

Sutton House Society Newsletter

July 2008



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

Summer Outing

We hope you will be able to join us on Saturday 9th August for a trip to Knebworth House. The house was built in 1492 and we shall see the Tudor Great Hall.

This was the home of the Victorian author, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, who attended school at Sutton House for a very short period. He transformed the front of the house into a rather fascinating Victorian mock-gothic. There are also architectural features by Sir Edwin Lutyens.

We shall meet at Sutton House at 9:30 a.m., and drive to Knebworth for a conducted tour of the house. Afterwards there will be an opportunity to buy lunch at the property's café and (weather permitting) explore the extensive grounds. If time permits we shall stop at some local churches on the return journey.

The cost will be £18 for members of the Society and £20 for non-members. To come on the outing, please fill in the attached form and send it with your payment to Sutton House.

Custodian's Report

Sutton House Needs your Memories

Most people would agree that Sutton House, with its gorgeous courtyard festooned with wisteria, is a very memorable place. When stewarding in the Great Chamber our volunteers are

sometimes approached by people who have known Sutton House in its various incarnations as a school, a trade union head quarters or even a squat in the 1980s. They enjoy sharing their memories with us and frequently shed light upon little-known aspects of the history of Sutton House. These encounters have often prompted calls for an Oral History Project to record and collate memories. I'm delighted to announce that this summer the Sutton House Oral History Project will start in earnest. The National Trust has had long-running projects of a similar nature in its other historic houses, including Tyntesfield, Basildon and the Back-to-Backs in Birmingham. We hope to interview people who have an association with the house and have memories to share for the sake of posterity. These would include but would not be limited to those involved with the Save Sutton House Campaign, Sutton House Society, and Sutton House Music Society, and architects, tradesmen and volunteers who worked at the house during the restoration and early days. The finished recordings will be held by the British Library and the property in archive form. Oral history recordings are a versatile mine of information and can be used in exhibitions, audio tours and research. If you have any memories you would like to share or know of anyone we may not have on our books please get in touch with us at suttonhouse@nationaltrust.org.uk.

You can find out more about Oral History at <http://www.ohs.org.uk/>.

Hackney Tudors Project

Building on the success of the performance at Ralph Sadleir's 500th birthday party by children from Rushmore Primary School, the Hackney Tudors project has grown this year. Members of Clio's Company and Sutton House Education Officer Christopher Cleeve worked with children from another local school, Grasmere Primary School, on a series of drama and music workshops at Sutton House and St Augustine's Church Tower focusing on a significant episode of local history. This was the execution of local landowner Sir Giles Heron in 1540 and the shockwaves it caused in Hackney.

Sir Giles Heron, son-in-law of Sir Thomas More, owned thousands of acres of Essex and Oxfordshire in addition to a house and estate in Dalston. Heron became one of the victims of the vicious political faction-fighting of the months following the fall of Thomas Cromwell when one of his tenants denounced him for speaking against the king in his own Dalston kitchen. Heron was declared a traitor by Act of Parliament, meaning he never got a trial. After his execution, his neighbour Ralph Sadleir, himself only recently released from the Tower of London, took on the wardship of Heron's two sons.

A group from Grasmere Primary School used these events, and the places they visited, as the inspiration for a performance and a series of pieces of written work. They were especially interested in the fate of Heron's young sons, and in the effect these nationally-recorded events might have had on local children.

The project website is www.hackneytudors.co.uk. We are now planning to add this term's work to the site, and to include more children, schools and episodes in Hackney's Tudor history in the next stage of the project. This term's workshops were generously funded by a grant from the Goldsmiths' Company's Charity.

These photographs (© Clio's Company) were taken during the workshops.



Appeal for Secretary

We are very grateful to Naomi Hutchinson, who has been serving as the Society's Secretary since last autumn. Unfortunately she is finding it increasingly difficult to combine this role with her full-time job as Property Custodian, so would be grateful if someone else could take her place.

If you might be interested in becoming the Society's Secretary, please get in touch. The duties are not very onerous: they consist mainly of taking the minutes at committee meetings (about four times a year) and circulating them to the other members of the committee. It would help if you are on email.

Summer Outing Application Form

Knebworth House, Saturday 9th August 2008

Please fill in this form if you would like to come on the outing and send it with a cheque payable to "Sutton House Society" to SHS Summer Outing, Sutton House, 2&4 Homerton High Street, London E9 6JQ.

NAME

ADDRESS

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TELEPHONE

EMAIL

	<i>Price per person</i>	<i>Number of people</i>	<i>Total</i>
SHS members	£18		£
Non-SHS members	£20		£
Total			£

SIGNED

DATE