

Account of Purley on Thames

Land Valuation Records c1910

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An article by Jean Debney in the series From my History Notebook article 109 published in PPN October, November & December 1992

109. Land Valuation Records of Purley c1910 - Part 1

A new source of information about Purley has been discovered. This is the Land Valuation Records of the Inland Revenue compiled under the terms of the Finance Act 1910. All properties in England and Wales were surveyed in order to charge a tax on each site, reduced by the value of any buildings, etc. The necessary assessments had been made and completed by 1915 but the tax was never collected and the act was repealed in 1920.

The valuation carried out by the Commissioners of Inland Revenue was combined with details from landowners who completed an enquiry "Form 4". Unfortunately, Mr. & Mrs. Fullerton (of Purley Park) who owned most of Purley at that time, failed to return their forms. Nevertheless despite some disappointing omissions, the information for Purley provides a useful link between the Tithe Award of 1840 and modern knowledge.

The original Working Plans (Ordnance Survey maps 25" to 1 mile) and Domesday (Valuation) Books are in the Berkshire Record Office and the final Record Plans (same scale maps) and Field Books are in the Public Record Office at Kew. The information given in these two series is both complementary and different. Each plot is numbered, but not in an identifiable sequence, and the particulars entered in the books in numerical order. The amount of detail varies but mainly consists of landowner (and sometimes occupier), value of buildings, timber, crops, rights of way, shooting rights, etc. In some cases dates of purchase and price paid is given, or details of lease and rent. The "Forms 4" and other working papers have apparently been destroyed.

The following abstracts contain only the main information with the assessment

number in round brackets () to make it easier to locate the full entry and identify it on the map; the modern name of each plot, where known, is in square brackets [] to assist with identification where relevant.

PURLEY STREET [Purley Village] (north side, west to east)

(431) **PURLEY LODGE**, owned and occupied by C.E. Hodgkin, purchased 13th October 1902 for £2,000; 2.5 acres land at £220, buildings £1,750 and timber £50.

(432) **PURLEY LODGE COTTAGE AND GARDEN**, occupied by "Leath" on a weekly tenancy was bought by Mr. Hodgkin for £150 with Purley Lodge; the cottage was assessed at £125.

(475-6) **TWO COTTAGES & GARDENS**, owned by G.F.D. Fullerton and assessed at £200 total. [Jasmine Cottage].

(446) **COTTAGES & LAND** was included with the Westbury Farm assessment below. [Mimosas and the Cottage].

(463) **COTTAGE & GARDEN** leased by "Rogers" for £3.18s (£3.90) from Sir Chas. D. Rose, Bart; the building was worth £40 and later £30. [Wisteria & Cherry Mill].

(472-3) **TWO COTTAGES & GARDENS** owned by G.F.D. Fullerton; building worth £220. [Ivy Cottage].

PURLEY STREET [Purley Street] (south side, west to east)

(478-9) **TWO COTTAGES & GARDENS** owned by G.F.D. Fullerton; building worth £250. [Stargable and Letgable].

(628) **THE SCHOOL**, owned by "The Trustees", was worth £510 and stood on land valued at £40.

(453-4) **TWO COTTAGES & GARDENS** jointly owned by Rev. J.H. Dudley Matthews and the Trustees of the School; one cottage was leased to J. Belcher at £6 10s (£6.50) a year and the other to Miss Carrie Harris at £8; the buildings were worth £275 on land at £25. [Hemington].

(451) **RECTORY HOUSE & GROUNDS** stood in 4 acres of land assessed at £100 as agricultural land but £280 at market value. It was owned and occupied by Rev. J.H. Dudley Matthews with buildings assessed at £2,620 plus timber at £100 and a gross value of the whole at £9,250. [Lister Close].

(To be continued)

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109. Land Valuation Records of Purley c1910 - Part 2

PURLEY STREET (south side continued)

(460) **POND HOUSE** was occupied by Saunder Bros. and owned by G.T.D. Fullerton; it included the fields between Purley Street and the Thames etc. with a total area of over 221 acres assessed as agricultural land at £5,330 with £170 sporting rights, £420 timber, £250 crops and buildings at £1,000. [Farm Close, Home Farm & Purley Park River Estate].

READING ROAD (North side, west to east)

(442) **LAND, HOUSE & BUILDINGS** consisted of a field to the west of Westbury Lane between the road and railway and further fields and a house (see below) on the south side of the Reading Road which together totalled over 47 acres. It was leased by William Pocock from G.T.D. Fullerton and the assessment included timber at £70 and £100 crops; Oak Tree Poultry Farm was later mentioned in connection with land. [Purley Grange, Kinsland, houses and Caravanners].

(445) **12+ acres (of Glebe) LAND** on east of Westbury Lane was leased by R. Saunders from Rev. Matthews at a yearly tenancy of £13 6s 8d (£13.33); the assessment included £25 of crops and a public right of way at £10 with a total site value of £760. Notes in the Domesday Book state that Glebe Road, Purley Rise and Purley Rise Stores, Bide-a-Wee, Holehaven and Two Stacks were later on this land. [Memorial Hall, Winston Way].

(461) **WESTFIELDS, READING ROAD** stood on over 6 acres of land between the road and railway with Purley Lane on the east; the site had been purchased for £500 in 1893 when a further £3,560 was spent, and again in 1896 for £500 when another

£450 was spent. The name of Lady Sykes as owner-occupier of the house was deleted in the Domesday Book and that of Brig.Gen. E.D. White substituted in blue pencil; the value of the site etc. was reassessed at a later unknown date when the buildings were valued at £4,435, timber at £80, fruit trees £10 and other crops £10 with a total market value of the whole at £5,435. [Nursery Gardens].

(462) **WESTFIELDS COTTAGE** on the corner of Reading Road and Purley Lane was included in Westfields House above and still exists.

(479-80) **TWO COTTAGES & GARDENS, READING ROAD** were owned by G.F.D. Fullerton and valued at £150 total. [Well Cottages along roadside, now demolished].

(452) **3.5 acres LAND** (Glebe - deleted) between Purley Lane and New Hill, the Road and the railway, was owned by Rev. Matthews; valued at £350 with timber at £50 and crops at £10. [Westridge Avenue etc.].

(459 + 467 - 470) **PURLEY PARK** was a huge assessment bounded by Reading Road on the south, New Hill on the west and (?) St. Mary's Avenue on the north (the map does not indicate the boundaries in this assessment). It included the mansion and over 131 acres park and woodlands on both sides of the railway owned by G.F.D. Fullerton whose address was recorded elsewhere as Sherfield Hall, Basingstoke. The "buildings" included not only the mansion house and stables etc. but possibly also the lodge gates (south of Reading Road) and the gardener's cottage by the church, valued altogether at £10,280. There was also £450 of machinery, timber at £3,500, fruit trees at £50 and other crops at £200; the total market value of the whole property was put at £25,000. Assessment numbers (467) woods and plantation, (468) 24+ acres of "shooting" and (469 & 470) two cottages and gardens have been noted but not located. [Purley Beeches Estate, Purley Park Trust and houses between St. Mary's Avenue and the railway].

READING ROAD (South side, west to east)

(442) **LAND, HOUSE & BUILDINGS** which included land on the north side of the road (see above) was leased by William Pocock from Mr. Fullerton; the buildings were valued at £400. [Beech Road and Lichfield Cottage].

(444) **TWO HOUSES & LAND** totalling 33+ acres was leased by Thomas Pocock from Mr. Fullerton; one house is identified as Stonecroft in the Domesday Book and valued at £400. [Entrance to and first houses in Beech Road, Yew Tree Farm Cottage].

(To be continued)

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109. Land Valuation Records of Purley c1910 - Part 3

READING ROAD (south side - continued)

(435) BELLEISLE FARM, HOUSE, COTTAGES, ETC. had nearly 16 acres of land and was leased by the South Berks Hunt from Mrs. Fullerton; the buildings were valued at £4,895, timber at £80 and crops at £50. **(436-441) THE KENNELS & COTTAGES** were included in this assessment [Demolished]. [Trenthams, now Highcroft Estate].

(635) 19+ acres of LAND on READING ROAD (south-east corner of Long Lane & Reading Road by traffic lights) was leased by R. Saunders from Mrs. Fullerton with timber at £80, crops at £40 and a public right of way at £20 (this was probably the footpath from Reading Road to Tilehurst). [Cecil Aldin Drive & houses up Long Lane - names and boundaries pencilled in on the Record Plans - & houses on Reading Road].

(636) Nearly 50 acres WOODS & ARABLE LAND were part 'in hand' and part leased by R. Saunders from Mrs. Fullerton; the assessment included timber at £700, a public right of way at £20 (see above) and sporting rights at £225. [Houses along Reading Road, Theobald Drive and estate round Knowsley Road].

OTHER PROPERTIES IN PURLEY

(629) ST. MARY'S CHURCH, PURLEY stood on just over 0.25 acre of land and was owned and occupied by Rev. J.H. Dudley Matthews; the "building" was valued at £3,380, timber at £20 and public rights of the user at £70 (this probably referred to St. Mary's Avenue); no value was given to the land for agricultural purposes.

(446) **WESTBURY FARM** included a house, cottages and 180.5 acres of land purchased on 29th September 1908 by Sir C.D. Rose, Bart. of Hardwick House, Oxford, from Powys Lybbe whose name was deleted in the Domesday Book; it was leased by J.E. Gulliver at an annual rent of £282.2s.6d (£282.12.5). Two valuations were recorded under this assessment and the second one valued the buildings at £1,900, timber at £190 and crops at £260, with a public right of way at £100 and sporting rights of £135; the site in Purley Street now occupied by Mimosas and The Cottage was included in the above as were (447-450) four other **COTTAGES & GARDENS**.

(455) **SCRACES FARM** included a house, buildings, 2 cottages and 209 acres land in Purley and Pangbourne with a market value of £9,250. It was held on a 5-year lease from Rev. H.C. Wilder of Sulham to Saunders Bros. at £210 a year; the buildings were assessed at £900, timber £400, crops £150 and sporting rights of £60; however, it was also liable to Undeveloped Land Duty from 30th April 1909. [Currently Springs Farm]. (456-7) were **TWO COTTAGES & GARDENS** included in the Scraces Farm assessment, as were (342), (465) 20 acres of **PARK** and (492) in Pangbourne.

(482) **KERNHAMS** included **LAND, COTTAGE & GLASSHOUSES** etc. on 18+ acres of land on the east side of Long Lane; it was owned by Menpes Fruit Farm Ltd. and the site had been purchased by Mortimer Menpes on 19th December 1905 for £1,000; the market value in its "present condition" was £4,110 with buildings at £3,084, timber at £6 and crops at only £20(! - one wonders at what time of year this assessment was made). [Highfield Road, Orchard Close and houses along Long Lane].

(639) **MAPLEDURHAM LOCK, COTTAGE AND LAND**, was owned by the Thames Conservancy; there were no further details given.

(160 & 458) **THE GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY** had 1 mile 75 chains (3,117m) of line through Purley with rateable value of £8,653, much higher than any other property in the parish.

(462a and 462b) were **WIRES AND PIPES** in Purley owned by the "Telegraph Company" and the "Tilehurst Water Company" respectively; they were assessed for local rates but not for this valuation.

If anyone would like to see copies of the maps relating to this valuation or read the more detailed abstracts made of their entry, etc. then please ask. My telephone number is Reading 413223.

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