

Account of Purley on Thames

The Marsh Farm Estate (north)

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Marsh Farm was the main farm of La Hyde and had lands on both sides of the main road. The northern part was bounded by the railway and to the east was Sul Brook. Originally the lands to the east of the brook were part of the farm but got absorbed into Sulham Home Farm in due course.

When farming stopped the land was acquired by Bradfield RDC and used as a rubbish tip. It spanned both Purley and Pangbourne and in the 1930s Bradfield RDC built their Pangbourne Council estate based upon Bourne Road. When the use as a rubbish tip ceased after WW2, the council gradually extended their council estate and brought Bourne Road to a new junction with the A329.

Within Purley three further roads were constructed as part of the estate, Bucknell Avenue named after Arthur Bucknell, chairman of the Parish Council and its representative on Bradfield RDC, Wilder Avenue, named after the family which had owned the manorial rights to Sulham and Nunhide for many centuries and which was still the largest landowner in the area and Purley Way which ran parallel to the Reading Road; the latter being mainly single storey houses for old folks.

Later Dunluce Close was built to accommodate a small private development with the Purley/Pangbourne boundary running down the centre of the road.

The whole area was transferred to Newbury District Council in 1974 and subsequently many of the houses were sold to tenants under 'right to buy' legislation. The remaining council properties are now administered by Sovereign Housing Association. The whole of the Purley part was transferred to Pangbourne Parish in April 1991 as a final outcome of the 1977 Parish Boundary Review.

To the west of the Council owned area, in Pangbourne, Michael Moon, the owner of the manor, set up a bus enterprise operating Pangbourne Coaches. There was also a petrol filling station. All this has now been replaced by sheltered housing. This land had earlier been occupied by Marsh Barn which had been the headquarters of the Pangbourne Fire Brigade in which Purley had been a co-owner.

