

CELEBRATING THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF 'DISCOVERING BINGHAM' WITH AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF THE BINGHAM HERITAGE TRAILS ASSOCIATION FROM 2000 TO 2013



IN THE BEGINNING.... It all started in 1999 when Hilda Smith was invited to an award ceremony marking the completion of a project by her sister's local heritage group. At this event Hilda talked to people who had been awarded funds to carry out a wide variety of community projects. As soon as she

got home she phoned the Local Heritage Initiative, as it was then, who explained what was needed to make a successful bid. She also learned that LHI were moving their head office to Bingham, which seemed like a favourable omen.

Hilda's next step was to write to all and sundry and then invited all those who indicated any level of interest to a meeting held in an upper room of the Crown Inn on 13th January 2000. Eight people turned up and Hilda outlined her ideas to create a 'Heritage Trail' from Margidunum to Crow Close and a visitor centre in the town. By the end of the evening working parties had been formed to work on the trail and fundraising with additional thoughts on publicity and a theme for the Town

Summer Fair in June. The next meeting was set for 2nd March at The Crown. Not a bad evening's work!

It seems that our name just happened without any recorded discussion; the minutes of the next meeting are headed, 'Bingham Heritage Trails Association' and record the Election of Officers who were charged with ensuring that BHTA became a formally constituted body. This was achieved at an open meeting in The Crown on 9th April 2000 which was also attended by a representative of the Sealed Knot Society which, with the support of the Festival committee, resulted in a spectacular Civil War Display on the Robert Miles Junior School field at the Town Fair in June. Not a bad achievement for a three month-old organisation!

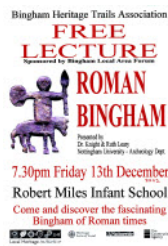
For the rest of the year a whole range of project ideas were discussed and frantic fundraising activities kept everybody busy. Finally a grant application to the Countryside Agency was submitted.



2001.... Our bid was submitted in February and by April we had received the news that we had won our first grant to produce a set of five leaflets, four wall charts and establish a website and 'virtual' museum with a completion date of January 2002 – a fairly tall order! The first AGM was held at the Infant's School on 14th April re-electing the committee (From L to R in the photo) Roger Snowdin (Treasurer), Cllr. Allen Ashmore, Hilda Smith (Secretary), Peter Allen (Chair), Joyce Allen (Minutes Sec.), Jack Wilson, Cllr. Eric Sharpe and, behind the camera, Geoff Ashton (Deputy Chair). For the second year running there was a BHTA stand at the Town Summer Fair in the Market Place telling the public of the successful bid, recruiting new members and raising funds with games and bric-a-brac. Other fundraising activities included car boot sales and a Jack Wilson wine tasting evening.



2002.... In February the project had been delivered on time and on budget and Peter Storey, Regional Director of the Countryside Agency, launched the new website, free leaflet and wall charts at The Old Courthouse to some 40 guests who had been involved in the project. In this year the Association became a registered charity, number 1090475. Plans were discussed to develop a bid for more funds to increase the web site and carry out further heritage research and by November we had won our second lottery grant. Then a busy December with a stall at the Christmas Fair on the 6th and, with support from the Local Area Forum, we launched the first of our annual series of open lectures on the 13th with David Knight and Ruth Leary telling a large audience about 'Roman Bingham'.



2003.... The New Year started with meetings of the Project Leaders for the various elements of the Phase 2 project which had started officially in November 2002 for completion by February 2004. The photomontage illustrates training for the Oral History recordings, developing a leaflet of walks on footpaths in the parish



and research to further enhance the web site. Our first lecture series continued with Bill Bacon on 'Bingham's Natural History' in the Linear Park and Peter Allen on 'Bingham's Rocks'. The first two issues of a new quarterly free newsletter 'Discovering Bingham' came out in September and December with a print run at Whatton Prison of 300 copies. This was soon increased to 600 but only in black & white.



2004.... From now on our activities have been covered in the



past 40 issues of the newsletter (these can be re-read on the web site) so this brief history can be limited to some of the highlights for each year. The lecture series continued with Rupert Bear on 'Crime & Punishment' then Geoff Ashton's talk on 'Building Bingham' raised the interest of many owners of older houses in the town. We launched the Phase 2 Project which greatly extended the web site and in November Hilda Smith presented the tapes and transcripts for the first phase of the Oral History project to the library.



2005.... Having received our third and largest LHI grant for our 'History of Settlement in Bingham' project, we set-to with a will to field walk all the arable land in the parish in three years. In the same year Awards for All granted us funds to survey the parish churchyard working with members of the Bingham University of the Third Age. A local company 3DLM carries out a modern laser topographic scan of Crow Close, free of charge, and for the 60th Anniversary of D-Day the World War 2 display on our Summer Fair stand was awarded the 'Best Dressed' cup.



2006.... After only 6 years, the Association was honoured by the Town Council's Special Award for contributions to the community and the churchyard team completed their mapping project with copies of their report presented to the Rector, Town Council and the Library. Our field walking came up with the oldest find; a flint that was



identified as being at least 250,000 years old and at the Summer Fair a selection of finds were displayed on a tray of compost which was a great success with visiting children.



2007.... With the support of Hammond Property Services the newsletter was printed in full colour! Our lecture series, now in its fifth season, included the presentation entitled, 'What the Papers Say' based on the findings of our team scouring the newspaper archive from the 1760s onwards.



Our Hot Pot Supper has become our main annual fundraising event and we ended the year in a joint production with Bingham Community Arts to present an historical musical drama, 'Bingham, Christmas 1865'.



2008.... With the New Year the last field had been walked and the team came together for a Wine & Finds evening with some of the 52,000 artefacts on display. There were still two more years ahead before the project would be finished and we had to apply for yet another extension. In a letter to HLF Peter Allen explained, "There is no part of this project that has not turned out larger than we thought..". In the meantime work continued on the other elements of the settlement project; studying the old maps and carrying out a geophysical survey of Crow Close.



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2009.... By now our main preoccupation was with writing up the archival report for the project as well as preparing the text and illustrations for the book 'Bingham, Back in Time' telling the story of settlement in a more digestible form. Then in July, archaeologists working on the new route for the A46 uncovered a Roman well. Balfour Beatty kindly agreed to pay for the professional removal of the top section, during a very muddy December, with the idea that we would re-assemble the well later, somewhere in Bingham.



2010.... One of the required outputs of the project was to mount a temporary public exhibition. This, under the title 'The History of Bingham in 100 Objects', (following the example of the BBC Radio 4 series) ran in the Library from March to August resulting in much interest and favourable comments. The book was finally launched on 21st May with a print-run of 300 copies. Before the year was out, a re-print of 100 copies had to be ordered. The publication also served as the theme for the decoration of the BHTA entry in the Christmas Tree Festival.



2011.... The 150th anniversary of the Butter Cross gave us an excuse to celebrate over the week of the Summer Fair. With the generous sponsorship of local organisations we added floral decorations to the eaves and columns with some of our members dressed as townsfolk of 1861. The town cemetery

finally became the location for the Roman well which was formally handed over the Town Council in November. This was linked with an information board and labelling every species of tree in the arboretum all of which was included in the new Heritage Town Trail leaflet. Our second book, 'People and Places – Press Cuttings 1768 to 1899', was published at the same time.



2012.... With our fourth successful LHI grant application for the 'Roots & Development of Bingham' project we aimed to dig up to 60 one metre square test pits in private gardens and school grounds to learn more of the archaeology in the built-up areas of the parish. To mark the Diamond Jubilee of H M the Queen BHTA donated an Amelanchier tree to the cemetery arboretum which was planted by pupils of Carnarvon Primary School. The ceremony was attended by Commander Judith Swann, Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire and Bingham Town Mayor, Cllr. Tracy Kerry with other Councillors and BHTA members.



newsletter, we covered other ongoing work such as research in the newspaper archive, investigations linked to the anniversary of the 1914-18 war and our ever increasing Picture the Past archive and data base, not to mention the new Bingham Tour Guide for Kids!.

