

## BRADWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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### Up-coming events

In this month we will continue with the regular monthly talks. The May talk is entitled '*Move the orchestra. The life of a forgotten genius.*' It will be given by Brian Gillham at 8.00 pm on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> May by then back in the Methodist Hall. The talk will commence with two steam locomotives and will end with the award of a Grammy. What comes in the middle will remain a mystery until the 17<sup>th</sup> but by the end you should understand why this person was a genius and you'll not forget him in the future.

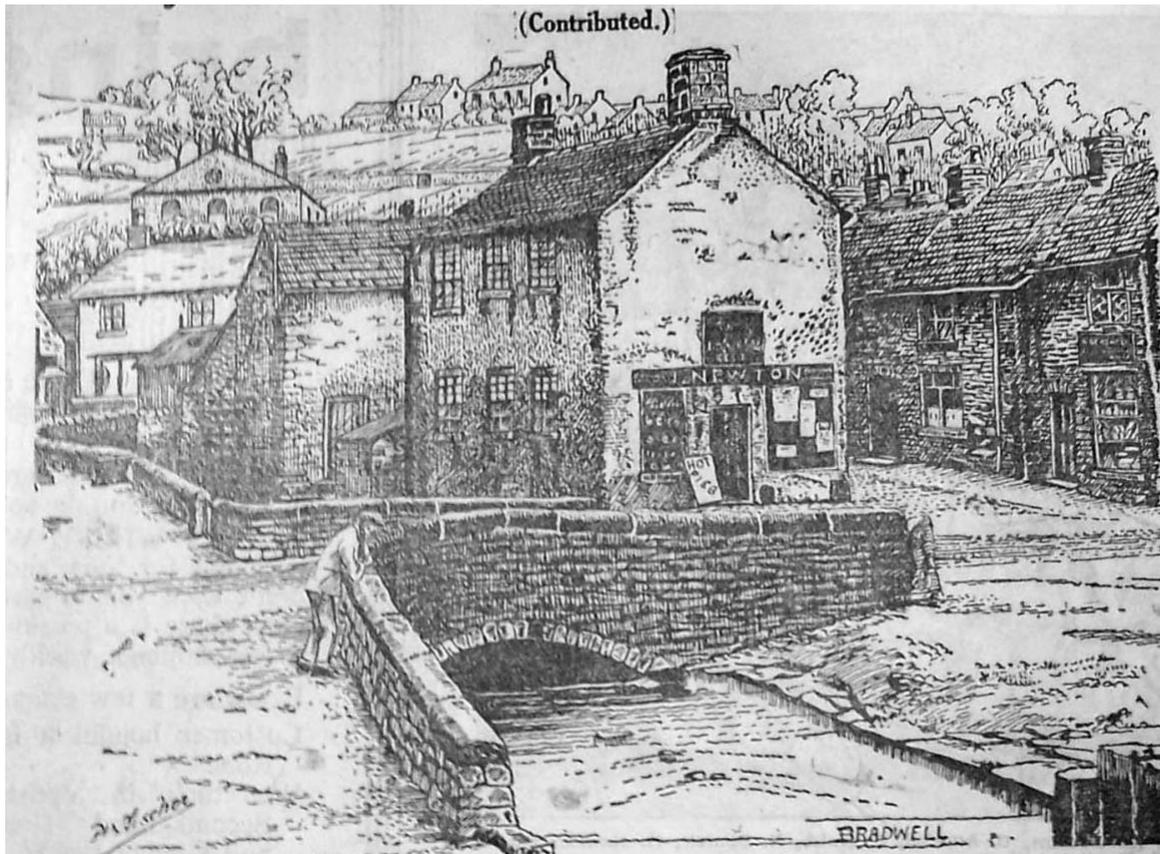
On the Society's website at [www.bradwellhistoricalsociety.org.uk](http://www.bradwellhistoricalsociety.org.uk) you will find under projects>notable Bradwellians the biography of Percy Bernhard Fischer. In the 1930s he wrote a series of articles for the Derbyshire Times entitled 'Rambles in the Peak' that he signed as 'Viator'. Here we reproduce his ramble number 3 entitled 'By Bradwell Water to Derwent Head'

### By Bradwell Water to Derwent Head

The old world village of Bradwell is hard to beat as a centre for Peakland exploration. To the southward are magnificent limestone gorges and defiles, Bradwell and Middleton Dales, Pindale and Cavedale and the Winnats, while northward one may cross the vales of Hope, Edale and Woodland, and so onward to the high gritstone moors that reach away to the very backbone of England, where the tiny rills, sometimes but a few feet apart go to swell the rivers that fall into two separate seas..

So now to the bridge at Bradwell, the centre of its activities – or should we say in - activities: the latter seems to, at the moment to predominate. This ancient-looking but solid structure dates back to 1814 , where was once a ford. Its days are

numbered however for soon the road is to be widened and a new bridge built and, although one may regret the passing of these old monuments, yet when one witnesses the daily passage of huge yellow juggernauts carrying the 10 – and 15 – ton of a certain local product to the ends of Britain, with sometimes a few inches between wheel hub and parapet, it would appear to be the time for wise spending.



The point at which we are now standing happens to be on the boundary line of the ancient Forest of the Peak, about midway to be precise. On the north and south line, so why not so to speak 'beat the boundaries' or as many of them as will be consistent with good rambling; that is to say confining oneself to the public footpath and disturbing not the nesting grouse.

The spin of a coin decides on a northerly course and we turn into the footpath next to Mr Hancock's emporium, through the first stile and by the pleasant field path toward the hamlet of Brough passing through Mr Daniel's prosperous looking poultry farm which, by-the-way, is developing at an amazing rate for a young undertaking.

Two fields on and we reach 'Grey Ditch'; a bit of a puzzler, this old entrenchment . Some of our archaeologists describe it as a 'forefence' of the Roman garrison at Brough, some ascribe it to British tribesmen of pre-Roman times, but more probably it belongs to the period of the Heptarchy (*a group of 7 northern areas in the 5<sup>th</sup> C AD*)

Howbeit the ancient 'brass hat' who marked out the site had quite an eye for position – a clear front with one flank on Micklow, probably in those days naturally protected by bogs, and his other flank looking down the

steep declivity of Hollow Dale, altogether a pretty stiff proposition for bows and slings.

Beyond the earthwork the prospect opens out, the gritstone pike of Win Hill stands out right ahead on the skyline, on the right front are the serrated rocks of Bamford Edge, and on the left Losehill and the Mam Tor range, over which here and there one gets a glimpse in the distance of the humped back of Kinder Scout.

Just below on the left Bradwell Water winds in a serpentine course in the lush green meadows of 'The Holmes', the Baptist's 'dipping places' of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century.

Below again are the fish ponds of that very exclusive body, the Peak Forest Angling Society, and the stalwart figure of the fish tenter – nay let us say warden as more seemly of one whose forbears have been wardens and keepers of the King's Forest for seven centuries.

And now a word in season for the unwise or the stranger within our gates possessed of vague ideas as to 'riparian' rights and so forth.

The fishing right in these Peakland rivers were granted by the king to one of his loyal subjects, and as such are absolutely unassailable, the original deed of gift one hears is so age-worn and fragile, that on the few regrettable occasions on which it has been required as legal evidence it had to be examined through the glass lid of a sealed box, and, may I add my friend the warden, though a gallant gentleman and in everyday affairs kindly and affable, will carry out official duties to the bitter end without fear or favour, so don't be misled by the absence of prohibitory notices – *experto crede*.

Continuing along the footpath past Mr Townsend's steading, with its neat garden and trim hedges – obviously an expert fencer (in fact one is struck by the general improvement in hedges and walls hereabouts as compared with conditions in years gone by) – one becomes slightly confused, and the stranger will be inclined to swing too much to the right towards the gate near the old hairpin flue, with its gaping cavernous end, a refuge for rabbits, to judge from the numerous tracks well-trodden in with lead sulphate deposits which still remain and one wonders if these little denizens of the sooty underworld ever suffer with lead poisoning. The path to take now leads through a stile immediately behind an old Smelter and through the trim farmyard beyond. The old works have been described in a previous article, but I may just mention, should the passer-by be curious as to the queer corner that has been, as it were 'sliced' off the end of the big building, that it happened that the ancient inhabitant whose self-imposed task it was to walk the footpaths to retain the public rights, delayed his walk on this occasion until after the foundations were in.

Take a passing look at St Anne's well, the quaint town water supply of the hamlet of Brough as we emerge on the main road where just ahead is Brough Mill, at the junction of Bradwell Water and the River Noe.

The present new and up-to-date mill building was reconstructed after a destructive fire about 18 years ago which practically destroyed a grand old landmark with history in every stone.

In 1154 the Peveril estates of which Hazelbach and the Mill of Burgh (Brough) formed part were forfeit by their then owner for being concerned in the poisoning the Earl of Chester, and were granted to the Strelly family. This does not quite agree with the record in the Hundred of Rolls (1275) that the Mill of the Burgh was in the hands of the said King (John), who gave it to Philip de Strelly for the 'service of finding a valet for carrying a falcon trained to take herons in the season'. No doubt a remote ancestor of my friend the warden, whose ruling passion, the elimination of herons, may be traced to heredity.

Hobeit Brough was in the in the possession of the Strellys until 1421 when Joan widow of Sir John Strelly, made it over with other properties to Richard Vernon for an annuity of 10 marks, and it presumably came from them to the Manners family by the marriage of Dorothy Vernon to John Manners.

A few moments to linger on the bridge and, if it is a windless day, to watch the lovely shadow effects on the water under the dark shale bank near the Roman Camp.

Without crossing the bridge, turn to the right through the stile, following the course of the stream until the track hereabouts hardly discernible, begins to rise and skirt the steep shale banks as far as Shatton Bridge and from the highest point of which one gets a grand panoramic view of Hope Valley.

But to proceed. On merging into Shatton Lane, cross the road just below the last villa, and follow the footpath across the white-painted bridge over the glen down which tumbles Shatton Brook, a pretty corner this, the spring sunshine filtering through the net work of still bare silver birch and darker ash makes a picture with a charm all of its own, lost perhaps when the summer foliage hides the vista of hill and moor. Just a few yards up the winding path, and one can look down upon Mytham Bridge (Mittenford of the Forest boundary) spanning the expanse of swirling waters where the Noe and the Derwent join.

Looking over the bridge to Bamford the warm red roofs of Saltergate stand out against the green hillside, and above is the plateau of the Filter Beds, so well designed as to blend perfectly with the contours of the slope and be hardly discernible - no disfigurement to the countryside here - rather the reverse.

But there is much to talk of round and about Bamford and forward to  
Derwent the shadows are lengthening, so perforce we must postpone  
our further exploration to another week.