

Chair's Report Annual General Meeting 14th April 2024

2023 has been a very active year by the Friends of Kenwood. Among the highlights has been our support of the Joshua Reynolds celebration exhibition. A grant from the Friends helped fund the rehang and fund the wonderful booklet that accompanied the exhibition. The exhibition was favourably reviewed and reminded people of the astonishing collection of the Iveagh Bequest.

Another highlight was the new exhibition showcase of Lady Cohen miniatures. When Lady Cohen generously donated her collection of miniatures to Kenwood, the Friends of Kenwood gave a grant to fund the restoration of the miniatures and a further grant to pay for a new bespoke display showcase to be placed on the ground floor to raise awareness of Kenwood's unique collection of miniatures. The Annual Members' event was held in October 2023 to celebrate this generous bequest and it was attended by Lady Cohen, her guests and our members. I would like to thank Louise Cooling and Alan Derbyshire for their talks and the events team for organising this event.

We also donated towards Heath Hands' project of creating an Interpretation Room at Kenwood Dairy. We hope this will help engage the local community further when they visit the Kenwood Estate.

Later in the year the Earl of Iveagh offered a unique tour of Elveden Hall, the remarkable house in Suffolk that had been transformed by Prince Duleep Singh, the last Maharajah of the Sikh Empire. With very short notice we were able to organise a coach trip and the Earl took Friends on a tour of the family furniture he was selling to raise funds to repair the roof of the building. Our thanks to Mark King who organised the whole event in a few days. It raised a few thousand pounds towards future events at Kenwood.

Other visits in our members' programme have proven extremely popular, and I am also grateful to Tracy Abraham and Sally Doganis for their support on the Council.

The Kenwood lectures included our special annual event: a fantastic lecture on the development of miniatures to coincide with the opening of the new display. Our thanks to Angela Cox, Richard Ormond, Patricia Hardy and Jerzy Kierkuc-Bielinski for once again organising a remarkable set of lectures across the year and to Nick Fielding and Helen Payne for all the support work involved to make these lectures available to all.

We held a drinks reception as part of our annual event and a Christmas reception with delicious mince pies. These events would never have happened without the tireless efforts of Mala Gole and her team.

We are still participating in EH's work on creating a new Master Plan for the whole Kenwood Estate. A lot of work has gone on behind the scenes and we hope that it will be completed by the autumn of 2024.

As ever, we are very grateful to our Treasurer Ken Solomons for compiling his Annual Report. Ken has ensured the legacies to FOK are wisely invested. Those legacies will enable FOK to continue to fund exhibitions and urgent issues like the picture lighting of the collection.

We are grateful to Julius Baer, Killik, and Pentland, our Corporate Benefactors, for their steadfast support, and also to our Vermeer and Rembrandt Friends. Finally, a big thank you to all our members. Your support has enabled the Friends to play a constructive and active role in the future of Kenwood.

Jenny Abramsky
Chair
Friends of Kenwood