

# *Account of Purley on Thames*

## Project Purley Meetings 1989

### **16 January 1989**

A free-format evening of childhood memories. Jan Jones told us a little of her mother's childhood in service. Jan then interviewed Eileen Greenwood who told of her early days in a mining family in the north. Many members joined in with their memories.

### **10th February 1989**

John Chapman on form again on Railways of Purley with super photos. A lot of most entertaining information. We learnt how the land was acquired for the Great Western Railway and of the various splendid engineering feats of Isambard Kingdom Brunel. What a brilliant man he was! John told us how to spot the evidence of the change in gauge and the addition of a second set of tracks through Purley. We were all surprised to learn of other railways in Purley and the following morning I went down to the river to see the site of the gravel carrying track, meeting other members with the same idea.

### **10th. March 1989**

After the AGM John Titterton treated us to his Purley Punch-ups - extravaganza. We galloped through 500 years of property disputes with the members split into groups representing Pangbourne, Sulham, Mapledurham, Purley Parva etc.. Often it was the same family, through many generations who won the disputes.

### **14th April 1989**

It was almost a case of standing room only when Dr Sadie Ward of the Museum of English Rural Life gave us an illustrated talk about rural life in this area. The slides included some of the Wilder photo collection. Bill Fisher's local knowledge popped up several times to fill in Sadie's comments about the slides. In fact there were a lot of exchange of comments, ideas and questions. Sadie made the interesting observation that there could be different interpretations of rural life depending upon the photographer.

### **12th May 1989**

25 years of Purley by Pat Deane

### **9th June 1989**

Visit to Museum of English Rural Life. Members were able to view the exhibits and take advantage of a unique opportunity to see the collection of over a million photographs and the most extensive library on rural matters in the country.

### **14th July 1989**

At the invitation of Mr and Mrs Michel Moon we were able to visit Sulham and have a conducted tour by its most knowledgeable resident. (and lord of the manor to boot) Michael explained the way in which the settlement of Sulham had grown over the years and we were able to look at Sulham Church and the Elizabethan Farm House. The visit finished up with a tour of Sulham House and wine on the terrace. A truly memorable evening.

### **September 1989**

Bill Fisher and his two sisters treated us to their memories of a childhood in Purley. Between them they managed to recall the occupants of most of the houses and a good deal about their life and times. Lucky for our amusement Bill was not the best behaved little boy and he had us in fits at some of his escapades, like sliding down the railway embankment and ripping his trousers. I wonder if the congregation at at Sulham know about their churchwarden.

### **October 1989**

Tom Robinson's wonderfully prepared talk on his father Heath Robinson, had us all enthralled. Many of us were amazed at the beautiful landscapes and book illustrations having only known the Heath Robinson inventions before. As well as bringing many of the books he illustrated, Tom let us see some of the sketches that he hopes will one day find their places in the Heath Robinson Museum.

### **November 1989**

The Coley group told us the story of their research and then the writing of their book. They played us tape recorded excerpts from their interviews which were charming and often very amusing. Probably the greatest interest was in the questionnaire they had drawn up which provided the framework for the interviewing.

### **December 1989**

Not too many made it to the annual Christmas party but perhaps it was too close to Christmas. Those that did had a splendid evening with tempting food and of course Jean's famous mulled wine. Our thanks go to Cliff Debney, John Chapman, John Titterton and Rick Jones for testing our credulity with their local history version of 'Call my Bluff'. For those who were not there can you define the following? - Huvvers, Drang, Irish Mile, Swanimote.





