

# *Account of Purley on Thames*

## A Bit of a Tell

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*By Rita Denman published in Purley Parish News February 2019*

Hello, The year is still young enough to wish you a happy and peaceful 2019.

At this time of year, when the days are still dull and often dreary there seems to be an anti-climax after all the excitement of Christmas but in February of 1875 Purley was agog with excitement as the new school was to be opened.

A small Free School had been provided by the Rector Rev Manesty for some time and held in a cottage in the village. When Rev Manesty died in November 1844 Rev Richard Palmer came to the Living and he carried on the Free School. Rev. Palmer inherited a considerable amount of money from his brother in 1872 and following the discussions in Parliament concerning the education of the poor he decided to finance a new school for Purley. A site was purchased from Phillip Lybbe Powis, Lord of the Manor of Purley Parva and plans were drawn up. The building was to be of flint and brick and the architect was Mr Joseph Morris, the Berkshire County Surveyor.

Building commenced around 1873. However all was not plain sailing and there were problems with the dimensions of the school and there was much to-ing and fro-ing of correspondence between all the parties including Whitehall. Suddenly in October 1874 Rev Palmer died and there were more problems of a legal nature. Rev Charles Henry Travers was inducted Rector of Purley and there followed more correspondence between the Rector and the Lawyers engaged in the legal matters regarding the management of the school. Eventually an agreement was reached and the school was ready. The first School Mistress was Miss Marianne Trimm.

The school was opened with due ceremony on the 9th February 1875. After a short service conducted by Rev Travers and Rev H Pearson. Tea was provided for the Parishioners.

The Reading Mercury of 13 February 1875 reported:

The new school building was opened on Tuesday last and gave the occasion of a happy parish gathering whose brightness was only clouded by the thought that the liberal donor of the school, the late Rev Richard Palmer passed to his rest before his last work for Purley was completed. There was a short special service in the schoolroom at 3.30 and a tea at four o'clock to which the Rev C H Travers and Mrs Travers invited the school children and the parishioners generally. The former numbered 48 - a large proportion for a small population - a satisfactory evidence that the encouragements given to education in this parish are duly appreciated. The schools which were designed by Mr Morris are very effective, standing on an eminence adjoining the Rectory Garden."

Mind how you go.