

Account of Purley on Thames

A Bit of a Tell

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This is one of a series of short articles written by Rita Denman for the Purley Parish News July 2016.

Hello, shall we carry on with our walk through the old village? We know that in 1730 the cottage now known as Hemington was the home of a shoe maker and his family. When it became vacant in the early 1800s the Rector Rev Charles Manesty ran a small free school there, In response to the Education Act of 1870 the Rector Rev Richard Palmer financed a school which was built on a site purchased from the Lord of the Manor of Purley Parva, Philip Lybb Powis which included the cottage. Sadly Richard Palmer did not live to see the building completed or the benefit it brought to the children of the village. Until it was sold, the cottage became the residence of the School Mistress.

On the other side of the street was a large thatched dwelling which was home to two families. This was demolished in the early part of the 1900s. The site which was also part of the Manor of Purley Parva stood vacant for many years and was where in the 1970s a local resident grazed a rescued horse named Blaize and and a donkey called Spring. Blaize and Spring had a stable specially built for them, a gentleman from Glebe Road came to look after them every day and a farrier came regularly. They had the run of the site which extended from the street back to the farm and along the back of the village cottages. The two animals were very entertaining. Blaize had obviously known the high life and now and again he went through some dressage moves. He thundered at a gallop from one end of the field to the other and little Spring followed him everywhere he went. The neighbours were very sad when Blaize became ill and had to be put to sleep. He left his village home wearing his new blanket. Spring went to be with other donkeys in Whitchurch. The two new houses were built in the mid 1980s.

On the end of the row is Ivy Cottage. It is recorded in times well past, that it was known as 'the old house' but we do not know the date when it was built Some years ago I chanced to meet an old lady who told me she that when she was a young child she had lived in Ivy Cottage, facing the pond. This would have been in the early 1900s. She had a vivid memory of the horse and cart being ready for a journey and sitting in the cart waiting for her father when something spooked the horse and it backed up the road. The cart crashed through a low railing where there was a drop down into the back garden depositing her in a heap. From that moment she never trusted horses. I will be here again in September if you would like to explore more of the old village with me.

