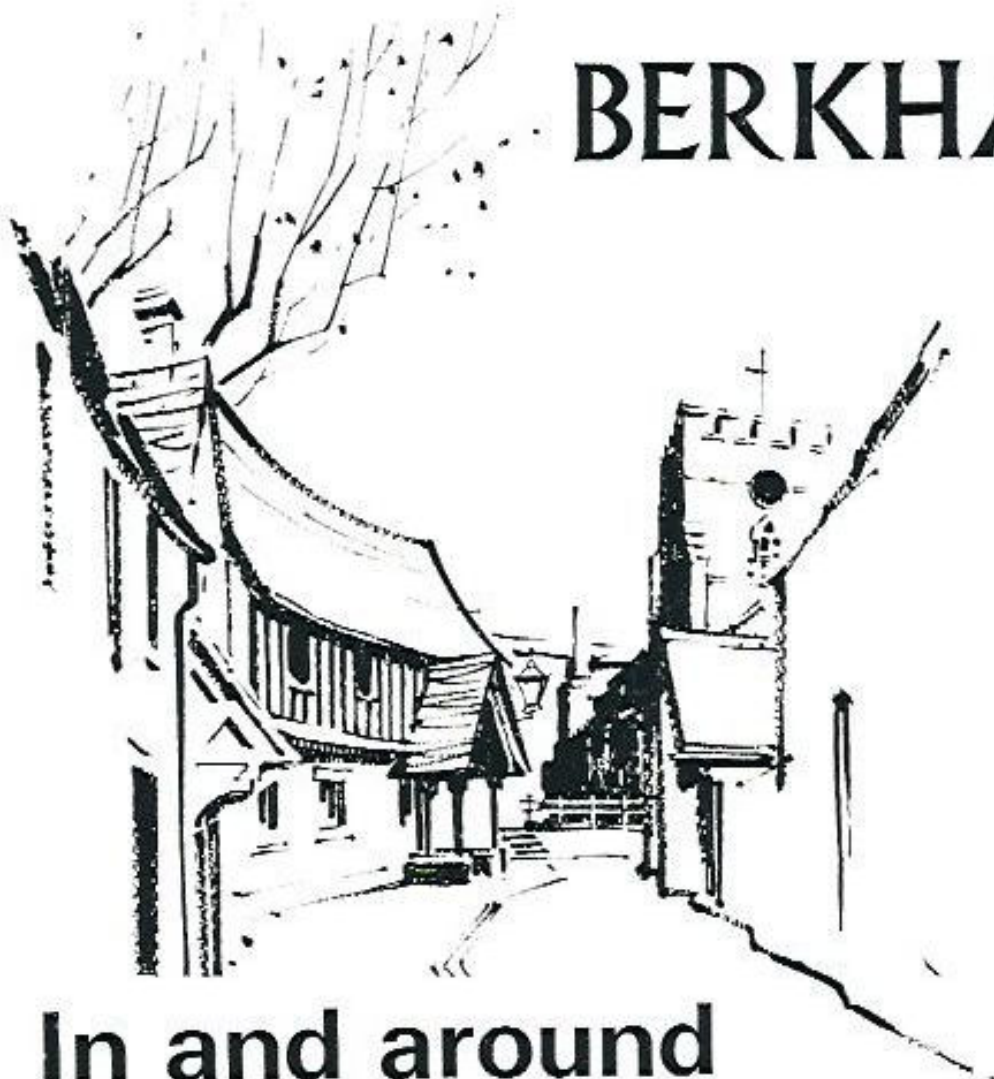


BERKHAMSTED REVIEW



In and around Berkhamsted by 'Townsmen'

A NICE LOT!

For as long as any member of the Berkhamsted Institute can remember, some large books, bereft of covers, reposed on top of a bookcase in the reading room. Now and again someone would look through the pages and perhaps admire the many illustrations, but no one ever imagined that the books were valuable until the reading room was about to close down last year.

Happily, a member knew a thing or two about old books. On his suggestion the rather tatty pile was taken to Sotheby's and sold by auction. For Lot 130 the Institute received a cheque for £249.45! The books, I should add, were of no local interest; if they were, they would never have left the town.

Now without the reading and recreation rooms that were used

for generations, the Institute still has an active chess club which meets regularly in a hall in Park View Road. The trustees hope to call a meeting shortly to which all who were members in the last fully operational year will be invited to suggest future policy.

A BERKHAMSTED CLOCK

Speaking of auctions, Lot 82 at a sale recently held by Phillips, Son and Neale, of New Bond Street, was described as follows:

'Moseley Elliot, Berkhamstead. A George III green lacquered Longcase Clock decorated with chinoiserie, the shaped hood with columns to the angles, the arched brass dial with striking movement.'

I had never before heard of a local clockmaker named Elliot. If you know anything about him, please write to me.

EDITORIAL

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CHURCHYARD CROSS

I was a little surprised to learn that the churchyard cross has been included in the revised list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest. Not that my use of the word 'surprised' indicates disapproval; it so happens that the memorial is such a familiar object that I hardly ever notice it! But I would certainly enter a strong protest if anyone ever suggested removing it.

I wonder how many—or how few—people ever read the inscription on the base? It tells us that friends and fellow parishioners provided the memorial to Mary Ann Smith-Dorrien, of Haresfoot, in 1909. The designer was a local architect, Mr. C. H. Rew, whose son Noel, also an architect, died two years ago.

R. A. Norris tells us that from an octagonal base springs the shaft which carries a head of tabernacle work. In the eastern face is a small Calvary; on the western face, St. Anne with the Blessed Virgin as a child; on the southern face, St. Peter; on the northern face, St. John Baptist, looking towards Berkhamsted School, part of the foundation of which was provided by the ancient Brotherhood dedicated to St. John.

DELAYED ACTION

I wonder if readers of the July, 1980, issue of the Berkhamsted Parish Magazine chuckled as I did on reading the following report of a temperance meeting at Potten End:

'Several new members joined

the Temperance Society, and one man declared his willingness to sign the pledge, but unfortunately he had ordered in a barrel of beer that very day, which he could not return, and he was loath to dispose of it otherwise. He was advised temporarily to attach himself to the red-ribbon section until the obstacle was removed.'

EMERY MILL

A reader's curiosity has been aroused by an old map showing 'Emery Mill' in Manor Street. 'What was it?' he asks.

In the 1860s, William Cooper, founder of the chemical works, found additional use for the mill that was normally used for grinding chemicals for his famous sheep dip. Glass and emery were crushed for glasspaper and emery cloth, and in my younger days I knew men who remembered a fantastic variety of old bottles and other glass objects being taken to Mr. Cooper's works and crushed to powder.

Later on, when there was no spare capacity, Mr. Cooper sold

this side of the business to John Oakey and Sons, whose products are still familiar to users of glasspaper, sandpaper and emery cloth.

SAXON ORIGIN

A scholarly booklet of especial interest to Northchurch readers was published recently by Phillimore & Co. Ltd. for the Herts Local History Council. 'The Anglo-Saxon Churches of Hertfordshire,' by Mr. T. P. Smith, contains surveys of nine very early churches in the county, and several pages are devoted to St. Mary's.

Mr. Smith discusses the investigations and theories of other writers and adds his own very knowledgeable comments. He says that there is nothing in the fabric to suggest a date earlier than the 11th century; selective archaeological excavation might help to answer some of the questions which have been raised.

I commend this booklet, which costs 50p, to all who are seriously interested in local history and archaeology.

ASKING THE WAY

Isn't it time we had a good street map prominently displayed in the town centre? Strangers and even residents often ask to be directed to the Employment and Social Security offices, which were transferred to the Post Office building months ago. It certainly seems that more could have been done to publicise the change of address.

Incidentally, occasionally I see people run after a bus on discovering that it does not call at the bus stop outside Sharland's store. A good sprinter with traffic lights in his favour stood a chance of catching the bus when it stopped outside the Town Hall, but he now needs wings to reach the new stop farther down the High Street.

An explanatory notice on the bus stop sign outside Sharland's would save a lot of frustration.

COUNTY LIBRARY

The County Library in Kings Road is normally open daily from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. except on Saturday (9.30 a.m. to 5 p.m.) and Wednesday, when the library is closed.



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