

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

GARDEN FINDS

When BHTA finished the field-walking project in 2010 we were left with c.400 hectares (c.1000 acres), about one third of the parish, under built-up Bingham, for which we had very little archaeological information. One of the ways we considered trying to fill this gap was to do a garden survey. Regular readers will remember that in the autumn of 2010 and spring 2011 we distributed leaflets to 2500 houses in Bingham asking the householders to keep anything of archaeological interest that they may find when gardening.

Sixty-five householders responded. The finds were collected in 2011 and have now been examined and identified. Written reports have been handed to each of the householders saying what they found and the items have been returned. The collections varied in size from a single item to 12kg (26 lbs) of broken pottery and other items. Some contained items that had been dug up during building work, while other collections had been accumulated over many years.

Thirty of the collections handed in were from the post-1950s housing estates. Many of these houses, particularly the more recently built ones, have small gardens with little bare soil showing and were not productive. One such



The BHTA stall at the Winter Fair in the Market Place attracted a lot of interest with bumper sales of our 2012 calendar and our latest book, *'People & Places - Press Cuttings from 1768 to 1899'* only £3.50. Also featured was the free Heritage Town Walk leaflet and the newly re-constructed Roman well and labelled arboretum in the cemetery. Among our visitors, shown above, were County Councillors Gordon Moore (Mayor of Rushdiffe) and Martin Suthers.

garden, however, did yield a worked flint, a Roman coin and a piece of medieval pottery. In general the collections from the new housing confirmed the prior land use that was expected from existing records. Usually this was either arable farming or pasture and the finds were similar in nature to those collected during field walking. Collections from the 19th century housing built on freehold land at the margins of old Bingham were looked at in conjunction with detailed records that BHTA holds on individual land parcels and they confirmed each other nicely.

The largest collections came from the bigger gardens in the old core of Bingham. This is the centre of Bingham and along the streets that we think were laid out in the 12th century, when Bingham was redesigned. These streets, The Banks, Long Acre and Long Acre East, East Street, Church Street, Market Place and Newgate Street together with the cross lanes like Market Street, Fisher Lane and Cherry Street where we know there was housing in 1586. Some collections from gardens in these places contained Cistercian Ware.[A] This is a type of pottery made in Ticknall, south Derbyshire

from about 1450 to 1550. Pottery like Midland Purple Ware [B], Midland Yellow Ware and Midland Black Ware, all made in Ticknall in the 16th and 17th centuries, was also found here with other types from the 18th century, such as the beautiful Staffordshire Slipware [C] used to make shallow dishes and Mottled Ware, which was used for chamber pots and beer tankards.

Many of the gardens in central Bingham had high concentrations of 19th and early 20th century pottery with glass, clay pipe fragments and various other objects. To a certain extent this was to be expected, because in these old gardens the soil would not have been ploughed for centuries and older pottery, usually found at depth, would not have been brought to the surface. In some of these collections there were oyster shells, animal teeth and bones, some of which showed signs of having been butchered. All sorts of metal objects were present here, including toy soldiers, brass decorative pieces from furniture and a selection of buttons from servant's livery, regimental uniform and a French school [D]. One piece was a pewter ring off a syringe, probably used by a veterinary surgeon. These probably mark the sites of the old, household rubbish dumps that would have been used until the local authorities instituted regular dustbin collections in the mid 20th century.

Some gardens yielded very old finds. In three of them there were worked flints. They could not be dated other than to say they were made between 6000 and 1000 years



ago. A lot of broken flints were sent in, but they lacked the marks that are used to identify them as being man-made. Nearly all of them would have been shattered during cycles of freezing and thawing during past Ice Ages. Three gardens yielded Roman finds. One was a coin that had been minted between 331 and 335 AD. This coin, made in Trier in Germany to celebrate the founding of Constantinople as the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, has featured in the September 2011 issue of *Discovering Bingham*. One piece of Roman grey ware pottery was quite large and was found close to one of the few sites in Bingham where the archaeologists have proved Roman occupation. It seems that there may be other pieces still in the ground in this garden. The third piece was from a Roman cooking pot and was unexpected at the site, which makes it particularly interesting.

One striking find was three pieces of Stamford Ware [E]. Stamford Ware is white and usually had a green or brown partial glaze, but this has invariably worn off. It was the first durable pottery made in England after the Roman occupation and was widely in use from the 10th to 12th centuries. These three pieces look as if they belong to the same pot and suggest that more of it may have been left in the ground. Its location is of particular interest because it may indicate early habitation at a site near Long Acre, one of the streets that may have been built in the 12th century. Nottingham-made green glazed or coarse sandy pottery from the 13th-

14th centuries was common in the fields, where it would have been turned up during ploughing. In the gardens it was very rare adding further proof that there has been little soil disturbance in the gardens of central Bingham.

A favourite for many gardeners is the day pipe and some excellent bowls were sent in. These can be dated and in some cases the maker can be identified. The oldest pipes date from 1620, but one particularly good find was a group of eight identical pipe bowls made in 1660-1670 [F]. They had all been smoked and suggested some group activity going on in this place at a time that coincided with the Restoration. Other 19th century pipes were outstanding for their decoration. Bowls were made in the shape of a bearded man or an acorn or decorated with the letters RAOB; another had the words 'PLAY UP NOTTS' a popular football slogan of the late 19th C. Two had the figures of pugilists on them



and one of them represented the bare-fist fighters [G] Jem Smith and John L. Sullivan. Smith, the English champion, and Sullivan the champion of America in the 1880s, never actually fought each other. A full report of this project will be put on the BHTA website.

BINGHAM JOURNAL

In the 1990s the Grantham Journal produced a Bingham edition. We have inherited a collection for 1993-1996 and are currently constructing a data based archive of interesting articles as a resource for people to use. The Grantham Journal has kindly agreed to our use of them as the items are technically still in copyright. We will feature occasional articles of interest in *Discovering Bingham*; this is the first selection.

These from October 1993 show how things have changed a bit on the catering front:

PLANS to convert Bingham Railway Station premises into a small Italian restaurant have been turned down. Councillors said Mr L Pedroncelli's plans would increase activity, noise and traffic which would disturb and annoy residents on Station Road and Langtry Gardens. Rushcliffe Borough Council also pointed out there was inadequate parking space on site. The building was previously used as a hairdressing salon.

BINGHAM is still going to be without an Indian take-away. An application by Mr Davood Marshemirani to set up at 29 Long Acre has been turned down, because it was felt the smell and increased noise and disturbance outside normal shopping hours would annoy neighbours. These were the reasons given by Rushcliffe Borough Council chief planning officer Keith Beaumont.

And this from the same month will strike a chord with BHTA members:

POTTERY thought to date from medieval times was unearthed during work on a children's play area at the Crow Close playing field in Bingham. The Town Council needed special permission to carry out the work because Crow Close is listed as an ancient monument. An archaeologist has worked closely with contractors, said Cllr. Greg Franks. Now the work is finished, the Council is aiming to fix an official opening soon.

ON THE OTHER HAND..

It would seem that over 140 years nothing much changes:

Nottingham Journal - July 20th 1855

BINGHAM,___ During the past week this place has been the scene of a great amount of "larking", owing it is supposed to the return to their favourite amusement, of those gentlemen who formerly enjoyed a reputation for that accomplishment. The throwing up of small stones at chamber windows appears to be the favourite pastime, and this in one instance has been a source of considerable fright to a lady, who will spare no expense, in case she can detect the offenders. On another occasion, these gentry seemed to entertain a great antipathy to a large horse roll, lying in a field kindly allowed for cricketing purposes by the rector. The roll in question was present for the use of the players, and at considerable trouble, no doubt, the nightly jury ran the implement into a large fish

pond, thereby requiring the assistance of some half-a-dozen horses in its extraction. The police, however, who are very effective, are on the alert, and a repetition of these midnight pranks we hope may meet with its proper retribution.

Bingham Journal – May 3rd 1996

END OF LINE FOR VANDALS
Steps have been taken to make sure vandals cannot move a roller from the cricket ground at Bingham on to the railway line. A resident of St Mary's Road told councillors a serious accident could be caused if equipment from Butt Field was put on the line.

At a full council meeting on Tuesday, chairman of the community committee Cllr. Jack Wilson said vandals had tried to move the cricket roller to the track. He said: "Fortunately, they had not been able to get it through the gate or it could have led to serious consequences". Mr Wilson said action has been taken to secure the equipment to make sure it was not moved except for the purpose of rolling the pitch when required.

In addition, the council has approached Railtrack to see if there was anything it could suggest to prevent similar problems occurring.

NOTE: The 'Cllr. Jack Wilson' mentioned above has moved on to greater things - he is BHTA's Hon. Sec.!

ORAL HISTORY

Back in 1988, the Local History Society carried out a number of oral history interviews which they recorded on audio tape. These tapes were given over into BHTA's safekeeping and as they include interviews with some notable Bingham residents, like Sam Shepperson, Miss Doubleday and Eric Green, we are very happy to have them. We are also fortunate enough to have recently been given transcripts of those tapes.

They will be included with Phase 2 of the BHTA's Oral History Archive which is now complete. It too contains interviews with some original residents, but also reflects the Bingham of today; a town where most of the residents were born elsewhere. Indeed some of them will have lived in several places before settling here. Some, like John Hudson, Methodist Minister or Peter Smith, Headmaster at Robert Miles school, or Jane Warner, of Porchester Farm, have since moved on from Bingham. Mostly they come because their work is here or hereabouts. All of them have fascinating stories to tell. Some do not live here, but work here - local shopkeepers and professional people. They are all important to the town and go towards making the Bingham of today and will be part of its history in the future. Should you be interested in carrying on this work, please ring Hilda 01949 837781.

CONGRATULATIONS



to our Vice Chairman Geoff Ashton on his Civic Award for his voluntary work on the Help Desk at City Hospital and in his role

as a member of Bingham Heritage Trails Association. Also to Jonathan Hammond on his Civic Award, at the same ceremony, for the support he gives to several town organisations. He generously prints this newsletter at cost.

2012 LECTURES Admission FREE

**Thursday 26th April
Picture Bingham's Past
Robin Aldworth**

**Thursday 24th May
Archaeology of the
New A46**

**Ursilla Spence
Archaeology Leader
N.C.C. Conservation**

8.00pm. Methodist Hall

BHTA Membership
costs you only a
minimum of £2.00
per annum.

For this *Discovering Bingham* is delivered every quarter to your home and up-dates on our activities are e-mailed directly to you.
WHY NOT JOIN NOW?

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