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## Not So Very Long Ago—2

Many an argument, I hear, has been started by last month's attempt to recall the eastern half of our High Street as it was rather less than forty years ago. Suggestions have been made that "Beorcham's" memory is not all that it should be. Perfectly true!

But the article was not based on memory alone: Mr. Loosley's directories came to the rescue, in particular the 1919 issue. Mr. Loosley was a man of great accuracy, and it is a pity future historians will not be able to use his guides when they wish to study Berkhamsted of the 1940s and 1950s. The last edition appeared in 1934.

And now—what was the western half of the town like just after the first World War? To youngsters such as myself, it seemed remote, very quiet, and not nearly so friendly as the bustling market place and the rows of shops and houses nearer home. But then, I lived in the eastern part of the town, and boys of the West End almost certainly held contrary views.

### NO NASTY SMELLS!

Odd trifles linger in the memory. To this day the smell of unbleached calico recalls "Alleluia" Timson's little drapery shop. And I shall never forget the reek of a fertilizer called "Phoedal" which Lane and Son, the nurserymen, manufactured and sold at their depot at the corner of Park View Road.

There were no nasty smells at "Billy" Roberts' fish shop, however; he was not only a first-rate tradesman but a great showman, and when he could think of nothing original to say he wrote "No Nasty Smells" on a large blackboard—a perfectly true statement. Once he changed the inscription to "Boy wanted, with brains if possible," thereby incurring the wrath of the *Teachers' World*.

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BEESTON, RAYBURN  
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MAKES OF MOWERS  
SUPPLIED.

Est. 1826

Perhaps I would have found the West End more lovable had it not contained the workhouse. "We'll all be driven to the workhouse" was not an unfamiliar cry forty years ago. This grim looking building seemed to mark the end of Berkhamsted (I always looked upon Gossoms End as a separate village), and as children we were scared of the tramps who collected outside the workhouse in the late afternoon, waiting to secure a night's lodging.

The tramps, by the way, loved to linger in St. John's Well Lane, and here one of the richest men of the town was once mistaken for a vagrant and given a shilling by the rector of Northchurch.

### THE BANKS?

But enough of these idle recollections, I suppose no part of the High Street has changed so much as the section between King's Road and Cowper Road. In the late 'twenties it was nicknamed "The Golden Hundred Yards," for three of the "Big Five" banks made their home there, opposite the long-established National Provincial Bank.

But in the first years after World War I, Barclays Bank was just a private house. So was Lloyds Bank. It was called "The Elms," and there really were elms in the High Street. Mr. C. F. Christian, tailor, and Mr. W. Burnham, a fruiterer noted for pomegranates, had little shops which were swept aside for the Westminster Bank.

One of the town's oldest businesses was that of Rawlins and Son, ironmongers, whose premises are now used by Mr. Leatherdale and the Eastern Electricity Board. The shop at Elm Grove corner was a showroom for Southey & Co., whose motor-cycles, assembled in workshops between Elm Grove and King's Road, were as famous as the holidays Mr. Southey arranged in North Wales for St. Peter's choir every summer. Happy days!

Do you remember Unity Cottages and Unity Hall? They were hidden from the High Street, and reached by a shabby little byway beside what is now the Co-operative Store. This large building replaced houses and a shop kept by Mr. Gale, greengrocer.

### BYGONE BUSINESSES

Mr. Roberts' fish shop is now the Co-operative Society's greengrocery shop; then came the butchery department and two of the town's most intriguing shops—one kept by dear old Pastor Wright, grocer, and the other, at the corner of Cowper Road, by Mr. Callard, corn merchant. Joe Callard kept enormous stocks, much appreciated by the town's fattest rats. You could see them in the shop and even on the roof of his outbuildings in Cowper Road. They never strayed far from home.

No changes to speak of between Cowper Road and Park View Road. But Lane's office at Park View Road

corner was always busy. It had to be, for this ancient nurseryman's business was one of the town's largest employers of labour. One of the sights of Berkhamsted was the nursery (and it was only one of several) on the opposite side of the road, where the Post Office is now being built. Another bygone local industry was represented by E. King & Son's coachbuilding works, now the offices of Donald Lockhart Ltd.

Do you remember, in this part of the town, "Tommy" Gayton's little hair-dressing saloon and Mr. Codgbrook's shoe shop at the corner of Kilsbury Road? The workhouse (replaced by modern shops and flats) may have looked forbidding, but a hundred yards ahead was Mr. W. Brinkman's nursery—colourful and very, very friendly. Next door was Goss Brothers' brushworks—another old local industry which has completely disappeared—and beyond the old infants' school was a nice little milk shop kept by H. Gibbs & Son (now Mr. Seabrook's shop).

### ON THE CORNER

What of the north side of the High Street? Starting from King's Road, we always looked at the shop of Mr. W. H. Morris, the watchmaker, who scarcely made the best use of his corner site. A long, dull red wall faced Lower King's Road, its bareness relieved only by a large clock which always gave the wrong time. This building was pulled down to make way for new shops and offices about 25 years ago.

Beyond the long drapery shop of Messrs. H. C. Ward and Son and the National Provincial Bank was Mr. Dickman's house—not a shop, as now, for Mr. Dickman's shop was farther along the High Street. It was a very nice house, with a tiny front garden right in the shopping centre. Next came the shops of Mr. T. W. Tomlinson (photographer), Mr. W. E. ("Alleluia") Timson (draper), and Mr. W. Wood (tobacconist).

### ALL CHANGE!

The remaining shops of this row still have more or less the same faces, but every business has changed hands. After the shops of Mr. A. E. Timson (baker) and Mr. T. W. Bailey (stationer) we had Miss Child (baby linen), Mr. W. Hodges (bootmaker), Mr. W. Good (draper), Mr. J. Hurst (bootmaker), and Fincher & Co. (confectioners), who also had shops in Lower King's Road and Prince Edward Street.

Mr. A. Honour's butcher's shop (a picturesque bit of old Berkhamsted, rebuilt by Mr. Lintott) started another row of shops: Mr. G. H. Sills (photographer), Mr. H. Sterne (outfitter), Mr. H. H. Dickman (chemist), Mr. C. Dockrill (tailor), the Co-operative Society (cakes), Mr. W. Pratt (watchmaker), Mr. H. Goss (brushes), Miss Sills (wool shop), Young and Son (undertakers), Mr. C. E. Seagrave (furniture), Mr. J. North (auctioneer), Mr. G. Figg (toys) and Messrs. J. Wood and Son (iron foundry). Then, nearer Gossoms End, we had the shops of Mr. T. Keller (bootmaker), Mr. J. Strange (baker), Mr. G. Ellis (decorator),

## 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:—

September 29—October 5: Boots.  
October 6—12: Figg.  
October 13—19: Dickman.  
October 20—26: Taylors.  
October 27—November 2: Boots.

### LIBRARY OPENING TIMES

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

Monday—10 a.m.—1 p.m.; 2 p.m.—7.30 p.m.  
Tuesday—10 a.m.—7.30 p.m.  
Wednesday—Closed.  
Thursday—10 a.m.—1 p.m.; 2 p.m.—7.30 p.m.  
Friday—10 a.m.—1 p.m.; 2 p.m.—7.30 p.m.  
Saturday—10 a.m.—1 p.m.; 2.30 p.m.—5 p.m.

(Continued from previous columns.)

Mrs. Gent (grocer), and D. Osborn and Son (builders, etc.).

How our shops have changed in little more than a generation! Some have had three or more different proprietors since the 1919 directory was published. But nowhere have more changes occurred than in Castle Street, the one part of the town where shops have reverted to houses. How many middle-aged and elderly people of the eastern part of the town recall the little sweet shops kept in the valley by Mrs. Adams and Mrs. Erinklow? The sports shop almost opposite the entrance to Berkhamsted School? Mr. "Dicky" Ward's fish shop? Mr. Gill's pawnbroker's shop? And the house, removed to make way for Manor Close, which was once the "Sun" public-house but will always be remembered as the home of Mrs. Halsey, noted for chitterlings and other tasty suppers?

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