

# DISCOVERING BINGHAM

Quarterly NEWSLETTER of the **Bingham Heritage Trails Association**  
[www.binghamheritage.org.uk](http://www.binghamheritage.org.uk) Registered Charity No: 1090475 Issue No.52 - June 2016

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

## WHY BINGHAM IS HERE

Change the order of the words in the title of a talk that Peter Allen gave in the WI hut on 12<sup>th</sup> May to, "Why is Bingham here?" and this is the core theme to all the archaeological research BHTA has done in Bingham since 2004, firstly when they field walked all the arable farmland and then when they dug the 62 test pits in the town centre. Peter started the talk showing where people had lived in the parish since 6000 BC; first around the lake north of Bingham, then from 4000 BC along a tributary of the River Smite in the southern half of the parish. In the Iron Age, around 950 BC, a combination of a massive volcanic eruption in Iceland and climate change forced the people to move to places in the northern half of the parish, including Bingham town centre, for the first time. While the Anglo-Saxons lived here from 450 to 850 AD there were four small settlement areas in the parish: Margidunum, Granby Lane, Lower Brackendale Farm and Bingham. Only one of these was to survive into the Late Anglo-Saxon period (850-1050 AD). There were two important reasons why Bingham was the settlement that survived. One is that its water supply from wells dug into the Hollygate sandstone was much better than in the other areas. The other is that there is some evidence that the area around the parish church has been a sacred site since the Iron Age. This gave



*With other local organisation, we set up our stall at the Senior Citizens' Fair in the WI Hall in March. Great interest was shown by the visitors in our display of WW1 research, a selection of local images from our photo archive and the range of free publications.*

the Bingham settlement status so that when the kingdom of Mercia became Christian in the 7<sup>th</sup> century the Christian cross was put where the modern church now is. The other settlement sites faded away while Bingham grew into a village. The centre of the village then was in Warner's Paddock, but after the Norman Conquest it gradually shifted to the Market Place. This seemed to have begun because the steward who looked after the estate for the Lord of the Manor lived there from soon after the conquest and the process was complete by the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century when Sir Richard de Bingham, the first lord to live in Bingham, built his Manor House there. He was clearly a

rich man. Test pits over the site of the manor house, which was derelict by 1586, found a plaster and lime floor, stone internal and external walls, limestone tile and red clay roofing material, inside walls lined with plaster of Paris, red clay floor tiles, coal, beef and venison bones, oyster shells and whelks, pottery from France and a silver penny from the reign of Edward II. Sir Richard's son William died in 1349 during the Black Death and finds from the test pits have been used to calculate a loss of around 40% of the population during this plague. Again using the finds from the test pits it can be shown that it took about a 100 years for Bingham to become a fully productive town again.

## THE ABSENT VOTERS LIST

In our World War 1 research project two documents have been our starting point for identifying individuals who survived the war. One is the Roll of Honour (RoH), a beautiful volume listing all those from Bingham who served in the war. The second is the "Absent Voters List" (AVL). As the result of an Act of Parliament passed on 6th February 1918, servicemen over the age of 21 became eligible to vote in their home constituency. The first so-called Absent Voters List was published on 15th October 1918 and was compiled from details supplied by the men themselves before the closing date for applications of 18th August 1918. The list usually recorded the man's regiment, number and rank at the time, as well as an address. Crucially, in many cases they also give his unit. Voting cards or ballot papers were sent to those named on the lists. A General Election was called immediately after the Armistice with Germany and was held on Saturday 14 December 1918. The count was delayed until 28 December to allow time to transport votes from men serving overseas.

In a number of cases the soldier named on the AVL was not an obvious member of the household he nominated. The AVL for Bingham revealed over 30 servicemen who do not appear on the RoH and therefore have slipped from the collective memory. It is unclear how people "qualified" for inclusion on the RoH. You would think they were all "Bingham Boys", but what constituted a Bingham Boy? Therein lies the problem; the RoH volume gives no indication of what connection one had to have with the

town. In most cases it was clearly a matter of birth and/or residence. But research into many of the names suggests it was not that simple. There are a number of names on the RoH whose connection with Bingham was that a parent or other relative had moved here during or just after the war and presumably managed to have their name inscribed. A classic case is Lieutenant Theophilus Buckworth, whose AVL address was the Rectory and who turns out to have been the brother of the Rector's wife. They both came from Norfolk. He may have lodged with them for a few months in 1913/14 after graduating from the Camborne School of Mines (after Eton) and before joining a tunnelling company of the Royal Engineers. Was he a Bingham Boy?

Harold Bertram Colam was not on the RoH. He hailed from Louth but his AVL address was Fernleigh House, Nottingham Road (now Granby House, Long Acre), and the home of his sister Mrs Simons, wife of the Conservative Agent. Perhaps she was the only relative whose address he could use. The 1911 census shows all three on holiday together at the Grosvenor Hotel in Bournemouth! Perhaps he was a permanent lodger in Bingham.

Harold Arthur Thomas Dixon's AVL address was The Rosary, East Street. He is not on the RoH but shared this AVL address with Harold George Marston, who is listed as serving on the Western Front and who genuinely lived there with his family. Dixon was from Nottingham and served in the army post office in the Middle East. His connection with Bingham is a mystery.

Arthur Wigzell Thomas' AVL address was The School House. He married a Bingham girl, Frances Dobson in 1915 whilst he was in the Civil Service Rifles at Richmond Park Camp. He was also listed on the full electoral list for 1918, again at the School House, but we have no evidence he was a teacher. They were not in Bingham after 1919.

Arthur Bertram Entwistle was in the Machine Gun Corps in France. He was from Derbyshire, but married Mabel Huskinson from Bingham in 1915 and clearly was using his new in-laws' address, The Banks, for the AVL. There were several such cases of "incomers" marrying local girls, using the in-laws' address for electoral registration but who did not appear on the RoH. It would seem that this new connection with Bingham did not rate so highly as those Bingham lads who married "non-Bingham ladies" and were listed on the RoH. Was the Bingham girl's concern for her incomer husband's safety at war any less painful than that of a Bingham Boy's "non-Bingham" wife and whose name was on the list? Or indeed of the Rector's wife for her brother?

A considerable amount of genealogical digging revealed that Lieutenant Arthur Mitchell Turner was a surveyor working for the Bingham architect Christopher Pearson Shaw. Arthur's wife lived on Long Acre whilst he was in France with 1st Field Survey Co. Royal Engineers but they left Bingham soon after the war and he never made it onto the RoH!

A future page on the web site will examine all the "non-Bingham AVLs" to see what

stories they reveal. The WW1 web site is deliberately constructed as a resource for people to research as they will. Some may wish to develop family stories; some may wish to undertake analyses of the data from a social history perspective. We rather hope local schools will use it as a resource for local history "Lest we forget".

## GEORGE GREEN'S WINDMILL



Very few people know about George Green but most people approaching Nottingham from Trent Bridge will have seen Green's Windmill standing on the hill above Sneinton. George Green and the Windmill were the subjects of an entertaining lecture given on 14<sup>th</sup> April by Tom Huggon of the Windmill Trust.

George Green's father, who was also called George, built the windmill. He worked as a baker in Nottingham and had premises on Goosegate. In 1800 Nottingham was a place of great unrest due to the high price of bread and when a freehold estate in Sneinton became available in 1806, Mr Green bought it at auction. He

decided to build a windmill and mill his own flour. There were a lot of windmills in this area of Nottingham, which were all built of wood. Mr Green designed and built his Mill with brick as he realised that it would be much stronger. He also decided that the cap would move around depending on the direction of the wind and would be fitted with sails with both louvres and canvas. He built a house next to the mill so that all the family could move from the City.

We have very little information about both Georges as family papers were thrown away. The information we have comes from public records. We do know that George junior was born in 1793 and died in 1841. Most children had no education and he attended school for only 14 months from March 1801 to summer 1802. He attended Robert Goodacre's School which is where he first became interested in mathematics. When he left school, George worked first of all in his father's bakery and then the mill.

In 1816 the Bromley House Subscription Library was founded on Angel Row in Nottingham and was the only place of learning in Nottingham. It cost £15 to join the library and £2 per year subscription so to be a member you had to be well off. Here George was able to read published works and meet others with an interest in mathematics and science.

As well as working in the

mill George continued with his studies and in 1828 he published his first and greatest scientific work "Essay on the Application of Mathematical Analysis to the Theories of Electricity and Magnetism". In this work he devised a way to use mathematics to understand electricity and magnetism. Even though there was no actual electricity he was able to explain how it flowed.

The following year George Green senior died and George took over the business. In addition to the mill the family owned properties in Sneinton and Nottingham although the conditions in these houses were dreadful. Half of the children born there died before the age of 5 and life expectancy was 18.

In 1833 George gave up the milling business and went to Caius College at Cambridge University, his fees paid for by the rents from the properties. He took a degree in mathematics and then became a fellow of the college where he did more research, kept the record book for students' gambling and wrote ten major works.

George Green had a partner Jane Smith. They never married and had seven children. Jane and the children stayed in Nottingham whilst he was in Cambridge and



**Tom Huggon in enthusiastic full flow**



**BHTA committee member Adrian Henstock at a recent lecture in the history of the church and its clergy, organised by the Friends of Bingham Church, began by looking at the origins of the building in the 1200's and explained the significance of the spaces, carvings and fittings still surviving from that era. He then traced its history in date order and pointed out interior features added during each period down to the present day. After the talk he conducted a tour of the churchyard pointing out some of the exterior details of historic interest.**

when his health failed he returned to Nottingham to live with them. He died in 1841 age 47 in Notintone Place opposite the house where William Booth (the founder of the Salvation Army) was born. George and Jane are buried together at St Stephen's Church.

Around 1862 the mill ceased working, the sails were removed and it was abandoned. In 1919 a Nottingham solicitor, Oliver Hind, bought the mill and let it out to a variety of manufacturers. The last use

was by a French polisher but in 1947 there was a fire that destroyed the mill and it was once again abandoned.

The mill was - nearly lost completely when a ring road was proposed and there were also plans for it to be demolished and bungalows built.

There could well have been no formal recognition of George Green if Laurence Challis, Professor of Physics at Nottingham University, had not attended a meeting in Budapest and given a lecture on his scientific papers. The

chairman of the meeting wrote to the City of Nottingham that there should be a monument to him and money was sent. In 1979 the George Green Memorial Fund bought the windmill and restoration work began. The cap was made at Basford College and the work was completed in 1985 when the windmill and science centre opened to the public.

The mill is open Wednesday to Sunday from 10am -4pm As well as visiting the mill and science centre visitors can buy the flour that has won food awards.

In 1983, 200 years after his birth there was a ceremony at St Stephen's Church where George Green and Sarah Smith are buried.

His theories are still relevant today and have been used by Stephen Hawkins, by Laurence Challis in his work on the effect mobile phones have and by Sir Peter Mansfield of Nottingham University in his work developing the MRI scanner. Einstein visited Nottingham and planned to visit the windmill but his train was late so there was no time. He said that George Green had had a major influence on Mathematics.

In 1993 a plaque was dedicated to him in Westminster Abbey. It is between Newton and Calvin and the citation reads "George Green, Mathematician & Physicist 1793-1841".

## BHTA CONTACTS

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**VICE CHAIRMAN}**

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

All are welcome to our  
**Annual General Meeting**

**Thursday 30th June**

7.30pm W I Hall, Station Street  
Following a brief business meeting there will be presentations on our current projects.

Plus light refreshments and wine