

# Wargrave Local History Society

## Latest News - November 1999

### Antiques Roadshow

The Wargrave Local History Society held a most enjoyable *Antiques Roadshow* valuation evening for its November Meeting, as part of the Wargrave Village Festival. Simon Jones, of Simmons and Sons, in Henley, was the guest expert - the fourth time he has carried out this task for us.

The audience had brought along a variety of antique and collectable items for Simon to assess. He began by explaining that the every item has a number of values, depending on the purpose of the value. He gave an 'insurance valuation' for each item - which is what its owner would probably have to pay in a shop for a replacement. The only legally recognised value is that obtained in open auction - any other valuation is an opinion, based on experience.

Simon then proceeded to describe and evaluate the wide range of items in a most informative and entertaining way. Ranging from small pieces of jewellery to a walnut long case clock; from early 19th century to the late 1960s and from £2 to £700 or so, it is not possible here to describe them all. A water colour of Wargrave, by Cornelius Pearson (1805-91) and a desert plate from about 1820 bearing an over transfer painted view of Bear Place were items with particularly local connections, whilst a mid-Victorian lamp in a silver plated case, with a spring loaded mechanism to hold the candle at a constant height, a 'strike' on the side, a compartment for matches, and a stand and hooks to allow it to stand or hang from top, bottom or side may have been the most ingenious, and a minute English-French dictionary, with a - very necessary - magnifying glass in its silver mount demonstrated the skill of the late Victorian craftsman. Such a print size would not be possible with modern word processors.

During the course of the evening, Simon illustrated many features to look for. The colour of 'white' bone china, for example, varies in its 'greyness' depending on its origin; whilst the same material can go a strange colour if it is exposed to heat, such as when hot liquids are put in a jug. He also gave some clues about detecting objects that are not what they may at first appear - the different grain and structure of bone and ivory, or wood veneer that is thinner than appropriate for the apparent age of the object. There were also clues on how to avoid fakes (notably of embroidery samplers) - and mention of items that are not faked - such as pressed glass, as the technique would be too expensive to copy.

Those who missed this fascinating evening may like to note the Simon will be returning to Wargrave in March for a similar event organised by the local RNLI.

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