

# London Voices – A National Trust project that focuses on families

By Sarah Husselmann

## What is London Voices?

London Voices is a three-year project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund that is due for completion this October. Its aim has been to “open a meaningful dialogue between [National Trust] properties and families from within their local communities.”

You might associate The National Trust with sprawling country houses surrounded by acres of open land and to some degree you'd be correct, but The National Trust is responsible for a number of historical properties in and around central London. Living in the big smoke, doesn't mean missing out on exploring our heritage.

By working with local schools and families, the National Trust wanted to better understand the barriers that prevent people from visiting their properties. Ruth Clarke, Project Leader, comments, “There was a feeling of ‘that's not a place for me’. If you've never been to a historic building, they can look intimidating. This project is about making the Trust welcoming, accessible and relevant to everyone.”

## The project involves four properties;

- Ham House and Gardens, working with Meadlands School, Richmond
- Osterley Park and House, working with Spring Grove School and Berkeley School, Hounslow
- Sutton House, working with Millfields Community School, Hackney
- Morden Hall Park, working with Liberty School, Merton

## Project achievements...

Creative workshops using puppetry and storytelling have been used to discover each location's unique history. The families involved play a consultative role in updating material made available to visitors. Chloe Bird, London Voices' Project Manager, confirms, “The staff and volunteers at our properties have learnt so much from

local family visitors. Families are helping us create exciting new resources that will be interactive, fun and available for everyone to try out this summer.”

There's no doubt the project has been an enjoyable and enlightening experience for everyone. Ali Basil, aged 10, from Berkeley School says, “Being at Osterley makes me smile.” “The families from Berkeley Primary School had a wonderful time at Osterley Park and House. The staff and volunteers there made us all very welcome. The storytelling and puppet making gave us great ideas. We can't wait to go back for some more fun!” Stephanie Collis, Outreach Community Officer, Berkeley Primary School.

## Visit a “London Voices” property this summer

The properties closest to us are Ham House and Garden and Osterley Park.

## BECOME A NATIONAL TRUST MEMBER...

Family membership typically costs £61.50 per year (when you set up a Direct Debit). Visit the National Trust website for full details and membership options: [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk) or call 0844 800 1895.

**Watch this space:** In response to findings in London Voices, the National Trust is conducting a review of its whole membership offer. They will be piloting a reduced membership scheme in London in the future.

## OSTERLEY PARK AND HOUSE

Jersey Road, Isleworth TW7 4RB. Tel: 01494 755566

**Osterley Park** is a magnificent neo-classical house with fine interiors, landscape park and 18th-century gardens. The house was a ‘party house’ created by the famous 18th-century architect Robert Adam. Fresh vegetables are



Osterley Park & House ©NTPL/Sylvaine Poitau



Osterley Park & House ©NTPL/Sylvaine Poitau

available from the Farm Shop.

**Admission prices:** House & garden, Adult: £8.40, child £4.20, Family £21. Groups (£7.15). Garden only: £3.70, child £1.85. Car park (Standard Admission): £3.50. Park: free

## EVENTS:

**From 30th July onwards** families will be able to use a tactile magical compass to navigate the historic rooms.

**Discovery Day**, creative fun days with a different theme each month. Booking Not Needed. **Scheduling Information:** 26 July 1pm - 4pm, 30 August 1pm - 4pm, 27 September 1pm - 4pm, Last Admission Time 3.30pm

**Osterley Craft Cart**, free trails and simple craft activities. Booking Not Needed **Scheduling Information:** 23 July 1pm - 4pm, 30 July 1pm - 4pm, 6 August 1pm - 4pm, 13 August 1pm - 4pm, 20 August 1pm - 4pm, 27 August 1pm - 4pm

**Explore More!** Osterley Park, Free Nature and wildlife themed activities in the Park. Booking Not Needed **Scheduling Information:** 23 July 1pm - 4pm, 30 July 1pm - 4pm, 6 August 1pm - 4pm, 13 August 1pm - 4pm, 20 August 1pm - 4pm, 27 August 1pm - 4pm.

## HAM HOUSE AND GARDENS

Ham Street, Ham, Richmond-upon-Thames TW10 7RS. Tel: 020 8940 1950

**Ham House** sits on the banks of the River Thames and is a unique 17th-century house with sumptuous interiors and restored formal gardens. The house is reputedly one of the most haunted in Britain. The gardens have famous lavender parterres and a maze-like wilderness. There is an onsite café.

Admission prices: Adult: £9.90, child £5.50, Family £25.30. Groups (£8.50). Garden only: £3.30, child £2.20, family £8.80.

## EVENTS:

**From 17th July onwards**, families will be able to journey around the world inside Ham House – a new exhibition room is being created containing a giant interactive ship with moveable cargo and room settings.

**FAMILY FUN**, Complimentary self-guided trails and family tracker packs available throughout the open season. Toy Box in Orangery Garden. Open Mon - Wed and Sat, Sun. Booking Not Needed

**Family Ghost Tour**, One hour guided tour. Normal Admission Charges Apply, Booking Essential: 0844 249 1895. No stiletto heels allowed in the house. **Scheduling Information:** 27 July 11.30am - 12.30pm, 3 August 11.30am - 12.30pm, 10 August 11.30am - 12.30pm, Gates Open Time 11am. **Pricing:** Adult £8, Child £6 up to the age of 16