



# THE BRUNDALL & BRAYDESTON CHRONICLE

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Have you got something to share? Items for publication should be sent to The Editor, Orchard House, Blakes Lane, Brundall NR13 5JN. Tel: 01603 716115 Email: enquiries@brundallvillagehistory.org.uk



*This recently-donated photo, from May 1964, shows the magnificent view towards Blofield Church from 15, Highfield Avenue, Brundall. Broadland District Council has received proposals to demolish this fine early 1930s house as part of an application by a local developer to erect several bungalows in its place and on land at the rear.*

## Medieval mayhem

**Ann-Marie Simpson discovers the story of the Bangs family of Braydeston and Strumpshaw**

Imagine living in Brundall 500 years ago. Clean air, green pastures, abundant wildlife, sheep and cattle, wildflower meadows, the sound of birdsong uninterrupted by noisy power tools or traffic. Sounds idyllic doesn't it? Then imagine a lifetime

of hard physical labour for most and total reliance on weather for good harvests and food on the table. You were lucky if you reached 40. If herbs didn't help your toothache maybe the blacksmith would.

In the 1400s people living around Brundall faced another threat - nasty neighbours. Some of these were members of the Bangs family.

Thanks to brothers Paul and Peter

Bangs we now have a glimpse of medieval 'goings on' in and around Braydeston and Strumpshaw. They have written a fascinating book called *The Bangs Family of East Anglia - the First 800 Years* (1). It is not only a wonderful resource for our local history but also a master class on how to research and write up a family history. Using the

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[www.brundallvillagehistory.org.uk](http://www.brundallvillagehistory.org.uk)

# Neighbours from hell - and some respectable citizens

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remarkable survival of the Manor Court Rolls of Strumpshaw and Braydeston (2) as well as a host of other records, they have been able to build up a vivid picture of their ancestors' lives. It also helps us to understand what life was really like back then.

As in most families, there are more than a few skeletons in the cupboard! A few might be described as the proverbial "neighbours from hell". Other members of the Bangs family gained a significant degree of respectability, including high office in Norwich business and civic life.

It is thought the name Bangs is of Viking origin. This surname, with variants, exists today in Scandinavia and north Germany and we know east Norfolk was widely settled by Danish Vikings.

The name first crops up in Norfolk in a Gt Yarmouth document of 1344 in a list of townsmen and mariners (3). In 1348 there is a William Bangge at Hardley. In 1379 we find the first mention of a John and a Robert Bange in the Strumpshaw Manor Court rolls. They are behaving themselves at that point but then fines for misdemeanours begin to appear. In 1384 John is fined for trespass and was slow in paying up. In 1387 John is fined for allowing a tenement to be in a ruinous state. This may be a family trait, as in 1404:

*Henry Bange caused damage in his tenement held in bondage to the lord and has a day for repairing the damage.*

Again in 1408 he is threatened with a fine of 4s unless he repairs the damage caused. The family seems to have been based in Strumpshaw for some time but by around 1420 they are also in Braydeston. This doesn't mean that they didn't have people living or working in Brundall. Manors were never tidily co-terminous with parishes.



**South Burlingham church where the Bangs were involved in a fight with an elephant. Right: A rare wall painting of the murder of Thomas Bangs.**  
*Photos by Carla Hodgson.*

Meanwhile, Augustine Banges was making a name for himself in Norwich (4). The authors believe he was "almost certainly ....the son of John Bange from Strumpshaw". He is mentioned in a 1398 deed of property in the parish of St. Edmund, Conesford - the King Street area of Norwich (5). Banges was listed as a 'piscator' and later described in 1430 as a 'fish merchant' but was also cropping up in other records as a builder of some sort. By then he was a very prominent citizen and was the Sheriff in 1432. He was involved with others in investing in property deals, some of which look somewhat 'shady'. One of these people was Sir Thomas Tuddenham, another was John Heydon. Tuddenham was Sheriff of Norfolk and Suffolk and Heydon was Recorder of Norwich in the same year Augustine Bangs was made Sheriff of Norwich. As the authors describe, this may have a bearing on some of the more outrageous acts the Bangs family was involved in later. Back in Braydeston/Strumpshaw in 1435 we read:

*Robert Bange caused damage in the lord's wood with his animals (fined 3d)...and the same Robert once*



ght. Above right: One of the pew ends in the shape of a Becket — who was also attacked in a church.

*obstructed the road beneath Edward Wade's (fined 6d)".*

Things escalate in the 1440s, with physical assaults recorded:

*Augustine Bange - not the Norwich one - (12d) and Simon Banges, son of Robert Banges senior committed an assault on Robert Holdewell and Michael atte Chirche...*

In 1450 a Margaret Pykeryng alleged that Henry Bange, of Strumpsagh, yoman had with force of arms broken into her enclosure and houses at Strumpshaw and with beasts grazed, trampled and eaten crops and grass....and churned up the ground with carts. It gets worse. It was also alleged that in 1452 Henry and his brother Augustine Bange together with two others:

*committed an assault on two of the lord's tenants in the church of South Burlingham with swords, spears, daggers, bows and arrows...*

I'm sure the church there is much safer these days! Note the spelling of Strumpshaw above. In these old documents place name spellings vary enormously,

sometimes even within the same document. Summing up the seriousness of these offences is a later Inquiry into these events, whereby a whole band of men from Witton, Blofield, Strumpshaw and South Burlingham including Henry Bange had:

*by armed force, that is with glaives [a one-sided sharp blade attached to the end of a long wooden shaft] plough-staves and spears at Stumpeshaugh and subsequently throughout the whole of the county of Norfolk...did daily ride on horseback in arms drawing a multitude of people around them and threatening and intimidating representatives of the Lord King in such a manner that no minister of the said Lord King dared to arrest them...*

This armed band took over the Manor of Bradestone, throwing out the servants of the Lord of the Manor, Osbert Mundford. Mundford wrote to Sir John Paston to seek help.

Henry and his brothers were the subject of multiple arrest warrants and he was in the Marshalsea prison

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for treason, when, amazingly, in a draft document dating probably from 1453 King Henry VI pardons those involved in these outrages, including Henry Bange. The authors point to this period in English history, just before the so-called Wars of the Roses, as being full of intrigue and examples of people changing sides between aristocratic factions. Tuddenham and Heydon mentioned above may have been responsible for the actions of these rioters.

At least one member of the Banges family was still in this area in 1467 but the family then moved on to other places in Norfolk and later to Suffolk and Essex and even New England - one became a Pilgrim Father.

The family were certainly 'on the up', getting involved in land deals and holding respectable positions in the places to which they moved. This is perhaps an example of how a family then could get involved in violent actions not so much by their own leanings but through the influence of more powerful local leaders.

In times when life was often lived 'on the edge' maybe attaching oneself to a powerful local leader was seen as the only way of ensuring your family's future.

#### NOTES

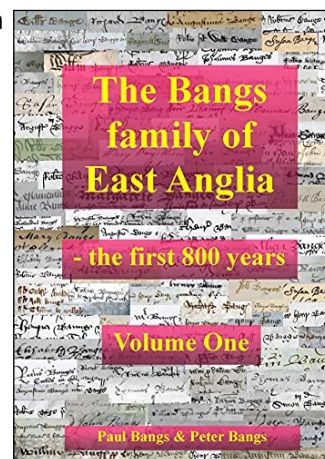
(1) "The Bangs Family of East Anglia – the first 800 years", Paul Bangs and Peter Bangs, 2021 Obtainable from Amazon

(2) The Court Rolls of the Manors of Braydeston and Strumpshaw are held in several places including the National Archives and the British Library

{3} NA Ref: KB 27/338

(4) Much of the evidence for Augustine Bangs of Norwich is found in the remarkable "Calendar of Deeds enrolled in the City Court, transcribed by our own Frederic Johnson (who grew up in Braydeston House at the end of the 19th century). These too are now in the NRO.

(5) NRO Ref: NCR Case 3e Roll 15 m33 dorso



## A smile to honour stalwart member Pat Makin

Many people in and around Brundall have been mourning the loss of Pat Makin who sadly passed away on February 23<sup>rd</sup>. She was loved and respected by all who knew her for her warmth and kindness and for her positive outlook. She was well-known too for her readiness to help in all sorts of village activities over many years. Those of you who attend our monthly local history talks will no doubt have been served tea or coffee by her on many occasions. She was always the first to arrive and the last to leave.

Long before the Local History Group was established, Pat and her husband Ian had been attending St Lawrence church since moving to Brundall in the late 1960s. She was always a very active member and as with a number of other organisations, even outside the village, regularly gave her time with practical help, like brass-cleaning, and cooking the most delicious cakes and pastries for various events (including the BLHG's 10th anniversary cake).

One regular commitment in the past was helping to



run catering for visiting families at Norwich Prison. It was her little joke to tell surprised friends that she was "just off to prison for the afternoon"! Patricia Nona Makin was born in Norwich on March 21 1930. After leaving school she worked for Norwich Union before marrying Ian, her childhood sweetheart, in 1956. They lived for a while in Thorpe and also away from Norfolk but then moved to Brundall, to their bungalow

on The Street.

Pat loved her garden and spent many hours bringing it to its current glorious state. Many of us have been cheered by it, and if Pat was in the garden there would be a friendly chat too.

One thing those of us who knew her will always remember is her smile. In these dark, troubled times perhaps we should all remember to exchange smiles with whoever we meet, in memory of her. It would be a lovely memorial and legacy for Pat.

Ann-Marie Simpson

**BLHG ARCHIVE PROJECT:** We are working in partnership with the Norfolk Record Office Community Archives Project supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Our enthusiastic volunteers attend weekly practical sessions and some work from home. Their achievements, with a selection of recent donations to the Archive, will be shown at the AGM on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> July. If you are interested in joining our group please contact: Chloe Veale 01603 928804 or [enquiries@brundallvillagehistory.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@brundallvillagehistory.org.uk).