

## Visit to Gainsborough's House



Images courtesy of Gainsborough's House, Sudbury, Suffolk



On Tuesday, 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023, a party from the Art Appreciation group made a long-awaited visit to this museum in Sudbury. Covid and all that entailed had put a stop to earlier plans, but in the hiatus the organisers had acquired generous donations from charities and individuals, and took the opportunity to completely revamp the museum. It now stands comparison with the best provincial galleries, with big modern spaces for temporary exhibitions: currently Suffolk artist Maggie Hambling. The galleries in the house itself hold a range of permanent exhibits associated with Gainsborough, as well as a large collection of his works. The main gallery takes the breath away, with the walls lined in dark green silk donated by a local firm, and each picture in its own pool of light.



Sadly, a number of our members were unable to come - chiefly because of ill-health - so we were a rather small group. Nevertheless, some have sent in their impressions of the visit.

"Viewing Gainsborough's house in Sudbury is an uplifting experience. The old premises have been sympathetically updated and extended to a high standard. Personally, I liked the information relating to the silk industry - bearing in mind that beautiful fabric is so skilfully painted in so many of the paintings on display. The new cafe and garden seating area presents a vast improvement on what was on offer before. Well worth visiting again."  
(Doreen)

"I loved the painter's artefacts - the round leather paint containers and the carved wooden lay figures which had acquired such a rich patina. The strong figured green but restful coloured silk on the walls set off the pictures with their carved and gilded frames, and the white, gauze-like fabric at the windows gave a calm and equal light to the room. One of my favourite pictures was of a family group under a tree where the padded opaque silk crown of the lady's hat was painted so differently from the translucent silk of her dress" (Jan)

".....I thought the money well spent with ample lifts, pleasant cafe, lovely shop and charming garden. The house, now open, housed antique furniture, musical instruments, pictures and other interesting artefacts. I thought the Gainsborough room was just perfect.... this made me feel transported to the time of Gainsborough. I enjoyed the other exhibitions that were on, especially the Suzanne Cooper .. with her cheerful, happy pictures: somewhat in the style of Eric Ravilious, I felt ...I didn't particularly like the Maggi Hambling exhibition. Not my style, too unsympathetic realism for me..." (Ann)

**Anna Smith**  
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