

A BERKHAMSTED NOTEBOOK

BY TOWNSMAN

Town Hall Clock

The Town Hall clock has turned grey—not with age but with a new coat of paint. Pale hands I do not love, but as time marches on my affection for the town's overhanging public clock may return. At night, as before, it will continue to shine like the harvest moon.

The Town Hall's new colour scheme continues the High Street "face-lift" which began with the shops a couple of years ago. It is yet another expense for the Town Hall Committee, which is likely to stay in power for quite a time before the property is transferred to the Urban District Council.

The committee does its best to maintain this large, rambling, ageing building in as good condition as finances permit. Repairs and renewals fell from £1,171 in 1962 to £304 last year, but now the committee has to install new heating apparatus and face further heavy bills for repairs and redecoration to the back as well as the front of the Town Hall.

The Manor House

Not every Berkhamstedian is going to the Costa Brava. A friend tells me he is staying at home to play host to friends who wish to spend their holidays in

Berkhamsted, and he invites suggestions for visits to places of interest.

It is unnecessary for me to draw attention to the charms of places within the *Review* area, though I fancy that many local people have yet to visit a house of rare distinction and astonishing charm. It is Little Gaddesden Manor House—Elizabethan, with contemporary wall paintings, stone mullioned windows, early keyboard instruments, and—sh!—a ghost.

This house is small enough to be seen and enjoyed in one visit. I cannot recall how often I have visited a large, stately home and returned with aching eyes, flat feet, and mental indigestion. At Waddesdon Manor, for instance, there is far too much to see in one visit. Happily, this treasure house is near enough for one to go again and again.

Where to Go

To people planning outings for visitors, or for themselves, here are a few more tips. Pay a visit to The Lee, two or three miles this side of Great Missenden, to see the ancient church behind the modern one; it is fascinating.

Don't forget Tring Museum. Drive or bus to Ivinghoe and see the windmill which is being so cleverly restored. Walk

along the towpath between Tring Station and Bulbourne; amble around the remarkable earthworks behind Cholesbury church; climb Swing Gate Lane and continue downhill to Bottom Farm for the sheer joy of seeing one of the loveliest valleys in the Home Counties.

And now, what about some suggestions from you?

On the Screen

'The Bargee', shown at the Rex Cinema a week or two ago, wasn't a very good film, but I enjoyed the local (or fairly local) colour. On the wide screen our canal looked most attractive, and from sudden bursts of conversation it was obvious that interest in the film quickened whenever a familiar scene came on the screen. We loved the remark that it was a good thing the leading man, named Hemel after his birthplace, was not born in a boat at Berkhamsted.

A man sitting in front of me was indignant because a pair of narrow boats, supposed to be leaving a wharf at Two Waters for Birmingham, was seen passing Apsley Mills. But strange things happen at sea, on the canal, and on the screen. I was pleased to see Winkwell swing-bridge in action, but thought a good opportunity was missed by not showing an angling club's competition being delayed by boats. Such things happen from time to time!

Film-makers, of course, are often in this district. One evening recently a Television film unit was busy in Cowper Road, taking sequences for something to do with traffic problems, so I was told.

I can hardly wait to know Cowper Road's TAM rating.

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