

# DISCOVERING BINGHAM

Quarterly NEWSLETTER of the **Bingham Heritage Trails Association**  
[www.binghamheritage.org.uk](http://www.binghamheritage.org.uk) Registered Charity No: 1090475 Issue No. 41 - September 2013

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

We are celebrating ten years of 'Discovering Bingham' but there are other anniversaries coming up!

## BINGHAM MARKET

As you browse amongst the stalls at Bingham's vibrant Thursday market, probably the last thing to come into your mind is that you are doing what people have been doing here for 700 years.

Yes, it's a long time and the market has changed and adapted over the years to reflect the requirements of each age.

When the widow Alice de Bingham and her son William applied for a Charter for a market here in 1314 they had a selfish motive: Alice wished to put the incipient market, probably extending along Church Street from the parish church, on a firmer legal footing. In promoting trade the de Bingham family would have enjoyed increased rents from the stallholders and their tenants would have benefited too, resulting in a win-win situation.

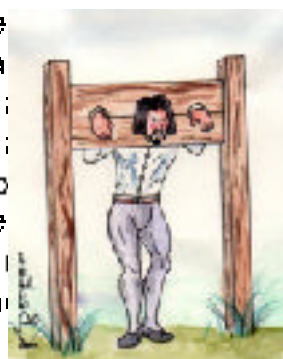
It is indeed quite likely that our present market place dates from this time, being laid out so that commerce could take centre stage in the community.

Our imposing Butter Cross is a Victorian replacement for the original which stood a few yards to the west of the present one. There was no shelter on its steps for the farmers' wives as they sold their butter. The phrase 'cold as charity' is apt in the present covered cross as anyone will attest, but it's sooo... much better than it was!

The Charter also allowed for two fairs a year - in November and February - which fell out of use 140 or more years ago. But by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the market was on its knees and it was revived by Rushcliffe Borough Council in 1974 after a lapse of more than 80 years.

The Market Place has been a forum for a variety of events over the years, in fact the Charter confirms

that a pillory was licensed here and since then it has also been a place where immorality was punished by public whippings and penance. A prison house for a 'lunatick' clergyman stood here and a very sane one - John Wesley



preached from the steps of the Buttercross in 1770. In our own lifetime we have seen events like 'Wings for Victory', military parades, church festivals, the meeting of the South Notts. Hunt and even 'It's a Knockout' charity tournaments.

We are so fortunate that Alice had the forethought to provide us with this gem so, join with us to celebrate and support our market. Seven hundred years of trading can't be wrong!

## CHARTER CELEBRATION

BHTA thinks that this 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary is such an important one that it ought to be celebrated. Letters have been sent to the Bingham Town Council and to the Market Manager to see if they have any intention to celebrate this event. We await a response, but it would be helpful if the public in general made its view clear on this. If you would like to see this anniversary celebrated then please tell the Town Council and copy to us.

**10TH ANNIVERSARY  
SPECIAL EDITION**

## BINGHAM IN WORLD WAR 1

Next year will be the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War also known as "The Great War" and "The war to end all wars". Four of us, Mike Patten, Richard Barnett, Rupert Bear and John Perry are looking into what part the people of Bingham played in this war and the results will be published on our web site in due course. We have tracked down a leather bound 'Roll of Honour' which lists all the people of Bingham who served in the war and survived, what regiment or unit they were in, where they served, whether they were wounded and for 33 of them, where they were killed and when. It shows that over 200 people served in the war plus the 33 who were killed. Amongst the survivors were seven women who served in the VAD (Voluntary Aid Detachment) as volunteer nurses. 15 men were in the Navy and the rest were in the Army. The roll was made possible by the efforts of Ann Harrison, an 89 year old lady who raised the money for it by selling scraps for pig food. She is commemorated by the statuette near the chancel screen in St. Mary and All Saints church.

**Where are we up to?** The roll has been transcribed onto a data base - thanks to Richard - and Robin Aldworth has photographed the commemorative panels in the church and also the Roll of Honour pages. For those who died we have been trying to trace them in the 1901 and 1911 census to find out where they lived and who their relatives were. We have also traced over half to their regiments and in the majority

of cases we have found out where they are buried and/or which memorial they are commemorated on. Thanks to Rupert for this painstaking task. The Roll of Honour has also given us a number of clues to carry on research into their service in the forces.

**What next?** We would like to see the service records of these people who died or survived but this may be impossible as many records were destroyed during the 2nd World War. Also what we would like are any photos and/or memorabilia of those who served in the war. We would photograph these items and return immediately. If you can help please contact Mike, Richard, John or Rupert. (See page 4 for other contact details.)

## THE BIG DIG

BHTA did its first proper archaeological dig in late July to coincide with the Council for British Archaeology's annual Festival of Archaeology. The stimulus for doing it was the discovery of a stone floor and a posthole while doing a 1-metre test pit in Robert Miles School last May. Our aim was to find the extent of the floor and see if we could locate another posthole and get some idea of the age, size, extent and function of the building it was part of.

We started in early July when Grantham Archaeological Group did a geophysical survey of the area we intended to dig. Then we marked out an area of 4 x 7 metres around the posthole. On 20<sup>th</sup> July Chris Harrison brought his mini-digger to the site and removed first the topsoil. Undemeath, in the



*Margaret Sibley's watercolour*

southern part of the excavation was a road with an upper surface of burnt shale and foundations made of rubble from the old rectory when it was demolished in 1964. We are presuming that this was the access road the builders laid from the gate of the old rectory to the site when they built the school. We removed the road with the digger. From Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> to Friday 26<sup>th</sup> July we dug by hand. Then on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> July Chris Harrison came back with his digger to fill the excavation.

Between 16 and 18 volunteers worked each day, digging, heaving buckets and pushing wheelbarrows from pit to the 'sieves' and then bagging up the finds. Three of them were lads from Toot Hill School. An archaeologist from Trent & Peak Archaeology was with us all week. T&PA has provided us with help and advice in all our projects since 2001. We also had an 'artist in residence' (see above) and lots of visitors came to see what we were doing.

A huge amount of material was recovered from the dig. It is now all washed and is ready to be described and identified. Much was revealed in the pit, though. We found that the stone floor





painting of the dig in progress.

we encountered in the test pit covered the whole of the excavation. In the north east corner of the dig we found where the late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century rectory flagpole had been. We discovered two skeletons of dogs. They seemed to be a type of hunting dog and were probably owned by an early 19<sup>th</sup> century Rector who was known as a hunting man. We did not find another posthole, but the quality of the floor suggests it was either for a barn or a yard and was unlikely to be from within a house. The pottery finds and the clay pipes seem to indicate that the floor was laid down in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. We found that it had been laid on sand and along the western side of the dig we found a sand pit that had been backfilled. The pottery in the fill was medieval to Tudor in age.

We still have a lot more work to do before we can say anything definitive about the site, so watch this space.

On our stand at the Summer Fair we ran a competition to guess where the next posthole would be found. As we didn't find one we drew the predictions out of a hat and the £25 prize went to Mrs. Eileen Gregg-Gilby.

## HALF-PENNY POST - 1900 EMAIL



We have reason to be thankful for the introduction of the ha'penny postal rate for postcards in 1894. With at least two collections and deliveries every day it was quickly taken up by working families as a reliable and almost instant means of keeping in touch at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, long before the telephone became generally accessible, and affordable. At the same time picture postcards illustrating local views were inexpensive and like today we are reluctant to throw away the attractive holiday postcards we are sent, so the recipients in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century tended to hang onto them. In time, some have come down to us and 100s of pictures of old Bingham and surrounding areas have been added to the BHTA photo archive.

There is more to it than just images; turn over the card and read the messages on the back and you will often get an informative, or at least, intriguing insight into everyday life at the start of the last century. It can be argued that the ha'penny post was as significant as the introduction of e-mail in more recent time. In the last few weeks BHTA have been loaned two batches of postcards, posted between 1905 and 1912, to be copied into our archive. The first batch came from, or to, Mrs Cuddy of Newgate Street, Bingham and her daughters Margaret and Berta. As an example of the

frequency of the post, Bertha wrote to her sister on Saturday 1st June 1912, *"I am expecting you tomorrow Sunday"*. Bertha also comes up with snippets of local news such as, *"The poor old tree on Parson's Hill got struck on Thursday so don't say nothing happens in Bingham."* Later, with more weather, *"A postcard to let you know we happen to be alive at Bingham after all the rain. We were a little more fortunate than the Territorials, Dr. B. and his party had to sit on the tent pegs to keep the tent from blowing away."* and then with hardly a pause, *"Mrs Blackshaw's baby was buried last Thursday. It [was] the school treat on Thursday"* or, *"Mr. Brown's nearly ready to shout Harvest Home"*. Was this a local custom and what did it involve?

It would seem that Margaret was in service; in 1906 her cards are addressed c/o Mrs Geandenough, Zulla Road and in 1912 c/o Mrs Smart, Sherwood. (From the previous message she was given Sunday off!) In June 1911 Mrs Cuddy is in Samaritan Hospital for Women (opened 1885), Raleigh Road and Margaret writes to her, *"Thanks very much for p. c. this morning...I came round last night and brought you some eggs. I will bring you what you asked for on Saturday"* The hospital was only a short walk from Zulla Road and it looks as if Margaret's duties meant she had to deliver the eggs outside visiting hours. Were patients in this hospital expected to provide their own food or just make a donation in kind to the costs? By September Mother was home and Margaret writes in a

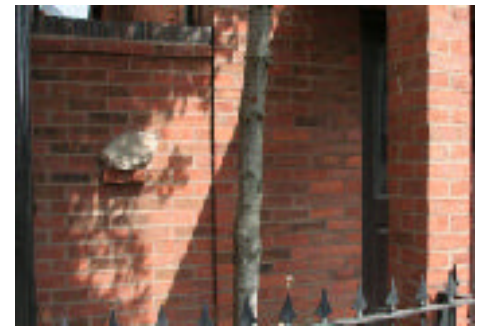
rather testy mood, "Have you forgotten that there is such a person as myself and the place where I live?"

The second batch of postcards involve the Pritchett family of Scarrington. Mrs Pritchett's sister Fanny in Old Basford writes, "Just to say Georgie got safe and we was please to see him looks well and if we will see you in a little while and we hope he [h]as been a good boy...". Their friend Fred W Gamble is rather more poetic; "Just a line to let you know that we are still on the map and hope you are on the same planet... I hope to spend a week and over there before the last rose of summer has faded away.... Should be pleased to see any of you at the Goose Fair". Son Wilfred was an itinerant farm labourer, in November 1908 he writes from Coventry, "I have landed here safe and am all right..." but by February 1909 he is working on Mr Adlington's Farm, Kirklington, Southwell from where he writes rather mysteriously, "I have not said anything to her as I thought it best not as they never speak and I have not seen her since that night only once and she never spoke but will tell you more when I write again". Most of Wilf's cards are written in very faint pencil and upside down compared to the address. (Was this to dissuade the postman from reading the message?!)

Wilfred also received a card from Lois saying, "I am down here for tea and asked aunt if I could send this p.c.. She wishes me to say George J is a little better today. Hope you are well...at home Bob is much the same really no better". Could Lois be carrying a torch for Wilfred? She continues rather coquettishly, "I do miss you when I come it is very cold today. Do you feel it much. I have not had heat going back home....I must not delay til dark as no Wilfred to take me." The health of George and Bob also came up in another card from Fred. On March 5<sup>th</sup> 1909 Wilf posted a card home, "...drop you a line to remind you if dad did not come to send my b book so as they get it on the ninth it is so bad out here as there is so much snow about..." Has anyone got any idea what a 'b book' was that had to be there by the ninth?

Apart from arranging visits and swapping family news the ha'penny post, like e-mail today, was used for sales promotion; the proprietor of Mitchell Garage, Park Row, Nottingham in 1910 sent a card with a photograph of his yard full of the latest Rover motors to a customer in Scarrington: "Dear Sir, I beg to inform you that there is every appearance of an advance in the price of petrol and if your stock is low, I would advise you to order at once. Yours f'fully, F Mitchell"

## BINGHAM'S BIT OF BERLIN



Bingham has its own very important piece of historic modern archaeology, in the form of a fragment of the original Berlin Wall - the iconic symbol of the Iron Curtain which divided Europe and the World from 1961 until 1990. It is built into the fabric of Hope Cottage in Long Acre and was placed there during development in the 1990's, having been brought back from Berlin at the time when the Wall (and all it represented) fell. The Wall was a barrier constructed to prevent people from escaping from communist rule. The barrier included guard towers and of the 5,000 people who attempted to escape over the wall to the West an estimated 600 were killed. It was a symbol of oppression and its fall was a symbol of freedom. Barry and Betty Nock brought the fragment of the Wall back shortly after its demolition in the newly re-united Germany. They decided to place it on display in a prominent position in the newly renovated cottage. They rightly named the property Hope Cottage. It symbolises the euphoria of a time when people felt that the world can be made a better place.

### BHTA CONTACTS

General e-mail: [bhta@binghamheritage.org.uk](mailto:bhta@binghamheritage.org.uk)

CHAIRMAN: Peter Allen - 01949 831575

VICE CHAIRMAN: Geoff Ashton - 01949 875177

SECRETARY: Jack Wilson - 01949 838275

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Robin Aldworth - 01949 839991

Thanks to **Hammond Property Services** for their support by printing this issue of *Discovering Bingham*