

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

As part of an HLF-funded project to investigate the roots and development of Bingham three 1-metre square archaeological test pits were dug in the grounds of Robert Miles Junior School in May 2012. In Pit 1 (CB02, Fig 1) a posthole was encountered in the corner of the pit, the top being at the same level as a rubble floor feature, 75 cm below surface. A complex stratigraphy above the stone surface contained plentiful building rubble with the highest significant level of rubble at 30 cm depth. The posthole, which had not been filled in, had a void of about 30 cm from the top

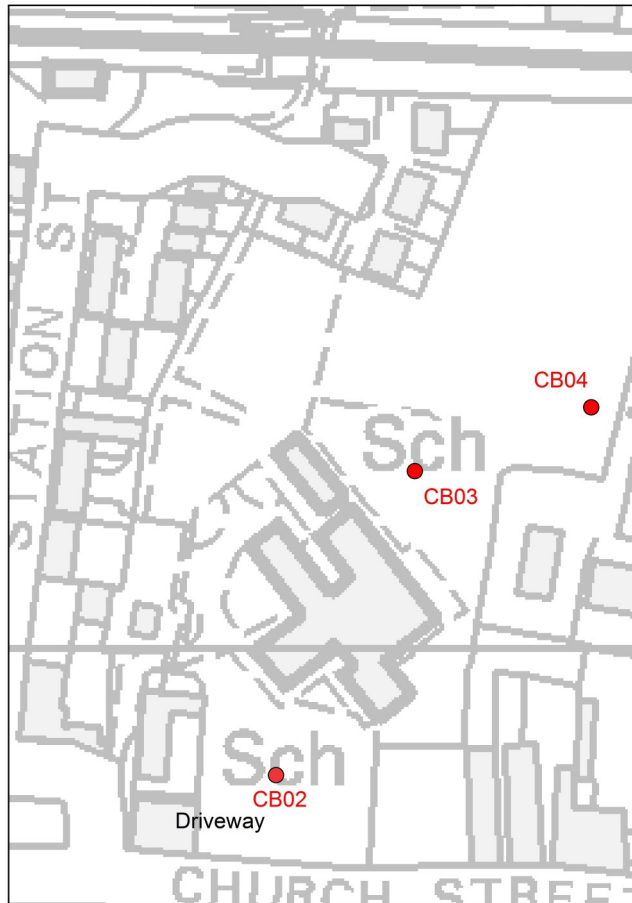


Fig 1. Location of the three test pits dug in the grounds of Robert Miles Junior School. Pit 1, logged as CB02 in the BHTA database is within the area of the excavation.

and was partially covered by a cap stone. It was probed and found to be about one metre deep. Slivers of wood were found adhering to the sides and lumps of a peaty material that may be decayed wood were found in the hole. The posthole measured 27 x 23 cm at the top. The long axis of the section was orientated approximately 23° E and the hole was inclined 10° to the east. A clay pipe bowl found resting on the stone surface was marked TC, which is the mark of Thomas Crew, a Nottingham clay pipe manufacturer who worked in the area between 1715 and 1720. He then moved to Sheffield.

It could not be established from the test pit whether the inclination of the posthole was original or an artefact of later activity, whether it was a part of a building or, if it were, whether it was a corner, internal or side post. There were no clues as to the function of the stone floor.

Robert Miles Junior School is sited in the grounds of what used to be the Bingham Rectory. There is evidence from a manorial survey that there was a rectory somewhere on this site in 1586, but there is no documentary evidence describing any buildings there until 1776 when a new rectory was shown on the manorial survey of that date. The new rectory (Fig 2) was built about 1770 by the Rev John Walter who became rector in 1764. This building was demolished in the early 1960s to make way for the present school, which opened in 1965.

PROPOSAL

It was proposed to carry out an exploratory dig on the site between 20th and 27th July 2013 to coincide with the CBA festival of archaeology. Members of the public were invited to view the work, as required during the festival. The dig was to be carried out by volunteers who have experience of the Bingham test-pits project and was overseen by Trent & Peak Archaeology (TPA). A member of staff from TPA was on site for the duration of the project. The excavation itself was

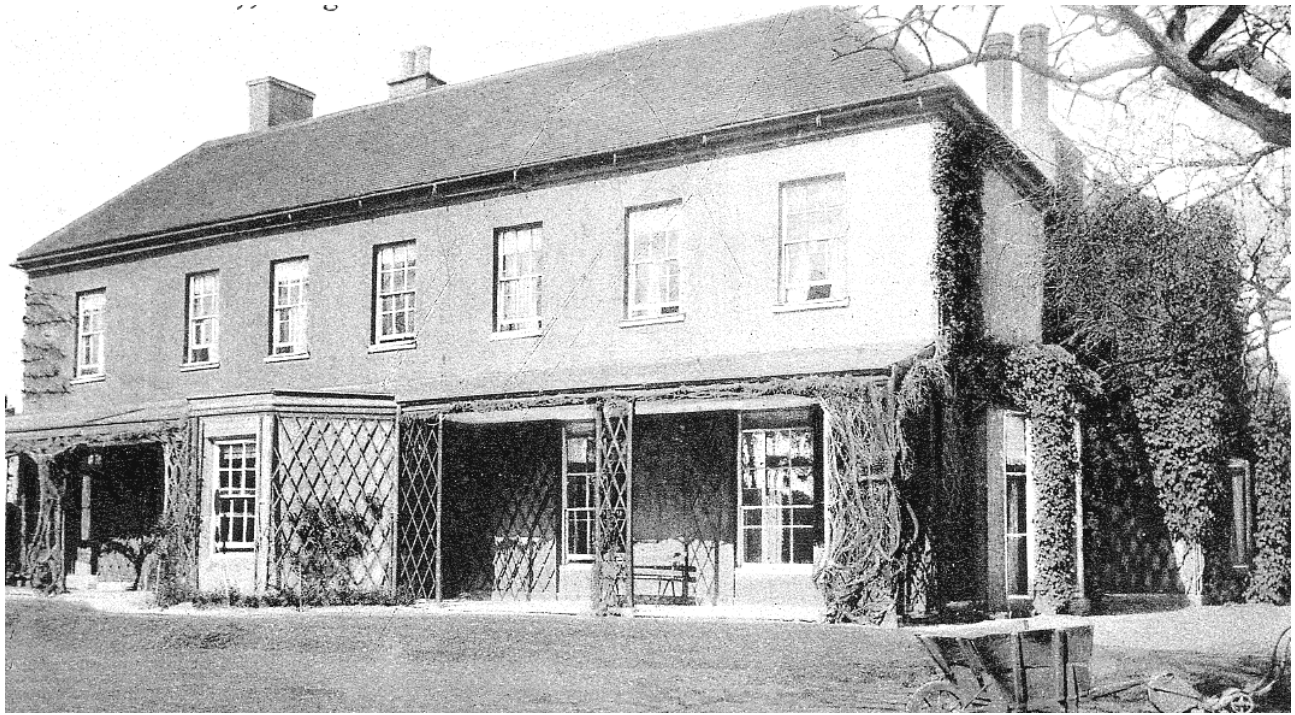


Fig 2. Photograph of the Georgian rectory that was demolished in the early 1960s.

planned to measure 7 x 4 metres around the original test pit. A geophysical survey was planned to precede the excavation.

A copy of the project plan (see Appendix 1) was deposited with the county archaeologist.

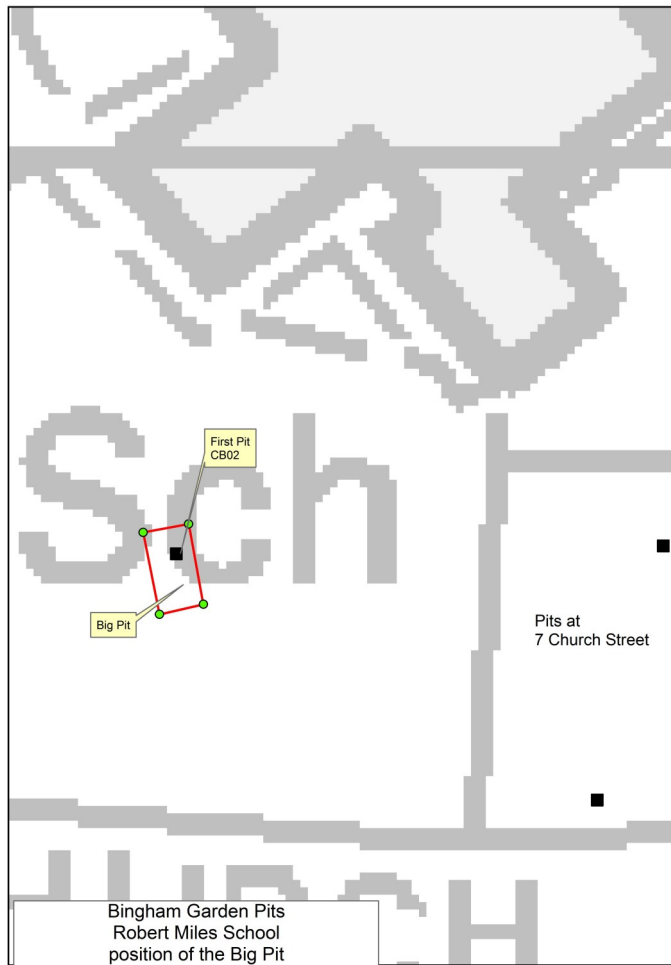
PURPOSE OF THE EXCAVATION

The purpose of the excavation was to test the extent of the stone floor feature, establish what relation the posthole had with the floor, determine, if possible, the nature of the building represented by the post hole and to examine the stratigraphy above the stone floor with a view to determining the origin of the building rubble and other material found during the test pitting. Evidence was also to be collected in an attempt to put a date to the floor.

PROJECT PLAN

The following stages were proposed and then followed:

- A geophysical survey of the target area was carried out. A preliminary visit and evaluation took place on 11th June. An earth resistance survey was carried out in an area initially measuring 20 metres square centred on the test pit but extending to around 30 metres long the western side of the area on 3rd July.
- The excavation area measuring 7 x 4 metres with the test pit site near the northern end was sited on Friday 19th July.
- On Saturday 20th July the turf was removed by machine and put into sheltered storage.
- The topsoil and part of the road track identified below it was also removed mechanically.
- The test pit was then dug out to the level of the stone floor feature by hand.
- The rest of the pit was excavated by hand. Most of the material removed was sieved and finds were bagged according to context. Some of the coarse material was hand sorted and not sieved.
- General excavation was stopped at the level of the stone floor, about 75 cm depth.



- A small pit was dug below the floor along the western wall to explore the sub-structure to the floor. A porous membrane was laid over the floor of the excavation before it was filled in mechanically on 27th July. The turf was re-laid and bare patches reseeded. The site was vacated on 27th July.

Fig 3 shows the location of the excavation in relation to the school and the test pit. It was recorded by digital photography and drawing at all stages.

Finds were included with material collected from the test pits project for identification.

GEOPHYSICS

Full details of the geophysical survey are given in Appendix 2. In summary, an earth resistance survey was carried out in an area of about 20 x 30 metres around the site of the 1-metre test pit. The purpose of the geophysics was to help identify the best place to put the 4 x 7 metre excavation. The results were inconclusive and were not used.

Fig 3 Location of the excavation.