

Berkhamsted Notebook

By TOWNSMAN

The Green Belt

A reader who shares my interest in the countryside says he is surprised that so little is said about Brickhill Green, Sandpit Green and Long Green. He enjoys visiting these open spaces for the study of wild life.

I like this little 'green belt,' too. Brickhill is the most familiar of the three greens; it is a wild little common of up-and-down walks which date from the time when it was Brick Kiln Green. The ponds and dells were once clay pits; the kilns were fired by gorse, which still grows there. Fine trees provide an altogether different sort of scenery on the extension of the waste land east of the road to Chesham.

Sandpit Green still supplies evidence of the excavations which provided its name. For the uninitiated, this is the little green with a wide and usually muddy track between Ashlyns Park and Swing Gate Lane. East of the lane is Long Green, little wider than the foot-path at the start and nowhere very broad. But it is certainly Long.

How fortunate we are to have this string of open spaces only a mile from the High Street! Long may they remain wild and interesting.

Wrong Number

We have heard a good deal about milk bottle tops, but nothing about those patent indicators which housewives place on doorsteps to show how many pints of milk are required.

Our indicator, which looks like a shamefaced clock with only one hand, is usually set to 2, ours not being a ten-bottle household. But unseen and presumably small hands are busy when the door is closed, and our needs are revved up to 5 or more pints—too many for the 'fridge, and a deterrent to strict dieting.

I know what it is to be young. We used to link door knockers with string so that when Mrs. X answered a rap on the door she automatically summoned her neighbour, *ad infinitum*. I suppose we must go back to paper and pencil—'2 pints, please.'

A Berkhamsted Museum

Many of the 500 people who saw the 'Rural Bygones' exhibition at Little Gaddesden, held in aid of the Pitstone Local History Society's museum fund, must have wondered why Berkhamsted cannot be as ambitious as a very small village just over the Buckinghamshire border.

The question of a museum for Berkhamsted has been raised many times, but we always come back to the housing problem. The only hope seems to be the conversion of some old building which can be spared the usual fate of demolition.

Meanwhile, the town goes on losing not only old buildings but the incentive to accumulate large relics of the past. Documents are easily stored; it is not so easy to find space for the tools of old crafts, furniture, dresses, and other relics worthy of preservation.

Incidentally, it is a shattering fact that Hemel Hempstead now has more architectural links with the past than Berkhamsted. But Hemel Hempstead has no museum, either.

Links with Ashlyns

I have received a copy of 'The Wethered Book,' to which a brief reference was made last month. Published in the U.S.A. for descendants of the Wethereds who lived at Ashlyns in Stuart times, it recalls such notable Berkhamsted worthies as Francis Wethered, Charles II's Comptroller of the Works.

Illustrations of local interest include Ashlyns Hall, the Wethered font in All Saints' Church, and the inscription on the monument in St. Peter's Church to Elizabeth Wethered Craddock, last of the family to live at Ashlyns.

Mr. L. Wethered Barroll, whose house at Baltimore is named Ashlyns, has sent a copy of the book to the local branch of the County Library, where it will be found in the reference section.

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