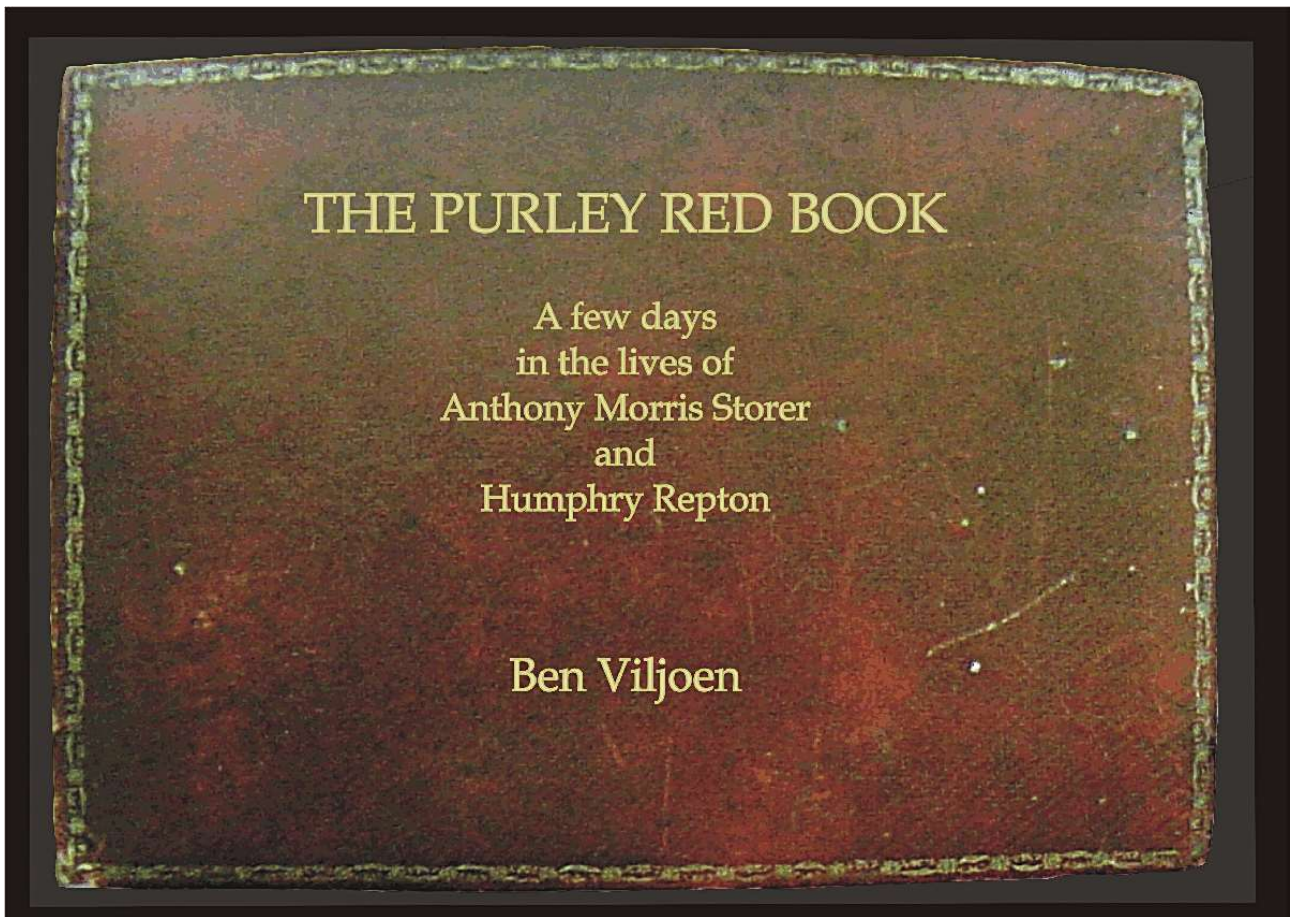


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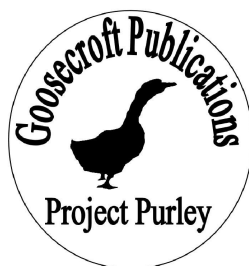
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# *The Storers of Purley Park and the Red Book of Humphry Repton*

*by Peter Fullerton*

It is entirely thanks to Jean Debney that I became interested in Storer family history. My grandmother was Leila Storer, who inherited Purley Park from her father, Major Storer. My father, Richard Fullerton, one of Leila's children, grew up in Purley Park. He had great affection for Purley, and placed the marble memorial to my mother in St Mary's church in 1930.

I first met Jean Debney in 1987 after being shown by chance by a friend one of the articles which she had written in the Project Purley Magazine. I went to see her and left with her all the records that I had on the Storers and on Purley Park as it was known in those days. These had been preserved in a brass bound mahogany deed box owned by Thomas Storer (1712-1793), the owner of the Storer sugar estates in Jamaica. The Red Book on Purley produced by Humphry Repton for Anthony Morris Storer in 1793 was one of the documents which had been preserved in the deed box.

The deed box had passed to Mrs Ivy Evans, daughter of Leila Storer, when she inherited Purley Park in 1919, and she passed it on to my father who died in 1965, leaving it to me. I realised that the Red Book was a unique family treasure, but Jean Debney was thrilled to see it and explained how important it was both for Purley local history and for historians of the life and works of Humphry Repton. Jean arranged for the Red Book to be photographed and copies made for the Purley Local History Society. A copy was also presented to the Library of the University of Bristol which is the main repository and archive on Humphry Repton. The existence of the Red Book on Purley, till then unknown, was a notable discovery for historians of Repton.

In 2002 Ben Viljoen introduced me to André Rogger, then a Swiss history graduate, working for his PhD on the Red Books of Humphry Repton. He had succeeded in tracking down and photographing 120 out of the 200 Red Books known to exist. He was excited to learn about the one on Purley and came and photograp-

hed the water colour illustrations in it. His book titled "Landscapes of Taste" published in 2007 by Routledge of Abingdon is an illustrated record of Humphry Repton's Red Books in which he particularly singles out the Purley Red Book and says that it "constellates, in a paradigmatic form, the key features of a Repton commission".

Also in the collection of Storer papers which I showed to Jean Debney was the Prayer Book owned by Thomas Storer. This quarto sized volume, bound in green leather with the Royal Coat of Arms embossed in gold, was one of a limited edition produced for King George II and used at the Coronation of King George III. In this family Prayer Book Thomas Storer and his successors had inscribed the dates of births, marriages and deaths of five generations of Storers. This enabled Jean Debney to construct the Storer family tree in meticulous detail which I was so glad to be able to reproduce in my family history "The Storers of Purley Park" printed in 2015.

Following Jean Debney, John Chapman wrote a series of articles for Project Purley about Purley Park and the Storer family. I am equally grateful to him for the extensive research which he did on Storer Wills and indentures about the Purley Park estate, and on the Storer graves and memorials in St. Mary's church. Ben Viljoen has also recently researched the background to the Repton Red Book and thrown new light on Repton's relationship with Anthony Morris Storer over the planning of the landscaping for the mansion which was to replace the old manor house at Purley. Repton's plans were rejected, probably because of the great flood of 1795, and Anthony Morris' nephew and heir, Anthony Gilbert, built Purley Park up on the hill above the village in 1801.

I am grateful too to Paul Marsden for inviting me and my family to view the mansion in its superbly restored state on our visit in November 2015. It brought to life the description which my father used to give me of his life as a youngster living in Purley Park just a hundred years ago.

I was honoured and delighted to have been made an honorary member of the Purley Local History Society in 1996, and continue to enjoy the Project Purley magazine, as well as Purley in Old Images.

## *The Story of The Wednesday Club.*

*by Rita Denman*

I was not personally involved with the Wednesday Club until 1994 but chatting to the original members I understood that the history developed on the following lines.

In the 1960/70s some residents of the Riverside Estate in Purley decided to organise a regular social meeting. The idea was very popular and an enthusiastic group became affiliated to the Old Age Pensioners' Social Clubs, a nation-wide group. The Purley Branch was run according to their Constitution. It attracted a large membership from around Purley and Pangbourne. Meetings were held at the Wintringham Way Social Club and transport was arranged for the Pangbourne members.

The Club was very successful and in addition to the weekly meetings coach holidays away and visits to places of interest were arranged. The OAP Club continued for a number of years until membership began to dwindle. When the transport for the Pangbourne members came to an end they were no longer able to get to Purley. This left just a few remaining members and the affiliation to OAP Clubs was ended.

By this time the Purley Sports and Social Club was in full operation and seeing the need for the elderly in the area offered to the beleaguered members a meeting place at the Sports and Social club premises on every other Wednesday afternoon and so the Wednesday Club was formed. The Sports and Social Club sponsored the group by offering annual membership to the PSSC for over 65s at a reduced fee. In addition the members paid a very small weekly contribution to The Wednesday Club to cover tea and biscuits.

Although it was much less formal the new club elected a secretary and treasurer and it was run on much same lines as the earlier group. Among the Club leaders were Joan Horsfield, Nora Jefford, Olive Skerritt, Joyce Winch and Ivy Hassall. Once again the Club began to flourish and attract new members. The highlight of the year was the Christmas Lunch organised and attended by the Sports and

## Social Club Committee.

In 1994 after I had retired Peggy Jesson a neighbour invited me and another neighbour Joyce Selby to visit the Club. We were warmly welcomed and made to feel very much at home and for the next two or three years we enjoyed the meetings and celebrations.

There came the time when the Secretary and Treasurer felt that it was time to hand over the reins and asked me if I would be willing to take over. I agreed to take on the role of secretary if Joyce Selby would become treasurer. This she agreed to do and we were 'voted in' unanimously taking on our responsibilities from January 26th 1997 with a membership of 27.

The meetings carried on in the same format with tea and biscuits and a raffle to which the members contributed the prizes. Ivy Hassall had always run the raffle and she continued to do this the proceeds providing any running expenses and an occasional treat. Visitors were always welcomed and relatives of members holidaying in Purley on a regular basis became friends. The Christmas lunch continued to be the highlight of the year. A summer buffet was introduced organised by the Club members and this also became a much anticipated event.

Numbers grew and new events arranged. An Easter bonnet competition, strawberry teas, harvest teas, song quizzes and bring and buy sales were all enjoyed. National events were celebrated enthusiastically. As all the members had rejoiced on VJ Day in 1945 it was with particular pleasure that we celebrated the 50th Anniversary with a traditional tea party on the 16th August 1995 followed by a Beetle Drive and community singing of old wartime favourites led by Edna Bint with her piano accordion.

Normal meetings were filled with chatter, knitting, card playing and solving cryptic crossword puzzles. Rev Roger Howell was a regular visitor and he and his wife Jean joined many of our special events. When the Community Wardens were funded in Purley they visited the Club from time to time to inform us of anything of interest to older residents.

To mark the Millennium it was suggested that we should do our

own 'History for the Millennium Survey' recording where we were born and what had brought us to Purley. The idea was well received and a short questionnaire was drawn up. Some members were keen to write a full length account. The Club also contributed to the Millennium Wall hanging which is in the Parish Church.

We were all delighted when the PSSC announced that a Senior Citizens tea party would be held in honour of the 100th Birthday of Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother on August 4th 2000. It was well attended and was a very enjoyable party. In recognition of the years of support given to the Wednesday Club by The Purley Sports and Social Club Committee an engraved pewter cup was presented to the Chairman by the Wednesday Club's senior member Mrs Nora Jefford.

The Golden Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth in 2002 was reason for another special party and it was appropriately celebrated.

In 2008 Joyce Selby moved away from the area. She had been an excellent treasurer and popular member and was very much missed. We were fortunate that we were able to place the role of treasurer in the good hands of Joan Gillett.

So the months and years passed and gradually we said goodbye to many of our dear friends and neighbours. Others moved away or were no longer able to get to meetings and once again there were just a handful of members remaining and it was no longer viable to keep the group going.

It was with the greatest sadness and regret that at the end of 2014 the Wednesday Club closed with, of course a Farewell Party.

*meeting reports*

## ***Murder at Reading Gaol***

***Given by Angela Buckley on 19th January***

The intriguing title of Angela Buckley's talk for the January meeting lured more than an average number of Project Purley members to the Barn.

The title might also be 'Murderers at Reading Gaol', as we were



treated to details of the crimes for which five inmates were executed during the 1800s, and information on the conditions at the gaol from when it was first built in 1844.

Reading prison was one of several modelled on Pentonville. It originally had five wings each with fifty cells, radiating like the spokes of a wheel from the control centre. Only three wings remain, but when the prison closed in 2012, each 30ft x 7ft cell housed two inmates, whereas in 1842 each cell held only one. Two people locked up in such a small space must have been grim, but might actually have been better than the isolation of the original 'Separate' prison system. This regime was designed to prevent prisoners from 'corrupting' each other by keeping them apart, even making them wear special caps during work and exercise to prevent them making eye contact.

The gaol is famous for hosting Oscar Wilde, but housed many other interesting characters, including a number of murderers, some of whom were executed on site, on the specially built platform on the prison's flat roof. The executions were held in public until 1862, when a crowd of about 4,000 people, mostly women, turned up to watch that of John Gould, who killed his six year old daughter.

After that they were done in private, but memorial plaques to those executed were put in the exercise yard, perhaps as a warning to the other inmates. The plaques were removed sometime before the prison was opened to the public after its closure - perhaps they were considered a bit too grisly.

We were given the histories of five of the convicted murderers who were held in Reading. The first was Thomas Jennings, who was



*Reading Gaol [M080123]*



convicted of poisoning his child with arsenic, a crime he denied even to the scaffold (in Forbury Gardens, with a crowd of 10,000!). William Spicer was hanged for the murder of his wife Elizabeth in 1846. She owned their house, and other assets, and died falling down the cellar steps. Two brothers, Henry and Francis Tidbury, sometime poachers, were convicted of killing two policemen in Hungerford, and executed in 1877. Understandably, this crime prompted a very thorough investigation, one result of which was the eventual marriage of the widow of Inspector Drewett (one of the victims) and the Superintendent in charge of the investigation! Charles Wooldridge was executed in 1896 for the murder of his wife 'out of jealousy', a classic story, though providing Reading gaol with its only ghost story.

The last history was much more gruesome, though it is possible that it was also a classic of its time. Amelia Dyer was a 'baby farmer', someone who fostered or adopted children whose parents (often single women) could not look after them. She was arrested after a baby's body was found wrapped in a brown paper parcel in the Thames near Kings Meadow. Six more children's bodies were found in the river, including two together in a carpet bag. Amelia was convicted of just one murder, but the probability is that she murdered many, many more. She was transferred to London for trial, and executed there in 1896.

The talk didn't have the cheeriest of subject matter, but it was nonetheless fascinating, and many members stayed on to ask questions and to see the other Victorian crime books that Angela has written, all of which can be seen on her website <http://www.angelabuckleywriter.com>.

*Gillian Wallace*

# *Purley Church of England School 1800 - 2007*

*given by Rita Denman 16th February*

Rita has lived right across the road from Purley Church of England School since 1975, when she and her husband moved to Purley. For fifteen or sixteen years, she was merely a spectator (and presumably a captive audience) of the comings and goings of children at the school.

There is something very special about hearing schoolchildren in the playground. Our corner of the world can't be too bad when the children are getting a decent education, and playing games outside. It must have influenced Rita, because when she retired in the early 1990s, she started helping out at the school (or perhaps it was a case of if you can't beat them, join them!). Studying the history of the school wasn't quite so voluntary, as it appears that fellow members of Project Purley rather twisted her arm to give a talk about the school and its origins, but we are very grateful that they did.

The site of the school in Purley Village was part of the Purley Parva Manor, and the original building was a cottage which in 1733 was occupied by a family of shoemakers. The cottage was acquired in 1818 by the Rev Charles Manesty, who was Rector of Purley from 1800 to 1844. It was then divided in two, with the Rector's gardener living on one side, and the school established on the other, probably

run by the Rev Manesty's wife and niece.



*Pat Deane with her class of 1964 (see also page 15)*  
[M000144]

It is not clear how many children the half cottage was able to accommodate, but in 1875 a new school was built on the site to provide for 55 children. It had 48 attendees right from the start, so either the population

or the desire for an education had increased significantly, although primary school education was not compulsory until 1880. Interestingly, although from the beginning it was a Church school, the funds for the building were provided personally by the Rev Richard Palmer, who had inherited a fortune from his brother in 1872, and the running costs were to be from voluntary contributions. The Rev Palmer died in 1874 before the school was finished, but his sister ensured that his plans for the school and its management were carried out, with the Rector of Purley and his successors to be sole trustees.

Funding for the school has been a bit rocky over the years, particularly in the mid 20th Century, when several plans were made to transfer pupils to Pangbourne or to Long Lane, but it has kept going. It even qualified for a terrapin classroom in 1962, along with probably most of the schools in the country.

We were shown a number of great photographs of the school and its 'offices', some dating back to the 1920s, but many taken by Rita in her capacity as interested neighbour and later as volunteer – an insider. The children don't seem to change very much over the years, just the clothes!

Rita brought copies of some fascinating old documents and letters relating to the school, including the original Trust deed, and after questions (and hearing a few reminiscences from old pupils!) the audience were invited to see them displayed at the front. The scrum round the table was evidence enough of how much the talk had been appreciated. Thanks must also go to Benjamin Johnston, Rita's grandson, who provided the technical expertise for the presentation.

*Gillian Wallace*

## *Annual General Meeting*

The society's 36th Annual General Meeting took place at the Barn on Friday 16th March.

Following the recording of apologies for absence and the adoption of the minutes of the 35th AGM, the Chairman then gave his

annual report. He began by thanking the committee for all of their hard work over the last year. There were some very interesting meetings during the year with topics including the history of Salters' Steamers, Wrecks of the First World War, the English Civil War, Lands of Reading Abbey in Purley, and the First World War. There were three outings in 2017. The trips to Hatfield House and Ewelme were very enjoyable and particular thanks go to Jean Chudleigh for her enormous effort in organising these. The third trip to the Western Front Battlefields was again very enjoyable and organised by a small group with considerable effort.

During 2017, there were two performances by Rain or Shine – Twelfth Night and Dracula – thanks were extended to David Downs who did all the organising.

We also participated in and organised a number of other events. The Barbecue in the summer was as successful as ever and thanks go to our hosts Ben and Dorothy Viljoen. The society's stand at the Christmas Market went very well, as did the Christmas party, where the Christmas Tree made by Gillian Wallace, as our entry in St Mary's Church Christmas Tree Festival, was on display once again.

Three editions of the journal were produced and a great deal of thanks go to Ann Betts for editing these and for chivvying people to encourage them to contribute. There have been some remarkable articles this year, ranging from the story of a Prisoner of War during the Second World War (Mike Adnett) and an interesting piece about Charles III (Ben Viljoen).

The website continues to grow and Gillian Wallace is helping with this. We have been going back over 30-40 years of the Purley Parish News which has produced many interesting pieces, many written by Jean Debney, but also many by others. Of particular interest, are the articles which give insights into Purley people, which include many obituaries. All of these are being digitised and made available online.

The archive also continues to amass more items and we have recently been given some material from Sybil Pryor.

We do have a slight commercial side and continue to sell Purley in Old Images. A new batch of books has just been ordered. Interestingly, Gillian Wallace went online to check whether Amazon was still offering the book, and found they had second-hand versions available with prices ranging from £105 to £36.

The Treasurer began her report by noting that the society's financial situation remains stable. There were two Rain or Shine productions in 2017. A £400 donation was sent to Five a Day Nursery after Twelfth Night, the summer production. A £400 donation was sent to Reading Street Pastors, following the Christmas production of Dracula. In addition, a £600 donation to Blind Children UK, in respect of the 2016 Christmas production, is shown in this year's accounts.

Journal production costs were lower than shown for 2016, when a special 100th edition of the journal was produced. As expected, speaker fees rose, as we welcomed more external speakers to meetings in 2017, as well as speakers from within our membership of course, who do not charge for their services.

There was an increase in sales of Purley in Old Images, mostly from sales at the Purley Christmas Fair, where Project Purley had a stand this year. No costs were incurred for Purley in Old Images in 2017, but more copies will be required in 2018 so costs are expected then. Barn hire costs did not rise during 2017, but are likely to be higher in 2018. The accounts were put to the membership and adopted. A proposal to keep membership fees at their current level for 2019 was similarly adopted.

John Chapman then stood down as Chairman and Catherine Sampson was proposed and elected in his place. Marjorie Butler was proposed and re-elected Treasurer and Ann Betts was proposed and elected Secretary. The Committee (Mike Adnett, Pam Beddoes, John Chapman, Jean Chudleigh, David Downs and Gillian Wallace) was proposed and elected en bloc. The treasurer thanked Ron Chudleigh for his support as an independent examiner and with his agreement, he was proposed and elected to serve in this capacity again next year.

## *All Quiet on the Western Front – Project Purley's Battlefields Tour*

After the Annual General Meeting, Catherine Sampson and John Chapman talked about Project Purley's trip to the First World War Battlefields of the Somme, Ypres and Arras areas. Ben Viljoen also spoke movingly about his wife Dorothy's Grandfather Tom Freer, the letters Tom wrote from the front and whilst a Prisoner of War, which survive, and the trip to Tournai Communal Cemetery Allied Extension, in Belgium, to see Tom's grave for the first time. Jean



Chudleigh and Rob Wallace were also very much involved in organising this trip, but unfortunately neither were able to be present at this meeting.

Twenty-four members and guests of Project Purley travelled out to the Battlefields last September. It was the first ever overseas trip by the society, and it turned out to be a very

emotional and yet at the same time very enjoyable tour. Ypres was chosen as base, due to its historical significance and sites of special interest, and also because of its choice of restaurants, cafes and bars within easy walking distance of the hotel.

The talk focused on the tour itself and also on the many cemeteries, memorials and sites visited and the men who fought and often died there. It was accompanied by a large number of images, mainly taken during the tour, maps and even extracts from poems. An account of the tour appeared in January's Journal.

*Catherine Sampson*



## *Obituary - Pat Deane*

Patricia 'Pat' Muriel Deane passed away peacefully at home surrounded by family on Friday 16th February 2018 after a very short illness. Pat was born on 25th February 1930 in Ickenham and married Tony Deane in 1955.

After Pat and Tony married they moved around the country with Tony's job as a civil engineer on airfield construction. They raised their first three children whilst living in a caravan on the airfields, then in 1962 they settled in Purley where they built their family home.

Pat was a dedicated and passionate teacher. She taught at many schools including Westwood Farm, Purley Infants School, Birch Copse and then finally Long Lane Primary School. After Pat retired from teaching she remained a governor of Long Lane Primary School.

Pat was an inspiration by her passion for teaching, hard work and being a loving mother. Pat was widowed in 2015, but leaves six children and two grandchildren.

*David Deane*

Pat was an enthusiastic member of Project Purley and served as Chairman for the 1995-6 year. She first came to our notice when, as a teacher at Long Lane School, she participated in the 1986 BBC Domesday Project. For several years she produced our Newsletter using Tony's office equipment which required photocopying pages in the correct order so that a small booklet appeared. Nowadays this is done by the computer and we have forgotten how much work used to be entailed and how frustrating it was when you made the slightest mistake.

She and Tony hosted many of our early summer barbecues by the side of their rocket and swimming pool. Sometimes, if you were lucky, you got to ride on their underground railway.

Pat was always very much involved with our exhibitions and contributed a number of articles to the Newsletter. She also produced a short history of Long Lane School for their Silver Jubilee.

We were very sad when she had to retire from active participation in the Society and even sadder to learn of her death.

*John Chapman*

## ***Bus Services to 1939***

### ***The Background to the Bus Industry***

Bus services evolved from four major sources: the carriers, the railways, municipalities and the coachbuilders. Many carriers mechanised their services usually by first acquiring a lorry to replace the horse and cart, then putting seats into it and later acquiring a specialist vehicle. The railways found the use of connecting buses an easy means of getting total coverage of their territory so that in conjunction with other railways they could offer a nationwide transport system for goods, parcels and people. The coach builders also began services to employ and promote the vehicles they were building. Local councils entered the scene in major towns, often supplementing or replacing tramway systems or horse drawn omnibuses, but usually enforcing strict regulation to exclude other operators within their boundaries.

At first most bus services outside the major towns were privately owned. In the 1920s there was intense competition between the bus operators but after the 1930 Act many went out of business or amalgamated with rivals. By the Second World War there were a small number of very large groups operating under the guise of local companies. Of these the Tilling Group was the most relevant to the Purley scene as they owned and controlled Thames Valley. This group had also absorbed most of the services started by the railways which were operating under the banner of Western National (Ex GWR), Southern National (Ex SR) and Eastern National (ex LNER) Other former railway services were merged into local Tilling subsidiaries.

### ***British Automobile Traction Co.***

One of the first services to Purley was started by a bus manufacturer when a branch of the British Automobile Traction Company was established to operate bus services. Its first route was from Sreatley

to the Bear Hotel in Reading and on to Maidenhead. This started operation on Saturday 31st July 1915. It used five 30hp Leyland S-type single deckers registered HE 8 to HE 12. They had 27 seats and were licensed to carry 32 passengers. They carried the logo 'BRITISH' on the sides with painted boards to show the towns and villages served.

One of its buses was badly damaged by a falling tree in a severe storm in early 1916 while travelling through Purley. The service was extended to Wallingford in 1919. In 1920 the bus operations were separated from the rest of BAT and into a new subsidiary known as Thames Valley Traction Ltd. when Thomas Tilling, a Lowestoft coach builder took a 14% interest in the new company.

### *Thames Valley Traction Company*

The new company took over on 10th July 1920 operating only the Reading to Wallingford Service through Purley. Some journeys diverted to the Berkshire Lunatic Asylum at Moulsoford (later Fairmile Hospital) and to ensure that patients did not use the bus to escape only return halves of tickets were accepted there. Route no 4 was shown in the timetable but not on the buses. At Wallingford connections were made with City of Oxford Services. In September 1921 a bus was outstationed at Wallingford to facilitate the early morning service into Reading. The route was renumbered 5 from 1st May 1922, the number it retained until 1992.

When the bridge between Streatley and Goring was rebuilt in 1924 some of the no 5's were diverted to Goring and Cleve but this did not prove successful and were withdrawn in October 1924. Another attempt in April 1926 was more successful and a daily Reading to Goring service was established. In January 1927 a second spur route was started, using a bus outstationed at Wantage. This left Wantage at 1030 and ran to Reading via Blewbury, Streatley and Purley. From Reading the bus covered the Goring services before setting off back to Wantage at 5.30 pm. In October 1927 the Goring service was dropped and the Wantage service improved by starting earlier. A short trip to Pangbourne and back from Reading was fitted in at 1 pm. By May 1928 a second trip daily to Wantage was being operated with an even earlier start from Wantage at 8.20 am.



*One of the early Thames Valley buses on Purley Rise and heading for Streatley [M030571]*

Parcels were a valuable part of the business and agents were established at major villages, Messrs. Tidbury Bros. acted as agent in Pangbourne and there was interchange with Reading Corporation at St. Mary Butts.

Fleet numbers for the buses began to be allocated from August 1920 starting

at 1 and continuing without duplication until 230 was reached in 1930. A few specialised vehicles escaped being numbered. Bodies and chassis tended to be regarded as separate entities and were often interchanged. When withdrawn from service several of the Thames Valley bodies ended up as summer chalets on the Purley River estate.

Route expansion in 1921 saw the introduction of a new Reading to Woodcote service in June. This ran via Chazey Heath, Goring Heath and Whitchurch Hill as service 15. This was re-routed from September 1921 via Purley, Pangbourne and Whitchurch Bridge. The revised service known as 16 brought in much more revenue as there was considerably more population south of the river than to the north. In January 1922 the service was reduced to run Tuesdays, Saturdays and Sundays only. In May 1922 it reverted to service 15 and in October 1922 the service was withdrawn completely.

### ***Reginald Braggs and G Jarvis***

Reginald Redwood Braggs set up a charabanc business in July 1921 with a 14 seater vehicle registered DP 3791 and known affectionately as 'Cushy'. He operated variously from Kentwood Hill and garages in the Oxford Road. As well as local hire trips he organised several long distance tours to places as far away as Cheddar and Torquay, being known as Cushy Motor Tours. As the charabanc business was both very competitive and seasonal, he decided to go in for scheduled bus operation and was granted a licence to operate

between Reading and Tidmarsh in January 1926 under the name 'Reading and District Motor Services'. The fare between Purley and Reading was 5d return and 7d between Reading and Tidmarsh. The service was later extended to Ashampstead and finally to Yattendon in April 1929.

By October 1926 he was sharing facilities at 1a Castle Street in Reading with G Jarvis and Sons who operated as 'Comfy Coaches'. In November 1926 he started a new long distance coach service from Pangbourne to Marble Arch in London which operated Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, but this did not last very long.

Jarvis seems to have become a partner with Bragg and the two businesses merged around March 1929. Licences for the Reading to Yattendon service were renewed in the name of Bragg, but Jarvis was in sole command and he sold the business to the Thames Valley Traction Company on 1st January 1936. Two vehicles were transferred to Thames Valley in the deal. They were a 1931 Star 'Flyer' (RD 3016) and a 1934 Thorneycroft 'Arden' 26 seater (RD 6270).

### *Herbert Galpin*

Herbert Galpin of Yattendon appeared on the scene in September 1925 when he licensed a Ford 'Model T' 14 seater bus (MO 5902) and ran a service between Yattendon and Reading on Tuesdays and Saturdays. He had started as a carrier and gradually moved most of his operation to buses, but still carrying parcels as well as passengers. He was still operating just before the outbreak of the Second World War. Some of the other vehicles he operated were BL 7928, a Republic 'model 11x' carrier's van with seating for 14 passengers; MO 3459, a second Republic which by 1932 was licensed only for goods; MO 7520, a Ford 'T' 14 seater charabanc painted red; and RX 6889, a Ford 'AA' 14 seater coach which survived under another ownership until September 1950.

### *T R Harris*

Thomas Richard Harris of 'The Nutshell' in Yattendon started a horse drawn service between Pangbourne and Newbury during the First World War, but on Tuesdays and Saturdays he extended the service to the Peacock in Reading. In September 1920 he acquired a

Republic 'Model 11.X' carrier bus painted green and registered as BL 7928. He sold out to D A Stewart of Yattendon in 1922, who in his turn sold out to Gilpin around 1925.

### ***J Prothero***

J Prothero started his bus services between East Illsley and Newbury in partnership with R V Revell in Jan 1921 as an extension of their carrier business. In December 1931 they extended their services to run into Reading via Compton, Ashampstead, Upper Basildon, Pangbourne and Purley. At first they were refused a Hackney Licence from Reading Borough Council and had to operate from private land near the Palace Theatre. They operated daily, except Wednesday with four return journeys but on Fridays and Saturdays they added a late evening service and on Sundays there were only the two afternoon services.

Protheros obtained their licence immediately the Traffic Commissioners took over licensing and regulation from the Borough and District Councils after the 1930 Transport Act, but in September 1932 they were taken over by the Newbury & District Transport Company which had been founded only a few months before. They had three buses out-stationed at East Illsley to provide the services to Reading and Newbury and other buses operated from the Newbury and Reading garages.

### ***William White***

William White was a carrier in Hermitage. He and his son Edgar started a regular passenger service to Reading in July 1922 running via Yattendon, Upper Basildon and Purley. He ran only on his regular days of Tuesday, Friday and Saturday. The Saturday return journey was delayed until 9 pm to allow for visits to the cinema. He had two vehicles which seemed to be readily convertible between bus and lorry operations. In June 1925 they acquired a 14 seater Mason charabanc (MO 5620) This was putty coloured and named 'Tony' In October 1925 they acquired another 14 seater charabanc, a Chevrolet, registered MO 6416 this was sold to Pococks towards the end of the 1920s. A Dennis 30- cwt 14 seater coach (RX 5493) was purchased in November 1929 and a second, slightly larger vehicle in May 1930 (RX 6401) By 1930 some of their Reading journeys ran via



Compton and Aldworth and the Saturday trip was dropped. In September 1932 their whole operation was revised and the buses travelled into Reading on Tuesdays and Fridays, but via Stanford Dingley, Bradfield and Theale. Whites sold their bus and coach business to Newbury and District in Summer 1934 along with the two Dennis coaches.

### *The 1930 Transport Act*

It was the Transport Act of 1930 which, by setting strict standards for timetables, fare tables and maintenance, eventually saw off the carriers and independents, leaving only Thames Valley Traction and Newbury and District Transport operating at the outbreak of War.

## *Nature Notes*

*by Rita Denman*

**December 1st 2017** and the first day of the meteorological winter. The long glorious summer of 2017 is finally over and the trees are bare. The crunchy leaf carpet has been blown away by the wind but there are still plenty of leaves in grassy areas for the worms to take below and work their magic. The temperature has dropped and the Jet Stream is pulling cold air down from the arctic. At Home Farm the cattle have been taken into the barn. The geese have been unusually quiet.

Perhaps they have been deceived by the recent warm weather and are still in their summer basking mode. There has been a distinct absence of pheasants and fewer deer. The lack of mammals has been made up for by the numbers of birds and the pyracantha berries have been very popular.

**December 8th** The view seems particularly lifeless with no movement anywhere. There are dull grey skies to the north but at present the sun is taking the edge off low temperatures. Western Ireland and Scotland have been badly hit by a series of hurricanes.

**December 29th** We have had every kind of weather as fronts cross the country from various directions although the south has been more fortunate than many areas. The outlook from the window has

been bleak with few signs of wildlife but a small group of starlings is increasing locally. A single red kite has been flying high on clear days and visitors to the seed feeders have been thrush, blackbird, dunnock, robin, blue tit and great tit.

**January 12th 2018** Our weather is wintry, but what else should we expect in winter! There is a possibility of cold and snow on the way as the jet stream changes direction. It has been a terrible time for the seal pups around our coast as many have been washed away in the exceptionally high tides.

**January 19th** Weather has contrasted between dull damp and dreary or cold with frost and very bright sun. High winds brought down some power lines in our area.

In the early part of January the view over the valley was still and seemingly devoid of all life the only movement being due to the weather, wind, rain and sometimes snow. Even the birds were reluctant to come out of their winter shelter and then the sheep came into view and it was a pleasure to see them. There were at least two black sheep in the flock and they seemed to be the leaders.

Usually they spread themselves all over the pasture but in rough weather they keep to the shelter of the hedges. The morning sun shone on the farm fields with a brittle brightness and the bare trees glowed with light but the hanging woods on the hill were in deep ominous shade with a dark grey sky above. The robin who owns the front garden has become adept at balancing on the fat ball container and hovering underneath it aiming at the space to peck at the tit bit.

**February 2nd** The RSPB bird count fell on a very wet dull day. My contribution to the count was one wood pigeon.

It has been a very big 'moon' week and the BBC got excited about the 'double super blue red eclipse moon' but later modified it to what might actually be visible in the UK. It was indeed a very bright moon and many spectacular pictures were taken around the country. The weather is still transient with changeable temperatures depending on the direction of the wind but the birds are beginning to sing their spring songs.

The weather experts in the UK have informed us that although the weather has seemed extreme overall it has been within normal

expectation. It is heartening that there is a noticeable lengthening of daylight. A large flock of gulls has taken to working its way through the fields at the farm and the meadow has attracted numbers of wood pigeons. The large number of geese that in recent years have wintered at the farm have moved on but the swans are there as usual. Sadly some swans in Berkshire have died of bird flu.

The sheep have gone. Daffodils all around the garden are in bud and dormant plants are coming to life.

**February 23rd.** Brrrr it's cold. The wind is coming from Russia and Scandinavia and there is talk of significant snow next week somewhere in the UK. The coming weather has been dubbed 'the beast from the east'. Weather forecasts are becoming cliff hangers, waiting for the next installment. Although windy and very cold there have been long periods of sun. The swans are still in the field. They are a dazzling white in the sunlight.

**March 4th Sunday.** We waited for an expected blizzard. The day was very cold and very bright with a blue sky. Tuesday dawned a sunny but cold day; but by mid day cloud appeared with light snow showers which were more prolonged as the day ended. On Wednesday the temperature at Benson was -10°C. There were snow showers all day. Thursday St David's Day: no sun, just a whitish grey sky and hills blanketed by fog and falling snow. The wind blew the dry snow into snow devils. It was calm but very cold. The birds made the most of the feeders in the front garden. A 'red' weather warning was issued to begin at 3 pm. Mainly for the west country but possibly reaching into the central belt of the UK. Problems were caused not only by the snow but also by the extreme cold. Cracked train rails and failing signals among them.

Friday heavy snow covered most of the country compounded by the winds which blew the dry snow into clouds and drifts. As soon as the roads were cleared the wind blew the snow back again. At night the sky cleared to reveal a full moon. The moon shining on the snow covered fields was a wondrous sight. Saturday and a definite rise in temperature began to clear the snow but there was a warning of freezing temperatures and freezing rain to come.

**March 9th** Thank goodness that in our area the bone numbing

weather has passed and it is getting more springlike. On days when the sun shines and the temperature is mild it is a real tonic. The days are lengthening and birds beginning to sing in the morning. There is green visible in the leaf buds of the malus tree in the front garden and daffodils are in bloom in the back garden and meadow.

**March 16th** It has been a beautiful spring day with a blue sky and warm sun. It is difficult to believe that there will be a return to wind, rain, snow and low temperatures as forecast. There is activity in the pond and the heron has been doing a few recce flights. A red kite parent bird has taken to bringing a chick to one of the tall elms nearby. A constant conversation goes on between the two as the parent encourages the chick to fly. The mirabelle plum tree in the meadow is in full flower.

**March 23rd** The spring equinox fell this week. However we were warned of a possibility of yet more snow. After a couple of days of reasonable weather the so called mini beast from the east brought another fall of dry snow. It blew into the air in amorphous clouds dissipating as it rose but thankfully thawed within a few hours. Despite the weather all the spring bulbs are growing and the forsythia is in flower.

**March 30th** Although we are now into summer time it doesn't seem anywhere near spring, let alone summer. After hours and hours of rain hailstones and thunder the grass is very green and very soggy. Betty and Flo forget to wipe their paws when they come in. Everything changes in the brief spells of sunshine. The birds are in their brightest colours. The RSPB bird count revealed an increase in gold finches. There are six that come to the feeder in the front garden where they make a beautiful splash of colour. Spring has been on hold so many times, surely it must come soon.

## *A new Book*

Ben Viljoen's new book about Humphry Repton, Anthony Storer and the Purley Red Book has just been published. It reproduces all the watercolours of the original Red Book and using extracts from letters and contemporary articles, provides considerable insight into the relationship between the two men. Get a copy from Ben for £22-00. A real work of art!!!