

Account of Purley on Thames

Joan Gutteridge

R200666 5/7/2019

An article by Jean Debney in the series From my History Notebook article 112 published in PPNMarch 1993

112. Joan Guttridge, widow of Purley, died 1710

Guttridge is a local surname found in this area of Berkshire over several centuries and people of this name have been recorded in Purley from after the Commonwealth period until the present century.

On 6th June 1710, Joan Guttridge was buried in Purley. She was the widow of John Guttridge, husbandman (a small farmer) of Purley who was Churchwarden for most years between 1662 and 1697 and in 1681 was also Overseer of the Poor. John occupied land in Purley Magna and a house somewhere in the manor on which he paid tax for one hearth in 1663. He was sufficiently wealthy to make contributions to several charitable briefs collected in the parish: 6d in 1670 for "redemption of the slaves in Turkey", 1d in 1673 for a fire at St. Catherine's, London and 2d in 1680 towards the "redemption of captives in Algiers". When his neighbour, Richard Bagley, died in 1688, he assisted in making a valuation and inventory of his goods.

John and Joan had three children baptised in Purley: John in 1663 (died 1688), Mathew in 1669 and William in 1678. There is no mention of the baptism of daughter Margaret who married Bartholomew Dore in Tilehurst in 1692. John (senior) died in 1701 but does not appear to have left a will. In spring 1705 it seems likely that his widow Joan was ill as she decided to write her will, most of which is quoted as follows: (the spelling and punctuation are as in the original).

"IN THE NAME OF GOD AMEN the twenty fifth day of Aprill in the fourth yeare of the raigne of our Sovereigne Lady Queene Anne over England, etc. Anno dni. 1705. I Joan GUTTRIDGE of Purley in the County of Berks widdow being aged and infirme but of sound sense & memory, praised be Almighty God for it, doe make and ordaine my last Will and Testament in manner following (vizt).

IMPRIMIS I give and bequeath unto my son Mathew GUTTRIDGE four pewter

platters, one whereof is marked with the letters "ML & AW", another with "JS & JG", another with "JL & WG", and the other with "ML & RC"; ITEM I give unto my said sonn Mathew one posnett skillett which will hold about a quart, one brasse kettle containeing about three gallons, one flock bed, one feather boulder, one feather pillow and pillow case, one spitt, one course table cloth, one chest, one coffer and one pair of tongs;

ITEM I give unto my daughter Margaret DORE two shillings and six pence of Lawfull English money;

All the rest and residue of my goodes and Chattles & Estate whatsoever (my Debts & Funerall & Testamentary expenses being first paid & satisfied) I give devise & bequeath unto my sonn William GUTTRIDGE whome I constitute and make full & Sole Executor of this my Will & Testament Joan GUTTRIDGE ("G" her mark) (Witnesses) Eliza ARNOLD, Ann BAKER (X), John WELLS"

Joan Guttridge's son William was granted probate of the will the following 9 November 1710 at Wallingford by an official of the Archdeacon of Berks. It is not known whose initials were on the pewter platters or what happened to them. Elizabeth Arnold, one of the witnesses, was a near neighbour and the young wife of John Arnold, husbandman of Westbury Farm until his death in 1713. She died in Reading in 1739. Joan's son, William, married Elizabeth Brunt in Purley in 1709 and served as Churchwarden in 1716.

At this stage, it is uncertain whether this branch of the family continued in Purley or not: in 1728, nearly 20 years after the marriage above, a William, son of "William & Elizabeth", was baptised in Purley. It was probably this last William who, when he married Elizabeth Froome in Streatley in 1750, was described as "of Purley". They had four children baptised in Purley, Mathew 1751, Elizabeth 1754, Moses 1756 and Jane 1759. In 1786, William Guttridge was said to be a lapsed copyhold tenant paying £2 a year rent for a cottage in "good repair" and a "parcel" of land in Purley Magna near the church. (However, in 2 of the 3 references to this matter he is referred to by the name of "Benjamin").

William and Elizabeth Guttridge's youngest daughter, Jane, married James Hamblin at Sonning in 1792 as his second wife. James was one of the poor labourers of Purley who, in 1795 and dressed in "grey frocks, hat bands and gloves", attended the funeral of John George Liebenrood of Purley Lodge; his wife, "Dame Hamlin", received a guinea under the terms of Mr. Liebenrood's will. Their youngest son, Mathew, born in Purley, served in the East India Company, married in Purley in 1831 and brought up a family of 8 children in the parish. Mathew is thought to have lived in the house now known as "Ivy Cottage" until at least 1871 when he was 76. If the line is complete, then it appears that members of this family continued in Purley for over 300 years.

Jean Debney

