

BERKHAMSTED REVIEW



In and around Berkhamsted

by 'BEORCHAM'

Town Hall Architect

I am indebted to Mr. Anthony Richardson, AA. Dipl., R.I.B.A., for some information about the man who designed Berkhamsted's most controversial building, the Town Hall. Edward Buckton Lamb was a well-known architect who designed 35 churches, the most notable being St. Martin's, Gospel Oak, in north London, with timber work very similar to the roof of our Town Hall.

Lamb also designed many country houses, planned additions to Ashridge House and redesigned Hughenden Manor, the home of Disraeli. And there is another Town Hall designed by Lamb—in the little town of Eye, Suffolk. He must have been a very busy man, for he was a good illustrator and writer as well as a well-known architect.

If you look at two carved stones over the Town Hall door, you will see one with the date 1859 and the other bearing the entwined initials, with dividers, of the architect. The prominence of the letter B on this stone has led many to imagine that the initials are those of a member of the Brownlow family; not so, for they are Mr. Lamb's. Incidentally, it was Lady Marion Alford,

mother of Lord Brownlow, who wanted Mr. Lamb to design the Town Hall after the building committee had favoured another architect.

High and Dry

The Citizens' Association deserves a pat on the back for trimming the towpath hedge between St. John's Well Lane and Lower King's Road. This praiseworthy effort reminds me that it is high time British Waterways were thanked for improving the towpath, which, not so very long ago, was in a parlous and even dangerous state at certain points between Dudswell and Marsworth.

Now it is a pleasure to use the path for long as well as short walks. But a word of advice: here and there the path is rather stony, so wear suitable shoes to take the rough with the smooth. And watch your step under Lower King's Road bridge, where the Bulbourne is still swirling over the towpath at the time of writing.

Attractive Northchurch

Villages situated beside main roads seldom receive the compliments they deserve; motorists are always in a hurry, and walkers

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are always conscious of the heavy traffic.

That is why people sing the praises of Aldbury and the Gaddesdens but rarely say a word about Northchurch. But it is really a most attractive village, improving all the time and looking especially nice this summer. The roadside trees are splendid, and so are the gardens.

A house which was looking forlorn a short time ago has been restored and has a nice new name, Northchurch Place. The two old cottages at Dropshort, also in poor condition until recently, have a new look, so it is unlikely that a name that has given rise to several amusing stories will die out.

Full marks, then, to historic Northchurch, still a village in its own right and likely to remain so, no matter how many boundary changes are made.

Where is it?

A reader tells me that his family and friends often test their local knowledge and powers of observation by studying estate agents' advertisements in local newspapers—you know, the ones containing lots of photographs of houses large and small.

Usually the town or village is named but not the street. And so the guessing game begins, with such clues "end terraced house", "convenient position", "on town outskirts", "quiet location", "near shops", and so on. Dad is sure that the two-storey town house is in Z Street. Mum says it is in Y Avenue. The next-door neighbour is certain that it is in Z Drive. And so on.

Well, that's one way of passing the time if you like arguments!

On the cover

Pardon a further mention of *Bygone Berkhamsted*, but several readers have asked if the illustration on the book jacket (a market day scene) was adapted from the engraving which appears on page 1.

No, it was the other way round!

Dr. Raymond Greene, brother of Sir Hugh Greene and Graham Greene, tells me that he has the original watercolour by James Duffield Harding (1798-1863), one of the best known early English watercolourists.

It seems that at least two engravings were

based on Harding's original work, one of which states that the scene was "drawn by J. D. Harding on the spot, 1780, engraved by E. Finden". This date doesn't make sense; it was probably between 1830-50.

MUSIC FOR ALL SAINTS

An interesting programme of music has been arranged for the next concert for the All Saints'/Methodist Scheme. The popular Watford School of Music Junior Orchestra will perform in St. Peter's Church (note the place!) at 3.30 p.m. on Sunday, July 13th. Admission is by programme, price 50p (children and old age pensioners 25p).



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