

BERKHAMSTED REVIEW



In and around Berkhamsted

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Prince Edward Street

Speaking of street names, I recently saw a list of planning applications which elevated Prince Edward Street to King Edward Street.

In either form it is a grand name for a cul de sac which is only nine times as long as it is wide. Originally called Princes Street, it was constructed shortly after Lower King's Road.

A rather complicated story began in the late 17th century, when Sir Thomas Hyde left £100 for the poor of Aldbury. With this gift the Aldbury churchwardens bought the major part of Butts Meadow, devoting the rent to charitable purposes in their village. But it was a very small rent, and in 1886 the churchwardens of Aldbury sought a more profitable investment. They put up notices saying that six acres of Butts Meadow would be sold by auction, adding that "a road 30-ft. wide has been set out through Grammar School land from the High Street which, when made, should form a most important approach to the property." The road was made in the next two years, but it was only a short cul de sac with a footpath continuing to Butts Meadow. Eventually the six acres were sold privately to Mr. A. W. Fisher, of Hemel Hempstead, for £1,505, and he advertised that the site would be put up for sale in 18 lots and that plans for roads had been passed by the Rural Sanitary Authority.

Dismay turned to relief when Mrs. Lionel

Lucas, in August, 1886, bought the land for use as a recreation ground. A very happy ending! **Misleading the Motorist**

A Station Road reader tells me that motorists wishing to go to the railway station sometimes take the wrong turning after passing over Castle Street canal bridge.

On the high railway wall they face two street name-plates only a few feet apart, Lower King's Road on the left, Station Road on the right. Some drivers therefore turn away from the station and start asking questions by the time they reach Gravel Path.

The name-plate for Lower King's Road is misleading and should not be there at all. The road from Castle Street to the station is really part of Station Road; in fact, it was constructed at least ten years before Lower King's Road was made in 1885. In other words, Lower King's Road ends at the station, and that is where the offending name-plate should be.

On a happier note, the short road from the station to Castle Street has a rather special quality. We have very pleasant views of the winding canal and the green heart of old Berkhamsted. I know of no other town where our canal is accompanied by a road. Do you? **Thanks for the Compliments**

Berkhamsted has been receiving some free and very flattering publicity. *The Lady* recently published a long article about "one of England's most charming country towns."

Wheeler's Review, with a 30,000 circulation, printed an illustrated article about the town and its authors — "so many literary links it could be called the Town of the Talents, a propitious setting for a future novelist." And *Country Life* brightened its cover with scenes of local autumn splendour.

Thank you, gentlemen — and *The Lady!*

Latitude and Longitude

What have Berkhamsted, Hemel Hempstead, Oxford and Merthyr Tydfil in common? This question, in the November *Review*, did not bring a single answer. Frankly, I'm not surprised!

The four towns are exactly the same distance from the equator and therefore on the same line of latitude — 51.45 North according to some authorities, 51.46 according to others.

By the way, in the early days of the London and Birmingham Railway, the time table was calculated upon the difference of longitude between London and other stations on the line. Berkhamsted was 1 minute 45 seconds behind Euston time. That was long before the BBC broadcast time signals!

Lower King's Road

In recent times many changes have taken place in Lower King's Road. Shops have opened and closed, some changing their trades, and in the process extensive internal changes have been made. Most of the exteriors have been smartened up, too, and Lower King's Road is now a very bright shopping area, with a good variety of trades and services. Three shops are devoted to music; there are also some nice places of refreshment.

In the High Street, too, several changes have taken place. Very few shops are now empty, and it is not surprising that Berkhamsted is attracting more shoppers from neighbouring towns and villages.

Berkhamsted Castle

It is sad to see the Castle grounds closed from 4 p.m. on Friday until 8 a.m. on Monday. This is one of only two Hertfordshire historic monuments in the care of the State — some counties have many more — and much as I regret the weekend closure I deplore still more the lack of interest of most of our townspeople, who only go to the Castle when there is a fete or a pageant.

Perhaps interest would increase if we all read a book entitled "Castles: an introduction to the

Castles of England and Wales", published by H.M. Stationery Office. It contains 28 plans of various castles — and which do you think comes first? Berkhamsted! And what does one read about our castle? "It may well have been one of the first constructed by the invaders... this is now so ruined that the original works are as clearly visible as anywhere in the country."

Here we have an expert's view, reminding us that it is the 900 years old earthworks that make Berkhamsted Castle so important and interesting. People who just look at a few ruined walls and say "There's not much to see" do not know what they are missing.

We should all go to the Castle at least once a year for a long and thoughtful look round.

STEWARDSHIP

The amount contributed to St. Peter's and All Saints stewardship fund in November was £1097.21.



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