

Wargrave Local History Society

Latest News - July 2000

Visit to Dorney Court

In July, members of the Wargrave Local History Society enjoyed a private guided tour of *Dorney Court*, and the adjacent church.

The house is set in magnificent grounds, and the earliest parts date from about 1440, with later additions up to the seventeenth century. It remains a stunning example of an early Tudor manor house - half timbered and gabled with pinkish brick. It has been the home of the Palmer family for more than 450 years, passing from father to son through twelve generations. Inside, the Great Hall, with its large open fireplace, (an early example of such a feature) and raised platform for the family to dine at a higher level than anyone else, provided the setting for an introductory talk on the history of the house and family. The Victorian era had seen the addition of a 'false' front to the house, but that was removed some years ago, so that the Tudor aspect is revealed. We were then able to visit many of the rooms in the house, which retain the feel of a lived in home, yet also the character of a medieval one, with furniture, ornaments and portraits collected by the family over several hundred years.

Our guide also took us to the Church of St James, alongside. This is thirteenth century, with a Tudor period tower. The baptistry is set lower than the rest of the nave, and there is - still - a large family pew for Palmer family.

For those who wish to visit other than in an organised group, the house is open during July and August on Monday - Thursday afternoons, and there is a plant centre and tea room close by. It is well worth a visit !
