

Clissold Park & House Restoration Project

The £8.9m restoration of Clissold Park and House, jointly funded by Hackney Council, Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and the BIG Lottery Fund, will return the Grade II* listed building and grounds to its former 18th century glory and introduce 21st century facilities to meet the needs of modern day visitors.

Extensive consultation has culminated in the finalisation of design detail for the majority of the project.

The restored Mansion House will include a new café with improved access for people with disabilities along with new function and meeting rooms for community use.

The wider improvements to the park will also involve extensive maintenance of the New River and Lakes, developing new animal enclosures and a play and urban sports area.

Work is due to commence in January 2010 and should be completed by summer 2011.

 To find out more about the project visit www.hackney.gov.uk/clissold-restoration-project

Or if you would like to receive monthly email updates email: simon.biss@hackney.gov.uk

The Owners and History of Clissold Park and House



House from the New River, 1904

Jonathan Hoare 1752-1819

- The banker Jonathan Hoare is known to have completed the leasehold assembly of the estate known as Newington Park between 1789 and 1790. The construction of Paradise House, (later called Clissold House), is also thought to have been completed about this time.
- As part of the improvement work to his estate, Hoare diverted the course of the polluted Hackney Brook away from his land and altered the course of the New River.
- Paradise (Clissold) House is of unusual design, in a severe stripped Greek style. The house is three storeys high but the ground on the western side is built up in a wide carriage sweep by a whole storey height to allow entry on that elevation at the middle level; when seen from the west, the house appears to be a two storey building set on top of a small knoll. The difficulties in planning the interior suggest that the building was conceived from the outside, in the tradition of garden buildings, as an object in a landscape.
- The house has in the past been attributed to the architect Joseph Woods (1776-1864), a nephew of Jonathan Hoare. His age at the time makes this extremely unlikely and there was no suggestion before about 1890 that he might have been the designer. No records of the construction of the house or park have been located and the identity of the designer(s) remains unknown.
- Hoare came from a local Quaker family and was the younger brother of Samuel Hoare (II) who campaigned against the slave trade. Samuel also helped his brother out with his debts, which had arisen from the purchase of the Newington Park estate.

- Despite his brother's help, Jonathan had to mortgage his house in 1798. A condition of the mortgage was that he had to pay double if the debt was not repaid in time. Jonathan failed to pay on time and the bank foreclosed.
- A popular rumour is that Hoare was reduced to selling milk door to door from the estate's farm during this time.
- Jonathan lost the house and the estate, his family moved to Church Street and stayed there for rest of their lives.

Thomas Gudgeon

- Little is known about Thomas Gudgeon, apart from that he acquired the land and house over series of transactions between 1799 and 1800.
- The estate was advertised 1805 but no change in ownership is recorded until 1811.

William Crawshay 1764-1834

- William Crawshay acquired the house and estate in 1811.
- During this period, the estate was known as Crawshay's Farm.
- A plan of the estate from 1821 shows a number of farm buildings on the site of the current red gravel football pitch and a 'great garden' on the site of the play area, complete with ornamental fountain.
- Crawshay is known to have refused permission for his daughter Eliza to marry the curate from St Mary's church, Augustus Clissold. When William died in 1834, Eliza inherited the house and married Clissold, who changed the name of the house.



Clissold House, 1907

Augustus Clissold

1797-1882

- After marrying Eliza Crawshay on the death of her father, ownership of the estate fell to Clissold in 1834.
- Clissold became a follower of Emanuel Swedenborg, withdrawing from the Anglican Church by 1840 to concentrate on writing and promoting the views of the Swedish philosopher.
- Little is known of Clissold's activities on the estate but he gave liberal financial assistance to the Swedenborg Society throughout his life. The Clissolds were in their forties by the time of the marriage and there appear to have been no children.



The Band Stand from the west, 1909

1882 – Present

- On the death of Augustus Clissold in 1882, the estate passed back to the Crawshay family.
- By early in 1886 the land was being advertised and was sold to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.
- John Runtz and Joseph Beck led a vigorous campaign to prevent the land being sold on for development and finally persuaded the Commissioners to sell the land to the Metropolitan Board of Works to create a public park.
- On 24 July 1889, Clissold Park opened to the public.
- Almost 120 years on, Clissold Park remains an extremely popular local attraction.

We hope that the restoration project will help to conserve the park and house for the years to come.