

Account of Purley on Thames

Purley, Berkshire and Purley, Surrey

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At one time there was much confusion with Purley in Surrey as they are much better known (and somewhat bigger) than we are. Many people in the village found their mail backstamped 'Croydon' after having been redirected. It was to avoid this confusion that the Parish Council had the name changed officially to Purley on Thames in 1985.

It would seem however that the Surrey Purley derived its name from the one in Berkshire. What appears to have happened is this.

Beddington in Surrey was the principal manor of a set of land holdings which went back at least to Domesday. Miles Crispin, who held one of the three manors of Purley, also held one of the two manors of Beddington.

The Huscarle family were Lords of the Manor of Purley Magna from at least 1199 and lived both in Purley and Beddington, although the family's main estate was at Beddington in Surrey. Later both Purley La Hyde and Purley Magna came into the hands of the Carew family who held the other Beddington manor and eventually acquired the Beddington Huscarle manor as well. The Carews continued with an interest in Beddington long after the manors of Purley La Hyde and Purley Magna were bequeathed to Sanchia and Elizabeth on the death of their younger brother Nicholas Carew (V) in 1485.

A 12th century grant of a 'moiety of a wood called Nithea in the manor of Saunderstead' to William, son of Osbert de Purley by the Abbot of Hyde, also seems to establish a connection. This is adjacent to the manor of Beddington and Osbert was one of the villeins displaced from the virgate of land in Purley which Isabella de Sifrewast gave to Reading Abbey soon after its foundation.

.....dimidiam virgatam terra in Purleya quam tenet in vilenagio Osbertus filius Godwin piscatoris, cum omnibus pertinentiis suis, in perpetuam et puram elemosinam liberam et quiteam ab omni consuetudine et exactione et demanda, et imminem ab omni servito seculari, et ut abbas et conventus Radingensis transmutent predictum Osbertum et progeniem suam

From Cartularies of Reading Abbey ed Brian Kemp item 819. see Also D M Stenton English Society in the early middle ages (1965) pp 145-6

There is a reference in the Close Rolls that King John took part of the lands belonging to William Huscarle and gave it to his chaplain Dionysius in 1215/6. There are also many other names and local connections linking this estate to our area, for example in 1349 Simon of Woodcote held land there and in 1270 a wardship was given to John of Tidmarsh. In 1323 Peter de Purley and his wife Julyan were given permission for a chapel at Hooley. In 1332 Reginald de Pirle obtained a licence from the Bishop of Winchester to have divine service celebrated in his oratory in Sanderstead. In 1346 a similar grant was made to John de Pirle.

see History of Surrey by Brayley and Britten p42

All the early references to Purley which have Surrey connections are as people's names as in John de Pirlee or Osbert de Purle. It seems almost certain that this merely indicated that they came from Purley in Berkshire and were probably servants of either the Huscarles or Carews.

It seems that somewhere in the 13th century a man from the estate in Purley, Berkshire known as John de Purley was sent to be a steward on the Beddington estate in Surrey. The de Purleys remained in the area till at least the reign of Edward IV. The line seemed to die out with females around 1442 but their name stuck to the farmstead where they lived. This farm eventually came to name the settlement of Purley and then the town developed from there in the 19th and 20th centuries as London expanded.

John Chapman

