



# A GRAND NEW EPISODE

Words Krish Kandiah  
Portrait Jonny Harris

**A COMPLEX BLEND OF HISTORIC BEAUTY, A DIFFICULT PAST AND A BRIGHT NEW VISION, THERE'S MORE TO THE HAREWOOD ESTATE THAN MEETS THE EYE. ITS OWNER, DAVID LASCELLES, SEVENTH EARL OF HAREWOOD, IS FIRST AND FOREMOST A STRAIGHT-TALKING YORKSHIREMAN WITH A PASSION FOR FILM, HISTORY AND CONSERVATION**

**SUBLIME: DAVID, YOUR NAME IS ASSOCIATED WITH ACTORS SIR IAN MCKELLEN AND JOHN THAW, AND YOU HAVE A BAFTA. HOW DID YOU GET INTO FILM?**

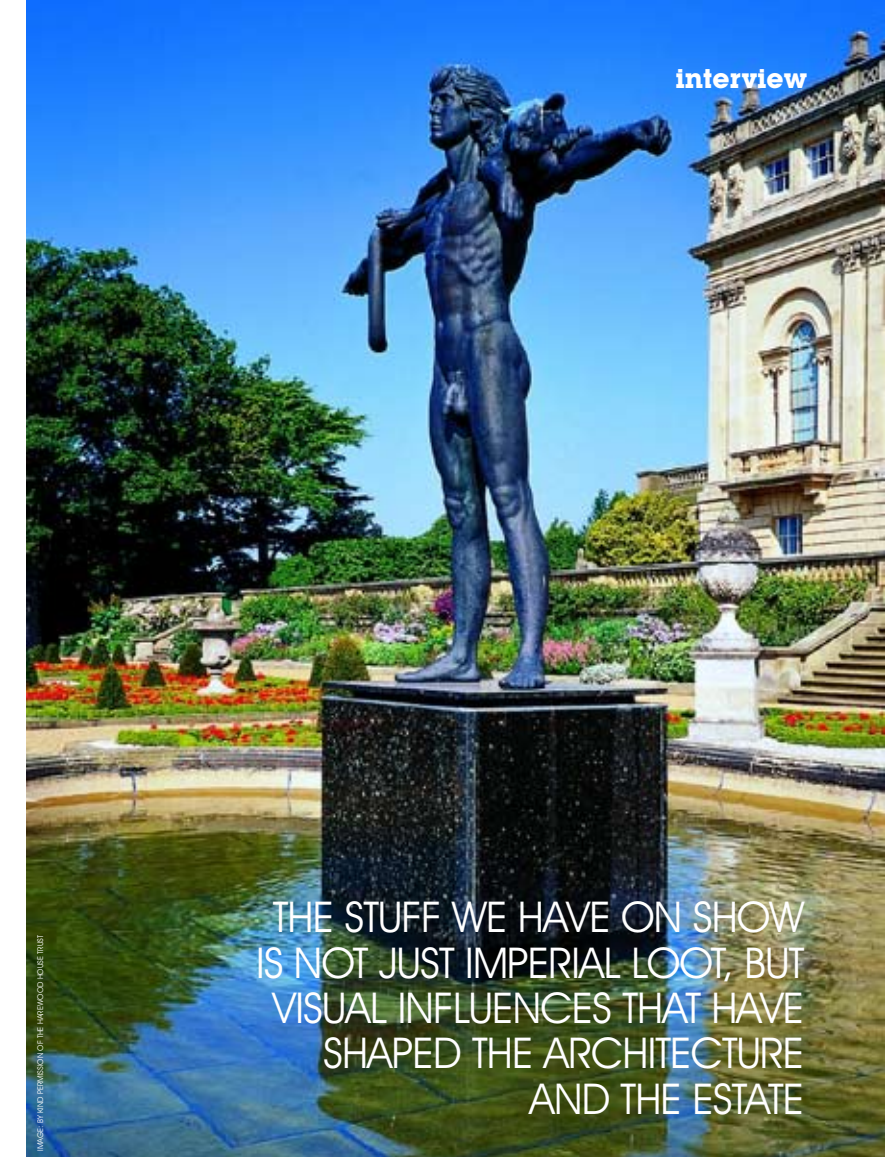
**DAVID LASCELLES:** Back in 1969 there were no media studies courses, so my love of film took me to Bristol University to read drama. From there I did a few film groups and workshops, and gradually gained experience in media. In those days Channel 4 were willing to take a risk on young, inexperienced film-makers and they gave me my first real break. Then I switched to mainstream TV drama and produced series three and four of *Inspector Morse*. The workload was equivalent to making nine feature-length films in two years, but we had an enormous audience of around 15m viewers. That's like the entire population of Australia, where I filmed my last episode.

I loved being a producer, and I got to work with a lot of very interesting people. Danny Boyle was an easy spot doing some great work; I was able to give him one of his first major productions. Then I went on to produce *Richard III*, which was a very ambitious film on a tight budget. Ian McKellen was a producer on it, and did it for a very low fee. It was his good example that meant we got a really great cast, including Robert Downey and Annette Bening, who bought in mainly out of a passion for Shakespeare.

**S: PRODUCING HOLLYWOOD ACTORS SEEMS A LONG WAY FROM PROTECTING THE 4000-ACRE HABITAT OF HAREWOOD – WHY THE CHANGE IN DIRECTION?**

**DL:** I became disillusioned with the TV industry – it was increasingly a hard place for me to work. Although Harewood had always been in the family, there was a strategic moment in the 1980s when a major change became urgent, and my wife Dianne and I decided to take it on. Like many stately homes, Harewood had been opened to the public but it was being run on an 'informed amateur' level. A new kind of leadership was needed, to bring stately homes out of their struggles. When our CEO came up for retirement, rather than rushing to appoint someone I rolled up my sleeves and took on the role for a year. I wanted to get to know the business from a grassroots level, which led to us then employing someone from a business, rather than a museum, background.

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**THE STUFF WE HAVE ON SHOW IS NOT JUST IMPERIAL LOOT, BUT VISUAL INFLUENCES THAT HAVE SHAPED THE ARCHITECTURE AND THE ESTATE**

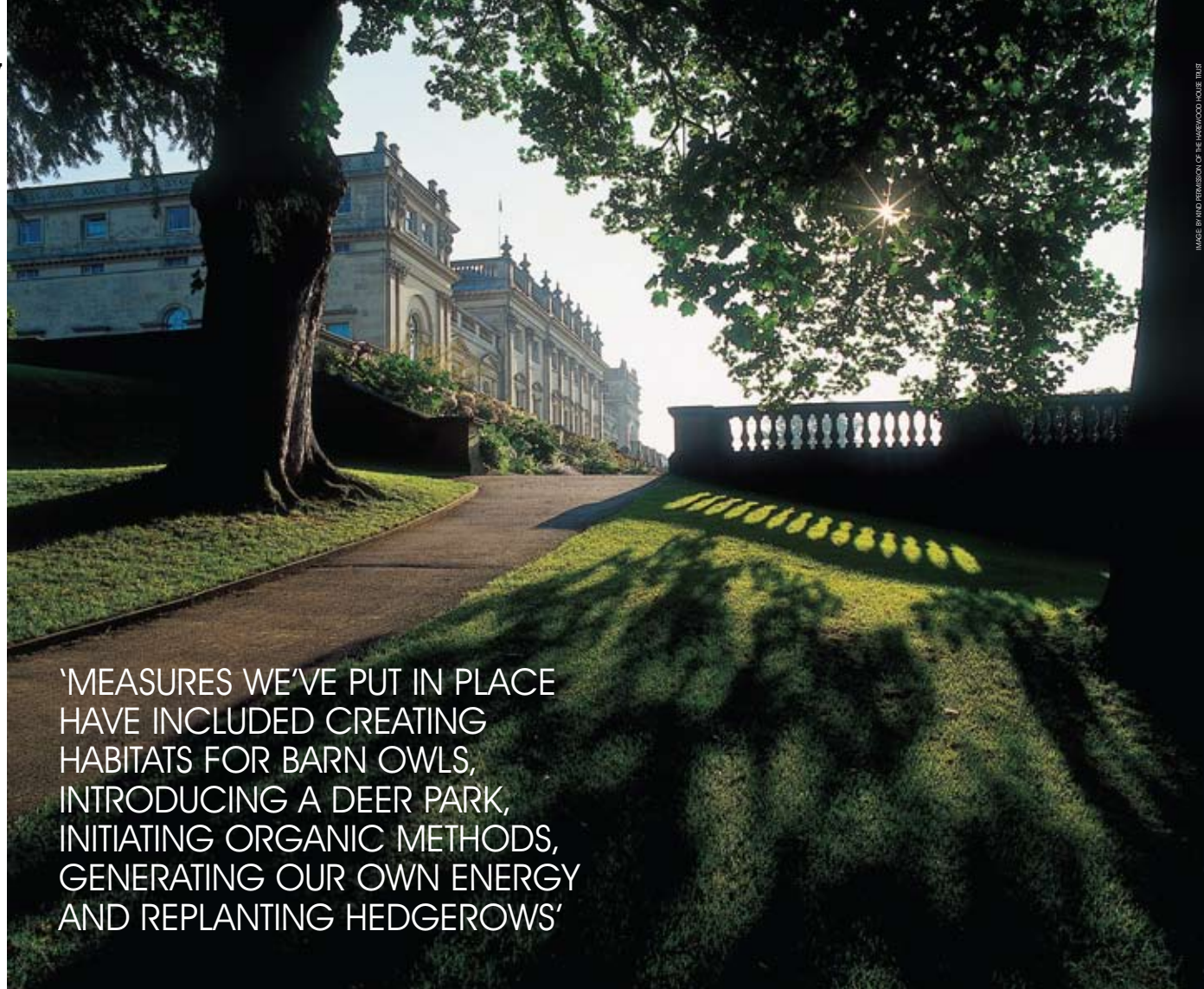
**S: YOUR CAREER CHANGE TOOK YOU FROM INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL AND AN URBAN LIFESTYLE TO SLEEPY, RURAL ENGLAND. HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE?**

**DL:** We want to keep Harewood alive and current. We keep asking the question, How do we engage so that we are relevant today? But Harewood is not just a quintessentially English place. Harewood draws on a wider cultural base and we promote that through our educational programme and global trail. The stuff we have on show is not just imperial loot, but visual influences that have shaped the architecture and the estate.

**S: YOU ARE VERY OPEN IN YOUR EXHIBITION AND PUBLICITY ABOUT THE SLAVE-TRADE**

**PAST OF THE HAREWOOD ESTATE. WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO PEOPLE WHO MIGHT DISMISS YOUR WORK ON ETHICAL GROUNDS?**

**DL:** None of us can do anything to change the past. The legacy of slavery is all around us in this country. It was the pervasive wealth-generator behind the Royal Family, the Church, the Oxford colleges. But ignoring it is not helpful. Nor is apologising going to change the past. While we feel sorry about what happened, we need to get the information out there. The way we do that is not through exhibitions about slavery, or slave-trade artefacts, but through a dynamic contemporary art programme.



'MEASURES WE'VE PUT IN PLACE HAVE INCLUDED CREATING HABITATS FOR BARN OWLS, INTRODUCING A DEER PARK, INITIATING ORGANIC METHODS, GENERATING OUR OWN ENERGY AND REPLANTING HEDGEROWS'

IMAGE: RAYMOND HARRISON OF THE HAREWOOD HOUSE TRUST

For example, we have exhibited work by Nigerian artist Sokaria Douglas Camp, whose art is partly related to the historic slave trade and partly to current Nigeria. Two years ago, for the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade, I produced Sonia Boyce's musical *Carnival Messiah*, which was based on the fact that the slave workforce celebrated the end of the harvest with a carnival. Heavily disguised carnival characters can be related back to their African roots. We are the first to celebrate the heritage of the past by bringing it into a contemporary context, which can continue this heritage into the future.

**S: CONSERVATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT, AS WELL AS HERITAGE, IS ANOTHER PASSION OF YOURS. WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THIS ASPECT OF THE ESTATE?**

**DL:** Harewood Estate is set in a lovely bit of countryside, which we have sought to bring to life by dramatically changing the management of the land. Measures we've put in place to do this have included creating habitats for barn owls, introducing a deer park, initiating organic methods, generating our own energy and replanting hedgerows. We are trying not only to conserve the environment at Harewood, but also to use it as a fantastic platform for best practice.

**S: I UNDERSTAND YOU HAVE A CREATIVE WAY OF FUNDING THESE MEASURES.**

**DL:** Emmerdale Village is set and filmed on the Harewood Estate, and the income that is ploughed in four or five days a week goes straight back into our conservation projects. This is just one of many things people may not expect of an English country estate, but we are committed to seeing the preservation of the Estate as a starting point rather than an end point. Harewood provides something for everybody now, and hopefully this is sustainable for the benefit of future generations. ■

## EVENTS AT HAREWOOD

**Harewood's 250th anniversary is being celebrated in style, with plenty of special events and themed weekends. Here are just a few of the exciting things going on in one of England's great treasure houses:**

### ARCHITECTURE WEEKEND

**4-5 July** A weekend of free talks, special-interest tours and family workshops, in celebration of the 250th anniversary of the laying of Harewood's foundation stone.

### TWELFTH NIGHT OUTDOOR THEATRE

**9 July, 7.30pm-9.30pm (gates open at 6.30pm)** One of Shakespeare's funniest and most popular comedies, performed by an all-male cast. Order some chilled wine and a picnic from the caterers, and watch the hilarious shenanigans unfold!

### OPEN-AIR CINEMA

**1 August** A lakeside summertime outdoor film festival where you can see *Kung Fu Panda*, *High School Musical* or *Mamma Mia* on the big screen.

For more information, see [harewood.org](http://harewood.org) or call 0113 218 1000

### ROLLS-ROYCE RALLY

**9 August 10.30am-6pm** Around 400 Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars are attending the 30th anniversary of the North of England Rally being held at Harewood. Models from the early 1900s right through to the present day from Europe, the USA and the UK will be arriving to join in the festivities.

Harewood is open all year round, so if you are not able to make any of the fantastic special events, fear not! Harewood is home to a huge bird garden, which hosts many of the world's rarest and most exotic birds. The Adventure Playground, Harewood Himalayan Garden and State Rooms are all available to be explored and enjoyed by all, as are the pre-bookable workshops ranging from flower-arranging and gardening to bee-keeping. When all this excitement leaves you feeling peckish, head to The Courtyard for some delicious sandwiches, hot meals or salads, or visit the sophisticated Terrace Café for champagne and cream teas.



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