

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

THE MARKET PLACE DIG

In April BHTA was able to take advantage of the work being done by Rushcliffe Borough Council to undertake an archaeological dig at one of the sites in the Market Place where new trees are to be planted. Both RBC and the contractor Paul Alvey of Commercial Surface Solutions were extremely helpful and we are grateful to them. The work took only two days, not the five we had allowed, and like all digs it raised more questions than answers.

In a pit measuring 2 x 2.8 metres we found that the top 30 cm or so were hard core and sand that dated from the 1960s when the Market Place was first paved. As can be seen in the photo, below this

was a cobbled surface across the whole of the pit. The cobbles were mostly less than 6 cm, but it was a very hard, firm and well-used surface. This was an interesting discovery because most people we have talked to remember the Market Place being muddy, not cobbled. When we have looked at old photographs there are not any that are clear enough for us to be certain that the people in them are standing on cobbles, but only a few show signs of mud. There was certainly no muddy layer on top of the cobbles in the pit.

We lifted the cobbles in half of the pit and found them to have been laid onto a brick-filled depression in one corner, a channel with soil in it in another and red clay everywhere else. All of this was really hard and well compacted. There were seven bits of pottery found under the cobbles. One of them was Mottled Ware. This was widely used for tankards in the late 17th to mid 18th centuries, which fits because there were always a lot of pubs around the Market Place. This means that the cobbles were laid at some time after 1750. The archaeologist with

us said that the irregular top surface to the clay was because a tree had been here in the period before the cobbles were laid and the bricks were dumped into a hollow where the trunk had stood. The channel of soil was where a root had laid. So, before 1750 this area was just clay. It had never been cultivated because there was no build up of soil.

We dug the pit in this locality because we know that the original Butter Cross was sited just opposite the entrance to Eaton Place and we thought that the old market would have been here. Maybe it was in the 18th century, but the medieval market was somewhere else. We will have another chance to look for it when they take out the trees in front of Wetherspoon's. The contractor has agreed for us to do a detailed examination of the sides of the pit, though we will not do another controlled dig.

This is not the only mystery of the Market Place. In front of the Co-op there is an area where the cobbles have been covered with 2 inches of asphalt. This seems to suggest that the asphalt was laid as a patch to repair a damaged part of the cobbled surface. We do not see this on any of the old photographs of the Market Place. If anyone has any memories of the cobbles or the asphalt patch please contact us.



A FORGOTTEN ANNIVERSARY All the World and Bingham !

The current commemoration of the First World War has tended to overshadow the fact that this year is the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo, which marked the overthrow of Napoleon Buonaparte who had attempted to dominate much of Europe. The battle took place just outside Brussels on 18th June 1815 and was won by British forces under the Duke of Wellington in alliance with other troops. Napoleon had in fact surrendered just over a year earlier and the whole of Britain – including Bingham – had joyfully celebrated the end of a lengthy war. Unfortunately he escaped from captivity and was able to fight another day.

Bingham celebrated the 'false peace' on 23rd 24th June 1814 in some style. On the first day the church bells were rung, a band paraded the streets and a bonfire was lit. Three separate meals were served in the Market Place. At noon an estimated 400-500 children 'all in clean apparel' were fed with 'large pieces of plum pudding'. At 2.00 pm 'several hundred people of all classes (for there was no distinction of persons on this happy occasion)' enjoyed a dinner of plum pudding, roast and boiled beef prepared by several local publicans. At 6.00 pm some 500 women 'indiscriminately' took tea – presumably in compensation for their earlier labours serving the other meals. In the evening there was a fireworks display. Jollifications continued the next day, with

another tea party in the Market Place and an evening ball at the Chesterfield Arms, at which dancing went on until five o'clock the next morning !!

It must have come as a great shock to discover subsequently that the war was not yet over, and it is perhaps understandable that there is no record of any similar celebrations by Bingham after Waterloo a year later, the inhabitants having exhausted all their energies and resources on the earlier 'do' !

One feature of the main dinner of 1814 was that no less than thirteen toasts were drunk, topped up from '*many great barrels of ale and porter*' [a form of stout]. Some were accompanied by patriotic tunes played by the band, and the whole was organised with military precision '*by beat of drum and certain signals ... in such a way that all... rose at one and the same time to express their approbation by loud cheering*'. The recipients of the toasts were members of the Royal Family and the Duke of Wellington, etc, but the loudest cheer was reserved for the last – to '*All the WORLD and BINGHAM*' !

This phrase is known to local historians but no specific documentary reference has previously been located to indicate its origins. Various theories had been propounded suggesting a date c. 1850, however we now know it goes back at least to 1814 when it was obviously already well-used at public celebrations in the Town. We are indebted to Dr Richard Gaunt of the University of Nottingham for drawing our attention to this reference. He has curated a new exhibition entitled

Charging Against Napoleon. Wellington's Campaigns in the Peninsular Wars and at Waterloo, to be displayed at the University Lakeside's Weston Gallery from 22nd May until 6th September 2015 (admission free).

A FAMILY AT WAR

Our latest HLF funded project, to study the impact on Bingham of World War One involves researching both the service and family histories of those who died and those who survived. All their names are on the Bingham Roll of Honour, kept in the parish church. Many families had more than one son at the war, and the Fewsters, who ran the post office in Market Place, were no exception – four of their sons served. Yorkshireman Edward Fewster married a Bingham girl, Emma Attenborough in Harrogate, not Bingham. By the time they moved here they had five sons and a daughter, Charlotte Annie, born 1891 in Bradford. The sons were: James Walter b 1880 in Harrogate; Edward Ernest, b 1881 in Nottingham; Herbert Attenborough, b 1882 in Harrogate; Edgar Lonsdale, b 1888 in Harrogate; and Sydney Harold, b 1896 in Bingham.

James Walter worked in the post office as a telegraph clerk and had hearing problems and a hernia which presumably contributed to his medical grade of B, which led to him serving throughout the war as a corporal in the Army Pay Corps in York. After the war he married Alice Walton of Melton Mowbray and, using his service experience, became an accounts clerk.



James Walter and Alice

They lived firstly in Union Street then in West Bridgford and later set up his accountancy business in Nottingham. He died in 1949 and is buried in Bingham cemetery.

Before the war, Edward Ernest was a telegraphist and then a railway clerk. He served as a sergeant in the Machine Gun Corps and was wounded twice serving on the Western Front. Later he transferred first to the Labour Corps, perhaps because his wounds precluded him from the action for a while and then to the Royal Fusiliers. At the age of 51, as a retired railway clerk living at Sutton-on-Sea, Lincolnshire, Edward died of cancer on 22 December 1936.

Herbert Attenborough did not serve, but became a Methodist Minister and, in 1905, emigrated to Manitoba, Canada. He became a Canadian citizen and made return visits to Bingham, sailing on the SS Magantic, with his wife Harriet, on at least two occasions, the last in 1923.

Edgar Lonsdale emigrated to Canada in 1909, possibly

answering the Canadian Government adverts inviting people from the UK to take up a grant of 160 acres of agricultural land in the central provinces. Edgar went to Saskatchewan to farm. He married Eliza there and had a son, Sydney. In 1915 he joined Princess Patricia of Connaught's Canadian Light Infantry, serving on the Western front where he was injured. By 1921 he and his wife were back in Saskatchewan.

Sydney was the youngest of the five Fewster brothers and worked in the family business as a postal clerk before joining the Sherwood Foresters, rising to Corporal. He was killed in action on the 26th September



Sydney Fewster

1917, aged just 20. 43 of his compatriots died that day in the battle for St Julien, 39 were missing and 69 gassed. Conditions were atrocious. It was impossible to use trenches, because they were flooded, forcing the troops to fight from pill box to pill box; giving no element of surprise.

Similar touching stories can be told of a number of Bingham families. If you

have or know of anyone who has records, photographs letters etc. of Bingham people involved in the war, please get in touch with us to share the information, as did Roma Berridge to whom we are indebted for the photos and additional information of the Fewster brothers.

SOCIAL EFFECT OF WORLD WAR ONE,

the second lecture of the season, was given by David Mason and focused on the impact on Bingham, as revealed in newspaper and other archives. At the start of the war, Britain's highly professional but small army proved inadequate to the task of fighting a major land war and hence was born the so-called *New (or Kitchener's) Army* which quickly attracted volunteers from all sections of society. Indeed, it became the most socially representative volunteer force in British Army history. This was reflected locally, as an analysis of the social and occupational backgrounds of Bingham volunteers shows.

Records show that the war quickly affected day-to-day life in the town. Particularly in the early years, Bingham frequently found itself host to detachments of locally stationed regiments, often providing billets, refreshments and entertainment. There were even reports of Zeppelin airships being sighted over the Town, a fact that led the Rector to reschedule evensong in order to avoid presenting an illuminated church as a target. Civilians found their lives affected in other ways and rose to the challenges presented by the continuing conflict. Bingham families hosted refugees from



Belgium while others contributed financially to their upkeep. Residents also responded enthusiastically to the war savings movement and school children did their bit, both as contributors and by raising funds for other initiatives. Indeed, throughout the War, there were reports of collections by the Red Cross, as well as 'in kind' contributions by sewing and basket making groups.

As men went to war, there was a growing shortage of labour to work the land. A number of solutions were considered, including permitting children to absent themselves from school for farm work and the employment of German prisoners of war. Increasingly women made a major contribution in this and other areas. The *Land Army* was formed in 1915 but many thousands of other women threw themselves into the

collective effort as VADs or military nurses while the formation of the *Women's Institute* in 1915 was also a direct response to the demands of the conflict. In many areas food shortages became acute, particularly with the German U-boat campaign from 1917. There is no evidence of this having been a problem in Bingham but residents were aware of the need to be prudent as the above picture of a goat cart bearing the legend, 'Eat less bread and win the War!' shows.

Peace came in 1918. Alongside the celebrations, there are also reports of an unseemly squabble about the best memorial for Bingham's fallen. As modern visitors to Bingham parish church can see, the Rector eventually prevailed and the memorial choir screen remains as a mark of the town's gratitude.

BINGHAM CELLS EMPTY Police Find no Work for the Magistrates in a Fortnight

[Report from the Nottingham Journal - 14th October 1914]

"For the first time in many years, there were no cases to be tried today at Bingham Petty Sessions. The Petty Sessions for the division are held fortnightly. The number of cases usually on the list would work out at an average of about five and many of the offenders would then be found to be non-resident in the division."

2015 LECTURES
To be held at 7.30pm.
in the W.I Hall,
Station Street
Admission FREE

Thursday
4th June
Crow Close
Adrian Henstock &
Peter Allen

To be followed on
Thursday 18th June
at 7.30pm by our
ANNUAL
GENERAL
MEETING

also in the WI Hall

None members are
welcome to attend to
hear presentations on
our recent work.

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