

Account of Purley on Thames

The Purley River Estate

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When the proposal to construct a new mansion in the Purley Gardens fell through the owner of the land decided to sell it off in small plots. The land was laid out around a number of access routes which eventually were named when the Post Office had difficulty in identifying plots after people began to reside there permanently.

Wintringham Way was named after Tom Wintringham who became a national figure in the late 1930s and whose idea the Home Guard was.

St Mary's Avenue had been constructed as a farm track in the early part of the 19th century to allow the villagers access to the church which had become isolated within the new emparkment. It was generally known as Church Walk and did not officially become St Mary's Avenue until the naming of the roads in the 1950s. At one time there was a gate sealing off the road at the foot of New Hill.

Mapledurham Road was the track which replaced Marsh Lane after the emparkment, as the route to Mapledurham Lock. Its surface remained the property of Farmer Bucknell and there were many disputes about the rights of the residents to use the track. For many years wheeled vehicles were banned and there was a locked gate alongside the village pond closing off the road. Access to the properties was via a track to the rear of Colyton Way with a spur close to the shop. Later the gate was moved northwards to permit the residents to take cars to their properties, but it was a long time before it was made up following a campaign to which residents were asked to contribute financially.

River Gardens ran alongside the Thames and provided a source of dispute and lively debate for many years as to who had the rights to fish and moor their boats as the bank and about a yard of ground belonged to Mapledurham House and the whole of the river bed is technically in Oxfordshire.

Other roads were named Colyton Way, Brading Way, Oak Tree Walk, The Short, Park Walk, Woodlands Way, Chestnut Grove.

Most properties were renumbered in the 1960s and the name Woodlands Way was dropped as it was considered as an extension of Park Walk.

Wintringham Way, Colyton Way, Brading Way and Chestnut Grove were made up in 1974/76 after years of lobbying and delay. The estate was well known for its atrocious roads and most taxi drivers flatly refused to venture on them for fear of broken axles. People used to fill in potholes with ash from their fires.

