

# *Account of Purley on Thames*

## Purley Park Trust

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### *Introduction*

Purley Park Trust is a private company operating as a charity. It was approved by Berkshire County Council to provide board and lodging, care and training for people with a mental handicap. Originally this tended to be Downs syndrome but now a much wider view is taken and women as well as men are provided for.

It was originally located at Purley Park, the former mansion house of the lords of the manor of Purley Magna in the 19th century. However after changes in emphasis and views on dealing with people with learning difficulties the Trust abandoned the Mansion and built houses in the grounds where people could be cared for in more of a family environment.

### *History*

Purley Park was purchased in 1948 by Major T J Parry and Lt Col Hugh Duncan to provide a home and school for boys who were handicapped by Downs syndrome. Tom Parry had previously run such a school in north Wales from 1923.

The problem had been that people with Downs syndrome are looked after by the state until they reach 18 when they become once more the responsibility of their family. Tom and Hugh set up the home to take care of boys older than 18 who still needed a great deal of specialist care and training.

Hugh Duncan later became the sole proprietor and in 1971 he set up the Purley Park Trust to ensure continuity. At this time he and his wife Elizabeth moved out to live in Long Lane.

In the 1970s a considerable amount of the park land was sold off for housing, to form Purley Beeches. This kept the Trust solvent, allowed the house to be modernised and paid the bills.

In 1980 an associated charity the Duncan Trust took over all the assets including the house and remaining property.

It has been the aim of the Trust to provide accommodation in as much like a family atmosphere as possible. Thus in the early 1980s an appeal was launched for funds to build cottages in the grounds. Planning permission for nine of these was obtained and the first, Hazel View, was opened in 1984.

A further development in policy occurred shortly afterwards when females were admitted.

### *Organisation*

### *Community Relations*

### *The League of Friends*

### *The 'Boys'*

Although with a few ladies and a number of quite elderly men the term 'boys' perhaps should not be used but that is how they have been known in the village for many years, and old habits die hard.

### *Bibliography*

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