

DISCOVERING BINGHAM

Quarterly NEWSLETTER of the **Bingham Heritage Trails Association**
www.binghamheritage.org.uk Registered Charity No: 1090475 Issue No. 3 - March 2004

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

YEAR-END FLOURISH THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

The closing weeks of 2003 were a busy time for us. A very successful wine tasting evening was held at Robert Miles Infant School on 28th November. 'Old Grapes - New Wines' was the theme chosen by Jack Wilson, BHTA Secretary, as he introduced the 50 who attended to the intricacies of tasting and appreciating good 'New World' wines. Apart from everyone enjoying a convivial evening, the event raised over £300 toward the running costs of the association. We have received a grant from the Local Heritage Initiative for Phase 2 of our web site but this cannot be used to cover our additional running costs. For example, the leaflets we publish, on a range of heritage topics, have proved so popular that we needed to reprint them during last year. We also have to pay for the upkeep of the web site. So fund-raising activities, like the wine tasting evening, are vital.

On the 5th December, members manned the BHTA display stand at the Bingham Christmas Fair held in the Market Place. A great deal of interest was generated by the presentation of some of the new work such as House Histories, Hedge and Tree Surveys, the Linear Park and



BHTA committee members (L to R) John Bannard, Geoff Ashton (Vice Chairman) and Jack Wilson (Secretary) chat to visitors at our display stand in the Market Place at the Bingham Christmas Fair.

Wartime Bingham. Further fund-raising was achieved by the sale of the '2004 Bingham Heritage Calendar', which has proved very popular. The many visitors to the stand also enjoyed a free cup of hot fruit punch that helped to keep the evening chill at bay.

Finally, to round off the year, the first in the second series of free Open Lectures got off to a good start when an audience of 75 came to hear Mike Bishop's talk that is reviewed in the following report.

BINGHAM'S PART IN HAROLD'S DOWNFALL

The first of BHTA's second season of lectures, sponsored by Bingham Local Area Forum, got off to a flying

start on Thursday 11th December when Mike Bishop, the Nottinghamshire County Archaeologist, spoke on 'Bingham after the Romans'. We knew we were in for a treat when he revealed that his speciality is the medieval period. Mike explained that there is a dearth of archaeological, documentary and cartographical evidence for Bingham after the Roman occupation until Victorian times, but that there was enough to tell a good story. He did precisely that!

Mike illustrated some of the archaeological finds of Saxon times and discussed the origins of the name and Bingham's role as the administrative centre of the Anglo-Saxon Wapentake, with monthly meetings at the Moothouse Pit. There were



Mike Bishop in full flow during his lecture.

three manors - one owned by Earl Tostig and the others by the brothers Hoga and Helgi, whom, for some reason, the audience seemed to take quickly to their hearts! Earl Tostig had fought Harold at Stamford Bridge; the weakened Harold then lost at Hastings - so Bingham had a hand in the Norman Conquest!

The Domesday Book records that the Norman Roger de Busli held Bingham, from whom it passed eventually to the Stanhopes (later Earls of Chesterfield) in 1586. Explaining the lumps and bumps shown in an aerial photograph, Mike raised the question of Crow Close, the medieval village site east of Cogley Lane. When and why was it deserted? Was it because of the rise of a rival settlement around the 13th century church and market? BHTA plans to sponsor a survey next year to help find out.

The 'grid iron' street plan of central Bingham is rooted in the medieval period; it was probably a planned settlement from the start, with regular plots for houses, surrounded by large open fields for arable farming and grazing. Located near the Fosse Way and the road to Grantham, Bingham soon

became a centre of commerce, trade and administrative activity.

As any good lecturer should, Mike left his audience wanting more; he spent time afterwards discussing particular points of interest with members of the audience whilst they enjoyed a Christmas fruit punch.

LAUNCHING OUR NEW WEB SITE

The **new** BHTA web site, funded by the Local Heritage Initiative, will be launched in March. Much has been added to the old site. There are pages about the way the Romans lived in Margidunum, built their houses and traded with the rest of Europe. New pictures include items never seen outside the University museum before. There are reminiscences about Bingham in the Second World War and an account of the criminality of the people of Bingham over the last 1000 years that will horrify you. New information about life in Bingham in the 1870s has come from copies of the very first parish magazines, produced by Rev. Robert Miles and the Church and Wesleyan schools' logbooks. Much new detail has been added about Bingham's buildings. Using tree rings in beams we now know exactly how old two of the oldest are. There is a mass of new information about the Linear Park, the trees and hedges in the parish and many new photographs of old Bingham. If that were not enough, we will also have a printed leaflet describing walks around the parish where you can see much of what we describe on the web site.

DENDROCHRONOLOGY

Tree-ring dating was one of the techniques used in an attempt to date three of the oldest houses in Bingham. The work, sponsored by BHTA, and carried out for us by the Trent and Peak Archaeological Unit, will appear on our web site and a copy of their full report will be placed in the Library at the beginning of March. Briefly, dating evidence has been found suggesting 1570 to 1590 at 23 Long Acre East, 1617 at 61-63 Long Acre and '16th century origins' for 21 Long Acre. We also plan to include more information in future editions of 'Discovering Bingham'.

DO YOU KNOW...Where this photo was taken?



This picture of Charlie Cowdell, which was possibly taken in the 1930s or 40s, shows him standing in front of a sign reading, 'Insurance benefit paid this week...'. It is on the BHTA web site and we understood that the location was outside the building that stood on the corner of Market Street and the Market

Place and was demolished in the early 60s to make way for the Co-op car park. From other old photos, the window and brickwork look right but we now know that the building had a corner doorway, which is clearly not the case in this picture. An alternative suggestion is that he is standing on the opposite side of the Market Place outside No. 16, now the Go Sing restaurant. Up until WW2 this was the office of the Rural District Council, where benefits might have been paid. Looking at photos of this building taken c.1900, the window and door are similar but there is no evidence of the distinctive chequer-board brickwork behind Charlie. There are also two very worn stone steps leading up to the door but in 1900 and today, there is only one step. The bootscraper is still outside Go Sing's but unfortunately, its position is obscured by Charlie's legs! So we are still not certain where this photograph was taken.

Have any of our readers got other suggestions as to where this building is, or might have been? There has to be a three-pane wide sash window, without horns, about three to four feet to the left of a doorway with two stone steps. This is fairly unusual in Bingham; in many of the older buildings you step down to enter, not up! Let us have your ideas that we can follow up.
(See page 4 for contacts.)

CORRECTION

Did you buy a BHTA 2004 Calendar? We're sorry, the gremlins got into November; the days and dates repeat those for October! If you would like a free, self adhesive correction slip, please contact Geoff Ashton.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The tree by the notice board in the Market Place is a rare narrow-leaved ash (*Fraximus angustifolia*), the only one in Bingham, we think. Does anyone know of any others?
- In 1840 there were over 80 farmers and cottagers who kept livestock in Bingham. Now only six farmers live in the parish.

BINGHAM TRAGEDY

A tragic accident occurred in Bingham on the evening of 28th December 1868, when eleven-year-old Robert Attenborough was drowned when crossing the Smite with Mr Charles Doncaster, who was also drowned. Robert, the sixth of twelve children, was the son of John (a hairdresser) and Mary Attenborough of Market Place, Bingham and was a pupil at the Wesleyan School on Chapel Lane (now Kirkhill). His teacher, Mr John Maston noted in his logbook that, '*the late sad accident had made a marked impression on the children*'. When the school reassembled on the 5th January John Marston gave a Bible lesson on the uncertainty of life, '*which much impressed the children*'.

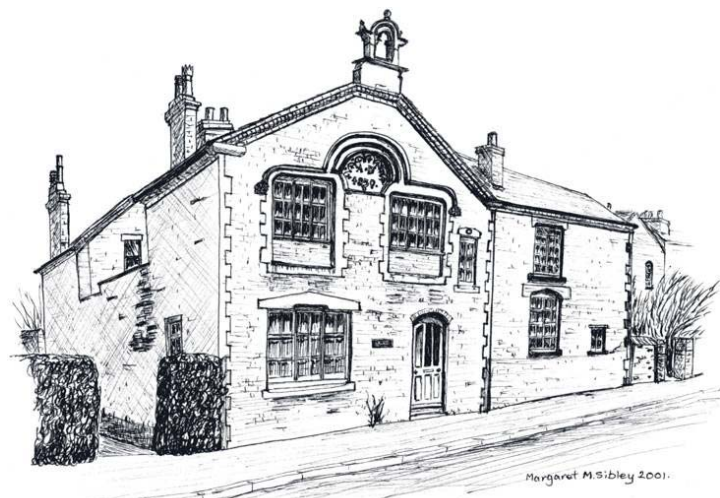
Robert, who had not been christened, was buried in the grounds of the Primitive Chapel on Monday, the 11th January. Thirty of his school friends attended the funeral. Mr Doncaster, a draper, who was the secretary of the school and much respected in Bingham, was buried in the Churchyard.

GLIMPSES OF THE PAST

Part of our research activity has been studying the logbooks of the Bingham Schools, held in the Nottinghamshire County Archive. These are just a few of the items we found, giving a fascinating glimpse of life in the town, nearly 150 years ago. Throughout the 1860's and 70's the teachers in Bingham's schools constantly bemoaned the irregular or non-attendance of their pupils, especially the older ones. Instead of attending school they were to be found working either in the fields or orchards, bean dropping, bird scaring, stone picking, turnip singling, pulling potatoes, cherry picking, haymaking and harvesting. If they weren't in the fields they were working in gardens or seaming stockings or nursing. Attendance picked up in the winter, but often parents were too poor to pay school fees and the children still didn't attend. It wasn't only work that kept the children from school. One teacher wrote in his logbook that he would like to ban cricket matches, fairs, flower shows, Lord Stanhope's yeomanry festivals, Plough Monday and cheap days out by train to Skegness or Nottingham.

However, the staff were sometimes realistic enough to know when they were licked - on 5th May 1876, Mr Jones' entry reads: '*On Tuesday a new locomotive engine for the new railway was drawn from the goods station to Mill Hill by 20 horses decorated for the occasion. Hundreds of people assembled at 9am;*

notice of the event being given by the 'crier' at 8.30am. Owing to the delay in moving it, it was 10 o'clock before it passed the school and as so few children met afterwards the attendance was not marked. Another engine was drawn on Thursday, but I have all in before 2.00 and let them out at 3.00 to see it pass.'



The Wesleyan School, Kirkhill. Sketch by Margaret Sibley

HOW TO CONTACT OUR OFFICERS, PROJECT LEADERS AND PROJECT CO-ORDINATORS (★)

General E-mail: enquiries@binghamheritage.org.uk

Name	Office/Projects	Address/Telephone
ALDWORTH Robin	COMMITTEE, Newsletter Editor Architectural photography Period scenes	30 Mallow Way 839991 Fax./Ans. Ph. 839984
★ ALLEN Peter	CHAIRMAN, Prehistoric, Roman, Medieval to Modern periods, Agriculture, Farm implements, Hedge & Tree surveys, Geology, Museum.	107 Grantham Road 831575
ALLEN Joyce	COMMITTEE Membership & Minutes Sec.	107 Grantham Road 831575
★ ASHMOR E Allen	COMMITTEE Leaflets, Wartime	73 Langdale Grove 837886
★ ASHTON Geoff	VICE CHAIRMAN, Built heritage, House histories, Street names Evolution – maps, Population	19 Church Street 875177
BACON Bill	Natural history, Linear Park, Tree survey, Photographic survey	4 The Pinfold 838585
BANNARD John	COMMITTEE	17 Market Place 831286 / Fax: 836083
BEAR Rupert	Crime & punishment	8 Melvyn Drive 837213 / 875846
PERRY John	Trail leaflets Transport	29 Cogley Lane 875231
SHARPE Eric	Wartime	34 Tythby Road 838843
★ SMITH Hilda	COMMITTEE Oral histories	11 Abbey Road 837781
SNOWDIN Roger	TREASURER Commercial development	26 Gillotts Close 839148
STOCKWOOD Tony	COMMITTEE Town Council Representative	46 Tythby Road 875778
★ WILSON Jack	SECRETARY Natural History	3 Quantock Grove 838275

There was also a high level of sickness. Measles, whooping cough and scarlet fever epidemics decimated attendance. One year, there were so few pupils to take part in the annual examination, that the local doctor had to produce a medical certificate proving that there was a measles epidemic in the town. High attendance was crucial for government grants and as the time for the annual government inspection drew near, desperate measures were sometimes called for to get the attendance up to the required level. Two boys left Bingham to live in Ilkeston just before the exam and the head teacher paid their train fares so that they could return to Bingham for the day and present themselves for the exam, obviously a pair who would bring credit. A girl who had left the workhouse to live in Aslockton was brought back for the day of the exam and several who had gone to another school in Bingham returned for the day. In spite of the problems, from the 1870's onwards, Mr Jones at the Wesleyan School and Mr Ledsome at the Church school achieved excellent results. The children of Bingham were well taught.

BHTA

Free Open Lecture

Sponsored by Bingham Local Area Forum

Final lecture in the current series

Thursday 29th April 7.30pm.

Methodist Church Hall

BUILDING

BINGHAM

Speaker: Geoff Ashton

BHTA 'Built Heritage' Project Leader