

## CASTLE CERAMICS

CHINA & GLASS

Pottery, Cutlery, Costume  
Jewellery, Lamps &  
Shades

311 HIGH STREET

Phone 1689

## BULBOURNE NURSERIES LTD.

Cut Flowers  
Pot Plants  
Spring Flowering Bulbs

Specialist growers of  
TOMATOES  
and CHRYSANTHEMUMS  
HIGH STREET  
BERKHAMSTED

Telephone 2548

A farewell gift of a suitably inscribed tankard was made to Major Gillam-Wood by the members of the Berkhamsted British Legion in recognition of his services as chairman for three years and as a token of their good wishes for his success in his new sphere as Manager of the Westminster Bank at St. Neots and for the happiness of himself and his family, who have now taken up residence in their new home.

## A. J. CRUICKSHANK

A.F.C. F.V.I.

HOUSE & ESTATE AGENT INCORPORATED VALUER & SURVEYOR  
236a HIGH STREET, BERKHAMSTED Tel. 2364/5

Also at

85 HIGH STREET, CHESHAM Tel. 8856

and

16 HIGH STREET, TRING Tel. 3433

In association with P. Fountaine and Cruickshank—planning consultants.

A COTTAGE FOR A SHILLING A WEEK

## A Property Sale of 1778

IN PREPARING articles on old local mansions I have been helped by the loan of several old deeds and "particulars of sale" notices. A large, valuable bundle shown to me recently by an estate owner included a manuscript of such rare interest that I have a valid excuse for postponing further visits to historical houses until the weather improves.

The manuscript is especially welcome in adding a little to our knowledge of 18th century Berkhamsted. A large book could be devoted to the 17th century alone, and 19th century sources are seemingly inexhaustible; it is the intervening century—perhaps a rather uneventful one in local affairs—which starves historians.

Pre-dating by many years any other known local "particulars of sale" notice, our latest discovery is in long-hand and presumably one of many copies laboriously produced by a local scribe. It is dated 1778, some years before we had a local printer to sing the praises of desirable properties in type. What may well be the sole surviving copy has the added interest of giving the purchase prices and the names of some of the buyers. As this supplementary information is not always given, it is possible that some of the properties were not sold.

### AT THE KING'S ARMS INN

The auction sale took place at the King's Arms Inn on Monday, April 20, 1778, before "hotel" was considered a more high-sounding name than inn. A manor house, three farms and many houses and cottages were offered in thirteen lots, making the sale an important one. Unfortunately, the name is not given of the auctioneer who proclaimed the virtues of "Freehold, Copyhold and Leasehold estates situate in the parishes of Berkhamsted and Northchurch."

Lot 1 was a capital messuage called Pilkington's; in other words, the manor house near the top of Castle Street, now converted into shops, offices and flats. (An article devoted to this manor appeared in the *Review* for July, 1962). The house, outbuildings, gardens, fish-ponds and 13½ acres of

meadowland were let to Samuel Simmons on lease for fourteen years from Christmas, 1775, at £70 per annum. In addition, an orchard was let to Simmons for £1 a year, a barn to—Fordon for £2 10s. a year, and an adjoining coach-house had a rental value of £1 per annum.

### FRONT GARDEN RENTS

Footnotes tell us that a pew and vault in the Parish Church belonged to the proprietor of Pilkington's, and that "the ground lying before the garden wall railed in is copyhold of inheritance of the Honor of Berkhamsted at the yearly rents of fourpence and sixpence quit rents payable to the proprietor of Pilkington's per annum £1 10s. 4d." I am not sure how this unpunctuated statement should be interpreted, but the land was of course the front garden, now the paved pavement in front of the shops and Harrods' estate office. The document does not state whether Lot 1 was sold.

It is perhaps astonishing to find that one could live like the lord of the manor for no more than one now pays for a cottage, but we shall have further examples showing how the value of money has changed.

Lot 2 comprised three freehold messuages let to John Chapple (£2 5s. a year), John Hurnal (£2 10s.) and John Perkins (£4 4s.), together with a shed for which John Wilford paid 15s. a year. The site of these properties is not stated, but I imagine they stood between the Manor House and the top of Manor Street, for the frontage merited a note similar to that given for Lot 1: "The ground lying before these buildings is copyhold of the inheritance of the Honor of Berkhamsted at the yearly rent of sixpence."

The three cottages and shed were sold to John Austin for £140.

### THE HOP GROUND

Lot 3 brings us to another three freehold houses let at £5, £2 2s. and £3 10s. per annum. Lot 4 was a freehold messuage let to William Norris at £3 a year ("there is a pew in Berkhamsted Church belonging to this lot"), and Lot 5 was a freehold messuage in Castle Street let to John Ludgate at £2 2s. a year.

Lot 6, a freehold messuage let to John Flint for £7 a year, was sold for £88. Lot 7, a freehold messuage in Castle Street let to John Flint for £3 per annum, fetched £42, and Lot 8, a freehold piece of pasture land in Berkhamsted, called the Hop Ground, let to John Fowler for £6 per annum, realised £230.

Could this Hop Ground have been the "Hop Garden" between King's Road and Elm Grove, as shown on the title map? £230 seems a high price to pay for such a small piece of land, even though hops have a habit of appearing there to this day!

### CROSS OF THE OAK FARM

Now we come to the farms. Lot 9, a freehold messuage and farm called Maudlins or Marlins, in Northchurch parish, comprising 119 acres, was let to Henry Thomas for £60 a year. It was sold for £1,280. The neighbouring farm (Marlin Chapel) also found a purchaser, who paid £1,000 for the house and 122 acres of land leased to Richard Wood for £48 a year. This was Lot 10.

Richard Wood was obviously an extensive farmer. He paid £41 a year for Cross of the Oak Farm (Cross Oak), with 37 acres (copyhold) and another 33 acres of freehold land in Berkhamsted and Northchurch. This, Lot 11, was sold for £900. Richard Wood also leased three closes of arable land (30 acres) and another eight acres, paying £21 per annum. This was Lot 12, sold for £28.

The final lot, No. 13, comprised a leasehold messuage in Castle Street let

to John Bird for £1 12s. 6d. a year and a leasehold piece of meadow in Berkhamsted let to Mrs. Geary for £1 10s. a year. Both Lots 12 and 13 were held by lease from the master and usher of Berkhamsted School.

### SHOOTERSWAY BRICKS

This auction sale of 1778 has taken us to many parts of the district. Now I would like to move on to the year 1863 (just a century ago) to recall an industry which has left a legacy in many of our older houses. I refer to houses built of bricks from the Shootersway kilns, for many years a familiar sight on the skyline.

The kilns which operated until quite recent times were on the far side of Darrs Lane. A century ago, however, bricks were made on the land between the upper part of Bell Lane and Darrs Lane. This information comes from the "particulars of sale" when the vast Rossway estate came in the market 100 years ago.

"The freehold property, brick and lime works with two kilns and drying sheds, now carrying on a lucrative trade, together with three cottages and gardens, barn, stables, cowhouse and an enclosure of meadowland in the rear," comprised over 14 acres and were in the occupation of John Skinner.

### ROYALTIES

Mr. Skinner's tenancy, states the notice, was due to expire at Michaelmas, 1863. He paid the "inadequate" rent of £63 per annum, and, in addition,

Telephone Berkhamsted 1780

C. H. BRACKLEY

for

PAINTING &  
DECORATIONS  
OF DISTINCTION

86 Shrublands Avenue  
BERKHAMSTED

a royalty of 2s. per thousand upon all bricks made, 6d. per ton for all lime made from chalk taken from a certain area, and 2s. per ton for all clay taken from three of the four small parcels of land leased by Mr. Skinner.

Bricks have of course been made in many parts of the district: on Berkhamsted Common and on Brickhill (formerly Brick-kiln) Green, for instance. It may be possible to devote an article to this ancient industry in the near future.

"BEORCHAM"

## F. H. Woolsey Ltd.

recommend

# SOLID FUEL for CENTRAL HEATING

F. H. WOOLSEY LTD.

24 Lower Kings Road  
Berkhamsted

Phone: Berkhamsted 60

F. H. WOOLSEY LTD.

89/90 Akeman Street  
Tring

Phone: Tring 2009