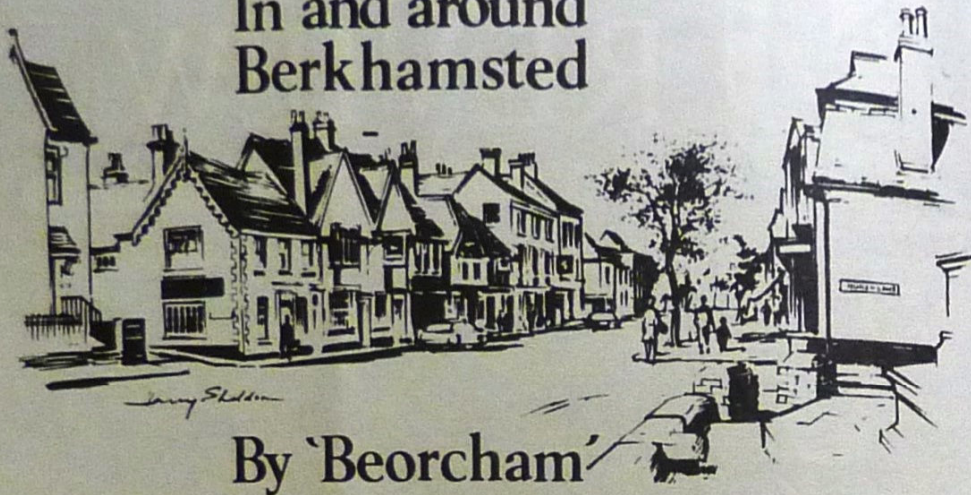


In and around Berkhamsted



By 'Beorcham'

THE KING'S HALL

At the time of writing it seems likely that the King's Hall in Prince Edward Street will suffer the same fate as St Peter's Hall, the Queen's Hall in Chesham Road, and small halls such as the Methodist schoolroom which have been demolished or are no longer available for meetings.

The King's Hall, much altered at various times, replaced the King's Arms stables in 1912. For a few years it was a cinema, called the Berkhamsted Picture Playhouse, and closed when the Court Theatre (replaced by the Tesco store) was opened in 1917. Thereafter the King's Hall, as it was called, has been used for all sorts of functions – dances, plays concerts, public dinners, exhibitions and meetings.

On the bright side we have an enlarged and well equipped hall in the Civic Centre, the Court House, and the much improved Sessions Hall. Let us hope that it will not be long before the Town Hall is re-opened.

THE REVIEW CAN BE OBTAINED FROM W.H. SMITH'S, BOBBIES IN THE HIGH STREET, ANSELL'S IN CASTLE STREET, AND J & M CLOUGH, AT GRAVEL PATH POST OFFICE. ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS FROM THE TREASURER, MILES NICHOLAS, 46 FIELDWAY, TEL 71598.

GREAT GADDESSEN

A townsman who has moved to the South Coast and still reads our 'Review' tells me that he was pleased to read some comments of mine on Frithsden and Nettleden. But, he adds, his favourite village is a mile or so beyond Nettleden, Great Gaddesden.

It is a very compact valley village, quite different from Little Gaddesden, which is high and long. Great Gaddesden is just far enough from the busy highway in the valley to miss most of the noise of the traffic, but it is from the main road where we have splendid views of the village, with a surprisingly large church dominating old and not so old houses.

Quite different from the very long and narrow church at Nettleden, Great Gaddesden church of St John the Baptist is as wide as it is long. If the door is locked there is a notice telling you where to obtain a key. It is a very light church of many periods, the list of ministers starting with Stephen de Hertford in 1255. Do not miss the 18th century addition which contains some very interesting memorials to the Halsey family.

With nearby houses of various periods Great Gaddesden is a colourful village, so be sure to take your camera. If you wander up the narrow road towards Nettleden you will see a very beautiful ancient house on your right; look for the letter box with the initials VR, as useful today as it was in Victorian times.

By the way, Great Gaddesden has a very lively parish magazine with news of Gaddesden Row on a hilltop over a mile from the ancient village. Sunday evening services are held on the breezy heights.

DORIAN WILLIAMS

The Shakespeare Festival at Pendley is always a great treat, but how we miss Dorian Williams, who knew so many in the large audience and had a warm welcome for everyone.

And how he gave Berkhamsted its greatest event of the century when he was pageant master in 1966, commemorating the 900th anniversary of William the Conqueror's parley with the Anglo Saxons at Berkhamsted.

In his last book, "Between the Lines" Dorian said that as long as he lived he would recall with excitement the overwhelming finale of the pageant, with 2,000 performers and the nightly audience of 2,000 it was unforgettable.

THE FURZE CUTTERS

Many years ago local men and boys looked forward to the first day of September, so they would be entitled to cut furze on Berkhamsted Common. That was a long, long time ago when few people could afford coal; furze was the main means of heating in many cottages. But there was a ban on cutting or digging up furze during June, July and August. At nightfall on the last day of August men and boys made their way to the Common to stake claims in the manner of gold prospectors.

It was said that the men and boys waited until they heard the midnight chimes of St Peter's Church. They must have had very good hearing!

THE WILDERNESS

A reader asks how The Wilderness received its name. I don't know. You can still see the old blue nameplate on a building in Back Lane (now called Church Lane) on the way to the car park.

In my young days we were warned never to go to the Wilderness. That was because there were some broken-down cottages and a small cemetery.

An 1874 copy of our parish magazine contains the following report:

"Our readers will have observed a new building arising in a part of the town which already gives signs of becoming a most fashionable quarter – the Wilderness. This has been obligingly erected by the owner, with a view to adapting it for a Mission Room, and it has been rented for that purpose for the rector. The room will be held for all parochial purposes, such as Parish Library, Mothers' meetings, classes, etc., which, we are glad to say, have far outgrown the accommodation at the Rectory. The Mission Woman will be on the premises, and be always ready to attend to the wants of the poor.

"To raise money for the Mission Room, a bazaar was held in the Rectory gardens, where nothing, not even a cup of tea, was to be had without money. £87 18s. was taken during the course of the day."

COPY DATES FOR THE REVIEW

SEPTEMBER 6th

Copy should be received on Fridays at the Court House Cottage, Church Lane
– preferably typewritten and on large sheets of paper with wide margins.

A year later (1875) the magazine reported a removal from The Wilderness to what is now the Britannia Building Society's office. That was after the Bourne School was closed and some time before the Berkhamsted School for Girls moved in.

At a time when the canal bridge in Lower Kings Road has been repainted, in colours not to everybody's taste, it is interesting to see a rare photograph of the first bridge of late Victorian times. With the trellis design the smallest child could see the canal below.

Our photograph was taken by the late Mr Charles Whybrow when he was a schoolboy, probably in 1908. Many bridges were turned round at this point and it is interesting to see three boats alongside.



FROM THE TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

A letter from Messrs. Flatt & Mead regarding the parking of Dona Kebab van outside of their premises was read to the Committee. It was agreed to write to Dacorum Borough Council supporting Messrs. Flatt & Mead's objections to the parking of this vehicle.

CAR PARKING SURVEY

After consideration was given to the Berkhamsted Town Centre Car Parking Survey 1984, it was unanimously agreed that additional car parking