

Spring 2020

FRIENDS NEWSLETTER



Friends of Dyffryn Gardens Newsletter

Dramatic Changes to the South Front

By Val Caple

Work on the South Front is well underway, restoring long-lost views and reuniting the design of house and garden without the barrier of overgrown fastigate yews.

The option of stumping back the old yew trees was considered, but it was impossible to predict whether they would all survive and look identical. The old yews have been removed and new ones planted to be maintained in the Italianate form Cory originally intended.

After much strenuous work by the staff, the old tree stumps have been preserved and moved to the top of the rockery and will be used to make a Stumpery.

It has been interesting watching experts at work and conservation in action on a grand scale! The new

yew trees, which have been waiting near the Cory Education Centre for many months, have now been planted and work has started to plant the trees and shrubberies on the corner bed where the old yew was damaging the culvert which drains water from the garden.

I cannot wait to see the new yew trees shaped to restore Mawson and Cory's vision from the Italian Terrace and look across to the treescape of the arboretum and take in all the stunning autumn colour.





October 1st 2019



October 29th



October 16th



Stumpery

Golf Buggy - Cheque Presentation

By Dr. Paul Knoyle

At the Gallery Dyffryn House, on 15 January a cheque for £3650 was presented to Gerry Donovan General Manager by Jane Howarth, Vice Chair of the Friends towards the cost of a second buggy to manage the increase in visitor numbers. Tea and delicious home made Christmas biscuits were provided by the Dyffryn Staff

This has been made possible by the generosity of members supporting functions such as the two Summer Musical Evenings when we were entertained by the St Hilary Choir.

The Friends are pleased to have been involved in this joint project.



A Peep Into Lady Cory's Jewellery Box

By Marion Davies

On a very wet and windy January afternoon what better treat than a fascinating and beautifully illustrated talk on the jewellery once owned by Lady Jane Cory. Rona Lowman-Hadland who is a research volunteer for the National Trust at Dyffryn has done a tremendous amount of research on this topic. And the excellent photographs shown by her husband Tony.

Jane Anne Gordon Lethbridge, daughter of a Somerset Army officer, married Clifford Cory, second son of Sir John and Lady Cory, on 25th January 1893 with a very grand society wedding in London. The marriage however was a 'disaster', and subject to much speculation. The couple lived together for only two months with no subsequent attempt at reconciliation. In a failed application for judicial separation Jane Cory presented a picture of an obsessively jealous man

Clifford Cory (1859-1941) entered the Cory family business aged 19, and by 23 he was in charge of the London office. He was regarded as the commercial powerhouse of the family and was responsible in the early twentieth century for adding the lucrative petroleum industry to the family's coal owning interests.

The failure of his marriage did not appear to impede his progress in life: he was a member of Glamorgan County Council, an M.P. (Liberal) for the St Ives constituency, Cornwall, High Sheriff of Monmouthshire, President of the Cardiff Chamber of Commerce and he was created a



Silver and gold, pavé-set with turquoises, with rubies, pearls and brilliant-cut diamonds



Coloured gold and pearls

Baronet in 1907. He ended his days as Chairman of Messrs Cory Brothers and lived at Llantarnum Abbey in Monmouthshire.

But what became of Lady Jane Cory (1866-1947) who, aged 26, was separated but not divorced and lived until she was 79. For most of her life she lived in London and was regarded as a prominent member of society mixing in Court circles. It is not known how much financial support she received from Clifford but she inherited considerable wealth after the early deaths of her sister and brother in law.

She was well known for the parties she hosted at her home in Belgravia Square which were attended by the glitterati of the day including on one occasion Paderewski, the Polish pianist/composer and Prime Minister. She

was also well known for her collection of jewellery which she acquired during her lifetime. When she died in 1947 she made a bequest to the V&A which included 99 pieces of jewellery from her collection. Rona's research took her to the V&A where she was able to see many of the pieces of jewellery and Tony was allowed to take photographs.

It's impossible in this written report of Rona's illustrated talk to give an adequate description of the splendour, craftsmanship, colour and beauty of the jewellery. A turquoise snake necklace which appeared to be eating its own tail and was articulated so that it moved as the wearer moved was particularly fascinating. Some of the

pieces were designed in a naturalistic style which reflected the vogue for botany, with grapes and vines being fashionable in Victorian times. A beautiful sapphire necklace and earrings which were made in England in 1850 were regarded as a portent of good luck.

Rona had a photograph of Lady Cory looking splendid in an evening dress and wearing a beautiful tiara and earrings. As a result of Rona's research we can today see the incredible jewellery collection at the V&A, but we know very little about her as a person. The only other known fact is that she was an accomplished embroiderer, 9 embroideries turned down by the V&A were



Lady Cory Miniature
By Basebe, Athelstane,
Painted ivory, gilt metal

donated to the Museum of New Zealand.

Rona's knowledge and her detailed description of the jewellery and the many photographs were much appreciated and enjoyed by the audience.

Images © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
See <https://collections.vam.ac.uk>

Winter Programme By Val Caple

We have been privileged in having 2 events organised by Dyffryn Gardens' Staff.

The Propagation meeting was well attended with a lot of questions from the floor after Chris Flynn gave an interesting and detailed demonstration of growing

plants from seeds, soft, semi-ripe and hardwood cuttings and grafts. He emphasised the importance of timing, the selection of materials and the cleanliness of tools.

At Question Time for Gardeners a team of experts, Chris, Ceridwen and Rory, answered a series of questions sent in advance by members of the audience. A large

range of subjects was covered from the best plants to grow under certain conditions, plant diseases and problems, growing vegetables, maintaining healthy soil and managing trees and shrubs.

Many thanks to Dyffryn Gardens the staff, and to Geraldine, Barbara and Jane for organising the events.

Introduction to Coade Stone - Part One

By Philip Willis

I first came across Coade Stone on a visit to the National Trust property, Croome House & Gardens in Worcestershire. In 1751, under the Patronage of the Earl of Coventry, Capability Brown set about creating one of his first landscapes which became a feature of so many of the great houses of the day. On first sight, when seen from the church of St Mary Magdalene, the view that greets you may seem rather flat and uninspiring but take a garden tour and the hidden delights of this garden landscape become clear. In particular, you will discover some fine examples of Coade Stone Statuary and decorative detail.

In this first of two articles we shall consider the story of Coade Stone and of its founder, Eleanor Coade. The second article will then look in more detail at some specific examples of Coade Stone, primarily at Croome House, but also at a couple of well-known London Landmarks.

Coade Stone is an artificial stoneware and is, in fact, a ceramic, being a clay body that has been fired in a kiln. It became very popular in the Georgian Period due to its creamy colour, which blended in with the architecture of the time and quickly became a favourite with many notable architects of the time such as Robert Adam, Sir John Soane, John Nash and James & Samuel Wyatt, to name but a few. Also, due to the formula of the clay mix and high firing temperatures (1100-1150 °C) it was very resistant to weathering and far more resilient than other types of

artificial stoneware to rain and frost penetration.

The basis of the formula of Coade Stone was approximately: 60-70% ball clay from Dorset and Devon, 10% or more of Grog, possibly crushed stoneware, 5 -10% of flint. 5 -10% of fine sand and 10% crushed soda-lime-silica glass (window-pane glass).

This formula meant that the amount of shrinkage was reduced in the firing process as some of the materials had already been through a kiln. Therefore, plaster moulds for new designs were made at a scale of 13" inches to 12" inches to accommodate the very limited shrinkage.

The Coade family, originally from Cornwall, were non-conformist Dissenters and Eleanor Coade was born in Exeter in 1733 where her father, George, had a wool business. English Dissenters, or Separatists, were Protestant Christians who separated from the Church of England in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. Eleanor's mother was also called Eleanor which causes some confusion during research. Unfortunately, George Coade went bankrupt in 1759 and the family moved to London where George later died in 1769. There is some evidence that Eleanor Coade had run her own linen and drapery business before embarking on her new business venture, presumably to support herself and family, thereby gaining some business acumen in the process. It should be remembered that Georgian businesswomen were few and far between.

Coade Stone was produced by Eleanor Coade in a factory at King's Arms Stairs, Narrow Wall, Lambeth

and now the site of the Royal Festival Hall on the South Bank. In the early 19th century, Narrow Wall was straightened and renamed Belvedere Road.

Eleanor sometimes referred to her product as Lithodipyras (from the Greek, meaning Stone Twice Fired). Daniel Pincot had been operating a similar artificial stoneware business on the same site since 1767 and it was this business that Eleanor Coade took over in 1769, developing her own recipe and process – hence Coade Stone. Pincot continued to work with Eleanor until 1771 when it became clear that Pincot was misrepresenting himself as a Partner in the business. Eleanor took out an advertisement in the Daily Advertiser of September 11th 1771 notifying customers that she was the real proprietor of the business and three days later took out another advertisement stating Pincot was no longer in the 'Employ at her Manufactory'. Pincot died in 1792 and was buried in Bunhill Fields Cemetery, Islington, London



Left: Charity Boy, dated 1821, Bishopsgate, London.



Right: Doorway & Keystone, Harley Street, London.

It was at this stage that Eleanor employed the sculptor John Bacon making the announcement, again in The Daily Advertiser of September 23rd & 25th, that the business was now under the Superintendence of Mr John Bacon, Sculptor. It is clear that Bacon was the main designer of Coade pieces, and remained so until his death in 1799, although other designers, modellers and painters of note included J.C.F. Rossi (figure of Britannia on top of Liverpool Old Town Hall), Thomas Banks (Old Father Time in Rochester Cathedral), John Flaxman (nine Statues at Buckingham

Palace, designed by Flaxman but modelled by Edward Hodges Bailey) and Benjamin West (Nelson's pediment at the Old Royal Naval College at Greenwich).

In the same year, 1799, Eleanor had a special gallery built near the Lambeth side of Westminster Bridge to display her products. It was at this point that she went into partnership with her cousin, John Sealy, who was already working in the business. The business was now named Coade & Sealy until Sealy's death in 1813.

By now, Eleanor Coade was 80 years old and took on a distant relation, William

Croggan, to manage the business, although he was never made a partner. Nor was the business left to him upon Eleanor's death in 1821. Therefore, to purchase the business, he had to engage in negotiations with her executors over its price (it is believed he paid about £4000). During the eight years of his management he maintained daily work books and it was these records that eventually found their way into the Public Record Office. During this period of Croggan's ownership Coade pieces were marked Croggan Late Coade and then just plain Croggan.

Croggan had a lucrative commission for decorations at Buckingham Palace in the 1820s and had also developed the Scagliola manufacture (marble effect for interior columns etc) which he had begun during Eleanor's lifetime. He opened retail premises in the New Road (Marylebone/Euston Road) to attract well-to-do residents of the developing Regents Park area, though the factory remained in Lambeth.



Left: Male Figures on Columns with Plaque above, Pall Mall, London.



Right: Chinese Figures & Lion, Twinings Tea, Strand, London.

However, disaster struck in the early 1830s and Croggan went bankrupt. Speculation suggested he had completed £20,000 worth of work for the Duke of York for which he was never paid. The Duke was building a new house in London but also had a reputation for never making any payments to his tradesmen and had in fact died £200,000 in debt. Croggan died in 1835 and his son, Thomas John, re-established a business as Croggan (1835) Ltd which survived into the 1970s.

Very little more Coade stone was made and the last pieces seen are dated c1840 with the factory moulds being sold in 1843. Mark Blanchard, who trained

at the Coade Factory and advertised that he was the successor to the Coade firm, continued to use the formula until the 1850s and may have bought some of the moulds. As design tastes changed, Blanchard turned his attention to producing terracotta and went on to become a leading manufacturer, winning prizes at the Great Exhibition of 1851.

This brings the background story of Coade Stone to a conclusion. In the next article some specific examples of Coade Stone statuary and ornamentation that can still be seen to day will be discussed further.

Dyffryn Gardens' Xmas Tree Trail

By Val Caple



Again the imagination of the designers was amazing and great fun.

Each 'tree' reflected an aspect of the history

of Dyffryn Gardens and the Cory family. Many thanks to the Volunteers who designed the trail around the whole garden

Friends Xmas Party

By Val Caple

Again we have to thank Barbara and the Blue Anchor staff for the tasty lunch and beautiful décor which the friends enjoyed. Also thanks to all of the members who supported us and made the occasion memorable.

We have been meeting at the Blue Anchor since 2015 and the Committee have been discussing a change of venue.

We would welcome comments about the Blue Anchor's food and facilities, and suggestions for alternative venues within



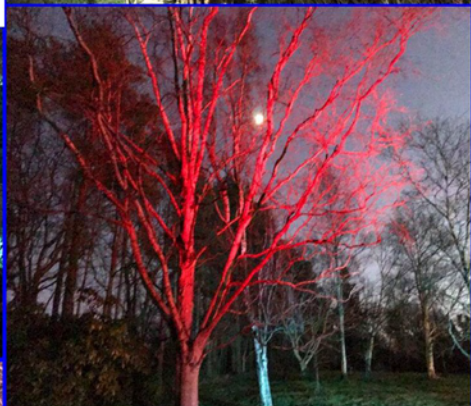
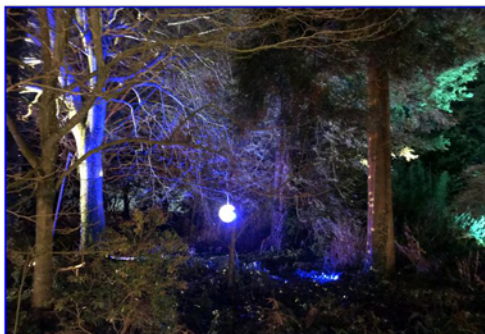
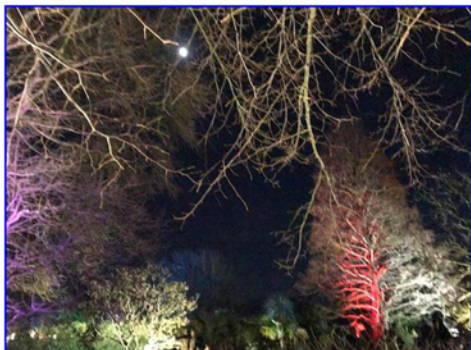
the Vale of Glamorgan so we can start planning for this year's celebration.

Dyffryn Gardens' Xmas Lights Trail

By Mary Evans

After turning back on 30 Dec because of horrendous traffic jam from traffic lights we tried again on 4 Jan and got there earlier. Success!

Here are my pictures. A really magical trail once the traffic barrier was surmounted.



The Snowdrops of Colesbourne Park

By Cynthia Merrett

Organised in February by the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust, some of the members of FOD took advantage of spare seats on this trip and were treated to a grand display of the emerging snowdrops surrounding the house of Sir Henry Elwes who, with the help of his gardener, led us on a guided tour.

This commenced with a short talk, while we were enjoying coffee and homemade cakes, detailing the history of how and when the collection started. As we strolled around the beautiful grounds the different species were indicated by him and the differences explained. Snowdrops did not exist indigenously in the UK



but were introduced from the mid Europe/Asian regions of the world by collectors. There are approximately 21 recognised species and an unknown number of hybrids; flowers can be of different shapes and markings, and leaves of different construction. Not all flowers are white and some are even scented. The hybrids are

usually created by bees and pollen distribution, while the species subdivide their bulbs, and produce offsets.

An enjoyable visit followed by a drive to Gloucester for lunch and sightseeing. The weather stayed dry until we left for home and the slow drive on the M4.

Mrs Joan Raum

By Barbara Hodges

It is with sadness that I have to inform you that Joan died in Llandough Hospital on 13th February 2020. She was a Founder member of the Friends and hosted the committee meetings in her home for several years until we transferred

to the CEC. Joan was a valuable member of the committee until she became ill a few years ago and was the designer our logo.

In her younger days she taught Botany. She loved animals, particularly dogs, and travelled extensively with her husband, Jeffrey, especially when his job



took them to the USA and Belgium.

The Isles of Scilly was a favourite holiday venue.

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For the latest information about membership, forthcoming events, etc. please visit www.dyffryngardens.org.uk

For information about Dyffryn Gardens events etc. visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk/dyffryn-gardens

Garden Cuttings

From the Committee

Committee Members

We are always looking for new ideas and would welcome you if you are interested to join us on the committee.

Meetings are held three to four times a year at Dyffryn. Please contact a member of the committee if you are interested.

Treasurer

We are urgently looking for a Treasurer to take over from Joan Andrews when she retires. Please contact Barbara Hodges if you are willing to join the Committee to take on this role

Membership Secretary

Clare has resigned as Membership Secretary. The Committee thanks

her for the sterling work over the past few years.

The membership fees are unchanged for 2020—2021.
RENEWAL FORMS WILL BE SENT OUT WHEN THE COVID-19 SITUATION BECOMES CLEARER AND THE NEW MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY IS IN POSITION.

Website and Newsletter

Val Caple would be delighted to receive your contributions for the Newsletter at any time. This is YOUR Newsletter.

Please also let her know how the website can be improved.

Winter talks

If you have any ideas for speakers for the autumn and winter of 2020-2021 please could you discuss with Barbara Hodges

Programme of Events 2020.

Talks are open to members only, unless otherwise stated.

Where numbers are limited pre-booking is required using the application forms provided.

Right: Members travelling to the cheque presentation



Monday 18th May 2020	Visit by coach to the National Botanic Garden See Application Form for Details
Wednesday 20th May 2020	Visit by coach to Dyffryn Garden Society 2.30 pm meeting in the Local Education Centre. Support your Committee by attending.
Thursday 19th July 2020	Visit by coach to Longhouse Farm and High Glanau See Application Form for Details

**Postponed due to COVID-19.
More information when the situation changes.**

For more Information about above events, please contact

Mrs Mary Ponting (maryponting@talk21.com) or Mrs Barbara Hodges (fodyffryn.sec@virgin.net) or visit www.dyffryngardens.org.uk

For National Trust events contact Dyffryn Gardens