

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

By Sarah Husselmann

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. Referring to Morden Hall Park, Sunni Holmes aged 10, from Liberty School says (holding hands a foot apart), *"I love the nature there. I've seen birds, dogs, squirrels, frogs, snails, slugs and worms. And fish. I saw one this big!"* Kim Price, Children's Centre Manager at Millfields Community School, explains, *"This project has literally opened doors as our families now make frequent weekend visits to National Trust properties and their confidence has increased."*



East garden at Ham House



Morden Hall

### Visit a "London Voices" property this summer

The properties closest to South West London are Morden Hall Park and Ham House and Garden.

#### Morden Hall Park

Between Wimbledon and Sutton.

Tel: 020 8545 6850

Morden Hall Park is a green oasis in the heart of suburbia. The parkland includes meadows, wetlands and waterways. The rose garden has over 2,000 roses in summer. The Snuff Mill Environmental Centre has a number of interactive displays and a café and gift shop can be found in the walled kitchen garden.

#### Ham House and Gardens

Ham Street, 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.

### July/August Events

#### Morden Hall Park

- Tales of the river, 5 July 12pm - 4pm, Celebrate the river with storytelling and hands on activities.
- Big Green Day Out, 19 July 12pm - 4pm, fun day all about being green.
- Holiday activities, 30 July 11am - 3pm, School holiday fun activities at the snuff mill. No booking necessary. There are family events every Thursday in school holidays.
- Summer Theatre - Mowgli Stories, 31 July 6.30pm - 9pm, See a performance of The Mowgli Stories (from Rudyard Kipling's "The Jungle Book"). Gates Open Time 5.30pm, Pricing: Adult £12, Child £8.
- Wild Child, 16 August 12pm - 4pm, Take part in an exciting challenge to explore nature and the great outdoors.

#### Ham House and Gardens

- 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 for the House and the Garden 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

