

## *Journal Contents*

|  |    |
|--|----|
| The History of a Purley Railway Carriage - an update<br><i>Catherine Sampson</i> | 3  |
| Purley in Old Photographs - your help needed<br><i>Catherine Sampson</i>         | 7  |
| Patricia Wilson <i>Ann Betts</i>   | 8  |
| Nature Notes <i>Cliff &amp; Jean Debney</i>                                      | 9  |
| Reviews of Meetings & Events   |    |
| Outing to the Joint Aeronautical & Geospatial Organisation<br><i>David Downs</i> | 12 |
| The Taming of the Shrew <i>David Downs</i>                                       | 16 |
| Guided Walking Tour of Newbury <i>Tony Trendle</i>                               | 18 |
| BBQ at Highveldt <i>David Downs</i>  | 21 |

## *Forthcoming Meetings & Events*

|  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| The Battle of Newbury, 1643 <i>Clive Williams</i>                  | Friday 18 <sup>th</sup> September |
| The Canal through Reading <i>Rick Jones</i>                        | Friday 16 <sup>th</sup> October   |
| What's in a Name - The Meaning of Surnames <i>Jean Debney</i>      | Friday 20 <sup>th</sup> November  |
| Christmas Party at the Gatehouse                                   | Friday 18 <sup>th</sup> December  |
| Wedding Days - Parents, children & your own photos and memorabilia | Friday 15 <sup>th</sup> January   |



# THE PROJECT PURLEY JOURNAL

September 2009

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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: 10 River Gardens, 1972  
by kind permission of Kevin McCormack  
Frontispiece: Members of the Joint Aeronautical &  
Geospatial Organisation*

## THE PROJECT PURLEY JOURNAL



*Photo courtesy of JAGO*

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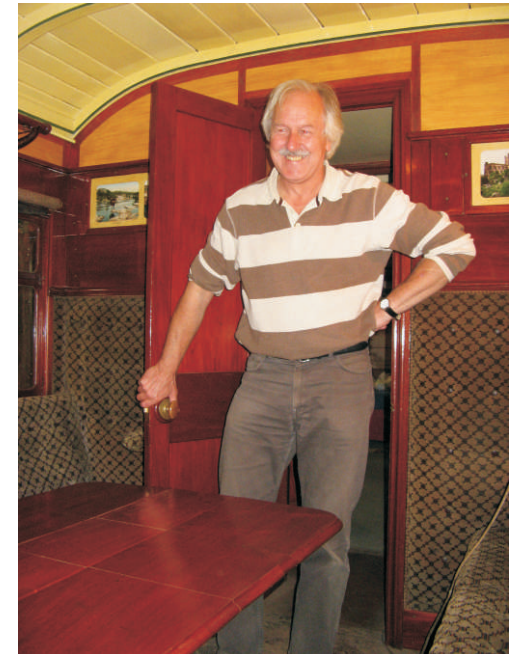
## *The History of a Purley Railway Carriage - an update*

CATHERINE SAMPSON

Many of you may remember the very entertaining talk given by Kevin McCormack, a member of the Great Western Railway Society, in November 2006, about his discovery, purchase and subsequent ongoing restoration of a railway carriage which had been a home at 10 River Gardens up to that point. 10 River Gardens (see cover) contained one of only 48 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Saloons ever built by GWR, and at least two more of these were being used as homes in Purley in the late 60s. Kevin's story told of a passion and dedication to rescue and renovate part of our railway history and part of Purley's history which would otherwise have been destroyed.

The third class saloon, dating from 1894, was rescued in 1972 and has been residing at the Didcot Railway Centre since then. Ann Betts and I travelled down to Didcot at the end of July to meet up with Kevin and find out how the restoration is progressing.

The saloon carriage consists of two lounges, each designed to carry up to 17 passengers, with two cubicles in the centre of the carriage, being shared by both saloons, one cubicle



*Kevin in doorway of restored lounge*



*View across restored lounge*

Original signs have been uncovered and restored to glory, the centre drop leaf table has been reconstructed from the six pieces it was cut into and the 1930s upholstery has been re-patched and in places replaced.

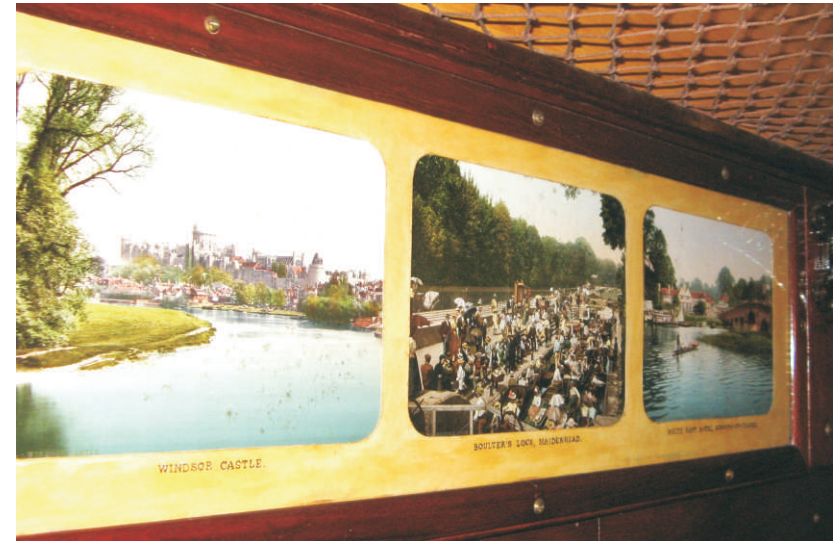


containing a toilet and the other a marble washbasin and mirror. Thirty five years on, Kevin has now completed the restoration of the first lounge and the two cubicles and is part way through restoration of the second lounge.

As you might expect, Kevin's eye for detail and his desire to restore the carriage as it originally was during its working life shines out as much as the gleaming mahogany which abounds throughout.

Ann and I both found the window blinds particularly fascinating. Some had still remained on the carriage when Kevin bought it, others he had been given by Lynette Barnes from the saloon carriage she was dismantling at 22 Brading Way. Intriguingly one

blind was much cleaner than the others, and Kevin explained that early on, knowing he had spare blinds, he persuaded his secretary at work to put the blind in the washing machine. Amazingly it survived and it came out much cleaner, but more cautiously Kevin plans to contact a museum to ask for help in preserving and cleaning the fabric of the others in the future.



*Scenic views*

Around the outside of each saloon are photochromatic images of scenes from across England. Some of these are original to the carriage and others Kevin has salvaged from other derelict saloons to complete the frames.

Kevin's next plans are to restore the paint on the outside of the carriage to the glory of its green and cream livery of 1900. He is also intending to display photos and information about the carriage to show a background of 10 River Gardens and the River Estate.

Since the carriage has been housed at Didcot it has received at least four visitors who had known the carriage when it was at 10

River Gardens. One of these was the former delivery boy who recalled drinking cups of tea around the table with Molly, one of the previous owners!



Didcot Railway Centre is well worth a visit although the saloon carriage is only open to visitors when Kevin is on site.

*Outside of railway carriage*

## *Purley in Old Photographs - your help needed*

CATHERINE SAMPSON



*Photo courtesy of Jack Iles*  
*Purley Carnival 1953*



*Photo courtesy of Lyn Nicholson*  
*St Mary's Choir with Rev. Hawkins, circa 1965*

As you may know Project Purley and its members have produced a number of professional quality publications over the years on subjects such as the Village School, Purley on Thames place names and the Church. Now, for the first time, we have decided to turn our hand at publishing our first book - of old photographs of the village.

We are very fortunate that a number of professional photographers have been attracted to our village, drawn by the beauty of the Thames, our church and old village and the historic houses such as Purley Hall. Undoubtedly though, the photographs that will bring the book alive are those that contain local people and events - that show life and celebration in Purley. This is where we need your help. We would love to hear from people who have some photographs of Purley, its people or events that we may copy. Obviously we will seek to obtain the appropriate permissions in respect of those chosen for publication.

We are particularly interested in photos that show the changing shape of the village, businesses and farms and village events such as carnivals, church fairs, sports matches or even old school photos.

Photos can be very old or more modern – our dates currently range from 1850 to 1992. Along with the photo's, we are interested in the stories that accompany them as it is an important way of preserving our history.

If you have any photos or have neighbours or friends who may have photos and are willing to help – please contact one of the publications committee. We don't need to keep the original – we just want to make a copy.

The aim is to hold an exhibition celebrating Purley during 2010 and it is planned that the book will be launched as part of that celebration.

I will keep you posted as to how we are progressing – but do get in touch with us.

*Publications Committee: Ann Betts (0118 942 2485), John Chapman (0118 942 6999), Jean Debney (0118 941 3223), Peter Perugia (0118 984 3932), Catherine Sampson (0118 942 2255) or Ben Viljoen (0118 984 3170).*

### **PATRICIA WILSON**

**3<sup>RD</sup> MAY 1942 - 5<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2009**

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Tricia Wilson. She died in the Duchess of Kent House on the 5<sup>th</sup> June after losing her battle with cancer.

Tricia was a loyal supporter of Project Purley and was involved with many local organisations including the Women's Institute, Purley Pathfinders, the Scrabble Club, the Bowling Club together with a local art group and a line dancing club.

She was buried in the new cemetery next to the Barn following a service in St.Mary's Church from where her coffin was taken on a carriage drawn by four black horses. She will be sorely missed.

*Ann Betts*

### *Nature Notes*

**CLIFF & JEAN DEBNEY**



*Red Admiral*

*We have decided to compile some nature notes in an effort to fill the large blank left in the Journal since Mike and Hazel King moved to Wiltshire. We are both less active these days so we intend to confine things mainly to what we see in our garden and immediate locality.*

*Apart from comments about the weather, we will comment about the birds - only those flying below the tree height will count - and general wildlife we have seen. The latter includes a frog on several occasions and our first toad.*

*When talking about the weather units are in millimeters (mm) of rain and degrees centigrade (EC) with the equivalent imperial units in brackets, noting whether the general atmospheric pressure is above or below the mean, ie. 1013.2 millibars (mb) or 30" of mercury. As a quick statement, the higher the barometer, the drier and more sunny the weather is likely to be. We have a max/min thermometer on the back of the house, a rain gauge in the back lawn and three barometers in the house, including an old one which belonged to my father and reads in inches. (The pressure in millibars occasionally get quoted on television weather forecasts.) It is worth noting that we live in a rain shadow area due to the hills to our south, west and north and our son in Woodley gets more rain than we do.*

*In the spring we enjoyed our annual display of wildflowers, in the grass of our front and back gardens. These included patches of*

primroses, followed by larger patches of cowslips mingled with bright blue bugle and occasional clumps of purple and white violets. Mustard garlic and wild marjoram grew down in our 'woody bit', as Jean calls our wild area at the bottom of our back garden: we ate these in our salads and anything else we thought suitable. Meanwhile bumble and honey bees enjoyed the clover and other flowers in the grass.

*In June* we were on holiday for the first two weeks and returned from a very hot Greece to relatively cool and dull weather here in Purley. During our first week home 14mm (½" +) of rain fell but the Wimbledon fortnight was nice and warm. In all there was just 30mm (1¼") of rain all month, most of it in the two weeks we were away. The barometer was above the mean and, as that forecasts, the weather got nice and warm although initially the nights were still cool. The sun managed to show itself quite a lot in the rest of the month and the temperature reached the hot 30's C (80's F) on the last two days.

Each week Cliff records the number of each breed of bird seen at one particular time. Visitors to our garden this summer included blackbirds, great and blue tits, magpies, a nuthatch, a robin, woodpigeons and the occasional wren. Butterflies began to appear in the last week when we saw the common blue, large and small whites and one red admiral.

*July* brought a mixed month with the barometer at first staying just below normal on the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> and then hovering just around normal in the middle of the month. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> it dropped to almost winter levels (1004mb) before rising to summer levels (1021mb) on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Rainfall was spread over the month with a total of 95mm (nearly 4") including 33mm (just over 1¼") over five days in the middle of the month.

The birds started to do their normal vanishing act at this time but more and more butterflies appeared between showers. The latter consisted of large and small whites, peacocks (with their almost black underwings) and red admirals, speckled woods, common blues and painted ladies all enjoying the nectar on the buddleias. In

the last week a small female muntjac deer made a periodic appearance. As usual it appeared suddenly at the top of the slope from our woody bit and stood motionless for over 5 minutes until it finally relaxed and started to munch on wild strawberry leaves.

**August** continued where July left off and the barometer stayed at summer levels. On the 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> 20mm (¾" +) of rain fell but there has been very little since making the levels in our waterbutts very low, and the temperature hovered around the mid 20's C (upper 70's F).

At the time of writing this report (mid August), Cliff hasn't seen a blackbird this month but is sure they are still around. The butterflies have been greatly enjoying the sun and drinking nectar from our buddleias. We have had up to 5 large and 4 small whites, 7 painted ladies, a red admiral, speckled wood, common blue and a peacock at any one time. We have also seen a yellow brimstone, the longest lived butterfly seen in GB which will now be around from time to time until the spring when it dies.

## *Reviews of Meetings & Events*

### *Outing to the Joint Aeronautical & Geospatial Organisation*

The meeting of Project Purley on Thursday, May 28<sup>th</sup> took the form of a visit to The Royal School of Military Survey at Denison Barracks in Hermitage. The intention was for our members to travel by car and, accordingly, Catherine, Edna, Marion and I left Long Lane at 9.15 a.m. to motor through the pleasant West Berkshire countryside and rendezvous at Hermitage by 10 a.m.

We had all been sent our timetables of events and route maps by secretary Tony, though Catherine had only received an empty envelope - we explained to her that this was probably for security reasons! Nevertheless the four of us reached Hermitage in good time and made a brief tour of the village before meeting with colleagues at the guardroom as arranged. There we collected our car park passes, parked as directed and made our way into the Officers' Mess for coffee. We soon discovered that our own map-reading skills were not all they might be, as we were in the wrong building, and were quickly redirected to the Joint Aeronautical and Geospatial Organisation (JAGO) conference room.

Because some of our members had gone AWOL, there were just twenty of us who were met by Brigadier Peter Walker, OBE, Head of the Training Branch at JAGO, and Fergus, his giant but docile Irish Wolfhound. Brigadier Walker was to give the first presentation of the morning and used powerpoint plus video clips to provide a fascinating insight into the work of 42 Engineer Regiment (Geographic) and the Royal School of Military Survey.

The technical training for a young soldier specialising in map making, a Geographic Technician, is so detailed and intense that a junior Lance-Corporal will frequently be in the highly responsible position of advising senior commanders in Iraq and Afghanistan on how, where and when to use terrain. He or she will have collected data from a number of sources to produce a wide range of products and services for the troops deployed on these operations. Complex procedures are required for the collection of geospatial data, its

management, exploitation and dissemination. Geographic Technicians will need to consider such criteria as slope analysis for helicopter landing sites, earth disturbance which may indicate an arms cache, possible sniper areas, dead ground and vehicle turning limitations in built-up areas. He or she may need to operate a printing press for hard copy maps from the back of a truck, construct 3-D models for computer displays and fly-throughs, and also act as a driver and a map storeman. As Lance-Corporals, Geographic Technicians are educated to achieve Foundation Science Degrees in Applied Computing, awarded by Sheffield Hallam University. By the time they reach the rank of Sergeant, they are likely to have further developed their education to achieve a Bachelors (Honours) Degree.

Since 1990 soldiers from Hermitage have continuously found themselves deployed on six-month tours, many of these to combat zones. A soldier can expect to make such a tour once every 2 to 3 years, although operational tours sometimes come at much shorter intervals. Apart from the actual duration of the tour, time will also be consumed by pre-operational leave and training, plus post-operational leave and annual leave, making a one year commitment in total. This can sometimes be difficult for soldiers with young families, but such is their enthusiasm that they frequently visit their Commanding Officer and ask, "Sir, I do not wish to volunteer for an overseas tour but will you please send me?" The amount of notice given for some commitments can vary, but may be as little as six hours in the event of countering terrorist activity. This means that soldiers on these specific duties have a very curtailed social life, including being banned from consuming alcohol whilst on stand-by.

Total length of the initial training for a geographer/surveyor in the Royal Engineers is two years which includes basic infantryman skills, technical training and driver training. This of course has to be constantly updated and it is part of Brigadier Walker's task to review training needs in response to feedback from commanders as well as from trainees themselves. He did show us a roughcut recruiting video (after explaining that we would not be pressured into filling in

any application forms) which showed the life of a Geographic Technician, and finally we watched a spoof video from soldiers on operations which was based on the popular song "Is this the way to Amarillo?" This clip proved to be so popular and was distributed so widely that it seriously overloaded the Ministry of Defence communications network and had to be banned!

After a break to stretch our legs and down another cup of coffee, we were introduced by the Brigadier to our second speaker, Staff Sergeant Baz Marshall, who has fifteen years military service and is currently working in the Operations Room at Hermitage after serving in Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan. He told us in graphic detail about the life of a Geographic Technician deployed to support operations. Currently they are stationed in all parts of the world, and include one lonely Lance Corporal right down in the Falkland Islands. Their tasks will include mapping for Headquarters staff, including details of minefield awareness, so surveying has to be absolutely precise. A few technicians remain in Iraq to support the



Photo courtesy of JAGO

local police and army, but Afghanistan is now the hotbed and Royal Engineers are based in all major cities. One of their priorities is to reduce, by accurate battlespace data management, the casualties caused by I.E.D.s (improvised explosive devices). Dirty and dusty working conditions mean that plenty of computer replacement equipment has to be available, though the arrival of air-conditioned portacabins has improved facilities. Eating and sleeping conditions remain basic, even primitive, and even after a long day spent making and updating maps, the young soldier still cannot relax. It is quite likely that he or she will be woken during the night by a patrol commander about to

take his men out on night patrol and asked to provide the latest map and information. The Lance Corporal will need to be security vetted to a very high level because of access to information, and for all this pressure and responsibility he or she can expect a salary of around £18-20,000 a year at the end of their technical training.

Of course Geographic Technicians will also have to fulfil all the basic duties of an infantry soldier and a Royal Engineer, and have the opportunity to take part in a variety of sporting activities. It is worth remembering in Cup Final week that the Royal Engineers beat the Old Etonians in the F.A. Cup Final as long ago as 1875. These soldiers also have to complete yearly Basic and Combat Fitness Tests which include an eight-mile run in full kit, and there is the chance of an attachment to special forces. Staff Sergeant Marshall had recently been seconded to the Special Boat Service as their map-making and map-reading expert.

Our speaker ended his excellent presentation by giving us a glimpse of the future of army mapping. Although Geographic Technicians may continue to use equipment such as DATAMAN, which classifies and manages incoming information, equipment will need to be smaller and lighter and there will be even greater use of communications. The requirement for paper products will be ongoing, however, as engineers continue to support operations all over the globe.

A vote of thanks to our two speakers was proposed by Chairman John, and then it was time to collect our goody-bags and enjoy the buffet lunch provided by the barracks' caterers. This also gave us the opportunity to look at the displays in the conference room which detail the history of army map-making.

Then it was time to leave 42 Engineer Regiment for the short drive back to Purley. We reflected with great admiration on not just the undoubted bravery of today's young soldiers, but also their expertise. The latter is the result of high quality training, a far cry from those far-off days when your scribe and our secretary were described as "horrible little men" by bellowing sergeant-majors as we struggled to master the basics of square-bashing and rifle drill. It

was entirely appropriate that, as a result of our visit to Hermitage, Project Purley was able to donate over £200 to the Army Benevolent Fund.

*David Downs*

### *The Taming of the Shrew*

For the fifth consecutive year members of Project Purley organised the visit by the Rain or Shine Theatre Company to The Barn. This summer's production was Shakespeare's "The Taming of the Shrew" and the eight-strong company arrived on Friday, June 19<sup>th</sup> to put on two performances, a matinee at 1.30 p.m. for the girls from Kendrick School, and an evening performance at 7.30 p.m. for the village.

But the day had begun much earlier for Ben, Cliff, Peter and me as we had met at The Barn just after 9 a.m. to set up chairs and tables, knowing that we had sold all 150 available seats. Jean provided us with coffee and biscuits and we greeted old friends from the theatre company as they drew up in their minibus and car at 11 a.m. It seems incredible that eight actors, plus all their staging - which this year included a caravan - props, lighting, costumes and sound effects can cram into just two vehicles, but within an hour everything was ready for the first performance, and The Barn had taken on the appearance of a real theatre.

So we had another cup of coffee, Catherine and Lee came and set up their refreshment stalls, the actors did their vocal warm-up and changed into costume, and the Kendrick audience, having enjoyed their picnics on the cricket outfield, filtered into their seats.

The play began on time and I was fascinated to watch the skill of the cast. Real actors perform not just with their voice and their face, but with every part of their body right down to their fingertips, and their expertise captivated a young but discerning audience. The director, James Reynard, who also plays the male lead of Petruchio, has found the ideal combination of drama, humour and no little slapstick in the production, and at the end of the matinee, the actors

took their bows to loud and prolonged applause.

During the three hour break between performances the actors scrubbed off their makeup, ate the high tea kindly provided by Lesley, checked props, costumes and staging for the evening and slept for an hour or so. Acting is hard, often physical work and I was saddened to hear that one of last year's cast had suffered a heart attack on the morning of a show. He is much better now but the company had an urgent problem to solve. They did so by employing a resting actor for three days to read in the part during performances while Tom Jordan, who appeared this year as Lucentio, was sent a video and script for "The Winter's Tale" and told he had those three days to learn the part by heart and take over!

The audience for the evening began to arrive around 6.30 p.m., some claiming their seats then imbibing outdoors in the beautiful sunshine. As people entered The Barn they were encouraged to buy programmes, order interval drinks or buy raffle tickets (surely if the O.B.E. were to be awarded for services to raffle ticket selling, Jean Debney would be a most worthy recipient!).

Once again the play opened right on cue and I was interested to notice the subtle variations between the afternoon and evening performances. The evening show lasted some six minutes longer, as it contained more violence and the exchanges of passionate embraces and kisses were definitely more lingering. But again the audience absolutely loved the whole play with its clever nuances of interpretation of the Bard's work. They gave generously to the donations box by the exit, and I am delighted to record that as a result of this year's event, Project Purley has raised the wonderful sum of £700 to be donated to the local charity of Hospital Radio Reading.

The evening performance finished at 10.05 p.m. and the actors had taken down the stage, lights, caravan, props and costumes and packed them all into their transport by 11 p.m. There was just time for handshakes, farewells, brief but sincere thank-yous all round, and then they had driven off into the night ready for their next engagement in Winchester the following day.

Ben, Marion and I finished stacking the chairs and sweeping the

floor of The Barn at nearly midnight, but I would like to thank all members of Project Purley who helped to make this annual event such an enjoyable and successful occasion yet again.

*David Downs*

### *Guided Walking Tour of Newbury*

Eleven members of Project Purley met up with their guides, Jane Burrell and Philip Wood, at the Lock, Stock and Barrel, a pub situated on the banks of the Kennet and Avon Canal. Prior to the walkabout, the group enjoyed a sterling lunch in the pub's courtyard. We learnt that Newbury was founded in the 11<sup>th</sup> century after the Norman invasion and over the following centuries prospered as a result of the cloth industry and the establishment of a number of mills built around the town. The cloth trade deteriorated in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century due to the destruction of the Antwerp Market. Newbury was the site of two Civil War battles, at Wash Common in 1643 and at Speen in 1644. Donnington Castle held by the Royalists under the leadership of Sir John Boys was the site of three sieges, culminating in a Parliamentary victory in 1646. The town was impoverished until the 18<sup>th</sup> century when the popularity of Bath led to Newbury becoming a stopping point in what was then a two-day journey from London. The construction of the Kennet & Avon Canal (costing £1.1m) and, later, the railway, radically improved Newbury's prosperity and importance, and it was from the Lock, Stock and

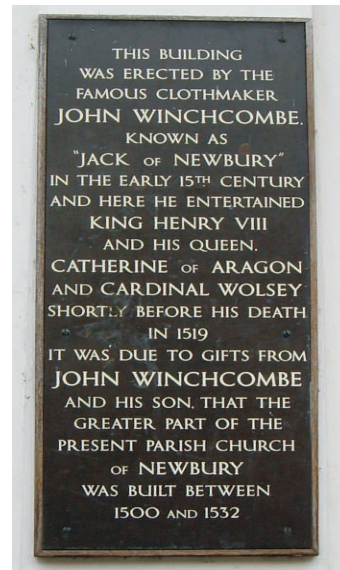


Barrel that we commenced our very short walk to the canal.

The canal, commencing in Reading and ending its journey at Bristol, cuts through the middle of Newbury dividing the town into two parts interlinked by

bridges and footbridges. On the north is the site of two old mills (West Mills), parts of which survive, converted into flats. On the south side the Town Mills have been replaced by flats alongside which a pretty terrace of buildings, once long ago pubs, almshouses and humble cottage homes, but now occupied by corporate and local firms as offices. Beyond the swing bridge the canal widens to create a turning point for the many goods barges that traversed the canal. Our walk continued to St Nicolas' Church - a 16<sup>th</sup> century Tudor church built on the site of a Saxon/Norman building in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century by John Winchcombe and his son - also John Winchcombe and famously known as Jack O'Newbury. Sadly, the Church was bolted and locked at our arrival (on a Sunday, too!) and we were deprived of viewing the Winchcombe family badges and the pulpit whence John Wesley preached. Exiting through the churchyard, the party crossed Bartholomew Street into the large Market Place. Here is the Corn Exchange - now a centre for the arts, which was erected in 1861-2 for corn auctions. Here, also, is the White Hart whence centuries ago the flying coach arrived and departed on its 12-hour journey to London. In the centre of the Market Place used to be the Guildhall and Prison where the infamous stocks and pillory were located. The building was demolished in 1828, at which time the stocks were destroyed. Replacement stocks were stored in the new prison basement, and Newbury holds the dubious distinction of being the last town using this form of punishment for felons when Mark Tuck spent four hours in the stocks for drunkenness in St Nicolas' churchyard. In 1878 the present Town Hall was built - and extended in 1910. At that time a 10mph limit was set to curb fast traffic in the town, especially along Mansion House Street and into the Market Place.

From the Market Place we crossed the bridge built by James Clark between 1769 and 1772 and passed into Northbrook Street. Halfway along that thoroughfare on the eastern side we stopped beside the original home of the Winchcombes, now sadly defaced by shops, although its gable end can still be clearly identified. It was at this house that John Winchcombe entertained King Henry VIII and Queen Katherine.



Our party continued to the top of Northbrook Street and into the area known as the Broadway, to the Clock House. This edifice was built in 1929 on the site of an 1889 clock tower, which – in turn – was built on the site of an 1828 obelisk surmounted by a lantern.

Turning onto the London Road and making a right turn into Park Way, we entered Victoria Park to see the statue of Queen Victoria, manufactured by Royal Doulton and graced with four surrounding somnolent lions. The statue was funded by a benefactor, Lord George Sanger, a circus proprietor, in memory of his late wife. In 1903 it was erected with pomp and ceremony in the Market Place, but removed to the garden of Greenham House in the 1930s when increased traffic demanded more space in central Newbury; at that time two of the four lions were sent to Beale Park. It was later moved to its present location and reunited with all of the four lions.

Our final destination in a busy afternoon, took us across the new bridge completed in 2001, replacing the wartime 'Emergency Bridge' to the Wharf Road area, where, many years ago, a wharf existed adjoining the granary; the basins were filled in during 1930. This area earmarks the most exciting future development of Newbury,

since the Council plan to rescoop a pit and construct a new wharf. This development corresponds with a massive new 'Oracle' shopping mall and precinct under construction at present and sited between Northbrook Street and Park Way. John Winchcombe, both Junior and Senior as business men and industrialists, would no doubt approve of the development of Newbury and its promise of prosperity and attraction.

Tony Trendle

### *BBQ at Highveldt*

Project Purley 1 - Jupiter Pluvius 0 was the all important result of the match of the day which kicked off at 7 p.m. on Friday, July 17<sup>th</sup> at Highveldt in Beech Road.

The ominous portents of a dull and showery St. Swithin's Day did little to deter the thirty brave members of Project Purley who made their way to Ben and Dorothy's beautiful house for the summer barbecue just forty-eight hours later. As guests emerged from their parked cars we noticed the tents and gazebos standing tall and erect in the front garden and wondered if they would provide quite enough shelter and warmth for what was promising to be an overcast evening. But we need not have worried.

Cliff met us at his ticket office just inside the front gate and explained that we could take our fold-up chairs back to our cars as the whole event was to be moved indoors! So all the time that Ben, Cliff, Peter and Tony had spent that morning putting up the tents was to no avail. As the grey won the battle for supremacy over the blue in the sky above, Ben and Dorothy decided at about 6 p.m. to make their whole house available to visitors - a most generous gesture which we all appreciated.

So we entered Highveldt where twenty of the guests had been accommodated in the lounge/conservatory area and the remaining ten in the dining room. All the tables were neatly laid, with the melon starters being prepared in the kitchen, Ben and Peter cooking the burgers, chicken and sausages on the barbecue under the canopy at the south end of the garden and the salads on display on the covered verandah. The water bottle we had been advised to bring in



case of continuing hot weather would most certainly not be necessary.

Guests were served with their starters, and once everyone was settled with their food, the hum of conversation began. In our smaller enclave, we discussed whether Waitrose in Oxford Road was more of a social club than a convenience store, who was going to win the Open Golf Championship, would England regain the Ashes this summer, and rather bizarrely, how tall are the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh. We also floated the idea of inviting Mr Brendan Rodgers, the new Reading F.C. Manager and a Purley resident, to become an honorary member of the society (Tony and David were strongly in favour of this). Rick threatened to play the piano but explained that he had not brought his music, and when Dorothy eventually joined us, we nattered on about the advantages of metric measurement and tried to decide why there used to be 12 pennies to a shilling and why a hundred-weight is made up of 112 pounds.

The sky lightened sufficiently to allow everyone to move outdoors and collect their main course expertly prepared by our two cooks without getting wet. They went in small groups to avoid congestion and this system worked well as a form of musical chairs



took place in the two rooms. As we lined up for our food, we were inspected by Tavistock, the Viljoen's seven-year old ginger cat, who was obviously put out at being denied his favourite chair on which to sleep. He had to wait until after dessert before he felt confident enough to come into the house, and when he did so he raced upstairs at top speed. No doubt he was later rewarded for his patience with one of the spare chicken legs from the barbecue.

From time to time people changed rooms to make sure they did not miss out on any of the current gossip. There was also the possibility of an inter-room quiz, but this proved unnecessary as

*Executive Committee*

conversations became louder and more animated as the hours ticked by. Most important of all, everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves and the barbecue concluded with a warm and welcome cup of coffee.

It was good to see Chairman John in attendance as he recovers from his recent illness, so it was Secretary Tony who made a speech of thanks to Ben and Dorothy for making us all so welcome. Members of Project Purley are nothing if not resourceful and resilient, and thanks to our hosts the event had been a triumph born out of adversity.

*David Downs*

|                |   |   |
|----------------|---|---|
| Chairman       | John Chapman<br>(0118) 9426999<br>John.chapman@purley.eu          | 5 Cecil Aldin Drive<br>Purley on Thames |
| Treasurer      | Ben Viljoen<br>(0118) 9843170<br>highveldt@ntlworld.com           | 12 Beech Road<br>Purley on Thames       |
| Secretary      | Tony Trendle<br>(0118) 9421036<br>tonetrend@sky.com               | 15 Purley Magna<br>Purley on Thames     |
| Journal Editor | Ann Betts<br>(0118) 9422485<br>ann.betts@tiscali.co.uk            | 4 Allison Gardens<br>Purley on Thames   |
|                | Cliff Debney<br>(0118) 9413223<br>cliff@debney.org.uk             | 8 Huckleberry Close<br>Purley on Thames |
|                | Jean Debney<br>(0118) 9413223<br>jean@debney.org.uk               | 8 Huckleberry Close<br>Purley on Thames |
|                | David Downs<br>(0118) 942 4167                                    | 99 Long Lane<br>Tilehurst               |
|                | Peter Perugia<br>(0118) 9843932<br>perugia@perugia515.fsnet.co.uk | 7 Nursery Gardens<br>Purley on Thames   |
|                | Catherine Sampson<br>(0118) 9422255<br>clspurley@aol.com          | 32 Waterside Drive<br>Purley on Thames  |