

# BERKHAMSTED REVIEW



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## In and around Berkhamsted

by 'BEORCHAM'

### New Year Resolutions

Isn't there a centenary we can celebrate in this brave new year? I cannot find one. Instead, may I suggest a New Year Resolutions for the Powers That Be?

1. That all the town's footpaths be made walkable and untrippable.
2. That priority be given to a footpath all the way up Cross Oak Road.
3. That something be done to improve the appearance of Monk's House, Monk's Cottage and the derelict buildings at Prince Edward Street corner.
4. That a little paint be applied to some much-neglected buildings in the High Street.
5. That empty shops not be left looking like refuse dumps.

### Narrow View

A former resident, paying her first return visit for several years, was asked if she had noticed many changes in the town centre.

After a moment's thought, she said: "They've moved the bus stop, haven't they?"

### Without a Mayor

Apart from townspeople interested in the preservation of the Town Hall, it is rare

to see a member of the public at meetings of the Berkhamsted Parish Council.

The Council's powers, admittedly, are very limited, and few of the score or so items on the agenda detain the councillors for more than a minute or two. At the December meeting, however, "any other business" produced a lively discussion on the name of the Council. Regret was expressed that Berkhamsted, unlike Tring and many other nice but smaller towns, had opted for a Parish Council, not a Town Council. Thus we forfeited the honour of having a mayor, and it is now rather late in the day to have second thoughts.

The chain of office worn by the chairman of the old Urban District Council was mentioned, and I am sure that we do not need a mayor to revive its use. So let's have a little pageantry if only to mark the tenth anniversary of the 1966 Pageant of blessed memory. How time flies—and how I wish we could recapture the vigour, liveliness and intense activity of 1966.

### The Old Harness Maker

Workmen have been clearing away a tottering old building in Prince Edward Street which aroused interest because it

bore an ancient signboard—"Walklate, harness maker."

John Walklate owned the middle shop in that now derelict block between the Civic Centre and Prince Edward Street. His name appears in a directory of the 1860s, and it is not improbable that he took over an established business. Anyway, the name Walklate was retained when the shop was owned by Mr. G. E. Wingfield, who, as horse-drawn traffic declined, advertised the repair of portmanteaux, gladstone bags, trunks, dress baskets, etc., as well as providing brown canvas covers to fit dress baskets. He also made letter and cartridge bags to order, and supplied dog collars, whips, leads and muzzles.

There must be hundreds of older residents who remember the tangy smell of leather in one of the town's nicest old shops. We also remember with affection Mr. Levi Newell, the town's last saddler—a fine craftsman and a great church worker and bandmaster.

### Coals to Berkhamsted

At a time when there is little traffic on the canal I was delighted to see a pair of narrow boats laden with coal. And you could buy as little or as much as you wished; plastic bags were available for carrying coals from towpath to cellar or fireside.

I enjoyed a chat with the young, lively crew, who told me that they have many regular customers. A pity I had left my camera at home!

### All Together

I have just received a copy of "BNCC News", No. 1, and if the initials puzzle you I must explain that they stand for the Berkhamsted and Northchurch Community Council.

As Geoffrey Lancashire explains in a foreword, the Community Council was formed three years ago with the aim of providing a service to the many voluntary bodies in the town.

It is a very interesting publication, and the intention is to supply notes, in turn, on all local societies, clubs, etc.

Most of our societies are self-contained and, incidentally, very active despite the

shortage of halls. But lack of co-operation leads to several meetings being held at the same time, and this is one little matter the Community Council could put right. And wouldn't it be helpful to have a monthly or quarterly sheet listing all activities?

### Unknown Novelist

I am told that Henry Nash, whose "Reminiscences of Berkhamsted" (1890) delight all who have a copy of his book, that he had a literary niece, Annie Louisa Nash, who wrote a play for children, "Catawampus," as well as a novel called "Lutes and Rifts," published under the pen-name of Louise Sahn.

I wonder if anyone has a copy of this book?



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