



## STEEPLE ASTON VILLAGE ARCHIVE

### Photography around 1900

Here in the early part of the twenty-first century, nearly everyone seems to have a digital camera, even if it's only the one in their mobile phone. But around the turn of the previous century, photography was the preserve of a privileged minority. Kodak had just brought out its first Brownie box camera (it appeared in 1900), but very few people had one. Most of the photographs that survive from this period were taken by professional photographers. Many people had family portraits made in a visit to their studios, or else itinerant photographers would visit villages like Steeple Aston and take pictures of local scenes and groups of people, often standing at their front gate. More often than not the resulting prints were produced in postcard form.

If, like the Bradshaw family who lived at the Grange, you had one of the new Brownies, the resulting prints would go into an album such as the one shown below on the left.



Most village people wanting a portrait to send to relatives and friends would visit one of the local photographic studios active in this period. In Bicester, for example, there were several including James and Sons, and J.T.Stewart, and the intriguingly named Mr.Mountain, while in Banbury there was R.Brummitt and Sons, and in Chipping Norton Percy Simms ran a studio. The portraits were generally produced in the form of "Cartes de Visites" which often had the photographer's details ornately printed on the card mount, as in the one illustrated above on the right.

Village scenes were also popular as postcards, and the later ones of Steeple Aston that are amongst the most well-known were those produced by Packer and Frith (one of which is shown here).

All of these and more will be the subject of SAVA's Spring Talk in the Village Hall on Sunday April 17<sup>th</sup>. The speaker, Audrey Linkman, has asked that those attending bring along an example or two of any early photos and any early cameras that are in their possession, for expert analysis and comment.

