



# BERKHAMSTED REVIEW

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## In and around Berkhamsted

by 'BEORCHAM'

### In the Market

Should Berkhamsted have two market days each week? This question was recently debated by the Parish Council, and I confess that my own views were rather mixed. Any attempt to make Berkhamsted a more popular shopping centre deserves consideration, especially at a time when some fifteen shops are empty. On the other hand, would not a street market add to the traffic dangers on days when huge goods vehicles (mercifully rare on Saturdays) hurtle through the town?

Not that there is anything new in the suggestion of an extra market day. It was tried many years ago and was a flop. That is not to say that a new attempt would fail.

In the early years of this century we had a vegetable and flower market on Tuesdays, a general market on Saturdays, and a cattle market on alternate Fridays. Until the 1880s there was also a weekly straw-plait market. At an earlier date we have five fair days each year, one of which, on August 5th, was a cheese fair. My only authority for this information comes from a guidebook published in the early 19th century.

### Walks for motorists

"No Through Road: the A.A. Book of Country Walks" is a new publication consisting largely of looseleaf pages giving details of 205 short walks (three to six miles) in various parts of the country.

No. 34 of these selected walks starts at Aldbury, continues to the Bridgewater Monument and Ashridge House, and returns to Aldbury by another route. A very obvious choice, if I may say so, and within the limit of 4½ miles it could be the best the district has to offer. But, as readers of the Review know, there are dozen of excellent walks north, east, south and west of Berkhamsted.

### Boxwell House

I wonder who will buy Boxwell House? A "listed" building, Grade II, it is to be sold by auction for use as offices. How I wish we could have it for a town museum!

Rebuilt about the year 1700, Boxwell House occupies the site of a house of the same name mentioned in a document of 1565. There have been many owners. In 1840 the house was bought by the Rev. J. C. Browne, curate of St. Peter's. Three years

later, he sold it to John Tawell, who was hanged in 1845 for murdering his mistress! Later on, Boxwell House became the home of Sarah Littleboy, a member of an influential Quaker family.

Until mid-Victorian times the land on both sides of Boxwell Road (which then existed as a short, gated drive to a paddock) formed the small Boxwell Estate. Behind the house, gardens and stables were nurseries and meadowland. Half-way up the hill was a gravel pit.

In 1879, the greater part of the estate came in the market, and a new road, aptly called Boxwell Road, was made.

### 110th Anniversary

Exactly 110 years ago—on August 1st, 1865—the Baptist Church was opened. I wonder how many people know that it contains some building materials taken from a much older Baptist chapel in Water Lane, and that while the new church was being built the Baptists held their services in the Town Hall, then only five years old?

A "Hemel Hempstead Gazette" report of the opening services refers to the "light and graceful stone spire . . . a conspicuous object in the scenery of Berkhamsted". This is still an apt description 110 years after the church and schoolrooms were built for only £1,600, including the site!

The architect, Mr. Neale, of Bristol, also designed the Congregational Church, which was pulled down early last year.

### Family Budget

My thanks to a reader for allowing me to see some extracts from a schoolgirl's exercise book, dated 1910, showing how a family's weekly income of £1 10s. was planned. Here are the items: Rent, 6s.; food, 14s.; light and fuel, 2s. 6d.; clothing, 2s.; insurance and club, 1s. 6d.; cleaning materials, 6d.; father's pocket money, 2s. 6d.; reserve fund, 1s.

A dinner for six persons, costing 1s. 6d., included a main course known as poor man's goose. This consisted of 1 lb. liver, 6d.; 1 lb. onions, 1d.; 3 lb. potatoes, 2½d.; seasoning, ¼d.; a total of 9½d. This was followed by sultana pudding, costing 8d.: ¼ lb.

flour, 1½d.; 6 oz. suet, 3d.; 6 oz. sultanas, 2d.; 3oz. sugar, ½d.; 1½ teaspoonful baking powder and pinch salt, ½d.; and ½ pint milk, 1d.

It would be interesting to know how father spent his pocket money of half a crown.

### Heber Mills

I have a photograph, taken in 1911, of a well-known local character, Mr. Heber Mills. He was probably the last man to cut furze on the Common for sale to the few people who still found a use for it. I shall be grateful for any further information from readers who remember Mr. Mills.



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