



Newsletter 131 – December 2023

## JOSHUA REYNOLDS: MATURE STYLE AND ROYAL ACADEMY



*Self-Portrait, by Joshua Reynolds (detail)  
The Iveagh Bequest, Kenwood (English Heritage)*

*In her second article to mark the tercentenary of the birth of Joshua Reynolds, Curator Louise Cooling discusses the mature style and final years of Reynolds, including the founding of the Royal Academy.*

On returning from his three-year Grand Tour in 1752, Reynolds set about establishing himself in London. With a solid grounding in the practical, theoretical and commercial concerns of the portrait painter's art, and greatly improved by his travels in Europe, Reynolds quickly emerged as England's most famous and fashionable portraitist. His novel portraits combined a good likeness with imagination, taking inspiration from literature and mythology, and borrowing from the Old Masters and classical sculpture. His aim was to elevate portraiture from mere 'face-painting' to a more varied art that granted an intellectual exclusivity to the artist, the sitter and the viewer.

By the mid-1750s, business was booming. Reynolds was producing more than a hundred portraits a year and as his star rose, so did his prices. In 1753 he charged 48 guineas for a full-length portrait – about £9,000 today; by 1764 the price had risen to 150 guineas, now equivalent to roughly £23,000. As his workload increased, Reynolds' studio grew and alongside pupils and assistants he began to employ specialist drapery painters to paint the costume in his

portraits. From 1755 until he ceased painting in 1790, Reynolds kept records of his appointments with sitters in small 'pocketbooks', which provide detailed information on his working life and social engagements. Anyone who was anyone sat to Reynolds, from aristocrats, politicians and intellectuals, to actors, musicians and courtesans. Reynolds evidently sought out the celebrities of the moment and offered to paint them, using their celebrity to further cultivate his own.

In the summer of 1759, Reynolds painted two portraits of the celebrated courtesan Kitty Fisher, the second of which is now at Kenwood. Arguably one of the first celebrities to be famous simply for being famous, for a brief period in the late 1750s and early 1760s, Kitty enjoyed extraordinary public attention and notoriety thanks to her wit, beauty, flamboyant displays of extravagance and high-profile liaisons with wealthy and powerful men.

Reynolds' second portrait of Kitty Fisher shows her in the guise of Cleopatra in a famous scene described by Pliny the Elder in which the Egyptian queen, seeking to impress the Roman commander Mark Antony, dissolved a giant pearl in vinegar and drank it. Similar stories circulated about Kitty, who according to Casanova, once ate a hundred-pound banknote on a slice of buttered bread. The association between Kitty and Cleopatra - another woman notorious for her beauty, lasciviousness and command over powerful men - was not lost on contemporary audiences. Painting a woman who moved amongst the social elite yet flouted the codes of polite society allowed Reynolds to push the boundaries of female portraiture in ways unacceptable for more conventional women. His portrait of *Kitty Fisher as Cleopatra Dissolving the Pearl* can be regarded as his first ambitious attempt at a hybrid form of female portraiture that sees Reynolds assigning his sitters the role, associations and iconography of a recognisable character from history, myth or literature. This strategy opened up Reynolds' female portraiture to new interpretive possibilities and associations.

Reynolds' decision in the late 1750s and early 1760s to pursue innovative forms of what might be described as 'celebrity portraiture' coincided with new collaborations between the artist and several notable printmakers in the production of engravings and mezzotints after his works. These prints, as much as the paintings themselves, were responsible for promoting Reynolds' work at home and abroad. They also reflect Reynolds' interest in enhancing

his profile and appeal to a broad urban public in a move that can be directly associated with the beginning in 1760 of regular public exhibitions of contemporary British art.

British artists had long looked enviously at the continental academies of art and bemoaned the lack of an equivalent forum in which to publicly exhibit their work. Reynolds had been involved in a proposal for the foundation of a British institution analogous to that of the French Academy as early as 1755 but the plans had come to nothing. However, on Monday 21 April 1760, the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, known as the Society of Arts, opened the first public exhibition of work by 'present artists'. Reynolds had been centrally involved in the organisation of the exhibition and was a leading contributor, sending four portraits.

The exhibition was a great success, for the British art world at large and for Reynolds personally. Crowds had flocked to see the show and Reynolds was lauded in the press as a patriotic example of British artistic achievement. In the years that followed, other exhibiting societies were founded, and Reynolds continued to explore and exploit the celebrity portrait and the exhibition space as a means of raising his status as an artist. However, there remained the ambition to establish an institution that not only promoted British art through exhibitions but could also improve it by offering young artists a programme of formal, academic instruction. During the 1760s, Reynolds became increasingly prominent in debates concerning the founding of such an institution. Finally, in 1768, the Royal Academy of Arts was established, and Reynolds was unanimously elected as its president.

The presidency and his knighthood a short time later cemented the now 44-year-old Reynolds as the preeminent artist of his age. For the remainder of his career, the Royal Academy formed the focus of Reynolds' professional life as a painter, writer on art and figurehead of the burgeoning British school. It was this last role that led Reynolds to begin delivering a series of lectures on art theory at the Royal Academy. Known collectively as the *Discourses*, the fifteen lectures, delivered over a period of 20 years and subsequently published, laid out Reynolds' views on art theory and practice. Principally concerned with the education of the artist, the *Discourses* explore themes including the purpose of art, the nature of the creative process, imitation, originality and the nature of genius, and offered a framework for understanding the traditions of 300 years of European painting. In the third and fourth *Discourse*, Reynolds set out his ideas on the guiding principles of high art, which he believed were embodied in the 'great style', more commonly called the 'Grand Manner'. According to Reynolds, the 'great style' endowed a work with 'intellectual dignity' that 'ennobles the painter's art; that lays the line between him and the mere mechanic; and produces those great effects in an instant, which eloquence and poetry, by slow and repeated efforts, are scarcely able to attain' (Reynolds, *Discourses*, ed. Wark, 43).

What Reynolds referred to as the 'great style' is most flamboyantly personified in his own art through the full-length 'Grand Manner' portraits of female aristocrats

exhibited at the Royal Academy during the 1770s and early 1780s. During the 1770s, Reynolds exhibited over 100 paintings at the Royal Academy. Among the portraits of actors, writers, scientists, clergymen, soldiers, statesmen and children, the works that dominated his submissions were full-length portraits of aristocratic 'beauties'. Three such full-lengths now find their home at Kenwood. Spanning the decade between 1773 and 1782, *Mrs Tollemache as Miranda*, *Lady Louisa Manners*, and *Mrs Musters as Hebe* personify the ambitious, role-playing 'Grand Manner' portraiture of Reynolds in his prime.

Alongside his development of the role-playing female full-length portrait in the 1770s and 1780s, images of children assumed an increasingly prominent place in Reynolds' oeuvre. The latter decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century saw a period of preoccupation with notions of childhood, influenced by the work of French philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau. His arguments for the inherent innocence of children helped to establish a cult of childhood in Europe, which found its first visual expression in the work of British artists, most particularly Reynolds. His portraits of children range from playful images intended to evoke a sense of natural simplicity and innocence, to more complex meditations on aristocratic childhood. The collection at Kenwood is particularly rich in such paintings and powerfully illustrates Reynolds' celebrated ability to capture the vitality, spontaneity and vulnerability of the infantile form, which his aristocratic patrons found so valuable in his portraits of their offspring.

To such portraits of children can be added another strand of Reynolds' art; the so-called 'fancy pictures', that also emerged as part of the artist's oeuvre in the 1770s and which assumed an increasing importance in the 1780s. Almost invariably featuring children – sometimes portraits of known sitters, but more often anonymous subjects – Reynolds' 'fancy pictures' combined the narrative possibilities of history painting with subject matter more characteristic of lowlier genres. Unlike portraits produced to commission, 'fancy pictures' such as the famous *Strawberry Seller* now in The Wallace Collection, (c.1772), *The Laughing Girl* (1782), and *The Fortune-Teller* (1781) were initiated by the artist himself. He nonetheless found a lucrative market among his aristocratic patrons. Having delighted in Reynolds' portraits of their own children, such wealthy and fashion-conscious nobles were seduced by these new concoctions, which combined the artist's masterly depictions of children with a pastiche-like referencing of Old Master prototypes. In this regard, 'fancy pictures' represent Reynolds' most adventurous subversion of the traditional academic hierarchy of genres.

In amongst Kenwood's examples of Reynolds' 'Grand Manner' portraits of female aristocrats, their progeny and a varied assortment of 'fancy pictures', is one solitary portrait of a man. The man himself. Self-portraiture was a life-long preoccupation for Reynolds; in total he left roughly 37 self-portraits in oil and on paper. As with other prolific self-portrait painters, Reynolds' self-portraiture provided both a means of advertising his talents and an opportunity for pictorial experimentation. The self-portrait at Kenwood is a particularly fine example of Reynolds' 1788 self-portrait,

the prime version of which is in the British Royal Collection. While an enormous number of versions exist, of varying quality, the Kenwood canvas is known to have been painted in the artist's studio and was given to his friend and first biographer Edmond Malone. Painted when he was around 65, it is the only portrait to show Reynolds wearing spectacles, which he had done since at least 1783, when he had complained of a 'violent inflammation' in the eyes. Examination of two pairs of surviving spectacles reveal that Reynolds was short-sighted and would not have needed spectacles to read and to paint. The inclusion of the spectacles then is a deliberate choice through which Reynolds confers a sense of himself as a man of intellect. Malone stated that the portrait showed Reynolds 'exactly as he appeared in his latter days, in domestic life', suggesting that the work was a private rather than a public image. However, following the artist's death, the portrait was engraved and extensively copied, becoming one of the most widely disseminated images of Reynolds.

In the year following the completion of this portrait, Reynolds experienced a frightening and sudden blindness in his left eye, something he described as like a curtain falling across his face. Within ten weeks he had lost all sight in that eye and by January 1791 was almost completely blind. Joshua Reynolds died a little more than a year later, on 23 February 1792.

The popularity of the portrait and the resulting copies attest to Reynolds' great fame and status within the British art establishment at the end of his life and his continued posthumous fame throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Many more prints and copies after Reynolds' paintings were made in the century following his death; *The Age of Innocence* (Tate) alone was copied full-size in oils no fewer than 323 times between 1856 and 1893. Multiple biographies of the artist were published, and retrospectives of his work were mounted throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. All of which fuelled the ardour of Victorian collectors like Edward Cecil Guinness. In his bequest to the nation, Lord Iveagh decreed that Kenwood be presented 'as the artistic home of an eighteenth-century gentleman': for him at least, it seems no artist better evoked the spirit of the Georgian age than Reynolds.

*Louise Cooling – Curator of Collections & Interiors, Kenwood*

## CURATORIAL REPORT

### Displays and Interpretation

*Spotlight on Reynolds: Lord Iveagh's Favourite Artist at 300* ran from 13 July to 19 November and received an overwhelmingly positive response from visitors, volunteers and staff, as well as coverage in the local, national and international press.

Preparations for the Creative Programming project *Collars, Carpets and Curtains: Stephen Farthing and the Swagger Portrait* are progressing and Wendy Monkhouse and Louise Cooling continue to provide support, alongside colleagues from conservation and HPD. The exhibition dates are June to October 2024.

## Conservation

Conservation of *Diana, Countess of Elgin* by Cornelius Johnson is almost complete. Return of the painting to Lady Mansfield's Bedchamber was delayed owing to conservation commitments elsewhere.

The painting attributed to leading Flemish portraitist Anthonis Mor, identified as Mary Beaton, Lady-in-Waiting to Mary, Queen of Scots, will travel to the conservation studio later this year to undergo analysis and treatment. The portrait, which is part of The Suffolk Collection, is one of the more enigmatic paintings in the collections at Kenwood: painted on high-quality panel, in a skilled hand, and marked on the reverse with an unknown collector's wax seal. It is hoped technical analysis and conservation treatment will help to answer some of the questions around this painting, including confirming the identity of the artist and sitter, as well as improving the overall appearance.

## Research, Talks, Tours, Digital and PR

Louise contributed a short piece on Joshua Reynolds for the *Kid's Rule* Member's Magazine, as well as an 'unusual objects in focus' piece on the eye miniature from The Draper Gift, which will appear in the autumn 2023 issue.

In August, a new long-form web article written by Louise was published on the EH website. The piece explores the rise of portrait miniatures in England in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and features works from both The Draper Gift and Lady Cohen Collection:

<https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/inspire-me/miniature-portraits/>

On 19 June, Louise delivered an online lecture on Kenwood's collections of portrait miniatures to a group from U3A and on 13 July, welcomed a group of curators and other staff members from Tate.

Over the summer Louise has been the national spokesperson promoting English Heritage's recreation of Georgian brown bread ice cream. Last summer, Louise and a colleague from PR were discussing the Georgian love of 'icy cream', in many weird and wonderful flavours, and how this was reflected at sites including Kenwood in the construction of ice houses (like that under the Dairy). In collaboration with the Food and Beverage team, PR developed a story, which included the recreation of brown bread ice cream, a popular Georgian flavour, to be sold at 13 EH sites nationwide. Louise has been quoted in the widespread media coverage, appeared live on GB News and featured in social media content filmed at Kenwood:

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/CwVE9xHMRqu/>

On 2 September Wendy Monkhouse took part in a Q&A event with Simon Schama, hosted in the Dining Room at Kenwood as part of the FT Festival. Thanks are due to Sally Doganis who came up with the idea for this collaboration between English Heritage and the FT festival.

## Current Loans

John Joseph Merlin's skeleton table clock and gouty chair are currently on loan to the Bowes Museum, Co. Durham as part of *The Magic of the Silver Swan*, an exhibition marking 250 years since Merlin's famous silver swan automaton first went on display at Cox's Mechanical Museum. The exhibition runs until 7 January 2024, and a virtual tour is available online:

<https://mpembed.com/show/?m=msZflqxtUL&mpu=339&mpv=1>

Frans Hals' portrait of Pieter van den Broecke travelled to the National Gallery in early September for the first leg of *The Credit Suisse Exhibition: Frans Hals* (30 Sept 2023 – 21 Jan 2024). The painting will then travel to the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (16 Feb – 9 June 2024) before the final showing at the Gemäldegalerie Berlin (7 July – 3 Nov 2024). The exhibition, staged by the three institutions in collaboration with the Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem, is the first major retrospective of Hals' work since the 1980s.

## Reciprocal Loan

While the Hals is on loan, the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam have generously lent Judith Leyster's *The Jolly Drinker*. Judith Leyster (1609–1660) was one of only a handful of professional women artists working in the 17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch Republic. She was among the most successful followers of Hals and like Hals, she painted in a bold, spontaneous style and favoured energetic scenes with figures playing games, dancing, singing and merrymaking. Leyster enjoyed marked success, becoming one of the first women to join the prestigious Haarlem painters' Guild of Saint Luke, opening her own workshop and instructing students of her own. Her brilliance earned her the nickname 'lodestar' or 'comet', a play on her surname and she adopted a star as part of her signature.

Despite her talent, ambition, and the acclaim she enjoyed, Leyster's independent career as a painter ended in 1636 when she married fellow artist Jan Miense Molenaer (1610–1668). After her death, she was forgotten, with her paintings often misattributed to Hals. It wasn't until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century that she was rediscovered and only in recent decades has Leyster been recognised amongst the great Dutch 'masters'.

*The Jolly Drinker* has never before been displayed in the UK. It will be at Kenwood until late 2024. As the Rijksmuseum declined to allow English Heritage to attach a picture light to the frame, TM Lighting are generously providing a specially manufactured spotlight, which will be arriving early December.

## Returned Loan

*The Prodigal Son as a Swineherd* by Abraham Bloemaert returned to Kenwood from *Going Dutch: Seventeenth-Century Painting from the Collection* at Leamington Spa Art Gallery and Museum on 12 September.

## Upcoming Loans

Three paintings by Angelica Kauffman - *The Artist in the Character of Design Listening to the Inspiration of Poetry*, *Rinaldo and Armida* and *Armida in Vain Endeavours with her Entreaties to Prevent Rinaldo's Departure* will travel to the Royal Academy of Arts, London in February 2024 for *Angelica Kauffman RA*. The exhibition, which runs from 1 March to 30 June 2024, is a revised version of the exhibition originally scheduled for 2020. As reciprocals, the RA will be lending three oil sketches by John Constable to Kenwood, all painted close on Hampstead Heath.

## Wing Room Picture Lighting

In late July, TM Lighting returned to Kenwood to install the newly designed 'coal-scuttle' louvres. These have made the LED lamps in the picture lights all but invisible from ground level. Kenwood is the first venue at which TM have installed the new louvres and in late August, TM commissioned photography of the lights with the new louvres to showcase on their website and social media channels.

## Portrait Miniatures

The long-awaited new showcase for the Lady Cohen miniatures arrived in mid-June and after some hiccups, passed the tests necessary to ensure the case was capable of sustaining an environment suitable for the display of miniatures. Alma Leather has manufactured a cover for the case, to limit light exposure inside. The first display of miniatures was presented in time for the FOK event on 19 October.

## Andover Albums

Louise has had further discussions with the British Library and Max Communications, a commercial digitisation company (recommended by the Imperial War Museum) as to the possible options for the digitisation of the Andover Albums.

To accompany the digitisation, Louise and colleagues from the EH Documentation team plan to begin improving the cataloguing of the Andover Albums, including adding each individual drawing to the collections management system (HOMS) with at least minimum standard cataloguing. This will allow for improved tracking of each work and information on individual drawings etc. to be stored centrally.

While various on-site and online applications for sharing the digitised albums will be possible in the long-term, in the short-to-medium term the individual drawings will be added to Art UK, enabling wide public access and information sharing. Additionally, the EH Curatorial Digital team will support the creation of new web content, exploring the creation of the albums by Viscountess Andover and her circle, and highlighting some key pieces from the albums, alongside some of the mysterious works.



## LANDSCAPE MATTERS

### Landscape Work

In the spring of 2023, there was substantial reduction of the holly hedge around the west inner circuit near swing-back bridge. The felling of some 24 trees (mostly self-seeded birch) in the woodland in the same area was delayed until this autumn. This will expose the view from the Pasture Ground to West Meadow.

### Rhododendrons

Last year, substantial pruning took place of the tall rhododendron hedge along the west side of the path which runs between Barbara Hepworth's *Monolith 'Empyrean'* and the West Meadow. Another area will be tackled this year as part of the cyclical rhododendron maintenance. Unfortunately, the island beds looked sadly overgrown during the summer months; this was due to teething problems with the new contractors at Kenwood. We have voiced our concerns to English Heritage and hope the problems are now resolved.

### Monolith 'Empyrean'

When Barbara Hepworth's sculpture returned to the Flower Lawn from the retrospective exhibition at the Rijksmuseum, we knew it would be encircled with a low hedge to afford it better protection from vandalism. Unfortunately, the plinth is lower than expected, and the new euonymus hedge is disappointing. The curators and gardens team have confirmed this is a 'work in progress' and will review the surround once a growing season has passed.

### South Terrace

We continue to voice our concerns to English Heritage at every opportunity about the risk of damage to the fabric of the House and the collection as a result of overly large vehicles passing along South Terrace.

### Outdoor Events

Thank you to those members who attended the Public Consultation meeting on 6 November in Kenwood's Music Room. This year's meeting was well attended, and there was useful discussion with a variety of views expressed, so English Heritage were able to take on board all suggestions and feedback. We very much appreciate your support in persuading English Heritage to listen to the views and comments of the Friends of Kenwood. High on the list of suggestions was more classical music at Kenwood and cooperation with the City of London Hampstead Heath.

English Heritage reported that they had a successful summer of events, the last and largest being the *FT Weekend Festival* on Saturday 3 September, and *How The Light Gets In* on the weekend of 23 and 24 September. None of the events wrought the damage of previous years to the landscape.

For the last 3 years, we have given English Heritage our support for the current winter programme. It is generally accepted that the impact on the landscape resulting from *Christmas at Kenwood* is manageable. 65,000 tickets were sold in 2022, over half of them to north Londoners, 65% to families, and 35% to first time visitors. We are keen to encourage a new audience to grow to love Kenwood and we are pleased that work is being done to widen access.

### Christmas at Kenwood

1 December 2023 – 1 January 2024

Tickets can be booked at:

<https://christmasatkenwood.com/>

Another new Christmas light trail this year in the grounds of Kenwood. Christmas stalls, refreshments, street food and a bar.

The route will largely follow that of previous years, on the harder and flatter parts of Kenwood's paths, close to the House and East and West Lodge entrances to the estate.

Kilimanjaro, the promoters, offered Friends of Kenwood a 10% discount on ticket purchase until the end of November.

If you are a member of English Heritage, you can get 33% off tickets. Just click on the link: <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/members-area/rewards/christmas-events-2023/> and enter discount code EHMEMBER33 when prompted.

### Christmas Trees on Sale at Kenwood

**DON'T FORGET!** From 23 November – 22 December, 9am – 7pm, Pines & Needles will be selling Christmas trees in the Kenwood Car Park as in previous years. We hope to obtain a discount for Friends of Kenwood, please check when you buy your tree.

### An Audience with Father Christmas

Every weekend in December. This very popular event is now fully booked for this year.

Please see the Kenwood pages of the English Heritage website next year to book early!

### Thank You

Thank you to all our members for your regular feedback about all aspects of Kenwood House, its world-class paintings collection, and the estate.



## FINANCIAL TIMES WEEKEND FESTIVAL

2 September, 2023



*Wendy Monkhouse and Simon Schama  
© Financial Times*

For several years now the Financial Times has sponsored a large festival in the grounds of Kenwood where well-known speakers take us through the issues, arguments and highlights of the year's current events. It is a rich mix of entertainment and speakers which annually attracts a huge live audience.

For some time we have been pressing them to relate an event to Kenwood House and this year they had a very popular talk by Simon Schama on Vermeer and also offered a lucky few the chance to listen to a private talk by Schama in Kenwood House on the House's very famous Vermeer, *The Guitar Player*. As soon as the private talk was advertised it was sold out - a real success. So we hope it may be the beginning of some sort of collaboration.

## ANNUAL EVENING EVENT

### Portrait Miniatures

19 October, 2023



*Alan Derbyshire, Louise Cooling and Mala Gole*

We were delighted to welcome as guest to this event Lady Cohen and family, who has gifted her wonderful collection of portrait miniatures to reside at Kenwood.

The convivial and celebratory evening began with an opportunity to see a selection of miniatures in the new bespoke display case, which now has a prominent position alongside the main collection on the ground floor.

Moving to the Lecture Theatre, Louise gave us a brief history of the miniatures genre and explained that many

miniatures would have been commissioned by the 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Mansfield at Kenwood, but that none of these were in the inventory when the House was sold in 1925 – it is possible that they went to the family seat at Scone Palace. Likewise, the 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Iveagh also purchased miniatures but bequeathed none to Kenwood. The miniatures collection at Kenwood started with the gift of 23 miniatures by Marie Draper and has now been enhanced with Lady Cohen's wonderful gift of 65 miniatures by some of the foremost artists of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. Louise was delighted that over a period of 5 years she was able to work with Lady Cohen to bring the collection to Kenwood under the Arts Council's Cultural Gift Scheme. Kenwood is now in possession of one of the finest collections in the country. Louise thanked the Friends for their support in buying the display case and hiring specialist conservator Alan Derbyshire to do a condition survey and treatment of some of the items in the collection.

Alan Derbyshire then gave us a short history of materials and techniques used for miniatures and conservation methods, starting in 1525 with Lucas Horenbout and Holbein, who painted on vellum which was stuck to playing cards. Nicholas Hilliard wrote about pigments and applied blobs of paint with a hot needle to simulate jewels. To replicate this process, Alan explained that he found it was necessary to heat up the entire miniature when applying the paint, to avoid a trailing tail of paint forming.

From the 18<sup>th</sup> century, miniatures were painted on ivory using watercolour which was mixed with gum arabic as ivory is a less absorbent support. The Venetian painter Rosalba Carriera was one of the first to use this technique. In terms of conservation, a major challenge is the propensity of ivory to warp with changing temperatures and Alan explained his technique to straighten warped miniatures using Goretex backing to slowly apply moisture to the support.

Other problems afflicting old miniatures and conservation techniques were explained including the removal of mould, copying the brushstroke technique of artists and glass disease.

A useful source for conservators is William Wood's *Memorandum of Miniatures* started in 1790, recording 1200 miniatures, ivory sizes, pigments, preparation of ivory and names of sitters.

Following the talk, attendees enjoyed an excellent drinks and canapé reception in the Upper Hall for which we have to thank Tudor and the Brew House team. Thanks also to all EH staff who opened the House and helped out during the evening, and to Mala Gole who organised the event for the Friends – all of them made this a truly memorable evening and we all look forward to seeing what will now be a rotating display of these little gems in the House.



## HIGH BARNET WALK

27 June, 2023



At the end of June, a group of Friends headed off from the terminus of the Northern Line towards the leafy expanse of Hadley Common. During this exploration of the northern edge of the London Borough of Barnet, our Blue Badge tourist guide would bring to life the area's development and history.

Setting forth on our 2-hour guided walk from the Tube station, we were transported back to when rural fields now covered with Underground tracks, road traffic and housing estates pulsed with an intoxicating thrum of human and animal life. We heard about the famous Barnet Fair where horses, cattle, pigs and human life were bought, sold and bloodied under butcher's knife or prize-fighters' fists.

Huffing and puffing up Barnet Hill like ancients carthorses hauling stagecoach passengers or trade goods up this steep section of the Great North Road (aka A1000), we noted former coaching inns such as the Red Lion and Ye Olde Mitre that grew up to serve passing trade numbering 150 coaches a day by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Hard to imagine that the road was even steeper before famous engineer, John 'Tar' McAdam reduced its gradient as part of his road improvement programme!

We were soon at one of London's highest points, 130m above sea-level. From agricultural origins in the early mediaeval period, Barnet's axis shifted away from the farms of East Barnet towards a small chapel of ease supporting a growing community engaged with farming, transportation, brewing and mercantile matters.

Indeed, 'Barnet' – from the Saxon word for 'a clearing in a forest made by burning' – is also known as 'High Barnet' (no further explanation necessary) and 'Chipping Barnet'. 'Chipping' in a placename suggests that it had the right to hold a market, or 'ceop' in Old English (qv Cheapside in the City of London or Chipping Norton in Oxfordshire). The local market dates to 1199. Further charters were granted by later monarchs.

The chapel of ease atop the hill is today the church of St John the Baptist. Until a few decades ago its immediate surroundings were known as the 'Squeeze', hemmed in not

only by London's principal road to the north and another road towards Hadley Highstone, but by shambles – butchers' premises where animal slaughter and food preparation took place for local burghers. (With its V-shaped crossroads, heavy local traffic and idiosyncratic traffic-light phasing, many regard it as a shambles still today, but that's another story!)

Making our way through the streets and back-passages, we heard about Good Queen Bess, who founded the eponymous QE Boys' - and later, Girls' – grammar school and we saw Tudor era buildings. We encountered almshouses built by City livery companies and wealthy local benefactors; the site of the former Victoria Maternity Hospital - where our guide himself was born – located in the former residence of the horticulturalist, William 'Orchid' Cattle; the workhouse said to have inspired novelist Charles Dickens to write *Oliver Twist*; and former homes of explorer, David 'Victoria Falls' Livingstone and writer, Fanny Trollope (mother of Anthony).

All this and still no mention of the one event most people associate with Barnet, the decisive battle in 1471 during the Wars of the Roses that caused the death of Warwick 'the Kingmaker'. We walked on the supposed battlefield, as our guide evoked that misty April day when England's history took such a decisive turn, enabling Lancastrian Edward IV to reign until his death from natural causes in 1483.

The farthest point on our guided walk took us onto the tree-lined green expanse of Monken Hadley Common, where we heard about forest reserved since the Norman Conquest for aristocratic and episcopal use as hunting grounds (Fr. 'chasse' giving meaning to Enfield Chase, for example). Our guide pointed out the unusual symbols spelling out the year '1494' over the entrance to St Mary the Virgin, Monken Hadley, and the church's roof-top beacon lit as part of a long-distance warning system.

Another fascinating walk in the company of Friends and an expert guide. It turns out that there is much more to High Barnet than one may have thought!

## VISIT TO ELVEDEN HALL

6 September, 2023





On a cloudless day our coach drew up to the mansion that is Elveden Hall, Suffolk country home of our patron, Lord Iveagh, who had invited the Friends for a special private visit. Not only would we see the elaborately ornate state rooms on the ground floor, not open to the public, but also view the hundreds of artefacts, bought by the 1st Lord Iveagh (Kenwood's benefactor) and his successors for Elveden and Farmleigh House, Dublin and due to be auctioned a few weeks later.

Lord Iveagh welcomed us most warmly on arrival and gave us a brief history of the house and its occupants. The child prince, Maharajah Duleep Singh, last ruler of the Sikh Empire was removed from his kingdom by the British East India Company in 1849 and exiled in England. In 1863 he purchased the massive Elveden Estate and its Georgian house. He set about having it extended with an Italianate exterior that did not prepare one for the spectacle of the interiors. These were redesigned in a flamboyant Indian Moghul style resembling the palaces he had known in childhood. Here he indulged his passion for lavish shooting parties, entertaining royalty and the aristocracy. After the Maharajah's death in 1893, the 1st Earl of Iveagh bought Elveden and embellished more of the ground floor in a similar manner.

Entering the house, one didn't know where to look first. What was above our heads demanded attention - the convoluted carving of soaring domes, pillars, fireplaces, arches and doors. Not a surface left undecorated. Our group was too large for a guided visit, so for more than an hour we roamed freely through the state rooms, and examined the objects displayed for sale. Lord Iveagh was on hand throughout, generously answering our questions. There was an extraordinary variety that included Irish, English and Continental furniture, fine china, carpets, textiles, art works, taxidermy and Guinness memorabilia – from the exquisite to the bizarre and all things in between. The exquisite included fine Ziegler carpets made in Sultanabad (Pakistan) and a 19<sup>th</sup> century gouache of Sikh gurus with their attendants: among the bizarre was an iron mantrap and a stuffed African lion baring its teeth commanding a room scattered with European furniture, including two rose-coloured daybeds, so tempting to collapse on. The juxtaposition of extravagant plaster carving and refined Georgian and Regency furniture was especially striking in the Great Hall. The Steinway concert grand, however, could hold its own.

All too soon we had to leave. Special thanks to Lord Iveagh for his kindly hospitality, to Mark King for his heroic efforts in organising the visit with just a few days' notice and to Tamara Rabin for her leadership on the day and for regaling the coach party with her account of the remarkable life of Sophia Duleep Singh, the Maharajah's singular daughter.

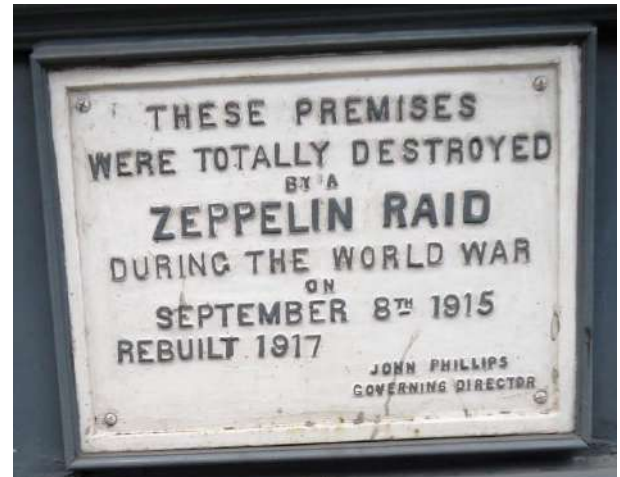
### **ZEPPELIN GUIDED TOUR**

8 September, 2023

For many – London residents and visitors alike - it comes as a surprise to learn that it was during the First World War that London was attacked by enemy aircraft for the first

time – not during the infamous 'Blitz' of the Second World War.

On the very anniversary of that fateful night in September 1915 when the City of London experienced its most destructive Zeppelin air-raid, a group of Friends were led by a Blue Badge guide along part of the route between Holborn and Smithfield.



Along the way we explored strategic thinking behind this terrifying new form of warfare against civilians, and how in practice it developed incrementally between 1915 and 1917 when fixed-wing bomber aircraft took over from airships.

We met several of the perpetrators:

- Ferdinand, Graf von Zeppelin, the German military official who pioneered designs of rigid dirigible airships after noting their value as artillery targeting aids during the American Civil War
- Peter Strasser, who advocated their adoption for offense
- Heinrich Mathy, who captained the crew of LZ13 on this destructive raid

London's defences (meaning, almost total lack of) at the time were explained, with details about the role in confronting the threat played by that irrepressible First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill. We heard why the Zeppelins were at first so hard to find or to shoot down, and how – and who – turned it all around in 1916.

We discovered how the British press exploited for propaganda value the frightful new power of the Zeppelins, dubbing them 'The Baby-killers'. We learned how it was a scrappy Australian journalist by the name of Murdoch (father of Rupert, grandfather of Lachlan) who led the charge that hounded Churchill out of office after the Dardanelles fiasco.

There was a surprising amount of visual evidence pointed out by our guide, considering all that London has gone through in the way of planned and unplanned redevelopment since September 1915: the clock hands



frozen at the moment it was struck by a bomb landing outside The Dolphin pub, shrapnel marks and partial rebuilding, the reconstructed Drill Hall that took a direct hit (see picture).

Landmarks included the workshop of expat American inventor, Hiram Maxim. Maxim pioneered the machine-gun that industrialised so terribly the level of slaughter during the First World War. His workshop is commemorated with an English Heritage blue plaque.

At each stage, we were helped to locate on a printed route map precisely where each hand-dropped explosive or incendiary bomb was dropped. The biggest bomb of all was 'Die Liebesgabe' ('Love Gift'), a 660lb high-explosive bomb that struck Bartholomew Close in Smithfield.

On its approach to the City from the Midlands, Captain Mathy veered east over Golders Green, unloading a few bombs over Hodford Road, perhaps to calibrate the airship's rudimentary aiming system. As it approached its ultimate target, LZ13 started dropping bombs over Queen's Square then flew over Holborn, Smithfield and the City before unleashing a final, deadly load around Liverpool Street station.

Our tour ended at Smithfield Market, where a memorial to members of the Butchers' Company who gave their lives during the 'war to end all wars' reminds us of war's human cost. Whether to civilians supposedly far removed from the battlefield - asleep in their beds at home or having a drink in their local pub or going about their jobs bringing food to the family table - or to military personnel serving in the imperial armed forces in the theatres of combat on land or at sea, now the skies presented a whole new deadly threat.

## VISIT TO ST BRIDE'S FOUNDATION

21 September, 2023

*"Fleet Street: type machines whirring away, hot lead everywhere, and all working to tight deadlines".*

With these words, Friend of Kenwood Chris Harrison sums up the atmosphere two volunteer printmen conveyed in an informative and fascinating visit to the St Bride Foundation. The long careers of Barry and Steve brought them from 7-year apprenticeships, to experienced newspaper journeymen, one a linotype setter, the other a monotype setter, until they were finally on the picket line as hundreds of jobs were lost in the industry.

Without places such as the St Bride Foundation, physical newspapers will soon be part of history. Not so printing itself however, as ably demonstrated both in the workshop and in the examples the archivist Alicia showed us later.

We were first educated in the mechanics of print: you need a punch, a matrix, a character and a mould for antimony. The most frequently used letters are the closest to the typesetter and his composing stick. Italics came (quite simply) from Italy, who knew? Gutenberg followed in the steps of the Chinese and the Koreans, centuries earlier.

"Black letters" are a German typeface, and the 15th century mix of soot and linseed oil holds up very well even today.

A brief history of printing followed. Wynkyn de Worde was an innovator who is credited with moving English printing towards a mass market. He initially worked with Caxton at Westminster Abbey, but in 1500 set up in Fleet Street, with its water supply for his machines and access to a relatively educated workforce. He published more than 400 books in over 800 editions and we saw a page of his printed *Descripcyon of Englande* from 1515 and its charming accompanying woodcut:



His eventual successor was the newspaper industry of Fleet Street. We saw the first newspaper, the Daily Courant, started in 1702 by Elizabeth Malet and we learnt that the 1710 Newspaper Tax drove newspapers into coffee houses.

By 1832 there were mechanical moulds and 2 types of mechanical typesetting: linotype and monotype. Both were an American development; their invention was eccentric. A linotype machine looks a bit like a telex machine with hot metal next to it; a monotype caster is a 2-person pneumatic machine, also with hot metal. The mechanical nature of newspaper printing meant it was dirty work: the moulds for the characters were only used once before being melted down into ingots for re-use. So the metal dripped into a pot positioned at eye-level, a component part of the machine, and engineers were constantly needed to keep the machines running.

50,000 newspaper pages were printed per hour, and there were thousands in the workforce. People forget, but the first 4 pages were news, and the last 4 pages were sport. The "Flong" was a papier mâché stereotype mould of every page, which was then put into a hot metal press. We saw the last ever hot metal Guardian, dated 29 June 1987, and the headlines included fears for the Lib-Lab Pact. The flong for the FT of 23 August 1986 carried a headline "Guinness tells why it went back on bid pledges."

We had the sense that we were standing at a window into history. The St Bride's Foundation was established in 1891. It had a printing school in the building, and it functioned

as a centre of a community. The library collection originally comprised technical manuals to do with printing, then it grew. There are now over 60,000 catalogued items, and it's interesting to note that digital type designers working today still use St Bride's as a resource.

### VISIT TO LINNEAN SOCIETY

16 November, 2023



For once, a select group of Friends didn't march straight through the portal of Burlington House towards the Royal Academy of Arts. Our destination was the restrained wooden door on the left, entrance to 'Linn-Soc'. The Linnean Society, established in 1788 by botanist Sir James Edward Smith, is the world's oldest active society devoted to natural history. In 1784, Smith purchased the entire library and specimens collection of Carl Linnaeus (1707-78), the Swedish botanist and deviser of binomial nomenclature, for 1,000 guineas.

But Linn-Soc is special for other reasons too: in 1859, although neither man was present, and passing almost without notice, a joint paper on the origin of species by Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace was presented to the Society. A seismic shift in natural history, with the benefit of hindsight.

Down under the pavement of Piccadilly we went, to the vault. In this strong-room are Linnaeus' books, manuscripts, and specimens. One of the oldest books owned by Linnaeus was the *Ortus Sanitatis*, an incunabulum of 1491 (he had another edition dated 1499, he clearly referred to it a lot). We also saw Linnaeus' own *Systema Naturæ*, which ran to 12 editions, of which 2 posthumously, and his mention of *homo sapiens*, first formally applied by him in 1758. At the time, this was an incredibly daring step: before then, man had been created by God. On the same page, Linnaeus classified *Bradypus*, the three-fingered sloth, with man. And he didn't know what to do with a host of mythological creatures, so he created his own category for them, *Paradoxa*. The specimen drawers and brown paper packages tied up with string revealed a treasury of plants, moss (Bryophyta), insects, Araneae, fish, all incredibly preserved after 300 years, all of which serve both as historical references, and also still as a resource for present-day scientists.

Near Linnaeus' original restored specimen display cabinet, now made 'safe' for the 21st century, hangs a fine 1797 portrait by John Opie of *Pleasant, Lady Smith as a Gypsy*. She was clearly the great woman behind the great man: like her husband, she hailed from Norfolk, and was a canny Victorian philanthropist. She 'donated' Smith's collection to Linn-Soc for a tidy sum and outlived her botanist husband by 50 years. She died in Lowestoft at the age of 103, causing the shops to close on the day of her funeral. Everything about the place, from the vaulted library to the brown paper specimen packets to the crocodile-skin upholstered President's chair smacks of a Learned Society; long may it and its fellow tenants of Burlington House remain.

*Our thanks to Mark King, visits coordinator for another stimulating visit. Do join us on a future occasion – they are treats, where you can discover our own city.*

### KENWOOD ESTATE AUTUMN WALK

9 November, 2023



Storm Ciaran was too much even for us this autumn, so we had to wait a week for more clement weather. It arrived and we spent a chilly but dry morning with Head Gardener, Crissy Mulrain, in the kitchen garden and on South Terrace looking at the Pasture Ground.

Crissy brought along some of the maps from the Kenwood archive to show the lie of the pasture ground before Repton undertook his remodelling of the landscape in the three visits he made to Kenwood in the last years of the 18th century. Originally, the land to the south of the house was a kitchen garden, there were walls surrounding it, and we find now that as water runs down from the watershed at the top, towards the River Fleet further downhill, most of the water which accumulates on the Pasture Ground tends to pool where the old walls lay. Every now and then, little holes open up where the water hits the mix of Bagshot sands and Claygate bed, always a challenge for the gardeners.

Have you ever noticed the cork oak (*Quercus suber*) at the top of South Terrace near the steps down to the café? It is a fine old tree, but no one knows if it was part of the original Repton planting. Cork oaks are native to the

Iberian Peninsula and provide cork for traditional wine bottle corks, as well as insulation. One of the most notable cork oaks is in Portugal; it's still harvested and is known as the 'Whistling Tree.' It was planted in 1783. It needs three people to encircle its girth. But the Kenwood tree can't be far off – as one of our willing company illustrated, the Kenwood circumference must be almost the same.

The rest of our walk took us only as far as the Kitchen Garden. This is largely unvisited by visitors to Kenwood, and as such, English Heritage have identified the area as a potential site for small events, normally held in a tipi. This produced a good revenue stream last summer so they will do the same again in 2024. The grass held up well, and as it is slightly set apart from the busier parts of Kenwood, holds an appeal for private hirers. While we were there, Crissy pointed out the biodiversity in this relatively small open space: crows have pecked quite destructively at a small area of grass, *Viburnum opulus* (or guelder rose) and rosehips abound to feed birds through the winter, and the high walls provide some shelter from wind and frost.

Our next walk will be in warmer weather, and by then Kenwood will be well on its way as part of English Heritage's '100 Meadows' project. 97% of England's meadows have been lost since World War 2. You can find out more about meadow conservation and see familiar pictures in some of our regular email news bulletins, or here:

[www.english-heritage.org.uk/learn/conservation/gardens-and-landscapes/meadow-conservation/](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/learn/conservation/gardens-and-landscapes/meadow-conservation/)

Our thanks to Crissy for a fascinating morning, eliciting snippets of interesting information. Who knew that rosehips used to be gathered by children for rosehip syrup and sold to Boots the Chemists for 6d a pound?

## LECTURES AND VISITS

January to June 2024

### Lectures

Sunday 14 January, **Curating Colour: An Introduction to Colour Revolution, Victorian Art, Fashion and Design**

Charlotte Ribeyrol

Sunday 11 February, **'A Paradise of Pollen and Paint': The Story of Benton End**

Christopher Woodward

Sunday 17 March, **'Miss Angel' comes to London: Angelica Kauffman at the Royal Academy**

Annette Wickham

Sunday 14 April, **Fashioning Sargent**

James Finch

Sunday 12 May, **A Breath of Fresh Air: Constable's Hampstead Sketches**

Nicola Moorby

Sunday 9 June, **The Heritage Collections at the Houses of Parliament**

Melissa Hamnett

### Visits

We are visiting places in the London area which are accessible by public transport. There will be more visits arranged for the spring and summer. Do check the website and read the regular email bulletin, where you will also find booking details when these become available.

Monday 29 January, **'Holbein at the Tudor Court' at the Queen's Gallery**

Booking for events is available by link on the Events Sheet and on our website.

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

### Spring Estate Walk

Thursday 23 May, 10.30 am, **Late Spring 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.

Booking in advance (essential) by emailing:

[info@friendsofkenwood.org.uk](mailto:info@friendsofkenwood.org.uk)

## FRIENDS OF KENWOOD ON SOCIAL MEDIA

You can find us on Twitter (now X), Instagram and Facebook. You can also find our Friends of Kenwood online talks on YouTube. Just search for 'Friends of Kenwood'.

## MEMBERSHIP

*'One of London's most impressive houses'* (Wall Street Journal)

If you love Kenwood too, and if you haven't yet renewed for the current membership year, please remember it's never too late to renew your membership! If you're not sure about your current membership status, simply email us to ask: [info@friendsofkenwood.org.uk](mailto:info@friendsofkenwood.org.uk).



You can support us even more generously by becoming a Rembrandt Friend for £300 p.a. or a Vermeer Friend for £750 p.a.

To renew your membership you can pay by bank transfer, by PayPal, or even by cheque if you still have a chequebook. You can find all details of how to pay on the 'Join Us' page of our website at <https://www.friendsofkenwood.org.uk/>

From April to October you can also pay by Direct Debit; this option is only available through our website and by setting up the direct debit facility through the GoCardless platform.

We would like to thank all of you for your support, whatever membership level you belong to. With your help, we are able to act as an important advocate for Kenwood. We need lots of support, so please encourage your friends and family 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. We would greatly appreciate any donation which helps us achieve our aim to keep Kenwood as a top priority within the English Heritage portfolio. 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](mailto:kssco@aol.com) or writing to him c/o Kenwood House, Hampstead Lane, London NW3 7JR. Any donation made under a Gift Aid declaration will, of course, have tax benefits for both you and the Friends.

You may recall that, in our last Newsletter, we reminded you that you can support the Friends of Kenwood by remembering us in your will. Legacies, small and large, have enabled us to make regular grants over the last few years to English Heritage for projects to enhance the visitor experience at Kenwood. Although we are currently in a good cash position, we have to look to funding requirements for future developments, not least those that may come out of the Kenwood Masterplan, work on which is nearing completion.

When a bequest is made to a registered charity like Friends of Kenwood, this amount is disregarded in calculating the Inheritance Tax on the estate. Additionally, if charitable bequests amount to 10% or more of the taxable estate, the rate of tax on the balance reduces from 40% to 36%. This results in the net estate available for distribution to other beneficiaries reducing by only a small amount.

If you choose to include us in your will, you will need to direct your gift to Friends of Kenwood (registered charity 273258) and this will help us to protect the future of Kenwood House, its outstanding collections and the Kenwood Estate.

### **GiveAsYouLive**

Thank you to those members who already help us raise money through Give As You Live. To date we have raised £658. If you have not yet joined, please consider joining now.

This platform provides support to charities by linking them with online retailers who are willing to give a small donation to the charity each time someone who is registered makes a purchase.

It is very easy to use and costs nothing.

To sign up for Give As You Live, you just have to register at <http://www.giveasyoulive.com/join/kenwoodfriends>.

Thank you very much for helping the Friends of Kenwood in this simple way.

### **Vermeer and Rembrandt Friends**

The Friends would like to extend grateful thanks to the following for their continuing support:

Vermeer Friends: Chris Carter

Rembrandt Friends: Jenny Abramsky, Elizabeth Meek

### **Corporate Benefactors**

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

**Julius Bär**

**KILLIK & Co**

**Pentland**

## LECTURES AND VISITS - JANUARY TO JUNE 2024

Lectures take place in the Lecture Room starting at 11am and are livestreamed so that Friends can alternatively watch at home. Whenever possible, the lectures are also recorded for future viewing on our YouTube channel.

Up-to-date information for each lecture will be in the Friends of Kenwood email news bulletin, where you will also find the booking link for the lecture.

### LECTURES

Sunday 14 January, **Curating Colour: An Introduction to *Colour Revolution, Victorian Art, Fashion and Design***

Charlotte Ribeyrol



*Ramon Casas, Jove Decadent, Despres del Ball, 1899*

Britain's industrial supremacy is often perceived through a black-and-white filter, as the funereal age of coal pollution and bleak, working-class slums reflected in the dark, supposedly 'gothic', tones we see in the films, T.V. series, and video games set in that period. Yet, the industrial revolution also totally transformed colour and most notably the chemical composition of colouring materials. Exploding the old myth, the stimulating exhibition, *Colour Revolution: Victorian Art, Fashion and Design* at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford until mid-February 2024 interweaves objects of visual culture, literature and chemistry. It is one of the main outcomes of a project called CHROMOTOPE.

Charlotte Ribeyrol is the lead curator, and her lecture introduces the exhibition. She is Professor of 19<sup>th</sup> century British Literature at the Sorbonne Université, Paris. Her main field of research is Victorian Hellenism and the reception of the colours of the past in 19<sup>th</sup> century painting and literature. In 2014-16 she co-directed a major

interdisciplinary project on chromatic materiality with chemists and archaeologists and published a collection of essays, *The Colours of the Past in Victorian England* (2016). Since 2019, Charlotte Ribeyrol has worked on her project CHROMOTOPE which explores the 19<sup>th</sup> century ‘chromatic turn’. She is also the author of *William Burges’s Great Bookcase and the Victorian Colour Revolution* (2023).

## Sunday 11 February, **‘A Paradise of Pollen and Paint’: The Story of Benton End**

Christopher Woodward



*Benton End*

Christopher Woodward shares the story of Benton End, a Tudor manor house and walled garden on the outskirts of Hadleigh, Suffolk, which from 1940 until the 1970s was the East Anglian School of Painting and Drawing, founded by the artists Cedric Morris and Arthur Lett-Haines (known as ‘Lett’). 17-year-old Lucian Freud was the first pupil, and a teenage Maggi Hambling one of the last.

Cedric Morris is the only person in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to be of national significance as both a painter and a horticulturalist. Born into a Welsh industrial dynasty, he lived a life of itinerant charm in the 1920s but after he and Lett threw an ‘End of the World Party’ in Fitzrovia, he moved to Suffolk to make a garden. In the 1950s and 60s Benton End was as influential a garden as Sissinghurst, and was scattered with the easels of students, for whom its Mediterranean food, freedom, and wildness were a glimpse of a different way of life. ‘A paradise of pollen and paint’, wrote Ronald Blythe ‘with a dangerous whiff of garlic’. The Garden Museum has recently been majority gifted Benton End by a charitable trust and has begun work to renew the garden.



Christopher Woodward is Director of the Garden Museum and before that Director of The Holburne Museum of Art, Bath and a curator at Sir John Soane's Museum. He is the author of *In Ruins* (2001) and was a Trustee of the Heritage Lottery Fund (2007-13).

Sunday 17 March, **'Miss Angel' comes to London: Angelica Kauffman at the Royal Academy**

Annette Wickham



*Angelica Kauffman, The Artist in the Character of Design, Listening to the Inspiration of Poetry, 1782*

The Swiss artist Angelica Kauffman is no stranger to Kenwood's visitors. She achieved international fame as one of the most celebrated painters of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Fulsomely described by a contemporary as 'perhaps the most cultivated woman in Europe', she was known for her elegant portraits and pioneering history paintings. Kauffman not only painted some of the most influential figures of her day – from queens and countesses to actors and socialites – she also

reshaped the genre of history painting by introducing a cast of multifaceted female protagonists drawn from classical history, literature and mythology.

The lecture traces Kauffman's trajectory from child prodigy to one of Europe's most sought-after artists. It will explore her training and rise to fame, her pivotal period in London including her role as a founding member of the Royal Academy in 1768 and her later career in Rome. It introduces the exhibition *Angelica Kauffman* which opens at the Royal Academy of Arts on 1st March 2024, and includes major loans from Kenwood.

Annette Wickham is Curator of Works on Paper for the Royal Academy Collection, and prior to that she was an Assistant Curator at the V&A. She is co-curator of the *Angelica Kauffman* exhibition. She has published extensively on aspects of the Royal Academy and its collection. Her research interests include the history of art education and women artists in Britain.

Sunday 14 April, **Fashioning Sargent**

James Finch



*John Singer Sargent, Lady Helen Vincent,  
Viscountess d'Abernon 1904*

*Sargent and Fashion* at Tate Britain (22 Feb – 7 July 2024) organised in partnership with the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, is the first exhibition to investigate the fascination with clothing and fashion which runs through the work of John Singer Sargent. By including a number of garments and accessories worn in Sargent's paintings alongside the portraits in which they appear, the exhibition provides a new perspective on Sargent's working process, and the distinctive painterly vision which made him the leading portraitist of his day. The lecture will examine the key themes underpinning the exhibition, as well as providing an insight into its preparation and evolution over several years.

Dr James Finch is a curator and art historian specialising in British art of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. He is currently Assistant Curator, 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Art at Tate Britain where he has worked on several exhibitions and displays, including *Turner's Modern World* and *The Rossettis*. Prior to joining Tate, James Finch was Curatorial Assistant at the Royal Academy of Arts, and undertook his doctorate, as a partnership between the University of Kent and Tate. He has published widely on 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century art.

## Sunday 12 May, **A Breath of Fresh Air: Constable's Hampstead Sketches**

Nicola Moorby



*John Constable, Hampstead Heath, with Pond and Bathers, 1821*

To coincide with an important loan to Kenwood of three works from the Royal Academy, art historian Nicola Moorby discusses John Constable, and his revelatory sketches of Hampstead. Always an intensely autobiographical artist, Constable is famous for painting landscapes with which he had very intimate associations. This talk reveals his connections with Hampstead, which from 1819

onwards became an important second home for himself and his family. It was here that he extended his outdoor oil practice, producing closely observed naturalistic sketches of heath and sky that are remarkable for their exceptional freshness and vitality. As much admired today as his finished paintings, these highly charged and individualistic studies sit at the intersection of art, science and profound, personal emotion.

We are delighted to welcome Nicola Moorby again to Kenwood. She is an independent art historian and curator, specialising in British art of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Formerly at Tate Britain, she has curated several exhibitions including, most recently, *Constable: The Dark Side* at The Arc, Winchester (2023). She regularly teaches short courses at the Courtauld Institute of Art and lectures widely. She has appeared as an expert on television and radio including *Great Paintings of the World with Andrew Marr* (2020 and 2021) and *Art on the BBC* (2022). Her forthcoming book about Turner and Constable for Yale University Press will be released in 2025.



Sunday 9 June, **The Heritage Collections at the Houses of Parliament**  
Melissa Hamnett



*Royal Gallery, Houses of Parliament*

The Heritage Collections at the UK Parliament are of national and international significance with many of them specifically designed to complement the interiors of the Palace of Westminster, which was rebuilt in the 19<sup>th</sup> century after a massive fire. It is a Grade 1 listed building and UNESCO World Heritage site. The collections comprise about 30,000

objects which relate to the past, present and future of the Parliamentary Estate, recording its history, its work and its people and date from the site's medieval origins as a Royal Palace to the present-day institution. They range from works on paper, paintings, sculpture, ceramics, metalwork, textiles and historic furniture, as well as architectural items linked to the Estate. This talk will unpack how these living, 'working' collections both capture and maintain corporate memory as well as helping to explain the functions and processes of Parliament from the ceremonial to the day-to-day.

Melissa Hamnett is Director of Heritage Collections and Chief Curator at Parliament. She is responsible for the strategic direction and day-to day management of the Parliamentary Art Collection, the Historic Furniture and Decorative Arts Collection and the Architecture Collection including access, engagement and collections development. Previously, Melissa Hamnett worked at the V&A, delivering major gallery renovation projects and latterly was Curator of Sculpture 1850 to the Present. She publishes on 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century sculpture, specialising on the links between British and French output, the New Sculpture and British sculpture after Rodin.

## SPRING ESTATE WALK



Thursday, 23 May, **Late Spring at Kenwood**

A walk with Kenwood's Head Gardener. Meet at North Front of Kenwood House at 10.30am.

This walk is free for Friends of Kenwood; non-members £5

Book in advance (essential) by emailing [info@friendsofkenwood.org.uk](mailto:info@friendsofkenwood.org.uk)

## VISITS

*We are visiting places in the London area which are accessible by public transport. There will be more visits arranged for the spring and summer.*

**Visit booking:** *To book a place for a visit, please use the Eventbrite or other link which can be found on the Lectures/Events page of our website, or look out for the link in our regular email news update.*



Monday 29 January, **'Holbein at the Tudor Court' at the Queen's Gallery**

Buckingham Palace Road, SW1A 1AA



This exhibition showcases one of the most important surviving collections of Holbein's work. Celebrating Holbein's artistic skill, it explores the career of the artist and the lives of those who commissioned portraits from him, bringing us face-to-face with some of the most famous people and influential minds of 16th century England.

Through remarkable drawings, paintings, miniatures, furnishings, armour, illustrations and notes, the 'Hows?' of Holbein will be revealed as well as the wise and their wens. These long-dead individuals will

come alive again before your eyes.

The visit comprises a group introduction to the exhibition and artist by a Royal Collections Trust expert, followed by unaccompanied freeflow through the exhibition rooms at your leisure.

Assemble inside the Queen's Gallery at 10.50 am to clear the security process. Tour will start promptly at 11.00.

The tour costs £27.50 plus a small administration fee and can be booked [here](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/fok-curatorstaff-led-tour-of-holbein-at-the-tudor-court-tickets-765332228297?aff=oddttdtcreator):

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/fok-curatorstaff-led-tour-of-holbein-at-the-tudor-court-tickets-765332228297?aff=oddttdtcreator>