

# Berkhamsted Notebook

By TOWNSMAN

## Our Changing Town

In years gone by I relied upon former residents and others who called at rare intervals to tell me how Berkhamsted had changed. Not that I was unobservant; to a resident the changes came slowly, lacking the element of surprise.

But today it is difficult to keep pace with developments. It has not taken long for a brand new housing estate to replace allotments in Dell Field. A block of shops and flats at Cross Oak Road corner has risen in a very short time. In Park Street the new Roman Catholic Church is almost ready for consecration.

On with the new, off with the old. The second of the two lock-keepers' cottages between Lower Kings Road and Billet Lane has been sunk, almost without trace. Poet's Corner no longer leans against the 'Crystal Palace.' And Berkhamsted Place, built partly from the stones of the Castle, now has less to show than its ruined ancestor.

In the past ten years Berkhamsted and Northchurch have lost a very large number of old properties. Some were scheduled as buildings worthy of preservation. Some admittedly were nicer to look at than to live in. But some could and should have been saved.

## Caught in a Trap

I was strolling past the Sunnyside allotments and stopped to chat to an old friend. Suddenly, silently, he drew my attention to a stoat a few yards away. I hadn't seen a stoat for years, and was surprised to see one so near the town.

But allotment-holders on the far side of Ivy House Lane told me that stoats had made their home there for many years. 'I won't say that I see them every year,' one man told me, 'but we know they are here. As a matter of fact, a year or two ago I put down a trap to catch rats, and caught a stoat.'

## No End of Ends

Why do so many local place-names end with an End? This question was put to me by a resident who reeled off a long list of names—Potten End, Gossoms End, Pouchen End, and so on.

Many different theories have been advanced from time to time. I have a hunch that the Ends were the ends of streets or parishes or fields—or, in the obvious case of Bourne End, the end of a river. Was not Gossoms End so called because it was the end of the town where the Godsalms lived?

If you have a better explanation, please send it along. And readers with a good map and time on their hands may like to compile a list of the Ends within an eight miles' radius of the Berkhamsted crossroads. No prize for the longest list—only an honourable mention!

## In the Country

It was a beautiful day for strolling along a country lane. The birds were singing, the buds were bursting, the banks were studded with flowers.

I saw celandines, dandelions, violets, bluebells, wild strawberry flowers, a mattress, a broken pram, a wrecked umbrella, a broken bottle, half a dozen cigarette packets, an empty paint tin, and several of those large and apparently indestructible empty bags which farmers leave around after dosing the soil.

Oh, to be in England . . . But now it's May, so please don't pick too many bluebells, and do watch out for broken glass, barbed wire and old baked bean tins.

## Zigzag Path

My reference to the many roads in the district without footpaths prompted a reader to say that there was a very special need of a path beside the short, winding road on the north side of the Castle. As he points out, there is an adequate path in Brownlow Road and another in New Road, but the connecting link is dangerous for pedestrians.

Oddly enough, this little road without a proper path was once known as Zigzag Path, taking its name from the short turns or angles of white painted railings beside the road.

# CALLAGHANS

FOR



TELEPHONE

BERKHAMSTED 5473