



## ***Account of Purley on Thames***

### **Chronicles 1920-1929**

#### **1920 11/12 Geo V**

The South Berks Hunt bought Belleisle Farm which they had leased since 1903 (ref 40-33)

At a special Parish Assembly on Nov 16th the proposals of a special committee for a War Memorial were considered. It was agreed that a tablet should be erected in the church at a cost of no more than £80 and that the order should be given to Messrs. Millwall Bros of London (ref 25)

Henry Leath found a ring enscribed 'Liebenrood' in the orchard of Purley Lodge. He returned it to the family who now lived at Prospect Park. (ref 13)

Purley Park Estate was offered for sale following the death of Major Storer's daughter Leila Fullerton in 1918. At the time the estate comprised Purley Park and its grounds which included the boat house and the Gardeeners cottage, together with numerous plots and cottages around the village (ref 52-1920)

#### **1921 12/13 Geo V**

The school was closed on Feb 23rd by the School Medical Officer because of measles. (ref 184-15)

#### **1922 13/14 Geo V**

In May the school was closed early because of a circus in Pangbourne. The circuses used to be held on Marsh Farm opposite what later became Pangbourne Motors and thus were technically within the parish of Purley. The marsh spread from there to Tidmarsh and was owned by the Wilders. (refs 184-15; 13)

#### **1923 14/15 Geo V**

Mr Hodgkin offered to provide a parish notice board (ref 25)

The state of roads in Purley Village gave cause for concern. The footpath from Westbury which was used by children going to school was being badly cut up by Mr Gulliver's carts (ref 25)

There had been a Court case about the rights of way from Purley to Mapledurham Lock and Mr Robert Saunders was instructed not to lock the gate (ref 25)

#### **1924 15/16 Geo V**

In January Bradfield Union proposed an Act to impose a river tax upon Purley. The Parish Assembly was strongly opposed to it as there would be no benefit to Purley. They asked that if such a tax were imposed then a ferry should be provided to ply between Purley and Mapledurham (ref 25)

On March 28th Mr C H Tidbury was appointed Assistant Overseer to replace his father who had just died (ref 25)

In the summer the first gas supply was brought to Purley via a 12 inch steel main which was laid along the Oxford Road from Tilehurst. It was brought in at the behest and expense of the Hodgkin's at Purley Lodge. As well as providing light at the lodge there was a single mantle in Purley Lodge Cottage (downstairs) and two flares (ie no mantles) in the two upstairs bedrooms. (ref 13-1/84; 185-1)

Charles H Coe was inducted as Rector of Purley on 27th December (ref 22)

### **1925 16/17 Geo V**

When the managers of the school came to appoint a new headmistress they were horrified to learn that her salary had to be tied to the number of pupils in the school and would be £288 per annum. They put forwards a proposal that the school should become just for infants and juniors and applied to the County Council for permission to appoint an uncertified teacher. The County Council agreed with the proposals and as a result children at Purley School from Standard V and above were transferred to Pangbourne School in September, Mrs Edith Tidbury was engaged and paid considerably less than the £288. She had originally been a teacher at the school in Pangbourne and was previously an Assistant at Goring School. She was born in 1888 (refs 13; 184-16; 320-1926-35; 37)

### **1926 17/18 Geo V**

The Reading and District Traction Company began operating a bus service to Tidmarsh via Purley in January. It was later extended to Ashampstead and finally to Yattendon. The fare to Reading was 5d return from Purley and 7d return from Tidmarsh (ref 13-1/84)

A flint implement of the St Acheul type was found in a chalk surface in Purley (ref 88)

A CBS2 type manual telephone exchange was installed in Pangbourne. It served part of Purley. There were 130 lines and four operators. Previously service had been provided from an exchange in Minster St in Reading (ref 186-1)

The salary of the Assistant Overseer (Mr Tidbury) was increased from £10 to £15 pa. His workload had increased considerably because of the splitting up of an estate (the Purley Rise estate?) into plots. (ref 25)

Mr Simmonds of Tilehurst was bringing wood to his ground to the south of Church Walk (now St Mary's Avenue), sawing it into logs and carting it away in a motor lorry. This was causing rapid deterioration in the village roads for which no money from the State was forthcoming as they were not classified. The Parish Meeting resolved on March 22nd to ask him to help pay for the cost of repair. (ref 25)

The position of Overseer was to be abolished from 31/3/1927 as their duties were being transferred to other Authorities. Mr Saunders was re-appointed on March 22nd as the last Overseer for Purley. (ref 25)

Purvey's Railway had been removed by 24th June although the agreement with the Great Western Railway did not expire until 31st December, It was a two foot gauge line with Decauville track and was used to haul gravel from the gravel pit near the Thames (now a pond) to the Thames to be loaded onto barges and to the Purley Rise building site. It had been put in to provide gravel for the concrete to build the new Caversham Bridge. It was owned and operated by John Purvey and Sons, Smiths and Engineers of Reading Road Pangbourne. (their yard was adjacent to the Garden House and included the land where the Memorial Hall now stands) (ref 13)

There were several Parish Meetings during the year to assert rights of way over footpaths (ref 25)

The Parish Meeting on 12th November decided to ask the County Council to establish a Parish Council as there was now more business than could be conveniently transacted by a Parish Meeting. (ref 25)

The Lister family bought the Old Rectory. A new Rectory was to be built on part of the old Glebe lands south of the railway (where Westridge Avenue and Allison gardens now stand) (ref 13-1/84)

The County Council noted the proposed developments at Purley Rise and established a 'building and improvement line' for the A42 Reading to Pangbourne Road between points 167 yards east and 500 yards west of Purley Post Office. It was later extended to the George in Pangbourne (refs 278; 320-1926-76)

The Reading to Pangbourne Road was widened near the Roebuck. Most of the work was within the Borough of Reading and the County Council paid £310 to the Borough for a short extension into Purley. They got a 50% grant from the Government (ref 320-1926-155)

## **1927 18/19 Geo V**

At the Parish Meeting of March 21st the first Purley Parish Council was elected. It consisted of Mr C E Hodgkin, Mr H A Tidbury, Mr S Anderson and Miss L M C Jones (ref 25)

Freddy Mills of Ivy Cottage, aged 8 was killed by a steam lorry in Purley on March 23rd (ref 184-16)

The first meeting of the Civil Parish Council was held on March 28th.

The Rev C H Coe was elected chairman. Mr Horace John Turner was appointed Parish Clerk at an annual salary of two guineas. (ref 4)

Mr Coe resigned as rector and left the parish in the Spring

On May 11th four aeroplanes set down in Purley and the children were let out from school and taken to see them (ref 184-16)

At the second meeting of the Parish Council Miss L M C Jones was appointed temporary chairman (ref 4-7/27)

Arthur Harris-Rivett was inducted as Rector of Purley on 13th November. As the new Rectory (on the present Westridge Avenue site) was not yet ready he had to live at West Lodge Cottage for a time. This was one of a pair of cottages on the south side of the Oxford Road opposite the entrance to Purley Park (refs 13-1/84; 22)

330 yards of three inch gas main were laid along Purley Village (called Long Lane by the Gas company)

The cottage and smithy at the corner of Long Lane and the Oxford Road came onto the market with a third of an acre of land. The County Council had been wanting to widen the A42 at this but had been unable to purchase compulsorily. They resolved to purchase the property for not more than £250, but in the event they got it for £225. They also resolved to sell off any land not actually needed for the road widening to defray expense. The demolition did not in fact take place until 1936 (refs 320-1927-170, 424)

Ambrose Petrocockino died. He had been County Councillor for the Pangbourne Division for many

years. He was replaced by the right Honourable Sir Arthur Sackville Trevor Griffith-Boscawen of Pangbourne Lodge who had been Minister of Agriculture in 1921 and Minister of Health in 1922 when MP for Taunton. Ambrose had been married to the daughter of General and Lady Sykes of Westfield in Purley. (ref 320-1927)

## **1928 19/20 Geo V**

Mr C E Hodgkin of Purley Lodge was elected Chairman of the Parish Council on 13th Jan (ref 4-1/28)

On 13th Jan the Parish Council made a contract with the Pangbourne Fire Brigade to provide coverage for Purley at a fee of £25 pa. (ref 4-1/28)

A Parish precept of £30 was approved to cover expenses up to 30th September (ref 4-1/28)

At the Parish Meeting on March 10th the five members of the Parish Council were re-elected and Mr Pocock was appointed to serve on the Fire Brigade Committee (ref 25)

## **1929 20/21 Geo V**

The Parish precept was set at £50 on Jan 8th for the coming year.

On 9th July the Parish Council resolved to support Pangbourne Parish Council in their dispute with the Tilehurst Water Company over increased charges. (ref 4)

The police had been investigating the disappearance of the signpost in Long Lane. Mr G Abery admitted he had sawn it down and burned it. He later agreed to pay £3 compensation (ref 4-8/29)

Following the re-organisation caused by the Local Government Act 1929, the Bradfield Sanitary Board and the Board of Guardians of the Bradfield Union were abolished and their functions taken over by the reformed Bradfield Rural District Council. Miss Justina Collins of Streatley was elected unopposed as Purley's District Councillor. Under the same act practically all the roads in Purley came under the jurisdiction of the County Council (ref 25-4/32)

The Fire Brigade were asked by the Parish Meeting of March 25th to inspect the hydrants in Purley (ref 25)

A report on the Thames Valley noted plans for a road connecting Mapledurham Chaucey to Purley, crossing the river below Mapledurham to link with a ring road outside of Tilehurst. It further noted that it was considered uneconomic to widen the road between Tilehurst Station and Purley (ref 303)

The new extension to the churchyard was consecrated on 23rd June.

Purley Parish Council had drawn attention to the lack of footpaths between the village and the entrance to Purley Park where the road is in a cutting. Mr Farmiloe, though his steward, agreed to provide land and the County Council agreed to make the footpath for a distance of 280 yards for £230. It qualified for a 60% Ministry of Transport grant (refs 25; 320-1929-130)

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