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**A HART**

'BEORCHAM' STARTS A NEW TOUR OF DISCOVERY

## Old Local Field Names

In old local documents, references are made to fields with such picturesque names as Maidens' Baulk, Dog Kennel Field, and Pharaoh's Dell.

Here we have homely reminders of the time when Berkhamsted was "truly rural"—when fields and meadows had names that were perhaps centuries old and as familiar to the inhabitants as street names. A few fields were named after their owners (Nash's Pightle and Glover's Meadow, for example); a larger number took their names from wells, dells, ponds and barns. Among the more attractive names were Strawberry Close, Goodspeed, and Gilliflowers; but Berkhamsted also possessed fields with names which suggested poor crops and poverty, such as Hunger Field, Little Starve Acre, and Ragged Jack.

### From Fields to Houses

Today, very few local fields and meadows have well known names. Butts Meadow, the Moor, Tompkins' Meadow, Velvet Lawn, Kitchener's Field and Dell Field at once come to mind, but it is not easy to extend this short list. And three of these six names are comparatively modern.

Happily, the practice of consulting old maps and documents to find appropriate names for houses is growing. Such house names as "Timber Close," "Kentish Croft," "Partridge Close" and "Shepherd's Close" are not only more attractive and more original than "Chez Nous" and "Cactus Villa"—they perpetuate names used by Berkhamstedians when fields, not houses, occupied the hillsides.

To recall the old field names of Berkhamsted, we cannot do better than consult the Tithe Map and set off on a few imaginary walks, learning as we go the names in common use a century or

more ago. There necessarily will be a few gaps, for here and there fields had no known names, or were described simply as Five Acres, Nine Acres, Fifteen Acres, and so on.

### The Hop Garden

Let us start from the centre of the town and walk up Cox's Lane (now King's Road). On our right, the land between Hope Hall and Charles Street (including the upper part of Elm Grove) was known as the HOP GARDEN. It was not the only hop garden in Berkhamsted, for Berkhamsted had its own breweries in those days. Mr. O. W. King, whose house stands on part of the former Hop Garden, tells me that hops still persist in growing in his garden, though it must be a hundred years since they were grown commercially there.

Between King's Road and Doctor's Commons Road (from Charles Street to "The Beeches") was SAINFOIN FIELD, a rare instance of a field being named after a crop. Between Sainfoin Field and the stepped lane which links King's Road with Doctor's Commons Road was GUTTERIDGE POND FIELD—a reminder of a former roadside pond.

Next, still on the west side of King's Road, we come to TIMBER CLOSE, a name perpetuated by Mr. R. E. Webb's house, which occupies but a corner of a "close" which stretched from King's Road half-way to Cross Oak Road, and included the lower parts of Graemesdyke Road and Kingsdale Road.

Almost the whole of the Kingsdale Road area, from King's Road to Cross Oak Road, was DELL FIELD, a name given to many fields in the district. Between the spinney (recently cut down) and Kingshill were OX FIELD and OX MEADOW, which extended half-way to Cross Oak Road.

### The Butt Field

Let us now turn our attention to the area between King's Road and Chesham Road, starting once again from the

Berkhamsted School for Girls was DOG KENNEL FIELD. I wish I knew the origin of this curious name; your guess is probably better than mine!

Rising steeply behind Dog Kennel Field was GREAT BUTT FIELD, part of which is now popularly known as Tompkins' Meadow. Great Butt Field had a small frontage on Chesham Road where "Kinghoe" stands today.

The houses and gardens between "Kinghoe" and the Playing Fields stand on HUNGER FIELD. This is an important discovery. Local historians have often wondered where Hunger Hill (mentioned in old documents) was situated, and it would now be safe to deduce that Hunger Hill was the steep part of Chesham Road, or Elvey or Grubbs Lane, as it was formerly called.

### Dilly Piece

Returning to King's Road, we pass by Dog Kennel Field and find—no, not the Ashlyns estate, but DILLY PIECE, THE LINCES, and SPARK FIELD.

Dilly Piece—why doesn't some householder revive this charming name?—was a narrow roadside strip of land which extended between the two entrances to Ashlyns Road. Behind Dilly Piece, The Lincos rose steeply to Hunger Field. The boundary was the fenced and hedged section of the public footpath to the Playing Fields. Incidentally the name (The Lincos) denotes ancient terraced cultivation.

The southern half of the Ashlyns estate occupies part of Spark Field, which stretched as far as Kingshill. To the east, Spark Field was bordered by EIGHTEEN ACRES, the name formerly given to that part of the Playing Fields west of the public footpath.

### Maidens' Baulk

Two other parts of the Playing Fields (adjoining Chesham Road) had the ordinary name of FIVE ACRES and the extraordinary name of MAIDENS' BAULK. And thereby hangs a tale.

A Charity Commissioners' report published about 120 years ago states: "There is a piece of land, called Maidens' Baulk, forming part of a field belonging to Thomas Dorrien, Esq. It is now indistinguishable from the rest of the field, but a baulk means a strip of land forming a sort of terrace, and thus distinguished from the field

## Medicine and Local Arranger

Arrangements for the emergency medicine now operating in B as follows:—

### CHEMISTS' RO

The week-day evening (6-7 p.m. morning (11.30 a.m. - 12.30 p.m. adopted by Berkhamsted chemists pending of medical prescriptions, for the current month:—

June 28—July 4: Dickman  
July 5—11: Taylors  
July 12—18: Boots  
July 19—25: Figg  
July 26—August 1: Dickman

### FOOD OFFICE

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

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