

BRADWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY



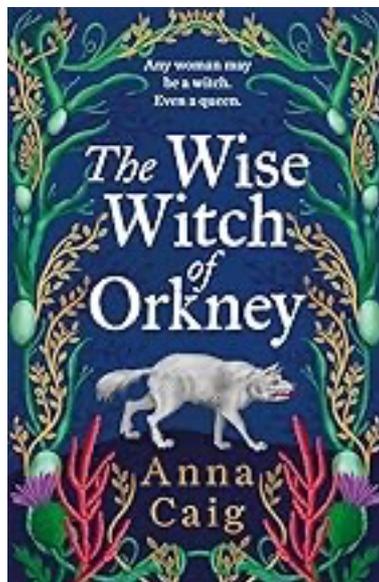
NEWSLETTER No. 60 February 2026

It is difficult to believe that with Issue number 60 the Newsletter has celebrated its 5th Birthday.

Up-coming events

Unfortunately the scheduled talk by Paul Downing has had to be postponed until next year. Fortunately John Monahan has been able to call on the good offices of fellow villager Anna Caig whose novel is to be published by Black and White Publishing on the 26th of February.

Anna will be telling us of 'The challenges of writing an historical novel'. The title of her novel is *The Wise Witch of Orkney* and is set mainly around Edinburgh at the end 17th Century. The talk will take place in St Barnabas Church on Tuesday 17th February at 8 pm. As usual parking spaces will be available in the school playground.



Membership

At the January 2026 AGM of the Society members ratified the request of the Committee to increase the fee for joining for a year with all its benefits to £15. We believe that you will therefore want to re-join the Society at the new price. Once again it would be most convenient for our treasurer Andy Smith if you could arrange your payment via BACS transfer. The payment of £15 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 at one of our meetings.

Thanks

In Newsletter 59 a question was posed to members about whereabouts in Bradwell John Fells had lived before moving to Brussels. Neil Roberts has written to say that: 'John Fells's cottage was the small one standing back from Towngate, which backs on to Jane and Andrew Dalrymple's garden. I don't know its name. He lived and worked in Brussels and used to visit Bradwell at New Year and Easter among other times'.

The continuing story of the life and times of Seth Evans

In Newsletter No. 58 for December 2025 we began quoting from the full two-page spread of the issue of the *Derbyshire Times* for 10th January 1925 that was an appreciation of the life and times of Seth Evans. The spread was entitled **Fifty Years a Journalist, Death of Mr. Seth Evans, J.P., A busy public career** and we now take up the account with another section from the piece. This reads

ANTIQUARIAN AND HISTORIAN

Apart from his work for the newspapers Mr. Evans was a local antiquarian and historian of repute. He had searched many ancient records in churches and chapels and parish archives. He had also collected a valuable library of local books which was perhaps his most cherished personal possession. He was a member of the Derbyshire Archaeological and Natural History Society. Mr. Evans did much writing on antiquarian and historical subjects and books from his pen include 'Bradwell Ancient and Modern' 'History of Wesleyanism in New Mills Circuit' and 'Methodism in Bradwell'. Many of the articles he wrote for newspapers he collected and published as 'Peakland Pickings'. He was often applied to for historical information and there were very few questions on that subject that he could not answer. Mr Evans also had some gift as an artist and made his own drawings for illustrating his articles.

Mr. Evans was cradled in Wesleyan Methodism and retained his connection with that cause throughout his life. In former years he was a most acceptable preacher and occupied the pulpit at all Methodist churches in the Peak. He was also an elocutionist of some ability and often recited at Sunday School and other concerts.

PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS

For over forty years Mr. Evans had resided at New Mills and had played a big part in the public life of the town. As a journalist he knew it through and through and had filled the office of overseer in troubled times. As a very young man he was elected member of Bradwell School Board of which he acted as clerk also. His public work in New Mills was by his election to the School Board and he was one of the last elected to that authority before it was superseded by the Balfour act in 1903. On the operation of that act, he continued to be a manager of the New Mills group of Council Schools, a governor of the County Secondary School and a member of the Evening Classes Committee. Of all those bodies he was in turn chairman and he continued his membership until his death.

It was in 1903 that Mr. Evans was elected to New Mills Urban Council as a member for St. Mary's Ward, and by his many years of service he became the 'Father of the Council'. His first return was unopposed and he met with no opposition on several subsequent occasions. In more recent times he was strongly opposed but he always secured very handsome majorities. That was so when he was opposed by Labour in March last year. He was chairman of the Council in 1906-7 and had the distinction of occupying that position when the Gas-Works Act went through Parliament and the waterworks were taken over from Mr. Sumner. He took a special interest in the Library Committee and was instrumental in adding to the library many books of great local value. For a long period he represented New Mills on the High Peak Hospital Committee of which for several years he was chairman.

THE CROWNING POINT

In 1912 came the crowning point of his public career, when he was appointed Justice of the Peace for Derbyshire.. That was an honour he valued highly. Even to that work he did not come without experience, for he sat on the Bench during his chairmanship of New Mills Council. Since his appointment Mr. Evans had sat regularly at New Mills and Chapel-en-le-Frith Courts. Frequently he was the senior magistrate present at Chapel, and was called upon to preside. So recently as Thursday last week he presided at Chapel Court. Living in the central part of town he was always popular and easily approachable Mr. Evans got more than his share of magisterial duties. He signed hundreds of documents many of them of a private nature. His profession as a journalist brought him into frequent contact with the police who very often called upon him to sign summonses and take cases at occasional courts. This kind of public work took up much of his time.

Long as is this list of public offices, it does not exhaust the appointments Mr. Evans held. on behalf of the magistrates he acted as censor of the films shown at the cinemas in the Peak. When the late Mr. Edward Godward formed the New Mills Higher Educational Endowment he appointed Mr. Evans as one of its trustees. When the new trusts were formed for Trickett's and Bowden's charities he became a trustee of these also. He was too a trustee of the estate Trickett's charity, and acted as secretary.

In these offices which often occupied much time, he continued to the end. In fact, notwithstanding his failing health and strenuous life as a journalist, he had laid down no office except his membership of the High Peak Hospital Committee. In former years Mr. Evans was most active in Liberal politics, and at one time was a vice-president of New Mills Liberal Club. He had never changed his politics, but other work had claimed his attention.

Years ago he was a member of the committee of New Mills Co-operative Society and the committee of the Rose of Sharon Lodge of Oddfellows.

The newspaper tribute stretches further under the headings of “**A strenuous worker**” and ‘**Council’s Tribute**’ but these sections are mainly repetitions of what has been described here. So we will leave it now. Should you wish to read these additional sections you will find them in the *Derbyshire Times for the 10th January 1925*.

Has anyone copies of Seth’s sketches referred to in the text (or seen them)?