



NUMBERS UP!!?

SUTTON HOUSE

NEWS

• *Sutton House Society*

Not the lottery, unfortunately, but our visitor numbers. Although, with the completion of the building work and the good media coverage we received, we expected higher numbers of visitors, we were surprised to find our numbers were double those for 1993: there were **5,180 paying visitors** (3,106 in 1993) and **4,696 National Trust members** (2,499 in 1993). Add to these figures Free Entry Days, other voucher schemes and school group visits and the total number of visitors becomes **11,536**. But visitors are only part of the picture, an estimated **8,000** people used the house to attend meetings, conferences, private receptions, concerts, drama performances, study days

TOTAL - FEBRUARY to DECEMBER 1994 == 19,536

(and that's not counting Grumbold's or shop customers)

Our target for 1995 must be **20,000** recordable visitors/users, please help us by bringing along as many of your friends and relatives as possible! And to make that easier, see the back page for our special offer of joint NT/SHS membership.

NATIONAL TRUST CENTENARY

In 1995 we celebrate the centenary of the founding of the National Trust. There will be many events taking place across the country and numerous TV programmes and news features. At Sutton House we will mark the event in several ways:

A lecture on Friday 3 February at 7.30pm when Peter Clayton, Chairman of the OCTAVIA HILL SOCIETY will talk about the life and work of this remarkable woman who was one of the founders of the Trust. Before turning her attention to the need for city dwellers to have access to open spaces, countryside and coastline she had been inspired by people like John Ruskin and F.D. Maurice and worked tirelessly to alleviate the appalling housing conditions in late 19th century cities. **Tickets £4 (£3)**

With generous financial backing from Save & Prosper Educational Trust, we will be working with the Hackney Archives Department to create a computer based education project on late Victorian Homerton and central Hackney. By scanning material held in the archives and storing images on CD-ROM, users from primary school age upwards will be able to find out about housing, health, education, and parochial conditions in this part of the Borough. More news about this in the next newsletter.

And for fun, we will be joining forces with Ram's Episcopal Primary School (formerly Hackney Free & Parochial who also have their centenary this year), the parish church and other local groups to celebrate in mid-summer with a traditional **FAIR**.

JANUARY 1995

No. 16

AWARDS

We were delighted to hear we had won our first ever National Award - a Commendation in the 1994 *INTERPRET BRITAIN AWARDS* organised by the Society for the Interpretation of Britain's Heritage. As the Award ceremony will be held in Sutton House in February we hope those attending from across the country will feel inspired to encourage their members to visit us during 1995. We have submitted other award applications so watch this space for further news.

NEW COMMITTEES

At the Annual General Meeting of the Society held in November, and after seven year's service. Ken Jacobs stood down as Treasurer. We cannot thank him enough for this most valuable contribution. Ken and Jean Jacobs' enthusiasm, effort and commitment to Sutton House has been tremendous. Now they have moved to pastures new in Essex and although they still support us they have less available time. We wish them good luck for the future.

The new committee is now: **Mike Gray**, President; **Richard Moss**, Chair; **Audrey Seabrook**, Secretary; **Lissa Chapman**, Vice-Chair; Anne Blackburn; Grace Bryan-Brown; Joy Geary; Alan Hayday; Mary Horwood; Julie Lafferty; Peter Mudge; Diana Osborne; Shirley Stewart; Jane Straker. It is hoped that Joy will be Treasurer.

The society has now completed the necessary constitutional changes referred to in the last newsletter and thanks go to Richard Moss for undertaking this lengthy but necessary task.

The Local Management Committee membership is now:

Gayne Wells, **Chair**; Anne Blackburn; Victor Belcher; Erica Davis; Mike Gray; Roger Lansdown; Kate Moorse; Margaret Willes; Richard Griffiths; Julie Lafferty.

We were very pleased that following our invitation for new members two further volunteers offered their services, Helen Winter and Lesley Delacourt, and are being nominated for approval by the Regional Committee.

SOCIETY SUPPER CLUBS

Friday 3rd March, 7.30pm

Dr David Starkey - Hackney & the Holbein Connection

Sutton House Society welcomes the return of celebrated historian, Dr David Starkey, who many of you may have seen in several recent television appearances. Dr Starkey is well known to the Sutton House Society and gave the inaugural Annual Lecture here in 1992. Tickets: £12.50 (includes buffet supper). Members can invite maximum of 2 guests. Tickets are certain to sell out, so book early.

Supper Clubs are usually held on the first Friday of the month and a programme for the year will be sent to Society members with 1995 membership cards.

WHO IS PERCY LOVELL?

Percy Lovell is not a name known to many members of the Sutton House Society, yet we owe him a great debt! Evidence found recently in the National Trust's archives makes it clear that he played a pivotal role in the negotiations and fund-raising activities which resulted in the house being purchased by the Trust in 1938.



Lovell, an architect in private practice, was Secretary of the London Survey Committee between 1907 and 1939. He was also the first Secretary of The London Society from 1913. In both these roles he played a very important part in the recording and safeguarding of London's historic buildings. (The centenary of the Survey was celebrated in 1994 with a publication '*London Survey 'd'*' £8.60 incl. P & P from Sutton House and an exhibition at the Museum of London until 15 January)

The files are full of letters and postcards, many hand written, from Lovell, persuading groups and individuals of the importance of the building, then known as the St. John's Church Institute and encouraging support for a campaign to buy the house for the National Trust. One letter dated Nov.8th 1936 to the Secretary of the Trust, Mr D.M.Matheson, describes an early visit to the house

Dear Matheson,

We had a very successful afternoon at 'Hackney (where he had discussions with the Rector). I was interested in seeing the place again & I cannot see that it is in a very bad state. J was wrong about the 'two' linen/old panelled rooms. There is only one on the ground floor. But there are three Jacobean or Elizabethan rooms - one more than I thought.

If we get together on the lines I suggested we can get on with a definite appeal. Stevenson said to me he thought if it could be got for as low a price as £2,500 it would be quite a sound proposition. But we must get an Appeal Committee together first I should say.

Vr. sincerely, Percy W. Lovell

An Appeal Committee was indeed established including the great Labour leader, George Lansbury - then a Vice President of the National Trust. However, by April 14 1937, the appeal appeared to be starting to founder. Lovell wrote then:

My dear Matheson,

Many thanks for yours. The real fact is that I am the only person who is really trying to find money. If only others would peg away too we should get it. Cannot some of your influential folk put in a word for us with the Pilgrim or a similar Trust.

However, by July 6th Lovell spotted a notice in The Sunday Times to the effect that the Robertson Bequest was looking for an "appropriate object in the Home Counties" and suggested that Matheson put in a plea for the Institute of St. John. Within a week Lovell was able to write to Matheson

Needless to say I was delighted to receive your message this morning. I had been itching to ring you up myself but restrained my curiosity and was well rewarded..... Thus do you send afresh torrent of hope and enthusiasm coursing through my veins. It was only a month or less ago that I wrote to a friend and said "if the Institute is to be saved, a miracle will have to happen and pretty quickly too!" It has happened

Sadly, Lovell died a few years later, never being able to see the full effect of his work - indeed it was not until the 1990s that the miracle he hoped for really did happen!

M.L.G.

EDUCATION

A successful start to the school year with 19 visits during the Autumn term including 10 from schools who were visiting for the first time. The costume and kitchen handling collections and newly devised worksheets have provided a good framework for these visits. The new costumes made by Lissa Chapman and a new model of the house made by Grace Bryan-Brown are excellent additions to our growing visual resources.

We are pleased to report that a joint project with the **Geffrye** Museum is being launched for the Winter Term. School groups will spend the morning at the Museum considering lighting, heating and insulation in Tudor times and an afternoon visit to Sutton House will enable them to assess the effects.

HACKNEY HISTORY PRIZE - £150 FOR A PIECE OF ORIGINAL RESEARCH INTO THE HISTORY OF HACKNEY - CONTACT FRIENDS OF HACKNEY ARCHIVES
081-363 5516

OPENING TIMES FOR 1995

H I S T O R I C R O O M S

The Historic Rooms at Sutton House will re-open on **Wednesday 1 February**. The usual pattern of Wednesday & Sunday visitor days will then continue thorough out the year until the last visitor day of the season which will be **Wednesday 29 November** but will be supplemented by additional visitor days on Saturdays starting on **Easter Saturday 15 April** until **Saturday 28 October**.

Admission: £1.60 Adults, 50p children under 17

JOINT MEMBERSHIP OFFER

For those Society members who are not yet Trust members, a special joint membership is on offer. Join the Trust (Individual subscription £24) and have free Society membership for 1995. You benefit and so does Sutton House as there is a special arrangement which allows around 75% of your subscription to be given direct to Sutton House.

G R U M B O L D S C A F E - B A R

Grumbolds Cafe-Bar will re-open after the New Year break on **Wednesday 18 January 1995** and thereafter will be open its usual days, **Wednesdays to Sundays 11-5**, and **Wednesday & Friday evenings from 7pm**.

***** PLEASE NOTE THAT FROM 18 JANUARY 1995 GRUMBOLDS WILL OPEN AT 11AM RATHER THAN 11.30AM *****

WHY NOT TRY MORNING COFFEE & CROISSANTS?

Sutton House, 2 - 4 Homerton High Street Hackney, London E9.

Telephone: 081-9862264