

BERKHAMSTED REVIEW



In and around Berkhamsted

by 'Townsmen'

AN EYE ON THE LAND

The Harvest Festival reminded me, as it does every year, that little is ever said about the most essential industry of all, agriculture. Berkhamsted is a town surrounded by fields providing vital needs, yet harvests come and go, receiving less publicity than, say, a preservation order for one urban tree.

We pretend that Berkhamsted is still a country town, but many of us are inclined to think more of fieldpaths than fields, and old traction engines at play excite more interest than combine harvesters at work.

Of course, times have changed. Productivity goes up but the work force goes down. Long after Berkhamsted ceased to hold corn and cattle markets, farmers and their labourers were familiar, regular

and numerous visitors to the town; today there are very few of them, and they look much the same as other businessmen!

Anyway, here is one townsman who keeps an eye on the land, rejoices to know that gales did not do too much harm to the crops, and promises to shut the gate, beware of the bull, and keep to the footpath

NUTTING TIME

Speaking of country matters, an old friend remarked that despite the usual enthusiasm for black-berrying, hardly anyone goes nutting nowadays.

He recalled boyhood expeditions for chestnuts in New Road, hedge-nuts almost everywhere, and walnuts at Bottom Farm—if no one was looking. The aim was to build up stocks for Christmas, but there was a great deal of instant tasting

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

OCTOBER

1973

(and tooth-breaking), not to mention burnt fingers at chestnut-roasting time.

MORE ANAGRAMS

My remark on the difficulty of finding a good anagram of the town's name for a crossword clue hamsted, Herts, HP4 2QR." The postmark on the front of the envelope—I could think of nothing better than "the mad kerbs"—brought the following from a reader, who says that she almost went mad trying to find alternatives. Here they are: "D breaks them", "He marks debt", "Deb met shark".

Nothing nice about any of them, is there? I give up!

POSTAL TOUR

A recent note of mine on the Post Code had an interesting sequel. A Potten End reader sent along a used envelope accompanied by the following rhyme:

The full address and postal code
Availed this letter naught!

Five days round Herts it
journeyed ere

To me at last 'twas brought.

The envelope bore the recipient's name and street name and number, followed by "Potten End, Berkvelope shows that it was posted at Hunsdon, Ware, on August 2. On the back are the following postmarks: "Watford, 6 a.m., 4 Aug." and "St. Albans, 10 a.m., 6 Aug.". For good measure, also on the back, are two large inscriptions: "Remember to use the Post Code".

CANADIAN TRIBUTE

A short time ago I had the pleasure of taking two Canadian visitors on a tour of the castle grounds. They had a very remote

family connection with our town; apparently an old uncle sometimes came here to stay with *his* relations and was forever talking about Berkhamsted.

The visitors from Vancouver enjoyed the tour, took lots of photographs, and were especially impressed by the fine turf. But most of all they liked the custodian's lodge—"it's so quaint, we would just love to live in a house like that".

Incidentally, it was my first visit to the castle grounds for some time. I noticed some nice new seats for visitors and a strong handrail for those who climb Tower Hill. I also had the pleasure of meeting the new custodian, Mr. Denmark, who keeps the grounds in tip-top condition.

OUT OF PAWN

Among my souvenirs (well, it wasn't mine in the first place) is a pawn ticket issued by William Chilton, pawnbroker, of 4 Castle Street, Berkhamsted. It is dated 23 April, 1879, and some poor soul from New Mill, near Tring, pawned goods (unspecified) to the value of 2s. 6d.

It wasn't long before Mr. Chilton disposed of his business to Mr. T. Gill, who in turn was succeeded by Mr. G. Gill. The shop closed down in the 1920s.

Many of the pawnbroker's customers came from neighbouring towns and villages; similarly, many Berkhamsted people patronised a similar shop at Chesham, walking both ways, to avoid being seen pawning goods in their own town.

At the foot of the pawn ticket is the following note: "This establishment closes on Wednesdays at 5 o'clock in the afternoon." I suppose that was the nearest they came to an early-closing day in 1879.

LONG AND SHORT OF IT

A friend has drawn my attention to the public footpath sign at the Brickhill Green end of the much-used path through the playing fields to the town. It states that the distance to the High Street is half a mile. "An under-estimate, surely," my friend commented.

In fact it is just a little less than three-quarters of a mile. But on the way up it may seem rather more than that!

ACCURATE FORECAST

The other day I had occasion to refer to a book published in 1951 by the Hertfordshire County Planning Office. It contains a table showing the anticipated population of urban and rural districts in 1971. Berkhamsted Urban, with 10,777 inhabitants in 1951, was expected to have 15,000 twenty years later.

Right to the nearest thousand! The actual figure in 1971 was 15,439. I congratulate the planners on their accuracy. Will they please lend me their crystal ball? I will then have a go at forecasting the weather.

CHEMISTS ROTA

The chemists specified are open from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. on the Mondays to Fridays shown and from 11.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. on Sundays. The chemists are not open late on Saturdays.

30 Sept.—5 Oct.: Dickman
7 Oct.—12 Oct.: Boots
14 Oct.—19 Oct.: Figg
21 Oct.—26 Oct.: Dickman
28 Oct.—2 Nov.: Boots.



BMC SERVICE

For all BMC
Spares and Service

Large selection of NEW and USED
cars always in stock

UNDERHILL & YOUNG LTD.

HIGH STREET, BERKHAMSTED

Telephone 2371/2/3