

Account of Purley on Thames

Edward Bazeley (1834-1915)

R200671 26/7/2019

An article by Jean Debney in the series From my History Notebook article 25 published in PPN July 1982

25: William Bazeley (?1834-1915) - Coachman

William Bazeley was a coachman for many years to Major Anthony Morris Storer of Purley Park. Born in Greatworth, Northamptonshire, about 1834 he was the son of James Bazeley, a labourer, and was working in Purley as a groom in 1861. There he lodged with Henry and Ann House and married their daughter Mary, aged 22, in Purley Church on 26th April 1861.

Ten children were born over a period of 17 years to William and Mary Bazeley but only six survived childhood. The five eldest children, Bessie Eliza (b.1862), Elizabeth (b.1863), Mary Louisa (b.1865), William (b.1866) and Sarah Ann (b.1869) all grew up and the three eldest girls married in Purley. The girls were very good at needlework and received several prizes for their work at Purley School which they all attended: Elizabeth received 1/- and Mary in the 2nd class received the 1st prize of 4/- in 1875; three years later Mary made a day shirt for Major Storer and Annie made a chemise for Mrs Storer for which she received 3/6d. Annie stayed on at School and was appointed a Monitor in 1883 when she would have been about 14 years old.

Mrs Mary Ann House the school Mistress at this time, was almost certainly related to the Bazeley family by marriage. In 1878 she recorded in the School Log Book the following tragic series of events:

14 March - Attendance very small. A number of children being very ill, others of the same families being sent home from school by Doctor Morrell.

18 March - Lost two dear little pupils by death: Henry Bazeley on 14th aged 6 years, and Ellen Bazeley on 17th aged 4 years.

Six weeks later, the entry on 29th April reads:
Three Bazeleys allowed to return to school after 7 weeks illness.

Agnes Bazeley also died in this epidemic aged 1 Yr 10 mths.

but the current baby of the family, James Thomas, who was then about 4 months old, survived. Arthur, the youngest child who was born a year later only lived for 9 months.

The Bazeleys lived in one half of the Lodge Gates (*) to Purley Park which were situated on the south side of the Oxford Road. These thatched, brick and tiled buildings were erected in the late 18th century, probably at the same time as Purley Park house itself, and were connected by a pedestrian subway under the main road to the grounds. They were symmetrical, single-storey buildings and had half octagon fronts to the road each with an ogee-shaped tall sash window with a "Gothic" glazing pattern; the doors were on the inner faces and each lodge had a central chimney. Inside, the accommodation consisted of a living room, two bedrooms and a wash house; one of the lodges also had a kitchen by 1923, but this may have been a later addition. In 1871 the Bazeley family consisted of five children aged 2-9 years living with their parents in one of these small buildings.

William was promoted from Groom to Coachman sometime during the 1860s and served Major Storer in this capacity for more than 40 years. When his master died in 1902 he left a pension of £30 a year "to my old and faithful servant, William Bazeley" in his will. William was thus able to enjoy a relatively comfortable retirement until he died during the Great War on 22nd March 1915.

(*) Purley Lodge Gates - They were Grade III Listed Buildings; by the time they were demolished in the 1970s the thatched roofs had been replaced with tiles.

Jean Debney