

Berkhamsted Notebook

By TOWNSMAN

A Rambling Club

A friend has just passed on to me a query that was put to him by a newcomer to the town: Have we a rambling club in Berkhamsted? To the best of my knowledge, we haven't. But there is one at Tring, another was started recently at Aylesbury, and nearly every week-end I see one group of walkers or another being piloted by a map-reader along our byways.

These groups are on the small side compared with the 50—or even 100-strong parties we saw during the shorts-and-rucksack days before the war, when 'I'm happy when I'm hiking' was a popular song.

We are still in the heart of first-rate walking country, and it is shameful that through sheer neglect some good old rights of way have become untrodden paths.

Having issued three editions of a local footpath map, the Citizens' Association has done much to arouse interest in our byways, an interest which is bound to grow again now that the roads are so crowded. And as it is fashionable for young people to take part in marathon walks, usually in aid of charity, perhaps there is scope for a rambling club in Berkhamsted.

Looking for Eyesores

Speaking of the Citizens' Association, I can hardly wait to hear the results of its invitation to the townspeople to name Berkhamsted's greatest eyesore. But it may be some time, I hear, before we know the worst. Meanwhile, I can only say that whenever the subject has been discussed in my presence, no two people have named the same eyesore. Indeed, what are eyesores to some are things of beauty in the eyes of other beholders.

One of my colleagues is critical of this unusual public opinion poll, saying that it is negative, cynical, flippant and not what he expected from the Citizens' Association. He would have preferred an invitation to name what was good, not what was bad, in Berkhamsted.

Well, correspondence columns are always open for paeons of praise. What, in this town of ours, gives you the greatest cause for pride, satisfaction or pleasure?

Gravel Path

Mr. R. Gilbert, of Ashlyns Road, has often entertained me with stories of Berkhamsted in late Victorian times. The other day he called in answer to last month's request for information about

the origin of the name Gravel Path. He remembered discussing this question with his father, who thought that the name arose from the use that was made of the ancient track between Ravens Lane and the Common by carts loaded with gravel.

Much of the material used to make and repair the town's roads was dug up on the Common—Clay Pond, I believe, is an old gravel pit—and Gravel Path would have been the most convenient route to the town before Lord Brownlow made New Road.

Mr. Gilbert recalls that a former licensee of the Bull public-house, a one-armed man named Mr. J. Andrews, owned several horses and carts which were used to convey gravel from the Common to the town.

Broad and Narrow

Here's another query, inspired by the improvements now being made to the A41. How did Broadway, a notoriously narrow way between Hall Park and Bourne End, receive its name?

Any suggestions?

Endpiece

From a reader in Connecticut, who lives in the nearest large town to our namesake Barkhamsted, comes a comment on my recent note on the many local place-names ending with End. My friend quotes the *Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, 1966, under the word End: 'In East End, West End, and the ends of the earth there is a historical survival of the sense 'quarter, region' of O.E. *ende*.'

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