

# Wargrave Local History Society

## *From the archives*

One of the earlier photographs in the society's collection, this item 'from the archive' dates from the late 19th century

The view is somewhat different to what we would be able to see now, as it is the St George and Dragon seen from the river side of the building. The hotel had been run for several decades by the Wyatt family. William and Emma Wyatt had come from Binfield to live in Wargrave in the early years of the century, and had set up their business in 1845. There was a wharf alongside the river, whilst on the downstream side of the hotel there was a boat business. William died in 1861, but Emma continued running it, until she died in 1888, when their son, Frank took over the hotel and boat business until 1910. These remained in the family, however, as Frank's son, Val took on both the hotel and the boatyard. In 1936 the boat business expanded to provide moorings for motor cruisers, marine engineering services and boatyards at "The Willows" (ie downstream of the St George and Dragon, in Willow Lane.). In due course, Val's son Bill took over the boatyard (the hotel having meanwhile been sold to H & G Simonds, the brewers), and ran it until 1976. The boatyard in Willow Lane still trades as 'Val Wyatt Marine', although there is no family involvement now.

This photograph can be precisely dated to January 27th 1890, as it marks the marriage of Frank Wyatt to Kate Downs. The marriage register records that Frank Thomas Wyatt was 'off full age' (ie over 21), "a hotel keeper, bachelor of Wargrave", whilst Kate came from Hammersmith - her father, George, also being a hotel keeper. As might be imagined, Kate then became much involved in the running of the St George and Dragon.

