

# BERKHAMSTED REVIEW



## In and around Berkhamsted by 'Townsmen'

### FORWARD THINKING

Looking ahead, if not forward, to the demise of Chorleywood Urban District Council, a member has suggested bonfires and fireworks 'to give people the opportunity to mourn or celebrate the passing of an era.'

Well, now, what shall we do when the Berkhamsted Urban Council issues its final demand? And what will happen to the chairman's chain of office?

The Fanfare for Europe did not arouse great interest, so I doubt whether a Fanfare for Greater Hemel Hempstead would cause much excitement. As for fireworks, we have had quite sufficient over the Town Hall question.

I don't think the occasion merits another pageant, or even *son et lumière* in the council yard behind the Civic Centre. A performance of

'The Force of Destiny' or 'Patience' in the council chamber is a possibility, though I would prefer a torchlight procession or forced march all round the conservation area, followed by a bonfire of rate demand notes in Butts Meadow.

Seriously, we must do something. Any suggestions? Sensible ones, please!

### WELL DONE!

One local organisation which will not have to worry about the desperate shortage of public halls is Berkhamsted Town Football Club. Its new club-house, large enough to be called a hall, is nearing completion next door to the grandstand in Lower King's Road.

It isn't easy, nowadays, for small-town football clubs to attract sizeable gates, but the people who run the local club have always had lots

### EDITORIAL

Hon. Editor  
Mr. H. D. Woodward, 53 Bridgewater Road  
Tel. 2723

### SUBSCRIPTIONS-ADVERTISEMENTS

Hon. Manager: Mr. C. J. Gosling,  
8 Bridgewater Road Tel. 3194

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of enthusiasm and energy. Good luck to them.

### THE CURATE'S EGG

I have been asked to relate what a correspondent calls 'Berkhamsted's own 'curate's egg' story'. It has nothing at all to do with the famous *Punch* cartoon of a young curate who, not wishing to displease the bishop with whom he was breakfasting, said that his egg was 'good in parts'.

The story appears in 'Highways and Byways of Hertfordshire' (1902), by Herbert W. Tompkins. He says: 'We are told that there was at Great Flaunden no resident clergyman, and that a curate came over at intervals from Berkhamsted. On one occasion he had been absent longer than usual, and the caretaker refused to admit him to the church, because her goose was sitting in the pulpit and the eggs were expected to hatch out on the following Wednesday.'

By the way, Tompkins' book is still one of the best on Hertfordshire. But he slipped up by showing a picture of some half-timbered cottages which formerly stood near Billet Lane corner with the caption: 'Cowper's birthplace, Berkhamsted St. Mary'. As if the poet son of a rector of Berkhamsted St. Peter would have been born in the next parish!

### BETTER LATE . . .

At the time of writing there is still a lot of nattering about Christmas postal delays. A friend of mine, living at Hawridge, three miles



from Berkhamsted as the crow flies, received on January 5th a letter which was posted in Berkhamsted and bore the postmark December 21st, 3 p.m. It bore a 3p stamp. A good thing it wasn't sent second class mail.

#### NOT ON THE LEVEL

Overheard in the High Street: 'You know you are getting old when you notice that the road between the Post Office and Cross Oak Road goes uphill.'

#### GOING ELECTRIC

Twice a day the Town Hall clock shows the right time—at noon and midnight. But soon, according to the Council minutes, and subject to second thoughts, it will go like clockwork without a weekly wind up, subject to there being no power cuts.

I hope you have noticed that the clock was erected in memory of Thomas Read. There is an inscription to this effect on the bracket.

Read died in 1897; he was a founder of the Mechanics' Insti-

tute in 1845, holder of many offices in the parish, and owner of a sawmill in Holliday Street. He installed a steam engine which not only served the mill but drove a press which, next door, printed the *Berkhamsted Times*.

#### LOCAL COACHBUILDERS

A short time ago I received a beautifully printed trade card (gold on dark-grey) bearing the words: 'E. Pethybridge, carriage builder, Berkhamsted; established 1832; carriages of every description built and repaired.'

The card was sent to me by Mr. G. N. Pethybridge, who lives in Yorkshire. He is a grandson of the founder of the business, which stood on part of the site now occupied by the Outspan building. My correspondent also sent along photographs showing some fine carriages lined up outside the works.

The business closed down at the turn of the century, and it is just possible that one or two readers remember it. Another old-established coachbuilder's works

continued until a few years before the 1939-45 war; it belonged to the King family, and is now Donald Lockhart's offices.

#### B.P. SCOUT GROUP

The local committee of the B.P. Scout Guild have taken a bold step and ordered D.I.Y. kits for two 'Mirror Class' sailing dinghies to be given for use by local scouts. This has meant using all available branch funds and therefore the full support of members and friends is requested for a supper-dance arranged for Saturday 3rd February at Northchurch Social Centre in order to get the finances back on a sound footing.

Members should note that the branch annual general meeting has been fixed for Friday 23rd February at 7.45 p.m. in the 1st Berkhamsted scout headquarters in Chapel Street. Members will be notified when dinghy assembly work is to commence. Remember 200 man-hours!



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