

## BRADWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY



### NEWSLETTER No.35 January 2024

#### Up-coming events

Once again the main date for you to write in your diary for January is our AGM to be held on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 8.00 pm in the Methodist Hall. To help cut down on paper usage we have again taken the step of posting most of the papers relating to the meeting on our Website : the agenda, reports by the chairman and treasurer and the programme for the coming year. You can view the first three of these by going to [www.bradwellhistoricalsociety.org.uk](http://www.bradwellhistoricalsociety.org.uk) and after selecting the 'about' option go to [AGM 2024](#). You will find the programme for the coming year on the 'home' page. After the formal business part of the meeting we are hoping that we will have brief (c. 10 min) presentations by member on the theme of 'Down Memory Lane ' .

Later in the month there will be a meeting for the new Committee on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> January at 7.30 pm in the Shoulder of Mutton. The agenda for this will be emailed to Committee Members after the AGM.

In January it is the time to renew your annual subscription. The Committee has once more agreed to maintain the membership fee at £10, although this will need to be formally ratified by you members at the AGM. It would be most convenient for our treasurer Andy Smith if you could arrange your payment via BACS transfer. The payment should be made to the Bradwell Historical Society and the details are as follows - Sort code: 16-15-15 Account number: 10004599. Please make sure when you make the transfer that you are clearly identified as the person who is making the payment. Should this not be suitable for you the treasurer will accept cash ((preferably) or a cheque. The Committee is also recommending that the fee for attending a meeting as a non-member remain at £5 and also should such a visitor attend a second meeting and pay a further £5 they will then become full members for the rest of that year.

## Recollection of childhood visits to Bradwell

Through the good offices of Helen Mason the Society has received a long memoir written by Christine Darneley. Helen is a niece of Alison and Jean Darneley and the memoir she has sent to us was written by Alison and Jean Darneley's cousin. Christine was part of the family that lived in Hull where her father was a Customs Officer. The first part of her memoir is concerned with growing up beside the Humber but this is followed by detailed recollections of the annual family summer holidays spent in Bradwell at Dale End cottage. We are intending to post the whole of the memoir on our website but this will need to be edited (the pdf we have has handwritten annotations). So in the meantime we are reproducing here some of her recollections of her impressions of Bradwell and the house in which they stayed.

(my) Granny went away every Spring to spend the summer in the family holiday home in Bradwell in the Derbyshire Peak District. My Grandfather's family came from that region and he had grown up in the village. The oldest Darneley graves are in Hope Churchyard and date back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

My great grandfather was a builder and carpenter (in Hull) and had built the house called 'Dale End' by joining and converting three small cottages. The kitchen and bedroom above it had been a cottage owned by two sisters who earned a living by weaving. The old oak beams in what became the kitchen still had the hooks from which their loom was hung. There was a little winding staircase with three-cornered steps leading up into one little bedroom above. The middle cottage was the largest and had once been the village school run by a very strict lady known in the family as 'Aunt Shenton'. She must have been related in some way, and my Granny used a silver teapot on state occasions which was always referred to as 'Aunt Shenton's teapot. The main room on the ground floor which became the living room of the holiday home, had once been the school room. There was a bedroom above and an attic above that. I don't know whether my great grandfather had added the attic himself when he converted the cottages. I suspect he did, to accommodate his tribe of grandchildren. I think somehow of Aunt Shenton managing the school and her living quarters in just two rooms. The third cottage went back to two storeys and the front door of our holiday house led directly into this part. There was a little study-room down stairs and a bedroom up above reached by another more conventional staircase. A lean-to at the end of this third cottage had been converted into a lobby containing a bathroom and laundry with a copper to heat the water.. There was no indoor lavatory, only an earth closet across the yard at the kitchen end of the house.

The finished house was very pretty, standing up against the rock-face (which was a bit cold and damp) on a little hillock above the road. In the village it became known as a 'Swiss Cottage' because of its slight resemblance to a Swiss Chalet., but its proper name was 'Dale End'. Two of my cousins still live there (*must have been pre 2001*) but now it has central heating, modern plumbing and an indoor loo!

Taking it in turns, all of Granny's seven children, with their own families, would visit her during the summer. Eventually one of my aunts bought another cottage in the village so that as the children got older two families could come at the same time during the school holidays. We loved going to Bradwell and would not have missed that special summer holiday for anything in the world.

There were wonderful family picnics and long hikes. The favourite was to climb to Bradwell Edge – not quite high enough to qualify as a 'mountain' very nearly! Then we walked across Abney Moor to 'Sandy Lane' which led down to Abney, and had a picnic in Abney Glen. The lane was interesting because it seemed to mark the boundary between a limestone and sand(*grit*)stone area and along the pathway, running deep between two sheltered banks were patches of real sea-side-like sand. When we came across these we would demand a 'rest' so that we could play in it. 'Sandy Lane' as we called it was the place for wild flowers and blackberries. We always took bowls with us to pick the brambles. In Abney Glen below the little hamlet was a small stream and after the picnic socks and shoes came off and the children were into the water to build a dam. We never managed to make it completely water tight, but there was no fun like trying. The dam was always broken up and its remains cleared away before we left, to let the water follow its usual course.

Once on a different expedition we made a campfire and cooked 'dampers'. This was a sort of dough moulded onto the end of a stick and held over the glowing embers of the campfire to cook. The stick had to be turned continually so that the damper was done on all sides. Then it was removed from the stick, which was tricky because it was so hot, and the hollow was filled with golden syrup. They were smokey, charred and sticky, but we thought them delicious.

My brother David and I were the youngest children in the larger family and so before we started school we took our turn in Bradwell in June to leave room for the others later on (*in their school summer holidays*). We loved to go up the Yeald, a rough stony hillside reached by a steep little path and stile, which went up by a wall at the side of Granny's garden. The Yeald had once been mined for fluorspar and in the lower part were old adits to workings half covered with rotting boards. We were warned to keep well away from these. But on the higher part, above the pathway where steep banks were the spoil had been colonised by wiry moorland grass and harebells and scabious in profusion. Amongst the grass were stony areas where quite large chunks of fluorspar were still lying around and we used these to mark out the floor-plans with several large rooms. The crystalline stone was white but tinged with ochre yellow and the occasional streak of Derbyshire Blue John. Over the years the bank grassed over and today all the lovely spar seems to have disappeared completely.

It seems likely that Christine's recollections of Bradwell recorded here date from the late 1930s. In our Newsletter No 27 on the Turf War at Dale End reference was made to Robert Shenton and his wife living there, but this was much too early for the Aunt Shenton referred to here to have been Robert's wife Selina Shenton. But perhaps she was a relation of the reverend's.