



The Friends of Kenwood

Newsletter No 1 April 1977

The launching of the Friends of Kenwood has got off to a tremendous start. Membership is now moving towards the 400 mark, of whom 17 are life members and six are firms or institutions who have taken out corporate membership, thus helping considerably in giving us a healthy bank balance. Those who have joined mainly live locally, but there are others from outside London and support for the Friends has come from directions as diverse as the Duke of Wellington and the actor Warren Mitchell. Now we must aim at a membership total of at least 500 by the summer. So why not ask a friend to be a Friend?

The excellent response is one reason why this first newsletter must apologise for our failure to acknowledge individually all the membership applications. Membership cards are now being printed and will be sent out shortly.

You will also be receiving your first invitation to a Kenwood event - the private view of "Gainsborough and his Musical Friends", the GLC's silver jubilee exhibition which runs from May 4 until and including the jubilee Bank Holiday on June 7. The exhibition, to be hung in the Orangery and the music room, includes 12 major paintings by Gainsborough, among them the so called portrait of Giardini, the King's fiddler, which is on permanent loan to Kenwood, pictures from Her Majesty the Queen's collection and the National Portrait Gallery's newly-discovered drawing of Abel, the composer.

The private view, on Wednesday May 4, will be from 5.30 to 7.00 p.m. and there will be a pay bar manned by the Friends.

Linked with the Gainsborough exhibition, there will be an evening concert of music by composers represented in the exhibition, which is being given by the Barlow Baroque Players in the Orangery on Sunday May 29, at 7.30 p.m. This is part of the traditional Orangery concerts at Kenwood and will be followed at 7.30 p.m. on Sunday June 5, by a reading of Gainsborough's letters and the poetry of his time, arranged by John Carroll.

Sunday May 29 is also the date for a visit, the first to be organised by the Friends, to Chiswick and Osterley. Friends will leave Kenwood by coach at 1 p.m. accompanied by a member of the Iveagh Bequest staff, and return at about 7 p.m. The cost will be £2 per person.

Chiswick is the famous Palladian mansion, based on the Villa Capra, designed by the Earl of Burlington with grounds laid out by William Kent. Osterley is a Jacobean house re-designed by Robert Adam for Robert Child, the 18th century banker, which contains a series of Adam rooms from his earliest period (as at Kenwood) to his late "Etruscan" style. Tea is available in the coach house at Osterley.

Those wishing to book for the visit should phone Mrs Jean Horsman on 01-340 9872 or Mrs Peggy Khuner on 01-435 7250.

The final item on our initial programme is the private view, on Wednesday, June 22, of the main GLC summer exhibition at Kenwood, on the interesting portrait painter Nathaniel Dance. He started his career in Rome, collaborating on one occasion with the great Batoni, and in later life tended to be over-shadowed by painters such as Reynolds. But his large conversation pieces retain their fascination, particularly those in connection with the Grand Tour. Dance eventually retired from active painting, married a rich widow, won a seat in Parliament and died Sir Nathaniel Dance-Holland Bart.

The exhibition, the first major one of Dance's work, is made up of some 60 paintings and is being compiled by Professor David Goodreau of Carleton University, Ottawa. It will run until September in the main first floor exhibition rooms at Kenwood. The private view will again include a pay bar manned by the Friends.

As far as future events are concerned, we are hoping to arrange visits to artists studios in the late summer, an event for Friends' children during the summer holidays and an autumn lecture on Robert Adam. Other ideas for the future include a brains trust or antiques evening for Friends and, possibly, a visit abroad to see the new Pompidou Centre in Paris.

Meanwhile, would those who speak foreign languages and are willing to guide visitors round Kenwood please contact John Jacob, the Curator. You may also like to make note of the names and addresses of the officers of the Friends listed below:

Chairman - Peter Clapham, 5 Christchurch Hill, NW3 ; Secretary - James Lumsden, 20 Helenslea Avenue, NW11 ; Membership secretary - Kate Lawrence, 18 Stanford Road, N11 ; Treasurer - David King, 4 Little Green Street, NW5.