

# BERKHAMSTED REVIEW



## In and around Berkhamsted by 'BEORCHAM'

### Remarkable Discovery

A fascinating story was told by Mr. Bryan Egon at a recent meeting of the Local History Society in St. Peter's Church. His subject was the ancient brass now firmly fixed to the sill of the window near the vestry door. It is of the type known as a palimpsest, the brass having been used for an inscription on the reverse side. Some of these ancient brasses were also cut into two or more pieces, and Mr. Egon discovered (in the Sussex church of Isfield) a brass which was originally part of the one at Berkhamsted.

He is now preparing an article on the subject, and I look forward to reading the whole story of a remarkable piece of detective work.

After Mr. Egon's talk, local historians not only saw but heard the whistling weathercock which formerly flew high above the tower of St. Peter's Church. With the wind provided by a vacuum cleaner, a recording was made of the birdsong, which was more like a prolonged hoot than a whistle. No wonder people living near the church were pleased when the trumpet-like tubes were plugged! Previously, a sharpshooter scored some direct hits, as was proved when a bullet was found in the tail after the haughty old bird was taken off his 100-ft. high perch. Believed to be one of only two ancient whistling weathercocks in the country, the bird is now in a place of safety.

### Local Industries

The recent Industries Fair, which occupied

two floors of the Civic Centre, was a welcome reminder that Berkhamsted is much more than a commuters' town. I paid two visits and learned a great deal about works and offices which employ a large number of residents and also attract many people from other towns.

Several visitors were astonished to learn that we had such a wide variety of industries and services. There would be less astonishment if more people occasionally walked the length of North Bridge Road. But so little is known of this industrial zone that lorry drivers often draw a blank when they ask the way to North Bridge Road.

I was pleased to see some large parties of schoolchildren at the fair, and hope that it will not be a once-only enterprise.

### Tripping Along

This must be a record year for nasty falls and sprained ankles. Wherever one goes there are uneven pavements and pot-holes. Following a very severe winter which caused much damage to roads and footpaths, excavations have been made on both sides of the High Street, mainly in the roadway, sometimes on the footpaths, and walkers have to watch their steps. Some of the paving stones are marked with an X to indicate that they need further attention.

It is only fair to say that the men who laid the new pipes worked hard, and if through traffic was slowed down there were very few long hold-ups. Walkers, however, must watch their steps. Don't have a bad trip!

EDITORIAL  
9 Shrublands Road

ADVERTISEMENTS  
23 North Road

CIRCULATION and  
MAGAZINE COMMITTEE  
20 Murray Road

TREASURER  
36 Trevelyan Way

Mr. H. D. Woodward  
Tel. 2723

Mr. Neil Cowan  
Tel. 4916

Mr. A. C. Conway  
Tel. 5796

Mr. M. J. Robinson  
Tel. 3559

### House with a History

As mentioned in the July *Review*, a plaque is to be placed on the house (107 High Street) where Clementine Hozier (afterwards Baroness Spencer-Churchill), lived with her mother in the early years of this century.

The house is one of four described in Nikolaus Pevner's "Hertfordshire" as "an urban terrace of early 19th century yellow brick houses, with pretty iron balconies." Previously there was a farmyard at the corner of Rectory Lane, with a large barn which is clearly shown in J. C. Buckler's drawing of Egerton House. Incidentally, the four houses were known as Egerton Terrace, a name we should perpetuate to remind us of a long lost neighbour, Egerton House.

Until the turn of the century, No. 107 was the home of Mrs. Vaughan Williams. Then came Lady Blanche Hozier, mother of the girl who married Winston Churchill. The Hoziers were followed by Captain Beard and then by the Rev. R. H. Cattell, the first vicar of Sunnyside, who was waiting for the present vicarage to be built in Ivy House Lane. The house was then occupied by Major T. H. C. Hopkins, a master at Berkhamsted School.

The next occupant was Mr. J. D. H. Cousins, a very well known auctioneer, valuer and estate agent. At a time when everybody wore a hat or cap out of doors, Mr. Cousins was known as the man who never wore a hat. But he usually carried an umbrella, and in the blackouts of the first World War he also carried an ancient lantern containing a candle.

By 1929 Dr. A. C. Turner had succeeded Mr. Cousins at No. 107; then, after Mr. A. H. Martin's short tenancy, the house was occupied for many years by Mr. A. W. Turner (no relation of the doctor), a well known optician who had a fine collection of antique furniture and musical instruments. And now the house is occupied by the Watford branch of SLADE, the printers' trade union.

### The High Laid Low

One of the town's tallest buildings was recently demolished. I refer to the fire brigade's hose-tower behind the Civic Centre, it was built shortly before the 1939-45 War, replacing the long poles from which wet hosepipes were previously suspended.

On the tower was fixed the air-raid siren

which continued to alert the fire brigade for many years after the war. This siren replaced the steam hooter which was installed at the waterworks in 1904 and was always sounded at 1 p.m. on Saturdays to make sure that it was in working order. There was a period when the hooter was out of action, and rockets were fired to summon the firemen. A King's Road resident was astonished when one of the rockets landed in his doorway.

Today's firemen are summoned by pocket "alerters" which have a range of about five miles. And at the fire station in Castle Street they have a modern hose-tower which made the one near the Civic Centre redundant.

### STEWARDSHIP

The amount given to the St. Peter's and All Saints stewardship fund in May was £1,316.55.

### COFFEE MORNING

There will be a coffee morning, and sale of good quality second hand books in the Court House in aid of the West Herts Church Council for Social Work on Saturday 22nd September from 9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.

Do come and support this work. Mrs. M. Bowden (1 Chalet Close, 6134) will be glad to receive good condition second-hand paperbacks during the week beforehand or on the day.

### THE REVIEW

Mr. David Sherratt has kindly agreed to take over the editorship of the *Review* for a trial period of a few issues, starting with the September edition.

Items for the next issue should therefore be sent to *Dean Incent's House, High Street* by or on 7th August. Mr. Sherratt is well known in the parish, among many other things, as the key figure in the successful appeal to raise the funds to renovate St. Peter's church clock and as the editor of the *Review's* companion publication *Newslink*. It is certain that he will have plenty of good ideas for the development of this magazine.

The retiring editor Mr. David Woodward wishes to thank all those many readers who have supplied him with material, especially those who have been regular contributors, and also those whose articles ever got left out for lack of space. He would also like to thank all those who have subscribed to the magazine for their tangible commitment and to hope for your continued support.