

Account of Purley on Thames

Oral History - David and Rose Martin

R200381 4/6/2017

Interviewed by Archie White in 1974

The Home Guard had a check point on St Mary's Avenue in 1939.

Revd Moreton was a POW in the hands of the Japanese. He had joined the army as a padre and was captured in Singapore. The PPPOA bought Moreton a Meerschaum pipe - he used to come into the Social club for a drink.

Revd Skuse lived at Kendrick Court, near the Royal Berks and used to cycle over to Purley He reminded people of 'Puir Willie'

There was a bad flood in 1947. Lots of debris floated along St Mary's Avenue. The temperature rose about 20 degrees while the snow was on the on the ground and the earth frozen solid. The Thames was frozen over in 1963.

Fisher took over the shop from Girdler, then Richards had it.

Keen had the thatched cottage opposite Purley Park. Paid £3000 for the poultry farm after he came out of the airforce - he got tied up with the National Front. Pardoe was also involved. He packed up about 18 months ago when the chicken farm went bankrupt. He let out the buildings for light industry and got Planning Consent. He sold out to developers for over a million pounds.

Collins rented cottage after Keen. he later built a house on Beech Road and had a shop in Pangbourne.

Galsworthy, Ruskin and Oscar Wilde used to come down to Purley and Mapledurham and used many local scenes in their books.

Mountaine bought the estate and sold off plots - Palmer bought plots on St Mary's Avenue and re-sold them.

The 'Roebuck' on Wintringham Way was owned by a Lithuanian Jew.

There was a Coronation bonfire. Calley cut a lot of yew and Bucknell's cow eat it and died. Bucknell collected insurance.

The chap who ran the Post Office was from MI6 Major McMahon he ran the paper shop and kiosk.

In 1957 there was a split in the OAPs club because of an argument about a holiday.

The Pensioner's voice was published as a local rag.

In 1938 10/12 St Mary's Avenue just had a shed on it.

Martin's house was a £100 bungalow from the Ideal Home Exhibition circa 1932 - it could be taken apart into bits.

Natham drowned himself in the river. He had dermatitis and quarrelled with his wife losing his job as cowman to the Bucknells

At number 17 St Mary's Avenue the bricks of a previous cottage were found. The farm labourers cottage on Winifred Mountaine's land - the bricks were used to lay a brick path.

