

BERKHAMSTED REVIEW



In and around Berkhamsted by 'Townsmen'

OUR NEIGHBOURS

Two Berkhamsted residents, Mr. V. J. Wrigley and Mrs. G. Robinson, are among the ten authors who have written the newly-published *History of Hemel Hempstead*. It is a splendid example of teamwork, full of interesting information, much of it the result of years of scholarly, original research. Full marks, too, to the Corporation for generous guarantees which permitted such a thick volume to appear at only £1.25 for the paperback edition. The hard-back edition costs £2.

The book contains many references to Berkhamsted, once the more important town, now less than a quarter of the size of the borough.

That there was rivalry between the two places in early times is shown by a shocking event of 1336

Eleven Berkhamsted men went to Bovingdon, smashed up the home of John de la March, bound him and his mother and took them to Berkhamsted castle, where they were secretly tortured to death.

Happily, there were no such goings-on when Berkhamsted suffragettes, under police escort, addressed large crowds at Hemel Hempstead in 1912. The arch-enemy of Women's Lib was a young man who walked around ringing a handbell all through the speeches.

In modern times rivalry has been more or less restricted to sporting events. Do you remember the annual 'local Derby' between the Berkhamsted and Apsley football clubs?

Perhaps there will be some wrangling when the new council is formed. Lots of Berkhamsted

EDITORIAL

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JULY

1973

ratepayers will be up in arms if we do not have a fair slice of the cake!

AT THE PAVILION

Speaking of our near neighbours, I often pay a visit to the Pavilion at Hemel Hempstead, and usually the audience includes a large number of people from Berkhamsted. There was almost a mass exodus from our town when the Wayfarers presented 'The Dream of Gerontius', and at a recent concert by the Hallé Orchestra I saw scores and scores of Berkhamsted people.

Hemel Hempstead has a very good reputation for encouraging and supporting the arts, but then, the borough has adequate accommodation for symphony concerts and other big events. No one expects Berkhamsted to have a hall capable of accommodating an audience of a size which justifies the engagement of a symphony orchestra, but we would like to have a hall seating, say, 300 people, and perhaps the new authority will provide it.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

In my strolls along the canal towpath I usually look at the names of the boats. One which caught my eye near the Cow Roast lock was Serendipity. A few minutes later, at Dudswell, I saw a boat named Ann Archy. No doubt it is given a wide berth.

TEN MILES AN HOUR

When did we first have 'lollipop' ladies and gentlemen to see school-children safely across the street? Ten years ago? Twenty?

As a matter of fact, it was deemed necessary to station a teacher at the entrance to the County Council (Park View) School as long ago as 1909. I discovered this information in a cutting from the *Berkhamsted Gazette*, which reported a public enquiry into the Urban Council's request for the imposition of a 10 miles per hour speed limit in High Street, Chesham Road, King's Road and Lower King's Road. It was thought that many people 'in charge of motor cars were not acquainted with the many side turnings and drove through the town at a greater speed than was considered to be safe.'

Of course, there were objections to this restriction. Charles McWhirter said the High Street was one of the finest roads through any town or village in the kingdom; it was perfectly safe to travel at 15 or 16 miles an hour. Mr. E. Webster said he usually travelled at the same speed, and Mr. E. A. Whitfield, whose normal speed was from 16 to 20 miles an hour, had never been told that he had been driving to the danger of the public.

How times—and speeds—have changed!

INSIDE STORY

Two people, standing at the crossroads, were discussing the new police station.

Said one: 'It's still a job to see what it will look like.'

Said the other: 'I expect it will be ever so nice inside.'

LOOKING AROUND

A friend tells me that recently he took some Canadian friends on a tour of the town. They were impressed by our churches and the castle, but to his surprise some of the side-streets aroused even greater enthusiasm. Graemesdyke Road was especially praised, and I agree that with its many fine trees it is one of the most attractive of all our urban roads. But no doubt you have your own favourite—perhaps the street in which you live?

Incidentally, at this time of the year I am often asked to suggest walks and outings for visitors. The series of articles describing various routes for walkers, printed in the *Review* a few years ago, is

not forgotten, and I am sometimes asked if spare copies are available. Sorry, no! A pity the type wasn't kept standing for an inexpensive reprint in booklet form, but the thought never occurred to me at the time. I can only recommend readers and visitors to buy the Citizens' Association fieldpath map and devise their own routes. It is almost impossible to find a poor one, such is the variety and beauty of the countryside around Berkhamsted.

REJOICE

Here, primrose constellations flow
Protected by the foxglove spire,
There, tulips trimmed with sparkling dew,

Laburnums pooling shades of fire.
Where cuckoo flutes his timeless call

Re-echoed over hill and dale,
The silken drapes of blossoms fall
To spread a pastel cloak and veil.
Where dappled sunshine smoothly spills

In sudden bars of golden light,
To keen the note of lark on wing,
That all within God's world, is bright . . . Elizabeth Gozney



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