

Wargrave Local History Society

Latest News - July 2008

Visit to The Vyne

In July members of the Wargrave Local History Society made a most interesting visit to The Vyne, a Tudor mansion at Sherborne St John, near Basingstoke, now in the care of the National Trust.



The house stands in large grounds, partly wooded, with a large attractive lake, alongside which is the path from the car park the house itself, and despite being quite close to the town, is a very peaceful and tranquil setting. On the approach to the house, the gardens are more formal, and a seventeenth century brick summerhouse.

The house was built for Lord Sandys, the Lord Chamberlain to Henry VIII - and the King is known to have stayed at the house on three occasions. The house remained in the ownership of the Sandys family until the Civil War, but in 1653 it was sold to Chaloner Chute, who was Speaker of the House of Commons for the last Commonwealth parliament.

Chute had the alterations made to the house, and his great grandson, John Chute, who inherited the house in 1754, re-designed some of the interiors - but in keeping with the alterations done 100 years earlier. The house passed on to William Wiggett - who took the name Chute - in 1842, and he made further changes, but again 'in keeping' with the rest of the house, using 17th century materials when fitting out the new library, for instance.

The west wing of the house includes a long oak gallery on the first floor, which seemed cooler than the adjoining rooms. The walls are lined with oak linen fold panelling that dates from between 1518 and 1526 - and as such is rare (similar galleries at places such as Hampton Court having long since disappeared) . Below is the stone gallery - used as a greenhouse in the mid 18th century (and fitted in the mid 19th century

On the north side of the house, the large drawing room and the saloon are richly furnished - the latter including a Broadwood piano made in about 1846 - one of our members played this, and the sounds wafting into the adjacent rooms. To the east of this north side of the house is the chapel - with a lovely 16th century stained glass window above the altar. The upper parts of the north and south walls, above the Tudor wooden stalls, are painted to look like Gothic arches, as if the building were much larger.



Within the rooms of the house there are many interesting items and pictures, including some fine porcelain and some unusual opaque painted glass, ordered by John Chute in Venice in 1741. In another room is a gold ring, found close to Silchester, which is nearby. It looks as bright as if newly made - although it is actually Roman, with a Latin inscription naming its owner as Senicianus.

Signs to the house can be found from the A33 Reading - Basingstoke road. Many people will have passed that way without realising there is such a hidden treasure close at hand.