

Institute of Physics

LONDON AND SOUTH EASTERN BRANCH REMS SECTION

VISIT TO STOCKWOOD PARK, LUTON.

Thursday 10th July 2003

This visit has been organised by Stanley Melinek

Stockwood Craft Museum provides displays of Bedfordshire rural trades and crafts and also has some beautiful gardens and the intriguing Hamilton Finlay Sculpture Garden. The complex includes:

The Stockwood Craft Museum: This offers an insight into another time, when local crafts people and tradesmen produced many goods. Visitors can discover what life was like for children working long hours in lace-making schools. They can learn about farming 100 years ago. What kind of tasks faced the agricultural labourer every day? Then there's brewing and baking, shoemaking and rope making, the blacksmith's forge and the wheelwright's shop. Altogether the displays present one of the finest rural life collections in the country.

The Bee Gallery: There is a long tradition of honey making in Bedfordshire. The Bee Gallery offers visitors the chance to watch live bees working hard in the observation hive. Colourful display panels explain the life cycle of the bee and the processes involved in making honey. This gallery is run in partnership with the Bedfordshire Bee Keeping Association.

The Mossman Collection: Local farmer George Mossman had a passion for horse-drawn vehicles and during his lifetime he built up a unique and comprehensive collection. He left this collection to Luton and today it makes one of the finest displays of horse-drawn vehicles in the country. Among the treasures is a mail coach, which travelled between London and York nearly 200 years ago. The Collection is located within the gardens at Stockwood.

The Gardens: These spectacular gardens take visitors through a range of fascinating themes spanning 9 centuries of gardening history, from the Elizabethan Knot Garden, to the cosy informality of the cottage garden or the striking classical lines of the Italian garden.

The Hamilton Finlay Sculpture Garden: Created by the international artists Ian Hamilton-Finlay, the 'Improvement Garden' is a classical garden in which the sculptures are an integral part of the landscape. The modern sculptures refer to Greek and Roman mythology.

Further details can be found at <http://www.luton.gov.uk/enjoying/museums/101685.html>

The timetable is:

11.03	Meet at Luton Station (10.31 fast train from King's Cross). Walk to Stockwood Park (2km uphill) or no 1 Bus. (Latecomers can join at any time. Entrance is free. The park is also close to exit 10 of the M1. A map will be provided Visit the craft museum and lunch in the "tea room"
14.30	Optional walk in countryside (6km) starting from outside museum
17.00	Walk back to Luton Station

The visit will cost £1.50 per person. There is no limit on numbers.