

PROJECT PURLEY PROJECT PURLEY PROJECT PURLEY
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NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 1987

A CHANGE OF CHAIRMAN

Unfortunately, John Titterton has had to resign as chairman.

As many of you know he is co-editor for a series of books, two of which are due out this autumn. John has had to take on a lot more responsibility for these and is finding the task very time consuming. In addition the Electricity Board has chosen this moment to promote John to a more time consuming job so he is having to put in more hours at work. He felt that he would not be able to devote any of his time to Project Purley for the coming months and therefore should not remain as chairman. John and Rita are remaining as members and John hopes to be back with us on the committee in the new year.

As those of you who were at our September meeting will know, Cliff Debney has been persuaded to 'volunteer' to act as chairman until the next AGM. Our thanks to him and to John and Rita for all their past work.

Secretary

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Les Mitchell of Ascot writes about Belleisle House, now G Percy Trentham Ltd.

"I lived near Tilehurst Station from 1936 to 1957 (apart from some war years) and two of my best school pals, John LUCAS and his sister Pauline, lived in the large house which occupied the corner of Long Lane and the main road. The last time I passed the area the large house was still there, owned by a private firm, and in far better decoration than when I knew it!!!

The house took in all the land to the corner of the two roads and included many large barns and stables, large greenhouses all in ruin and a very large vegetable garden overrun by weeds. There was a wooden floored room attached to the house that was large enough to hold a dance in. The walls were decorated with animal heads and I was given a small antelope head which we had in our small hallway for many years, until it fell to pieces.

There was one aspect of that house which I have never seen or heard of elsewhere. Gas jets were everywhere mounted on the walls. I found this very strange for mains gas had not been laid on to Purley at the time these fittings would have been in use. When I enquired of my young friends about this they took me to an outhouse where there was some strange apparatus which included a small gasometer. It appeared to be a large version of the old carbide bicycle lamp. A great quantity of carbide was flooded with water and the gas produced stored in the gasometer.

SEPTEMBER MEETING World War II

John Chapman started off our trip down Memory Lane by telling us about the formation of the ARP in Purley in the mid 1930's and the various preparations for war. These ranged from the digging of trenches to the logging of useful pieces of equipment, like wheelbarrows, to the commandeering of vehicles. A local dignitary even had to give up his Rolls Royce to the wardens! Many members brought along memorabilia such as hard hats, ration books, identity cards, even a 1d bus ticket. Cliff Debney had many treasures retrieved from his parents house in Manchester. Among them were letters between mother and children separated since evacuation. How heart rending some of these were. John Chapman had the foresight to bring along a tape recorder and microphone so hopefully some members memories will be preserved..

FUTURE PROGRAMME

Friday 9th October at The Gatehouse, Purley Lane

Poor Law - Jean Debney

Jean will be telling us of some of the sad cases that 'went on the parish'.

Friday 13th November at 44 Wintringham Way

Oral History - Adam Green

Adam Green, The County Archivist, will be describing the county programme to preserve and coordin-

ate work of Oral History Groups 1 ours. We hope to pick up some tips from him and from his examples.

Friday 11th December at The Gatehouse, Purley Lane

Christmas Social

This years social evening will again include a fun quiz, details will be given at the November meeting. We have decided to sell tickets this year at £1 per head to include the famous (or infamous) Debney mulled wine, orange juice and food. Non members are welcome so please bring along the family. Each ticket will have a number and will be placed in a draw for a bottle of wine on the night of the social, so bring your tickets with you!

Events planned for next year include;

- * A light hearted look in dramatical format at the work of the census enumerators.
- * A visit to Blakes Lock Museum
- * The Purley beneath our feet.
- * Bats and where to find them
- * A guide to historical architecture

AUTUMN COURSES

The English Country House Pangbourne Junior School

Mondays 7.30pm-9.00pm from 21st September

Tracing Your Family History Little Heathe School, Tilehurst

Thursdays 7.30pm-9.30pm from 24th September