

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



LOOK UP FOR HISTORY

Our parish church is by far the oldest surviving building in the town. Building probably started in the early 1200s, the earliest work being the base of the tower. Completion of the main construction took place over the following century. The Lord of the Manor, Richard de Byngham, died sometime after 1308 leaving his widow Dame Alice and a son William. King Edward II granted them the Market Charter in 1314 around the time the church tower was nearing

completion. If you look up above the clock face on the south face of the tower there are a row of carved heads. The top pair pictured above are just left of centre. In Medieval church carving it is very unusual for a woman to be depicted, unless she is a Queen. The head, top right is clearly wearing a widow's wimple and almost certainly represents Dame Alice with her late husband to the left. These are only two of the intriguing examples of the Medieval stone mason's art that can be found on the exterior, and

interior, of the church which is well worthwhile visiting. The lower photos are just one example of 13th century humour. These will be found on the exterior of a south chancel window. On the left, a soul burning in hell fire and on the right a sufferer with toothache, the implication being that, for the stone mason, there wasn't very much to choose between the two conditions!

We recommend you take the time to visit this fascinating building, look up, to see what else you can find. If the church is open, you can pick up the free BHTA Churchyard Trail leaflet to find out who is under your feet. While you are there perhaps you could give what you can to help preserve this local treasure for future generations.

THE WHEELS THAT GRIND EXCEEDING SLOW !

Our study of the minutes of the meetings of Bingham Parish Council from the early 1900s, mentioned in the June issue of the newsletter, continues. What becomes very clear is the length of time it took (takes?) to get anything done in Bingham. Improvements to Bingham Market Place would be a good

example, but this subject is so lengthy it would take up all the space we have in this quarter's issue. Suffice it to say that the matter of improvements was first raised in Council in April 1921 and was finally resolved in 1961.

So let's take the provision of litter bins as an example. Litter was the responsibility of the Parish Council during this period.

On 21st June 1958 it was agreed the Council purchase litter bins for the Market Place (which was the responsibility of the Rural District Council), Market Street, and the bus shelter opposite the White Lion.

On 2nd September the Councillors were informed by the Clerk that 6 litter bins had been ordered, 4 to be fixed now – 1 at Bloors shop on Carnarvon Place; 1 at the fish and chip shop; 1 in the bus shelter; and 1 at the Blacksmith's shop on the corner of Long Acre and Grantham Road. The other 2 were for the Market Place when it had been improved by the RDC.

On 21st Sept the Councillors were told by the Clerk that he needed to know whether the

bins were to be free standing or attached to a building so he could order the correct type. On April 21st 1959 the Clerk told the Councillors that the decision about litter bins in the Market Place could not be decided until the improvements to it had been done.

At the meeting on June 1st the Councillors were still trying to decide the position of the litter bins.

On July 19th 1960 the Council was of the opinion that a further 4 bins were necessary, 2 in the Market Place and 2 on the new Council estate. It was agreed they should be concreted in and Cllr Mrs. Lamin and Cllr Dr Wade would decide the actual positions and report to the Clerk in order that the County Highways Authority could be informed where to put the posts. After this nothing more seemed to happen UNTIL....

on the 17th October 1961, after the market place had at last been improved by the RDC a letter from the RDC was read out at the Council Meeting in which they complained about the litter in the Market Place and requested that litter bins be provided by the parish Council

as litter was their responsibility. The matter was referred to the next meeting.

At the next meeting on 17th January 1962 a subcommittee was established to consider the necessity for litter bins and to site and arrange for them to be erected. Cllr Jacques offered to fix the bins when the posts had been erected.

On the 17th April 1962 the subcommittee suggested that litter bins be placed in the bus shelter (it doesn't say which one), the shop on Carnarvon Place, and the frontage walls of the Coop and the Tip Top Bakery (now Rex Gooding estate agents) if the owners agreed.

At the Council meeting on 29th May 1962 the Council was told that the shops had agreed to have litter bins, but they could not go ahead without the permission of the County Council.

There is no further mention of litter bins so we can only assume that after over 4 years the matter was eventually resolved for the time being.

As well as the parish Council meetings we also have:

The finance committee minutes from April 1940 – April 1955

The Lighting committee minutes from July 1945 – April 1955

The Cemetery committee minutes from April 1897 – April 1948

2 volumes of the Bingham Annual Parish Meetings Sept 1921 – March 1967.

If anyone would like to help our research by picking out more interesting items, please let us know using the contacts on the back page.



The White Lion bus shelter at about this period but no sign of a litter bin.

ALL IS SAFELY GATHERED IN

Bingham has celebrated the gathering in of the harvest for centuries. After the hard work through the seasons, it was a time to relax. In the middle of the 19th century, Bingham celebrated on the farms, but from 1862 the form of the celebration was changed as we see from this extract from the Nottingham Telegraph of September 27th 1862.

'Harvest Home Festival

The harvest home festival which originated in the southern counties a few years ago, promises to become general throughout the county. Instead of the dinner or supper for the labourers with ale and tobacco ad libitum afterwards, which has been the custom for centuries, the ingathering of the harvest is to be celebrated by a thanksgiving, after which rustic amusements of a more refined and rational character are to be entered into. On Tuesday next the majority of farmers in Bingham have decided on granting a day's holiday to their employees. It

The Saxondale harvest in 1896 shows that the methods of bringing in the crops were also changing with the adoption of the latest steam technology to drive the machinery. Photo by Herbert Morris, Bingham's resident photographer, since 1885.



is proposed that they meet in the Market Place at 11-00am and walk in procession to the church for divine service. Each employer will walk at the head of his men. In the afternoon a dinner and tea will be provided either gratis by the masters for their men or tickets may be purchased by members of the committee for bona fide harvest labourers. There will also be a reserved number of tickets for visitors. Tea, under like conditions will be provided for the harvest women. Rural sports will be

set up to fill the time between dinner and tea.'

The man behind the change was one Reverend Hawker of Morewenstowe, Cornwall, known to his parishioners as Parson Hawker, an eccentric for a man of the cloth, both in his flamboyantly coloured clothes and in his habits. He built himself a hut with driftwood he found on the beach. The hut is owned now by the National Trust and there he would sit, writing his sermons and poetry and smoking opium. He wanted his parishioners to think of a good harvest as a divine gift and on September 13th 1843 he put a notice outside his church, informing his flock that from then on a special Sunday would be set aside for thanksgiving and that an old custom of making Eucharist bread from the first corn would be revived. The idea spread mostly through High Church magazines and eventually reached Bingham. It seems that no-one wanted the harvest feast on the farms to end and the new celebration was a compromise.



Rev. Hawker and his Hut



WORLD WAR ONE 1914 to 1918

Regular readers will know of our recent research project which traced the histories of those Bingham men and women who died in World War One and, importantly, those who served and survived. BHTA is already planning an event to be held on 9th and 10th November 2018 to commemorate the centenary of the armistice that led to the end of the war. Technically, of course, the war did not end until the Treaty of Versailles in 1919.

So far our plans are to mount a two day exhibition of our research together with two evening events, all at the Methodist Hall. Hopefully the exhibition will include a contribution from Bingham British Legion and the Women's Institute - Bingham branch. The latter is also celebrating its centenary in 2018. The British Legion will be running some other events too and if other local organisations have ideas we would welcome their contributions. As part of the exhibition we would like to display some WW1 artefacts so we would like to hear from anyone who owns these items and is prepared to provide them on loan for the period of the display. We shall also be featuring what the survivors did after the war, so artefacts from the 1920s would also be

welcome. Adequate security arrangements will be in place.

The Friday evening event will be a combination of live classical music of the time (possibly a string quartet or similar) together with readings from war poems, war diaries and first hand accounts. This event will, in a sense, be looking back over the war. The Saturday event will be a mixture of popular songs and other entertainments of the period and will look forward to the better world everyone expected but many did not experience.

Some of the performers will need to be professionals but we are hopeful of finding voluntary talent to contribute. We invite any reader or organisation with the necessary skills to get in touch with us; at the same time we will be approaching a number of local groups to ask for help.

Clearly the event will cost money. BHTA is providing some funding, but we shall need more. The Town Council is likely to contribute and we shall be looking for business sponsorship and other contributions. More importantly we will welcome offers of help with performing, stewarding, providing refreshments, operating equipment etc. etc. Please talk to a member of the committee or contact us through the web site.

MIKE PATTEN - CBE 1938 - 2017



It was with great sadness that we learned of Mike's death in City Hospital on 26th May following a stroke after several months of declining health. He and his wife Pat became BHTA members soon after we formed in 2004 and for the last seven years he served on the Executive Committee as our Treasurer. He was also the initiator of the recently completed World War One project.

After a distinguished career in Custom and Excise, for which he was awarded the CBE, he threw himself into the life of the town. He will be greatly missed and remembered by all who knew him for his generosity, engaging charm, energy, and infectious sense of humour. We are sure that all members would wish to express sincere condolences to his wife Pat, his son Ian and the rest of the close family.

CODA: Mike had been planning to retire from his Treasurership at our AGM on 27th June and had started the process of handing over to Charles Richardson who was formally elected at the meeting. Sadly, we will never know what wry comment Mike might have made at missing his target by a month but a comment there certainly would have been!

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