

# *Account of Purley on Thames*

## Hobbies and Pastimes

R200436 22/7/2017

### *Introduction*

There are many activities which people enjoy doing informally either on their own or in a group which does not neatly fit into the other categories such as recreation, cultural and community service. Generally these are based upon a hobby or a particular interest but occasionally people do things which they would not do normally just to have a change and an enjoyable time.

There have been many clubs and societies founded in Purley to cater to these interests, but generally these are short-lived being formed initially by a few enthusiasts, having a period of flourish and then disappearing as the enthusiasts either left the area or lost interest.

### *Carpentry and DIY*

### *Crafts*

### *Dancing*

For many years there were regular barn dances held at the Memorial Hall. Most were organised by the Hall Committee to raise funds for the Hall. Until 1984 they were very successful and popular being held on a Saturday night. However the regular caller, Stan Warren, found himself unable to do Saturday nights and the dances ceased. They were revived on Saturday November 12th 1988 with Stan once more doing the calling with an attendance of of 90 of all ages.

There have also been dancing classes for young girls held at the Barn.

### *Flower Arranging*

### *Gardening*

See individual article

### *Music*

Many Purley residents have been excellent musicians, some playing an instrument and many singing in one of the local choirs. We had a pop-star living amongst us for many years when Ian Gillan lived in Nursery Gardens and played with Deep Purple, Black Sabbath and his own band just called Gillan.

### *Numismatics*

Numismatics, or the study and collection of coins and medals, is one of those things which almost everyone does to a limited extent but which only a very few pursue as a real hobby. Almost every home in Purley will have a box with old and foreign coins, many will have medals won by members of the family in two world wars or from other service.

Occasionally old coins are discovered in gardens, especially in the older part of the village.

A number of people in the village have been ardent collectors. However because of the value of collections, most have preferred to not advertise the fact.

A Purley Medal was struck around the turn of the 18th/19th centuries. It bore the head of Anthony Morris Storer on the obverse and a figure which has been interpreted as a slavedriver on the reverse, with the legend 'Purley'. Both gold and silver editions are known but so far no one has explained the circumstances under which the medal was struck.

## *Philately*

## *Photography*

Almost everyone these days has access to a camera which can range from a feature on ones mobile phone to a full professional set of equipment. In our area Henry Wilder was perhaps the first person to take it up as a hobby and he had a mobile dark room carried in a donkey drawn cart. He used to roam around the area taking photographs, mostly around Sulham and Pangbourne, but many in Purley. He was operating from the 1860s and was one of the pioneers of photography. Project Purley is lucky to have a copy of the 13 volume set of albums which Henry started. In his day there were no films to buy or places where you could get negatives developed. You had to prepare a glass plate by coating it with silver iodide or silver bromide, keep it protected from light, then insert it into the camera while covered with a light proof canopy and finally lift off the lens cap a count to five or so depending on the strength of coating and the light conditions. Then the glass plate had to be deloped and prints taken.

In the early part of the 20th century technology had advanced and took a giant leap forward by the introduction of the box camera. This took black and white photos on 127mm film and there were commercial developing and printing companies around so you didn't have to have your own dark room although most keen photographers did.

Gradually technology improved to allow colour pictures to be taken and then 35 mm slides came into vogue. This triggered the starting of the Purley Slide Club which ran for many years. Even now many people have boxfuls of 35 mm slides and no equipment to project them with. Other technologies and systems flourished for a while but then the great breakthrough occurred with the introduction of digital photography which did away with the need to buy films or pay for printing - you could do all the printing on a home computer or simply keep a digital image or post it to friends via media like facebook or the internet. The net result is that instead of a few photos which you kept in an album you now have thousands of images which are easily forgotten.

The first meeting of the Purley Slide Club was held on the 15th October 1970 (ref PPN 11/70). This met at the Memorial Hall and was generally devoted to showings of members slides. However quite often there was a visiting speaker on a general photographic topic.

On 25th October 1984 there was a photographic exhibition held in the village hall at Pangbourne to raise funds for the Reading Kidney Therapy Unit. It was organised by Ken Mercer of Beech Road and included contributions from many people in Purley. It raised £150 (ref PPN 12/84)

## *Wine and Beer making*





