

## BRADWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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### Up-coming events

The April talk is by Joe Richardson and his topic is 'Understanding the Russian Character in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century'. In these troubled times it seems that anything we can do to understand the Russians is for the better. The talk will be in St Barnabas Church on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> April at 8 pm with car parking available in the school playground.

### Membership

Andy Smith will still gladly accept your membership fees for 2026 that now stand at £15. The easiest way to pay is by 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 at the April meeting but is hoping by then there won't be too much of a rush to pay when the doors open.

### Plans of a new member

John Newborough has moved into the Old Vicarage in Bradwell and has set in place a programme of restoration and renovation of the property. Regarding the renovation work, here is a summary:

The work we are planning for this year:

- We are having the window frames restored over the next 6 months and the glass replaced with heritage double glazing - partly to make the house more comfortable and affordable to run, and partly to benefit the house

(cold/damp over the years has done some damage). The joiners are planning on setting up a workshop in the house to do the work so more opportunities for photos.

- Five of the mullions have slipped out of position, so we are hopefully getting a stone mason to reset them in the next few months.
- The staircase banister is quite ornate but very wobbly/dangerous. The joiners are going to dismantle it and rebuild it.

Work for next year and beyond:

- In addition to the fireplaces (two which have been modified to run on gas), the house is heated by two gas boilers and an Aga, has two hot water cylinders and 4 cold water header tanks. We hope to replace all this with an air-source heat pump system, all discretely hidden out of sight. This is what I meant about making the house work for a modern family without impacting its character (the boilers aren't original anyway, and the various leaks from this complex set of pipework has also done lots of damage over the years). NB: the fireplaces will be reverted back to log/coal burning, but will probably never be used (most surrounds aren't original but period correct versions were re-instated by the previous owner).
- The servant staircase currently has two showers installed over it, blocking access. We hope to remove these showers and restore the staircase.
- The original Victorian tile floor is cracked, uneven, has patches of cement filling gaps, and mostly covered by lino. The floor has already been reinforced to avoid further cracking, but we hope that there is enough of the tile flooring still intact under the lino so that we can eventually get it restored.

Other interesting details:

- I've identified most of the initials on the 19th century children's height markings in the attic.
- There are two wooden plinths, one in a maids bedroom and one in the old kitchen, which I believe used to hold servant bells. The bells are gone, but I have found two wires which connect to the maids room running through the attic and hope to find more wires for the kitchen bells when I start lifting floorboards. There is also the remains of two of the pull handles in the living

room (the handles have been broken off but the fronts are still there and I can hear the springs move in the walls when I twist the fronts).

- There is also various decorative details around the house which might be of interest, e.g. patterned frosted glass, pantries, disconnected lightning rod, etc.

What we aren't sure about:

- The doors and shutters are original but some are badly damaged, we could restore them, but they'd have to be painted to hide all the filler. Do we replace with replicas, or repair and paint them (they weren't painted originally)?

- The stairs to the attic are built with a false wall in front of the original wall on the first floor (I can still see the original coving by lifting floorboards to reveal this original wall). However, the height chart in the attic has dates within a few years of the house being built. So were the stairs to the attic originally elsewhere, or simply built within a year or two after the first floor was finished?

- Various other little details I won't bore you with now, such as missing staircase newel cap, a door to a cupboard that has been removed, etc.

*At a later date John hopes to tell us about the work and what he has found.*