



## *Account of Purley on Thames* Chronicles 1930-1939

### **1930 20/21 GeoV**

The Parish precept for the coming year was set at £50 on 14th Jan (ref 4-3/30)

Reading Corporation were set to take over the Tilehurst and District Water Company and both Purley and Pangbourne Parish Councils met with the Parliamentary Committee of Reading Corporation to get assurances that their charges would not be raised unduly (ref 25-4/32; 4-3/30)

The County Council published their Regional Planning Survey. It noted that Lady Rose had reserved an area of riverside land in Purley and that the main road was to be protected from filling stations by Purley Hall. The Pangbourne and Purley by-passes were proposed as was a new river crossing to Mapledurham near the Roebuck. (ref 396)

Bradfield RDC took over the refuse collection service. Starting Thursday 13th March Purley had a fortnightly bin collection. The bins were limited to two and a half cubic feet capacity and had to be placed by the road side. (ref 557)

Janet Mary Fullerton died at Ware in Devon on 16th Feb. She was buried at Purley. She had been born 18/5/1895 and was the wife of Richard Alexis Downing Fullerton, grandson of Major Storer, formerly of Purley Park. A memorial tablet to her memory was placed in the nave of the church (ref 12)

After a number of gales the roots of a tree were overhanging the road to the village. The Parish Council asked the rector, on 2nd April, to get it removed (ref 4)

Mr and Mrs Nelson Cooper gave a new chancel lamp to the church after their first son was born. This was a small lamp burning smokeless oil that fitted inside the large lamp which had been brought to Purley from a ruined church in France during the war and which burned large quantities of very smoky oil. (ref 13-1/84)

The Carlton Trees Nusery started up in Purley. It was run by the Melvilles on the site of what is now Cecil Aldin Drive (ref 184-33)

The County Council had considered a plan for widening the A42 by Purley Park but the Ministry of Transport had rejected their scheme. The MOT required an effective overall width of 40 feet (against the 34 feet proposed). This would require additional land and considerably more excavation. The MOT had further suggested that to reduce unemployment the County Council should agree to employ '50% transferred labour " to do the excavation If they did then the Council would get an increased grant of 75% on a proposed expenditure of £5000.

It was understood by the County Council that the land in question was being sold for building plots and so they decided to go ahead and purchase the strips of land required for not more than £250. (ref 320-1930-30)

## **1931 21/22 Geo V**

Messrs Abery and Arnold were reported to the Parish Council on 13th March for encroaching on Long Lane (ref 4-1/31)

The Parish precept of £50 for the coming year was set on Jan 13th (ref 4)

At the County Council elections on 6th March Sir Arthur Griffiths-Boscawen (a former Minister of Agriculture) was re-elected for the Pangbourne Division. He was immediately appointed to the Guardians Committee for Newbury District (refs 320-1931-142: 149)

At the Parish Meeting of 9th March a new Parish Council was elected. It consisted of C E Hodgkin, H Pocock, H A Tidbury, S Anderson and J W Venners (ref 25)

On 21st April the widening of the road in Purley cutting was in progress. The Parish Council had been writing to the County Council about this for some time, particularly about the provision of a footpath (refs 4, 25-4/32)

The First Purley Guide Company was formed in June (Ref 1-1/33)

Mr A Garton was appointed a School Manager by the County Council in July (ref 320-1931-328)

On the 4th August the Parish Council decided to approach the Whitchurch and Pangbourne Electricity Company to see whether they would lay a cable to Purley. (ref 4-8/31)

On the 30th October the Parish Council were informed that the Wessex Electricity Company would lay a cable if there were sufficient demand. The Parish Council decided to hold a Parish Poll to measure the demand. (ref 4-10/31)

Ernest Edwin Skuse was inducted as Rector of Purley on 22nd December (ref 22)

An air carnival came to the fields behind what is now Denefield School.. There were flying displays and the public could go for joyrides, either in a biplane (at 5s each) or in the 12 seater 'Empress of Australia (at 30s each) (ref 13-1/84)

Ill health forced Cecil Aldin to move to Majorca where he stayed until 1934. (ref 184-53)

## **1932 22/23 Geo V**

No parish precept was asked for at the meeting of the Parish Council on 28th Jan as the balances were satisfactory (ref 4)

At the Parish Council meeting on 4th Jan they decided not to oppose the proposal to site high voltage pylons in Purley (ref 4)

220 yards of four inch steel gas main were laid in April in Westbury Lane and Glebe Road. The total cost of the works was £127/16/11. (ref 185-1)

On 26th July the Parish Council were informed that fares between Purley and Reading on the buses of the Reading and District Motor Services had been reduced. Previously the fare to Purley had been the same as to Pangbourne and there had been numerous complaints. (ref 4)

At the same meeting it was resolved to ask Bradfield RDC to allocate some of the new Council houses being built on the Purley Rise Estate to Purley people. Twelve houses had been made

available. In the Parish Magazine the expectation was expressed that 'when summer comes we expect that the bath rooms will be a real amenity to the tenants' (refs 1-1/33; 4)

Three members of the Purley Guide Company and a Guider went to the Divisional camp at Ramsbury. Their camp coincided with a heatwave (ref 1-1/33)

On the 25th October the Parish Council were informed that the stile at the entrance to the footpath to Tilehurst on the Oxford Road had been erected (ref 4)

The County Council finally agreed to sell 1070 sqyds of land surplus to requirements for road widening of the land on the smithy site which had been bought in 1927 (ref 320-1932-328)

### **1933 23/24 Geo V**

A new Parish Magazine was launched in January by the church. It used a standard commercial cover overlaid with Purley items and containing 'Home Words' as an insert It was priced at 2d which did not cover costs. (ref 1-12/33)

The first fortnight of January was very foggy and there was a mild flu epidemic in Purley (ref 1-2/33)

The School was confirmed as being for infants up to 8 years of age.

Mrs Tidbury was left with 16 children and six others, Rosemary Rodell (1 School Cottage), Eileen Smith (1 Long Lane) (Menpes Cottages), Ronald Rawlines (7 Long Lane) who was killed in the war, William Fisher (Glebe Road), John Iles (Glebe Road) and Donald Carter (Ivy Cottage) were sent to Pangbourne Council School with a seventh, Jack Whitney (Horse Ferry Cottage, by the Roebuck) going to a school in Reading (ref 1-2/33)

At the Parish Council Meeting on 24th Jan it was reported that the Parish Poll on electricity supply had not produced a sufficient response, so no cable would be laid in the near future (ref 4)

At the Parish Council meeting on 28th March the precept for 1933-34 was set at £40 (ref 4)

On Palm Sunday, April 9th, there was a confirmation service conducted by Bishop Whitehead, sometime bishop of Madras. Sixteen candidates were confirmed in what was only the fourth such service in 40 years. (ref 1-5/33)

Hugh Lister took the services at the church on Trinity Sunday (June 11th) (ref 1-8/33)

Hot water was installed at the school.

When Cecil Aldin had occupied Kennelgates as Master of the Hunt he had allowed parishioners to use the tennis courts. The new MFH Sir George Mowbray, continued the privilege 'until such times as the house is again occupied' Mr Anderson had been responsible for maintaining the court in good condition. When the Bretherton's arrived in July they also allowed use of the court on certain days of the week. (ref 1-7/33 & 8/33)

Mrs Tidbury suffered a long illness and was replaced temporarily as mistress at the school by Miss Dymott of Burghfield. The Diocesan Inspection was conducted by the rector of Englefield (ref 1-8/33)

### **1934 24/25 Geo V**

Edward Oliver Farrer died on 20th Feb. aged 80. He had been a member of the Parochial Church

Council and sidesman for many years. He was an Alderman and had been Mayor of the Borough of Reading in 1931-32. He had last been in church in August 1933 when he attended the christening of his grandson. As a memorial his wife gave £120 to pay for new heating in the church and a brass plate was erected in his memory. This memorial plate was to have been unveiled on 25th November by the Mayor of Reading, Mr Allwright, but he died suddenly and the ceremony was postponed to December 30th when the Deputy Mayor performed the ceremony. (refs 1-12/34, 3/34; 12; 76-5/9/34)

At the Parish Meeting on 5th March it was reported that work on marking out footpaths for the Ordnance Survey was almost complete. Details of the twelve footpaths were given to the meeting of 2nd August and objections to footpaths 10 and 19 were raised at the November 20th meeting (ref 4)

At the Parish Meeting of 5th March the precept for 1934-35 was set at £45. Also a new Parish Council was elected consisting of C E Hodgkin, H Pocock, H A Tidbury, J H W Venners and S Anderson (refs 4; 25-3/34)

A Branch of the County Library was set up at the school. It was open every Wednesday after school and was managed by Mrs Tidbury. (ref 1-2/35)

At the PCC meeting on 25th April there was an appeal for funds to repair the north wall of the church. It was estimated that drainage would cost £7-10-0. Wessex Electricity Company were to be asked to lay a cable to the church. Mrs Farmiloe had refused to grant the church a piece of land for car parking so the rector was asked to approach Mr Saunders. A sketch of the memorial tablet for Mrs Fullerton was considered. Mr Keep was to be asked to make a sketch map of the Churchyard to provide identification of the graves. It was decided to apply for a faculty to level all unknown graves. New heating for the church was considered (ref 76-12)

The new heating in the church (Paid for by Mrs Farrer) was installed by Goodmans and replaced a somewhat primitive system which consisted of a fire box which ran the length of the main aisle. The smoke ran along a flue leading to a chimney in the vestry with the hear rising from a grating which had to be raised in order to stoke the firebox. There was also a small stove in the vestry which was not very efficient.

The site of Purley River Estate had been sold by the Farmiloes to a Mrs Mountayne. She had intended to build a large mansion on the site but had been told that this would not be possible because of flooding. As a consequence the site was divided into camping plots and sold off at £5 a time. The average width of a plot was 11 feet and they extended between 60 and 120 feet in depth. The County Council warned plot owners that temporary buildings were liable to be removed without compensation because of flooding but many were erected and the pretence that they were mobile was demonstrated by nailing a pair of wheels to the outside.

In the annual hospital egg week, 1023 eggs were given by the people of Purley (ref 1-10/34)

The October Parish Magazine had a new cover with a photograph of the church taken by Mr Shaw. (ref 1-10/34)

Sir Arthur Griffiths-Boscawen resigned his County Council seat (for the Pangbourne Division) in November (ref 320-1934-485)

There was an outbreak of Whooping cough which reduced attendances at the school for six weeks in November and December. (ref 309)

The owners of properties in the Purley Rise Estate agreed to donate strips of land for sight line

improvements. The excavation works would cost £365 and it was recommended by the County Council that the tithes on the land be re-apportioned and redeemed (ref 320-1934-566)

## **1935 25/26 Geo V**

Cecil Aldin died on January 6th at the London Clinic. He was a notable artist and Master of the South Berks Hunt and had lived at Bellesisle Fram, then known as Kennelgates. (refs 184-53; 1-2/35)

On Jan 29th the Parish Council asked the Thames Valley Traction Company to provide earlier and later bus services (ref 4-1/35)

On the same day the Parish Council set up a joint Committee with Pangbourne Parish Council to make arrangements to celebrate the Silver Jubilee (ref 4-1/35)

On 6th March the Bishop of the Yukon held a confirmation service for ten people in Purley (ref 1-4/35)

Walter Wysard of June Cottage, Pangbourne, was elected County Councillor for the Pangbourne Division. in March (ref 320-1935-14)

At the Parish Meeting on 1st April the precept for 1935/36 was set at £30 (ref 25)

On 24th April a small tablet was erected in the church in memory of Cecil Aldin, beneath the memorial to his son. It cost £20 which was donated by his friends (ref 1-3/35)

At the Parochial Church Council Meeting on 24th April it was reported that Mr Keep of Pangbourne had made a plan of the graves. He had asked for a fee of £18 but the PCC thought this excessive although they agreed to pay him. (ref 76)

At the same meeting it was noted that repairs to the rectory would cost £100 and they decided to raise a mortgage. In the event the mortgage had to be for £110 as by November costs had escalated. (ref 76)

May 6th and 7th were celebrated as holidays for the King's Silver Jubilee. On Monday May 6th a party was held for children from Pangbourne, Purley and Sulham. There was a tea and sports. Every child was given a commemorative mug (ref 184-17)

On 16th July the Parish Council agreed to ask the Jubilee Committee to use the surplus funds to purchase life saving equipment to be put on the river bank at Pangbourne. A lifebelt was purchased and there was still money left so Purley was offered a seat to be placed on land recently given by Mr Flewitt (refs 4-10/35 & 7/35)

On 22nd October the Parish Council took note of plans by Reading Borough Council to terminate buses in Kentwood Hill rather than at the Roebuck. (ref 4-10/35)

On the same day Mr John Rain was co-opted to the Parish Council to fill the vacancy caused by Mr S Anderson leaving the District (ref 4-10/35)

At the PCC meeting of 8th November it was noted that there were twelve council houses in Purley (Glebe Road) of which four were for Purley people and eight for Pangbourne people. Purley people had been experiencing difficulty in obtaining accomodation and the Parish Council were asked to pursue the matter (ref 76)

An extra days holiday was given to the school to celebrate the marriage of the Duke of Gloucester (son of King George V) and Lady Alice Scott (ref 184-17)

Purley Garage was started by Thomas A Stevenson (ref 184-44)

Work on the improvements to the A42 at Purley Rise continued. The owner of one property agreed to give up a strip of land for £5-10-0 as expenses for re-planting his hedge and setting back his gate. The County Council also decided to acquire land at the junction with Westbury Lane and excavate new site lines at an estimated cost of £60. (ref 320-1935-136 & 370)

## **1936 26 Geo V/1 Edw VIII/1 Geo VI**

The school was closed on January 6th because of the funeral of King George V (ref 184-17)

On 21st January a petition was presented to the Parish Council to have the Camping Estate closed. Messrs Pocock and Rain were empowered to take up the matter with the County Council (ref 4)

It was reported at the same meeting that further Council houses were to be built on the Purley Rise Estate. (ref 4)

On the 23rd January the Parochial Church Council noted that there was £19-10-0 left over from the Cecil Aldin Memorial Fund. It was decided to invest it in War Savings Certificates. (ref 76)

Since January only children up to eight years of age were taught at Purley C of E School. Only one classroom was usable and there were not enough children to justify a second teacher. (ref 184)

There was an outbreak of measles in the village in March (ref 309)

On 25th March the PCC noted that the organ was full of dust and Mr Cooper, the organist, was instructed to obtain an estimate for repairing and cleaning it (ref 76)

A precept of £40 was agreed at the Parish Meeting on 30th March for the year 1936/7 (ref 25)

On 16th April the PCC noted that there were serious dry rot problems with the floor of the church and that the magazine was now defunct (ref 76)

On the 6th May the insurance of the church was reviewed and new valuations agreed as follows:-

Chancel £900

Rest of Building £4000

Seats £1000

Windows £300

Organ £400

Bells £750

Communion Plate £200

(ref 76)

In May Purley Forge was demolished to make way for the widening of the Oxford Road

One of His Majesty's Inspectors called at the School on 25th June to inspect accommodation because of proposed changes in its status. (ref 184-17)

The School children went on an outing to Bognor Regis on June 26th with the expenses paid for by Mr Farmiloe of Purley Park (ref 184-17)

On 28th September the Parish Council noted the urgent need for a Village Hall (ref 4)

By 30th September the Rural Dean had made an inspection of the church and suggested many items for attention. Messrs Collier and Catley were given the job of repairing the church floor with work to commence in the new year. (ref 76)

A three inch steel gas main was laid in New Hill in September. The cost of the works was £73/17/5 (ref 185-1)

The Purley Park Plot Owners Association was formed to protect the interests of the residents there. (ref 184)

Improvements to Long Lane were planned. The Rev H C Wilder had agreed to donate land but the Ministry of Transport wanted additional land to provide a 40' highway. The Rev Wilder was prepared to donate further land but required £61 to provide new fences and hedging (ref 320-1936-127 & 404)

The Purley Park River Estate was valued for Rating purposes. It was on 34 acres adjoining the river and had 265 hereditaments with a total rateable value of £461 (ref 320-1936-547)

## **1937 1/2 Geo VI**

On 26th January a meeting was held between Purley and Pangbourne Parish Councils to discuss the Coronation celebrations (ref 4)

On 29th Jan the PCC noted that the floor of the church was so bad that offensive odours were noted after the church had been closed for a while. The repair works ordered the previous September were to be put in hand immediately to be finished before Easter (ref 76)

It was reported to the Parish Council on 15th Feb that to celebrate the Coronation; Pangbourne planned to entertain the children and old people, give souvenirs and hold a Sports Day. Purley Parish Council were in favour of joining with Pangbourne and sharing the cost, however it was decided to hold a Parish Meeting to decide the matter (ref 4)

Also on 15th Feb a dispute which had arisen with the Chairman of the

School Managers was discussed. It was about whether the Parish Council had the power to appoint a manager or merely to nominate and recommend. This followed the resignation of Miss Palgrave as the Council's appointee and the appointment of Mr R P Walden on 26/1/37. His appointment had been challenged at the subsequent meeting of the Managers and it was decided to refer the matter to the County Council's Education Committee. (ref 4)

At the Parish Meeting of 22nd Feb it was decided that Purley would organise its own celebrations for the Coronation of King George VI and that the Parish Council should guarantee £30 towards a deficit. A General Purposes Committee was set up to organise events (ref 25)

At the Parish Meeting on 15th March there were elections for a new Parish Council. The voting was:

H A Tidbury - 10, H Pocock - 9, J W H Venners - 8, J D Rain - 8, R P Walden - 7 and R W Wells - 2. No poll had been demanded (ref 25)

At the same meeting it was noted that there had been bad flooding in Long Lane and the County Council was urged to make the road negotiable (ref 25)

At the same meeting the precept for 1937-38 was set at £60 (ref 25)

The repairs to the church floor were completed by the end of March under the supervision of the architect, Mr Walden, to specifications prepared by Messrs Collier and Catley for £115 (ref 76)

A flag pole was erected in the playground of the school on May 24th to commemorate the Coronation (ref 184-18)

On June 28th a deficit of £30 was reported to the Parish Council on the Coronation account and they agreed to settle six of the outstanding bills. (ref 4)

The PCC applied for a grant from the Incorporated Church Building Society towards the costs of the floor repairs. However the bishop decreed that grants could not be made unless a faculty had first been obtained. The PCC decided on 30th June to appeal to the bishop for a change of heart, The final bill came to £127 (ref 76)

On July 22nd there was a school outing to Littlehampton paid for by Mr Farmiloe (ref 184-18)

On 4th October it was reported that two cottages on the Main Road were to be demolished for road widening. One had been occupied by Mr Winkfield and his wife Liz for over 30 years and the other by Joe Kirton, the milkman. The cottages had been known as Well Cottages because of the well in the front garden. They stood approximately where the Trentham's roundabout now is and were a pair of small tiled-roof, one up and down cottages with a lean-to kitchen. The District Councillor, Miss Tina Collins, was asked by the Parish Council to protest. (ref 1-11/77; 4-4/10/37)

Charles W E Edwards bought the Purley Garage for £800 (ref 184)

598 yards of four inch steel gas main were laid to serve Purley Rise Estate and part of Glebe Road at a cost of £250/7/- (ref 185-2)

The first electricity sub-station to serve Purley was installed at Beech Road (ref 187-1)

The new Council houses were almost ready for occupation in October

The Coronation celebrations eventually cost the Parish Council £20-9-4 (ref 25)

The water main in Purley was extended. (ref 309-37-68)

## **1938 2/3 Geo VI**

On 28th Feb the PCC resolved to remove the Ivy from the church tower. Mr Rawlins who had suggested it agreed to do the work (ref 76)

On 28th March the Parish Council took note of a circular from Bradfield RDC about Air Raid Precautions (ref 4)

At the Parish Meeting on 30th March the precept for 1938-39 was agreed at £40 (ref 25)

Mortimer Menpes died on 1st April. He was a noted artist and etcher and had been born in Australia

on 22nd Feb 1855. He had lived at Iris Court in Pangbourne for the past 30 years and had run the Menpes Fruit Farm in Long Lane.. (ref 1-4/67)

During May there was a serious outbreak of measles (ref 309-38-81)

On 27th June the Parish Council considered a request to nominate a number of Air Raid Wardens following the appointment of a Head Warden for Pangbourne (ref 4)

The Annual School Outing was to Southsea on 14th July (ref 184-19)

On 28th September, following the return of Neville Chamberlain from Munich, the PCC resolved 'That as the crisis was now over, an appeal could now be asked as a thank offering to God for the blessing of Peace' The appeal was to be for the repair of the organ, estimated at £49. (ref 76)

On 24th October the Parish Council were asked by Berks CC about the extent that the ferry was used. The Parish Council asked that it be moved so as to provide a better link between Purley and Mapledurham (ref 4)

At the same meeting it was resolved by the Parish Council to ask Mr Stanley to be Chief Warden for Purley (ref 4)

256 gas masks were delivered to the school to be distributed to the inhabitants of Purley (ref 184-19)

Well Cottages were demolished. There had been a temporary shop alongside one of the cottages consisting of a canopy under which vegetables were sold (ref 13-20/1/84)

Mrs Pocock died aged over 100 (ref 1-7/67)

## **1939 3/4 Geo VI**

It was reported to the Parish Council that as a result of the Fire Brigades Act of 1938, the responsibility for Fire Protection would be taken over by Bradfield RDC. Thus as from 29th Jan Bradfield RDC would be negotiating with the Pangbourne, Goring and District Brigade (ref 4-1/39; 25-3/39)

At the Parish Meeting in March it was noted that no precept would be required for 1939/40 (ref 25-3/39)

At the same meeting it was reported that Air Raid Precautions were being organised in the area under Mr C L Stock who was the Head Warden for Pangbourne (ref 25-3/39)

The annual school outing was to Hayling Island on July 20th (ref 184-19)

On 4th September about 50 evacuee children, with mothers, arrived from Holloway and Islington. All were found billets. They included 42 children of school age. In addition about 100 children of school age had come to live on the Purley River Estate from London on their own families' initiatives (ref 184-20)

A second teacher was appointed to the school on 2nd October to cope with all the additional children (ref 184-20)

The deeds of the roads in Purley River Estate were made over to the Purley Park Plot Owners Association 'until such time as the Local Authority adopt them'

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