

## **Noble Gifts: the legacy of Daniel George Bingham (1830-1913) to ‘my dear old native town’ of Cirencester**

**by David & Linda Viner**

### **Introduction**

A series of celebrations between 2005 and 2008 marked the achievements and legacy of one Cirencester-born individual, whose name remains well known a century after the significant benefactions he made to his native town. Indeed the Bingham name remains in daily use, in both Cirencester’s library and in its principal public hall. The Bingham Library was first opened on 21 September 1905. Comprehensive refurbishment in 2008 has given the town what amounts to a new library facility within the 1975 footprint, gratifyingly retaining the name of its original founder. Meanwhile, the Bingham Hall centenary celebrations in October 2008 provided a clear reminder, if any were needed, of the extensive use which townspeople have made of this amenity since it was first opened on 14 October 1908.<sup>1</sup>

Daniel George Bingham was born on 16 March 1830 in Black Jack Street, close to the town’s commercial heart of the Market Place, West Market Place and Castle Street. His family background was indeed in commerce; his father (also Daniel, 1793-1834) was listed variously in local trade directories as a trunk or cabinet maker and an upholsterer.<sup>2</sup> The site of his birthplace is marked by the easternmost of the ‘modern villa residences’ built by Earl Bathurst in 1868-9 on the south side of the street.



Daniel George Bingham (1830-1913), ‘Cirencester’s munificent benefactor’. (W. Dennis Moss, © Bingham Library Trust)

He was the third son of a family of four brothers and one sister.<sup>3</sup> Following his father’s death his mother married Thomas Cox, a well-known Cirencester resident and they had a son, William Henry Bingham-Cox.

Bingham’s own career was to be on the emerging railway network, which took him away from Gloucestershire to London and eventually to the railways of Holland where he earned his living and amassed a significant income. Once established in Holland he made his home there, choosing in due course not to return to live in his native town despite retaining a very strong affection for it throughout his life. He died in Utrecht on 1 March 1913 and is buried there together with his wife beneath a simple red granite slab in the municipal cemetery.

Apart from his own career success in Holland, Bingham’s achievement was in providing the funding and not a little of the drive and foresight to create the principal cultural and social facilities in Cirencester, which remain both relevant and highly valued today, a century later. It was said ‘no worthy object ever appealed in vain to his open heart and purse.’

## Railway service

After attending a school in Castle Street,<sup>4</sup> Bingham started work in or around 1844 at the nearby station for the Great Western Railway (GWR), only recently opened as part of the spread of the new network across the west of England. In retrospect today, it is difficult to appreciate both the significance to contemporaries of this new transport phenomenon, and indeed the role which Cirencester played (albeit a brief one) in the onward development of the GWR network. For a short period from its opening date of 31 May 1841 until May 1845, Cirencester station was the terminus of the extension northwards from Swindon, by a junction with the GWR's main line between London Paddington and Bristol, towards Stroud, Gloucester and Cheltenham. When that route was completed, the 4½ miles from its junction at Kemble to Cirencester became a branch line and remained so until its final closure in 1965.

The thoughts of the young Bingham, then aged only about fourteen, can only be guessed at when arriving for work as a junior clerk at the Cirencester terminus station, complete with its own boardroom (a legacy still surviving today from this brief period as the headquarters of the new line's development)<sup>5</sup> but it is fascinating to think that his horizons were even then being raised towards the potential this new opportunity offered him as part of a vibrant, growing and increasingly significant transport system. In later years he must have felt that this opportunity, once given, was not to be lost. Even the conservative local weekly newspaper, the *Wilts & Glos Standard*, had spotted 'the advantages that may be anticipated by the town and neighbourhood' by the railway's arrival, which 'are at present incalculable'.

Bingham enjoyed various examples of good fortune early in his career. What became a lifelong friendship with James Staats Forbes began when Forbes took up lodgings with the Bingham family in Black Jack Street on his appointment as district manager soon after Cirencester station opened. Spotting young Daniel's capabilities, Forbes gave him a job. When in his turn promotion beckoned, firstly to divisional superintendent at Cheltenham and then as chief goods manager at Paddington, Forbes offered Bingham a post in London too, thereby placing him at the heart of the expanding railway network in which the Great Western Railway had become such a key player. Bingham moved to London in 1855.

Thereafter, as Nigel Bray records, Forbes' rise through the layers of railway management directly benefited Bingham too. In 1857 Forbes became head of the Dutch Rhine Railway Company based in Utrecht, albeit a body on the very edge of bankruptcy. His team-building to overcome this state of affairs, creating 'a group of chief officers of exceptional ability', also gave Bingham his chance when in 1858 he became chief goods manager, charged with reorganising the goods transport of the loss-making railway. Three years later, when Forbes returned to England to manage another English regional railway (the London, Chatham and Dover Company), Bingham succeeded him, still then only 31 years of age.

For nearly thirty years, until the Netherlands government nationalised this railway in 1890, Bingham ran the company's business, reviving its fortunes to such an extent that the government's payment for its shares was 25% over its value. According to a Dutch reporter writing in 1900, Bingham was indefatigable, a man who 'greatly contributed to the development of the railway system in our country ... it was in utter chaos, and he had to bring order to it while being thwarted from all sides'.<sup>6</sup> His objective was to bring in more customers using the railway by facilitating the transport of their goods to and from the stations, however distant. 'It is to him we have to thank for those big black hooded carts still to be seen in the streets ... collecting or delivering goods ... with their splendid signs: D.G. Bingham, General Goods Agent'. In 1882 he had 340 employees, and the main commodity carried was German coal.

A meeting in 1859 was to have life-long significance for Bingham and Hendrik Adriaan van Beuningen who had recently joined the Rotterdam office, aged sixteen. Bingham became mentor and 'a-one-in-a-million-teacher' to Hendrik, with even closer family ties being forged when Hendrik married Jane Bingham's sister, Ann Lavinia Brain, in 1866.<sup>7</sup> At the time of his death in February 1908, Hendrik van Beuningen was hailed as 'One of Utrecht's finest citizens'.

A wealthy man, his patronage of the arts, public institutions and social justice in Utrecht must have been an inspiration to Bingham for his own munificence. Both derived their fortunes by acting as coal wholesalers, exporting coal from Westphalia and importing Spanish ore using the rail network where the scale of their operations allowed them to negotiate special fees with the railroad companies.

By 1893 Bingham was head agent in the Netherlands for *Hibernia und Shamrock Bergwerkgesellschaft*, the number three on the list of mines associated with the Rheinisch-Westfälische Kohlen-Syndicat (RWKS), and for the mine *Wilhelmina Victoria*, which was part of the same *Bergwerkgesellschaft*. In effect he had the monopoly on sales of coal from the Westphalian mines for which he operated as agent. Van Beuningen was head agent for the mine *Consolidation*, the sixth largest in the RWKS. They joined forces with four other companies in 1894 to form a consortium which allowed them to maintain their independence, as representatives of the RWKS in the Netherlands.

By 1904 the Steenkolen Handelsvereniging (SHV – Coal Trading Association) had the sole rights for German coal imported by rail, and was able to handle the imports via the river Rhine, a situation which enabled the Netherlands to become ‘the gateway to the world market for the German coal trade’. Within the SHV partners, van Beuningen and Bingham were the second and fourth wealthiest respectively.

### **Links with England**

Throughout, Bingham had retained his various contacts with home, and his visits to England though regular were brief. In 1860 he had married Jane Brain from Kelmscott, a first cousin and a daughter of John Wells Brain and Jane Simpson.

With a view to establishing a base in England for his retirement, Bingham bought an estate at Shipton Solers, near Andoversford, which he placed under the management of a nephew, Mr J.W. Brain. Together they carried out many improvements and established a fine herd of pure-bred Shorthorns. However, the property was sold and his focus moved to Box in Wiltshire.

### **Box in Wiltshire**

It was during the early years of the twentieth century that Bingham’s period of philanthropic funding for various projects seriously began to take shape and be realised. It focused naturally on Cirencester in particular but also to the benefit of another, if smaller, community in north Wiltshire where he and Jane had a family interest for some years previously. At Box, they had bought ‘Sunnyside’ sometime during the 1890s, originally with a view to moving there to live although in practice it became established as no more than a holiday home for them, their links to Utrecht proving too strong.<sup>8</sup>

Sunnyside still stands and today is the Bybrook Nursing Home. The Bingham’s had the house extensively enlarged, with landscaped gardens, and the date stone over the door of 1902 suggests a programme of work undertaken over several years. The family links to Box were very strong as reflected by the beneficiaries in Hendrik van Beuningen’s will of 1908, where he mentions his sisters-in-law, Mary Brain married to Joseph Fry, Elizabeth Brain married to Richard Tarrant, and Julia Brain, all living in Box.

When the community sought a village hall, Bingham acquired some land in Chapel Lane in Box and followed a procedure mirrored by his benefactions in Cirencester. By a deed of 5 Dec 1905 he handed over this land to the newly formed Bingham Hall Trust, the trustees being the vicar of Box, a solicitor based in Bath, and Bingham himself. The aim was to build at Bingham’s expense a new structure to be known as the Bingham Hall. This was done, as recorded in the parish magazine at a cost of £650, and the hall duly opened with a concert on 24 April 1906, only seven months after the opening in Cirencester of the new Bingham Library.

## Bingham Public Library, Cirencester

It was the Cirencester library project which was to be the first of Bingham's various benefactions in the town.<sup>9</sup>



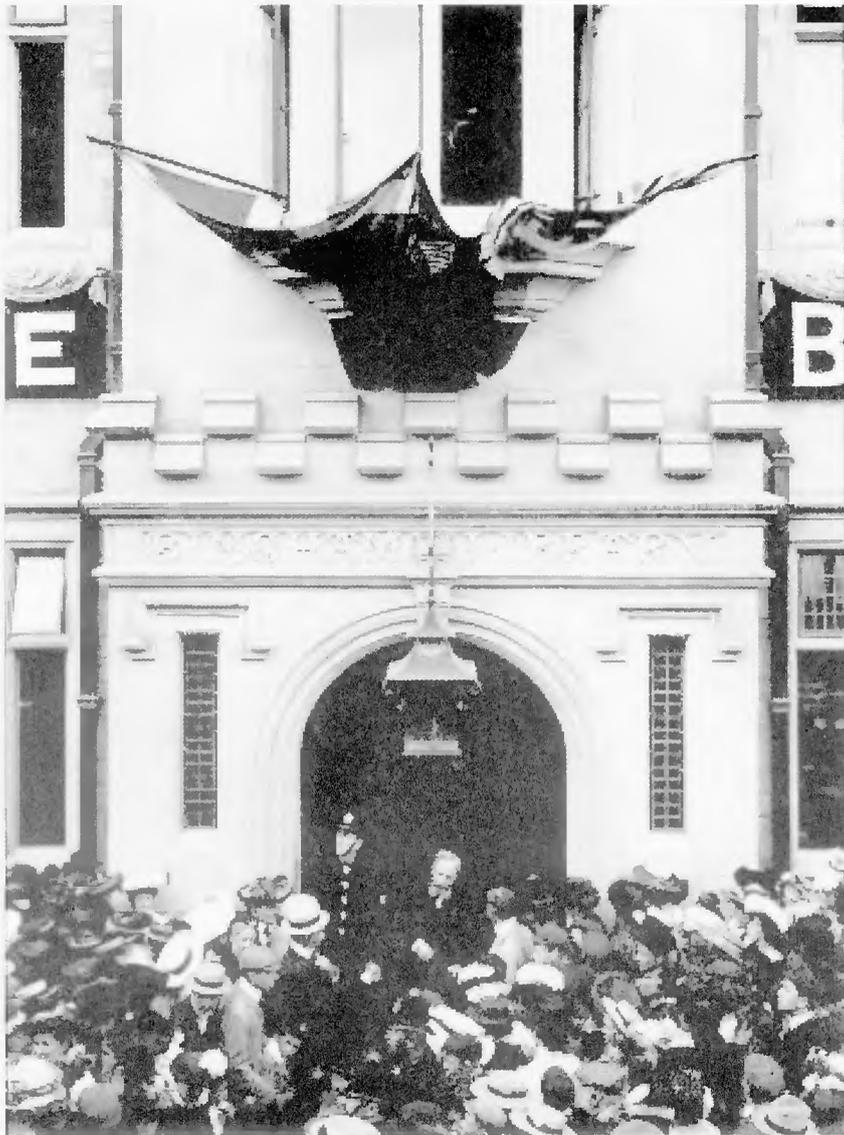
Workmen in Dyer Street gather as work on the Bingham Library draws to a close. (© Bingham Library Trust)

In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries private lending libraries of popular literature had been established by the town's booksellers, notably Samuel Rudder, Timothy Stevens, and Thomas Baily. The next step, 'to establish a public library for the use of the town and neighbourhood' was taken in July 1835 when the Cirencester Permanent Library was established. Capital was raised by the issue of shares and it was hoped that small dividends could be paid to shareholders. Annual subscriptions ranged from one guinea to 25s, the latter allowing borrowers to take books home to read. A Newsroom and Library Room were made available in premises in Dyer Street, with Mr Overthrow as its first librarian. Individually numbered books were listed by size, but it must be said the stock would have appealed to only a select group of studious subscribers.

In 1863 it was hoped that by depositing the books from the Subscription Library in the Reading Rooms of the newly opened Corn Hall it would re-invigorate the health of the library, but poor financial management, low rates of borrowing and the poor physical state of the books themselves failed to appeal to public borrowing. All the stock and the furniture were sold in 1885. The Reading Rooms struggled on buoyed up by donations from public-spirited individuals. Bingham's brother, Charles, ran a confectioner's business in the neighbouring property, from what is now Barclays bank, and encouraged his brother to

support the ailing Reading Room. In emulating the munificence of his own brother-in-law in Utrecht and in the spirit of Andrew Carnegie, Bingham seized the opportunity of benefiting his native town.

In 1903 he secretly purchased property in Dyer Street for the express purpose of constructing a new library for the town. It was, he said, 'to establish a place for study, for recreation and for reasonable amusement – a permanent resource for the student desirous of supplementing his education ... a pleasant refuge for the ordinary reader; and a locality adapted for use on those occasions for public information and intellectual recreation which become more and more frequent in these days of wonderful scientific progress and discovery.'



Adjoining the Fleece Hotel and close to the Market Place, this property had latterly been in use as a parcels office for the Fairford and Cirencester Omnibus Company having for some years been a cheese warehouse. The purchase also included the adjoining house, subsequently let to provide additional funding support for the library. Years later, in correspondence shortly before his death, Bingham wrote that one of his aspirations at the time was the establishment of an art gallery, an ambition finally achieved in a dedicated space named in his honour as the highlight of the 2005 centenary celebrations.

To designs by V.A. Lawson and using a local builder Mr George Drew, work to clear the site of warehouses and stables began in October 1903, with the foundation stone laid on 21 January 1904 when, on behalf of the town, Earl Bathurst thanked Bingham for his 'Noble Gift'. Construction proceeded apace with the official opening ceremony held on 21 September 1905. Spread over three floors, the building provided Lending and Reference Libraries on the top floor, a Lecture Room capable of seating 200 on the first floor, with a News & Reading Room and separate Smoking Room on the ground floor. A gymnasium and

'A Noble Gift', Bingham stands at the door of the Library during the formal opening ceremony on 21 September 1905. (© Bingham Library Trust)

entertainment room occupied the semi-basement, while accommodation for the resident caretaker was provided in a separate cottage at the rear of the property, with the librarian accommodated in a flat in the main building.

All persons resident in the parish of Cirencester above the age of 13 were eligible to borrow books from the Lending Library. Figures gathered by the then librarian, Mr G.P. Jackson, at the time of the Golden Jubilee in 1955, reflect the success of the library: the average yearly issues for the period 1905-1915 were 37,000; 53,000 for 1916-1925; 47,000 for 1926-1935; 100,000 for 1936-1945; and 131,000 for 1946-1955.

The Lecture Room provided well-lit and comfortable facilities for a large number of societies to meet regularly, including the Chess Club, Choral Society, Draughts Club, Orpheus Society and the Naturalists' and Archaeologists' Club. The inaugural lecture on Tuesday 26 September 1905, 'The Study of the Empire' by H.J. MacKinder, was over-subscribed and hastily moved to the Corn Hall. The continuing popularity of the lecture programme, with an average audience of 270, stretched the facilities of the Lecture Room. Although gratified by the success, Bingham began to develop plans for a purpose-built hall with facilities not available in the Corn Hall.



Banners in English and Dutch proclaim 'Success to the Bingham Library' and 'Health and Long Life to the Donor'. (© Bingham Library Trust)



The Lending Library was on the top floor and this view shows the latest in library technology, the Cotgreave Indicators (far right). (W. Dennis Moss, © Bingham Library Trust)

In passing it is of interest to note that in the Trust deed of 5 December 1907 the witnesses to Bingham's signature were H. A. van Beuningen, President Chamber of Commerce, Utrecht, and W. van Beuningen,

Director, Steenkolen Handelsvereniging, Utrecht (brother-in-law and nephew respectively). In Cirencester the Trustees included Earl Bathurst, Archdeacon Sinclair, F.T.E. Boulton, W.S. Harmer, E.C. Sewell, F.W. Woods, and E.B. Haygarth.

### **Bingham Hall, Cirencester**

The second 'noble and inspiring vision' was given solidity in the form of the Bingham Hall and Rifle Range, opened in King Street on 14 October 1908.<sup>10</sup>

The formation of the Cirencester companies of the Boys' Brigade and the Church Lads' Brigade attracted Bingham's attention to the need to train the youth of the country in habits of discipline, obedience and self-control at a time when patriotic fervour and the need to defend the realm were uppermost in the country's mind. The hall provided facilities for military and physical exercises and recreation, with a fully equipped rifle range in which to practise with a Solano target of landscape and moving figures.



The foundation stone was laid by Countess Bathurst in March 1908 and the Bingham Hall was completed by October. (W. Dennis Moss, © Bingham Library Trust)

The foundation stone was laid on 7 March 1908 and work was completed within seven months at a cost of £30,000. A two-day Fancy Fair, organised by Mrs Bingham and Lady Bathurst, helped to raise funds for the restoration of the Town Hall and improvements in the West Market Place, the latter involving the demolition of buildings which obscured the west door of the parish church.

Trustees continue to administer the Trust formed in 1908, and to manage the letting of 12 houses and 6 villas which provide a steady revenue for the upkeep of the Hall and Rifle Range. During the First World War, the Hall was used as a Red Cross Hospital to deal with wounded brought to the town by the Midland & South-Western Junction Railway to its station in Watermoor. Since then 'the arts of peace' have held

sway with countless theatrical and operatic performances, and social gatherings, dances, lectures and shows. Bingham delayed his return to Utrecht after the official opening to attend the first performance of 'The Runaway Girl' when the acoustics were tested for the first time. Originally open to the rafters, the vaulted ceiling of painted canvas now in place was inserted to improve the sound quality.

As with the Library it is interesting to note Bingham's continuing involvement with the business community in Utrecht as witnesses to his signature of the 1907 Trust Deed for the Bingham Hall were J.J.A. van Schreven, Officer of the Dutch State Railways, and H.A. van Beuningen, President of the Chamber of Commerce.



The interior of the Bingham Hall soon after opening and before alterations were made to the ceiling to improve the acoustics. (W. Dennis Moss, © Bingham Library Trust)

### **Winsley Sanatorium, Wiltshire**

There was another side to Bingham largesse which should not be overlooked, and that is financial support for the provision of medical equipment and facilities, linked to the family areas of interest in and around Box and Cirencester. A chest hospital or sanatorium was opened in March 1905 in the Avon valley at Winsley west of Bradford on Avon near Bath.<sup>11</sup> It was of course conveniently close to Box and the Bingham family would have been well aware of it. The town of Cirencester assumed responsibility, as Bingham's obituary states, 'of providing by voluntary subscription a town bed at Winsley Sanatorium for Consumptives'.

When this contribution showed signs of flagging, Bingham 'wrote a cheque for the balance of about £120 that was wanting'.<sup>12</sup> The full funding input from the town's list of subscribers and a detailed account of the throughput of Cirencester residents at the sanatorium can be gleaned from local newspaper reports. The annual report for 1911 recorded that by then a total of twenty patients had been treated 'in the Cirencester Town Bed' since its opening; the list of subscribers names twenty nine individuals and town institutions, contributing a total of £91.19s, Bingham personally contributing £3.

## **Cirencester Hospital**

Towards the very end of his life, Bingham was able to support the Cottage Hospital in Cirencester by funding the building of an extension to provide seven additional beds. Internal remodelling improved the facilities for both staff and patients, and it was deemed necessary to drop the adjective 'Cottage' when it was re-opened as Cirencester Hospital in April 1913 with a fully equipped operating room, 17 beds and outpatient and emergency care facilities.

The original building dates from 1875 when Mr Allen Bathurst M.P. (later sixth Earl Bathurst) provided a Cottage Hospital at his own cost in memory of his wife, the Hon. Meriel Leicester Warren, 'for the benefit and accommodation of the poor when suffering from disease or accident which cannot be treated adequately in their own homes'.

The facilities were further extended when the X-ray equipment in use in the Bingham Hall during the war was moved to the former Apsley Hall, and the group of buildings in Sheep Street were re-designated the Memorial Hospital from 1921 in acknowledgement of the sacrifice in World War One by Cirencester people.

## **At home in Utrecht**

The Bingham's situation in Utrecht was comfortable. Although a workaholic, Bingham made time to pursue his love of the theatre and books, billiards and European travel. He owned property in and around the city including a country estate eight miles away at Schonauwen, where he restored the ruined tower of an old feudal castle, and where he was able to indulge his love of country sports with shooting and fishing. A painted tile panel now hanging in the foyer of the Bingham Hall shows Bingham with his wife and a female companion, boating on the canal below the tower.

Jane Bingham was a long-time pillar of the community in her own right, and their home provided a local focus for the English community in Utrecht, principally teachers and governesses employed by Dutch families. A second focus centred around the English church in Utrecht.<sup>13</sup> Bingham bought a plot of land and provided a handsome donation towards the cost of building both Holy Trinity Church and the adjoining Parsonage, for the benefit of English-speaking residents and visitors.

The foundation stone was laid on 9 November 1911 and the church was consecrated by Bishop Bury in June 1913. The residents of Cirencester contributed to the furnishing of the new church. In 1912 the Cirencester Friendly Societies' Hospital Demonstration Committee devoted a portion of the proceeds of the annual carnival to providing a carved oak communion table and reredos for the church. They remain there still.

## **The legacy**

How have these benefactions fared since?

For the Bingham Library, despite the investments and endowments within the Trust deed of 1907, the expense of providing a public service proved to be a financial struggle from the beginning, not helped by the wider financial depression and world wars. Following Bingham's death, his wife continued to help with gifts and bequests up until her own death in December 1922 when Trustees suggested that they should ask the Bingham Hall Trustees for a grant of £100 from their surplus income. Other options for consideration included a review of the charges for room use and a request for the porter to reduce the stoking of the boiler!

Money was always a problem. The Trustees approached the Cirencester Urban District Council to exercise its powers as the Library Authority and yearly grant aid was used to supplement the income derived from

the original investments set up by Bingham. In 1955 CUDC sought to relinquish its library powers and in 1960 Gloucestershire County Council were asked to provide the library service. At the same time the CUDC was appointed as the single Trustee of the newly constituted Bingham Library and Art Gallery Foundation, subsequently transferred to Cirencester Town Council in 1975 following local government re-organisation.

The book stock, including the Cirencester Collection and the Gloucestershire Collection of local reference books, and the day-to-day running of the library service passed to GCC. The buildings remained, and still remain, in the ownership of the Bingham Library Trust. By 1975, the increase in population and the development in library services meant that the building was unable to cope with increased demands and the decision was taken to build a new library in the garden to the rear with access from The Waterloo.

Originally opened on 20 June 1975 by Marjorie Bingham, a great niece of Daniel George, the library was completely refurbished in 2008 to meet the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Bingham would no doubt approve of this latest transformation, a third generation, which in some respects, with Wii, computers and drinks, has returned to the ethos of the 1905 library while still offering its traditional function of lending books. The Trust maintains a close involvement with the library with annual grants towards the provision of newspapers and magazines, the microfilming of the *Wilts & Glos Standard*, and a contribution to the funding of the post of children's librarian.

While the library provision transferred to GCC, the Trustees retained responsibility for the local studies material comprising documents, photographs and paintings which had been amassed by successive librarians.

Mr S.E. Harrison, the Librarian in 1912, and always with Bingham's full support, outlined his dream of creating a library of local studies material. 'What I am aiming at is to see in the library every book, print, political squib, map, report, catalogue, newspaper, and periodical issued from a printing press in Cirencester, and every book written by a Ciceter-man or woman, and every book containing reference to this grand old town. I ask you to remember that the Bingham Library is your library; and the more interesting and valuable it becomes redounds to your credit. I am quite certain if you will co-operate with me that in a very few years you will have a local collection more interesting than in many a larger town, because of the prominent place we have always held as capital of the Cotswolds, and the stirring events of history that have occurred here.'

And many co-operated, so much so that by the 1980s the collection of local studies material numbered over 5000 items, all of which were sorted and catalogued by the late Jean Welsford (her husband Alan was Librarian at the time). In 2007 the collection of local studies material was transferred to Gloucestershire Archives with ready access via the online catalogue.<sup>14</sup>

As a Registered Charity, the Bingham Library and Art Gallery Foundation (Charity No. 311488) has a number of remits: (1) the provision and maintenance of a collection of pictures and other works of art for display and exhibition; (2) the conservation, storage and maintenance of such a collection; and (3) the promotion of the appreciation of art and allied subjects. Income from assets is used to promote the education in, and appreciation of art, and allied interests such as music, and grant applications are open to all residents/persons in Cirencester below the age of 30.

In 2005 the Trust was able to fulfil Bingham's dream of opening a gallery to display the many paintings and drawings that had been presented to the library. In a letter dated 20 April 1912 Bingham thanked the Beecham family for their generous donation of paintings depicting historical scenes painted by John Beecham. 'Fortunately we own Dyer Street House which I hope ultimately to utilise as a Fine Art Gallery.' The dream was finally realised in September 2005 when the former Reading Room of the original library was refurbished and opened as the Bingham House Gallery. Drawing on a reserve of over 150 paintings and drawings that reflect the work of local artists and scenes, the Gallery is open in the summer months with a changing theme reflecting local interest.

The Bingham Hall in Cirencester has maintained a flourishing programme of concerts, lectures and activities, and celebrated its own Centenary in 2008. Countless performances have benefited from the fully equipped auditorium and dressing rooms, with seating for an audience of 400. The flexibility of the rooms allows for small and large groups to meet, and drama and dance feature strongly.

In contrast, in Box in Wiltshire, Bingham's hall no longer survives. A wooden structure with a corrugated iron roof, it served the village well for over sixty years but by the 1960s had reached the end of its useful life and was replaced by the opening of the Selwyn Hall in 1969. The old building was demolished in 1973 and the site sold. The Bingham Trust as now constituted was set up in 1979, and benefiting from the sale proceeds and other funds has administered the trust since that time, making small grants 'to the benefit of the inhabitants of Box (except where provision is made out of rates, taxes or other public funds)'.

In that function, the Box trustees mirror the continuing work of the two groups of Cirencester trustees, and it was a pleasure during the celebrations in the town between 2005-08 for all three groups of Bingham trustees to embark afresh on a process of mutual self-discovery, in the realisation of the widespread legacy of both Jane and Daniel George Bingham, but especially and inevitably by DGB. Moreover, it confirmed such largesse extending in reality as well as in spirit beyond the confines of Bingham's declared affection for his 'dear old native town' of Cirencester.

In Utrecht, Holy Trinity Church and the adjoining Parsonage, built for the benefit of English-speaking residents and visitors, serves today's Anglican congregation in Holland and celebrated its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2003.

In conclusion, Earl Bathurst's proposal of thanks at the official opening of the Bingham Public Library in September 1905 still rings true today: 'Your name, Sir, will be remembered by many generations with grateful hearts and your example will shed lustre on the pages of the history of this town.'

## Acknowledgements

Research on the Bingham legacy to Cirencester has benefited from the help of many people over a number of years, concerned not least to ensure a firm historical basis upon which the various celebrations could be held. All are thanked, especially officers and trustees past and present of the respective Bingham trusts. John Kirby kindly made available the Box reference material. Charles Bingham of Tavistock and his daughters were delighted to contribute to the celebrations during 2005-08 of his distinguished family member's largesse to Cirencester. The late Jean Welsford's work on the town's historical records has become a fitting memorial; Alan Welsford, himself a former Bingham Librarian, has continued to support that cause. Rosemary Waring has similarly championed continuing community life based around the facilities of the Bingham Hall.

## References

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<sup>1</sup> This essay relies heavily on the detailed reports in the local weekly newspaper, the *Wilts and Gloucestershire Standard* (hereafter *Wilts & Glos Standard*). Published works of particular relevance include Jean Welsford, *Cirencester: a history and guide*, Alan Sutton 1987; and David & Linda Viner, *Cirencester A Century Ago: The Bingham Legacy*, Sutton Publishing 2004

<sup>2</sup> *Local Directories: Gell & Bradshaw* 1820; *Pigot* 1822-3, 1830.

<sup>3</sup> Siblings: Charles b.1826, Frederick b.1828, Catherine b.1833 and Seymour b.1834.

'The Late Mr Daniel George Bingham; Death of Cirencester's Munificent Benefactor', *Wilts & Glos Standard*, 8 Mar 1913.

'The Late Mr D.G. Bingham, Cirencester Town's Meeting of Condolence', *Wilts & Glos Standard*, 22 Mar 1913.

'Death of Mrs Bingham', *Wilts & Glos Standard*, 23 Dec 1922

<sup>4</sup> Not, as has sometimes been assumed, at Cirencester Grammar School which was at that time around the corner in Park Lane

<sup>5</sup> The developing company, the Cheltenham and Great Western Union Railway, was absorbed into the GWR, the original lessees of the line, in 1843. The present station at Kemble Junction was not built until 1882. On the line generally, see Nigel Bray, *The Cirencester Branch*, Oakwood Press 1998. The station became Cirencester Town from 1924, to differentiate it from the town's second station opened in Watermoor in November 1883.

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- <sup>6</sup> 'A Cirencester Man in Holland' (celebrating 25 years' association with Dutch Rhenish railways), *Wilts & Glos Standard*, 13 Oct 1883. Jan van 't Sticht, in the *Stichtsche Courant*, April 1900
- <sup>7</sup> P.D. 't Hart, *H.A. van Beuningen, 'Een van Utrechts beste burgers'*, Utrecht 2006: (English translation: *Hendrik Adriaan van Beuningen (1841-1908): 'One of Utrecht's finest citizens'*).
- <sup>8</sup> With thanks to Trustees in Box. *Box Parish Magazine*, June 2006.
- <sup>9</sup> Bingham Public Library:  
'Cirencester Permanent Library', *Wilts & Glos Standard*, 05 Jan 1856.  
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'Cirencester star opens the town's 'glamorous' library', *Wilts & Glos Standard*, 27 Nov 2008.
- <sup>10</sup> Bingham Hall:  
'Bingham Public Hall and Rifle Range', Supplement to *Wilts & Glos Standard*, 04 Jan 1908.  
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'The Bingham Hall – 75 years on – and a real asset for town', *Wilts & Glos Standard*, 14 Oct 1983.  
'Still 'of advantage' to town' (Centenary Celebrations), *Wilts & Glos Standard*, 18 Sep 2008.  
'Remembering the man who made hall possible', *Wilts & Glos Standard*, 25 Oct 2008.
- <sup>11</sup> 'Winsley Sanatorium, Cirencester Town Bed', *Wilts & Glos Standard*, 30 Mar 1912.
- <sup>12</sup> 'Cirencester Hospital, Recent Additions and Improvements, this week's re-opening', *Wilts & Glos Standard*, 17 Apr 1913. Steve Clews, *Cirencester Memorial Hospital: a brief history of the site and buildings*, Cotswold District Council 1988.
- <sup>13</sup> English Church at Utrecht, 'The Late Mr Daniel George Bingham; Death of Cirencester's Munificent Benefactor', *Wilts & Glos Standard*, 08 Mar 1913.
- <sup>14</sup> Gloucestershire Archives D10820. Gloucestershire Archives, *Newsletter* October 2008, p.7-8.