

Account of Purley on Thames

Another Court Baron

R200691 21/7/2019

An article by Jean Debney in the series From my History Notebook article 55 published in PPN November 1985

55. Another Court Baron

On 27 October 1636 on the eve of the Civil War, John Knight, steward to the lord of the manor of Purley Parva, Richard Libbe, held a Court Baron in order to conduct some land transactions. The original court roll is now lost, but a copy made of one tenant's entry survives. Written in Latin on parchment, it states that "to this court came William Perryn, one of the customary tenants of this manor who holds one messuage with a garden, 2 acres of land in Middle Field and 2 half acres (i.e. two separate strips of land in the common field) together with appurtenances in Purley".

The document goes on to relate that for a fee of 40s the Copyhold Lease was renewed for the three lives of William Perryn, Joane the wife of Robert Coxhead and Joane Coxhead their daughter and heiress, "for the term of their lives and the longer lives of them successively at the will of the lord according to the custom of the said court".

The annual rent was 5s plus "all other works, customs and services due", and a herriot of 20s to be paid to the lord on the death of one of the "lives". Although it is not known for certain, it is thought that Joane Coxhead

Nearly 30 years later the copyhold lease for the same property was renewed, this time for the lives of Robert Newbury, now the "customary tenant", Joane his wife, "daughter of Robert Coxhead deceased", and Robert Newbury their son. At the same court Joane Coxhead, senior, paid the heriot of 20s for the death of her husband Robert.

Joane Newbury, nee Coxhead, died in 1666, but it was not until 1699 that the lease was renewed for the lives of Robert Newbury her son and her two grandsons Robert and George Newbury. The descent of the Newbury family can then be traced from generation to generation from successive court records, supplemented by entries from the parish registers.

In the 1841 Tithe Awarer for Purley, Thomas Newbury was named as "owner" of the property but a more correct description would be "lessee for life"; his tenant was then Edward Sherwood, farmer of Purley. By the 1850s Thomas was living in Sunbury, Middx: he was named as lessee in the Enclosure Award for Purley in 1856 and by 1874 had moved to Cavendish, Suffolk.

The property referred to above is the site opposite the School in Purley Village. The cottage, which was occupied by various tenants in the late 19th and 20th century, was burnt down relatively recently and the site is now an empty field where a horse can sometimes be seen grazing contentedly.

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