

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

## ***Charles Manesty***

R200718 15/7/2019

*An article by Jean Debney in the series From my History Notebook article 70 published in PPN March 1987*

### 70. The Effects of the Rev. Charles Manesty

The Rev Charles MANESTY died suddenly in the Rectory at Purley on 11 November 1844 aged 71. He had been Rector of the parish for 44 years.

The abruptness of his final illness is suggested by the brevity of the will drawn up only the day before which, because he possessed some considerable property, might have been an extensive document. With no time to summon a solicitor from Reading, his gardener Jesse LEWENDEN together with neighbours Edward SHERWOOD and Edward's older sister Sarah witnessed his signature.

After the decease of an incumbent his family must immediately vacate the Rectory ready for the new Rector. And so, just over two weeks later, an advertisement appeared in the Berkshire Chronicle with a long list of items for sale by Rev Manesty's widow before she moved into Reading.

In the bedrooms, mahogany furniture included a four-poster bed, dressing tables, a wardrobe, chests of drawers, a wash stand, some bed steps (probably to climb into the high 4-poster) and an Ottoman (a cushioned divan). Bedding included wool mattresses, bordered goose feather beds, Witney blankets and Marseilles quilts and among the "dressing glasses" was a "very handsome cheval glass"

(a long mirror swung on a frame)

On the floors of the dining and drawing room were Brussels carpets and rugs, with mahogany and rosewood

chairs, sofas and sideboards, a small cabinet, chiffonier (an ornamental cabinet with drawers or shelves), bookcases, a loo table (for the card game) and dining tables. The lamps had "superior chimney glasses" and there were Chelsea and French china ornaments, French clocks, a collection of rare oriental china vases etc., 600 ounces of plate, silver cutlery and many other plated items.

In the cellar was stored some old port, claret, East India Madeira and other wines.

The library contained about 800 books including religious and literary titles such as Stuart's and Brown's Bibles (both with plates), Flavius Josephus' history of the Jews (translated from Greek by L'Estrange), Wm Maitland's History of London, a topographical dictionary of England and Wales, the Annual Register from 1758, Valphy's Delphin Classics, the Life of Lord Eldon and books by Jonathan Swift, Addison, Pope, Heber, Scott and Horne.

In the greenhouse were melon and cucumber plants. He had a townbuilt chariot, a landaulet and a phaeton in the coach house and a pair of carriage horses. Elsewhere were brewing utensils and beer casks.

In the farm buildings (whose remains can still be seen in the wall at the side of Lister Close) were four Alderney and Jersey cows with two calves, two fat hogs, a sow with 12 piglets and two "in-pig" sows. There was also a small hay rick, a stump of old hay, a timber-built granary on stones, market and dung carts and - unexpectedly - a "nearly new tent".

Catalogues were on sale for 6d (2½p) each from the Auctioneer, 17 Friar Street, Reading, the George in Pangbourne and inns in Wallingford, Henley, Maidenhead, Windsor, Newbury and Basingstoke.

The result of the auction was not recorded, but the above suggests that this country clergyman practised animal husbandry to provide his family and servants with the necessities of life. It also gives us a brief glimpse

into the household furnishings and possessions of a wealthy 19th century parson and are probably fairly typical for the time.

