



Newsletter 113 – December 2014

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY MIRROR ACQUIRED FOR KENWOOD

A George III giltwood and carton pierre mirror, dating to c.1770, has been successfully acquired for The Iveagh Bequest, Kenwood. It was lent to the collection for the reopening of the house in November 2013 and subsequently offered for sale.

The neoclassical fluted frame is surrounded by a fine example of carton pierre ornamentation of scrolling foliage and chains of husks. Carton pierre is made of paper pulp with whiting and glue and is cast in moulds to make ornamentation which is stronger and lighter than plaster-of-Paris.

This beautiful mirror was made by a leading London maker of the period, as yet unidentified, and its style is in keeping with the eighteenth century furniture collections presented at Kenwood. The mirror will remain in Lord Mansfield's Dressing Room on the south front ground floor. When Lord Mansfield (1705-93), the Lord Chief Justice of England lived in the house he used this room as a dressing room and study. The room is currently hung densely with paintings, including Reynolds and Gainsborough, and the mirror is a handsome addition on the pier wall.

This mirror was previously sold by Sotheby's in 1969 as part of Viscount Kemsley's collection from Dropmore Park, Burnham, Buckinghamshire. Gomer Berry, 1st Viscount Kemsley (1883-1968) was a newspaper publisher, co-owning the firm that included the Daily Telegraph and The Sunday Times.

The purchase of this mirror from Michael Hughes Limited, London was made possible by donations of £5,000 from the Friends of Kenwood and £29,000 from the English Heritage Foundation.



The George III mirror, recently purchased with the help of The Friends, hangs in Lord Mansfield's Dressing Room.

CURATOR'S REPORT Laura Houlston, Curator of English Heritage Collections in the south-east, including Kenwood

Loans

The Marble bust of 1st Earl of Mansfield by Nollekens, 1779, has returned to the Library having been lent to Waddesdon Manor for the exhibition entitled Fame and Friendship: Pope and the Portrait Bust. **'Portrait of the Artist'** by Rembrandt, c.1665-68, is on loan for the exhibition **Rembrandt: The Late Works** at the National Gallery, London until 18 January 2015, and The Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (12 February – 17 May 2015).

Displays

There are two early Rembrandt paintings currently on display until the end of May in the Dining Room. They are **'Anna and the Blind Tobit'**, c.1630, National Gallery, London and **'Jeremiah lamenting the Destruction of Jerusalem'**, 1630, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

Staff

Dr Jerzy Kierkuc-Bielinski has been appointed as curator to Kenwood. He has come from Sir John Soane's Museum and will begin in January.

Floor protection

Eyemat floor protection will be placed in the Library, the Adam staircase area and the Antechamber to protect the original boards. Visitors will still be able to wander freely around the rooms.

Recent Publications

 by Laura Houlston

'New light on the display of furniture at Kenwood' by Laura Houlston, Furniture History Journal, 2014, pp 277-296.

'The conservation and reproduction of neo-classical window seats designed by Robert Adam for the Library at Kenwood' by Ann Katrin Köster and Laura Houlston, **'Conserving Context: Relating Object Treatment to Collections and Settings'** ed. by Gerry Alabone, pp47-57

CELEBRITY LECTURE

It was standing room only for the celebrity lecture on Thursday 9 October. Lord Melvyn Bragg, our Ambassador, introduced Sandy Nairne as the man who had propelled the National Portrait Gallery into the heart of the new golden age of galleries. And his talk showed us why.

We were given an insider glimpse of the historical importance of portraits, and the strategy the gallery has developed. He explained they were keen to honour people whose achievements had a real place in understanding British history. He flashed through beautiful portraits of Shakespeare, Dickens, Churchill and Mary Wollstonecraft.

Portraits, he claimed were important historical documents. They gave a glimpse of time passing and he quoted Thomas Carlyle who said 'In all my historical investigations a good portrait, a faithful representation is valuable to me'.

A striking painting of the ageing Elizabeth I, in a dress that cost as much as a house, standing on a map of England, revealed more than just history. It vividly expressed her power as well as her relationship to the sitter, Sir Henry Lee. Contemporary portrait paintings were more controversial. He described the furore over the portrait of the Duchess of Cambridge, criticised as 'suburban' although she herself had chosen the artist. But he reminded us that Gertrude Stein said to Picasso of her portrait: 'It doesn't look like me'. To which Picasso had replied 'It will'.

He explained how they had devised the film of David Beckham asleep, in order to avoid it being another marketing tool for the Beckham brand. And he showed startling paintings of Tony Blair, Ken Livingstone and Zaha Hadid amongst others, which in their different ways, captured their characters.

A memorable evening.

VISIT TO THE WILLIAM MORRIS GALLERY

'The work of ten men in one man's lifetime' is how one of our guides described the man who was never idle in all his sixty-two years. On Wednesday 22 October we were led through a series of themed displays that recreated the many facets of Morris's work as a designer, craftsman, poet and socialist campaigner. If an idea or project caught his imagination he determined to understand the entire process and improve upon it. As a young student he became obsessed with the literature and art of the medieval world, which together with his love of nature, were the major influences on his own artistic endeavours. Yet far from retreating from what he saw as the mechanical and ugly world around him, he sought to improve it visually, socially and politically. The refurbished museum was a joy to visit with interactive displays, clear

explanatory texts and plenty of the much-loved designs for wall paper, printed textiles, stained glass and furniture. The two galleries which probably fascinated us most were the Workshop, inspired by the Morris & Co workshops at Merton Abbey, and the Shop. In the former, we discovered the processes of textile printing, with many of the wood-blocks and machines on display. In the latter, we could imagine ourselves in Morris's fashionable Oxford Street shop, a rich, dark interior with exquisite furnishings, including a modern recreation of one his embroideries, in which we could appreciate the vitality of the shimmering colours that had not yet faded. If you've never seen this museum, do go and you'll have a treat.



EARLY MORNING PRIVATE VIEW AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY

The lucky 'winners' of our ballot for the 20 available spaces at the National Gallery VIP morning had the marvellous opportunity to visit the exhibition **Rembrandt: The Late Works** on 13 November.

The exhibition explores the expressive and radical artistic style that Rembrandt pursued from the 1650s until his death in 1669. In addition to Rembrandt's later paintings, the exhibition includes a selection of lent drawings and etchings. Kenwood's Rembrandt, *Self-Portrait with two circles* can be found in Room 2, and continues to confound attempts to interpret its meaning.



The exhibition runs until 18 January. If you haven't yet seen it, do try to go. And do try to come into Kenwood House during this period, to see the two paintings in the Dining Room which have been loaned from the National Gallery and the Rijksmuseum which reinforce Rembrandt's reputation as the greatest master of the Dutch Golden Age.

We are extremely grateful to Richard Ormond, Council member for Lectures, for obtaining these rare places for our Friends and Benefactors, and - to the National Gallery for inviting us. Thank you too, to all of you for participating in the ballot; we had a huge response and all Friends entered into the spirit of the occasion with much good humour!

Christine Mathez-Davey, Chair of the Friends of Kenwood

LANDSCAPE MATTERS

For 2015 English Heritage does not plan to hold the large-scale summer concerts of recent years. They share our concern that all summer events should minimise disruption both to the landscape and to people.

Several Friends of Kenwood have asked about the current whereabouts of the Pagoda, which was at the protected viewpoint over London near the Kitchen Garden. The structure was taken down as it was considered unsafe and not period-correct. We await English Heritage's design for a ground level replacement orientation point.



English Heritage continue to want to further 'open up the views' down to the pond from the Dairy, from Beech Mount looking back towards the Dairy, and between the House and the Dairy. If this is to involve significant, mature tree loss, we will inform our membership. The rhododendrons on the flower lawn have now been reduced in height, so widening the 'window' from the House through which to spy the Dairy. English Heritage has discovered that there was a series of ponds below the Dairy (not just one) and its aim is to reinstate them. At roughly the same time, the sculpture **Flamme** by Eugène Dodeigne will be moved to the quarry which is off the path from the car park to the House. We think

this will be an excellent position for it. The sculpture is the only work by Eugène Dodeigne in a public collection in the UK. Dodeigne was born in Liège in 1923, and still lives and works at his home in Bondues, northern France.

If you are interested in reading about the Heath & Hampstead Society's challenge to the City of London over the Hampstead Heath Ponds Project via the Judicial Review, please go to its website <http://www.heathandhampstead.org.uk/>

REPLACEMENT OF PLAQUE TO COMMEMORATE GEORGE LEVY

On 27th February 1977 there was an inaugural meeting to launch the Friends followed by a party in the Old Kitchen with soft drinks, nibbles and a glass of wine at 25 pence a glass! George Levy MBE was our first Chairman and continued until his death in 1996. He founded the London Historic House Museums Trust (which was folded into English



Heritage in 2012) and as part of it, the Friends of Kenwood in 1977, when Kenwood House was at risk of falling into nothingness. To mark his importance to Kenwood, there is a commemorative plaque to George Levy at the foot of the Atlas Cedar (*Cedrus atlantica*) at the end of the Lime Avenue near the West Meadow Gate. The original memorial plaque went missing in 2012. A replacement plaque was instated for a few months, but unfortunately it did not weather well. The Friends have paid for a new plaque which is a less-tempting but highly appropriate replacement, set in concrete and maintenance-free, and we are grateful to English Heritage for their contribution towards installation costs.

The original replacement, left, and the new replacement plaque, right.

OBITUARY

We are sorry to announce the death of William Thomas, Chair of the Friends of Kenwood from 1996 until – April 2003. William took over the reins from George Levy, and steered the Friends through a challenging period, while English Heritage began to take over the management of Kenwood from the GLC. He was a retired senior partner in Clifford Chance, with a long standing interest in the arts. We send our heartfelt condolences to Enid, William's widow.

TREE IDENTIFICATION with Bettina Metcalf



On 30 May the Friends of Kenwood were treated to a lively introduction to tree identification by amateur dendrologist Bettina Metcalf, who guided the group around the large pasture between the South Terrace and the wood pond. Within this relatively small area Bettina opened up a new world. A few steps from Repton's terrace we were introduced to Norwegian maple, Black walnut, a medlar and Judas tree. In each case Bettina proffered the Latin name based on Linnaeus' system of description, as this unique name avoided the confusion of varying common names that exist for many trees. Groupings of similar trees allowed Bettina to invite us to compare and contrast the characteristics of leaves and fruit of beeches and hornbeams, and then of several oaks. By the pond we were shown moisture-loving swamp cypresses and a white willow, as well as native birch and an ash. After introducing us to a venerable Caucasian elm and a couple of Liquidambar trees, Bettina concluded our perambulation near the Henry Moore sculpture. Here she pointed out the differences between three adjacent lime trees, and mentioned that the trees of the wonderful lime avenue are hybrids of the two British native limes.

Donald Gillett

TREE WORKSHOP with Bettina Metcalf

On 4 October a group of 15 Friends of Kenwood were given a tour of the estate with a focus on placing trees in the historical context of Humphrey Repton's design of the Kenwood landscape. We looked at many exotic trees, and the dates they were introduced into the country. What was brought home to us was how many of the tree varieties were later introductions after Repton's time, enriching Repton's initial landscape design.

Paul Huggins

LATE MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS We rely on Your Support!

It's never too late to renew your membership, so if you forgot to do so over the summer, *please renew now!* Membership also makes a nice present – why not buy a subscription to the Friends of Kenwood as a Christmas present?

You can pay in lots of different ways: by cheque (made payable to 'The Friends of Kenwood'), by standing order, or by PayPal. If you would like to pay by standing order, please contact info@friendsofkenwood.org.uk and we will send you details; if you would like to pay by PayPal, please go to www.friendsofkenwood.org.uk and follow the simple instructions to pay online.

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.

HELP US KEEP COSTS DOWN!

In order to keep our mailing costs down, after 2014 we will no longer be posting Newsletters except to the very few remaining Friends who still do not have email. You will still all receive your annual Membership renewal reminder in June, however, by post as well as email. You can go 'paperless' altogether if you pay by Standing Order. That would really make us happy!

Don't lose touch with us though! An enormous amount of work goes into the production of our two Newsletters a year, and although we are all volunteers, we work really hard to try to keep you part of the Friends of Kenwood community. So don't just click on the delete button when you receive an email from us! Make sure we have **YOUR** email address and stay connected!

DO YOU HAVE IT SKILLS?

Our growing membership and range of activities means that the present Council of Friends is looking to streamline a range of its procedures. Making more use of electronic methods of communicating is a priority (hence this new format Newsletter!). We are looking for members, with comprehensive IT skills, who would be interested in being co-opted on to the Council, or joining a sub-committee, to assist us in these changes. If you would like to join us or want to know more, please email info@friendsofkenwood.org.uk

SUNDAY LECTURES

Sunday, 7 December 2014 at 10.30 am

Marian Kamlish will speak about **George Morland** (1763-1804)

THIS LECTURE WILL BE FOLLOWED BY OUR CHRISTMAS PARTY. A 10% discount is given to Friends in both Gift Shops after the Christmas Lecture.



2015

CHANGE IN LECTURE VENUES

From January 2015, Sunday morning lectures will be held in the Lecture Room in Kenwood House at the same time, 10.30am. We can no longer use the Old Kitchen because Searcy's, the new caterers, wish to hold special lunches there on Sundays. This change of venue will limit capacity, but there is no other room in the House which has greater capacity.

Sunday, 18 January, **Map Making**
Peter Barber

Sunday, 15 February, **John Julius Angerstein (1735-1823): Patron and Promoter of British Art in 18th Century London**
Dr Susanna Avery Quash

Sunday, 15 March, **Dido Belle**
Laura Houlston

Sunday, 19 April, **Captain Cook and his Artists: Reporting and Recording Exploration**
Dr Sophie Forgan

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Due to constrained seating restrictions, there will be no admission to the lecture unless you attend the AGM.

A 10% discount is given to Friends in both Gift Shops after the Annual General Meeting

Sunday, 17 May, **Ford Madox Ford, 'Parade's End' and the First World War**
Professor Max Saunders

Sunday, 21 June, **Artist and Empire**
Alison Smith

VISITS

Wednesday, 7 January 2015, **The Garrick Club**

Monday, 13 April, **Spencer House**

GARDEN VISIT

Thursday, 14 May 2015, **A stroll round the Kenwood Estate with Head Gardener.**
Paul Jackson



Details of lectures and booking forms are on the Events page of the site or attached separately. Please complete a booking form for **each** visit.. Details of all events are on the Events sheet.

AN AMBASSADOR

We are delighted to announce that The Friends of Kenwood have an Ambassador. Melvyn Bragg, Baron Bragg, FRS, FBA, FRSA, FRSL, FRTS, is a broadcaster and author, best known for his work with ITV as editor and presenter of the 'The South Bank Show' and 'In Our Time' for Radio 4.

VERMEER AND REMBRANDT FRIENDS

The Friends would like to thank the following for supporting us as Vermeer and Rembrandt Friends:
Chris Carter; Elizabeth Meek

CORPORATE BENEFACTORS

The Friends would like to thank the following for supporting us.

