

# *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 October 2017.*

Hello again. Autumn is well and truly with us and the skeins of geese filling the sky are a very moving sight. Wildlife is responding to the changing seasons. Over the years, many things have changed in Purley but the same signs of nature have been watched by generations of Purley folk.

When I came to Purley with my family in 1975 I was lucky to have neighbours whose families had been living here since the late 1800s. They loved to tell their stories and I loved to listen and catch a glimpse of the old way of life. They are few and far between now but there are still some old families in Purley and they have a lot to tell us.

A number of residents have recorded in words or on tape, anecdotes about daily life. The memories of the Pryors who lived in the old Rectory, now Lister Close, tell of the gardener's nightmare of the Easter egg hunt and of the old church bier that became part of the fixtures at the Rectory. Phyl Rawlins remembered the hunt which was based at Belle Isle Farm. When the riders and the pack of hounds came home in the dusk, lanterns were hung on the horses harness and as they came down the then narrow track of Long Lane she loved to see the bobbing lanterns shining in the dark. When the hounds returned to the kennels they were fed and the air was full of the smell of stewing meat. Some said it was horrible. Whole carcasses were delivered to the kennels and it was a childrens' dare to to run in and touch it and run out again and not get caught. The children would have known every corner of Purley and everyone's comings and going and had much more freedom than they do today.

Lottie Luker lived at 2, Jasmine Cottage. Her father had been employed on a farm in Long Lane. He said that in the late 1800s it was all sheep in this area. Sadly, Lottie died just a few years after we came here but she was very friendly to us as new- comers to the village. The late Bill Fisher lived in Purley in his boyhood and he reckoned that at that time, around the 1920s, there were no more than 50 families in the parish. As I was interested he gave me a 1966 Ordnance Survey Map on which he had marked in red the houses where those families had lived in earlier times.

Although we now lead very different lives, we can still keep the old neighbourly village spirit alive.

Now mind how you go and I will look out for you again.























