

Wargrave Local History Society

From the archives

This picture from the Society archives dates from 1965, and shows the local thatcher, Jack Dyer, from Twyford at work in the cemetery. The land had been an old chalk pit, still worked in the early years of the 20th century by George Bayliss.

The churchyard was becoming full, and so a new burial ground became necessary. It was considered best to have it on a higher level than the churchyard, where it was difficult to dig a grave without it flooding. The 5 acre site was given by Henry Coulson Bond, of Wargrave Court, and extends to five acres. 1¼ acres of it was sheltered by the wooded chalk cliff and was surrounded by a wall to form the consecrated burial ground. The cottages on the site were “re-thatched in a picturesque manner”, and converted to have a toolshed at one end, and a vestry at the other, whilst the centre was opened up to form a shelter supported on oak pillars.

Sir William Cain, of Wargrave Manor, gave a stone cross that stands in the middle of the cemetery, and that was dedicated on the same day as the burial ground was consecrated, 8th August 1923.

The two graves seen at the bottom of the photograph are for members of the Bayliss family, who had lived in the cottage. Sadly, the cottage fell victim to vandalism, and as the structure was then deemed unsafe, the ground was cleared, and became available for further interments.

The rest of the chalk pit site has, in more recent times, been kept as a nature conservation area.

