

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

For all  
heating queries  
consult the old firm

## James Wood and Son

Domestic Heating & General  
Engineers, Plumbers & Ironmongers  
294 HIGH STREET,  
BERKHAMSTED  
Phone: 94

## Sparrows Herne Trust

As was stated in last month's *Review*, no real improvement in the condition of our highways was made until turnpike trusts (from the reign of Charles II onward) were empowered by Act of Parliament to collect tolls at bars or turnpikes and, in return, keep the roads in good order.

The Stanmore—Aylesbury section of the busy road from London to Birmingham was controlled by the Sparrows Herne Trust, of which we still have an interesting reminder outside Underhill and Young's garage: an iron post bearing the name of the trust. It is, I believe, the only relic of its kind in the district, though before the war similar posts stood beside the main road at Hall Park and near the "Robin Hood" inn at Tring.

**TROUBLE AT THE TOLL-GATE**  
Sparrows Herne, an 18th century foundation, functioned until 1878, when eight main Hertfordshire roads were "disturmpiked" (a word actually used in a document of the period) and were taken over by the county.

In some ways the turnpike trusts were not unlike railway companies; they attracted private investors, were regulated by Act of Parliament, compelled to adhere to a fixed scale of charges, and enjoyed what was virtually a monopoly.

Anyone found by-passing the toll-gate was treated in much the same way as a man or woman who travels by train without a ticket. For example, Henry Gates, in 1811, was convicted for evading toll at a Sparrows Herne turnpike gate by going with a cart drawn by two horses over what was not a public highway.

The Sparrows Herne trustees sometimes met at the King's Arms Hotel, and among the shareholders were Berkhamsted residents. In 1763, Mary Essington, of Ashlyns, "granted securi-

ties value £210 advanced and lent by her on the credit of the tolls of the turnpike from Sparrows Herne to Aylesbury" for distribution to six poor Berkhamsted widows. Interest of 10 guineas was paid annually by trustees of the turnpike.

### TAKING TOLL

On this busy highway tolls were collected every six or seven miles from waggons, coachmen, horse-riders, and drovers. Pedestrians alone were exempt from payment.

I have not been able to find a list of charges made by the Sparrows Herne Trust—doubtless there were variations according to the cost of living—but another Hertfordshire turnpike trust (Wadesmill) was empowered, in 1733, to charge 1s. 6d. for every coach, berlin, chariot, chaise, chair or calash drawn by six or more horses or mares; sixpence if the vehicles were drawn by four horses or mares, and threepence if by one horse or mare.

For every wagon, wain, cart or carriage pulled by five or more horses or oxen the charge was one shilling; by three, sixpence; by less than three, fourpence. One halfpenny was charged for every horse, mule or ass laden but not drawing.

Drovers were required to pay tenpence per score of oxen or neat cattle, and fivepence per score of calves, dogs, sheep or lambs.

### NO ESCAPE

The trustees were empowered to detain anyone who did not pay the toll, and, after five days, to sell his cattle or goods, the overplus to be given to the defaulter!

Cattle and sheep must have been an important source of revenue; drove after drove plodded along the highway from Wales and the Midlands to Smithfield, resting overnight at the Cow Rest (believed to take its name from "Cow Rest") or in paddocks behind the Goat Inn, another good "pull-up" for drovers.

Like the old railway companies, the turnpike trusts had varying reputations. Some roads were better than others. The Sparrows Herne Trust had the reputation of maintaining its thirty miles of highway in what, before the days of John Macadam, was considered a reasonably good condition.

### RAILWAY COMPETITION

Even so, our road had its share of deep ruts, and accidents were frequent. Hunton Bridge was a notoriously dangerous spot, and there, in 1818, a coach overturned, killing a girl and seriously injuring several other passengers.

The first quarter of the 19th century was the turnpike trust's golden age. We will say more about the coaching days in a later article; but we cannot leave the Sparrows Herne Trust without

recalling the first rail *versus* road crisis. Before the railway was a year old the turnpike trustees stated that, "in consequence of the great reduction in income of this road occasioned by the London and Birmingham Railway," they found it necessary to throw upon the county the repairs of all county bridges on the road, and of 300-ft. of the road at each end of such bridges.

### DIRTY HIGH STREET

The Sparrows Herne Trust was not responsible for the upkeep of urban sections of the road. Berkhamsted High Street was maintained by the parish, and it was often in a disgraceful state—ankle-deep in mud in winter, a ribbon of thick dust in summer. To make matters worse, sanitation was unknown until a century ago. Sewage from badly constructed cesspits flowed into the High Street with the drainage from manure heaps. Housewives threw slops out of bedroom windows and were asked to mend their ways by the Berkhamsted vestry. A local writer of the period tells us that "all kinds of vegetable refuse were cast into the street. Pigs were the recognised scavengers." The first road-hogs!

Earlier still, in 1758, the "principal inhabitants" of Berkhamsted complained that the High Street was out of repair and so dirty that they could not walk without great discomfort and inconvenience. One William Bates was appointed scavenger for the year, but he could not perform his duties until the parish levied a special rate of 6d. in the pound "to repair and cleanse the High Street."

### HOLDING UP THE TRAFFIC

One of Bates' predecessors in the broom and shovel business was brought before the magistrates for not clearing away "the dirt and other annoyances in the street," and in 1678 a Berkhamsted man was summoned for "annoying the King's way near the Church by littering it with straw, so that it was impassable for carts." Fifty years later a Berkhamsted staymaker was fined one shilling (paid in court) for "obstructing a certain watercourse adjoining the High Street with gravel and dirt and other material, causing it to overflow into the highway." Presumably this was at Bank Mill.

Stonewards were appointed to maintain the footpaths, and their only claim to fame, according to Henry Nash, is that they "totally neglected their duty. If attention was bestowed upon any favoured spot, say, the front of their own doorways, it was to pave them with small round pebbles."

These pebbles will be remembered by many townspeople. Removal of moss from between the stones provided casual employment for "Dutter" and other Berkhamsted characters of yesteryear.

We have moved a long way since the days of stonewards. But it is worth remembering that even in mid-Victorian days the office of surveyor was a part-time one. For many years it was held by a grocer!

(To be continued.)

## 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:—

April 1—7: Dickman  
April 8—14: Taylors  
April 15—21: Boots  
April 22—28: Figg  
April 29—May 5: Dickman  
Easter Monday (April 2): 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., Thur., & 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.

Agents for  
DUNHILL  
RONSON  
COMOY  
BARLING  
LOEWE  
ORLIK  
PARKER  
MOSDA

HAVANNA &  
JAMAICA  
CIGARS

The Corner Shop  
Berkhamsted

# MAYO'S

232 High Street  
Berkhamsted

Agents for  
FULLER  
ELIZABETH SHAW  
DORLON  
LINDT  
SUCHARD  
MELTIS  
MACKINTOSH  
CADBURY  
and  
ALL GOOD  
CHOCOLATES  
& SWEETS



By Appointment J. Floris Ltd. perfumers to the late King George VI

## TRUE ENGLISH FLOWER PERFUMES

by

Obtainable from

**HUBERT B. FIGG**

(Proprietors: Hubert B. Figg Ltd.)

Chemist

HIGH STREET, BERKHAMSTED

Phone 80

**FLORIS**  
of London

also TOILET WATERS, BATH ESSENCES, TOILET POWDERS  
TOILET SOAPS and SACHETS etc.