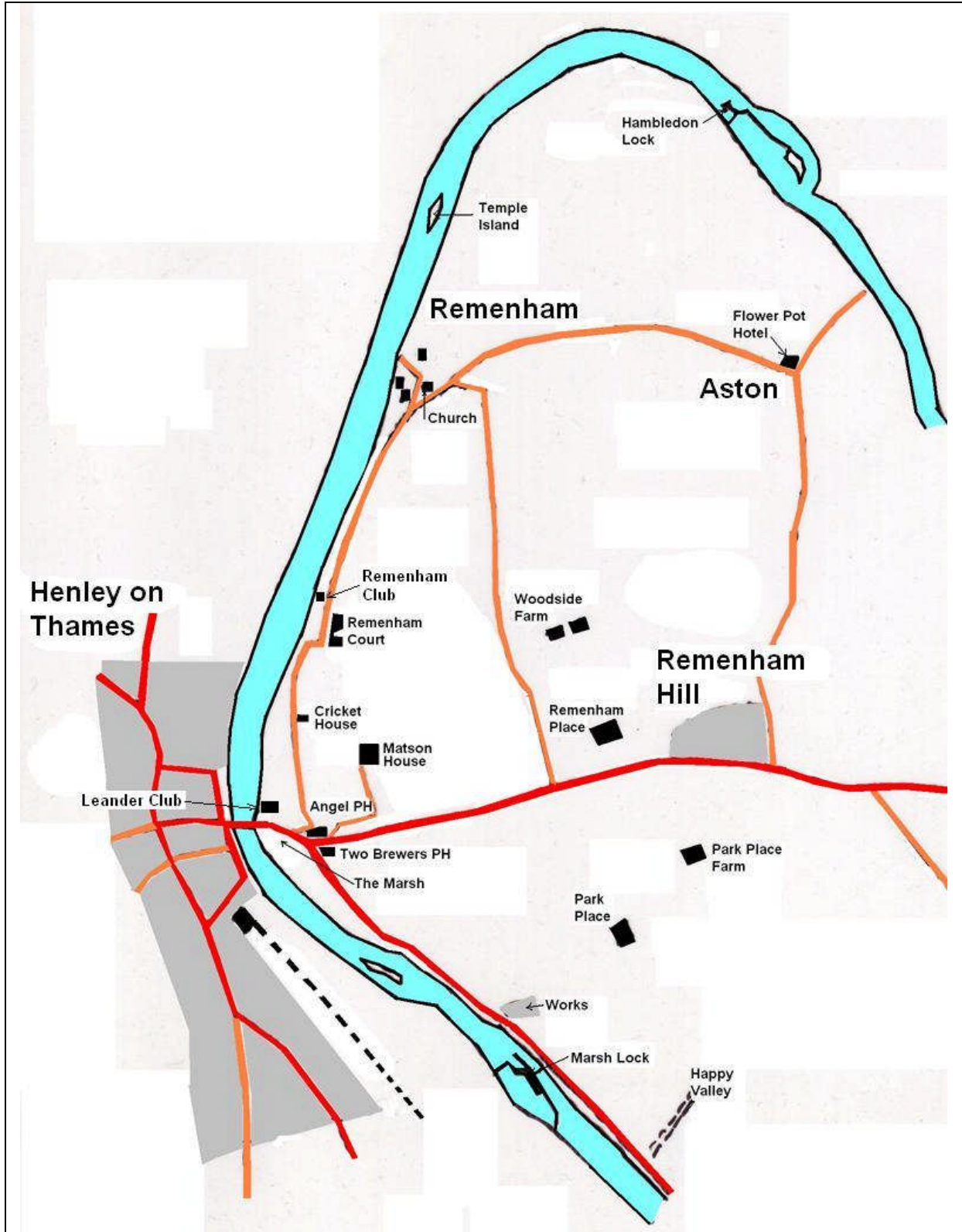


Remenham, Berkshire

The parish of Remenham contains several hamlets and estates. The principal areas are Remenham, Aston, Remenham Hill, The Marsh and Marsh Lock.



My personal interest in Remenham stems from the facts that

- I was baptised in Remenham church
- My father's ancestors lived in Remenham from about 1850 to 1915

Remenham

The name Remenham probably comes from the old English words *reoma* and *ham* and probably means a homestead or an enclosure by the riverbank.

Remenham village is a small collection of buildings, principally St. Nicholas' church and rectory, a village hall, Remenham Farm, the site of the former manor house and the former school. Parts of the moat of the original manor house remain. Sir Edmund Montfort owned it in the reigns of Edward IV and Richard III. A lane from the church provides public access to the river.

Remenham church dates back to the 13th century. The only remaining part of the church from this time is the east window from about 1320. One window in the nave is restored from the 14th century and the tower dates back to the 15th century. However the building underwent a complete modernisation in 1870, at a cost of £700, and a sacristy and vestry were added in 1892, costing £450.

The lych gate was built in memory of Violet Noble, youngest daughter of John Noble of Park Place, in 1868.



Remenham Church



View of Remenham Church and Remenham Farm from the river bank



Remains of the moat of Remenham Manor



The Old School at Remenham

A number of large houses are to be found in the area. Along Remenham Lane, which runs parallel to the river, Remenham Court (formerly Remenham Lodge) and Matson House (formerly Wilminster Park) command good views over the River Thames.



Remenham Court



Matson House

On the eastern side of Remenham Lane is the site of the former Henley Cricket and Lawn Tennis Clubs. The cricket ground may date back to the 18th century.

In Emily Climenson's Guide to Henley-on-Thames (published 1896), Henley Cricket Club played matches on Wednesdays and Saturdays from May to October. Membership of the cricket club cost £1 1s (£1.05) per annum. The keeper of the ground at this time was George Eustace.

The Henley Town Cricket Club was formed in 1886 and played on land behind The Little Angel, owned by Brakspear's Brewery. In 1896 annual membership was 10s (50 p) and the club had almost one hundred honorary and playing members. Upwards of thirty matches were played annually during the cricket season. The current Henley Cricket Club plays on the same site.

According to Climenson's guide, The Lawn Tennis Club was formed in 1884 and played on four courts situated off Marlow Road in 1896. Kelly's Directory of Henley-on-Thames from 1936 shows the Lawn Tennis Club playing at Remenham and Miss E.M. Mott and E.M. Steward as their honorary secretary.



Henley Lawn Tennis Club courts from an old postcard



The former site of Henley Cricket Club and its pavilion in 2009, now used for Regatta parking

Aston

The hamlet of Aston comprises a collection of cottages and The Flower Pot Hotel. Ferry Lane beside the hotel leads to a former ferry across the River Thames.



The Flower Pot Hotel



The site of the former ferry at Aston

Remenham Hill

The hamlet of Remenham Hill is situated 300 feet above the River Thames. Its former inn, The Five Horseshoes, is now a commercial property.

The steep road linking Remenham Hill to Henley-on-Thames was carved out of the chalk at the top of the hill and built up at the bottom. It is known as White Hill because of this.

The Squire Car Manufacturing Co Ltd was situated in premises behind the present White Hill Service Station between 1934 and 1936. Run by an ex-Bentley apprentice, Adrian Squire (1910-1940), it produced seven expensive sports cars. The cars were highly desirable, known for their high speed and braking. However it was their no-expense-spared price that saw the demise of the company. Squire then went to work for Lagonda. He was killed in an air raid.

The large country house called Remenham Place was a preparatory school for boys around the beginning of the 20th century.

The Marsh

The area immediately on the Berkshire side of Henley bridge is known as The Marsh. There was once a tollgate by the bridge, but it was removed and the toll collector's cottage was demolished in 1873 when the bridge toll was abolished. A larger house, called Toll Gate Cottage replaced it until it was, in turn, demolished in 1963 and replaced with another house away from the road.

The Marsh was also the site of three public houses, only one of which remains open. Beside the bridge was The Carpenters Arms, now the headquarters of Henley Royal Regatta, built in 1986. This inn had its own boathouse where boats could be hired. At the start of the Wargrave Road was The Two Brewers. This is now a commercial property. And at the foot of White Hill is The Little Angel. This latter inn has been extended in recent years to accommodate the large crowds during the Regatta.

In the days of horse-drawn coaches, extra horses were held in readiness to assist with the ascent of White Hill.

There is also a small collection of houses and cottages in the area. Along the Wargrave Road, Thamesfield House has been greatly enlarged and is now a retirement home. The site of the Henley Municipal Swimming Baths, called Solomon's Hatch, was a marked off area of the River Thames. Henley Rowing Club now owns it. As a non-swimming junior school pupil in the 1950s, being taken to the baths was an awful experience for me with the river's cold water and a stony bed to stand on.



Henley Regatta Headquarters



The former Two Brewers PH



The Little Angel PH



Postcard of Henley Swimming Baths from 1950

Marsh Lock

Marsh Lock was built as a pound lock in the 1770s on an island in the River Thames to replace a flash lock at the site of three mills. At the same time, as decreed by an Act of Parliament requiring the Thames Commissioners to provide a continuous towpath, the wooden footbridge was constructed. It had to be built around the mill on the Oxfordshire bank.

The lock was then rebuilt in 1883, to strengthen it, following the formation of The Thames Conservancy in 1853.

New Mills, on the Oxfordshire bank, stood where the main weir is today. There was a flourmill and a paper mill before its closure in about 1904. Some of the mill buildings still remain.

Marsh Lock in 2009.
The wooden bridge carrying the towpath is on the left; the lock keeper's cottage is in the centre; and Marsh Mills House, formerly the residence of the mill owner, is on the right.



A double flourmill, known as Marsh Mills, was situated on the Berkshire bank up until the Second World War. After this the mills were converted into flats.



Marsh Mills from an old postcard



The blocks of red-brick flats at Marsh Mills 2010

River traffic through Marsh lock was originally mainly for carrying goods. The closure of the mills coincided with an increase in pleasure craft on the River Thames and Marsh lock remains one of the busiest locks on the river.

Park Place

The largest mansion in Remenham is Park Place. Its site first saw Stroud's or Vyne's Place in the 13th century. The names derive from the owners Richard de la Strode, who bought land in Aston in 1257, and Thomas Vyne who had the land held in trust in 1479. In Henry VI's reign, it was owned by William Peck and became known as Peck's or Park's Place.

Lord Archibald Hamilton acquired the land in 1719 and built the first mansion on the site of the current house. He sold it to Frederick, Prince of Wales who was the father of George III. George grew up on the estate.

In 1752 Park Place was bought by General Henry Conway. He was responsible for the layout of the grounds, building a bridge (known as Conway's bridge or the Ragged Arch) to carry the Wargrave Road at the lower end of Happy Valley to gain access to the River Thames and a Grecian ruin at the upper end, both using stones from Reading Abbey. A Druid's temple was re-built in the grounds, having come from Jersey, where Conway had been Governor. Following a fire in 1768 the house was partly rebuilt.



The boat house at Park Place with Conway's bridge



Conway's bridge (The Ragged Arches) over Happy Valley

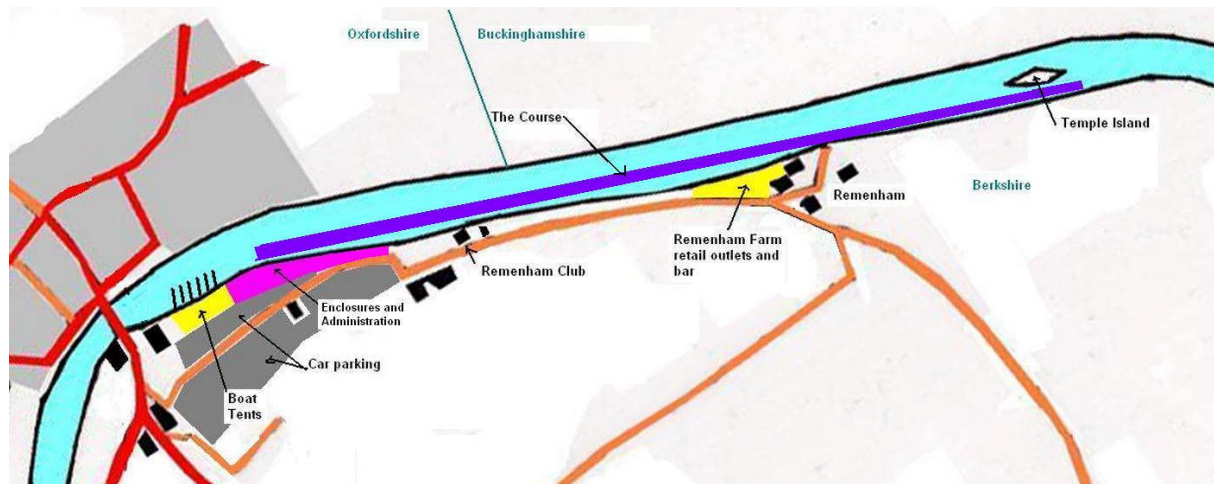
Following General Conway's death, Park Place had several owners: 1796 James Harris (First Earl of Malmesbury); 1816 Henry Spurling; 1824 Fuller Maitland; 1858 Mrs Maitland; 1867 Charles Easton.

In 1870 the estate passed to John Noble. He rebuilt the house in its current form following a fire in 1871 that destroyed much of the mansion's interior. The estate remained in the ownership of the Noble family until 1947.

Between 1947 and 1988, Park Place was in use as a boarding school by Middlesex County Council, and later Hillingdon Council, for pupils aged 11-16 with health and emotional problems. In 1960 Horace Jackson started a Scout Troop, known as 2nd Henley-on-Thames, at the school. Fred Harvey later ran it until his death in 1980 when the Troop closed.

Henley Royal Regatta

The Henley Royal Regatta is a weeklong international rowing event held on the River Thames from Temple Island to Henley. It started in 1839 and was rowed from the downstream end of Temple Island to Henley Bridge. In 1885 and again in 1924 the course was modified to provide the longest straight stretch of the river from the downstream end of Temple Island to Poplar Point, known as Henley Reach. The length of the course is 1 mile 550 yards (2.112 km).



The Regatta Course



The River Thames downstream from Remenham Club towards Temple Island



Two crews racing near the start of the Regatta course by Temple Island

Although called Henley Royal Regatta, the administration, boat storage, landing stages, grandstands and car parking for the event are all located in the parish of Remenham. The boat tents and viewing enclosures are situated on the Berkshire bank of the river between the Remenham and Leander Clubs.

In the 1950s and 1960s local schools were closed (from Wednesday to Friday) for the Regatta. This was presumably to allow older pupils to work on the Regatta site. The 1st Henley Scouts provided help to Remenham Club and Phyllis Court Club. As a Senior Scout, I worked at Remenham Club collecting glasses before being transferred to serving behind the bar, a job I retained the following year. The bar was open from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. and took £1000 for the first time in the week in 1965. At this time a pint of bitter cost 1s 10d (about 9p) and a Pimms cost 10s (50p).

Traylen's funfair was sited behind the regatta enclosures at this time. By the 1980s the enclosures had been enlarged and the area was also used for car parking and for a few years the funfair relocated to Wargrave Road.

Today the regatta 'village' has spread to include corporate hospitality on the Buckinghamshire bank and Remenham Farm provides an open-air bar and retail outlets for the general public.



The public bar at Remenham Farm 2008



Retail outlets at Remenham Farm 2008

Temple Island

Temple Island lies at the start of the Henley Royal Regatta course. The upstream portion of this eyot (pronounced as in the number 8) was leased by the Regatta Stewards in 1987 for 999 years; the downstream end is a nature reserve. The Stewards undertook extensive restoration work to both the island and temple.

In 1771 James Wyatt designed and built a fishing lodge on the eyot in the form of an Etruscan-style temple for the owner, Sambrook Freeman of Fawley Court. The ownership of the island and Fawley Court passed to the Mackenzie family in the 19th century and it was then that the Regatta Stewards first expressed an interest in buying it.

Nowadays the temple is available for hospitality and functions for up to 40 guests in the Etruscan Room or 120 on the lawns.



Temple Island in 2010

The Taylor Family in Remenham

Eli Thomas Taylor was born on 26th May 1855 in Chieveley, Berkshire. His parents were James Taylor (1818 – 1900), a shoemaker, and Martha, nee Baul (1823 – 1897). In 1880 Eli married Emma Chesterman at Holy Trinity church, Reading. Emma was born in Marcham, Berkshire on 16th July 1856. Eli was a coachman and domestic worker.

The couple moved to Gravel Hill, Henley-on-Thames where their first child, Frank Herbert Taylor, was born on 20th May 1880.

As a young man Frank became a resident gardener at Thamesfield in Remenham. He served in the Royal Warwickshire Regiment in World War I. On his return to Henley he lived with the family at 30 Albert Road and worked as a gardener. He died in Townlands Hospital on 20th June 1961.

By the time of the 1881 census, the family had moved to Cricket House, Remenham. Their second child, Kate Taylor, was born on 8th December 1881.



Cricket House in 2009
with the old cricket
pavilion attached (right)

Kate became a domestic worker and remained unmarried. For a while she worked at Little Park, Wickham, Hampshire as a housemaid. Kate later brought up her nephew Frederick William Thomas Taylor at 30 Albert Road, Henley. She died in Henley on 11th October 1975.

Eli and Emma had a third child, Frederick Taylor, on 22nd January 1884.

Frederick became a chauffeur and, in later life, a motor mechanic. He married Alice Margaret Thrusell on 3rd April 1915 in Sutton, Surrey. They had one child, Frederick William Thomas Taylor who was born in Avonmouth, Bristol on 28th January 1918.

Frederick married the widowed Emma Jane Jones at Trinity church, Henley on 3rd August 1930. He died on 6th January 1956.

Frederick William Thomas Taylor spurned his father after his mother died and was brought up by various aunts and uncles. During his school years, at Henley Grammar School, he lived with his aunt Kate at 30 Albert Road, Henley. He went on to become a manager at Stuart Turner Ltd in Henley, married Marjorie Joyce Rixon on 13th January 1943 and had four children who were brought up in Lower Assendon. He died on 4th November 1988 in Teignmouth, Devon.

A fourth child, Albert Taylor, was born on 31st July 1885.

Albert became a groom and then a labourer at the Corn Mill in Hambledon. He joined the Royal Berkshire Regiment during World War I and was killed in action on 29th September 1918.

Eli and Emma's fifth child, William Taylor, was born in Remenham on 30th November 1887.

William became a footman at 11 Bryanston Square, Marylebone, London. His later life is subject to ongoing research.

The couple had a sixth child, Arthur Taylor, on 2nd April 1890.

Arthur joined the Royal Marines Light Infantry. He married Mary Ann Titcombe at Trinity church, Henley in 1917 and became a general labourer. Their first child was born in St Marylebone, London, on 3rd May 1914. The couple later lived at Wantage, Oxfordshire and had three more children. Albert died on 30th December 1971.

In the 1891 census Eli Thomas and Emma Taylor are shown living at The Marsh, Remenham, with their children Frank, Kate, Frederick, Albert, William and Arthur.

Another child, Edith May Taylor, was born in 1895. She was christened at Remenham church on 16th June 1895 but died on 27th August in the same year.

In 1896 they had another child, Ernest Taylor. He was christened at Remenham church on 30th August 1896.

Ernest became an errand boy at a draper's shop. During World War I he joined the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry and was killed in action at Ypres on 25th September 1915.

Eli Thomas and Emma had two more children, in 1899 and 1902. Amy Taylor was christened at Remenham church on 11th June 1899 and died on 14th September 1899. Edward Taylor was christened at Remenham church on 7th September 1902 and died on 5th December 1902.

In the 1901 census, the family address is The Bank, Remenham. Eli Thomas, Emma, Kate (a housemaid), Albert (a groom), William, Arthur and Ernest are shown living there.

In the 1911 census a fuller address is given for the family as Bank View, The Marsh, Remenham. Eli Thomas, Emma, Albert and Ernest are shown living there. The parents are described as having been married for 31 years, having a total of eleven children born alive of whom four had died and seven were still alive. This leaves one child unaccounted for in the National Records and the Remenham Parish Records.



Bank View cottages
(left) and the former
Two Brewers PH in
2010

Also in the 1911 census, William Taylor was living in Marylebone as a footman; Frank was living at Thamesfield as a gardener, Kate was living at Little Park, Wickham, Hampshire as a housemaid and Arthur was a member of the Royal Marine Light Infantry at the Royal Marine Barracks in Gosport, Hampshire.

Emma Taylor died in November 1913 in Remenham. Eli then moved to 30 Albert Road, Henley-on-Thames with his family. His daughter Kate continued to live at this address until being taken to the Chilterns End nursing home.

Eli Thomas Taylor died in Henley on 4th July 1928.