

# Sutton House Society Newsletter

January 2004



For all interested in the past, present and future of Sutton House

## The good news and the bad news...

### First the good news... : a major award for Sutton House?

The £100,000 Gulbenkian Award is Britain's biggest arts prize, and Sutton House's pioneering **Black History Month** programme joins a shortlist that includes some of the most famous names in the museum world — including the National Gallery in London, the Royal Armouries in Leeds and the Gallery of Modern Art in Glasgow.

Black History Month at Sutton House involved a wide-ranging programme of events and activities designed to explore the lives of black Londoners through the centuries, from Tudor times to the present day. The project was run in partnership with volunteers and staff, and activities included an interactive black Londoners' history mystery trail, a vibrant school visit programme, storytelling workshops for the over-55s and a community performance event led by local students telling the story of Mary Seacole, a Jamaican nurse who tended troops in the Crimean War.

Fiona Reynolds, Director General of the National Trust, someone well known to Sutton House Society members, commented: "The Gulbenkian Prize is one of the best-known accolades in the arts and museums world. We are delighted that the innovative and inspiring work of the staff and local communities at Sutton House is being recognised in this way."

### But now the bad news...: the Car Yard/16a

The land stretching from Sutton House along the backs of the houses on Sutton Place to Churchwell Path was sold at auction on 24 November 2003. A partnership of local residents and Sutton House did bid but was outbid by a developer from Stratford. The land sold for £391,000. Conversations with the new landowner indicate that he would like to develop the land for housing or live/work units. The Sutton House Property Manager and local residents have written to Hackney Council to ask them to prepare a planning brief for the site. A planning brief would set clear guidance on what would and would not be permitted in terms of future use of this land. This would constitute supplementary planning guidance which would assist Hackney Council in dealing with future applications that threaten the significant heritage of this area. It should also alert the developer to the fact that there is limited potential for this land he has just purchased. We sincerely hope that the developer will realise that the land has limited development potential and will pass it on to the residents and the National Trust. The National Trust remains committed to purchasing the Car Yard.

## Decorations at Sutton House

During the closed period the east stairs and the west stair lobby at Sutton House were decorated. The carpet is on order and should be in place by March.

## Report on recent Society events

### Beating the bounds



On Sunday 26 October the Rev. John Pridmore, the present Rector of St. John-at-Hackney, rededicated the boundary post at the Middlesex Filter Beds in memory of Bill Hurdman. He was joined by members of the Society and Geoff Bennett, Park Ranger of the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority. The post now carries a smart new bronze plaque that reads:

This post stands near the boundary of the London Boroughs of Hackney and Waltham Forest, which runs along the River Lea, to the east.

It was erected by the Sutton House Society and the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority, and blessed by the Reverend W. Hurdman, Rector of St. John-at-Hackney, on 24<sup>th</sup> May 1992.

*This post is made from oak, over 450 years old, from Sutton House, Hackney (National Trust).*

### A Hackney Anthology

On Friday 7 November, in place of the normal Sutton House Society Annual Lecture, the Society presented *A Hackney Anthology*. This was a selection of readings of prose and poetry, on subjects connected with Hackney or written by people who have been associated with Hackney. It featured a wide range of characters from many centuries: Samuel Pepys, who recorded visits to Hackney in his Diary; Marie Lloyd, the great music-hall artiste who was a great favourite at the Hackney Empire; Harold Pinter, who was educated at Hackney Downs School, to name but three. The selection was assembled and presented by Mike Gray, the Society's Chairman. The readers were Lissa Chapman, Jay Venn and Peter Mudge, with special guest appearances from Laurie Elks and Brian Catchpole.

### Christmas Social

On Sunday 13 December, the Society held its Christmas Social in the tower of St. Augustine's Church. The tower is not the most comfortable of venues (no heating, little light, and nowhere to sit down!) so it was gratifying that there was such a good turn-out on such a cold and dark evening. Halfway through the evening we were led off to the nearby "new"

church of St. John-at-Hackney by Stephen Jakeman, the Tower Captain of the St. John-at-Hackney Society of Ringers, for a live demonstration of change-ringing in the tower and a talk on the history of Hackney's bells. Back in the "old" tower again afterwards, we listened to carols sung by the Homerton Consort.

## Sutton House events February to April 2004

### Art Gallery

*Wednesday 4 February to Sunday 29*

*February : Keith Martin*

Local artist Keith Martin will exhibit a series of 2-D and 3-D pieces which take elements of east London's industrial heritage as a starting point.

*Wednesday 3 March to Sunday 4 April :*

**Celebrating Sutton House (2001–2004)**

Brought together specially for this exhibition will be three years of wonderful creations by people who have taken part in the broad range of arts projects at Sutton House.

*Wednesday 7 April to Monday 3 May :*

**Young Artists, New Artists**

Young people from three Hackney secondary schools have taken part in the premiere of the Sutton House art prize. Come and see the work of these new artists on display for the first time.

### Activities For All Ages

*Sunday 28 March and Sunday 25 April*

*11.30am to 5pm : Discovery Days*

Choose from a variety of lively and unusual activities at historic Sutton House. See how characters from the past bring the house to life. Join a tour to discover fascinating secrets, and learn new skills at a variety of workshops.

### Free activity-packed days for all ages, each with a different theme

*Easter Sunday 11 April 12.30 to 5 pm :*

**Painting Places**

First in a series of special days where visitors are invited to capture Sutton House with assistance from a professional

artist and free art materials. Free after admission to the house.

### Free Sutton House Tours

Themed guided tours at 1.30 and 3.30 pm on the first Sunday of each month from February to November. Please contact Sutton House for further details.

### Over 55s

Each Friday afternoon at Sutton House is dedicated to people who are aged 55 and over. On offer is a programme of free talks, tours, art and craft sessions and activities. Free entry to local residents. Special-price tea or coffee and cake: £1.20.

### Talks, Tours and Courses

*Saturday 7 February 11am to 12noon :*

**Tudor Hackney**

David Mander of the Hackney Archives Department talks about the creation of the Tudor Hackney web site and gives a flavour of life in late 16<sup>th</sup>-century Hackney. Adults £5, Children £2.50, Families £15. Tickets from the National Trust Box Office on 01494-755 572. Includes tea and coffee.

*Saturday 21 February 2 to 3 pm : Ignatius*

**Sancho**

This talk about Ignatius Sancho, slave turned writer and businessman, is by Stephen Bury of the British Library. It is the first in a series of talks leading up to Black History Month at Sutton House in October 2004. Free after admission to the house.

*Saturday 6 March 11am to 12noon* : **From Pottage to Peacocks — the Art of Tudor Cooking**

Maureen Poole, Head of Kitchens at Kentwell Hall, will be giving a talk on Tudor cooking. She will appear in costume and will be handing round tasters and examples of Tudor cooking equipment and ingredients. Adults £5, Children £2.50, Families £15. Tickets from the National Trust Box Office on 01494-755 572. Includes tea and coffee.

*Saturday 27 March 2 to 3 pm* : **Olaudah Equiano**

Arthur Torrington of the Equiano Society talks about the fascinating and inspiring life of Olaudah Equiano, an African slave who bought his freedom and became a key campaigner for the abolition of slavery. Free after admission to the house.

*Saturday 3 April 11am to 12noon* : **Tudor Women**

Dr. Sian Jones, formerly of Southampton Museums, returns to Sutton House to repeat her popular talk about the role of women in Tudor Society. Adults £5, Children £2.50, Families £15. Tickets from the National Trust Box Office on 01494-755 572. Includes tea and coffee.

*Tuesdays 20 April to 6 July 6.30 to 8.30 pm* : **London from the East — a social history of the East End**

This course, based at Sutton House, will examine the development of London's East End since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. We will look at the East End's rich traditions — as a centre of crafts and industry, as the point of reception for immigrants from many lands, and as the home of radical political and social movements. Site visits included. For further information on this and the autumn programme please contact Carol Watts on 020-7631 6652.

*Saturday 24 April 2 to 3 pm* : **Lascars**

A talk by Asif Mustafa. Asif will be talking about Lascars, the forgotten

Asian, African and other “foreign” seamen serving on British ships over the last one hundred years. Free after admission to the house.

**Sutton House Music Society**

Sutton House Music Society's twelfth season of concerts takes place at Sutton House. Adults £8.50, Concessions £5, Families £20. Tickets from the National Trust Box Office on 01494-755 572.

*Sunday 1 February 5pm*

Bernard Roberts (piano) plays Debussy and Beethoven.

*Sunday 7 March 5pm*

Professors from Trinity College of Music play music for wind and piano by Mozart, Poulenc and Janáček.

*Sunday 4 April 5pm*

The Fitzwilliam String Quartet and Penelope Roskell (piano) play Beethoven and Shostakovich.

**Other local events**

*Wednesday 28 January 3pm* : **In the Bleak Midwinter**

Ann Clements of NADFAS (National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies) presents an illustrated lecture on artists' responses to snow and ice — 500 years of instructive shivering. The lecture will be followed by live music and refreshments. The event supports restoration work at Grade II\* St John-at-Hackney Church. Tickets £15. Cheques payable to the Parish of St John-at-Hackney with s.a.e. (sorry no credit cards) to The Secretary, 27 Sutton Square, London E9 6EQ.