

Kemble Vicarage



Kemble Vicarage 1880

I found this photograph by chance in an antiques shop on the Lynchford Road in North Camp near Aldershot. I thought I recognised it as the vicarage at Kemble, demolished in 1970, but I wasn't sure so I left it and went home to look at the picture taken of it in the 1960's by Richard Wood (below). I went back the next day and bought it.

It's an albumen print of the 1880's but there is no date, nothing about who took it or who is the figure, though one assumes it was the vicar. Henry Taunt (1842-1922) was in Kemble in the 1870's when he was taking pictures of the Thames and villages along the Thames. He took two of the north side of the church showing it before and after the restoration. Perhaps he had a commission from the vicar.

The vicarage was designed by the architect R W Billings who also did work on Kemble House for the Gordon family which included the archway at the original eastern main entrance to the house and also Clayfurlong Farm. All this was in the 1850's. The vicarage was on Old Vicarage Lane and the property extended down the whole length of the Lane. There was a barn on the property which is now a house. Of Billings's vicarage all that's left is the wall along the lane, the doorway in the wall and the two yew trees either side of the door.

Before the dissolution of Malmesbury Abbey in 1539 there was no priest's house in Kemble. 'To make a house for the use of the church of Kemell aforesaid,' part of a tenement belonging to William Marten, land 50 feet by 24 feet next to the King's Highway, was set aside.

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Kemble Vicarage 1960 – Richard Wood