

# 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

## THAT WAS 2003 THAT WAS!



*This photo-montage illustrates some of the BHTA activities in 2003. Our display boards in the background are permanently displayed in the entrance of the Old Court House and are taken to all our public events. They show our work in Geology, Built Heritage, Natural History, etc.. In the foreground, there are groups representing our series of open lectures, meeting members of the public, interviewers being trained for the Oral History project and gathering the recollections of residents whose memories go back to the 1920s.*

This has been a year dominated by project work. We received our award from the Local Heritage Initiative (LHI) in November 2002 and have to complete by February next year.

In Phase1 we took advantage of knowledge that already existed when we drafted our leaflets and built the web site. This time we have been doing a lot of original research and that takes time. Gradually, though, the many projects are coming to completion.

Many fascinating things have emerged. One gem was a bound set of parish magazines for the years 1868 to 1874, when the Reverend Robert Miles was in his pomp. Jan Krupa had read about BHTA in the Buttercross and

asked me if I would be interested to see them. They belonged to his sister-in-law, who lent them to us. They are full of detail about contemporary life in Bingham, which will be put in a web page all on its own. When things like this happen it reassures us that the effort we put in to keeping BHTA in the public eye does have its rewards.

Two substantial projects have been a survey of the trees in Bingham's public places and the parish hedgerows. We have found trees over two hundred years old and Elizabethan hedges. It surprised us that there are so many different kinds of tree here, some quite rare.

Trent and Peak Archaeological Unit at Nottingham University are working with us to bring out more information about Margidunum

and to study the oldest houses in the town. We have completed studies on crime and punishment in Bingham since 1066AD, wartime Bingham, the Linear Park and several more house histories, containing a wealth of information about nineteenth century life in the town. A leaflet showing things of heritage interest that can be seen from the public footpaths has been prepared for printing and Hilda Smith has been busy interviewing Bingham people for an audio archive. There is a lot still to be done, but we are on target to finish by the due date.

The public lecture series continued with two early in the year and the first of the new season's on 11<sup>th</sup> December. Our AGM was held in June; we always have a stall at both the Summer Fair and the Christmas Fair and we held a wine tasting evening in November. It has been an expensive year because we had to reprint the leaflets, which all went in less than twelve months after we launched them. We are doing the calendar and cards again and, of course, we started the newsletter.

On a sad note, Peter Thompson, died in October. He was an active and involved member, whose constructive presence was always guaranteed at the AGM. His participation will be missed. As for next year – we are not short either of work or ideas.

*Wishing a  
very Merry  
Christmas  
and a Heritage - rich  
New Year  
to all our readers!*



## Mad About Buildings

If you see some bloke staring at rooflines in Bingham, examining coggings, studying windows, staring at boot scrapers and pumps or measuring bricks, don't worry; it's only Geoff Ashton being nose-y about Bingham's built heritage!

On the face of it we don't have many buildings that you would normally call 'historic', but many do repay a bit of study and appreciation as you try to work out what the building is trying to tell you about its life. You may see a blocked up doorway or window here, evidence of added windows there, changed frontages and roof lines, evidence of one time thatched roofs and a host of other details. Although the exteriors of many of Bingham's older buildings are clearly Victorian, much hidden detail remains from the eighteenth and even seventeenth centuries. We have engaged a professional house historian to evaluate what many people think are the three oldest buildings in Bingham. Already the Built Heritage leaflet has been reprinted (obtainable from the Library or Town Office), there are about 50 pages of built heritage on the web site and there will be more on the web in the New Year.

Quite a number of house deeds have been studied and related to census information and trade directories to build up house histories. These and other documents such as maps, photographs and the memories of Bingham residents add colour and interest to the legal documents. It becomes quite fascinating to tease out details of the development of families between censuses. From these it is possible to see who could afford servants, to establish their trades and occupations and trace the intricate associations between individuals in the way they witnessed each other's documents, lent each other



*The Wheatsheaf, Long Acre, as it might have been in 1792.*

*Drawing by Margaret Sibley. Available as BHTA card (15p.)*

money and built family alliances through marriage. Bricks and mortar come alive when you can tie up these elements. Some of the names we come across are still represented in the town today and we welcome any historical information the present day family members might like to share with us.

Much still needs to be done. Documenting more of the built heritage in this way will take us beyond the formal period of the Lottery Grant. Researching individual houses leads to looking at whole streets, and another strand of our research is the derivation of street names and the development of some of the older streets of the town. We have taken photographs to compare with the same scene on old photographs to see how things have changed in a hundred years – or not, in some cases! These will also be on the web soon.

We are still on the lookout for the deeds to any buildings built before about 1920. Mortgage companies may charge you to see your deeds, but might be persuadable to part with the older documents as these are often merely taking up valuable storage space. If the property is registered with Land Registry these old documents are no longer required to establish title. Frustratingly, a lot of old deeds have been destroyed, without the owner's knowledge, because of storage issues. It is always worth a letter to ask the mortgage company or your solicitor what documents they hold.

If you have access to your deeds or if you have other interesting

information, especially old photographs or other documents on buildings in Bingham, we'd love to hear from you. If you'd like to get involved in doing some of the research work, again please let us know. (see page 4)

## Museum's Treasures are 'Snapped' Up!

Peter Allen, and Robin Aldworth recently spent two days in the museum of the University of Nottingham, photographing over eighty artefacts from their reserve collection.

With the remains of the Roman town of Margidunum in the parish, the plan is to increase the amount of information on the existing 'Roman' and 'Picture File' web-pages. One of the best ways to do this is to add more pictures, with captions, of the wide variety of objects that have been retrieved from 'digs' since the site was first excavated by Felix Oswald in the 1920s.

Last year, Dr David Knight and Ruth Leary, of the Trent & Peak Archaeological Unit, spoke on 'Roman Bingham' at the first of our open lectures. At this event, we heard of the large collection of artefacts held by the Museum that is rarely displayed, due to lack of space. Only a few of them have ever been photographed.

With the help and advice of Ruth Leary, the Unit's specialist in Roman pottery, Peter and Robin set up their equipment and started shooting. Everything has been recorded on digital camera so that the images can be transferred directly to the web-site but, with future lectures in mind, the opportunity was taken of recording a selection of objects on colour slide film. Ruth Leary and David Knight have prepared explanatory captions for all the pictures.

Apart from the collection of pottery, there are other fascinating objects such as iron domestic utensils, tools and nails, earthenware and stone roof tiles, coins, jewellery, glass, gaming



*Margidunum artefacts*

▲ Roman iron adze, this would have had a wooden handle.

▼ 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. bowl and lid bought from the Nene Valley.



counters, and even pieces of iron slag from the smithing that was carried out at Margidunum nearly 2000 years ago. There are also some pre-Roman stone tools including Neolithic and Bronze Age arrowheads, scrapers and axes. The majority of these objects rarely see the light of day, except when they are removed from the store for examination by visiting experts or students. Now, the photographs will be widely accessible to the public via the BHTA web-site. The pictures will also be held on CD by the Archaeological Unit for the use of staff and students at the University.

## From Bingham Road to Beeching and on to Butterflies

There may be many people in Bingham who do not remember when we had two railway stations and two lines which served the Town.

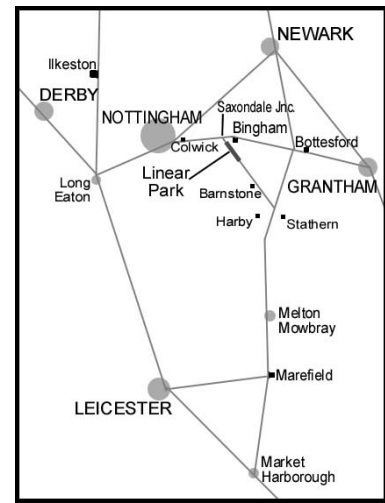
The Linear Park which starts at the Saxondale end of Nottingham Road and continues south east from there to the Parish boundary and beyond, follows the course of one of these lines which was closed and dismantled in the 1960's.

An 1846 Act of Parliament gave authority for the Ambergate, Nottingham, Boston and Eastern Junction Railway Company to build a line serving the towns and regions listed in its title. An agreement with the Midland Railway, allowed the ANB & EJ Railway to build a line linking Grantham with Nottingham. It joined the Midland line at Colwick and ran into the Midland's Nottingham station. The line opened on the 15th July 1850 with its own independent station at Grantham. The Great Northern Railway reached Grantham in 1852 and soon ANB & EJ arranged to run trains into the new GNR main line station.

This collaboration with the GNR was extended through an 1855 agreement so that the GNR's trains should run into Nottingham using the ANB & EJ's line.

The line that ran along the course of what is now the Linear Park was the second line to be built in Bingham. An 1874 Act of Parliament authorised the GNR and the London & North Western Railway to build a joint line to link Newark with Market Harborough with a branch from Marefield to Leicester and a second branch from Harby and Stathern joining the Grantham to Nottingham line at Saxondale and then to Nottingham, London Road Low Level station.

This line from Saxondale opened for goods traffic in July 1879 and for passengers in the following



September. A station known as Bingham Road together with a Station Master's house was built at a point not far from where the present Linear Park starts on Nottingham Road; the house is still there as a private residence. At this point a bridge took the line over the Nottingham Road and across what is now the Wynhill Estate. The line was never popular with passengers but significant freight was carried. Further details about the history of transport in Bingham will be on our website in the New Year.

Bingham Road station was closed in July 1951 and the line from Saxondale Junction to Barnstone was closed to all traffic in September 1962, with the line and the bridge being dismantled shortly afterwards. Then, in March 1977 Bingham Town Council agreed with Nottinghamshire County Council to purchase the old line from the Nottingham Road south-east to the parish boundary for £10. Since then the line has been developed as a recreational facility for the people of Bingham known as the Linear Park and is becoming the focus of the natural history interest in the parish. The Park already supports a variety of wildlife and this will increase in the future since Bingham Town Council adopted a professionally designed Management Plan for the Park which, for example, will increase the distribution of butterflies in the Park as well as in Bingham as a whole. Familiar butterflies seen in Bingham

**BHTA**

**Free Open Lectures**

Sponsored by Bingham Local Area Forum

**11<sup>th</sup> December**

**'Bingham after the Romans'**  
MIKE BISHOP Methodist Church Hall

**27<sup>th</sup> February 2004**

**Speaker: Rupert Bear**  
**'1000 years of Law, Order, Crime and Punishment in Bingham'**  
Robert Miles Junior School

**April 2004 – 'Our Built Heritage'**  
Details to be announced

include the Brimstone, Cabbage Whites, Green-veined Whites, Orange Tips, Peacocks and Small Tortoiseshells together with Red Admirals and Painted Ladies. Two more recently established species are the ragged winged Comma and the Holly Blue. Brown butterflies such as Meadow Browns, Hedge Browns, Ringlets and Wall Browns frequent the hedgerows and roadsides.

Whilst all these butterflies inhabit the Linear Park there are, in addition, Common Blues, Small Coppers and the Brown Argus. Four Skippers can be seen: the Large Skipper, the Small Skipper, the migratory Essex Skipper, and the locally rare Grizzled Skipper. Usually seen here in late May and early June, the Grizzled Skipper is at the very northern

edge of its British distribution. Finally, the Park is home to the Four Spotted Moth, a nationally rare insect most usually seen in the south west of England. The moth appears in May and June with occasionally a second



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

General E-mail: [enquiries@binghamheritage.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@binghamheritage.org.uk)

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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 Wartime	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	SECRETARY	3 Quantock Grove 839991

generation in August and September. It is active on the wing in the sunshine, the adult moths will eat the small bindweed leaves but it prefers the flowers and seeds especially in infancy. Much of the work involved in the Management Plan for the Park is undertaken by The Friends of Bingham's Linear Park; the main aim being to provide the habitats that favour the existing species and, hopefully, encourage other wildlife to become established. If you are interested in helping with this work; contact Bill Bacon, Chairman of the Friends of BLP, (see Contact table below). The work includes the selective clearance of scrub to increase the extent of open grassland; providing suitable habitats for the many invertebrates mentioned above, creating appropriate habitats for breeding birds including some nest boxes suitable for owls, as well as bat boxes, installed on mature trees. Details of the management activities that visitors to the Park might see will be added to the BHTA website in the New Year. There will also be a detailed 'Walk through the Park', section by section, which describes the various flora and fauna you might see at various times of year.

*Editor: For colour pictures of these insects, just pick up our Natural History (and other BHTA leaflets) from the Bingham Library. There is also an illustrated, 4 fold card, 'Guide to the Butterflies of Britain', publisher: FSC Publications, from the Wildflower Farm shop, £2.75.*

**NEED A  
LARGER  
PRINT  
EDITION?  
RING 839991**