

# Berkhamsted Notebook

By TOWNSMAN

## Fewer and Fewer

The recent closing of the Gardener's Arms (Castle Street) and the Queen's Arms has reduced the number of inns and public-houses in Berkhamsted and Northchurch to 19, or, at a rough estimate, one to every 800 inhabitants. Until the Pheasant (Northchurch), the Stag (Gossoms End), the Boot (Castle Street) and the Edward VI (Mill Street) were closed a few years after the 1914-18 War, there were 29 licensed houses, one to every 300 inhabitants. Since the second World War five more public-houses have put up the shutters.

The Queen's Arms, mentioned in a document as early as 1607, probably had its busiest day in 1723, when 358 men and women of Berkhamsted passed through its door to sign the oath of allegiance to George I.

## Any Volunteers?

I have been asked whether the Urban Council has ever tried to revive the office of town crier of Berkhamsted. I do not think so. If someone volunteered for the job, I am sure the Council would give him an audition. But the occupational hazards—sore throats, corns and

bell-ringer's elbow—are rather off-putting.

The late Mr. W. Elliott, our last town crier, managed very well until wartime restrictions and old age forced him out of business. But the town was then only half its present size, and in the course of a few miles' walk he made himself heard to most of the inhabitants. I can picture him now, red-faced beneath a three-cornered hat, ringing a shining bell and not at all pleased when wags asked him to repeat what he had been saying.

People who drive around in cars and vans with loudspeakers are unromantic substitutes for the genuine article. Mr. Elliott was never a public nuisance.

## Safe and Sound

Although still surrounded by scaffolding at the time of writing, the spire of the Baptist Church has been saved and will, I hope, survive for very many years to come.

A few months ago, when it seemed likely that the spire would be demolished, I tried hard not to imagine how the church would look without its most prominent feature. It is pleasant to know that the High Street and Raven's Lane will not lose a familiar landmark.

## Rural Bygones

For many years Mr. David Wray, of Little Coldharbour, had been collecting 'rural bygones' such as tools, domestic ware and indeed anything of rustic interest—even such hefty relics of the past as farm wagons. Large and small, they make a fascinating collection, and early in July Mr. Wray will transfer his relics to Little Gaddesden Village Hall for a two-day exhibition. Not that the farm wagons will be taken into the hall!

Mr. Wray put in hundreds of hours of hard work on the restoration of Pitstone Windmill, surely one of the loveliest sights in the district, and slides showing how this lonely relic was saved will be screened at the exhibition.

## Ancient and Modern

The May number of *Hertfordshire Countryside* contained an excellent two-page article by Mr. E. J. Holland, who, as a keen amateur photographer, has contributed many of the scenes which have appeared on the front page of the *Berkhamsted Review*.

Mr. Holland is a good writer as well as a good photographer, and thanks to his efforts readers all over the county are now familiar with All Saints' Church. It is rare for *Hertfordshire Countryside* to feature a modern church, but it contains a 17th century font and a fragment of a Norman font which were transferred from St. Peter's to All Saints' Church in 1906. It is this rare association of ancient and modern which provides the theme of the article, which is illustrated by four of Mr. Holland's own photographs.