

Newsletter 125 – December 2020

DAME JENNY ABRAMSKY



We are delighted to welcome to our Council Dame Jenny Abramsky, who is taking over the Chair from Christine Mathez-Davey, who resigned at the end of last year.

Dame Jenny comes to us with a wealth of experience in arts organisations – she was Chair of the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) and was previously Director of Radio and Music at the BBC. She also has extensive interests in the performing arts, especially ballet, and is Chair of the Trustees of the Royal Academy of Music.

The Council is very much looking forward to working with Dame Jenny and by way of introduction to Friends, we asked her about her association with Kenwood:

What is your connection to Kenwood and this area of North London?

I was born on the Holly Lodge Estate and my earliest memories are of walks to Kenwood. The House introduced me to the power of art, the grounds to an English landscape. My parents had friends visiting from all over the

world and we would always take them to Kenwood. It was the treasure in our backyard.

I was Chair of the Heritage Lottery Fund when English Heritage applied for a grant to repair and restore the House and Dairy in 2012-13. I spent some time at the House discussing with the then Chair of EH what the lottery money would fund. It was fascinating looking at the original plans and decorative scheme, the debate gold leaf vs not gold leaf. And then to see the glory of the Library in its original colour scheme has been a wonderful experience. Those who love Kenwood have a lot to thank Lottery players for.

What is your favourite aspect of Kenwood and its collection? Do you have a favourite painting?

I had a print of the Vermeer on the wall of my bedroom so I can honestly say that Kenwood helped shape my view of the world. Every time I go to Kenwood, I head for the Rembrandt. The humanity, the sense of tragedy you get when looking at that picture is overwhelming. It's unique.

What direction do you think Kenwood and the Friends should take in the coming years?

Since lockdown, as our world shrank, the woods around Kenwood have been my open space, like for thousands who live around the Heath. But the crisis of Covid-19 now means Kenwood faces unprecedented challenges. English Heritage, like all our cultural institutions, is fighting for its survival. The collapse of tourism has meant the collapse of much of its income. And it is unlikely that income will return before 2022/3. So, the Friends of Kenwood have a crucial role to play in helping ensure the House and Estate face the future with confidence.

BREWHOUSE MURALS

The first murals at Kenwood appeared in 1928, painted by Roger Bland, the son of Lord Iveagh's secretary, as Julius Bryant tells us in his catalogue of the Iveagh Bequest. The paintings were blue and white, 'willow pattern' depictions of Hampstead and coincided with a general revival in mural painting in both public and private spaces, such as those executed by Rex Whistler for the Tate Gallery restaurant (1926-7) and the decorative panels by Edward Bawden and

Eric Ravilious for the walls of the refectory of London's Morley College (1930).

By the 1950s, Bland's paintings had already been whitewashed due to deterioration and it was not until 1990 that English Heritage tendered for a new set of murals celebrating EH properties, especially four in London – Marble Hill, Chiswick, Kenwood and the Ranger's House. The work was to be carried out quickly and with minimal disruption to the operation of the café. Decorative artist Christopher Boulter had the brilliant idea of painting a series of vignettes and arabesques on canvas in the studio, installing these in thin frames, and adding the surrounding trompe-l'oeil architectural decoration on-site. Boulter was duly awarded the commission and completed the work in only four months.

The style is a free interpretation of the neo-classical Adam idiom, suggested of course by Adam's association with Kenwood, but perhaps it is also influenced directly by the bolder style of wall paintings at Pompeii. We have cartouches surrounded by decorative ribbons, putti, scrolls and urns, and the whole is bathed in a peculiarly English subdued, watery light. The artist said at the time of his work: 'Easel painters often make the mistake of thinking of wall-painting in the same way, in two dimensions. But my work is for rooms – for three dimensions. You have to try to create an ambience rather than an accurate representation. It's much more like theatrical decoration'.

Last year, Friends of Kenwood agreed to pay for the restoration of the murals to coincide with the general refurbishment of the café, and the contract was awarded to London firm Virtu Conservation Housekeeping. The remit was to conserve the 1990 murals while preserving any remnants of the 1928 scheme.



The conservators found the walls covered in thick layers of dust and cobwebs and there were greasy deposits and splashes, commensurate with the room's use as a café. There was also evidence of many interventions over the last 30 years, including varnish spills and retouching.

The first stage of the project was to dust vacuum the surfaces, clean with water on soft sponges and then dry with microfibre cloths. Flaking and detached paint was then consolidated with dispersion adhesive applied with pressure. Japanese paper was applied with adhesive to conserve remnants of the original wall painting scheme and a filler was used to even up all surrounding surfaces. Finally, re-touching was carried out using acrylic paints supplied by specialist conservators Paine & Stewart.

We hope you will agree that the murals are now in a very presentable state and the Brewhouse has acquired a new and pleasing character, with the English Heritage refurbishment fitting round and setting off the murals to their best advantage.

The Friends are proud to have made this restoration possible and we look forward to using the café to the full following the current lockdown.



CURATORIAL REPORT

Displays

The proposed *London Stone* (working title) display, originally planned for later this year has been postponed until autumn 2021 due to the pandemic. The display will re-present Claude de Jongh's *Old London Bridge* alongside *A View of Westminster Abbey* by Houbraeken, on loan from Dordrechts Museum. However, as the Houbraeken is one of two reciprocal loans to be lent in exchange for two paintings from Kenwood - to a temporary exhibition at Dordrecht Museum which has been moved to Autumn 2021 - we have had to postpone *London Stone* until this date.

The re-display of one the Suffolk Collection's finest portraits, *Daisy Leiter* by John Singer Sargent, has been completed. The portrait is now displayed on the Deal Staircase, while the painting of Viscount Andover by Antonio David has been moved to the Sargent's former location in the Alcove Bedroom. The Sargent portrait is one of the highlights of Kenwood and it now serves as a 'bridge' between the Iveagh Bequest - particularly the 18th century portraits by Gainsborough and Reynolds which so influenced Sargent – and the Suffolk Collection.

When the House is able to re-open to the public, a new exhibition label will be placed on the table close to the portrait in the Deal Staircase.

This re-display has been generously funded by the Friends of Kenwood.



Daisy Leiter, by John Singer Sargent

Research, Talks and Digital

Both Tessa Kilgarriff and Louise Cooling put together successful Instagram tours which were shared via EH's main account and highlighted the history and collections of Kenwood. These garnered 4,289 likes for Tessa's post and 4,092 likes for Louise's post.

To celebrate the reopening of Kenwood an extended digital version of the *Pictures of Innocence* trail was created for the EH website:

www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/kenwood/history-stories-kenwood/pictures-of-innocence/

In early November Louise delivered an online talk on *The Heyday of the Portrait Miniature in Britain: Highlights from the Draper Gift* for our members and the Kenwood volunteers, organised by the Friends of Kenwood. Tessa will also be delivering a talk in early December on the Self-Portraits of Sir Joshua Reynolds.

Loans Out

Rinaldo and Armida and *The Artist in the Character of Design* by Angelica Kauffman were lent to a major retrospective of Kauffman's work at the Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf. They returned in early October 2020.

Louis, Duc de Bourgogne by Hyacinthe Rigaud and Joseph Parrocel travelled to a new monographic exhibition on Rigaud at Versailles in early November 2020.

Loans In

The Royal Academy generously agreed to extend the loan of their two paintings currently displayed as part of the *Pictures of Innocence: Children and Animals in Georgian Art* trail. These will remain in place until early December.

Collections care during lockdown

During the period of the early pandemic, when many members of staff were furloughed, the top curatorial priorities were collections care and security. Wendy Monkhouse and Kenwood site staff undertook regular inventories of the collection and ensured that environmental controls were maintained and improved where necessary. Historic Property Stewards JJ Lane and Keith Ferguson planning on the new one-way route and Covid-secure procedures. The curators are continuing to advise on plans for reopening the first floor.

Louise Cooling – Assistant Curator, Kenwood

LANDSCAPE MATTERS

The Kenwood estate reopened from total lockdown on 27 May, just after we published our last Newsletter! English Heritage kindly gave Friends of Kenwood and Kenwood Volunteers a special 'private' afternoon on 26 May and the weather was blissful. The photos below say it all! This must have been the longest period the estate had been closed to the public since the Second World War, and although that was sad, an upside was that the sustained closure allowed many areas to recover from years of pedestrian traffic. Reopening the estate also helped our neighbours, Hampstead Heath, who had borne the brunt of large numbers of visitors taking their daily exercise over lockdown.

The sculptures by Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth were put into quarantine during estate closure and afterwards; they were unwrapped two weeks before the House reopened on 2 September.



For the reopening of the House, English Heritage again offered Friends of Kenwood and Kenwood Volunteers the opportunity of a special afternoon soft opening on 1 September. This helped to trial the new one-way route through the ground floor of the House, and also gave members the chance to buy merchandise from the Orangery shop at a discount!

The second-hand bookshop had already reopened on 14 August. At the time of writing, it has had to close again, along with the House and the shops, but if we're lucky, by the time you read this, it might be open again. Whenever it does reopen, be sure to go – the bookshop is in Mansion Cottage near the Brew House café and has some fabulous books for sale. It has been open Friday – Sunday 11am – 3pm but check our website and social media updates for current opening times.

The Steward's Room café reopened in mid-June, the all-important loos at the end of June, and the Brew House Garden and Mansion Cottage Shop at the beginning of July. The cafés started with takeaways only, then the Brew House garden seating and tables came back out, and finally the indoor seating in the Brew House became available. But nothing is straightforward and now, at the end of November 2020, we are back to takeaways only. Once again, keep up to date with news via our regular updates, our website, and our Twitter, Facebook and Instagram pages. Let's hope by the June 2021 Newsletter all this will have passed.

There have been several closures of the entire estate over the last year due to bad weather, and sometimes that inclement weather did not materialise. English Heritage have agreed to review their protocol for bad weather and have also agreed to try to communicate any necessary closure of the estate better to all visitors to Kenwood.

Looking forward, *Pines & Needles* will be selling Christmas trees in the Kenwood Car Park as in previous years. Over the Christmas period, there will also be a small number of extra pop-up catering stands in the Service Wing area to help create a festive spirit.

Work will start on resurfacing the South Terrace in 2021; this is something we have been asking for in order to eliminate the deleterious effect of the dust from the current surface which creeps into the House. Much-needed work to renovate the loos in the Service Wing is also expected to commence in 2021.

In summer 2021, current plans are to hold the large outdoor summer events which were postponed from 2020 because of the pandemic. The GCE Heritage Live concerts are scheduled for 18-20 June 2021, and the Soho House day shortly thereafter. Having not been able to hold public consultation meetings in Spring or in Autumn 2020, we hope our members and other local stakeholders will have the opportunity to attend a public consultation meeting in Spring 2021 before the events are finalised.

We would like to express our thanks to all the English Heritage staff who worked at Kenwood over lockdown – and also to those who are now back from furlough and working so hard to catch up and keep the estate, the House and its collection in such a great condition that we've been able to enjoy it over the summer and into the autumn. As James Baniecki, Kenwood Supervisor, wrote in our last Newsletter, Kenwood is a place we all truly care for.



Hampstead Heath News

A Code of Conduct for all dog walkers and a licensing scheme for professional dog walkers will be introduced on the Heath from the beginning of April 2021.

Swimming at the Hampstead Heath swimming ponds is now charged, although over 60s and under 16s can swim for free from 7am – 9.30am.

The story of the swan family has been turned into a children's book, *There's Something About Wallace*, and reached the national news!

The Heath 2021 Calendar with wonderful photos by Matt Maran is now on sale, available from Heath Hands and from Matthew Maran's website.

2021 will be the 150th anniversary of the 1871 Hampstead Heath Act and a number of events are planned to celebrate this significant moment which set aside 200 acres of the Heath as an open space for the people of London. The guardians of the Heath (at that time the Metropolitan Board of Works) undertook "at all times [to] preserve, as far as may be, the natural aspect and state of the Heath."

If you are interested in recent developments on Hampstead Heath, you can visit the City of London's Hampstead Heath page on its website: <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/green-spaces/hampstead-heath>.

FRIENDS OF KENWOOD AGM

The Forty-Third Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the Iveagh Bequest took place on Zoom at 11am on Sunday, 1st November 2020, attended by 39 Friends and 4 English Heritage (EH) representatives.

Our Chairman, Christine Mathez-Davey, BEM, reported on the events of the past year and was pleased to report a productive year, despite House closures due to Covid-19 restrictions. She reported that membership stayed steady, with a rise in life memberships, and was grateful for the

continued support of our corporate benefactors Killik & Co, Pentland Group plc and Julius Baer, and our Rembrandt and Vermeer Friends.

All four events to mark the 350th anniversary of Rembrandt's death were successful: the partnership between English Heritage and the Gagosian Gallery for the *Visions of the Self: Rembrandt and Now* exhibition, the *Rembrandt #nofilter* display at Kenwood (funded by FoK) and the talks by Professor Welu at Kenwood and by Simon Schama, who was introduced by FoK Ambassador Lord Bragg at King's Place.

We also funded conservation work on the vignettes in the Brew House (£14,000), which has had a complete renovation, and where catering has been brought in-house by EH. The Friends agreed to fund up to £1,500 per year for purchases for the Kenwood Reference Library.

The accounts for the year show a net sum of £20,226 raised for the year. The membership subscription process has moved online smoothly.

A series of online Spotlight Talks, organised with the help of Kenwood Volunteers, have proved very popular and provided a robust link with Kenwood for members.

EH reported that visitor numbers were up compared to the previous year, and that they had spent nearly £1.2m on the House. The General Manager, Sam Cooper, left Kenwood in early 2020, and Chris Small is currently interim manager.

Most outdoor events in 2020 were cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions, and the House was closed for some of the year.

Louise Cooling, the assistant curator, has published an article on Rembrandt's *Self-portrait with Two Circles* on the EH web site, and has also created a trail exploring the theme of children and animals in Georgian art. EH has completed an application for Kenwood to be admitted to the Arts Council England UK Museum Accreditation Scheme, which will help with fundraising.

Having received copies of the Reports in advance, several members raised pertinent queries at the AGM, which EH will be looking into.

Christine Mathez-Davey, announced her retirement from the Chair of the Council after having served for 13 years, and introduced Dame Jenny Abramsky, who agreed to be co-opted as Chair for the rest of the current term. All present thanked Christine for her many years of dedication to the Friends and to Kenwood, for which she was awarded the British Empire Medal in 2018.

Dame Jenny Abramsky was given a warm welcome, and all looked forward to moving forward together under her leadership.

The Chairman's Report, in full, will be available on the Friends website: www.friendsofkenwood.org.uk

Mala Gole, Secretary, Friends of Kenwood

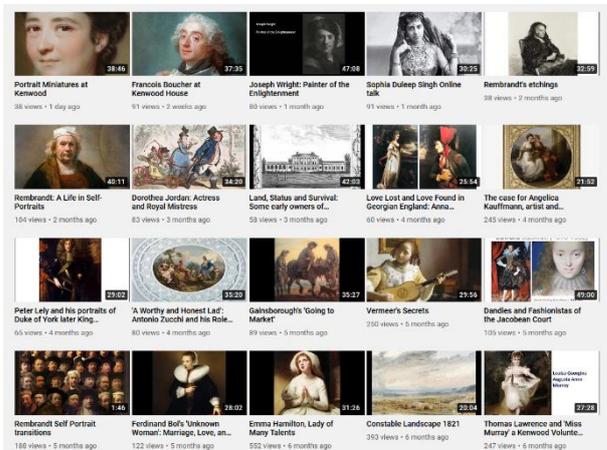
Elizabeth Inglis

The FoK Council would like to announce that Elizabeth Inglis has decided to retire from the Council. Elizabeth has been active over many years, especially in the planning and organisation of events and garden visits, and her cheerful contribution will be much missed.

Louise Cooling

We would like to congratulate Louise Cooling on her temporary secondment as full-time, site-based Curator of Kenwood, effective from 1 December until financial year-end. Louise joined as Assistant Curator in October 2018 and so is well-acquainted with our world-class collection.

Kenwood Online Talks



At the beginning of the coronavirus lockdown in March, Friends of Kenwood and the Kenwood Volunteers decided to join together to host and present a series of regular talks on the Zoom platform, with the aim of keeping everyone engaged with Kenwood and also to provide an opportunity for everyone to meet up during this period of lockdown and isolation.

The talks highlighting Kenwood's great art collection have been well received with an average of around 90 participants per talk. As Wendy Monkhouse, Senior Curator (South) said in the English Heritage Members' Magazine for October 2020, "The Friends and Volunteers of Kenwood proved how much knowledge, commitment and enthusiasm they have to offer even when our collections were inaccessible."

We have recorded the talks and they are available on a YouTube channel which can be accessed by searching for Friends of Kenwood, or go to:

www.youtube.com/channel/UC_mQasMb-eMa_3lZMIwM2JA/

We currently have nearly 3,000 views. Our thanks go especially to Helen Payne and husband Matthew who have expended considerable effort on editing and presenting the talks for the YouTube channel.

The collaboration between Friends of Kenwood and Kenwood's Volunteers has been richly rewarding for everyone, and we have discovered how important it is to provide a focus and hope in times of crisis.

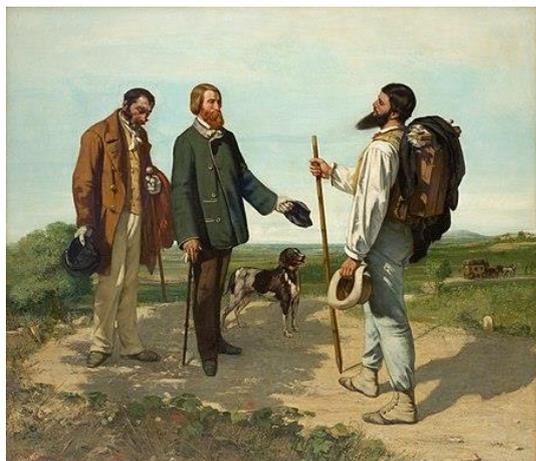
LECTURES

January to April 2021

With ongoing uncertainty about the pandemic and of any assurance of when we can use the Lecture Room, we shall continue to have our lectures transmitted by zoom at 11am on Sunday mornings, apart from the lecture after the AGM which will start at 11.30am. Details for joining the lectures will be given in the Friends of Kenwood online news bulletin that precedes it.

Sunday 17 January, **Sacrificed for Liberty: Bruyas, Courbet, and the Art of Patronage**

Kathy McLauchlan



La Rencontre or 'Bonjour M. Courbet', by Gustave Courbet

The relationship between Gustave Courbet and his patron Alfred Bruyas presents a dramatic instance of the tensions between patrons and artists during the nineteenth century, their expectations and ambitions. This lecture follows the various stages of their story, which starts in the 1840s, with a young man's hopes for a small art collection in Montpellier, and concludes in Paris in 1855, with a huge international exhibition and one painter's ambition to establish himself as France's leading modern master. We will see just how much Courbet, the painter, owed to his patron, but also how – ultimately – Courbet's assertion of independence broke with traditional ideas of patronage.

Kathy McLauchlan completed a PhD thesis on French painters in Rome during the nineteenth century. A freelance lecturer specialising in 19th century art history, she has published catalogues and articles for the British Council and the Barbican Art Gallery. She is currently a course director at the Victoria & Albert Museum, where she organises courses and study days on the history of art and design.

Sunday, 21 February, **Playing to the Gallery: Displaying Theatrical Portraiture in Georgian and Early Victorian London**

Tessa Kilgarriff



Master Betty as Hamlet, by James Northcote

Celebrity culture boomed in 18th century London, but it wasn't only on the stages of the city's theatres that actors and actresses forged their reputations. The display of theatrical portraits at exhibiting venues including the Royal Academy, Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery and at popular print shops allowed artists to capitalise on the intense public interest in leading theatrical stars. To what extent did painters, printmakers and actors collaborate to create these striking works, and how did the exhibition-going public perceive them? This talk will examine some of the most notable stars of the period, such as Sarah Siddons and David Garrick, as well as bringing lesser known players and portraitists to the fore.

Tessa Kilgarriff was formerly Curator of Collections and Interiors at Kenwood, Ranger's House and Chiswick House (2019-2020). A specialist in 18th and 19th century British art, she received her PhD from the University of Bristol. Prior to joining English Heritage, she was Assistant Curator at Watts Gallery – Artists' Village in Compton, Surrey.

Sunday 21 March, **Stonehenge: A Curator's View**
Heather Sebire



©English Heritage, Kenwood

Stonehenge, Winter Solstice Sunrise

Stonehenge is arguably the most famous prehistoric site in the world. The first monument was an early henge built about 5,000 years ago, and the unique stone circle was erected about 2,500 BC. Together with Avebury nearby, Stonehenge is the heart of a World Heritage site. This lecture will give a description of the Stonehenge site and a summary of recent research projects and then it considers how artists, writers and poets have been inspired by and responded to this unique site over many centuries.

Heather Sebire is Senior Stonehenge Historic Property Curator at English Heritage. She is currently Honorary Secretary of the Society of Antiquaries of London of which she is a Fellow, and a former Council member of the Prehistoric Society and the Royal Archaeological Institute. She is also a member of the Scientific Committee of the *Paysages des mégalithes* project to inscribe the many sites at Carnac in Brittany as a World Heritage Site.

Sunday 18 April, **Treasures in Little: 18th and 19th Century Portrait Miniatures at Kenwood**
Louise Cooling



©English Heritage, Kenwood

Portrait Jeanne Baptiste Johnston, née Maillard, by John Smart

Kenwood is home to a famed collection of British paintings, among them some of the most spectacular portraits of the 18th century. Less well known are Kenwood's more diminutive treasures; a collection of more than 100 portrait miniatures spanning three centuries. From the introduction to Britain of ivory as a support, to the innovations of the Modest School and the masterpieces of Richard Cosway, Jeremiah Meyer and John Smart, the 18th century saw the miniature in Britain reach its zenith. Yet within a few decades, the advent of commercially available photography propelled the miniature into terminal decline. This lecture explores both the heyday and the decline of the portrait miniature in Britain through the lens of Kenwood's significant collection, examining the role of the miniature in the development of a national style, the response of miniaturists to the changing landscape of art in Britain and the place of miniaturists within the pantheon of British art.

Louise Cooling joined English Heritage as Assistant Curator of Kenwood in October 2018. She was previously Curator of Paintings at Royal Collection Trust and Assistant Curator of Paintings at the V&A. She specialises in British art of the 18th and 19th centuries, with a particular interest in portrait miniatures and the practice of women as artists and collectors. In addition to her scholarly publications, Louise is the author of *A Royal Christmas* (Royal Collection Trust, 2018).

SPRING ESTATE WALK



Thursday 6 May, 10.30 am, **Spring at Kenwood**

A walk with Kenwood's Head Gardener. Meet at North Front of Kenwood House.

This walk is free for Friends of Kenwood; non-members £5.00.

Booking in advance (essential) by emailing:

info@friendsofkenwood.org.uk

or call Helen Payne 07775 894146

GiveAsYouLive and Amazon Smile

If you shop online, please choose the Friends of Kenwood as the beneficiary of your online shopping.

To sign up for *Give As You Live*, you just have to register at www.giveasyoulive.com/join/kenwoodfriends.

To sign up for *Amazon Smile* simply go to www.smile.amazon.co.uk from the web browser on your computer or mobile device. You use the same account on www.amazon.co.uk and Amazon Smile so it's very quick to set up.

Then every time you buy something online through these two platforms, we receive a small percentage. It is beneficial to all: the UK's major retailers belong to Give As You Live (eg John Lewis, Boots, Argos) as part of their own social philanthropy programmes and we get a few pennies for each purchase.

To date, we have received over £500 in these small donations, just by people clicking – no effort!

MEMBERSHIP

We would like to thank all our supporters for your continued loyalty in this difficult year, whether you are Annual, Life, Rembrandt and Vermeer Friends, or Corporate Benefactors. By being members and by belonging to the Kenwood community through the Friends of Kenwood, you have made a significant contribution to our ability to act as important advocates for Kenwood.

If you haven't yet renewed for the current membership year, please remember it's never too late to **renew your membership!** If you're not sure about your current membership status, simply email us to ask: info@friendsofkenwood.org.uk

You can pay in several different ways: by bank transfer, by PayPal, or by cheque (although we would much prefer renewal by electronic means). For payment by bank transfer, you can find our bank details on the renewal form on the membership page of our website, www.friendsofkenwood.org.uk. If you would like to pay by PayPal, please go to the website and follow the simple instructions to pay online.

Between the beginning of April and the end of August each year, you can also pay by direct debit, please note this option is only available through our website and by setting up the direct debit facility through GoCardless.

You can support us even more generously by becoming a **Rembrandt Friend** for £300 p.a. or a **Vermeer Friend** for £750 p.a.

We need lots of support, so please encourage your friends and family to become Friends too!

SUPPORTING THE FRIENDS OF KENWOOD

We rely on your support to keep our high profile at Kenwood House. 2020 will go down as an incredibly difficult year for the English Heritage Trust who manage and care for Kenwood. We would greatly appreciate any donation which helps us achieve our aim to keep Kenwood a top priority.

If you would like to make an additional financial contribution to our work, please contact our Treasurer, Ken Solomons by emailing him at kssco@aol.com or writing to him c/o Kenwood House, NW3 7JR.

You can also support us by remembering the Friends of Kenwood in your will. This can make a significant difference to our fund-raising efforts, helping us protect the future of Kenwood House, its outstanding art collection, and the Kenwood Estate. If you choose to include the Friends in your will, you will need to direct your gift to our registered charity number: 273258. It is simple to do and tax efficient.

A further benefit of leaving a gift to Friends of Kenwood, or any other qualifying charity, is that this amount will not be subject to Inheritance Tax. In addition, if total charitable bequests amount to at least 10% of the taxable estate, then the Inheritance Tax chargeable on the balance is reduced from 40% to 36%.

VERMEER AND REMBRANDT FRIENDS

The Friends would like to extend grateful thanks to the following for their continuing support:

Vermeer Friends: Chris Carter
Rembrandt Friends: Jenny Abramsky, Elizabeth Meek, Kip Meek

CORPORATE BENEFACTORS

The Friends would like to extend grateful thanks to the following for supporting us as Corporate Benefactors:

