

BERKHAMSTED REVIEW



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In and around Berkhamsted

by 'BEORCHAM'

A Long, Long Wait

But for the vital need for a by-pass I would have some very cynical things to say about a long story which should have ended many years ago.

Way back in 1927 a Regional Planning Report admitted that the road through Berkhamsted and Tring was closely built up and difficult of improvement. Shootersway, it was stated, "could be readily adapted as a supplementary route if slightly extended and improved."

This was over 50 years ago, when there were very few houses near Shootersway. A widening scheme, with an extension to Bourne End, would not have been very costly.

A quarter of a century later (in January, 1952) the Urban District Council envisaged "an arterial road leaving the existing road at Bourne End and after running along the high ground to the south-west of the town rejoins the existing main road near Dudswell."

And so the years have gone by with much talk and no action. In comparison, the Town Hall Saga is a short story.

All Spats and No Socks!

Referring to an item in last month's *Review*, a correspondent says that he spent his early years in Tring and always called Bulbourne "Boobun"; he also called Wilstone "Wilstun" and Startops

End "Starrups End", two pronunciations which still survive.

He goes on to say that many Tring people thought that Berkhamsted was a swanky sort of town — "all spats and no socks"!

A Link with Normandy

A reader asks if I have any up to date information about an abbey in Normandy which has a remote link with Berkhamsted. From 1222 until 1369 the rectors of St. Peter's were presented by the Abbot and Convent of Grestain, and our Victorian rector and historian, John Cobb, said that the site of the ruined abbey could still be seen.

Today, I understand, very fragmentary ruins survive, but in an orchard there is a memorial tablet stating that Arletta, the mother of William the Conqueror, was buried there with her husband, Herluin de Conteville, who founded the abbey about 1050.

I shall be pleased to hear from anyone who visits the site, which is about five miles from the ancient port of Honfleur.

The Greenway "Suburb"

A friend recently remarked that the older part of Greenway is unlike any other road in the town, and asked if it was inspired by the so-called garden cities of Welwyn and Letchworth. The entrance from Cross Oak Road certainly gives this impression.

We must go back to 1911, when Berkhamsted Tenants, Ltd., was formed with a management committee which included Mr. C. H. Greene, Headmaster of Berkhamsted School, and other prominent townspeople. The company's capital consisted of loan stock and shares of £5 each, which could be paid for in monthly instalments of 5s. The committee and officials, who received no remuneration, had the power to let houses to non-members, but preference was given to applicants who were willing to take up shares on a very modest scale.

A portion of Greenway Common was purchased and the first 24 houses of various sizes and styles were built, the smallest houses being let at about 8s. 6d. a week, inclusive of rates. But the Water Company was demanding about 3d. a week for a bath — an "exorbitant" charge!

This early development was a boon to residents of Shrublands Avenue, the town's longest cul de sac until Greenway provided an outlet at the top of the hill.

Operations were halted by the First World War, and later on the estate was extended westward by the Co-operative Society.

Cheap at the Price!

Speaking of rents in years gone by, a friend has just shown me a form headed "Conditions of letting cottages, with the appurtenances thereto belonging, on the Right Honourable Earl Brownlow's Ashridge Estate."

The form concerns a cottage in Bank Mill Lane which was let in 1910 to a man at £5 5s. per annum, subject to his staying in the employ of Mr. H. A. Chapman of Little Heath Great Farm. The tenant was required to open bedroom windows from 8 a.m. to 12 noon, limewash every room once a year, and dig all vegetable matter and refuse into the garden.

If these rules were strictly attended to, an allowance of one shilling in the £ was refunded on payment of rent.

Angle Place

A recent reference of mine to the footpath known as Angle Place prompted a reader to ask why, shortly after leaving Doctors Commons Road, the footpath is accompanied by a wide lawn bordered on the north side by a fine row of horse chestnuts.

This was originally a short road which, on a map dated 1897, was called Anglefield Road, a name which, many years later, was given to a new road between North Road and Cross Oak Road. In 1897 there were no houses on the west side of Doctors Commons Road, and it is possible that the intention was to have a road, not a footpath, from that road to Montague Road and North Road.

An interesting point is that until late Victorian times the footpath, Angle Place, started at the junction of Charles Street and King's Road, but this section was closed when Doctors Commons Road was made.

"This Amiable Woman"

A few Sundays ago I paid my first visit to a little country church I had often passed on the way from Cholesbury to Wendover. It gives its
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