



# The Kinnelogue

The Newsletter of The Friends of Kinmel Hall

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**FRIENDS OF KINMEL HALL  
NEWSLETTER  
1<sup>ST</sup> EDITION  
1<sup>ST</sup> FEBRUARY 2021**



**TRAGEDY**

**2011 + 2021**

**TRIUMPH**



Greetings To All  
**THE FRIENDS OF KINMEL HALL**

To This The Very First Edition Of Your Newsletter And We Are  
Very Serious When We Say  
*'YOUR'*  
Newsletter

We Want You To Tell Us What You Want To See In The Future  
Editions Of The Newsletter Alongside The News That We Have  
For You.

Do You Have Any Questions About The Hall, Her History,  
Her Owners?

Let Us Know By [EMAIL](#)



## ROLL OF HONOUR

We Have The Honour And The Privilege To Have Some Very Well-Known Names Amongst The Friends of Kimmel Hall.

Some have kindly agreed to allow us to use their NAME amongst the Friends Of Kimmel Hall but have made it clear that work commitments/restrictions mean they are not able to take an active part in the work we have before us.

We are still very grateful for their support.

The Friends Of Kimmel Hall include The Marquess of Anglesey,  
The Lord Lieutenant of Clwyd, Jeremy Musson,  
Matthew Beckett, Mark Girouard, Peter Hare, Elaine Boxhall,  
Miss Stella Mew

In Addition To This We Have Been Joined By Groups Such As  
Dream Heritage, Youth Fellowship Rally, Ballymena Youth  
Group.

These Groups Either Have Similar Interests To Our Own Or  
They Are Groups That Have Stayed At The  
Crown Of Nesfield's Career between 1978 – 1999

When The Hall Rose From The Ashes Of The Fire In 1975 With  
The Inspiration, Foresight and Determination of One Man – Who  
Everyone, Including His Own Family Thought He Was Mad  
When He Claimed He Was Going To Rebuild Kimmel Hall

Edmund David Vince

Irrespective Of What People Had To Say About Him Later  
It Cannot Be Denied That What He Did To The Hall Was  
Nothing Short Of A Miracle!



## **‘INVINCIBLE EDDIE’**

”incapable. of being conquered, overcome, or subdued; insuperable”.



You Cannot Help But Wonder What Ken Betty John Jake Bob Or Even Eddie Himself Would Have To Say If They Were To See The State Of All Their Hard Work At The Hands Of The Current Owners And – More Importantly – The Council Who Harrassed Eddie And The Kimmel Hall Evangelical Trust For Years Before They Had To Relinquish The Lease.

Well For This First Edition We Have Taken The Liberty Of Asking Those People Who Knew Eddie Best Of All – His Family And We Have Even Been Able To Contact Betty Ogden’s Daughter And John Alderson Himself To Ask Them For Their Opinions



The First Comment Comes From: -  
FOREWORD 'TRAGEDY TO TRIUMPH'

Courtesy of Mrs Elaine Boxhall

nee Southern PE Teacher 1950 - 55

Clarendon school for Girls KINMEL HALL 1946-1975

**By the Marquess of Anglesey, DL, FSA, FR Hist S, Hon FR/BA,  
FRSL.**

*When I first heard that a Mr Vince was going to restore Kinmel Hall, I thought that he must be a madman. Soon though, I realised, particularly after first meeting him, that he was not only very sane indeed but that he was also well named. The dictionary definition of invincible is "incapable of being conquered, overcome, or subdued; insuperable". This sums up a vital part of the character of my friend Eddy. I soon discovered that the sure foundation of his invincibility is his unshakeable belief in the Christian God and the efficacy of prayer.*

*The Historic Buildings Council for Wales, of which I have the honour to be chairman, has the statutory duty, amongst others, of advising the Secretary of State on the giving of grants, for the structural repairs, to owners of outstanding historic buildings. After the awful fire at Kinmel we were all in despair. Here was one of Britain's (not just Wales') greatest and largest Victorian country houses~ a veritable palace and an architectural gem ~in real danger of decay and demolition. The lack of an owner with a potential use in mind, and, just as vital, the means to effect the extensive and expensive repairs which were essential, seemed as inevitable as anything in this world. I recollect that before the fire, Clarendon School had applied for grant aid towards the repairs. necessary to just some of William Eden Nesfield's splendid chimneys. The sums required for these. alone were enormous.*



*How much vaster, then, was to be the cost of the post-fire structural costs! On top of these, of course, was the expense of interior decoration and all the large variety of works which, under the Historic Buildings Act of 1953 would not qualify for grant. The amount of taxpayers' money available for assistance to all the eligible historic buildings in the Principality is, naturally, limited.*

*Nevertheless, the tremendous importance of Kinmel architecturally and the wonderful enthusiasm and competence of its new owner ensured that something approaching 40% of all structural repairs would be made available over the years. Not only is a very important part of Britain's heritage saved from extinction, but its new users are eminently excellent both from a spiritual and a social point of view.*

*In my thirty years of service on the Historic Buildings Council for Wales, I can honestly say that none of our numerous tasks of rescue and revival, repair and restitution has given me such profound satisfaction and joy. Working in close partnership with Eddy Vince, on his great project, has been a prodigious privilege for all the Council's members and for the Welsh Office staff, especially the architectural assessor, Douglas Hogg. To have been participants in a miracle of this nature makes one at once humble and proud.*

*Mrs. Boxhall's excellent and telling account of the way in which things proceeded is indeed worthy of the subject.  
Higher praise cannot be given.*

According To Jonathan Fenton-Vince Who Took Responsibility  
For Looking After The Venetian Gardens Whilst The Hall Was  
In His Fathers Care: -



*My father's words would be "Except the Lord build the house, they that labour, labour in vain". He would always turn to God's word and seek His way. Another appropriate scripture would be "The grass withers and the flower fades but the Word of the Lord endures forever.*





To Understand Where we are today, We need to Understand  
Where we have come from.

In September 2011, the first of three Open Days were held at  
Kinnel Hall, St Georges, Abergele.

The idea behind these Open Days was to give prospective buyers  
the opportunity to be taken around the Building and Grounds by  
someone who could tell them the story of this amazing Palace of  
Versailles in the middle of North Wales.

The Company acting on behalf of the Receivers had produced a  
colour brochure about Kinnel Hall giving all the pertinent details  
about the Hall. In this brochure it stated that

*'Kinnel Hall has 79 Bedrooms'*

On contacting the Auctioneers, I asked them:-

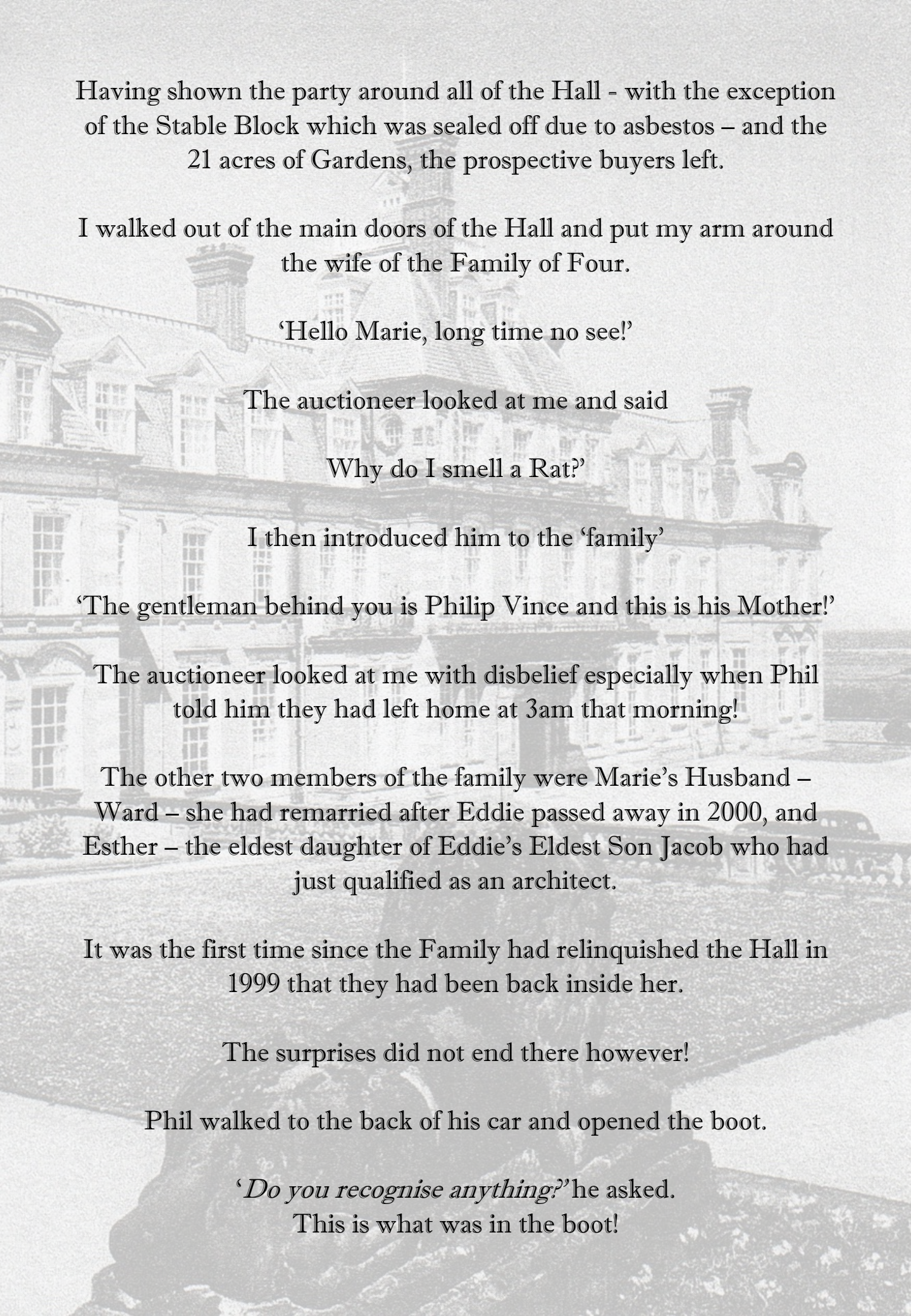
*'How did you get 750 guests into 79 Bedrooms?'*

The result of this conversation was I was invited to show the  
prospective buyers around the Hall because I knew more about  
her than the Auctioneer did and they had had it on their books  
since 2007!

The First Open Day took place on a beautiful day which showed  
Kinnel of to her very best. The group I showed round included 3  
prospective buyers, a representative of the Receivers and the  
Auctioneer.

Having shown them around the Dining Room, Kitchen, Drawing  
Room, Ballroom and Library we came back through the Salon to  
the Sunken Lounge where we found a family of Four standing by  
the Main Doors. This family explained to the Auctioneer that they  
had stayed in the Hall when she was the Conference Centre, they  
happened to be in the area and wondered if they could look  
around. SO they joined us on the remainder of the tour.





Having shown the party around all of the Hall - with the exception of the Stable Block which was sealed off due to asbestos – and the 21 acres of Gardens, the prospective buyers left.

I walked out of the main doors of the Hall and put my arm around the wife of the Family of Four.

‘Hello Marie, long time no see!’

The auctioneer looked at me and said

Why do I smell a Rat?’

I then introduced him to the ‘family’

‘The gentleman behind you is Philip Vince and this is his Mother!’

The auctioneer looked at me with disbelief especially when Phil told him they had left home at 3am that morning!

The other two members of the family were Marie’s Husband – Ward – she had remarried after Eddie passed away in 2000, and Esther – the eldest daughter of Eddie’s Eldest Son Jacob who had just qualified as an architect.

It was the first time since the Family had relinquished the Hall in 1999 that they had been back inside her.

The surprises did not end there however!

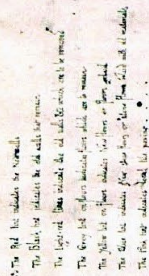
Phil walked to the back of his car and opened the boot.

*‘Do you recognise anything?’* he asked.

This is what was in the boot!



### PLAN OF THE GROUND FLOOR.



## An Original 1871 page of W E Nesfield's Plans For Kimmel Hall But What Is Wrong With Her?



In March 2012, I met the 'owner' of Kinmel Hall and discussed with him his plans for the Hall.

It was his intention to restore Kinmel Hall to its 1960's Grade 1 listed status before deciding what he would then do with her.

Sadly, those plans never came to fruition due to his worsening health problems which led to him revealing that he was NOT the owner of Kinmel Hall merely a representative of a company called Acer Properties Limited.

In March 2013 he was forced to step down from all of his business dealings because of his health problems.

I had already been introduced to the other representatives of the company and I had been warned that there were long term family problems between the two families because the person who 'bought' the Hall was the Brother-in-Law of the two Sisters who took over the Hall. They hated each other!

It is this family dynamic that I believe is the reason why Kinmel Hall has been allowed to deteriorate by the 'owners'.

Their Brother-in-Law's other business interest at the time he took ill was Unity Mine in Neath.

When he stepped down from his position with this Company the Sister-in-Laws could have easily taken over because their interests at that time including Financing Mining in Turkey.

However, they did not, and so Unity was forced to close!

The Security on the Hall was immediately reduced to 6 visits during the hours of darkness with no access to the Hall itself, they had to drive around the Hall to the Stable Courtyard and then turn around and come back out.

It was during one of these visits in October 2013, after 'workmen' had been at the Hall for a few weeks making her 'secure' that the Security Team made the following discovery.



















On October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2013, the 'Owners' of the Hall paid a visit to see the extent of the damage caused by numerous break ins over the preceding weeks including the damage to the fireplaces and doorways.

What they were not expecting was the gentleman who walked into the Hall at 1pm that afternoon – Peter Jones-Hughes, Conwy Council's Conservation Officer.

A few weeks before he had arranged a meeting with the owners, Fire Brigade Arson Prevention Team, Conservation and Planning and other interested parties.

Everyone turned up for the meeting – with just one exception,  
The Owners!

Instead, a Brother And Sister in their mid-Twenties walked into the Hall accompanied by a Builder – not a Surveyor.

The Brother and Sister ran an Estate Agents in Hyde Park in London that dealt with Flats and Apartments in that area. They introduced themselves as the Owners Property Management Team!

The two Sisters were speaking at an International Conference in London on the Financing of Mining in the Home Country of Turkey.

During the walk round the Arson Prevention Team instructed the Property Management Team to fit Steel or Perspex Panels to the Ground Floor Windows of the Hall as with the Stable Block.







This was the workmen's interpretation to these instructions. To make matters worse the wooden panels have been screwed into the wooden window frames – without Listed Planning Consent.

This was an example of the poor quality of workmanship that the Hall has been subjected to since the Sisters took over 'responsibility' for this Grade 1 listed –

*'nationally – indeed internationally – important historic building, among the most significant Victorian buildings in Wales of the nineteenth century'* – Jeremy Musson LLB Hons, M Phil, FSA.

This is the standard of work that we must do everything in our powers to rectify before it is too late –

*'Like an elderly grandparent with a past steeped in history, Kinmel should be respected and preserved and able to engage with society.'*



*It is appalling that Kinnel Hall continues to be neglected, she has been left with little to no maintenance and desperately requires condition survey to identify those emergency tasks needed to prevent further deterioration. If action is not taken soon the future of Kinnel Hall is in jeopardy and her history will become another photograph on the Wall.' Peter Hare*



In next months issue:

We will look at another part of the amazing history of  
Kinnel Hall

We will bring you up to date with the steps taken in  
'Operation Resurrection'

We will start the process of appointing the committee of  
The Friends of Kinnel Hall





In Closing The First Edition Of The Friends Of Kinmel Hall  
Newsletter I Need To Go Over What The Next Few Weeks Hold  
For The Plans Of  
The Friends Of Kinmel Hall  
To Move Forward.

We Have Asked A Local Resident If They Would Be Willing To  
Take On The Role Of Press Officer For The Group. The Reason  
For This Is Because Francis Has Spent Most Of His Life Living  
On The Kinmel Estate With His Parents Who Still Live On The  
Estate. His Father Was The Kinmel Estate Gamekeeper.

Francis Has Agreed To Act As The Point Of Contact For The  
Press and Media We Intend Contacting In the Coming Weeks  
And Months With The Media Campaign That Has Been Drawn  
Up With The Assistance Of The Media Consultant Who Works  
With The Anglesey Column Trust.

The Information That The Press Will Be Given As An  
Introduction To The Situation Has Been Drawn Up By The  
Honorary Historian For Kinmel Hall With The Assistance Of The  
Vince Family, Kinmel's Original History Researcher – Cyril  
Blakeman and The Old Clarendonians Historian  
Mrs Elaine Boxhall (nee Southon)  
PE Teacher at Clarendon 1950 – 57.

This Will Be Followed Up With Regular Updates As Hopefully  
The Effect Of The Campaign Takes Effect On The Council And  
They Hopefully Start To Take Steps To Secure The Hall's Future

The Media Campaign Will Be Aimed At Different Publications  
According To The Specialist Areas That The Hall And Its  
Environs Touch Because Of Its Varied History From  
Architecture, Horticulture, Engineering Etc.



Francis Has Also Kindly Agreed To Try And Create A New Facebook Group For The Friends Of Kinmel Hall Following The Failed Attempt Earlier This Year.

The Media Campaign Will Coincide With The Friends Of Kinmel Hall Linking Up With The North Wales Development Agency Officially.

In Order For This To Work To Both Of Our Advantages We Need To Create A More Formal Structure To The Friends Of Kinmel Hall Group.

In Next Month's Newsletter We Will Be Asking For Volunteers To Take Up Positions Within The Structure Of The Organisation.

We Envisage They Will Include Positions Such As: -

Chairman

Gen. Secretary

Treasurer

Membership Secretary

Meetings Secretary

Assistant Secretary

Minutes Secretary

This Is Not A Definitive List But It Gives An Idea As To Possible Posts That May Be Available



Whilst The Election Of These Posts Take Place It Would Be Best That The Process Of Starting Work On Getting The Deplorable State Of The Hall Brought To The Council's Attention More Strongly Than It Has Been In Recent Years.

This Is Where The North Wales Development Trust Comes In. It Is They Who Will Make Contact With The Officers Of The Council Whose Responsibility It Is To Enforce The Legislation Surrounding Grade 1 Listed Properties Such As Kinmel Hall And Who Have For The Last Nine Years – Nearly Ten – Done Virtually Nothing Constructive To Preserve –

*‘a nationally – indeed internationally – important historic building, among the most significant Victorian buildings in Wales of the nineteenth century.’*

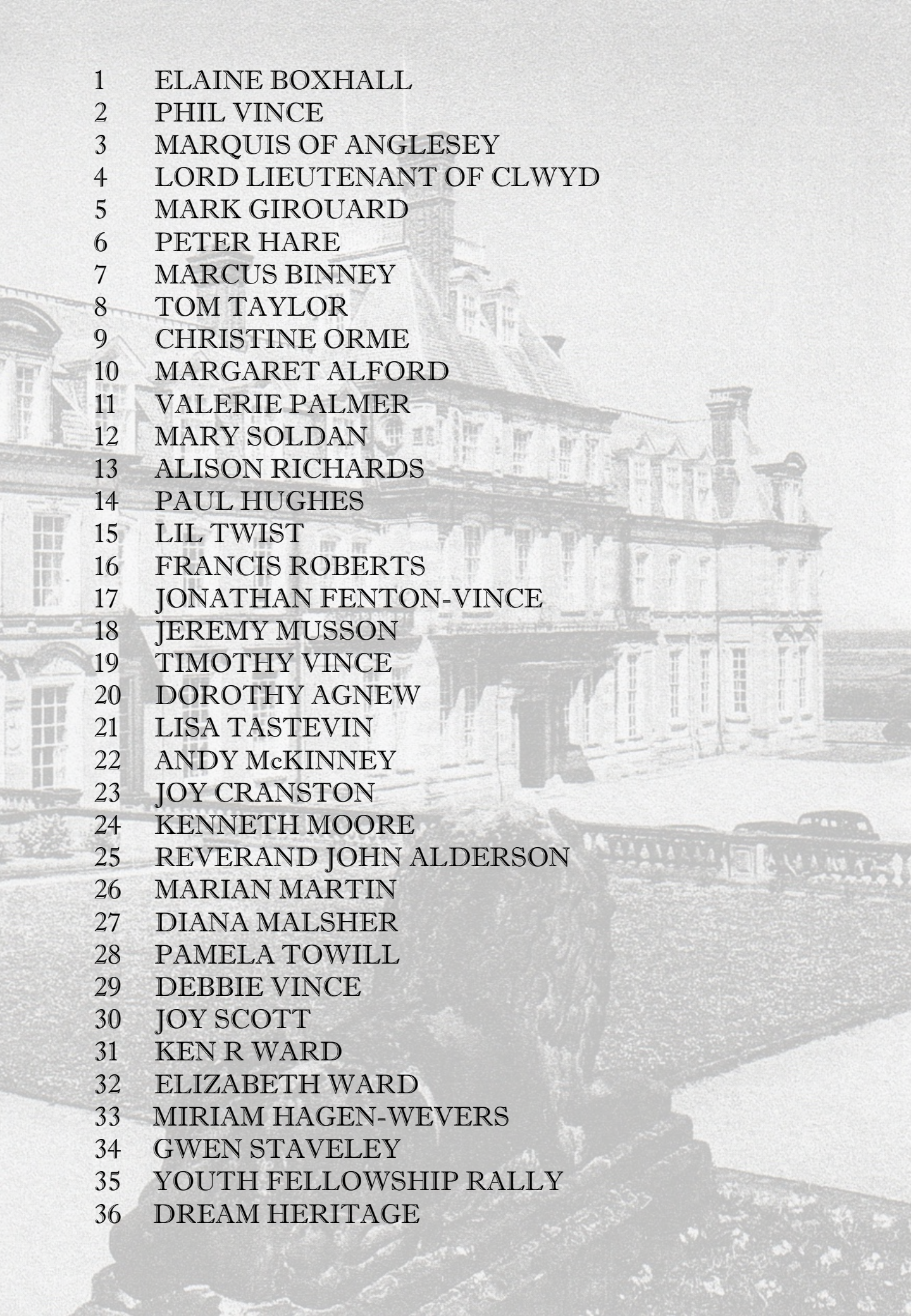
*Jeremy Musson 2021.*

*When They Make Contact With The Council They Will Make Them Aware Of The Existence Of The Friends Of Kinmel Hall Group, The Membership Of That Group, The Nesfieldscrown Website And The Fact That Future Communications With Both The Council And The Welsh Assembly Will Now Be Through The North Wales Development Trust. The Trust Want Things To Be Kept On An Amicable Footing Moving Forward And So This Is Why They Are Working With Us And The Council.*

*As Was The Case With The North Wales Hospital, The Trust Can Assist The Council To Locate Funding That The Council Would Not In Normal Circumstances Be able To Access. We Currently Are Aware Of Three Interested Parties And Possibly More!*

**‘LAUS DEO’**



- 
- 1 ELAINE BOXHALL
  - 2 PHIL VINCE
  - 3 MARQUIS OF ANGLESEY
  - 4 LORD LIEUTENANT OF CLWYD
  - 5 MARK GIROUARD
  - 6 PETER HARE
  - 7 MARCUS BINNEY
  - 8 TOM TAYLOR
  - 9 CHRISTINE ORME
  - 10 MARGARET ALFORD
  - 11 VALERIE PALMER
  - 12 MARY SOLDAN
  - 13 ALISON RICHARDS
  - 14 PAUL HUGHES
  - 15 LIL TWIST
  - 16 FRANCIS ROBERTS
  - 17 JONATHAN FENTON-VINCE
  - 18 JEREMY MUSSON
  - 19 TIMOTHY VINCE
  - 20 DOROTHY AGNEW
  - 21 LISA TASTEVIN
  - 22 ANDY McKINNEY
  - 23 JOY CRANSTON
  - 24 KENNETH MOORE
  - 25 REVEREND JOHN ALDERSON
  - 26 MARIAN MARTIN
  - 27 DIANA MALSHER
  - 28 PAMELA TOWILL
  - 29 DEBBIE VINCE
  - 30 JOY SCOTT
  - 31 KEN R WARD
  - 32 ELIZABETH WARD
  - 33 MIRIAM HAGEN-WEVERS
  - 34 GWEN STAVELEY
  - 35 YOUTH FELLOWSHIP RALLY
  - 36 DREAM HERITAGE