

Purley Historical Trail 2010

Begin at the Tesco Extra store (café and toilets). It was built on the site of the East Surrey water works and opened in 1991. On leaving Tesco, turn right and walk down the slope to the subway. Note murals, with pictures of transport in Purley over the years. Cross the first road using the pedestrian crossing and look left. The Rotary clock was unveiled in 1973.



Purley crossroads. Tesco store to left.

Photo: Graham Brooks 1992

Purley crossroads

Purley is situated at the meeting point of two chalkland river valleys known as bournes. The Coulsdon Bourne follows the A23 and the Caterham Bourne follows the A22. Cross the road by the pedestrian crossing, to the *Jolly Farmers* public house to learn more of the bournes.



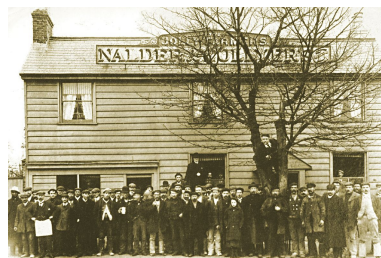
Purley crossroads. c.1905

From a postcard courtesy of Roger Packham

The Jolly Farmers

Under the right-hand gable-end are two blue plaques provided by the Bourne Society. One refers to the pub and its predecessor, a wooden beer house replaced in 1907. The other plaque tells of the subterranean bourne or 'woe water' that carved the river valleys that meet at Purley, now mostly in culverts. The plaque refers to a superstition that the Bourne floods will occur every seven years and foretell a 'national disaster'.

From *The Jolly Farmers*, go towards the railway bridge. Cross Whytecliffe Road South then up the hill to the pillar box. Turn right up the slope to Purley station.



Purley crossroads

The Jolly Farmers 1907

From a postcard courtesy of Roger Packham

Purley Station

Look for the Bourne Society plaque on the front of the station. In 1840, the London and Brighton Railway built a station with a wooden shelter at the Godstone Road level crossing, in Purley, and it was named 'Godstone Road'. It closed in 1847 but reopened in 1856, as 'Caterham Junction', when the Caterham Railway Company constructed a line linking Caterham to Purley. In 1888, Caterham Junction station was renamed 'Purley'. With the station entrance behind you, go down the right side of Station Approach and turn right into Whytecliffe Road South. Walk along Whytecliffe Road South and just after the Purley Clinic, go straight ahead into Whytecliffe Road North. At 136 Whytecliffe Road North, cross the road and go through the car park to the left of Christ Church. Beware of moving vehicles.



Purley Station, rear entrance. c.1905.

From a postcard courtesy of Roger Packham

Christ Church

Christ Church dates from 1877, built as the new parish church. Previously the area was in Coulsdon parish. John Henry Smith contributed over £5,000 towards its erection and endowment. Robert Resker, vicar 1885-1916, wrote a history of Purley and its early development. See the Bourne arch in the wall.

Leaving the car park at the Brighton Road exit and turn right to the pedestrian crossing. Cross Brighton Road, to the sign 'Christ Church CofE Primary School', and proceed left. Turn

right into Rotary Field by the school playing field. Follow the path up the hill. Where the path turns left at right angles, look for the Iron Railway sign.



Christ Church, Purley. c.1910.

From a postcard courtesy of Roger Packham

Croydon, Merstham and Godstone Iron Railway

The Surrey Iron Railway, with wagons drawn by horses was reputedly the world's first railway and ran initially from Wandsworth to Croydon. The next stage, built by the Croydon, Merstham & Godstone Iron Railway, ran from Croydon to Merstham between 1803-1835, mainly for carrying lime for building. Its route ran to the west side of Brighton Road and a section of it has been preserved, on its original site, in the Rotary Field. Another is found by Purley Library, by another Bourne Society plaque. The photo shows an artist's view of the CMGIR in action at Coulsdon.



A CM&G train crossing the bridge at

Chipstead Valley Road, Coulsdon

Watercolour by G B Wollaston, 1823.

Courtesy of Croydon Public Libraries

With your back to the Iron Railway sign, go along the path. At the T-junction, turn left to the Brighton Road. Just before the exit, there is a stone memorial on the grass to the left.

Rotary Field

The Rotary Field was presented to Coulsdon & Purley Urban District Council by the Rotary Club in 1925. In spring, look out for the bright yellow flowers on the *Forsythia* hedge (on the Brighton Road side) and displays of crocuses.

Turn right after leaving Rotary Field and go past a pillar box to cross Christ Church Road. Continue along Brighton Road towards the town centre.



Rotary Field, Purley.
February 2010.
Photo: Paul Sandford 2010

Purley War Memorial Hospital/Astoria Court

In 1908, developer JP Oldaker obtained a lease on land owned by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and by 1909 he built a small cottage hospital, with eight beds. At the end of the World War I it was decided to extend the Cottage Hospital as a memorial to those who had died in the war. That building was officially opened in 1922 as the Purley and District War Memorial Hospital.



Opening of Purley Cottage Hospital, 1909.
From a postcard courtesy of Roger Packham

Opposite the hospital lies Astoria Court, built on the site of a former cinema. In 1934, the Cinema Supreme opened and in 1935 it became the Astoria. There were two more name changes – Cannon (1985) and MGM (1993) – before the cinema was demolished in the late 1990s. Continue along Brighton Road.

United Reformed (formerly Congregational) Church

The foundation stone was laid on 15th October 1903, and the church opened on 22nd October 1904. The church, built in the Free Gothic style, has been extended over the years. The Memorial Hall was built in 1953, and the Youth Hall in 1995. The church was used as a First Aid post in World War II.

Continue along Brighton Road and cross the cobbled Russell Hill Place. The first building is *The Rectory* pub, formerly the Gas Company Showrooms, opened in 1927. Continue along Brighton Road and at Lorimers, look across the road, between Mann Countrywide and Subway.

Downlands Shopping Precinct

Downlands Shopping Precinct was erected in 1984/85 on the site of the vacant Christ Church School buildings. To the right

lies Pretoria Terrace, built by JP Oldaker in 1903 to mark the end of the Boer War.

As you continue along Brighton Road, you pass shops that predate the former Gas Company Showrooms. Bank Buildings was erected by JP Oldaker in 1907 where villas once stood. It took its name from the corner building, a bank finished in 1907. Now Pizza Express, it was occupied by London & County Banking Company, later National Westminster Bank, from 1909.

At the traffic lights, cross and turn right up Russell Hill Road. Pass Russell Hill Parade (1935) and Russell Parade (1939); and Tudor Court, built in 1930, across the road. The name 'Russell' refers to Lord (Earl) John Russell, the first president of the Warehousemen, Clerks' and Drapers' School, which opened in 1866. It was later called Russell Hill School and, since 1962 the premises have been occupied by Thomas More and Margaret Roper Schools. The old school is now Royal Russell School in Croydon.



The Warehousemen, Clerks' and Drapers' School, Purley, c. 1920s.
From a postcard courtesy of Roger Packham

Shortly before the pedestrian crossing is the next stop.

The Foxley Hatch

Inside the *Foxley Hatch* public house are several pictures of Purley as it was in the past. The tram terminus at Russell Hill Road/Brighton Road is one view of Purley shown here.



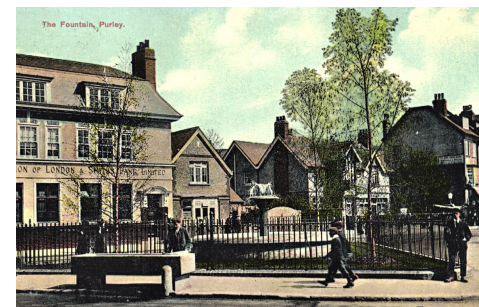
Purley tram terminus c. 1906
From a postcard courtesy of Roger Packham

From the Foxley Hatch, continue up the hill and turn left by Premier Healthcare into Foxley Lane. Proceed to the fountain by the Library.

Purley Fountain

It was inaugurated in 1904 at Purley crossroads to commemorate the reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901). In 1935 it was moved to outside the railings of the Waterworks and in 1959 it was moved into the grounds of the Waterworks, now Tesco site. The fountain was moved to the Library Garden in Banstead Road in 1983.

From Purley Fountain, turn left and walk back towards the centre of Purley along Banstead Road and facing the oncoming traffic



Purley Fountain, c. 1915
From a postcard.

Purley Library/Purley Baptist Church (PBC)

The Library was opened in 1935 and the original parts of PBC were built in 1906. Purley Hall stood where the sports court is found. The area owned by PBC is being redeveloped from 2009.

Continue along Banstead Road to the major road junction and turn left and go to the pedestrian crossing. Turn right across the crossing to reach the start point.



Banstead Road junction with Brighton Road, Purley, c. 1905.
From a postcard courtesy of Roger Packham

Tesco Car Park – End of the trail. For a more detailed history, see the Bourne Society's *Village Histories 1: Purley*, available at the Library, from the Bourne Society or via Genfair.

www.bourne-society.org.uk