

Newsletter number 112 June 2014

Kenwood's Dido Belle on the big screen



The portrait of Dido Belle with her cousin Elizabeth, formerly attributed to Johann Zoffany

Born around 1761 and baptised in 1776 at St George's Church in Bloomsbury, Dido Elizabeth Belle was an illegitimate daughter of Admiral Sir John Lindsay and an enslaved African woman known as Maria Belle. Dido was sent to live in the household of William Murray, 1st Earl of Mansfield, who was Lindsay's uncle and Dido's great-uncle. She was brought up as a free young gentlewoman at Kenwood House at the same time as William Murray, in his capacity as Lord Chief Justice, was called upon to rule on cases affecting the legitimacy of the slave trade.

Dido spent almost 30 years at Kenwood House and her position was unusual but to some extent she was treated as a member of the family. Lord Mansfield ruled that slavery was 'so odious and nothing can be suffered to support it but positive law, I cannot say this is approved by the law of England'. As a result, the Abolition of Slave Trade Act was enacted in 1807. Dido's official 'freedom' came in 1793. When Admiral Sir John Lindsay died she became Mrs Dido Elizabeth Davinier and left Kenwood House for married life. The important social

event of the abolishment of slavery has been turned into a film, 'Belle', mainly filmed at Osterley Park House (north of Isleworth in Middlesex as Kenwood House was undergoing restoration at the time), by director Amma Asante. To date, 'Belle' has received acclaim from the critics. Make sure you don't miss it when it's showing in your area. A small display of the film costumes is planned for Kenwood to coincide with the opening of the film. Members will be kept informed.

The Landscape at Kenwood

You will remember that our last Newsletter asked for your views on English Heritage's proposals to clear the views on West Meadow so that the Dairy could be seen from Kenwood House, and so that the ponds could be visible from the Dairy. We would like to thank all of you (and there were a lot) who took the trouble to give us your many views and who then came to the Public Meeting and wrote as part of the Public Consultation. While it was impossible to please all users of the Kenwood Estate, we feel that we have achieved a reasonable compromise.

The three copper beeches stand proud on the slope below the Dairy, and the very considerable tree removal work is now mostly over. You will see over the coming months that the area will be sown to grass and kept roped off until it has properly established to withstand pedestrian footfall.

A digger will scrape out the vegetation in the Farm Pond, at the foot of the slope near the entrance to Lime Avenue, and in this way, EH hope to restore a cattle 'splash'. The holly hedges which have been cut down will be allowed to re-sprout and will be supplemented by native species hedging.

To find out more, go to <http://www.englishheritage.org.uk/about/news/restoring-kenwoods-views-latest-update/>

We hope that you will visit the Dairy as so much land has been cleared and it is visible to all visitors. It is now open to the public on the first Sunday of every month from 10am to 3pm

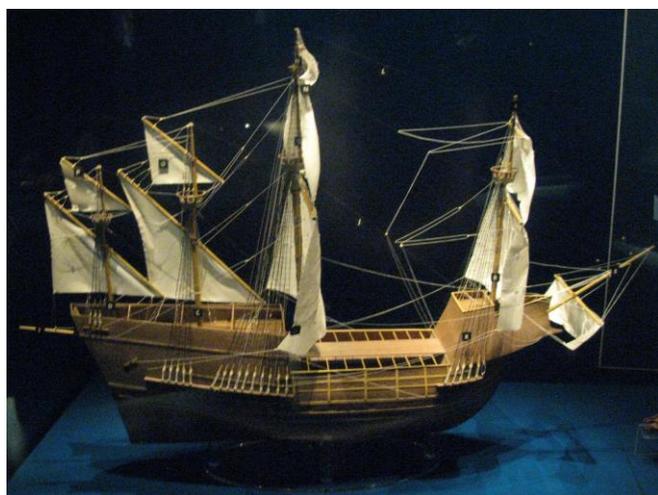
Several Friends of Kenwood have asked about the current whereabouts of the Pagoda, which was at the viewpoint over London near the Kitchen Garden. The structure was taken down last year as it was considered unsafe and not period-correct. EH will be replacing it with a ground level orientation point in the future. If you are interested in current discussions about the Hampstead Heath Ponds Project, please go to <http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/green-spaces/hampstead-heath/ponds-project/Pages/default.aspx>. This is full of information provided by the City of London which runs Hampstead Heath.

The Heath & Hampstead Society is leading the local community in its engagement with the City of London. Its website takes you to the link about the Ponds Project, <http://www.dammonsense.org.uk/>

Here you can read Lord Hoffmann's address to a public meeting arranged by the Heath & Hampstead Society last November, and you can keep up to date with where the City of London and the Heath & Hampstead Society have yet to reach agreement.

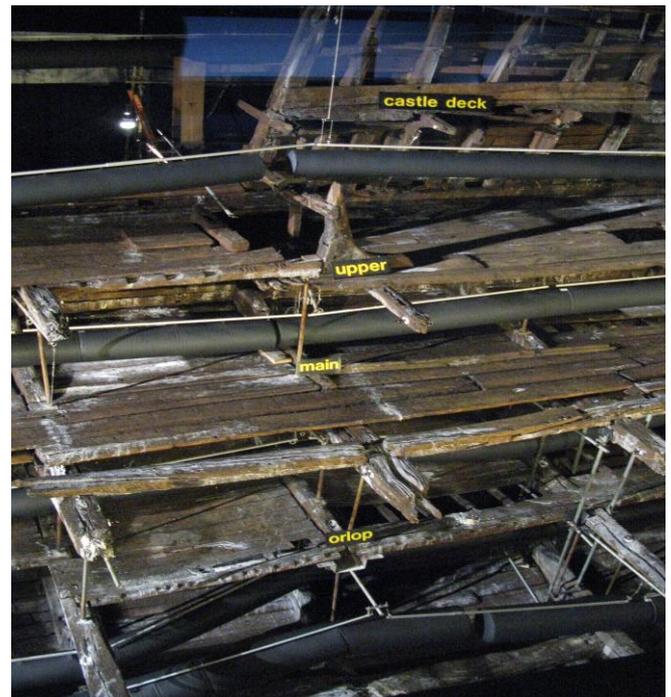
THE MARY ROSE: The Story Continues

A boast that King Henry VIII's flagship *The Mary Rose* and her nineteen thousand artifacts were this country's Pompeii is more than justified. A visit on 8th May was arranged by the Friends of Kenwood following an invitation by Paul Griffiths, the Head of Operations of the restoration project. Paul had been the General Manager at Kenwood during its period of restoration and generously agreed to arrange a visit for the members.



The party of 35 members assembled at the East Gate on a blustery day and was taken by coach to the naval dockyard in Portsmouth where the enormous *Mary Rose* museum stood in a dry dock surrounded by the ships of the British Navy, ancient and modern. We were served with lunch and following an introductory talk from Paul we were shepherded through the maze of timber ducts and supports in this state-of-the-art building by a volunteer dressed to resemble an officer of the time. We were led, deck by deck, through the museum and were shown the wealth of artifacts that illustrate the history of the ship and the lives of its crew.

Reconstruction is not complete and the staff emphasized that it is very much "work in progress". However we were able to see the reconstructed hull and the ducting for drying out the timbers.



The *Mary Rose* had been built in Portsmouth in 1510 and after serving in two wars with the French it capsized and sank suddenly for reasons unknown thirty five years later. Attempts were made to salvage the ship during the 19th century but although four of its brass guns, several long bows and other artifacts were found, the main timbers of the hull were not raised until 1982.

A feature of the visit was the dedication, informality and the willingness of the museum staff to demonstrate and explain the enormous collection of artifacts on view that is growing as work progresses. It was a real eye opener as to how the staff and volunteers have been able to preserve the *Mary Rose* and display its artifacts. It wasn't Kenwood House but after all it had been sunk in the Solent for nearly 200 years when the foundations for Kenwood were first laid.

Barry Scheer, Friend of Kenwood

Spring Tour of the Kenwood Estate

14th May 2014

A group of Friends of Kenwood went on a splendid tour of the estate given by Head Gardener, Paul Jackson. Having been on the previous one in the autumn it was delightful to see the estate in this season of fresh growth. What particularly struck us was Paul's enthusiasm for improving and developing the grounds as a fitting setting for the house. It was a beautiful cloudless day which helped to bring to life all the improvements made since the last tour.

The most dramatic change was the opening up of the vista from the house to the dairy. This has resulted in the dairy being reinstated as the eye-catcher and focal point of that vista, as well as relating the dairy to the house,

which was the historic intention. Paul has great enthusiasm for new projects, such as reinstating the former farm pond near what was once pasture land in front of the dairy, with eventually, perhaps, some long horn cattle to graze that pasture. It was rewarding to see how the new planting around the dairy has grown since the autumn accelerated by the very mild and wet winter, and how this winter's storm damage is being dealt with. What Paul emphasized is how much work trees and rhododendrons need to husband them properly; that is an ever ongoing challenge. We look forward to the autumn tour to witness improvements to the estate over the summer season.

Paul Huggins, Friend of Kenwood

Re-opening Celebration – 26th November 2013

In 2012 when the imminent closure of Kenwood House was announced, the Council resolved to maintain the interest and loyalty of all our Friends. The celebratory party for the Re-opening of the House confirmed that we had succeeded. The Celebration was a triumph! We thank the English Heritage staff for their great contribution and support on the evening and during the Caring for Kenwood period. Dr Jeremy Ashbee, Head Historic Properties Curator, Dr Susan Jenkins, Senior Curator London and East, and Laura Houlston, Curator Collections (London) outlined the planning and many decisions that had to be taken to make the restoration such a success. The tour of the rooms was followed by a wine and canapé reception with music supplied by Bluespective with Barry Smith: Tenor Saxophone, Alvin Burrell: Bass, and Charlotte Brenna: Piano. The event was much oversubscribed, but disappointed Friends were invited to a Bucks Fizz and croissant breakfast reception to view the rooms on January 21st. One of our members, Janet Sutter, very generously sponsored the Buck's Fizz for which we are extremely grateful. English Heritage brought the celebrations to a close with a Gala Dinner on 4 December at which HRH Prince of Wales was the Guest of Honour. The Friends were represented by the Chair, Christine Mathez-Davey. Christine had the pleasure of talking to Prince Charles, who congratulated the Friends on the success of the Entrance Hall Appeal and stressed how important friends' groups were to the safe-keeping of institutions, such as Kenwood.

Friends of Kenwood AGM 2014

The 37th Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the Iveagh Bequest took place in the Old Kitchen at Kenwood on Sunday 13 April 2014. It was attended by seventy Friends members. In her report to the meeting our Chairman, Christine Mathez-Davey, highlighted the enthusiasm shown by members for the 'Caring for Kenwood' project, and said that the Friends' contributions were prominently acknowledged on a table in the Entrance Hall and on the Donors' Board in the Orangery. Among other matters, she spoke about members' participation in the Dairy Views consultation process, and the recruitment of Melvyn Bragg as a FOK Ambassador.

Treasurer, Ken Solomons, and Membership Secretary, Helen Payne, also presented their reports. Ken mentioned particularly the outcome of the Friends' Entrance Hall Appeal and our donations made to the 'Caring for Kenwood' project. Helen announced that the number of 'Ordinary members' had increased by an excellent 18% over last year's figures.

Reports on Kenwood's operational and curatorial matters had been provided by Alex Sydney, English Heritage Head of Historic Properties, London, and by Curator of Collections, London, Laura Houlston, and were read out to the meeting. These reports, and the Chairman's report, can be found, in full, on the Friends' website www.friendsofkenwood.org.uk.

A number of issues were raised by members, including: the use of, and access to, the Dairy; the clearing of trees as part of opening up the Dairy Views; expenditure on replicas in the House; and the possibility of the Stables becoming a staff office hub for London, related to the changes to EH's structure under the proposed English Heritage Charity Model. The Friends of Kenwood have contributed to the costs of the newly reprinted Orientation Leaflet of the House and Estate, published when the House reopened.

Curatorial News

This has been a busy year with the 'Caring for Kenwood' project, so highlights have been selected. Many objects from the collection were lent whilst the house was closed for 18 months. These included: forty-eight of the key paintings touring the United States, raising awareness of Kenwood, and generating interest in the collection and project. Rembrandt's *Portrait of the Artist* went first to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York where it was received with much enthusiasm and rave press reviews.

Publications

A new guidebook is now available and includes the most recent research and many new images and illustrations. Published articles by the English Heritage team, around the project research, include; *'Sands of Time'* by Ann Towers, Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings; *'The Re display of furniture at Kenwood'* by Laura Houlston, for the Furniture History Society; *'The Dairy at Kenwood'* by Richard Hewlings, English Heritage Historical Review and *'The Decoration of the Library at Kenwood'* by Susan Jenkins, English Heritage Historical Review.

Laura Houlston, Senior Curator, London

A full report is available at:

<http://www.friendsofkenwood.org.uk/pdf/folder/curatorial-notes-AGM2014.pdf>

Volunteers for the Friends of Kenwood

The Events Committee of the Friends organise the activities for our members. On occasion, we would really appreciate some additional help for the events. We are now compiling a list of volunteers. If you haven't been asked already and would like to add your name to the list, please contact visits@friendsofkenwood.org.uk. Thank you.

Lectures & other events - June to December 2014
All lectures begin at 10.30 a.m. in the Old Kitchen

Sunday 15 June: Sargent: The Plein-Air Painter
Richard Ormond

Sunday 21 September: Scene from a Disaster: Géricault and 'The Raft of the Medusa'
Dr Kathy McLauchlan

Thursday 9 October: CELEBRITY LECTURE

We are hosting a **Celebrity Lecture** to be given by Sandy Nairne, Director of the National Portrait Gallery, entitled **What Makes a Great Portrait?** We are pleased to announce that our Ambassador, Melvyn Bragg, will be introducing the lecture.

Sunday 19 October: Sir Hans Sloane and London
Ian Foster

Sunday 16 November: Fabergé in London
Geoffrey Munn

Sunday 7 December: George Morland
Marian Kamlish

The CHRISTMAS PARTY will be held after this lecture.



Forthcoming Events

William Morris Gallery, Walthamstow visit
22nd October

Make your own way there and meet at the Gallery entrance 10:30am.

Tree Workshop with Bettina Metcalf:

Saturday, 4th October– Meet north of House 10.00am.
We will be walking around the Estate looking at bark, fruit, leaves and the overall shape of various broad-leaved and coniferous trees in order to learn how to identify the different genera and species.

Autumn Garden Tour – 12th November at 10:30am.
Meet at the front of the House for a meander round the Estate with Paul Jackson, Head Gardener, to see the autumn colours and the interesting changes taking place on the Estate.

Nominate the Friends of Kenwood as your favourite charity for your online shopping!

Do you shop online? Over 3,000 of the UK's major retailers, including Amazon, John Lewis, Marks&Spencer, and lastminute.com, now belong to this scheme and donate a small percentage of their online sales to charities - to date, over £4m. You can support us really easily by going to <http://www.giveasyoulive.com/join/kenwoodfriends>

follow the easy registration instructions, then every time you buy something online from participating retailers a percentage of your purchase will be donated to the Friends of Kenwood.

Donor Book to mark the completion of the Caring for Kenwood project

English Heritage have produced a little booklet which records the huge undertaking of the last two years. The Friends of Kenwood take up a whole page, thanks to your wonderful generosity towards our Entrance Hall Appeal, and you can read it at <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/daysout/properties/kenwood/donate/> If you would like to see a hard copy, you can come along to one of our lectures, where we will have some available to view, or get in touch with us at info@friendsofkenwood.org.uk

We have great pleasure in announcing our first Vermeer Friend, Chris Carter, and Elizabeth Meek's wish to renew her membership as a Rembrandt Friend. Their support is invaluable and very much appreciated.

It's Membership Renewal Time! – renew today!

Please continue to support us and our work for Kenwood by **renewing your membership** as soon as you can. Your membership renewal form accompanies this Newsletter. We now have even more ways you can pay! You can **pay by PayPal** by going to the membership page on the website, www.friendsofkenwood.org.uk and clicking on the PayPal button. Or you could set up a **Standing Order** which, once done, saves you having to remember to renew, and then your membership cards are sent to you automatically every year. You can pay by **Cheque** (made payable to 'The Friends of Kenwood'). **Please complete the form enclosed with this Newsletter and return it to Helen Payne, Membership Secretary.**

We love email! Please include your email address on the renewal form if you haven't already given it to us. If you would like more information about how you can help us more, please contact Sue Lynas at info@friendsofkenwood.org.uk If you would like to make an additional financial contribution to the work of the Friends of Kenwood, please contact our Treasurer, Ken Solomons by emailing him or writing to him c/o Kenwood House, NW3 7JR.

We are delighted that Killik & Co have become Corporate Benefactors of the Friends of Kenwood for the forthcoming year and welcome them warmly.

Our Corporate Benefactors

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