

# ***Account of Purley on Thames***

## ***Purley Hearth Tax 1663***

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*An article by Jean Debney in the series From my History Notebook article 96 published in PPN January and February 1991*

### 96: PURLEY HEARTH TAX - 1663 (part 1)

King Charles II, restored to the English throne in 1660 after exile in Europe during the Commonwealth, was very short of money. Between 1662 and 1689, Parliament tried to raise over £1-million by taxing occupiers of houses, worth 20s a year or more, 2s on each hearth. This was an unpopular tax with non-payment, evasion and even rioting in some places. However, the surviving lists of names, compiled by local constables and now in the Public Record Office, give an indication of size of house, economic status and those exempt by poverty.

In the library of the Society of Genealogists is a transcript of a return made for Purley on 28 Oct 1663 by George Draper the Constable. It lists 20 householders of which 8 (or 40%) were "poore". 'Compton's Census' in 1676 to discover the extent of nonconformity suggests that there were about 120 people then in Purley.

In the following, the number of hearths is given after each name, with identification and further information where possible from other records. Original spellings of the surnames have been retained.

1. Mr BLAGROVE: 4 The Rectory.

Thomas BLAGRAVE, Rector of Purley from 1660, died 1670 & succeeded by son Thomas.

(See also Mistress WATTS below).

2. Matthew JUSTICE: 9 St John's Farm, Purley Magna.

Yeoman; family in Purley from pre-1574; churchwarden 1664; died 1669. Widow Elizabeth marr John Brooke in 1677 who took over the property; later held by George BLAGRAVE and then his widow Mary (nee CHILDS dau of Thomas below).

3. Thomas CHILDS: 8 Westbury Farm, Purley Parva.

Yeoman; family in Purley from 1617; also held other properties in Purley Parva & Purley Magna; marr Joan JUSTICE (sister of Matthew above, she died 1692); five children; overseer of poor 1665-83; died 1690. (See Purley News Oct, Nov & Dec 1990)

4. James BAREFOOTE: 1

Husbandman; ? son of James (died 1665 Purley); churchwarden 1664; marr Elizabeth (she died 1686); six children; died 1672.

5. John GOODBOY: 3 Purley Magna.

Family in Purley pre-1574; bap 1616 son of John; inherited property from father 1629; lease held by Thomas CHILDS 1690, then to son-in-law Joseph HOLMES. ["Goodboys Wheatham" (1594-1714) field mentioned in tithe dispute over clover 1714; probably part of "Wheathams Hall" in the 1841 Tithe Award - now part of the River Estate.]

6. Mistress WATTS: 3

Probably occupied part of Rectory as widow of Rev Richard WATTS, rector of Purley 1623-1659.

7. John ELMES: 1 Purley Parva.

John ELMES of Ashampstead took over property in 1664 after death of Matthew Henwood; churchwarden 1710.

(See Purley News, March-July 1990)

[House was on the site of "Mimosas" in the Village.]

(to be continued)

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96: PURLEY HEARTH TAX - 1663 (part 2)

8. John GOODEREDG: 1 (?GUTTERIDGE) Purley Magna.

Churchwarden 1662-97; four children; died 1701 (widow Joan died 1710). [Other Gutteridges, apparently unrelated, lived in Purley in 1700s]

9. George HIGGS: 3 Purley Parva.

Yeoman; property inherited via his wife Mary from her father William GREEN; died 1669.

[In 1733 a mention of a Dorothy HIGGS of the Red Lyon, Purley, may refer to this property].

10. Olivir JORDAIN: 3 Purley Parva.

Yeoman; leased land from 1647; he was possibly from Riseley, Bedfords; churchwarden 1669; died 1670.

Widow Joan of Burghfield died 1685 buried Purley.

[Jourdens Fightle/Close was 1½ acres of arable in Kernhams, by Long Lane on the boundary with Tilehurst and named in leases etc. to 1818.]

11. John TAYLOR: 1 Purley Magna.

Churchwarden 1667; bur Purley 1705 "of Mapledurham".

[A John TAYLOR 'junior', possibly son of above, mar 1681 & bur 1743 in Purley, was churchwarden 1713-14 and occupied property in Purley in 1711; his son Richard baptised 1694 & a carpenter of Henley Oxf 1754 when he was named 3rd life in lease on Elmes Copvhold: see John Elmes above].

12. George DRAPER: 2

Constable of Purley, Sulham & Tidmarsh 1663;  
buried Purley 1664; the elder, wheelwright of Pang-  
bourne in his Will. It was probably his son Thomas  
who paid a charitable brief in Purley in 1670 & was  
an owner-occupier in Purley Common Meadow 1671  
[Drapers Acre in Tithe Award 1841.]

The following were listed as "poore" and were exempt  
from paying the tax:

13. Richard BAKER: 2 Nothing known.

14. Widow KNAP: 1 Purley Parva?

Possibly Millicent, widow of Edward Knapp; he occupied  
a copyhold cottage & 8 acres land in 1624.  
[In 1681 two acres of land in "Knapps Close" were  
leased to George Blaggrave of Tilehurst.]

15. Richard OSBORNE: 1 Glebe Cottage.

On north side of The Streete; tenant on yearly rent  
1671; died 1679.

16. Widow DILL: 1 Nothing known.

17. Robert NEWBERRY: 1 Purley Parva.

Inherited copyhold property on north side of Purley  
Street (now site of 2 new houses) via wife Joan nee  
COXHEAD (see Purley News Nov 1985); property remained  
in family till 19th century.

18. Widow CLIFFORD: 1 Nothing known.

19. John SANFORD: 1 Nothing known.

20. Widow SYMONS: 1

Possibly nee TAME, married 1619 Purley to Nicholas  
SYMONS, (he died 1638).

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