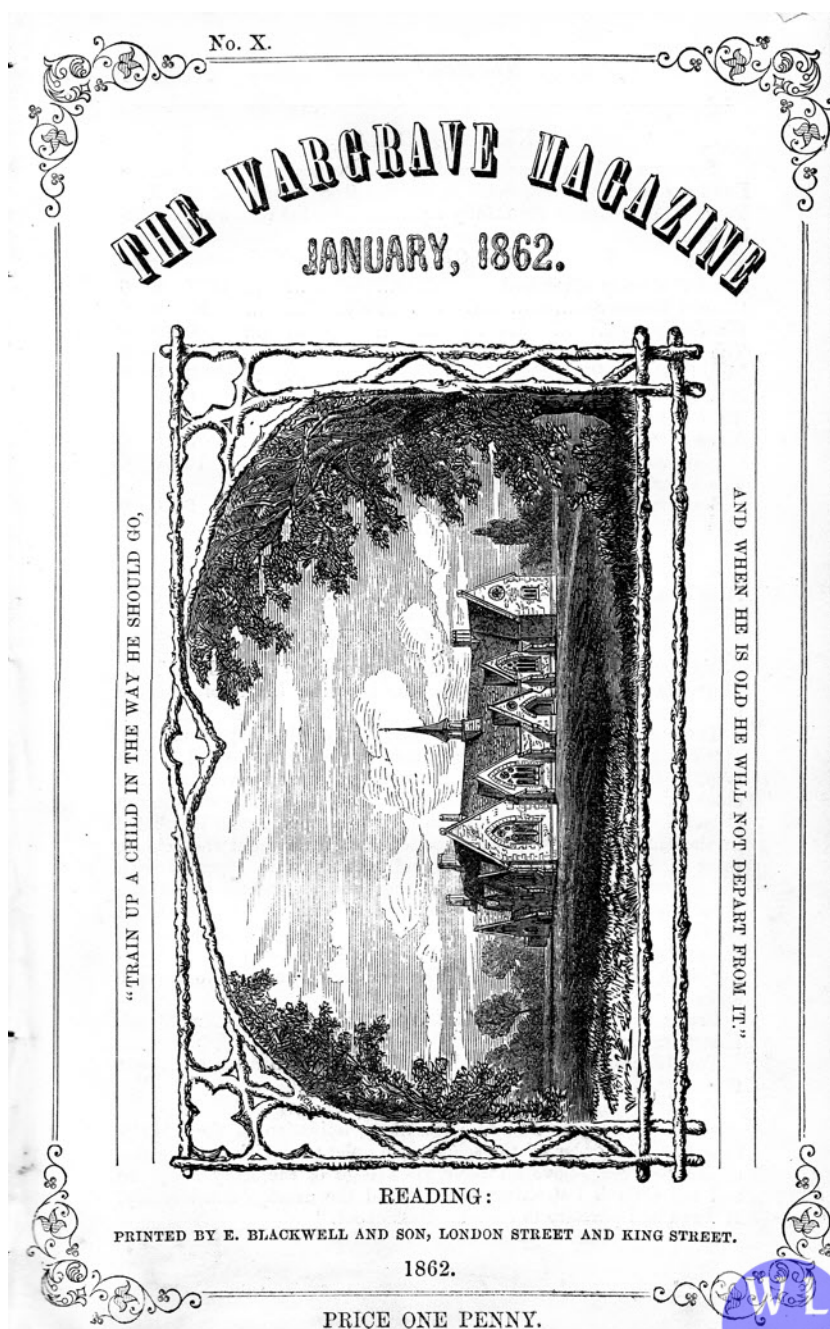


# Wargrave Local History Society

## From the archives



The Wargrave Magazine was first issued in April 1861, and this edition (*left*) from over 160 years ago was the first one dated January. The magazine was started by the then vicar, Rev.d Simon Sturges, the Rev.d G A Robins becoming the editor. Although published by the church, and later transformed into the Parish News, it carried news about all sorts of village activities. (The cover picture was of the school, to be opened later that year.)

This issue announced the creation of a Friendly Society in the village, to be jointly run by the parishes of Hurst, Ruscombe and Wargrave. (Twyford did not exist as a separate parish until 1876, being part of Hurst at that time). There was no welfare state, to help the poorer members of the community in times of need, so these Friendly Societies were established, as a mutual aid organisation to help its members, particularly at times of ill-health, or death of a family member. By the end of the century over 25,000 of these groups were registered - mostly, as here, of a local nature. The idea was that, in addition to donations from "gentlemen who have exerted themselves to give the labouring classes an opportunity of belonging to a society", each member paid in a regular small monthly subscription to the fund, and could then receive a lump sum when the need arose. In the case of the "Three Friends" Benefit Society, set up for local villagers, benefits would not, at that stage, be paid to those over 65, but that as all of the funds were to be shared by the members it was hoped in due course to extend the payments to those 'of a more advanced age'. It was considered better to include the upper age limit for the time being, the report said, than "to announce that the society is bankrupt" (a fate which had befallen many other such societies).

The same magazine reported on a Provident Club. Relatively few people would have had a bank account in those days, but this was another means for members to budget and provide for certain essential needs, by making regular weekly payments into the fund. A church collection had added £11 17s 0d to the Clothing and Coal Fund. 120 members subscribed to the clothing club, and 149 families to the coal club - with 75 tons of coal having been distributed. The magazine added that "these clubs are fully appreciated by the careful and industrious poor". The magazine 10 years later, in January 1872, included the Provident Club accounts (*right*) - noting that 11cwt of coal was allowed to those who paid 2d per week, and 10cwt to the sick and aged people who pay 1d. Those earning as much as 18s a week were excluded from the scheme.

### COAL CLUB.

|                              |                              |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>The Village.</i>          |                              |
| 20 Subscribers at two-pence. | 16 Subscribers at one penny. |
| <i>Crazies Hill.</i>         |                              |
| 31 Subscribers at two-pence. | 16 Subscribers at one penny. |
| <i>Hare Hatch.</i>           |                              |
| 16 Subscribers at two-pence. | 12 Subscribers at one penny. |

### CLOTHING CLUB.

|                                |                                |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>The Village.</i>            |                                |
| 3 Subscribers at six-pence.    | 9 Subscribers at three-pence.  |
| 12 Subscribers at four-pence.  | 11 Subscribers at two-pence.   |
| <i>Crazies Hill.</i>           |                                |
| 8 Subscribers at six-pence.    | 13 Subscribers at three-pence. |
| 15 Subscribers at four-pence.  | 17 Subscribers at two-pence.   |
| <i>Hare Hatch.</i>             |                                |
| 5 Subscribers at four-pence.   | 6 Subscribers at two-pence.    |
| 14 Subscribers at three-pence. |                                |