

Berkhamsted Notebook

By TOWNSMAN

Wild Life

On several recent occasions I have had the good fortune to see deer on Berkhamsted Common. The most memorable sight was that of antlers riding high above the gorse bushes. A moment or two later, a magnificent lone buck crossed my path, only a dozen yards or so ahead. What a fool I was to have left the camera at home!

Then there was an occasion when I was walking up Dwight's Lane towards Gutteridge Farm. A young fox came running down the hill towards me, and when only a short distance away he bolted through the hedge into a field. Again, no camera.

I must be better equipped next time I go on safari.

Citizens' Association

Although the Citizens' Association has never been on the inactive list, save during the second World War, it gave the impression, a few years ago, of doing very little beyond sponsoring the annual meeting at which we have an opportunity of seeing and hearing candidates for the Urban Council.

Not that the committee was inactive. An alert eye was kept on local affairs,

but there wasn't much to discuss in public. Now, however, the Association is right to the fore, holding meetings which are not only important—such as those on Education and traffic problems—but attracting very large audiences. The Association also had a half share in promoting Peter Scott's fine lecture on Wildlife—and it isn't very often we see people actually queueing up for a lecture.

Keep it up, Citizens!

This Year's Centenaries

After asking when the eagerly-awaited film of Berkhamsted Pageant would be available—very soon, I hope—a friend said he wondered whether we had any good centenaries to celebrate in 1967.

Nothing so famous as 1066, I am afraid, but a good deal of church building was proceeding just 100 years ago. The Congregational Church was opened in 1867, and in the same year the Primitive Methodists moved from Castle Street to the High Street, their 'new' church of 1867 being enlarged some thirty years later. Holy Trinity, Potten End, was also built in 1867 but will not celebrate its centenary until January, 1968.

Incidentally, the literary world is

currently showing great interest in the most famous of our early women novelists, Maria Edgeworth, who was born 200 years ago. She spent some of her girlhood at Edgeworth House, Northchurch, which bears the date 1767 neatly carved in the brickwork of the north-west chimney. An interesting coincidence—but Maria was not born there.

Falling into Line

Following a recent comment of mine, a reader drew the attention of the Ministry of Public Building and Works to the four different spellings of Berkhamsted on various 'Ancient Monument' signs directing the way to the Castle. The Ministry has decided to use one form, and one form only—the one which is more or less standardised locally, but still provides variations on an original theme elsewhere.

Speaking of the Castle, members of the Local History Society recently saw all that is left of a fine medieval fireplace on top of the keep—a photograph. How this relic came to be utterly destroyed is a mystery, but it seems that it was in good shape up to 1906, when certain excavations were made.

Another Castle relic, the only English medieval bow still extant, is in the safe keeping of the British Museum. Have you ever seen it? It caused a stir when it was found in the moat at a depth of 2½-ft. in 1930. About 4-ft. long, with tapering ends, it is somewhat like the stave of a barrel, with the bevels made for the gut clearly visible. There must have been something special in the water of the moat to preserve such a relic for hundreds of years.

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