

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

COMMEMORATION OF THE END OF W.W.1.



Over the past four years, as reported in last year's June issue, our Parish Church bell ringers have rung a quarter peal during every month that has included the 100th anniversary of the deaths of the men of Bingham that gave their lives in the Great War. The last peal will be rung in August for Pte. Walter Kirk who died, aged 26, on 17th August 1918.

The commemoration will continue by BHTA arranging, with the involvement of the Royal British Legion and the Town Council, three events to mark the centenary of the end of the war. (Look out for the logo on this page which will be used in all the publicity.) These will be held on November 9th and 10th in the Methodist Community Centre

and entry will be free. We are grateful to Bingham Town Council, Borough and County Councillors for support.

1. A two day exhibition will display the results of BHTA's lottery funded project to explore and record Bingham's part in the war. A series of displays will tell the stories of those who died and also some of those who survived and what they did following the war. The displays will be augmented with photographs and exhibitions of WW1 military artefacts together with items representing the post war period.

2. A concert on Friday evening 9th November, with the theme "Looking Back", will include musical contributions from a string quartet and the

Cranmer Singers interspersed by readings from war diaries and war poems. The first half will be a one act play about life in the Machine Gun Corps, written and presented by Bingham Musical Theatre group.

3. On Saturday 10th November the programme theme will be "Looking Forward" starting with musical items from The Stormy Weather Boys and The Vale Singers. In the second half the Toothill School Big Band will play pieces from the 1920s and 1930s and Bingham School of Dance will demonstrate the Charleston together with short readings during the event.

For the period up to November 11th The British Legion will be displaying memorial poppies around the town and on the Saturday morning they will hold a special version of their traditional commemoration event in the Market Place.



FOURTEENTH ANNUAL LECTURE SERIES COMPLETED



Tony Knight gave the second talk in this year's series on his 'Metal Detecting Adventure' and brought along a large collection of his finds which attracted a lot of interest among his audience.

CAVALIERS & ROUNDHEADS IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Around 60 people turned out on Thursday evening May 10th to hear Adrian Henstock deliver the last BHTA public lecture of this season. (Photo below) His topic was the Civil War in Nottinghamshire, with especial reference to Nottingham, Newark and the Vale of Belvoir. The war was primarily a struggle for a stake in the government of the country by the small landowners and wealthy merchants who made up the House of Commons. They had become exasperated with the stubborn refusals of King Charles I who believed he had a 'divine right' to rule as he chose.



Adrian began by pointing out that the county played a special part in the war, as it began with the King raising his royal standard outside Nottingham Castle in 1642 as a signal for loyal local gentry to join him, and ended with his surrender to the Parliamentary army at Newark in 1646. Both Nottingham and Newark were sited at strategic

crossing points of the River Trent, having the only two bridges between London and the North. Nottingham was garrisoned by troops supporting Parliament ('roundheads') and Newark those for King Charles ('cavaliers'). In addition the Newark Royalists established small satellite garrisons at Shelford Manor, Wiverton Hall, and Belvoir Castle. The fertile Vale of Belvoir was a prime source of provisions - chiefly corn, meat and horses - which were constantly being commandeered by the Royalist garrisons.

In March 1644 King Charles' nephew Prince Rupert of the Rhine marched from Chester to relieve Newark which was under siege by a roundhead army. At the head of some 3000 cavalrymen, 3000 foot-soldiers and a 'goodly train of artillery' he travelled via Ashby and Rempstone and camped overnight at

Bingham. This was probably near Toothill - the 'look-out hill' - which was between the Fosse and Tithby Road (not the site of the present school) but the army no doubt spread out over a wider area. Two cannon balls have been found along with numerous clay pipes from this period.

The nearest fighting to Bingham took place just before the third and final siege of Newark when roundhead troops attacked the small garrisons. Shelford Manor was sacked in a bloody engagement which resulted in 140 deaths, including the governor Sir Philip Stanhope. The troops then marched on Wiverton Hall - almost certainly through Bingham - but the governor surrendered without a fight. Bingham church registers record the burials of two soldiers at this period.

Ultimately King Charles faced the inevitable and ordered the Newark garrison to surrender after a 6-month siege, during which the plague had broken out, one inhabitant describing it as a '*miserable, stinking infested town*'. Unfortunately refugees from the town carried it to the surrounding settlements and it reached Bingham by August and claimed 46 deaths by Christmas. King Charles was tried by Parliament for treason against his own country and beheaded in London in 1649, after which Britain became a Republic with Oliver Cromwell as 'Lord Protector of the Realm'. Out of the 60 signatories to his death warrant, four were from Nottinghamshire, and in addition Francis Hacker from East Bridgford was the officer in charge of his execution.

POST-WAR BINGHAM

This continues the item in our March issue of extracts from Rector John Reay's reports in the Deanery Magazine

In the mid-1949 edition the Rector comments: "This is the season of outings, with which some of us must be content instead of a holiday. There was a glorious run to the Wye Valley, thoroughly enjoyed by the W.I." and later in the year they: "...spent a very happy day at Chester... and an afternoon tour stopping at Southwell Minster with tea at the White Post Hotel, Farnsfield then through farming country where acres of corn were being harvested, through Sherwood Forest, Thoresby Park, Edwinstowe, Mansfield, etc." Church outings included: "Miss Simons took some 30 Sunday School scholars and teachers to Newstead Abbey. We heard the story of Lord Byron and saw the new Tablet to Dr. Livingstone. We drove through the grounds and on to Nottingham. After tea...we motored to Wollaton Hall - a delightful outing." Mr. R. Collin, the Church School Headmaster, organized a trip for: "100 boys and girls to London—on the 7.19 train then buses took us first to the House of Commons. The rest of the day was devoted to getting to know London, which the scholars have been studying these last few weeks." Later in the same year we read: "We shall floodlight our Church from September 15th to 25th. ... we would like our people to invite their friends to Bingham for ... Harvest Thanksgiving Services and also for the following Sunday evening, 'Choir Festival', September 25th. We are not likely ever again to floodlight our ancient Church,

so we want as many people as possible to see it in all its glory. It will be "new moon" time and the nights will be dark enough, and the Church will look beautiful indeed."

In the last issue for the year Reay reports, "There was a gathering of friends to say farewell to Mr. and Mrs. Langford. The chair paid our tribute to Mr. Langford's admirable service as stationmaster and citizen. The Church Hall itself will long remain to remind us of his services as he, acting as the Hall Committee Secretary, negotiated our purchase of the Hall from the Crown at £430." The hall at the time is now the Studio next door to the Wheatsheaf in Long Acre. 1951 was to prove a year of major change but at the start we find the Rector cajoling his flock: "It was a pleasure at our Christmas Fair to find the Hall full at five o'clock... we made £130 in little more than two hours and very welcome the sum is...we are grateful to all the ladies who lent a hand and to the whole parish making cakes and manning the stalls..... We would like to see it translated into more frequent attendance at church. Every church family ought to be represented at Church every Sunday. Can we make up our minds to do better in the New Year, please?" In the Spring the rector was reflecting that, in his previous living 18 years ago, he had four church schools to support, and: "He used to think then it was time to hand over the education of our boys and girls to the State. The Church had nobly done her work in this sphere...now the cost of schools has increased enormously... and has become

more than we can manage." At the April Church Meeting: "There followed a lengthy discussion as to whether we should retain the Church School on an aided basis, having possessed it for over 100 years, or hand it over to the Education Committee as a controlled school. The feeling of the meeting was for handing the school over although our conscience is still greatly concerned."

So, with the school building empty, the 'Church Hall' became surplus to requirement and was sold although, as yet, we have found no record of exactly when this happened. A missed opportunity to obtain the long needed Community Hall for the town!

MEMORIES OF BINGHAM RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

This is an edited version of a memoire sent, via our web site, by Peter Staveley

As I look back over my working career spanning 43 years as an Environmental Health Officer for a number of local authorities, the local authority that holds many fond memories for me was Bingham Rural District Council which embraced a total of 40 parishes from Flintham in the North, to Upper Broughton in the South, Elton-on-the-Hill in the East and Holme Pierrepont in the West. In the early days, not all of the Council's area benefitted from mains water supplies, and it was not until 1960 that the last of the parishes (Upper Broughton) finally got mains water! The Council purchased an ex-War Department water bowser to deliver water to outlying properties that didn't have mains water or where their well or spring had become contaminated. Not all the

Council's areas had main sewers, with seven villages still relying on cesspools or septic tanks. One of my first memories of working for the Council was the winter of 1963 - the coldest since 1740 - with temperatures as low as -20 degrees centigrade. The Council's lorry fleet, including its refuse collection lorries and cesspool emptying vehicles, were kept in the open air in the staff car park at the back of the Council offices on the north-side of Market Place. I recall arriving at work on my bike one particularly cold morning to find the only remaining petrol-engined refuse lorry towing a diesel refuse truck around the market square in a vain attempt to get it started. This before anti-freeze diesel fuel was common.

In a similar vein, the cesspool emptying tankers kept overnight in the Council car park suffered. This time, however, the major problem was that the sewage outlet from the tankers froze overnight, and meant that the tanker was inoperable. The only remedy was to light a fire under the frozen outlet. The story goes that Lewis Squires was carrying out this on a tanker, which was still half-full from the previous day. Lewis became aware that the sewage was starting to flow from the outlet pipe when, without warning, the pipe suddenly became free of ice, and poor Lewis was "engulfed". To his chagrin, nobody volunteered to take him home so that he could

get a bath and a change of clothes!

The duties of an Environmental Health Officer at Bingham were wide-ranging, and as well as food hygiene inspections and investigation of all aspects of pollution (including noise) I was involved in meat inspection at four small slaughterhouses. In those days the animals slaughtered were all sourced locally, and the meat was of a consistently very high quality.

Due to EU legislation and rules, small slaughterhouses like these closed down because they couldn't afford the changes required. One complaint about noise involved a dog kennel establishment. My boss Alec Paterson and I visited to discuss the complaint with the proprietor. Access was via a high and solid gate and he invited me to go first, an offer I declined, so Alec duly opened the gate. Snarling and menacing dogs emerged, they ignored Alec and bit me!!

The Council had its fair share of 'characters' not least of whom was the Clerk to the Council, Henry Waring, a qualified lawyer who always announced his presence by singing loudly wherever he



On 23rd April, ten BHTA members, led by our Past Chairman Peter Allen, were invited to the strip along the old A46 to be given a tour of the test excavations by staff of Oxford Archaeology South (in yellow Hi Vis) who were contracted by CgMs Heritage to carry out the investigation of the site prior to the new housing development. We now await the report and analysis of their findings with interest.

went throughout the offices. Other notable and long-serving Council staff were: Bernard Whyley, Markham Dawn, Alice Krupa, Stan Morley, Rodney Newcombe, Cliff Harding, Sid Collings, David Bell and last, but not least, Cuthbert Smith the Pest Control Officer. He used to treat wasp nests with a Cyanide based product called Cymag, (now strictly banned). As a student I often helped Cuthbert to treat difficult wasp nests, and he always cautioned me, "If you smell almonds I should move away sharpish!!" These are just a small sample of the memories that I have of my time at Bingham - happy days.

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

Friday 29th June

7.30pm W I Hall

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Non-members are welcome to attend to hear presentations on our recent work followed by wine, nibbles and chat.