



## ***Account of Purley on Thames***

### **Project Purley Meetings 1987**

#### **13 Feb 1987**

Planned - John Gurnett will be talking about Newspapers and Local History. John is a past editor of the Times Index.

#### **13th March 1987**

Planned - AGM followed by more recording from the Oral History Group.

#### **10th April 1987**

Planned - John Chapman on travel in Purley

#### **May 1987**

Planned - a visit to the Aerary at St Georges Chapel in Windsor Castle.

#### **June 1987**

Dr Hopkins, the planned speaker was unwell and so Jean Debney stepped in at the last moment to put together a most interesting presentation of the Storer papers which had been loaned to her by Peter Fullerton, a descendant of the Storer who had recently visited Purley. How lucky we were to be able to study this wonderfully informative set of documents.

Not only was our knowledge of Purley's past increased but an almost complete snapshot in time could be drawn from the articles and advertisements in the copy of 'The Lady' reporting the Storer wedding. The pieces of the history jigsaw are beginning to fit together with many names from court documents occurring again in the Storer rent book and in the school records.

#### **July 1987**

The walkabout from Pangbourne to Purley Village via Sul Brook, Scaces Farm and the Great Western Railway was brought to life for us all once again thanks to the notes produced by Jean Debney. The intrepid walkers surmounted overgrown paths and patches of nettles to complete the walk. Jean was asked to repeat the walk on the following Friday at the request of many members. This was done despite the threatening skies of our wonderful British Summer.

#### **September 1987**

John Chapman started off our trip down Memory Lane by telling us the about the formation of the ARP in Purley in the mid 1930s and the various preparations for war. These ranged from the digging of trenches to the logging of useful pieces of equipment like wheelbarrows, to the commandeering of vehicles. A local dignitary even had to give up his Rolls Royce to the wardens.

Many members brought along memorabilia such as hard hats, ration books, identity cards and even a 1d bus ticket. Cliff Debney had many treasures retrieved from his parents home in Manchester. Among them were letters between mother and children separated since evacuation. How heart rending some of these were. John Chapman had the foresight to bring along a tape recorder and microphone so hopefully some members memories will be preserved.

#### **9th October 1987**

Jean Debney gave a talk on the Poor Law records of Purley. She told us that only the 19th century

Poor Laws Overseers accounts exist for Purley but that further material has been found in the records of other Berkshire parishes. From this she has built up a considerable mass of material relating to some 18th and 19th century inhabitants of Purley.

She went on to explain about Poor Law examinations, removal orders and settlement certificates and told us about such folk as John Chapman, Jane Grundy and her future husband Charles Hopson as well as Daniel Redbarn who worked for John Sherwood and then for William Lovegrove. She also told us about Richard New who had too large a family and his grandfather William Lukeman who was too old to work; both of whom received parish relief.

Further information has been found in the Guardians minutes of the Bradfield Union which date from 1835, but more awaits discovery from this fascinating source.

### **13th November 1987**

We were fortunate to have an informal talk on Oral History from Adam Green, the County Archivist. His expertise in this field produced further ideas for our own successful Oral History Group headed by Tom Robinson and Margaret Hughes with their band of interviewers. The points he raised confirmed that our group was working along the right lines. During the talk he pointed out that we should not forget the younger adults and children. Their memories and impressions at various stages in their lives could add a different dimension to the history of Purley. Besides the question of interviews various technical questions were discussed, particularly the question of storage and deterioration. New techniques are continually improving our chances of handing the oral history material well into the future. He also spoke briefly on the planned county oral history library.

### **11th December 1987**

The traditional Christmas Social evening brought an opportunity for members to relax and chat to fellow members. The local history picture quiz and crossword was won by Eileen Greenwood, closely followed by Dorothy Viljoen





