

Wargrave Local History Society

From the archives

One of the major collections in the society archive is the album of postcards that had been gathered over many years by members of the Bird family, and this month's image is taken from one of those.

At first sight, the view looks as if it was taken recently, but a number of clues show this to be much earlier. Firstly, looking at the wall between the churchyard and Mill Green, a gate can be seen just to the right of the left hand pair of tree trunks. The lych gate now stands there, having been erected in memory of John Rhodes, of Hennerton, in 1912 (He had died a couple of years earlier). Then, looking at the church itself, the east end is covered with climbing plants (mainly ivy) and there is also some to be seen on the corner of the brick tower, just above the apex of the nave roof.

When the Diocesan architect, Mr Fellows Prynne, examined the structure after the 1914 fire, he added a footnote to say "Danger of ivy. While speaking of the tower, I must add that the ivy, if allowed to grow as at present, will become a greater danger to the tower than fire. Already, stems no less than 2 inches in thickness are finding their way into the walls, as I myself cut out a stem of that thickness near the junction of the tower and the north nave wall." The presence, or not, of ivy on the walls and tower are therefore a good indication of whether a picture of the outside of the church is pre- or post- fire. What is often less obvious in pictures from this direction is that the church was rebuilt to be one bay longer at the east end than it had been beforehand.

For photographs from before the fire, the height to which the ivy has grown up the tower is an indication as to if one picture is earlier or later than another.

The original owner of this postcard has written their initials (H W) and the date on the back - May 4th 1905 - well over a century ago.

