

Account of Purley on Thames

Charities

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The type of charities we are dealing with here are those where someone either made a large donation or left money in their will to further a particular cause. Other types of charity which are set up to further a charitable objective, uses volunteer effort and collects money to fund the activity will be dealt with elsewhere.

Wills

An Act of 1536 encouraged people to leave money in their wills for the relief of the poor. In many parishes such bequests were able to yield an annual dividend which was able to be distributed regularly. The custom arose of distributing money or goods on specific days and a charity board was often erected in the church to record the name of the benefactor, the day of distribution and who was entitled to benefit. Many of these boards survive today in other churches. There were no such charities established in Purley other than the Cow Money as far as we are able to ascertain but a number of specific bequests were recorded eg:-

<i>Name</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Bequest</i>
Henry Kelsall	14936/8	to church
Elizabeth Twynhoo	15006/8	to church
Thomas Holloway	1572	6d for the poor mens box
John Justice,husbandman	1600	5s to 5 named persons
John North, Yeoman	1608	2s to parish church and one cow for the poor of the parish
Alice Bird, widow	1617	10s
William Henwood, fuller	1638	3s 4d to the poor of Purley on the day of my burial
Robert Handscombe	1675	20s to former rector Daniel Reynor
John George Liebenrood	1795	£42 to 24 named poor of Purley
Emma West	1924	£50 for the poor of the parish
Mr Price	1928	£25 to church

The Cow Money

A sum of six shillings a year was at one time distributed among poor widows in respect of a sum of £6 held by the overseers. This was called Cow Money as the six pounds appears to have originated from compensation provided when the cow, given by John North in 1608, died. Nothing was heard of the money after the Overseer, Richard Sherwood, died suddenly in 1856, although an enquiry was held in 1905. It may be significant that his widow paid for the lancet windows in the chancel, one of which depicted the Good Samaritan and the text 'Go and do likewise'

Charitable Donations

Purley has a long tradition of giving money to help the less fortunate. In 1984 when famine swept the Horn of Africa' parishioners made generous donations to the Famine Relief Appeal and a bring and buy sale raised over £750 in one day. The churchwardens accounts are full of other donations resulting from collections for various charitable purposes.

Money was raised during the first World War. In the first year a donation of £3-17-6 was made for the aid of Belgian refugees and £5-16-10 to the Prince of Wales's Fund. Throughout the War there were regular donations to the Red Cross and occasional donations to such bodies as the Lord Kitchener's Memorial Fund (£3-6-7) and to support war blinded soldier's children (£2-11-5)

Donations to the various war charities continues long after the war was over and the annual collection for the Earl Haig Poppy Fund continues to this day.

In 1928 there was widespread hardship in mining communities in the wake of the General Strike. Purley had three special collections which raised £9-16-9.

Between 1669 and 1826 Purley contributed considerable sums of money under the 'Briefs' system. This is dealt with in the Church History

