

Sutton House Society Newsletter

March 2006



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

Celebration of an Unknown Gentleman



In 1535 Hans Holbein, the great portrait artist of the court of Henry VIII, drew a picture which was not at a later date recognised and subsequently catalogued as 'An Unidentified Gentleman'. Many (including Dr. David Starkey) believe that this portrait may be of Sir Ralph Sadleir, the builder of Sutton House. Public awareness of Sadleir as a significant figure in history is slight, so maybe the epitaph *unknown gentleman* is indeed appropriate. But we at Sutton House are always trying to enhance his profile, particularly as he was the man who built the beautiful house in the first place. In fact he also played a key part in national history: first he was ambassador to Scotland at a critical time for England's relationship with its northern neighbour; later as Principal Secretary of State he was virtually the equivalent of a modern Prime Minister; and in later life he was entrusted with the security of Mary Queen of Scots while she was imprisoned in various castles prior to her trial and execution.

Ralph Sadleir was born in 1507 which means that next year is the quincentenary of his birth. This will be a marvellous opportunity to celebrate his life in Hackney where his career as a statesman began. The Sutton House Society and the National Trust are making plans to do just this. The weekend of 23rd to 24th June 2007 has been set aside for the celebration. We have made contact with descendants of Sadleir from all over the world and hope that many will join us for the occasion. We are delighted to say that, on the Saturday, David Starkey, Tudor expert and television presenter, will give a talk about Sadleir and his role in the court of King Henry. Besides this there will be a performance by local schoolchildren, readings from Sadleir's fascinating *Letters and Negotiations*, and a Tudor

banquet with musical entertainment to round off the first day. Sunday will be a free-entry day to the house with a wide range of activities appealing to families, and it will be a first opportunity, since the acquisition of the neighbouring yard, for many to see the western elevation of the house, which retains most of its original Tudor appearance.

If you would like to receive a copy of the programme when it is finalised please register through the website www.suttonhousesociety.org.uk or write to *Sadleir Quincentenary, Sutton House, 2&4 Homerton High Street, London E9 6JQ*. In the meantime, please make a note in your diary: **23rd to 24th June 2007 the Sir Ralph Sadleir Quincentenary**.

Spring outing

Please join us on the Society's Spring outing, to two properties in Hampstead: the Freud Museum and Fenton House. It will take place on Saturday 29th April. We are very grateful to Ailsa Pain who will be our guide.

Itinerary

11:30 am: Meet at Swiss Cottage station near the ticket office (Jubilee Line). Walk to the Tavistock Institute to view the statue of Freud and then on to the Freud museum in Maresfield Gardens.

After the museum, take the 46 bus up to Hampstead Village, where there are many options for purchasing lunch.

2:30 pm: All meet again outside Fenton House, Hampstead Grove, NW3.

Freud museum

Freud and his family were amongst the many Jewish refugees who came to the Hampstead area in the period immediately before the Second World War. Dr Freud was ill when he came and died soon after, but his daughter Anna, a specialist in child therapy, lived in the house for most of the last century and left it as a museum to commemorate her father's life and work. One can see the couch used by Freud's patients and a video about his life, and also family films of their own special moments.

It is not always known that Freud had a great interest in ancient Egypt and collected many statuettes of the period which are on display.

The cost of admission is expected to be £3, provided there are enough of us to qualify as a "group".

Fenton House

Fenton House is a 17th century house with period furniture, a fine collection of porcelain, needlework pictures and the Benton Fletcher collection of early keyboard instruments. We also hope to see Kathleen who has left Sutton House for a short spell to work there.

Admission is £4.90, free to NT members. Please remember to bring your NT membership card if you have one!

Booking

Booking for this outing is not essential, but it would be very useful for us to have an approximate idea of numbers. So if you think you would like to come on the outing, please fill in the attached form, and send it to Sutton House, marking the envelope "Spring Outing".

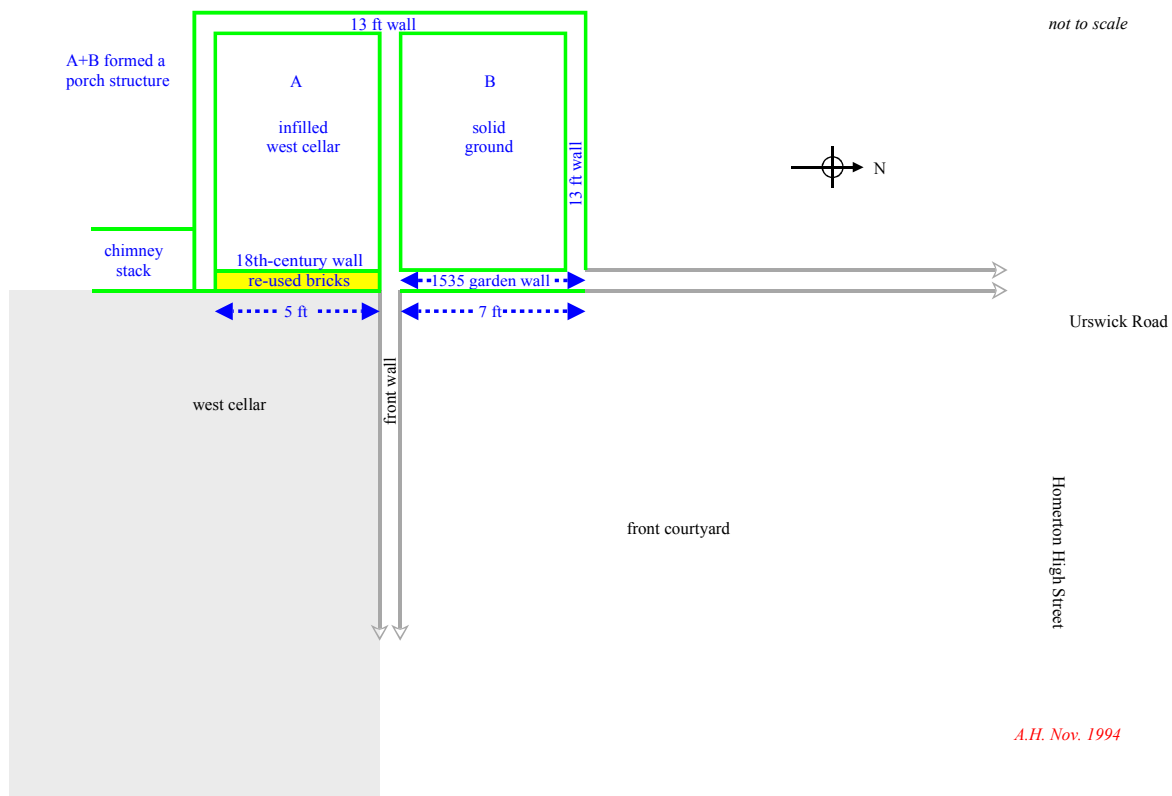
Dowsing report

Some of our readers may know that Alan Hayday is a keen dowser. We are very grateful to him for the following article which describes one of his investigations.

We may have to revise our ideas about the original 1535 plan of Sutton House, or Bryk Place as it was known then. One thing that was always uncertain was whether Bryk Place had a grand entrance in addition to the modest entrance leading to the service wing of the house. I believe I have located just such an entrance, into the west wing, by means of dowsing and some observation in the west cellar.

In November 1994 I, with permission of the operator of the Car Repair Yard, carried out a brief survey in the only corner not cluttered with cars. This area near the entrance gate became of interest to me, because I was picking up outlines of walls leading from the NW corner of the house. In addition, I perceived that the west cellar extended into this area, but had been infilled and bricked off some time in the 18th century, probably when the house was divided. It was at this time that the two present entrances were brought into use, fronting the High Street.

My thinking is that once there was a large brick porch 13 ft × 13 ft situated in the present Car Yard. Below part of it was the west cellar, with possible access via a trapdoor and steps.



All this remains to be verified, of course, but should be easy enough to prove, when the gravel and concrete top surface is removed from the car yard.

Visit to Bromley Hall

Alas! It now appears that Sutton House is *not* the oldest house in East London. According to latest research, this distinction belongs to Bromley Hall, which antedates Sutton House by a few decades.

Last December a group of us paid a visit to Bromley Hall. It is a fascinating Tudor survival in a most unlikely part of Bow. We are very grateful to Colin Brooking and John Hills for making the visit possible.



Forthcoming events at Sutton House

10th May: The Tudor Tailor

Jane Malcolm Davies, who used to provide the costumes and interpretation at Hampton Court Palace, has written a book with her costumier on Tudor clothes. She will be giving a talk and taking questions at Sutton House on 10th May, starting at 7:30 pm.

Learn about Tudor tailoring techniques and long-forgotten ways of decorating fabrics such as pinking and stamping. Find out how many layers it took a courtier to achieve the fashionable look and how ordinary working people acquired their clothes and coped with the practicalities of life.

They will have copies of their book *The Tudor Tailor* on sale after the talk. Admission is free on the door.

Spring outing; Saturday 29th April 2006

*Please fill in this form if you would like to come on the outing and send it to **Spring Outing, Sutton House Society, 2&4 Homerton High Street, London E9 6JQ.***

NAME

ADDRESS

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TELEPHONE

EMAIL

	Number of people
SHS members	
Non-SHS members	
Total	

SIGNED

DATE