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The Kenwood volunteers: from the left Eric Albani, Eileen Allen, Barrie Brown, Rose Wilson, Gerard Donnachie, Clare Alway and Daniel Servini. Photo Mike Coles

A pleasure to volunteer

By Eileen Allen

The daily opening of Kenwood House, our local English Heritage gem located on Hampstead Lane at the northern side of the Heath, depends upon a team of nearly 400 volunteers, who welcome visitors and act as guides and stewards in the rooms which are open to the public.

Entrance to the 18th-century urban villa, which houses one of the finest art collections in the country, is free thanks to the bequest to the nation in 1927 by Edward Cecil Guinness, Lord Iveagh. The House is certainly one of London's best-kept secrets and the collection of paintings includes works by Rembrandt, Vermeer, van Hals, Constable, Gainsborough, Reynolds and Turner.

East Finchley members of the volunteer team, Rose Wilson, Clare Alway, Barrie Brown, Daniel Servini, Gerard Donnachie, Eric Albani and I, agree that it is a privilege to be in close proximity to works of some of the world's best known artists in such a beautiful setting.

From small beginnings

A Scottish gentleman named William Murray bought a smaller

house on the same site in 1754. He became the first Lord Mansfield and subsequently Lord Chief Justice of England and it was he who employed the services of the eminent architect Robert Adam to remodel and enlarge it.

One of Adam's masterpieces was the magnificent library, which together with the rest of the house underwent a complete restoration in 2013. English Heritage undertook much research to establish the colour scheme used by Adam and what can be seen today is exactly as it would have been in the 1760s.

The next time you are walking on the Heath do drop in and enjoy this wonderful place. You are sure of a warm welcome and if you are interested in becoming a volunteer, search 'Kenwood volunteer' at www.english-heritage.org.uk.

The truth about how I stay slim

By John Lawrence

How would you feel if you had secret cameras filming you for a week, watching everything you cook and recording every mouthful of food you take? That's the experience Yemi Williams had and he describes it as "weird".

Yemi, of Brendon Grove, N2, was one of the stars of Channel 4 show *The Truth About Slim People* in November, a scientific investigation into why some lucky people can eat what they want and still not put on weight.

Still a dustbin

Yemi, 37, husband to Afua and a busy father of two young children, measures 5ft 10ins with a 32in waist and always tips the scales at around 12 and a half stone. Apart from the mile walk to and from East Finchley station every day, he doesn't do much exercise.

"I've never dieted and I've

never had to worry about what I eat," says Yemi, possibly losing a lot of friends in the process. "My dad always said I was a dustbin because I ate so much when I was a kid. I still do. Like every Thursday I have a big Subway lunch with three cookies."

Secret filming

Yemi volunteered for the programme because he couldn't believe it was just his genes that were keeping him a healthy weight. So Channel 4 installed cameras in his home, gave Afua a secret camera to wear when they went out for a meal one night and made sure his work colleagues at *The Voice* newspaper had cameras to record secretly what he ate at his desk.

"I knew about the cameras at home but I had no idea about the secret cameras until I saw the footage," says Yemi. "It's really weird to see yourself stuffing your face when you didn't know you were being filmed. I was shocked."

Getting it right

The Channel 4 nutritionists who examined Yemi's eating habits concluded he was staying slim for a number of reasons: he always sits down for three square meals a day and rarely snacks, he regularly gets seven good hours of sleep at night, he doesn't drink, and when he walks to the station he walks at a fast pace.

Yemi says: "It was a fascinating experience. I guess

I'm doing a few things right and that lets me get away with eating what I want. I'm lucky and people probably hate me."



Yemi Williams Photo Mike Coles

Hat's off

Strictly Come Dancing champion Joanne Clifton stars in the London fringe premiere of Irving Berlin's all-singing, all-dancing musical *Top Hat* in the Upstairs at the Gatehouse theatre in Highgate until the end of January. The show, based on RKO's motion picture, features classic songs like *Puttin' on the Ritz*, *Cheek to Cheek* and *Let's Face the Music and Dance*.

Celebrating the best of the 1930s, *Top Hat* tells the story of Broadway sensation Jerry Travers who dances his way across Europe to win the heart of society girl Dale Tremont, played by Miss Clifton, in a riotous mistaken-identity plot. Find times and book at www.upstairsatthegatehouse.com.

Make a difference

Age UK Barnet is looking for volunteers with a few hours to spare in the week to make a difference to lives of older people.

Based in Oak Lane, N2, the charity is looking for volunteers to support its services and activities. If you feel you could get involved, find out more by following the 'Volunteer with us' link at www.ageuk.org.uk/barnet or give volunteer manager Sam a call on 020 8432 1422.

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