

# Berkhamsted Notebook

By TOWNSMAN

## Gossoms End

Derelict buildings so quickly become targets for stone-throwers that I was pleased to see demolition contractors at work on the last of the long string of cottages at Gossoms End. The surprise is that steps to widen this notoriously narrow part of the main road were not taken years ago.

When I was a boy, Gossoms End seemed to be a separate village, neither part of Berkhamsted nor part of Northchurch, though the road forms the boundary between the two parishes.

Brinkman's nurseries brightened the corner of Cross Oak Road; then came Goss's brushworks, a school, Mr. Gibbs' dairy, and the long row of cottages, interrupted by a small half-timbered farmhouse of great antiquity but no recorded history.

On the opposite side of the road, in Northchurch parish, was the 'Stag', a public house which was closed soon after the first World War.

I have happy memories of Gossoms End, for I spent hours watching the trains from my grandmother's window. In those days there was a good deal of toing and froing with jugs—milk from Mr. Gibbs' sweet-smelling dairy, and at

night a stronger liquid from the 'Stag'. And if ever there was a *general* shop, it was Mr. Faulkner's, which survived in bold isolation until the housebreakers attacked it a fortnight ago.

## In the Window

The Berkhamsted Annexe of the Dacorum College of Further Education has given us some interesting window displays, but none so colourful as the one labelled 'Costumes of the nations worn in college classes.' Excellent!

And what a hive of industry the annexe will be this winter. I saw the queue on one of the enrolment days, and was furious with myself for having too many commitments this winter to join the students.

## Saving the Canal

A recent White Paper on British Inland Waterways made very cheerful reading. Any possibility of our canal degenerating into a derelict waterway now seems to be removed. The Government of this crowded island is aware of the pleasure our inland waterways give to thousands upon thousands of people, a pleasure that is all the greater now that roads and many beaches are crowded.

The news was especially welcome to the Grand Union Canal Society, which came into being at Watford early this summer and enrolled 15 members at a meeting in St. Peter's Hall in July.

The society recently issued a newsletter containing a reference to 'the benefits of re-opening the Wendover arm from a county planning angle,' and I wondered how many Berkhamstedians were familiar with this branch of the canal.

From the main canal about a mile this side of Marsworth it curves towards New Mill, goes under the A41 at the foot of Tring Hill, gives the old village of Halton a hump-backed bridge, and ends—sorry, starts—at Wendover.

Unfortunately, all efforts to water-proof the bed of the canal failed to prevent serious leakage; that is why the section from Drayton Bridge to Little Tring pumping station is dry, though I believe a conduit still brings a supply of water from Wendover (where sailing boats often make a fine sight on World's End reservoir) to the more familiar reservoirs near Marsworth.

If you like towpath walks, I am sure you will enjoy the one from Buckland Wharf (on the A41) to Wendover. Take your camera—you will get some good shots at Halton—and be sure to bring back photographic evidence that you have been to World's End. A curious name, don't you think?

## Yours affectionately

Yet another new spelling: 'Berichamstead, Hearts.' That was how a letter was addressed to me a few days ago.

Dear, dear!