

SUPPER CLUB FOR MEMBERS AND GUESTS

SUTTON HOUSE

NEWS

Clearly Terpsichore did not tickle your fancy (or twinkle your toes) as the Midsummer Ball had to be cancelled due to lack of numbers. We think that perhaps you will prefer to sit, sip and sup and so, to that end, we are launching the Sutton House Society Supper Club on **FRIDAY 30 JULY**.

Members and their guests are invited to book their places for supper by 23 July. The three course menu is varied and costs £15.00 per head. Drinks will be extra but, as an incentive, the Society will be donating one free bottle of wine per table of four.

•*Sutton House Society*

As well as providing an opportunity for members and guests to have an enjoyable evening and to view the magnificent peacock created by Grace Bryan Brown for

the ill-fated ball, our aim is to hold a regular monthly supper club - sometimes with an entertainment or preceded by a talk - to establish Grumbolds Cafe-Bar as an evening venue.

We do hope you will come along on 30 July to help us launch the series and for your diary, please note the programme your committee has planned for you.

- Friday 30 July - The Feast of the Peacock
- Friday 24 September - SHS Annual Lecture followed by Supper
- Friday 29 October - Magic Lantern Show & Supper Club
- Friday 19 November - Lecture & Supper Club

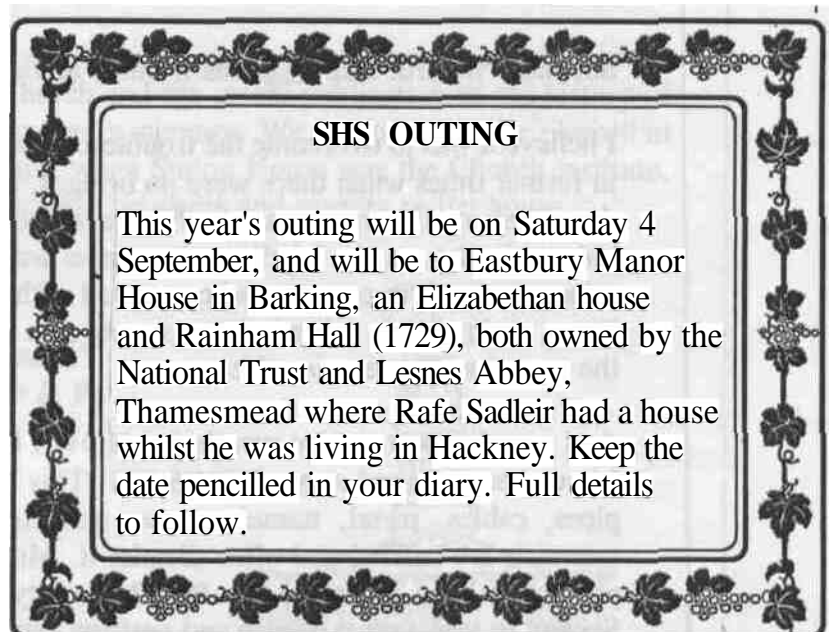
Please make your booking using the enclosed form and, if possible, indicate your preference of main course.

Grumbolds Summer Opening

***Grumbolds Cafe-Bar will be open
Wed - Sun, 11.30am-5.30pm.
Saturdays in August to 3.30pm***

THE SECRET TUNNEL

Interest never flags in the likelihood of a tunnel beneath Sutton House and one of our regular volunteers, Alan Hayday, is as keen as most. He writes:



" *'Legends of underground passages between ancient sites such as churches, abbeys, castles and camps are amongst the curiosities of archaeology. They are so frequent and persistent that it is unnecessary to give examples. It has never been my fortune to verify one, and other archaeologists have had the same experience. But it is scarcely safe to say they do not exist. The distances which those tunnels are supposed to negotiate are often several miles, sometimes down steep hills - with a stream below*
to dive Under. '

From THE OLD STRAIGHT TRACK by Alfred Watlam (1925)

So, DOES the SECRET TUNNEL exist?

Well, I believe I have traced it! It basically corresponds closely with the plan in the exhibition in Sutton House, except that it actually extends further than shown. It begins at (under) the old church tower, runs in a straight line to Homerton High Street, under the gate of the car repair yard, past the front of Sutton House, from where a second, narrower passage joins it. The main tunnel, which is 5' wide, continues under the road for a considerable way, passing under the Hackney Cut (built 1768) and onwards to near the East Marsh Sports Centre, where it leaves the road alignment at an angle. It passes under the NW corner of the sports centre and heads in a straight line towards the River Lea. It passes under a mature tree, before going under the river which runs here in a different course than in former times - a meander has been cut off. The tunnel continues on its dead straight alignment to gate 15 of the new Spitalfields Market, which it passes beneath!

The tunnel continues on under the old railway marshalling yard, now derelict, and on between tower blocks in Oliver Close, Leyton. This group of five blocks has a wider space between two of the blocks than the others - the tunnel runs through this gap. The alignment continues under the Fire Station, under Church Road and the almshouses on the corner, into the churchyard of Leyton Parish Church - which is very old and has been rebuilt at least three **times**.

So, there we are! But why was it built, at vast cost!?

I believe it was to overcome the troublesome and dangerous obstacle posed by the Lea Valley in former times when there were no bridges, the river frequently flooded to a mile wide and the marsh really was a marsh. Not to mention dangerous robbers - Dick Turpin had his hideout in the marsh. I believe the tunnel was constructed by Thomas Sutton's skilled coal miners in the 17th century and connected with both the Tan House (Sutton's home) and Bryk Place, and possibly other buildings were also connected by side tunnels. Only exploration of the tunnel will determine this.

And now I expect you're wondering HOW I know all this? Well, for many weekends lately I have been out and about DOWSING! This is a cheap and effective way of finding buried pipes, cables, metal, tunnels, water etc. etc. and one which DOES WORK - although scientists are baffled and often dismiss it. More research needs to be done on this aspect of physics. I have informed the British Society of Dowsers of my findings and invited the Society to visit Sutton House and perhaps verify the position of the tunnel. Also, it is hoped that geo-physics students from University College London will visit and carry out tests using the latest scientific equipment which can detect cavities deep in the earth.

If these results prove positive - which I am sure they will, maybe an excavation can be made!?

Alan Hayday

STAN PIESSE MEMORIAL

In the last newsletter we had the sad task of reporting Stan's death last February. At that time we promised a fuller obituary drawing on the interview Stan recorded about 18 months before he died. Since then, the Sutton House Local Management Committee have been considering an appropriate way of commemorating Stan's important role in the rebirth of Sutton House as a focal point in the community. The Committee has decided to use the recorded interview as part of a short audio/visual presentation on the house which will be sited in the restored east cellar.

During the years when Sutton House was St. John-at-Hackney Church Institute, the east cellar was used as a chapel and the current work will bring it back, as near as possible, to an Edwardian vestry room. Here we would like it make it possible for a visitor to press a button and enjoy hearing and seeing a presentation on the history of the house over the past 100 years. The old chapel will also display panels telling the story of the "tute" drawing on items from old parish magazines, the reminiscences of Stan and others whose memory stretches back to those times, and including ephemera from that period gathered during the building work.

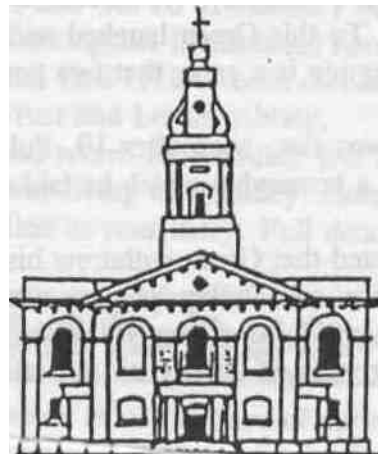
The production of this audio/visual presentation will cost around £1,500 and, as it does not form part of the capital building programme, the money will need to be raised independent of the Sutton House Appeal. If you would like to make a donation in memory of Stan Piesses please send a cheque to:

The National Trust (Stan Piesse Memorial) c/o Sutton House

and if you know anyone who would also like to contribute, please tell them about our proposals.

As a Hackney resident all his life and a committed and active churchman, he valued enormously the work undertaken by the Church and the recent publication of the history of St. John-at-Hackney Church is dedicated to Stan's memory. We feel he would be pleased to know that the story of those important years, when Sutton House was the Church Institute, was being told to future generations of Hackney reside" and vicitnrc tn rtip hncp

Newly published;
"St. kAft-at-Hackney' The Stwy <rfa Chwrch^
hy David Mwder Price €3.00 (+50 P & P)
available from Suttexk House -AV(»



Mike Gray's been in the archives again !!

THE HORSE WHIPPING - NOW THE TRUTH CAN BE TOLD!

Perceptive readers of the Sutton House Souvenir Guide will have noticed that Mr. Charles Horton Pulley, who lived for over 40 years in the east wing of the house, was said to have been "not averse to horse whipping a stubborn vestryman into shape"!

It was Benjamin Dark, the Hackney doctor and local historian, who first reported Pulley's curious predilection in his '*Glimpses of Ancient Hackney*' published in the 1890s. However, the origins of the story were not known until recently, when a pamphlet was discovered in the British Library entitled

*IDEAL "HORSEWHIPPING"
FACTS
relating to
Mr Charles Horton Pulley
Vestry Clerk of Hackney
by Mr Charles Green
Editor of The Hackney Magazine
1834*

The Vestry was the equivalent of a parish council and until the 1830s it was selected not elected (in other words, when a vestryman retired or died, he was replaced by a man chosen by the remaining members). Charles Green was one of the reformers that had campaigned for an elected vestry. He later turned his attention to the 'pluralist' Mr. Pulley who had secured for himself six or seven parochial salaried posts including Vestry Clerk of Hackney, Clerk to the Lamp Board and Clerk to the Highway Surveyors, as well as providing - for a fee - legal services to the parish. He clearly wielded considerable power within the vestry and Green conducted a somewhat bitter campaign against him throughout the 1830s.

In his pamphlet, Green related an incident which had occurred in July 1834 but which appeared to have been somewhat exaggerated by the gossips of the day. He wrote

".... being Parish Printer I sent to Mr. Pulley the second sheet of the Borough list of voters with a request that he would be good enough to read the proof immediately and return it by the bearer, a lad in my employ. The boy returned pretty quickly, without the proof, but with this message '*Mr Pulley's compliments, and he is not going to be your slave or at your beck and call, just when you please*'.

The following day at 9am, Pulley stormed into the printer's shop and proclaimed objection to an article by Mr Green in the Hackney Magazine (in which he appeared to have been described as a bungler). He threatened to avenge himself by trying 'the effect of a horse whipping'. To this Green laughed and replied 'That would hardly do Mr. Pulley because horse- whipping is a game that two persons can play at'.

The very next day, soon after 10, Pulley made a second visit to the print shop, this time flourishing a horsewhip which he laid on the table.

Pulley insisted that Green withdrew his remark about 'bungling' which the latter refused to do. 'Then Sir' said Pulley 'you are a sneaking, scurrilous fellow and may consider yourself as horsewhipped *without my going through the disagreeable ordeal*'.

The whip remained quietly on the table throughout the encounter -somewhat of an anti-climax!

Mike Gray

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