

Monumental Inscriptions

In

Purley on Thames Berkshire

Part 1

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

In this publication we have attempted to record all the Inscriptions commemorating former residents of Purley on Thames plus some others who had a strong connection with the parish. We cover both the inscriptions at St Mary's Church and those in the Parish Council Burial Ground at Goosecroft plus in a few other places.

This work will record all the known deaths of persons who were either residents of Purley on Thames in Berkshire or who had a strong connection with the village. It also includes all known memorials and their inscriptions.

The church of St Mary the Virgin dates back to Saxon times and burials have been conducted for over 1000 years. However it is only from the early part of the sixteenth century that we have any records.

Many memorials have been lost over the years and many removed when the church was rebuilt. Thankfully we have records of such memorials as existed before both the rebuilding of 1870 and 1983.

The work is in eight parts:-

- Part 1 Introduction
- Part 2 Burials and memorials in the old churchyard
- Part 3 Burials and memorials in the churchyard extension opened in 1934
- Part 4 Memorials attached to walls and several objects with the church
- Part 5 Cremation memorials at the church
- Part 6 Burials and cremation memorials in the Parish Council burial ground opened in 1999
- Part 7 Memorials at the Memorial Hall and other sites in the parish
- Part 8 Indexes and Maps

Each part has been made available as a separate booklet produced by members of Project Purley and published by Goosecroft Publications, the Society's publishing arm.

The Parish Registers

While it is highly likely that early clergy kept records none have survived. It became a legal requirement to keep a register from 1538; but during the Commonwealth period, those from Purley were lost. However some Bishops' Transcripts have survived with entries dating from 1608.

The earliest surviving register dates from 1662 when Thomas Blagrove became rector after the Restoration. It records baptisms, marriages and burials and remained in use until 1773. It is now deposited in the Berkshire Record Office reference D/P 93/1/1

A separate register to record marriages dates from 1755 and this remained in use until 1811. It contained a separate section for Banns. This is now deposited in the Berkshire Record Office reference D/P 93/1/2 . It continued in use for Banns until 1908.

Baptisms and Burials were recorded together in a new register dating from 1773 but after 1789 the lists were kept separate. This register remained in use until 1812 and is now deposited at the Berkshire Record Office reference D/P 93/1/3

From 1812 new registers were in use individually for Baptisms (D/P 93/1/4) until 1848, Marriages (D/P 93/1/5) until 1840 and Burials (D/P 93/1/6) until 1985. All are now deposited in the Berkshire Record Office.

The baptism register was replaced in 1948 by D/P 93/1/7. It remained in use until 1985 when it was deposited and replaced by a new volume which remains in use.

A new burials register came into use in 1985 and remains in use.

We have had access to all the Parish Registers going back to the early 17th century and anyone who appears in any of the registers will get a mention whether or not there is a permanent memorial.

References

There are two numbering systems in use; one to record a person's position in one or other of the registers and one to identify plots in the several burial grounds.

The Plots Numbering System

In the Church Registers burial plots are numbered according to the plan drawn up by Mr Keep in 1934. This has been extended since and remained in use until the graveyard was full in 1999. Inscriptions on grave stones use this numbering system,

Attached memorials have been allocated numbers in the 400 series to be compatible.

Cremation memorials at St Mary's fall into three groups

Memorials around the Garden of Remembrances are numbered in the 700 series

Memorials in other parts of the two graveyards are numbered in the 500 series

Memorials inscribed in the Book of Remembrance are numbered in the 600 series.

The Personal Numbering System

Individual entries in the Burial Registers are also numbered. In the current register, which dates from 1985; and in the previous register which was in use from 1813 to 1985; the entries have printed numbers. For earlier registers the burial entries have been numbered sequentially. To avoid confusion each entry number has had a multiple of 1000 added to it to indicate the register.

Other names which do not appear in any of the registers have been allocated numbers above 6000. The full scheme is:-

1001-1034 Bishop's Transcripts 1607-1642

2001-2276 Burials 1662-1773

3001-3137 Burials 1773-1812

4001-4692 Burials 1813-1985

5001-5999 Current Register 1985-date

6001-6999 Names commemorated on MI but not in Register

7001-7999 For use in the Goosecroft burial ground

8001-8999 Other names on MI

9001-9999 Names of persons commemorated but not recorded in a register.

These reference numbers are shown in the index.

Entries and References

Until 1838 Registers were kept in blank books with one entry following another in chronological order. After that date registers were kept in specially printed books which had separate boxes for each item of information and with a reference number printed. We have numbered all the entries in the earlier volumes in order of appearance and have used these numbers to identify entries by adding a multiple of 1000 to distinguish the several registers.

The additions are:-

1000 for bishops transcripts 1608-

2000 for the 1662-1773 burials

3000 for the 1773-1812 burials

4000 for the 1813-1985 burials

5000 for the 1985-date burials

6000 for entries in the Goosecroft Burials register

Recording Conventions

All personal names forming part of an inscription are given in upper case. Other text on inscriptions is given in lower case regardless of what is on the MI. All quotations are in lower case with quotation marks.

No attempt is made to indicate lination as this is not regarded as useful information. Otherwise the transcription is as faithful to the original as possible.

Dates are given as inscribed but in the indexes the international recording convention in the form yyymmdd is used eg 25th March 1780 is 17800325

Where a headstone has never been known to exist but the name of the occupants of a plot are known, this information is given in the form of a note.

Notes also will provide cross-references to other MIs and, in some cases, additional biographical information.

The Maps

The maps are based on the plan drawn up by Mr Keep in 1934. This had been updated by successive rectors to record subsequent burial plots, however scale was not preserved correctly.

For most maps there are two versions, first a pre-1981 version showing the church as it then was and all the burial plot; second a 2000 version showing only existing headstones. The 2000 version shows layout of paths and the church as rebuilt in 1983 and modified subsequently. The Garden of Remembrance is shown together with the new location of several of the gravestones. The new churchyard was resurveyed and many of the graves in the north east sector have been repositioned.

The plan of the enlarged church is based upon the drawings of Richard Perkins and Partners, the architects for the 1983 extension.

Acknowledgements

While the basis of this work are the transcriptions undertaken by John Chapman over a period of several years, much of the work had

been duplicated by other members of Project Purley and this has been used to cross check the text.

For inscriptions which did not survive the rebuilding in 1870, credit is due to Elias Ashmole who visited the church in 1661 and to Mrs Becker who visited shortly before the rebuilding.

Mrs L H Chambers of St Albans visited the churchyard on 12th May 1943 and recorded all the inscriptions extant at that time. It is fortunate that she did so as many of these inscriptions are no longer legible.

The notes are based on research from many members of Project Purley, but especially of that of Mrs Jean Debney.

The assistance of the following is also acknowledged:-

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission
The British Library, Dept Manuscripts
The Berkshire Record Office
Reading Central Library

Finally the considerable assistance of the former rector, the Reverend David Evans must also be acknowledged.

4001-4692 Burials 1813-1985

5001-5999 Current Register 1985-2000

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8001-8999 Other names on MI

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Dates are given in the numeric form day/ month/ year eg 25th March 1780 is 25/3/1780.

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