

DISCOVERING BINGHAM

Quarterly NEWSLETTER of the **Bingham Heritage Trails Association**
www.binghamheritage.org.uk Registered Charity No: 1090475 Issue No.61 - September 2018

BHTA: Increasing public awareness of our heritage in Architecture, Folk & Natural History, Archaeology & Geology



BINGHAM'S UNDERGROUND OVEN

In the cellar under 11a Market Place, recently restored by Hammond Property Services who own the cottage and the offices next door, there is an oven which consists of a huge concave chamber made of narrow, probably 18th century bricks, that extends under the old cottage above. Our measurements suggest it could have baked 200 loaves. It is possible the bricks are in their original position. On the other hand our house historian, Richard, thinks they were re-used and that the oven dates from about 1810. It is potentially unique for a village bakery. The only ovens Richard has seen of this size have been in stately homes! The oven frontage is made of a mixture of brick sizes and contains the cast iron door, which, when we got involved, had already rusted off its broken hinges and was in a bad way. To the right of the doorway is another cast iron door guarding a side flue for

burning wood to heat the oven. This was an early 19th century development to get away from having to heat the oven by filling it with faggots of burning wood. When the oven was hot the ashes would be raked out and the loaves inserted to bake.

Jonathan Hammond was keen to retain what Richard thinks is a significant historical structure, and has offered BHTA the opportunity of setting it up as a heritage attraction. BHTA volunteers cleaned out the oven which was inches thick in debris and in the process found a Ewbank Carpet sweeper from the 1940s! We believe the oven was still in use just prior to the war and we have a copy of a 1930s painting [above] showing how it was. The bakery was run by Arthur Martin, whose widow later ran a confectionary shop built on the triangular space between

the two buildings. Several alterations (including improving the access stairs) have been made to the cellar during re-construction but the original oven wall and brick floor have been retained. We found a blacksmith who has refurbished the oven door and it is now in place. We shall be cleaning up and "blacking" the flue door and the surrounding cast iron frames of both doors. BHTA will be designing some information boards and Jonathan is having appropriate lighting installed. Peter Savage has made a new wooden door to replicate the original which closed off the proving chamber under the oven.

When the job is complete the room will be available to view once we have worked out a visiting strategy with Jonathan, as access has to be through the new office space.

AGM PRESENTATION

This year's AGM on July 29 followed our well established tradition by conducting the formal business in a matter of minutes and spending the rest of the evening (before ending with wine and nibbles) with presentations on some of the work of the past year. Last year the Town Council passed several volumes of Parish Council minutes to us. Members Doug & Jennie Travers [pictured] volunteered to research one of these records. This is Part 1 of their report.

The Bingham parochial committee minute book for the cemetery, records every meeting held from its creation on April 7, 1887 until its dissolution on 21 April 1948. The minutes of all the meetings during more than 60 years are faithfully recorded in 417 pages, which up to 1946 were in the handwriting of a person present, initially in elegant copper-plate script. Meetings are not much different to modern Town Council meetings except that the participants are all men and the discussions reflect a much more rural community.

The business of the first meeting on April 7, 1887 is to form a committee and choose its chairman. The obvious choice as chairman in a Victorian English village was the Rector, the Rev Percy Howard Droosten, in post from 1884 - 1910. His status and experience as a clergyman would have been considered valuable. He remains unchallenged as chairman, at first sometimes holding meetings in the rectory, until



his last meeting on November 10th 1908. The first task of the committee is to appoint Mr Jones, clerk to Lord Carnarvon's steward, to survey the ground they have in mind for the new cemetery. The committee meets Mr Jones at the site and asks him to prepare a sketch plan of the burial-ground and the possible cost of laying out the site. Mr Jones submits a plan at the May meeting and it is approved.

At this point there is intervention from a higher authority, the local government board making sure everything is being done according to proper procedure. They have been prompted by the rural sanitary authority to enquire "whether there are any dwelling houses within 200 yards of the proposed cemetery site and whether the consent in writing of the owners had been obtained, etc. They also say they would be glad to learn what expenses would be incurred. The clerk is to reply to the letter and report the probable cost to be £300. The Committee receive a favourable reply and decide to go ahead to purchase the land, compensating any tenant for loss of rights, (only if such tenant claims compensation). The local government board intervention seems to have prompted them to make sure

they were adopting a professional approach because they resolve to ask for a copy of the model by-laws relating to cemeteries.

By now they're confident enough to go ahead and they approach Lord

Carnarvon in September 1887 to convey the land to them. He replies the following month that he can only grant them an acre of land for the cemetery. It seems that the plan involves more than this and the Earl is graciously willing to sell them the other portion if they want it. The committee decides to accept just the 1 acre! This appears to have called his Lordship's bluff because we hear in November that he is now willing to give them the extra land they require for a nominal rent. So now that the land has been purchased Mr Jones can proceed to the next step, marking out the grave spaces and paths. The committee enquires about fees in the cemeteries nearby and it is time to appoint a caretaker.

At the meeting on 5 January 1888 it is "resolved that Thomas Walker be appointed caretaker if he consented to accept the terms proposed by the committee." Clearly he does because his wages are regularly recorded in future minutes. At the same meeting there are payments to approve to Mr Jones for surveying, to Stanton Iron Company for cinders, James Walker for stakes, William Gray for painting, J. Brown for wire netting, Charles Brewster for his tenant rights and the Honourable Lord Middleton for

shrubs. Furthermore the plan of the cemetery is to be mounted on a board and varnished and the clerk is to obtain a cash book and register for the cemetery. At last they agree that they are ready to open the cemetery and a notice is put up in Mr William's office and in the Bingham post office that the cemetery will open for business at the beginning of the next month, i.e. 1st February 1888.

The committee meets again two days before the opening and instruct James Walker "to put up a board near the entrance of the cemetery with the scale of fees painted thereon and they arrange to purchase the following articles:- from Mr John Roworth, spade, shovel, shears and brush; from Mr Richard Brown a scythe, a rake, a foot iron and pickaxe; and from Mr James Walker, a barrow, trestles, webbing, six planks, four crossbars and a coffin pattern, also that a tin box be purchased for the safekeeping of the registers and other books. A variety of fees are set for grave spaces and the right to erect monuments, all designs and inscriptions to be approved. Graves are to be 8 feet deep for the first interments, 1s. 6d. extra to be paid to the Sexton for any depth beyond. Double fees are to be charged for non-parishioners. During the next few months there are further purchases as their need becomes apparent; a ladder - presumably for climbing out of the eight foot graves, and grass seed for bare patches.

There is a need to establish some rules of conduct. In these

early years the cemetery was only open on Sunday. "Any person desirous of visiting it at any other time may do so by applying to the Sexton for a key." Unaccompanied children and dogs were not allowed in and "all persons guilty of any unseemly or indecent behaviour will be proceeded against according to law". It was about this time that the churchyard became closed to new burials but there is some friction over the transfer. Apparently a representative of the Crown had been down making enquiries into the closing of the churchyard. The committee is annoyed that they had not been informed. They "expressed surprise" that they had been ignored in a letter to the Home Secretary in July 1888. Feelings are still strong in October when it is proposed that the committee should instruct the rural sanitary authority to take steps at once to close Bingham churchyard for burials except in existing graves and vaults, because firstly the churchyard is unduly full, secondly for sanitary reasons and thirdly because provision has been made by the present cemetery. This proposal is narrowly defeated. Possibly the Rev Droosten objected to the sanitary committee interfering with his church's affairs.

During the summer of that year sufficient progress has been made for the Earl of Carnarvon to visit the cemetery. It is recorded that he "expressed himself pleased" with the site. Later in the year he sends some shrubs to replace those which had died. The committee is duly grateful. The clerk is to

write to the steward, thanking his Lordship for his present of shrubs - very deferential. [\[In the December edition we hope to include Part 2 of the report\]](#)

CLEARING THE GARAGES

Garages, though they are meant to be used for cars, are much better for storing junk! Since BHTA started doing fieldwork in 2004 the Ashton's garage was used as the main storage depot for the kit and was where finds were stored until they needed numbering. Most of them then moved to the Allen's garage, where they remained until a permanent home was found for them. Overall we have collected over 70,000 finds, bagged them and stored them in fruit boxes from Bingham market. Add these to the gazebos, walking boards, fencing, tarpaulins, tools, buckets, sieves, ranging poles, hundreds of metres of rope and masses of other bits of kit and there is more than enough to fill a couple of garages. Some space was liberated when Nottingham University took our field walking collection, but that was replaced with the test pits finds. With the ending of field work we have now cleared nearly everything away. All our good kit has been given to archaeological groups in Radcliffe and Southwell, the rest has been taken to Calverton or put into Rhino bags and taken away. There is a residue that we cannot get rid of yet, but fairly soon our cars may find themselves protected from the weather for the first time in their existence.



OUR TOWN FAIR STALL PREVIEWS WORLD WAR ONE CENTENARY COMMEMORATION

The aim of our display at this year's Town Fair was to preview the plans to mark the 100th anniversary of the end of World War One this November. These will be the culmination of a five year Lottery Funded project to explore and record the contribution made by the people of Bingham to the war. Over the past year we have worked with the Bingham branch of the Royal British Legion and the Town Council to come up with ways of commemorating this important anniversary.

The full results of our research have now been on our web site for several months and cover not only the Bingham residents who gave their lives in the conflict but also those who survived, recording their service and, where possible, details of their lives and achievements in the post-war period. All these data and images will be distilled onto 32 one metre square display

boards to form a FREE two-day exhibition mounted in the Methodist Community Centre. There will be displays of photographs, military artefacts and other items representing both the war and post-war periods, with videos and audio recording running continually in the Worship area. Refreshments will be on sale during most of the time.

The exhibition will also include displays by the Bingham Women's Institute which is marking the centenary of their foundation, and the Bingham Branch of the Royal British Legion which will also be running other linked and co-ordinated events on 8th, 10th and, of course, Sunday 11th November.

The FREE exhibition will be open to the public on Friday 9th November – 9.30am to 5.00pm and Saturday 10th November – 9.30 to 4.00pm.

On both evenings **FREE Commemorative Concerts** will be performed. Due to limited seating, **entry can only be by ticket-holders**. From early October these tickets can be obtained either from Hammond Property Services or Bingham Library.

Friday 9th November Concert 7.30pm "Looking Back". The programme will include the Juliet Ward String Quartet, The Cranmer Company of Singers with readings from War Dairies and Poems. There will be the opportunity to view the exhibition before the concert.

Saturday 10th November Concert 7.00pm "Looking Forward". The programme will include The Stormy Weather Boys, The Vale Voices, Toothill School Big Band, Bingham School of Dance – *Charleston Demonstration* and Occasional Readings. Refreshments during the interval will be on sale.

Look out for further publicity which will carry the '100' logo below.

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