

BRADWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER No 49 March 2025

Up-coming events

The March talk will be given by Trevor Gilman on Tuesday 18th of the month as usual at 8 pm in the Methodist Hall. Trevor's chosen subject is 'The Story of Buxton's Crescent'. About this he writes: 'Buxton's Crescent was built in the late 1700s in an attempt to emulate Bath as a fashionable spa. A chequered history followed. It was vacated in 1991 following structural and financial problems. Finally reopening during the pandemic, it has recently been offered for sale. The talk follows the various ups and downs ending with a look inside this iconic spa hotel.

Just another gentle reminder for those of you who have not yet renewed your membership of the Society. 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 that you will be able to pay at Trevor's March talk.

More early farming memories of Charles Bland

This month we return to the memoirs of Charles Bland. In the April 2023 Newsletter (No. 26), with kind permission of his godson David Bancroft we recorded the early life on the Hills of Charlie Bland. In the June Newsletter of the same year (No. 28) we learned of his farming experiences in the 1940s with the focus being of the harvests. In the same period Charlie also learned of diary farming. He wrote:

How many of us remember the days when milk was carried down in two gallon churns and poured out into pint and quart measurers. Also gills (which in those days was half a pint)

Neither was there any rest on Sundays , it was a seven days a week job. Usually on Sundays the milk was placed somewhere round the back of the house so as not to disturb the customers from their beds.

Saturday was paying day (for customers) Five pence a pint. Five shillings and ten pence for one quart a day per week. Everyone gave us six shillings, except the ones who forgot for a multitude of reasons! There were also tokens for families with small children.

The churns were heavy, and we had to rest them on our knee, while we carefully poured the milk into the measure. Some customers demanded that the rim should also be filled, which was more than a pint, and needed a steady hand.

During the week some housewives invited us into their homes for a cup of tea and a chat. Others kept us at the door talking. I wonder what people would gossip about if that happened today?

Christmas was a great time. We always delivered fresh milk and cream on Christmas Day, and judging by the number of mince pies and sherries we had, it was amazing how we managed finish the round. I do not ever remember being given money as tips.

Today milk arrives from supermarkets or in bottles on the doorstep, and few people know or care about the effort of obtaining it.

Milking started early, six am so that milk could be ready for distribution at a fairly early hour in the morning. Each cow had to be milked by hand as milking machines had not yet been installed. Some cows were easier to milk than others. Some had teats like sausages and the milk poured from them, while others were very small and were far more difficult to milk. These cows were always left until the last, in the hope that someone else would come along to milk these but they seldom did!

The cow had to be given its ration of corn, according to how much milk it gave, before it released the milk. The three-legged stool had to be placed in position and its bucket held between the knees. The cow was encouraged to lean slightly on the person milking it as while the cow's weight was on the leg nearest to you so it couldn't kick you and also lose all the milk. In summer they seemed to have dirty tails, which sometimes had to be tied to their leg to stop them lashing you round the head, which was very painful. A new calved cow could give up to five gallons of milk per day and the rich warm milk would froth in the bucket.

Once a week the amount of milk per cow had to be registered for milk marketing requirements. Then it was passed through a filter and into the churns, which were in turn placed in a trough of cold flowing spring water. None of the milk produced on the farm was pasteurised it was sold more or less straight from the cow and nobody to my knowledge was any the worse for drinking it.

Having said that it was described as a free herd, for which the farmer received a small subsidy from the Ministry of Agriculture.

Later in the 1940s and aged just eighteen years Charlie began work as a Pit Boy and he has left us a detailed account of his career at the mine and that will appear in future editions of this Newsletter. From his account he seems to have been one of the "Bevin Boys".