

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

B.H.T.A. History of Settlement Project MAKES THE FRONT COVER!



We had a full-length feature article about our *History of Settlement* project in the 2011 January/February issue of the prestigious magazine *British Archaeology*. The impact of it has been felt already with a 30% increase in visits to our website since December. We have now reached an average of 200 visits a day for February (on 16th Feb.). By Christmas the first print run of 300 copies of our book on the project, '**BINGHAM, Back in Time..**' had sold out so we have had to go for re-print which is now selling well.

OTHER NEWS ITEMS

Roman well.

Our planning application to rebuild the Roman well in the cemetery was **approved by Rushcliffe Borough Council** on 17th February. It is now time to do it! We have already had a meeting on site with a representative of the Groundwork Trust to discuss design options and possible costs and have met with the Bingham Town Council to talk about funding. Although we do not yet have a good estimate for the cost, we are anticipating needing to raise some additional funds either from grants or sponsorship.

Arboretum.

We have decided that in addition to putting labels on the trees in the cemetery we should produce a leaflet giving information about the cemetery and the trees in it. When we did the original tree survey in 2003/2004 there were four pine trees we could not identify. These will now have to be done. If anyone has a special knowledge of pine trees then please contact us.

Garden survey.

Spring is coming. Gardeners will be working the soil and turning up bits of pottery and other oddments. Several interesting items have been brought to us already, but we

plan shortly to issue a reminder to those who had leaflets delivered in October to keep an eye open for interesting objects. Soon after that we will be collecting what has been found.

World War II.

An item in the Bingham Advertiser proved useful in bringing people forward who could talk about their experiences of the war in Bingham. Two people remembered where the Wellington bomber had crashed in the fields near here. It was the last field in the parish on the right going south down Tithby Road, though a check of our field-walking database showed no finds from that field that could have come from an aeroplane. We still think there are more people with memories for us to record. If you know of someone then get in contact with us.

Butter Cross 150th Anniversary

In discussions with the Bingham Town Council it has been decided that this important celebration to mark the 150 years, over which the Cross has become an iconic symbol of our heritage, will



start at the Summer Fair in June by recreating the tradition, established in the early years to mark the anniversary of Hassall's death, by decking the Cross with flowers. The photomontage on the front page gives an idea of the effect we hope to produce.

We want to make the celebration more than a 'one-day wonder' at the Town Fair by arranging events over the following week and a provisional programme is as follows:

Saturday 11th June the final decoration will be ceremonially added to the pre-dress Butter Cross with the Mayor of Rushcliffe officiating with some of us in 1860s costumes.

Thursday 16th June as part of the regular weekly market, BHTA will provide an information stand and displays under the Butter Cross on the theme of Life and Times in Victorian Bingham.

Saturday 18th June as part of the regular Farmers' Market, the stalls will be arranged around the Cross with, we hope, some of the stallholders also in period costumes to create the feel of a Victorian market. During the morning there will also be programmes of live music performed by local groups.

So we are looking for sponsors for the floral decoration of the column capitals and the '1861' and '2011' date panels. Invitations have already been sent to 24 local clubs and groups and local businesses to contribute acknowledged sponsorship for the flowers and entertainment associated with the celebrations this June. Their initial responses have been very encouraging.

EARLY VICTORIAN BINGHAM

On Thursday 27th January an audience of 60 people attended the first in this year's series of three lectures with the overall theme of 'Bingham's People and Places'. Adrian Henstock was the speaker, setting a very high standard for the series.

Adrian took as his theme the effects on Bingham of the enormous changes which Britain underwent in the 1830s '40s & '50s. This period witnessed the end of the traditional Georgian way of life and the introduction of numerous Victorian political, religious, social and technological reforms. Many of the new ideas were reflected in the opening of new public buildings in Bingham. A strictly regulated Union Workhouse to house the poor, destitute and elderly of Bingham and neighbouring parishes was built on Nottingham Road in 1837. The founding of the first full-time County Police force resulted in the erection of a police station/lock-up/court house in Church Street in 1852. Two new Church of England schools were built - one at the end of Fisher Lane in 1840 and the other in East Street (Old Church House) in 1846. The Wesleyan Methodists immediately retaliated and built their own school in Kirkhill in 1850.

The period also saw the adoption of 'Victorian Values' with the temperance movement aimed at reducing hard drinking, and numerous rallies were held in the town. A Temperance Hall was erected in a yard off Long Acre which later became a chapel. Many of these new values



were introduced by a series of Methodist ministers and especially the new Rector after 1846, the Rev Robert Miles. He immediately began the restoration of the crumbling parish church and the erection of a school, largely at his own expense. There was intense rivalry between the various denominations to capture not only the hearts and souls of the people but also their stomachs, as many events were accompanied by a good tea! At this date only two-in-five of Bingham church-goers went to the parish church, the rest attending the three nonconformist chapels, which had an especial appeal to the poorer classes. Many of these lived in new clusters of terraced cottages in Nottingham Road called by nicknames such as 'Skinner's Hell' and were notable both for their close-knit sense of community and for being hot beds of gossip.

Perhaps the most profound change of the period resulted from the opening of the Nottingham - Grantham railway line in 1850 and the subsequent collapse of the coaching and commercial traffic on the tumpike roads. After 1850 there were four trains a day to and from Nottingham, the average journey time taking 25 minutes compared to the



single daily stage coach of 75 minutes. An unexpected side effect of this was the adoption by the national railway network of Greenwich Mean Time in place of local time. The railways also had the effect of opening up Bingham to the new influences and opportunities afforded by improved links to the rest of the country. Although the town's population had risen dramatically during the years 1800 to 1841 it began to fall after 1851 with the drift of Bingham people to large towns such as Nottingham, Sheffield and Bradford.

Adrian concluded by looking at case studies of prominent Bingham residents of the time, notably the plumber, postmaster and schoolmaster John Strong, whose long life straddled both the Georgian and early Victorian periods, and the printing dynasty of the Staffords who operated from a farm house in East Street before moving into Nottingham. Adrian finished by reading extracts from a brief description by an Italian language teacher of his visit to the Rector Robert Lowe and family at the Rectory in 1825.

NEWSPAPER AND PHOTO' ARCHIVES

Our current research in the Nottinghamshire County Library newspaper archives provided Adrian with a lot of

material for his lecture on early Victorian Bingham. In fact there was far more than he had time to include in his presentation so here are just three rather gruesome items from 1850 that ended up 'on the cutting room floor':

February 8th 1850

SUDDEN DEATH AT BINGHAM.

On Tuesday last, Mr Samuel Barnes, cottager, was discovered in a small ditch, containing a small quantity of water, situated in a field in his own occupation, about half a mile east of the town. It is supposed, that while cleaning the ditch, he fell in a fit (to which he was subject); he was first discovered by a boy, who was working in an adjoining field. The lad, who had gone to Barnes' haystack, to get his dinner, discovered the deceased in the ditch. He immediately raised him up, but life was extinct. The lad called to a man who was ploughing in an adjacent field, and the body was conveyed home. Medical aid was immediately procured, but all efforts to restore animation were abortive, although the deceased was quite warm. He left a wife and four children. (*This gentleman is an ancestor of a BHTA member*).

June 14th 1850

ACCIDENTS AT BINGHAM

On Tuesday last, as Mr Reddish, carrier, of Whatton-in-the-Vale, was in the act of turning his cart round, after baiting his horse at the Chesterfield Arms Inn, the cart, which was laden with coal, being light on the shafts, flew up, and threw Mr R. into the air with considerable force, and, in descending, he came into contact with another cart, by which his head was severely lacerated, and he was otherwise

seriously bruised. He was conveyed home after the accident. On the same day, a black mare, the property of Miss Walker, of the Chesterfield Arms, met with a fatal accident. Whilst some men were endeavouring to catch a pony, which was grazing in the same field, the mare made a jump at the fence, and ran a stake into her entrails. The animal was worth £15.

December 6th 1850

GENERAL HOSPITAL CASUALTIES

On Friday, Elizabeth Castledine, of Bingham, was engaged in lighting her fire, when, in consequence of kneeling upon a hot cinder, her clothing became ignited. In this state she ran out into the road, where some neighbours extinguished the flames by rolling her about the ground. By this operation, however, her face and knees were badly cut. She is now going on well.

Our Photo' archive was of less use to illustrate Adrian's lecture as photography only started in the 1840s and the earliest pictures of Bingham, that we have been able to date, are from the 1870s.

Regular readers of this newsletter will know that we are always searching for images of the town's past and since last December we have obtained nearly 200 additions to the collection. Most of these we had not seen before.

Over the page are four examples:

1- The main picture shows the skittles stand at a mid-summer fair in the Rectory gardens. The signs behind the nine-pins reads, 'Everybody's doing it, 3 balls for 1d. Nuts for nine' This probably refers to the Irving Berlin 1911 song which became a popular Charleston dance in the 1920s



which is probably the date of the picture. The insert photo taken at a Rectory fete in the 50's shows Bishop Gelsthorpe and Edward Warner watching an unknown skittle player and lady. It looks as if the same bowls are being used!

2- Again in the Rectory garden this photo of an extravagantly costumed 'Pastoral play' c. 1912 and we have names for most of the dancers.



3)- This postcard is captioned, 'The Dairy Farm, Bingham'. Does any one know where it is, or was?

4)- We think this shows the Bingham Station warehouse staff c. 1910. Certainly the loading platform is still behind Cabourne House. Can anyone identify any of the men?



We are planning to show more of these photos and present new newspaper quotes at our AGM in June.

CONGRATULATIONS!

to BHTA member Jim Johnson who has received a Civic Award for his services to Bingham Leisure Centre Archery Club.

For us Jim surveyed many of our field walking grids, provided used arrows as stint markers and is now extending our research about WW2.



2011 LECTURES

On the theme:
Bingham's People and Places

Thursday 10th March
1776 Georgian Times

Thursday 12th May
1586 Elizabethan Times

Presented by a team of BHTA speakers including Peter & Joyce Allen, Geoff Ashton, and Adrian Henstock.

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