

Journal Contents

A New Year's Message from the Chairman <i>John Chapman</i>	3
Message from the Editor <i>Ann Betts</i>	4
Don't Mention the War <i>John Chapman</i>	5
Christmas Tree Festival <i>Ben Viljoen</i>	8
Nature Notes <i>Michael King</i>	9
Reviews of Meetings & Events	
Woodland Archaeology (Dick Greenaway) <i>Hazel King</i>	12
Statues & Monuments of Reading (Sidney Gold) <i>David Downs</i>	12
The History of a Purley Railway Carriage (Kevin McCormack) <i>Millie Bordiss</i>	16
The Christmas Party <i>David Downs</i>	18

Forthcoming Meetings

Members' Meeting: A Family Heirloom (Will members please bring & talk about a family heirloom)	19 th Jan
Purley Through the Ages <i>Jean Debney</i>	16 th Feb
AGM followed by a Dogs for the Disabled presentation <i>Sandie Mathieson</i>	16 th Mar
A Working Life on the River <i>George Fielder</i>	20 th Apr
Wallingford Walkabout (starts 7 pm)	18 th May
Outing (details to be confirmed)	15 th Jun



THE PROJECT PURLEY JOURNAL

January 2007

Number 73

£2.00

Project Purley Publications

- 4 **Sources for the History of Purley on Thames Vol 1 Index** (revised Feb 1989)
- 5 **Sources for the History of Purley on Thames Vol 1 part 3** (items 39-61) (Reprinted and revised Sept 2005)
- 6 **Index Locorum to The Diary of Reading Corporation** (reprinted September 2005)
- 16 **Monumental Inscriptions at St Mary's Church Part B - Memorials in old churchyard**
- 18 **Beating the Bounds (£0.50)**

Please contact Ann Betts if you would like to purchase copies of the above publications. The costs, unless marked otherwise, are £1 per copy for members and £2 per copy for non-members, plus postage where applicable.

The following are being prepared for re-publication

- 1 **Sources for the History of Purley on Thames Vol 1 part 1** (items 1-23) (revised Aug 1988)
- 2 **Sources for the History of Purley on Thames Vol 1 part 2** (items 24-38) (Aug 1988)
- 3 **Monumental Inscriptions at St Mary's Church Purley Part C** (Feb 1989)
- 8 **The Early History of Purley C of E School** by Rita Denman (1993)
- 10 **The Place Names of Purley on Thames** by John Chapman (Sept 1990)
- 11 **Project Purley Newsletters 1-11** (Apr 1996)
- 12 **Project Purley Newsletters 12-16** (Apr 1996)
- 13 **Purley on Thames at the Millennium** compiled by John Chapman (Dec 1999)
- 14 **Monumental Inscriptions at St Mary's Church Part C - Memorials in new churchyard**

Other Purley Related Publications

- Tour Guide to Purley Church** (1988)
A History of St Mary's Church Purley by John Chapman (1988)

*Cover: Pillbox near the Roebuck
Frontispiece: Janet Mary Fullerton memorial in
St Mary's, Purley*

THE PROJECT PURLEY JOURNAL



*This Journal is published
by
Project Purley,
the
Purley on Thames
Local History Society*

Printed by The Print Room, Portman Road, Reading

A New Year's Message from the Chairman

JOHN CHAPMAN

*Editor Ann Betts
Designer Ben Viljoen*

*The contents of this Journal are protected
by copyright and nothing may be
reproduced without prior written permission
from Project Purley*

ISSN 1361-5599

First of all can I wish everyone a very happy and prosperous New Year. We have an excellent programme lined up for 2007 as we are repeating the series of Millennium lectures after someone pointed out that since 2000 we have had so many new members who have not had the opportunity of hearing about the history of Purley. Another advantage is that the lectures will be given by our own members and they come very cheap!!!

The past year has been very eventful with some excellent speakers and visits, including a rain soaked walkabout in Reading. The one talk that I thought was going to be the most boring turned out to be the best of the lot. This was our first meeting of the 2006-7 season when Dick Greenaway spoke on Woodland archaeology - it certainly opened my eyes to a completely new field of interest. For most of the meetings we have been able to do a re-run of the talk from the excellent reporting of David Downs - thank you David!

One project which is now well underway is to capture as much information as we can about Purley in electronic form so that it can be made secure for the future and easily available to members. Several of us have accumulated vast amounts of data, text and images over the years but it has been very difficult to let other people know exactly what we have and even more difficult to let people have access to it all. Some of it we will eventually publish but our immediate aim is to capture the information.

As well as holding meetings and events for our own members we raised £500 for 'Dogs for the Disabled' as a result of another successful visit by the Rain or Shine Theatre Company - in 2007 we will be supporting the Macmillan Nurses. Several of our members give talks to other societies and we have been very active supporters of the Berkshire Local History Association - especially our catering crew who did us proud at the BLHA AGM.

One of the first acts of your new Executive Committee this year

was to recognise the tremendous contribution that retiring Chairman, Jean Debney, has made to the society over the years and I was pleased to be able to present her with honorary life membership.

Can I conclude by thanking the members of the Executive for their hard work and support over the last year and all members for their support for our speakers and other events. Also to the Parish Council for their financial support.

Message from the Editor

I would like to thank everyone who contributed an article for the Journal during 2006 and to wish all readers a very happy New Year. If anyone has any suggestions for subjects they would like covered in the future or feels the urge to write something themselves, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Do remember that the Rain or Shine Theatre Company will be returning to the Barn on Friday, June 8TH 2007 to present Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. David Downs will be supplying us with more details later, but please note the date in your diary.

Subscriptions for this year at a rate of £5 per person are now due. Please note that only paid up members are entitled to a free copy of the Project Purley Journal.

Ron Denman

Ron who for many years was responsible for the layout of the Project Purley Magazine sadly died on the 15th September 2006. A full obituary will be published in the next issue.

Don't Mention the War

JOHN CHAPMAN

Just before you get to the Roebuck, on the north side of the A329 is a strange concrete building almost hidden in the bushes. For those of us that can remember the war we can recognise it immediately but for the younger members it is somewhat of a mystery.

Let me take you back to 1937 when war with Germany was looming. The Home Office began preparations to meet three very apparent threats. The first was bombing from the air and several designs of bomb shelter for domestic use were built. There was the Anderson - an arrangement of curved corrugated iron sheets which could be assembled to cover over a hole you dug in the garden and to which you had to go when the sirens sounded. You were supposed to place all the soil you had dug from the hole on top to camouflage it. My grandparents had one of these and they were absolutely useless as at the first sign of rain the water flooded into the hole so they were always dark and dank. The second most popular ones were the Morrison. These were great fun for children. They consisted of a sort of metal table which you could hide under when the sirens sounded and eat off it when they didn't. My aunt had one and we used to make a camp there. The best advice is what we did - shore up the staircase and put a bed under it - I was sleeping there with my mother and baby brother when a bomb dropped in front of the house and blew it in and we were quite safe and snug, although the house was unusable after that. We were lucky as we evacuated to Gloucestershire and another family moved in. Then the house got a direct hit and they were all killed.

The second threat was gas. This had been used by both sides in the First World War and people were really terrified of it as there were still lots of men from that war around to tell the tale. Everyone was issued with a gas mask when war broke out. Children got one that made them look like Mickey Mouse, babies were issued with a respirator box that was more likely to suffocate them than save them

and adults got a traditional respirator mask in a small cardboard box which you were supposed to carry around with you all the time and put on as soon as the siren sounded. As school children we had regular practices - the head rang a bell and we all put on our masks and dived beneath our desks. As it turned out gas was not used.

The third threat was invasion. The first line of defence was to stop them even trying to invade by denying the Germans air and sea superiority and this is what actually succeeded but we were constantly told to be on our guard against German paratroopers dressed as nuns but what we were supposed to do about it was never very clear. The second line of defence was obstacles on the beaches and guns on cliffs. These were backed up by the Home Guards who were initially called Local Defence Volunteers. If this line failed then the plan was to fall back to a number of defensive lines across the country until they reached the Thames which was the last line of defence.

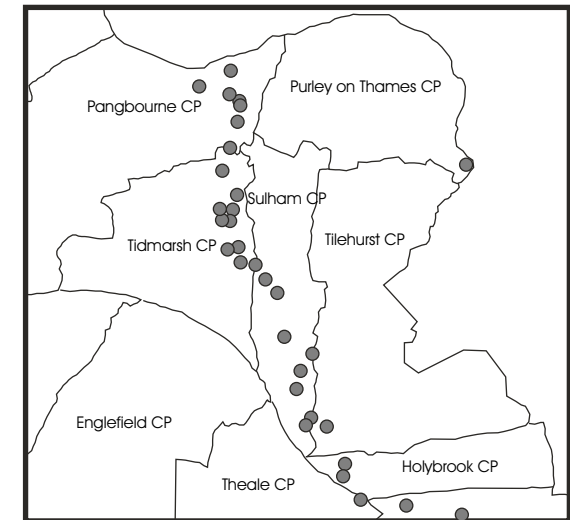
You can still trace these defensive lines as they are marked by pill boxes made of concrete of a type that had been developed in the First World War to protect machine gunners. They had a horizontal slit through which one could fire and were mostly of hexagonal shape as this eliminated sharp corners which could be attacked by heavy artillery and which allowed the gunners to have overlapping fields of fire. These pill boxes were often supplemented by tank traps and other obstacles but these have all gone now. They started building the pill boxes (that is what our concrete construction is - see cover) in May 1940 and they went on until late summer when the result of the Battle of Britain was more assured. During this time some 15,000 of these were built and a very large number of them have survived.

They were built in one of two ways. The first was to build wooden shuttering and then pour concrete inside, reusing the shuttering on the next box when the concrete had set. The second was to build a brick skin instead of the shuttering and just leave it in place to give added protection. They were then painted or disguised in some way to make them look like a mound of earth or a farm building.

The only time most of them were used however was in practice

for the D-Day invasion when they were used as targets by Allied gunners as the Germans were known to have constructed their own and they were trying to find the best way of destroying them. About a third of those built have been destroyed - mostly in 1944 - the rest have just been left and abandoned, as has ours. In later years there was a campaign to get rid of them but they were built of very good concrete and after a few years the concrete hardened and they were almost indestructible. Several attempts were made to blow some of them up but they did more damage to the surrounds than they did to the pill boxes. Nowadays many of them are listed buildings!

Distribution of pillboxes in and around Purley



Based on information supplied by West Berkshire Council

Some years ago Berkshire County Council Archaeology Department did a comprehensive survey of the ones in Berkshire and they are all now listed on the Sites and Monuments Record. The main line was known as the GHQ line and through Berkshire it followed the River Loddon then cross country to Burghfield and along the Kennet and Avon Canal before turning north through the Sulham Gap to join the Thames at Pangbourne and thence along the Thames westwards. Our box was a guard covering the road from Reading and was not part of the main line.

Christmas Tree Festival

BEN VILJOEN

I am sure that many of you attended the splendid Christmas Tree Festival that was held in St Mary's just before Christmas.



Here is a copy of the notice that accompanied our display:-

We are pleased to be able to participate in this weekend's Christmas tree festival.

Our tree is decked with holly and ivy, the traditional decorations of Christmas time. The use of ivy is also a reminder of the famous Ivy Wedding that took place in this church in 1889.

Our display features a lancet window that was originally in the north wall of the chancel. The window dates back to the 12th or 13th centuries but the glass was replaced in 1870 when the church was rebuilt and much of the surrounding stonework had been replaced over the years before it was finally blocked up in 1983 when the extension was built.

The glass was going to be thrown out but with David Evans' permission it was rescued by John Chapman and has been languishing in his loft since then. Hopefully its importance can now be recognised and we can find a place to display it on a permanent basis.

During the course of the festival it was agreed that the framed glass will be displayed on a permanent basis in the blind window alcove to the left of the altar, a very fitting home as this was the window from where the glass was originally removed.

Our frontispiece shows the memorial to Janet Mary Fullerton, the daughter-in-law of the bride whose ivy wedding our display commemorated. This memorial was, by sheer coincidence, next to the window alcove in which we placed our display.

Nature Notes

MICHAEL KING

August

At the beginning of the month the temperatures became a little cooler with nice fresh mornings. The third week brought much needed rain, which resulted in the lawns beginning to look green again and autumn flowers began to bloom. The horse chestnut trees were turning brown which seemed early - perhaps lack of rain. Nice to see a good re-growth on the railway embankments despite the hot dry summer. Still observing the rare humming bird hawk moth in the garden. It had been reported in the national press as being seen over a fairly large area. Dragon flies and damsel flies hawking over ponds and streams in their beautiful colours of green, blue, brown and red. With the cooler weather more birds seen feeding on the

nuts and seeds hung in the garden. Large flocks of swallows and martins gathering over the meadows, the swifts having already left for warmer climates. Regularly heard tawny owls call at night - its country name being the screech owl.

September

Rain and strong winds but milder temperatures with grass, trees and plants growing strongly again. Vegetable growth in the allotment preferring these cooler conditions. When at the allotment I lifted an old carpet covering the adjoining plot, and was pleasantly surprised to find three adders (2 female and 1 male) resting in the warmth, as well as one shed skin. Other allotment holders had seen adders, which are also known as Northern Vipers. At the first frost they hibernate in a ready-made hole in the ground. On my next visit I found 2 slow worms. The hot dry summer saw an invasion of crane flies which were especially difficult to keep from coming indoors. Crickets observed on the lawn.

October

Weather very changeable, heavy showers and strong winds, but some sunny spells. Grass is growing rapidly, almost like spring. Autumn flowers now in full bloom and rose buds forming/opening to perhaps give their last show of colour before winter. A large flock of Canada Geese - approximately 200+ - were feeding on the stubble field adjacent to the allotments. Apparently the early browning of some horse chestnut trees has been due to the caterpillar of the leaf minor moth - an immigrant! A cold winter should prevent these becoming a problem in 2007. Whilst walking a river meadow when on holiday in Dorset, I observed sheep eating the tips of nettles - never seen this before. There were many butterflies still evident in the hedgerows, mainly red admiral which come in spring and then their young leave in autumn. Also an abundance of ladybirds. Lots of blackberries ripening. According to the River Cottage Chef, there are over 400 varieties of blackberry, which fruit at different times. Adult swallows now en route to Africa, but their year's young still can be seen. Why they do not travel with their parents is still one of

life's mysteries.

November

Frost and misty mornings for the first few days of the month, then strong winds and heavy rain, finishing with thunderstorms and mild temperatures for the time of the year. Leaves at last beginning to change into their autumn colours and, with the strong winds, carpeting the ground as they fall. Visited Exbury Gardens in Hampshire and was surprised to see a second flush of flowers on the rhododendrons and camellias. A few lone hornets looking for their winter quarters, which normally consists of chewed-up wood pulp shaped like a hanging shrivelled apple. Last of the bumble bees and butterflies still evident in the warmer spells. Birds still not taking full advantage of the seeds provided. It was reported that no barn owls bred in the Pang Valley during the 2006 season due to the lack of small mammals, their main food.

Winners and losers of the summer drought: hedgehogs and song thrushes suffered from lack of slugs and snails due to the dry conditions; hares and deer because grass turned brown lacking nourishment and the amphibians as small ponds and streams dried up. Moths and butterflies were more abundant as a result of the warmer temperatures and bats found plenty of food in the warm evenings.

Apparently there are now more deer in this country than since the time of William the Conqueror.

Reviews of Meetings & Events

Woodland Archaeology

Dick Greenaway's illustrated talk on Woodland Archaeology in West Berkshire in September should surely have inspired members attending that meeting to look with fresh eyes when next walking in woods.

Rural archaeology, such as field systems, has unfortunately been lost over the years to the plough and developments, but woodland archaeology has been relatively undisturbed. With the lack of access to these areas, as well as the tree canopy, it is, therefore, still possible to find evidence of previous woodland management such as enclosures for deer parks, boundary banks, saw pits, charcoal hearths, chalk and gravel pits. Trees that have been coppiced, or pollarded, can also date a woodland, as well as the growth of flora such as bluebells and dog's mercury. Bluebells indicate an undisturbed area, whereas dog's mercury colonizes previously worked land. Chalk and potash were produced for use on the land as fertilizers and the gravel extracted was for road maintenance in the days when each parish was responsible for their upkeep. Apparently brick kilns were still being used in the West Berkshire woods until World War II.

Woodland surveys are usually conducted during the winter months. If anyone is interested, or wishes to volunteer to help in this historical work, they should contact the local Archaeological Service on 01635 519534 or Email: heritage@westberks.gov.uk.

Hazel King

Statues & Monuments of Reading

The guest speaker at the October meeting was Sidney Gold, a gentleman already known to many members of the society, either because they had taken part in the Reading town centre walkabout he led in May, or because they had in the past been patrons of his hairdressing emporium in Oxford Road.

Sidney's topic was similar to that of the recent walkabout so it is necessary to describe only briefly the statues and monuments we visited on that gloomy, rainswept summer evening. He told us about the three best known and most enduring statues in Reading, namely the Maiwand Lion, Queen Victoria and George Palmer. They were all designed by George Simonds (1843-1929), a member of the well known brewery family, but who studied sculpture in Dresden and Brussels before coming to Reading in 1905.

The Maiwand Lion is a memorial to the 328 soldiers of the Royal Berkshire Regiment killed at the battle of Maiwand in July 1880 during the Afghan campaign. It cost £900 and was unveiled by Lord Wantage in December 1886. The Lion is over 31 feet long, weighs 16 tons and is bolted together from nine sections. It represents the courage of a brave and distinguished regiment and has become the best known symbol of the town of Reading. Photographs taken during its recent renovation show that the lion does indeed have a tongue, though this is not visible to anyone standing in the Forbury Gardens. Simonds also received the commission for the statue of Queen Victoria to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of 1887. The cost on this occasion was £1,000 and the unveiling took place in July 1887, performed by the Duke of Cambridge. Simonds' next major commission for a public sculpture was to honour George Palmer, one of the founders of the biscuit factory and also Member of Parliament for Reading. The bronze monument was unveiled on the same day as the opening of Palmer Park in 1891. It stood originally in Broad Street but, by 1929, town centre traffic was so heavy that it had to be moved to ease congestion. It was taken by lorry to Palmer Park and re-erected on its present site near the athletics stadium.

There are three more pieces by Simonds on display, all marble busts situated at the head of the staircase in the Town Hall. These are of Henry Bilson Blandy, several times Mayor of Reading, Arthur Hill, Mayor for four consecutive years by 1888 and after whom the London Road swimming baths are named, and C.T. Murdoch, Member of Parliament for Reading from 1886-92 and again from 1895-98. It was Murdoch who performed the first kick-off at the new

Reading F.C. stadium at Elm Park in 1896, declaring the ground to be "second to none in the kingdom."

Two more marble busts sculpted by William May, a contemporary of Simonds, can be seen in the Museum of Reading. One is of William Palmer, who endowed a fine collection of paintings to the Art Gallery, the other represents Joseph Stevens, the first curator of the Museum.

On the exterior of the Museum in a niche below the gable is another Queen Victoria by F G Anstey of Regents Park. It cost only £100 and is considered to be of great artistic merit, but its beauty is largely wasted as the fine detail is almost impossible to see from ground level. However the decorative friezes on the walls of the Town Hall and Museum are more easily viewed and are intended to depict the history of the town of Reading, as well as scenes of museum activities, including history, science, art and literature.



Facing the railway station is a bronze statue of King Edward VII, dressed in the robes of a Field Marshall. The sculptor was George Wade and the unveiling was by Prince Christian in December 1902. The statue commemorates the King's Coronation and funds were provided by Martin John Sutton, a local benefactor from the seed manufacturing family. Another less well known representation of Edward VII is the bronze wall medallion by Alfred Drury, erected

after the King's death at the Royal Berkshire Hospital in remembrance of his genuine interest in the hospital. Originally situated in the archway leading to Redlands Road it can now be seen behind the tea bar near reception.

Drury also designed the marble wall medallion of Martin Hope Sutton, father of Martin John placed in Greyfriars Church, whilst the marble statue of Rufus Isaacs, MP for Reading, Viceroy of India and later Marquess of Reading, stands in the King George V Memorial Garden in Eldon Square. The statue of Isaacs created by Charles Jagger was originally intended to be set up in New Delhi but, after Indian independence, was brought to Reading. It remained in the museum store before being unveiled by the Third Marquess in 1971.

Dr Richard Valpy, headmaster of Reading school for almost fifty years until 1830, is commemorated by a statue in Saint Laurence's Church. It was designed by Edward Hakewill, a former pupil of the school, but is so badly placed in the church that it is difficult to see in any detail. Moves by Reading School to relocate the statue to the school-site in Erleigh Road have so far fallen upon deaf ears.

Descriptions of four more local monuments concluded Sidney's talk. He referred to the Simeon Obelisk in the Market Place, which was designed by Sir John Soane and completed in 1804. Paid for at a cost of £310 by Edward Simeon, a Reading man who became a director of the Bank of England, it is triangular in shape to fit the outline of the Market Place.

The thirteen heads on the Abbey Gateway, eight on the north side and five on the south, were carved by



Andrew Ohlson and restored by public subscription at the end of the nineteenth century. The 1887 Jubilee fountain in Saint Mary Butts is made of Portland stone and based on a design by George Webb, a Reading architect. It has twenty-nine water jets, but the original drinking cups on chains have long since disappeared. And, finally, we were told about Attwells Drinking Fountain on the Thameside Promenade near the Holiday Inn. Unveiled in 1908, it was created as a result of the will of Mrs Attwell, whose husband Frank was not only Mayor of Reading, but also the manager of the Royal County Theatre.

Our speaker ended by showing us a cartoon from the local newspaper in which a team of workmen are shown attempting to drag the Maiwand Lion out of the Forbury Gardens. It appeared at the time of the removal of the George Palmer statue and was drawn by local artist, Charles Chapman, best known as the artist for the Billy Bunter annuals and who had lived in Highmoor Road in his youth.

And so Sidney Gold's description of Reading's statues and monuments had come full circle. The evening had taken more of the form of a lecture than a talk, but Sidney has a confident, clear voice and a series of excellent slides enhanced the quality of his presentation. We shall now be able to look at each of the items he told us about with fresh eyes and added interest.

David Downs

The History of a Purley Railway Carriage

This was an intriguing title for a talk given by Kevin McCormack at the Society's November Meeting.

The story began in 1969 when Kevin, sailing up the Thames and passing along by Purley, espied there a railway carriage. Being a member of the Great Western Railway Society, he was sufficiently curious to know what the carriage was doing there. He and his friends moored at the Lock and set off to have a closer look at the carriage situated at 58 Wintringham Way.

Through this chance sighting and a word with a local inhabitant,

Kevin learned of another well preserved carriage at 10 River Gardens. This was a very exciting find because it was, in fact, a 3rd Class Saloon Carriage built in 1894. This type of carriage (built between 1892 and 1898) could be hired at Paddington as a private saloon carriage for party outings to be taken to various venues along the line, such as the Newbury Races. Well fitted out with a sitting area at each end and toilet facilities situated between the two saloons, it was very popular for outings. It was, however, withdrawn from service in 1937 and apparently No.2511 was in situ at 10 River Gardens in 1938. This particular carriage was in excellent condition, having been protected from the elements by a wooden structure built around it with a verandah giving it the look of a small bungalow, as was evident from a photograph taken by Kevin in 1971.

It seemed that a lady named Molly had been living there, but had left to take up residence in a Nursing Home. In 1972, it came on the market for £200 and was offered to the Great Western Railway Society. They declined the offer because of the difficulty in removing the carriage from its close proximity to the river, which they considered to be an impossible task. Not so Kevin. He bought the carriage himself and, as the proud owner, was fully determined to get it moved to Didcot, the home of the Great Western Railway Society.

Having taken down the surrounding wooden structure and had Rentokil examine and treat the carriage, all was set for the removal. On the 16th April 1972 a low loader lorry and a crane appeared in River Gardens and with great efforts not to end up in the Thames, the low loader managed to back up to the carriage and, with the crane lifting carefully, Saloon Carriage No.2511 was on its way to its new home. Again Kevin showed photographs of the carriage on its stately way over the Downs to the Didcot Railway Centre.

The next thing was to get it onto a railway wagon on the line. Kevin had asked at Reading for the loan of a 30ft long flat wagon to be brought to Didcot to take the carriage. Misunderstanding ensued and two 15ft wagons were in situ. Kevin had noticed a 30ft wagon

parked up at the depot and asked to borrow it and so got his precious cargo on the line to be taken into an engine shed, where he could work on it.

Since then Kevin McCormack has set about lovingly restoring the Saloon, both inside and out, to its original pristine condition. There was much to do, including restoring the toilet facilities. The GWR Society bought the toilet and hand basin from a railway carriage situated at 22 Brading Way and Kevin bought a condemned tool van for the wheels. This latter purchase meant that the carriage could have a short outing in 1989, back on the tracks for the first time after many years. Kevin is still working on the carriage, and we found this to be a most interesting story, told with humour and with modesty in the light of what he has achieved.

Millie Bordiss

The Christmas Party

This year's party took place on Friday, December 15th at the usual venue of Rick and Val Jones's house which was as welcoming and beautifully decorated as ever. Unfortunately, some of our members were ill, some had travelled to Scotland for a birthday party and some had other commitments so this meant that just twenty-one of the Society's regular clientele gathered for the annual bash.

Guests began to arrive from 7.45 pm onwards and were greeted with a literally warm welcome of a glass of mulled wine. This was served by our Chair, John Chapman, assisted by Cliff Debney. Cliff certainly took the sartorial honours for the evening, as he was wearing a scarlet bow tie, plus a colourful Max Miller-style waistcoat (though fortunately Cliff was not telling any colourful Max Miller-style jokes).

Once the traditional postage saving exchange of Christmas cards had happened, Chairman John made a formal speech of welcome. After thanking Rick and Val for their hospitality once again, he mentioned the Christmas tree display at St Mary's Church, where Project Purley's excellent entry had been prepared by Rita Denman

and Ben Viljoen. He also referred to the chancel window from St Mary's Church which was removed when the Church was extended in 1983. John rescued it at the time and now twenty-three years later it has been reframed by Ben and returned to the Church as a permanent display. Although the glass in the window is Victorian, the sill dates from the twelfth century. The restoration of the window is another example of Project Purley's commitment to preserving the heritage of our village.

Formalities completed, conversation and chatter began among groups of three or four seated around the warm, comfortable lounge. Topics discussed included the morality or otherwise of reusing unfranked postage stamps (we all agreed it was wrong), the magical goings-on at the Purley WI Christmas party and the possibility of publishing a Project Purley book of poetry to raise money for charity.



Then it was down to the serious business of the evening, i.e. eating the buffet that had been contributed to by all present and finding the answers to the quiz. This year's quiz asked members to match a film title to a crossword-type clue (e.g. Sabu grown up = The Elephant Man, or Metro = The French Connection) and with twenty-nine titles to find from one hundred and ninety-six films, proved to be a real conversation killer. There were long periods of silence punctuated by occasional squeals of delight as someone suddenly found an answer, and for an hour or so this became the quietest party of the

festive season. As frustration grew, there were cries of "it's no good, I must have another sausage roll/mince pie/piece of cake/Thai fishcake," and a time limit of 9.45 pm was introduced. When the answer sheets were marked and the scores added up, it was found that Catherine Sampson, with twenty-one correct answers, had been narrowly beaten by Annabel Mason, who found twenty-three. Annabel was presented with a bottle of Bucks Fizz as her prize.



The social aspect of the party resumed with everyone enjoying themselves as glasses were refilled and the food tables almost but not quite cleared. Festivities continued until about 11 pm when guests began to drift away into the surprisingly mild evening air. As we left we all reflected on two things - how fortunate we all are to have so many good friends and, also, how on earth can "coach ripped Holy Scripture" be the clue for "Tora! Tora! Tora!"

David Downs

Executive Committee

Chairman	John Chapman (0118) 9426999 john@purley.demon.co.uk	5 Cecil Aldin Drive Purley on Thames
Treasurer	Ben Viljoen (0118) 9843170 highveldt@ntlworld.com	12 Beech Road Purley on Thames
Secretary	Lee Hall (0118) 9429238 leeandrichard@vodafone.net	33 Waterside Drive Purley on Thames
Minute Secretary	Hazel King (0118) 9424442	2 Highfield Road Tilehurst
Journal Editor	Ann Betts (0118) 9422485 ann.betts@tiscali.co.uk	4 Allison Gardens Purley on Thames
	Cliff Debney (0118) 9413223 cliffdebney@onename.demon.co.uk	8 Huckleberry Close Purley on Thames
	Jean Debney (0118) 9413223 jeandebney@onename.demon.co.uk	8 Huckleberry Close Purley on Thames
	David Downs (0118) 942 4167	99 Long Lane Tilehurst
	Peter Perugia (0118) 9843932 perugia@perugia515.fsnet.co.uk	7 Nursery Gardens Purley on Thames
	Catherine Sampson (0118) 9422255 clspurley@aol.com	32 Waterside Drive Purley on Thames