Journal Contents

Forthcoming Meetings & Events

Outing to the Joint Aeronautical and Geospatial Organisation at Hermitage	Thursday 28th May
The Taming of the Shrew *Rain or Shine*	Friday 19th June
Guided Walking Tour of Newbury *Jane Burrell*	Sunday 21st June
BBQ at Highveldt	Friday17th July
The Battle of Newbury *Clive Williams*	Friday18th September

PROJECT PURLEY Local History Society

THE PROJECT PURLEY JOURNAL

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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: Paddington Bear in Reading Football Colours by kind permission of David Downs.
Frontispiece: Solomon's Seal, vaguely ecclesiastical flowers in honour of Bishop Wilberforce

THE PROJECT PURLEY JOURNAL

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Samuel Wilberforce

JOHN CHAPMAN

This is the second in the series of articles on famous people associated with Purley.

Samuel Wilberforce was the third son of William Wilberforce who is well known for his work to abolish slavery in the British Empire. He was born in London on the 7th September 1805 and followed a usual clerical career, being ordained in 1828 after graduating from Oriel College, Oxford. After serving as a parish priest as rector of Brighstone on the Isle of Wight he was made Dean of Westminster in March 1844 and Bishop of Oxford in October of that year.

He was a man of very forceful ideas and seemed to relish involving himself in controversy. In 1847 he railed against the appointment of R D Hampden to the bishopric of Hereford and, although a high churchman, he held aloof from the Oxford movement and quarrelled with John Newman to the extent that Newman would no longer publish his articles.

It was however in his opposition to Darwinism that he showed himself up as a strident debater and earned the soubriquet of 'Soapy Sam' from a comment by Benjamin Disraeli that the Bishop's manner was "unctuous, oleaginous, saponaceous". It began in a Sunday sermon at St Mary's church in Oxford in May 1847 when he addressed many delegates to the British Association for the Advancement of Science and issued a stinging attack on a book, popular at the time, called *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*. As far as he was concerned science had to conform to theology and if it diverged then it was the science that was wrong.

Darwin's book *On the Origin of Species* was published in 1859 and in 1860 Wilberforce and Thomas Huxley were set up for a debate on the theory of evolution at Oxford. Darwin remarked afterwards that Wilberforce's arguments 'quizzes me quite splendidly' but it was Sam's question to Huxley that made the headlines when he

asked whether Huxley was descended from a monkey on his grandmother or his grandfather's side. Huxley retorted that he was not ashamed to have a monkey for an ancestor but he would be ashamed to be connected with a man who used his great gifts to obscure the truth. Such was the impact on the audience that Lady Brewster is said to have fainted. The end result however was not the defeat of Darwinism as the organisers had expected.

Samuel Wilberforce went on to become Bishop of Winchester in 1869 and was killed in a fall from a horse on 19th July 1873.

Samuel had promised Major Storer a donation of £10 towards the costs of restoring Purley Church but the rebuilding happened after he moved to Winchester and we do not know if the promise was honoured.

Bishop Samuel Wilberforce's Observations

JOHN CHAPMAN

Samuel Wilberforce was made Bishop of Oxford in October 1844. His predecessor, Charles Bagot, had, with considerable reluctance, accepted the transfer of Berkshire from Salisbury but had refused to accept Buckinghamshire so when the new bishop was appointed, Bucks was added to the diocese and Samuel was faced with administering a diocese of over 600 parishes.

To assist him in remembering the clergy and details of each of these parishes, he kept two Diocese Books in which he recorded his private thoughts and observations. Some of these could well have resulted in a libel suit had they become known at the time. They have however now been published as part of the Berkshire Record Series and shed considerable light on the state of the church in the mid 19th Century.

Below we reproduce the entries referring to Purley and our three neighbouring parishes of Sulham, Tidmarsh and Pangbourne and their rectors, with grateful acknowledgements to Ronald and Margaret Pugh who deciphered Samuel's dreadful handwriting.

Book One has copies of entries made when the archdeacons and rural deans came to present the state of their areas and includes in two columns the bishop's and the Archdeacon or Dean's thoughts. It also lists miscellaneous information such as lists of gamekeepers and clergy holding game licences and the names of dissenters. Book Two is more straightforward as it has a page for each of the parishes. Book One is covered by pages 1-93 and Book 2 by pages 95-339 of the Berkshire Record Publication.

Book One

Page 41 – all four parishes are listed as being in the Deanery of Reading without comment.

Page 38 – Richard Palmer of Sonning listed as holding a game certificate of £4-0-10d

Page 54 – lists the comments of the bishop and the Reverend Austen-Leigh – first the Bishop's comments:-

Pangbourne – Church in dreadful state. Wants rebuilding Mr Breedon squire paup. Cartwright Dent lives there unhandsomely

Purley – Mr Palmer – in good order – bonus. Moderate rather high

Tidmarsh – T Wintle – very small parish. Hopkin Squire – elderly good kind of man, There on Saturday and Sunday, resident. – NB near St Johns – has no license for non-residence.

Sulham – J Wilder – Fellow of Eton – Gentlemanlike – all in order – Schools – does not reside in vicarage but in his nephew's house.

And the dean's comments:

Pangbourne – Held for short time, second son of Hulme. Very pleasing man but quite young.

Purley - R Palmer – Easy man, active, good speaker, anxious about duties.

Tidmarsh – Thomas Wintle of St John's – very sensible pleasing man. – Hopkins laid out much on Church.

Sulham – John Wilder – would be Tractarian (applies May 1846 that the Rev Lionel Carden tutor & sometimes parochial substitute may not be licensed)

Page 91 – Mr Wintle Tidmarsh – his Privy Council return

Book Two

Page 205 – Richard Palmer offered to go with Bishop to London in May 1856 to mediate in a dispute at Hurst parish – J Leveson Gower who had been writing 'foolish & insolent letters' declined the offer. Bishop describes old Palmer as a rock.

Page 252 Pangbourne

Rev H Breedon. NB heard from Hobhouse that B had offered to let the parsonage on a lease of 5 years to his mother Q

Poor Breedon dies Jan 14 1857. I hear that the next presentation sold after his death by his brother to pay his debts. J Hopkins says he had it from the solicitor but I may not quote him, Mr Hall the solicitor of Hungerford, told him that sold to Wade of Ryde but he could not raise the money. Young B Candy told him do. Told as creditor that his being paid would depend on the sale. After much communication Captain Breedon assures me on his honour as a gentleman that having intended unknowingly of the pact to sell he had on leasing it given it freely to Mr Finch. Mr Finch after enquiry amongst relatives who might have covenanted to buy solemly asserts the freedom of the gift. Mr Hopkins of Tidmarsh letter of May 22 says no more can be done but Institute so May 23 1857 Institute Robert Finch from Canterbury Diocese. Spoken well of by Archbishop. Ordainer – testimonials from Nares, R Warrener, R Smith.

June 28 – young Hopkins writes to complain that Capt Breedon has removed the Credence and Stole – I write to churchwardens to ask.

Archdeacon goes over to settle it. Nov 57. R Hopkins renews complaint & I see Finch with Archdeacon and he very mulish. I refuse to advise about a letter in Union unless he consents to act on my advice, which he refuses to do

Aug & Sep 59 his trouble as to refusing to take a corpse into Church because the man had been irregular in attending.

Aug 62 complaints of omitting Athanasian Creed on St Bartholomews. Write – He snarly. – I reply see copied letters

March 63 – he comes to me at Englefield, very anxious to clear himself of supposed low churchmanship. Says he will act about restoring the church, seems to feel the importance of it. I am more hopeful here. Some signs of life. Bad accounts of R Hopkins, supposed to beat his wife to live immorally – very ill this Spring – nearly lost sight.

Nov 63 – R Hopkins complaining of All Saints collect etc missed. Finch will not promise to alter – see letterbook Nov 10/67

Page 256 - Purley

Richard Palmer – wished to be included in Reading Mission 1860 & Leighton preached – good attendance etc

Mr and Mrs Store (she daughter of John Willoubey) come to reside when poor Popham died.

March 1864 – Mr Store anxious for restoring & remodelling. Says the Rector quite asleep. Old Clerk waiting for the Bishop to move something.

Page 261 – Reading Mission

Services for the Reading Mission February 26th to March 4th 1860 to be held at Pangbourne, Purley and Tidmarsh – participating clergy include

Page 287 – Sulham

John Wilder. Wrote to him June 25 on the sudden death of his wife. Visited the parish & modern church March 2/57

H Wilder curate March 64

Page 296 – Tidmarsh

W Hulme - Hopkins offers him the Rectory. First with conditions then refused. Then with none, but disagreements. Hulme comes to me for Institution & resolves not to take it. Then offer to J H Worsley, he doubts, he and she come to Cuddeson resolves to accept if Hopkins yields about house. H refuses & so ultimately H re-offers it to Hulme & he takes. They coming together to Cuddesdon for interview Oct 1854.

H H Woods. Having been ordained by Bp Winton 1829-1830 to Mr Hodgson's curacy at Wood Hay & curate to Dodgeson at Buttermere, comes for institution Sep 22 1855. Charged him to continue matters as heretofore conducted by W Hulme. He seems highly respectable.

Write to him Oct/55 specially to name his putting the Elements on the table rubrically. Young Hopkins have written privately to me as to this.

March 3/57 – Confirmed here. Visited farmers wife from Checkendon. Spoke to Woods about placing Elements on as ordered in rubric & monthly communion. Hopkins had quarrelled with him for building the new parsonage a few yards nearer the road than he wished !

Preached here April 1857 afternoon to a good and very attentive congregation.

March 1860 – included in Reading Mission Prevost preaching. Woods at Englefield professes warm desire for full reconciliation with squire.

March 23/63 – confirm here, a very nice confirmation. Hopkins will give £1000 and let me nominate if only he can get rid of Woods.

Page 330

All Saints Sonning – Richard Palmer is giving £50 a year to maintain the curate and objected strongly to making the church independent of Sonning.

Reviews of Meetings & Events

Childhood Memories

Perhaps it was the reluctance to speak to an audience that restricted the numbers at Project Purley's January meeting, when just twenty-one members were in attendance. Of those present, eleven volunteered to contribute to the topic of "Childhood Memories."

Chairman, John, asked speakers to talk in alphabetical order of first names, so Ben Viljoen kicked off by telling us about his early days in Africa. He recalled that his family moved around a lot and that he enjoyed playing with the children of the family's servants. He was able to make a catapult for hunting, but soon graduated to becoming a marksman with a rifle. He had to make his own toys, and used to mould animals, especially cows, from the clay of the river banks.

Cliff Debney was a wartime evacuee, being moved with his two brothers to Chapel-en-le-Frith in 1939. He enjoyed his life there, as all three of them were allowed to roam and explore at will. He brought with him a letter he had written to his parents, and also a poem about the futility of war written by his grandfather.

Wartime Reading was recalled by David Downs, who remembered air raid sirens being sounded on the roof of the Co-op factory in Grovelands Road. He would be taken by his mother to shelter in the long cupboard under the stairs until the "all clear" was sounded. David's father served in the R.A.F. during the war, and whenever he wrote a letter home, would add a drawing for his son as a postscript. Unfortunately, none of the letters survive. David could also remember a community bonfire each November 5th, when effigies of the enemy leaders, such as Hitler, Hirohito and Mussolini would be burned.

Dorothy Viljoen spent an idyllic childhood in the Leicestershire countryside, and showed us her favourite toy. It was a group of pecking birds, still in full working order. Rather poignantly it had been carved for her by a German prisoner-of-war, detained for conservation work after the end of the war.

A fun filled, happy childhood was described by Jean Debney, who grew up in Surrey in the 1930s. She and her two sisters made dens in the field opposite their house, but during the war, outdoor activities were necessarily restricted. Her father was an A.R.P. warden, who showed his defiance by burning a huge swastika on a bonfire. The family would listen to I.T.M.A. on the radio, and Jean was badly burnt one day as it was being plugged in. She brought to show us a couple of wartime and immediate post-war photograph albums.

John Murphy's house overlooked the playing fields near Hendon Football Club, and as a youngster he would bunk over the wall at the football ground to watch his local team. He and his pals would ride their bicycles to the nearby allotments to scrump fruit, but on one occasion he had his bike confiscated as he attempted to run away from an enraged allotment holder. John added that the swaying of the poplar trees in the fields, and the seagulls being driven inland by bad weather, was a childhood memory that had often been

rekindled by seeing similar events since he moved to Purley on Thames.

Now it was the turn of our Chairman. John Chapman was born the day the Abyssinian War started, for which outbreak he was always blamed. As a child he was taken to Castle Bromwich aerodrome to watch the biplanes, then on a day's outing to Blackpool, he fell over and grazed his knee. Compensation came in the form of a toy squirrel, which John still has to this day. On the outbreak of World War Two, his family moved to North Wales for a brief period, but on his return to Birmingham, he felt amply protected by a tin helmet he wore while following the German bombing raids and picking up pieces of shrapnel. He remembered with amusement seeing cyclists falling into bomb craters in the road, and also a Dornier pilot waving to him during a raid. The family had to move again, this time to Stroud, after their house was blitzed. Gas masks and ear plugs still had to be worn, but even after the local common had been bombed, incongruity and enterprise still prevailed as the local bus company organised tours to view the huge craters.

Our most senior contributor was Millie Bordiss, who was reluctant to talk at first, but once she got into gear, regaled us all with tales of a gentle and happy time near Harrogate. At the age of four she was taught the alphabet by her father, and in her free time often played hopscotch in the street. The winter of 1934 was dreadful, so Millie had to wear a long blue scarf wrapped round her, with a handkerchief pinned to the front, so that her elder sister could wipe Millie's nose when necessary. There was an annual Sunday School Christmas party and a summer garden party funded by the philanthropic local mill owner, when each child was given an ex-Wimbledon tennis ball as a present. At school, her class made red, white and blue pom-poms to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of 1935, then did it all again for the Coronation of George VI in 1937. At these celebrations Millie's brother would race her up and down the pavement in her pushchair, but sadly everything changed in 1938. That year her father died and the growing-up process began in

earnest.

Pam Gilham talked briefly but amusingly about wartime life near Guildford, where her family had to accommodate an evacuee. During enemy bombing raids, the entire household had to hide under the dining room table. Unfortunately, there were so many of them that they could only protect their head and body, so they all sat back to back with their legs protruding.

A rival to Millie in terms of experience was Rita Denman, who read a carefully prepared account of her time growing up in Brighton during the depression of the 1930s. She explained that there was little industrial work, and the main occupations were in the railways, G.P.O., laundries and the summer holiday trade. Mothers had to take in lodgers to supplement their budget, but even so children could be seen scampering round the streets without socks and shoes, and impetigo was prevalent. Beggars, many of them World War One veterans, stood in the streets asking for money, and their existence, together with life in the local workhouse, contrasted sharply with that of the rich, bright young things who frolicked and danced in the clubs, hotels and on the beach.

Our final speaker was our Secretary, Tony Trendle, who was born and brought up in South East London. One of a large family, with fifty-six cousins, he was often brought to Reading in the 1930s, and remembers riding on the top deck of a tram to Caversham Bridge. Tony's uncle was Alf Messer, a former captain of Reading Football Club, and he was surprised how many passengers on the tram wanted to come and talk to his uncle, who later became licensee of The Truro public house in the town. Sunday afternoons usually meant a family picnic out at Woolhampton via the A4, but a return to London led to a less happier experience. In common with several other members, Tony experienced the horrors of World War Two whilst in his teens, and was lucky to survive when a German Messerschmitt machine-gunned the road where he was riding his bicycle. His displeasure was compounded when he was unable to find any of the spent bullets or cartridge cases! Like many males of his generation, Tony's childhood came to an end when he was called

up for National Service.

All these fascinating reminiscences were followed by a free for all discussion. The consensus of opinion was that those living in the countryside had a rather better time of it than those in towns, where there seemed to be greater deprivation. Common to all members were memories of free milk in school, and simple yet enjoyable games of cigarette cards, hoops, conkers and marbles. But the most incongruous incident was that recalled by our Chairman. Never was the British spirit better exemplified than when he walked through a bombed out street in Birmingham in November 1940, and was surprised to find an ice-cream seller parked amongst the rubble selling cones and wafers from his van!

David Downs

How the English Language Evolved

Hugh Granger is an informative and dynamic speaker, just as one would expect a former chief examiner of English to be. He lectures on such varied topics as The Great Train Robbery, Hoaxes and Coincidences, The Use of Deception in World War Two and The Evolution of the English Language. It was the latter subject which formed the basis of his talk to Project Purley members and several guests on Friday evening, February 20th.

Our speaker used a microphone to amplify his words and his talk, which lasted for just under an hour, contained so much interesting information that it was difficult to assimilate it all. One would be attempting to digest the content of one sentence whilst trying to concentrate on the meaning of the next. But the talk was also laced with a generous helping of humour, so the evening was nothing if not enjoyable. And it was possible to recognise many of the salient points in the history and development of our English language.

Our ancestors were hunters of anything edible including plants as well as animals, so they had to mingle and work together, thus forming a common tongue. Within that framework each tribe

developed its own language, and this diversity became further emphasised when farmers used natural features such as hills and rivers to define and defend their boundaries. So this isolation led to further diversification of speech, and language only achieved any form of standardisation when the Greeks introduced the first true alphabet.

By the time of the Roman invasion of Britain our language had become logical and grammatical even if the majority of the population was still illiterate. The Romans left many new words behind in England when they departed, especially those to do with law and administration, such as invasion, degeneration, legislation and delegation after they had set up professions in our country and introduced the idea of paying salaries to those who had learned Latin.

The invasion of the Vikings, raping and pillaging down the coast towards Kent (compared by Mr.Granger to "Millwall supporters on a package holiday") resulted in King Alfred compiling the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, much of it written by himself, to record the many battles and movements which took place.

By the time of the Battle of Hastings in 1066 and the Norman Conquest, English nouns began with capital letters and also genders – "wife" was neuter in Anglo-Saxon we were told. But William's victory over Harold meant that British kings would now speak Norman French, so Anglo-Saxons were handicapped by not being able to discuss any matters of law.

But gradually the French influence faded and a significant change occurred in 1380 with the writing by Chaucer of "The Canterbury Tales." The stories told by pilgrims on their way to Canterbury proved so popular that they were read at Court, and this gave the English, instead of French, language sufficient status to be adopted throughout the land.

The Renaissance period enabled the works and legends of philosophers such as Aristotle, Plato and Socrates to be released, and many more previously unknown words flooded into the English language. William Caxton introduced printing in 1450, and the

writings of William Shakespeare, our most famous and best loved playwright, contributed between 700-800 new words, for example, critical, hint, hurry, leapfrog, majestic, all of which became common usage, though the Victorians decided it was necessary to divide his plays into acts and to update his spelling.

Dictionaries became popular in the eighteenth century, and Doctor Samuel Johnson's, published in 1755, was the most comprehensive of these. Our speaker said that dictionaries tend to fossilise language and indeed most lexicographers spell according to hard and fast rules. Johnson for example changed the spelling of "dette" to "debt" because of the "b" in "debtor"

The last fact led to a brief question and answer session about the anomalies of spelling in English. Mr Granger pointed out that there is no spelling in speech, only sounds, and that therefore we do not need three separate spellings for cite, sight and site, as their meaning is obvious in context. Furthermore, "run" has only one spelling but can have 396 different meanings. So most of our words, especially those from abroad, break spelling rules. Examples of pairs of words which follow no logical or consistent rules include "study" and "muddy," and "full" and "dull," "pity" and "pretty," "give" and "drive" and "move" and "glove." All of these must appear strange to the foreigner attempting to learn and pronounce English, but our speaker emphasised that the best way to learn a language is to live it, which is of course what our children are doing as they grow up. In fact some of our ancestors' children not only learned our language but introduced their own words to it – "wolf," "ox," "bear," "fire," "winter," "sky" and "night" are all the result of a kind of mongrel tongue produced by youngsters many hundreds of years ago. Their vocabulary of new words and sounds was an accurate indicator of the kind of world they inhabited.

Mr Granger was nearing the end of his talk when he explained the reason for the decrease in individual dialects. The introduction of compulsory education which included the use of textbooks meant that language became standardised, and this process was enhanced by the spread of radio, newspapers, film and television. As

communications improve the number of languages and variations in language tend to decrease. Texting is considered by many to be bad for children's command of language, but does get rid of what Mr Granger calls the "twiddly bits" in spelling. It is worth remembering however that new words are added to the English language at the rate of one every three hours but, even so, English is still the form of communication used by 93% of all Air Traffic Controllers.

The speaker concluded by telling us that we could all go home with an "ology," in this case "philology", or the study of words, as he had taken us on a conducted tour of our language's history at the rate of one hundred years per minute. And his last amusing story concerned a foreign student to whom he had successfully explained the intricacies of English spelling and pronunciation. The poor lad had overcome all barriers to his understanding only to be totally confused by a newspaper placard which proclaimed, "NEW PLAY IS PRONOUNCED SMASH HIT."

It was a relief is some ways when we broke for coffee and biscuits and during informal chats Mr Granger confessed that he is a great fan of "Countdown," even though it now allows slang words, and that he spends a lot of his retirement playing internet Scrabble. He has produced 33 CDs on a variety of subjects, and I am certain that any one of the topics he has covered would provide a similarly amusing yet instructive evening for members of Project Purley.

David Downs

A Revised & Updated History of Reading Football Club

David Downs last addressed Project Purley in 1996 and thus he began his presentation with a brief history of the formation and early days of the Club, started in 1871 as amateur status playing friendly matches, and as part of his memorabilia he showed a picture of an event held in 2003 when a match was played, simulating the attire of the team in those early days, against Reading School. The first match, held nearly 140 years ago ended in a 0-0 draw, but the second

occasion, when many of the Club Academy boys took part in the presence of the Mayor of Reading claimed success with a 4-3 victory.

Within David's memorabilia is a diary, discovered when Elm Park was demolished prior to the move to the new and current stadium, written by the Club Captain of 1880, W.L.Franklin, referring to an FA Cup match against Preston North End (a professional team). The players of Reading, still amateurs comprised mainly of employees of Huntley and Palmers, departed from Reading after work on Friday afternoon, arriving at their destination in the early hours and successfully searching for a lodging house for half a night's sleep. Sadly the match, 7-0 at half-time, ended in an 18-0 defeat and exodus from the Cup, despite the fact that Preston fielded only 10 players. Indeed, it is recorded in the diary that on that dreadful afternoon, the Preston goalie, having little to do, stood patiently under an umbrella within his goalmouth, wearing a mackintosh in the driving rain.

Another record is of the Maidenhead goalkeeper who had a wooden leg, causing the groundsman at the end of the game to complain about numerous holes across the goal line.

By 1895, the club had turned professional and moved to Elm Park, where they remained until 1996, a tenancy of 102 years. A year earlier, 1894, a cup tie was arranged with Charterhouse School, whose team was named the Old Carthusians. They won the match 1-4 (played at Caversham) and that year this old boys' school team also won the FA Cup. In March 2009 a special match was arranged to commemorate that game, when some of Reading Academy boys were able to exact a small revenge by winning against the School by 3 goals to 1.

Past players of the Club were very proud of their association and service. Arthur Hallworth, who later became chauffeur to the Mayor of Maidenhead and passed away in 1977, was discovered to have his Reading team shirt and shorts under his deathbed, tidily packed in a Gladstone bag.

The Club joined the Football League in 1920 and won the 1925/6 championship. A medal, one of the few, was discovered at a car boot

sale in Manchester many years later and sold for only £3 despite being solid gold. Joe Duckworth, the Reading goalkeeper and the original holder of the medal, became a deck chair attendant. The season 1926/7 was the glory year when Reading reached the semi-final of the FA Cup, but were then beaten by Cardiff 3-0, the team that then went on to win in the Cup Final. Huntley and Palmer produced biscuit tins in celebration of this achievement, shaped similarly to the Cup itself. However, five seasons later in 1931, the Club was relegated to the Third Division (South).

During the war years, many well known players, now in the forces, represented Reading F.C. at Elm Park. Sir Matt Busby was one such personality, as he was stationed at Aldershot, also Ted Drake (later to become manager) and George Marks.

A distinctive year, 1988, saw Reading win the Simod Cup, playing Luton Town at Wembley in front of 61,000, scoring four goals with only one in reply. This was all the more glorious after dismal years in the '80s when the Club had been relegated to Division 4, and the 1983 debacle of Robert Maxwell's foiled attempt to merge Reading and Oxford into the Thames Valley Royals. The dreadful early '80s did produce the occasional light relief when, for instance, Reading travelled to Portsmouth for a match where they could only field 10 players. However, the coach driver was persuaded to play, and he turned out to be their best player, despite losing 4-1.

David has written books on the Club and has collected a great deal of historic memorabilia including the model of Paddington Bear in Reading colours shown on the cover. He was appointed Child Protection Officer, and since this time, is currently Children's Safety Officer as well as being the Club Historian.

May 3rd 1998, when Reading were at home to Norwich, marked the last day when football was played at Elm Park; the next day the demolition people arrived with earth moving equipment. However, after the match, David was given special permission to set up a tent on the centre spot and camp overnight. He relates a slightly dubious story of being awakened during the early hours and, peering through the canvassed flaps, he was astonished to see hundreds of

ephemeral spectres of all the past great players in assembled ranks floating by his tent. He assures us that this visitation had no connection with his earlier evening visit to the Spreadeagle pub.

The move from Elm Park to the new 24,000 seat Madejski Stadium earmarked ascension to greater success and, in 2001, the team competed against Walsall in the Play Off Final at the new Millennium Stadium in Cardiff, narrowly losing 3-2 after being in the lead for 115 minutes. But, in May 2006, they achieved Premiership status and with an all time record 106 points, losing only two games throughout the 2005/6 season.

In contrast to the modest shirt in David's collection from the days of 1903, the new shirt carries the Club sponsor's name, Waitrose, and with it a proud badge, one of the four quadrants being a crown, denoting the position of the Club in the Royal County and, in another quadrant, the Maiwand Lion. David himself often proudly wears this shirt on his free days. Indeed, a shopping visit to Waitrose caused attention when a passing customer asked him to show her the way to the organic yoghurts.

Tony Trendle

The History of Aviation in Berkshire

Project Purley had to make a late change to their starting line-up for the evening meeting on Friday, 17th April, when the scheduled speaker was unable to appear owing to illness. However, an inspired substitution by secretary, Tony Trendle, meant that we were able to welcome Jean Fostekew, the archivist of the Museum of Berkshire Aviation, who gave us a most interesting and well illustrated hour-long presentation.

Jean was accompanied by her husband, Ken, the curator of the museum, which is based in Mohawk Way, Woodley. She told us that the museum was set up in 1991 and opened to the public in 1993. Its logo gives an idea of the museum's contents as it includes symbols of Hawk Aviation, the Royal Air Force, the United States Air Force, the Air Transport Auxiliary and the black and white

stripes of the D-Day invasion of Europe.

There was no actual airfield in Woodley in the early part of the 20th century, though several pilots made unofficial landings on the large grass areas in the vicinity. Jean apologised for not being able to offer a Purley connection in her talk, and said the closest reference she could think of was an aircraft crash in Calcot in the 1920s. Other illustrations she showed of the early days of aviation in Berkshire

included Geoffrey de Haviland making his first ever flight near the Seven Barrows in 1907, the two Royal Flying Corps heroes of World War I, Mannock and McCudden (both winners of the Victoria Cross) photographed with their aeroplanes near East Hanney, and the Kent brothers standing near their aeroplanes in Woodley. The latter pair advertised Berkshire Aviation Tours in their two-seater planes, an experience only slightly less frightening for the passenger-tourist than that of Mannock and McCudden in their aerial dogfights

against the German aces.

A fighter pilot of the Second World War, the famous Douglas Bader, crashed at Woodley Aerodrome in 1931 whilst stunt flying and had both legs amputated though this did not prevent him from becoming a high-scoring destroyer of the Luftwaffe. A year after his accident, in 1932, Miles Aircraft moved from Shoreham to Woodley as the aerodrome expanded. Their Miles Hawk, developed in Woodley, could be bought for £395, a seemingly huge cost compared with the £450 needed to buy a bungalow in Reading at the time. The plane's fuselage was covered in fabric to lighten its load, as the engine was not very powerful and the power/weight ratio was vital to the success of the aircraft.

The production line at Woodley improved and increased as war threatened and the need for training aircraft became apparent. The Hawk Trainer, then the Magister, taught many Spitfire and Hurricane pilots to fly, and the number of employees increased from 46 to 7,000 almost overnight, which presented huge logistical problems, especially in terms of food and accommodation. The planes that were produced were painted firstly in the company's livery of red, then training yellow, and finally in R.A.F. camouflage.

Towards the end of the war, Harwell was used as the central base for the D-Day landings and many hundreds of Horsa gliders, made by Elliotts of Newbury, were waved off by the employees who had constructed them. In fact the whole of Berkshire was covered with aircraft at the time, as it was only a short hop across the Channel to enemy territory. Field Marshall Montgomery landed in France in a Miles Messenger soon after D-Day, the first plane to do so and ideal for the task as it was a very rugged aircraft and needed only a short take-off and landing distance.

Vincents of Reading, located opposite the railway station in the centre of town and also in Star Road at Caversham, sold Rolls Royce cars before the war but made components for Spitfires during it. Henley airfield also helped the war effort as a base for the test-flying of reconnaissance aircraft, but as longer range planes were employed, they had to be transferred to Benson, where there was a

bigger airstrip. Hurricane fighter planes were built at Langley. They were described as "primitive compared with the Spitfire" by our speaker, but the last of the 500 manufactured locally had the distinction of being flown by Group Captain Peter Townsend,D.S.O., D.F.C. perhaps best known for his 1950s courtship of Princess Margaret.

Most of the exhibits in The Berkshire Museum of Aviation are unique. There are static aircraft exhibits, photographs, historical archive material and references to many famous people. These range from Charles Lindbergh, who visited Woodley in 1936, possibly on a spying mission for Adolph Hitler, who later awarded him the Iron Cross, to the Duke of Edinburgh. Although a Mohawk was specially built for Lindbergh at Woodley, he was scathing about the British aircraft industry in general, in contrast to the Duke. Prince Philip visited Woodley to watch the Handley Page Herald being built, and as a qualified pilot himself, flew one for ninety hours on a tour of Africa.

Also on display in the museum are a Polaris missile warhead, because many of the parts are made by local firms, and details of the Fairy Rotodyne helicopter, never mass produced but demolished at White Waltham, an airfield which has itself been pulled down and turned into an industrial estate. Woodley aerodrome ceased to exist in 1963, when an Auster became the last plane to fly off the runway. The site was later taken over by Adwest Engineering.

Jean's talk was a little difficult to follow at times as she has a soft voice and the events she described were not always in chronological order. But she was well prompted and supported by husband, Ken, and provided more than enough material for her audience to want to tour the museum. The entrance charge is £3 (adults), £2 (children and senior citizens) whilst a family ticket costs £8. Days and times of admission vary, but telephone enquires can be made to 0118-9448089.

David Downs.

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