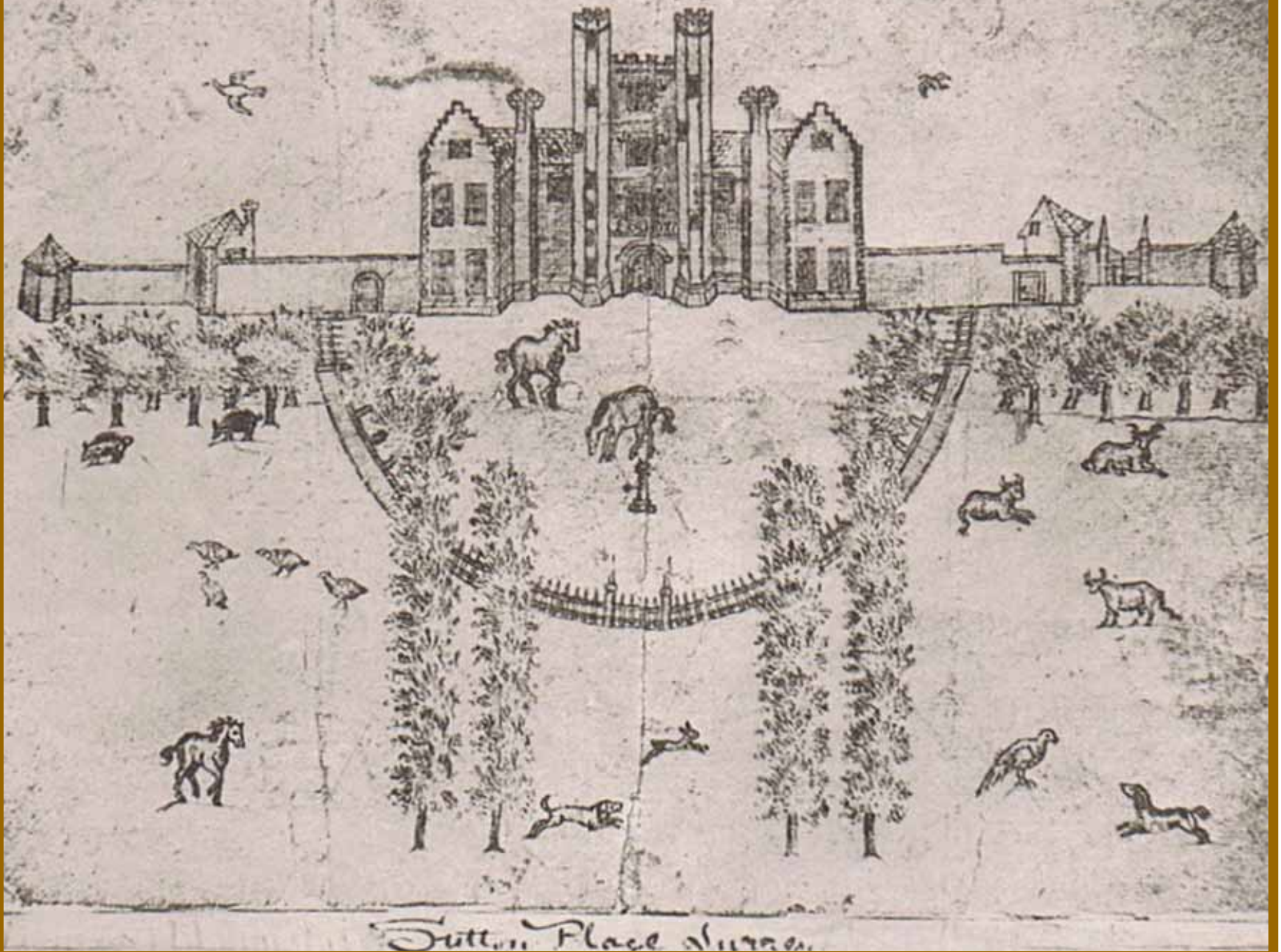


# THE BUILDING OF SUTTON PLACE. SIR RICHARD WESTON'S GRAND DESIGN.

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**A** lot of people refer to Sutton Place, Guildford – but the house (and indeed the village of Sutton Green) is firmly in the Borough of Woking – the original manor of 'Sudtone' being the 'south manor' of Woking.

A drawing of the park at Sutton Place before the north wing was demolished in 1784.



**A**t the time of the Domesday Survey Sutton was owned by Robert Malet, whose father (William) was a supporter of William the Conqueror at the Battle of Hastings.

In 1100 Robert Malet unfortunately supported the wrong brother in his claim for the English throne, with Henry I stepping in before Robert, Duke of Normandy could get a foothold and confiscated the estates of his supporters, including Malet's land at Sutton.

In the early 12<sup>th</sup> century, between 1115 and 1135, Stephen Earl of Mortain gave the tithes from Sutton to endow Lewes Priory in Sussex. A confirmation of the grant when Stephen became king in 1135 mentions a 'Robert de Hech' who may have held the tithes (and

therefore the manor) from the crown before Stephen's tenure.

By the 14<sup>th</sup> century the Manor of Sutton had been 'merged' with the Manor of Woking and in 1329 the manor house at Sutton was described as 'ruinous'. By 1353 the only building of any worth was the dovecote, although a list of structures in 1382 lists a 'tiled grange with two porches and doors, a byre, a cowshed, a house for straw covered with straw, a dairy house, a granary or storehouse with tiled stable' and a chapel (as well as the tiled dovecote).

By the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century there was probably very little there.

On the 7th May, 1521, the Manor of Sutton (the south manor of Woking) was granted by Henry

VIII to one of his couriers, Sir Richard Weston.

Weston (who was born in about 1465) was made the Governor of Guernsey in 1509 and in 1511 he served under Thomas, Lord Darcy, assisting Ferdinand, King of Spain in his fight against the Moors. Three years later Richard Weston was knighted by Henry VIII. He quickly rose up the ranks in the court, being made Knight of the Body in 1516 and Knight of the Bath two years later. In 1520 he accompanied Henry to the Field of the Cloth of Gold.

His big breakthrough, however, came in 1521 when he sat on the jury which tried and condemned to death Edward Stafford, the 3rd Duke of Buckingham. The Duke was executed on the 7th May, 1521 – the same day Sir Richard was granted Sutton!





At this stage, of course, there was no manor house at Sutton, and it was to be a few years before work would begin on a new house and site about a quarter of a mile to the south of the original one.

Sir Richard had served under the Duke of Suffolk in France (in 1523), been created Treasurer of Calais (1525) and Under Treasurer of England (1528). A person of such status needed a house to match, and so in the late 1520's work began on the new Manor House at Sutton.

Sutton Place was one of the first major country houses in England to have no moat or form of

defence. Sir Richard had seen many fine houses on his travels abroad, and he chose an Italian style for his new house in Woking, probably employing Italian builders and craftsmen – some of whom may have worked on Hampton Court.

Sutton Place was one of the first in this country to use terracotta in a structural as well as decorative way with door surrounds, window jambs, parapets, plinth cappings and turrets, with plaques of Sir Richard's initials and winged cherubs to be found everywhere.

Sir Richard was a descendant of the Weston's of Boston in Lincolnshire, but his wife Ann was



Stained glass windows in the library (above left) and other rooms displayed the Tudor Rose and other emblems of Henry VIII. It is thought some may have been salvaged in the 17<sup>th</sup> century from the ruins of Woking Palace.

Above one of the doorways displays the terracotta motifs of winged cherubs, whilst below is another drawing showing the North Wing in the later part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century





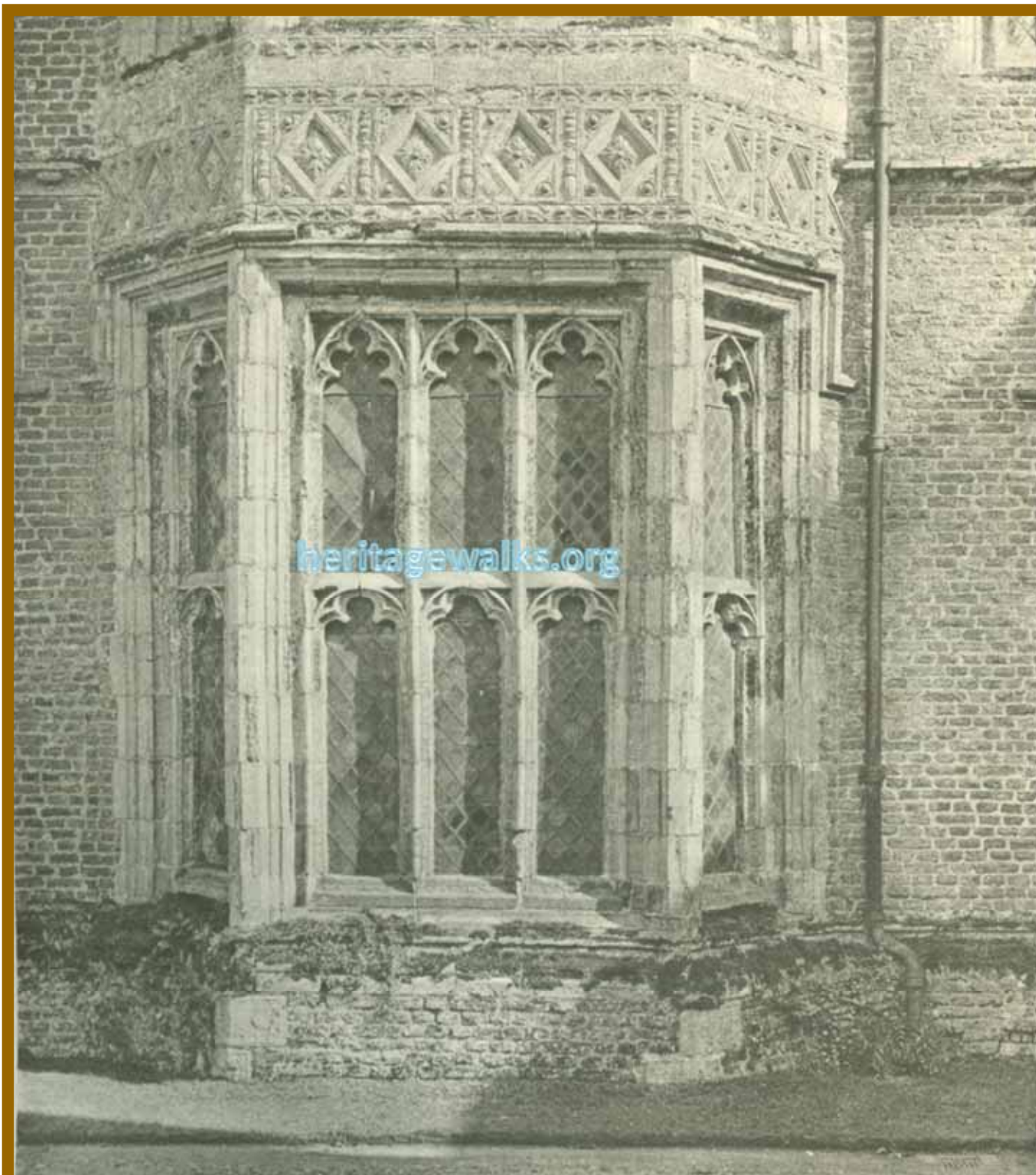
the daughter and co-heir of Oliver Sandes of Shere, which might explain why the family settled in this area. They had two daughters (Catherine and Margaret) and a son, Francis.

He was born about 1515 and in 1530 married Anne the daughter of Sir Christopher Pickering, who since her father died in 1516 had been made a ward of the Weston's - so the two must have grown up together.

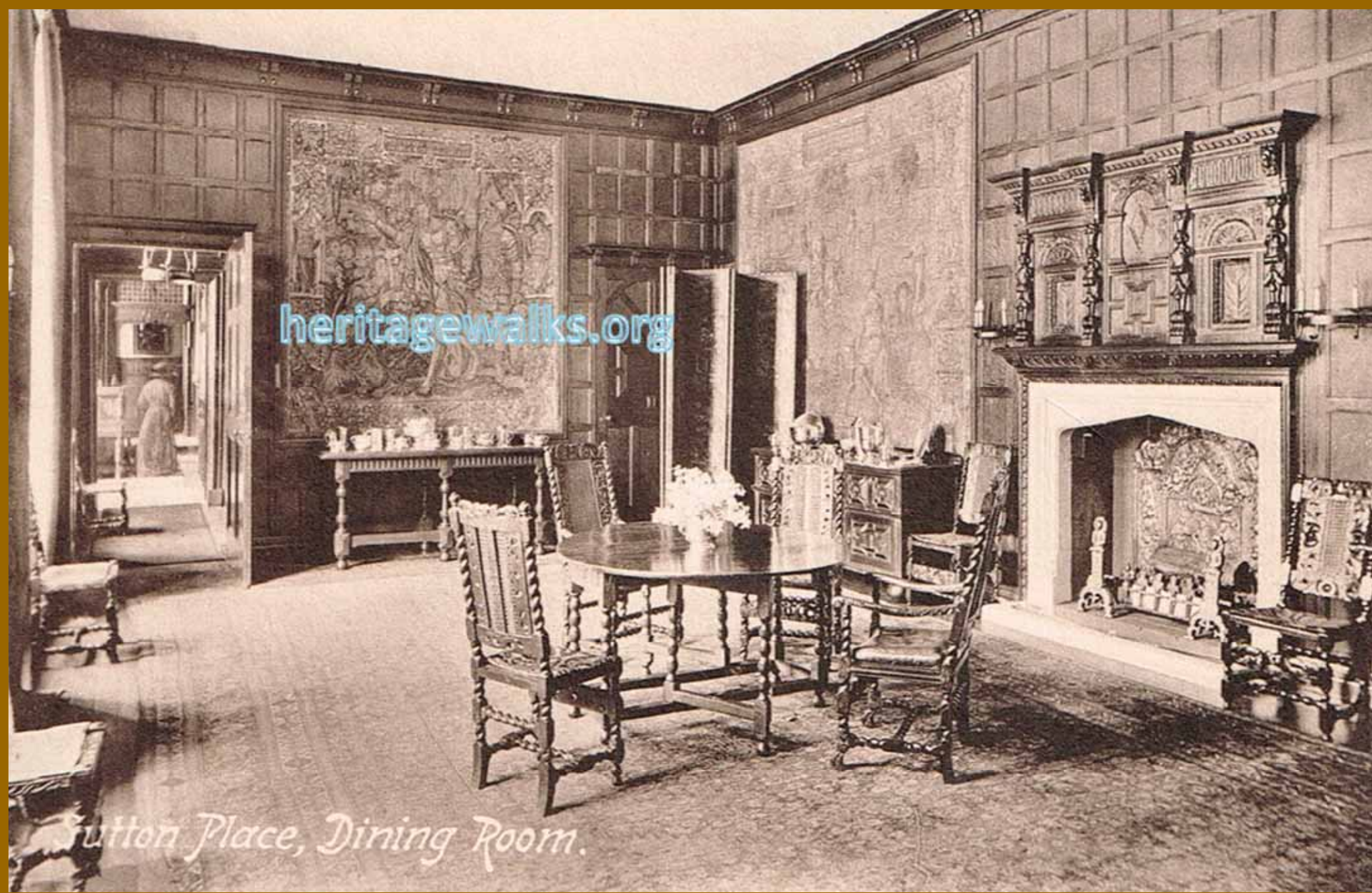
In 1532 Francis was appointed a Gentleman of the Privy Chamber, and in 1533 upon Henry VIII's marriage to Anne Boleyn was knighted, becoming like his father a Knight of the Bath. It must have been a tremendous time for the Weston family because in the same year Henry VIII visited Sutton Place and Sir Francis' name frequently appears in the Kings accounts of that time. One entry reads '£6 paid to my Lorde of Richeford for th'use of Maister Weston for four games which he won of the King's grace at Tennes'. Other items record losses by the King to Francis at dice, bowls, 'imperiall' and a game noted in the accounts as 'Pope July's Game'. He probably didn't realise it, but beating the King at so many sports and games was probably not a good idea.

In 1536 when Henry had tired of Anne Boleyn, Sir Francis got caught up in the affair. Indeed he was accused of adultery with the queen and on the 4<sup>th</sup> May was arrested and sent to the Tower of London. He pleaded not guilty but was convicted and sentenced to death, being executed on the 17<sup>th</sup> May and buried in the churchyard of St Peter's in the Tower.

Ironically, perhaps, it was after a visit by Anne Boleyn's daughter, Elizabeth I, in 1561 that a fire broke out in the original north range of the house. It was finally demolished in 1784 – although the area to the front of the house is still known as 'the courtyard'.



Sutton Place was one of the first undefended country houses to be built in this country with its large bay windows and delicate terracotta work.. Inside tapestries and panelling adorn the walls of the dining room.



*Sutton Place, Dining Room.*



# FAMILY FUN IN THE 80's AT THE SUTTON PARK TRAINING DIGS



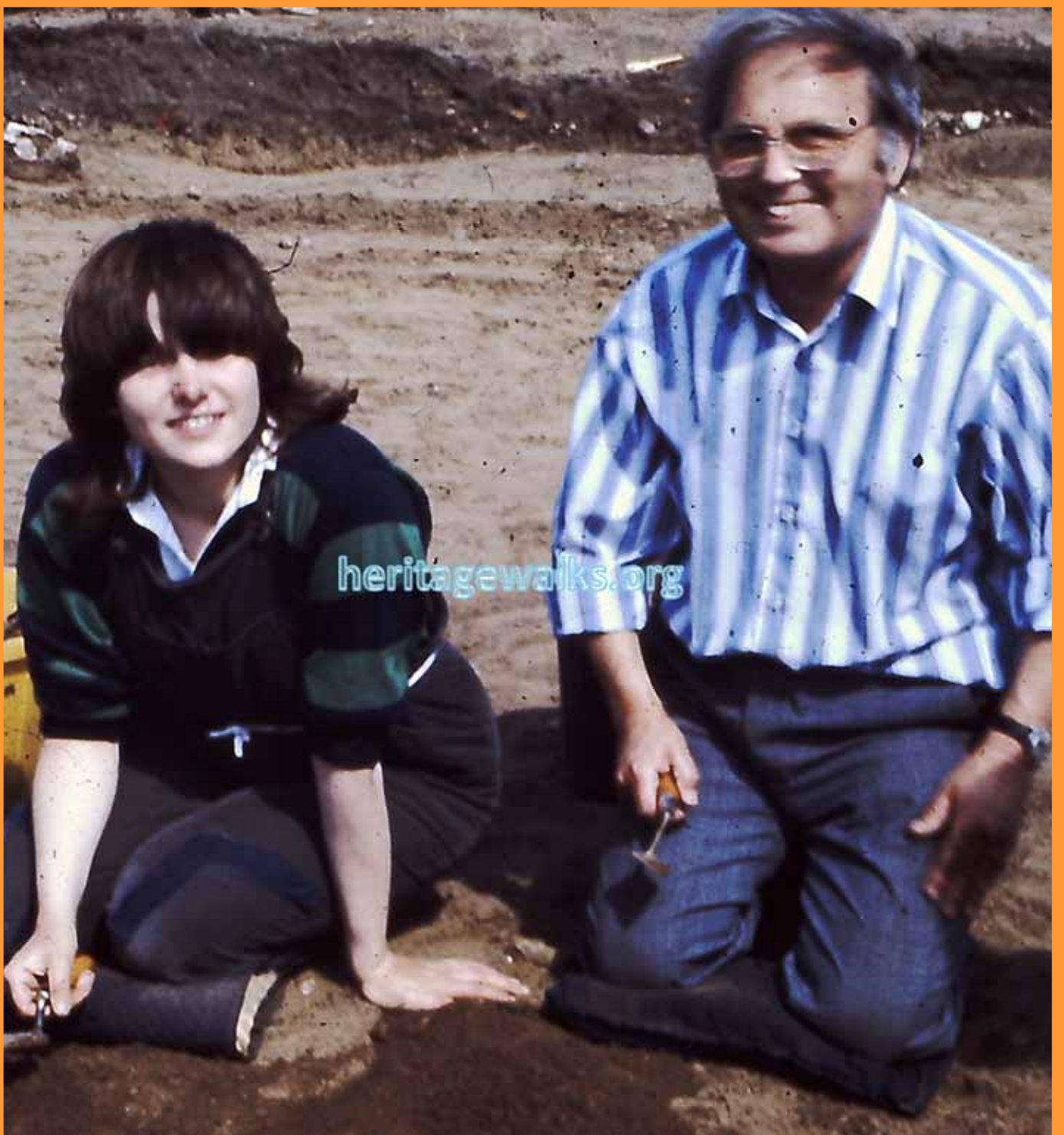
Between 1978 and 1986 the Surrey Archaeological Society (and others) carried out excavations in the extended churchyard of St Edward's Church at Sutton Park. The aim was to discover the site of the original manor house of 'Sudtone' and although early to mid Saxon and Saxo-Norman pottery was found on the site (mainly through field walking), there were no features that definitely dated from that period. The earliest feature discovered was a possibly 13<sup>th</sup> century ditch complex, succeeded by three buildings (two of which were probably 14<sup>th</sup> century) with at least three sequences of tile hearths. The third building was probably a small prospect tower or garden feature erected in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century when the new Sutton Place was being built to the south.

The Sutton Park excavations were used as a training dig (much like the ones at Woking Palace are now), with many local people taking a week or two holiday to learn archaeological techniques.

For several years this was my 'family holiday'. In the picture above my mother is in the striped top digging away, whilst my father stands behind her leaning on a spade (I, of course, had just taken a brief rest from hard digging in order to take the photograph).

In the latter years of the excavations my girlfriend (now long-suffering wife, Glenda) joined me on the dig – so you could say she has only herself to blame! She is pictured here (right) with my father in 1986 I believe, whilst once again I took a break from digging to take up the camera.

I should point out that there are some pictures of me actually working, but are far too scary to include on this (or any other) site.





# THE SELF-CONTAINED COMMUNITY OF SUTTON GREEN



**N**ow called 'The Olive Tree', the Fox & Hounds on Sutton Green Road was built in about 1904 replacing an earlier inn on that site. There was another 'beer house' in the village in Robin Hood Lane (called the Bold Robin Hood), now turned into a private house called Sackleford, and with a forge where the garage is now and the village store and post office just around the corner, Sutton Green was in the early years of the last century almost a self-contained community. There was a little school on the Green and the Catholic Church up on the hill at



Sutton Park, and in 1921, as a memorial to those who died during the First World War, All Soul's Church was built on New Lane with a 'Memorial Hall' (since completely rebuilt) a few doors closer to the village centre.

Although the school house has long gone and there is no village store any more (the Farm Shop at Elm Nursery adequately filling that role), the village still remains 'independent' although no longer dominated by the 'Lords of the Manor' at the big house on the hill.

