

Account of Purley on Thames

A Bit of a Tell

R302028 20/10/2018

This is one of a series of short articles written by Rita Denman for the Purley Parish News October 2018

Hello, it is good to meet you again. The year seems to have flown by and here we are in October, one of the the most beautiful months in the calendar, nature's grand finale. Traditionally it is the month for Harvest Thanksgiving. Due to the extremes of weather, farmers and growers around the world will be especially thankful for this year's harvest.

In our own gardens we have seen the effects on the tomatoes, runner beans and cottage vegetables that we enjoy growing. The wild brambles have done fairly well as have some apple trees so I hope you will enjoy the treat of a home made blackberry and apple pie.

In the past apple scrumping was commonly done by village boys and perhaps the girls too risking the anger of the owner of the tree if the scrumpers were unlucky and caught. There are some trees in Purley which have their own stories handed down through the generations.

The large walnut tree in the village school grounds is still remembered by many. The nuts were shared among the pupils at the end of the term. Another of the old village stories is of the elderly lady who was known to arrange a row of apples temptingly on the wall of her front garden and waited for the children to come out of school. It was a game of cat and mouse to see who could grab one and escape before she gave them the rough edge of her tongue for stealing her apples.

Our old friend Fred Rawlins in his many reminiscences retold this story. "The old Rectory stood back off the road dwarfed by a majestic cedar and sweet chestnut trees. How many local lads went scrumping those nuts and how many still remember the call from the porch steps 'Boys, boys, bob up and let me see who you are'. Being locals we were allowed to go on scrumping."

The oldest tree in the village is probably the oak tree in Long Lane. A venerable landmark which in the not too distant past gave shelter to the Purley children waiting for the carrier to take them to Pangbourne School.

Mind how you go.