

REMENHAM NEWSLETTER



Remenham Fayre 2019
*by Remenham Photographer
Russell Cleaver*



**Patronal Festival
Sunday 8 December**

11.15am sung Holy Communion with hymns
celebrated by the Venerable Judy French
followed by wine and nibbles

**CHRISTMAS SERVICES
ST NICHOLAS, REMENHAM**

Sunday 15 December

11.15am said matins (BCP)
4.00pm candlelit service of 9 lessons and carols
followed by mulled wine and mince pies in the Parish Hall

Sunday 22 December

11.15am said Matins (BCP)

Tuesday 24 December

9.00pm candlelit Holy Communion (BCP) with carols

Wednesday 25 December

11.15am children's service with Holy Communion and carols (45 minutes)



THE CHURCH OF ST NICHOLAS

Rector

St Mary's, Henley }
St Nicholas, Remenham }

Revd Jeremy Tayler

The Rectory, Hart Street
Henley-on-Thames, Oxon

Churchwardens

Charlotte Every

Tel: 07973 798071

churchwarden@remenhamparish.org.uk

John Laing

Tel: 07778 464162

Churchwarden emeritus and verger

Mike Dowsett

Tel: 01491 575711

Treasurer

Nigel Gray

Tel: 01491 572024

Secretary

Mandy Sermon

Tel: 01491 412908

Sidesmen

1st Sunday

Antony Duckett

Rosemary Duckett

2nd Sunday

Anthony West

Sarah West

3rd Sunday

Charlotte Every

4th Sunday

John Laing

Sue Laing

5th Sunday

Glen Palethorpe

Ruth Palethorpe

NORMAL SERVICES

11.15am

Matins (BCP)

First Sunday

11.15am

Holy Communion (BCP)

Second Sunday

11.15am

Matins (BCP)

Third Sunday

11.15am

Holy Communion (BCP)

Fourth Sunday

11.15am

Matins (BCP)

Fifth Sunday

Parish Office: Monday & Tuesday 9.30am-12.30pm, Wednesday & Friday 9.30am-4.30pm

Tel: 01491 577340, email: *office.hwr@lineone.net*

ARTICLES FOR THE NEWSLETTER AND EDITORIAL POLICY

Do please keep sending any interesting/topical items for possible inclusion to the Editor, Felicity Rutland, preferably by email to *newsletter@remenhamparish.org.uk*. The editorial team reserves the right to edit, amend, précis or reject articles. The opinions expressed are those of the authors of the articles and not necessarily those of the editorial team.

REMENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

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All mail to Remenham Parish Council, PO Box 4748, Henley on Thames RG9 9DH

The Parish Council meetings are held on the second **MONDAY** in the month at 8.00pm in the Parish Hall, except on the evening of the Annual Parish Meeting (usually in May) when it is beforehand. There is normally no meeting in August.

*****PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE OF DAY - PREVIOUSLY THE SECOND TUESDAY*****

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Charlotte Every	Churchwarden
John Laing	Churchwarden
Mandy Sermon	Secretary
Nigel Gray	Treasurer
Sue Laing, Paul Sermon, Anthony West, Sarah West, Hugh Whitfield	

CHURCH CLEANING

November	Mike Dowsett	
December	Penny Whitfield	Jayne Gray

ALTAR FLOWERS

November	Charlotte Every	Suzanne Came
December	ADVENT	

PARISH REGISTER

Baptisms

21 September	Ezmae Moira Zoe Best
13 October	Sophia Anne Julia Skinner

Burial of Ashes

20 September	Derek Geoffrey Eveleigh
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Memorial Service

28 October	Patrick Pearce
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NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

Months	Deadlines for Contributors	Approx. Dates for Distributors
Jan-Feb	Friday 28 December 2018	Friday 4 January 2019
Mar-Apr	Friday 22 February 2019	Friday 1 March 2019
May-June	Friday 26 April	Friday 3 May
July-Aug	Friday 21 June	Friday 28 June
Sept-Oct	Friday 16 August	Friday 23 August
Nov-Dec	Friday 25 October	Friday 1 November
Jan-Feb 2020	Friday 27 December 2020	Friday 3 January 2020
Mar-Apr 2020	Friday 21 February 2020	Friday 28 February 2020
May-June 2020	Friday 24 April 2020	Friday 1 May 2020

PARISH DIARY *(See articles for more information)*

Please note - Parish Council meetings are now on the second MONDAY of the month rather than the second Tuesday.

November

- 7/8/9th 7.30pm Remenham Thespians performances, Parish Hall
- 10th 10.55am Act of Remembrance (war memorial, back of church) followed by Matins
- 11th 2.30pm W.I. Christmas 'Pot Pourri' in the Parish Hall
- 11th 8.00pm Parish Council meeting, Parish Hall

December

- 8th 11.15am Patronal Festival, St Nicholas - Sung Holy Communion followed by drinks
- 9th 2.30pm W.I. Christmas lunch at The Little Angel
- 9th 8.00pm Parish Council meeting, Parish Hall
- 15th 4.00pm Candlelit Carol Service followed by mulled wine and mince pies in the Hall
- 24th 9.00pm Christmas Eve candlelit Holy Communion with carols
- 25th 11.15am Christmas Day Children's Service with Holy Communion and carols (45 mins)

FROM THE EDITOR

As I write this it is the Autumn calm before the Christmas storm, and it follows a frantically sociable couple of months, with the Fayre, Harvest Supper and Quiz, all hugely successful both as fun occasions and also financially, all raising some essential funds for the church and Hall. A number of us also supported the Cricket Club Sports Dinner, so it's been a busy couple of months!

Now for the Thespians (If you must) and then the wonderful Christmas Services, some of them candlelit, for which - along with drinks and mince pies - Remenham is famous. As you will see, the W.I. also celebrates Christmas in style and all are welcome at its 'Christmas Pot Pourri' on 11 November.

Our very own history expert, Jim Bland, has recently moved to Thamesfield, and has written a most illuminating article on its history. (What next Jim?) I have also been able to fit in two photos of White Hill, c 1910, from David Cook - how delightfully free of traffic!

Let's forget the political turmoil and General Election and enjoy the tranquillity of our local community over the festive season.

Felicity
newsletter@remenhamparish.org.uk

FROM THE RECTORY

Dear friends,

In the seventh century Pope Boniface IV consecrated the old pagan temple of the Pantheon in Rome to the Blessed Virgin Mary and All the Martyrs. At his request, several cartloads of human remains thought to be those of Christian martyrs were brought out of the catacombs and reburied under the altar of the new church. The origins of All Saints' Day are not entirely clear, but the consecration of the Pantheon seems to have had something to do with it – the day of its consecration was 13th May, and All Saints' Day was celebrated on that day until it was moved to 1st November in the eighth century. And the difficulty with All Saints' Day is the same as the difficulty caused by those cartloads of human remains: it's a good deal easier to deal with one saint at a time; it is the specific human details of character and personality and biography that make the saints interesting to us, and by dumping them all together, either literally in a pit under the Pantheon, or metaphorically in the celebration of All Saints' Day, it becomes impossible to note any of those specific human details, and what remains is the idea of sanctity in general.

But although we may find the stories and the colourful details of individual saints more entertaining, the idea of sanctity in general is actually a pretty important thing to think about. There is a tendency to think of All Saints' Day as a celebration of human achievement, but that isn't what sanctity is about at all. Many of the great saints were by most people's standards pretty eccentric, many of them were despised and hated and persecuted in their day, and many were in conventional terms abject failures. What is special about them, and the thing that they have in common, is the extraordinary extent to which they were open to the transforming grace of God revealed in Jesus. All Saints' Day is above all a celebration of Jesus, and a celebration of the power of his transforming love. Sanctity takes as many forms as there are saints, but what unites such varied characters as Blessed John the Hairyc, Saint Bibiana, patron of the hungover, or the recently-canonised John Henry Newman, is their openness to the God who is the source of all holiness.

Fr Jeremy



Contrasting photos of the foot of White Hill, taken about 1910

Provided by David Cook

NEWS FROM ST NICHOLAS



History was made on Sunday 8 September when, for the first time in St Nicholas's history (our first rector was recorded in 1076), a woman priest celebrated Holy Communion. In Father Jeremy's absence celebrating St Mary's patronal festival, the Reverend Sarah Nesbitt, Curate at Shiplake and Dunsden came and took our service.

The Harvest Supper took place on Friday 18 October in the Parish Hall which had been beautifully decorated and looked most cheery and welcoming. We sold a record number of tickets (51) and made over £900. Thanks to all those who made delicious cottage pies and apple crumbles and to Helen Rosier who provided a delicious curry as the vegetarian option. A good time was had by all and we now look forward to the Quiz and the Thespians' performance.

We are approaching our busy season. The first of our special services is on Sunday 10 November, Remembrance Day – we will be holding our Act of Remembrance at the war memorial in the back of the church at 10.55am which will be followed by Matins.

Next, we will be celebrating our patronal festival on the Sunday nearest to St Nicholas' day, Sunday 8 December, when our Archdeacon, the Venerable Judy French, will be celebrating Holy Communion at 11.15am. The service will be followed by wine and nibbles in church. We will be taking a food collection for the Nomad food bank based in Henley. They particularly want Christmas biscuits, sweets, mince pies, as well as tinned veg, fruit and meats. If you are not coming to church but would like to donate, please contact Charlotte on 07973 798071 to arrange collection/dropping off donations.

And then we are into the Christmas season: our candlelit carol service will be held at 4.00pm on Sunday 15 December followed by mince pies and mulled wine in the Parish Hall. There will be the first service of Christmas itself at 9.00pm on Christmas Eve and our Christmas Day service will be a service of children's Holy Communion with carols lasting 45 minutes at 11.15am. Details of all our Christmas services are elsewhere in this newsletter – do try and come along.

With good wishes

Charlotte Every

John Laing

Churchwardens, St Nicholas Remenham

REMENHAM FAYRE

This year's Remenham Fayre raised in excess of £2,000 and was very well supported.

The weather was once again in our favour, except for one sudden gust of wind that whipped through the area and almost destroyed a double gazebo that was used for the Coconut Shy. Chris Leeming and Oscar Sly were our knights in shining armour and very quickly put things right.

Many thanks to all the helpers who manned the stalls (you all know who you are). A big thank you to the ladies of the W.I. who supplied us with wonderful teas and cakes, and to Steve Allender who ran the bar.

Melanie Healey was unavailable to run the dog show this year, which was very well attended. Nicola Meredith was asked to run the event with Barry Rosier as her assistant. The youngest dog in show was won by Boodle, owned by Lene; Best Village Pooch, Riley, owned by Richard Barraclough; Best trick, Larry, owned by James. The treat catching was eventually a tie between four dogs. They all loved the bits of cooked chicken.

The Lowe and Ward families dominated the races with Martha Lowe winning the sack race; Noah, Krista and Martha won the hilarious four legged race; Steve and Josh Ward both won sack and three-legged races; The Tug o' War went well with the girls and ladies being the victors.

Winners of the produce show were David Richter, classes 1-6 (fruit & veg); The Crockets, classes 7-9 (floral display); Rosemary Duckett, classes 10-13 (cooking and craft); Liz Nash (poem containing 'Remenham'). The children's craft section had no entries!! Many thanks to Liz Nash for organising the entries and results, and to Andrew and Wendy Hawkins for judging the entries.

Photos were taken by Russell Cleaver, who did a great job, thank you Russell.

Barry Rosier and the rest of the team



REMENHAM W.I.

September

At our September meeting we had a catch up on our Summer Events, with a superb tea party in our President's Garden, with lots of chat and a delicious tea provided by our Committee. We were entertained with songs from the shows by Mandy Shora and it was fun to all join in. We also had a craft morning in Daphne's garden, more chat than craft. Judy Palmer gave a report on the Centenary tea at Easthampstead Park, where 2 members from each Berkshire institute were invited - a very elegant afternoon was enjoyed by Judy and Irene. Several of the Committee did a recruitment drive outside Tesco's, Eight showed interest, and will be followed up. The Berkshire knitted doll Emily, was entertained around the W.I.s in the County as part of the Centenary Celebrations. She had a great time in Remenham visiting an Hygienist, a trip to the River and Rowing museum, a river trip on Spanish Lady, enjoyed a church service and Baptism, helped with gardening and finished up with a tea party. Lovely photos were taken and all will be recorded in a Diary for the archives.

Remenham Country Fayre was held as usual in the garden of the Village Hall. Our W.I. served tea and cakes, which was much appreciated. The whole afternoon was well supported and a great success.

A letter had been sent to Theresa May showing our thanks for all her work, courtesy and respect. A reply of thanks was received saying she would continue her work in the constituency. A trip to the Mill at Sonning is planned for October, and our Christmas lunch will be at the refurbished Little Angel Pub this year in December. In November we will hold our Christmas "Do"; there will be Christmas stalls and tea and an entertainment by Jane Hill. Members were asked to get making!

After all this business our speaker Peter Lowes was introduced to give his talk on "Could you swim the Channel". He gave a short introductory T.V. presentation and was wonderfully entertaining about all the training in cold water swimming at Lidos and in the Thames. He took us through all the huge preparation necessary - Book a slot 2 years in advance, have your team at the ready. Peter's slot was put forward by a month. He arrived at Dover at 7am and completed the crossing in 13 hours and 58 minutes, having followed the guide boat, accompanied by support swimmers, and being fed every hour with hot carbonated drinks and tiny sandwiches, taking 30 seconds. The weather was marvellous and the sea smooth, just stinging jelly fish and patches of seaweed to contend with. Afterwards, on arrival at a sandy beach near Calais, he was taken back to Dover and was sea sick the whole way! Peter said he could never have done it without the support of his wife and family and friends. He still keeps up the swimming and this year he swum the length of Lake Windermere.

After all these dramas the members were quite exhausted and enjoyed a marvellous tea provided by Carol and her team. Carol had won the raffle, and Daphne the best bloom competition. The meeting closed after a lot of excited chat with Peter, as many know his mother and they live locally. Our next meeting is on October 14th when Belinda Fitzwilliams will tell us about "All angles of Henley Regatta".



October

In the absence of our President, our Vice Judy Palmer took the meeting, with a welcome and telling us of the 7 apologies; there were 15 present. Sadly Shirley Behan has had a stroke and is in Abingdon Hospital - a card was sent from us all.

Judy then went through all the notices:- Nov:2nd: W.I. House at Mortimer is having an open morning all are welcome; Nov:11th is our "Pot Pourri" Christmas fund raising event, at the Village Hall at 2.30pm. where there will be a Christmas "Bring and buy" table, delicious teas and an entertainment by Joan Hill. All are welcome, tickets £5 each.

On December 5th the W.I. of Berkshire is holding a Centenary Church Service at Mortimer at 11am., with 2 members from each W.I. Dec:16th is the date for our Christmas Lunch. There are 2 competitions, one for a celebration card and another for a card for the Queens 94th birthday, with gold embroidery. Entry forms from our secretary.

Two other items of interest; (1) The National organisation of the W.I. are working on the 2 matters voted for at the W.I. A.G.M. in June, firstly "Local bus services" and secondly "Abuse against women". (2) Our Treasurer Ann Francis, when she and her husband Peter were holidaying in the Isle of Man, took a trike ride on the TT course - they reached up to 90 m.p.h. All this featured in the Berkshire News.

Judy then introduced Belinda Fitzwilliams, to give her talk on "All angles of the Henley Royal Regatta" to include stories and art. She started with a slide show of her photographs put together by Pat Sly's daughter Pru. Belinda was the adopted daughter of Eirene and Eustace; they had the cottage on Rod Eyot which floods every year! So Belinda was always boating everywhere. They would not allow her to go to Art College, so she did a sports teacher training course instead. Belinda's adopted mother was rather like "Mrs Bouquet" from the TV show, all must be over the top. So they moved often around Henley, from Hop Gardens to Peppard and Marsh Lock House. Belinda always intended to marry a rowing man! She married Hugh at St Mary's Church, with a reception at Leander, and they have 3 children. Belinda worked for 25 years, mainly teaching Art. She adored all the Regatta parties, loving the fashions, colourful Blazers, Pimms and beautiful flowers, not forgetting the Scouts in their suits and bowler hats, checking on lengths of skirts and nowadays mobile phones. Belinda was heartily thanked for her experiences reminding many of us of the wonderful Regatta Parties we had enjoyed over the years. We then appreciated her marvellous sketches of people at the Regatta, even under umbrellas! Belinda is a master at her craft.

Daphne won the craft competition, and Carol the raffle. We had an excellent tea provided by Carol and her team of Jen, June and Ann. Our next meeting is our Christmas do, on Monday November 11th, 2.30pm at the Village Hall, everyone very welcome.

Sheila Constantinidi

HENLEY CRICKET CLUB SPORTS DINNER

This Remenham-based club held a Sports Dinner at Shiplake College on 19 October. An impressive 230 people attended, including a number of Remenham residents, enjoying a delicious dinner, talk from ex-England cricketer Graeme Swann and an auction that raised £19,000 for the always-needed equipment that helps make the club so successful.

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REMENHAM QUIZ NIGHT 2019

Fourteen teams of four people assembled for the ever popular Quiz Night at the Parish Hall on the evening of October 26th. As contestants arrived, the Hall buzzed with excitement in anticipation of another memorable evening full of fun, laughter and keen competition. And, indeed, it proved to be just that!!

The contestants, with Team names ranging from the exotic (Quizlamic State) to the very apt - Conquistadors, who won - and Pretty Dym, who didn't - faced 6 rounds of questions from the renowned Quiz Master, Anthony West. Despite the warnings from the "irrefragable" (*'not able to be denied or refuted'*) Mr. West, that the Quiz Master's answers to the questions were indisputable, there were those - a few - who tried to argue for dispensation: they failed!

During supper - a curry supplied by the Bombay Kitchen in Henley followed by Magnums! - the Teams poured over a "supper round" of questions which ended in a three way tie, solved by a 'sudden death' play off, won by the New Street Players.

By general consent, it was a wonderful evening, enjoyed by all present. As always, huge thanks are due to those working "behind the scenes", Nick and Sally-Anne Plunket (Bar), Sarah West, Jayne Gray and Pat Sly. But above all, thanks to those who attended for their very generous support of the Raffle and Bar!!, enabling us to raise in excess of £1,600 for Parish Hall Funds.

Nigel Gray
organiser extraordinaire

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REMENHAM ARTISTS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS - URGENT!

Thank you to the *Remenham Artists* who have contributed some wonderful pictures and photographs for use in the newsletter, principally for the front cover. I urgently need more, so please keep them coming! *Felicity, newsletter@remenhamparish.org.uk*



REMENHAM THESPIANS

presents another episode of



REMENHAM MURDERS

*See some of your favourite local characters - and some new ones
- in the murder mystery comedy*

AGATHA CRUSTY AND THE VILLAGE HALL MURDERS!

Performances in the Parish Hall on

Thursday, Friday and Saturday 7/8/9 November at 7.30pm.

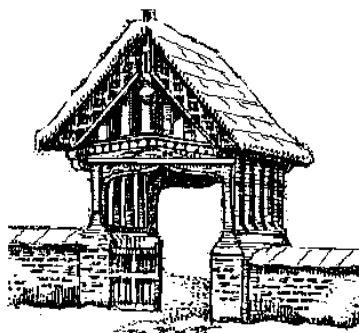
Bar opens 7.00pm and during interval

**SOLD OUT FOR FRIDAY AND SATURDAY - BUT DO ADD YOUR
NAMES TO THE WAITING LIST AS THERE MAY BE CHANGES!**

Tickets

Thursday 7 November	£8.00
Friday 8 November	£10.00
Saturday 9 November	£12.00 (<i>including refreshments with the cast afterwards</i>)

Tickets from Pat Sly on (01491) 577925 or patsly@tinyworld.co.uk



REMENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

PARK PLACE POLO

The Parish Council has submitted a representation to the appeal and I have submitted another.

REWIND

It appears that Rewind has been sold by Global Media and David Heartfield (the founder) is acting in a consultative capacity. It also appears that the existing staff have been retained. Whilst I have never been in favour of Rewind as it is in my view an event too far, the current team have done much to improve some of the village's concerns.

VILLAGE SKIP

Paul is doing his very best to get a new date.

LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

Following the consultation, we are negotiating with Central Government (which is a little distracted) as to how we meet their objectives and ours.

CLIMATE EMERGENCY

The Borough has a considerable number of officers engaged in all sorts of initiatives principally in the areas of waste, energy and air quality.

THIRD BRIDGE

Amazingly there is renewed momentum around the idea of a third bridge. The new government seems to have given some new sense of priority to the project. Oxfordshire is fiercely against.

REMENHAM HILL

The project to extend the 30mph to Culham cottages is now progressing albeit slowly.

ASTON LANE

Aston Lane was pumped out and the I have put Aston Lane as a priority for remedial action large holes at the side of the road and patches of water have been included for remedial action.

NEW LIBRARY FOR TWYFORD

An exciting new chapter could be opening for Twyford Library, as proposals progress to develop a new facility at the Old Polehampton Boys School which is located in the heart of the village. As part of wider regeneration plans for the borough, Wokingham Borough Council is signalling its commitment to bring a new library to life for local residents to enjoy. Twyford's current library welcomes around 18,000 visitors a year and is the main community facility available for families, the elderly and local people living in the northern parishes.

ROGUE TRADERS

A recent conviction prompts the reminder that we all need to be on our guard against rogue traders. The conviction resulted from people placing requests for landscaping work on Facebook, to which a rogue trader replied, giving quotations and requesting deposits, but he did no work on the gardens and kept the money paid.

INVESTING IN SUCCESS

Wokingham Borough Council has chosen to invest in our community, protect a vital amenity and secure long term income by growing its property investment portfolio with the purchase of the Waitrose building in Twyford. With ever increasing pressure on our budget it's critical that Wokingham Borough Council looks for opportunities to become more commercially minded and find ways to make the money we do have work better for residents. The council set up the commercial property investment team in early 2018 following executive approval of a £100m investment fund in September 2017. The aims of the fund are specifically to secure long-term investment income for the council which can then be used to fund essential services for local residents for many years to come.

WBC's growing investment portfolio is a key part of this approach and is proving to be a real success seeing excellent returns for our residents. In the last year we invested around £47m from which we are now generating an annual income of more than £2.6m. That's a fantastic return of over 5.5% on our investment, five times more than the 1% return we would get if we simply put this money in a bank.!

TRAIN SERVICES

There's a big timetable change happening from December 15th, when half of our daytime services from Twyford to London and back will switch to being Crossrail trains.

Further details are available on the Parish website - www.remenhamparish.org.uk.

*John Halsall
Deputy Chairman Remenham Parish Council
Councillor Wokingham Borough Council
Leader of the Council*

Please use clerk@remenhamparish.org.uk or chairman4rempc@gmail.com for Paul Sermon, John Merkel and eventually me as well (but not yet), or johnnashalsall@gmail.com for me or clerk4rempc@gmail.com for Paul. Tel 07939 041227 for me 07425 131861 for Paul.

THAMESFIELD RETIREMENT VILLAGE

Wargrave Road, Remenham

Thamesfield, built in the 19th century, is just one in the group of mansions overlooking the River Thames which flows in a horseshoe loop from Wargrave, past Henley, Remenham and on, downstream to Marlow, Cookham and Maidenhead. This stunning landscape has been protected from ugly development by over 200 years of Henley Regattas although it is now under threat from impresarios of crowded rave-ups bent on destroying its peace and tranquility.

The mansions set in this unique landscape are smaller, less ambitious versions of the French Chateaux of the Loire in the sense that they were statements of the wealth and position in society of the owners. Wargrave Manor, Remenham Lodge, Phyllis Court, Fawley Court, Park Place, Wilminster House, Greenlands, Culham Court, Danesfield House and Cliveden are spectacular examples. Some have featured in the Remenham Newsletter** during 2018 and 2019 describing their owners and residents— who made a mark on the national or international stage.

***Park Place—The Lord & Lady Hamiltons, Horatio Nelson, Frederick Prince of Wales and General Conway No. 266; Remenham Lodge—Baron Miles Thomas No. 264; Culham Court—Baronet William Henry Barber and Dame Constance Hattie Barber No. 264; Wilminster House—Bishop George Augustus Selwyn and Bishop John Richardson Selwyn No. 265; Remenham Place—Brigadier General Sir Douglas and Lady Dawson, Lord Chamberlain No.262.*

In 2013, Elizabeth Hazeldene, a genealogist, consulted over 30 documents to unearth the history of owners and residents of Thamesfield. Her main points are:-

Following the Land Act in 1799, the estate of Thames Fields was enclosed by acquisition of common meadows, arable land and gardens in Remenham Parish. By 1852 a William Lamb was listed as owner of the estate. The next recorded resident was Thomas Fox Alexander Byles, a brewer, distiller and supplier of liqueurs who occupied the house for at least 10 years in the 1860/1870 period. He was followed in 1876 by a wealthy hop-merchant, Robert Arnold Cosier [1822-1886]. In 1891 Cosier's son sold Thamesfield to Sir John Edwards Moss.

Sir John Edwards Moss [1850-1935] was the grandson of John Moss who had been one of the founders of the Great West North Western Bank in the mid-19th century. Sir John's mother Amy Charlotte Edwards [1817-1882] was the heiress of the Edwards estate which became, by Royal Licence in 1851, 'The Edwards Moss Baronetcy of Roby Hall in Lancaster'. With this inherited wealth Sir John was 'born with a silver spoon in his mouth'; he was educated at Eton where he excelled in most sports becoming Captain of Boats in 1869 winning the 'Ladies Plate' in the Henley Royal Regatta in 1867, 1868 and 1869. He took part in the Oxford and Cambridge Boat race in 1870 and 1871 while he was an undergraduate at Balliol College, Oxford and where he read for a degree in Jurisprudence. He was well versed in the classics and had a reputation for knowing most of the odes of the Roman poet Horace by heart.

He married Margaret Everilda Blackburn of Hale Hall, Lancashire in 1873. They lived at Roland House in Scotland to take part in the annual shooting seasons before acquiring Thamesfield in 1891, where the Edwards Moss extended family occupied the house for the regatta weeks. It is said that these functions, including the debutantes' 'coming out' presentations for the London Season were the 'social glue that bound country house owners together'. It also made sure that 'old money' remained in the hands of the gentry rather than leaking out to the 'hoi polloi'. Their lives were a combination of pleasure and recreation while displaying their wealth and consumption. [See review of the book 'The Country House Past, Present and Future' by David Cannadine and Jeremy Musson—Times Literary Supplement No. 6070].

Once established in Thamesfield in the 1890's Sir John set about building glass houses for cultivating tropical fruits and his extensive collection of orchids which exceeded 15,000 varieties, transported from the Roby Hall estate, relocated to Torquay. He lived at Thamesfield until 1935, enjoying a busy social life; Sir Francis and Lady McClean, the Mackenzies of Fawley Court, Charles Bright of Paradise House and Captains of Boats at Eton and the Leander Club were present at his funeral and burial in the old churchyard at St Nicholas Church in Remenham on June 28th 1935.

We get a flavour of this vanished upper class society from TV costume dramas such as Downton Abbey, P G Wodehouse satires or accounts of the lives of our own family forebears. As David Cannadine says, 'It was ordinary domestic servants, gardeners and grooms whose unremitting toil had made possible the privileged life enjoyed by the British landed elite of wealth, status and power'.

The fate of Thamesfield after the death of Sir John Edwards Moss in 1935, epitomises the slow collapse of this society caused primarily by the mass slaughter of a generation of young men in WW1, the depression, universal poverty, unemployment and financial chaos in the 1930's. Other factors changing the top heavy class divisions included introduction of labour saving technology, fairer availability of education and opening up of employment opportunities for women.

Thamesfield became an estate agents' white elephant. No one wanted to buy it as a grand family home in spite of the advertisement:

"Brick, faced in cement in Italian style, central tower, entrance porch supported by four Doric columns, balustrade over bay window, entrance hall, reception room, billiard/library room, 21 bed and dressing rooms, domestic offices, entrance lodge. Timbered pleasure grounds, stabling and garage, walled kitchen garden, glass houses, quarter of a mile of river frontage, curtilage about 9 acres."

The house was saved in 1943 for use as a residential youth centre during WW2 by benefactors Viscount Hambleden and Ernest Makowar, a local business entrepreneur. Much of the associated land was leased to the Sea Cadets, Eyot Centre and riverside boat centre. In 1984 Mr Graham Payne, Mayor of Henley and property speculator bought Thamesfield for £500,000. His request for planning permission to replace it with a block of flats was rejected. In 1987 he sold it to Betty Williams who converted Thamesfield into a 36 bed nursing home.

After visiting America in 1993 and discovering the concept of 'close-care' living Betty added 12 close-care apartments to the property. A further 12 apartments were added in 1996, opened by Michael Heseltine, the then MP for Henley. The nursing home was reduced to 24 beds, followed by a further reduction to 12 beds in 2002.

'Retirement Villages', the current owners, purchased the site in 2004.

Today Thamesfield still contains a 12 bed nursing home, as well as 35 specially built privately owned apartments. Services available to residents in the apartments include 24 hour emergency on-site support, meals, a personal laundry and cleaning service, shopping, a range of communal activities and domiciliary care as needed.

In other words it provides communal sheltered accommodation for relatively active people recognising that 80 and 90 year olds may well enjoy a quality of life and independence of 60 and 70 year olds a generation ago.

'Retirement Villages' is a country-wide organisation operating in 14 locations with 7 more announced. As social needs change, it aims to provide a spectrum of facilities listed as Independent Living, Assisted Living, Residential Care, Respite Care for primary carers. The organisation was acquired by AXA [a worldwide insurance and healthcare company] for £100 million in 2017.



Jim Bland, Thamesfield, Wargrave Road, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 2LX. August 2019

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To report fly-tipping or dumped rubbish that isn't dangerous, contact WBC website and simply follow the instructions. <https://selfservice.wokingham.gov.uk/services/flytipping/>

On this page, you'll find a facility to create an online account, which will allow you to report any problem, such as potholes, flooding or rubbish collection – and then track the WBC response to your complaint.

Even if you currently have no complaint, it's a good idea to create an account, so that you are in touch with the various facilities and helplines.

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