



THE FRIENDS OF KENWOOD

Newsletter No. 108

June 2012

WONDERFUL NEWS!

The Heritage Lottery Fund has recently awarded English Heritage a grant of £3.9 million towards the Caring for Kenwood project, the major programme of repair and conservation work which is now underway at Kenwood. Work includes critical repairs to the main house roof and exteriors, re-presentation of the stunning Robert Adam interiors, rescue of Kenwood Dairy and a new programme of education and participation.

English Heritage will be holding a **Garden Party** at Kenwood on Saturday 16th June 2012, 11am-4pm to celebrate this exciting new project. Please join us at the event to find out more about the work taking place at Kenwood and how you can get involved. Visit www.english-heritage.org.uk to find out more. The Friends will have a stall.

THE TREASURES OF KENWOOD HOUSE ON TOUR

Forty-eight paintings of the Kenwood collection are 'on tour' in the USA. Preparation for such a great number to travel needed careful planning.

Firstly, the condition of each painting and frame was recorded, photographed and documented.

Fortunately, they were mainly found to be in good condition. Some frames were flaking or structurally unstable such as those surrounding Gainsborough's 'Countess Howe' and 'Hounds Hunting the Fox'. A frame conservator stabilised them, and later both painting and frame were dusted. The paintings were additionally surface-cleaned. Often paintings improved much in colour and clarity.

There were some works where the necessary tension of canvas could not be achieved, making them very vulnerable to movement and vibration. In such cases sailcloth was attached to the reverse of the stretcher, and threaded behind the cross members.



Hals' portrait of Pieter van den Broecke is examined for flaking paint by conservators Chantal-Helen Thuer and Krista Blessley

HARD HAT TOUR 4th April 2012

One chilly April morning five Council members met to view the restoration work on the Service Wing. The whole area was covered and a scaffolding walkway surrounded the roof. Ann Towers Project Manager for Kenwood and Andy Wilkinson led the way describing what had been done and what was to come. It was fascinating to see how the entire roof structure had been stripped of tiles, the condition of the timbers examined and the roof relined and ready for new Welsh slates to be hung. The tiles are not uniform but graduated in size for aesthetic reasons – the smallest at the top. The original lead gutters and downpipes needed renovation. The old lead has been stripped (sold for scrap) and new deeper lead gutters installed. The 'hot work' or welding of the lead is not done in situ for safety reasons. No welding is done within three hours of the site closing to allow time for elements to cool. A team of lightning conductor experts were installing the necessary wiring.

Brickwork has had to be repaired and care has been taken to reuse the original bricks.



We also looked at the ground level columns. Research has shown that the original finish was lead paint sprayed with a fine layer of sand to give a stone finish. Ways of how to achieve this

using safer technology are being examined. The team working on the site admires the superb workmanship of the 18th century builders especially bearing in mind the tools at that time. They enjoy the challenges and discoveries of today's exciting project.

A JACOBAN CELEBRATION

20th March 2012

It was indeed an evening of wine, music and dance. Sounds of merriment and laughter filled the air as guests left after a performance of dance in the Orangery by the graceful Nonsuch Company in period costume. We were treated to a series of delightful 17th Century dances that were courtly yet



playfully flirtatious. We were also invited to take part and take part we did!

At the beginning of the evening the Quartet Juliet in the Orangery set the scene. Before the dancing we enjoyed a tour of the House with entertainment in three rooms. Upstairs, Friends were introduced by Laura Houlston, Curator Collections London and East, English Heritage, to the Suffolk Collection of

Jacobean portraits. Julius Bryant, Keeper of Word & Image at the Victoria & Albert Museum, managed to ignore his favourite Rembrandt and directed our attention to two magnificent Van Dyck portraits, which illustrated how significant the Suffolk Collection was for later artists. In the Music Room we listened to a lute player Lynda Sayce and to a soprano Kate Semmens who sang songs from 17th C composers.

It was a great celebration and brought the house to life in a perfect way to say a temporary farewell. We plan a great celebration when the house reopens in October 2013.

VISITS

THE HUNTERIAN MUSEUM, ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

10th January 2012

Skeletons, foetuses, gallstones, tumours, jaws, teeth, mammals, insects..... We had a riveting tour amongst them all in their formaldehyde at the Hunterian Museum. Our guide was a surgeon, and that was a remarkable advantage, with lots of extra snippets of information: while the exhibits are all very clearly presented, only the doctors among us knew beforehand that John Hunter worked out that bones had blood in them by dissecting the antlers of a deer. Fewer still would have been able to recognize the 18th century condom for what it was. Hunter's collection dates from the late 18th century. It is just a fraction of the vast collection Hunter originally amassed: what was stored in the basements, including all of the Odontological Collection, survived the war intact, but much of the collection remained in situ, and in May 1941 the pickling medium of the specimens proved only too combustible when the building was badly damaged by bombs. It went up in flames.

The Hunterian has a new exhibition entitled '*Anatomy of an Athlete: Elite sport, surgery and medical art*', which runs until September, linking in with the Olympics. Do go! You won't be disappointed!

THE WALLACE COLLECTION

13th March 2012

Our visit to this sumptuous townhouse was brought to life by our guide, Jill Bace, who navigated us through rooms of priceless pieces of ceramics, furniture and pictures as though she were taking us round her own home. Madame de Pompadour featured as the most colourful figure; her patronage of the Sèvres porcelain factory, her appearance in portraits and the furniture that she used were highlights of our visit. French 18th century objects were the focus of our visit, but we also glimpsed

paintings by Goya, Hals and Velasquez, Rubens and Gainsborough that are displayed in the Picture Gallery. There was much more, particularly Medieval and Renaissance objects that we did not have time to see. Many of us had not been to the Wallace Collection before, but we all hoped to visit again.

Thanks to Angela Cox for arranging two fascinating and very enjoyable events.

CURATORIAL NEWS

Rembrandt's Self Portrait is currently at the Metropolitan Museum of Art New York for 6 weeks where it has been given a rapturous welcome.

The Iveagh Bequest Paintings catalogue of 2003 by Julius Bryant is currently being reprinted by English Heritage with the support of the Friends.

The Guitar Player by Vermeer is at The National Gallery London and will soon go on display.

The nine **Larkin** full-lengths from **The Suffolk Collection** and the **Ushak** carpet are at Holburne Museum of Art in Bath until May 2013.

Constable's view of **Hampstead Heath** and Van de Velde's **A Dutch Hoeker at Anchor near a Pier** are at the National Museum of Wales from November 2012 to September 2013.

There will be a small **Exhibition** entitled '**The Ladies of Kenwood**' about the **Iveagh Bequest, Kenwood** at Wellington Arch at Hyde Park Corner to generate interest in the Caring for Kenwood project from 6 September to 28 October 2012.

The small graphics display in the **Mansion Cottage** will change from June to inform visitors about the work being undertaken whilst the house is closed.

Collections Online

English Heritage is starting to put its collections on line.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2012

The 35th Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the Iveagh Bequest took place in the Old Kitchen at Kenwood on Sunday 15 April 2012. It was attended by 64 Friends and by representatives of English Heritage.

In her report our Chairman, Christine Mathez-Davey, highlighted the importance of the Friends' continuing support for the 'Caring for Kenwood' project, and the Council's determination that Friends should continue to enjoy the full benefits of membership during the restoration period. Christine also spoke about the recent launch of two exciting new categories of membership. She urged members to generate as much financial assistance so the Friends can help English Heritage in raising funds so essential for Kenwood at this time. Our Chairman announced that, sadly, Paul Griffiths would be leaving English Heritage shortly.

She thanked him for all the assistance he had extended to the Friends and presented him with a gift, wishing him great success in his new post as Head of Operations at the Mary Rose Trust.

Amongst other matters, the meeting agreed the proposal to adopt the Friends of Kenwood Constitution 2012. This document replaces the 1979 Constitution and can be viewed at (www.friendsofkenwood.org.uk/council).

TWO NEW MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

Following the success of our Corporate Benefactors' scheme, we have launched two new categories of membership. If you would like to become an extra special friend, you might like to join us either as a **Rembrandt Friend** for £300 or as a **Vermeer Friend** for £750 a year. In addition to all the usual membership benefits, you will receive invitations to special events, advanced booking information and acknowledgment of your support. For an information leaflet, or to join, please follow the instructions on the 'Membership' page of our website at www.friendsofkenwood.org.uk.

IT'S MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME! DON'T DELAY – RENEW TODAY!

Your membership renewal form accompanies this Newsletter. Kenwood has never needed the support of its Friends more than it does now, so please do continue to show us how much you care by **renewing your membership** as soon as you can. If you have any friends who are not Friends of Kenwood, please encourage them to join! Membership also makes a nice present! It's a snip! Single annual membership is £18, joint is £27, Single Life Membership is £300, and Joint Life Membership is £400. You can pay by cheque (made payable to 'The Friends of Kenwood') or by standing order. If you would like to pay by standing order, please contact info@friendsofkenwood.org.uk, or complete the form enclosed with this Newsletter and return it to Helen Payne, Membership Secretary.

If you would like to make an additional financial contribution to the work of the Friends of Kenwood, please contact our Treasurer, Ken Solomons at Kenwood House.

Another way of helping would be to make a legacy to the Friends of Kenwood. Leaving a bequest is not complicated and is very tax efficient. If you choose to include the Friends in your will, you will need to direct your gift to our registered charity number: 273258.

LECTURES AUTUMN 2012

Until further notice lectures will be held in the Old Kitchen near the Brew House. **ALL** lectures will begin at 10.30 am.

Sunday, 16 September at 10.30 am
THE PORTRAITS OF WILLIAM HOLMAN HUNT Dr Judith Bronkhurst

Sunday, 21 October
OSCAR NEMON Aurelia, Lady Young

Sunday, 18 November
THE MYTH OF THE TITANIC Dr Richard Howells

Sunday, 9 December
AUGUSTUS JOHN Tristan de Vere Cole

This Lecture will be followed by our Christmas Party



VISITS

Wednesday, 18 July
THE GEFFRYE MUSEUM

Thursday, 13 September
CHISWICK HOUSE

GARDEN EVENT

Wednesday, 13 June at 10.00
IDENTIFYING TREES ON THE KENWOOD ESTATE

Please complete a booking form for **each** tour and visit. Details of all events are on the Events sheet and our website www.friendsofkenwood.org.uk

Registered charity 273258

Wednesday, October 17th at 7.00 pm

DIAMOND JUBILEE LECTURE

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY CORONATION

Sir Roy Strong

in the Old Kitchen

This is a very special fundraising event – more details on the enclosed invitation. Cost £28.00 per person and £30.00 per guest. The Lecture will be followed by a glass of wine

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Our corporate benefactors

