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More About Our Street Names

By 'Beorcham'

Here is a postscript to the "historical directory" which appeared in February, March and April issues of the *Review*. Sins of omission, happily, were not numerous, but several readers have written, called or telephoned to supplement the information already published.

Reference to Bell Lane, named after a former Northchurch public-house, reminded a parishioner that in a document of 1770 the name was given as Gray's Lane. From the same source I learn that in mid-Victorian days Oakland Lane was the name given to a section of Gilham's Lane (now Cross Oak Road) near Oakland Villas, the oldest houses in that part of the town.

Here is another comment: "I do not know where the swing-gate which gave Swing Gate Lane its name was situated, but I wish you would hit out at the people who have started corrupting the spelling to 'Swingate Lane' . . . You did not mention that the continuation of this lane (the bridle-way beyond Bottom Farm) has for generations been known as the Crinkle Crankle."

Friday Street

Friday Street (the farm in Haresfoot Park) interested another reader, who believes that this name was formerly given to outlandish farms in many parts of the country. Because they were isolated, the farms were considered unfortunate, and the name may have some association with Good Friday. My informant adds that the road through Haresfoot Park must be of great antiquity, and suggests that one of the cottages near the park gate may have been an inn many years ago.

Several readers agree that it would be appropriate to revive Squires' Lane as the name of the little turning off Lower King's Road. For this name I am indebted to Mr. F. W. Stupples, who found it in an early Victorian deed. Mr. S. T. Chappell points out that a more modern deed gives the name as Waterside Road—an apt name, but I prefer Squires' Lane, and hope to see it adopted by the Urban Council.

The Circus!

"How long has Sunnyside been known as Sunnyside?" asks a correspondent. I don't know. So far as I am aware, the name has never been recognised officially, and is not of great antiquity. Possibly it is a nickname which gained currency when the George Street area was being developed.

Speaking of George Street, did you know that the bend (about 150 yards from Gravel Path corner) was once known as The Circus? This name appears on a map published in 1866, when plots of land were being offered for sale.

Happily The Circus died an early death, but residents still refer to the little path which connects George Street with New Street as The Spinney. Nowadays this name is regarded as a joke, but there really was a spinney in years gone by. By the time the Ordnance Survey map was published in 1874, it had been reduced to two rows of fir trees.

Bridges and Billets

A reader gently rebukes me for not mentioning that Little Bridge Road was originally named Londrina Terrace. But that is very recent history! My critic adds that we have too many "Bridges" in our street names—Bridge Street, Little Bridge Road, two Bridgewater Roads, and now North Bridge Road, a new turning off Billet Lane.

Now for a word or two about Billet Lane. "Why isn't it given its proper name—Crooked Billet Lane?" I am asked by a reader, who complains that "plain Billet Lane suggests a row of lodgings for soldiers!" He goes on to say that it is one of the oldest rights of way in the district, and was of great importance before the metalled road was made over Northchurch Common. An early photograph shows a "water-splash" where the little Bulbourne bridge stands today.

Meaningless Names

"Why George Street, Clarence Road, Montague Road?" asks another reader. "Who were George, Clarence, Montague?" I don't know. These

street names were probably chosen at random, like Hazel Road, Beech Drive and Briar Way.

Interest was aroused by the recollection that the path leading from Chesham Road towards Swing Gate Lane was known as St. Edmund's, and was probably so named after an ancient religious house. Actually, the name St. Edmund's was given not only to the path but to the whole of the field above the Rectory Meadow, the western part of which is now occupied by allotment-gardens. Farther east, the upper part of the Swing Gate Lane Estate was known as St. Edmund's Field. A reader suggests that, to preserve this old name, the Council should fix the name-plate "St. Edmund's" on the little wall at the entrance to the path from Chesham Road.

Rotten Row

Finally, I have been reminded of Cobb's reference, in his "History of Berkhamsted," to a Rotten Row near the Castle Mill. Cobb states: "So, you see, there was formerly a Rotten Row in Berkhamsted, just as now there is a Rotten Row in Hyde Park. Whether the name be a corruption of 'Routine' we cannot say. Doubtless, however, along our Rotten Row there have passed many routines or processions to and from the Castle."

I did not include Rotten Row in my list for the very good reason that we do not know where it was. Many other old place-names can no longer be identified—Hunger Hill, Oxlade, Philip's Lane and Myddell Hill, for example. An early document mentions Tiptoes Lane and Tiptoes Bridge near "Banckes Mill," but here again we do not know where the lane and bridge were situated. Other ancient names, mentioned in the "Victoria" History of Hertfordshire, include le Corourestrete, Strickelane, Northmulane, Jacobsbern, Hulfred, le Foulsho, Pourputte, and Benethenstrete.

Some Suggestions

So much for the past. Turning to the future, I hope the Urban Council will continue to name new streets after bygone notabilities. Among men and women who have yet to be given street name-plates are Dean Incent, Thomas Waterhouse (last rector of Ashridge), Carey, Murray, Sayer, Spencer and Finch (of Berkhamsted Place), Henry Nash and Thomas Whateley (eminent Victorians), Edward Salter (generous benefactor of 17th century), Christopher Woodhouse (the borough's last bailiff), Francis Wethered (of Ashlyns), and Mrs. Lionel Lucas, who gave the town Butts Meadow.

But perhaps we had better exclude Sir Edward Carey, Queen Elizabeth's Master of the Jewel House and builder of Berkhamsted Place, for Carey Street, in London, has certain associations with bankruptcy!

Local field names will be the subject of a later article.

Medicine and Food

Local Arrangements

Arrangements for the emergency supply of medicine now operating in Berkhamsted is as follows:—

CHEMISTS' ROTA

The week-day evening (6-7 p.m.) and Sunday morning (11.30 a.m.-12.30 p.m.) service rota adopted by Berkhamsted chemists for the dispensing of medical prescriptions, is as follows for the current month:—

April 26—May 2: Figg.
May 3—9: Dickman.
May 10—16: Taylors.
May 17—23: Boots.
May 24—30: Figg.

FOOD OFFICE

The Food Office, in the Town Hall, is open on four week-days as follows:—
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Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 12 noon.

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