



Newsletter 121 – December 2018

IVEAGH BEQUEST
90th
ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS



Lord Iveagh and the Kenwood cake

On the evening of 3 October, the Friends came together to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the Iveagh Bequest and we were delighted that Edward Guinness, 4th Earl of Iveagh, was present with Guinness family members to celebrate with us.

After welcome drinks, our evening started with a lecture by Julius Bryant, erstwhile curator at Kenwood and author of the definitive and scholarly catalogue of the Bequest's paintings. Julius gave us an immensely entertaining whistle-stop tour through the history of the legacy, beginning with the 1st Earl of Iveagh's acquisition of the House in 1925 to save it from likely demolition, and to house his collection of paintings. The 1st Earl, in an extraordinary philanthropic gesture, then gifted both the house and some of the collection to the nation through the Iveagh Bequest, stipulating free access to the public, but he also died before the House opened its doors on 18 July 1928.

Following a further bequest to the collection by Lord Moyne in 1946, the Bequest received its first curator in 1950 under the stewardship of London County Council. Anthony Blunt, Keeper of the King's Pictures, published a brief catalogue of the collection in 1953. From the 1950s onwards, the LCC and later the Greater London Council allocated money for major exhibitions including loans from abroad. Significant acquisitions – many original to the house - were also made, including Robert Adam furniture bought from The White House in Washington, to replace that sold off by the estate of the previous owner of the house, 6th Earl of Mansfield.

In 1978, Gainsborough's *Greyhounds Coursing a Fox* was allocated to Kenwood by the government from the sale at Mentmore. The 70s also saw two thefts from the collection – firstly two Guardi paintings and then Vermeer's *Guitar Player*. Fortunately, the paintings were recovered and returned to Kenwood.



Lord Iveagh (6th l.) and Guinness family members

There were at one point plans to incorporate the Kenwood Estate lands into Hampstead Heath, but the successful case against this was strengthened by the discovery of Repton's Red Book landscape designs for Kenwood at Scone Palace, which clearly proved that Kenwood was an intact 'gentleman's park' of historic interest.

The visit by the Queen to a concert in the grounds, and of course the major £6m restoration project in 2013, brought us up to date, and everyone, even non-stout

drinkers, were ready to concur with the final slide of Julius Bryant's presentation – 'Guinness is good for you!'

Following Julius Bryant's lecture, eighty Friends and guests sat down for supper in the Orangery and Lord Iveagh cut the Kenwood anniversary cake he had kindly provided from the Elveden Estate Food Hall.

Thanks to all involved in organising an evening which managed to be both intimate and splendid – to the Friends, especially Lesley Barnes and the Events Committee, English Heritage and Searcys. We are also very grateful for the sponsorship received from Searcys and Waitrose and Partners, also to Julius Bryant for his lecture and to Lord Iveagh and family for their support and attendance.



Dinner time

CURATORIAL CHANGES AT KENWOOD

In our last Newsletter, we explained our reasons for opposing English Heritage's proposals to appoint a single Curator covering Marble Hill House, Chiswick House and Kenwood. We were concerned that a part-time Curator would be unable to devote sufficient time to Kenwood and that its future might be threatened.

At the beginning of the summer, we submitted a further paper to English Heritage, detailing the work we would like to see from a dedicated, full-time, site-based curator at Kenwood. English Heritage's response has been to appoint a site-based Assistant Curator, reporting to the Curator responsible for the three properties, and a written assurance that English Heritage will work with the Friends to deliver the aspirations outlined in our Vision Paper for Kenwood. The Assistant Curator, Louise Cooling, took up her post at the end of October.

In addition, English Heritage informed us that they were putting in place a new curatorial structure for London and the South of England, which would encompass Kenwood. The new team includes a Properties Curator (London) Kristian Kamiński; Curator (North London) Dr Esmé Whittaker; Collections Conservator (London) Ann-Katrin Koester; and finally, based at Kenwood, Assistant

Curator Louise Cooling and a Collections Care Assistant, Jana Kostalikova. This is designed to make available a greater collective expertise for Kenwood. We look forward to working with them and hope they will be able to develop some of the ideas we have put forward.

One of the principal purposes of the Friends of Kenwood is to ensure that the art collection at Kenwood receives the attention it deserves and maintains its international reputation for the future, and we believe English Heritage understand that we will do everything we can to ensure the spirit of the Iveagh Bequest is upheld.

CURATORIAL REPORT

I am delighted to have taken on Curatorial responsibility for the collections and interiors at Kenwood and we have welcomed Louise Cooling, Assistant Curator, to the Kenwood team. I look forward to working with the Friends as we develop and refine our vision for Kenwood and the internationally significant collections.

Additions to the Green Room – In the new year we hope to hang Reynolds' *Venus Chiding Cupid*, the conservation of which was so generously funded by the Friends of Kenwood. New interpretation will focus on the recent research discoveries made by Alex Gent, as well as highlighting the connection between the painting and those by François Boucher on display in the same room. We also hope to display Angelica Kauffmann's *Armida in Vain Endeavours with her Entreaties to Prevent Rinaldo's Departure* in the Green Room.

Reframing Rembrandt Project – We are exploring ways of celebrating Rembrandt's *Self-Portrait* in 2019 to coincide with the 350th anniversary of Rembrandt's death. As part of this, we hope to undertake conservation of the French c.1735 frame, reframing the painting in a reproduction Dutch 17th-century style frame so that it remains on display throughout the project.

Loans

John Singer Sargent's portrait, *Daisy Leiter*, has returned from the Art Institute of Chicago where it featured in *John Singer Sargent and Chicago's Gilded Age*. It has been re-hung in Lord Mansfield's Bedchamber.

Two paintings by **Angelica Kauffmann**, *The Artist in the Character of Design Listening to the Inspiration of Poetry* and *Armida in Vain Endeavours with her Entreaties to Prevent Rinaldo's Departure*, have returned from Tate Britain.

Four of the paintings by **Arthur Boyd Houghton** will be lent to the exhibition *The Crowd* (working title) at Manchester Art Gallery from 18 May 2019–September 2019.

Two Girls Dressing a Kitten by Candlelight, by **Joseph Wright of Derby**, will feature in *Ombres, de la Renaissance à Nos Jours* at the Fondation de l'Hermitage, Lausanne, from 28

June–27 October 2019. The portrait of *Sir Godfrey Webster* by **Louis Gauffier** will be placed back on display in the Breakfast Room.

Volunteers

We are keen to increase curatorial engagement with the volunteer cohort and to this end Louise will be hosting monthly Curatorial Surgeries for volunteers, beginning on Thursday 6 December. These will be an opportunity for volunteers to speak with Louise directly about any curatorial-related thoughts, ideas or concerns; to discuss spotlight talks and share visitor feedback. She will also routinely contribute to the weekly Volunteer Newsletter.

In the New Year, Louise intends to initiate a programme of quarterly curatorial tours for volunteers. These would be a chance for the Curatorial team to share our expertise more directly and would give volunteers an opportunity to engage closely with specific aspects of the house or collection. These tours will, we hope, encourage new ideas for Spotlight Talks, as well as generally helping volunteers to engage with Kenwood and its collections.

Louise hopes that the initiatives outlined above will help to create a stronger dialogue between volunteers and the curatorial team, and enable us to better support and encourage the volunteers in the invaluable contribution they make to Kenwood.

Dr Esmé Whittaker - Curator (Collections & Interiors), North London

Louise Cooling – Assistant Curator, Kenwood

LANDSCAPE MATTERS

We regularly receive comments from Friends who are concerned about the vulnerability of the wonderful magnolia on South Terrace. The Head Gardener and his team share these concerns and to this end the protective mulched circle around its feet has been enlarged and low metal hoops will be placed around it to give a message to discourage climbing.

The rebuilding of the Sham Bridge (first built in 1791) down by the Thousand Pound Pond is due to complete in December, this time using accoya footings, a sustainable timber. This should ensure a longer durability of wood in a damp location. If you are interested in seeing what accoya looks like, more accessible than the Sham Bridge are the obelisks in the Brew House garden which are also crafted from accoya; you can read about how the Friends of Kenwood funded the restoration of the obelisks (and identified accoya as most suited to our needs) in our June 2017 Newsletter.

The Stable Block Project, a ‘preservation through re-use’ project, is due to complete by the end of the year. This is a significant capital project by English Heritage and the

restored Stable Block will provide some staff accommodation as well as delivering a rental income stream to Kenwood from open market residential lets.

The meeting arranged for the post-summer event feedback was attended by local residents and some Friends of Kenwood, and English Heritage have assured us that they will take comments on all outdoor summer events into consideration.

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

KENWOOD ESTATE REPTON WALK

13 September 2018

There was an excellent turn-out on this sunny morning for a tour of the estate by Head Gardener Dave Gibbons. The theme of the walk was the influence of landscape gardener Humphry Repton on the extensive changes to the landscape that took place after the Kenwood estate was inherited by the 2nd Earl of Mansfield in 1793.

Repton’s ‘Red Book’ proposals for Kenwood have not been published but Dave showed us excerpts showing aspects of the new design, some of which are still in place today. Repton was in particular unhappy with the evidence of Kenwood’s close proximity to London and wished to countrify the setting as much as possible (‘rus in urbe’).

Changes which took place to this end were: re-routing Hampstead Lane further back from the house, moving service buildings and stables further from the house and planting shrubberies to conceal these, moving the Kitchen Garden to the east of the house, removing the formal garden south of the house to make way for the sweeping lawns we see today.

Some existing features of the grounds were incorporated into Repton’s proposals, such as the lime avenue west of the house, whilst other ideas of Repton were not implemented – a bridge to the east of the house did not materialise, and his plan to remove the sham bridge was not carried out.

Many thanks to Dave for a very informative talk and the ensuing lively discussion on the merits of restoring historical design versus the need to provide for the needs of the large number of visitors to Kenwood.



KENWOOD ESTATE AUTUMN WALK

17 October 2018

The tour of the Kenwood estate on this occasion was themed as Ornamental Trees. The autumn drizzle, which fortunately later cleared up, did not deter a surprisingly large party of Friends of Kenwood guided by Dave Gibbons, the Head Gardener. The colourful autumn foliage made up for the dullness of the weather. Dave imparted an encyclopaedic knowledge of the trees inspected, with many details of when and from where they were introduced into England.

We started the tour looking at the trees on the north lawn in front of the house, which was appropriate as the Friends donated several trees when the rhododendron ponticum was cleared 20 years ago. Now maturing well, these trees include the following: two magnolias, a tree introduced from Nepal in the 19th Century; a Bhutan pine with banana shaped cones; a Scots pine, native to Scotland; a noble fir introduced in 1830 by the renowned plant hunter, Douglas. A more recent planting from seven years ago is the monkey puzzle, introduced from Chile in 1795 with its distinctive spiky needles.



Noble Fir

Native to Lebanon, a strawberry tree beside the house was pointed out with its a two-year cycle, the first year producing bell-like flowers, the second strawberry-like fruit.

Proceeding towards the stables we looked at some young hornbeams, too young to have acquired the distinctive ridged bark of the adults of these native trees. At the other end of the age spectrum we saw there the ancient sweet chestnut, naturalised after it was introduced by the Romans from Southern Europe and North Africa. It is characterised by the amazing deep fissured spiralling bark and orange spiky casing to the edible fruit.

In the walled garden we saw much autumn colour, including a couple of vivid acers with their colour changing with the season from red to purple. Originally from southern Europe the walnut tree here has interest in its bark and edible fruit.

On the way back we inspected an ancient beech on the hill, probably 250 years old, with 19th Century graffiti inscribed into the bark of its magnificent silvery trunk towering above an impressive root-scape.

Near the South Terrace we saw a plethora of further gems: a dawn redwood (an endangered species) with very fine fronds, discovered in the 1940s in S E China; a ginkgo with fantastic autumn colour, a tree found in fossils 150 million years old and introduced from China in the 18th Century; a small Judas tree; a Caucasian elm introduced in the 1760s; an Indian bean tree with slender bean pods and distinctive flowers; a shagbark hickory from N. America, renowned for its timber; a Persian iron wood; a large London plane near the house, introduced in the 19th Century with its interesting pattern of peeling bark and globular fruit.

Taking in the wider view down to the lakes more exotica were pointed out: a swamp cypress, a deciduous conifer from Florida, rusty brown in autumn; a coast or Californian redwood, the tallest growing tree with its vivid red fibrous bark; a liquidambar with a changing kaleidoscope of autumn colour, introduced in the 1680s.

At the end of the tour we were all aware, as a result of Dave's amazing arboricultural knowledge, what a valuable treasury of exotic trees adorns the Kenwood Estate.

Paul Huggins, FoK

ANDREW GRAHAM DIXON AT KENWOOD

18 October 2018

The Friends of Kenwood were the sponsors of this captivating talk in the Orangery by celebrity art historian Andrew Graham Dixon as part of English Heritage's celebrations of the 90th anniversary of the Iveagh Bequest.

Graham Dixon acknowledged the extraordinary philanthropic act of the 1st Earl of Iveagh in leaving Kenwood and part of his staggering art collection to the nation under the Iveagh Bequest. He noted that Cecil Edward Guinness was the only 'English' collector of the time who dared to compete with the Americans, and he was in the right place at the time to purchase works of art which came to the market due to a recession in America and the impoverishment of the European nobility. But Guinness was confident enough, assisted by his dealer Agnews, also to buy 15 Gainsboroughs (more than the number owned by the National Gallery), and 36 works by Reynolds.

Not only was he highly acquisitive, Guinness was also at the cutting edge in terms of taste. Notably, when Johannes Vermeer and Frans Hals were still regarded by other 19th century collectors as too impressionistic (notwithstanding the ascendancy of the Impressionists in France), Guinness dared to buy works in which others

showed little interest. Graham Dixon's thesis was that in the same way as Rembrandt valued the 'perfection of imperfection', so Hals tended towards representations of real people, quoting Montaigne's observations on the mutability of man, 'we are as water'. Vermeer's depiction of *The Guitar Player* seems to be a snatched moment, although of course it is highly artificially contrived, but it also seems to embody what the restless 17th century Dutch did not have enough of: tranquillity. This was an interesting argument, given that in the 1880s fortunes were being made and lost in a similar way to those made and lost in the 17th century, and the old order of the social hierarchy was shaking. So, it might well be that Dutch merchants resonated more strongly with Guinness than portraits of perfectly posed French and Spanish aristocrats.

For this reason, and because he is clearly interested in the subject, Graham Dixon was at his best when talking about Frans Hals, Rembrandt and Vermeer, but he had quite a long list of his favourite paintings in the Iveagh Bequest! So he picked up speed for a whistle-stop tour of some other 9 'star' paintings. Amongst these were favourites such as *Countess Howe*, *Mrs Masters as Hebe* and Reynolds' moving self-portrait, but Graham Dixon also picked less obvious pictures, such as the *Fêtes Galantes* of Jean-Baptiste Pater, and Guardi's paintings of Venice's Grand Canal. He wryly observed that while one Guardi view is virtually unchanged today (another example of how clinging to the old order can cause societal stagnation), the other is now dominated by Venice's railway station.

Some of Graham Dixon's anecdotes amused the audience – Guinness was only interested in Gainsborough's women, so he often sold back the companion-piece husbands to Agnews; the price he paid for the Vermeer equates in today's prices to the cost of a Toyota Prius. But in addition, he gave a thought-provoking, well-prepared lecture, where he paid tribute to the 1st Earl of Iveagh, expressed indebtedness to, and admiration for, Julius Bryant's *Kenwood: Paintings in the Iveagh Bequest*, and he provided an enjoyable evening with which the Friends of Kenwood are pleased to be associated.

Julius Bryant's catalogue *Kenwood: Paintings in the Iveagh Bequest*, originally published by Yale, 2003, was reprinted by English Heritage in 2012 to mark the re-opening of Kenwood House upon completion of the Caring for Kenwood project in 2013.



INVESTITURE OF A BRITISH EMPIRE MEDAL TO CHRISTINE MATHEZ DAVEY



Christine (bottom row, 4th l.)

On the evening of Wednesday 10 October our Chairwoman Christine Mathez-Davey received the British Empire medal for her services for the preservation of Historic Houses.

It is a medal richly deserved. In the 1980s Christine campaigned for a secure future for the Iveagh Bequest which led to a successful transfer from the Greater London Council's Historic Houses to what is now English Heritage.



Christine was appointed to the staff at Kenwood House thirty years ago and has worked tirelessly to preserve the Estate as an inspiring landmark for future generations. In 2007 she was elected Chairwoman of the Friends of Kenwood. Following a grant by the Heritage Lottery fund, the

House was shut for restoration for two years. Her inspiration and enthusiasm during that period ensured that the Friends' activities, visits and lectures flourished. Under her guidance the Friends raised £45,000 for the renewal of the Entrance Hall.

The Investiture took place at Loseley Park near Guildford, the family home of Mr Michael More-Molyneux, Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Surrey. Dressed in a splendid uniform complete with ceremonial sword, he presented the awards to the proud recipients.

The Ceremony took place in the Great Hall lined with family portraits and with a Minstrels' Gallery. There were nine recipients accompanied by family and friends. Representatives of Surrey County Council were also

present. It was a memorable occasion - quite formal but also relaxed.

After the ceremony and group photos of the recipients wearing their medals, we moved to the Drawing Room to enjoy refreshments and canapés. It was an opportunity to talk to other medal holders and their companions. Their achievements, dedication and tireless service to their communities were impressive.

There were many fascinating examples of selfless public service and determination. Our host the Lord Lieutenant and his wife circulated, making us very welcome.

Gill Hopkins, FoK

LECTURES AND VISITS JANUARY TO JUNE 2019

Lectures

Lectures begin at 11.00 am in the Lecture Room.

The lecture on **14 April** begins at 11.30 am, following the AGM.

Seating is limited in the Lecture Room due to fire regulations. The Lecture Room is open from 10.30am.

Sunday 13 January, **Turner's Watercolour Technique**
Nicola Moorby

Sunday 17 February, **Book and paper conservation of the Andover Albums: a collaborative project**
Lorraine Bryant

Sunday 17 March, **Elizabethan Treasures: Miniatures by Hilliard and Oliver**
Catharine MacLeod

Sunday 14 April, (at 11.30 am following AGM)
Sargent and the Portrait Charcoals
Richard Ormond

Sunday 19 May, **From Berlin to Belsize Park: Émigré Architects and Émigré Homes in the 1930s**
Dr Alan Powers

Sunday 16 June, **Belonging and not Belonging: The Immigrant Experience in Modern British Art**
Monica Bohm-Duchen

Visits

Thursday 24 January, **The Vintners' Company**



Vintners' Hall, 68 Upper Thames Street, London EC4V 3BG at **10.45 am**

The cost is £13 for admission and the tour.

Wednesday 6 March, **Two Temple Place**



2, Temple Place, London WC2R 3BD at **10.45 am**

The cost is £14 for admission and the tour.

FOR FULL DETAILS OF LECTURES AND EVENTS SEE THE EVENTS SHEET AND WEBSITE

SPRING ESTATE WALK



Wednesday 10 April, 10.30 am, **The Fact or Folklore of Plants 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.

Please contact Elizabeth Inglis on 020 8450 8802 or via email efinglis@dsl.pipex.com

NOMINATE THE FRIENDS OF KENWOOD AS YOUR FAVOURITE CHARITY FOR YOUR ONLINE SHOPPING!

Have you noticed every Newsletter includes this reminder? If you possibly can, please sign up to Give As You Live. It is a platform through which you can access most of the UK's retailers online. You just have to register, nominate FOK as your charity, and then every time you buy something online, we receive a small percentage from the retailer. It is beneficial to all: the retailers can show they are socially responsible, we get a few pennies for each purchase, and you can feel better that a percentage of your purchase is not going to offshore online companies.

Register at www.giveasyoulive.com/join/kenwoodfriends.

To date, we have received nearly £400 in these small donations, so it's worth doing!

MEMBERSHIP

It's never too late to renew your membership!

You can pay in several different ways: by cheque (made payable to 'The Friends of Kenwood'), by standing order, by bank transfer or by PayPal.

For payment by standing order and 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.

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 really need lots of support, so please encourage your friends to become Friends too!

Why not buy a subscription as a Christmas present?

SUPPORTING THE FRIENDS OF KENWOOD

We rely on your support to keep our high profile at Kenwood House, and your donations are welcome in increasingly challenging times. Kenwood is under the care of The English Heritage Trust which has to be self-funding by 2023. Our aim at the Friends of Kenwood is 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%.

We have recently received two substantial bequests, one from the estate of the late Leone Westbury, and one from the estate of the late Melinda Harris. We are most grateful for both of these bequests, which have considerably improved our financial position and thus helped us to continue our active role in Kenwood projects.

VERMEER AND REMBRANDT FRIENDS

The Friends would like to extend grateful thanks to the following for continuing to support us as Vermeer and Rembrandt Friends:

Chris Carter, Elizabeth Meek

CORPORATE BENEFACTORS

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





George Chaldezos, FoK

