

## Chairman's report for 2024

This year with my approaching retirement as the chair(man) of the Bradwell Historical Society I couldn't help but look back at previous accounts I'd written about our doings. The earliest I was able to find went all the way back to the AGM for 2012. It is not surprising that many of the 'thank you's' I was able to record at that time relating to 2011 are still relevant as we reach 2025. Our hosts of the Methodist Chapel and the team of volunteers who continue to provide our refreshment have both been with us throughout. Non-members who have provided such good support to us in more recent years include Cheryl Fearn and Frank Cooper and their activities continued in 2024.

I noticed that in the report on our activities in 2011 I gave thanks to John Monahan for the work he had carried out (together with Shirley Archer) in arranging such a varied and interesting range of talks. Some of you looking at the title of the talk I gave that year may think that I've fallen into a rut. Then I spoke of the 'Sickly Stuarts' and in 2025 I'm down to give a talk on 'Henry Frederick Stuart'!

Once more in 2024 John provided us with a variety of talks several of which were given by our own members. Because of the strides that Andy Smith has made in storing information about the activities of the Society in the form of our own website I don't have to list them here. But I would like to say how much I valued the contribution of Joanna and Peter Mackey on Local Carols. This provided a particular challenge to several of our members especially Steve Lawless because Joanna asked for us both to be able to see and hear local carols being sung. Unfortunately the equipment we had was not up to this! (The committee is now addressing the question of re-equipping to meet requirements for presentations in 2025 and onwards.) But as a bonus Joanna sang the carols herself and even persuaded us all to join in the singing of the Bradda Anthem '*Peace O'er the World*'.

An unexpected source of income in 2024 came our way when St Barnabas Church members agreed to make the BHS the recipient of a collection made at a Coffee Morning held in April: this amounted to some £360. After discussion your committee felt that at least part of the money received should be used for a particular purpose. This was for a reprinting of the Society's publication of *Jabez Bradwell's Diary* a project that provided some unexpected challenges. The diary itself was kept by Jabez from 1877 to 1886 and was discovered in about 1995 when it consisted of barely legible pieces of pencil-written paper not bound together. Nevertheless due to the determination of a number of the early members of the BHS it was put into a form suitable for publication with at the time up-to-date annotations added. A second printing was put in place in the early 2000s but by 2024 there were few copies of either printing to be found nor was there any electronic copy of the text. Fortunately the Sheffield firm called Mensa Printers used great skill in producing a third printing for us and this went on sale for £5 in 2024. This copy was also worked on by Ken and Ann West and after some modifications will be stored in our archives (for a possible third reprinting?).

A challenging year but I hope we will continue to meet future challenges equally well.  
Brian Gillham