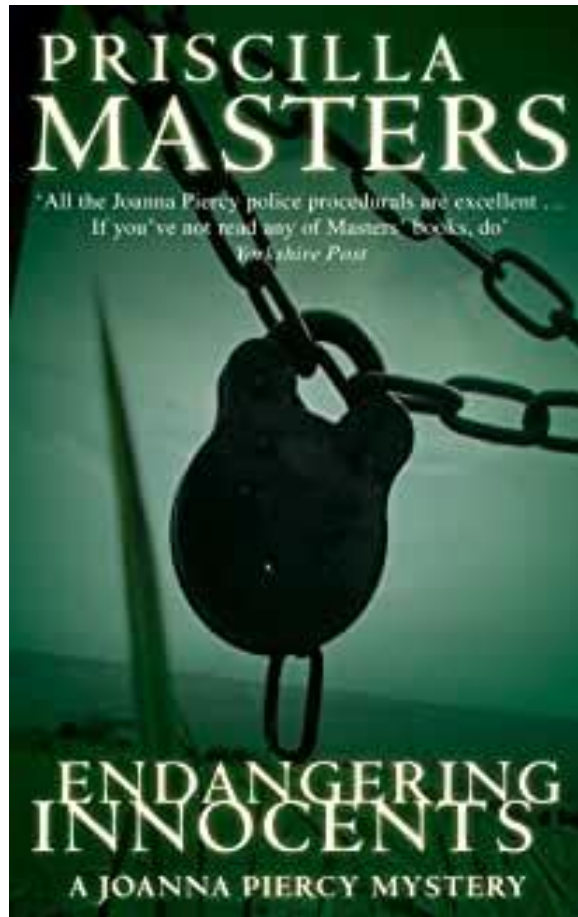
- The crashing of aircraft in [The Peak](#) – especially in World War II.
- The occurrence of very heavy snow storms just like the one in 1947 that led to German POWs digging the Twiggs out at [Hartle Moor Farm](#) above [Bradwell](#).
- The settling of Polish families in the Peak. Two Polish service men arrived in [Bradwell](#) after the war, sailor Stanislaw Galasinski and soldier Kazimierz

Matkowski. Kazi's life was reviewed in the July 2023 Newsletter.

Set piece description :

A snow plough drives beyond the **Snake Pass Inn** on the A57 and uncovers a corpse.

Stephen Booth's comment on some of the apparent topographical inconsistencies in his books 'They are only stories'.



Priscilla Masters

Date published: 2002 by Severn House. **Date of setting:** 2001.

Detectives: DI Joanna Piercy and DS Mike Korpanski.
Based in the police station in Leek.

Major crime:

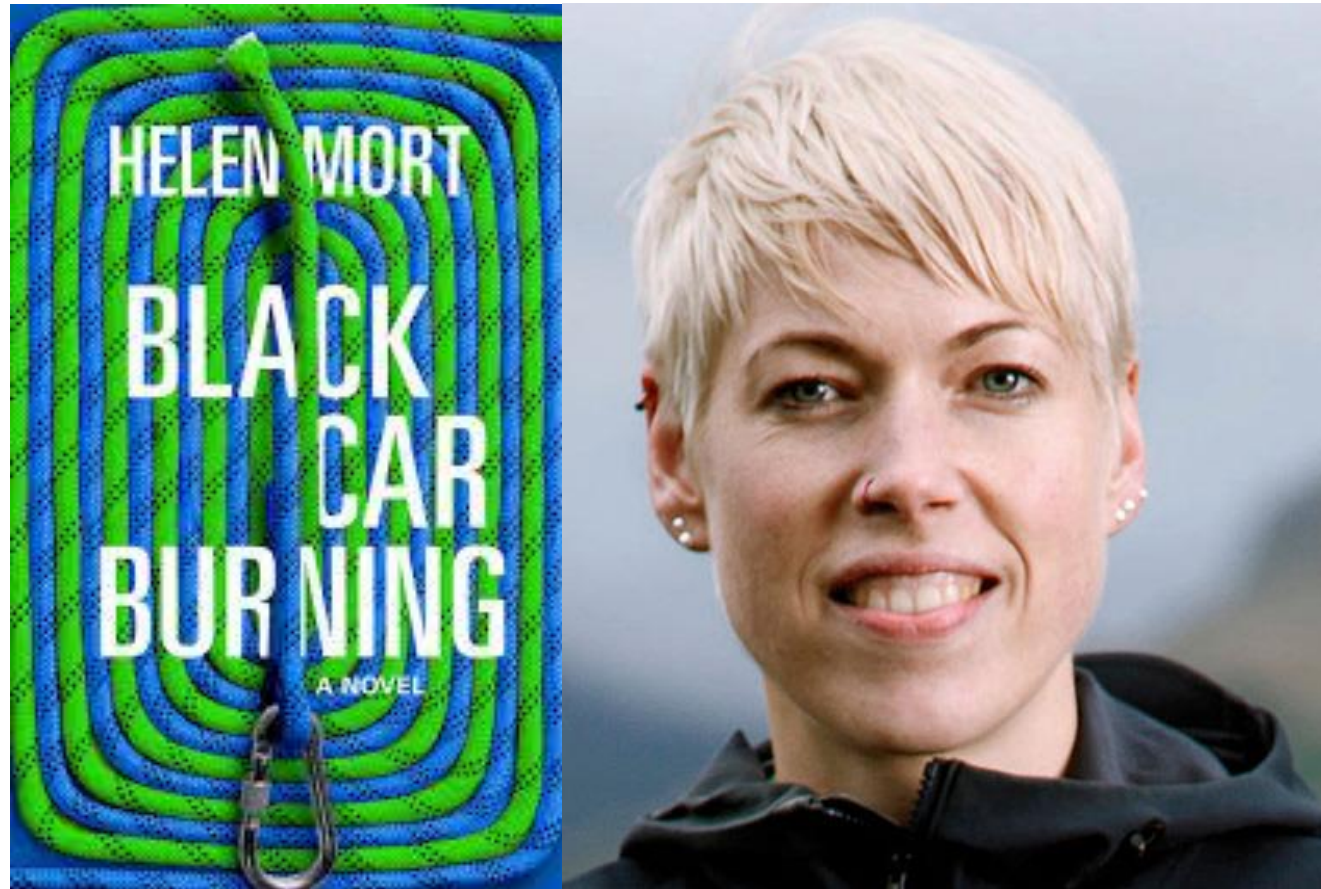
The disappearance of a 5 year old girl from her school in **Horton** near **Rudyard Lake** in Staffordshire. The chief suspect has an alibi that he had been fitting a shower in the bungalow of an elderly lady in **Brown Edge**.

Historical background:

- The search for the girl takes place during the outbreak of foot and mouth disease in 2001. The farmers who are desperate to prevent the spread of the disease from [Uttoxeter](#) to their farms on the [Staffordshire Moors](#) are very reluctant to allow access of searchers (especially public volunteers) to their land.

Set piece description:

Joanna's free-wheeling cycle ride from [Waterfall](#) on the Moors down to [Leek](#).



Helen Mort

Date published: 2019 by Chatto & Windus. **Date of setting:** 1989 and 2016.

Police Officers: PCSO Alexa ---, and ex PC Pete --- both of South Yorkshire Police.

Policing:

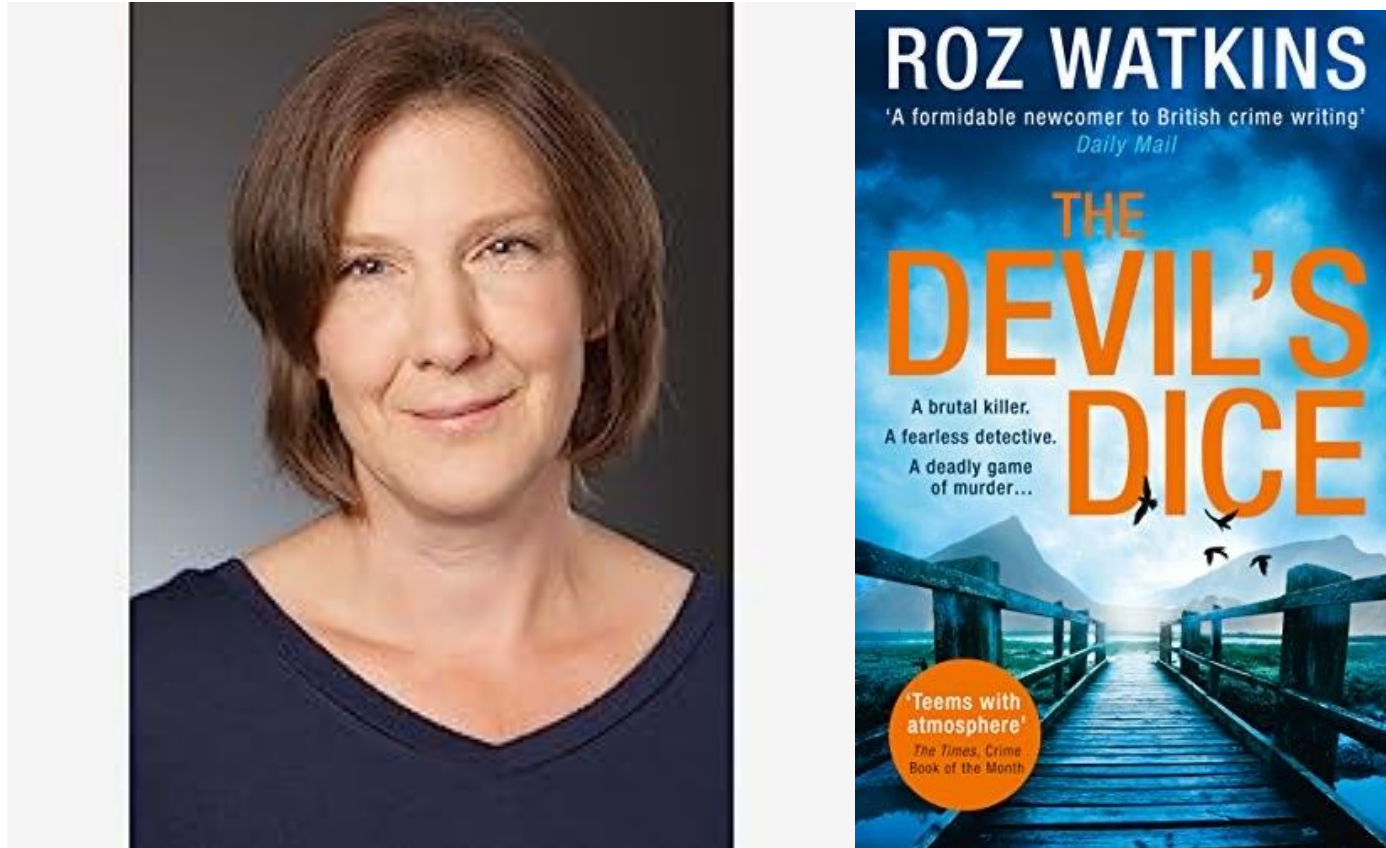
Alexa is almost overwhelmed with problems of community policing in **Page Hall, Sheffield** with such a diversity of population, including Romanies. One of her confidants tells her 'There's no trust. None at all.' Pete spends much of his time in the library following the reported details of the Second Leveson Inquiry into the **Hillsborough** Disaster at which he had been a PC.

Historical background:

- The **Hillsborough** disaster and second inquiry.
- The influx of Roma population into **Page Hall**.

Set piece descriptions:

- The failure of Alexa's partner Caron to climb **Black Car Burning** (graded E7 & 6c) on **Stanage Edge**
- The announcement of the 7-2 verdict in the second Leveson inquiry.



Roz Watkins

Date published: 2018 by Harper Collins. **Date of setting:** Present

Detectives: DI Meg Dalton and DS Jai Sanghera who work from the fictional police headquarters in **Eldercliffe** based on **Belper** (where Meg lives in the book) and **Wirksworth**, whilst Jai lives in **Matlock**.

Major crime:

The death of Peter Hugo Hamilton (who happens to be a Patent Lawyer!) in a cave nearly opposite a quarry the description of which suggests the region around **Wirksworth**.

Other crime (not) investigated: Activities of a group (including Meg's mother) who offer advice on assisted dying to the terminally ill.

Historical background:

Quarrying throughout the Peak and legends of witches in Derbyshire.

Set piece descriptions:

Meg being attacked when leaving her mother's house. She is pushed down a steep flight of steps that resemble to steps down from the [The Hills in Bradwell](#) except that the fictional metal railings had been removed for the war effort and not replaced.

Atmospheric description of Meg's interview with a half demented woman at the [Nine Ladies Stones, Stanton Moor](#).

Desperate struggle in a disused windmill '[near Bakewell](#)'