

To ensure widespread compatibility and minimise deterioration when taking further copies, we decided to use the uncompressed TIFF format for our master copies of the original images, scanned to give 5-10MB file sizes. Photographs with more significant technical or historic value often require more detail, so these are scanned again at the highest quality the image will stand.

Next a copy of the initial TIFF image is taken and ‘improved’ by straightening horizontals, cropping and adjusting the levels to get the best output (all done with Photoshop Elements). We see the photos as primarily social history documents rather than works of art, so we carry out only minimal photo restoration – just enough to remove distracting blemishes. Three other electronic copies are made and optimised for the web site; the web image, its magnified version and its thumbnail. Finally copies are made that are optimised for printing (at up to A4 size), these are saved as JPEGs, and used for the printed images of our paper database.

As our interest is primarily social history, in parallel to the manipulation of the images, a major part of our work is involved in researching their contents. This includes identifying who or what the image shows, where and when it was taken and any background information that we can discover. In most cases feedback from the donors and their families is crucial, although as the archive builds, we are also able to cross check information against our own records and research. Once we have compiled the information it is loaded on to the website with the relevant photographs.

### *The Website*

We were fortunate to have a locally based website developer, David Howes, whose tender for the website far surpassed others in terms of value for money and scope of ideas. He turned our initial ideas of how we would like the website to appear into reality and added many other features, such as the regular changing of the photograph on the home page, to keep the site looking fresh.

The website also allows us to promote our publications, which are funded solely through sales; publish family history threads which enable researchers to share information; share details of our current research and make our photo archive available to researchers around the world.