

# Wargrave Local History Society

Latest News - July 2001

## Visit to Thames Valley Police Museum

In July, the Wargrave Local History Society visited the fascinating *Police Museum* at Sulhamstead. This is housed in Sulhamstead House, part of the Thames Valley Police Training College.

The house itself dates from 1744, having been built for Daniel May. The property later passed to the Thoyte family, and they added a gas house, to provide gas for lighting, and then to the Watsons. The War Office acquired it in 1940, and then it passed in 1949 to Berkshire County Council, who used it as the headquarters of the Berkshire Constabulary. The grounds have superb views across the Berkshire Countryside.

In 1968, the number of police forces in the country was reduced by a series of amalgamations, and the local forces of Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Oxford City, Reading Borough & Buckinghamshire merged to form the Thames Valley Police Force. The museum reflects the history of the Thames Valley and its constituent police forces.

The exhibits include material on the Great Train Robbery, but much more of interest. This includes displays on the history of policing nationally and locally, showing the development of items such as truncheons, police communications - from a whistle to the modern radios, transport - and radar speed detection - uniforms, forensic work, and so on. Also on display are some old 'Charge Registers', recording those charged with a crime - from motoring offences to murder - their 'possessions' at the time, their 'previous conduct' and the outcome of the case, which many of the society members found particularly interesting.



*Part of the display of police armbands and truncheons*



*Early police radios and radar speed detectors*

