



BERKHAMSTED REVIEW

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In and around Berkhamsted

by 'Townsmen'

A New Bridge

If you do not go to Billet Lane very often, you may not have seen the new canal bridge which has been built beside the old one. Strolling along the towpath the other day, I thought there was very little headroom for walkers and gondoliers, but there is really no need to duck your head. You have to be very, very tall to receive a nasty bump.

I hope the iron bar which was installed to protect the brickwork of the old bridge will be retained. It is an interesting relic of the days of horse-drawn canal traffic. In the course of time the tow-ropes wore away good old British iron, causing a series of deep grooves. Similar indentations may be seen on some other bridges that were built over winding stretches of the canal.

Down in the Valley

Builders are busy in Provident Place, or Foggy Bottom, as we called it in the days of pea-soup fogs. Many houses, including Geary's corner shop, were pulled down a few years ago, and the former cul-de-sac now ends at the corner of Holliday Street.

I doubt whether the name Provident Place will be retained. It crops up in sundry places; I recall seeing a Provident Place in Islington. I have a hunch that the Berkhamsted road of that name was originally known as Waterside, to my mind a much nicer

name.

In Darkest Berkhamsted

Isn't it time we had better lighting in Water Lane and Mill Street? Many people dread the dingy way to the car park and public conveniences. It is the dreariest part of the town, with some almost unbelievably murky corners.

Prompt action, please!

Bygone Berkhamsted

A little more information about a sequel to the *Short History of Berkhamsted*. It will not be a detailed account of local life in Victorian and Edwardian Berkhamsted—that will come later—but a book of pictures which is scheduled for publication fairly early in 1975.

Altogether there will be over 120 pictures of local interest—Queen Victoria's visit in 1841, a large number of photographs dating from the 1850s, portraits of the gentry and their servants, and reminders of bygone mansions, shops and cottages.

Every picture tells a story, so to supplement the captions there will be copious notes in addition to the art-paper section, which alone will run to 80 pages.

The title? *Bygone Berkhamsted*. It is hoped that the paperback edition will cost not more than £1 (perhaps a little less). There will also be a cloth-

bound edition at £1.60 or thereabouts. Sorry to be vague about the price, but printing costs are rather high nowadays!

A Famous Pianist

The programme of the Berkhamsted Music Society's 21st anniversary concert contained a fitting reference to Benno Moiseiwitsch, the society's first president. This world-famous pianist lived in Anglefield Road during and for some years after the war. He gave a number of recitals locally in aid of good causes, and it was not unknown for residents to walk very, very slowly past his house when the great man was playing for his own or his guests' pleasure.

On one occasion Benno was just a little cross because his records were not given so much prominence in a local shop window as discs of pop music of the period! Incidentally, he died in 1963.

By the way, when we do have a large hall in Berkhamsted, perhaps the Hemel Hempstead Arts Trust will switch one or two of its Autumn Festival concerts to the second largest town in the Dacorum district. I wonder how many people remember two concerts that were given in Berkhamsted by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Sir Adrian Boult? That was in June, 1941.

An Old Clock

Mr. S. J. Snoxall, of 163 Chaulden Lane, Boxmoor, recently showed me a very old handsome clock bearing the name of Thomas Sadler, of Barckham Sted.

The spelling suggests that it is of considerable age. If you know anything about Thomas Sadler, perhaps you will advise Mr. Snoxall, who would like to date his ancient timepiece.

The Rate for the Job

My thanks to Mr. Potton, of Briar Way, for showing me a page from the ledger of a local builder and contractor. The page is dated May, 1899.

Hours were long and wages were small. The most highly paid employee was R. J. Wright, a painter, who was paid 8½d. an hour and received £2 6s. 4½d. for working 65½ hours. Nothing extra for overtime! There were four other painters, their wages ranging from 4½d. to 7d. per hour.

Of the eight carpenters, two received 7½d., three 7d., one 6½d., one 5½d., and one 3½d. an hour. Rates for the four builders were 7½d., 5d., 4½d., and 2½d. an hour. There was one carter, who worked 57 hours for 4d. an hour but received an extra shilling to increase the week's wage to £1. Four labourers also received 4d. an hour, while a fifth received only 3d. an hour (14s. 9d., for a 59-hour week).

Last on the list was a labourer, whose hourly rate was ¾d. an hour. He worked 56½ hours to receive 4s. 1½d. A young trainee labourer, I imagine!

COUNTY LIBRARY

The County Library in King's 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.