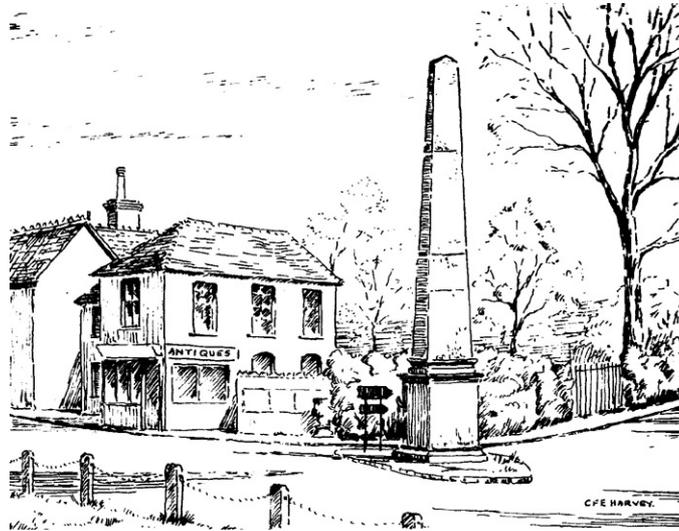


The Obelisk

The following article is taken from St. Mary's News, February 1973:



'This month, Mr Harvey's sketch on the cover of *St Mary's News* depicts the Obelisk at the Marlow Road junction. As I explained several months ago this Obelisk originally stood by the side of Middle Row (a row of buildings which ran down the centre of the lower Market Place into Hart Street). It was then known as "*The Pump*" by reason of the fact that a pump was attached to it, the water from which was used to wash down the Butcher's Shambles. When Middle Row was demolished in 1793 to improve the access to the Bridge, the Obelisk was re-erected at the Cross and there it remained until 1885 when the Phillimore Memorial Fountain replaced it.

'At the Cross the Obelisk was used as a sign post with one arm pointing southwards and indicating the way to Reading and the other pointing Northwards indicating the way to Oxford.

'It has recently been suggested that the Obelisk was originally one of the series of pillars erected at various points on the Hatfield Road by the Trustees of the Reading to Hatfield Road. Pillars of a somewhat similar design were erected at Marlow and High Wycombe, but I find it difficult to subscribe to the theory that Henley's Obelisk was originally a *Hatfield Road Pillar*. The Hatfield Road ran from Reading to Hatfield via Marlow and Wycombe and the Pillars were always inscribed with words to the effect that the same were *erected by the Trustees of the Reading to Hatfield Road*. No such inscription appears on our Obelisk. It was originally on the southern side of Middle Row and actually in Hart Street, which was not on the route to Hatfield.

'For the past few months the Henley Borough Council has been faced with a problem with regard to the future of the Obelisk. In order to make the Marlow Road junction safer for traffic it is proposed to instal a roundabout there which would entail the removal of the Obelisk. Where then should the new site be? I gather that Lord Esher favours placing it in "Red Square" (the lower Market Place). Some people have suggested erecting it by the Riverside while others say "scrap it and forget all about it".

'To assist them in solving the problem the Council has decided to have a full-scale model of the Obelisk made in order to see where it would fit in best with the surroundings.'

G.H.J.T.

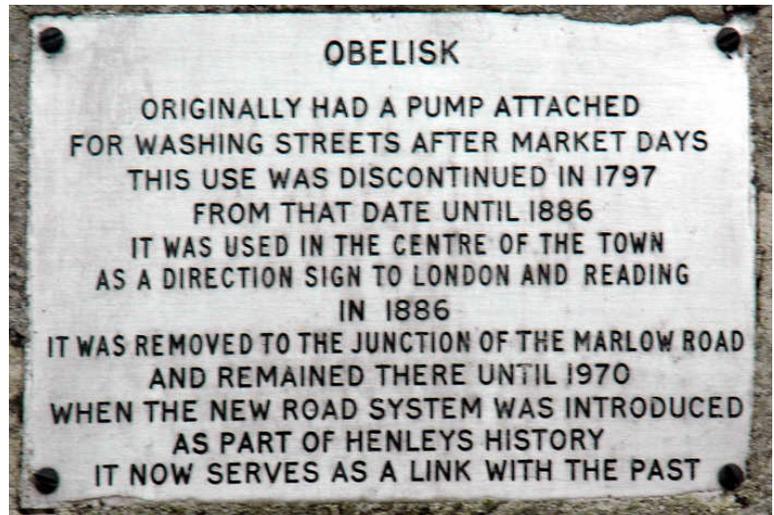


The obelisk at the Marlow Road junction in 1967

The obelisk was eventually relocated to Mill Meadows, where it can be seen today.



The obelisk in Mill Meadows in 2010



Modern plaque on the obelisk