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Newsletter 13
April 1986

Project Purley is now into its fifth year and still going strong. For many members the Society may be their only contact with 'local history'. But we are just one element of a national 'local history' interest. There are many other societies or groups of people who are doing research of their own. Some are near to us, e g Thatcham, Mortimer, Cholsey, Streatley and Goring. At County level there is The Berkshire Local History Association (BLHA). Details of some BLHA events this year are given on page 5. Nationally there is The British Association for Local History (BALH) and details of other events outside the county are to be found on the centre pages.

From articles in this edition one will see that Project Purley is becoming involved in this wider arena. In April we are hosting the History of Reading Society and in September we are taking part in a two day event at Avebury (details on page 4).

On publications there is also much material to be read. The latest BALH Journal (produced quarterly) reports 47 different Local/Regional History Publications. Subjects include Epping Town Fire Brigade, The Port of Roman London and The Coal Mines of Buxton. Hopefully a mention of our own Society's first publication will appear in the Journal in the near future.

SO FAR THIS YEAR

The first three lectures of 1986 were each different in subject and presentation, but all proved popular with members. In January, Cliff Debney told us about the origins, development and changes in the names of the fields, woods and farms in Purley and neighbouring parishes. Names could be derived from the nature of the land, the crops grown, the name of the occupier or many other factors. Some names were of recent creation, others go back several centuries.

For February's meeting the Natural History Group invited Neil Bucknell to talk about the birds (feathered variety) which he had seen in Purley since his childhood. (Until recently Neil's father, John Bucknell, had lived at Home Farm). Neil admirably described the different birds that could be found by the River, on higher ground in Purley and in people's gardens. We heard of the unique sighting of a pink starling in Purley in the 1960's. It was a very enjoyable meeting to which all present could easily relate, as was shown by the discussion afterwards.

Following the AGM in March the Oral History Group gave us a marvelous presentation of some of their work so far. We were treated to selections of the recollections of Purley residents, some recorded up to 10 years ago. It provided a fascinating view of the history of Purley over the last 50 years. Those attending cannot now forget "Dan Dan the Sanitary Man". It was obvious to all that the Group had taken great pains in the selection of items and every cassette started superbly on cue. Many members will hope for a second edition in next year's programme and would like to see some sort of publication.

LIEBENROOD ROAD, READING - The Purley Link

Liebenrood Road, Reading is probably a name which sticks in the mind of many motorists driving through Reading because it is different. The answer to why there is a Liebenrood Road in Reading lies in Purley. It is named after the family who lived in Prospect Park until the turn of this century when it was given to the Reading Borough Council. The origin of the family goes back to John George Liebenrood who was buried at Purley in 1795. He lived at Purley Lodge. He left his estate to his adopted great nephew, John Engleberts Ziegenbein on condition that he changed his name to Liebenrood. This John moved to Prospect Park about 1804. When his own children died without heirs the property passed to the Handcocks, who were relatives of his wife. They also changed their name to Liebenrood.

According to the memorial in Purley church, John George Liebenrood came from Elrich County Hohnstein, Saxony (now in East Germany). So what brought him to Purley? The answer again is on his monument but this time it is in code. The heraldic arms on it show that his wife's maiden name was Allen. A John Allen was churchwarden in Purley and died in 1757. His will shows that his only child Ann was married to John George Liebenrood.

The background of John Allen is still to be researched but the Allen arms on the monument were being used by an Allen family in Streatley in the 1660s. There is also a table tomb with these arms on in the churchyard of St Marys Butts. This is an example of the local history of one place contributing to that another.

FUTURE PROGRAMME FOR PROJECT PURLEY

- May 9th Mr Vincent West a society member will be talking about "Berkshire Seventeenth Century Tokens". A token was usually a private coin which could be exchanged for goods/services/money.
- June 13th This is the first of the parish walkabouts. The Sulham-Pangbourne side of the village will be explored. The walk will start at Sulham Lane, and proceed to Home Farm Sulham, Saltney Mead and back along the river to Pangbourne.
- July 11th This second walk will be around the Purley Park River Estate to discuss its past and present.

SUMMER BREAK

- Sept 12th An illustrated talk on the History of Reading.
- Oct 10th Celebration of the Bicentenary of the Court Baron of 23rd Oct. 1786.
- Nov 14th Purley migration to and from Tidmarsh/Sulham 1750 to 1850.
- Dec 5th Christmas Social.

SEPTEMBER 6th-7th FOUR COUNTIES FESTIVAL.

This two day event at Avebury is a combination of displays by various societies and a lecture programme. Project Purley will be among the exhibitors. The lectures include ones on landscapes and the Domesday Book. If you are interested in attending either day then please contact Jean Debney or any Committee Member.

OTHER FORTHCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

THE BERKSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION has two further Saturday meetings this year.

'Transport and Communication in Berkshire'
Saturday 10th May at Berkshire Agricultural College at Birchetts Green (Between A4 and Marlow). There will be talks on the Kennet and Avon Canal, Postal Services and other subjects with displays by a number of groups.

'Deeds and Property Documents'.
Saturday 6th December. Further details will be given in the next newsletter.

The Nineteenth Century English Village, at Rewley House, Oxford. 10-11th May 1986.

A Local History Event in Salisbury.
7th June 1986. Cost £5. The Salisbury Local History group have organised a day, commencing at 10.45 am, made up of lectures, guided city walks and a mini-bus trip to Old Sarum. The lectures are on 'The Anatomy of Building', 'Beneath Salisbury' and 'Salisbury's History'. Cathedral workmen will be demonstrating their skills.

Annual Conference of Regional and Local Historians. 12-14th September 1986 at the University of East Anglia, Norwich. Cost £55. The theme is the Relationship between Local Communities and the Nation. The programme includes lectures, discussion groups and visits based on East Anglia.

If you are interested in any of these events John Titterton has some details and can obtain more information.

HOUSES FOR SALE

The following article quotes two advertisements from local papers.

Reading Standard April 1986:

"£73,950 Purley - new location - four bedroom detached * entrance hall * cloakroom * dining room * lounge * kitchen/breakfast room * 3 double bedrooms + 1 single bedroom * bathroom * gas rad central heating * double glazing * secluded rear garden * double length garage."

From the advertisement it is not obvious which house is being advertised but any prospective purchaser can obtain details from the estate agent. However for the local historian of 50 years hence this is not so easy. Here is an advertisement of an earlier date:

Reading Mercury May 20th 1776:

"To be let pleasantly situated at Purley Berks four miles from Reading about 200 yards from the turnpike from Reading to Oxford and about half a mile from the River Thames. A well built lathed brick house in good repair containing 2 parlours, a butlers pantry and kitchen on the ground floor with a brew house adjoining. Three bed chambers a dressing room one light and two other closets on the first floor, two bed chambers and others for servants on the attick story, a wine vault and good cellars, proper conveniences for wood, coals etc, stabling for 3 horses, a garden, orchard and close adjoining the premises. Part of the furniture is to be disposed of if agreeable to the tenant. Further particulars may be had on the premises which may be viewed at any time being now inhabited."

There are many similarities between the two entries. Both are trying to give the prospective purchaser/tenants an idea of the nature of the accomodation but at the same time not take up too much space in the paper. The accomodation of each is similar. Both have two reception rooms, one with four bedrooms and the other with five. But the differences in the way life has changed are obvious:

- ii. double length garage against stabling.
- i. central heating against 'conveniences for wood/coal'
- iii. the second house also has servants quarters, a brewhouse and an orchard; facilities today's houses do not have.

Although the accomodation is similar, the second house would be for a person of some importance in the village. There would be few houses of that standard in the village.

The precise identity of each house is not obvious from the advertisements. In twelve months time the first house will be as anonymous as the second. The Society obviously would like positive identification of the second house. Should the description fit that of a house of suitable age in Purley, we would be very pleased to hear from you.

HELP HELP SATURDAY SEPT 6TH 1986 HELP HELP

Saturday September 6th 1986 will be a busy day for the Society. We will be mounting our usual display at The Purley Fayre and also taking part in a two day local history event at Avebury Wilts. So our resources will be stretched. Any member willing to help please contact the committee.

MORE WALKING

In addition to our two parish walks in June and July this year there are also two further walks in the parish which may be of interest.

Sunday 4 May A parish walk to celebrate Purley-on-Thames. The walk starts from the church at 12.30 and breaks for a picnic lunch (bring your own) at the Lock and resumes 2 pm.

Thurs 24 July The History of Reading Society visit Purley with a walk guided by Jean Debney starting at the Church at 7.30 pm. Hosts/hostesses to help with the refreshments at the Church would be appreciated.

AGM AND CURRENT COMMITTEE

At the AGM on 14th March 1986 the following officers and committee members were elected.

Chairman - Jean Debney	Reading 413223
Secretary - Jan Jones	Pangbourne 3779
Treasurer - Ben Viljoen	Pangbourne 3170
Committee Members	
John Chapman	Reading 426999
Cliff Debney	Reading 413223
Terry Hughes	Reading 414697
John Titterton	Reading 421255

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

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