

# BERKHAMSTED

1066  
~1966



## PAGEANT

3rd-11th JUNE 1966

Souvenir Programme: 2/6



In association with the Co-ordinating Committee for the Commemoration of 1066. Produced, His Grace the Duke of Norfolk, K.G., P.C., G.C.V.O.



## BERKHAMSTED CASTLE

It is apt that we should re-live the town's dramatic happenings within the ruined walls of Berkhamsted Castle. Our stage was trod many centuries ago by Thomas à Becket, the Black Prince and other great men who are represented in the concluding episodes of our Pageant. We are not only on historic ground but in a setting of great beauty, surrounded by earthworks of astonishing size and interest.

Dominating the scene is the high mound made by Norman serfs. To the east, Prince Louis of France and the Barons camped on the fields of Whitehill. To the north, the park and hill-top common were once a happy hunting ground for the King and his favourites. To the south, hidden from our view by the railway, Berkhamsted flourished for centuries as a small valley town until, in fairly modern times, it began to climb the hillside beyond our straight, wide High Street, an authentic part of the Roman Akeman Street.

Berkhamsted is a growing town, but here, in normal times, the Castle remains a haven of peace and beauty, a place where we may dream of an age when any famous Englishman who did not visit Berkhamsted was at least aware of the existence and importance of our Castle.

Cicely, Duchess of York, mother of Edward IV and Richard III, was the last occupant of the Castle. Half a century after her death in 1495 the walls were already 'much in ruine,' their decay hastened by builders who helped themselves to the masonry and timbers. Today we can no longer identify the sites of the great painted hall, the three-storeyed tower, the chapel, the various stables and gateways. But we know that the main drawbridge faced Castle Street, the ancient King's Way to the Castle.

Now in the care of the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works, Berkhamsted Castle is a splendid relic, worthy of a visit at any time of the year. In spring the green banks are gay with daffodils. In summer photographers are busy and a school party or two may be seen wandering around the arena or scrambling to the top of the Shell Keep. The tall trees are magnificent in autumn and have their own austere beauty in winter. And after a rainy season the water-filled moats show how formidable were the defences in the days of the Castle's might and glory.

We hope you will come again and take the opportunity to make a leisurely circuit of the moats; one of the most rewarding short walks in the Home Counties.

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# BERKHAMSTED PAGEANT 1966



*Script and Production by*  
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## Foreword

THE PAGEANT was inspired by the concluding words in a recent History of Berkhamsted, by P. C. Birchnell, which recalled the successful Pageants of 1922 and 1931, and suggested that Berkhamsted's connection with 1066 provided an appropriate occasion for another.

Four years ago Berkhamsted Rotary Club explored the possibilities for such a gigantic undertaking and sponsored public meetings, which resulted in launching the Pageant as a Community enterprise in bringing together the different elements of a fast growing town. The success of the venture, and the justification for the early optimism, has exceeded all expectations. At the same time it has brought pleasure and created new friendships for the many participating. Professional and amateur have worked enthusiastically side by side in bringing events to their climax.

Much has been said in recent times about celebrating a defeat, but it remains that the date of 1066 was a turning point in English History, and the sound progression of ordered government springs from that time. The integration of the Saxon and Norman peoples has been one of the major influences on world history during the last millennium. Berkhamsted is therefore proud of its association with this memorable date, and it is proud of its contribution to the nation in the subsequent years.

Crusades were launched from here, the establishment of commoners' rights resulted from a Berkhamsted incident, and Berkhamsted led the world by the provision of the first science laboratory in a school. Thus Berkhamsted is proud of its part in national and international history.

Berkhamsted is not content to rest on its laurels, and because of this the former Pageants are not being repeated to mark this notable occasion, but rather a new look has been taken at Pageant production as a whole, and our presentation is new and novel if only because it starts with modern day and goes back to 1066 as the climax.

With the past in mind and thinking for the future it is fitting that any proceeds arising should be donated to H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh's National Playing Fields Association, which, under his inspired direction, does so much for the provision of play equipment, sports grounds and pavilions and the supply of sports gear to the younger generation, thus helping youth to fit itself to assume its ultimate responsibility in national life.

In conclusion I wish to thank the many hundreds of people who have played a part, big or small, whether in front of house or in a menial back stage task, for the scores of hours spent in committee work, for spare time, money and services so freely given, and particularly the Royal Engineers for their bridging operations, making this presentation possible.

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Historical Notes and Research by

The History Sub-Committee

Chairman: P. C. BIRCHNELL

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Verses linking the Episodes

written by

MARGARETTA BENNETT

## Introduction

A Shakespeare, in a cockpit once revealed  
To credulous eyes the vasty fields of France,  
So we, by that same magic shall call back  
From ages past, the history of our town.  
First yesterday, and then the day before,  
And backwards yet again. We'll build a bridge  
Across nine hundred years of chequered time.  
Great kings we'll meet, and common people too  
Who cheer, and mock, and jest about their rulers;  
Yet limelight shines upon their thrifty days  
When kings ride past. Ermine and precious stones,  
Banners and trumpets; all the pomp of kings  
Shines like a gold patch on their fustian robes,  
Making life sing! Then back to drab again.  
The cock shall crow. Old people, long abed,  
Shall rise and walk once more in Berkhamsted.

## Episode I

## THE INNS OF COURT REGIMENT MARCHING AWAY TO FLANDERS FIELDS

1915

THE LITTLE VALLEY town which arose on the south side of the Castle in Norman times is today noted for its schools. It is also a town with a variety of light industries and the head offices of important business concerns. But 'residential' is the description which is most frequently applied to Berkhamsted, for many hundreds of the 15,000 inhabitants work in London and other towns.

Here, as elsewhere, history is continually being made, and any one of a number of modern events and incidents could be used as a starting point for our Pageant. Perhaps the most memorable years were those of the two World Wars, when thousands of soldiers trained in and around Berkhamsted. The long and very special relationship which existed between the town and the Inns of Court Officer Training Corps is our reason for going back to the 1914-18 War.

Berkhamsted, then only half its present size, was jolted into a period of astonishing activity. Billeting officers inspected every house and chalked the number of vacancies on the front door. Almost every householder found room, and a welcome, for one, two, three or more soldiers.

There was military activity everywhere: in the streets, over the hills, in the woods and on Berkhamsted Common, where miles of trenches provided a foretaste of the mud of Flanders. The trenches were filled in long ago, but a familiar memorial on the Common reminds the old and informs the young that 2,000 of the 12,000 men of the Inns of Court O.T.C. who came to Berkhamsted never returned from the battlefields.

But first we lead you back by lesser steps.  
Divest yourselves of fifty years we pray  
And see, against this crumbling citadel  
The sights and songs and tunes of yesterday.  
Kitchener's men bring backwards through the years  
Our pride, our thanks, our well-remembered tears.

*Although the Episode depicts 1915 it begins in 1966. People are walking and standing about the Market Stalls in Berkhamsted High Street. They look up at the sound of jet planes flying overhead. Modern cars drive in and circle round, stopping by the Stalls. They drive off after picking up wives and friends. Period cars and horse drawn vehicles drive in and as they approach the Stalls the crowd changes to one of 1915. The drivers join in the crowd. The Band of the Inns of Court Regiment is heard approaching. The Band marches on, followed by a platoon in uniform and behind them a column of recruits in civilian dress. Mr. J. T. Newman, the photographer, cycles in and sets up his camera to photograph the troops.*

*A Recruiting Sergeant takes the opportunity to appeal to Volunteers. "Come on, me lads, your country needs*

*you. Let's hope the only white feathers here are on these pretty girls' hats. If you need a bit of persuasion there's the King's Shilling and a quart of beer at the Swan out of my own pocket, and free cigarettes once you're in. Come on, lads, let's see you join in behind the Band. Your King and country need you."*

*The troops re-form and march away followed by the recruits, the soldiers singing as they march away. The crowd takes up the refrain and boys and girls run after them waving the Union Jack.*

*The singing fades away as the last of the troops march off. A group of inhabitants stay behind, waving. The voice of one is heard calling out, as they depart: "Good luck boys!—May God protect you and bring you back!"*





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Twelve

## Episode II

THE FIGHT FOR  
BERKHAMSTED COMMON

1866

ON OUR WAY back to 1066 we mark another great centenary—the fight for Berkhamsted Common in 1866.

After purchasing a vast tract of land between Berkhamsted and Ashridge, Lord Brownlow, the young lord of the manor, ill advisedly enclosed about a third of Berkhamsted Common. People who had always exercised ancient common rights were excluded from 434 acres, and the way was also barred to farmers, walkers and others who had used well-worn tracks across the Common.

Substantial iron railings were erected early in February, 1866, and destroyed a month later. The dramatic story of the night raid on the fences has delighted Berkhamstedians of four generations—the recruitment of an 'army' of London labourers for a secret mission in the country; the chartering of a special midnight train to convey the men to Tring station; the march to Berkhamsted Common and the wrecking of the railings before dawn on 7th March, 1866.

The man who organised and paid for the raid was Berkhamsted-born Augustus Smith, M.P., who, in the House of Commons, was urged to fight the cause of the Berkhamsted commoners, of whom he was one, by Mr. George John Shaw-Lefevre, M.P. (afterwards Lord Eversley), the principal founder of the Commons, Open Spaces and Footpaths Preservation Society.

The raid aroused widespread interest, as did the long law-suit which was won by Augustus Smith, perhaps the town's greatest benefactor, for he was also largely responsible for the early-Victorian revival of Berkhamsted School and for the foundation of the town's first elementary school.

By oak and ash and thorn  
So was our homeland born.  
With shadowed slopes and misty dales  
Young saplings bending to the gales  
And glancing sunlight on the vales  
By oak and ash and thorn.

By oak and ash and thorn  
So were our commons born.  
And we who know our land's delights  
Shall fiercely claim our ancient rights  
To walk in freedom on the heights  
By oak and ash and thorn.

By oak and ash and thorn  
Our heritage was born.  
And, as imagination plays  
We join the folk of former days,  
To tread again old tracks and ways  
By oak and ash and thorn.

*A small party of workmen enter with tools and materials to erect a fence. They start working.*

1ST WORKMAN: These fences is a fair ol' weight.

2ND WORKMAN: Who ordered this lot, then?

3RD WORKMAN: This job is going to take us till Doomsday.

4TH WORKMAN: Who's paying for the beer tonight?

1ST WORKMAN: Take a hold of this, will yer, George?

2ND WORKMAN: Some of them Berkhamsted people won't arf be cross.

3RD WORKMAN: Mind yer backs.

4TH WORKMAN: Dig an 'ole just here then, Bert.

3RD WORKMAN: How far 'ave we got to go with this little lot then?

4TH WORKMAN: That's a good drop of ale they're drawing at the King's Arms.

1ST WORKMAN: That it should come to this!

2ND WORKMAN: Worst do since old Bill Conker got give his crown here in 1066.

1ST WORKMAN: 800 years ago! That's a long time, but 'tis sure 'tis worst happening ever.

3RD WORKMAN: Why do it then?

1ST WORKMAN: Why do it?

3RD WORKMAN: That's what I said, Why do it? If it be so bad, why do it?

Thirteen



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1ST WORKMAN: Well, why do you?

2ND WORKMAN: Come off it. You know why we do it. 'Cos we 'ave to. This is Berkhamsted Common, not Birmingham where they have Unions and like.

1ST WORKMAN: That's right. We do it whether we like it or not.

2ND WORKMAN: 'Sright, and we like what we're paid for doing it.

3RD WORKMAN:—Even if we don't like what we're doing! Gawd! Sooner we get Union here like that new Carpenters' Union, the better.

4TH WORKMAN: 'Ark at our radical.

3RD WORKMAN: Well, wotcher think? Look at that?

*During this dialogue there has been considerable activity. First of all a shepherd drives up a small flock of sheep. He is waved away. A man drives up in a donkey cart, letting out a stream of oaths as he is turned away.*

*During this altercation a lady rides up on a horse. The workmen acknowledge her.*

SHEPHERD: Why didn't you tell me you were going to do this. Where am I going to graze my sheep...

LADY: Look at this, Matilda. Whatever next. Papa will want to know more about this business.

DONKEY MAN: Well, Bloody Hell and Sweating Harry! I've never seen 'ought like it. You horrible pig keepers—take down those perishing fences.

1ST WORKMAN: We're only doing what we were told!

2ND WORKMAN: You can't come through.

3RD WORKMAN: You'll have to go right round, you know.

4TH WORKMAN: There's no gate along here.

LADY: What is the meaning of this fence, pray?

1ST WORKMAN: Lord Brownlow's orders, Ma'am.

3RD WORKMAN: Tory B—!

1ST WORKMAN (interrupting): His Lordship felt, Ma'am, felt that—

LADY: Yes?

3RD WORKMAN: That the likes of us should be kept out.

LADY: Indeed, I don't see—

*A farmer rides up on his cob and joins the crowd.*

FARMER: And neither do I. How am I expected to get back from Hemel market if you block my way.

2ND WORKMAN: It's not us, sir.

3RD WORKMAN: It's 'is ruddy lordship.

1ST WORKMAN: That's right, sir: at least it's 'is lordship. He thinks sir—you see, 'e feels sir—

FARMER: You'll feel my crop my man, if you don't let me through.

1ST WORKMAN: That I cannot do sir. I'm only doing orders.

LADY: We cannot blame him, Mr. Crawley. I shall have to speak to his lordship.

3RD WORKMAN: Then you'll have to go to London.

LADY: Really, it is too tiresome.

FARMER: It's a darn shame. I have to be back at Aldbury in half an hour about selling my tegs.

3RD WORKMAN: Well, like the rest of us, the tegs will have to wait.

*Two or three small boys have come in. One climbs the fence, the first workman catches him and starts beating him.*

1ST WORKMAN: I've 'ad enough, that's what.

3RD WORKMAN: Thought you were agin the fence.

1ST WORKMAN: So I am, but if I 'ave to put up the darn fence, then it's darn well going to keep people out.

LADY: Do leave that poor child alone. He's Mr. Tombs the Keeper's son. He can't get home from school unless he climbs the fence. Don't hit him.

4TH WORKMAN: Won't 'urt him, Ma'am, he'll a bin 'it at school anyway.

*A roughly dressed man has appeared, shouting. He is a navvy.*

NAVY: You can take your sticks down, George.

3RD WORKMAN: What do you mean?

1ST WORKMAN: 'Course we can't. Who are you, anyway?

NAVY: Never mind who I am, but I'm telling you. Take down those sticks or we'll take them down for you.

FARMER: Good for you.

LADY: Oh, do be sensible. We don't want a row. Here comes Lord Brownlow's Agent.

*Enter Mr. Paxton, accompanied by Mr. Hazell and a few youths.*

1ST WORKMAN: 'Allo, Mr. Paxton, looks like there's to be trouble. What are we supposed to do?

MR. PAXTON: Carry out his Lordship's instructions, of course. What d'you think?

NAVY: We'll show you what we think. Come on, lads! Five or six navvies appear and rush the fence, waving sticks and shouting.

MR. PAXTON: Here, wait a minute.

MR. HAZELL: This is private property.

NAVY: And that's just where you are wrong, sir. Get into it, lads!

MR. HAZELL: Really!

NAVY: —and truly! Another word from you and you'll be in the canal.

*Despite mild resistance the navvies tear down the fence and chase off the workmen, knocking Mr. Paxton and Mr. Hazell to the ground.*

NAVY: That'll teach you to close our common.

FARMER: Well, well! Let's hope that will be the last of it.

LADY: All very unpleasant, but at least I can get home.

FARMER: I don't like to think what his lordship will say.

LADY: You can depend upon it that his lordship will speak graciously and sensibly, for he is a sensible young man; and you must not forget how much he has done—new roads, good work of every sort.

*There is a sudden cheer. Mr. Augustus Smith arrives, accompanied by a friend.*

MR. PAXTON: Mr. Augustus Smith, sir, we have you to thank for this. It is outrageous.

MR. HAZELL: They threatened me with the canal, sir—with a—duking indeed. I am still threatened.

AUGUSTUS SMITH: You will come to no harm, sir. But his lordship should have known better. I warned him, and her ladyship, but they would not heed. This may be the way to his great estate, but it is the common land of the people, and such it has long been. You will find, Mr. Paxton, that the will of the people is not to be denied when it speaks with the voice of history. And if any want to learn as much, then Augustus Smith will teach them.

*Cheers as the crowd flow past the broken fence.*



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## Episode III

THE VISIT OF THE  
FRENCH KING LOUIS XVIII

1814

IN THE COACHING DAYS the King's Arms was a popular posting house. 'Mine host' was John Page, and he was ably assisted by Mary (nicknamed Polly), the most beautiful of his three charming daughters.

Among Polly's admirers was Louis XVIII of France, who spent much of his long exile at Hartwell House, near Aylesbury. On his journeys to and from London he always entered the King's Arms while the horses were changed, and his interest in Polly gave rise to much gossip. After his restoration to the throne in 1814, she visited King Louis in France.

Polly's father was not only landlord of the King's Arms but also High Constable. As he had the duty of taking some rifled mailbags to London following a highway robbery, we have found a way of introducing Robert Snooks, who ordered a post-boy to 'stand and deliver' and stole a large sum of money from the Berkhamsted and Tring mailbags. He was hanged near the scene of his crime—a lonely spot between Bourne End and Boxmoor—on 11th March, 1802.

A royal guest, the King of France,  
Goes home across the sea.  
The hazards in his game of chance  
Seem set for victory.  
With Bonaparte in Elba chained  
His kingship and his throne are gained.

But the golden crown spins.  
How will it fall?  
King Louis wins,  
Or Napoleon takes all?

It's au revoir, and royal toasts  
To maidens à la mode.  
To English ale and English hosts,  
And gentlemen of the road.  
And France's kindly King departs  
With wishes true from English hearts.

But the golden crown spins,  
How will it fall?  
King Louis wins,  
Or Napoleon takes all?

*Groups of people are assembling around the Inn sign. A number of children are playing children's games of the times around a maypole. Outriders gallop in: immediately Mr. Page, the Innkeeper, appears with his three daughters, his wife and his staff. Six horse-men ride in, preceding the coach which carries King Louis XVIII of France. He steps out and is greeted by various worthies, Mr. Page, and his family. Each of the three sisters curtsies low, but as the King lifts up Polly he leans forward to whisper in her ear. She giggles rapturously.*

*During all this, the bodyguard of horsemen, who in fact are local worthies from Aylesbury, ride off and can be seen disguising themselves. In the midst of the King's dillying with Polly, they gallop back, a masked highwayman at their head. The King tries to escape into the coach and falls over Polly.*

1ST GUARD (Snooks): Stand and deliver! Your money or your life!

*Instead of consternation, everyone is laughing, which confuses the King.*

KING: Je ne comprends pas. Je ne comprends pas. Expliquez-vous! Expliquez, mon ami!

1ST GUARD (Snooks): Froggie language means nothing to me. I must have Polly as ransom. Hand her over!

*Everyone laughs. Two guards dismount and seize Polly, who to his delight, kisses the King and submits. Mr. Page whispers in the King's ear.*

4TH GUARD (Judge): C'est une blague, mon majesté. Il fait semblant d'être Robert Snooks.

KING: Ah! now I understand. This is Mr. Robert Snooks, the highwayman!



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MR. PAGE: Snooks the highwayman, arrested and hung on Heme Common some years back.

MRS. PAGE: A very high highwayman he must be then!  
KING: Then I arrest Mr. Snooks in the name of the King of France.

1ST GUARD (Snooks): Arrest? What for? I have taken nothing.

KING: You have apprehended a pretty mademoiselle. In France that is the greatest crime. Seize him. The other guards seize him. After bantering and horse play, the King goes into the Inn with Polly. While waiting a mock trial is held, with "Snooks" as prisoner.

4TH GUARD (Judge): Robert Snooks: you are here accused of philandering with pretty Polly Page. Guilty or not guilty?

1ST GUARD (Snooks): Guilty, my lord. But please, my lord, can I have a second chance?

4TH GUARD (Judge): Certainly not. There is another charge: that in March 1802 you did accost one John Stevens, a post boy, order him to stand and deliver himself of mailbags containing large sums of money. Guilty or not guilty?

1ST GUARD (Snooks): You are dead right, my lord—and so am I if this took place in 1802!

4TH GUARD (Judge): Call the first witness! Call John Page!

*The Innkeeper comes forward.*  
Tell the Court, Mr. Page, what passed between you and Snooks.

1ST GUARD (Snooks): Polly Page!

3RD GUARD: Silence in Court!

MR. PAGE: As Postmaster and High Constable, I did myself apprehend the varlet Snooks and thus took the mailbags myself to London to the Post Office.

1ST GUARD (Snooks): It was the only one open!

MR. PAGE: Being a holiday it was, in fact, closed, so I delivered it to Sir Francis Feeling.

4TH GUARD (Judge): And was he grateful?

MR. PAGE: I understand some letters were missing.

4TH GUARD (Judge): Extraordinary! Were they found later?

MR. PAGE: I understand that they were delivered this morning.

1ST GUARD (Snooks): Only 12 years late. Our post is improving.

3RD GUARD: Sentence! Sentence!

4TH GUARD (Judge): Robert Snooks you are found guilty and are condemned to be hanged by the neck until you are dead.

1ST GUARD (Snooks): Like the post, you are 12 years too late!

*A gibbet is erected. There is a shout of "To the Gallows: To the Gallows."*

3RD GUARD: To the gallows with him, there is no time to be lost.

1ST GUARD (Snooks): There's no hurry. They cannot start the fun till I get there.

"Snooks" is "hanged". Amidst laughter and cheers, the guards remount.

2ND GUARD: Where is the King? We shall be late.

3RD GUARD: The King is still in the King's Arms. So is Polly!

1ST GUARD: If he does not hurry he will find Bonaparte is back in Paris.

3RD GUARD: True enough. His little island is not many miles from Marseilles.

2ND GUARD: Tell him, mine host, that there are plenty of pretty girls in Paris.

1ST GUARD: It is urgent that we leave. We cannot reach the White Horse Cellars in Piccadilly in under six hours.

MR. PAGE: I will bring him.

*Mr. Page goes into the Inn at which moment the King with Polly, looking a little dishevelled, appears. He climbs into the coach. Polly tries to follow for a last embrace. Mr. Page pulls her out.*

THE KING: (*swaying*) Bonnes amitiés mes amis. Merci mille fois.

(*To Polly*) Au revoir, ma chérie. Au revoir.

*The coach moves off, escorted by the guard, the coach horn blowing. The crowd shout "To France! To France!" Polly bursts into tears, and runs after the coach.*

POLLY: I follow, mon roi! I follow.

VOICE OF THE CROWD: She will!—and so another page is turned in French History!

*The coach departs, many in the crowd running after it.*



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Twenty

## Episode IV

## THE POET WILLIAM COWPER AS A YOUNG MAN AT BERKHAMSTED

1759

ONE OF WILLIAM COWPER's first biographers prophesied that Berkhamsted would be better known as the birthplace of the poet than for its 'connections with so many historical personages who figured in the tragedies of old.'

Unfortunately, the rectory in which William was born in 1731 was pulled down many years ago, thereby depriving the town of a potential tourist attraction.

The poet's father, John Cowper, was rector of Berkhamsted from 1722-56; his mother, a descendant of John Donne, died when William was only six years old. He was then sent away to school and his visits to Berkhamsted ceased in 1759, three years after the death of his father, when he 'sighed a long adieu to fields and woods from which I once thought I never should be parted.'

In this episode we introduce the scholars of the Bourne Charity School, an 18th century foundation which, in a new form, still benefits many young people of Berkhamsted.

We also introduce Peter the Wild Boy, a German waif who was found 'wild' in Germany and was brought to England by the Royal Family, who soon tired of their strange pet. Peter was then entrusted to the care of a local farmer, who received a royal pension to maintain him. St. Mary's, Northchurch (which has pre-Norman features) contains an interesting memorial to Peter the Wild Boy, who died in 1785.

Within this book, its pages filled  
With measured verse and rhyme.  
The poet Cowper has distilled  
The memories of his time.  
His early thoughts, his dreams, his fears,  
The wisdom of his later years.

He, who so loved this countryside  
In sunshine and in rain,  
His gentle spirit here abides  
And walks with us again.  
The things he loved, both great and small,  
His moving pen depicts them all.

*There is a pair of stocks in the arena, and in the foreground a simple bench on which an old man is seated. Young William Cowper strolls in reading aloud from a small book.*

WILLIAM COWPER: "England, with all thy faults, I love thee still—

My country! and, while yet a nook is left  
Where English minds and manners may be found,  
Shall be constrain'd to love thee. Though thy clime  
Be fickle, and thy year most part deform'd  
With dripping rains, or wither'd by a frost,  
I would not yet exchange thy sullen skies,  
And fields without a flow'r, for warmer France  
With all her vines."

*He approaches the bench and seats himself next to the old man, who takes no notice of him.*

Good day venerable sir. Permit me:

"Ask not the boy, who when the breeze of morn  
First shakes the gill'ring drops from every thorn  
Unfolds his flock, then under bank or bush  
Sits linking cherry stones, or platt'ning rush,  
How fair is freedom?—he was always free:  
To carve his rustic name upon a tree,  
To snare the mole, or with ill-fashioned hook,  
To draw th' incautious minnow from the brook,  
Are life's prime pleasures in his simple view,  
His flock the chief concern he ever knew—  
She shines but little in his heedless eyes,  
The good we never miss we rarely prize."

You do not understand? Let me explain—Some twenty-seven years ago I was born here, I, William Cowper, son of the Reverend John Cowper. As a child this was my home; it was here my mother died and left us empty, desolate. She died when I completed my sixth year: yet I remember her well. I remember too, a multitude of maternal tendernesses which I received from her and which have endeared her memory to me beyond expression.

Twenty One



"My mother! when I learn'd that thou wast dead,  
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?  
Hover'd thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,  
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?  
Perhaps thou gav'st me, though unseen, a kiss;  
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss—  
Ah that maternal smile! it answers—Yes.  
I heard the bell toll'd on thy burial day,  
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,  
And, turning from my nur's'ry window, drew  
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!"

*While he is reciting a simple bier carrying a draped coffin is borne across the stage, a small dejected group following it. In the distance a bell tolls.*

Yet children revel not long in gloom. Returning here  
I see this not so much the stage of death, but as child-  
hood's playground.

"Be it a weakness, it deserves some praise,  
We love the play-place of our early days:  
The scene is touching, and the heart is stone  
That feels not at that sight, and feels at none.  
The wall on which we tried our graving skill,  
The very name we carved subsisting still,  
The bench on which we sat while deep employed,  
Though mangled, hacked, and hewed, not yet  
destroyed;

The little ones unbuttoned, glowing hot,  
Playing our games, and on the very spot,  
As happy as we once, to kneel and draw  
The chalky ring, and knuckle down at law;  
To pitch the ball into the grounded hat,  
Or drive it devious with a dextrous pat:  
The pleasing spectacle at once excites  
Such recollections of our own delights,  
That viewing it, we seem almost to obtain  
Our innocent sweet simple years again."

*Children from Bourne's school appear in their uniform and start to play round the stocks.*

Later, when attending Dr. Pitman's school I can re-  
member the ring in my heart for the children of  
Bourne's Charity. But—

"Where once we dwell our name is heard no more,  
Children not thine have trod my nur's'ry floor;  
And where the Gardner Robin, day by day,  
Drew me to school along the public way,  
Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapt  
In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet cap,  
'Tis now become a history little known,  
That once we call'd the past'ral house our own.  
Short-liv'd possession! but the record fair  
That mem'ry keeps of all thy kindness there,  
Still outlives many a storm that has effac'd  
A thousand other themes less deeply trac'd."

*A small boy in a red coat is dragged through in his  
"bauble coach", by Robin the Gardener.*

I remember, too, poor Peter the Wild Boy. Living  
with his keeper at Bourne End, so differing from his  
native German forest, he showed great kindness to  
us children though, alas, his poor deluded brain  
allowed no contact even with the simplest of us.

"I am out of humanity's reach,  
I must finish my journey alone,  
Never hear the sweet music of speech;  
I start at the sound of my own.  
The beasts, that roam over the plain,  
My form with indifference see;  
They are so unacquainted with man,  
Their tameness is shocking to me."

*Peter the Wild Boy lurches in, joins the children, lets  
them ride him and pretends to chase them. His keeper  
arrives and takes him off, the children disbanding.*

There was neither tree, nor gate, nor stile to which I  
did not feel a relation. The house itself I preferred to  
a palace, and even now twenty years hence, I recall my  
long adieu to the fields and woods from which I once  
thought I should never be parted, and was at no  
time so sensible of their beauties as just when I left  
them.

*He rises, but the old gentleman does not move.*

"For I have lov'd the rural walk through lanes  
Of grassy swarth, close cropt by nibbling sheep,  
And skirted thick with intertexture firm  
Of thorny boughs; have lov'd the rural walk  
O'er hills, through valleys, and by rivers' brink."

*The old gentleman is still motionless.*

I will leave you sir, for it would seem that at your age  
memories of early associations mean less to you than  
to one much younger, though seemingly more melan-  
choly than your good-self—who, it may be, feels  
likely to be reunited with your youth somewhat  
earlier than I. Sir, I envy you in the tranquil evening  
of your life.

*He wanders off, reading.*

"Come, Ev'ning, once again, season of peace;  
Return sweet ev'ning, and continue long!  
Methinks I see thee in the streaky west,  
With matron-step slow-moving, while the night  
Treads on thy sweeping train; one hand employ'd  
In letting fall the curtain of repose  
On bird and beast, the other charg'd for man  
With sweet oblivion of the cares of the day."

## Episode V

## PRINCE CHARLES VISITS BERKHAMSTED PLACE

1616

ALTHOUGH JAMES I and Charles I made generous gifts to the poor of Berkhamsted, the town was reluctant  
to give anything back when Charles demanded Ship Money! Most of the townspeople supported Parliament  
against the King, and Berkhamsted-born Daniel Axtell was captain of the guard at the trial of Charles I,  
thereby losing his life when, at the Restoration, he was hanged at Tyburn with other regicides.

Our episode introduces Charles at the age of 16, when he was Prince of Wales. He visited Berkhamsted  
Place, the now derelict Elizabethan mansion on the hill north-west of the Castle, to stay with his tutor,  
John Murray.

Two years after this visit, the prince's father, James I, made Berkhamsted 'a free borough town',  
and the Corporation functioned for some forty years. But the market declined, revenue was almost nil,  
several leading townsmen were reluctant to take office, and it seems that the town was impoverished by the  
Civil War. And so, about the year 1663, Berkhamsted ceased to be a borough.

Never was fate so seeming fair,  
So set in paths of grace,  
As this first Charles; one would swear  
Kind fortune touched his face.  
Alas! that clouds presage a life  
So storm-tossed and so filled with strife!

This gentle, grave and kindly Prince,  
This lover of the arts,  
A kindly husband, father, friend,  
A man of many parts.  
But in the crystal lies the flaw  
That leads his land to civil war.

*At one end of the arena are the gates of Berkhamsted  
Place. The arena is thronged. Two soldiers keep the  
crowd back to make room for a small reception party.  
Preceded by two outriders, Prince Charles arrives,  
suitably escorted. As he enters the arena, a boy, a  
scholar of the Free School, runs forward and welcomes  
him.*

SCHOLAR: Most noble Prince, son of the King of  
England by divine grace, we young as are you, but  
worthy only to serve your Highness in the humblest  
offices, do greet your Highness, and acknowledge the  
great fortune for all the scholars of this town in that  
you should visit them and that your Highness's own  
most skilled and revered tutor shall be pleased at  
your request to live in this town.

Ave! Ave!

*The Prince acknowledges the scholar and rides on to  
the gates where he is greeted with cheers from the  
crowd. He dismounts and the Clerk steps forward.*

CLERK: Most Noble Prince, the citizens of this ancient  
and loyal town offer greetings to Your Highness, and  
desire that the bounty you bestow upon the town by  
your presence this day may be repaid fourfold in the  
joys and delights that you may receive in this place.  
From the citizens and all that dwell within the con-

fines of Berkhamsted St. Peter, welcome to you, our  
most royal Prince, Charles of England, son of his  
most excellent Majesty, James, King of England and  
Scotland by the divine grace of God—Amen!

CROWD: Amen.

PRINCE: Mr. Clerk, citizens of Berkhamsted, for your  
greetings thanks: for your favours and hospitality  
more thanks. The King, my father, greets you and  
pleases to tell you that it is his most earnest desire  
that within two years at most, it will be his pleasure  
to grant to Berkhamsted St. Peter a Charter which  
will create the said Berkhamsted St. Peter a free  
borough by the name of the Bailiff and Burgesses of  
the borough of Berkhamsted St. Peter. It will be his  
further pleasure, to grant to the bailiff and twelve  
chief burgesses, a common seal. A Council House or  
Guildhall will be erected and the bailiff and burgesses  
will be accorded the power to make and enforce such  
bye-laws for the rule and government of the town,  
the inhabitants and trades.

My father the King determines that the free borough  
of Berkhamsted St. Peter will be empowered to  
employ a Recorder and Common Clerk and to  
permit the Bailiff and Burgesses, with the Recorder,  
to be sworn as Justices of the Peace. The Corporation  
will have a properly administered prison and a



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common market ordained to be held on Thursdays and besides that on Mondays. Further it will be permitted for Fairs to be held on Shrove Monday and Whit Monday, besides the ancient Fair on the Feast of St. James.

If in the new borough a stranger should wish to become an inhabitant, then it is decreed by my father, the King, by most divine right, of England and Scotland, that he shall compound for his freedom and pay £5 at the least, before he set up or useh any manner of trade within the new borough. This will be decreed.

In accordance with statute it is proposed that the number of alehouses be limited to six. That it is my wish that all in the town tonight should have free ale. A number of citizens are brought forward to be presented to the prince.

CLERK: Permit me to present to your Royal Highness Mister and Mistress Thomas Murray of Berkhamsted Place.

MR. & MRS. MURRAY: Your Royal Highness, we are deeply honoured.

PRINCE: Madam! My dear Tutor, my pleasure is as great as yours. It has long been my wish to see your new home.

MR. MURRAY: Your gift, sir: a gift if I may put it, rich in Royal tradition, for much of the masonry of the mansion came from the walls of Berkhamsted Castle.

PRINCE: Indeed!

*There is a sudden disturbance as an apprentice is trying to reach the Prince.*

APPRENTICE: Let me speak! let me speak! I speak for youth! I speak for the artisan. I am the worker of tomorrow. Let me speak!

*The clerk and two officers remove him amidst a general hubbub.*

MR. MURRAY: Alas, your Highness, the youth of today lacks proper controlling and discipline. They have little love of learning and proper carriage.

*The hubbub continues, but above it is heard the voice of an old witch on the fringe of the crowd.*

WITCH: Be warned, gentle Prince. I see a sword. The sword is in the hand of that young man, but the man is older: he is a Captain. I see a Trial. I see the Captain—his sword is high. The prisoner falls. It is the King. The prisoner is the King. The King! Be warned gentle Prince, King to be.

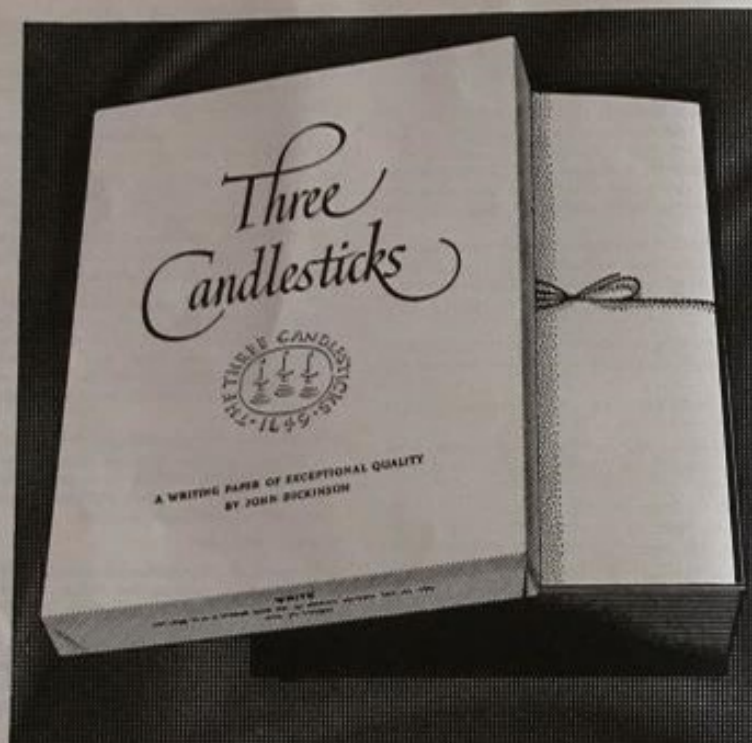
*The wailing of the witch has cast a gloom on the proceedings. The Prince hurries through the gates, his horse led behind him. Some of the crowd chase the old witch away shouting 'Duck her! Duck her!'. The arena is deserted save for the scholar who welcomed the Prince and an old schoolmaster who has been with him throughout.*

SCHOOLMASTER: Prince and Pauper! Prince and Pauper! I fear my son, that poor old Betsy speaks true. I thank God that I shall not live to see bloodshed, but my fear is that it will come, and you in your generation will be called upon to decide.

SCHOLAR: How, Sir?

SCHOOLMASTER: Already there is unrest. The Kingdom is deep down ripening for change. For many the divine right is no longer acceptable. Death must lead to unrest—unrest must lead to conflict: conflict must lead to bloodshed. *(They move away.)* Pray God my son, old Betsy is proved wrong. "The prisoner is the King" God forbid!





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*3rd — 11th June, 1966*

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Marshal Walter Hall  
Wardrobe Mrs. Anne Clarke  
Props Geoffrey Dell  
Musical Director S. J. Sheppard

*The Cast drawn from the Berkhamsted Branch of the British Legion and the Berkhamsted and Boxmoor Silver, the Home Hempstead Town and the Ellesborough Bands and citizens of Berkhamsted.*

*Marching troops drawn from the C.C.F. Berkhamsted School and the Berkhamsted A.T.C.*

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Assistant Producer Elizabeth Morrison  
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Wardrobe Sheila Butt  
Jennifer King  
Properties Jim Hodges  
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2nd Workman Douglas Cox  
3rd Workman John Ashby  
4th Workman Malcolm Glass  
Shepherd Barry Hart  
Shepherdess Barbara Hart  
Lady Sheila Pates  
Donkey-cart Woman Elizabeth Bradfield  
1st Farmer Tom Williams  
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Mr. Paxton Richard Lynham  
Mr. Hazell Richard Lindeman  
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## Episode III (contd.)

1st Guard (Snooks) Michael Garforth-Bles  
2nd Guard Pam Garforth-Bles  
3rd Guard Pam Holiman  
4th Guard (Judge) Celia Wilson  
King Louis XVIII David Overton  
John Page Oliver Coburn  
Mrs. Page Barbara Kilpatrick  
Polly Page Olive Walker  
Polly's two sisters Jenny Tufnell and  
June Formey  
Louis Aide-de-Camp Peter Morris

*Cast drawn from Berkhamsted Operatic and Dramatic Society, and the Bovingdon Primary School.*

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Assistant Producer Alastair Longlands  
Marshal Miss Gillian Potter  
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*Cast drawn from Ashlyns School.*

## Episode V

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Marshal Ray Hilleard  
Wardrobe Mrs. Hilda Phillips  
Properties Ivor Cooley  
Prince Charles Ann Mary Norman  
Clerk Peter Shirley  
Mr. Murray Jim Shirley  
Mrs. Murray May Shirley  
Apprentice Stephen Beddall  
Witch Christina da Cunha  
Schoolmaster Fred Phillips

*Cast drawn from Berkhamsted and District Boy Scout Troops, Girl Guide Companies and Cub Packs.*

## Episode VI

Producer Daphne Heal  
Marshals W. Goodwin-Bailey  
Mrs. W. Goodwin-Bailey  
Wardrobe Mrs. Ethel Webb  
Properties Miss Carol Harris  
Miss Valerie Best  
June Groves  
Princess Elizabeth Sally Foord-Kelcey  
Roger Ascham Jane Poole  
Sir Thomas Pope Phoebe Lowe  
Ladies-in-Waiting Belinda Buller Popham  
Sarah Rayment  
Lord William Howard Jane Wilcox  
Sir Thomas Cornwallis Linda Sweet  
Sir Edward Hastings Rosemary Harris  
Dr. Owen Thea Goodwin-Bailey  
Dr. Wendy Alison Coupar  
Nurse Judith Goodchild  
1st Page Judith Smith  
2nd Page Valerie Lister  
Male Rider Joan Firth  
Messenger

## Episode VII

Producer Brian R. Terry  
Marshal Dr. le Bary  
Wardrobe Mrs. B. H. Garnons  
Williams

*Cast drawn from the boys of Berkhamsted School*

## Episode VIII

Producers Charles E. Tarbox and  
Peter J. Such  
Marshal Bruce Ruggles  
Wardrobe Mrs. Joyce Sinnott  
Properties J. Lewis  
Secretary W. Chapman  
Burghers Mike Ashby  
Henry of Berkhamsted J. R. Constantine  
King Edward III Winston Moss  
Queen Philippa Angela Cooper  
Page Barbara Gent  
Archers The Berkhamsted  
Bowmen

*Cast drawn from the citizens of Berkhamsted and district.*

## Episode IX

Producer Revd. B. Jones  
Marshal Neil Cowan  
Wardrobe Mrs. Marjorie Lawson  
Properties Edwin Perry

*Cast of Bishops, Rector, Monks and Citizens drawn from worshippers and friends of St. Peter and All Saints.*

## Episode X

Producer John T. V. Molem  
Marshal Mike Laing  
Wardrobe Dick Warren  
Ian Banks  
Properties John Newman  
John Malone  
Fitz Count Peter Griffiths  
Reinulf John Griffin King  
Queen Isabelle Angela Cooper  
Mandeville Dick Warren

*Cast drawn from the Berkhamsted Round Table, the worshippers and friends of St. Peter and All Saints and citizens of Berkhamsted and district.*

## Episode XI

Producer Edmund J. Cooper  
Production Manager Clive Birch  
Marshal Colin Bowler  
Wardrobe Jennifer Willment  
1st Mason Frank Pearce  
2nd Mason Ted Pinney  
Messenger Reginald Moore  
Thomas à Becket Trevor Edwards

*Cast drawn from members of the company of Theatre 21*

## Episode XII

Producer Dorian Williams  
Marshal Peter Law  
Prince Edgar Kenneth Jones  
Edmar Thane of Harold Ian White  
Archbishop Aldred Keith Chamberlain  
Bishop Keith Hoskin  
William, Duke of Normandy Stuart Ready

*Cast drawn from Pendley Shakespeare Festival, the citizens of Berkhamsted and the full company*



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All those ladies and gentlemen who so kindly recorded  
their voices without participating in the  
Pageant.

### *to the Pageant as a whole by:-*

Those very many people, too numerous to mention  
by name, who have helped as performers,  
dressmakers, with the production of scenery  
and properties, grooms, watchmen, preparing  
the grounds, programme sellers, ushers, car  
park assistance, etc., etc., etc.

## Episode VI

## THE ARREST OF ELIZABETH AT ASHRIDGE

1554

ASHRIDGE HOUSE, now a college, is an early 19th century Gothic revival extravaganza which replaced a 13th century monastery. Ten years after the dissolution, Edward VI granted Ashridge to his sister, afterwards Elizabeth I, and there she remained for several years.

The peace of this country retreat was shattered one night in February, 1554, when commissioners and over 250 soldiers arrived from London to conduct Elizabeth to the Tower of London. She was accused of complicity in Wyatt's rebellion, which was directed against the marriage of her sister, Queen Mary, with Philip of Spain.

The commissioners demanded to see Elizabeth and, though told that she was ill, insisted upon entering her room. The next day the princess was taken on a painful 12-day journey to the Tower, where, on arriving at the Traitor's Gate, she declared, 'Here lands as true a subject, being prisoner, as ever landed at these stairs.'

After weeks of imprisonment she was released but did not return to Ashridge. It eventually became the home of the Bridgewater family, who built the present house, and then of the Brownlow family.

Warily walks the young Bess,  
Lovely and captive Princess.  
Weighing her chances,  
Watching barbed glances,  
Seeing her freedom grow less.

Facing life with pride and dread,  
Will she, won't she, lose her head?

Shadowy foes are around her.  
Sisterly rages confound her.  
Traitor's Gate beckons,  
Grimly she reckons  
Friends against foes that surround her.

Young, courageous and alone,  
Will she, won't she, reach the throne?

Sudden the gulf that is yawning  
Closes. A fresh day is dawning.  
Bells from the steeple  
Call to the people  
To greet a new queen in the morning.

So comes the distant dream.  
Gloriana reigns supreme.

*A splendid cavalcade of horsemen and horsewomen  
enter, in the centre of which is Princess Elizabeth.  
She is speaking with Roger Ascham.*

ELIZABETH: It was indeed fortunate for me, dear  
Roger Ascham, that you were ever appointed as my  
tutor, for in these troublous and uncertain times,  
I have through you found the rewards of study, piety  
and meditation.

ASCHAM: That you should speak thus is my reward, but  
it is my happiness too, that your recently discovered

satisfaction in books and the deeper hidden reservoirs  
of the mind should not preclude for you the joys of  
sport and exercise, for it has ever been that the proper  
usage of the body is complimentary to the proper  
usage of the mind. The recluse is ever confined within  
the limits of his mind, denied the stimulus to explore  
new horizons.

ELIZABETH: But is not also courage of the mind derived  
from physical courage?—and indeed, no greater  
need for courage can ever have existed than today.



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ASCHAM: Every day in life demands courage madam;  
some days demand greater courage than others.  
*Suddenly a messenger gallops in. He is apprehended  
by the Princess's Governor, Sir Thomas Pope. They  
confer.*

POPE: Your Highness. The Queen's Commissioners are  
on their way hither, to carry you to London. I urge  
you to withdraw. It would be prudent.

ELIZABETH: Prudent it might be, Sir Thomas Pope, but  
somewhat lacking in courage.

POPE: Madam, I implore you.

ELIZABETH: Ask Master Ascham here. He will tell you  
that courage, not prudence, is the source of living.

POPE: I deeply regret—

*A Lady-in-Waiting gallops in and rides straight to the  
Princess.*

LADY-IN-WAITING: Your Highness, I crave pardon, but  
my Lord has met on the way Lord William Howard.

POPE: Howard?

ASCHAM: The Commissioners!

ELIZABETH: Pray continue, Madam.

LADY-IN-WAITING: Lord William Howard, Highness;  
and my lord insists that he is coming hither to take  
you.

POPE: All is confirmed, Princess, I urge you to flee.  
If it is thought at court that in any way you did  
assist the scoundrel Wyatt...

ELIZABETH: And where is it that your lord met Lord  
William?

LADY-IN-WAITING: Near unto St. Albans, he said,  
Highness. They enquired the way by the Golden  
Valley.

ELIZABETH: Indeed?

LADY-IN-WAITING: And I understand, Highness, from  
my lord that they bring with them the Queen's own  
litter and her personal physicians Dr. Owen and  
Dr. Wendy. It seems, ma'am, that they had heard  
you were not well.

ASCHAM: Her Royal Highness is far from well.

ELIZABETH: And far from ill—except when it suits.

POPE: I beg of you, Madam.

ELIZABETH: There is no hurry, Sir Thomas. Let us enjoy  
our sport and we will then repair to Ashridge, which  
in the meantime, my lord Governor, be so good as  
to have defended. There is time and enow, for Lord  
William travels with the litter and personal physicians  
of the Queen, my sister. He cannot hurry.

POPE: In all humility, ma'am, Lord William Howard  
may hurry more than you believe. The prize is great.

ELIZABETH: The prize will be no greater than the sur-  
prise to find my palace fortified.

POPE: But why, ma'am, delay your return?

ELIZABETH: Why Sir Thomas? Have you forgotten that  
I have an engagement this day? I keep a tryst; and  
indeed those with whom I keep it are now arrived.

*The Huntsman and hounds ride in and join the throng.*

ELIZABETH: Welcome, honest friend. More than unjust  
today shall I who am at this moment pursued enjoy  
the pursuit of one no less innocent than myself.

ASCHAM: Yet, Princess, no hart in this forest is as  
great as the heart reposing in the Princess Elizabeth  
of England.

*There is a sudden shout and a sombre procession can  
be seen approaching.*

POPE: The Queen's Commissioners!

HOWARD: Your most royal and venerated Highness,  
Greetings.

ELIZABETH: My Lord William Howard, I bid you wel-  
come, yet I am discomforted by your presence for  
which I was in no way prepared.

HOWARD: Highness, I together with Sir Thomas  
Cornwallis, and Sir Edward Hastings, bring you  
from Her Majesty, as Her Majesty's own Com-  
missioners, affectionate and sisterly greetings in  
earnest of which Her Majesty has despatched her own  
litter and her personal physicians Dr. Owen and Dr.  
Wendy, thinking to find your Highness indisposed.

POPE: See for yourself, Lord William, Her Highness  
is far from well. Help her from her horse, gentlemen,  
before she falls. Assist her to the litter.

*Elizabeth, feigning weakness perhaps, but genuinely  
sick, is helped to the litter.*

ELIZABETH: Where would you take me, gentlemen?

HOWARD: To court, madam, at Her Majesty's request.

ELIZABETH: To court—or to the Tower?

HOWARD (hesitating): To court, your Highness.

ELIZABETH: Might I not be better contented in the  
company of little cousin Jane Grey in the Tower?

HOWARD: Cousin Jane—is no longer in the tower.

ELIZABETH: Released! (Howard does not reply.)  
Escaped! Tell me, Lord William.

POPE: Dead?

HOWARD: This morning, I deeply regret this informa-  
tion.

*Elizabeth swoons and has to be assisted.*

ELIZABETH: I am not well enough to go. Take me to  
my Palace.

HOWARD: Her Majesty commands.

ELIZABETH: Might I not, then, lodge at my own houses  
at all times on the way?

HOWARD: Such is not the Queen's will.

ELIZABETH (distracted): I cannot go.

ASCHAM: Courage, Princess, and as the hart this day  
you will know freedom. There cannot ever be  
imprisonment of the mind.

*Elizabeth recovers and sits upright on her litter and  
appears as a Queen.*

ELIZABETH: Gentlemen, proceed! Here departeth as  
true a subject being a prisoner as ever rode under  
escort: before Thee, Oh God, I speak it, having now  
no other friend but Thee alone!

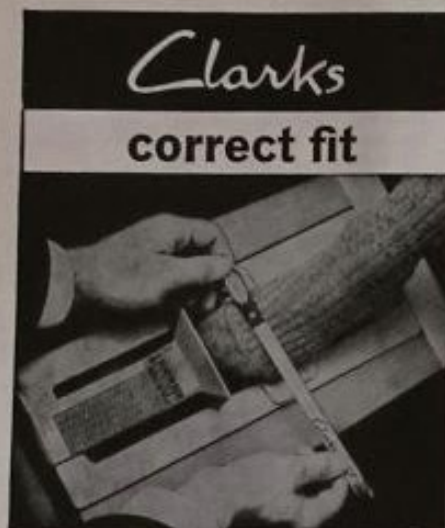
*The procession begins to move away, leaving dis-  
consolate the Princess's Court.*

POPE: We are all thy friends, Princess, and as long as  
thou live we shall remain thy friends, for in thy  
person beats the heart of England.

*As the procession departs, all cheer and shout after her.*

ALL: Elizabeth of England! Long beat the heart of  
England! Gloriana!





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Thirty Four



## Episode VII

THE FOUNDATION OF  
BERKHAMSTED SCHOOL 1544

HALF A CENTURY after Berkhamsted Castle was left to fall into ruin, 'the fairest school house in the land' (to quote a contemporary writer) arose in Castle Street, just below St. Peter's Church.

Berkhamsted-born John Incent (afterwards Dean of St. Paul's) gave his own property and encouraged fellow townsmen to make over the lands of the brotherhood of St. John the Baptist (a medieval benevolent society) to endow a school.

A schoolmaster was engaged and teaching presumably started some years before 1541, when Incent sought a Royal Charter for the school as a safeguard against the disturbances, religious and political, of those times. He received a licence from Edward VI to found a school for 144 boys, and 'builded with all speed a fair schoole large and great all of brick very sumptuously.'

From an auspicious beginning the school ran into many troubles and it was not until 1854 that Incent's proposed number of 144 boys was reached. During and since Victorian times many handsome buildings have been added, and the number of scholars is now over 730. The newest addition, Newcroft, was opened in 1958, by H.M. the Queen Mother, who also opened large extensions to Berkhamsted School for Girls, a Victorian foundation.

In bluff King Harry's years of rule  
Dead tongues were brought to life.  
Now scholars went to Grammar School  
With ink-horn, pen and knife.  
On Greek and Latin, verse and prose  
They heard the changes rung,  
And woe betide the schoolboy who  
Preferred his mother tongue.

Such seekers into classic lore  
Were aided in their search  
By the frequent application  
Of a most compelling birch.

From dawn to dusk the scholars sat  
At work—no time to play.  
With bread and cheese and home-brewed ale  
To help them on their way.  
And for their lighter moments,  
When the classic texts would pall  
There was rhetoric and logic,  
And . . . not any games at all!

And if a scholar's wandering mind  
Should leave him in the lurch,  
It would soon be recollected  
By a most compelling birch!

*A large group of boys in orderly fashion process towards a dais set out in front of the school buildings. They stand waiting. John Audley and John East mount the dais and arrange a table.*

AUDLEY: I scarce thought that we should see so quickly risen this building in our midst.

EAST: When God holds sway—

AUDLEY: That I doubt not, but it was not God alone that erected this building.

EAST: The hand of Incent was guided by God.

AUDLEY: With respect the Worthy Dean did not so much as lift a brick.

EAST: Good Mr. Audley, this is no occasion for scepticism. When you are older and wiser you will appreciate the hand of God and the genius of the Dean in erecting this building.

*A boy has approached the top of the steps, listening. He interrupts.*

Thirty Five



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BOY: How came it, then, this building was erected?

EAST: By the grace of God, my boy. Twenty years ago the Dean, whose late father was secretary to the Duchess of York at the Castle hard by, was president of the Hospital of St. John the Baptist which controlled great funds. Being born in Berkhamsted he was approached by the citizens of the town appealing for help in founding them a school, on lands belonging to the Brotherhood of St. John.

Our Dean, so enlightened in the Glory of God, added funds and lands of his own that a building might arise so strong and fair that a school the like might not be seen in the whole realm of England.

AUDLEY: The Dean approaches.

*Enter the Dean with Dr. Reeve and worthies of the town. They ascend the dais.*

DEAN: Let us pray.

*All kneel, except the Dean, who recites two brief simple prayers. All rise.*

DEAN: Richard Reeve, I do call upon you to occupy this seat as the first schoolmaster of this our new school, by the grace of God founded in this year the One Thousand, Five Hundred and Forty Fourth after the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Thirty-sixth year of the reign of His Most Excellent Majesty, Henry Eighth, his name, of England, Defender of our faith.

Richard Reeve, on this Twenty-third day of March, you are hereby installed.

BOYS: Hurrah! Hurrah!

DEAN: John Audley, I do instruct to take this chair next the schoolmaster as his usher, who will at all times and in all ways assist him in his duties at this school: for as long as it shall be deemed a worthy appointment.

*Audley mounts the dais and takes his seat.*

DEAN: Holy and humble John East, I now convey unto you the care of the souls of all these persons. It will forever be your ministry that you tend their minds in such way that they learn to live in the Glory of God, at all times acknowledging the deity and confessing before God the frailty and humility of man. That may they at all times conduct their lives in such a way as they will learn the wisdom of the Lord and his servants.

EAST (after kneeling for a moment): Let us sing together a Te Deum.

*All kneel and sing. As the Te Deum is being sung there enters singly a slow procession of boys, each in the costume of a different period, reaching down from 1544 to 1966. Silently they pause and then quietly join the kneeling school at the foot of the dais.*

DEAN: I declare the school now to be opened for scholarship in this district, to the Glory of God and the Good of Man: and I hereby present for safe-keeping the Deeds of this school to Schoolmaster Richard Reeve.

*He presents the Deeds.*

BOYS: Hurrah! Hurrah!

DEAN: It is now my intention on this happy and worthy occasion to call for the immediate service of ale, that all the scholars might better remember the day.

BOYS: Hurrah! Hurrah!

*Ale is produced and seized avidly by the boys.*

AUDLEY: Methinks the scholars will remember nothing of this day if the ale is strong.

EAST: Methinks you will make a worthy schoolmaster, Master Audley, with your wit and wisdom.

*The Dean is escorted from the dais by worthies and passes through the throng of cheering and drinking boys who follow the party away.*



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## Episode VIII

THE BLACK PRINCE'S  
DEPARTURE FOR FRANCE

1346

IF THE BLACK PRINCE is a favourite character in local history, it may be because Berkhamsted Castle was his favourite home. In 1337 the young son of Edward III was created the first Duke of Cornwall and was granted Berkhamsted (with other estates) 'to hold to him and the heirs of him and the eldest sons of the heirs of the kings of England and the dukes of the said place for ever.'

Picked men from Berkhamsted were taken by the Prince when he set out to fight the French. His marshal was Henry of Berkhamsted; his esquire was Sir John Raven, who lived on Whitehill (the slope east of the Castle) and gave Raven's Lane its name.

It was at Berkhamsted where the Black Prince spent his honeymoon. Here the couple entertained the whole Royal Family for five days, thereby suggesting that the King was not wholly dismayed by his son's marriage to Joan, the Fair Maid of Kent, his cousin.

The Black Prince was taken ill at Berkhamsted Castle in 1376 when he was 46 years old, and died after a painful journey to Westminster.

Waiting his father's coming,  
Stands he, whom warriors call  
The Paladin of Princes,  
The proudest knight of all,  
'I bear a noble gift my son,  
Take this great castle for your own'.

Black Prince, of fame and fable,  
Of Christendom's renown.  
New keeper of this castle,  
New guardian of this town.  
'I swear no plea shall be ignored  
Whilst I, your Prince, be your overlord.'

The burgess and the pauper,  
The housewife and the maid  
Go gallily to their duties,  
And all walk unafraid.  
'No Baron grim, nor scoundrel knight  
Our Prince's people dares affright'.

Flags and pennants fly from all over the castle.  
Knights and their ladies with pages and heralds muster,  
awaiting the royal arrivals. There is a fanfare, and  
escorted by Henry of Berkhamsted, Edward the Black  
Prince enters the arena. Lord Burgherssch greets him.

BURGHERSCH: The King your father is now within the  
boundaries of the town. Is it your wish that you  
should ride out to greet him?

BLACK PRINCE: It was the King my father's wish that  
I should greet him here. We will, therefore, await  
him.

HENRY OF BERKHAMSTED: Would it might be that His  
Majesty brings news of peace, that your Highness  
might therefore stay amongst us.

BLACK PRINCE: It is not for the son of Edward  
Plantagenet to languish in England when the sword

is drawn in France. It is in the fields of Normandy  
and Aquitaine that glory lies.

HENRY OF BERKHAMSTED: But in the heart of Hertford-  
shire that peace exists.

BLACK PRINCE: Peace is for children and their grand-  
sires wearied and honoured in battle. For youth and  
manhood it is the field of conflict, where chivalry  
may flower and order may be restored when disorder  
reigns.

BURGHERSCH: Do not forget, sire, what long ago was  
foretold by Merlin the Wizard: that neither Edward  
nor Clarence should wear the crown of England, but  
that it should pass to Lancaster.

BLACK PRINCE: What will be will be, and it is the will  
of the King my father that I should now to France:  
and it is my will to obey the will of my father.



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BURGHESCH: Who now approaches?

*Fanfare and state entry of King Edward III with Queen Philippa and court. They are greeted by the Black Prince. The King is handed a scroll by a page.*

PAGE: Your Majesty, the Deeds of the Castle of Berkhamsted, together with the Manor, the Town and the Park.

KING: Edward, you are hereby called by letters patent, as is your right as my first son, and as heir to my Kingdom to the Dukedom of Cornwall; it is further my wish that you hereby acquire the deeds of this most excellent and loyal town together with its manor and park and its well fortified castle to be held by you, and your heirs and the eldest sons of the heirs of the Kings of England and of the Dukes of Cornwall for ever.

*The deeds are handed over, the Prince kneeling.*

BLACK PRINCE: Will it please your Majesty that I present certain members of my court.

KING: Yes, my son, so do. Call forth your marshals and then take your adieu.

*Lord Burghesch reads from a scroll and as each name is called he receives from the Prince his insignia of Office.*

BURGHESCH: Henry of Berkhamsted, Principal Marshal to His Highness the Prince.

Everard Halsey

John Wood

Stephen of Champneys

Robert Whittingham

Edward le Bourne

Richard of Gaddesden.

*A horse is brought for the Prince, who mounts.*

QUEEN: Pride in a mother's heart at the triumphs that will be yours are mingled with the sorrows of parting. May God protect and bless you.

KING: My son, we will ride with you on your way until we take our leave and make for Windsor. You for Normandy whence we do not doubt news of your glory and achievements will reach us.

BLACK PRINCE: Sire, I nothing so much desire as to lead your armies to your renown and credit wherever the fates of war may lead us. I cannot doubt but that use in the field for the first time of cannon and ball now to be employed by your armies will strike fear and dismay in your enemies, and their defeat and subjection will follow speedily and certainly. When victory is assured then this black surcoat will be replaced by one as white as are the Windsor Swans and I will then return to this my castle here in pleasant Berkhamsted.



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## Episode IX

## THE CONSECRATION OF ST. PETER'S CHURCH

1222

THE FINEST building in Berkhamsted High Street is also the oldest. St. Peter's Church, boldly sited at the top of Castle Street, was begun early in the 13th century and was much enlarged in the 14th century.

With the raising of the tower in Henry VIII's reign the church grew to full size—and it is still one of the largest ancient parish churches in the Home Counties. In recent times, loving care and many thousands of pounds from large and small donors have been lavished upon the restoration of St. Peter's.

Our earliest known rector, Robert de Tuardo, was instituted in 1222, and we conveniently assume that St. Peter's Church was consecrated in that year. To mark the 700th anniversary of this event the town held a Pageant in the Castle grounds in 1922. It was successfully revived in 1931, the 200th anniversary of the birth of William Cowper.

Spirits of fire and water,  
Spirits of wood and stream,  
Under the cross' shadow  
Fade like an evil dream.

Out of the evil places,  
Out of the mire and sod.  
Stone upon stone is rising  
The House of the Living God.

Spirits of hill and river  
Shrive! in cold and fear.  
For unto God the Giver,  
The bells of Christ ring clear.

*A crowd is assembled around the chancel of the church.*

1ST CITIZEN: It's a great day. Some say greatest day ever for Berkhamsted.

2ND CITIZEN: Why so? What's going to happen here?

1ST CITIZEN: Because our church is to be consecrated.

3RD CITIZEN: And in good time. For long dark years our citizens here have fallen from faith.

1ST CITIZEN: Yea, they have turned to heathen idols. Indeed, all of a quarter century ago Hugh of Grenoble, our Bishop, came for to put down the worshipping of nymphs and sprites at the Holy Well, but still these evil practices persisted.

3RD CITIZEN: Even the worthies of the town thought to hold concourse with devils and returned to worship at the well of evil. But now we are to have a house of God for worship.

1ST CITIZEN: Beloved Hugh of Lincoln has brought us back to God and is come today to consecrate our church.

*Singing is heard and a great procession appears in solemnity, winding its way across the arena to the chancel: choir, vergers, sacristans, clergy, Bishop. They approach the chancel and altar, the crowd following. A short service is held, being the consecration of the church and the induction of the first rector, Robert de Tuardo. The service ended, the procession re-forms, and singing a recessional hymn, depart, the crowd following.*

Forty Three



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## Episode X

THE SIEGE OF  
BERKHAMSTED CASTLE 1216

If YOU CLIMB to the top of the shell keep, you will see the fine stone-lined well which was required to supply water to the Castle garrison in the event of their being driven to the ultimate point of retreat.

There is no evidence that they ever had to do so, though the Castle was in a state of siege for a fortnight in December, 1216.

Prince Louis of France was trying to gain the English Crown by leading the barons, who had forced John to seal Magna Carta, to victory against his 9-years-old heir, Henry III. But the garrison raised the drawbridge (opposite Castle Street, east of the modern causeway to the arena), and, led by a German, they repulsed assaults led by a Frenchman.

The barons, encamped on Whitehill, used mangonels to hurl stones against the Castle, causing great damage. During the siege the garrison made spirited sallies, seizing chariots and provisions, carrying off a banner and throwing the camp into confusion while the barons were at dinner.

On the fifteenth day the defenders surrendered and were spared their lives, goods and houses. But this was a local defeat. The Frenchman was driven from the land and Henry III sat firmly on the throne.

The Frenchmen came to England,  
But not to fight our nation.  
Oh, not they came to England  
By special invitation.  
King John had proved a tartar,  
And the Barons start to shout:  
"Come help us throw him out, lads!  
Pray help us turn him out!"

The Frenchmen came to England.  
They were not asked to stay.  
But though King John was dead now,  
They wouldn't go away.  
The countrymen of England  
Were filled with fear and doubt.  
"So help us throw them out, lads!  
Pray help us throw them out!"

The Frenchmen came to England  
With bow, and spear and lance.  
And over English castles flew  
The fleur-de-lys of France.  
But soon the nation shouted:  
"Pray turn yourselves about,  
And back you go to France, lads!  
Before we throw you out."

*A crowd of peasants assemble. Two youths play long sticks. Baron Fitz Count and Baron Reinulf, a German who speaks with an accent, emerge from the castle. They are treated with servility.*

FITZ COUNT: What a hollow shell the Magna Carta is!  
A hollow shell! As hollow as the crown of poor lamented John.

REINULF: 'Twer as good for John had Louis of France had his throne. He would at least have been spared the indignity of Runnymede.

FITZ COUNT: But there is none to deny the goodness of the Great Charter. You should best know that.

REINULF: You better. Do these serfs in your employ at the castle know yet that justice should not be sold, delayed or denied to any free man? Are your dungeons empty?

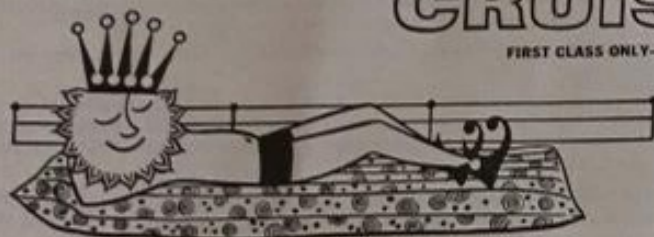
FITZ COUNT: They know what they understand: and they understand that since John's unhappy decease two months since, the rightful King is young Henry.

REINULF: Louis of France would think otherly it seems.



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FITZ COUNT: But Louis would think in French!

REINOLF: And I would think in German!

*Suddenly Queen Isabelle gallops in escorted.*

QUEEN: The castle is attacked. The Barons of Louis approach at speed. Protect the castle I beseech you, in the name of the King of England. Fight for King Henry.

FITZ COUNT: The Barons of Louis. To arms! To arms!

*A fanfare is sounded and all withdraw within the castle. Outside the castle a figure appears furtively and beckons to small groups that take up strategic positions round the castle. At a signal the groups come together to form an attacking party. A banner is raised. While they are forming there is a sudden foray from the castle by a party of English soldiers and in a matter of seconds the French banner is snatched away and carried within.*

*Lord Mandeville, the French leader, calls up more forces which advance on the Castle. A fanfare is sounded. There is another foray and a few minutes of confused fighting, the French Mandeville's banner being carried by the defenders of the castle.*

*The English defenders attempt to withdraw, but they are cut off, and only a few struggle back into the castle: many are left in the field dead or wounded. Lord Mandeville's army re-forms and after a pause a small party with a white flag advances from the castle headed by Queen Isabelle, who has with her, her young son.*

QUEEN: We ask only mercy and that which is the right of this young King.

FITZ COUNT: My Lord Mandeville, lack of numbers and insufficient supplies force us to surrender, and open to you the gates of this Castle. Our plea is that you spare the lives of innocent souls and learn in fair trial that our duty was a duty, as we thought, to our King.

REINOLF (to Fitz Count): Justice shall not be sold, delayed or denied to any free man.

MANDEVILLE: In the name of Louis of France we enter the Castle and to those herein and those dependent, we promise clemency and justice. Lead us within.

*Lord Mandeville offers his hand to the Queen and they lead into the Castle.*





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Forty Eight

## Episode XI

THOMAS À BECKET AND  
BERKHAMSTED'S FIRST CHARTER 1156

THE EARTHWORKS OF Berkhamsted Castle were started in the latter part of the 11th century, and the oldest masonry now surviving is thought to date from 1155-65, the years when Thomas à Becket held the Castle. One of the charges made against him when he fell from royal favour was that he spent too much money on Berkhamsted Castle. A century after his death we find references to 'Sir Thomas's Chamber'.

It was during Becket's connection with Berkhamsted that Henry II granted Berkhamsted its first charter. (Other charters were granted by Edward IV, Richard II, Elizabeth I and James I.)

Henry II's charter promised the men and merchants of Berkhamsted that they were to enjoy their privileges 'as well and as honourably, and better and more honourably,' than in the days of King Edward the Confessor, King William and King Henry I. In addition, they were to be freed from all tolls and taxes wherever they went in England, Normandy, Aquitaine and Anjou.

At a somewhat later date the leading tradesmen of Berkhamsted were wool merchants, some of who had agencies in Flanders—not alas! in the duty-free area.

A sprig of broom that comes from far Anjou,  
A kindly sapling, come to plant a line  
That stretches, king upon Plantagenet king,  
Across three hundred years of shadowed time,  
Justice, he brings, and honour, castles rise  
Strong to protect against the tyrant's away  
And men in safety walk throughout the land  
Freed from the old, chill fears of yesterday.

Come, bridge the centuries, set fancy free,  
This castle where we walk shall rise again.  
A fortress, triple-moated, strongly wrought  
By masons in this second Henry's reign.  
Gatehouse, and keep, and postern stand renewed,  
These crumbling walls rise proud against the sky.  
As once they rose, when archers with their bows  
Stood sentry here to challenge and to die.

*A gang of masons, carpenters and labourers come in with various implements and tools.*

1ST MASON: My life, it's hot work with the stone. See how the masonry sweats . . .

2ND MASON . . . as do the masons!  
But it is a noble work, for all that. They expect the walls to last, and they certainly will.

1ST MASON: They'll last a good deal longer than those old walls of wood, rotting and devoured by time.

2ND MASON: Aye, The wood was stout enough two generations back, but you can't beat the raw material of the earth. Now we use great blocks of stone, close chipped flint and rocks the size of a man's head. Look at the thickness of these walls.

1ST MASON: No doubt about it. These walls will stand a thousand years and more and people will stand and look and wonder: "What manner of men built this great pile of stone?"

*A mounted messenger and attendants ride in on horseback.*

MESSANGER: Men of Berkhamsted!

1ST/2ND MASONS: Sir?

MESSANGER: Where is your Lord, the Archdeacon?

1ST MASON: Not far from here, sir.

2ND MASON: Soon here, my lord.

1ST MASON: He comes about now to inspect our work.

2ND MASON: Aye. He comes every half hour for the same purpose.

MESSANGER: I would speak with him.

*Archdeacon Becket enters preceded by a Servant with flower and lantern.*

1ST MASON: Lucky you came now then. He should be along any minute . . .

2ND MASON . . . Wanting this finished, and that altered no doubt.

1ST MASON: Ay-Aye—that looks like him . . .

2ND MASON: The Archdeacon is here, my lord.

BECKET: What! Have we King's men at last?

Forty Nine



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What will you with Becket, sir?

MESSANGER: From the King greetings to his friend, the Archdeacon.

BECKET: Gracious . . .

MESSANGER: From his most excellent majesty, a Charter for Berkhamsted St. Peter and for Wallingford, for—

BECKET: Yes, yes, my lord. The Charter we know of. It has been discussed. The King—my friend . . . is most kind.

To the King, then—deepest thanks, for keeping his word, and, of course, for this, his most excellent Charter. My people will benefit now from my patronage.

MESSANGER: My lord.

BECKET (taking the flower from the servant, and handing it to the messenger): And give him this. Its name is Plantus Genestae, commonly known as Plantagenet, from the heart of England. You will find that it grows all over the common land here in Berkhamsted.

So—to Henry Plantagenet, with our thanks.

The Messenger rides slowly forward and looks up at the assembled people of Berkhamsted. He unrolls the Charter, pauses and then reads.

MESSANGER: "Henry II grants that all the men and merchants of the Honour of Wallingford and Berkhamsted St. Peter's shall have his firm peace through all his Land of England and Normandy, wheresoever they shall be; and he does give and grant to them for ever, all the Laws, Liberties and

Free Customs as they enjoyed them honourably, in the time of King Edward, King William, Great Grandfather to the said King Henry, and that they shall remain with their merchandise to be bought or sold through England, Normandy, Aquitaine and Anjou, by Water, by Land, by Wood and by Strand, Quit of Tallage, Pontage, Lastage, Passage, and all Customs and Exactions, upon the forfeiture of £10. And this he prohibits and commands upon the same forfeiture.

"And the King grants to the Men and Merchants of Wallingford and Berkhamsted for ever, all Laws and Customs like as they had in the time of King Edward, and King Henry his Grandfather: and he also grants to them wheresoever they should go with their Merchandises, to buy or sell thro' all England, Normandy and Spain, by water and by Strand, by Wood and by Land, they should be quit of all Toll and Passage of Bridges and Picage, Paviage and Stallage, and Shires and Hundreds, of Aids, Viscounts and Service of Guilds, and Danegilds, of Hidage, Bloodewite, Fredewite, Murders, Assart Guard and Leguard, and of Works of Castle Wall, and Ditches, Bridges, Streams, and of all Customs and Exactions secular, and of all servile Works, and they shall not be disquieted by any Man upon the Forfeiture of £10 and that no Man shall vex or disturb them; and to enlarge their Liberties, the King granted further that no Summons, Attachments, Distress, Inquisition or Execution shall be executed by any of the King's Officers within the Liberties of Wallingford and Berkhamsted; but by the High Steward, Escheator, Coroner and their Bayliffs and Ministers of the same Honour and Liberty." So says his majesty, King Henry the Second.





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## Episode XII

THE CONQUEROR  
AND THE CROWN

1066

IN THIS EPISODE our Pageant reaches its climax. The date no one ever forgets—1066—is also the first authentic date in local history. It was at Berkhamsted that the Saxons conceded victory to the Normans, and the consequences of this historic meeting have excited argument and passion for 900 years.

In the middle of October 1066—nine months after the death of Edward the Confessor—the Normans won the Battle of Hastings. Early in December the invaders, having fired Southwark, moved westward as far as Wallingford before crossing the Thames. Then they turned eastward to encircle London, causing great devastation wherever they went.

While the Normans were advancing through the Chilterns, the Saxon leaders rode out to West Hertfordshire to parley with William. The meeting place was Berkhamsted. Archbishop Aldred, the Atheling Edgar (heir of the Saxon royal line), Earl Edwin, Earl Morcar and the chief men of London swore loyalty to William and in return received a promise of good government. Then the Normans acquiesced in Duke William's assumption of the royal title. Now indeed the Conqueror, he was crowned at Westminster on Christmas Day, 1066, a few days after the momentous meeting at Berkhamsted.

The history of England was changed, and Berkhamsted's many links with Royalty began.

Here William stands, here paces Normandy,  
Part French, part Viking, whole adventurer,  
Who tossed the dice at Hastings, and has won  
This ancient land, this Saxon heritage,  
That now, like slave obedient to command,  
Must cringe, subservient, at his Norman heels,  
And yet, unfolding in the mists of time,  
Norman and Saxon blood shall flow together  
In a proud junction. England shall stand high,  
Then conqueror and conquered shall be one,  
But now, ahead is darkness, rage and fear,  
Time hangs upon the Conqueror's caprice.  
England and London behind barred doorways wait  
To hear the Norman thundering at their gate.

*Soldiers, armed, come out from the castle. A small group headed by Edmar Thane of Harold descends from the Keep and signals to withdraw. A second group appears at the top of the Keep, headed by Aldred, Archbishop of York, accompanied by Prince Edgar in silence. The whole scene is in silence except for the drums.*

*A third group appears. At its head is the imposing figure of William of Normandy. With him is his half-brother, Earl Mortain. As he approaches the groups in front of the castle Edgar kneels in obeisance, rises and signals to the Archbishop, who turns and, accompanied by the others, ascends the Keep.*

*William is invited to follow. Slowly he ascends the Keep, all still in silence save for the drums. On reaching the top all kneel save the Archbishop and William.*

**PRINCE EDGAR:** Sire, our land ravaged, our army defeated, our capital surrounded, we are forced to submit and secede to you as our conqueror.

**ARCHBISHOP:** William of Normandy, son of Robert the nephew of Emma wife to Edward surnamed the Confessor, conqueror of Harold, we, men of authority and rule, do come hither from the Witan in the City of London, to pay homage to your person, offer our oaths of fealty and in the names of the people of England, pray that you will take Edward's Crown, the Crown of England, to be our King.

*There is a moment's pause. William is seen briefly to kneel. The Archbishop makes the sign of the cross over him. William rises and turns to the groups below.*

**ALL:** God save the King: God save the King!

*Suddenly from all round the arena the cry is echoed "God save the King! God save the King!" At the same time from all round the arena there surges forward to the centre players from all the different Episodes, some in each group carrying flares. They face the Keep.*

*As the figures descend from the Keep, the massed company turn to the front, and join in the final anthem: All England is free.*

THE END



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Dorian Williams, the producer of the Pageant has also written the script. He has previously produced pageants at Aylesbury and Dunstable and tableaux vivants to celebrate the centenary of the British Red Cross in Hertfordshire.

Dorian Williams founded the Pendley Residential Centre of Adult Education at his family home, Pendley Manor, Tring, in 1945. Over a hundred short term courses are held there annually attended by over 3,000 people. For the past 17 years he has directed the highly successful and now nationally known Pendley Shakespeare Festival, annually in September, producing two Shakespeare plays in wonderful open-air settings.

Dorian Williams is also well known as BBC Television's commentator on equestrian events and ever since the war has been responsible for the direction of the many wonderful displays that have been produced as part of the Royal International Horse Show at the White City and at the Horse of the Year Show at Harringay and Wembley.



## Producing a Pageant

by DORIAN WILLIAMS

To be invited to produce a pageant is not only an honour and a privilege, but it is intensely exciting. The role of a pageant master combines those of both the artist and the conductor. His is the overall design, the general pattern: the detail in each episode is filled in by others, the colours of the individual costumes, the detailed moves, the scenic effects and the props.

His, again, is the overall effect, the change of mood, the rhythm, the tempo: but it is others, the sub-producers responsible for each episode who provide the different speakers, bring their own interpretations to the script and to the performance.

Just as the conductor welds all the different sections of the orchestra into one mighty whole, capable both of a great volume of sound and conversely a pianissimo passage, so the producer of a pageant welds all the different episodes, each stamped with its own individuality, into a co-ordinated whole. Scenes of massive pageantry alternate with scenes of quiet beauty. There is a constant flow of colour and sound, all working towards a great climax.

Without the spade-work done by all the sub-producers it would be quite impossible for the pageant master to do his job. Twelve different scenes, some with over 200 performers, each needing costumes, props, instruction. Indeed, it is essential that the pageant master should maintain an overall view of the whole performance, which he could never do if he got bogged down with detail particular to one or other of the different episodes.

Nevertheless, he is conscious all the time that his task would be impossible were it not for the contribution of all the various departments: the sub-producers, the costumiers, prop men and stage hands, the marshals, sound and effects departments, administration. Everyone is playing a vital part. It is up to the pageant master to bring it all together.

He must never forget that, unlike a play, a pageant to be effective must have primarily a great visual effect. He must remember, too, that if the audience is really to enjoy the pageant they must feel that they themselves are involved. They must be made to feel that they themselves are personally experiencing something that in fact happened centuries ago, because here it is before their very eyes. They should sigh with Cowper, root with Augustus Smith, cheer with Polly Page's friends; they should feel that sense of uplift so obviously experienced by those taking part in the consecration of the church; they should fear for Elizabeth, revere the various royal personages who graced the town with their presence; they should feel pride at the founding of the school; they should be aware of Becket's paradoxical character; they should await the arrival of William of Normandy with awe and a certain anxiety.

Just as those performing should feel they are become a part of history; so those in the audience should feel that they are spectators at the making of history. This is what the pageant master is trying to achieve as he brings all the facets of the pageant together.



## NATIONAL PLAYING FIELDS ASSOCIATION

*"If people like doing nothing, I have no objection. All I am concerned about is that people should not be forced to do nothing because they have no opportunity to do something in their leisure time."*

With these words, the President of the National Playing Fields Association, His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, once made probably the most apt summary of the aspirations of the N.P.F.A.

Ever since its foundation in 1925, the N.P.F.A. has been working to ensure that every member of the community—rich or poor, young or old, expert or beginner—who wants to take part in active indoor or outdoor recreation could do so.

How does the Association set about achieving this objective? It does so in three main ways—with financial help, technical advice and by what might best be termed 'friendly persuasion'.

### FINANCIAL HELP

Since 1925 the N.P.F.A. has made grants and loans totalling nearly £2,000,000 to sports clubs, local authorities and other organisations. This money came from its own funds and others which it administers.

It is estimated that this money has been directly responsible for the provision of some 13,000 individual facilities including almost 3,700 children's playgrounds. Through the Association receives a grant towards headquarters' expenses from the Department of Education and Science, all funds for grants and loans have to be raised from voluntary sources.

### ADVICE

Almost every local council in Britain—as well as many sports clubs—has at some time approached the N.P.F.A. for advice on technical matters such as planning and layout, acquisition of land and all legal matters in connection with recreational facilities. Each year enquiries are received from abroad, including some from countries in the Communist bloc. This service is provided free. When necessary special visits are made to schemes.

The N.P.F.A. works closely on technical subjects with the official governing bodies of many sports. For instance, the Association acts as official technical adviser to the Amateur Athletics Association. Special research has been carried out with appropriate official bodies into play leadership, cycle tracks, floodlighting, sports area surfacing and so on.

One of the N.P.F.A.'s most important research projects—on sports halls—has just been completed. This was carried out by a special Research Fellowship, established jointly with the Polytechnic, Regent Street, London. The terms of reference of this fellowship have just been extended for a further two years, and the Fellow appointed Consultant Architect for the Association on sports buildings.

The information gained in this research is made public through the wide range of publications put out by the Association. These range from a quarterly magazine, circulated to local authorities and others interested in recreation, to highly specialised books, sometimes published in conjunction with other bodies.

### PERSUASION

The N.P.F.A. has no statutory powers. It cannot compel any local authority to any course of action—or nor would it wish to. This is where the 'friendly persuasion' comes in. Each year the Association organises a conference in London

for members of local councils at which views and problems are fully aired. Close contacts are also maintained with Government departments.

These are some of the ways in which the N.P.F.A. brings to bear its powers of persuasion.

The Association urges local authorities to make the fullest use of their powers to provide ample open spaces and, in particular, children's playgrounds when slum clearance schemes are initiated and new housing developments planned.

The N.P.F.A. believes that sufficient use is not always made of sports facilities in schools, and urges education committees to make them available—under proper supervision—to outside organisations. The same applies to some industrial sports facilities.

Local councils are asked to make use of their powers to grant discretionary rating relief to sports clubs.

Help is given at planning enquiries to organisations and individuals fighting to preserve recreational facilities threatened with being taken over for building purposes.

Too many parks and swimming pools close just when people are leaving work and school. The N.P.F.A. is urging local councils to put this right, if necessary by installing floodlighting. The Association also promotes the wide use of porous playing surfaces, which can be used quickly after rain.

The Association is doing all it can to persuade local authorities to start adventure playgrounds and play leadership schemes in their areas. The N.P.F.A. believes that these facilities provide the most constructive and enjoyable play possible for children. Courses on play leadership are organised annually.

The N.P.F.A. has affiliated associations in every county in England and Wales as well as branches in Northern Ireland and Scotland and a representative in the Isle of Man. Through the work of these associations—which operate often only with the help of an honorary or part-time secretary—the ideals of the playing fields movement are carried out on a local level.

The Honorary Secretary of the County of Hertford Playing Fields Association is Mr. Hubert Richardson, 97 Stanley Avenue, St. Albans.

Government at all levels is becoming increasingly aware of the importance of providing enough recreational facilities of the right kind for the use of the community. The advances made, particularly in the last two or three years, are due in no small part to the continuing work of the N.P.F.A.

But much remains to be done—in many ways problems are becoming more pressing. Why? Land suitable for recreation is becoming scarcer and more expensive. Shorter working hours and a higher standard of living are increasing the demands on existing facilities. The ending of National Service has meant that thousands of young men who would otherwise be using facilities offered by the Services must now find their recreation on public and private fields.

People sometimes ask why recreation is so important. Does it deserve a high place on our list of social priorities? Yes.

Nobody can lead a properly full life without making good use of leisure time. Young people with interesting things to do are not likely to be forced by boredom into delinquency and vandalism; children with somewhere to play off the streets are unlikely to be involved in road accidents; and older people with an absorbing and active spare-time occupation are less apt to fall victim to ill health.

Besides—and this may be the best reason of all—recreation is fun!



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