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Newsletter 12 January 1986

The Project Purley Newsletter enters 1986 in a different format. It is hoped that the new size will be easier for members to handle and to keep and also presents the articles in a more readable form. Project Purley, in addition to catching up with the past, is keeping up with the present. This newsletter has been produced using a word processor. To obtain the correct layout using a typewriter would have ground the editor to a halt.

Computers are becoming more and more common in schools and in the home. They have many applications for the local and family historian. At least three members are now using their home micros for Project Purley. Apart from producing newsletters, minutes and other administrative documents they are recording a chronology of events relating to Purley. Any new event can be easily inserted into its time slot. It can also provide an index to names and places in documents. Courses on Computers for Local History are being held at Oxford in February and April this year (see page 5).

This newsletter in addition to detailing future events and evening classes also mentions some recent discoveries by the Society. If you have any comments or contributions for the newsletter the editor would be pleased to hear from you.

MAPS MAPS MAPS MAPS MAPS MAPS MAPS MAPS MAPS

The society is collecting copies of maps of any date showing Purley. Apart from the Ordinance Survey, maps produced in or before the nineteenth century usually covered a whole county. Other maps were commissioned by a landowner to show his own estates.

The Society now has copies of a twentieth century copy of an estate map of the manor of Purley Magna made in 1786. The present whereabouts of the original is unknown. The map was made for Mr. Robert Macreath, the then Lord of the Manor, by a William Moss. It shows the church, Manor House and Farm, fields with their acreages and names, cottages and other buildings. It may not show all details as properties owned by others need not appear on Mr. Macreath's map.

Although Robert Macreath only held the manor for about five years, we must thank him for this map and a "Court Baron" which is a description of the boundaries of the manor, also made in 1786. Copies of this map can be bought for £1.

Some county maps showing Purley, listed below, are also available for purchase. Contact John Chapman, Rdg (4)26999, if interested.

County Coaching maps - by John Carey.  
1790-1805 - Many counties - Framed. Berkshire  
£9 - other counties £9.50. 11½" x 13½".

Speed's map of Berkshire. (circa 1627)  
12½" x 0" - unframed. £1

Robert Morden's map of Berkshire (circa 1695)  
13½" x 15" - unframed. £1

## WARREN HASTINGS AND PURLEY

It has always been believed that Purley Hall was used by Warren Hastings after his return from India and during his impeachment. Until now no specific evidence of his possible stay has been established except for two paintings which show him in front of Purley Hall.

This position is now changed following the discovery by John Chapman of this item in the Reading Mercury dated Monday 4th May 1789.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mr Hastings has taken Purley Hall about five miles from this town for a temporary country residence until by the arrangement of his affairs he shall be enabled to build himself a house. Purley is a pleasant seat, the property of the Rev. Dr. Wilder.

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There is not space here to give full details of his life nor the events in India which led to his impeachment by Parliament. He had been born in poor circumstances at Daylesford in Oxfordshire. His early life had been spent in India where he was appointed its first 'Governor General' in 1773. He returned to England in June 1785 and then a political storm arose which culminated with his trial which started in February 1788. He was not acquitted until 1795. He moved to Daylesford in 1794/5 and lived there until his death.

The newspaper article shows that he came to Purley Hall after his impeachment started. Still more research needs to be done.

## EVENING CLASSES AND WEEKEND COURSES

Below are listed some of the evening and weekend classes available in the Thames Valley Area and run by Bracknell College, Reading and Oxford Universities. The list only covers courses on Local History or related subjects. If you are interested in any of them, John Titterton, Rdg (4)21255 has a copy of the relevant Prospectus giving fuller details.

### Reading University Extramural Dept.

#### a Evening Classes:

England from the Anglo Saxon invasion to the Norman Conquest. Thurs 7.30-9.30 from 16 Jan 1986, 10 Weeks.

#### b Saturday Schools

15th March 1986

The Great Bath Road - a history of the road, its traffic, towns and inns on its route.

5th April 1986

Reading Abbey - to be held in Abbey Gateway and includes a walk around the ruins.

10th May 1986

Georgian Reading - social and economic history of Reading in 18th and early 19th centuries.

### Bracknell College

#### a Daytime and Evenings:

Sources for Local History - Wednesday afternoons at Wokingham starting 8th January. Tutor - Jean Debney.

ANOTHER YEAR OLDER ANOTHER YEAR WISER !!

The passing of another year is good news and bad news for the historian. For the national historian the good news is the release for viewing of documents which are now 30 years old. However, the bad news is that another year has passed during which documentary or archaeological material has been lost or destroyed.

The local historian suffers the bad news but does he have any good news? Discoveries are unlikely to be made in the national archives relating to local events. Items of importance or interest will have been common knowledge or gossip within the community when it happened.

The local historian should perhaps view the year by looking at his "locality" to see how it has changed over the last twelve months and how these changes may have altered the lives of the people living there. For example :-  
Do we know for Purley in 1985

How many people were born in the parish?  
How many people died in the parish?  
How many people moved into the parish?  
How many people moved out of the parish?  
How many houses/buildings were constructed?  
How many houses/buildings were destroyed?  
Did the public transport system change?  
etc. etc.

These questions may seem trivial but the answers, when taken together and built up over a number of years can contribute to a picture of the people of Purley today for future historians. Project Purley is seeking the answers to these sort of questions, for any time over the last one thousand years.

Whilst the Society has not answered all the above questions for 1985, we have not been idle. This year items of information have come to light for different periods. Two are mentioned in this Newsletter; William Moss's map of 1786, page 2, and Warren Hastings at Purley Hall, page 3. Another find this year, still to be investigated, are documents in the Berkshire Record Office referring to the Red Lion, Purley's long lost pub.

1. document is an island. The copy of the map of 1786, which came from a members loft, can be compared with the Tithe Map of 1841 and also used with the Court Baron (see page 2) which was found in the British Library in 1983. The Tithe Map came from the Rectory and was examined before Project Purley was formed.

The items above were discovered by different members of Project Purley at different times and in different places. Each new discovery is useful not only for what it contains individually but also its inter-relationship with other material already found (or yet to be found) to give a fuller picture. One source may add to the value of another.

Any member can contribute to this pool of knowledge by spending the odd hour in the County Record Office (Shire Hall) or the new Reading Reference Library. If you want to read the local paper for say the 1950's, or 1920's or 1820's, then please come forward. You can select what you wish to look at or we can make suggestions. Perhaps a group could go together. However, to avoid duplication and omissions this should be co-ordinated. If you can help us be even wiser by the end of 1986 please contact John Titterton or Jean Debney.

## FUTURE PROGRAMME - 1986

The programme of General Meetings for the first part of this year is outlined below. Of particular importance is the A.G.M. in March which marks our fourth anniversary. A new committee will be elected and there are vacancies, so please consider volunteering for next year. The duties are not horrendous with about 8 meetings a year and assisting at Society events. We need a Secretary, it is a very necessary post, so your help in this area would be much appreciated. For more details contact Jean Debney or John Titterton.

### Friday 14th February:

Neil Bucknell, son of the late Mr John Bucknell, will be talking about ornithology, illustrated by slides.

### Friday 14th March:

A.G.M. followed by a presentation by the Oral History Group.

### Friday 11th April:

John Chapman will be giving the third talk on the history of St Mary's Church.

### Friday 9th May:

Mr West, a new resident of Purley, will be talking about Berkshire Tokens. Tokens were issued in place of coinage and exchanged for goods locally.

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PROJECT PURLEY is the local history society of Purley-on-Thames, Berkshire.

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