

A BERKHAMSTED NOTEBOOK

BY TOWNSMAN

Bright Lights

The giant Christmas tree in the High Street arrived when the shopping days could be counted on the fingers of one hand. Better late than never! It was a cheerful sight; what's more, rather more tradespeople than usual painted the town red, blue and yellow with coloured lights. Every year Berkhamsted gets a little brighter at Christmas.

But is it bright enough? Our wide and straight High Street would lend itself admirably to a more ambitious decoration scheme. Nothing so lavish as we see in Regent Street and Oxford Street, of course; but at small cost we could turn our highway into a colourful if fruitless orchard.

I refer to the roadside trees. Just one of these trees, outside Norman Clarke's, goes gay at Christmas with electric lights. With goodwill to all passers-by and small expenditure of money it would be an easy matter to wire a couple of dozen or more trees for coloured fruit. What a lot of pleasure the bright lights would give—especially on murky nights!

Over to you, Chamber of Trade. There are only 300 shopping days to next Christmas.

Robert de Tuardo

Every parishioner of Berkhamsted St. Peter must be aware that our first rector was Robert de Tuardo. He was instituted in 1222 and was followed a year later by Hugh de London.

As Tuardo was almost certainly a place-name, I have often wondered where Robert came from. Spain, perhaps? The name has a Spanish ring, though I could be hundreds of miles out with my guesswork. Perhaps a geographer will take up the search? Thanks!

Incidentally, from 1222 until 1381, apart from one short break, our rectory was under the patronage of the Abbot and Convent of Grestein, near Honfleur. William the Conqueror's mother, Arletta, was buried there—an interesting fact to remember now that we are busy preparing a pageant to commemorate the Conqueror's visit to Berkhamsted.

In the Limelight

Speaking of the pageant, a friend has expressed the hope that St. Peter's Church, and perhaps some other important buildings, will be floodlit during the fortnight when Berkhamsted will be host to visitors from far and near.

Not a bad idea—but not an original one. Older residents will remember how

beautiful the church—and even the town hall—looked when floodlighting was used at the time of the jubilee and coronation celebrations before the war.

Every evening, however, the church is fairly well lighted by our street lamps. Late at night, when the traffic is reasonably light, I often stand and stare at ancient flints reflecting the soft amber light. But it is a noble pile at any time of the day or night, at any season.

Hard to Find

Recently, a lady unsuccessfully asked several people the way to Victory Road and was then directed to Victoria Road. Next, she had to travel another mile to find the Health Centre at the back of a little side-street at Gossoms End.

'It seems rather stupid', she remarked, 'that a small town should have two streets with almost identical names.'

Information, Please

Park Street, though still a cul-de-sac so far as vehicles are concerned, has been busy since the footbridge to the Park and Dell Field was opened.

People who pass this way often comment upon a building at the lower end of Park Street. It looks as if it may once have been a church or chapel. It was, I believe, built by the Osborn family a century ago for use as a workshop and store. Here, so I am told, the first paving slabs used on our footpaths were cast by a new method which won great admiration. I have also heard that for a time the building was used as a tannery.

Perhaps someone will confirm, deny or supplement this scanty information.

CALLAGHAN'S GARAGE - LTD.

Agents for



and ROOTES GROUP

TELEPHONE - - - -

BERKHAMSTED 73