



Account of Purley on Thames

The Roebuck Ferry Cottage

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The Roebuck Ferry was the means whereby horses pulling barges could cross from the Oxfordshire side back to the Berkshire side and so continue towards Reading. There was a minimal station on the north side with merely a pulley for the chain.

On the south side however there was also a cottage for the ferry keeper which is reached via the tow path and accessed via the Roebuck. It was in the Parish of Tilehurst and remains in Reading Borough as a finger of land protruding into Purley.

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Pick of the Past



with Harold Hill

HERE is an usual picture taken at the Roebuck landing stage in 1890. The picture shows the Reading steam launch and pleasure boats — note the rowing boats and a punt which you could hire out from there.

However, I must say the landing stage appears to be very primitive bit of timber work, but in those days rules and regulations regarding safety were almost non-existent and, as you can see, the river bank could do with some

attention. The men in the picture seem to be an industrious lot, the captain of the steamer standing proud by his boat being watched by an exhausted fellow worker.

