

DISCOVERING BINGHAM

Quarterly NEWSLETTER of the **Bingham Heritage Trails Association**

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

www.binghamheritage.org.uk

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Welcome to the latest newsletter of Bingham Heritage Trails Association. The last issue was over 2 years ago, and we are thankful for the chance to restart our newsletter.

Many things have changed in the last 2 years, and we hope to be able to restart many of our activities which include this newsletter, our annual talks, and local archaeological digs.

We welcome new members; our website gives all the information you need to join us.

Forthcoming talks:

LECTURE

Thursday 19th May 2022
at The Methodist Centre, Bingham

Doors open 19.30 and starting at 20.00

Bingham in WW II – some research highlights



A.G.M.

Friday 24th June 2022
at The W.I. Hut, Station Street, Bingham

Starting at 19.30

To be followed by a Social Event
to enable Members to reconnect



This edition has been kindly printed by Bingham's Community Estate Agent who has pledged to donate £100 to B.H.T.A. for anyone who uses their services and has a genuine link to the B.H.T.A.

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Flints and Arrowheads found in North Bingham by Andy Balls

Barbed and Tanged Arrowhead, Late Neolithic/Beaker Period to Early Bronze Age.
Date around 2500 to 1500 BC

Length:- 25.5mm
Width:- 19.5mm
Thickness:- 5mm
Weight :- 1.66g

Found in Bingham



Small Plano-Convex Knife, (Small variant can be referred as a Slug Knife) Same Period as above
date around 2100 and 1700 BC.

Lovely invasive pressure-flaking.

It looks to be an Early Bronze Age Plano-Convex Knife. Although the shape is less common. Of course, it may originally have been longer and broader form all the way along. It has been used and resharpened until it got to its current form.

Length:34.9mm
Width: 18.1mm
Thickness: 6.9mm
Weight:- 4.43g

Also found in Bingham



Both were found on the surface while out walking. Keep your eyes on the ground!

Bingham in World War 2 – a BHTA research project

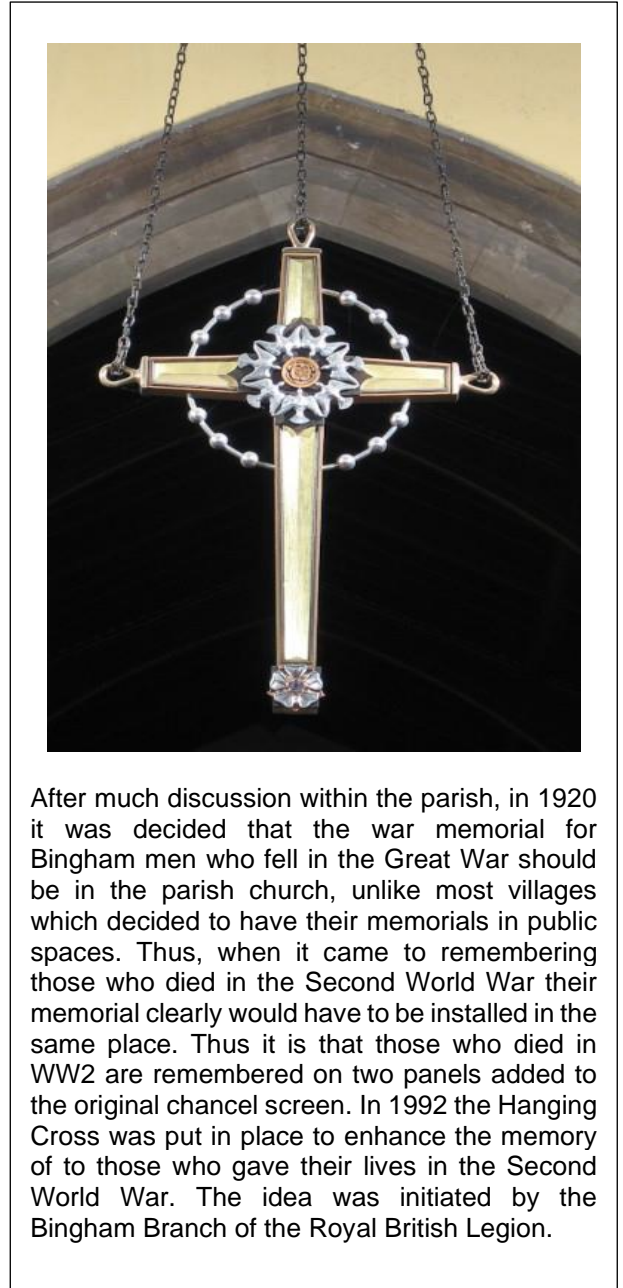
BHTA launched its WW2 project in 2019 but it was brought to an abrupt halt by the Covid emergency. Since the spring of 2021, however, we have resumed our research and have begun uploading our findings to our website at: <https://www.binghamheritage.org.uk>

Not only did Bingham citizens serve in most of the major theatres of the war, some becoming prisoners of war, but they also came from diverse origins. The fallen include members of long-standing Bingham families, as well as men originally hailing from places as far flung as Northampton, Buckinghamshire and Marshall, Texas, USA.

There is a common theme of tragedy in the stories of all these men but three, perhaps, stand out as particularly poignant.

- *Signalman Herbert Davis saw service in Italy, Sicily and North Africa. In Tunisia he fell ill, first with pneumonia and subsequently TB and was invalided back to the UK in August 1944. When it became clear that there was no hope of recovery, he was allowed to return to the family home in Tythby Road, where he died on March 3rd 1945, aged 25.*
- *Gunner Thomas Leslie Smith was a prisoner of war of the Japanese from early 1942 until the Japanese surrender in August 1945. Thomas died of malnutrition four days after the end of hostilities.*
- *Private 1st Class James Earl McGeorge, United States Army Air Force, was stationed at either RAF Langar or Bottesford, when he met and married a Bingham woman, Edith Matthews. James was serving with the occupation forces in Germany in September 1945 when he was killed in a road traffic accident. He was aged 21. His wife Edith gave birth to their son, named after his father, almost exactly a year after their marriage.*

Researching these stories of the fallen has been made much easier for us by the records of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and also by the access we have had to family records. When it comes to those men and women who served in World War 2 and returned, however, there are more difficult challenges. This is because many of the relevant records remain closed.



After much discussion within the parish, in 1920 it was decided that the war memorial for Bingham men who fell in the Great War should be in the parish church, unlike most villages which decided to have their memorials in public spaces. Thus, when it came to remembering those who died in the Second World War their memorial clearly would have to be installed in the same place. Thus it is that those who died in WW2 are remembered on two panels added to the original chancel screen. In 1992 the Hanging Cross was put in place to enhance the memory of to those who gave their lives in the Second World War. The idea was initiated by the Bingham Branch of the Royal British Legion.

In the case of Bingham, moreover, the town's roll of honour for WW2 includes only those who fell. Unlike WW1, there is no official or definitive list of those who survived the conflict. As a result, we have had to rely on a variety of 'non-official' sources.

One of these is a list of recipients of grants from a *Returning Forces' Fund*, jointly administered by the Royal British Legion and the Women's Institute. We thought we had struck gold with this document until we discovered that the only surviving copy is missing one or more pages. The list breaks off among family names commencing with the letter 'P'.

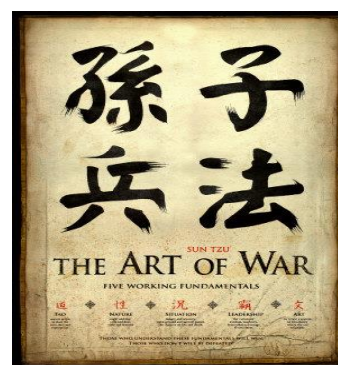


Evacuees arriving at Bingham Station in June 1940

It has nevertheless proven valuable as a source of information although its semi-official status means that we cannot be certain of its comprehensiveness, how it was compiled or how people got to be included or excluded.

To make up for these deficiencies, we have turned to a variety of other sources.

- *RBL membership records have pointed us in the direction of individuals missing from the Returning Forces' Fund list.*
- *Newspaper reports for the period have also been useful sources, not only in identifying names but also in providing helpful contextual information.*
- *Perhaps most importantly, interviews with surviving relatives, both of the fallen and of returnees, have pointed us to individuals whom we might otherwise have missed.*
- *Finally, we have made a number of public appeals for information which have yielded helpful leads.*



As a result, we have compiled a list of some 160 men and women, associated with Bingham, who we believe served in some capacity and returned. More information about these will be found in the next newsletter. Watch this space!

We can be contacted via our website at: bhta@binghamheritage.org.uk or by phoning the project leader, David Mason, on 01949 876 635