

BERKHAMSTED REVIEW



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AUGUST

1974

In and around Berkhamsted

by 'Townsmen'

Look West, Young Man

One of last month's contributors advised people to look west along the High Street and admire the trees and fields on the horizon. Yes, it is a splendid view, and at the moment there does not seem to be any threat to the green slopes of Hertfordshire's highest village, Wigginton.

Some people look that way to see what weather we are likely to have in a few minutes' time: not an infallible guide, for factory smoke has occasionally been mistaken for a black cloud.

Anyway, the distant view is most attractive, and almost magical on those rare, sparkling days of winter when an inch or two of snow seems to add a hundred feet or more to the hillside.

Incidentally, it pays to look east as well as west: from certain points one has the impression that the High Street is heading for a forest!

Breaking-Up Time

At the time of writing a huge mound of bricks marks the site of what, until recently, was the oldest surviving Church of England school in the district. It bore the date 1844, and over the door was the coat of arms of the Countess of Bridgewater, who, with gifts of land and money, did more than anyone else to provide schools in early Victorian times.

Originally a school for infants, it became the

Bridgewater Domestic Science Centre between the two World Wars. While girls learnt the art of cookery, boys attended carpentry classes in another old school building (still standing) on the opposite side of the street.

Right to the end the recently-demolished school served the younger generation: it was a meeting place for Gossoms End Boy Scouts.

Changes at Gossoms End

How long this part of Gossoms End will remain free of buildings I cannot say. At least we are spared the dangers of a very narrow stretch of the highway.

It is hard to believe that on the south side over 30 cottages occupied what is now a new footpath and a narrow lawn beside the widened highway. Older readers will remember, at Cross Oak Road corner, L. H. Brinkman's nursery, with many small greenhouses, and the long corrugated iron building which was Goss Brothers' brushworks until other uses were found for it. A large garage now occupies the site. Next came the infants' school, H. Gibbs and Son's dairy, and a long row of cottages all the way to Queen's Road corner.

In more recent times a row of eleven cottages (one of which was the Stag public-house for many years) was demolished. The little lane on the west side of the former boys' school is still known as Stag Lane.

The Gade Valley Trail

Have you walked the Gade Valley Trail? I cordially recommend it to readers who like to stretch their legs, and especially to those who seek a change from familiar walks starting and finishing in Berkhamsted.

The trail is fully described, with illustrations and a map, in a booklet recently published by the Hemel Hempstead Council of Social Service. Starting from St. Mary's Church, walkers are advised what to see in the old High Street before exploring the steep little roads and alleys behind the inns and shops. A short walk across the fields brings you to Piccotts End, noted for its ancient mural paintings and full of pleasant old houses that will make you stop, look, and take photographs. Fieldpaths high above the road lead to Water End, and on the way back to Hemel Hempstead the walker's route is never far from the river Gade.

Of course, you can start and end the walk at Water End if you wish, and thanks to the great number of footpaths there are many variations on the booklet's recommendations. But for 10p you have a useful guide which will almost certainly add to your knowledge of the district as it has to mine. The booklet is available at 48 High Street, Hemel Hempstead.

Local Artists

I try not to be envious of other people, but how I wish I had the ability to join the ever-growing number of local artists. I see students enjoying art classes at the local outpost of Dacorum College, and hurry along to St. Peter's Hall whenever it becomes an art gallery. For good measure there are outdoor exhibitions of paintings in the churchyard—a splendid setting, if I may say so, especially when the lime tree scents the neighbourhood.

Naturally, I am particularly interested in scenes of local interest, and this year we have had more than ever before. How instructive it is to see local scenes as others paint them; I get out my camera to capture subjects which had not previously appealed to me, or to photograph familiar buildings from new angles. Don't tell the artists; they may never speak to me again!

Elvyne Hall

"For Sale" posters on another old school building make me wonder what will happen to Elvyne Hall, in Chesham Road. That's the one which, for many years, has been used by the St. John Ambulance Brigade. Many older readers will recall the time when it was a private school run by Miss Abbey, who, like Miss Dell, kept a similar school behind Egerton House, superintended St. Peter's Sunday School for many years.

Elvyne, by the way, is an old family name, and for a time Chesham Road was called Elvyne Lane. Later it became Grub's Lane (from another family name), and I know which of the two names I would prefer if we had never called the lane Chesham Road.

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REMEMBER THE MEETING ON THE
30th SEPTEMBER

THE REVIEW IN FUTURE

Since 1971 the price of the 'Berkhamsted Review' has been maintained at 5p. During this period there have been a number of sharp increases in the cost of production, which up to the present time have been absorbed. This is no longer possible. It has been decided, therefore, that commencing with the September issue the price will be raised to 7p. In order to encourage readers to place a regular order a discount is offered to annual subscribers. Thus the annual rate will be 75p for 12 issues commencing in January 1975 and payable in advance. All existing annual subscriptions will not be subject to increase until January 1975.

Although the Management Committee deeply regret this decision, they believe that even at its increased price the Review still costs less than any comparable publication. This is largely due to the size of the circulation which it enjoys and the Management Committee hope for your support in maintaining and extending this.

BRITISH LEGION

Mrs. R. Mardle and Mrs. D. Clarke are holding a ploughman's lunch in the Gable Hall (Prince Edward Street) Berkhamsted on Wednesday 14th August from 11.45 a.m. to 2 p.m. There will also be a raffle and a bring and buy stall.

Please support this effort in aid of ex-servicemen and their dependents. Tickets (including lunch) are 30p. from 68 Charles Street or Castle Hill Avenue by 6th August.

BOBBY BREWSTER'S WISHBONE

"Bobby Brewster's Wishbone" and "Bobby Brewster's First Fun" are two new books by H. E. Todd, which are here reviewed by a 7-year-old reader.

Bobby Brewster's Wishbone is very good because it is funny and very strange things happen to Bobby. My favourite story is "Fun in the Frost" because Mr. and Mrs. Brewster get older so they cannot remember things very well. Bobby is very forgetful too. One frosty day when Bobby was going to School he opened the door and in the frost, written on the grass was the word 'satchel'. Bobby said to his Mummy thank you for reminding me to take my satchel to School I almost forgot. In the afternoon Mrs. Brewster was going shopping and it was still frosty. When she opened the door she saw the words 'shopping bag' on the grass. The next day Bobby told his Mummy that somebody who had a lot of sense could write it or else it was Jack Frost's magic.

Bobby Brewster's First Fun is some of the stories that H. E. Todd tells when he goes round to visit groups of children.

The story I liked best was "Up the Wall". Everybody should know that a fly goes up the wall across the ceiling upside down without going bonk on its head. Not every body knows that Bobby likes sardine sandwiches very much. One morning when Bobby was in bed a fly went up the wall across the