

KENWOOD MANAGEMENT PLAN

The last issue of Suburb News reported the publication by English Heritage of their long-awaited management plan for Kenwood, "Caring for Kenwood." This article describes the plan in more detail, and how the Residents Association is responding to it.

The Plan itself is a weighty document in two volumes, costing £5, but a leaflet summarising the Plan is available free from the new Kenwood Estate Office in Mansion Cottage (next to the restaurant). The first volume contains background information about the estate, its history and ecology, and addresses the key management issues in general terms. It describes the creation of the estate by the Mansfield family from the mid-eighteenth century, and the contribution of the landscape architect, Humphrey Repton, whose design has survived substantially intact to the present day. The house and the greater part of the estate were acquired by Edward Cecil Guinness, first Earl of Ireagh, who left it to the nation in 1929 under the terms of an Act of Parliament which enshrined his wish that future custodians should preserve the "atmosphere of a gentleman's park." Managed first by the London County Council and subsequently by the Greater London Council, it was transferred to English Heritage when the latter was abolished in 1986. In later years it was managed as part of the Heath and after grazing ceased in the 1950s it became less open and more rural in character. This rural character is much valued by local residents and English Heritage's initial attempts to restore some of the historic elements met with fierce opposition. The first volume of the Plan records the consultations that took place between 1990 and 1994, including the results of the MORI questionnaire. It goes on to describe the ecology of the estate, which includes a sphagnum bog and

areas of ancient woodland designated by English Nature as Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Plants, birds and invertebrates are referred to and surprising features of the landscape are described in detail. The section on management emphasises the need to maintain a balance between the designed and natural landscapes. Key issues addressed include the need to fell weak or overcrowded trees to allow for the regeneration of woodland; the gradual re-establishment of grassland in some areas; the control of rabbits and squirrels; the need for paths and fences of an appropriate character; and concerns about dogs.

The second volume sets out the management aims, objectives and strategies in more detail, area by area, although one of the comments of the Residents Association is that in many respects the plan is still insufficiently detailed. The estate has been divided into five areas: ornamental gardens; lawns and lakes; woodland; meadow parkland; and the Elms Garden (a later addition to the estate). The Trees and Open Spaces Committee of the Residents Association have looked at the Plan in detail and have submitted their comments to English Heritage. The RA has welcomed the Plan and agrees with its broad approach. Most residents of the Suburb probably see Kenwood primarily as a recreational facility; providing a respite from urban or suburban surroundings. However this contrast can be provided in the context of a mansion surrounded by parkland, and while regard must also be had to the context of the surrounding Heath, the RA accepts that a different approach to the rest of the Heath can be justified. Any change, however, should be carried out as inconspicuously and sensitively as possible, giving the fullest information before and during work.

This, in general, is the approach



that has been adopted. The Plan envisages a change from scrub and woodland to grass with parkland trees in areas such as the pasture ground copse (to the west of the main lawn) and the north copse (between the main lawn and the west meadow); but taking place over many years as the existing birch trees die off.

The main aims refer to the need for unified management, embracing both the historic design and nature conservation and maximising visitor enjoyment. The RA has commented that the aim should reflect that the estate is part of the Heath, and that a specific objective - which cover such things as research and recording; estate management; conservation; and security and safety - should recognise the need to establish priorities. The strategies for the ornamental areas start from the desire to encourage visual and actual links between the house and gardens, which the RA supports. English Heritage are keen to restore the flower garden (immediately west of the house), which has already proved somewhat controversial and the RA has said that this will require further consideration. The use of

the existing lawn for marquees for events has been particularly controversial and the RA will seek to establish what limits will be placed on this: in the RA's opinion fund-raising events which result in the closure of parts of the house or garden should be allowed only in exceptional circumstances. The RA has also expressed concern about rabbit-proof railings around the garden and suggested they might be softened with hedges.

In front of the house English Heritage propose removing the rhododendrons (replanting them along the drives) in favour of a "soft, woodland edge." The RA has said it agrees with this policy. In the kitchen garden English Heritage wish to re-erect glass-houses and create a working kitchen garden. The RA has said that it would prefer to keep the upper part as it is and that the atmosphere of tranquillity should not be lost. Other proposals for the ornamental areas include the restoration of the dairy, possibly in conjunction with the reintroduction of grazing, which the RA would welcome if not over-commercialised.

Most of the strategies for the remaining areas are broadly designed to retain their existing appearance, apart from the gradual

restoration of meadow parkland mentioned above. Turkey oaks in the north wood will not now be felled, although they will be prevented from spreading. Previous proposals to fell some of the dairy bank trees have been controversial - it is still proposed to remove "a minimum number of selected trees." The RA agrees this is necessary to ensure that the remaining specimens develop properly to maturity. English Heritage now propose to retain the holly hedge at the edge of the west meadow; the RA has said that it would prefer this to be opened up more. English Heritage also intend completing the "park rail" around the pasture ground (the main lawn); the RA has suggested this might require further consideration and generally fencing should be kept to a minimum, although it supports the fencing of the wood pond to prevent dogs falling in.

As part of their strategy for increasing visitor enjoyment English Heritage have introduced an extensive programme of walks and talks, expanded information and educational activities. They have shown themselves keen to establish a new Consultative Forum, on which the RA and other local amenity groups will be represented, which met for the

first time in early April. The RA is very pleased that English Heritage are taking a positive attitude to local participation and hopes that the Consultative Forum will ensure that in the long term residents will be able to make a meaningful contribution to the management of the estate.

Colin Gregory

CARING FOR KENWOOD - KENWOOD OPENS THE DOOR

Following the recent launch of the Management Plan, the new landscape Visitor Information Centre, located in Mansion Cottage near the Brewhouse Restaurant, is showing signs of being very popular with both local users and occasional visitors.

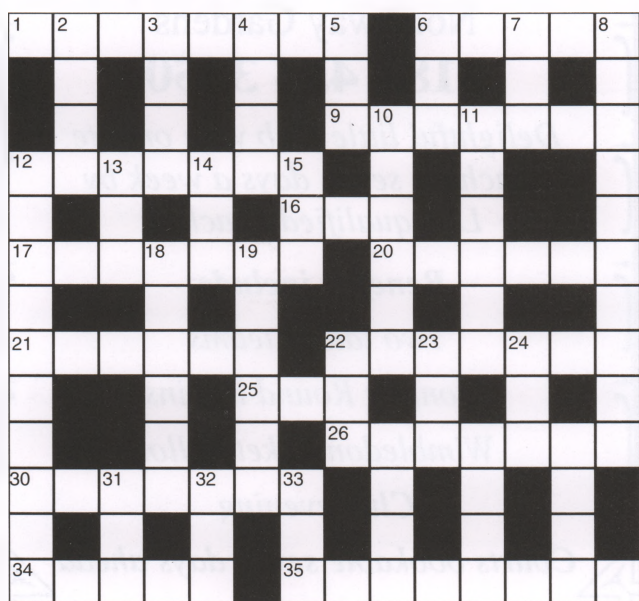
It is now open three days a week - **Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday between 11am and 4pm.** The Information Centre will help Estate users to understand the character of the Estate, and the need for and methods used in managing it for its future enrichment; as well as being somewhere for visitors to drop in to ask questions.

Information Sheets are available on topics of interest; and a **reference archive** is being developed. A **programme of Lectures and Walks** is planned for the summer with specialist topics, such as Repton and the Red Book, as well as regular **Estate Guided Walks** led by the Estate Rangers.

Would you like to be a Volunteer at Kenwood?

We are keen to establish a pool of Volunteers to help extend the opening hours and service provided by the Information Centre. We are looking for people with customer care experience; a knowledge of the local area; and an interest in the environment and conservation. Appropriate training will be given to all volunteers.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer in the Kenwood Estate Visitor Information Centre please contact Rachael Holdom, Visitor Liaison Officer, on 0181 340 5303.



CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 West, a thorny, twisty route (8)
- 6 Stuffy; doesn't open (5)
- 9 Leigh said Ron's return went against the grain (7)
- 12 It's plain one must slow down in heavy ground (7)
- 16 Any old way to stretch out (3)
- 17 Fastens back left and recovers (7)
- 20 Re-order from rare combination (6)
- 21 Road with mixed border (6)
- 22 May bug aerial (7)
- 25 Paddle, alternatively, say (3)
- 26 Howler made a big noise, flipping from beginning to end of road (7)
- 30 Spiders' mating site (6)
- 34 G & S opera company messed up first half. Wrong kind of singing (5)
- 35 About to flow over the top here (4,4)

DOWN

- 2 German car sounds rocky (4)
- 3 Level fastener (4)
- 4 Whither away a bit? (4)
- 5 The money to back Marshal? (3)
- 6 and the club to back this! (3)

- 7 French girl abandons college and gives consent (3)
- 8 Rory bade me dismantle the rasper (5,5)
- 10 Single (3,3)
- 11 Chief engineer's signal for recovery (6)
- 12 Go, win, carry off here (10)
- 13 With skill, he avoided the heart (3)
- 14 Feeling bad, losing time from plough (3)
- 15 7's protagonist might be able to do it this way too! (3)
- 18 Incursion access (6)
- 19 Go away! Tom and Em got close (6)
- 22 Vehicle top over tail round the bend (3)
- 23 Eat, turn round, and drink (3)
- 24 Mount Carp (3)
- 27 A girl I like in part (4)
- 28 Like 6 ac.? Not at this time of night! (4)
- 29 Jean's in a bad muddle (4)
- 31 The place to be when ... (3)
- 32 you feel like 14 (3)
- 33 Cats composer puts emphasis on going all out (3)

QUICK CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 Flowering tree (8)
- 6 Opened wide (5)
- 9 Error (7)
- 12 Roads (7)
- 16 Little woman (3)
- 17 Wrung (7)
- 20 Excused (3,3)
- 21 Exact retribution (6)
- 22 Having special perception (7)
- 25 Employ (3)
- 26 Rags (7)
- 30 Flowers (7)
- 34 Lakeland water (5)
- 35 Part song (8)

DOWN

- 2 Mine shaft (4)
- 3 Scenter (4)
- 4 Mislaid (4)
- 5 Weapon (3)
- 6 eg. steam (3)
- 7 Pulse (3)
- 8 Awful truth (5,5)
- 10 Romances (6)
- 11 Ploy (6)
- 12 Unchanging (4,2,4)
- 13 Managed (3)
- 14 Measure (3)
- 15 Dismal (3)
- 18 Kindly (6)
- 19 All off stage (6)
- 22 Favourite (3)
- 23 Still (3)
- 24 Go (3)
- 27 Inside (4)
- 28 Welsh river (4)
- 29 List (4)
- 31 Ancient (3)
- 32 Fish (3)
- 33 Total (3)

A bottle of bubbly for the first correct answer drawn on June 14. Cryptic solutions only to the Editor.

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