

# *Account of Purley on Thames*

## A Bit of a Tell by Rita Denman

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Hello again. Have you ever stopped to listen to the birds singing on the corner of Nursery Gardens and the main road? The louder the traffic the more they sing. The birds have probably been established in the old pine trees for many years as the house that once stood here was the gardener's cottage to Westfield House, a country house built in the 1870s. The area now known as Nursery Gardens was the ground surrounding it. Stable Cottage further along the road was, as the name suggests, the stable block to the same house.

The gardeners cottage became the Purley Post Office and many residents will remember Mr and Mrs Gutch who were the proprietors but before then the Post Office was across the road at Lichfield Cottage and run by the legendary Miss Pocock. At that time Cecil Aldin the well known artist was living at Belle Isle Farm. He came to live in Purley as the Master of Fox Hounds for the South Berkshire Hunt and lived in Purley for twenty years through the early part of the 20th century. He had a large number of pet dogs who were not only companions but models for many of his paintings and he called them his Partners. It was a familiar sight to see him walking to the Post Office at Lichfield Cottage accompanied by his motley pack of dogs. Westfield gardeners cottage was demolished in 1993, two new houses were built on the site and the Post Office moved to its present home. Mind how you go and I'll see you again.







