

# Berkhamsted Notebook

By TOWNSMAN

## New Lamps for Old

More and more people would rather have a Victorian lamp-post in the garden than a petrified gnome. The Council, I hear, has a waiting list for relics of the gas age, and it is good to know that they will not be scrapped.

Some of the old squares are still standing beside their new, switched-on successors. The mantle will finally fall on all-electric street lighting in a month's time, when, for the first time for 116 years, Berkhamsted will have neither high- nor low-speed gas street lamps.

Not all of the old lamps will be retired to private gardens. The one on the Court House porch has more or less been scheduled as an ancient monument, though henceforth it will be fed by wire, not by pipe.

Of especial interest is the ancient lamp-post at the top of Rectory Lane; on it you can still see the iron rings to which horses were hitched before the days of motor hearses.

The old gas lamp attached to the two pretty little cottages opposite Berkhamsted School will, I hear, continue to adorn Castle Street. But the gas is being cut off and illumination will come from the opposite side of the street.

## The Rector's Gas

Speaking of gas, the following letter was written to the Gas Company by the rector of Berkhamsted, the Rev. James Hutchinson, on November 20, 1858:

'Gentlemen,—In the spring of this year, it was agreed that your committee should, under certain stipulations, bring the gas up to the Rectory. My chief object in urging this at that time was to have the use of the gas in my kitchen, that I might save my servants the great inconvenience of having a fire in the hot weather. The next object was to have the gas to warm the interior of my house in the cold weather, for which, had I thought that the engagement on the part of the committee would not have been fulfilled, I should have provided otherwise.

'The hot weather has passed and the cold weather is come, and no gas-pipes have been laid; and now, if the work be done, I must have openings in my walls, and workmen in my house, during the winter. In expectation, however, that the work will be done, I have ordered the internal fittings to be commenced.

'I should recommend that the pipe be laid in the centre rather than at the side of the road, as there will then be no pressure on it from heavy wheels'.

## Three Zebra Power

Mrs. M. Chandler, in last month's *Review*, suggested that the next Pageant should recall an incident of 1903, when three horses and a zebra drew Lord Rothschild in his carriage from Tring Park to the Town Hall.

Now, that's real pageantry. We don't have sights like that in Berkhamsted nowadays, not even when a circus comes to town. Today we have to go to Whipsnade to see zebras, and I hope the Zoo authorities will oblige us with the necessary motive power when we hold the next Pageant.

A friend at Aldbury assures me that the gentleman in the carriage was the Rt. Hon. Lionel Walter Rothschild before he succeeded to the title, and that his carriage was drawn by three zebras and a pony. The pony was odd horse out only because the famous banker failed to rustle up a quartette of zebras.

As a boy, by the way, I remember seeing ostriches in Tring Park. The exotic animals and birds are now dead ones—in Tring Museum.

## Splash of Colour

A very brief word of thanks to the Council and their parks superintendent for the lovely splashes of colour which brighten our roadsides.

Wonders have been worked at Northchurch, where flower beds at the corner of Darrs Lane are winning high praise from the most critical gardeners. I have lost count of the number of people who have commented upon this fine display.