

Sutton House Society Newsletter

June 2004



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

Spring outing

Hampstead through artists' eyes

On Saturday 22nd May members of the Society were taken on a very interesting tour of Hampstead by Ailsa Pain, a long-standing member of the committee. It was devoted especially to Constable and Keats, and was in part a follow-up to last summer's trip to the Stour Valley, where we visited a number of sites associated with England's foremost landscape painter.



In the morning we went on a walking tour of the old village of Hampstead. This included the parish church, in the churchyard of which are the tombs of John Constable and John Harrison (famous for the marine chronometer). Besides two of the houses in which Constable lived, we also passed a large number of other houses bearing plaques for their associations with notable people — at one time or another Hampstead seems to have been the residence of an extraordinarily wide range of characters: the composer William Walton, the artist George Romney, the novelist John Galsworthy, the birth-control advocate Marie Stopes, to name just a few. We also saw some of the scenes that Constable painted; although most of them are scarcely

recognizable after nearly 200 years, it is nevertheless remarkable how some parts of Hampstead have managed to retain their rural character. At the end of our walk, we sampled the waters that made Hampstead a fashionable spa in the 18th century.

Hampstead is a very hilly place, and in Hackney we are not used to hills, so we were quite glad to stop for lunch! This we had at Burgh House, an attractive Queen Anne building that houses the Hampstead Museum and is also a popular venue for weddings.

In the afternoon we visited Keats' house. This was the only occasion on the outing that the plans went, unfortunately, slightly awry. It had been arranged that we should be given a guided tour of the house, but when we arrived we were told that there was a poetry-reading taking place and that would prevent the guided tour from taking place. However, a member of staff was able to give us a brief talk on Keats and his association with the house, so that gave us some useful background knowledge before we went round the house on our own.



We had ideal weather for the outing: sunny but not too hot. We are very grateful to Ailsa for making all of the arrangements and for guiding us so expertly.

Property Manager's report

First the good news... the car yard

A few months ago this was the bad-news story, but things are getting more promising by the day. We do hope that by early August we will have the car yard in our hands! Then the hard work will begin: we shall need to fund-raise to clear the site and create a garden. The site is badly oil-polluted thanks to years of abuse by the last tenant. The site was broken into by travellers over the bank holiday weekend at the beginning of April, but they deserted it after a few days because it was so muddy and oily!

And now the bad news...

We were deeply disappointed to find out that Sutton House did not win the Gulbenkian Museum of the Year award. The eventual winner was 'Landform' in Edinburgh. Although we did not make it to the final four candidates, the judges were very keen to emphasize how impressive the work is at Sutton House and how the property is clearly

doing extremely valuable work in connecting with local communities. For all of us the positive news has to be that so many people think that we are on the right track. We should like to thank everyone who supported the Sutton House application: the number and enthusiasm of email responses was noted by the judges.

Brick Place Cafe

Do drop in and try lunch or afternoon tea and cake at Brick Place Cafe at Sutton House. We are very pleased to have Rita Lindsay running the cafe. Staff favourites are the cooked breakfasts and the Sunday roasts, but there are plenty of soups, salads, and daily specials to tempt you. The bar is fully licensed, and we now have a children's certificate which means that you can now sit with your children or grandchildren in the bar area, as well as the dining room or courtyard. If you are a long-standing cafe customer who was disappointed by the cafe over the last couple of years, please come back to us and find out how much things have improved!

St. John's fete

The Sutton House Society and Sutton House will have a joint stall at the St. John-at- Hackney Church Fete this year on **Saturday 24th July**, from 12.30 to 4.30 pm. This year the fete will be opened by the Pearly King of Hackney. As well as the stalls there will be tours of the church and a short organ recital, and people can go up the belfry to see how the bells are rung. If you would like to volunteer to work on the stall please contact Siân Harrington at Sutton House on 020 8525 9054. Stalls are set up from 9.30 am, the fete runs from 12.30 to 4.30 pm, and stalls are then taken down from 4.30 to 6.00 pm. Volunteers are welcome at any time between 9.30 am and 6.00 pm.

Sutton House newsletter

Our first newsletter is launched in June. The newsletter (not to be confused with the Sutton House *Society* newsletter) promotes the house's events and provides updates on exciting new projects at the house. If you are a Sutton House Society member you will get a copy of the newsletter sent to you by post or a notification by email.

Sutton House Society website

www.suttonhousesociety.org.uk

The Sutton House Society now has a new website. Do please visit it. Among other things you will find all the newsletters for the last three years, an up-to-date list of events taking place at Sutton House, and a "guestbook" where you may submit comments and suggestions.

Sutton House forthcoming events

Please see the Sutton House newsletter (referred to in the Property Manager's report) or the Sutton House Society website.

Society outings

Behind the scenes at Osterley Park

Join the Property Manager for an exclusive tour of this West London N.T. property including a roof walk with fantastic views across London, on **Thursday 12th August**. The tour begins at 10.30 am and lasts 2 hours. You are then welcome to have lunch in the cafe or enjoy a picnic in the grounds. Afterwards the house is open for visitors: free to N.T. members, but there will be an additional charge to non-members who want to go inside. Please note the 10.30 am tour will include a flight of stairs with 80 steps so is not recommended for those with a heart condition or who find steps difficult.

The cost of the tour is £5. To book please fill in the form and send it with your payment to Sutton House. Further details will be sent to you when you book, but you will need to make your own way to Osterley tube station on the Piccadilly line where we will meet at 10.00 am.

Autumn outing

The Society's autumn outing will take place on the weekend of 11th-12th September. The details have not yet been finalized, but it will include a visit to Hill House. This very fine house is owned by English Heritage, but is only open on one weekend every year — so don't miss this rare opportunity to visit it! Full details of the outing will be available in the next newsletter.

Booking Form

Behind the scenes at Osterley Park : Thursday 12th August 2004

Please fill in this form to book places on the outing, and send it to:

Sutton House, 2&4 Homerton High Street, London E9 6JQ.

NAME

ADDRESS

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TELEPHONE

EMAIL

I should like to book places on the outing, at £5 each.

I enclose a cheque for £

SIGNED DATE.....