

Tudor House newsletter May 2011



Southampton children at a Tudor food workshop during the Easter holidays

With spring here, Tudor House is a hive of activity: here's an update from Dan Matthews, the Major Project Team's Lead Officer for Tudor House, on what's recently been achieved and what the next few weeks will bring.

Now that our fearsome winter has finally passed, gardeners from the Open Spaces team are back tending the plants that have survived the winter and replanting those that didn't make it to help return the Garden to its former glory. They have done a great job (*garden pictured below*).



Picture by Joe Low

City Eye spent a day filming recently, as part of their long term video project to document the changes to the House as the work progresses. The outcome will be an eight minute film, which can be seen in the House by all visitors.

Doors throughout the House are being refitted. This probably seems like a simple job but it involves re-mastering a number of ancient locks and fitting alarm sensors and automatic push buttons.

The floors are being sanded in preparation for re-varnishing, using a hard wax oil for durability and the team are now contemplating paint colours for the Georgian wing as the lime-wash plaster throughout the House is almost complete. We are currently looking at reds and greens. Protective coverings are now being removed as the builders move out of the rooms revealing beautifully restored fireplaces and panelling.

CCTV is now installed. Final touches to the graphic panel texts are being agreed before the panels are sent off for manufacturing.

Conservation matters. Diana Marriott, one of the Arts and Heritage conservators, has been working on a number of items due to go on display in the House some of which have not been exhibited for many years. She has been supervising a team of helpers working on objects as varied as a case of Victorian stuffed birds and a pair of 1920s shoes.

One of our 'star' objects, a sedan chair, is being restored at the Leather Conservation Centre in Northampton. During the work, conservators have discovered a number painted on the back of the chair, showing that it was a public sedan chair for hire, rather than belonging to a private household.



They are also conserving a leather wine flagon in the form of a rather intimidating-looking Elizabethan lady (*pictured above*) which will be returned to its original case in the Banqueting Hall.

Archivist Jo Smith, assisted by Sue Hill, has been scanning items from the Archives for the project, in particular images of Tudor House and Southampton through the ages for the work being done by AV Company Centre Screen. These items will be featured in the Big Show, the audio-visual presentation in the Banqueting Hall that sets the scene for new visitors to the House.

Karen Wardley, Arts and Heritage's Collections Care Manager, on the changes at Tudor House which visitors may notice.

When that huge oak front door re-opens to visitors, some aspects of Tudor House will appear unchanged. People who love the garden will be pleased to hear it has been carefully renewed and replanted, with guidance from the original designer, Dr Sylvia Landsberg. The distinctive historic structure has been repaired to the highest architectural standards by the conservation specialist architects, Purcell Miller Tritton. The quirky character of the building is unaffected, but leaking gutters, rotten beams and draughty windows are things of the past, and the house is now ready to face the challenges of the next hundred years.

Access improvements include a moving platform lift to the first floor, and another one into the Georgian Room. Some areas will remain hard to reach for those with limited mobility, but a virtual tour which includes the attics and cellars has been specially commissioned, and can be seen on computer screens on the ground floor and eventually on Tudor House's own website. Before, the displays often had little or nothing to do with the House itself. Now, the building becomes the main exhibit, showing its history through the changes undergone, and the stories of people who have lived and worked there.

A vivid sound and light show in the Banqueting Hall will introduce visitors to the house and to some of the characters who will then accompany them around the house, by means of an audio tour. For example, visitors will meet John Dawtrey, who built Tudor House at the end of the 15th century and William Spranger, who saved it from demolition at the end of the nineteenth century. Each room has its own theme and objects from our collections feature in cases and on open display in room settings. Some objects have been specially selected for people to handle. Display panels with striking visual graphics and illustrations by artist Andy Gammon, show how the house might have looked at different periods. Dr Andy Russel has worked with him to ensure historical accuracy.

Along with more traditional methods of display, latest technology, in the form of Guidarotas - specially designed for Tudor House - will also feature. These are free-standing interactive screens which can be turned by the visitor to show 360 degree views of the room in Tudor, Georgian and Victorian times. We want to make Tudor House a fun place for families, so some elements have been designed specifically with children in mind: a mini beasts trail in the garden, a children's audio tour, and special "Fact, Spot, Do" panels dotted around the building which give interesting facts, highlight special features to look for, and suggest follow up activities offer much for families to do together.

Schools will also be encouraged to visit, so that new generations of Southampton children will have the opportunity to get to know the building. Gemma Winterton, from our learning team, is developing a programme of workshops and activities for schools, to take place in both the newly refurbished and renamed Westgate Hall, as well as in Tudor House itself.

Finally, like Westgate Hall, the building will also be available for hire, for special occasions such as weddings. In this way we hope to be able to generate the income we need to maintain the building to the same high standard we have currently achieved.

Talk at Westgate Hall

The next talk in the **Southampton's Past Times** series is:

Roger Machado: a life in objects by Gemma Watson

This talk uses interdisciplinary research on the Tudor diplomat and herald Roger Machado who was a contemporary of Sir John Dawtrey.

12th May Westgate Hall 7.30 – 8.30pm £4.50 (£3.50 FOSMAG, SCMAS)

Tea and coffee available.

Volunteers needed – come along to the drop-in day, Saturday 11 June

On Saturday June 11 between 11am and 3pm there will be a volunteers drop-in day at Westgate Hall. Come along and meet the team, find out more about the many different roles that we need help with, from supporting workshops to helping to run events. Have a chat to staff over a cup of tea and find out whether this is for you. There's no need to book, just turn up on the day.

If you want to read the previous issue you can see an on-line version at

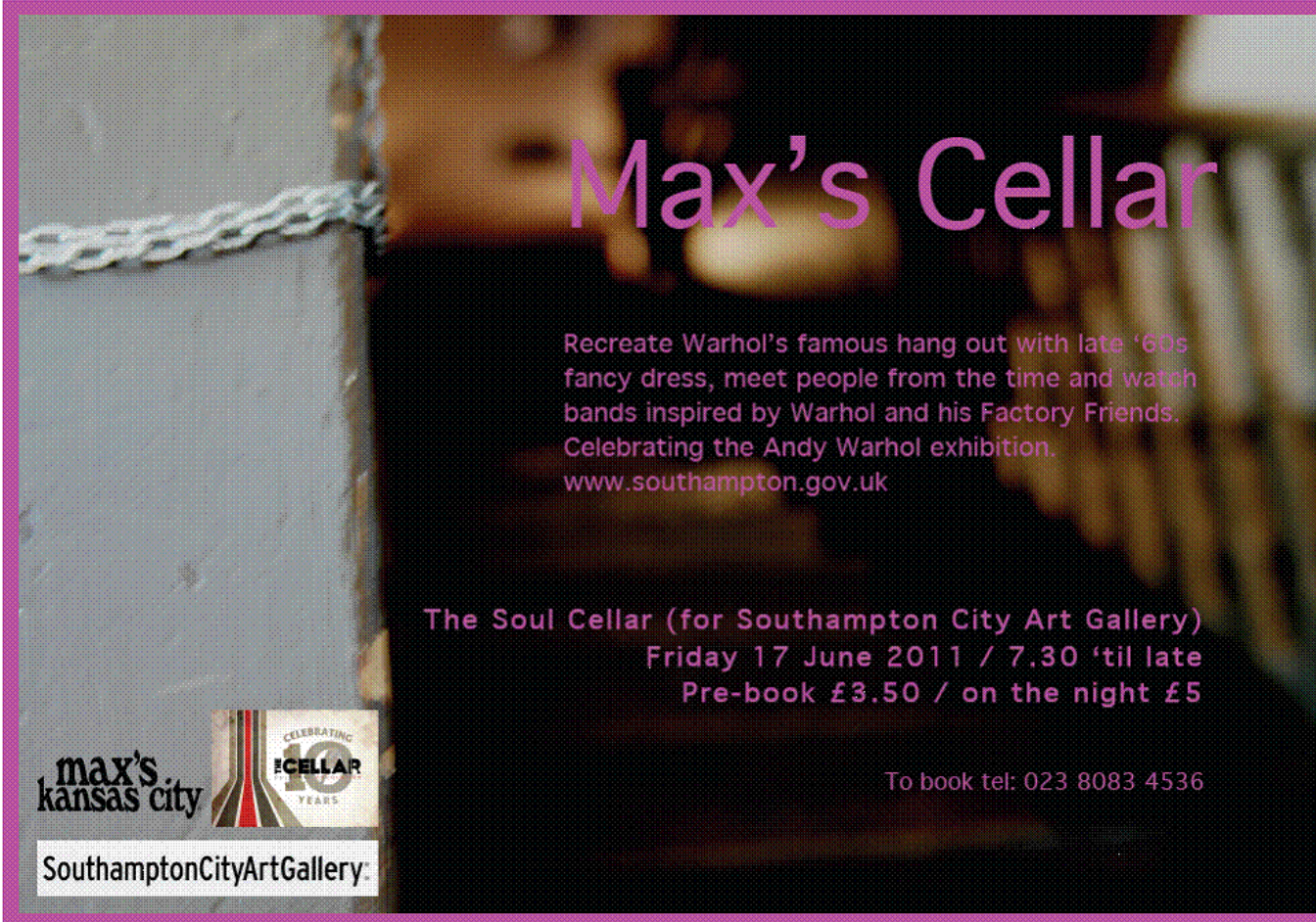
www.southampton.gov.uk/tudorhouse

Facebook. For the very latest information about Tudor House and Garden, visit the page <http://tinyurl.com/4vest9t> and 'like' it (you need to have a Facebook account to 'like' the page).

Please pass this email on to colleagues and friends. If you have received this email from a friend and would like to be put on the mailing list direct please get in touch here

museums@southampton.gov.uk and put Tudor House newsletter in the message line of your reply and we will add you to the list.

Special Warhol Exhibition Event - Friday 17 June

The poster features a background image of a person in a dark, possibly velvet, outfit. The text is overlaid on this image. The title 'Max's Cellar' is in a large, pink, sans-serif font. Below it, the event details are in a smaller pink font. At the bottom left, there are logos for 'max's kansas city' and 'CELEBRATING 10 YEARS THE CELLAR'. At the bottom right, the contact information is provided in pink. The entire poster is framed by a thick pink border.

Max's Cellar

Recreate Warhol's famous hang out with late '60s fancy dress, meet people from the time and watch bands inspired by Warhol and his Factory Friends. Celebrating the Andy Warhol exhibition.
www.southampton.gov.uk

The Soul Cellar (for Southampton City Art Gallery)
Friday 17 June 2011 / 7.30 'til late
Pre-book £3.50 / on the night £5

To book tel: 023 8083 4536

max's kansas city

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS THE CELLAR

SouthamptonCityArtGallery