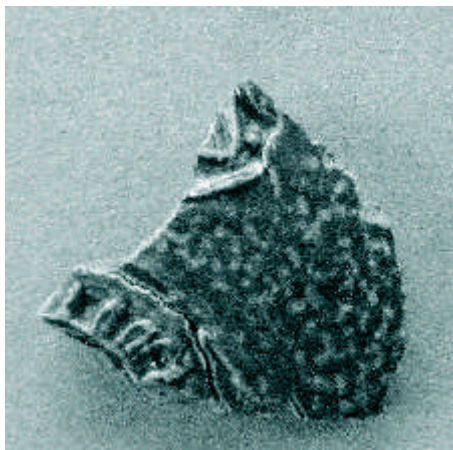


DISCOVERING BINGHAM

Quarterly NEWSLETTER of the **Bingham Heritage Trails Association**
www.binghamheritage.org.uk Registered Charity No: 1090475 Issue No.10 - December 2005

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

IF YOU SAW THIS IN A FIELD



WOULD YOU GIVE IT A SECOND GLANCE?

Probably not, unless you were a member of our field walking teams. Last year we started a 3-year project to walk all the arable land in the parish looking for signs of settlement in Bingham from the Stone Age to the present day. What we are looking for are any man-made objects, such as flint and stone tools, pottery and china, brick and tiles, clay pipes, coins and other metal artefacts, that can give us clues to the land-use and people's lives in the past. The walkers do not have to be archaeological experts; they just pick up anything of possible interest that catches their eye, bag it and record where it was found for plotting on a computerised grid. This process was explained in *'Field walking goes Hi Tec!'* in Issue No. 8 of *Discovering Bingham*. In the first year they collected more than 8000 objects, each

was washed, numbered and grouped in type categories such as clay pipes, Roman, or Victorian pottery, etc. At this point we call in the **real** experts who examine all the finds and either confirm, or correct, our initial identification. The finds are then logged on our database and interpretation can start.

But let's go back to the pottery fragment, pictured left, which was found in a field near Chapel Lane by Linda Pitt. It's only about 3cm across but when our expert saw this he got quite excited. From the distinctive mottled salt-fired brown glaze and the vestiges of moulded designs he was able to identify this as a fragment of a 'Bartmann' (sometimes known as 'Bellarmine') bottle. These were made in great quantities in the Cologne region of Germany at the turn of the 16th century and were exported all over Europe and the American colonies, usually containing distilled spirits.

The other picture shows a similar Bartmann ('bearded man') bottle and the approximate position of our fragment is shown by the black outline. This example was found in Virginia, USA and is dated 1594. The design always included the face of a 'wild man' of Northern European folklore but the coat-of-arms or other symbol on the body of the bottle was 'customised' to



suit the client who ordered each batch. We will have to wait to see if further research can reveal which batch it was that ended up in Bingham but it suggests that, at the end of Queen Elizabeth's reign, there was someone here that was well off enough to buy their spirits from Germany. - - - >

2006 SEASON BHTA FREE PUBLIC LECTURES

Sponsored by NCC
Rushcliffe Members Forum

Lectures will all be held on
Thursday evenings at 7.30pm.
in the Methodist Church Hall.

2nd February -
Gavin Kinsley & Laurence Platt
**Latest Archaeology
around Bingham**

16th March - Hilda Smith
Bingham -
Yesterday & Today

18th May - Geoff Ashton
Beneath.....that
Yew Tree's Shade

There is a sequel to this story. By coincidence, a member of BHTA committee has made a study of the history of salt-glazed stoneware and 30 years ago he discovered a fascinating old document amongst the Sherard family archives from Stapleford Hall near Melton Mowbray. This is a business agreement between three merchants for the importation of Cologne stoneware into England drawn up in the very same year - 1594. A Dutchman called Joos Croppenbergh agreed to go and live in Cologne to buy up pots from the makers and then, assisted by an Antwerp merchant called William Brunynck, to organize their shipment down the Rhine and across the North Sea to London. There they would be sold by an English merchant called William Simpson. It thus seems very likely that these were the very men who transported our Bingham pot into this country.

This is just one example of the intriguing information that our field walking finds are throwing up. If any readers have the time and interest to get involved in our work, we always welcome more volunteers (see page 4 for contacts) We only ask for a commitment to as few, or as many, 3-hour sessions as they can manage. Just think what you might find!

'ALL THE WORLD AND BINGHAM'

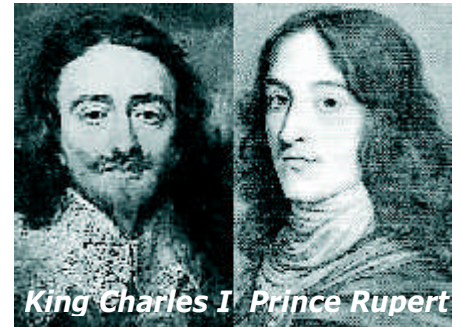
(Old Nottinghamshire saying takes on a new meaning)

One of the unexpected bonuses of having a web site has been to find how it is used by people outside of Bingham. We know of two families who used our web site to help them make up their minds

where they would like to live when they moved from the USA to jobs in Nottingham. On another occasion a lady in Canada sent us an e-mail to enquire about the name Horsepool. She owned a nineteenth century quilt with the name embroidered on it and when searching the web for the name found our site. We told her what we knew about the family, which no longer lives here, but was prominent in Bingham for centuries. Another enquiry came from a man who lives in Massachusetts and is researching the family of Reverend Robert Miles. Yet another family, now living in New Zealand, are descendants of Thomas Jones, the headmaster of the Wesleyan school during the 1870s. They made contact to ask what we knew about him. Then there was the antique dealer, who wanted to know about clock makers in Bingham because she had a Bingham clock in her shop. Most recently, an environmental consultant from North Yorkshire made contact to talk about the hedge survey we did two years ago to help him with one he is doing now. He said that ours is the only web site he has found that explains how to do such surveys. Each week our web pages are visited by about 80 users which, we are told, is high for a specialist site of this type.

THE SEARCH FOR PRINCE RUPERT'S CAMP

Throughout the English Civil War in the 1640s between the supporters of King Charles I (royalists or 'cavaliers') and Parliament ('roundheads') Newark was an important garrison town for the King. As a result of its important

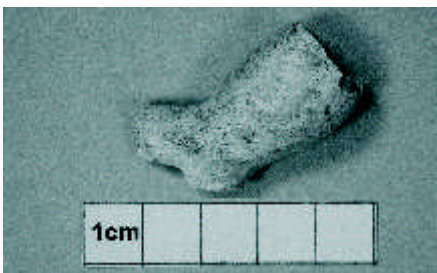


strategic position on the Great North Road the town was besieged by the roundheads on no less than three occasions. Most of the Bingham area came under Newark's influence, and there were small satellite royalist garrisons at Shelford Manor, Wiverton Hall, and Belvoir Castle.

During Newark's second siege in 1644 King Charles summoned his nephew - the dashing Prince Rupert of the Rhine - to come to its assistance. Rupert marched across country from Chester via Ashby, Rempstone, and Bingham, gathering soldiers as he went. Contemporary sources say that his army camped over the moonlit night of Wednesday and Thursday 20th - 21st March 1644 in a 'close' at Bingham, and we are hoping to locate the site. A 'close' was a hedged field as opposed to the open field strips into which most of Bingham's farm land was divided at the time, and is probably most likely to have been on the hilltop between the Fosse Way and Tithby Road or else further north along the Fosse towards Newark. The camp must have occupied a large area, as the army apparently consisted of some 3000 cavalymen with their horses, 3000 foot-soldiers with pikes and muskets, a 'goodly train of artillery' and numerous baggage wagons. The next

day the army moved on to Beacon Hill overlooking Newark and, after a bloody cavalry battle and bombardment, emerged victorious.

Surprisingly, the best archaeological clues to the whereabouts of Prince Rupert's Bingham camp may lie with his troops' smoking habits! Many soldiers smoked clay pipes, and if we can discover a quantity of broken pipes that can be dated to around 1640 to 1650 in one area this may indicate where they camped. Pieces of pipe stems and occasionally bowls are found in most fields in Bingham. Although some may have belonged to farm labourers, who broke them while working, most got there in Victorian 'night soil' because when the pipe broke the bits were thrown into the privy. The way we can distinguish these from the earlier pipes is because their style changed over the years and those made in the mid 1600s are quite distinctive.



Pipes then had short stems, usually about 1cm thick with a large diameter hole. The bowls were small and bulbous and the heel was flat so that the pipe could be set down on a tabletop without burning it. The clay was brown not changing to white until the 1700s. We have already discovered examples from the mid 1600s in Bingham and one of them is illustrated above.

DEM BONES, DEM BONES, DEM ...



Our project with U3A to map the churchyard is progressing well. There are about 600 gravestones, three of which date from the 1600s and 130 from the 1700s. There are three Belvoir Angel stones. (see picture above) Descendants of many of those buried here are still living in Bingham and it would be good to hear from them to add to the part of the study which will produce biographical information.

Of the headstones, 50% are of Swithland Slate and the carving is as clear as if it were done yesterday. Inscriptions on sandstone (about 30%) are often badly eroded; the memorial for the Rev Robert Miles is one such. We are finding many names we know from other research. James Hardstaff, the grocer who retired to live at 1 Market Place is buried just beyond the lych gate. The man who built that house, James Harvey, has a sandstone memorial that is badly eroded.

Inscriptions are worth a chapter of their own! Some are quite accepting of fate: *My glass is run, my days are spent My life is gone, it was but lent. But God in Christ to me has given Henceforth Eternal life in Heaven.*

Infant mortality becomes depressingly evident from many stones – families like Richard and Sarah Stone who lost four children aged 2 and

3 between 1818 and 1829. The various inscriptions they chose for their infants perhaps exemplify a general acceptance of fate and faith. The one for three year old John Marshall Stone reads: *When the archangel trump shall blow And sleeping souls to bodies join, What crowds shall wish their stay below Had been unstained and short as thine.*

The churchyard is home to a wide variety of plant life. In 1307 Edward 1 ordered that yew trees be planted in churchyards to protect buildings against high winds. We have over 20 large specimens. There is of course the famous Gingko planted by Frank Miles. There are several Lime trees, which provide the habitat for the Lime Hawk moth occasionally seen here. There are over 50 types of lichen, none particularly scarce. If you possess a 10x magnifying glass take a look at some of the lichens - it is a whole new world down there! The natural history experts have identified over 40 species of flowering plants, six grasses and five mosses.

A STEP NEARER TO THE SECRETS OF CROW CLOSE

Crow Close on Cogley Lane is the site of the first English deserted medieval village to be formally recognised in 1909. For years historians and archaeologists doubted the existence of medieval villages and little research was done on them. After World War 2, when aerial photographs were available for the whole of the country, scores of sites were then recognised throughout England. These photographs clearly show the differences in the growth of crops and grass, known as "crop

marks", which delineate building outlines, old hedges and walls, tracks and ditches.

On Crow Close, the signs of the old village are to be seen as earthworks as well as crop marks, but all the pictures were taken obliquely making it practically impossible to draw an accurate plan from them. Before any kind of archaeological investigation can be carried out, a detailed plan is needed. In February this year Dr Kate Strange, who works for Bingham-based **3D Laser Mapping Ltd** offered to do a survey of the field for BHTA using state-of-the-art Riegl laser surveying equipment. The survey took place in March (See Discovering Bingham Issue 8). The results have now been given to BHTA along with software that can be used to create three-dimensional views of the field. A preliminary look has yielded one surprise. There are signs of ridge and furrow, not noticed before, that could indicate medieval ploughing.

It is hoped to use the plan to locate areas where geophysics can help in further interpretation.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Peter Allen and Geoff Ashton talked to the **Cranmer Historical Group** in Aslockton on **4th October** about our field-walking project, showing for the first time distribution maps of different kinds of finds.

On **12th October** Joyce Allen and Geoff Ashton gave a repeat of their BHTA Lecture, *'Bingham Voices'* at the **Bingham Bowls Club** which was well received by the 35 people who attended. They have also been invited to give the talk to the Townswomen's Guild and the U3A early next year.

Our second **Hot Pot Supper** on **29th October** was a great success. After a sumptuous meal we were entertained by the *'Skerries'* folk group and the event raised nearly £400 toward the day to day running costs of the Association.

The Field Walker's Lay

by Jenny Handfield

For a year now we have been walking,
Our times for fun are with wine and hotpot.
If you like wind rain, snow and sleet, and not being hot,
Get your warm coat, hat, 'cos we are a friendly lot.

Head down within the two metres
Look which way you choose,
Then your mind to loose.
Would they think us crazy?
Would they think 'Wow!!'?
What we do following after the line of the plough.
Would they share a joy that they are not forgotten?
Are their ghosts with us as we orderly cross the land?

We are now learning not to fill too many bags;
We make a lot of washing, don't we know!
So now we are on our second year
And out we go, back to bring, Grey, brown, green and any other ancient thing.
Come along and see,
The wonders of field walking might be your cup of tea.

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**On sale from the
Newsagents in Eaton Place
& Geoff Ashton, 19 Church St.**

STOP PRESS

BHTA is grateful to County Cllr. Martin Suthers who successfully supported our request for funds to the N.C.C. Rushcliffe Members Forum to continue with our free public Lectures. This funding will cover the next three years. See page 1 for details of the 2006 series.