

DISCOVERING BINGHAM

Quarterly NEWSLETTER of the **Bingham Heritage Trails Association**
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BHTA: Increasing public awareness of our heritage in Architecture, Folk & Natural History, Archaeology & Geology

WINE TASTING SCORES ADD UP TO A GREAT EVENING



Some of the 'judges' get down to the serious business of tasting

We took time off from archaeological field walking of the parish to run a fund (and fun) raising, wine tasting evening at Robert Miles Infant School on 16th March. This was the third time this popular event has been organised, led by our Secretary, Jack Wilson who presented eleven of the 10,000 wines entered in last year's International Wine Challenge. As a change from previous occasions, Jack hit on the bright idea of asking those attending to judge the wines using the same scoring system as the IWC judges and compare the results. Most of the wines were presented in pairs for comparative tasting which, from the start, lead to a lively discussion among the groups of over 40 tasters. At the end of each section, Jack gave the judges scores and compared them with his audience's judgement. Sometimes there was close

agreement and sometimes there was not! Jack explained that, 'Wine tasting is a matter of personal taste. If you enjoy a wine, then that is more important than the opinion of the international judges!' The evening raised over £200 for the Association's general fund.

As our Chairman, Peter Allen, pointed out as he wished everyone a safe journey home, 'Although we have received our third grant from the Local Heritage Initiative to carry out a three-year project researching the settlement of Bingham from the Palaeolithic period to the present day, the grant only covers the direct cost of the project. These fund raising events are a vital part of financing the group's day to day running expenses. These include maintaining the BHTA web site, which is now

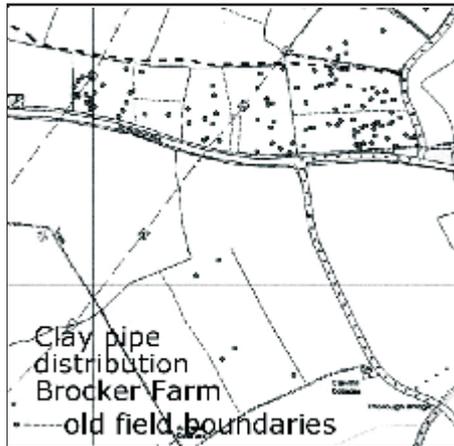
averaging 64 visits a day, publishing six free leaflets on various heritage topics and of course, producing *Discovering Bingham* every quarter.

FIELD WALKING GOES HI TEC!

Those involved in the field walking exercise will know how much material we have been collecting, washing and bagging in the finds facility (otherwise known as the Ashton's garage!). We started with transects 10m apart which has now been increased to 20m to ensure that we can cover the parish in three years. To date, we have something like 8000 finds which could grow to 15000 by the end of the project!

So, what do we do now? The finds need to be examined by experts to see what they are – this will start in earnest in June or July. Once categorised by type, material, age and so forth, we need then to decide what we can learn from them about Bingham's past patterns of habitation, land use etc. To this end, detailed records for each find are entered into an 'Access' database (good old Bill Gates!). We can then perform various statistical exercises on the data and produce lots of boring tables! However, if we could plot the finds on a map, think of how easy it would be to see patterns and think about the

interpretation of those patterns. Where were the most flints found? Could a cluster of scrapers indicate a possible encampment site? What fields were manured with night soil? And so on. We could also relate the finds to the old field patterns to reveal other aspects of the distributions.



The above map shows one such graphical distribution of clay pipes on Brocker Farm showing old field boundaries. The tedious part of this is plotting the grid references for each find and inputting to the database!

Bill Gates can't help here but a software manufacturer called ESRI can – with a Geographic Information System called Arc GIS. British Geological Survey has helped with previous projects and has this software; they have demonstrated its powerful geo-spatial analysis potential. But we could not really ask them, even in people's spare time, to do all the maps we were likely to want to look at. Arc GIS costs £1300 (the discounted price to charities like us) and we were planning on trying to raise the cash to buy a copy. However, after talking to a long dormant contact at ESRI, they have very kindly donated

a copy of the software, so the world is now our oyster.

All we have now to do is learn how to use it. We understand the basics, but it is a very powerful professional product and there will be many things we can do with it. We shall be able to call on BGS for some informal help but if there is anyone amongst our membership who has, or knows someone who has, any experience with Arc GIS we'd love to hear from you. This is your chance to shine! Please tell us and we'll be delighted to invite you to help with what promises to be an exciting phase of the project.

(See page 4 for Contacts)

BROKEN POTS

Archaeologist, Ruth Leary, who until recently was with the Trent and Peak Archaeological Unit at the University of Nottingham, gave a talk at the Methodist Hall in Bingham, in which she gave us the benefit of her extensive knowledge of ancient pottery. Ruth, along with a colleague, Dr. David Knight, gave the first ever talk on behalf of BHTA, so it was a special privilege to welcome her back to talk on this occasion, about Roman finds around Bingham.

Ruth can look at a pile of broken pot, and tell with a great deal of accuracy, where and when the pot was made. We were shown pictures of 1st century Samian Ware from Gaul, and spindle wheels in Grey Ware. At that time, pots were being made in moulds; some beautifully decorated using various kinds of pot stamps. Apparently they could be produced in a standardised form, some

being pot-stamped with their maker's name, thus allowing them to be dated with a great deal of accuracy. For example, a maker of pots named Gabrus, was known to have worked in East Gaul from AD150-200, so pieces with his stamp on, can be dated to that time.

Only one piece of Samian ware has been found at the site of the inhumation on the Bowling Green site at Long Acre, but it is a fine piece, with a stag's head decoration. This pot was made by a man called Reginus. Pottery found on the site, includes a range of Iron Age and Roman types.

Archaeologists discovered this inhumation to be in an enclosure, but as this is a recent and exciting discovery, which they have not yet finished dating, it will probably yield more useful information in due course.



Ruth Leary during her return visit to the third annual BHTA Open Lecture Series

Carnarvon School site was first excavated in 1958 by a Mr C Ashton, assisted by Tony Gregory. It had a skeleton and a considerable amount of pottery sherds. The site had some of the best Samian ware pots, shipped all the way from Gaul, and also some lesser quality, probably

locally produced pots. Pots for grinding, for cooking, for storage and for eating and drinking can tell the archaeologists a lot about the people who lived there. They probably had a well equipped home, and would almost certainly have traded with the military post or town at Margidunum, supplying the post with local products and artefacts. A stone lined well was later found on the site but not fully excavated. It was capped, presumably for safety purposes.

Ruth also told us that there is a possibility of there having been a Roman kiln in the vicinity. If evidence of the existence of a kiln should be discovered, that would be a great find indeed for Bingham. There is the intriguing possibility that such evidence might be thrown up by the BHTA current, three year, field walking project. So, watch this space!

GRANT AWARD FOR CHURCHYARD MAPPING PROJECT

The mapping of the churchyard that BHTA is carrying out with the U3A Family History group has now started. We have just heard that our application to Grants for All has been successful. The £2000 is to cover the cost of printing the churchyard trail leaflet and for putting the information about gravestone locations etc onto the web site. Our financial contribution is to produce the map and data book for the Rector and a copy for the library. Awards for All is a Lottery grants programme that aims, 'to help communities explore, share and preserve their traditions, culture or heritage'.

MORE HI TEC EQUIPMENT USED FOR OUR 'HISTORY OF SETTLEMENT' PROJECT



The topographical survey of Crow Close, which is part of our overall project, got a surprise boost when a local firm offered to do the survey for us - for free. The home-made trolley, giving ease of mobility, may not be particularly 'Hi Tec' but the ultra-modern laser surveying equipment mounted on it, **is!** Dr Kate Strange, brought up in Bingham and educated at Toot Hill Comprehensive School, of 3DLM based in Church Street, Bingham, carried out the survey one bitterly cold March afternoon. The equipment, provided by Riegl UK Ltd. and costing about £20,000, converts a series of 360 degree laser scans into a detailed contour map of the area. The cows in the field were not a problem; the equipment "airbrushes" them out! The five-hectare field was surveyed in just over four hours - it would have taken weeks to do by conventional methods.

BHTA JOINS CBA

As a consequence of BHTA joining the Council for British Archaeology, three of us were among the 70 people who attended the annual meeting of the East Midlands branch of the CBA held in Papplewick village hall on 19th March. It was a day of lectures and a walk around Papplewick. We took along some of our display material and leaflets and crowds of people gathered round them during the breaks. It was gratifying that so much interest was shown and we received several requests for information about our activities. We came away feeling quite pleased with ourselves.

The walk around Papplewick was a tour of the remains of Robinson's sophisticated water management system that had been developed in the late 18th century to supply the cotton mills in Papplewick. The mills have long since gone, having been demolished when the centre for the manufacture of cotton moved to Lancashire.

The talks covered the history of the cotton industry in Papplewick, an excavation of a Roman town house at Vine Street, in Leicester, investigations of an Iron Age site near Worksop and a dig at a prehistoric site near Great Hucklow in Derbyshire. We learned a great deal from these and during conversations with other participants, who were open, friendly and eager to help newcomers like us.

SINCE THE LAST NEWSLETTER

As for our current project, we finished the archaeological field walking temporarily just before Easter and resumed again for a short spell on 18th May. We have done more than 110 hectares and collected over 8000 finds. Work on building the database is well advanced, but the process of identifying the finds has only just begun. We ended the first part of the season with a get-together of all the field walkers and some of the farmers on whose land we have worked to show off the best finds. Coincidentally, this was the same evening that two members of the BHTA committee attended a ceremony in Radcliffe to receive a certificate for services to the community presented by the Rushcliffe Community Awards Scheme.

ARTIFACTS, ARCHIVES & VOICES

As part of Local History Month and Adult Learners' Week BHTA gave a talk in Bingham Library to an audience of 50 on Thursday evening, 26th May. Jack Wilson introduced three speakers who talked about how to use **Artefacts, Archives and Voices** to find out about the lives of the people of Bingham.

A display of finds made in the field walking survey was examined with new eyes after Geoff Ashton had explained their significance. He told the audience how distribution maps of these finds showed where our prehistoric ancestors camped on hunting trips; how the Romans built houses along the roads that radiated from Margidunum; and how clay pipes could indicate where night soil had been used on fields

Adrian Henstock gave examples of how trade directories, maps, parish registers and census forms can be used to show where people lived and what they



Hilary Strasburger, Chief Librarian, chats with the BHTA speakers after their presentation.

did for a living. Some of Bingham's rectors used the parish registers to record interesting additional information and the Reverend Hutt, in 1916, even gave details in the burials register of the day that three Zeppelins flew over Bingham on the way to a bombing raid over Derby.

Hilda Smith let the audience hear recorded voices telling their stories. Florence Todd described the WI AGM when Tony Blair was heckled. Martin Harwood described the day the skeleton of a murdered medieval man was found behind the Handicentre. Keith Handley's story was of the conversion in a day and a half of an old fashioned grocer's into Beaumont's supermarket. Alan Morris talked about how children were allowed to play in and around the rectory, while Kate Paterson reminded the audience of the famous sense of humour of Mr Dixon, Bingham's pharmacist.

As Jack said at the end, body language told him that the audience had enjoyed themselves.

HOW TO CONTACT OUR OFFICERS

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COME TO HAVE YOUR SAY

at our

AGM

7.30 Tues. 28th June
Moorlands Day Centre

All welcome