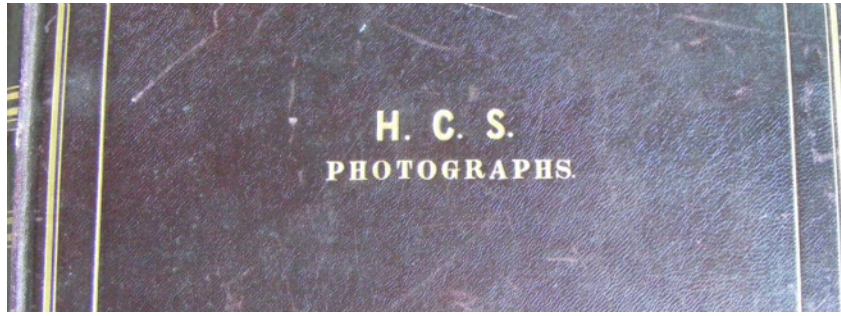


Harriette Cooke Smith Photo Albums



In 2009, we acquired three albums of photographs which feature (inter alia) scenes of Wargrave from the 1870s belonging to Harriette Cooke Smith

In Spring 2009, three albums of photographs were found in a consignment of rubbish in Northamptonshire and were salvaged by an enterprising member of the public. Realising that someone might be prepared to pay for these photographs, he was planning to sell them for charity, when a member of our Society visited his home, and recognising that some of them related to Wargrave, arranged to bring them here for inspection first. Two sample images were displayed at our Annual Meeting in March, and subsequently members of the Committee inspected them in detail.

Suddenly the penny dropped, when the photographs of the house "Woodclyffe" were linked to the initials on the cover - Harriette Cooke Smith, the benefactress of the Village in the early 1900s, lived at Woodclyffe, and that name was applied to the Village Hall, the Almshouses, the Hostel, the Allotments, and the Recreation Ground; she was also the donor of the Generator House for St Mary's Church and the Crazies Hill Village Hall.

Internal evidence dates the photos to the early 1870s. They include many "holiday snaps" from around the country and abroad (though "snap" is hardly the right word to describe high quality plate photography of that period!). Such a find could not be allowed to go missing once more, and so the Society stepped in and negotiated to acquire them and rewarded the finder and his Charity accordingly. We hope to be able to make good use of them in the future.



Harriette Cooke Smith

Not all the photographs are as easy to identify, but some have already yielded details of such things as the Inn signs of now long-departed hostleries!



To Wargrave residents, this is an easily identified picture of the crossroads in the centre of the village, with the Greyhound Inn on the right. Where the Woodclyffe Hall now stands, opposite the projecting tree in the distance, there is no sign of that building. There is nothing in the picture to give any firm clue to the date, but the context of the picture in the album places it in the 1870s

Originally, Woodclyffe was a cottage called "Hill Side". In 1869, Mr and Mrs Smith bought the house, and in 1873, it was greatly extended to its present size and renamed. It is a typical High Victorian house, with overtones of both Gothic and Arts and Crafts styles.

This image of a sitting room is clearly of that period.



This enlargement of the two boys and their dog gives a good idea of the excellent resolution of the photographic prints in these albums.

We are always interested in adding to our collection of pictures, documents, books, maps etc relating to Wargrave, so if you have anything that you think may be of interest, please contact