

Institute of Physics

LONDON AND SOUTH EASTERN BRANCH REMS SECTION

Visit to Linley Sambourne House & Leighton House Museum Friday 4 November 2005

This visit has been organised by Alan Swindells

Linley Sambourne House, (<http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/linleysambournehouse/general/default.asp>) 18 Stafford Terrace is a unique example of a late Victorian townhouse. Home to the cartoonist Edward Linley Sambourne and his family from 1874, it survives with almost all of its furniture and fittings intact. Linley Sambourne's artistic career stretched from 1867 to 1909. He had a life-long passion for drawing, developing many styles but excelling at the grotesque and fanciful caricature of people and animals. A number of critics regard his early cartoon work at Punch magazine as his best.

In 1874 Edward Linley Sambourne married Marion Herapath, the daughter of a wealthy stockbroker. Helped by Marion's father, the couple paid £2,000 for an 89-year lease on 18 Stafford Terrace. Classical Italianate in style, Stafford Terrace was built in the 1870s as part of the new developments on the Phillimore Estate. The inhabitants of Stafford Terrace, as listed in the 1871 census, were professional men including retired officers, senior civil servants, tradesmen etc. The arrival of an artist at no.18 Stafford Terrace was a novelty. The young couple decided to furnish their home in the fashionable 'aesthetic' or artistic style of the period. They lived in the house for the next 36 years and, although they made some alterations, the basic decorative scheme remains the same today.

Leighton House Museum <http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/LeightonHouseMuseum/general/> is the former studio-house of the great Victorian artist Frederic, Lord Leighton (1830-1896). Located on the edge of London's Holland Park, the house is one of the most extraordinary buildings of the nineteenth century.

The sumptuous interiors are hung with important paintings by Leighton and his contemporaries including John Everett Millais, Edward Burne-Jones and George Frederick Watts.

The son of a Scarborough doctor, Leighton's career was jump-started by strong parental support, which just shows what could be achieved on the rare occasion when Victorian middle class parents bucked the cliché; extensive travel in his youth gave him an early knowledge of Continental schools and several foreign languages. A most diligent worker, Leighton made steady progress up the greasy pole of the official art world, reaching the top in 1878, when he was elected President of the RA; Leighton was immensely suited to the diplomacy demanded by the job, but it is generally believed that the workload contributed to his fairly early death, which occurred just a few days after his (unique) ennoblement.

Meet at Linley Sambourne House, which is located at 18 Stafford Terrace, W8 - just a two minute walk from Kensington High Street and the Commonwealth Institute. If you walk west along Kensington High Street, in the direction of the Commonwealth Institute, turn right into Phillimore Gardens and take the second right into Stafford Terrace. The visit will start at 14.00.

If some members want to meet for lunch before the visit, assemble at High St Kensington station at 12.00 and Alan will escort us (tick box on the reply form). Numbers are limited to 24, cost (not including lunch) is £10 pp. Please note there will be a fair amount of walking and standing over the three hours and **this visit is on a Friday**.