

1876

# Diamond Jubilee SUPPLEMENT

of the

## Beckenham Journal PENGE & SYDENHAM ADVERTISER

The Beckenham Journal, Penge and Sydenham Advertiser, this month celebrates its Diamond Jubilee, and has pleasure in presenting to its readers this Souvenir Supplement, in the form in which the "Journal" first appeared, as a monthly publication. In the following pages are specimen sheets from the first number, recollections by Beckenham's oldest inhabitants, pictures of by-gone Beckenham and special articles reviewing the past sixty years as witnessed by the "Beckenham Journal".

1936

## THE TEST OF TIME

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# THE Beckenham Journal

AND  
PENGES AND SYDENHAM ADVERTISER.

No. 1.                      SEPTEMBER                      1876.                      Price ONE PENNY.

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By Order of the Directors,

J. W. CROSS.

General Manager.

# THE FIRST

## "BECKENHAM JOURNAL"

### A PUBLICATION

### THAT MET A GREAT WANT

"It is the earnest wish of the conductors, without reference to party or religious sect, to give an impartial report of all matters of interest to the district; at the same time, without endorsing the views expressed by correspondents, it is hoped that the columns of "The Beckenham Journal" may be the means, by the insertion of letters and the consequent correspondence resulting therefrom, of correcting abuses, and improving the condition, sanitary and moral, of the neighbourhood."

These words are taken from the opening editorial in a little publication issued for the first time to the public of Beckenham on September 1st, 1876. It was published with due dignity, yet modesty, as "The Beckenham Journal and Penge and Sydenham Advertiser." It was a monthly publication of twenty-four pages, each page about one eighth the size of the present page.

The "Journal" of those days, like the "Journal" of to-day, was in size a reflex of Beckenham. The amount of space devoted to news was, on the average, about one eighth of what is devoted to-day and a glance over those old files indicates that while there were at times some burning questions, the average flow of local news was less in proportion to that of to-day. Beckenham being small then had a wider area of interest and hence it was that with the general quietude of local affairs, events in the neighbouring districts had an appreciable interest for local readers. Matters of local government occupied a good deal of attention and we find that the doings of the Beckenham Parochial Committee — the predecessor of the Local Board of Health — were given considerable space, the minutes, including all the correspondence, being published in full. The West Kent Sewerage Board was then quite a young authority and considerable local satisfaction was expressed at the decision of that Board to throw open its meetings to the Press, in contrast to the Bromley Rural Sanitary Authority (then the principal public body in the district) which excluded reporters.

The first number of the "Journal" voiced local complaints about the scarcity of water in the neighbourhood, a great contrast to present conditions as will be remembered by those who read our recent extracts from a report about the Metropolitan Water Board. In those days, as now, there was a grumble about the rates, for a rate demand for "special purposes" aroused indignation from the fact that the special purposes were not defined.

A report, with full prize list, of the

Alexandra District Flower Show, a fore-runner of the Beckenham Horticultural Society, indicated a keen interest in gardening matters, and particulars were provided of the proposed new church (now Holy Trinity, Lennard-road) which was about to be built.

In contrast to the swimming facilities of to-day, a report of the contests of the Norwood Swimming Club held at the lake in South Norwood Park indicated the distance local swimmers had to travel in those days for a dip. Other sport is represented by the fixtures of the Crystal Palace District Bicycle Club.

Even in 1876 there was a batch of correspondence, an evidence of healthy interest in local life. Full particulars were provided of the Beckenham postal services. There was a complete list of the Churches, Missions, Sundays Schools, etc., in Beckenham and Penge, with clergy, ministers, churchwardens, leaders, particulars of services and other details. The "Births, Marriages and Deaths" recorded one birth, two marriages, and two deaths.

Local trade enterprise was expressed in several pages of advertisements, an adventure which, continued in following issues, helped substantially to build up many a flourishing Beckenham business.

From those early days the "Beckenham Journal" has recorded the history of the district, first month by month for six years, and ever since week by week, and has placed before the public a complete record of everything of importance that has happened in its daily life and progress. It has spared no pains in giving as full a record as possible and has been ever alive to any special needs, as will be remembered from its amplified and illustrated editions on outstanding occasions which have enjoyed remarkable popularity. It was claimed in the first issue that the endeavour would be to make the "Journal" a first class channel for the diffusion of information on any subject of interest in the locality and we humbly suggest that that endeavour has been maintained consistently and without fail.



# THE BECKENHAM JOURNAL.

## TERMS FOR ADVERTISEMENTS.

Displayed Advertisements, Page, £1 7s. 6d.  
 Ditto ditto Half do. 14s.  
 Ditto ditto Quarter do., 7s.  
 Ditto ditto One Eighth do., 4s.  
 Column Advertisements three lines and under 1s. 6d.,  
 and 4d. per line after.  
 Servants wanting situations 24 words and under 1s.  
 A Special reduction will be made on Advertisements  
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AGENTS—Mr. D. NOTTLE, Clifton Terrace, Beckenham.  
 Mr. DE BRUIN, The Village, Beckenham.  
 Mr. WEBB, China Dealer, High-st., Beckenham.  
 MATTHEW & GREEN, High-street, Penge.  
 Mr. S. COLLINS, Stationer, &c., Bromley.  
 To whom Advertisements may be forwarded.

## The Beckenham Journal AND PENGE AND SYDENHAM ADVERTISER, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1876.

IN issuing this the first monthly number of a new publication, the kindly consideration of the inhabitants of Beckenham and its vicinity is solicited on behalf of "*The Beckenham Journal and Penge and Sydenham Advertiser*." Designed to supply a want, the existence of which all will be willing to acknowledge, it will be the aim of its conductors to make "*The Beckenham Journal*" at once a first class channel for the diffusion of information on any subject of interest in the locality in which it circulates, and at the same time an advertising medium, second to none in the district.

It is the earnest wish of the conductors, without reference to party or religious sect, to give an impartial report of all matters of interest to the district; at the same time, without endorsing the views expressed by correspondents, it is hoped that the columns of "*The Beckenham Journal*" may be the means, by the insertion of letters, and the consequent correspondence resulting therefrom, of correcting abuses, and improving the condition, sanitary and moral, of the neighbourhood.

To Advertisers the best possible terms will be offered, specially reduced prices being charged for advertisements that are inserted for a stated period.

Secretaries of Cricket Clubs, Benefit, and other Societies are requested to send early notices of Matches or any event connected with them, that the same may be duly inserted in the ensuing number, to ensure which communications should reach the office not later than the 26th of the month.

## WEST KENT MAIN SEWERAGE BOARD.

We are advised that the West Kent Board have now made arrangements with the Local Board of Health at Bromley for a portion of their premises, to occupy as permanent offices; and they have issued notices that the Press will be admitted to the meetings. We shall be able to report the proceedings, and shall pay strict attention to the progress of this great and important work. We insert with much satisfaction the addresses of Mr. BEGG and Mr. STONEHAM, as they contain most valuable statements as to the work done during the last year. The length of these letters prevents us from making any comments, and such would be gratuitous as an addition to the details given.

We congratulate the Board upon their present position, upon having opened their deliberations to the public; and we hope that the Rural Sanitary Authority will follow this example. We cannot subscribe to much that is said on this subject, but publicity is the character of English Institutions, and the public are better satisfied when the deliberations of administrative bodies are open to their inspection. The Rural Sanitary Authority is comparatively a new body, but they have done useful work, and that work will be all the better appreciated if reports of their proceedings are published in the local journals. We can speak from personal knowledge of the conduct of the Beckenham Parochial Committee. The reports of the two years they have been in existence speak for themselves; and the conduct of that body has nothing to fear from the most undisguised openness. We believe that we are correct in our view that the Parochial Committee would prefer that their proceedings should be made known in the same way as those of the School Board, but they cannot take the initiative, so long as the Rural Sanitary Authority excludes reporters.

## THE WATER SUPPLY OF THE DISTRICT.

THE most important subject before us is the scarcity of water over this district. The roads have been unwatered for some weeks, and the inhabitants have been subjected to the greatest privations. We learn that in many parts of the country the scarcity has been quite as severe, and we hope that it will teach the public, and especially the water companies, a lesson. It is too much the case that when the evil has passed away, the precautions to be taken are neglected or forgotten; but we hope that in this case the lesson will be accepted, and lead to practical measures. The Parochial Committee in the first instance, and then the Rural Sanitary Authority, have made strong representations to the Lambeth Water Company, and they have directed attention to the remedy. It is found that all round London there is an abundant supply of water from the chalk springs. All during the drought the well at Shortlands has never failed, and it is from that source that we have supplied for the roads in the village, and such other parts of roads as have been watered. We are assured that the question will not sleep. We cannot go at length into the subject as we give *in extenso* the letters referred to above.

## SPECIAL RATE.

WE find that considerable dissatisfaction prevails in consequence of the way in which the demand notes for rates are made out. We have before us one of these notes, demanding a rate of 5d. in the pound for special purposes. This is not sufficient. It is necessary that it should be stated what these special purposes are. In a previous case there was a demand of 1/6 in the pound, but no particulars. In this case we are informed that several of the largest ratepayers will refuse to pay the rate until the information is given as to the purposes to which it has to be applied,

## THE BECKENHAM JOURNAL.

## BECKENHAM SCHOOL BOARD.

THURSDAY, 3rd August.—Present: Messrs. F. T. Barry, J. Kressman, S. Poulton, G. Hird, and W. Malyon.

Balance in hand £101.

Mr. STENNING submitted plans of the proposed works to be executed upon the schools, and he was requested to attend at the next meeting when tenders will be opened.

Upon the motion of the CHAIRMAN, a committee of management over the Board's schools was appointed, consisting of Messrs. Kressman, Wolley and Hird.

In consequence of this arrangement it was stated by the CHAIRMAN that hereafter it would most likely be necessary to vary the constitution of the Finance Committee.

Mr. POULTON, in accordance with previous notice, moved that additional school accommodation be provided for 300 children in the Alexandra District—this was well within the order of the Education department. In this particular district there was a great deal of party feeling towards Mr. Cator, who was the manager of the existing school, and it was not his (Mr. Poulton's) intention to enter into the question of whether or not these schools were properly conducted, but there was no disguising the fact that they were exceedingly unpopular and there would be great difficulty in persuading parents to send their children there. One of the objects for which this board was formed was to provide education of such a character that parents might send their children to school without a fear of anything beyond. This Board ought not to consider whether their action would prove unpleasant to certain individuals—they had simply to deal with the fact that the present schools were viewed with suspicion, and were consequently avoided.

Mr. HIRD seconded the resolution.

Mr. POULTON said that in the officer's returns it appeared that 800 children were represented by their parents as attending the Alexandra schools, whilst the fact was there was only accommodation for about 450, with an average attendance of 200.

The CHAIRMAN did not consider the present returns as being complete and he thought it better to adjourn this motion until a perfect schedule was before them.

Mr. WEBB, the inspector, said the schedule would be ready in a week.

Mr. POULTON did not object to a short delay, but he felt bound to urge the matter on as it was of vital importance to a very large part of the population in his district.

Mr. KRESSMAN suggested that they refer the matter to a committee.

The CHAIRMAN felt that they ought to have the complete returns before moving further, and he also suggested as a reason why too much haste should not be shown in the matter, that they were not sure whether or not the existing schools in the Alexandra District would fall into the Board's hands. In spite of the figures quoted, their inspector could not find any children that were not sent to school.

Mr. HIRD said that was because the children left Beckenham to find shelter in the Penge schools.

The CHAIRMAN said that was a matter over which the Board had no control. All they had to see to was that the children went to some efficient school, and he felt certain the Education department would not sanction the erection of fresh schools in the parish whilst it could be shown that there were efficient schools yet incompletely filled.

Mr. HIRD replied that if the children wished to be admitted to their own school there would not be room for them.

Mr. POULTON said the Alexandra District contained 550 houses and there was only school accommodation for 450 children.

The CHAIRMAN replied that these were only estimates; let them see an official return.

Mr. POULTON said he quoted from the census returns which were as reliable as any return this Board would get of their own.

The CHAIRMAN said their amended return would contain the date of birth and the name and address of every child in their parish. He would be the first man to vote for this motion when it was found that the children really needed additional school accommodation, but they ought not to spend the public money until a real necessity arose for doing so.

Mr. POULTON said if they waited until the schools were filled under their present management that would never occur. Many parents were sending their children to private schools or else to the Penge School, and he knew perfectly well that a great many persons would rather leave Beckenham parish than allow their children to go to the Alexandra Schools. The Department had directed this Board to provide additional school accommodation, and it was only a question of which were the best sites for the buildings—it would be a mistake to wait for the present schools to fill before providing more room.

Mr. HIRD suggested that the Department would be guided by the number of children in the district referred to, and not by the attendance.

The CHAIRMAN doubted about this view being taken.

Mr. POULTON could see no chance of the school coming into their hands until the church was built, and that would take two years to complete—they could not afford to wait so long.

Mr. MALYON said that without prejudice to the resolution before the Board he would move "That the clerk be directed to write to Mr. Albemarle Cator, and ask him if he were willing to cede to the Board the Schools built on land of his in the Alexandra District, and on what terms." It would be in the interests of economy, he considered, to get those Schools if possible; it would no doubt come cheaper than by building new schools, and he deprecated the evil effect of two schools being in such close proximity, and possibly working in a spirit of antagonism. He believed from a conversation he had with the Treasurer of the said schools that the trustees would only be too glad to get the buildings off their hands, and read certain correspondence to that effect. Mr. Cator had, it was true, given the land, but the deed conveying the same had never yet properly been executed, hence the hands of the trustees were completely tied, and the only person competent to negotiate the transfer was the gentlemen on whose ground the schools were built. He pointed out that the schools were in a good central position, that they would be available for the Alexandra District, Penge Park, and the Birkbeck Estate, and were surrounded by so much vacant space that if at any time it were found necessary to increase their accommodation it could easily be done without incurring the expense of buying fresh land.

The Board concurred in the suggestion of Mr. Malyon, the clerk being directed to write to Mr. Cator; the original motion standing over till the receipt of the reply from that gentleman.

Mr. POULTON next moved that a school be provided for 130 children at Elmer's End. He suggested that only girls and infants should be accommodated, and that the boys should attend the village school.

Mr. HIRD seconded the motion.

The CHAIRMAN agreed that this was a necessary school to provide.

Mr. KRESSMAN also looked upon this as a pressing want, but he wished the subject to be reported upon by a committee.

Some conversation ensued as to the most desirable site for the schools, and in the result, a committee consisting of Messrs. Poulton, Kressman, and Malyon were appointed to report at the next meeting. Mr. Webb was also directed to furnish a complete return of the children between 3 and 5 in Elmer's End.



# THE BECKENHAM JOURNAL.

## COUNTY OF KENT FRIENDLY SOCIETY.

Established 1828 (under the Friendly Societies' Act)  
PATRON—The Most Reverend The Archbishop of Canterbury.

Capital £28,500.

We have before us the Report of the above Society, which states—"At no period of the Society's existence has its financial position been better than it is at the present time, 1876. It has a strong claim to the confidence of the working classes in Kent. It is true that no part of the funds of the Society is spent in anniversary or festival meetings or in holiday excursions; but in lieu of such attractions, it offers to prudent and respectable men the substantial advantages of a large provident institution with *surplus* capital. Liberal grants are made from the surplus capital to members who are afflicted with illness of exceptional duration, and also to members who have secured old age pay.

"The Society has raised many struggling men above need of recourse to the Poor Rate in illness, and has saved many from being driven into the Workhouse in their declining years. It offers the means of securing provision during illness, support in old age, and a sum sufficient to pay for the expenses of burial, and leave something over, at a cost in money less than that which has been paid by many worthy but unfortunate men in this County for the benefits (so called) of unsound Sharing-out Clubs. A considerable proportion of poor old men now inmates of the Union Workhouses in Kent, as well as in many other Counties of England, have been members of such unsound Clubs, which have either turned them adrift in their old age, or have broken up from bad management, and left their members to shift for themselves."

Want of space prevents our giving further particulars connected with this Society. In a future number we will give other details, and hope soon to see a Branch established for Beckenham and its neighbourhood.

**DEATH AT BECKENHAM JUNCTION.**—It is our painful duty to record the decease, in an awfully sudden manner, of an old and respected parishioner, Mr. Alexander Harley, of 9, Fox Grove Road, Beckenham. On Wednesday morning last, shortly before 10 o'clock, the deceased left his residence intending to proceed to town by the 10.45 train. He arrived at the Beckenham Junction Station and seated himself on one of the chairs on the platform. After he had been thus seated for about ten minutes, he was observed to fall. Assistance was immediately rendered, and Dr. Booth at once sent for, who was quickly in attendance, but his efforts were unavailing, for life quickly ebbed away in about the space of seven or eight minutes, from the time he (Mr. Harley) was observed to fall. The body was conveyed back to the residence which it had so short a time previously left, apparently in full life and vigour. It is said the cause of death was an affection of the heart. Mr. Harley was always ready to identify himself with all that was going on for the good of the parish, and this is the smallest tribute we can offer to his memory, beyond sharing the real sympathy which is universally expressed for his widow and children under such solemn and harrowing circumstances.

**HINTS ON GARDENING.**—Want of space prevents our inserting in this number a paper on gardening, written expressly for this journal by a gentleman resident in this parish, who is considered an authority on such matters, and whose contributions, we have no doubt, will be read with much interest.

## PENGE NATIONAL SCHOOLS.

These schools, containing about 850 scholars, have again been visited by Her Majesty's Inspector, who reports upon them to the Educational Department in the highest terms. After speaking of them as examples to other schools in the neighbourhood, he adds that they "maintain their well-established character as some of the most ably and successfully conducted schools in the district. The elder scholars have passed satisfactorily in physical geography, mechanics, and animal physiology, and are diligently instructed in book-keeping. The needlework in the girls' department is carefully graduated, and leaves nothing to be desired. The singing is good, and the discipline is excellent." In the boys' department as many as 224 scholars satisfied the requirements of the Science and Art Department in freehand drawing, practical geometry, and model drawing, while ninety of them were rewarded with certificates and prizes. With such results as these, it is no matter of surprise that these are the only schools in this populous hamlet, and the inhabitants are to be congratulated upon having such efficient schools in their midst, supported by voluntary contributions, rather than a Board school taxing the whole of the residents.

## PENGE TABERNACLE.

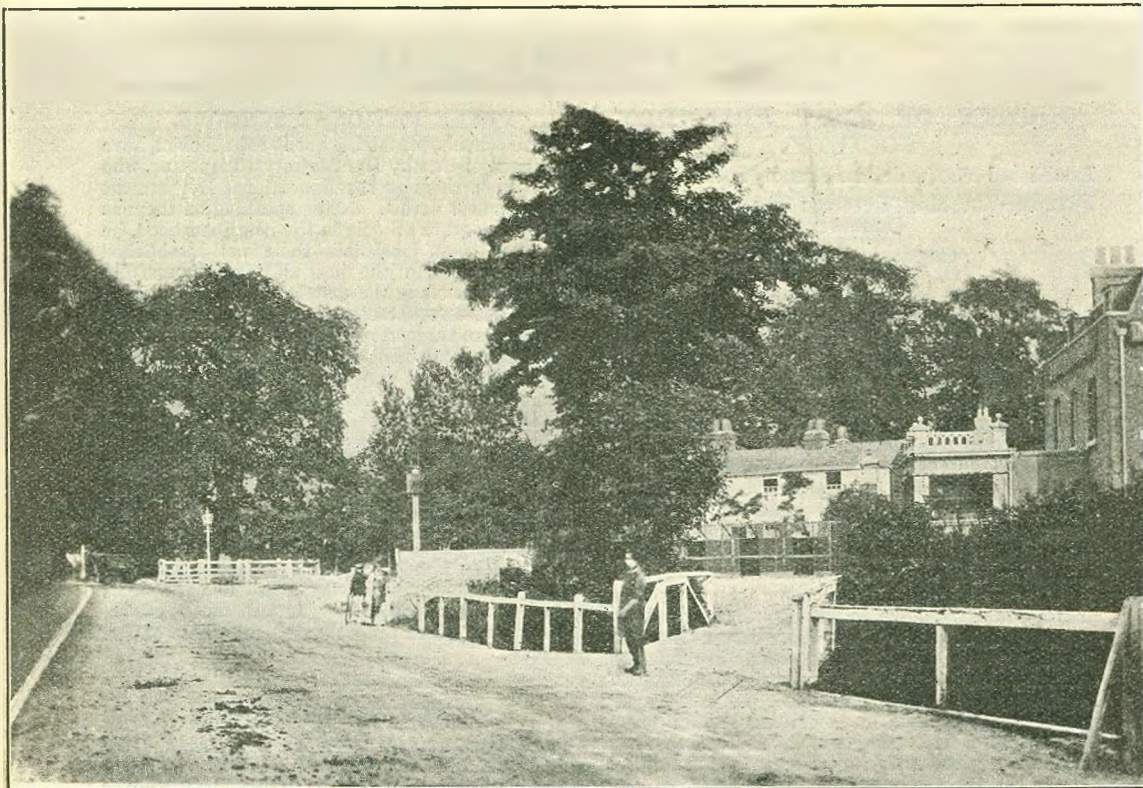
The Penge Tabernacle Sunday School held their Annual Summer Treat in a field near Croydon Road, kindly lent for the purpose by Mr. W. Matthews of Elm View, Croydon Road, Penge, on Bank Holiday, August 7th. The children assembled at 1 p.m. at the Tabernacle, Maple Road, and thence marched to the ground. Tea was served to the juveniles at 4.15, and to the adults, of whom there were a large number, at 5 p.m. The teachers and other friends devoted themselves heartily to the enjoyment of the young people, and the weather being so favorable, a very happy day was spent. All gathered together about 8 p.m., sang a closing hymn, and after a few words from the Pastor, and hearty cheers for Mr. Matthews (with Mrs. & Miss), the superintendent (Mr. Gloster), and the Pastor, the doxology was sung, and the friends separated just before dark.

## THE NEW PEAL OF BELLS FOR PENGE CHURCH.

To those inhabitants of Penge and others who interested themselves in the appeal made a few weeks ago from the Vicar of St. John's Church, Penge, to obtain a peal of bells for that Church, it will be gratifying to learn that the contractors have so far advanced, that the ensuing week will probably see the bells swinging; and it is intended to ring the maiden peal on Saturday, September 2nd. As the Rev. D. McNally will return on that day from his summer trip, it will make a pleasant greeting for him.

## SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS.

The district of Penge falls within the Greenwich division of the London School Board, and as the elections will take place in November next, candidates are already putting themselves forward for public notice. We find that two of the present members, Mr. Macgregor (Rob Roy) and Mr. Waugh, do not intend offering their services for the next Board. The Hon. and Rev. A. Legge has already issued his address to the electors, and we hear of two other candidates, Mr. Richardson, well known in connection with the Lewisham Board of Works, and the Rev. Canon Money. From all appearances the competition to represent this borough will be very keen.



Opposite the "Journal" Offices in 1876. The photograph shows the Pound.

## DIRECTORY NEWS

A copy of a Kent directory published by Pigot and Co. gives the population in 1839, at 1,288. Some interesting extracts are:

"Letters from all parts arrive by mail cart from London every forenoon at eleven and afternoon at five; and despatched every morning at a quarter before nine and afternoon at a quarter before five."

"Coaches to London, the 'Accommodation' from Beckenham every morning at half past eight. National School, Beckenham, William Knight, master, Elizabeth Knight, mistress."

The "directory," including Bromley, occupies less than six columns.

It is interesting to note that the only "academy and school" in Beckenham was William Arnold, and among the few at Bromley was a boarding and day school run by Mary Lamb and Sarah Lamb.

William Levens (baker) is about the only name which is still used in Beckenham. The "taverns" mentioned are the George and the Three Tuns. There are two malsters given for Beckenham, Henry Overton, Lower Elms End and James Turner, Elms End.

In a directory published about 1873 the mention is made of Elmers End so that this district must have taken its new spelling between 1839 and 1873.

In the 1873 directory published by Sinnock Howard and Co., as the "Crystal Palace District Directory and Court Guide," Beckenham is given eleven pages with an eight page "court" directory.

At this date the population is given as 7,000.

Elmers End is given a separate identity as having a population of 600 and an iron schoolroom in which the Church of England services are carried on by the Rev. W. C. Upton.

Shortlands is here mentioned as a hamlet. In this directory Birkbeck-road has three houses, Mackenzie-road thirteen, and Ravenscroft-road six. In the High-street, Thomas Graham appears first after the Rectory, followed by Francis Drake, draper. There is a watchmaker, E. Butcher, a few doors further on, whose clock still runs in the "Journal" offices to this day, and among some Beckenham names still here to-day are W. Booth, grocer; Charles Austin, the Beckenham Dairy; and William Copeland (now H. Copeland, the builders, of Bromley-road).

At "The Cedars" (so named then instead of Village-place) was Colonel Samuel Wilson, J.P., and Cornelius Lea Wilson.

The Rev. T. Lloyd Phillips had not then built the Abbey School, but had a gentlemen's school at Holmwood, Brackley-road, and there were Doctors Stilwell and Brown, at Springcroft, Park-road. G. Weeks, the ironmonger, was given as in Southend-road (now the railway bridge part of the High-street) and T. S. Day, the chemist on the corner was also the post and money order office.

### BECKENHAM IN 1885.

In 1885 the first number of the "Beckenham Directory" was published and printed at the "Journal" Offices with the imprint "T. W. Thornton at his Steam Printing and Binding Works, 3 and 4, High-street."



# CHANGES BECKENHAM HAS SEEN CONTRASTS WITH YEARS AGO

In the lifetime of the "Beckenham Journal" there have been so many changes in almost every department of life that we might almost be said to be living in a different world.

The whole aspect of Beckenham itself has completely altered and could it be possible for anyone who had been away and had not seen it in the whole of the sixty years, to come back, there would be found very little of the old to recognise.

It was termed a village and the name sticks to-day to the old High-street. But it was more than that; it had the beginnings of a small township. In 1876 it already had the start of a growth which, though very gradual, has developed into the Beckenham of to-day, no longer isolated amidst rural surroundings, but forming a part of the great mass of the residential area around London in which one passes from place to place with houses and roads connecting all the way as though they were part of the one great town.

In local government a Parochial Committee, which was a committee of the old Bromley Rural Sanitary Authority, has developed into a fully fledged Corporation directing the destinies of the youngest, but the biggest and the most wealthy of the Boroughs of Kent. Sanitary matters in the old days were not satisfactory, the water supply called for improvement, official medical supervision left something to be desired, public lighting was chiefly prominent for its economy.

The early news pages indicate that in the old days public entertainment was on a very small scale. The Public Hall had not then been erected and such concerts as were held were in very small halls attached to religious buildings. The accommodation must have been very limited and we can only imagine the entertainment. The contrast with to-day is of course enormous, for in Beckenham or near at hand is every possible form of entertainment which a large population with varied tastes could wish for. At the same time private parties, receptions and so forth continued for many years on a scale which is unknown to-day.

In home life the change has been remarkable. Now, practically every house has its bathroom. Then, the bathroom was the rarity. And in contrast to the labour-creating houses of those days we now have conveniently planned residences with labour-saving devices of many descriptions, with electricity and gas appliances for all manner of work, and an unlimited water supply.

Through the many years of Beckenham's great development from the rural area to the residential town there was always a disposition to retain as far as possible the rural aspect. That was regarded as vital, as a necessary part of Beckenham's peculiar and most characteristic feature in its claim to be a place of residence. That is the secret of Beckenham's pink paths. They originated in the red bricks with which the public paths were paved, the red tint being chosen to give that sort of air which a red brick Tudor cottage is supposed to give in a suitable aspect. There was once an idea to change them for a harder brick; hence the "blue brick squabble" which arose when the roads on the Birkbeck estate were paved with the harder surfaced, but less picturesque article. That was the end of the "blue brick" experiment. But from time to time there came complaints of the others. In spite of their supposed beauty-giving appearance they would sometimes wear unevenly and when people, hurrying to catch their morning train, stepped in a hole and got splashed with water there were outcries against them. Possibly financial and other considerations had their weight and an old Council decided, in order to retain Beckenham's distinctive colouring scheme in pavements, to use pink coloured artificial stone flags.

In some of the rural areas the broken stone was thrown down for the traffic to wear it in—steam rollers were rare. When motor traffic came about, various treatments with oil were tried, which were temporarily effective in the matter of dust, but it was not until someone had a brain wave and thought of using tar that the modern smooth, dustless road developed. Who nowadays remembers the old crossings laid with granite sets and the old crossing sweepers who often had a hard job to keep the way clear of mud?

We wonder how many people remember the days when the street gulleys were emptied and heaps of unpleasant matter were deposited by the roadside and sprinkled with disinfectant powder to deodorise the smell until the slop cart leisurely came along to remove the unsightly mounds? To-day hardly anyone notices the motor vehicle which quietly empties the gullies without any unpleasantness.

# " I REMEMBER . . . "

## OLD INHABITANTS RECALL BY-GONE INCIDENTS

### " JOURNAL'S " £5 PRIZE FOR 89-YEAR-OLD RESIDENT

Numbers of old residents of Beckenham responded to the " Journal's " quest to find the " Oldest Inhabitant," and as a result the Five Pound award offered is presented to

**Mrs. Elizabeth Ann Town, of 99, Churchfields-road, Beckenham, who has lived in Beckenham for 89 years.**

There are several close runners-up, to whom consolation awards are being made, and the accounts of their recollections of sixty years ago or over—which was a condition of the entry—are printed in the following pages.



## Sunday Dinners 2d. a Dish And the Mail Driver Frozen to Death

Mrs. Elizabeth Ann Town, of 99, Churchfields-road, Beckenham, who has lived in Beckenham for 89 years, has many interesting details to recall in the following contribution:

I was born in a cottage in Fullers-row which was just past the Croydon-road Recreation Ground.

When I was a child I remember playing round the old prison cage which stood with the stocks and pound in Beckenham Village, opposite the place where the Greyhound Hotel now stands. Beckenham High-street, as it is now known, was then called Penge-road. Another part very little known was a footpath leading from the Alms Houses in Bromley-road to Foxgrove Farm, in Foxgrove-road, which was then only a narrow road leading to the farm. This path went through some fields where Albemarle-road and The Avenue are now. Just past the Alms Houses in the Bromley-road was a spring.

Where the Memorial now stands was then known as Banyards Corner and from there to Clock House Station was all fields. Crossing the stream which still runs alongside of Clock House Station was an old wooden bridge called County Bridge.

On the corner of what is now Sydney-road stood an old cottage known as Sydney

Cottage, which had a horse pond in front. Churchfields-road was then a narrow lane just wide enough for a horse and van to pass through. At the Lych Gate which still stands at the entrance to the Parish Church was a stool on which the coffins were rested.

Two more connections with old Beckenham were the toll gates, one which stood opposite the Alexandra School and the other in Long-lane, Elmers End.

A well-known baker in Beckenham (Levens) had a very busy time on Sundays baking the dinners of residents at the cost of twopence a dish.

It was the custom at that time for the mail to be left at the police station as there was no post office in the place. One very severe winter night, the mail cart pulled up at the station as usual, and the police on duty waited for the bags to be brought in, but none coming, they went to see the reason why and found the driver frozen to death, so severe was the frost.

An early recollection was before the line was built through Beckenham Junction. An old farm house stood opposite the corner of Foxgrove-road from which an old lane led to the fields across which a footpath led to Kent House-lane. These fields were known as Rushey Meadows.



# Boating on the Moat

## Happy Memories of Foxgrove Farm

Mr. Alfred Glover, of Ranmore, Crescent-road, Beckenham, recalls boating, in a home-made craft, on the moat that surrounded Foxgrove Farm, and many other interesting details in the 84 years that he has lived in Beckenham:

I was born in Beckenham village over 84 years ago and have lived here ever since.

My father's house stood on the present site of "Woolworth's," where I spent my boyhood. I was christened in the Parish Church by the Rector, the Rev. Frederick Chalmers. He remarked that I was "named after one of our best English kings." This church was the only place of public worship in those days. There was no evening service, which gave occasion for Miss Marsh (Mrs. Chalmer's sister) to conduct an evening service in a barn in a field, opposite our present hospital.

In our pretty village there were only three lamp-posts — one at the top of Church Hill, one at Thornton's corner and one near the present "Regal."

At Thornton's corner also were "The Pound" (for stray animals) and "The Cage" (for drunken men).

On the site of the present "Greyhound" stood a doctor's house with a river flowing by, adding to the beauty of the village.

The police station was next to the "Three Tuns" and I fancy we only had three policemen and about three postmen. The mails were sent to and from London

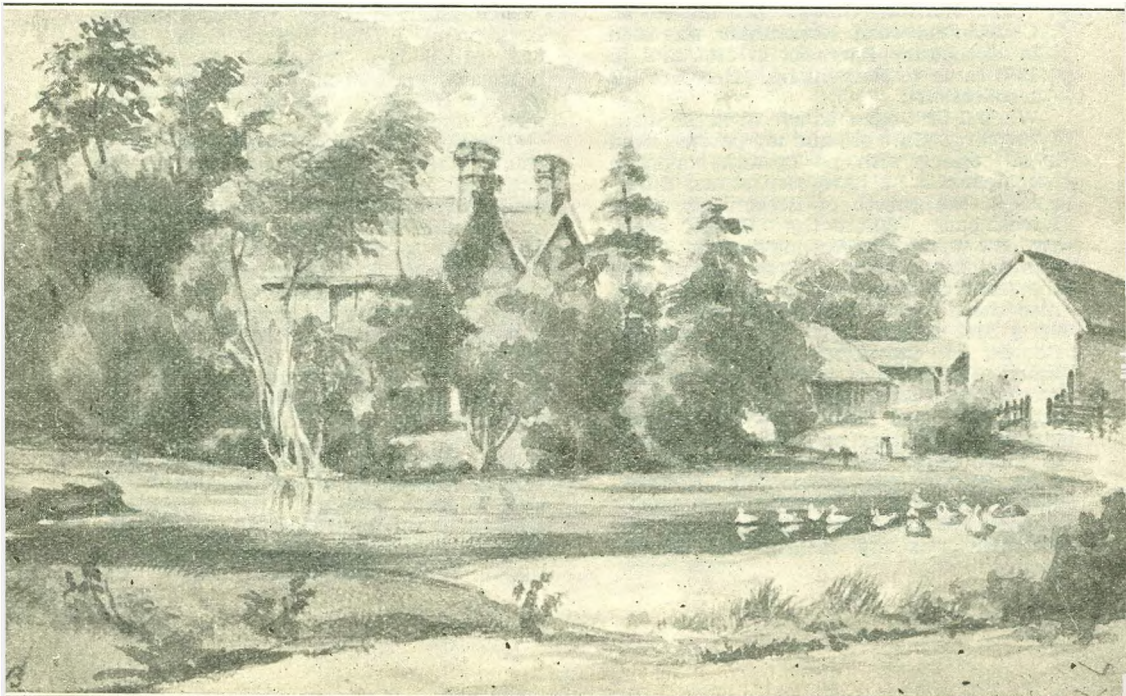
and Bromley by road. The driver of the mailcart announced his arrival at Beckenham Post Office by sounding his horn.

In these days Beckenham Junction was a terminus, with a turn-table.

An annual fair was held in the Fairfield (the present site of Burnhill-road). In this field I played cricket for many years. It was owned by the landlord of the "Three Tuns," where the players adjourned for supper after a match; and according to custom the losers rolled a new morocco cricket ball along the table to the winners.

The Foxgrove Farm occupied by my uncle was the paradise of my boyhood. It was a very extensive and delightful place with a large garden and two large orchards. The farmlands extended in breadth from the Foxgrove-road to the Albemarle-road; and in length from the main Southend-road to "over the hill and far away" to the river Ravensbourne. The farmhouse was surrounded on three sides by a moat (I believe in earlier days there was a drawbridge) which was a source of great pleasure, comprising skating, fishing and boating. The boat was "home-made" and required great skill in handling. A facetious friend once said "to ensure safety it is advisable to part your hair in the centre."

Those who knew Beckenham then and know it now, realise its rural beauties and serenity have largely passed away. While saying this, we would not forget that we now enjoy, and are very thankful for the many amenities we did not possess in those bygone days.



# Gruesome Tales of the Road to Penge And a Run to Bromley for the Doctor

Mrs. Morina Jane Bowman, of 3, Christ Church-road, Beckenham, was born in Bromley, on November 6th, 1853, and was carried to Beckenham six months later to live in Kelsey-square.

Beckenham as I first remember it was just a small village. We lived in one of two cottages at the entrance of the Fairfield. This field was the centre of the village life; here we had a big bonfire on the 5th of November, an annual fair and local cricket matches. These matches were really good; I know because my father, Mr. S. Moss, was captain for many years. The men wore white flannel trousers and white shirts with stiff fronts and cuffs. We started cricket on Good Friday.

Most of the land was farmland; we used to go gleaning on Foxgrove Farm, and my mother used to thresh the corn we gathered, then send it to Bromley to be ground.

The nearest doctor lived at Bromley (Dr. Elliott). I remember running behind a cart all the way to Bromley to get

him to come to my father. I was mud from head to foot. This was before the arrival of the first Dr. Stilwell.

The road to Penge was very dark, or so it always seemed to me, trees met overhead and there were gruesome stories told of happenings after dark.

Park Langley was a hop field for many years. Oakwood, Bromley-road, was a large estate, Kelsey was another, and, of course, most people remember the Cedars which is now the centre of the town.

There was a lovely old Rectory, where now stands the Town Hall, where we had all our Sunday School treats; the tea was provided, but we had to take our own cup. The Parish Church was the only one in Beckenham when I was young; all the school children went there and had to sit in the gallery. This was before the Church was rebuilt.

As a child I sang in the choir at the laying of the foundation stone of St. Paul's, New Beckenham, and later at Christ Church, and still later at St. John's, Eden Park.

## Beckenham's Fields and Farms Landmarks that Have Gone

Mr. William George Arnold, of 13, Churchfields-road, Beckenham, was born in Dorchester Barracks in 1861 and in 1864 came to Beckenham. Here are his recollections:

When I first came to live in Beckenham I was three years old and my parents lived in a cottage with no upstairs, opposite the Memorial. I have seen a vast difference in the growth of Beckenham, when I look back. Where the "Co-op" shops are now was a Mr. Watling's estate: This was extending back to Queen's-road and the front entrance was in Westfield-road. Also there was a farm which was owned by a Mr. Austin, Mr. Brooker and Mr. Reeves, in Croydon-road, near Cedars-road. Many years ago the police and fire stations were next to each other by the Three Tuns Hotel. The fire brigade was only voluntary and horses were used in those days. The captain's name was a Mr. Purvis. The police force in Beckenham consisted of thirteen men, two of whom were mounted policemen, and one of them was my father, Mr. Charles Arnold.

Beckenham in those days was known as Beckenham Village. Beckenham Hotel was called the Travellers' Rest Place to accommodate about fourteen men. The Cottage Hospital consisted of two wards, men's and women's.

Opposite Thornton's Corner there was a pound where the police used to put the stray cattle in. In Upper Elmers End-road there was a little iron church, and by the side of it there was a footpath which led to Langley-road, now houses. There was no Clock House Station; it was steps, and one side took you into Sydenham. Where Hawke's greengrocery shop is to-day, was a butcher's shop, and behind it was a big slaughter house. This was owned by a Mr. Shaw and was later sold to a Mr. Egcombe. There was also a Mr. Holyfield's farm in Croydon-road. They also owned the William the Fourth; now where the farm was there are shops. Where Kempton's Pie Factory is there used to be a brewery. Kent House-road used to be all fields and let out to allotment holders; also, it was all fields along Upper Elmers End-road.



# The 1866 Railway Crash

## Telegraph Clerk who Crawled under Wreckage

Mr. Walter Mathew, of 109, Mackenzie-road, Beckenham, tells, in the following letter, his personal account of the railway crash in 1866, illustrated on another page, in which as a telegraph clerk he crawled under the wreckage and saw the dead fireman.

I was born on January 10th, 1850, at Copers Cope House which still stands at the corner of Southend-road, and Copers Cope-road, and have lived in Beckenham all the time except while at boarding school at Bromley, and a year or two at Keston. My father leased the farm from John Cator, and the farm lands ran along the north-west side of Southend-road to Stumps Wood Hill, and at the back joined Kent House Farm and Sydenham.

Opposite Copers Cope Farm was Foxgrove Farm, the land extending from the Churchyard to Beckenham Place.

When the land was wanted by the Railway Company, my father, Michael Mathew, took Stone Farm, Wickham-road, opposite Hayes-lane, where there is now a garage.

Sir John Lubbock, of High Elms, Farnborough, used to pass daily on his way to Beckenham Station for London, in an open carriage with two horses, a postillion riding on one. Sir John returned at 5 p.m. and he was so regular to time that we set our clocks by him.

Beckenham Railway Station was opened in 1857 and a very pretty station it was; it had a glass roof, and the woodwork was painted in white, the iron work in red, and the nuts and bolts were picked out in blue.

On January 10th, 1866, there was a railway accident at Blakeney-road bridge. There had been a very heavy snowstorm, the telegraph wires were broken down, and owing to the melting of the snow the river at Blakeney-road was very much swollen and the foundations of the bridge which spanned the river gave way.

At 1 a.m. a goods train was due to arrive. Baxter, the signalman at Beckenham Junction, could get no communication of trains coming, owing to the breakdown of the telegraph wires, so he was on the look out, and when he saw the train approaching, pulled off the signal and watched for it to come on, but suddenly he saw the head lights disappear, and heard the crash.

The engine driver was thrown on to the bank, and found himself sitting facing London, unhurt. Maxted, the fireman, was killed, buried beneath the wreckage, and it was four days before it was possible to extricate his body.

Another event was the fire at the Crystal Palace. It occurred on a Sunday afternoon. Frank Moore, the station-master's son suggested we should go over, so we went over hedges and ditches. The transept was all ablaze, the glass was smashed and this saved the fire extending, leaving the gap which exists by the North Tower.

An amusing incident occurred at Stone Farm. Fuller, the undertaker, was told that my father was dead. He came up to Stone Farm, and when he opened the gates the first person he saw was my father, who said, "Hullo Fuller, what do you want?". He replied, "I heard you were dead, and I have come to measure you for a coffin."

## THE FORESTERS' ARMS

Susan Humphreys, now living at 82, Stembridge-road, recalls a tavern that stood opposite the George Inn in High-street, in the course of her notes on 67 years in Beckenham.

I was born in Beckenham in 1869 and have lived in Beckenham all my life, sixty-seven years. I was born opposite the George Inn, between the Forester's Arms and the saddler's shop; the old-fashioned front room and small garden were taken away to enlarge the Forester's Arms and a grocery shop was opened in what was once the front of our cottage. I believe the cottage still stands. My father and grandad both died in this cottage.

I remember the old Church, the Rev. Cator, and I used to go to the Sunday School and remember old Daddy Dennis with his red coat. My grandad used to keep the graves in order. I remember when there was no School Board; we were not sent regularly to school and had to pay school money. Mr. Kressman used to live where Sainsbury's shop is; he was a German but so good to the poor. One winter we were snowed up and he came to the school and sent us home with soup tickets. He used to buy boots and pay our school money. When we got a School Board, the officer was Mr. Webb; he used to keep the china shop now the International Stores. My mother used to go and work for him at his house. I remember Mr. and Mrs. Vian at the Knoll, the old crack, the flood and Auntie Blackford's sweet shop.

# A Builder's Recollections

## Laying out Beckenham's Roads

The laying-out of roads in anticipation of building development is recalled by Mr. J. Duncan, of 5, Mackenzie-road, Beckenham, in the following contribution:

I do not remember it, but my father and mother came to Beckenham either in 1871 or 1872. It was when Shortlands Vicarage was being built, where Mr. James Syme and my father were working as mechanics, and on its completion, I believe the firm of Syme and Duncan started its first venture as builders.

But my first recollections are of Thesiger-road. That was in 1873, and at that time, a wicket gate existed where Kingshall-road now joins Kent House-road and gave entrance to a footpath leading across fields, over the railway lines and into Beckenham-road. After a short residence in Thesiger-road, we went to number 40, Mackenzie-road, then called Strathmore Lodge. This house was afterwards occupied by Mr. Watkins, the surveyor of Beckenham at the time. From there we moved to 78, Beckenham-road and I remained there till 1895, when I again moved to Mackenzie-road, where I have resided for over forty years.

The Fairfield was open ground where I played cricket, and I have a dim recollection that, near where Manor-road is now, there was a lake or waterfall and a bridge near, and that just near Thornton's was The Pound. But I remember quite well the stream in front of the "Greyhound" being open and also the "Greyhound" yard where the cheap-jacks used to sell their goods. The old wooden houses where the International Stores now stand, Mr. Harry Holmes' house next door to them, the Police Station, the Y.M.C.A., Sparrow's bakery, the old-fashioned butcher's shop somewhere near Scawen and Dart's, and the old wood yard at the bend of Croydon-road gave the High-street a very different appearance.

Hayne-road was just being formed and the bridge over the stream at the Blakeney-road end was being built. Blakeney-road only extended as far as the railway bridge, the rest being a lane leading to the Cator Estate stables. The Beckenham-road was quite countrified and just about where Elm-road Church stands, there was a large tree with a shed near it, where the cows sheltered. This tree was blown down and broke a portion of the wall which ran along the other side of the road belonging to the Clock House garden. Clock House Station did not exist. The Clock House with its low wall, iron railings and stables formed a prominent feature at this time.

The Birkbeck was made up of fields with

the three roads formed in anticipation of building. There was a road, where numbers 21 and 23, Mackenzie-road are now, with gates across leading over the line into the brickfields, which then existed. Between Mackenzie and Birkbeck-roads an iron building served as an offshoot of the Anerley Congregational Church, the minister being the Rev. Binder. Just before the present Barnmead-road on that side of Beckenham-road, a small cottage existed, which at one time was occupied by the late Mr. T. W. Jones and from there onwards, up to the corner of Kent House-road, there were only two small cottages and the usual hedge and ditch. Kent House Station was not built, but there was a pond on the Beckenham-road side of the Chatham Railway near by called Crutcher's Pond, where a lot of skating took place in the winter which then seemed more severe than nowadays. At New Beckenham Station old-fashioned gates existed which had to be opened and shut when trains passed through.

Such events as the first appearance of the "Beckenham Journal," the South Eastern Railway accident, the great snow-storm of 1881, remain fresh in my memory as also do the familiar figures of Sexton Denn's, of the old Parish Church, which then boasted a gallery, and Mr. Downham, who ran a school in Gloucester-terrace, attended by James Edgecombe, William Sparrow, William Brooker, myself and others.

## THE BRICKFIELDS EXPLOSION

Mrs. Alice Jane Rolfe, of 29a, Chancery-lane Beckenham, was born on August 28th, 1848 and came to live in Beckenham in 1867 in Downsbridge-road. She remembers the old village of Beckenham and the laying of the foundation stone of Christ Church; also the terrible flood when many persons were driven from their homes; and an explosion at the brick fields in Southend-road when many lives were lost.

Mrs. Rolfe was married at St. George's Church in 1870.

### BORN IN THE POLICE STATION.

Mrs. Agnes Sales, of 41, Burnhill-road, Beckenham was born on April 19th, 1865, in the old Police Station adjacent to the Three Tuns Hotel. The building is now being pulled down to make way for a garage.

Her father was Station-Sergeant Foster.



# PUBLIC AUTHORITIES – THEN AND NOW

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## CHANGES THAT THE YEARS BRING

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In the lifetime of the "Beckenham Journal" there has been tremendous progress but nothing perhaps illustrates this more than the development of local authorities.

When the "Journal" came into existence the local authority was a Parochial Committee holding powers under the Bromley Rural Sanitary Authority, something similar possibly to the kind of authority West Wickham had before the recent amalgamation. It struggled for many years to get some improvement and in 1878 the old Local Board of Health was appointed. This was a great advance but it was after the coming into being of the Beckenham Urban District Council that Beckenham began to fill a really distinctive place on the map of Kent. The days of the Urban District Council saw the foundations laid of the present Beckenham as a model residential neighbourhood and the justification for the granting of the Charter which has made Beckenham a borough.

In the early days the population was a few thousand; to-day it is estimated at about 70,000. It had an assessable rateable value of about £90,000 and that has grown to over three quarters of a million. From the small Parochial Committee there is now a Corporation of thirty-two members.

The reports of the local authority have never erred on the side of brevity, but great as is the space devoted to Council reports to-day they are not, of sheer necessity, proportionate with those of the early days. Then, space was devoted to detail and routine matters which now would be impossible, for to give committee reports to the same extent as we did then would mean that the whole of the "Journal" itself would not be large enough, and that the public would be bored to distraction.

Discussions have ever been keen, and at times long, but the atmosphere of the modern Council Chamber is something very different to that of some of the meetings of the past. Now, everything is well ordered, dignified and in accordance with the strict rules of debate, and very rarely is there much "liveliness" and practically nothing pointedly personal.

In the old days there were acrimonious debates, and personal remarks were extremely warm even to the extent of drawing forth "I shall consult my solicitor in the morning," and debates of a heated nature went on even to mid-night. Even now, meetings last till mid-night, though

these late meetings are generally in Committee. Certainly in open Council the discussions are mostly cool, calm debate, the one object being the public interest, with enlivening humour now and then, and the spice of sharp, clever remarks which save the debates from dullness.

While the Borough Council has replaced the old Urban District Council, the Education Committee has taken the place of the old School Board with a work immensely greater than could have been dreamed of in the old days. The children are not only provided with the preliminaries in education for the starting of the lives of future citizens, but at every stage their health is safeguarded by regular medical inspections and clinics of various sorts. Their sight, hearing and general physical fitness are looked after, it is seen that necessary attention is paid to the important matter of their teeth and the future holds still further prospect of physical development being even more studied.

The West Kent Sewerage Board had just been formed when the "Journal" appeared, but the Joint Hospital Board had not then come into existence. Police business was conducted at the Bromley Petty Sessions with an occasional charge heard at Village Place, the residence of "Squire" Lea Wilson, but there were less local cases in three months than there are in one week to-day.

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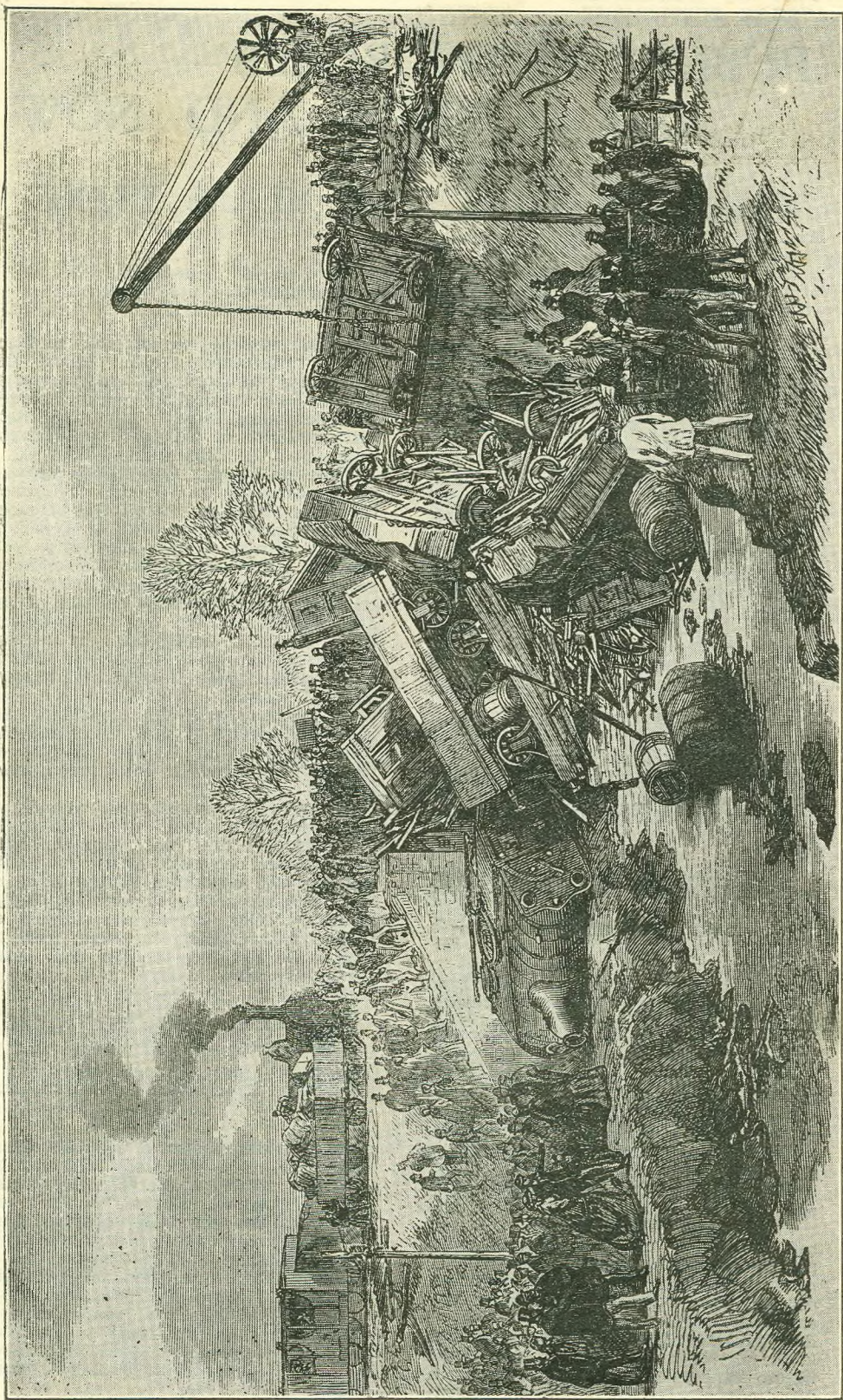
## OSCAR WILDE AT THE PUBLIC HALL

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On Thursday, November 4th, 1886, Oscar Wilde lectured at the Public Hall on "Art in Dress." The anticipated event created something approaching a "flutter" and an editorial a week before observed that "Whatever may be said of this much ridiculed enthusiast, it cannot be denied . . . that his lectures are wonderfully thought out and teeming with practical ideas."

His lecture appears to have been well-received but he seems to have disappointed those who expected an exotically-arrayed figure by "appearing in ordinary evening dress."







# RAILWAY SMASH IN 1866

## AN OLD WOOD CUT

An event that occurred ten years before the "Journal" was established, was recorded in "The Illustrated London News" of January 20th, 1866, and we are privileged to reproduce the wood cut that accompanied the account of a railway smash at the Blakeney-road bridge.

The picture was lent to us by the Stationmaster of Beckenham Junction and is reproduced by kind permission of the "Illustrated London News."

The account of the accident—which is also described by Mr. Mathew in another part of this supplement—is as follows:—

On Sunday morning a rather alarming accident, which caused the loss of one life, took place on the main line of the London, Chatham and Dover Railway, within a short distance of Beckenham, Kent. It is necessary to explain that, between one and two miles from Beckenham a stream crosses the track of the railway, and is spanned by a girder bridge upon lofty piers of brick and stone. On one side of the stream are ploughed fields and on the other osier-beds. The snow which fell during Thursday and Friday week covered those fields to a considerable depth. The rain which fell on Saturday melted the snow and not only swelled the stream, but saturated the ground on each side of it and sapped the foundations of the bridge. No indications of weakness, however, were observable. The midnight passenger-train from London passed over the bridge in safety within two hours of the time when the whole structure fell down, and the train next following was destroyed.

At half past one o'clock on Sunday morning a goods train, consisting of an engine and tender, thirteen trucks, and a brake-van, left Battersea Station for Ramsgate. It arrived at the bridge over the brook, and here the disaster took place. The engine got on and nearly crossed the bridge, which is about forty feet in length, when an immense mass of the further pier gave way and fell heavily into the stream. The girder bridge thus deprived of its support at one end appeared to swing out sideways, and then fell with a terrific crash into the stream, bringing with it the engine and the tender and the whole of the train, all hurled pell-mell to the bottom of the stream. The engine-driver, before the engine touched the ground, leaped from it into the ploughed field. He was severely shaken, but he escaped with his life, though the height from which the engine fell is about forty feet.

The fireman was not so fortunate; he clung to the rail of the engine and, the tender falling on it, he was crushed to death. Soon after daybreak, gangs of workmen were hurried to the spot to remove the ruins. Half the girders of the bridge were found to be smashed to atoms,

and half the pier was destroyed. The engine and tender were entirely smashed. Over them were piled the remains of some trucks to a considerable height. In the stream and in the fields around lay the merchandise with which the train had been laden.

### THE RAILWAY IN BECKENHAM.

The first appearance of the railway in Beckenham we are informed (vide "Beckenham Directory," 1885) was in 1856, when the South Eastern Line was operated from London Bridge, following which the West London and Crystal Palace Company made a line from the Crystal Palace through the Junction and into Shortlands. The South Eastern Company then obtained running powers over this line to Shortlands and on their own account further extended it to Bickley. What later became the London, Chatham and Dover Railway Company was then in existence as the East Kent Railway Company, who continued their road upwards to Bickley and obtained running powers through Beckenham round by the Crystal Palace and from thence over the Brighton line to Victoria. Later on, when the traffic so increased that this arrangement proved inadequate, the line was made through Penge, Sydenham Hill, Dulwich, and so on to their present West End terminus.

### JUNCTION MID-KENT SERVICE

#### *More Trains in 1876 !*

In the first number of the "Beckenham Journal" there is published a Railway Time Table for the London, Chatham and Dover Line, the Mid-Kent Line and the London, Brighton and South Coast Line.

On the main up line to Holborn or Victoria there were 29 trains a day, the first leaving Beckenham at 5.9 a.m. and the last at 10.55 p.m. There was a similar number down, from 6.10 a.m. at Victoria to 12.15 midnight. On Sundays there were eleven trains up and down.

Curiously enough, however, Beckenham Junction had a better service on the Mid-Kent line then than it has to-day. Whereas in 1936 only nine trains a day run from Beckenham Junction to Charing Cross or Cannon-street, in 1876 there were twenty, with a similar number of incoming trains and an increase in both directions on Saturday.

# PLACES THAT HAVE GONE

## IN THE "JOURNAL'S" SIXTY YEARS

While the "Journal" has been growing, a lot of the landmarks of old Beckenham have disappeared. Beckenham was not particularly rich in buildings of historic interest, but there were some that seemed well worth preserving. Although their passing has been regretted by many, modern needs have known no sentiment for them and they have been replaced with what is regarded as more suitable to the times. Other places have been demolished without a pang and in some cases their removal has been Beckenham's gain.

### BROOK PLACE.

This was a collection of little wooden houses standing opposite Thornton's Corner, on the site now occupied by the triangular piece of land owned by the Corporation and a portion of the Telephone Exchange. It was a picturesque spot and the houses were reached by a rustic bridge which spanned the Bec which then ran open from a wall surrounding the Manor House gardens until it disappeared under the road opposite Messrs. Dunn's premises. In course of time the stream was culverted and the houses, which had become dilapidated and unfit for human habitation, were pulled down. Unfortunately the spot remained unused except as a dump for building rubbish, until the growth of Beckenham demanded a telephone exchange, when the site was bought by the Post Office, who disposed of the small portion not required, to the Beckenham Council.

### VILLAGE PLACE.

Village Place was the home of the Lea Wilson family, which stood where Cedars Parade now stands. It was a three storey place and a rather austere building with more accommodation than architectural beauty, and it was fronted by a high wall over which some glorious cedars peeped into the High-street. The grounds which were attached to it are now covered by The Drive and extended in a narrow strip right to Church Hill. It was from Village Place that the state coach of the Lord Mayor of London of those days used to convey Col. Lea Wilson to civic functions. For years after, a coach and four, kept by Mr. Lea Wilson used to issue from here on occasions and formed quite a feature of the place. Opposite the house and on the other side of the road was an open paddock on which the "Squire's" cows grazed.

### THE OLD WOOD HOUSE.

Few places have gone from Beckenham with more regret on the part of lovers of the ancient than has the Old Wood House, situated where Messrs. W. H. Smith's shop now stands. As many Beckenham residents will still remember it was a picturesque old building which had been converted into three shops, the sort of places which would satisfy an old village. It had timber framed walls filled in with

brick and when it was ultimately pulled down it was discovered that it had been an ancient Manor House and that the three shops were really one large hall, recalling those buildings of ancient days which had no chimneys, but a central hole in the roof to let out the smoke from a fire in the centre of a room.

### HIGH STREET MANOR HOUSE.

There has been a little confusion about the Manor House, Beckenham. What is now known as the Manor House still stands in part in the Bromley-road opposite to the Parish Church and until a few years ago used as the offices of the Beckenham Urban District Council. There was another house in the High-street known as the Manor House and it would appear to have been an even older building. It was much more picturesque in appearance with its old red brick walls and its gabled roof showing signs here and there of the stress of years. It had some fine rooms, some very roomy cellars and a room of special use to the ladies in the days when the hair was powdered and it was necessary to thrust the head through an aperture in the wall so that the hair could be powdered without the clothes suffering. Its pretty old garden had a small lake fed from the Bec through a sluice, which latter has been secured by the Beckenham Society as an interesting old relic and is now in the possession of the Borough Council in Kelsey Park. This Manor House stood where Messrs. Boots' premises now are and was for a time used as headquarters of the British Legion.

### THE OLD PARISH CHURCH.

An effective landmark standing on the top of Church Hill was the old Parish Church with its slender steeple. It was the crowning part of the picture made by old Beckenham and its removal was not carried out without many regrets being expressed. But it was considered unsafe, beyond reasonable restoration and quite unsuited to the accommodation then required. It dated back to the time of Edward III and had a picturesque and interesting interior. The present Lych Gate is a restoration of the old thirteenth century lych gate in which the old form has been retained and as much of the old material as it was possible to use.





#### **CLOCK HOUSE** (illustrated above).

Possibly there is no place more asked for by first time visitors than Clock House. The fact that it has given its name to a railway station and a district possibly leads to the supposition that it was a house of very great importance. It was an eighteenth century mansion which was demolished in 1896 to make room for the Technical Institute and the Baths.

#### **BECKENHAM LODGE.**

Opposite the spot where the War Memorial now stands and occupying almost the site of the Co-operative buildings was an old building known as Beckenham Lodge. In its grounds were some fine specimen trees including the fine old cedar which gave Cedars-road its name. In its later years the Lodge was used as a school for boys.

#### **THE POUND.**

Can anyone imagine a pound for stray cattle in High-street, Beckenham? Yet one used to exist opposite Thornton's Corner and by its side was the Parish Pump which was used to draw water from the Bec to water the roads. Possibly in the old days the village stocks stood there, but no record exists, although rumour asserts that it was a fact. We hear a lot to-day about the mischievous tricks of the young. It is evidently not a feature peculiar to to-day for when the "Journal" was quite young some adventurous youth pulled the pound up bodily and deposited the timbers in a field. But the Lord of the Manor immediately had a stout oaken structure erected capable of resisting any such enterprise.

#### **THE OLD RECTORY.**

Beckenham Rectory once stood where the Town Hall rears its tall tower. It was a big square building which could

hardly be seen from the roadway on account of the intervening trees, for all the way from the Constitutional Club to the Church House elm trees overhung the pathway. An extensive field running side by side with Rectory-road opposite the railway was used for cricket and football, and through the generosity of Rectors, was at times a substitute for public playing fields.

#### **LANGLEY COURT.**

This fine but modern building stood on the site of the old Langley Farm. It came into particular prominence in 1913 when it was the scene of one of the biggest fires which have ever occurred in Beckenham. The whole of the fine premises was practically gutted.

#### **LANGLEY LODGE.**

This building of later years was known as the Dower House and was a part of the Burrell estates. In 1820 it was in the occupation of the Marchioness of Exeter and had a fine front with its Grecian portico.

#### **KELSEY MANOR.**

One of the greatest regrets that many old Beckenham residents had was in the destruction of the old Kelsey Manor. Standing in a prominent position on rising ground above the lake it was the crowning portion of a beautiful picture. The grounds around it were very pleasing and the whole aspect was one of great charm. It was a converted building in which an old rather square structure had been encased in a style which seemed to fit the surroundings in a most appropriate manner and a suggestion of the mediaeval was introduced into the turrets, which was most effective. It included a private chapel. It was certainly Beckenham's most imposing picture.

# BECKENHAM YEAR BY YEAR

## A RAPID GLANCE AT THE IMPORTANT EVENTS OF THE LAST SIXTY YEARS

A river of sixty eventful years, bearing developments and improvements of a prodigious nature, has passed under Beckenham's municipal bridge, and there has been no year without evidence of a very active spirit in the district.

In tracing back through the records of things the "Journal" has seen, one finds that the growth of the Borough from little more than a village has been a well-ordered progress, and one sees that the events of yesterday have a very direct bearing on the affairs of to-day.

**1876:** It was one of the earliest years within living memory, and a notable one for Beckenham, that saw the first issue of a monthly publication known as "The Beckenham Journal." Contemporary public figures regarded the infant as a tangible asset to the district.

**1877:** One of the most important actions of the original local authority—the Beckenham Parochial Committee—was the division of the district into five wards. Last year, the Urban District Council re-arranged a much greater Beckenham into eight wards.

**1878:** In sixty years, the "Journal" has seen four different local government authorities: the Parochial Committee, the Local Board, the Urban District Council, and ultimately the Borough Council. It was in 1878 that the Parochial Committee gave place to the Local Board.

**1879:** The expansion of the Church locally has been an involved and a dramatic story. One of the early events was the building, and the consecration by Bishop Tufnell, of St. James' Church. It was rebuilt last year.

**1880:** An allegation at a meeting of the Local Board that a baker's boy had been jolted out of his cart on account of the bad condition of one of the roads, is typical of the feeling existent just then about that subject.

**1881:** Complaints about the rates must constitute a feature of local life in almost every district. So angered did the people of Beckenham become when complaints were first heard, that they set up a "Rate-payers' Protection Association."

**1882:** Following closely on the building of St. James' Church came activity in the town's other church circles. The laying of the memorial stone of the Baptist Church in Beckenham-road, was the first outcome of this activity, and other events followed.

**1883:** The characteristics of old Beckenham were already disappearing. Among them was the toll-gate which had stood in Kent House-road since 1853. Albemarle Cator ordered its removal, but in the same year also the foundation stone of the Public Hall was laid.

**1884:** Preparations were being made for the great advances that were imminent.

Church Hill and what is now the High-street were throwing off their village-like charm and quiet. 1884 saw the building of the police station in Church Hill.

**1885:** After long negotiations between the squire and the Local Board, the Beckenham Pound was removed. Though there were few residents who did not realise that rural beauty must be sacrificed for cleanliness and prosperity, some mourned the loss of the old landmark.

**1886:** The last years of the eighties were significant in the ecclesiastical life of Beckenham, four big events taking place in '86 and '87. The Parish Church was rebuilt (without any interruption of the services), and the Arthur-road Mission commenced.

**1887:** In a rapidly swelling population were many Nonconformists, and so great was the increase in this section of the community, that two sizeable churches were commenced in one year. They were the Wesleyan in Bromley-road, and the Congregational in Crescent-road.

**1888:** Proof that the district was expanding outwards is supplied by the fact that while ecclesiastical matters in Beckenham were going ahead rapidly, the building of a new church at Shortlands was well in hand. In 1888, St. Mary's Church was consecrated.

**1889:** Figuring prominently among the "headline events" of the last two years have been the local storms of municipal controversy over Beckenham's representation on the County Council. The town's first representative on that body was the late Mr. Arthur Baker, who commenced the duty alone.

**1890:** Since the publication fourteen years earlier in "The Journal" of time-tables of the London, Dover and Chatham Railway, a sporadically expanding Beckenham necessitated still more up to date railways, and one of the first moves in that direction was the rebuilding of Beckenham Junction.

**1891:** Characteristic of our town are the beautifully laid out open spaces, with which it abounds. When the Croydon-road Recreation Ground was opened, the people responded to that wise move on the part of the local authority with a huge demonstration.



1892: Though few could have foreseen the terrific effect of railways on Beckenham and the surrounding suburbs, a vast increase in the population was impending. It was stimulated by the opening of a railway from Nunhead to Shortlands.

1893: An important event in the history of the Beckenham Parish Church was the building and opening of the Church House. Standing incidentally for the obliteration of one more green space, that building has justified its existence by its close association with social life in the Parish.

1894: The third of the different authorities under which Beckenham was to flourish was the Urban District Council. Governing the district since forty-two years ago, it was the men of this body who did most to direct the influences that have culminated in the Beckenham of to-day.

1895: Within a year of taking over local affairs, the new Council was making business-like and progressive moves. One of the first arose out of a suggestion to build for Beckenham a technical institute and swimming baths. But the idea was not greeted at first with enthusiasm.

1896: Before any progress could be made in the Technical Institute Scheme, it was necessary to demolish several old buildings at Clock House. But that sacrifice made way for the facilities for better education which are an inevitable concomitant of prosperity.

1897: Two occasions in the past two years—and there will be another in May next year—are ample testimony to one's impression that Beckenham is a great place for celebrations. Possibly the first of these was held in honour of Queen Victoria's Jubilee.

1898: Local authorities in Beckenham have diligently preserved the local amenities, and have weighed carefully the pros and cons of any question relating to the residential character of the town. Thus, when a recreation ground at Shortlands was proposed, it was laid aside.

1899: The loyal manifestations of happiness and goodwill that were seen in Beckenham in '97 did not rest at processions, carnivals, paper hats, and bonfires. Tangible evidence of the town's feeling towards that great Jubilee was seen when a brand new wing of the Hospital was opened.

1900: An event which brought Beckenham into prominence was the escape from the Crystal Palace of Charlie, an elephant. After a brief period of liberty in the streets of this town, Charlie was captured on Hayes Common.

1901: The beginning of the new century saw a new little town in Kent dealing with its own difficulties in its own way. One of these difficulties, over which there was a great deal of controversy, was the question of trams. The proposal was dramatically dropped almost on the eve of the signing of the contracts.

1902: Well remembering the success of their part in the Jubilee Celebrations, five years earlier, the people became once more dutifully and spontaneously joyful

on the occasion of the coronation of Edward VII. How closely those years resemble in the order of their events the present period!

1903: A familiar sound to dwellers in Beckenham is the boom of the Parish Church bells. The re-building of the church took several years, and it was not until 1903 that the half completed building put out the stone shoot that completes the edifice of to-day.

1904: This was a year peculiarly significant to the historian who sees the past in retrospect. Thirty-two years ago, sitting in their municipal council chamber, the fathers of the town foresaw the years that were to follow, and decided in favour of Incorporation.

1905: In church matters, Beckenham was by this time considered a power in the county. It was transferred to the Diocese of Rochester (in which it now is), and became a rural deanery.

1906: Another intimate connection between history and news of the present day is brought to light in a church event. In 1906, the first part of St. Michael's Church was built. It was not until last year that the west end and a gallery were added.

1907: Sixteen years after the opening of the recreation ground at Croydon-road, a similar "lung" was dedicated to the public at Churchfields-road. It was a very wise move, for the new ground was situated in a very thickly populated area.

1908: Following the transference of Beckenham into the Diocese of Rochester, came a re-arrangement of parishes inside Beckenham itself. The first part of the Church of St. Michael and All Angels was opened in 1906, and it was constituted a separate parish two years later.

1909: Consideration of the Council's method of working, and several changes in that method, resulted in an increase in the efficiency of the governing body. Far more matters were dealt with in committee, and meetings were now held monthly instead of fortnightly.

1910: This was a memorable year in what was, as yet, only a poorly developed aesthetic side to the town's life, for "Beckenham Past and Present," a volume devoted solely to the history of this town, was published by the late Mr. Robert Borrowman.

1911: Three years elapsed from the time of the original suggestion to the actual opening of Beckenham's biggest and most beautiful open space, Kelsey Park.

1912: An important step in the negotiations for the purchase—a purchase that the town cannot once have regretted—was the public enquiry, resulting in the giving of ministerial sanction. The enquiry was held at the Public Hall.

1913: It was a day of municipal triumph for Beckenham when Kelsey Park was officially opened by Mr. John Burns, and it is interesting to reflect that only recently, an extension to the park was declared open by the Mayor of Beckenham..

1914: Britain's demand on its men did not find Beckenham unresponsive. Men, young and old, were ready to go, and go they did. It was in that first year of war that an order for the occupation of Christ Church Hall as a hospital was received.

1915: The succeeding years testified still more impressively to Beckenham's ability in time of war. The Central Schools were turned into a hospital also, and the Beckenham War Relief Committee, which did a great deal of useful work, commenced operation.

1916: With its manhood at the front, Beckenham's social activities came to a complete standstill. But the improvised hospitals and all the other emergency institutions combined to counteract the anticipated demoralisation diligently and adequately.

1917: It was during this time of great national necessity that one of Beckenham's most enterprising movements commenced. Allotments were developed, and what was then a source of much needed supplies, has become subsequently a prominent feature of Beckenham life.

1918: Weary of futile, reasonless slaughter, the world signed a treaty of "peace." Beckenham's part in the war can be estimated by the fact that the Christ Church hospital had accommodated 835 patients, many of whom had made permanent friends of their allies over the water.

1919: Unlike many other towns, Beckenham realised at once the suitability and the moral necessity of a memorial to those who had given their lives.

1920: One of Beckenham's biggest controversies is the provision of a library. Though the matter is now being remedied—to the delight of many of the townsfolk—it was sixteen years ago that the Council passed the Libraries Act.

1921: It was a great day for the local world of sport when the late King George V visited Beckenham to witness an international hockey match.

1922: The exceptionally high standard of Beckenham as a residential district has always been a source of justifiable pride. Council houses for the workers did not in any way impair that high standard, and were indeed the outcome of a very worthy decision on the part of the governing body.

1923: The middle 'twenties were notable for the enormous developments and changes in bricks and mortar that Beckenham saw.

1924: Hitherto the thoroughfare of little more than a large straggling village, Beckenham's High-street was destined to undergo changes. Extensive alterations were made, and Beckenham without its Cedars, looked and felt more like a modern town than ever before.

1925: Building rose to a peak when the Southern Railway adopted complete electrification on all its suburban lines. Londoners soon found that many pleasant

parts of Kent were easily accessible from the Metropolis, and many moved their homes to Beckenham.

1926: In the "Journal's" fiftieth year of publication, the Urban Council made a bold move. It decided on new municipal offices, and purchased what remained of the Rectory Estate, for that purpose.

1927: Wide public interest was aroused when a meeting to enquire into the question of borough status for Beckenham was held.

1928: As though conscious of the municipal status which it would be called upon in a few years to maintain, the town adopted electric street lighting throughout the district.

1929: Never has the public imagination been stirred as it was over the question of Sunday cinema licences—a question which rose to its climax in 1929. The applications for the Sunday licence resulted annually in considerable speculation as to the exact course of the Council.

1930: The past six years appear in retrospect like the overture which precedes the full-blown opera of Beckenham's present civic dignity. Soon after the decision to purchase the Rectory, work was commenced on the new Town Hall which was to be worthy of the site secured for it.

1931: There was a second royal visit to Beckenham. Queen Mary came to Eden Park in March, 1931, to inspect the Frederick Milner Homes of the ex-service-men's Welfare Society, and she was loyally received.

1932: The offices of the various municipal departments scattered all over the town were at last gathered into one suitable building. The Beckenham Town Hall, a monument to civic progress, was opened by the Duke of Kent (then Prince George), in 1932.

1933: As the sixty years draw to a close, it is easy to find indications of Beckenham's progress in every page of the records. An extension of Kelsey Park in '33 is a feature which will appeal to people of Beckenham particularly.

1934: With the addition of West Wickham and the re-arrangement of boundaries, the local government body found that it had control of one of the largest areas in Kent. The amalgamation will be a benefit to both towns.

1935: Beckenham's Charter: Who will forget the genuine pride shown by the residents—well skilled in celebrating—during that week in September last year? Who will forget the enthusiasm—in every section of the community—encouraged by the foresight and comprehensive geniality of the Council?

1936: The Borough Council's first year of office has been clouded only by the death of its beloved monarch, King George V. Already, sufficient has been seen of his son, Edward, to promote expectations of an England still more prosperous, and a Beckenham imbued with yet greater concern for the welfare of its inhabitants.



# THE HAMLET OF PENGE

## BUILDING WELL-DEVELOPED IN 1876

In contrast to Beckenham, where changes in the past sixty years have been so great that many parts have been altered out of all recognition, Penge has changed very little. It was in 1876 already a well-developed place so far as building is concerned, and one has to go to far earlier days to find the Penge Common, so frequently referred to in accounts of the past.

But there were one or two differences in appearance which still lent a rural aspect to Penge and many will remember that leafy lane which connected it with Beckenham.

In 1855 by the passing of the Metropolitan Local Management Act, Penge became a part of the metropolis, and though in the county of Surrey was placed in the district of Lewisham with Beckenham Parish running between. Power was given to Penge to elect vestrymen and to call a vestry for the election of members to represent the hamlet at the Lewisham District Board of Works.

Prior to 1876 the parochial business of the district was carried on at premises known as 7, Hawkhurst Place, the vestry meetings being held in a small room on the first floor. This accommodation was inconvenient and the Lewisham Board of Works was approached with a view to obtaining certain funds from them, the proceeds of the sale of two gravel allotments made under the Penge Inclosure Award, and whether they could be applied towards building a Vestry Hall — the Anerley Town Hall, in fact. Eventually the money was paid to the Lewisham Board for the construction of Sewage Works.

Another question raised was whether the Vestry was legally constituted. Penge never had a Parish Church except St. Mary's, Battersea, 7½ miles away. Parishioners of Penge elected Overseers for the Poor and other Officers, but never exercised the privilege of electing churchwardens. Counsel's opinion was that the money could not be applied to building the Vestry Hall, but that the Vestry was a legally constituted body.

The Penge Vestry therefore adopted what was known as the Vestry Clerk's Act, under which power was obtained for erecting a Vestry Hall, and later authority was obtained for raising a loan and the hall was built and opened in 1876.

### THE ANOMALIES OF PENGE.

Before Penge was constituted an Urban District Council by the Commission in 1900, it was in a very extraordinary position as a recital of the facts reveal:—

It was in the London County Council area.

It paid its poor rates to Croydon.

For its highway purposes and rates Lewisham was responsible.

For ecclesiastical purposes it came within the parish of Battersea.

Income tax demands were addressed from Wandsworth.

For Parliamentary elections it was attached to Dulwich, which was a division of Camberwell.

For London School Board elections it was joined to Greenwich.

County rates were paid to Newington.

Police court cases were dealt with at Lambeth.

And as a London newspaper of that period, anxious to discover further anomalies, observed: "Penge gets its water from the Lambeth Company and its gas from Lower Sydenham."

Among the changes to be noted are those of name. At the time this paper was first published Beckenham-road was known as Dulwich-road.

### BILLET GREEN.

From Maple-road up towards the Crystal Palace all the frontage was already built on with two exceptions. There was a paddock opposite St. John's Church which has fortunately been preserved as a perpetual open space in the name of the Penge Recreation Ground; while the well-known Penge Triangle opposite the old Crooked Billet inn was then known as Billet Green. This small square of green, enclosed by a single railing, was a popular playground, and at intervals was the haunt of the travelling photographer—a great attraction then—and the cheap jack, these pedlars making brief halts in the hamlet to ply their trades.

In the High-street opposite Penge Empire Theatre, there existed two old cottages, partly thatched, which served as the workhouse before Penge came under the Croydon Board of Guardians.

### THE COUNTY BRIDGE.

Proceeding in the direction of Beckenham there were no houses on the north side of the road from St. Arvan's (now the County School for Boys) with the exception of two cottages by the County Bridge. This bridge crossed the stream which runs under that part of the road where Beckenham-road, Beckenham, and High-street, Penge, now adjoin, and until a few years ago, when the two local councils united in culverting the stream, it was visible at the side of Kent House-road. The next houses along the road would be Elm Farm and the Clock House and so into Beckenham. On the other side of the road there was a fair amount of building already in progress, terminating at the Prince Arthur Inn.

Penge-lane, which was the main road to Sydenham, was then only half its present width. Mention of Sydenham recalls the fact that there still existed in that direction two toll-gates. One of them was situated in Kent House-road where Lennard-road crosses, and the other in Newlands Park at its junction with Tannsfeld-road. Mr. Harding kept this toll gate and lived in Vine Cottage in Harding's lane, which was named after him.

St. John's-road connected with Newlands Park at that period, a level crossing having existed there before the railway company substituted a footbridge. Although the increasing traffic on the railway rendered the continuance of this crossing impossible, it must have been very convenient for drivers of vehicles; to-day it is necessary to make a very circuitous journey in order to reach the opposite side of the track.

#### **PORCUPINE STILE.**

From Alexandra Cottages to Sydenham was land farmed by Mr. Langland. It was at the end of these cottages that a footpath led out to Kent House Farm, approached by a stile which bore the intriguing name of Porcupine Stile. This title marked an interesting link with the past, for it was here that the Porcupine Inn stood before being pulled down for the erection of the cottages.

Maple-road was built on at the west side, and looked out over fields which Mr. Downer and Mr. Wreen used for grazing cows. It was, however, already sectioned into roads which were eventually to become Blenheim-road and those other thoroughfares which connect Maple-road with Croydon-road.

St. Hugh's-road, the site of the old Anerley Tea Gardens, was in the process of being erected, but for the most part Penge was already well established with the houses which we see to-day.

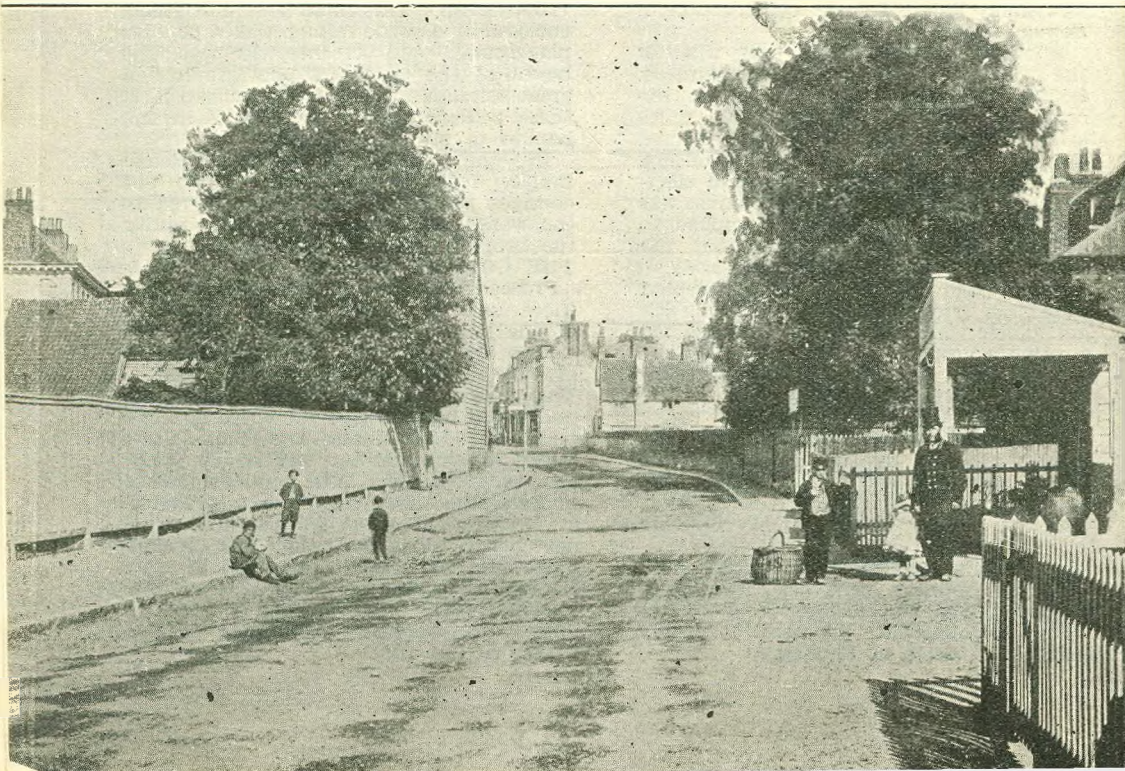
## **THE PENGE POETIC POTATO SALESMAN**

No record of the district of sixty years ago would be complete without a reference to Mr. Joseph Gwyer, the Penge Poetic Potato Salesman. For many years this enterprising gentleman not only sold potatoes from Ivy Cottage, Hawthorn-grove, but he poured out volumes of poems, published an almanack, an autobiography, a review of the past, a survey of the district and sundry dissertations upon topical subjects.

Gwyer's poems are exceedingly amusing. He employed a free and easy doggerel style with a fine disregard for scansion and an amazing license in rhyme, and his spelling was not too good. But there was a great deal of sincerity behind it all, nevertheless.

Scarcely an event of national importance could pass without its receiving due notice from the Penge poet, his Muse covering births, deaths and marriages of the nobility to stories of heroism and tragedy, and occasionally of little events in which he was himself a prominent figure.

To every purchaser of one of his books, Gwyer gave a sack of potatoes!





# SIXTY YEARS OF SPORT

## SWIMMERS' TREK TO NORWOOD

Since the first number of the "Beckenham Journal" was printed sixty years ago, Beckenham has become one of the most important sporting centres in the country. In 1876 there was little organised sport in this district and summer and winter pastimes were in their infancy. Comparatively little space was devoted to sport, but as its various branches have been popularised, more and more prominence has been given to it until to-day it is regarded as being one of the most important features of a newspaper.

Sixty years ago the Beckenham Cricket Club was then in its tenth year and was well established at its delightful ground in Foxgrove-road. Among the clubs which visited Beckenham in those days will be recalled Blackheath School, Aldershot Division, Civil Service, Incogniti, Bexley, Upper Tooting, Mitcham, Buckhurst, R.M.A., Ravenscourt Park, Reigate Hill, West Wickham, Harrow Blues and St. John's Club.

Besides the Beckenham Cricket Club, there was but one other organisation devoted to the sport—Beckenham United. This club played on the Rector's Glebe which adjoined Green-lane, now known as Oakwood-avenue. Occasional matches were played by the Beckenham Police on what is now known as Hospital Meadow, and the youth of the village used to try out its skill on the Fairfield and on meadowland in Hayne-road. Later, activities were transferred to Cedars-road.

### THE LOCAL ASCOT.

One of the features of the summer season was the athletic meeting run by the Beckenham Cricket Club. Quite a large entry was received each year both from club members and in the open events from the various athletic clubs around London. It appears that one of the most popular events was the "penny-farthing" bicycle race. The meeting was regarded as a kind of local Ascot and in place of the rows and rows of cars which appear to-day on important functions on the ground, there used to stand the carriages and pairs.

### "TURBANS WILL BE WORN."

Mention of the bicycle race brings to mind that there existed a flourishing club known as the Crystal Palace District Cycle Club and runs were made on Saturday afternoons from the Robin Hood, Penge Police Station and Anerley Station. In a club fixture list of 1876 there appeared this note: "Members are reminded that turbans will be worn in lieu of straw hats during the winter months." Beckenham would seem to have formed a cycle club of its own the following year.

### SWIMMING IN THE LAKE.

The only facility offered to swimmers was the Norwood lake. This did not stop the villagers from taking their dip in ponds and lakes when no-one was looking. One of the ponds for surreptitious swims was situated on private land at Eden Park.

It was noted for its clarity and there are possibly still one or two old Beckenham villagers left who could tell stories of their efforts to acquire the art of swimming, in the course of which there were several narrow escapes from drowning.

During the winter months there was but little football. There was one club in existence in 1876 bearing the name of the village and judging by reports published in the "Journal" of that year it was rugby that was played. In a report of a match played against the Hermit F.C. it is recorded that "Beckenham, who played one man short, won by one try against two rouges." This club had among its members some very good players and it is said that one of them was so strong that he had been known to pull six players along with him after he had been tackled.

Bromley-road Schools, known then as the Beckenham National Schools, were permitted to play football in the Bevington Meadow, now Manor-road. The senior boys of the two upper forms had the privilege of selecting teams and playing two or three times a week. This was considered to be a great advance and it owed much to the interest taken in the welfare of the boys by the Rev. William Cator.

### A PHENOMENAL GROWTH.

The years between 1876 have witnessed an almost phenomenal growth in sport. As Beckenham has increased in population so the sporting activities have grown. It was during the late 'eighties and the beginning of 1900 that there was an interesting expansion.

The Cricket Club was, of course, still flourishing and in 1886 the first Beckenham Lawn Tennis Tournament was held. Its story is a romantic one and as its history has already been penned it is a well known one. The first holder of the Men's Singles Championship of Kent in 1886 was H. Chipp. It appears that there was no lady champion until two years later when it was won by Miss Jacks. Since then the tournament has progressed until it became recognised as a dress rehearsal to the national championship meeting at Wimbledon.

### PAST ATTRACTIONS.

As ages and customs have changed some of the old attractions have passed. For instance, during the summer there used to be the annual cricket match between gar-

deners and coachmen, when the chief consideration seemed to be enjoyment and the science of cricket was at a discount. Then the Baker family used to play a Beckenham eleven and the police. Another interesting fixture of more recent years was the Beckenham Hospital Cricket Match, when a Beckenham and District XVIII used to play Mr. J. L. Bryan's team. In the match played in September, 1926, players were selected from A. P. F. Chapman, C. S. Marriot, G. J. Bryan, Ashdown, Beslee, Freeman, Hardinge, Hubble, Seymour and Wright. Polo, too, was played at Eden Park where the Nestanglo Club now is.

In the days before the war, Beckenham used to be the scene of county cricket matches and it is encouraging to learn that there is every possibility that Kent will be playing here again in the near future. Among the famous players who have visited Beckenham many will still doubtless remember the grand old gentleman of the game—W. G. Grace.

The Cyphers is another of the older cricket clubs which has sprung into the forefront since it was formed in 1903 from the old Brixton Amateurs and to-day it is regarded as one of the finest clubs in the county. One of the earliest games played on the present ground was captained by the late W. G. Grace and on many other occasions he played there. Since its inception the club has entertained many famous cricketers—Archie Maclaren, the Ashton brothers, Arthur Day, Ernest Beldam, H. E. Enthoven, C. T. A. Wilkinson (now a member of the Beckenham C.C.), and Johnny Douglas.

Cricket is the summer game and so vast has been the increase in the number of clubs in Beckenham that it would be possible to fill two pages with nothing but cricket.

## SECOND TO NONE.

At swimming, Beckenham occupies a place second to none in the county. The Beckenham Swimming Club was apparently founded about 1893 and the club used the baths at South Norwood as its headquarters. In those early days there was a strong agitation for a baths establishment in Beckenham, and in 1901, the swimming club held its first annual gala in the new baths. With the opening of them there sprang up another club known as the Beckenham Baths Club, which was disbanded after several years' existence.

The Beckenham Ladies' Club followed at a later date, first as a section of the men's club, and later as a separate entity. Popular figures at the baths then were Mr. Raymond Brown, Mr. Francis Hooper, Mr. J. A. Bennett and Mr. H. R. Austin, the then Baths superintendent. Mr. Austin worked hard for the swimmers and it was largely due to his efforts that the Elementary Schools Swimming Association became such an important organisation. At a meeting of the local association in the earlier days it was stated that 200 children had received swimming instruction and 53

had gained certificates.

## SOCCER AND RUGBY.

Soccer and Rugby seem to have had an up and down career. The Club that was in existence when the "Journal" was first published disappeared and an Association Football Club came into being, when clubs such as the Old Brightonians', Old Westminster, Guy's Hospital and Hampstead, were played.

In 1894 a new Beckenham Rugby Club was formed and in 1900 a meeting was held to see whether it would be possible to continue the club. A decision was made in favour of its continuance. Later it disbanded and in 1924 another club was formed and to-day the Beckenham R.F.C. fields five fifteens.

During the last forty years numerous soccer clubs have been formed, some have been disbanded, but others remain. The older footballers of the district will undoubtedly recall clubs such as Beckenham Rovers, Beckenham United, Beckenham Swallows, Beckenham Swifts, Clock House, Ferndale and Glendale. Clock House continued until 1923 when it disbanded and the present Beckenham Town was formed as a result and an early entry into the London League was made. Beckenham still appears in the London League Hand Book as winners of the "Fulham" Cup in 1927-28.

Of the early days of football many tales could be told. Little respect was shown for the referee on occasions and stories are still told of how in the days of the old Clock House F.C., the referee often incurred the wrath of the spectators and players who showed their displeasure by pelting him with mud or throwing him in the river.

## THE BECKENHAM LEAGUE.

Since its inception in 1912, the Beckenham and District League has had some extremely flourishing periods and it has had some very lean ones as well. In the year of its foundation there was a membership of 20 clubs; in 1920 this had increased to 27; and in 1923 the League had a membership of 36 with two sections in the third division. The present number is 27.

## IMPORTANT HOCKEY MATCHES.

Hockey first found a place in Beckenham sport in September, 1900, and the club had not been long in existence before a county match was played here. Hockey has grown a great deal since then and Beckenham is looked on as one of the big powers in hockey to-day.

In the last sixty years there has been a great change in the outlook on sport. It is now regarded as important to one's physical well-being, and sport is encouraged by educational authorities as an essential towards building an A1 nation.

Much of the meadow-land has disappeared, but Beckenham must regard itself as fortunate in the matter of playing fields, for there are not many towns where the residents have such facilities for carrying on their favourite pastimes.





## HOUNDS IN BECKENHAM

The above photograph, which is reproduced by courtesy of the management of The Hotel, Beckenham, shows an unusual incident for Beckenham in the early years of the present century. We have been unable to trace the exact date at which this photograph was taken; perhaps a reader can supply the information.

An earlier occasion when hounds appeared in Beckenham was a matter of comment. An extract from the "Journal" of March, 1897, reads:

### A RUN WITH THE HOUNDS.

On Saturday there was what may be called an extraordinary sight for Beckenham—a meet of the Collingdale Drag-hounds at the Railway Hotel, the arrangement having been made by Mr. S. F. Hammond Thorn, M.R.C.V.S., the new proprietor of the establishment. A special train brought horses and hounds to Beckenham Junction and a finer lot of hunters are seldom seen together. The company included a number of well-known sporting gentlemen, some of whom drove down from town by coach. A luncheon was provided at the Hotel by Mr. Thorn, during which the healths of the host and the visitors were drunk, and afterwards the hounds and huntsmen were photographed on the lawn at the rear of the premises. A start was made about two o'clock, and there was a large gathering of spectators. The scent was laid in the vicinity of Grove

Park by the kind permission of Sir Samuel Scott, and Messrs. Dutton Brown, Tremlett, Rider Wood, and Upton. There was a splendid run for those who owned the hounds, and those who went in vehicles and who consequently were compelled to keep to the road, also had a good view. It was, however, a capital outing for all, and although there were one or two spills, no one was seriously hurt. It is to be hoped that this is but a prelude to many similar treats. After the hounds returned to Beckenham one of them strayed on the railway and was killed by a train near Clock House.

## "SMALL ADS," 1876.

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# WEST WICKHAM VILLAGE

## PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF OLD INHABITANT

When the "Journal" was founded, West Wickham was in reality a village "down in Kent." There was no railway service. People who wished to travel by train had the option of going to Beckenham Junction, Bromley South, Penge or East Croydon.

The first train ran into West Wickham Station on Whit Monday, 1882, and some old Wickhamites treasure photographs of that historic occasion. One of these photographs may be seen in the bar of the Railway Hotel which was opened on the day that the first train came in. The late Sir Henry Lennard, of Wickham Court, was one of the celebrities present.

Mr. William Bennett, of 122, Hawes-lane, West Wickham, has a vivid recollection of that Bank Holiday. Mr. Bennett was Wickham's first Town Postman. There were other postmen before him, but he was the first of the Established, or Civil Servant class. He was born in Beckenham and is two years older than his brother, Mr. J. A. Bennett, the Kent County Councillor.

Mr. William Bennett paid his first visit to West Wickham in 1869.

"You ought to have seen Wickham then, boy," he told a "Beckenham Journal" representative who chatted with him on his allotment at Hawes Down.

### BISMARCK RUMOUR.

"I remember well when the old 'Journal' was started," he continued. "Beckenham was then a village. Wickham at that time had no street lamps nor for years after. Then they got eleven. It must have been about that time that Bismarck was supposed to have paid a visit to the late Mr. Mellin at West Wickham. There was a lot of talk about it and they say that the coachman who drove the Man of Iron to Wickham in a cab with drawn curtains still lives at Bromley. Anyway, I didn't see Count Bismarck although I was on the spot and honestly I don't think he ever did come to Wickham. The late Mr. Mellin was a native of Heligoland and of course he was well in with all the big people in his own country. He built a wonderful place in Wickham and there were all sorts of stories current about the tower, as well as the cellars.

"One of my earliest recollections of Wickham is the big fire at Hawes Farm not far from the site of the Hawes Down School of to-day. It was the largest fire that Wickham ever had and in my opinion was bigger than the one in Park-road, Beckenham, down on the left past Minshull House. Anyway, the fire at Hawes Farm lasted so long that it was a standing joke among us lads at Beckenham. We used to run out to Wickham to do some pumping so that the regular firemen could have a rest. It was a real farm fire, but not quite in the same category as the one at Ham Farm, in Beckenham. That fire

was on a Sunday morning. The firemen were glad to see us boys there. We drove the pigs and chickens out of the danger zone for them, but as fast as we drove them out, back they went again. Meanwhile, other chickens and pigs were being roasted to death in the flames, but the live birds and porkers didn't seem to notice that.

### "THE LEATHER BOTTEL."

"They were exciting times for us lads when they were making the Branch Line to Hayes. I used to be out Elmers End way a good deal then and it was an experience for us to watch the navvies. Mr. Wall, the sub-postmaster at Elmers End, didn't mind. He ran a grocery shop as well and he had all the navvies' trade. They lived on fat bacon and screws of twist tobacco. Of course, they were also partial to liquid refreshment and they made the "Leather Bottel" at number 6, Wickham Green, their headquarters. The license of that old tavern was transferred to the Railway Hotel in 1882. Some people say that Dickens once called there. The sign of the old 'pub' remained for years after it closed and then the sign disappeared. No one knows where it went to. One gentleman, I know, advertised for it but the sign never came back. I didn't know the 'Leather Bottel' as a customer, but I do know that it was a well-known house of call, especially on Sundays. People used to call there and then run across the Goodhart estate to the "Dust Hole" at Hayes for another one. The old 'Dust Hole' like the 'Leather Bottel' has long since closed its doors and I am told that its site is now the centre of a new, wide road near Hayes Post Office."

When Mr. Bennett took on the job of postman at Wickham there was no regular system of drainage and often he had to tramp through swamp land on his rounds. Small wonder that in due course he became one of the foremost agitators for a sewer. His "delivery" included Wickham Court and farm and Coney Hall.

"There was only one house in Coney Hall then—the farm," explained Mr. Bennett.



**CRICKET STORIES.**

Always a staunch supporter of sport, Mr. Bennett told a story of the Wickham Cricket Club's early days.

"At that time, the club's principal supporter was Mr. Edwards, of The Nest, down by the Pond. If you don't know where The Nest is let me tell you that it is the wooden house up The Alders. At that time it was often called 'the first house in Kent,' as in fact it is. If you go down there you will see what I mean. When the Lord Mayor of London brought the Charter to Beckenham a year ago he was received on the Borough boundary—outside The Nest. But to go back to Mr. Edwards and the cricket club. Mr. Edwards, as I say, was the club's chief supporter and he was also a Radical. The cricket club was then known as the Village Club, and one season they played the Gentlemen's Club, of Wickham. Well, they defeated the Gentlemen's Club and they were never invited to play again. The Gentlemen's Club used to be down at the back of Bird's Place."

Sixty years ago Wickham's old Stock's Tree occupied most of the narrow High-street.

**MAFEKING NIGHT.**

"It nearly touched the Swan," said Mr. Bennett. "The nippers used to have wonderful games round there. It was always said that the stocks were in a stable at the Swan, but to be truthful no one knows what became of them. You should have seen the Swan at the time of the first Jubilee! Talk of illumination! There were only lanterns in those days, but we put up a good show. Every cottage on Wickham Green had a golden crown over the doorway. But Mafeking night beat it all. You ought to have been there, boy. I was in it. We had a procession. We raked out a bloke who could play a trumpet and we sang 'The Road to Mandalay' and 'Soldiers of the Queen' from one end of Wickham to the other. We went to Wickham Court, Wood Lodge and Hawes Down and we finished up outside the Swan at three o'clock in the morning. I was on duty at five and I didn't feel like it. I well remember the reception Mr. Russell gave the boys at Wood Lodge; well it was their own fault if some of them had thick heads next day."

Mr. Bennett had a seat on the board of the managers of Wickham Church School, but that is coming to later times. It was he who moved the resolution to the effect that the national school could not carry on any longer and calling on the Kent County Council to take over.

He has a fund of stories of the Rev. Bertie Roberts who was Rector of Wickham for forty years.

"Mr. Bertie Roberts never had a farthing for himself out of his stipend," declared Mr. Bennett. "He spent all on others. When I came to Wickham as postman he asked me to keep him informed of any cases of distress that I came across. And there were some cases even

then. I always told the Rector and down he would go next day to help them. He never told you what he had done."

Mr. Bennett remembers Dr. W. H. Blake coming to Wickham. Dr. Blake, he recalls, was in partnership with Dr. Wells, of Beckenham. Dr. Wells was the parish doctor, his predecessor being a Dr. Pickett.

**WATER FROM THE STREAM.**

Mr. Bennett was one of the first choristers at Elmers End Church. His father used to be organist there "when it was the little iron hut up towards the brewery on the left hand side of the road."

There was no water supply in Wickham then.

"All the way up Elmers End-road people had to drink out of that old stream by the Rising Sun. They used to take pails and cart the water home. What a change from to-day, boy!"

And then Mr. Bennett pointed across the road to the civilian patrol who had just taken up his position outside Hawes Down School with his board and notice to motorists, "Stop! Children coming. Beckenham Borough Council."

Mr. Bennett treasures many photographs of old Wickham, most of them taken by himself.

Mrs. Plaistow, wife of Mr. Dick Plaistow, of The Thatched Cottage, Corkscrew Hill, West Wickham, was born in the parish and has lived in West Wickham all her life. Mr. Dick Plaistow used to be gardener to Mr. James Baker, late of Wood Lodge, West Wickham, and now of Park Langley.

Mrs. Markham, of 39, Kent-road, West Wickham, is another resident of more than sixty years' standing.

**EXTRACTS FROM SOME  
EARLY LEADERS**

"We do not expect to escape criticism or censure, and shall not, as a rule, occupy time in replying to such. In whatever remarks we have to make, as well as in the communications we insert, we shall be careful to exclude all personalities and especially the worst kind of them—that of imputing improper motives to others.

"Elections at this period of the year can never secure the suffrages of the larger number of the ratepayers, and it is most important that the first Board as it will have to enter upon grave business, should be composed of good and practical men. . . . We believe that there is on this subject only one feeling, and that is to do the best in the interests of the parish, and we hope that no party consideration will bias the election."

"In this number will be found a report of the proceedings of a vestry called to appoint churchwardens. . . . Never has it been our lot to witness a meeting where party feeling ran higher or at which the proceedings were of such an unseemly description as characterised this meeting."

# EVERYTHING NEW

## SINCE THE "JOURNAL" STARTED

It was after the "Journal" started that interest in local life quickened and the desire for more organised civic life developed. With the growth of the community came new organisations, the increase of municipal needs and the building up of the public services which form such an important feature of modern Beckenham.

Beckenham itself is a new Borough, the youngest in Kent, but the largest. The idea of a Borough dates back many years and covers a period in which there was both earnest advocacy and decided opposition, as there is on almost every big public question. Incorporation came last year and was celebrated with a public demonstration which surprised even Beckenham itself in its completeness. The "Journal" dealt adequately with the occasion with an issue which was the biggest and finest of its kind ever issued in the district.

### THE TOWN HALL.

The fine premises form the consummation of many years of effort. When the old Urban District Council started, their offices in Bromley-road were more than adequate for the needs of the local government of the district. But as years went on and as staffs grew they became overcrowded. By cutting and contriving, altering and adding, more employees were housed. As time went on first one building and then another outside had to be rented to accommodate the staffs of the various departments. The evil hour of going to the expense of new, adequate buildings was put off again and again, and even when it became almost impossible to continue under the hampered conditions, economy again stepped in and negated a proposal to get on with the work. And then came a fortunate intervention when the government was giving grants for new buildings to aid employment. Beckenham had a chance to get its Town Hall for what was, comparatively, a trifling cost to itself, and the spirit of economy being more than satisfied, Beckenham had its Town Hall, which was opened with all due ceremony in October, 1932, by the Prince George, now the Duke of Kent.

### THE BATHS.

When the baths were erected just over thirty years ago they were regarded as the last word in that sort of thing. They have since provided the means of instruction and pleasure to many thousands of Beckenham's residents. As we write the commencement is being made of operations to make them up-to-date, by enlargement and improvement.

### THE TECHNICAL INSTITUTE.

These buildings were erected over thirty years ago to meet what was regarded as a want in the education of that day. As time went on they were altered from their

original purpose and became the first County School for Boys and for that purpose have been replaced by a much larger and finer building just over the border of Beckenham. For a long time there has been a dispute between the local authority and the Kent County Education Authority as to their tenancy, but after several years it is believed that a solution of the difficulty, satisfactory to both sides, has been arrived at and that the buildings will provide a valuable means of increasing the secondary education facilities of the neighbourhood.

### RECREATION GROUNDS.

The commencement of Beckenham's great scheme of Parks and Recreation Grounds was made after the "Journal" started. It began with the Recreation Ground in Croydon-road, the Alexandra Recreation Ground, and then the Churchfields Recreation Ground. Since then there have been added Kelsey Park, recently enlarged again, Cator Park, Crease Park, Stanhope Grove Playing Field, the Elgood Playing Field, and about 133 acres in different parts of West Wickham, supplementing the Blake Recreation Ground and the McAndrew Playing Fields of twelve acres, which existed at the time when West Wickham joined in with Beckenham.

### ELECTRICITY UNDERTAKING.

The Electricity Undertaking was first run by a company to whom the Council leased the rights of electricity supply. They ultimately took it over themselves and worked it and the result has been one of the most successfully run municipal enterprises of the kind in the country, with a succession of lower and lower charges.

### FIRE BRIGADE.

Beckenham's present Fire Brigade, a highly trained and well equipped organisation, is the successor of what was a very primitive arrangement for dealing with fires. It has the latest apparatus designed to deal with any known emergency and its only want is a really up-to-date fire station. Of late years an ambulance section has been added and the work carried out by that department is very extensive.

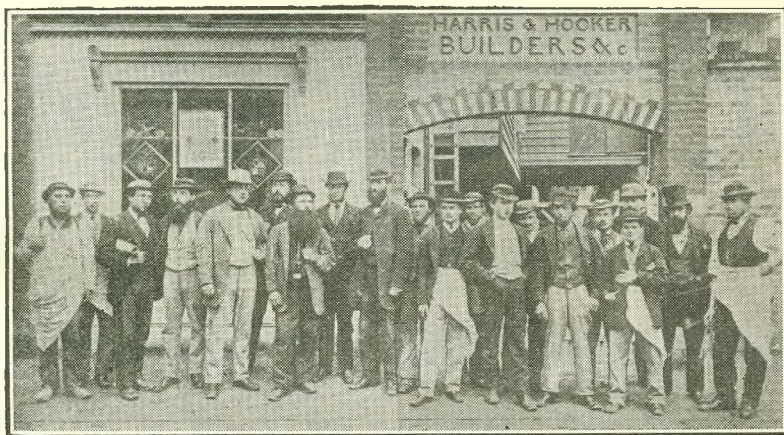
### REFUSE DESTRUCTOR.

Very early in Beckenham's municipal development it wisely set up a very efficient system of dust destruction by which all refuse was consumed by fire with the added advantage that the heat so gener-



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ated was able to aid the steam plant at the electricity works adjoining. Quite recently, to meet the increased demands of a bigger population and a larger district, new plant of still greater efficiency has been erected, ensuring for Beckenham thoroughness in this department of public services for many years to come.

## HIGHWAYS DEPOT.

In Churchfields-road adjoining the Electricity Works, there is a Highways Depot of remarkable completeness facilitating in a very thorough manner the vast work necessary on the Beckenham highways. There is accommodation for the great fleet of motor vehicles the Council has to employ and there are efficient workshops connected with the various departments of this useful auxiliary to the public services.

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.

The School Board was in existence when the "Journal" first saw the light but its work was very small indeed compared with what is now undertaken by the Education Committee. Vast new schools on modern lines have been built in various parts of the district to see that the young have adequate means of education near their homes. The programme for the immediate future is still a large one.

## MATERNITY HOME.

Established in 1920, the Maternity Home, an institution run jointly by Beckenham and Penge, has so thoroughly fulfilled a

want that we are on the eve of seeing a still larger building specially erected to cover the purposes for which the building in Croydon-road was adapted.

## HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

This is one of the most important departments of the work of the local authority and is one which has seen tremendous development. It can be said of it that it looks after the health of the individual from the cradle to the grave, but it goes further than that, for its interest in the healthy life of the child starts even before birth. The work done amongst the children is entirely of more recent years and has proved to be one of the biggest things the local authority has carried out in the interests of the district.

## HOUSES, SHOPS AND ROADS.

The great majority of the houses, shops and roads in Beckenham have come into existence since the "Journal" was first issued. Houses by the thousand, shops by the hundred, and dozens of roads, have been put into being. Large open fields, beautifully wooded estates, have gradually disappeared, and now houses exist everywhere. Fortunately the development has taken place at a time when town planning was able to exercise a little control. In place of awkward masses, ill designed roads and incongruous mixtures, everything is well ordered and the average resident welcomes the visitor with pleasure and shows his guest round with pride in the appearance of his place of residence.

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