

BERKHAMSTED REVIEW

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In and around Berkhamsted

by 'BEORCHAM'

Guided Tours

Full marks to Northchurch Women's Institute for bringing out an attractively illustrated folder showing places of interest in the village. Visitors are invited to look around, and for their guidance there is a detailed map extending from Dudswell to Billet Lane, supplemented by brief, chatty notes on interesting features and old buildings which have survived a spate of demolitions in modern times.

Many people will learn for the first time that Alma Road was once known as Number Row. This was because it was the first road in the village to have numbered houses. Another interesting point is that a cottage in Bell Lane (once known as Salmons Lane) was formerly a straw-plaiting school with measuring marks still on the mantelpiece. But it is unfair to go on quoting from an informative folder which, at 3p, is almost a gift.

The Northchurch Society, by the way, has arranged a conducted tour of the village for an evening in June, and in the following month Mr. Michael Tollit will take members of the Citizens' Association on an "architectural walk" in Berkhamsted. Perhaps the town, too,

should have a short, inexpensive guide for visitors.

Dangerous Curves

Isn't it time (someone asked me the other day) that we had a footpath beside that narrow, winding portion of Brownlow Road which runs behind the Castle to New Road? From the walker's point of view (and trees make it a very restricted view) this must be the very worst road in the district with the one exception of a notoriously dangerous part of Cross Oak Road. It is appalling that pedestrians have no path to escape from these very busy roads.

Incidentally, the road behind the Castle was once known as the Zigzag, because it was lined with railings that were angled left and right alternately.

Where is Dacorum?

Looking through the district council election results in his daily newspaper on May 7th, a resident complained that the local result was not included. He—and many other people I imagine—looked among the H's for Hemel Hempstead instead among the D's for Dacorum.

Much as we may be familiar with the name, thousands of newspaper readers must have wondered where Dacorum was situated. The

new names of several other district councils are equally puzzling.

Now for a ten-second quiz. What is the name of the district council for Chesham, Amersham and neighbouring villages, including nearby Ashley Green? Full marks for an instant answer, but no cheating! Oh, well, here goes—it is the Chiltern District Council.

Prominent Names

For as long as I can remember, the names of Mrs. Spergold, Miss Sear, Miss K. Dowson, Dr. Batterbury, J. Dockrill, J. Marnham, J. Peters and T. H. Norris have been familiar to me. But I wonder how long their names, inscribed on eight separate foundation stones, all dated April 11th, 1898, will survive now that the Methodist Church is up for sale?

Victorians were very keen on inscribed stones of this kind. An unusual one is on a chapel at Gaddesden Row: "Erected by friends in memory of Ellen Knowles, who willed the first lamps to this place of worship, 1876." The word "willed" makes a change from the usual "bequeathed."

The "Berkhamsted Express"

My thanks to a reader for giving me a copy of a local newspaper which had a very short life. No. 5 of the *Berkhamsted Express*, dated December 13th, 1895, is still in mint condition and full of interesting reports.

The publisher was Arthur D. King, a member of the well known firm of printers whose house and printing office in Lower King's Road is now up for sale.

Like many other small provincial publishers, Mr. King bought large, flat sheets with national news and features printed on one side only, the reverse side (pages 1, 4, 5 and 8) being printed locally. For this splendid combination of national and local news the price was one penny.

David Pike, at Lower King's Road corner, advertised 50 juicy oranges for one shilling, chestnuts at 2d. per lb., and grapes at 4d. and 6d. per lb. Edward Platt, grocer and wine merchant, sold finest Highland malt whisky for 3s. a bottle or £1 a gallon. J. Verney's cut currant cake was 4d. per lb. In those days, however, many families had an income of less

than £1 a week.

All the type was set by hand, and Mr. King must have worked through the night for a very long report of an anti-vaccination meeting to appear the following morning. A report of a Parish Council meeting tells us that F. Q. Lane, the nurseryman, gave 100 flowering shrubs to replace the ones that had been damaged by boys playing on the Moor. It seems that the Town Hall Committee was favourably disposed towards the Parish Council to allow a strong room to be erected in the Town Hall for the Council's documents.

A note on local postal facilities shows that four deliveries of letters were made on weekdays and one on Sunday. The railway service was not so good as it is today, but there

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