

# BERKHAMSTED REVIEW

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## In and around Berkhamsted by 'BEORCHAM'

### Still Increasing

The recent General Election provided yet another reminder that the local population is still rising rapidly. At the time of the 1974 General Election the number of electors in the Hemel Hempstead Division was 83,795; now it is 91,843. There are only thirty or so constituencies with larger numbers.

Before 1918, when Hertfordshire was still largely rural, there were only four constituencies in the county. Berkhamsted, Tring, Hemel Hempstead and many villages were in the West Herts Division, which included Watford. In the middle of the first World War much thought was given to the creation of a fifth electoral division in Hertfordshire, and in 1917 the Berkhamsted Urban District Council suggested that a new constituency should be known as the Berkhamsted Division.

However, Hemel Hempstead gave its name to the new division, and at the time of the General Election of 1918 the number of electors was 25,752. That was before there were votes for women.

An interesting point is that in March, 1918, the views of local authorities were sought on the subject of Proportional Representation, and our Council came out strongly in favour of trying this system.

### Sunnyside Up!

Talking of boundary changes, seventy years ago Sunnyside was transferred to the

Berkhamsted Urban District, the inhabitants having previously been represented on Northchurch Parish Council.

This was not the only important happening at Sunnyside in 1909. On the last day of June, the Bishop of St. Albans consecrated the present church of St. Michael and All Angels. At the same time a new ecclesiastical parish was formed, known as Sunnyside with Broadway.

No fewer than 25 clergymen attended the consecration service, and by that time the £3,000 needed for the provision of the Church, Vicarage, etc., had been raised.

The design of St. Michael's is said to have been based on an old Sussex church. Which one? Do you know? A friend suggests that the architect may have been inspired by several churches in Sussex.

Many years ago the late Mr. W. G. Gilbert, builders' foreman for H. and J. Matthews for 36 years, told me that he saved some flints and rubble when working on a restoration of St. Peter's Church and incorporated this material in the new church at Sunnyside.

It will not be long before Sunnyside has a centenary to celebrate, for in 1881 a mission room was opened in George Street. This was followed by an iron church (now the parish hall) in 1886, and the present church in 1909.

### "Clementine Churchill"

There is bound to be a heavy demand for a book about a famous Berkhamstedian, the late

Baroness Spencer-Churchill. It is Lady Soame's biography of her mother, who lived at 107 High Street for four years and attended Berkhamsted School for Girls.

The daughter of Sir Henry and Lady Hozier, Clementine was among the last of the girls who went to the former Bourne School (222 High Street) before Berkhamsted School for Girls was transferred to King's Road.

I understand that the many illustrations include a photograph of Clementine as a schoolgirl. And there are several allusions to Berkhamsted, which she often revisited.

"Clementine Churchill" is due to be published on June 21st. It is published by Cassell at £7.95, a modest price for a book which runs to nearly 600 pages.

### Found in Hamburg

How's this for a strange discovery? A Berkhamsted schoolboy was spending a holiday in Hamburg, and in a shop he saw a folder containing some scenes of Berkhamsted and "Ashbridge", an obvious mis-spelling. The folder was originally sold by J. Evans, athletic outfitter, of 14 Castle Street, Berkhamsted.

The schoolboy bought the folder and brought it back to Berkhamsted. But how did it get to Hamburg? We shall never know. Evans, by the way, had a shop opposite the school lych-gate some 60 years ago. It was one of the few shops which were not "out of bounds" to the schoolboy.

Incidentally, another reader has shown me a letter posted in Paris and addressed to him at Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, Grande-Bretagne. I suppose that a century ago a Parisian would have written to Grande-Berkhamsted.

### Still popular!

A short time ago the *Sunday Express* said that the prices of houses were high in two very popular towns, Berkhamsted and Amersham.

Oddly enough, I have just seen, in somewhat similar vein, an item about Berkhamsted in a long-forgotten periodical, *Bazaar*, dated June, 1909. Replying to a correspondent, who sought a house within 40 miles of London, the periodical said that Berkhamsted was very healthy, with pure, bracing air. "House rent ranges from about £30 upwards (per annum), with rates amounting to a third of the rental, but houses are not readily obtained, the beautiful scenery and excellent educational advantages rendering the place popular."

### Carriages at 10.15

My thanks to a reader for the gift of a programme of the Berkhamsted Dramatic Club, which gave two performances in the Town Hall on April 17th and 18th, 1882. A short play, "The Lottery Ticket", was presented at both performances, followed by "The Area Belle" on Monday and by "Ici on Parle Francais" on Tuesday.

For the first night, front seats were 1s., back seats 6d.; for the second performance, the prices were 2s., 1s. and 6d. The performances were given under the patronage of Mr. T. F. Halsey, president of the West Herts Infirmary, to which the whole of the proceeds were given.

The stage manager was Thomas Penny, solicitor, who became our first Town Clerk.

"Carriages may be ordered for 10.15" — so what a clatter there must have been outside the Town Hall when the gentry departed for home!



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