

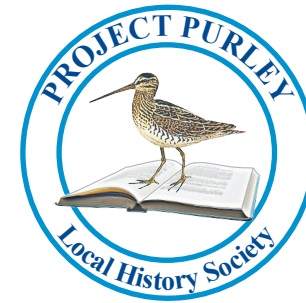
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Forthcoming Meetings & Events

Heritage Open Days (see pages 23 & 24)	9 th to 12 th Sept
Launch of <i>Purley in Old Images</i> (starts at 2.30pm)	17 th Sept
The Art of Deception in World War Two <i>Hugh Granger</i>	15 th Oct
Sir John Betjeman <i>Roy Denison</i>	19 th Nov
Rain or Shine Theatre Company (To be confirmed)	10 th Dec
Christmas Party <i>The Gatehouse, Purley Village</i>	17 th Dec
Weddings - memories & memorabilia (Members Open Evening)	21 st Feb

*Meetings held at The Barn, Goosecroft Lane off Beech Road, Purley
at 8 pm unless otherwise stated*



PURLEY IN OLD IMAGES



Purley on Thames Berkshire

Edited by Catherine Sampson

THE PROJECT PURLEY JOURNAL

September 2010

Number 84

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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: The cover of the new Project Purley book.
Frontispiece: Mortimer Menpes's fine tomb behind
St James the Less, Pangbourne.*

THE PROJECT PURLEY JOURNAL



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Mortimer Menpes

JOHN CHAPMAN

Purley has been associated with many artists over the years and several roads in the parish have been named after them including Menpes Road on the Wimpey Estate.

Mortimer Menpes was born at Port Adelaide in South Australia and attended the local grammar school. In 1874 he came to London to study under Whistler whose daughter Rosemary he married a year later. He had his first exhibition at the Royal Academy in 1880. He went to Japan for 9 months to study both the art of Japan and the techniques used by Japanese artists. This visit made a great impression on him and for the rest of his life he was surrounded by souvenirs of his time in Japan. While living in Fulham his house was decorated in the Japanese style. He acquired so much material that he had to hire a freighter to get it all back to England.

In April 1888 on his return he staged an exhibition at the Dowdeswell Gallery in Bond St which caused a sensation in the London art world. Even the Prince of Wales felt obliged to see what it was all about. It was a great success and Mortimer sold all his pictures of the visit for over £2,000.

During the Boer War he was War Artist to the magazine *Black and White*. A selection of the works made then were included in his book *War Impressions* (1901) He was a first rate rifleman and a vivid raconteur. For many years he travelled widely, painting and etching wherever he went accompanied by his wife.

His daughter Maud was his partner in the Menpes Press which he founded to publish his works and his other daughter Dorothy was often employed to write the commentaries. His most famous work was probably *The Thames* which was published in 1906 and consisted of watercolours of scenes down the Thames with commentary by G E Mitton although this was published by A&C Black.

Dorothy later married a man called Flowers, lived in a 17th-

Century cottage in Westwood Row, Tilehurst, and was left about 4,000 of Menpes's works and books. She approached Harold Hill at the Gun St Gallery in Reading for advice on safe-keeping as she was afraid that the cottage was vulnerable to fire, which indeed it was as it later was burned to the ground. Eventually the collection was sold. Dorothy died in Minehead in July 1973 aged 89.

Mortimer developed a revolutionary new process for copying oil paintings which bore his name. He set up a company to reproduce great paintings and began issuing *The Menpes Series of Great Masters*. He presented a set of some fifty reproductions to the Australian Government to form the basis of the Commonwealth Art Collection; but it was many years before these were put on show as some purists in the Australian art world disapproved of showing what they regarded as fakes even though they were never claimed as originals and were as close as Australia was likely to get in seeing great art. Thankfully they are now treasured.

In 1907 he bought land off Long Lane and started a Carnation and Fruit farm. He also built eight cottages to house his foreman and other workers in his forty glass houses. These were known for many years as Menpes Cottages and as 1-8 Long Lane, but when houses in Long Lane were numbered they became 55 to 71 Long Lane (odd nos only) with 63 missing. The foreman's house became 35 and the old office which had been converted to a cottage became 41.

For the last thirty years of his life he lived at Iris Court, Pangbourne. Rosemary died 23rd August 1936 and Mortimer followed her two years later, on 1st April 1938. Both are buried in separate graves behind Pangbourne church.

Purley Parish Council had been pressed for some years to commemorate him with a street name, especially after one was named for his contemporary, Cecil Aldin. Orchard Close which formed the entrance to the fruit farm reflected the fruit theme as did Apple Close which was built on the main site of the farm, but it was not until 1984 that Menpes Road was named after him.

Purley in Old Images

CATHERINE SAMPSON

After eighteen months in the making *Purley in Old Images* has its official debut in September and I, as a member of the Project Purley Publication Group, couldn't be more excited.

The book contains almost 250 images, covering over 150 years, and including within them over 400 current and former Purley residents. But important as they are, the book is more than just the images, as we also include a brief historical introduction to Purley and to each chapter, short biographies of over seventy 'Purley people' who are mentioned in the book and in addition the book is fully indexed.

After extensive research and cost-comparisons, we chose CPI Antony Rowe of Eastbourne to print *Purley in Old Images* and opted for digital printing with full colour throughout which captures the subtle tonal variations of the older photographs. Size-wise we've chosen to go for something larger than you would normally see in these types of books and the combination, although a slightly more expensive option, has given us, we believe, the very best 'canvas' on which to display the pictures. Many of the photographs in the book have been kindly loaned by our local Museums, Libraries and other organisations, but the vast majority have come from current and former residents. Thank you to everyone who has lent photographs, helped to identify names or provided additional information. The book will go on sale at a cover price of £24.99 but discounted to £20.00 for Project Purley members and for current and former Purley residents.

Our official launch will be on September 17th at 2.30pm in The Barn and I do hope that you'll be able to join us there. We'll be joined by a number of guests including the Hon. Mrs Bayliss, who as Lord Lieutenant for Berkshire is the Queen's representative for our County, and who has written the foreword to the book. Along with the official launch and opportunity to see and buy *Purley in Old*

Images, we also plan a small exhibit and will serve light refreshments. This launch afternoon will replace our normal Project Purley meeting that would have taken place that evening.

In October, our book sees an outing to the Farmers Market where we will have a stall and if this is successful we may venture to another market before Christmas. We'll also be approaching local shops and societies and advertising the book on our website. Other planned marketing and publicity includes distributing flyers, posters on the Parish notice boards and some updates in the Parish News. The press have also been invited to our launch. But perhaps the very best way to promote the book is by word of mouth and recommendation, so please do tell your neighbours and friends and let them know how they can buy a copy.

They can either phone Ann Betts on 0118 942 2485 or myself on 0118 942 2255, order the book via the web at www.project-purley.eu or face-to-face at the Farmers Market on October 9th where we will be having a stall. The book will also be available from our bookstall at Project Purley meetings.

I do hope you enjoy the read!

Geoffrey Gilham & Betty Hunter

ANN BETTS

We regret to report that we lost two of our members during the summer break. Geoff Gilham in June and Betty Hunter in July. Both were loyal members of Project Purley and will be sorely missed. Our sincere condolences go to Pam Gilham and Phyllis Hasemore and their families and friends.

Nature Notes

CLIFF & JEAN DEBNEY



Lathyrus latifolius

After the VERY cold winter and a warm spring with its bright flowers we have had a heat wave and drought in July which started in Wimbledon fortnight. On some days the temperature reached 29.5C/85F and didn't fall below 11C/52F at night. And, with only 35mm/1.4" rain on different days which fell in minuscule drops and soon evaporated, the lawn became brown and 'crispy', the plants wilted and the water butts ran dry. After such hot weather, August so far is making up for this with plenty of rain but unseasonably low temperatures.

Although our white and purple buddleias have been flowering since mid-July there has been a dearth of butterflies visiting them this year to enjoy the nectar. This is probably because of last winter's freezing conditions. Apart from the ubiquitous large and small whites we have seen only three peacocks (or one peacock on three

occasions?), A red admiral and gate keeper (a smaller brown butterfly with an 'eye' on the forewing) plus a few bright yellow brimstones.

The bright pink perpetual pea made its usual cheerful appearance towards the end of June. It grows each year through the fence from next door and entwines itself on to some *Lonicera* bushes (it's hardly a hedge!). But most of the red astilbe and some of the white in our patio pots were killed by the frost this year but otherwise most other things in the garden seem to have survived OK - especially the ground elder which insists on spreading itself around in the area by the right hand fence! By putting our small olive tree in the front porch it survived the winter unscathed.

Many trees seem to have more seeds than usual this year, perhaps in an effort to make sure their species survive after last winter. The tall ash trees at the bottom of the garden are heavily laden and we have had a huge number of seeds blown into the garden from the remaining tall common lime trees that line the back entrance into Purley Park. They have a single round seed on the end of a thin stalk attached to the centre of a 'wing'. This in contrast to the silver lime trees growing in the Norcot Trading Estate along the road into Reading: they have two seeds on stalks on a single 'wing'. The sycamores, which are so predatory on our lawns, have single winged green seeds but the field maple that stood in the garden opposite produces bunches of double winged seeds which are tinged red near the seeds blending to green at the end.

Returning from the shops one day in June we found 'Ginger Tom' crouching on the front lawn and looking very guilty. He ran away as Cliff approached and a rummage in the moss uncovered a slow worm with a missing tail playing 'dead'. After a few minutes in Cliff's hand he recovered and disappeared very fast. Another day we were walking over the railway bridge on New Hill and disturbed a slow worm sunning itself. It rapidly disappeared between a gap in the bricks and eventually vanished from sight. They are legless lizards marked like a snake and can grow up to seventeen or eighteen inches long but are usually about twelve inches. They have

a forked tongue which enables them to find their prey such as spiders, small earth worms and insects plus a special liking for slugs. In August or September the female produces a litter of six to twelve animated silver 'needles' about two inches long.

A pair of crows successfully raised one baby which perched in our trees begging the parents for food. A pair of tits also raised a family in the titbox but there has been no sign of them since June. While weeding I found a small brown toad in the garden and then a dead blackcap which had probably hit one of our windows. Pigeons often mistake the shiny glass for a space and hit the glass with a thump making us jump and leaving a white greasy outline of their breast and spread wings.

During July and early August we have only seen three blackbirds, a couple of blue tits and a great tit, two robins, four wood pigeons, a song thrush, dunnock and a magpie - not to mention frequent views of the red kite soaring in the thermals rising up the hill from the river.

In other words, compared with number seen in spring, many birds have disappeared.

We suspect also that the muntjac deer did not survive the freezing conditions in January as we have not seen them this summer. A fox made a brief appearance the other morning but quickly disappeared down the bank as Cliff opened the curtains.

As we write this in mid-August, the holiday month for many, the weather has turned disappointingly wet and cool and today we have even had the central heating on for a while.

Reviews of Meetings & Events

Visit to Didcot Railway Centre

The May outing for Project Purley was a visit to Didcot Railway Centre, meticulously arranged by Catherine Sampson. This was to be preceded by lunch at the Red Lion pub in the picturesque, thatched cottage decorated village of Blewbury.

So it was that mid-morning on Friday, May 7th Edna, Marion, Millie and I motored out along the A417 to the village where we met other members of the Project Purley 1st XI, plus our guide for the day, Kevin McCormack. Other society members had eschewed the attraction of the 19th-century Red Lion, and a leisurely meal during which we diners - several bleary-eyed after staying up to listen to the election results - discussed the ramifications of a hung parliament.

Eventually it was a group of twenty who met at the entrance to Didcot Railway and were escorted by Kevin, a former secretary of the Great Western Railway Society, between the many steam trains on view. In 2010 Didcot is celebrating the 175th anniversary of the GWR, and our visit coincided with one of the gala event days.

We were therefore able to see locomotives No.5322 which served in France during World War one, 3822 which was one of the Heavy Freight class capable of hauling 1,000 ton trains, and the special saloon car 9002 of the Cornish Riviera express. This car, suitably modified, was used by Winston Churchill and General Eisenhower during World War Two and the Queen Mother during the 1950s for travelling to the races! Kevin gave a running commentary on several of the locomotives and buildings as we made our way to the carriage and wagon display sheds, but it was not always possible to hear what he was saying, partly because our group was so strung out, but also due to the competing noise of engines building up steam, high-pitched whistles and the chatter of so many other visitors on this special and busy day. We did learn, however, about the 1940-built World War Two air raid shelter, situated near the embankment and also the ash shed designed to prevent Luftwaffe bombers from

recognising such an important railway station.

We eventually saw what was to be the most fascinating item in our tour and the one with most relevance to Project Purley. This was third class saloon carriage No.2511 built in 1894. As passenger traffic



dwindled during the 1920s, a number of carriages were sold off by the GWR, and No.2511 was bought for £35, complete with fittings, in 1938 and delivered to Pangbourne Station. From there it was moved by lorry into Purley and placed on foundations to become a family home at 10 River Gardens. It needed the addition of a gabled roof and verandah to make it attractive and fully habitable, but once completed, served as a Thameside home until 1972.

It was then, when the property was up for sale that Kevin, with the help of a donation from his mother, bought the carriage for £200 and had it returned to Didcot where he has spent the last four decades restoring it to its former glory. To do so, he has needed to salvage items from other old carriages which were being dismantled,

including one which stood at 22 Brading Way.

Kevin took us around No.2511 in three groups so that we could all listen while he talked about the restoration. We also had the opportunity to look at photograph albums of the work in progress and read newspaper and magazine articles about his labour of love. Each group spent half an hour in the carriage, and we all marvelled at how much time and effort he had spent on 2511, as some of the work was intricate in the extreme.



For the rest of the afternoon we spent our time like excited schoolchildren riding in vintage carriages up and down the line behind Great Western steam locomotives. We also wandered round the museum where fond memories were recalled by being able to purchase a platform ticket by putting one old penny (bought for 20p) into a slot machine. This was a particularly poignant moment for those of us who were train spotters in our youth.

There was a brief stop at the café for a cup of tea and a slice of cake, then a visit to the shop, before we returned to our cars for the journey back to Purley.

Our thanks to Catherine and Kevin for providing such an enjoyable day which has helped us to experience the history of the

GWR, which played such a vital role in the development of our village. The discount received by Project Purley as a group booking will be passed on to Kevin McCormack towards the continuing restoration of carriage 2511.

David Downs

The Importance of Being Earnest

The Rain or Shine Theatre Company made their annual visit to Purley on Thames on Friday, June 11th to present two performances of Oscar Wilde's comedy, *The Importance of Being Earnest*. The company had performed in Worcester the previous evening, so it meant an early start for the actors from their base in Gloucester, as the matinee for the girls from Kendrick School was due to begin at 12.30 pm

It was an early alarm call too for members of Project Purley who were getting The Barn ready. Ben, Cliff, Peter, Jean and I were in attendance shortly after 9 am setting out the chairs and tables, whilst Catherine, Lee and Ann were preparing the refreshments. We were soon joined by Eloise and Stevie, the two delightful drama students from Kendrick, who were to work with the actors during the day, and then the seven-strong cast themselves.

It took the actors just over an hour to set up their stage, lights, props, music and clothes rail, all miraculously produced from the battered but obviously trusted transit van which they use to travel round the country.

Then the two coach loads from Kendrick arrived, and after a quick break for lunch eaten in warm sunshine on the outfield of Purley Cricket Club's square, the play began in front of an audience of just over 100 girls and a dozen villagers who, for various reasons, were unable to attend the evening performance.

The matinee finished at 2.50 pm and the girls returned to their coaches - the earlier than usual start had been because some of them and their staff were due to visit the Globe Theatre in London the

same evening. The actors, with a four hour break before preparing for the evening performance, either disappeared into Pangbourne, read, did the crossword in one of the dailies, scanned through their lines once again, or simply snatched a couple of hours sleep.

We provided a high tea for the cast at 6 pm, then they changed into their costumes as the sell-out audience arrived for the 7.30 pm performance. The seats were numbered this year, thanks to Ben's neat diagram and David's raffle tickets, in order to avoid the rather undignified loose scrum which had taken place on previous occasions as the queue broke and everyone scrambled for the best view of the stage. The numbering worked well, and will be used for future performances.

And so to the play. Anyone who was disappointed not to be able to watch another Shakespeare comedy soon realised that they were in for a fascinating, fun-filled evening. From the butler's opening plea to the audience, couched in Victorian terms, to switch off mobile phones, to the final line of dialogue, which summarises John Worthing's philosophy, the laughter came thick and fast. The script had been revised and updated slightly, so that when John (Earnest) is asked what are his politics by Lady Bracknell, he replies 'Liberal Democrat.' 'I see', says Lady Bracknell, 'Tory,' as she makes an entry in her notebook.

The best known line in the play - 'A handbag!' - was delivered sotto voce by Hilary Derrett, who played the redoubtable Lady B. This superb piece of acting proves that less is more to a discerning audience. For me, Hilary was the star of the evening, as her facial expressions and body language were eye-catching, especially when she was not speaking. Alec Gray too, in his first appearance in Purley, changed voices and posture as well as costumes in his three roles as Lane, Merriman and Canon Chasuble. But the real and enduring attractions of Wilde's stylish comedy is in the language itself. 'Ignorance is a delicate and exotic flower' is an early line of Mr Worthing's, but when Gwendoline says, 'In matters of utmost importance, style, not sincerity, is the vital thing', she states

accurately the author's attitude to his writing as well as to life. Elements of slapstick, neatly woven into the play by director, James Reynard, who also played Mr Worthing, only added to the fun of the evening.

Our percentage of ticket sales, plus profit on the bar run by Catherine, Lee and Ann, plus extremely generous donations from a kind and clearly satisfied audience, mean that Project Purley has raised £700 from the event, to be split equally between The Avenue and Brookfields Schools. Thanks are due to all those who supported the event, and in particular members of Project Purley, some of whom did not leave The Barn until well past 11 pm, after stacking away chairs and tables in preparation for the Farmers' Market the following morning.

Thanks also to Rain or Shine, who were fulfilling only the ninth engagement of a sixty-two venue tour which will take in the length of the country. The visit each June of this wonderful little theatre company has now become a village tradition, and they will revert to Shakespeare next year when they perform *Much Ado About Nothing*. Meanwhile you may like to note the date of Friday, December 10th, when they will also be visiting The Barn to put on a Christmas production, the title of which is still to be decided.

David Downs

Visit to Littlecote House

Thirty members of Project Purley gathered in Littlecote House, on the Berkshire/Wiltshire border, on a gloriously hot and sunny June 17th for the start of what turned out to be a fascinating visit.

A delay at the beginning of our visit caused by a guide forgetting our booking, turned into a blessing in disguise as Warner Hotels, who bought Littlecote from the entrepreneur Peter de Savary in 1996, quickly rectified the situation and threw in a series of 'extra's' throughout our day.

While a new guide was being hastily arranged for us, we enjoyed tea and coffee in the Great Hall, the site of numerous banquets over

the years and reputedly where Guy Fawkes was tried for treason by Sir John Popham, Lord Chief Justice. Sir John, who inherited Littlecote in 1590, had already by this time tried Mary, Queen of Scots and Sir Walter Raleigh.

We didn't have to wait long before our replacement guide, Pauline, arrived and we started our tour before the front elevation of the house. Here we learnt of the first Littlecote House, built by the de Calstone family in the 14th century, and its later extensions and rebuilds first by their descendents, the Darrell family, of whom we were to hear much as we progressed through the house, and later by the Pophams.

Inside the house we spent more time in the Great Hall, admiring



what remains of the armoury collection (most of it is now on display in the Royal Armouries in Leeds) and the stained glass roundel of royal initials, lover's knot and cupid's head which marked the courtship of Sir George Darrell's granddaughter, Jane Seymour, with King Henry VIII in 1520. A whole series of fascinating rooms then beckoned, together with the Long Gallery, each usually with an accompanying ghost story (Littlecote is reputedly the third most haunted house in England) and many with additional associations with either the Civil War or Second World War.

The Cromwellian Chapel is believed to be the only such surviving chapel in a private house in England. We sat on the hard, slightly sloping pews, designed so to keep the congregation awake and 'on their toes' through the long sermons, and listened to Pauline weave another ghostly story, which certainly kept us awake. A quick clamber up the stairs to the chapel balcony and along the corridor and we were to hear the 'mother of all ghost stories' with the telling of the grizzly account of one Mrs Barnes, a midwife, who had been apparently brought blindfolded to the house in 1575 to deliver the baby of a unidentified, masked woman. After the safe delivery of the child, the midwife had apparently witnessed in horror as it was immediately thrown onto the fire and killed. Both the mother and baby are said to haunt the bedroom and landing beyond.

Sustenance then beckoned in the form of a very enjoyable carvery lunch, which was washed down by a glass of bucks fizz courtesy of Warners. There was then time for a quick peruse of the gift shop before the start of our afternoon tour of the outside of the house and grounds, led by another guide and the head gardener.



The grounds of Littlecote contain extensive Roman ruins including a villa complex and the famous Orpheus Mosaic which



was protected under a wooden structure, thus giving us temporary respite from the, by now, scorching afternoon sun. After a diversion to see Littlecote's Stumpery we retired back to the Great Hall for reviving tea and coffee, once again courtesy of Warners, and where we were each given a book on the Roman Villa as a parting gift from Warners.

All in all, we had a fascinating and enjoyable day that took us on a journey through two thousand years of history.

Catherine Sampson

Annual Barbecue

July is the month for garden parties and barbecues, and Project Purley members were involved in three such occasions this year. On Thursday 15th, David and Marion's house in Long Lane was the venue for the Purley Women's Institute's Bubbles Party, where a fair sprinkling of Project Purley Ladies were among the forty people in attendance. On Tuesday, 20th Ben and Dorothy were invited to Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip's residence in London, to be joined by 8,000 others, and then on Friday, 23rd Ben and Dorothy hosted the annual barbecue, exclusive to Project Purley members, at their beautiful Highveldt home in Beech Road.

A total of thirty arrived at Highveldt, all carrying folding chairs and plates of food. Numbers would have been higher, but for the fact that some members - Ann and Edna for example - were otherwise committed, as members of the Thames Vale Singers who were performing *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* and *Captain Noah and His Floating Zoo* in The Barn on the same evening.

Some of us arrived well before the advertised time of 7 pm so that a photograph could be taken of the compilers of *Purley in Old Images*, a fascinating publication by Project Purley, edited by Catherine Sampson, which will be on sale from late September.

Next came the traditional game of musical chairs as everyone decided who they would like to sit next to, and which of the five gazebos they would like to shelter under in the event of rain. As it happened, and despite the thunder and lightning of the previous day, the weather was kind to us. The light, balmy evening was one of the most pleasant in recent memory.

Chairman, John, made his usual succinct speech of welcome, explaining that there was ample time for those who wished to do so to explore the garden. Several chose to and were guided in their perambulations round the flowers, shrubs, trees and lawns by a display board featuring an article from the *Amateur Gardener* of June 5th. Ben is, of course, a member of the Berkshire Gardens Trust, and it was his involvement with the organisation which had resulted

in him and Dorothy receiving their invitation to the aforementioned Buckingham Palace Garden Party.



Now it was down to the serious business of eating and drinking. Ann and Catherine appeared with the melon starter, and while this fruit course was being consumed, Ben and John were barbecuing the sausages, burgers and chicken legs. So it was on to the main course, embellished with a mouth-watering choice of salads, and while all this was going on, the hum of conversation became steadily louder.

In our gazebo we chatted about holidays, in particular the cruise to the Baltic which several of us had experienced. We discussed the forthcoming publication and how it is being proofread and edited,

and almost inevitably despaired of the England football team's pathetic showing in the World Cup finals held in South Africa. We all agreed that the reason for this was that overpaid international players put club before country instead of the other way round. Then as guests began to mingle, Dorothy came and told us more about her and Ben's encounter with royalty. No-one is allowed to take a camera inside the Palace grounds, but it is possible to buy a video of the occasion for £12. But the bands played and the sandwiches were cut to perfection.



The invitation to each gazebo to take part in a five-a-side football competition on Highveldt's bottom lawn fell on deaf ears, then it was time for members to get, as John put it, 'their just desserts'. This we all did, and the catering had been so precisely planned that everyone felt replete, and there was very little food remaining. Project Purley members are not greedy or gutty, but they certainly know how to enjoy a good spread.

Towards the end of the evening, Jean joined our table and we chatted about family history and an impending 80th birthday celebration. Liz and I reminisced about our teaching careers and

former colleagues, then suddenly chairman John called the barbecue to order before expressing Project Purley's thanks yet again to our hosts for their hospitality.

So enjoyable and busy had the evening been that it ended later than usual and it was well past ten-thirty as chairs were folded, plates and cutlery packed away and members drifted away into a still quite warm evening.

Project Purley now takes a break until Friday, September 17th when we shall meet in The Barn for the launch of our publication *Purley in Old Images*.

David Downs

Heritage Open Days (9-12 September 2010)

Catherine Sampson

Heritage Open Days celebrate England's architecture by allowing visitors free access to properties that are either not usually open or would normally charge an entrance fee. Last year the event attracted around one million visitors.

They were established in 1994 as England's contribution to European Heritage Days, in which an impressive forty-nine countries now participate. In the UK, four other schemes give access to properties in September: Open House London, Doors Open Days in Scotland, Open Doors Days in Wales and European Heritage Days in Northern Ireland.

Currently sixty properties across Berkshire have confirmed they will be either opening or offering special events over this long weekend. Bracknell offers ten openings and events and Newbury and Slough each an impressive fifteen. Sadly Reading, as I write, is languishing near the bottom of the list for its access to sites.

At Aldermaston, the Grade II listed Bridge House, believed to have been built after the Newbury/Reading Canal was completed in 1723 and now home to the Alder Bridge Steiner Waldorf school, will be opening its doors, as will be the Church of St Mary the Virgin, the 18th-century village lock-up and The Kennet and Avon Canal Trust Visitor Centre.

Over in Slough, and open to the general public for the first time, the Horlicks Factory's Art Deco board room and museum are located in what has been described as the town's most beautiful industrial building. James and William Horlick opened their malted milk factory in 1908 and its still going strong, although the company is now part of GlaxoSmithKline PLC. Visitors will be able to see the wood-panelled art deco board-room together with its 'Mouseman' furniture, as well as their small museum including items from the Horlicks archives.

Other Berkshire attractions include the Donnington Hospital in Newbury, Snelsmore Common Fire Tower in Newbury, Cliveden in Taplow and Basildon Park. Guided tours are available at some locations including Easthampstead Park Mansion, Wokingham, a former Royal hunting lodge, and the Newtown Road Cemetery in Newbury, which dates from 1847. Pre-booking is required for some attractions and opening times vary.

Further afield the 18th-century Gothic Temple at Stowe, with its circular domed vault, offers magnificent views over the Stowe Landscape Gardens. The Grade I listed Quaker Meeting House at Jordans near Beaconsfield, dates from 1688, and has a special exhibition on five remarkable Quaker women who are buried in Jordans burial ground. Sandham Memorial Chapel contains an outstanding series of large-scale paintings by the artist Stanley Spencer. Finally, Oxford is opening an astounding 126 sites to the public, including many of the colleges and their chapels, the Bodleian Library, The Ashmolean and Pitt Rivers Museums, The Malmaison Hotel (the former prison and site of at least one murder in 'Morse') and Blackwells Bookshop.

For more details check out the website: <http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk>

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