

Berkhamsted Notebook

By TOWNSMAN

In the Window

Suddenly, the dreariest windows in the High Street have become a star attraction. Thousands of people have stopped for at least a minute or two to inspect a display of local 'bygones' in the three windows of the Berkhamsted Annexe of the Dacorum College of Further Education.

(By the way, isn't it time this institution had a short, snappy name? 'Annexe' reeks of Hemel Hempstead colonialism. Dacorum House, Akeman College—anything but the complicated mouthful which suggests a lean-to postscript to a decorous bit of redbrick.)

To resume. The window display, mounted by the Local History Society as a Pageant sideline, will remain for another week or two. What then? Shall we again see empty windows?

The BADCFE (go on, play it on the piano) could very well invite other non-commercial groups to use the windows. Why not an occasional show by the Berkhamsted Arts Society? Or a book display by the County Library? Plans for new developments by the Urban and County Councils could be given a show. In fact, there are all sorts of possibilities, including displays of the work of students of the BADCFE.

On Tap

A former Berkhamstedian, now living in Sussex, writes: 'I liked your reference to the water-trough which formerly stood outside the Town Hall. It was the only local structure which bore an inscription in Greek. Translated, it was "Water is best"—a less familiar claim than the one the brewers make.'

The highly ornamental drinking fountain-cum-trough was erected to commemorate Queen Victoria's jubilee in 1887, and the opening ceremony was performed by Dr. Bartrum, headmaster of Berkhamsted School, who said he regarded the fountain as 'an indication of a tendency to temperance in Berkhamsted.' Thereupon he sampled the water, apparently with greater relish than some other prominent townsmen who were less familiar with the liquid.

Small World

Taking my summer holiday in the spring, I joined an Inter-Church pilgrimage to the Holy Land. One day we visited Samaria, and as one of the cars placed at our disposal was rather crowded, a member of the party was invited to return to Jerusalem in a taxi hired for another Inter-Church group.

I volunteered for the vacant seat—and found myself sitting next to our former rector, the Rev. Horace Spence, whom I had not seen for thirteen years. Mrs. Spence was there, too, and the two-hour return journey seemed to last ten minutes as we talked about mutual friends in Berkhamsted.

Yes, it's a small world. And what a happy coincidence!

Non-Roman Walls

I have been asked to give some information about the 'Roman' road between Frithsden and Nettleden.

Well, it is **not** Roman, and 'road' is a rather high-sounding name for a rough lane which is sometimes so muddy that all but the stoutest walkers turn back.

It arouses interest, however, because for part of the way there are high brick walls on either side, crossed by a high, wide and formerly handsome bridge. One almost expects to see a tall-funnelled steam engine pass overhead.

The bridge carried the main drive from Ashridge to Water End over the deep cutting made by the lane, and tradition has it that this elaborate work was ordered by the Duke of Bridgewater to provide work at a time of great distress and unemployment.

If you are not familiar with the lane and bridge, I suggest that you put on your stoutest shoes and walk from the hamlet with a pub but no church (Frithsden) to the village with a church but no pub (Nettleden). But don't ask me to clean your shoes!

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