

# Wargrave Local History Society

## *From the archives*

For those who know Wargrave well, the date on this document in the Wargrave Local History Society archive might be something of a surprise.

Although the Wargrave and Shiplake Regatta has been held in early August for well over a century, it was not always so. This programme dates from September 1888, and comes from the Derek Bird collection - Derek having been our first chairman.

The *Reading Mercury* of August 6th 1853, reporting on a regatta held that year, said that "The increasing interest felt by the inhabitants of the village was manifested on the present occasion (the second year of its existence,) by the large subscriptions to the race fund, which enabled the committee to offer several prizes well worthy of being contended for." - which would put the first event as having begun in 1852. The 1853 event had been held on a Wednesday - August 3rd - and it was held from time to time until 1895, when (apart from war-time and the present pandemic) it became an annual event.

Many of the events in the 1888 programme would be familiar to present day participants, with separate classes for watermen, gentlemen and ladies. The first event - watermen's single sculling - was at 8.30 am, with the last - a canoe race over land and water, at 6pm. There was also a tug of war and a greasy pole contest - each "open to all comers". A 'Wargrave Regatta speciality', the dongola race, already featured in the programme, for which 3 teams had been entered "The Little House", in red and white, nearest the Oxfordshire bank, "Ash Tree House", in orange and brown, in the centre, and "The Vicarage" in dark blue nearest the Berkshire bank. Other teams competing included rowing clubs from Reading and Henley, and also a team of tutors from Hill Lands and a team from Hill Lands, North Block - Hill Lands then being an academy for those hoping to become army officers. The cox for this team was a boy by the name of Trenchard. Hugh Trenchard, shown in the census as a student at Hill Lands, went on to become the founder of the Royal Air Force. Many familiar local village names, such as Wyatt, Rhodes, Pope, and Hermon appear in the list of competitors.

PRICE FOURPENCE

# WARGRAVE REGATTA

PATRON :  
SIR GEORGE RUSSELL, BART., M.P.

COMMITTEE :

MR. J. W. RHODES,	MR. J. JUDGE,
„ PERCY HERMON,	„ P. T. WYATT,
„ R. G. BLACKWELL,	„ J. EATON SMITH.

## HIGGS' OFFICIAL PROGRAMME

FOR  
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 1888.

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✦ Regulations. ✦

COMPETITORS to ascertain their "Courses" by applying at the Committee Tent, not less than half an hour before the time appointed for starting.

All Boats to be at the Starting Post at the time appointed for each race: the start to take place without reference to absences.

The number of the Winner will appear after each race on the Umpires' Launch.

Each Boat to carry its "Station" Number at the bow.

The Prizes will be presented on Mr. WATNEY'S LAWN (Berks side of the River), immediately after the last race, when the Winners are requested to assemble as soon as possible.

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THE  
Bands of the Royal Berkshire Regiment

Will be present by kind permission of the Commanding Officer.

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Admission to the Lawn (whence a view of the entire Course is obtained), 1s each person.

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FIREWORKS AND ILLUMINATION OF BOATS AT 9 O'CLOCK.

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J. EATON SMITH,  
Hon. Sec.

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by authority of the Regatta Committee.