

# Wargrave Local History Society

Latest News - June 2002

## Visit to Whitchurch Silk Mill



Members of the Wargrave Local History Society had a most enjoyable visit to the Whitchurch Silk Mill during June. On a glorious summers day, we travelled through rural Berkshire and Hampshire to discover a mill that is not only a museum but also a producer of the silk fabrics produced by the traditional methods - and all set in delightful grounds.

The site, alongside the River Test in the heart of the village has housed a mill since the time of Domesday - the present mill building being about 200 years old. The water wheel still is able to power some of the machines by shafts and leather belts - the vibrations from the water wheel being felt through the wooden floor above.

On the top floor the raw silk, imported from China, is spun onto bobbins, (below, left) and the warp prepared. On the ground floor are the weaving looms (below, right) - which can have 10,000 threads in the warp of the fabric. These are power looms - about 100 years old, although a treadle loom of earlier times is on display on the middle floor. Here also was the Tea Room, where we enjoyed a drink and home made cakes.

