

DISCOVERING BINGHAM

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BHTA: Increasing public awareness of our heritage in Architecture, Folk & Natural History, Archaeology & Geology

700th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

Next year, 2014, will be the 700th anniversary of the granting of a market charter to Bingham. It was then that Bingham stopped being a village and became a market town. There were already markets in places like Mansfield, Worksop, Newark and Nottingham, so competition was stiff. The fact that it is still here is something that Bingham should be proud of. In September, BHTA held a meeting with the Community Committee of the Bingham Town Council to discuss how to celebrate the event. It was decided that celebrations would be linked to the 2014 Summer Fair, which will have a medieval theme and the Town Council has undertaken to establish a planning group consisting of Councillors, BHTA and other interested parties to arrange it. At the time of going to press the first meeting has yet to happen.

LADY ALICE TURNS UP ON CUE !

Bingham's Thursday Market, was granted in 1314 by a charter of King Edward II to Dame Alice, the widow of Sir Richard de Bingham, Lord of Bingham manor, and her son Sir William. Right on cue a fascinating and timely new archival discovery has been made. A friend of BHTA committee member Adrian Henstock was recently in Lincolnshire Archives

researching records of the mediaeval bishops of Lincoln. He had completed his work in the microfilm copies and was flicking through the images to waste time until his bus home to Grantham when he noticed a 'doodle' image of a woman wearing a wimple drawn in the margin pointing with her finger to the adjacent written entry. On investigation the entry turned out to relate to Dame Alice, described as the 'widow of Richard de Byngham, knight'.

It appears that in 1312 Dame Alice took a vow of chastity before Bishop Dalderby of Lincoln at one of the Bishop's palaces at Sleaford. In the vow she referred to herself by her maiden name of Alice Bertram, being a daughter of Sir Richard Bertram, lord of Bothal Castle in Northumberland. The doodle of her is an extremely rare find, especially in an administrative record book.



An image of a woman other than a queen is especially unusual - she must have made some impression on the diocesan clerk writing out the entry ! We know from other documents that her husband Sir Richard had died sometime after 1308, when the Archbishop of York licenced a private chapel for his own family use near the junction of the modern Kirkhill and School Lane. His life-sized effigy in full armour now lies in Bingham parish church at the side of the altar.

THE BLACK DEATH IN BINGHAM

The main reason that we dug archaeological test pits in people's gardens was to see what we could learn about the origins of Bingham town. We know from the Domesday Book that Bingham existed, but it does not tell us exactly where it was or where the families lived. The basic assumption we have worked to all along is that in 1220 AD, or thereabouts, St Mary's Church was built on the site of an earlier, probably timber, mud and thatch structure. So, our theory was that the original Bingham settlement was probably somewhere around the modern church. This is where we sited most of the 60 pits we have dug.

We now have identified over half of the finds we collected including everything that is medieval or older and we are beginning to get an

understanding of our early history. What is already clear is that there were people living in the area around the church as far back as the Iron Age and that occupancy of this area was more or less continuous from then onwards. This gives Bingham an unusually old history.

This continuity of settlement from the Iron Age in places around the church is interesting. It is not known precisely when Christianity came to Bingham but it seems that the early Christians built their church within an already old-established settlement.

The biggest surprise was in the large amount of Late Saxon pottery that turned up, over 70 sherds in total. Most of this was a type of pottery made in Torksey, Lincolnshire (below) from the late 9th century to just before the Norman Conquest. Significant



Head of a hunting arrow from the 12th century when there was still a thriving community living in Warner's Paddock.

concentrations of finds were turned up in four places that had already a long history of occupation. These were Foster's Lane, Cherry Street, Church Lane area and Warner's Paddock. The most was found in Warner's Paddock where these Late Saxon pot sherds were associated with bits of slag. We have not identified this yet, but it indicates some sort of industrial process going on there. The western boundary of Warner's Paddock is Jebb's Lane, which is a sunken lane or hollow way, in places over 2 metres deep. This is an ancient pathway and was possibly there in Roman times. The abundance of finds in the pits we dug there indicates that there was a significant community living

along the lane and they were there from the Iron Age right through to the middle ages. However, in the late medieval period there is nothing. This period is characterised by a type of pottery that was being made from the middle of the 14th century; that is after the Black Death or Plague, which came to England in 1348-49 AD. The fact that there is none of this type of pot there suggests that the people living along Jebb's Lane were victims of the Black Death. After that, Warner's Paddock seems always to have been pasture. There is no ridge and furrow there, which is indicative of medieval arable agriculture and we have found very little pottery of any younger period in the pits we dug there.

The impact of the Black Death on Bingham was seen in the field walking data. You can always assume that Bingham was affected, because nearly half the population of England at that time died, but it needs this sort of research to gather the evidence to show that it actually did happen here and exactly where the impact was felt.



Sgt William Barratt
Geo. Braithwaite MM
Pte Arthur Brown
Gnr Thomas Buggins
Pte Frank Burrows
Pte Eric Cabourn
Pte Herbert Cowdell
Pte Sydney Cuddy
Pte John Derry
Pte Joseph Dunsmore
Cpl Sidney Fewster
Pte Frank Green
Pte Chas. Hackett 50th
Pte Frank Harris
Cpl Robt. Henshaw
L/Cpl Thos. Henshaw

Sherwood Foresters
Cheshire Regt
Lancs Fusiliers
Royal Artillery
Sherwood Foresters
Northumb. Fusiliers
South Staffs
Northumb. Fusiliers
78th Canadian Infantry
Sherwood Foresters
Sherwood Foresters
Yorks. Regt.
Canadian Infantry
Sherwood Foresters
South Notts Hussars
Grenadier Guards

Rfn Leonard Hickman
Pte Amos Hill
A/Seaman Percy Hind
Lt. Richard Jardine
L/Sgt Ernest Johnson
Pte Geo. Kettleband
Pte Walter Kirk
Tpr Geo. Marriott
Spr Chas. Penson
Pte Geo. Squires
Pte Frank Starbuck
Pte Geo. Thornton
Pte William Widnall
Gnr Geo. Wilford
Pte Fdk Wright
Pte Russell Wright

Kings Royal Rifles
North Staffs Regt
HMS Inflexible
Loyal 27th Lancs
Machine Gun Corps
Cheshire Regt.
78th Canadian Infantry
2nd Life Guards
Royal Engineers
Royal Scots Fusiliers
N. Lancs Regt.
Sherwood Foresters
Sherwood Foresters
Royal Artillery
Warwickshire Regt
Sherwood Forester

1st & 2nd WORLD WAR UPDATE

Much work has been done by Rupert Bear on the background of the people from Bingham who died in WW1 - i.e. who their parents were, where they lived and what their professions were etc. We are now turning our attention to trying to find their army records which would tell us where they served and other background information on their service in the forces. This may prove very difficult as many service records were destroyed during the blitz in WW2.

We are also very short on photos for these people - we have a few but could really do with more. The blue panels below lists those people from Bingham who died in WW1 - if any was your relative, or you know their family and can pass the message on, we would like to borrow any photos or documents to copy and return or hear reminiscences of these loved-ones. WW1 contact Mike Patten 01949 831867

2014 is also the 75th anniversary of the outbreak of WW2. Because of the diminishing number of people who served in the 2nd World War we want to extend our research into this period. The orange list gives the names of those from Bingham who lost

their lives in this war. Again, if anyone has any photos or other records please let us know. WW2 contact John Perry 01949 875231

BINGHAM'S LOST MANOR HOUSE - Part II

In the March 2013 newsletter we reported on pits dug at Beauvale House which helped identify the site as that of the 13th century Manor House of Sir Richard de Bingham and Lady Alice. We found a cobbled yard dating to about 1270 and an Edward I (1272-1307) silver penny. The Manor House was derelict in 1586 and the 1776 maps did not show a house on this site. We promised further news when we had completed the dendrochronology and house history reports then in progress. It seems that the 1776 map is probably wrong and that there was indeed a house on this site in 1776. Then what about the rest of the map? Is our reconstructed map of the town in 1776 wrong in any other aspects? Having checked against the tithe map and other sources, we think not!

thick. There is a stone wall of similar thickness in the cellar which is about 10 feet west of the east wall which might have been a room of the Manor House, possibly discovered when the 18th century cellar was built? The front room had a large fireplace with a central chimney - common in many houses up to about 1750. The old kitchen to the rear of the front east room had a dateable rafter - 1584, consistent with Richard's dating of the eastern part of Beauvale House to the late 16th century. However, both he and Robert, our Dendrochronologist, suggest this is re-used! Richard's phasing plan shows the two eastern rooms as the earliest part of the present house.



The western half of the house has two beams dating to 1719. The size of bricks in this section (2¼"-2¾") is consistent with this date. Thus Richard is confident that the whole structure was standing in its present position in 1776. Richard thinks the Medieval main entrance

would have been on the east wall. Remodelling in the mid-19th century re-oriented the house to face south, by inserting the present main entrance together with its distinctive cast iron porch. In the 1850s three plots of land immediately east of the house were sold for building; the owners would not want their front door opening straight onto the house next door!

Dennis Aubrey Bacon	Sherwood Foresters
Walter Redvers Cowling	Northants Regt
Herbert Cecil Davis	Royal Signals
Dennis Peter Fellows	Sherwood Foresters
James Hammond	Royal Marines
James Earl McGeorge	USSAAF
Alfred Edwin Singleton	Northants Regt.
Clarence Frederick Slater	R.A.F
Thomas Smith	Royal Artillery
Roy Gretton Thomas	Royal Navy
Ernest Leonard Tinsley	R.A. O. C.

The plan of the house drawn by Richard, our professional house history consultant shows, as we suspected, the east wall of the ground floor to be about a metre

This complex report requires more discussion before a definitive final story can be written. Richard's conclusion was "The evidence is contradictory. A prime site such as this in the centre of Bingham must have been in continuous use from an early time. The thick east wall, reused timbers and early brickwork showing in some parts might suggest one or more structures on the site before a major rebuild / refashioning into one new single structure in the late 1700s." And we all thought it was just another Victorian farmhouse!

MEMORIES

In our newsletter last June we reported on the 'Picture the Past' drop-in day we held at the library in April. One of those who 'dropped-in' was Fred Lane who was born, in 1923, and bred in Bingham. His father owned the hardware shop, under the slogan, 'All roads lead to Lanes', a forerunner of the Handicentre and, from all reports, was even more of an Aladdin's Cave. One of the photos of a fun-fair in the Market place c. 1900 took Fred's fancy so we sent him a copy and in return received the following letter:

I am most grateful to you for sending me this as I have never managed to come across any shots of the Fair at Bingham. Living as I did in the Market Place I have very special memories of visits of the fair - usually twice a year

in the 20s & 30s. I was always fascinated by the steam traction engines and the steam driven roundabouts... and when the fair was open and the machines set up

I loved to see the engines generating the electric lights and I well remember the music played by the organs. The instrument on Holland's roundabout was always kept in tune and I can still remember the many tunes it played. I couldn't get to sleep in my bedroom at night - and I never wanted to! - Not only listening to the long repertoire of music but also having the walls of the bedroom lit up ... with dancing shadows as the horses galloped round. As the fair closed the organ would play, "God be with you 'til we meet again" and then the steam generation would die down with a slow steady whine and the lights would go out. Such happy days and nights!

The position from which the photograph was taken would quite possibly be from the window above my father's shop. The style of dress would also seem to support the date as being the early 1900s - before my time. In fact the roundabout shown is earlier than the ones I used to see - it even has Peacocks as well as horses! The steam traction engine in the background is a



'Burrell' made at Thetford, in Norfolk and as the rear wheels do not have rubber tyre strips it is certainly pre-1929. Sincerely Fred Lane.

WWI & Market Anniversary Year



2014 CALENDAR
From Newsagents **£3.50**

2014 LECTURES

8.00pm. Methodist Hall
Admission FREE

Thursday 9th January
Bingham Linear Park
Bill Bacon

Thursday 27th March
Bingham Three Feet Under
Quest for Origin of the Town
Peter Allen

Thursday 22nd May
Bingham's World Wars
Mike Patten

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