

William LOCKHART Ltd.

Coal & Coke Merchants

Special fuels stocked for all
Central Heating Boilers and
Patent Stoves

**LOWER KINGS ROAD
BERKHAMSTED**

Telephone :
BERKHAMSTED 60

HEMEL HEMPSTEAD :
32 Alexandra Rd. Phone: Boxmoor 1399
TRING :
Western Road, Phone: Tring 2009

P. D. CLARK & SON

High Class
Groceries &
Provisions

100 HIGH STREET
BERKHAMSTED Phone 87

Members of the National Association of Funeral Directors

F. YOUNG & SON

Funeral Directors

Cremations - Motor Hearse Proprietors
Embalming - Personal Supervision

Telephone 548

284 HIGH STREET, BERKHAMSTED

Where Berkhamsted Originated

HISTORIC NORTHCHURCH

How MANY TOWNSPEOPLE of today are aware that, in early years of the London and Birmingham Railway, a station at Northchurch was projected? William Cooper, founder of the chemical works, was among those who hoped the scheme would succeed. He often told friends that he would like to "pitch his tent" at Northchurch, but when the railway company took no action he naturally decided that Berkhamsted, with better transport facilities, was more suitable for an ambitious manufacturer.

But suppose Northchurch had been given a railway station! With that added attraction it might have become a large residential and manufacturing town. For that matter, a similar fate might have befallen Great Gaddesden had the railway been taken, as was originally planned, along the Gade valley.

Village Life

But we need not waste time discussing "what might have been." No tall factory chimneys desecrated the valley of Northchurch. In Victorian days the men worked in the fields or in Berkhamsted saw-mills. The women either plaited straw in their parlours or found employment as domestic servants in the many large houses of Northchurch.

Before the days of motor traffic, Northchurch was quiet and peaceful, and when the population was less than half the present number the village offered refreshment and good cheer at the "Bell" and the "Pheasant," as well as at the three public-houses which still survive. The "George and Dragon," an old coaching inn, is mentioned in road guides of pre-railway days.

For centuries Berkhamsted tried to take Northchurch under its wing. An attempt to amalgamate the two places was made 300 years ago, when Berkhamsted was a borough. But the marriage did not take place until 1935; the greater part of the built-up area of Northchurch was then included in the Berkhamsted Urban District. Old ecclesiastical boundaries were not affected.

In Reverse

Some residents of Northchurch resented the loss of their independence. Their village, they said, would become a suburb of Berkhamsted. Yet, centuries ago, Berkhamsted was a suburb of Northchurch! No less an authority than the Royal Commission's Report on Historical Monuments in Hertfordshire says that "the old borough of Berkhamsted apparently started near the church at Northchurch and was of great importance in the Saxon period, receiving as it did privileges from Edward the Confessor. The present [sic] borough apparently arose under the walls of the Castle in the 11th and 12th centuries."

Thus there were two Berkhamsteds—Berkhamsted St. Mary and Berkhamsted St. Peter, names which are still used by ecclesiastical authorities. But in the course of time the "suburb" more or less claimed a proprietary right to the name of Berkhamsted, and the "parent"—called North Kempstead in a 17th century document—adopted the name Northchurch.

Unchanging Scenes

Between the world wars, Northchurch doubled its size. But its High-street looks much the same today as it did when the last Michaelmas fair was held on the narrow road and path in 1883. One can still pass through the village unaware of the existence of the large housing estate which covers much of the hillside towards Shooters-way. But the narrow main road calls for concentration, and few motorists and cyclists care to stop and linger.

A pity, for one of Hertfordshire's most picturesque villages seldom receives the recognition it deserves. Partiality for high-walled and high-hedged privacy admittedly gives some parts of Northchurch an austere, unfriendly appearance, but between Bell-lane and New-road we have some charming scenes: a beautiful church and churchyard, old cottages with pretty front gardens, and a row of timbered almshouses that escaped the fire which destroyed much of the village in the 17th century.

A Fine Church

The church, or an earlier building on the same site, served a vast parish before its heart was taken out and ceded to

St. Peter's. Alterations and additions at various periods make it difficult to assess the age of St. Mary's Church; the plan suggests the first quarter of the 13th century (the same as St. Peter's), and the tower is about 400 years old. There is no evidence to support old claims that pre-Norman work can be traced.

Much could be written about St. Mary's Church—its beautiful stained glass, its memorials, its 300 years-old bells, its 15th century Flemish chest in the vestry. But, to the annoyance of many parishioners, the greatest interest is aroused by a memorial tablet to Peter the Wild Boy, an 18th century idiot whose grave may be seen near the porch.

Commoners' Rights

Why remember Peter and forget the sturdy yeomen of Northchurch? There was William Edlyn, for instance, who, 300 years ago, rallied a "disciplined force of a hundred men" to pull down fences that had been erected on Northchurch Common, depriving villagers of ancient common rights. Augustus Smith showed similar public spirit in 1866, but, unlike Edlyn and his two fellow ringleaders, he was not arrested, brought before the House of Lords—and released with a caution.

Some of Edlyn's contemporaries figured in the religious troubles of the period, for twenty Northchurch men and women were heavily fined and imprisoned for holding Nonconformist services in a barn just off the High-street.

Fifty Years a Rector

A Northchurch worthy of more modern times was Sir John Hobart Culme Seymour, rector from 1830-80, who met the needs of worshippers in more distant parts of his large parish by building St. John's, Broadway, as a chapel of ease. During his long ministry, the village school was built in the 1860's, on a site conveyed by Earl Brownlow. Northchurch, incidentally, was one of the first villages in the country to provide technical and continuation classes. A start was made in 1892 with carpentry classes in a barn at Durrants Farm and art classes in the village school; a dozen years later sufficient funds were available for the technical school to have its own building.

Norcott and Maudelyns

Two manors in the parish of Northchurch date back to the 13th century, if not earlier. They were named Norcott and Maudelyns—and the name Maudelyns, in a corrupted form, survives in ruined Marlin Chapel. The manor of Norcott was divided into two portions in 1600—Norcott Hill and Norcott Court. These names also survive, and it is interesting to recall that Norcott Hill Farm stands on the site of the original manor house.

'BEORCHAM'

CHEMISTS' ROTA

Local arrangements to meet
emergencies

The week-day evening and Sunday morning service rota adopted by Berkhamsted chemists for the dispensing of medical prescriptions, is as follows for this month:—

November 25—December 1: Dickman.
December 2—December 8: Boots.
December 9—15: Figg.
December 16—22: Taylors.
December 23—29: Dickman.

On week-days the respective shops will open from 6 to 7 p.m., including Wednesdays, and on Sundays from 11.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.

LIBRARY OPENING TIMES

The Berkhamsted Branch of the County Library is open in Prince Edward Street on the following days and times:

Monday and Friday—2.30 p.m. to 5 p.m.;
5.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.
Wednesday—10 a.m. to 1 p.m.; 5 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.
Thursday—10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Saturday—10 a.m. to 1 p.m.; 2.30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

OUR FISH
is fresh daily
OUR PRICES
are reasonable

W. W. WARD

Fishmonger, Game Dealer
and Fruiterer
MARKET HOUSE
BERKHAMSTED
Telephone 146

Efficient Service
with
Latest Equipment

WRIGHT & WRIGHT LTD.
Tring Motor Works
TRING

Agents for
AUSTIN STANDARD
MORRIS WOLSELEY ROVER
VAUXHALL BEDFORD

Phone: TRING 2312

The Wool Shoppe

We specialize in
HAND-KNITTED Made to
GARMENTS measure

Many makes of wool always in stock,
including "P & B" (Beehive)

MUNROSPUN
COPLEYS VIYELLA
SIRDAR
LAINES du PINGOUIN
LADYSHIP & HOLIDAY

Everything for the Needlewoman

EXCLUSIVE TAPESTRIES

162 High St., Berkhamsted
TEL 92

It pays to buy
GOOD shoes

WHITE & SON

The Footwear Specialists
High St., Berkhamsted
Phone 68

Also at Hemel Hempstead
& Chorley Wood

OUR REPAIRS are
noted for smart-
ness and durability