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ROUND THE DISTRICT WITH 'BEORCHAM'

Old Local Field Names

(CONCLUDED)

When looking at the early-Victorian Tithe Map and accompanying documents, it is difficult to resist the temptation to linger over features which have little or nothing to do with our quest for the old field names of Berkhamsted.

For instance, we find a "Candle House" near the Court House. What an interesting reminder of the time when a tallow-chandler carried on his odorous business in the very heart of the town, unworried by competition that was yet to come from gas and electricity undertakings! Little more than a stone's throw from the "Candle House," just below the Baptist graveyard in The Wilderness, was a filbert orchard. And just behind Castle-street, where part of Bridge-street stands today, were a rickyard and bullock-shed.

But enough of these diversions. Back to our field names—and how I wish a large map could be printed to save going into tedious geographical details!

The Frogmoors

Fortunately, THE MOOR is still THE MOOR. But could you place FIRST, MIDDLE and FAR FROGMOOR? First Frogmoor was the name of a small piece of land on the west side of Mill-street, between the bottom of Water-lane and The Moor. Middle and Far Frogmoor were immediately west of First Frogmoor, between Greene Field-road and The Moor.

The Sports Ground of today occupies the eastern part of LOWER MEADOWS, which stretched as far as the Gasworks' subway. On the opposite side of the canal, a long, narrow strip of land was called ST. JOHN'S WELL MEADOW. Surprisingly, the Tithe Map does not

mention SPITAL MEADS, the name given in many old documents to water meadows near the ancient Hospital of St. John, which gave its name to the well and the lane.

Several small meadows in the valley had no names. An exception was GLOVER'S LITTLE MEADOW, now largely occupied by the cottages and gardens of Belton-road. East of Glover's Little Meadow, stretching almost as far as the now unoccupied Lock House, was GLOVER'S MEADOW.

Great Pasturage

On the north side of the railway, GREAT PASTURAGE was the name of that part of the modern Castle Hill Estate west of the lime avenue, and also of the adjoining Park. Why doesn't someone in this area rename his house "Great Pasturage"? So pleasant and distinguished a name is well worth reviving.

Nowadays, most townspeople imagine that Dell Field is the name of the whole of the area between the Park, Billet-lane, the railway, and the hilltop public footpath. Thus, the allotment-gardens near the railway are called Dell Field Allotments. But in days when the Tithe Map was compiled, the lower section, including the allotment-gardens and land between the railway and canal, was known as ELEVEN ACRES.

DELL FIELD was the name of most, but not all, of the land above Eleven Acres; a long, narrow strip adjoining the upper part of the Park was called LONG SLIPE, the boundary between Long Slipe and Dell Field being in line with the footpath which runs straight from the top of Dell Field to the former Keeper's Cottage on Berkhamsted Common.

Near Northchurch Common

On the west side of Billet-lane, opposite the allotment-gardens and Bridgewater-road, were several small "Pightles." Here, too, stood a farmhouse, long since demolished and completely forgotten. Continuing up the deep-cut footpath from Billet-lane to the corner of Northchurch Common, we pass, on our left, SPRING FIELD, still bordered by a row of handsome beeches.

Let us now take the hilltop path from Northchurch Common towards Berkhamsted Place. For the first 150 yards or so, we pass through WOOD LANE FIELD, one half of which (on the left-hand side) is now occupied by bungalows. After passing through Wood Lane Field, we find, on our left, LITTLE STARVE ACRE (also occupied by bungalows) and, on our right, GREAT STARVE ACRE. Here, as on Hunger Hill (off Chesham-road) the crops were presumably poor.

Ragged Jack and Bess

Leaving Little and Great Starve Acres (and the bungalows) behind, we find, right, our old friend Dell Field. Left, on the other side of the hedge, is POND FIELD.

The winding footpath which runs from the north-west corner of Dell Field to Stony Bottom takes us past a number of fields with interesting names. On our left, LITTLE STARVE ACRE and CART PARK FIELD (both now occupied by bungalows), then LODGE HILL, LONG MEADOW, GREAT PLAIN, UPPER BIRCHES, and LOWER BIRCHES. On our right, POND FIELD, RAGGED JACK, RAGGED BESS, GREAT BABS BARN, and LITTLE BABS BARN. It would not be possible to give the exact location of these fields without going into great detail, but a few other field names in this area may be noted: CRANES-WORTH FIELD, GROOM'S CLOSE, CRAWLEY FIELD, PHAROAH'S DELL, GATES CLOSE, UPPER SHOT, MIDDLE SHOT, THREE CORNER CLOSE, UPPER STONEY LEYS, LOWER STONEY LEYS, and STONEY LEYS.

Around Berkhamsted Place

Returning to the top of Dell Field, we continue along the path to Berkhamsted Place. On our right, past Dell Field and Long Slipe and above the Park, was LITTLE CHERRY ORCHARD. On the left was GREAT CHERRY ORCHARD—but those cherry trees were cut down many years ago. Passing Castle Hill (or Newhouse) Farm, the upper part of the large, undulating field on our left shared the names of HUNDRED ACRES (an obvious exaggeration) and LODGE FIELD. A smaller tract on the north side of the road to Berkhamsted Place (now largely built upon) was BRIARY FIELD. Opposite, between the road and the upper part of the lime avenue, a triangular strip of land bore the tell-tale name of HOP GARDEN. Like many other farmers, the tenant of Newhouse Farm brewed his own beer in early Victorian days, but the bulk of the hop crop was doubtless sold to other and larger brewers!

Goodspeeds

The lower part of the Castle Hill Estate (east of the lime avenue) and the first part of what is now popularly called Kitchener's Field, was BANK FIELD. The northern part of Kitchener's Field, east of the footpath to the Common, had the happy name of GOODSPEEDS. Beyond Goodspeeds we pass through TEN ACRE MEADOW; then, on our right (before reaching Well Farm) we find BARN FIELD and SEVEN ACRES. SHEPHERD'S CLOSE was the charming name of the field in which stand the barns of Well Farm; opposite (i.e., on the western side of the footpath which runs towards the Targets) was WELL FIELD.

Now for the land east of New-road. Opposite the Castle, at the Corner of New-road and Whitehill, we find one of the loveliest of field names—STRAWBERRY CLOSE. Next, just beyond the signposted public footpath, we pass

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:—

August 30—September 5: Taylors.
September 6—12: Boots.
September 13—19: Figg.
September 20—26: Dickman.
September 27—October 3: Taylors.

FOOD OFFICE

The Food Office, in the Town Hall, is open on four week-days as follows:—
Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.; 2 to 5 p.m.
Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 12 noon.

LIBRARY OPENING TIMES

The Berkhamsted Branch of the County Library is open in Prince Edward Street on the following days and times:—

Monday and Friday—10 a.m. to 1 p.m.; 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.; 5.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.
Wednesday—10 a.m. to 1 p.m.; 5 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.
Thursday—10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Saturday—10 a.m. to 1 p.m.; 2.30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

NOTE.—The Library is CLOSED for alterations 1st—4th September inclusive.

Outpatient attendances at the West Herts Hospital have risen from 18,608 to 20,083 during the year 1952-53.

Casualties admitted to the hospital showed a slight decrease to 12,604.

LOWER HUNTS HILL and then LITTLE HUNTS HILL. Next, SIX ACRES, and then, last field before reaching the Common, GREAT FIELD.

Between these fields and Gravel-path we find HUNTS HILL, yet another DELL FIELD, FLAT FIELD, LITTLE FIELD, GREAT MEADOW, and NEW CLOSE—the last-named above the top of Whitehill. Yes, common, everyday names; but what of BROKEN POST MEADOW, now occupied by "Byways" and "Frith Haye"?

Help Please!

In concluding this brief series of articles, it must be admitted that justice has not been done to a subject of great interest. Lack of space (and laziness!) are to blame for the omission of a number of field names. There is scope for considerable further research, and the Local History Society would welcome the help of enthusiasts with the necessary time and patience to make an exhaustive study of the field names of Berkhamsted and neighbouring villages.

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