

BERKHAMSTED REVIEW



In and around Berkhamsted by 'Townsmen'

SECRET CODE?

Early this year a great deal of money was spent on advertising the Post Code—you know, those letters and figures which are added to addresses to speed up sorting and delivery

Six months later, how many people use, or even remember, their codes? The famous Townsman Research Unit went into action, putting the question to a typical cross-section of the community, i.e. four men and four women.

Only one of the eight knew his code. Another looked it up in his diary. Of the remaining six 'don't knows', one didn't care either, and another left such things to her husband.

It's amazing that we get any letters at all, isn't it?

BRIGHTER BERKHAMSTED

A young man called the other day to say that he and his wife had decided to return to Berkhamsted after living elsewhere for several years. 'It's so much livelier here', he said.

Had he been living in a remote hamlet? No, in a town much larger than Berkhamsted, but with a far higher proportion of commuters.

And if this sounds like a slur on commuters in general, let me say that locally we have some very active season-ticket holders who do much more for the community than many stay-at-homes.

ON TOUR

So much is said and known about the New Town of Hemel Hempstead that many of us forget that it has a very fine ancient High Street. Recently, the Local History

EDITORIAL

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Society, after seeing the ancient murals at Piccotts End, moved on to the borough for a conducted tour which included an exploration of those quaint little turnings off the High Street, so often missed by visitors. The party of about fifty people voted it a splendid evening.

Local historians also paid a visit to Wantage, where they saw a small-town museum in the making, occupying just one room which already is full of interesting by-gones. One of the founders of the museum is Mrs. Jane Cottis, whose husband, John, was formerly on the teaching staff of Ashlyns School.

Then, in June, a member of the Local History Society was invited to attend a mayoral lunch given at Hertford to the Connecticut History Society. Several guests came from Hartford, the state capital; two others live near Barkhamsted, our namesake in Connecticut.

WORDS, WORDS, WORDS

That was a bright idea, inviting *Review* readers to see how many words can be made out of the town's name. I have been having a go myself, finding dozens of small words but very few of seven or more letters, such as hamster and mastered.

Some years ago, when compiling a crossword puzzle, I tried hard to find a good anagram for Berkhamsted; the best I could manage was 'the mad kerbs', which may have a doubtful appeal to pedestrians who have gone on the wrong sort of trip. If you can find a good anagram, please let us know.

THE SUNKEN LANE

Many readers enjoy wandering along the lane which climbs steeply out of the Frithsden valley and descends just as steeply to Nettle-den. Popularly called 'the Roman road', it is not recommended to motorists, though now and again one may have to stand back for a Land-Rover or some other vehicle to pass by.

The lane is unusual in that part of it passes between high flint and brick walls and under a handsome bridge. Unfortunately, a tree crashed down and temporarily blocked the lane, causing extra damage to walls which have been deteriorating for years.

As for the bridge, a very handsome brick structure, wide enough for three lines of traffic, most of the stone parapet has vanished. One half expects to see an ancient steam train chug over such a bridge, but it was built for the main carriageway from Ashridge House to the Water End road, and apart from farm vehicles I doubt whether it has been used for many years.

WORTH KEEPING

Whatever happens to the Town Hall, I hope it will be possible to save the mosaic tablet above the fireplace, showing the town's coat of arms and the building date, 1859.

It is not a great work of art, and its removal could be a very tricky job, but it would be nice to retain a reminder of the great effort that was made by large and small subscribers for the good of the town all those years ago.

AEROPLANES REPAIRED

My thanks to a reader for the loan of a publication called *The Pictorial Record*, undated but apparently of 1917 vintage. For a war-time production it is surprisingly lavish, giving information about Berkhamsted, Tring and Aylesbury and very heavily weighted with advertisements. Many of the advertisers were rewarded with write-ups, some illustrated by photographs of the proprietor. Thus we see Walter Rickard beside a photograph of his

hairdressing saloon. J. King's saw-mill in George Street (now a recreation ground) shows the working proprietor with his staff. There is a particularly attractive photograph of 'a corner of the Old Tea House', now Wethered's shop. Accommodation was available for about sixty people.

A really sensational picture shows the Aylesbury Motor Company's building in Kingsbury Square with 'Aeroplanes Repaired' in large letters on the roof. Can you imagine what those daring young men in their flying machines thought when they saw that announcement?

CHESTNUT CORNER

At a school examination the inspector asked a boy why the earth turned round the sun on its own axis. The boy answered, with great promptitude, 'Because it doesn't want to get roasted too much on one side.'

—From Loosley's Berkhamsted Directory, 1896.



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