

Account of Purley on Thames

Purley in May 1966

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An article by Jean Debney in the series From my History Notebook article 114 published in PPN May 1993 (NB We did not have a copy of this edition in our archive so thanks to the BRO for supplying a photocopy)

114. Purley in May 1966

For several years, Mrs. Lucy Honor Gutch of the Garden House, Oxford Road, Purley, Berkshire sent weekly reports of village events to the Editors of The Berkshire Chronicle and The Reading Mercury. Her copy letters were donated to the Project Purley archives in 1986. The following edited extracts are taken from her reports for May 1966.

3rd May 1966 : Purley Park River Estate - Mrs. Ellen S. Read(1), widow of the late Mr. William Read, has passed peacefully away after a short illness. She survived her husband by eight weeks. Mr. Lenard Joanes(2), a retired Civil Servant, passed away on Monday last week aged 78 years. He leaves a widow, two sons and four grandchildren. The Cremation was at Henley on Monday, 2nd May.

Fire broke out early Monday morning at the Purley Park Old Age Pensioners Club in Colyton Way. The prompt arrival of the local Fire Brigade prevented the total destruction of the building. The cause of the fire is unknown.

Purley Memorial Hall - 66 members and friends of the Thames Vale Singers sat down to their 7th Annual Dinner at the Memorial Hall, Purley on Saturday last. It was followed by a social and dance arranged by Mr. Nevard.

10th May 1966 : Obituaries - Mrs. Florence Goodwin(3), founder of the Purley Memorial Hall and Hon.Sec. of the Hall Committee for many years, has died. She was a popular resident of Purley for over 30 years. An active member of the Women's Institute at the Village School and later at the Memorial Hall, she presented the Hall with a Bishop's chair. Her interests included drama, choir work and care of sick animals. The cremation was at Southport where she was living with relatives.

Miss Ellen Shepherd, late resident of Purley Village where she was born, died on May 1st at the age of 81 years. She was a pioneer member of the Village School Women's Institute, an active worker for St. Mary's Church and an ardent collector for the H.S.A. Her father was lock-keeper at Mapledurham Lock in the very early days. The cremation was at Henley. (*Note: Ellen was a granddaughter of William Shepherd the lock-keeper and daughter of Edward, fisherman of Purley; she was buried in Purley in 1884).*

A Jumble Sale was held at the Memorial Hall on Saturday by the Women's Institute. The proceeds amounted to over £26.

11th May 1996 : The weekly meeting of the Purley Branch of the Old Age Pensioners was held in the Community Hall on Tuesday last when final arrangements were completed for the annual holiday on May 14th to Torquay. Will other O.A.P. clubs please note that until further notice the Purley Branch will meet in the Community Hall.

18th May : Congratulations to Mr. Bernard Neil Venners, youngest son of Mr. & Mrs. Ken Venners of Purley Rise Farm, who celebrated his 21st birthday last Saturday by holding a party in a decorated marquee. The guests were entertained with music by the Peter James Band and two cabaret spots. The M.C. for the evening was Mr. Leslie Dee.

The Red Cross collection in Purley amounted to £13.10s.9d.

A Jumble Sale in aid of General School Funds and organised by the Parents and Teachers' Association was held at the Purley C of E School on Wednesday. The proceeds amounted to just over £10.

Fire broke out in the early hours of Wednesday morning and completely gutted the railway carriage home of Mr. & Mrs. James Webb(4), rendering the family of five homeless and Mr. Webb unable to carry out his duties as postman.

24th May 1966 : Purley Memorial Hall - Mr. D. Hutchings presided at the monthly meeting of the Management Committee last week; it was reported that the recent Whist Drives had been successful and would start again in the autumn. It was decided to accept an estimate to paint the outside windows and doors of the Hall, also for repairs to the Storage Shed roof which had been damaged by someone unknown. A quotation to connect the drainage to the main sewer was accepted subject to the approval of the plans by the R.D.C. and a notice is to be placed on the entrance gate stating that the Hall grounds are "PRIVATE PROPERTY".

Parish Council Meeting - The monthly meeting was held on Monday in the Memorial Hall. Mr. Theobald was re-elected Chairman and Mr. Bucknell as Vice-Chairman. It was felt desirable to send a letter to the Rural District Council with regard to the immediate removal of rubbish dumped at the foot of New Hill. The Tree Preservation Order concerning Garden House Nurseries was examined and approved. It was agreed that a letter should be sent to the County Clerk stressing the need for a resident nurse in the village and also the services of a doctor's surgery.

The Purley Branch of Old Age Pensioners met in the Community Hall on Tuesday after their return from an enjoyable holiday at Torquay.

30th May 1966 : A Whitsun dance organised by the Social Committee of the Purley Park Plot Owners' Association was held on Saturday last at the Community Hall. The M.C. was Mr. John Cockeran and 130 people danced to music played by the Jim Wallace Group from Tilehurst. The highlight of the evening was a raffle for a twin-tub washing machine, won by Mrs. Thomas.

St. Mary's Church, Purley - The Parishioners and Friends of the Rector, Rev. Harold F. Hawkins, are glad that he is now well enough to return to duty after a prolonged absence.

The Old Age Pensioners were entertained on Wednesday last at the Community Hall by Mrs. Hookway's Concert Party.