

1973/6 Memorial to Sir Gerald Festus Kelly KCVO

Painter 1879-1972. President of the Royal Academy 1949-1954

Marble

Crypt of St Paul's Cathedral London

McFall's diary records:

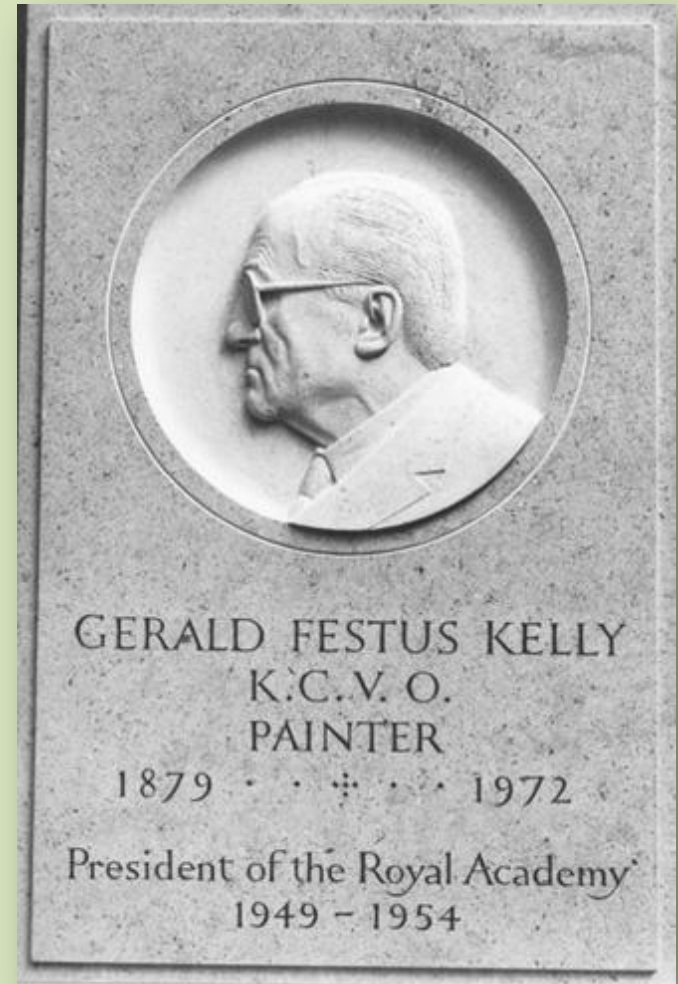
5/2/73 St Pauls measuring site for Kelly plaque
7/2/73 laying out Kelly inscription
12/4/73 approval for Kelly plaque
24/5/73 Kelly stone delivered (v hard) Roman stone;
25/5/73 nibble at Kelly stone
28/5/73 - 3/6/73 carving the relief portrait
4/6/73 draw on lettering Kelly
5/6/73 "President of..."
6/6/73 "...the Royal"
7/6/73 "...Academy 1949-1954"
9/6/73 "GERALD FE..."
11/6/73 "...STUS KELLY
12/6/73 "...CVO PAINTER 1897...1972"
14/6/73 finish Kelly
22/6/73 paint Kelly lettering in water colour
4/7/73 deliver Kelly tablet to St Pauls
20/9/73 St Pauls crypt Kelly panel up
22/11/73 St Pauls Crypt (Kelly service)

References: The Sunday Telegraph 25/11/73 Albany at Large: "In the crypt of St Paul's on Thursday one President of the Royal Academy, Sir Thomas Monnington,

unveiled a memorial to another. The profile of Sir Gerald Kelly, P.R.A. from 1949 to 1954, was cut by the sculptor David McFall RA, straight on to a marble slab, without first using a clay model.

McFall, as confident with his tongue as with his chisel, was once the victim of his subject's exuberance. At an Academy show, he noticed that one of his exhibits was attracting violent gestures from Kelly. The sculptor instantly set upon the PRA for disparaging his work. Kelly, with equal vehemence, told him he had been praising it."

The Daily Express 23/11/73 (William Hickey).



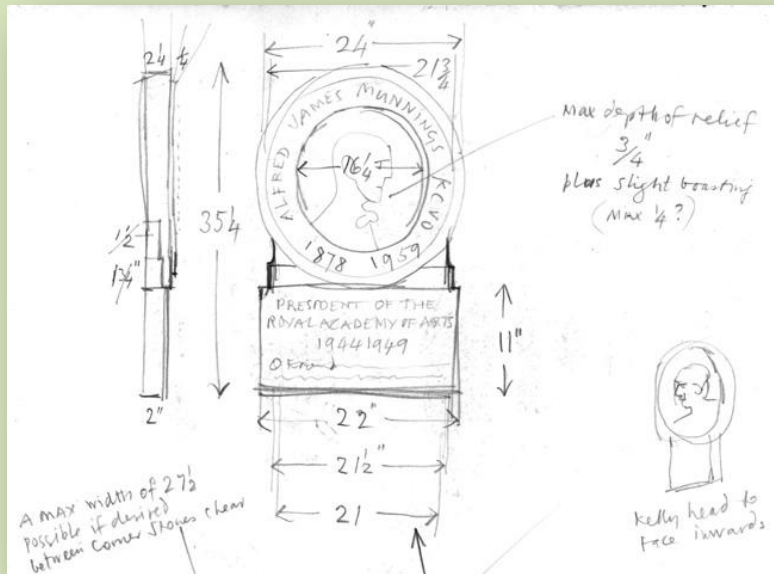
Sir Gerald Kelly

A memorial tablet to Sir Gerald Kelly will be unveiled at a service of dedication in the crypt of St Paul's Cathedral on November 22, at noon. The tablet, by Mr David McFall, RA, was commissioned through the Leighton Fund and will be unveiled by Sir Thomas Monnington, P.R.A.



Preliminary sketch

The memorial panel in the Past Presidents of the R.A. corner in the Crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral



GERALD FESTUS KELLY (b. 1879, d. 1972)

Sir Gerald Festus Kelly enjoyed one of the most distinguished careers of any twentieth century British artist. He was one of only four artists to be awarded The Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order (KCVO); the others were Frank Brangwyn, Augustus John and Sir Alfred Munnings. The monarch was grateful not only for a pair of magnificent state portraits (of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth II), but for his highly effective Presidency of the Royal Academy, where through a groundbreaking series of exhibitions he helped popularise the institution. Of Irish descent, Kelly was proud to become the first Old Etonian President of the Royal Academy. In order to appease parental opposition, he read poetry at Cambridge, before leaving to study in Paris in 1901. There he met Claude Monet, Auguste Renoir, Edgar Degas, Walter Sickert and Auguste Rodin, while including in his closest circle of friends talents as diverse as Sarah Bernhardt, Somerset Maugham, and Clive Bell. Maugham used Kelly as the basis for characters in several novels, and funded his first extensive foreign tour, to Burma in 1908. Combined with his tour to Cambodia in 1936, these led to the series of Eastern dancers for which Kelly is perhaps best remembered. Kelly travelled extensively throughout his career, and enjoyed painting such *plein air* sketches as this as a relief from producing portraits of such luminaries as TS Elliot, Henry Clay Frick, Harold Macmillan and Vaughan Williams. A great raconteur and *bon vivant*, he delivered what might serve well as his epitaph, at a speech to the Royal Academy in 1953: 'I am a naughty old man, utterly unrepentant in my love of things beautifully done'.

Kenneth Clark described Gerald Kelly as 'the most reliable portrait painter of his time,' and Clive Bell thought him 'about the best President of the Royal Academy since Sir Joshua Reynolds.'

Paintings by Sir Gerald Kelly



(left) Miss J c.1919

(right) Mah-Aung-Saw-Myan

