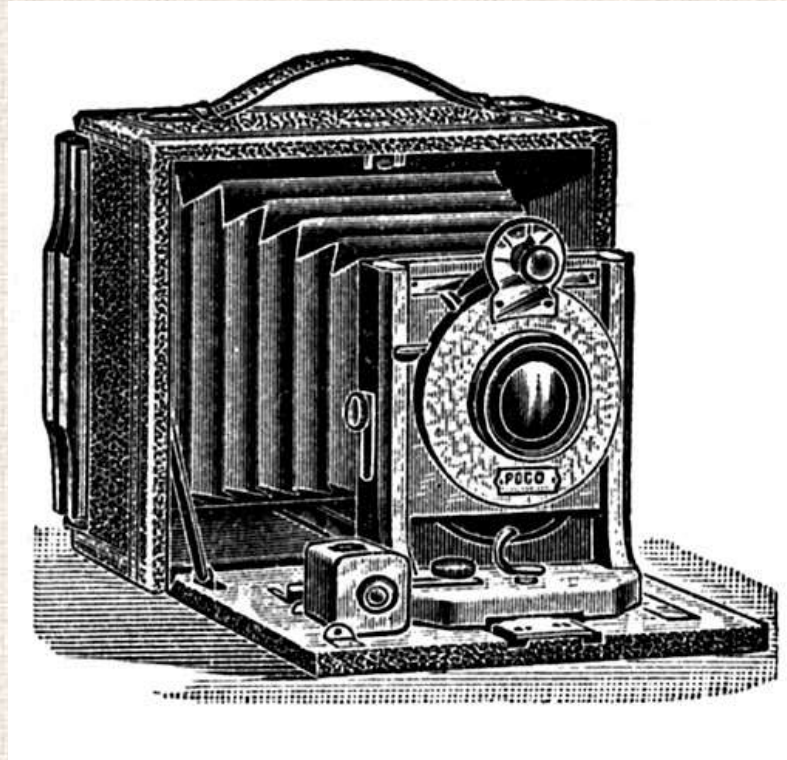


Thomas Reveley 1875-1941

A Wantage Photographer



Tom Reveley,

Telegrams:—
"REVELEY,
WANTAGE."

PHOTOGRAPHER.

THE STUDIO, WANTAGE.



TOM REVELEY'S STUDIO.

A Visit of Inspection is welcomed.
You will not be asked for a Sitting.

A SPLENDID COLLECTION OF CHILDREN'S PORTRAITS, and
AN INTERESTING SERIES OF SPORTING PHOTOGRAPHS.

One of the most well known North Berkshire photographers of the past 150 years was Tom Reveley who was an active professional photographer in the Wantage area from 1896-1941.

Tom was born in Wantage in 1875 to Thomas Reveley and his wife Maria (nee' Pring). Thomas Reveley Snr was a draper originally working in Oxford, who moved from there circa 1874, to set up a drapers business in Wallingford Street with his wife. Sadly Thomas died shortly after his son's birth and his wife Maria continued the drapers, eventually taking into partnership (and eventually marrying) Arthur Wood. The drapers shop named Reveley and Wood was on the site of what is now Waitrose.

It is not known how Tom Reveley first became interested in photography, however his obituary states he first became a professional photographer when he was aged 21. A planning application was approved by the Wantage Urban District Council in 1897, for a building for use as a studio, to be erected behind Tom Reveley's new house at 48 Market Place Wantage. On the 19th February 1898, Tom Reveley married Mary Reid Carmichael and the couple set up home in the Market Place where Tom had his new photographic business. Two sons eventually arrived completing the family. They were Guy (1901-1929) and Philip (1899-1957). Guy Reveley became a mining engineer educated at the Camborne School of Mines. In 1929 he married Margaret Irene Trebilcock but sadly became ill on their subsequent honeymoon and died on the 29th January 1929. Philip joined the RFC in 1917, was shot down on an RAF bombing mission in 1918 and remained as a POW for the rest of the war. He became the landlord of the Blue Boar in Newbury Street and died in 1957.



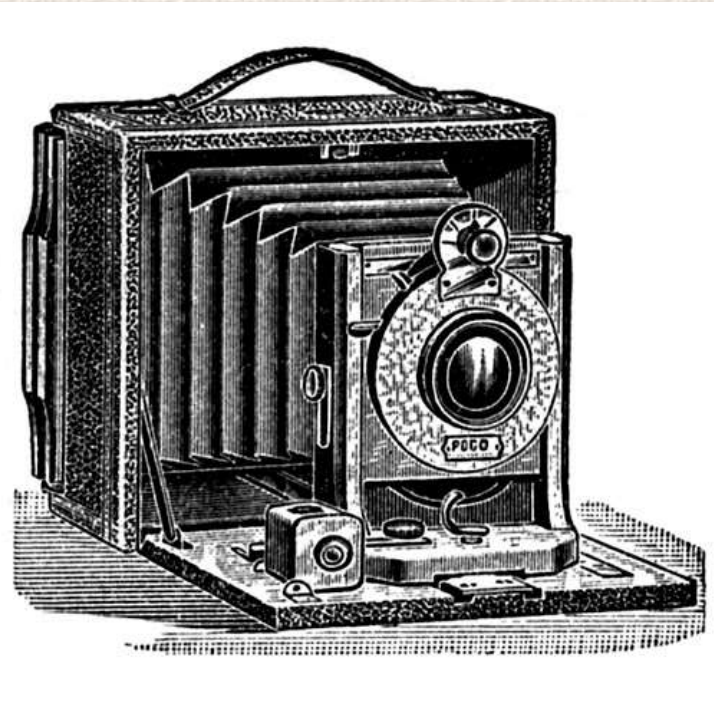
The photographic business developed from 1896, with Tom Reveley gaining a reputation for all types of photography, views, family groups, children and animals. He also recorded royal visits to Ardington for Lord and Lady Wantage, in particular one by the Prince and Princess of Wales in 1897. During this occasion, Tom took a photograph of Lord Wantage's famous shire horse 'Prince William' for Princess Alexandria who was so delighted with the enlargement she decided to hang it in the hall at Sandringham.

Animals were one of Tom's specialties, and in 1904 he held a small one man exhibition which was mentioned in the British Journal of Photography. This said 'the work of Mr Tom Reveley of Wantage, affords a display interesting especially to those concerned in the breeding of pedigree animals, whether horses, dogs, cattle or sheep. Mr Reveley has attained an extremely creditable excellence, artistic, technical and one may add, occasionally humorous in photography in this special direction.'

Tom was also in demand with the horse racing industry photographing horses and their jockeys.

Tom Reveley's photographs can be found published in The Sketch, The Illustrated London News and the Tatler. His photographs were turned into postcards and can still be found at Postcard fairs and on online auction sites.

With all this work coming in, another photographic studio was opened, this time in Abingdon and Tom engaged another photographer to help him. This was Percy Jones, who came from Derby with his wife and was lived in Ormond Road in 1911. Most of the photographs taken of the Wantage Peace Celebrations in 1919 were taken by him.



Tom also had an assistant who also became a professional photographer. Her name was Alice Mary Hoare, always known as Dolly due to her size. Born in Pusey Berkshire in 1894, Dolly was the daughter of Harry Seward Hoare and his wife Julia. Originally from Heston in Middlesex, Harry Hoare was a gardener who in the early 1900s started Challow Nurseries near Wantage. Dolly had two brothers Arthur and Frank. Frank later became a noted film producer well known for his documentaries and work for the Children's Film Institute. Dolly seems to have first started as an assistant photographer with Tom around 1911 as she is described as a photographer living in East Challow in the census taken that year.

By 1939, Tom was 65 and looking at the 1939 Register on FindMyPast one can find Tom Reveley still living at 48, Market Place Wantage. Living with him is Dolly Hoare. Sadly on the 9th July 1941, Tom Reveley died, and his sole executrix was Dolly 'in recognition of her devoted service and friendship over a period of many years.'. Mary, Tom's wife moved to Scotland where she died in 1955. In the meantime the photographic business in Wantage was carried on by Dolly. There are photos obviously taken later than 1941 under Tom Reveley's name, that were produced by Dolly Hoare. Dolly's nephew who visited Dolly Hoare in the 1960s describes the studio at this time as:

"An extraordinary Victorian affair with old mahogany cameras and natural light etc. I wish I had taken photographs. The whole place was by then very run down and crawling with cats and attendant smell. Photographs in the window of the shop front were faded and even curling. I could not have imagined anyone going in for business."

Dolly by this time was an eccentric old lady who went everywhere in her 1931 Austin car. She was in the 1960s the auxiliary secretary for the Newbury branch of the RSPCA (hence the cats) and used to distribute "busy bee" badges in aid of the PDSA to children. Dolly Hoare died in 1976 and this corner of Wantage Square was subsequently redeveloped.

Scroll on for examples of Tom's work.

Portway c.1900

Viewed from Ickelton Road. The entrance on the left is to Highfield House, originally the home of the Headmaster of King Alfred's School which can be seen further up on the left hand side.

Just past the tree on the right, is the Wantage Fire Engine House, which at this time housed the Wantage Fire Engine. In 1908 it became the armoury for King Alfred's School Officer Training Corps. The engine moved to the front of the VC Gallery in the market square, the front of which became the Fire Station for Wantage for many years.



Mill Street c.1900s

Photo taken from half-way down street looking past Almshouses on left and the original Shears Public House which was demolished circa 1912. On the right can be seen the Church Reading Rooms (with plaque at door) and further down can be seen 24, Mill Street (in the 1950s Mrs Cummings Sweet Shop) which was demolished circa 1960 to become Limbrough Road.



View from Church tower looking west circa 1900s

The barn in the centre of the photo is in the grounds of Priorshold. In the early 19th Century it was used to house Napoleonic Prisoners of War who left graffiti on its interior walls. The row of poplars seen in the background lined the Mead path and are at the bottom of the grounds for the Mead.



Mill Street, 1900s

This photo was taken at the same time as no 5 looking up the street towards the Town Hall at the top. On the left can be seen the Wantage Tramway Offices (with the tall pediment) and on the right the Castle Public House by the turning to Alfred Street.



Newbury Street circa 1900s

A policeman stands at the junction of Church and Newbury Streets in this shot taken during the 1900s. The railings seen on the left were the entrance to Tubbs House and in the distance is an extension to the then St Mary's School designed by the architect William Butterfield in 1894. Opposite Tubbs House can be seen what became 'The Wantage Novel Library' which closed in recent years.



Vicarage Garden 1900s

A gardener stands by the brook looking over the garden for the vicarage. To the right can be seen 'Old Church House' and what is now Betjeman Walk but was known as Lords Lane.



St Agnes House Ormond Road, 1900s

This photo was taken on the site of Chandlers Court in Ormond Road in the garden of what was known as the Guildry or St Agnes House. It was an offshoot of the Convent in Denchworth Road and was used as a sanatorium and later as a religious retreat. The man you see was the gardener Frederick Belcher 1874-1944. He was a founder member of the Wantage Chrysanthemum and Fruit Society and also worked as a court bailiff. In his later years he lived in Springfield Road.



White Horse Hill circa 1910

The negative for this photo has the caption “Myself on White Horse Hill” is most probably the only known photograph of Tom Reveley and may have been taken by his assistant Dolly Hoare.



Mr Edwin Unwin

Edwin Unwin was born in 1849, the son of Mark and Mary Ann (nee' Tyler) Unwin of Bermondsey London. His father Mark was a bricklayer and there were 7 other children in the family. A bright child, Edwin was educated at Westminster College in London. The college was founded in London in 1851 as a training institute for teachers for Wesleyan Methodist Schools and moved to Oxford in 1959.

Edwin can be found working as a teacher in Sheerness in the 1871 Census. Two years later whilst working in Croydon he married Grace Bennett Collins. The couple would have six children, two of whom also became teachers, the eldest also Edwin, and their daughter Gertrude who taught at the council school in Garston Lane Wantage.

In 1875, the Unwin family moved to Wantage where Edwin became Headmaster at the Wesleyan School in Church Street . It was a position he would hold for nearly 40 years. As well as teaching Edwin was a lay Methodist preacher and from 1894-1925 was a Liberal Councillor for the Wantage Urban District Council. Edwin Unwin died in Wantage on the 22nd October 1927 and his wife Grace in 1944.



Mrs Louisa Hillier

Louisa Florence Allen was born in Wantage in 1871, the daughter of James Allen and his wife Lucy (nee' Liddiard). James Allen was a shoemaker and for a time the publican at the Shoulder of Mutton in Wallingford Street. According to the 1881 census Louisa had an elder brother Edward Henry.

On the 3rd June 1899, at St Mary's Church Reading Louisa married William George Hillier aged 28 the publican of the Waggon and Horses pub in Wallingford Street Wantage. This is the white and blue three story building opposite Rockwell House and next door to the Kings Arms. It ceased being a pub around the 1950s. According to licencing reports in the Faringdon Advertiser William took over the Waggon and Horses in January 1899 and relinquished his licence in February 1908 when it was taken over by James Ivey. William and Louisa moved away from Wantage and in the 1911 census they can be found living at Clanfield near Carterton where William was working as a domestic gardener. However, in 1914 they returned to Wantage where William took over the Abingdon Arms in Grove Street running it until 1917.

It is not known what happened next but by the 1930s the couple were living in Swindon. It was here that William died in 1936 and Louisa in 1957.



Brookside Cottages 1900s

At the beginning of the 20th Century at the side of the brook and past the iron bridge, there was an orchard on the right (now the Betjeman Millenium Park) then two groups of cottages. The group on the left in this photo was built on a piece of land referred to in John Price's map of 1754 as 'The Gogs'. Here the water is diverted in front of the houses under the Platt Bridge and down to Mill Street. The path at the side of this water course to Mill Street has always been known to Wantagians as 'The Gogs'.



Denchworth Road circa 1900

The road from Barwell to Grove, then a quiet agricultural area of Wantage. The policeman in this photo is believed to be PC Henry Bellinger.



White Horse and Dragon Hills circa 1900

One view that has not changed much in 120 years, though there will be much more traffic now!



Studio photo of lady with dog c.1900

It is not known who she was. Do you recognise her? If so please contact the Vale and Downland Museum Curator - curator@valeanddownlandmuseum.co.uk



Grove Top Lock, Wilts and Berks Canal circa 1900

There was originally a flight of six locks in this section of the Wilts and Berks Canal. This particular lock has been restored and is now a very popular recreational walk for local people at Grove.



St Katharine's School c.1900

It was built in 1898 by the architect A M Mowbray who was responsible for building several churches in Oxford. St Katharine's originated in Newbury Street, part of a 'middle school run by the sisters of the Community of St Mary the Virgin. Its object was to give a better education to children than that could be had at the national schools with lower fees than at St Mary's School. The day pupils were mostly daughters of local business men, it also became a boarding school, a kindergarten, and a preparatory school for boys and girls. In 1938 the school was amalgamated with St Helen's in Abingdon. This building was demolished circa 1966 and replaced by the current St. Katharine's Care Home.



Rear of Unknown house from tennis court circa 1900s

This is a mystery photograph as we have so far been unable to identify it. Various suggestions have been made including Lindenfield a Victorian semi-detached house in Denchworth Road which it is not. If you do recognise it please contact the Museum curator.



Chapel, Chain Hill Cemetery Wantage circa 1900

This small chapel was situated where today there is a burial plot for ashes. Local names of Palmer, Kent and Dixon can be seen on the nearest graves in this photograph.



East Challow Church circa 1900

St Nicholas Church in East Challow was built sometime in the mid 12th Century. The Rev H J M Sanders was the vicar here from 1900-44.



Lockinge House and Church circa 1900

Home of Lord and Lady Wantage, Lockinge House was an enlarged version of a Georgian house built in 1730 by Matthew Wymondsold. The house was demolished in 1947, seen as too large to manage and the Loyd family moved to Betterton House. The church and Orangery remain there today.

