

DISCOVERING BINGHAM

Quarterly NEWSLETTER of the **Bingham Heritage Trails Association**
www.binghamheritage.org.uk Registered Charity No: 1090475 Issue No.50 - September 2015

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

WE HAVE REACHED OUR HALF-CENTURY WITH ISSUE **No.50**

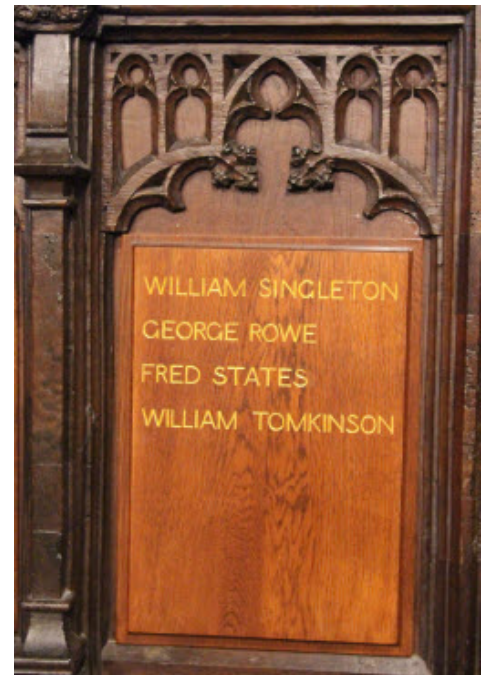
HOME FRONT LEGACY 1914-18 PROJECT

The Council for British Archaeology (CBA) is working with community groups across the UK to identify and map the remains of the First World War Home Front. As part of this, the CBA is holding day schools around the country to let people know what resources already exist to help track down their local WWI remains, and how to go about recording them. BHTA and CBA East Midlands co-hosted one of these day schools in Bingham on 3rd October in the WI hut (itself a WWI army hut). Geoff Ashton started proceedings (photo below) speaking about the WWI research that BHTA has already carried out, after which there were talks about projects at Clipstone Camp and the Lincoln Tank Factory. Clipstone Camp may even be where the Bingham WI hut came from! Sue Wright of the CBA then gave an overview of the many research resources that exist, from the county-based Historic Environment

Records to online sources such as the National Archive. We had a chance in the afternoon to practice using the CBA's recording toolkit on the WI hut. BHTA plans to make further use of this to record the town's WWI remains, which will complement our existing 'Bingham and World War 1' project.

BINGHAM'S FORGOTTEN NAMES

During our researches into Bingham and WW1, we found three names listed in the Sherwood Forester's record of the fallen which were not on our Memorial. Details were passed to Bingham British Legion who after consultation with, and a grant from, the Town Council arranged to have the names added to our War Memorial in time for this year's Remembrance Sunday service. Space was available on a panel (above right) with the name William Singleton that had been added some years ago to correct an omission. The three new names are:-



as a servant in the Chesterfield Arms. Later that year he enlisted in the 3rd Battalion Sherwood Foresters and served in many locations abroad and in the UK. In 1910 he married Beatrice Street from Somerset and moved with his wife to Somerset where they had 3 children. He contracted pneumonia and died at home 29 August 1914. At that time any serving soldier who died was considered to be a war fatality so his widow was awarded an Army pension of 20s 6p per week for her and the 3 children. George is on the roll of Honour at Donyatt Church, Somerset.

2) **L/Corporal Frederick States** - He was born Frederick Castledine in 1896 in Bingham. In 1901 he was



1) **Private George Rowe** - was born in Bingham in 1882 and lived with his parents and siblings on The Banks. In 1901 he was boarding/working

BHTA Spreads the Word Archaeology of Bingham

Welcome to the first issue of the quarterly BHTA newsletter.

It will be distributed to all members of the Association, but we aim to make it freely available to the public in the Library, especially at the Old Court House and at other points around the town. The Newsletter will keep you up to date with work currently being done by the Association, tell you about our future plans for heritage research and public events and report any interesting heritage news.

Last winter BHTA ran a series of public lectures. This was made possible by a generous grant from Bingham Local Area Forum. We were very anxious about it. Anyone of you who has organised an event will know what it feels like in that last half-hour when you are wondering if anyone will turn up. As it happened, the events attracted audiences of 40, 54 and 90 for the three lectures. This has given us confidence to set up these events for the coming winter when we hope that attendance will be even higher. This is important to us because we are registered as an educational charity and we do take seriously our remit to raise awareness of Bingham's heritage in the community at large.

The idea for the lectures came from a member at the 2002 Annual General Meeting. We are always open to ideas like that. If you have any that will help us fulfil our remit, write to: See page four for a list of BHTA contacts.

One of the most intriguing mysteries about Bingham surrounds the story of Crow Close.

This field between Cogley Lane and Carnarvon School, has been known to be the site of a deserted mediaeval village since 1906, but when and why it became deserted is not known. An informant based on Cogley Lane tells some of the story, but much is still unknown. Signs of the village are clearly visible on the ground and an aerial photograph, but the site has never been accurately mapped.



1948 Aerial view of Crow Close from the north-east (see Howells p. 6)

understand by professionals, is that there is little scope to provide such a large amount of volunteer effort to accompany it.

A way round this is to incorporate the survey of Crow Close into a larger project. The one BHTA has in mind is an archaeological field-walking survey of the whole of the grounds. The way in which these are conducted is for trained volunteers to walk the ploughed fields looking for archaeological artefacts. They walk along parallel lines 10m or 20m apart and when they see anything of interest the find spot is located using an electronic measuring device. Some of the items will be taken away for precise analysis and identification. We know from previous work near Field Barn from the Late Palaeolithic through to the Medieval period. Very few archaeological field-walking surveys have been done in Nottinghamshire and Miss Bishop, the county archaeologist, is keen that more should be done.

As both the Crow Close survey and the field-walking will be winter activities, our plan is to

Issue No. 1, Sept. 2003 photocopied in black and white at HMP Watton

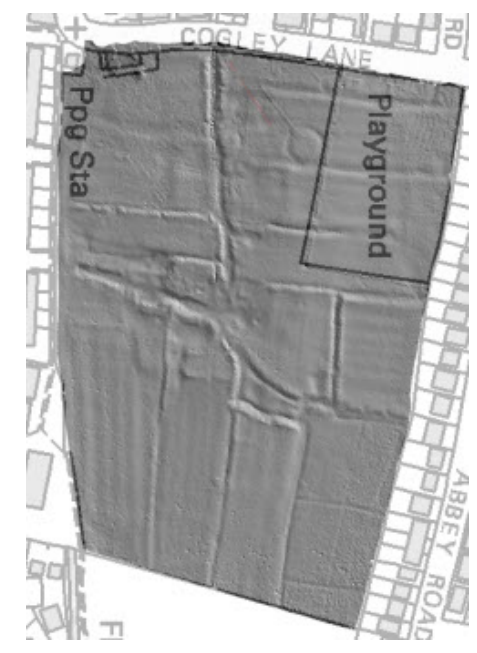
with fossilized 'humps and bumps' of early settlement and farming. The *Newsletter* article suggested that a surface survey by professional archaeologists should be incorporated in the proposed Lottery bid for an archaeological field walking survey of the whole parish. As is well known that indeed is what happened.

In 2005 both a geophysical survey and a topographic survey using a 3D laser scanner were carried out in conjunction with a study of aerial photographs. When all the results were co-ordinated they revealed a complex variety of earthworks ranging from sunken hollow ways, traces of mediaeval ridge-and-furrow farming, and probable Tudor enclosures (shown on the right) However what had appeared to be mediaeval house platforms showed no signs of former occupation, and what had been claimed to be the ruins of a lost chapel of 'St James' turned out to be the foundations of two large

buildings probably of different dates. Neither were likely to be a chapel as they were not orientated east-west.

At the same time several members turned detectives, searching historical archives, piecing together evidence and evaluating its significance. They found no indication that Bingham parish had ever contained a subsidiary 'village' apart from several outlying farms. Secondly although we discovered a reference to 'St James chapel' in a document of 1575 we concluded that it had never existed ! It had been confused with the well-documented St Helen's chapel which stood near the top of Chapel Lane, the culprit being an anonymous London scribe who had copied the wrong name in 1575 !

Having embarked on a major project to reconstruct the probable layout of Bingham's streets and fields from written manorial estate surveys of 1586 and 1776 we were frustrated to discover that Crow Close did not appear on either, being sited in a 'black hole' to the east end of the parish ! However we soon



living with his grandfather and mother Miriam Castledine in East Street. In 1904 Sidney States married Miriam Castledine in Mansfield. Frederick took the name of States. He joined the the 16th Battalion Sherwood Foresters and landed in France in December 1915. He died on 21 March 1918 probably as a result of a gas attack. His name is on the memorial at Pozieres.

3) Private William Welch Tomkinson - Born in Bingham 1897 and was living on Market Place in 1901 where his father was a butcher. He enlisted into the Territorials claiming to be 17 years old. He was in fact only 15. He signed on as a full time soldier 5 September 1914 and agreed to serve abroad. He was killed in action 22 June 1916. How he died is unknown - the war diaries have no entries for 22 - 23 June. He is buried at Bienvillers Military Cemetery. There was a family notice in Nottingham Evening Post - 3rd. July 1916 - "Killed in action, aged 19, late of Bingham". His name is on no war memorial that we know of.

WHEN IS A VILLAGE NOT A VILLAGE ??

The first BHTA *Newsletter* issued in September 2003 opened with the words: 'One of the most intriguing mysteries about Bingham surrounds the story of Crow Close. The field, between Cogley Lane and Carnarvon School, has been known to be the site of a deserted medieval village since 1909, but when and why it became deserted is not known'. The site bore the classic features of a deserted medieval village

realised that this fact was the key to its history, as it formed part of the 20% of land *not* owned by the lords of the manor but by independent freeholders.

Further investigation revealed the surprising fact that the same family – The Porters – were the owners at both dates, and in addition they also appeared on a survey as early as 1450.

In 1674 the Hearth Tax returns listed 'Mr Porter' with a six-hearth house, the second largest in the town. As there was no indication of its location within the town centre or in the west of the parish we concluded by elimination it must have been in the east. Confirmation was found in a tiny footnote in a *History of Nottinghamshire* published in 1797 which mentioned the former Porter 'estate and family mansion, which stands at the end of Bingham' which was called Bingham Hall.

The Porter surname had died out in the mid-18th century after heiress Mary Porter married a cousin, Henry Sherbrooke of Oxton. When he died without male heirs in 1754 the combined Bingham and Oxton estates passed to Mary's cousin Henry Porter of Bingham who changed his name to Sherbrooke in order to inherit both. The Sherbrookes already owned a grand country house in Oxton and so it appears highly probable that they moved there and abandoned the old Porter home in Bingham.

We therefore came to the conclusion based on both historical and physical evidence that the earthworks of Crow Close probably represent the foundations of

Bingham Hall – possibly of medieval or Tudor origin – with outbuildings and possibly cottages of medieval to Georgian date, which was abandoned and allowed to rot after 1754. It is a matter of considerable satisfaction to say that the objectives declared back in 2003 have been achieved and that we have come up with a plausible theory to explain the mystery.

The possibility of doing a dig on Crow Close has been explored with Historic England, the land owner, Southwell Diocese and the tenant farmer and none oppose the idea. A site meeting with Historic England and Trent & Peak Archaeology, who would have to be involved, discussed a future course. It was decided to prepare a preliminary formal statement of intent which, if accepted, would lead to a project bid with TPA followed by an application for a grant to do the work. It is a long trail!

ARCHAEOLOGICAL PITS PROJECT

The archaeological pits project is now finished. It started in November 2011, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and throughout we have had Trent & Peak Archaeology as our professional advisors. All the results will be on our website shortly, but we celebrated the end with two exhibitions.

One of these took place on Monday evening the 9th November at Robert Miles Junior School. The

headmaster, Rob Gilbey, kindly allowed us to use his hall to show off what we had found in the three pits that were dug in each of the three schools. These were Robert Miles Junior School, Robert Miles Infants School and Carnarvon Primary School. Mr Geoff Nickolds, a trustee of the Heritage Lottery Fund, joined the three head teachers and some of the pupils who took part in the digs and their parents, all keen to see what



came out of the pits we dug in the schools during 2012. The children did the digging, sieving and finds washing over a period of four days in each school. The weather was not universally kind to us, but the children seemed to enjoy the mud as much as the sun. The archaeology of each school was completely different, which enabled us to cover a wide period in the exhibition. Part way through the evening Peter Allen, who was the project leader during the dig, made a presentation to the three heads of a report (photo over) containing a full account of the dig with a catalogue of finds recovered at each school and a glossary of terms to help the teachers who wished to use them for displays in the school. Also each school was given a memory stick with everything on it including many photographs of pupils at



Headteachers with their reports, from Left: Helen Greensmith, Jonathan Cunliffe and Rob Gilbey.

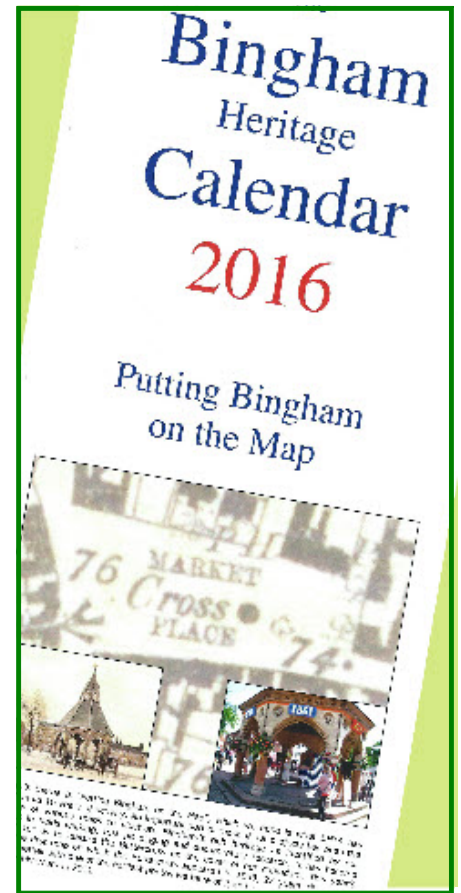
work. The finds themselves, all boxed up and numbered, were delivered to the schools after they had been returned to their bags a couple of days later.

The second of the exhibitions was held in Bingham Library on Saturday 21st November. This was a day-long event to mark the completion after four years of the 'Roots and Development of Bingham' project. Finds recovered from the 62 test pits were laid out showing how Bingham grew from a cluster of houses in the Iron Age to what it is now. Illustrating the other element of the overall project was a display of detailed histories of a selection

of existing houses with information about the tree-ring dating done on a dozen of them. The exhibition also included a display of over fifty photographs and a PowerPoint projection, on a loop, showing different facets of the project.

The event, as shown below, was very well attended.

Members of the BHTA committee were on hand all day to explain the work. Among the visitors was John Everitt, a trustee of the Heritage Lottery Fund, which funded the project. At 2 pm a short ceremony was held at which Peter Allen, the project manager, thanked all those who had contributed to the project, especially the householders who had allowed BHTA to dig a hole in their lawn. This was followed by a ceremonial hand-over of a collection of finds and a detailed report on the pit dug at the Old Post Office to Paul Openshaw, the new owner. In the next few weeks all the other householders will receive a report and their finds.



Don't forget your BHTA Calendar £4.00 from Newsagent or our stand at the Town Fair - Dec. 4th

2016 LECTURES
To be held at 7.30pm
in the W.I. Hall
Station Street
Admission FREE

Thursday 28th January
Archaeology of Nottingham's Trams
Gareth Davies

Thursday 14th April
History of George Green's Windmill
Tom Huggon

Thursday 12th May
Archaeological Pits Project
Peter Allen

BHTA CONTACTS

General e-mail: bhta@binghamheritage.org.uk

 www.facebook.com/binghamheritage

CHAIRMAN: Geoff Ashton - 01949 875177

SECRETARY: David Mason - 01949 876635

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Robin Aldworth - 01949 839991

VICE CHAIRMAN}

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