



BERKHAMSTED REVIEW

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In and around Berkhamsted

by 'Townsmen'

OUR CHANGING TOWN

Much is said, usually disparagingly, about our changing High Street. But seldom does one hear anything about our older side-streets, which are also changing, and usually for the better.

Instead of dull uniformity we now have colour and variety. Young people especially work wonders with old terrace houses, brightening the exterior, sometimes fitting new doors and windows, removing interior walls, re-siting staircases and installing every possible mod. con.

A certain amount of rebuilding takes place, too, temporarily creating gaps which surprise people who have not visited this or that road for a considerable time. For instance, the old (lower) part of Highfield Road recently lost a row of ten cottages (once known as Collins' Row), leaving an open space opposite the old Wesleyan Chapel which, only a few years after it was built, was converted into two houses.

Castle Street also has changed in recent times. Ten years ago many people were incensed by the removal of the so-called "sunken" cottages. But the sanatorium which occupies part of the site now has pleasant gardens fore and aft. With other changes Castle Street now has a rather special quality which I cannot define but certainly find

most attractive.

Lower King's Road has brightened itself up, too, and seems to be all the busier for the change.

AMONG SO MANY!

A reader tells me that his young son, who is very fond of arithmetic, startled him by saying, "Dad, I've just worked out that one Englishman in 2,900 is a Berkhamstedian."

Of course, it's not the quantity but the quality that matters!

A NEGLECTED WRITER

When Sir Hugh Greene appeared with his brother Graham at a local meeting a few weeks ago, he mentioned that he was preparing a book containing a selection of short stories by a former fellow Berkhamstedian, W. W. Jacobs.

How strange that a humorist who achieved enormous fame is almost forgotten today. Few people under 40 years of age have ever heard of him. Yet for many years his lighthearted tales, often with a dockside flavour, pushed up the sales of the once-famous Strand Magazine. The best of his stories were reprinted in book form under such titles as "Many Cargoes", "Captains All" and "Night Watches". All are now out of print.

Now and again he changed his style and setting, and a thriller called "The Monkey's Paw" was

especially successful. Like several other tales by Jacobs, it was dramatised and broadcast.

He lived at Beechcroft, Chesham Road, and was a familiar figure in the town, paying a daily visit to W. H. Smith & Son's bookshop and regularly attending the Court Theatre on Mondays and Thursdays. I recall him as a slightly built and rather solemn man. As a humorist, I suppose he had to keep a straight face.

STRAIGHT AND NARROW

Several people have commented on the very narrow footpath under the railway bridge near the station.

That it is only 2 ft. wide at the narrowest part of the roadway is understandable, but why aren't pedestrians given much more space where the road fans out to a very great width? Using such a narrow ledge—it scarcely merits the name of footpath—is almost akin to walking a tightrope.

A BOOK ABOUT TRING

Congratulations to Miss Sheila Richards on her newly-published *History of Tring*, sponsored by Tring Urban District Council shortly before it became a thing of the past. That the book contains much material that has never been published before is not surprising; Miss Richards is a highly qualified researcher who is not unknown in Berkhamsted.

In 1836, as many as 600 men, women and children worked in a silk mill at Tring, by far the largest place of employment for many miles around. The men received 15s. a week, the children 3s. At that time Tring had almost as many inhabitants as Berkhamsted and Northchurch combined, but grew at a much slower rate later on. No doubt this was due in part to the railway station being so far from the town. Had the ill-fated Cheddington-Aylesbury branch line started from Tring Station I fancy that the town would have developed on new lines!

In more modern times Tring became the home of one of the Rothschild families, in whose park the great one-day Tring Show attracted as many as 20,000 people, many of whom came from Berkhamsted. Those who stayed away marvelled at the extra traffic along the highway.

I commend Miss Richards' book, a veritable bargain at 40p, to *Review* readers. But what a pity such a fact-filled history lacks an index.

EXPORT ORDERS

Incidentally, the *Short History of Berkhamsted* appeared just over two years ago. At the time it seemed rather rash to order 4,000 copies of a hard-back edition, but there is a continuing demand for the book and fewer than 1,200 copies remain in stock.

At least 50 copies have been sent or taken to Canada and the United States. There are also copies in Australia, South Africa, Hong Kong, France, Germany, Sweden, Liechtenstein and the Falkland Islands.

THE RECTOR'S RIGHT

Once again I have been asked if Green Lane (the

little turning off Chesham Road) has ever been a right of way to the top of Rectory Lane.

No. But it seems that there was a dispute over a century ago, for at the far end of the lane, at the entrance to the garden of the former rectory, an engraved stone bears the following inscription: "The Rector has ancient right of way through Green Lane to Grubbs Lane. J.H., Rector, 1866."

J. H. was the Rev. James Hutchinson, rector from 1851-71. As has often been explained, Grubb's or Grub's Lane was an old name for Chesham Road.

BERKHAMSTED CRICKET CLUB

OLD CODGERS EVENING

A party was held in the Pavilion at the Town Ground on September 6th, which was a landmark in the history of the club. It was a landmark to prepare for the further landmark of 1975, which will be the Club's Centenary season.

All old members who could be traced were invited to meet present players, and they responded from places far apart. As always the ladies, without whose constant help the Club would never have survived, prepared a sumptuous buffet. A total of 150 attended, and many of them were still reminiscing till one o'clock in the morning. It was a really heartwarming affair, with players from the nineteen twenties right up to present day, and practically every captain of all three elevens since the war. Many ladies were there too, for one of the strengths of the Berkhamsted Cricket Club is that it has always encouraged families and children.

For the past many years ties with local schools have been strong, and hundreds of boys have been coached and played for Colts teams. This season over eighty boys are members of the club. The result is that all the Senior teams now include players who have graduated through since boyhood. Surely this is what local cricket should be all about.

The policy has paid off handsomely. Since 1969 when the Hertfordshire Competition started Berkhamsted have twice been champions, and they are currently top again in the Senior League.

We have high hopes for our hundredth season in 1975, and we do look for support on and off the pitch from those in the town who are interested in cricket. Players please join us—patrons please become vice-presidents—others please come and watch and cheer us on. You can be assured of a warm welcome and an enjoyable afternoon.

H. E. TODD,

2 Brownlow Road, Berkhamsted (Tel. 4857).

A MERRY MARKET

You will be able to buy your Christmas presents and enjoy yourself at a Merry Market, on 16th November in St. Peter's Hall from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Stalls, games of skill, music and refreshments will be provided. If you would like to run a stall and have not already been asked, please ring either David Woodward (2723) or Mark Orchard (3717).