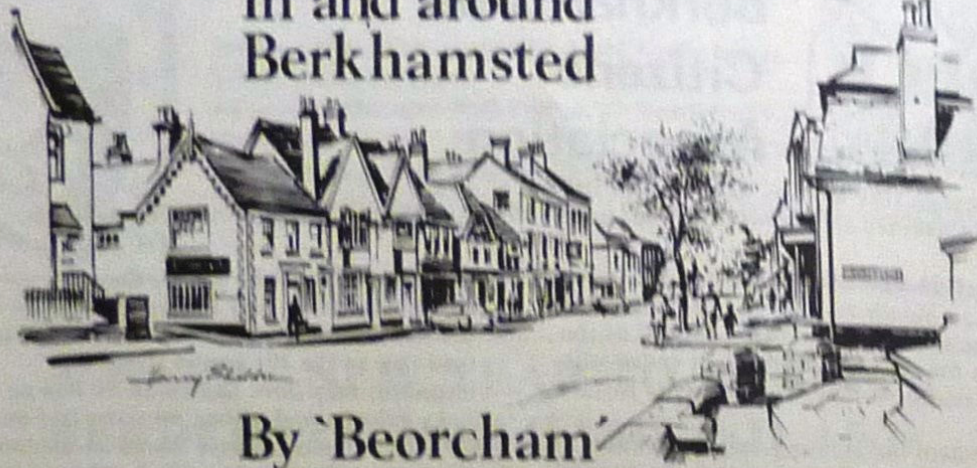


In and around Berkhamsted



By Beorcham

CASTLE STREET CHANGES

Several readers have expressed their appreciation of last month's front page picture, showing an old lady seated at the doorway of a very old house in Castle Street. It is believed that at one period it was a public house called the Sun. The street number, 13, was altered to 12a by the last occupants, but it was still an unlucky number, for the house was pulled down to provide an entrance to Manor Close.

William Cooper, founder of the local chemical works, is believed to have lived in this house when he came to Berkhamsted in 1845. In the 1870s it was the home of E. G. Page, who had a small tobacco factory at Northchurch and advertised 'best Cuban cigars' at 8s. (40p) for a box of 100.

Later, the house became noted for such delicacies as tripe, cow-heel, chitterlings and black-puddings. Mrs Bishop (the lady in the photograph) was the wife of a travelling slaughterman; she had no difficulty in obtaining all the offal needed for the business, which was afterwards carried on by her daughter, Mrs Halsey.

Many old residents recall a snowy evening when a man, walking home from the railway station, saw a lot of blood in Castle Street. He called the police, who eventually ascertained that Mrs Bishop, or her

daughter, had slipped on the ice when taking a pail of blood from the butchers. It is said that her adjectives were most appropriate.

The two tall houses at the entrance to Manor Close were built in the hope that they would be used as boarding houses or homes for the masters of Berkhamsted School. They were built to the order of the Rev. J. C. Browne, a curate of St Peter's in early Victorian times, who expected too much and suffered a financial loss. For many years one of the houses was the newsagent's shop of George Loosley, who for some years was editor of the *Berkhamsted Times*.

TOO MANY NAMES

The new official guide to Berkhamsted contains an excellent street plan, but I am astonished to find that it gives yet another name for Haxter's End Lane, as it has been called for generations. In recent times it has borne a 'Little Heath Lane' nameplate, and now, according to the street plan, it is Broadway Church Lane.

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Haxters End Farm, about half a mile from the main road, was for many years the home of Peter the Wild Boy. It was

demolished a long time ago but that is no reason for dropping the old name of the lane. We don't change the name of Swing Gate Lane just because the swing gate disappeared a long, long time ago.

A FRIENDLY TOWN

Very few months go by without American tourists coming here to see the home town of their 17th century ancestors, the Axtells.

Recently a very pleasant letter was received from Colorado Springs saying that the writer's daughter recently spent three months in Europe, and it was at Berkhamsted where she met the friendliest people.

COMPARE THESE PRICES!

Mrs Clark, of Chesham Road, has passed on to me a most interesting relic of her days at the Victoria School over 70 years ago. Hilda Kent (her maiden name) kept an exercise book containing entries dated September 4, 1910.

In splendid copperplate script she devoted a page to "Planning out the weekly income" for a family of six with an income of £1 10s. (£1.50) a week.

Here are the entries: rent, 6s.; food, 14s.; light and fuel, 2s. 6d.; clothing, 2s.; insurance and club, 1s. 6d.; cleaning materials, 6d.; father's pocket money, 2s. 6d.; reserve fund, 1s.; total £1. 10s.

For a dinner for six persons costing 1s. 6d., the menu was as follows: 1 lb liver, 6d.; 1 lb onions, 1d.; 3 lb potatoes, 2½d.; seasoning, ¼d.; total 9½d. The second course was a sultana pudding: ¼ lb. flour, 1½d.; 6 oz suet, 3d.; 6 oz sultanas, 2d.; 3 oz sugar, ½d.; 1½ teaspoon baking powder and pinch of salt, ½d.; ¼ pint milk, 1d.;

total 8½d.

The first course, by the way, was popularly called "Poor man's goose."

EARLY MOTOR CYCLES

Last month's reference to Southey motor-cycles, made in Berkhamsted, prompted a reader to ask if any are still in existence. Many enquiries have been made without success, and there is now only a very slender chance that we shall ever find one for a local museum.

The enquirer told me that he was one of the lads who gazed enviously at the motor cycles displayed in Mr Southey's showroom at the corner of Elm Grove, in 1906 Mr Southey rented half of the shop to W. H. Smith & Son on the expiry of their contract for bookstalls at the old London and North Western Railway stations. A few years later the newsagents' shop was transferred to larger premises, now a travel agency, opposite Smith's present store.

100 YEARS AGO

Every week the *Berkhamsted Gazette* recalls interesting items from its files of 25 and 30 years ago. The Review is a much older publication, and at the start of a New Year you may like to know what appeared in our edition for January, 1883.

The Mission Room at the George and Dragon temperance hotel in Castle Street was the meeting place for the Temperance Society, the Drum and Fife Band, Mothers' meetings and a club for unmarried women and girls over 14 years.

Every Monday, for one hour, the Nursing Home was open for users of the Penny Bank and Parish Library. Pennies for the Adult Clothing and Coal Club, however,



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Review Office: The Gardener's Arms, Castle Street.

Editor: David Sherratt.

Advertising Manager: Neil Cowan, 23 North Road. Tel. 4916.

Circulation Manager: Noel Agate, 21 Upper Ashlyns Road. Tel. 6387.

Treasurer: Michael Robinson, 36 Trevelyan Way.

Committee Secretary: John Cook, The Gardener's Arms, Castle Street.

IN AND AROUND BERKHAMSTED

By 'Beorcham' *(continued)*

were paid at the Court House, while payments for the dispensary were paid at the Bourne School house, now the Britannia Building Society office.

Seventeen district visitors met once a month at the Rectory, and the Sunday School teachers' instruction class was held in the north transept of St Peter's Church on Friday after Evensong. Sunday schools for children over seven years were open morning and afternoon at the Court House; children under seven years went to the Gossoms End and Chapel Street infants' schools.

The rector, the Rev. John Cobb, had two curates, one of whom, Arthur Johnson, succeeded him as rector.

A RECTOR'S TRAVELS

It is interesting to recall that John Cobb, who wrote the town's first history book when he was curate, started the town's first parish magazine when he returned to Berkhamsted as rector.

To several early numbers he contributed very interesting articles on his travels abroad. The Cobbs were not afraid to visit Alsace-Lorraine a very short time after the Franco-Prussian War, travelling in trains which puffed over bridges that had not been

properly repaired. The badly battered station at Sedan reminded Mr Cobb of the old railway station at Berkhamsted, where the platform for up trains was "a wretched erection." That was a few years before we had a new station.

In Italy the Cobbs were thankful that troops patrolled the way from Amalfi to Paestum to keep brigands at bay. In Austria the couple shot the rapids in a salt-boat.

Alas, John Cobb died suddenly in June, 1883. William Ewart Gladstone, the Prime Minister, was in the congregation at St Peter's the day before the funeral.

TAILPIECE

Visiting relations after many years' absence, a former resident said there were so many changes each side of the Town Hall that he was almost at sea. But the puddles in the High Street are not all that large.

Many readers have asked the name of the lady on the front of November's cover, and I am grateful to 'Beorcham' for – as usual – coming up with a fund of information.