

WHEN OLD FAGGOTS CAUSED TROUBLE

## The Town's Royal Charities

It is curious that not one of Berkhamsted's three Royal charities was administered according to the wishes of the donors.

Besides granting Berkhamsted a new charter, James I gave £100 for the poor of the parish, stipulating that the money was to be used to "set the poor to work in a manufactory." The churchwardens were bewildered; factory management was beyond their ken, and eventually the £100 gift was used to purchase land at Ashley Green, the rent aiding the poor rate.

A misapplication which benefited the ratepayers instead of the poor was not remedied until 1757, when it was agreed by the vestry that the rent should be laid out in bread, sixpenny loaves being distributed every Sunday, Christmas Day and Good Friday to poor people who had not received alms within three months.

### CHARLES I'S TWO GIFTS

Charles I was even more generous than his father. He gave two sums of £100 for Berkhamsted's poor, the first in 1620, when he was Prince of Wales.

This was intended as another "work, not want" gift. The money was to be used to employ the poor of Berkhamsted in Jersey, and according to Chauncy a start was made "until the undertakers broke." Only £82 of the £100 was recovered, and with this sum the churchwardens bought a row of tenements called Ragged Row (afterwards replaced by the workhouse and then by Kitsbury Parade). Some 130 years ago the tenements were pulled down and the materials were sold for £40, this sum going towards the fund for building the workhouse.

When he was king, Charles gave another £100 to provide firing for the poor of Berkhamsted. An old vestry

book states: "A.D. 1627. A true note of the distribution of the wood given by his Majesty to the poor of this town; that is to say, for the use of £100 in the hands of Stephen Besouth, Thomas Newman, Edward Kellett and William Pitkin, delivered by particular note unto these poor people hereunder written. This wood was disposed of before the 20th December, and it was valued to be worth £10." Then follows a list of the names of 72 recipients.

In other words, four leading property owners, and their successors, were each required to supply faggots to the value of £2 10s. for distribution to the poor in good time for Christmas. Kellett was owner of Egerton House; Besouth of Harriotts End Farm; Newman of Ashlyns.

### AT EGERTON HOUSE

For a century the poor enjoyed King Charles' hearth-warming gift. But as the years passed by, and estates changed hands, ancient obligations were no longer honoured. It is good to record that among the last property-owners to keep the home fires burning was Dr. Robert Brabant, rector from 1681-1722, who owned both Egerton House and Harriotts End Farm, and personally supervised the distribution of wood for firing at the gateway of Egerton House.

Deprived of their Christmas faggots, the poor grumbled until the churchwardens, about 200 years ago, invited old parishioners to supply evidence so that a case could be laid before the Solicitor General. Eight of the ten witnesses could not write.

### UNPOPULAR LOGS

John Hudnall, 70 years of age, said he received 20 faggots from Dr. Brabant every year "for near 20 years." Izabella Dean (66) recalled the distribution of 20 faggots apiece to 20 poor people, the last about 15 years ago. George Hollys (69) said that Thomas Smith neglected one year to distribute the faggots, and "Dr. Brabant, who afterwards purchased the estate, obliged him to distribute the faggots that were due before he completed the purchase." From Alice Lay (60) came a statement that the faggots were worth 1d. each.

Then up spake Edward Chilton (55), who, as a youth, had been coachman to the late Dr. Brabant, and for several years had drawn out and delivered the faggots. The precise quantity he could no longer recollect. Some of the faggots came from the orchard of Egerton House, and others from Harriotts End.

Chilton "well remembered the poor were not satisfied with the faggots Dr. Brabant sent to them, being the logs of some of the cherry trees in the orchard of Egerton House; the poor complained very much of them and said that they ought to have had good spring faggots."

Thomas Holloway (86), a churchwarden in the year of Dr. Brabant's death, and his wife Ann (79), also gave evidence. Thomas said he employed John Geary, an attorney of Chesham, to compile a list of the papers in the church chest. At the time of taking the list he saw and heard read a paper which set forth all the particulars relating to the faggots as well as the estates and persons that were bound to pay them. He had often been told that Dr. Brabant took several papers of consequence out of the church chest of Berkhamsted, which were not returned.

At a vestry meeting on October 16, 1757, the following statement was made: "It appears plainly that the poor have an undoubted right to such a distribution [of faggots] which by former vestries and other records appears to amount in the whole to £10 a year, that is 50s. a year to each person whose estates have been severally bound for the same. It is of the opinion of this parish now assembled in vestry that a demand be immediately made by the churchwardens and overseers on behalf of the poor on the four persons . . ."

### NOT ROBBING THE POOR

The landowners were indignant. Mrs. Mary Essington, of Ashlyns, said she had never heard of the charity and could not bear to think that the parishioners imagined that she was wilfully robbing the poor. To placate the good lady, a resolution was passed absolving her from un-Christian meanness.

In 1759 a case was laid before the Solicitor General. He was of the opinion that if the defendants should deny the trust, there was insufficient evidence to enable the parish to recover. No documents could not be found at the King's Remembrance Office and the Lord Treasurer's Remembrance Office.

### BREAD, NOT FAGGOTS

By entries in the church book it appears that about the year 1758, John Dell contracted for the purchase of Harriotts End Farm, and procured a reference to a Master of the Court of Chancery respecting the claim at that time made upon this estate by the parish. The Court confirmed the claim, and decreed that the sum of £30 should be paid by the purchaser of this estate to the parish for the arrears due to them, and that he should have an allowance for this payment out of his purchase-money. This sum of £30 was paid to the parish by John Dell, and was laid out in South Sea Annuities.

The property of King Charles's charity thereafter consisted of an annuity of 30s., received by the churchwardens from Thomas Dorrien, as the owner of Harriotts End Farm, and the sum of £35 5s. stock in the New South Sea Annuities, the interest of which was 21s. The two sums of 30s. and 21s. were carried to the bread fund until, in more recent times, a new scheme for administering the town's ancient charities was adopted.

'BEORCHAM'

## EMERGENCY MEDICINE

### 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:—

July 31—August 6: Taylors.  
August 7—13: Boots.  
August 14—20: Figg.  
August 21—27: Dickman.  
August 28—Sept. 3: Taylors.

### LIBRARY OPENING TIMES

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

Mon., Tues., Thurs., & Fri.—10 a.m. to 1 p.m.;  
2 p.m. to 5 p.m.; 5.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.  
Wednesday—CLOSED ALL DAY.  
Saturday—10 a.m. to 1 p.m.; 2.30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

## De Wool Shoppe

We specialize in  
**HAND-KNITTED** Made to  
**GARMENTS** measure

Many makes of wool always in stock,  
including "P & B" (Beckhive)

MUNKROSPUN  
COPLEYS VIVELLA  
SIRDAR  
LAINES de PINGOUIN  
LADYSHIP & HOLIDAY

Everything for the Needlewoman

EXCLUSIVE TAPESTRIES

162 High St., Berkhamsted  
TEL. 982

Telegrams:  
MATTHEWS, Berkhamsted

Telephone  
15

Builders, Contractors  
and Decorators

# H. & J. Matthews Ltd.

Funeral Directors,  
Cremations, Embalming

CASTLE STREET, BERKHAMSTED

## Callaghan's Garage Ltd.

for

EFFICIENT AND COURTEOUS SERVICE

for

ROOTES GROUP SERVICE

for

PROMPT PETROL SERVICE

Shell Premium — National Benzole — B.P. Super — Dominion

Tel: Berk. 73

OUR FISH  
is fresh daily  
OUR PRICES  
are reasonable

## W. W. WARD

Fishmonger, Game Dealer  
and Fruiterer  
MARKET HOUSE  
BERKHAMSTED  
Telephone 146

## P. D. CLARK & SON

High Class  
Groceries &  
Provisions

100 HIGH STREET  
BERKHAMSTED Phone 87

## Mow with Ease

HAND & MOTOR MOWERS  
OVERHAULED & REGROUND  
ON THE PREMISES. LATEST  
TYPE OF GRINDER INSTALLED  
ALL MAKES OF MOWERS  
SUPPLIED.

## JAMES WOOD & SON

Domestic Heating & General Engineers

294 HIGH STREET - - - BERKHAMSTED  
Est. 1826 - STILL AT YOUR SERVICE - Phone 94