

Sutton House Society Newsletter

October 2005



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

Some dates for your diary

Please come to these events!

Annual Lecture

The Sutton House Society's Annual Lecture will be given by Richard Griffiths, the architect responsible for the restoration of Sutton House. The lecture's title is "Sutton House and beyond: old buildings, new needs". It will take place on Thursday 13th October, starting at 7:00pm. Admission costs £5 for members and £6 for non-members.

Visit to Goddard & Gibbs Stained Glass Studios

Goddard & Gibbs have been creating and restoring stained glass for over 125 years. The company have their own studio artists but also collaborate with independent artists, interior designers and architects in creating art in glass. Originally based in Hackney at Kingsland Road, Goddard & Gibbs relocated a few years ago to Cooks Road in Stratford. Now they are told they will have to move out of the area to make way for the 2012 Olympics development. This scenario is becoming commonplace in those boroughs affected by the Olympics, and there will be a haemorrhage of skills and creative employment opportunities out of the East End unless robust legacy arrangements are put in place now.

During the tour of Goddard & Gibbs studios, you will see the processes involved in glass restoration and the production of modern glasswork, and hear about the history of the firm. This promises to be a fascinating glimpse into the world of creative glass-making and restoration. The tour of the studios will last 2 hours and there will be a brief talk from one of the company's expert staff.

The tour will take place on Thursday 27th October. Meet at the entrance to Bromley-by-Bow underground station at 1:30pm (S2 bus from Clapton, or District or Hammersmith-and-City line, Zone 2).

The cost of the tour will be £5. If you wish to reserve a place, please write to Julia Lafferty, 32 Ickburgh Road, London E5 8AD enclosing payment of £5. It is regretted that Goddard and Gibbs can only accommodate a total of 15 people on the tour, so places will be limited.

For further information please contact Julia Lafferty on 020-7981 2800 (day) or by email to julial@cpre.org.uk.

Annual General Meeting

The Sutton House Society's Annual General Meeting will take place at Sutton House on Thursday 17th November, starting at 7:30pm. All members of the Society are encouraged to attend. This is your opportunity to choose the members of the committee and to discuss the affairs of the Society.

Visit to Bromley Hall

From the fifteenth century this was the manor house of Lower Bromley. William S. Woodin, an entertainer and author, lived at the Manor House, Brunswick Road from 1872 till his death in 1889. The building on the corner of Gillender Street was originally thought to be the gatehouse to Bromley Manor, but it has now been established by the Museum of London that it is the main hall itself built between 1482 and 1495. It was the residence of John Blount, father of Elizabeth, who is known to have been one of Henry VIII's mistresses. During the 1880s it was used by the Regions Beyond Missionary Union to house nurses and in 1914 it became a paediatric training hospital. Following some reconstruction after WWII bomb damage it was used as a home and office for an adjacent garage and later a carpet warehouse. During this time it fell into disrepair and was placed on the "Buildings at Risk" register by English Heritage. The hall was purchased in 2001 by Leaside Regeneration, since when it has been attempting to secure funding to enable work to begin on restoring it as serviced office units for small businesses. Leaside is proposing to use the ground floor for a permanent exhibition on the hall, the manor and the Tudors. It is also hoped to provide a meeting room, presentation materials and access to elements of the internal structure. These consist of a staircase, an original Tudor arched oak doorframe and the remains of the cellars of a structure pre-dating Bromley Hall itself.

We are hoping to arrange a visit to Bromley Hall in December. If you would be interested in coming along, please contact Colin David on 0791-7403739 or colin_david@ekit.com.

Final Outcomes from the London Area Restructuring

Here is the latest news from the National Trust about the plans for Sutton House. We expect to discuss this at the AGM.

Introduction

Following the consultation period the NT have taken on comments as far as possible and have made the following decisions regarding the future structure of management in London and the operations at Sutton House.

Management structure

Reporting lines for London properties - the Sutton House Property Manager will also take on responsibility for Red House, 2 Willow Road, Fenton House, and Carlyle's House.

The new Sutton House PM role will be based at the London Area Office but will spend a day per week at Sutton House.

The Sutton House Community Learning Manager will become London wide role but will work a minimum of three days per week on Sutton House projects.

The Community Learning Manager and the Learning Officer will carry out one day a week duty management at Sutton House but this will be a Monday when the house is closed.

Changes to the operation at Sutton House

Regular commercial room bookings will cease from 1 January 2006 however Sutton House will retain the option of letting the meeting room on a Thursday to regular bookers.

The single most significant issue arising from the consultation process has been the opening of the café and shop and the impact this might have on the community's perception of the house as being 'closed'. The NT has therefore decided that the shop, café and gallery will open from 12.00noon – 4.30pm Thursday to Sunday. The historic rooms will open from 12.30pm - 4.30pm Thursday to Sunday. This standardises the opening arrangements making it clearer for visitors and members. The historic rooms will therefore be open 2.5 hours a week more than at present. The café, shop and gallery hours will be reduced from 27.5 hours per week to 18 hours per week due to their closure on a Wednesday and the slightly shorter days.

There will no longer be evening concerts and meetings, however, Sutton House will retain the option of private views for the gallery.

From 1 January 2006 the Sutton House Music Society will have to assist with the set up and clearing of the room furniture etc for concerts.

Sutton House will no longer be holding the Spring Craft Fair but hopes to run a Christmas Craft Fair as normal.

The impact on staff at Sutton House

The existing Property Assistant role is matched to the new Property Assistant role, but will be required to work regular Sundays.

The existing Assistant House Steward role is matched to a new role of Housekeeping Assistant however the hours are reduced from 24 to 18 per week

The Retail Assistant role remains within the new structure and the post holder is therefore unaffected. This is primarily in response to concerns raised about lone working.

The duties of the Volunteer Coordinator role have been moved to the Custodian and Property Assistant role. This combined with the reduction of the activity relating to the spring craft fair means that the Volunteer Coordinator role is therefore sadly redundant.

Other matters

Following successful meetings with the Local Authority and others we are taking forward discussions regarding the car yard; the role we can play in developing cultural activity in Hackney; and we have started to consider a further fundraising campaign to provide a partial endowment for the property.

Farewell to Siân

We are very sorry to announce that the Property Manager, Siân Harrington, left Sutton House at the end of September. We shall miss her greatly. She came to Sutton House in March 2002 at a time when relations between the Sutton House Society and the National Trust were under some strain, and it was noticeable that there was a very great improvement as soon as she arrived. In addition to all her official duties as Property Manager, she has also served very efficiently as the Society's Secretary, for which the committee is extremely grateful. Although leaving Hackney and Sutton House, Siân will not be leaving the National Trust: she is going to become the Property Manager of Osterley House on the other side of

London (the Society visited Osterley House in August last year). We wish her all the best for the future.

At the AGM, we shall need to elect a new Secretary. So do please come to the AGM, and if you would be willing to become the new Secretary that would be especially welcome!

Summer outing

Despite slightly disappointing weather, a dozen members of the Society managed to spend an enjoyable day at Clandon Park and Loseley Park on Sunday 14th August. Especially memorable were the Gubbay collection of furniture and porcelain at Clandon and the walled garden at Loseley.



Maori meeting house at Clandon



Formal garden at Clandon



Walled garden at Loseley



Loseley House