

FRIENDS NEWSLETTER



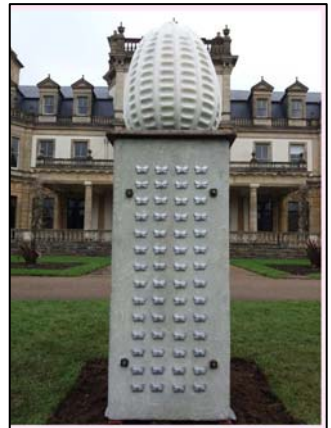
Friends of Dyffryn Gardens Newsletter

Sculpture trail recalls Lost Souls, heroic plantsmen and Dyffryn Gardens' special place in history

By Gerry Donovan, General Manager at Dyffryn Gardens

An outdoor trail designed by members of Sculpture Cymru was launched on 29 January as a part of a temporary exhibition to reflect on the history and botanical collections of the award-winning Dyffryn Gardens. The 'Place' exhibition explores the history, design and rich plantings of the Edwardian gardens.

Sculptors who have taken part in the exhibition include artist Lee Odishow, who was chosen to design a new First World War memorial for Belgium war zone, and John Howes, formerly Director of the BA Fine Art programme at the University of Wales, Trinity Saint David, Swansea.



We are thrilled that the varied works of the artists of Sculpture Cymru are adding an intriguing aspect to the rich experience of all our thousands of visitors who come to

see our wonderful plants and trees, wide vistas and intimate garden rooms. It has been great to see so many talented sculptors embrace the history and environment of Dyffryn and reflect this within their emotive pieces of art scattered around our gardens.

Dyffryn News
By Dyffryn Gardens Staff

Dyffryn enjoyed great success in attracting visitors during the past year, They welcomed their 100,000th visitor, Mrs O’Riordan and family, on Christmas Eve morning. Mr and Mrs O’Riordan had travelled from Sussex to spend Christmas with their family in Cardiff. This was their first Christmas in Wales so it was an extra special treat to be greeted with balloons and bubbly. They had come to see our Twelve Days of Christmas Trail.

The Trail was well received by visitors who posted impressions on Twitter.

Dyffryn Gardens’ staff then welcomed the 110,000th visitor on

The 14 artists are producing Dyffryn-inspired sculptures which will form a trail through the arboretum and gardens and will be in place for a year. There is a guidebook available in the visitors’ centre.

Random Acts of Kindness Day. The Gardens are also finalists for Cardiff Life Leisure & Tourism Award—the results will be out in March, not a bad start to 2017,

The team of book volunteers have refurbished the Exhibition Hall bookshop to fit in with the new Garden Café - in just one day! The bookshop has generated £15,814.52 from March 2016 – February 2017 from book sales. Please drop off your donations in the shop

12 days of Christmas Trail



Coach Trip to Stourhead House and Garden

By Rev. Margaret Stark

On Monday, 17th October a coach party of Friends made a pilgrimage to Stourhead in Wiltshire, in search of history and nature in its autumnal colouring. The weather was fair in the late morning when most of us explored the fine Palladian mansion; there was much to see including the large and airy library with beautiful painted glass in the upper reaches, and on the shelves a collection of Thomas Hardy novels that had been made by his friend Alda, Lady Hoare, who, with her husband Henry, had restored Stourhead House in the late 1890s. We also viewed their collection of remarkable paintings and their extensive Chippendale furniture. As we toured the house we were told the tragic story of Harry, the Hoare's beloved son, whose ill-health was compounded by war and who died in 1917 after sustaining wounds on the battlefield.

After a snack in the restaurant we were divided into strollers and more serious walkers for guided tours round the lake. A few of us lagged behind and so after a bit of serious walking we later fell in with the strollers. On our walks we encountered some very old and handsome trees including Tulip Trees, Western Red Cedars and a Dawn Redwood. The lake, which



House



Interiors

originated in three natural springs, is, of course, a beautiful sight, and as we looked across it, the acers in their autumnal clothing were a stunning red or yellow. Most other trees were only beginning to turn. Also across the lake we had views of the various temples – the Pantheon (dedicated to all gods) and the Temples of Apollo and Flora. Inside the Pantheon were statues of the various gods in marble, plaster or metal, among whom Diana the Huntress was prominent. There was also the underground world of the Grotto to explore. The lake itself was in tranquil mood, disturbed only by the ripples from passing or diving coots, ducks, geese and swans. Early in the afternoon we all suffered a soaking as heavy rain

descended but we kept going because Friends of Dyffryn are nothing if not determined! At the end of our walk we made a beeline for the restaurant and tea and cake, or explored the plants for sale and the shops. As we returned to Wales in our coach, we

commented to each other on the very enjoyable day we had had at Stourhead and thanked Mary as always for arranging the day and our driver, Dave, for conveying us safely.



Bridge



Pantheon Roof



Acers



Gateway

The Coffee Morning talks
By Val Caple

This winter we have been treated to a series of interesting talks on a variety of subjects. I hope the speakers will forgive me writing of my impressions rather than asking them for details of their talks. I am sure everyone who attended

would write about different aspects.

As I write there is only one left and I am intrigued by the title 'The treachery of the Blue Books'.

Many thanks to Barbara and everyone else involved in the planning and giving of these talks. They brightened the dreary months of winter

The Management of Whiteford Burrows and Sand Dunes
By Alan Kearsley-Evans
(National Trust)

Having enjoyed a walk in Cwm Ivy recently I was aware that the old footpath along the sea wall was closed because it had been breached in 2014. However I was delighted to hear of the planned replacement, which will also allow for a complete change in the management of the area. Cwm Ivy marsh, on the North Gower coast, was claimed from the sea as farmland in the 17th Century. It was protected by a sea defence which over the years was increased in size and strength. Now the embankment has been breached and the sea is reclaiming the land, with the exciting prospect of a new ecosystem which will encourage



fish, birds and animals to return. They are doing weekly monitoring surveys for plants, birds, mammals, invertebrates and sediment. The rapidly developing tidal creek system is providing a haven for sheltering young fish - and the otters that feed on them and ospreys are regularly seen in the area during their spring and autumn migration. The solid seawall will be replaced by a system which allows the tide to flood the site while reopening the popular circular walk at all but the highest tides.

See <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/whiteford-and-north-gower>

Lydney Park Gardens
By Sally James

Many years ago I visited the Roman Temple in the grounds of Lydney Park, but knew nothing of the family who owned it, or their development of the grounds. Sally was by way of being an 'old retainer' who had worked for the estate for 3 generations of the Bathurst family. On her retirement the then owner, Christopher, the 3rd Viscount Bledisloe, told her she



would die if she retired, so persuaded her to stay on. We were very lucky that she agreed as she gave a lively and entertaining talk about working with a family

who still treated their staff as part of the family, with Christmas parties and lifelong care. The grounds have been developed by all the owners who had a very hands-on

approach to running the estate. Many of the Roman finds are stored in the museum with other interesting articles.

See page 12 for the planned visit.

For more information see: <http://www.lydneyparkestate.co.uk/>

The Gardens of the French Riviera By Joan Andrews

Again this is an area I have visited and so enjoyed being reminded of some of the beautiful gardens between Nice and the Italian border. Many were designed by British ex-pats who enjoyed the milder climate allowing them to use a wider range of plants in their gardens.

Among the many amazing gardens, 2 stick in my memory.

La Mortola is an exotic botanical garden created by Thomas Hanbury, best known for bequeathing his Lutyens house and Wisley estate to the Royal Horticultural Society. He was a merchant adventurer who made a fortune in Shanghai, but La Mortola was chosen by

his older brother, a pharmacologist in the family pharmaceutical business of Allen and Hanbury. The garden displays a variety of plant families on a steep site overlooking the sea. The garden is now owned and maintained by L'Università di Genova.

Serre de la Madone was laid out by in 1924 by Lawrence Johnston, who had already created Hidcote Manor. He gradually converted various horticultural plots into a very personal garden with a remarkable collection of plants on a series of terraces. The garden is very different to Hidcote because of the terrain

The garden is listed as a protected site and



La Mortola



Serre de la Madone

the Conservatoire du Littoral (the government agency for the protection of the coastline now maintains the property.

Le Paris de la Parisiens By Rita White

I envy Rita her fluency in French and the extended time she spent in Paris allowing her to meander through those areas which casual visitors, like me, never sees.

The area she talked about was around the Ile de la Cité and the banks of the Seine.

La Rive Gauche (the Left Bank) is, in this section, to the south of the Seine, La Rive Droite to the north. To get your bearings you look along the river as it flows to the sea.



The tour started with some original 'hôtels', old mansions which survived modernization and are now beautifully maintained. It included the Pont Neuf (clothed in brown paper when the photo was taken) and finished with Centre Georges Pompidou Centre, of which

everyone has their own opinion, but which Rita loved. Along the way we visited art galleries, museums and churches such as the beautiful Sainte-Chapelle above.

It is many years since I visited Paris, but my appetite has been wetted to explore further on foot

Christmas Lunch at The Blue Anchor

I was looking forward to returning to the 2015 venue for our annual lunch, and was not disappointed. The food, the atmosphere and the other guests were delightful.

Many thanks to Barbara and others who helped with the organisation of this very enjoyable event.



Primula coryana – a primula named for Reginald Cory

By Roz Cooper

In 1918 George Forrest collected seed of a primula in the mountains of Mu-li, W. China. These were collected during the 4th expedition, sponsored by a syndicate that included Reginald Cory. This expedition was administered and the seed distributed by the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) and plant identification was undertaken by Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE).

In an article published in *Gardeners' Chronicle* 1918 George Forrest writes about collecting plants. "of the Nivalid primulas quite a group has collected around *Primula calliantha*. one lovely plant ... with the foliage of *P. calliantha*, has much longer and more slender scapes each bearing 2-5 blooms of the most enchanting shade of lake-carmine, with the eye dull grey ... and deliciously fragrant. A glorious plant! Another, equally fine, of the *calliantha* group, has rose-pink flowers."

This captures the difficulties of understanding the variation in primulas at the time. The distribution of Asiatic primulas was also an issue although Forrest writes that there must be connections between those in the Himalayas and those in China. In 1920 Professor Sir Isaac Bayley Balfour, Regius Keeper at RBGE, published descriptions of new species of *Primula*. This list did not include *Primula coryana* but did describe another nivalid primula *Primula boreio-calliantha* collected by Forrest.

The 5th Forrest expedition during 1921-3 was jointly sponsored by Cory and J.C. Williams. Cory was also

responsible for managing this expedition and liaised with RBGE about plant identification and distribution of seed. Bayley Balfour wrote a letter to Forrest in 1922 explaining that Cory was in Edinburgh trying to sort out seed distribution which RBGE had agreed to do on Cory's behalf and that Cory was delighted that a plant was to be named after him.

Later in 1922 Forrest wrote to Cory about difficulties with Frank Kingdon Ward in Mu-Li. The area was now closed to plant collectors as Kingdon Ward had attempted to collect without a permit. Because of this Forrest had lost 150 specimens and two months work. Forrest's local collectors were not restricted so he was able to collect more seed.

Professor (later Sir) William Wright Smith, was appointed Regius Keeper in 1922 when Bayley Balfour retired. In 1923 a formal description of *P. coryana* was published by Wright Smith which includes references to the 1918 original collections of this primula and subsequent collections in flower by Forrest in the mountains near Mu-Li and in the mountains near Yung-Ming. He describes "a plant of 12-18 inches. Under surface of foliage peculiarly aromatic when rubbed. Flowers fragrant, fleshy, soft rose-lavender; throat filled with light sulphur-coloured farina."

The formal description confirms that the plant was named "in honour of Reginald Cory esq. of Duffryn, Cardiff to whom the Royal Botanic Garden is indebted for much material collected by George Forrest in Western China. The name was attached by Sir Isaac Bayley Balfour to the original fruiting specimens but no

description has been found.”

The last sentence is key. The earliest publication of a plant name takes precedence and it became clear that there were issues with *Primula coryana* as a name. There also appears to be some confusion why there was an assigned name but no description published - Bayley Balfour had died in 1922. Nivalid primulas are difficult to grow in Britain and there are several references to plants reaching flowering stage, some even being drawn or painted at that stage, only to die shortly after. It is possible that the 1918 collections did not survive long enough to be published.

Forrest left for China on his 6th expedition in 1924, sponsored by J.C. Williams and Cory once more. Wright Smith later wrote to Forrest that he was working on primulas. Heinrich R. E Handel-Mazzetti had sent herbarium specimens to RBGE and his *Primula muliensis* was very close or identical with *P. coryana*. Handel-Mazzetti was an Austrian who specialised in Chinese plants. In 1924 Wright Smith wrote to Forrest expressing his annoyance that the description of *Primula coryana* had not been published fast enough so the name from Handel-Mazzetti will have precedence. He also wrote that he was not going to tell Cory about late publication.

There was a 3rd letter from Wright Smith to Forrest in 1924 asking for more seed of *Primula coryana* as he was not sure if they have the real thing. So far I have not discovered any later references to *Primula coryana* by the George Forrest.

In 1929 the RHS published *Field Notes of Trees, Shrubs and Plants other than Rhododendrons collected*



Photo from primulaworld.blogspot.co.uk/

in Western China by Mr George Forrest 1917-19. *Primula muliensis* has two RHS numbers which suggests the seed may have been received in small quantities sent by post and then a bulk shipment. Cory as a member of the syndicate, may well have received seed from both. Cory would have received seed from the 1921 and 1922 collections and it would be fascinating to know if he was successful in growing this difficult primula from any of these collections.

Currently both *P. coryana* and *P. muliensis* are regarded as synonyms of *Primula boreiocalliantha*, the plant described by Bayley Balfour in 1920.

See also www.rbge.org.uk and www.theplantlist.org

Please ask Val Caple if you would like the full paper, including references

Dyffryn Events

From Kate Simmons, Visitor Experience Manager

What's On over Easter?

We're especially excited for the Easter holidays this year—Dyffryn has been chosen to represent Wales in a **national pilot project** for the National Trust!

This is a fantastic opportunity to raise our profile and create a distinctive offer for Easter which lasts for the whole of the holidays, not just the 4 days of the Bank Holiday weekend.

All the pilot properties will be focusing on these aims:

- Exploring a nature offer
- Focusing on multi-generational audiences
- Exploring a non-Cadbury offer
- Managing visitor volume through programming (spreading visits away from peak)
- Amplifying our conservation work

This year's programme will include

Cadbury Egg Hunt 14th to 17th April Archery Lawn & Garden Rooms

Make it Monday 10th & 17th April Morning Room, Dyffryn House

Magnolia Walk Self-guided trail leaflet (throughout April)

Plant Hunter Expedition
Each day from 8th to 23rd April 10.00 to 18.00 in the Arboretum. Do you have the courage and cunning to become a legendary Plant Hunter? Grab your wits and your muddy boots as you set off on an adventure through the evolving woodland of our arboretum.

Other events

Mother's Day Cupcake Bouquet Workshop
Fri 24th Mar 2017 17:00-18:30. Learn how to make a beautiful flower cupcake bouquet in our Garden's Café

Many of these events require pre-booking. Please contact Dyffryn Gardens for more information (see page 12)

AGM Wed. 10th May 2017

Please come and support your Committee

Vice Chairman's Resignation

We are still looking for a Chairman and a Vice Chairman. Please contact me if you are interested, or can suggest possible candidates.

Plea for new Committee members

If there is anyone else who would be willing to put themselves forward as a Committee member please

contact me as soon as possible. We meet about 4 times a year at Dyffryn.

Talks/presentations

Please contact me if you have any ideas for presenters or subjects for the programme of coffee mornings for next winter. We have been asked to include meetings at other times of the day—what do you think?

The meetings were well attended last winter—thanks to all those who came or helped with refreshments - we would be lost without you.

Barbara Hodges,
Hon. Secretary

Programme of Events 2017.

Talks are open to members only, unless otherwise stated.

Where numbers are limited pre-booking is required using the application forms included with this issue.

Right: Friends at Stourhead



Wednesday 10 th May 2017	Friends of Dyffryn Annual General Meeting 2.00 pm in the Cory Education Centre
Tuesday 16 th May 2017	Coach Trip to Lydney Park Spring Gardens and South Lodge See Application form for details.
Thursday 20 th July 2017	Coach Trip to The Sir Harold Hillier Garden and Sandleford Place See Application form for details.

For more Information, please contact

Mrs Mary Ponting, 4 Church Terrace, St Mary Church, Cowbridge, Vale of Glamorgan, C71 7LU, maryponting@talk21.com
or Mrs Barbara Hodges, Greenfields, Eagleswell Road, Boverton, Llantwit Major, CF61 1UF. fodyffryn.sec@virgin.net

For information about the gardens, events etc please contact
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<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/dyffryn-gardens>