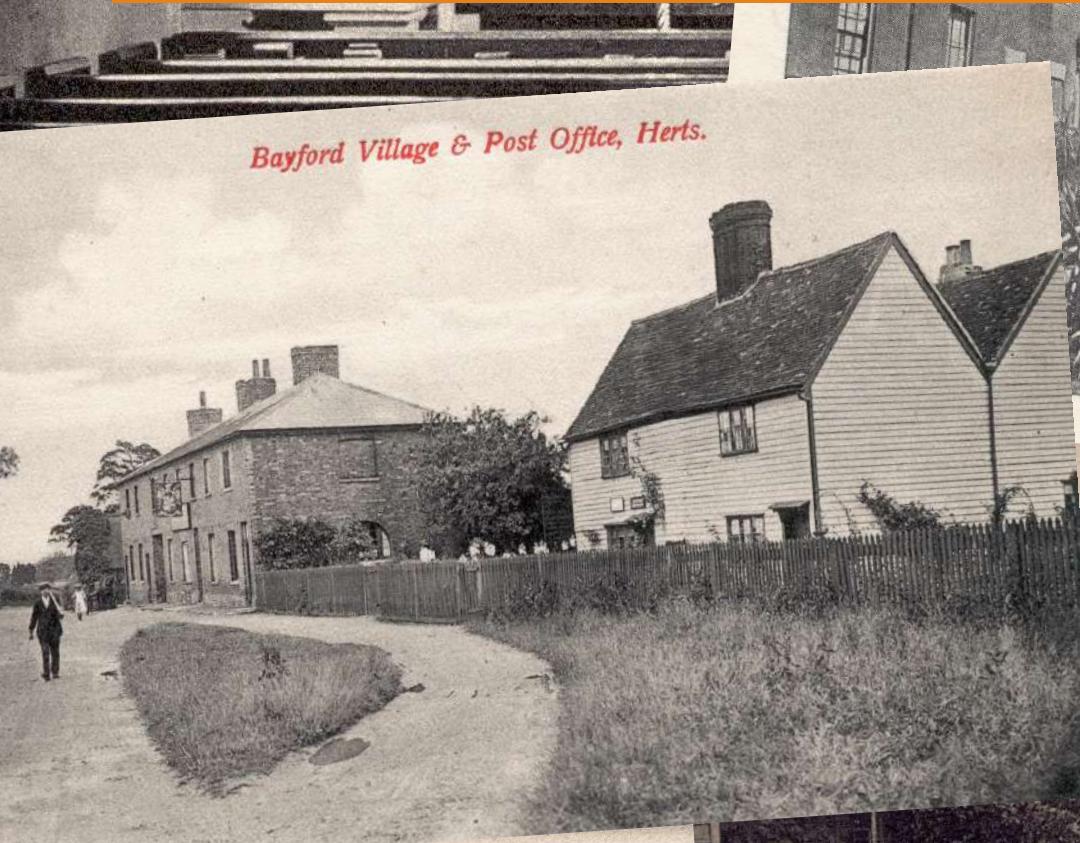





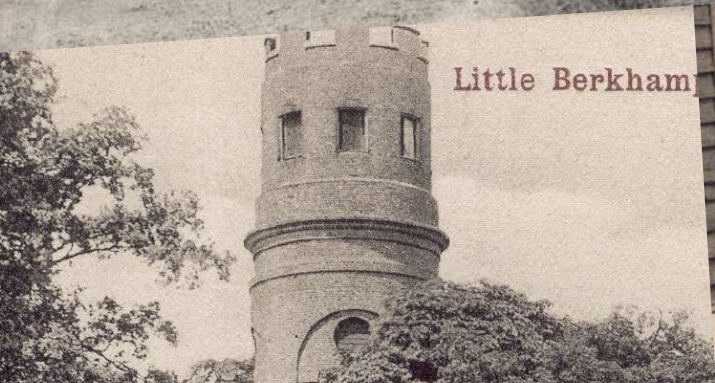
# BAYFORD & LITTLE BERKHAMSTED




*Bayford Village & Post Office, Herts.*



*Bayfordbury, Hertford.*




*Little Berkhamstead, near Hertford*



*Little Berkhamstead, near Hertford*

A HERTFORD MUSEUM PUBLICATION



*Little Berkhamstead. (Looking down the road)*





"THE FIVE HORSE SHOES," LITTLE BERKHAMPTON HERTS.  
PROPRIETOR - C. C. R. RUTHVEN.

## A Hertford Museum Publication

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## A MATTER OF MANORS

Bayford and Little Berkhamsted Manor Houses predate some of their more extravagant and well known neighbours. The concept of the Manor House is well associated with village life across Hertfordshire, however, in Little Berkhamsted in particular, the identification of the Manor House has been less than straightforward, with several contenders.



The Hales at the Old Manor, Little Berkhamsted

By 1880, the Manor House, also known as Manor Farm, had been sold to John H. Johnson, a building contractor from London. Johnson presumably found that the old house did not have the modern amenities he required and built a new Manor House on two fields named Blue Ball and Pondfield, further up Robins Nest Hill towards Stockings Lane. The Old Manor continued to be rented out to a series of tenants, several of whom were responsible for managing the farm and one enterprising couple, the Hales, who offered room and board for cycling holidays.

Johnson lived at the New Manor until around 1900, by which time it was simply referred to as the Manor House. The house was then occupied by the Hanbury family and, in the early 1920s, by circus owner Bertram Mills, and it became a familiar sight to see the circus horses being put through their paces on the ground behind the rectory.



The new Manor House, Little Berkhamsted  
HETFM2008.46.2.22



He was followed by Joseph Rochford and his family, and daughter Betty bred and exported Anglo-Nubian goats from the grounds.



Betty Rochford's goats at the Manor House  
HETFM2008.46.2.24



Ponfield, 1915

Further up Robins Nest Hill, past Stockings Lane is a large imposing 19<sup>th</sup> century house, now known as Culverwood. The house was previously known as Ponfield, Pondfield, Ponsfield House and

Pondfield End. From 1883, it was occupied by Percival Bosanquet, High Sherriff of Hertfordshire in 1896. Bosanquet took on the role of village squire, employing many on the 150 acres of farmland that came with the house and building the village hall in 1888. The name Culverwood was taken from the nearby woodland and in Bosanquet's time referred to Culverwood Lodge, also listed in the census and directories as Culver House, Little Culverwood and Culver Road.

The Manor House in Bayford was originally built as a late medieval hall house and the current house dates from 1580. It was constructed by John

Knighton who was gifted the Manor of Bayford in 1544 by

Henry VIII, and it was known as Bayford Place by 1613. William Baker lived there from 1758-1762 whilst Bayfordbury was being constructed, after which it was occupied by members of his family until 1838. Additions were made over the years including the upper hall and porch, designed by the celebrated architect Edward Lutyens.



Manor House, Bayford  
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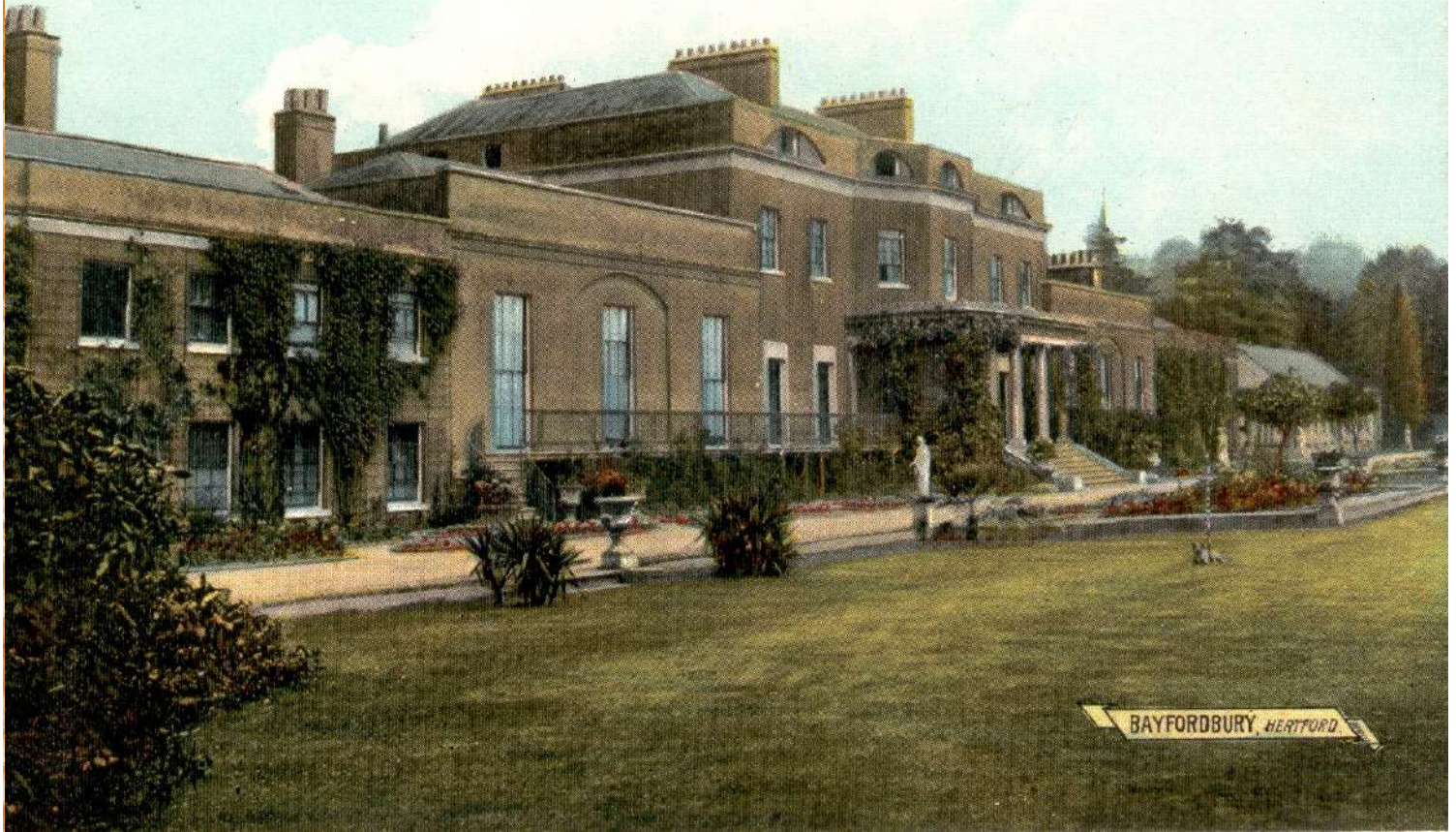


Percival Bosanquet  
HETFM:6035.148



# THE BAKERS OF BAYFORDBURY

A tinted postcard depicting Bayfordbury circa 1910  
HETFM2831.173



**Sir William Baker bought the Bayfordbury estate in 1757 for twenty-one thousand pounds, the equivalent of nearly four million pounds today. The estate included three thousand acres and the Manor House.**

**Sir William built a new home on the estate, set away from the village, which was completed in 1762, originally named Bayford House, the house soon become known by the name Bayfordbury.**

Sir William was the son of a successful draper and was an astute merchant in his own right. He was a director of the East India Trading Company and governor of the Hudson Bay Company. His trading links took him to South Carolina where he owned rice plantations.

His wealth was so significant that he was able to give the government money in order to pay off the county's debts. In thanks for this George III offered him a baronetcy which he refused, and instead took a knighthood.





The Kit-Cat paintings on display at Bayfordbury circa 1910  
HETFM2831.176

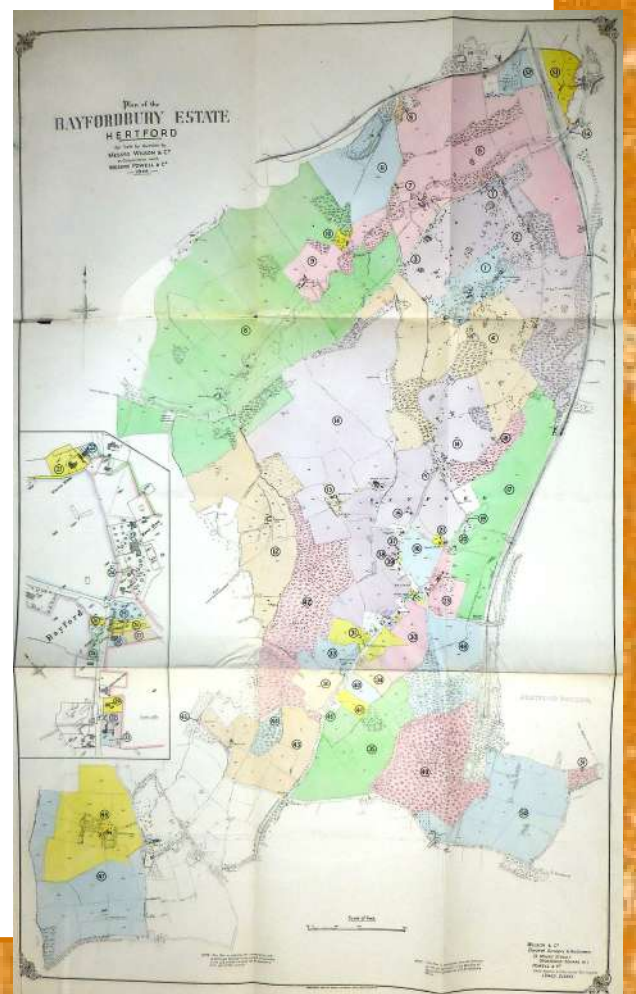
From 1772 Bayfordbury housed treasures associated with Sir William Baker's wife, Mary Tonson. She was the great-niece of the Book Seller and Publisher Jacob Tonson and she inherited the famous Kit-Cat paintings. These were portraits of the members of the Kit-Cat club, who met in a tavern in the city to discuss politics, literature and art. The paintings stayed at Bayfordbury

until the 1940s when the estate was sold. They were acquired by the National Portrait Gallery, where they are still on display today. Another treasure Mary Tonson brought with her to Bayfordbury was an original manuscript of John Milton's Paradise Lost. This copy was sold by Henry William Clinton-Baker to pay the duty after his father's death.

When Henry William Clinton-Baker died in 1935, the estate was passed to his brother Lewis William Clinton-Baker. On his death in 1939 his son was still a minor, so the estate was managed by his widow.

In 1940 the estate was leased to Dr Barnardo's, where it became a home for around forty children. After the war ended the estate was sold. The estate included Bayfordbury, eight country houses, nine farms and Bayford Village, a total of 49 lots. Before the public auction was held the John Innes institution acquired Bayfordbury house, the grounds, the lodge and Home Farm. This saw the next phase of the history of Bayfordbury, as a vital research centre. The public auction was then held on 30<sup>th</sup> May 1945, "*in two sessions commencing at 11am and 2pm,*" and saw the end of the Clinton-Bakers time at Bayfordbury.

A map of the Bayfordbury estate indicating the location of each auction lot  
HETFM3806.945



# BAYFORDBURY OBSERVATIONS

When Sir William Baker bought Bayfordbury he used it as an opportunity to enjoy his love of trees, planting rare trees such as the Lebanon Cedars. Each generation planted their own specimens until Baker's grandson William Robert Baker officially began the Pinetum. In 1903 William Robert Baker's grandson Henry William Clinton-Baker extended it, and continued research into rare conifers.



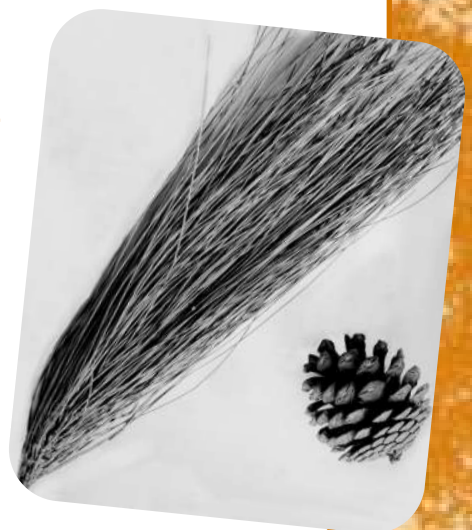
The Lebanon Cedar at Bayfordbury,  
planted by Sir William Baker  
In Illustrations of Conifers by H Clinton-Baker

## John Innes Institution

John Innes was a Scottish property tycoon, who was interested in the growth and preservation of trees. On his death in 1910, he left his estate to the study of the growth of trees and for the improvement of horticulture by experiment and research. Initially based at Merton, the centre was drawn to Bayfordbury after sustaining bomb damage during the Second World War. Bayfordbury was attractive because of the large expanse of land and potential to grow the research centre. After it was purchased in 1945 alterations were made to include homes for members of staff, and to add research greenhouses. The work that took place expanded from a focus on rare conifers to research into plant genetics and cell function.

Henry Clinton-Baker was particularly passionate about horticulture and would send away for conifer specimens from all over the world, compiling lists of illustrations to aid research. He collaborated with the British Museum and Kew Gardens in his research. With this grounding, it was appropriate that a more established research organisation should purchase the estate when it went up for sale.

Pinus Massoniana,  
native to South china  
and Taiwan depicted  
in illustrations of conifers  
by H. Clinton-Baker  
HETFM2008.58.2828





## University of Hertfordshire

In 1967 the John Innes Centre then moved to Norwich and Hertfordshire County Council bought Bayfordbury to extend Hatfield Polytechnic. Bayfordbury Observatory was built and opened in 1970 with one telescope as well as offices and workshops. Throughout the history of the observatory, as technology has developed more equipment was added, which allowed further ground-breaking research to be carried out. In 1992 Hatfield Polytechnic became the University of Hertfordshire after it was awarded university status.

The University of Hertfordshire grounds at Bayfordbury also serve as a field centre for the Life and Medical Sciences department. Students can collect data from grass, woodland and controlled environments to aid with research projects. The research heritage of Bayfordbury continues for future generations.

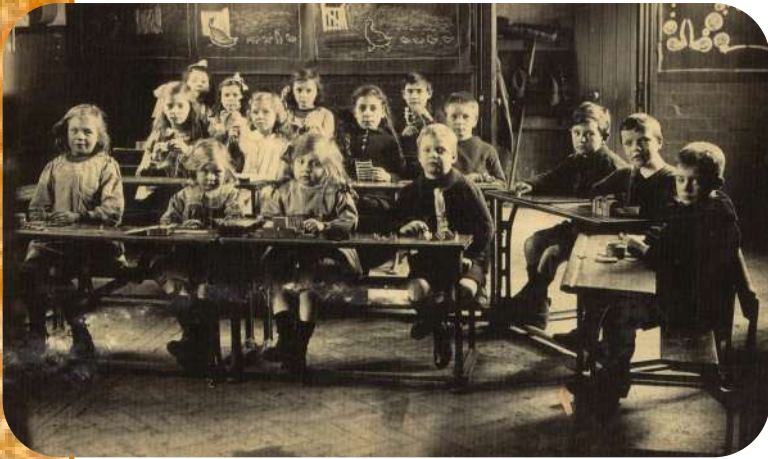


A bird's eye view of Bayford Observatory  
Image courtesy of Bayford Observatory



# A VILLAGE EDUCATION

Historically, a village education has been a very special experience, where students and teachers live in the same community and participate in all aspects of village life. The village schools, however, have always had to weather fluctuating populations. Whilst Bayford school has looked outside the village for its students, Little Berkhamsted sadly succumbed to dwindling numbers.



The Infants Class,  
Little Berkhamsted, circa 1920  
Image courtesy of Marguerite Brasher

*dividing the boys and girls. Ours had a long wooden seat with nine large and small holes in it. The toilet paper was newspaper, if any. These pits used to be emptied once a term."*

Things weren't much different by the time Neil Morris attended the school in 1964: *"It was a pretty daunting school. The windows were really high, very, very old fashioned school... No heating. They had an old coal boiler... and that had a big fence round it... to stop anybody burning themselves. The old caretaker, Sonny Camp, he used to rule with a rod of iron. Outside toilets... and we used to have to walk from the school up to the local village hall for school dinners."* The old school building was no longer suitable and a new modern school was built. The building transfer took place with due ceremony in 1965, as Neil recalls: *"We had a procession up there and we were led up there by one of the senior church people from St. Albans..."*

Mary Barnes began at Bayford School in 1903: *"It had one large hall with one fire to warm it in the winter. It had three rows of forms for each class... I remember if we were late, we had to go up to the Headmaster for the cane in front of the whole school... The toilets were a pit with a wall*



The Upper Class with Mr Noble,  
Little Berkhamsted, circa 1920  
Image courtesy of Marguerite Brasher



*That was a lot more modern, obviously. Indoor toilets, for us, that was a big thing. There was three classrooms, infants, juniors and senior infants... But you also had your own hall and kitchens and a playing field, so everything was contained in that school. The classrooms, yeah. They were big, they were bold, they were bright. The windows were all down low. Lots of light in."*

Bayford School continues to flourish, but with few children still resident in Bayford, the majority of students come from surrounding villages.



Alfred Noble and Little Berkhamsted School Beekeeping Club, 1930s  
Image courtesy of Marguerite Brasher

Little Berkhamsted School closed in 1944. Its last Headmaster, Alfred Noble, took up the reins in 1919. Alfred and his wife Lucy, also a teacher, were progressive in their outlook and introduced a variety of activities to the school curriculum. Under their tutelage the children managed gardening plots, engaged in woodworking and weaving and even sold honey from their own school beehives. Alfred set up a weather station and the children took daily readings which were

reported in the Mercury each week and sent to the Meteorological Office. The school became the recognised local weather station. The Nobles did not neglect the more academic subjects and by the time the school closed its doors it was enjoying a 100% success record for examinations. In 1943, the Hertfordshire Education Committee called time on the school as of the following Spring term as the roll included only 26 children, of whom nine were evacuees. Rather than take a post elsewhere, the Nobles opted for early retirement and stayed on in the village they loved.

Little Berkhamsted School Weather Station, mid 1930s.  
Left to right: Richard Yowles, Leslie Lawman, Ronald Brooks  
Image courtesy of Marguerite Brasher





## COMMUNITY SPIRIT

**Small populations and difficulties in transportation, have historically meant that social life and community events were centred in the village. Both Bayford and Little Berkhamsted have maintained these traditions, though with the changing needs of a less static population, both villages have had to diversify.**

Both villages are fortunate in having a village hall which remains central to their community life. Little Berkhamsted village hall was built in 1888 by Percival Bosanquet who lived at Ponfield (now known as Culverwood) and he continued to maintain it until his death, after which it was taken on by Sir Brodie Henderson. Prior to the First World War it operated as a Working Men's Club and during the Second World War a nissen hut was erected on the recreational ground as more meeting space was required. The village hall has hosted numerous societies, clubs and events and even a cinema club; Helen Mayles attended the youth club there during the 1970s and remembers: *"They had table tennis, they had a tuck shop, sometimes I think they might have done a film as well. It's one of those things... it has to rely on somebody to do it and when that person moves on, it dies out."*



Little Berkhamsted Village Hall, circa 1920  
Image courtesy of Marguerite Brasher



Dance at the Nissen hut, Little Berkhamsted 1940s  
Image courtesy of Ethel Mayles

Bayford village hall has hosted similar activities for young people. Joyce Mentern grew up in the village in the 1950s and remembers: *"We had a youth club, run by the local headmaster, and we had a social club on a Friday evening for adults, and sometimes we'd meet up for a social once a month, and we had a thriving badminton club."*



By the 1960s and 70s, Bayford club was offering a wide array of activities as Neil Morris recalls: *"It was very good... we used to have table tennis in there... a little snooker table... One or two outings used to be arranged. I think we went down to the seaside a couple of times and then we used to get people come in and give talks."* Both villages have relied on residents to organise and deliver a range of events such as fetes and celebrations. Little Berkhamsted residents Jerry O'Reilly and Sandie Ash organised a VE day exhibition and celebration in the village in 1995 and are gearing up to repeat this for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in May this year.



VE Day Exhibition, Little Berkhamsted, 1995  
Image courtesy of Sandie Ash

Bayford is known for its Garden Days, which were started in the 1990s. Four families spearheaded the fundraising project in which visitors were welcomed into the gardens of several of the village's most notable houses. Neville Hudson is the last remaining founding organiser of the biennial event and described how they made it such a success: *"Somebody said to me "Why don't you put bands in the gardens?" Well it's rather nice by the swimming pools... I think it started with a Steel Band in my own garden at Warren House. And then it increased and then we had Barnet Town Band... and Potters Bar... People came at about twelve o' clock, ate a ploughman's lunch and then wandered around and sat out in the gardens listening to the band, moving on to the next one and we close at five, with this huge take of £37,000 the last time."*

The changing population of Bayford has impacted on the event and the organisers have had to work much harder to get homeowners involved: *"There were four main people who ran the village but unfortunately now they've passed on or moved away... and I'm afraid I'm the only person still remaining in the village, of the big houses, as such."* Bayford Gardens Day continues to flourish however, and Neville and the team are looking forward to the next one on June 21<sup>st</sup>: *"It's been a good history and fortunately I've got Stuart and Marionina taking it over this year... so we're starting afresh and it's the next generation, and it's nice to think it can be carried on."*

It makes a lovely afternoon in the countryside and a day to remember.  
BETWEEN HATFIELD & HERTFORD off B158



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[www.bayfordgardensday.co.uk](http://www.bayfordgardensday.co.uk)

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# HOMES BIG AND SMALL

There are homes of all sizes in the villages of Bayford and Little Berkhamsted. When Bayford Village belonged to the Bayfordbury Estate, the homes were created for the different members of staff. Over time as the dynamic of the villages changed, both Bayford and Little Berkhamsted housing developed.

## Cottages

In Little Berkhamsted the former Blacksmith and Post Office are now private residences. A butcher could be found in a cottage that is now part of the village store, and the post office was moved around people's homes for some time.



Cottages in Little Berkhamsted circa 1905  
HETFM2833.851

The Kenyon Cottages in Bayford were built for agricultural workers and as such the rent was subsidised. Mary Barnes' family lived in a cottage supplied to farm workers and she remembers "*We lived in a very Old Thatched Cottage, with 2 up and 3 down. It had a big Squar[sic] Post in the middle of the living room, all down stairs were cement floor. The Back Kitchen had a large Bakers Oven.*"



Bayford Homes circa 1910  
HETFM2831.163

## Social Housing

Many people who had grown up in the village but been unable to find accommodation were able to return through social housing. A small block of council houses was built on Church Road in Little Berkhamsted in the 1920s, in order to house soldiers returning from the First World War.

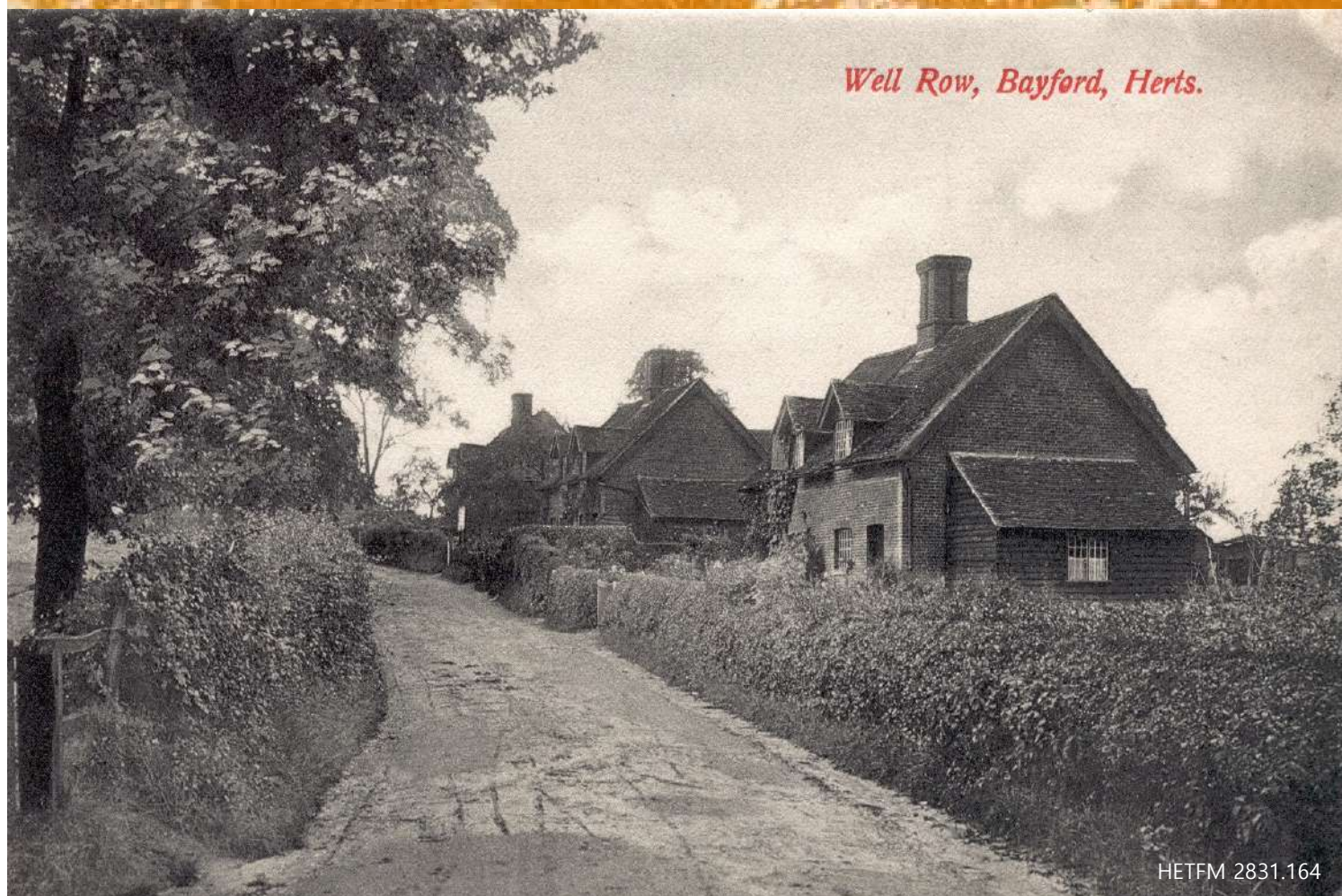


Ethel Mayles remembers *"It had a living room and a front room, a tiny little kitchen, it was six feet by nine, and a little bathroom that was six feet by nine... the toilet door was outside in the garden... they didn't get electricity until the 1940s."* In the 1940s, a set of council houses was built in Bayford overlooking the village pond. These were perfect for young families, and Carole Swain remembers *"As children, there was quite a lot of us actually in Willow Corner and we used to go down to the woods to play, picking wild flowers."*

### **Bayfordbury Sale**

The sale of the Bayfordbury in 1945 meant people with no connection to the estate could now move to Bayford. Mr Haydock bought two fields, which he planned to turn into a smallholding. His daughter Joyce remembers: *"When we first came to Bayford we did have cattle, about six cows... And he did plant some trees, hoping it would be like an orchard."*

Other large properties in the village were sold at the Bayfordbury sale including the Warren, which was described as *'A Delightful Small Country Residence,* and Bayford House which was listed as a *'Fine Old Queen Anne House,'* in the sale brochure.





## ON THE MOVE

Writing in 1949, in his *Anthropology of a London Suburban Village*, Little Berkhamsted Schoolmaster, Alfred Noble, who arrived in the village in 1919, summarised the transport available: *“Mr W. Pallett had a horse and trap for hire to convey persons to the railway station (then Cole Green)... Later on Mr Bob Knowles had a taxi... and this was succeeded by a black bus which he drove on certain days to Hertford for shoppers... Mr Knowles built the garage and conducted the business himself for many years. Finally the London Transport buses began to run regularly from here, via Bayford, Brickendon, to Hertford on two days per week. Now there is a daily service.”*



Knowles garage, Little Berkhamsted  
HETFM2008.46.2.17

*go into Hertford twice a week and once a month to Welwyn Garden City.”*

Helen Mayles also remembers: *“They got it together and then the ladies used to take it in turns to drive the minibus... or else we would have been stuck... It was difficult, if you wanted to go anywhere, you’d have to walk down the hill and catch the bus, which was very dodgy, for a teenager, so you didn’t go too far.”*

Ethel Mayles recalls the difficulty she found in getting about when she moved to Little Berkhamsted in 1958: *“There was hardly any traffic went through, and they had a bus service three times a day, but it didn’t go any time when you needed it. It didn’t start ‘til ten in the morning and the last one was about four at night... You had to have transport, and at the time my husband had a motorbike so it was very cold! (In 1969) they stopped all the buses, so the village got a minibus up, used to*



School master Alfred Noble and family  
on his motorbike and sidecar outside  
Little Berkhamsted School  
Image courtesy of Marguerite Brasher



Most young people relied on foot or bicycle to get about. Neil Morris grew up in Bayford and spent most of his childhood cycling: *"We learnt our cycling proficiency through the youth club... We were always out, never indoors... there was very little traffic so we were on our bikes. So having the cycle proficiency didn't do anything for us. We just had a little red badge on the back with a white triangle to say that we passed!"*



Little Berkhamsted minibus, 1969  
HETFM2008.46

Bayford Station opened in 1924 and has been central in attracting newcomers to the village with its easy access to London. Joyce Mentern's family moved to Bayford in 1953 as her father wanted to have a smallholding and still commute to his job in Islington: *"When we first came to Bayford, we did have... about six cows."* Whilst the station has continued to attract those seeking a balance of city and country lifestyles, some long term residents feel that it has attracted a commuter population who are less involved in village life. The station has also trimmed down since it first opened, as Neil Morris notes: *"We don't have any station master there now or anything like that, the actual ticket office is all gone which is a shame".*



Bayford Railway Station 1961

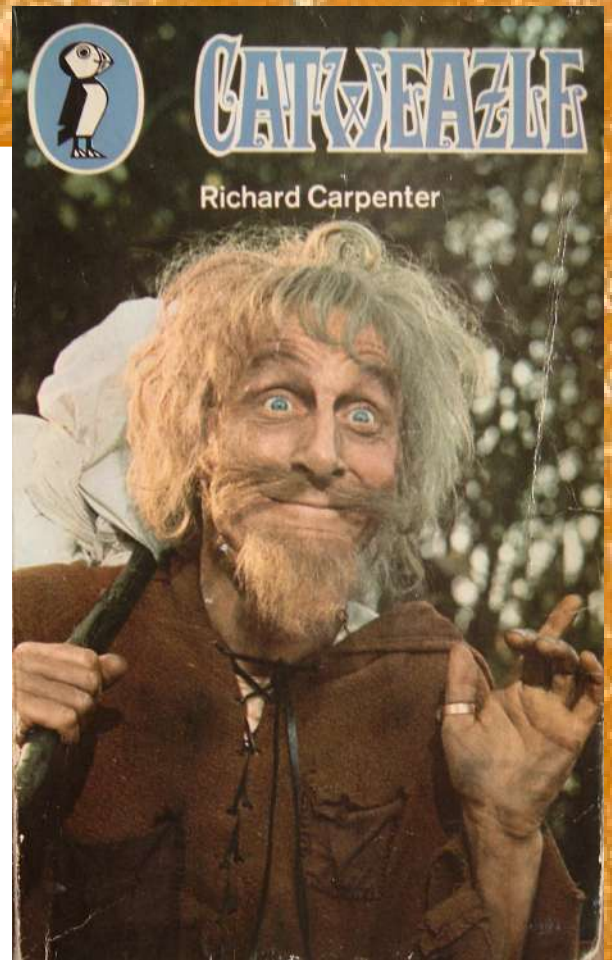


## POP GOES THE CATWEAZLE

Both Bayford and Little Berkhamsted can claim their place in popular culture. Bayford, with its rural setting combined with easy transport links into London, makes it the ideal place for location filming. The nature of Little Berkhamsted lent itself to an escape from celebrity a public figure.

### Television

The children's television show Catweazle filmed its second season in the Bayford area in 1970. Many of the scenes from the show can still be recognised by fans today. In one scene, Catweazle can be seen riding down a hill on a bike, before falling off near the railway tracks. Local viewers can see St Mary's Church at the top of the hill and know the hill to be Bayford Lane.



Catweazle, by Richard Carpenter  
Image courtesy of scorzonera

Bayford is still a draw to people visiting for its connection with the series. Andrew Egg remembers travelling up on the train from Enfield:

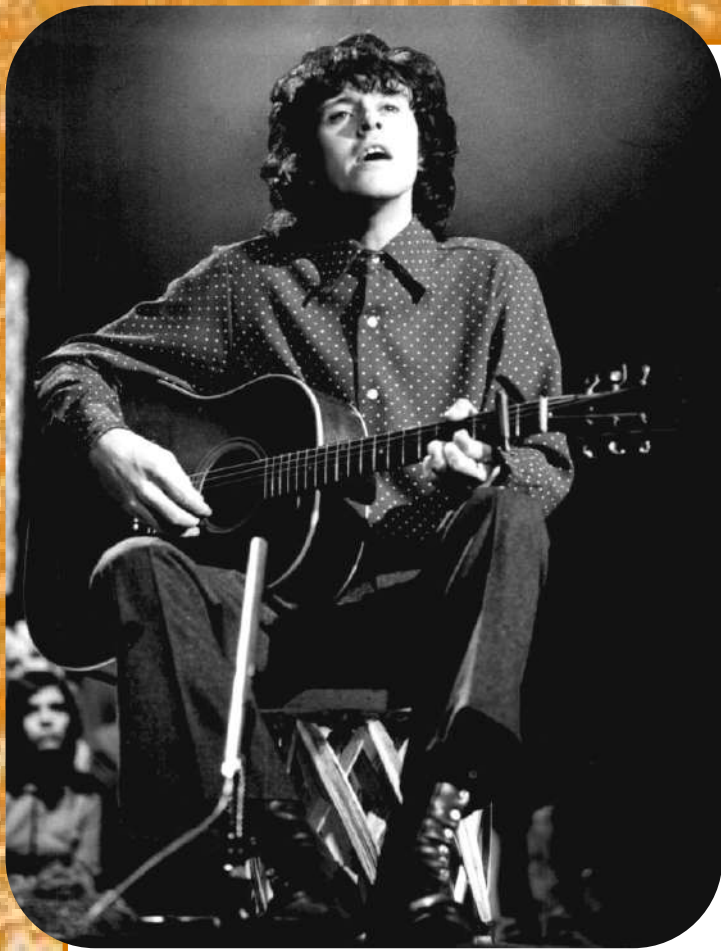
*"We recently recalled a rather long alcoholic lunch at the Bakers Arms pub in Bayford, back in 1985 and when we left for the train station we pretended to be Catweazle & Cedric heading for Duck Halt!"*



Then and Now image, featuring a scene from Catweazle Episode 2 Season 2 'Duck Halt', and how it looks now. Image courtesy of Vince Cox







Donovan performing in 1969

## Music

The pop star Donovan moved to Little Berkhamsted in 1967 when he bought Bucks Ally Cottage just outside of the village for £12,000. In his autobiography he remembers the cottage fondly, Writing: "*Down a winding lane, I passed over a stream that sprang to view the sixteenth century cottage, nestling in a hidden glade, below a dark forest..*" Donovan liked the cottage for its seclusion, and its closeness with nature. He wrote: "*There in the gentle glade, creatures visited the back door and chiff-chaffs chirped their birdsong.*" It was a good source of inspiration for him and he made many of his hit singles while he was living there,

including one of his best-known songs *The Hurdy Gurdy Man*. Donovan left Little Berkhamsted in the early 1970s for Ireland, where he stayed after leaving his music career at its height.

After Donovan moved out of Little Berkhamsted his home was bought by music photographer Allan Ballard. He is well known for capturing musicians like The Police, Marianne Faithfull and Marc Bolan. Ballard's career started at the evening standard, and he spent six months working at American Vogue before his career photographing rock stars took off. Many of his photographs were taken at his home in Little Berkhamsted.

Photograph of Marc Bolan taken by Allan Ballard, while he was living in Little Berkhamsted  
Image courtesy of Val Naylor





## PUBLIC HOUSES

Unlike many villages, Bayford and Little Berkhamsted are fortunate in still having a public house. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, both villages also had several beer houses and for a brief period in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century Little Berkhamsted was also home to the Robins Nest Inn, now a house on Robins Nest Hill.



Former Robins Nest Inn  
HETFM2008.46.2.34

### The Five Horseshoes

The earliest known reference to the pub dates from 1678, although a reference to an alehouse in Little Berkhamsted from 1596 may refer to the Five Horseshoes, and parts of the building date to this period.

The pub has also been referred to as the Three Horseshoes during its history, as Hertfordshire diarist, John Carrington, noted of his visit in November 1802: *"Went to the 3 Horshoos Barkhamstead... 6d in Gin and Water with Cheek the Carpenter their..."*

The pub was run by a series of owners throughout its history but by 1858 it was in the hands of Young's brewery in Hertford.

One enterprising Landlord, John Stratton, who ran the pub from 1878, took advantage of the new cycling craze and promoted the pub to

cycling clubs. The pub hosted clubs from across North London, as well as some notable clubs such as the North Road, London Scottish and the Alma. The pub acted as a commercial centre for the village, hosting business transactions, auctions and meetings, and, during the 1880s, the post office.

Today the pub is part of the Chef and Brewer pub chain and is noted for its popular food menu.



"THE FIVE HORSE SHOES," LITTLE BERKHAMPSTEAD HERTS.  
PROPRIETOR - C. C. R. RUTHVEN.

The Five Horseshoes  
HETFM2833.855



## The Baker Arms

Today the pub occupies four cottages, built around 1800, but it started life as The Griffin in the second cottage from the right. Like the rest of the village, it was owned by the Baker Family, taking their name around the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was leased to McMullens brewery by William Clinton Baker in 1929 for £100 per year and eventually sold to the brewery in 1946. Over the latter part of the twentieth century the pub has grown significantly; the end cottage with the semi circular window was added in 1985 as a saloon bar, the final two cottages were added in 1992 and the carriageway entrance to the rear yard has been incorporated into the building.

From the mid 70s to the mid 90s the Baker Arms was famed for its weekend entertainment, with people travelling from far and wide for its traditional East End Knees Up. Sandra Maniez used to visit every week-

end and describes the atmosphere:

*"You know when you see the old films about the East End of London, and the pubs would be absolutely rammed, standing room only, and you'd have somebody on the piano... and they would sing things like Knees Up*

*Mother Brown and I am the Music Man,*

*and all those sort of pub things, and if you went to the Baker Arms, you got that, exactly that, on a Friday and Saturday night. And if you didn't get there... by half past seven it was standing room only and by 8 o'clock forget it! You just wouldn't get in the premises at all... It was in the saloon bar and there was this little old lady... she looked about a hundred... and she played the piano. There was a bloke that came every now and then and played the accordion, there was quite a few of the older people that could play spoons... and occasionally one of the blokes played the piano and she would then sing, and she would do something like Over the White Cliffs of Dover and sing proper old fashioned World War Two songs."*



The Baker Arms, circa 1900  
HETFM2831.162



## SPORTING VILLAGES

Sport was an important past time for the Villages of Little Berkhamsted and Bayford. For much of the history of the villages, playing cricket or football was an opportunity to socialise, exercise and compete. Sometimes Bayford and Little Berkhamsted would play against each other in village leagues, other times local sport offered an opportunity to earn some extra pocket money.

### Cricket

There are strong links to cricket in the villages of Bayford and Little Berkhamsted. The famous cricket commentator Brian Johnston was born in Little Berkhamsted and often would return to support the cricket in the community. He remembered fondly: *"I have played cricket on the green, I have spoken at the cricket dinner and I have co-opened the new Cricket Pavilion with Barbara Cartland."*

There is evidence of cricket having been played in the Little Berkhamsted since 1842 but the current club was formed by the more recent merger of the Sahibs and Little Berkhamsted Cricket Club. The Bayford and Hertford Nondescripts play at their ground in Bayford, which was given to the parish after the Second World War. Both teams play in the Saracens



Former Cricket Commentator  
Brian Johnston  
Image courtesy of Chazter

Hertfordshire Cricket League. As both teams are well established it often transpires that multiple generations of the same family played for their cricket club. Neil Morris remembers: *"There's been a cricket club in Bayford since 1940, just before the War started... which my grandad played in... My dad's played in the team and my two brothers played in the team... I skippered the team for ten years."*



Peter Mayles and a friend at Cricket, circa 1940s  
Image courtesy of Ethel Mayles



## Golf

Bayford and Little Berkhamsted are well situated for golf enthusiasts, with both Essendon and Brickendon golf clubs close by. Often boys from Bayford would work as caddies to earn extra money and take the opportunity to spend the day out in the sun. Neil Morris remembers: *"It was really great fun. You used to go up to the golf course. We all used to have to sit in the hut, five or six of us... There was no set fee or anything like that... If you was really lucky you got a Coke and a packet of crisps afterwards."*

## Shinty

Shinty, a Scottish game, similar to both Hockey and the Irish sport of Hurling was played at Little Berkhamsted school. It is played using a stick called a *caman* to hit a ball around a pitch and into a goal.

Unlike hockey, there are no restrictions on how you swing the ball. It is likely that the game, which can be quite violent, was made slightly safer for the young children of Little Berkhamsted School, when it was introduced in the 1930s by headmaster Alfred Noble.



1936 Shinty Team, Little Berkhamsted School  
Image courtesy of Ethel Mayles

*Scholastic's Souvenir Co. Ltd., Blackpool.*





## TAKE ME TO THE TOWER

Standing head and shoulders above any other landmark in Little Berkhamsted is Stratton's Tower. It was built in 1789 as a prospect tower, supposedly by an Admiral Stratton, so that he could watch his ships on the River Thames. John Stratton was in fact a gentleman, although we don't know for sure why he built the tower. The mystery surrounding its creation also adds to the intrigue and eccentricity of the landmark.

John Stratton was the son of successful draper and nonconformist, Samuel Stratton, who lived in the City of London. The success of the elder Stratton is evidenced by his ability to purchase the estate at Little Berkhamsted, as well as his property on the Isle of Dogs. It is not apparent that John Stratton ever held a profession, but instead lived as a gentleman.





## The Brewhouse

The property purchased by Stratton was The Gays or Gaze, now known as The Gage. It was here that the Stratton family lived and continued to live after the tower was built. The Gays was a fashionable home, but the estate included a derelict Tudor house, known as the Brewhouse. This might have been an unsightly building, despite the fact that it had once been a substantial property in the area. The Tudor style was no longer fashionable, and the house had fallen into disuse by the beginning of the eighteenth century. So as not to spoil his view, John Stratton pulled the Brewhouse down, and the brick was reused to build the Tower. Evidence of the Tudor brickwork can still be seen today.

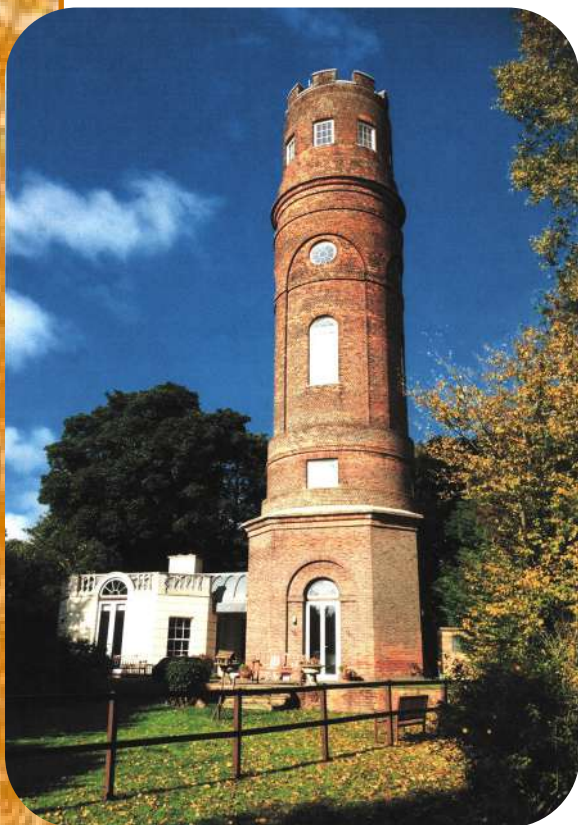


Fingerprint marks in the brickwork of Stratton's Tower indicate that they were hand made, and likely Tudor in origin

## Today

The Tower was owned by the Stratton family for over one hundred years and was kept as an observation tower. At some point a telescope was added and members of the public could go up to the top. It was reported that due to the theft of the lenses, the telescope was removed, and the tower closed. The tower remained part of the Stratton estate until 1940, when the widow of John Stratton's grandson died. It was not sold until 1948, presumably delayed due to the Second World War. In a letter to Hertfordshire Countryside in 1948, it was commented that *"it is a tribute to the brickbuilders that although a bomb fell nearby during the war, the tower still stood."*

Eventually it made its way into the hands of Tatton Brown, chief architect to the Ministry of Health, who renovated in in 1968, after continued efforts to get planning permission. This marked the first time the tower had been altered with a view that people should live in it. It was sold in 1978 to the first family to make the tower their permanent home.



Stratton's Tower as it is today.  
Image courtesy of David Cooper

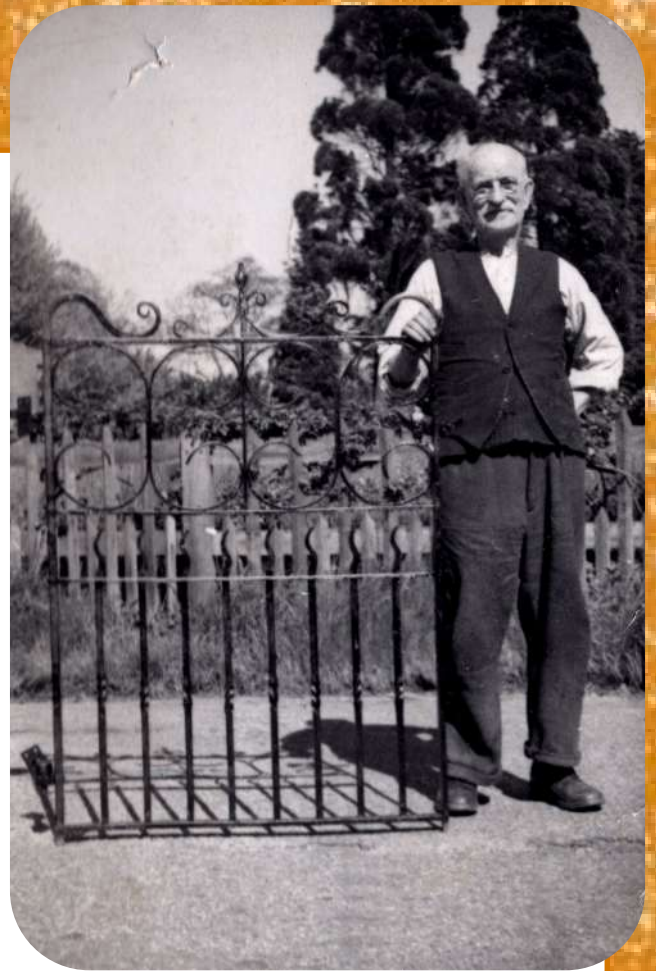


## THE FORGE

**For a rural community, a blacksmith's forge is essential and both villages initially provided this service. Whilst both have since closed their doors, the buildings which housed them remain and are still recognised as forge buildings.**

The Forge at Bayford was situated next to the Baker Arms and for much of the twentieth century operated by the Cheek family as, for a period, was the shop next door. As the demand for shoeing fell, the Cheeks diversified into agricultural machinery maintenance and chimney sweeping.

The Forge at little Berkhamsted was situated at the end of the cottages on Church Road near the junction with Robins Nest Hill. For many years the resident blacksmith was Mr Francis Mudge, who was still working aged eighty. In 1939, Mr Mudge raised £250, equivalent to around £11,000 today, in aid of the Red Cross by charging admission of 2d to peep at a family of robins that had made their nest in a drawer of nails in the forge.



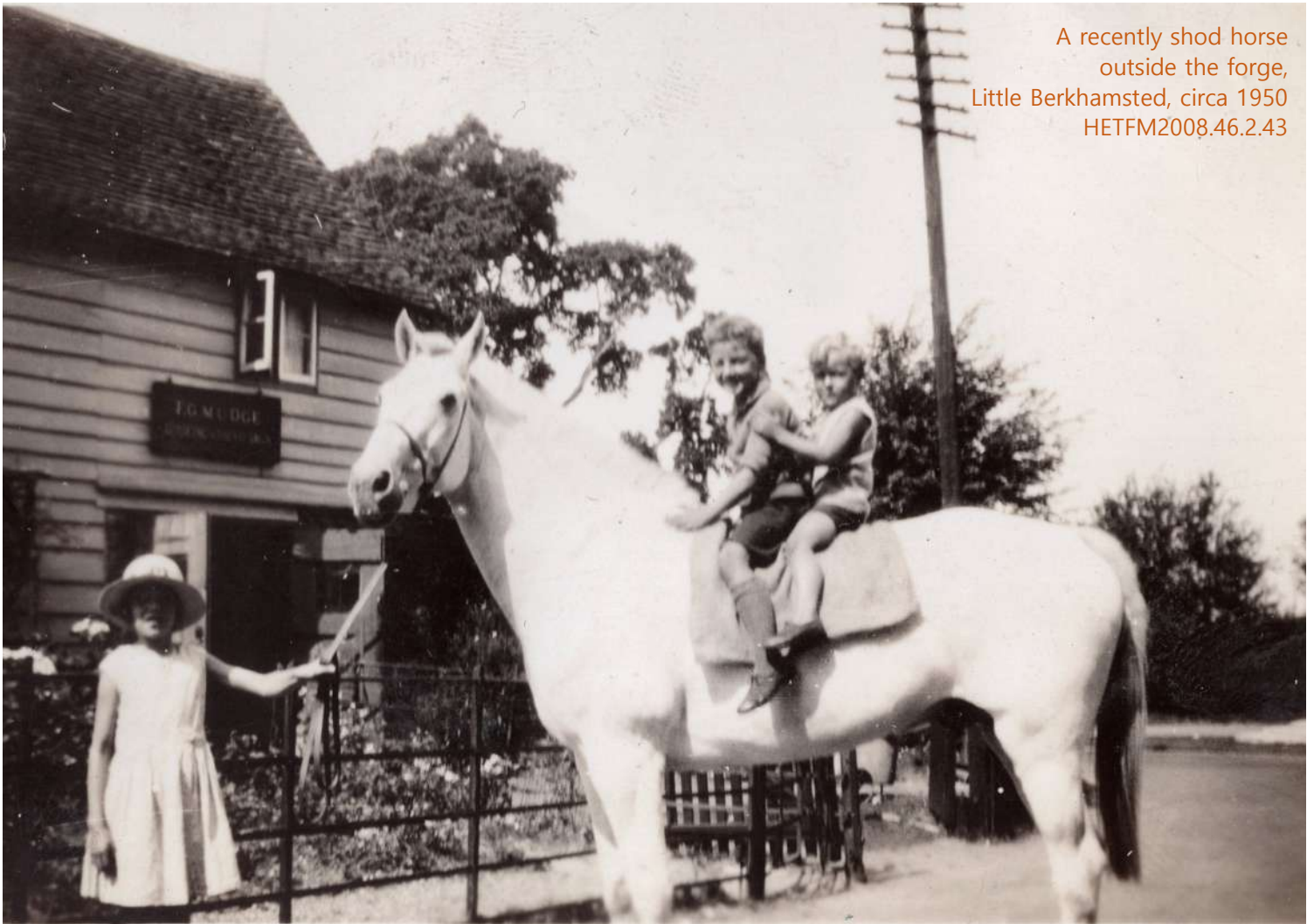
Francis Mudge, blacksmith, with a gate he made at the forge  
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The forge was a shop with a single storey structure attached, backing on to a livestock yard. Following its closure in the early 1960s, the building was converted to a two storey house. Great care was taken with the construction, including specifically undulating the lie of the roof tiles to ensure they complemented the old cottages next door. The house still includes features of its past as a forge, including a wall ring for tying up livestock and a door from the forge area which seems to have been used for practice by a series of apprentices.

The famous nest of robins at the forge, 1939  
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A recently shod horse  
outside the forge,  
Little Berkhamsted, circa 1950  
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Horse ring in the wall of the forge  
Image courtesy of Jerry O'Reilly



Door from the Forge  
Image courtesy of Jerry O'Reilly



## VILLAGE CHURCHES

In 1974, the churches at Bayford and Little Berkhamsted, along with Newgate Street, Essendon and Brickendon, were grouped together, led by one vicar. Today the church congregations are smaller, but the place the church holds in the community of the village is still important to many. A place to socialise, worship and celebrate together, these buildings are often the custodians of village history.

### St Mary's Bayford

The current St Mary's Church was built in 1871, by William Robert Baker when the village belonged to the Bayfordbury Estate. There have been four different churches throughout the history of St Mary's, and patent rolls for Henry III show the earliest stood in 1222. Some features of older churches remain, such as the iconic effigy of former Lord of the Manor George Knighton, who died in 1612.



The Tomb of Sir George Knighton,  
St Mary's Church  
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In George Knighton's will, he left ten shillings a year to the poor of Bayford. There were alms houses in the village during his lifetime, but it is said that they fell into disrepair by the early nineteenth century. Perhaps there was little need for them once the village became private in 1757.

The beautifully decorated altar was designed by Sidney Gambier-Parry, the renowned architect. The connection with the Parry family goes further, as Gambier-Parry's half-brother Hubert Parry was related to the Clinton Baker family through his mother. The famous composer was said to have sometimes played the organ in the church.

Interior of St Mary's Church, showing the decoration by Sidney Gambier-Parry



Exterior view of St Andrew's Church  
circa 1950s  
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### St Andrew's Little Berkhamsted

The earliest clear record of a church in Little Berkhamsted is in 1225, when the manor became forfeit to the king. The Sheriff was ordered to demolish some of the buildings in the village, but the 'Old Church' was instructed to be left alone, again suggesting that there had been a church in the village for some time.

Although he does not appear to have preached at Little Berkhamsted, Thomas Ken, later to be the Bishop of Bath and Wells, was born in Little Berkhamsted. His

mother moved out of London to avoid the plague and stayed with relatives in the area. Bishop Ken was unmoving in his faith and stood trial in 1688 for refusing to publish James II's Declaration of Indulgence. He was taken to the Tower of London but was acquitted at Trial.

The building itself dates to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, although alterations and additions have been made to it throughout its history. In 1857, the old doors of the church were removed but were saved by a local resident who kept them in his stable. They were returned in 1962 when the church faced significant work to retille the roof and install modern plumbing.

The vestry minutes of the church indicate that there were alms provided to the poor by the church. There was an alms house in the grounds, and the poor were also supported in the form of clothing, firewood and money.

Interior view of St Andrew's Church  
circa 1950s  
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## VILLAGE VENDORS

Little Berkhamsted is fortunate in still being home to a village shop, however, until the latter part of the twentieth century, both villages provided their residents with a variety of shops and services.

Services at Bayford were centred alongside The Baker Arms by the pond, with a shop and Post Office. The Bayford shop was situated in what had been the old forge, next to the pub. Carole Swain has lived in Bayford all her life and remembers the village shop: *"He had a big sort of counter at*



Bayford Post Office  
HETFM2831.163

*the back... where he had the biscuits lined up and the tea, the coffee and then if you wanted dried fruit and things like that, they used to weigh them out... and then they'd got a small freezer there, at the back of the shop they kept all their vegetables, tomatoes and things like that. I mean it was a bit more expensive obviously but it was*

*just convenient, that was the thing."* For a teenage Sandra Maniez and her friends, the Bayford shop was an ideal stopping point on their pony rides: *"You could stop and buy sweets on the way round... All the shops had rails that you could tie horses up to, because there was loads of us that owned ponies in those days, this was all 1970s... and there was no traffic in the lanes."* The shop eventually closed around 1980, when it was sold and converted to a private residence.

Bayford Post Office began life at a cottage in Well Row, before moving to the house next to the Baker Arms between 1930 and 1960. After which, a Mrs Rowsell took it on from her home at 5 Willow Corner, as Carole Swain recalls: *"You went into her front door, and then you went into what was her front room... and she'd got a counter in there and a proper little Post Office in her front room... She was open five days a week, so it saved you coming into Hertford."* Eventually the Post Office moved into the village shop where it remained until the shop closed its doors.

There are multiple references to Little Berkhamsted butchers and bakers in trade directories from the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, but by the 1920s, food deliveries from bakers like Rayments, based at Hertingfordbury Mill,

or Hertford butcher shop Stallabrass, enabled access to fresh goods. Ethel Mayles moved to the village in 1958 and recalls: *"They had a mobile grocery shop... They used to come Tuesdays and Fridays, the butcher, and Mondays and Thursdays, the baker."*

The current shop was run by Hertford Grocers Rayments from 1920 and then Hornes, who also provided lunches and teas for cyclists, from 1926-

1949. Today the shop is still highly valued by locals and residents of the surrounding villages, as Neil Morris, of Bayford, says: *"Little Berkhamsted have got a superb shop, I love that shop! The cakes and the bread up there... are very nice, and the people are lovely people."*

The Little Berkhamsted Post Office has moved around the village, with various tradespeople taking responsibility, including the baker in the 1870s and the Five Horseshoes in the 1890s. By 1926 it had settled at the village shop. Ethel Mayles was working at the shop when the Post Master retired: *"I used to help him out sometimes and he said to me, "Do you want to take it over when I go?" So, I said "Well, I wouldn't mind" and I didn't realise then, until I actually took it over, they pay you for doing it! So, I was getting paid twice!... They'd come in for their stamps and their pension... and have a little natter with them... The village shop is always the centre of gossip! I had worked in a Post Office in Hertford one time, so I knew roughly what went on."* The Post Office finally closed when Ethel retired in 2003.

Little Berkhamsted shop, circa 1950  
Image courtesy of Jerry O'Reilly





## VILLAGES AT WAR

We have little information on the effects of the First World War, except that twelve men from Bayford and nine from Little Berkhamsted lost their lives. Sir Brodie Henderson opened the war memorial at Little Berkhamsted in 1921. Both villages were proactive in making preparations for the Second World War, though few wished to dwell on its possibilities as the publican's wife noted at the time: *"People don't talk about the war unless you do first. They don't like it so they ignore it. Their whole philosophy of war is that "What is to be will be."*

In 1939 a journalist from the Daily Express visited Little Berkhamsted to understand the impact of war preparations on an English village. His article describes the scene: *"Four had been called up. A GPO linesman, a chauffeur, a Lieut.-Colonel and a toothbrush worker. The last named has always been hungry for excitement and he feels that this is his*

*big chance. There are five ARP wardens and several who didn't want to be left out but aren't officially recognized... They have a siren but so far, the effect of using it has been to make the villagers rush out into the road to discuss the excitement and it is then very difficult to make them return."*



Sir Brodie Henderson addresses the crowd as he unveils Little Berkhamsted War Memorial, 1921  
Image courtesy of Marguerite Brasher

lightly from air raids with few bombings, although a V2 rocket landed at Robins Nest Hill, and there were no casualties. There was significant damage, however, to the Rochford family's goat farm at the corner of Bucks Alley. A string of incendiary bombs set the hay barn alight and many turned out from the village to help put it out. Unfortunately, the only water source available was from the foul drain in the middle of the yard. Afterwards Joseph Rochford thanked all who'd helped with drinks at the Five Horseshoes.

Bayford and Little Berkhamsted came off



During the Second World War, both villages were ideal for people escaping the danger of towns and cities and several of the large houses were opened up to help those in need. Bayfordbury was leased to Dr Barnardo's and housed forty children at any one time between 1939 and 1945. Ashdene was leased to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital for Children, Shadwell, 1940-1946, and Woodcocks, in Little Berkhamsted, housed a Children's Home from Hastings, with the children attending the village school. Nearby Woolmers Park housed a maternity hospital. Sam Byford was a volunteer with the Little Berkhamsted Auxiliary Fire Service and recalled a training session at Woolmers. Sam climbed a ladder to the wrong

window and instead of rescuing a dummy faced an irate Sister in the delivery room! The Armed Forces also made use of the villages, with Culverwood becoming a military convalescent hospital and the Manor House housing servicemen both prior to and after secret missions.



Five Horseshoes, VE Night 8<sup>th</sup> May 1945.  
 Left to right: Standing: Ron Brooks, a wounded soldier from Culverwood, unknown, Don Spencer, unknown, unknown, unknown, Denis Hill the Landlord, Len Woodward, Mrs Pallett, Bill Simpson, Eric Pallett. Seated: Unknown, Maisie Brooks, Joe Spencer, Evelyn Simpson, Bill Murkett.  
 Image courtesy of Jerry O'Reilly

It wasn't just the local men and boys who enlisted, Mary Rochford, of the Manor House, Little Berkhamsted, was devastated when her horses Watchful and Morning Star were conscripted. Mary's older horse Sylvia was invaluable when petrol rationing came in, and learnt to pull a trap, enabling Mary to drive to Hertford for the shopping.

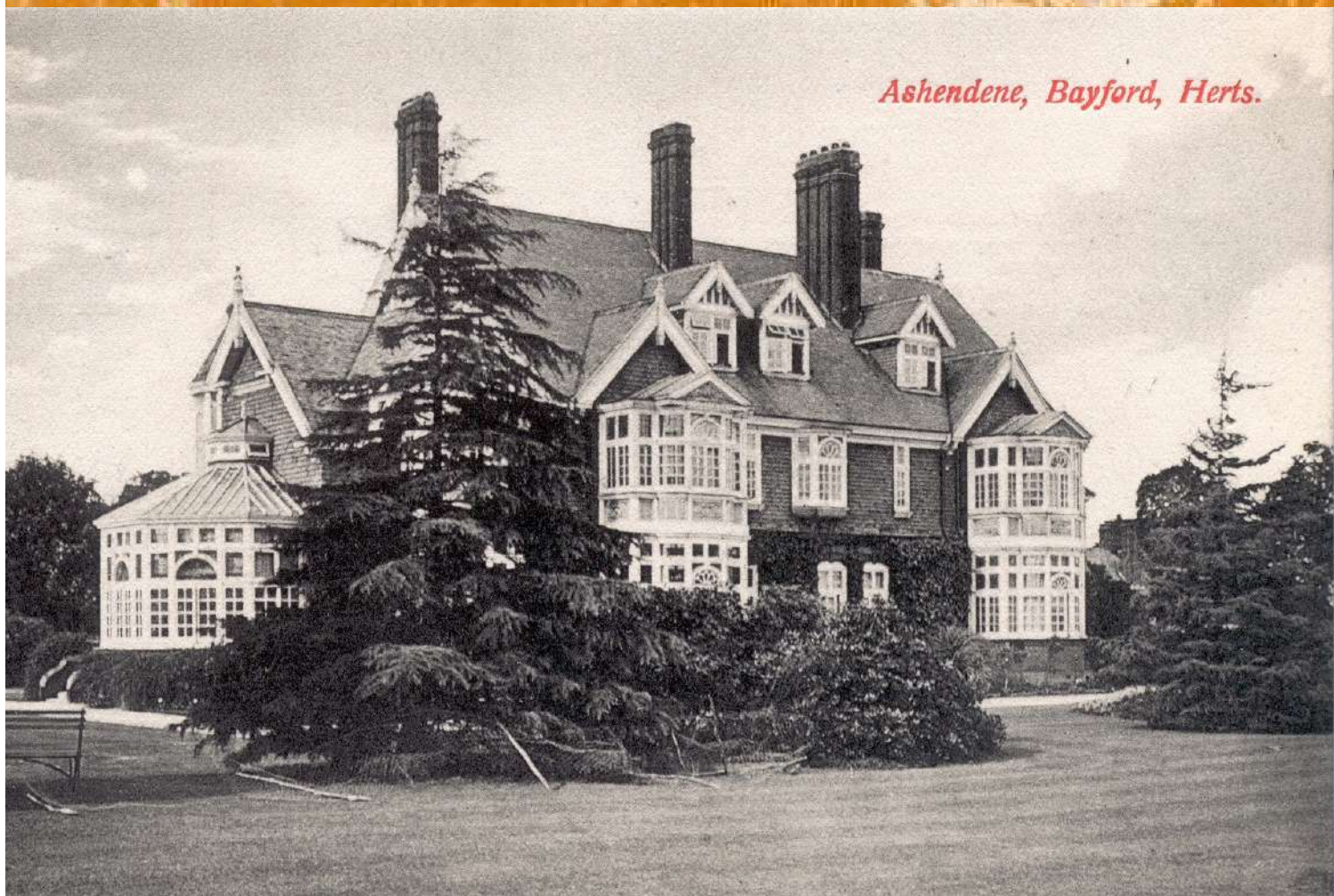
Both villages had cause to celebrate on VE Day, with celebrations held at the village pub.





*Ashdene Lodge, Bayford, Herts.*

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*Ashdene, Bayford, Herts.*

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CHURCH ROAD, LITTLE BERKHAMSTEAD

Image courtesy of Jimmy O'Reilly



*Little Berkhamstead Football Team 1919-20*

Little Berkhamstead Football Team circa 1919 - 1920  
Image courtesy of Ethel Mayles



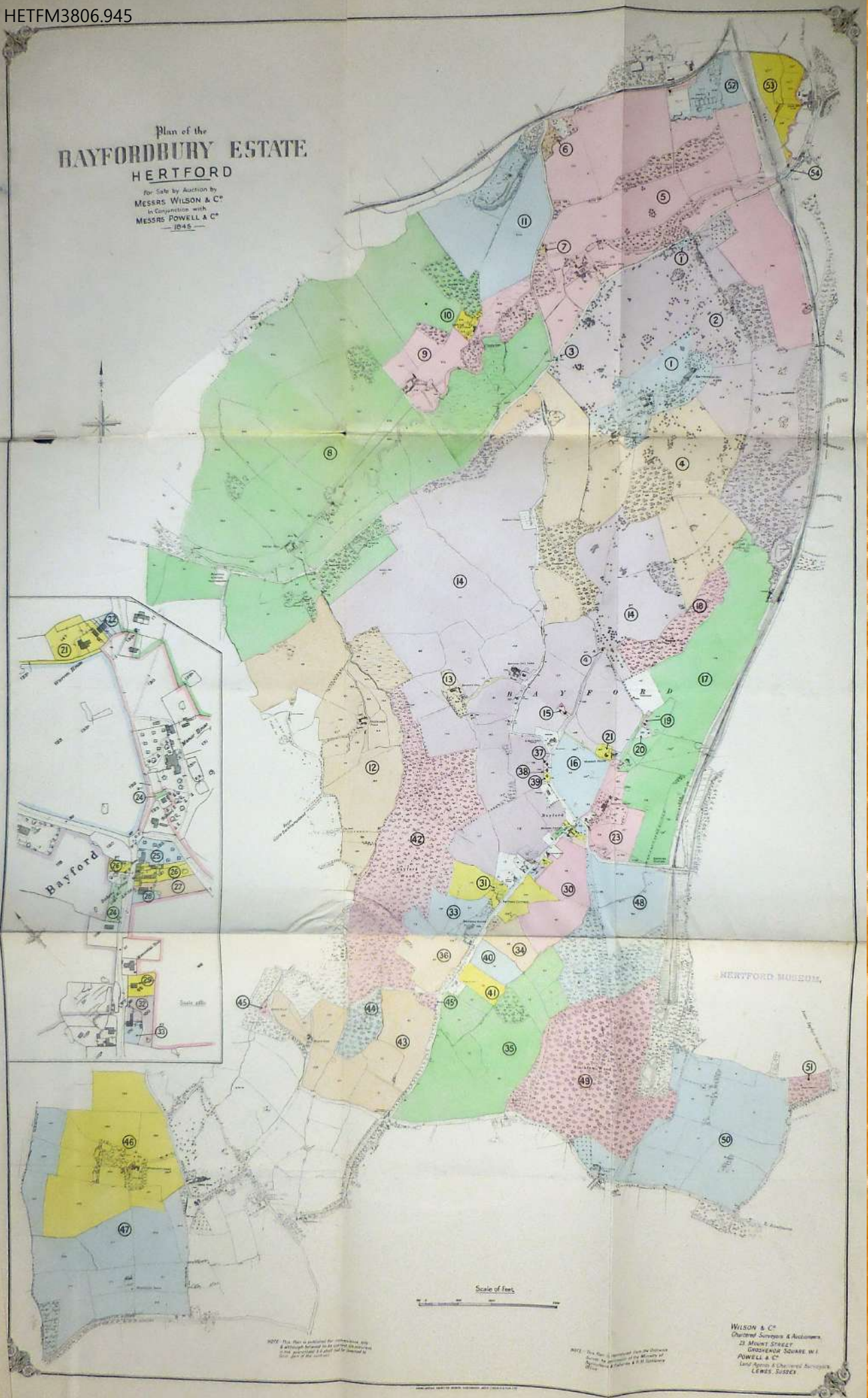


Opening of Little Berkhamsted War Memorial  
Image courtesy of Ethel Mayles



# Plan of the RAYFORDBURY ESTATE HERTFORD

For Sale by Auction by  
MESSRS WILSON & C<sup>o</sup>  
in Conjunction with  
MESSRS POWELL & C<sup>o</sup>  
— 1945 —



NOTE: This Plan is published for compliance with  
a Statute enacted for the purpose of enabling  
the purchaser to ascertain the extent of the  
land of the estate.

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