



Kings Weston Action Group Newsletter number 5

Back to work!

KWAG working party to kick-off 2012

Our practical conservation of the Kings Weston estate finally gets back underway this month with a working party event to be held on Sat 21st Jan. We know that many of you have asked to get involved in this so we hope that we can get a big turnout for this event. Hoping for a bit of a soft start to the new conservation work we have arranged to start clearing the woodland leading up to the Echo by removing a lot of the self-seeded saplings that threaten to engulf the more mature trees.

Everyone is welcome to come along and the event will start from Shirehampton Road public car park at 11am. Please come along with suitable footwear and clothing for the weather on the day. If you have gardening gloves or tools please bring these along. Bow-saws, loppers, pruning saws, will all come in handy though Bristol City Council will be providing a few tools if you need to borrow some.

We will be working on the estate until about 3:30 so if you aren't able to make the whole day please drop along at any time you can or bring lunch if you can spare the whole day. If you can't participate, but want to see what we are up to you are more than welcome to come along and meet us in person. Children are welcome though we ask that they are kept supervised by an adult at all times

Park Ascending

Kings Weston will feature in a new BBC4 programme to be broadcast at 7:30 on the 13th of Jan - this Friday! Philip Napier Miles the last Squire of the house played a vital role in bringing Vaughan Williams masterpiece The Lark Ascending to the world in 1920



and Kings Weston forms the backdrop to the story. A keen composer and musician himself Napier Miles actively encouraged the talent in others and was good friends with Vaughan Williams who visited the house on many occasions.

This brand new documentary for BBC Four tells the intriguing story behind the nation's most popular piece of classical music, as voted for by more than 25,000 radio listeners earlier this year.

Presenter and passionate classical music fan Dame Diana Rigg explores the origins of this 'romantic rhapsody' that was composed at a key turning point in world history. She sets out to explore why The Lark Ascending continues to strike a chord with so many people today.

The programme culminates in a beautiful performance of this classic piece by 15-year-old violin prodigy Julia Hwang and pianist Charles Matthews at Shirehampton Public Hall, where The Lark Ascending was performed for the very first time in December 1920.

Later this year the house will also make a cameo appearance in the new series of the BBC's Upstairs Downstairs.

New Discovery

More research by KWAG has uncovered a previously unknown painting of the park from the mid 1700's. The rare view looking out from the front of the Loggia (or laundry) and across the lower park is the only known image that shows the Great Terrace that once stretched along the slope to the north of the house and overlooked the Severn. The Great Terrace was built by Sir John Vanbrugh as an integral part of his designs for the house but was swept away during remodelling in the late Eighteenth Century. The present terrace outside the tea rooms dates only from the 1840's and is a fraction of the size of the earlier feature. Vanbrugh's original projected further out over the hillside and would have presented an imposing sight from ships in the King Road below; a mock fortification adding to the "castle air" that the architect hoped for Kings Weston.

The discovery of the painting has confirmed the scale of the terrace that KWAG had already identified in the course of its research, but adds considerably to our knowledge of its appearance. It also confirms that a kitchen wing had been constructed between the house and Loggia. Drawings exist of proposals for this structure but until now no evidence had been found that it was ever completed.