

Ladies,

Sally Congdon, Vicky Bradshaw and I are just back from our January Board meeting at Sulgrave Manor and we wanted to provide you with an update on our trip and what is going on at Sulgrave!

On Monday we had a tour of the Manor in the morning and meetings in the afternoon with Alison Ray, the Sulgrave CEO; Jo Cowley Head of Operations; and Emily Canterbury who is responsible for the new educational program.



As this was my first visit to Sulgrave Manor, the tour was very special. As you know the Manor is currently closed for restoration. It is draped in scaffolding and workers are hard at work with masonry repair which should be complete in the next several weeks. Repairs and redecoration to windows, doors and chimneys are already complete. Drainage and paving are next on the schedule with all work to be completed in March. We were able to see some of the sample pavers for the planned renovation of the courtyard which will be revamped with a new ramp and planting. Most exciting are the changes to the flow of visitors to the manor. Visitors will now enter along a walkway through the brew house vs. the courtyard. The brew houses will now have three functions: Visitor entry, gift shop

and tea room. The old tea room, which is a lovely large sunny space, will now be used for school programs, while the old gift shop will be the location of the new George Washington exhibit. The visitor flow, and visitors' experience, will be much improved.

Emily Canterbury gave us a preview of some of her school program plans. Emily is fairly new to the staff, young and a scout leader with incredible enthusiasm for the program. Some of her program ideas include:

- Living Long Ago, levels 1 and 2
- Exploring what life was like at home vs. on a ship in Tudor times
- Bugs and Buds - science based program
- Rich and Poor - what was it like to live at Sulgrave with different economic levels



Earlier this year they had a family program where the children made pretzels and cooked them over an open fire and then had chocolate and caramel for dipping. The grandchildren of Norman Hudson's (the Sulgrave Manor Chairman) were at the event. Since everyone appears to have left covered in chocolate, we thought the program a great success!!!

Another sign of improvement is the new temperature controlled archive. We were able to see some wonderful prints of the manor and where George Washington's coat is stored.

As we toured the Manor, I saw signs of the NSCDA everywhere, from the wonderful Minstrel Gallery in the Courtyard Hall donated by Mrs. Brown, to the George Washington portraits. We truly are a part of the fabric and maintenance of the Manor and the grounds.

Speaking of grounds, as we were walking around the manor we ran into the gardener with a gaggle of volunteers. Volunteer numbers are up and some of the spring flowers are starting to bloom. Staff at the Manor were thrilled when Jill Stewart, a Garden Volunteer and retired clinical oncologist, was interviewed by BBC Radio Oxford on 12th December. She spoke eloquently about the work of volunteers at the Manor, the culture of friendly engagement, the variety of her work, and the many opportunities for new volunteers in the Garden, Manor and Learning teams. She and her colleagues are preparing a family friendly area in the garden which will include wildlife planting, bug hunting and sensory activities. All elements will be designed to be especially attractive to visiting school students.



Additional Sulgrave news:

- Wool House - let in December for a 3 year Tenancy
- Kiln Yard - Architects SWB are working on plans and liaising with SNCC regarding the development of up to 5 houses to the rear of Kiln Farm and Manor Cottage. Once initial design agreement has been reached with the council public consultation will take place



On Monday night Norman and Jane Hudson invited us to dinner at their beautifully restored farm. This provided an opportunity for me to meet most of the other Sulgrave Manor Board members prior to our Board Meeting.

On Tuesday we had our Board meeting in which, as they always do, finances were a major topic of discussion. As we discussed in our FSM meeting in October, Sulgrave will be requesting a large grant from the NSCDA for Phase II of the restoration. This phase will include the following:

- Allow replacement of the outdated and non-compliant electrical system. It will see the introduction of heating for public areas and staff offices.
- Oil based paint, which was used on the internal lime plaster walls during the 1980s, will be removed thereby ending the damage to the Manor's fabric.
- Plaster will be repaired and the Manor will be redecorated throughout in an appropriate and sympathetic manner.
- The intruder and fire alarm systems will be updated to provide increased security and more cost effective control.

This work will allow the Manor to enter its centennial year in the best possible condition and ready for improvements to displays of collections and our visitor experience.

As Sally and I left England the next day to fly home, we both reflected on what a wonderful facility the Manor is and how lucky we are as an organization to be so integrally involved in maintaining the building and supporting its core charter of:

- To preserve Sulgrave Manor, the ancestral home of the family of George Washington, the first President of the United States of America, for the public benefit, and
- To provide and support education in subject areas relevant to Sulgrave Manor and its historic role in the history of Anglo-American relations and to the history, literature and institutions of the United States

There is definitely a feeling of optimism and excitement at Sulgrave Manor with all the current and planned changes. We both look forward to the next several months as we move forward with the grant process and begin to think strategically with the Sulgrave Manor Board about our longer term goals and objectives.

As always, we thank-you for all your hard work in helping raise funds for the Manor through the FSM and want to emphasis that this year it is extremely critical that we all do our best to educate our Corporate Societies on Sulgrave Manor and encourage donations.

More in April after our next Board meeting, and many thanks to all of you for your hard work as you start the Solicitation process for Sulgrave Manor!

Caroline A. Goodhart

Vice-President
Friends of Sulgrave Manor
NSCDA, Junior Representative to Sulgrave Manor Trust

