

NYMANS

*Handcross
nr Haywards Heath
West Sussex
England
RH17 6EB*

OS Grid Ref: 187:TQ265294

<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/nymans/>

CMG Archives

<http://www.campbellmgold.com>

(2012)

--()--



Nymans House in 1932 - before the fire in 1947

Introduction

The national Trust describes Nymans as:

Outstanding 20th-century garden, set around a romantic house and ruins, in beautiful woodland.

Set in the High Weald with splendid views, the garden is a series of experimental designs with spectacular planting and beauty all year. Both a horticulturalist's dream and a peaceful country garden, it is easy to lose yourself in its intimate and surprising corners.

The house, transformed into a Gothic mansion in the 1920s, burnt down shortly after, leaving romantic ruins. The remaining rooms are unexpectedly charming, filled with flowers from the garden as Anne Messel, Countess of Rosse had them.

*Ancient woods beyond the garden dip into the valley.
(<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/nymans/>)*

--()--

History

Nymans house and its surrounding estate are named after Robert Nyuweman, who held land in the Handcross area during the 14th century.

Details of land ownership before the 18th century are vague; however, it is recorded that Gerald Gatland held 89 acres of land in the Nymans area in 1597. Additionally, a mansion house at Nymans, belonging to Gerard Wheler, is mentioned in 1629.

The record becomes clearer after 1799 when Nymans was inherited by Elizabeth Ellyat.

In 1823 Elizabeth's son (name unknown) sold Nymans to Thomas Cooper; and in 1837 George Cooper (Thomas Cooper's son) sold Nymans to Thomas Hill.

In 1839 Nymans was bought by George Harrington who added more land to the estate and "enlarged and modernised an existing house" thereon. Additionally, it is believed that George Harrington planted the "newly fashionable evergreen trees" on the estate.

George Harrington died in 1852 and Nymans passed to William Carr.

In 1864 Nymans was bought by Captain John Dearden, who remained in possession thereof until 1890 when the property was purchased by Ludwig Messel.

Nymans remained in the Messel family until 1954 when was willed to, and taken over, by the National Trust.

--()--

Nymans Timeline

14th Century - Nymans house and its surrounding estate are named after Robert Nyuweman

1597 - Gerald Gatland held 89 acres of land in the Nymans area

1629 - A mansion house at Nymans, belonging to Gerard Wheeler, is mentioned

18th and 19th Centuries - the Messel family were a well-established Jewish banking family from Hesse Darmstadt in Germany

1784 - Aron Messel, father of Simon Messel, born in the German town of Messel

1799 - Nymans is inherited by Elizabeth Ellyat

1816 - Aron Messel founds a Banking House in Darmstadt Germany

1817 - Simon Messel, father of Ludwig Messel, born in Darmstadt Germany

1820 - Emilie Linheim, mother of Ludwig Messel, born

1823 - Elizabeth Ellyat's son (name unknown) sells Nymans to Thomas Cooper

1837 - George Cooper (Thomas Cooper's son) sells Nymans to Thomas Hill

1839 - George Harrington buys Nymans and adds more land to the estate

1846 - Aron Messel, father of Simon Messel, died (c. 62 yrs)

1846 - Anne Cussans - future wife of Ludwig Messel, born

1847 - Ludwig Messel born in Darmstadt Germany

1852 - George Harrington dies and Nymans passes to William Carr

1859 - Simon Messel, father of Ludwig Messel, died (42 yrs) - died from typhoid fever when visiting the battlefield of Solferino

1864 - Nymans is bought by Captain John Dearden, who remains in possession thereof until 1890 when the property is purchased by Ludwig Messel

1868 - Ludwig and Rudolf Messel arrive in England

c.1868 - Ludwig works as a clerk in Seligman Bros (a newly opened American Stockbroking firm)

1889 - Emilie Linheim, mother of Ludwig Messel, died (c. 69)

1871 - Converts to Christianity and marries Anne Cussans

1872 - Leonard Messel, son of Ludwig Messel, born

1873 - Ludwig establishes the stock broking house of L. Messel & Co in the City of London

1878 - Ludwig Messel became a naturalised British subject

1880 - By this time, Ludwig Messel was "sufficiently wealthy" to consider further moves in London and then a place in the country - Nymans in 1890.

1890 - Ludwig Messel purchases Nymans from Captain John Dearden - it was to be a country retreat for Ludwig's family and friends to enjoy

1890 - Ludwig Messel began creating a garden, spurred on by the development of other nearby gardens such as Leonardslee, Gravetye Manor, Wakehurst Place and Sheffield Park

1895 - Head Gardner at Nymans is James Comber

1898 - Leonard Messel, son of Ludwig Messel, marries Maud Sambourne - they have three children, Linley, Anne, and Oliver

1899 - Linley Messel, son of Leonard Messel, born

1902 - Anne Messel, daughter of Leonard Messel, born

1904 - Oliver Messel, son of Leonard Messel, born

1906 - Laurence Michael Harvey, the 6th Earl of Rosse, born - would later marry Anne Messel, daughter of Leonard Messel

1915 - Ludwig Messel dies (c. 68 yrs)

1915 - Leonard Messel, son of Ludwig Messel, inherits Nymans

1915 - Leonard Messel, son of Ludwig Messel, replaces the existing "non-descript Regency house" with a picturesque stone manor, designed by Sir Walter Tapper and Norman Evill in a mellow late Gothic/Tudor style.

1920 - Anne Cussans, wife of Ludwig Messel, dies (c. 74 yrs)

1925 - Anne Messel, daughter of Leonard Messel, marries barrister Ronald Armstrong-Jones. They had two children - Susan, Viscountess De Vesci (1927-1986), and Antony Charles Robert (1930-) who later married Princess Margaret (1930-2002, 71 yrs) in 1960 and become Lord Snowdon; he divorced Princess Margaret in 1978

1935 - Anne Messel, daughter of Leonard Messel, divorces barrister Ronald Armstrong-Jones

1935 - Anne Messel, daughter of Leonard Messel, marries Laurence Michael Harvey, the 6th Earl of Rosse, and becomes the Countess of Rosse. They have two children - William Clere Leonard Brendan Wilmer, the 7th Earl of Rosse, (1936 - still living 07/2012) and Desmond Oliver Parsons (known as the Hon Martin Parsons, born 1938 - still living 07/2012)

1930s - The garden at Nymans reaches a peak and is regularly opened to the public

1947 - The Nyman House fire (early morning of Leonard's 75th birthday). Leonard Messel leaves Nymans and never returns - he dies in 1953 (c. 81 yrs)

1949 - Plans were made to hand over the Nyman estate to the National Trust

1950 - Susan Armstrong-Jones, daughter of Anne Messel, marries John Eustace Vesey, 6th Viscount de Vesci of Abbey Leix, County Laois, Ireland in 1950

1953 - Leonard Messel, son of Ludwig Messel, dies (c. 81 yrs)

1953 - Nymans is willed to the National Trust with 275 acres of woodland

1954 - *National Trust takes over the Nyman estate*

1960 - Maud Messel, wife of Leonard Messel, dies (c. 85 yrs)

1971 - Linley Messel, son of Leonard Messel, dies (c. 72 yrs)

1978 - Oliver Messel, son of Leonard Messel, dies (c. 74 yrs)

1979 - Laurence Michael Harvey, the 6th Earl of Rosse, dies (c. 72 yrs)

1987 - The great storm (486 mature trees lost)

1992 - Lady Anne Messel, Countess of Rosse, daughter of Leonard Messel, dies (90 yrs)

--()--

The Messel family

Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries the Messel family were a well-established Jewish banking family from Hesse Darmstadt in Germany.

Aron Messel

Aron Messel (1784-1846) married Caroline Stern (1780 - 1844) and had a son, Simon Messel (1817-1859; c. 42 yrs).

In 1816 Aron Messel founded a Banking House in Darmstadt Germany

On Aron's death in 1846, his son Simon abandoned his promising career as a maker of high quality marquetry furniture and returned to Darmstadt to the bank.

Simon Messel

Simon Messel (1817-1859; c. 42 yrs) married Emilie Linheim (1820-1889; c. 69 yrs) in 1846 and had five children:

- Ludwig Messel (1847 - 1915; c. 68 yrs) - Financial Acumen
- Rudolf Messel (1848-1920; c. 72 yrs) - An Industrial Chemist
- Alfred Messel (1853-1909; c. 56 yrs) - An Architect
- Lina Messel - (1851-1926; c. 75 yrs)
- Eugenie Messel - (1854-1908; c. 54 yrs)

On Simon Messel's death, as his eldest son was only 12 years old, the bank was taken over by a relative - Ferdinand Sander.

--()--

Ludwig Messel (1847 - 1915; c. 68 yrs)

Occupation: from Jewish family of bankers

Following the early death of his father, Simon Messel (1817-1859; c. 42 yrs), and the deteriorating business environment in Germany, Ludwig Messel settled in England in 1868, and later married Anne Cussans (1846-1920; c. 74 yrs) in April of 1871.

Some commentators have suggested that Ludwig Messel converted to Christianity on marrying Anne; however, other commentators have suggested that the Messel family were already Christians in Germany.

Simon Messel had died from typhoid fever when visiting the battlefield of *Solferino in 1859. He was visiting the battleground because Alexander of Hesse, the Grand Dukes's brother had recently distinguished himself there.

**The Battle of Solferino (referred to in Italy as the Battle of Solferino and San Martino) on 24 June 1859 resulted in the victory of the allied French Army under Napoleon III and Sardinian Army under Victor Emmanuel II (together known as the Franco-Sardinian Alliance) against the Austrian Army under Emperor Franz Joseph I. It was the last major battle in world history where all the armies were under the personal command of their monarchs.*

The Messel family tell the story that the brothers Ludwig and Rudolf Messel arrived in London with gold coins sewn into their shirts to finance their new start.



Ludwig Messel and Anne Cussans c. April 1871

Anne Cussans was a descendant of Sir Francis Holburne 4th baronet, who died in 1820 (birth date unknown), and who was the son of Admiral Francis Holburne (1704-1771; c. 67 yrs).



*Admiral Sir Francis Holburne with his son
Sir Francis Holburne 4th baronet
from whom Anne Cussans was descended*

L. Messel & Co in the City of London

In 1868, Ludwig worked as a clerk in Seligman Bros (a newly opened American Stockbroking firm in London).

In 1869, Isaac Seligman marries Lina Messel, Ludwig Messel's sister.

In 1873 Ludwig Messel establishes his own stock broking house - **L. Messel & Co** in the City of London.

By 1880 Ludwig Messel had amassed a fortune and was able to consider some property moves which culminated with Nymans in 1890 - it is said that "astute dealings in South African gold" was the basis of Ludwig Messel's fortune.

The Chapter Closes

Shearson/American Express acquired *L. Messel & Co.* in 1986.

--()--

Ludwig and Anne Messel



*Ludwig and Annie Messel (Anne Cussans)
Ludwig purchased Nymans in 1890
It was to be a country retreat for his family and friends to enjoy*

Ludwig and Anne Messel had 5 children:

- Lieut. Col. Leonard Charles Rudolph Messel OBE (1872-1953; c. 81 yrs)
- Othelia Maude Messel (1873-1945; c. 72 yrs)
- Ruth Margaret Messel (1874-1933; c. 59 yrs)
- Harold George Messel (1877-1920; c. 43 yrs)
- Hilda Louisa Messel (1878-1941; c. 63 yrs)
- Muriel Messel (1889-1918; c. 29 yrs)



Ludwig Messel with his daughters Ruth, Hilda, and Muriel - date Unknown

Business flourished and Ludwig began searching for a suitable country house - the railways had opened up Sussex and Kent, making this something of a 'stockbroker belt'. Consequently, Ludwig bought the Nymans estate in 1890 and proceeded to create a great garden in the 600 acres that came with his new home.

Half of the 600 acres was agricultural land with two farmhouses and several cottages for the farm workers. The garden around the house, called the pleasure grounds, was approximately four acres. Beyond its perimeter fence was some parkland and about two-hundred acres of steeply sloping woodland which was used for shooting.



*The original Nymans manor House, c. 1890
South-West Front View*

The Nymans house and estate is set in 600 acres on a sloping site overlooking the High Weald of Sussex; Ludwig wanted to make a setting for family life and entertainments, with Arts and Crafts-inspired "garden room" planning where topiary features contrast with new plants from temperate zones around the world.



Alterations to the Nymans manor House - date Unknown

Thus it was that in 1890 Messel began creating a garden, spurred on by the development of other nearby gardens such as Leonardslee, Gravetye Manor, Wakehurst Place and Sheffield Park. Nymans soon became a treasure trove of East Asian trees and shrubs. Messel was advised by the foremost garden designers of the time, William Robinson and the arts & crafts stylist Gertrude Jeckyll.

Jeckyll pioneered informal planting within formal design and indeed, Nymans has been described as 'bits and pieces garden' with both formal and informal styles. It is also a very busy garden, crowded with flowers and plants.



Ludwig Messel with one of his daughters in the garden at Nymans, c. 1910

Ludwig Messel's head gardener from 1895 was James Comber, whose expertise helped form plant collections at Nymans of camellias, rhododendrons, which here, unusually at the time, were combined with plantings of heather (*Erica*) eucryphias and magnolias.

William Robinson advised in establishing the Wild Garden.



*Ludwig Messel in the garden at Nymans, c. 1910
The house is just visible behind the trees*

Messel Family with Friends, c. 1912



*Messel Family with Friends, c. 1912
Bertie Gibbs, H B Hemming, Eric Parker, Cecil Winn, Arthur Gibbs
Ethel Bagge, Ruth Parker, Ottie Loring, Anne Messel, Hilda Gibbs, Ludwig Messel
Charlotte and Dulcie Loring, Eric Parker Junior*

--()--

Leonard Messel (1872 - 1953; c. 81 yrs)

Occupation: Stockbroker

Lt. Col. Leonard Messel, son of Ludwig Messel, succeeded to the property in 1915 and replaced the "non-descript Regency house" with the picturesque stone manor, designed by Sir Walter Tapper and Norman Evill in a mellow late Gothic/Tudor style. He and his wife Maude extended the garden to the north and subscribed to seed collecting expeditions in the Himalayas and South America.



The ruin of the Stone Manor built by Leonard Messel

The garden reached a peak in the 1930s and was regularly opened to the public.



Leonard Messel

Son of Ludwig Messel and Annie Cussans, Leonard was born in London in 1872. Leonard, the eldest son was educated at Merton College Oxford, where he was friends with Max Beerbohn. On graduating from University he joined his family's stockbroking firm. He married Maud Frances Sambourne on 28 April 1898 at Saint Mary Abbots Church, Kensington. Maud and Leonard had three children, Linley (1899-1971), Anne (1902-1992) and Oliver (1904-1978). The couple lived at 104 Lancaster Gate and Balcombe House in Sussex, before moving to Nymans, the Messel family country home in West Sussex after the death of Ludwig Messel in 1915.

Leonard inherited Nymans on his father's death (1915) and, with great reluctance, moved from Balcombe House. He was persuaded to do so by the appeal of the garden and his dream of creating a magnificent mansion in the West Country Medieval and Tudor taste.



Leonard Messel and Maud Sambourne

Maud and Leonard socialised with wealthy families, artists, art connoisseurs and academics. Leonard was by nature private and withdrawn, more interested in his books, antiquities and the gardens of his country home than in the city or the social scene. Leonard's daughter Anne recalls that father never spoke about the city, all his conversation was about art.

Leonard was a passionate, connoisseur collector who amassed large collections of pictures, furniture, silver, rare mounted coconut cups, oriental ivories, porcelain, early continental glass and his world famous herbal book and fan collections. A cased Museum Room was created especially for Leonard's collections in Lancaster Gate. Anne, Countess of Rosse remembered that her father would host fan evenings, reserved for a few intimate friends who were intelligent and cultured enough to appreciate them. My father was prepared to waste no time at all on philistines who merely wished to chatter'.



Leonard was also a knowledgeable gardener and horticultural specialist. Building on his father's work at Nymans, Leonard famously developed the collections of rhododendrons, camellias and magnolias. His daughter, Anne, wrote that he sponsored expeditions to the East, to America and to Tasmania and Nymans became a meeting place for all the great gardeners of the day.

During the week Leonard would work in the city, spending weekends with his family at their homes in the West Sussex. Leonard was appointed the position of High Sheriff of Sussex in 1936.



Leonard and Maud Messel in later years in the garden at Nymans

In 1947 a fire, devastated Nymans and much of Leonard's collections, including the herbals. Leonard and Maud were forced to leave the house, never to return there to live, spending their last years at Holmstead Manor.

Nymans was bequeathed to the National Trust and Leonard died in 1953. A few items of his clothing are preserved in the Messel Dress Collection at Brighton Museum and Art Gallery.

At Leonard Messel's death, in 1953, Nymans was willed to the National Trust with 275 acres of woodland, one of the first gardens taken on by the Trust.

The fire

On the morning of Leonard's 75th birthday, in 1947, the household awoke to find Nymans on fire.

Although everybody inside escaped safely the house was ruined and a lot of Leonard and Maud's precious belongings were lost.



Leonard was so devastated that he left Nymans and never returned to the house again - he died in 1953.

In 1949, plans were made to hand over the estate to the National Trust, and the process was completed in 1954.

Leonard's daughter Anne, Lady Rosse, continued to be involved in the management of the garden as Garden Director until 1987.

Nymans was one of the first properties to be acquired by the National Trust purely for the importance of its garden.

--()--

Maud Francis Messel (1875-1960; c. 85 yrs)



Maud Francis Messel

Maud Francis Messel was the elder child of Marion and Edward Linley Sambourne, Chief Political Cartoonist for the satirical magazine *Punch*. She was born on 5th August 1875 at her grandparents' home at 18 Upper Phillimore Gardens. Taught at home by a governess, Maud was taken to museums and exhibitions, from an early age she mingled with her parents' circle of artistic friends. Around 1890 Maud began drawing lessons, on 16 May 1892, she had her first drawing printed in *Punch*. Her drawings were also published in *Pall Mall* magazine and she had commissions for book illustrations. As well as inheriting her father's artistic talents she was also a skilled needlewoman and embroiderer, talents she inherited from her mother.

Maud had her first season in 1893 and following many enjoyable years as a debutante married the stockbroker Leonard Messel at Saint Mary Abbots Church, Kensington on 21 April 1898. Maud and Leonard had three children, Linley (1899-1971), Anne (1902-1992) and Oliver (1904-1978). The couple lived at 104 Lancaster Gate and Balcombe House in Sussex, before moving to Nymans, the Messel family country home in Sussex after the death of Leonard's father Ludwig Messel in 1915. In the 1920s Maud completely redesigned Nymans as a romantic pastiche of an English manor house.

Maud and Leonard socialised with wealthy families, artists, art connoisseurs and academics. In 1908 Maud was presented at Court. Whilst in the country, she organised and designed costumes for the local Shakespearean Society, re-established the May Day festivities on Staplefield Village Green and set up the Nymans Embroidery Guild. As early as 1899 Maud organised embroidery groups in her home, by 1909, she established formal classes for local girls to provide training and an income. Like her husband, Maud Messel was a collector, everywhere she travelled she bought antique textiles, embroideries and lace, which she used as examples in her embroidery classes and occasionally applied to her own fashionable clothing.



Fancy dress played a central role in the life of Maud Messel, pageants, plays, children's fancy dress parties, and large fancy dress balls took place in her Sussex homes and when in London, she and Leonard attended fancy dress balls, most notably the Chelsea Arts Club Balls. Maud's favourite dressing up persona was Elizabeth Linley with whom she was distantly and tenuously related.

In 1947 Nymans suffered a devastating fire, which forced Maud and Leonard to leave Nymans, never to return there to live. The house was bequeathed to the National Trust and Maud lived out her last years at Holmstead Manor, she died on the 8th March 1960.

Maud had kept much of her fashionable clothing throughout her adult life and items of dress belonging to her mother Marion Sambourne and grandmother Mary Ann Herapath. After her death they were kept and preserved by her daughter Anne, Countess of Rosse who placed some of these items on long-term loan to Brighton Museum & Art Gallery in 1981 as the Messel Dress Collection.

Three Children

Maud and Leonard had 3 children:

- Linley (1899-1971; c. 72 yrs)
- Anne (1902-1992; c. 90 yrs)
- Oliver (1904-1978; c. 74) - had no children

The children were brought up in their parent's rarefied and exotic world, surrounded by beautiful furniture, paintings and objects in a society cultivated by artists, collectors, connoisseurs and scholars. This influence was to be significant on them.



Maud Messel with her daughter Anne, c1902

--(--)

Linley Messel (1899-1971) - c. 72 yrs

Linley had a career in L. Messel & Co, and was the commander of the Middlesex Yeomanry; and his siblings, Anne and Oliver, were able to pursue their artistic inclinations.



*Maud Messel, Linley Messel, Marion Sambourne holding Anne Messel, Linley Sambourne, Leonard Messel holding Oliver Messel
(c. 1905)*

Linley married Agatha Anne Alexander and had 2 children:

- Elizabeth Messel (1933-)
- Victoria Mary Messel (1938-)

Linley married Elizabeth D Downes (1946, Cairo) and had 2 children:

Marion (Polly) (1949-)

Thomas (1951 -)

--()--

Anne Messel (Armstrong-Jones; then Lady Rosse) (1902-1992; c. 90 yrs)

Anne was regarded as one of the great beauties of her time, an arbiter of fashion, and a highly respected gardener.



*Anne and Oliver Messel
(Date and Location Unknown)*

In 1925 Anne married barrister Ronald Armstrong-Jones with whom she had two children:

- Susan, Viscountess De Vesci (born 1927)
- Antony Charles Robert (born 1930 and later to become Lord Snowdon).



Susan Armstrong-Jones, 1947
Susan Vesey (née Armstrong-Jones) married John Eustace Vesey,
6th Viscount de Vesci of Abbey Leix, County Laois, Ireland in 1950.

After her divorce in 1935, Anne married Laurence Michael Harvey, the 6th Earl of Rosse with whom she had two children:

- William Clere Leonard Brendan Wilmer, the 7th Earl of Rosse, born 1936
- Desmond Oliver Parsons, known as the Hon Martin Parsons, born 1938



Laurence Michael Harvey, the 6th Earl of Rosse
(28 Sep 1906 - 1 Jul 1979; 72 yrs)

Anne's second marriage to Michael, 6th Earl of Rosse, was one of enduring happiness, based at Birr Castle in Eire, Womersley Park in Yorkshire, and Stafford Terrace (Linley Sambourne House) in London.

In later years, after the death of Michael in 1979, Anne settled more fully at Nymans, where her guiding eye still retained its influence on both house and garden.



Anne, Countess of Rosse (Nymans - mid 1933s)

Throughout her adult life flowers formed a core component of Anne's fashion identity. Many of her dresses that survive in the Messel Dress Collection are made of floral fabrics. As Anne grew older, her choice of fabric became brighter and bolder.



Anne, Countess of Rosse (1933)

Large, eye-catching corsages applied to her clothes were Anne's style signature. One of her earliest dresses preserved in the collection, designed by Norman Hartnell, is decorated with three-dimensional velvet roses.

Anne's corsages made from real flowers have obviously not survived, but press reports describe these striking decorations. In 1933 Anne was noticed wearing 'a lime green crêpe gown and cape bordered with sable squirrel which tied under the shoulder with a cluster of gigantic orchids'. The daily Express in 1933 described a very unusual evening dress worn by Anne with 'shoulder straps made of huge white feather flowers which unclipped could be worn as a necklace'.

Anne passed her love of corsage onto her daughter Susan, making for her in 1953 a yellow silk dress adorned with a bright pink silk velvet camellia - a favourite family flower.



(1938)

*Studio portrait of Anne, Countess of Rosse,
with her daughter Susan Armstrong-Jones (b. 1927 - d. 1986; c. 59 yrs)*



Anne, Countess of Rosse aged 80 at Nymans (1982)
"I am my garden" - Anne, Countess of Rosse (1985)
(Anne, Countess of Rosse (1902-1992; c. 90 yrs)



--()--

Oliver Messel (1904-1978; c. 74 yrs)

Oliver became a portrait painter and commissions for theatre work soon followed, beginning with his designing the masks for a London production of Serge Diaghilev's ballet *Zephyr et Flore* in 1925.



*Oliver Hilary Sambourne Messel
(1904-1978)*

Subsequently, Oliver created masks, costumes, and sets for a large number of films, plays, ballets and operas, many of which have been preserved by the Theatre Museum in London.

During the Second World War Oliver was employed as a camouflage officer.

Oliver went on to design many of the houses on the Caribbean island of Mustique, including that of his Royal wife of his nephew (Antony Armstrong-Jones), Princess Margaret.

--()--

Style

With great style the women of the Messel family use floral patterns and references on their clothes. Maud Messel (Leonard's wife) and her daughter Anne, later, Countess of Rosse, both had a committed interest in horticulture and a sentimental attachment to their gardens and plants.

Maud and her daughter Ann are remembered for filling their homes with flowers and were involved in plant propagation with their husbands. The gardens at Birr Castle and Nymans remain as testament to the family's passion.



Maud Messel's biographer, Shirley Nicholson, writes that Maud's favourite flowers were 'soft-petalled, drooping, heavily-scented old English roses - whose beauty lasted for a few brief days only - exactly suited to her romantic style'.

--()--

1987 Storm

In the Great Storm of October 1987 the garden suffered extensive damage, including the loss of 486 mature trees and many of the shrubs. Tragically, the pinetum, one of the garden's earliest features, was destroyed.



Nymans - The Great hall

--()--

Misc

A tour of the house includes Lady Rosse's library and drawing room, all filled with flowers just as they would have been in the days of the Messel family. Additionally, the furniture and tapestries are much as they would have been in the 1940s.

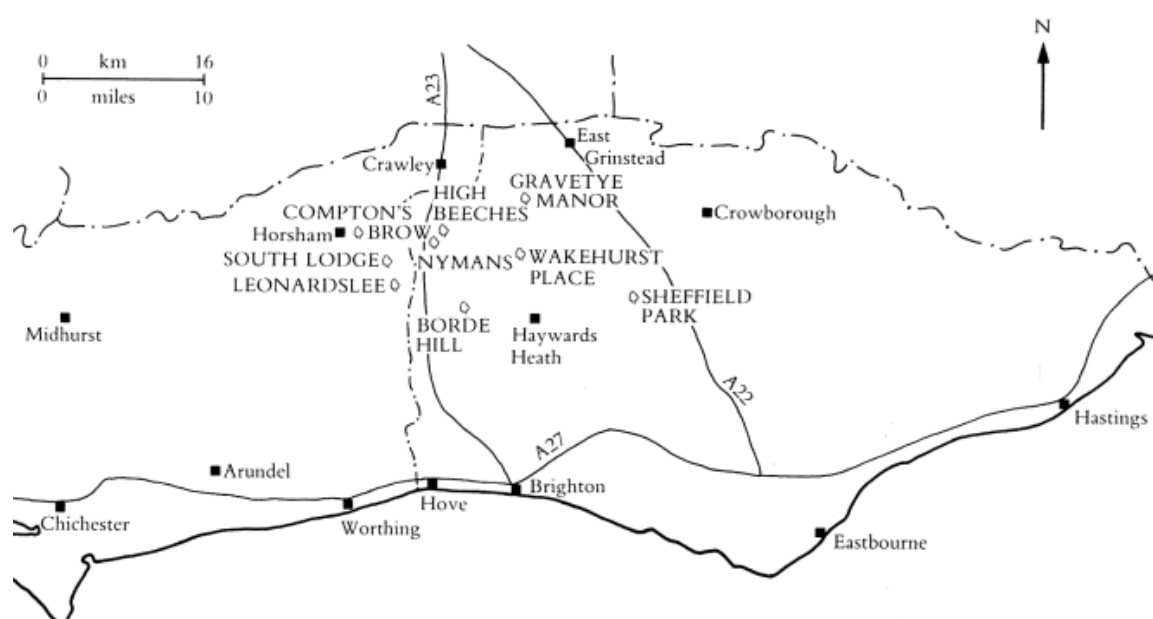
Alastair Buchanan, a descendent of Ludwig Messel through Ludwig's son, Harold (1877-1920), is the current family representative.

Ed Ikin is the current head gardener

--()--

Other Gardens

Other gardens were developed contemporary with Nymans:



--()--

Appendix - Antony Armstrong-Jones (1930 -)

Antony Armstrong-Jones was the only son of the marriage of the barrister Ronald Armstrong-Jones (1899–1966) and his first wife Anne Messel, later Countess of Rosse (1902–1992).

His maternal great-grandfather was the Punch cartoonist Linley Sambourne (1844–1910) and his great-great-uncle Alfred Messel was a well-known Berlin architect.

Antony's parents separated when he was young (c. 5 yrs old), and as a schoolboy he contracted polio while on holiday at their country home in Wales. For the entire six months that he was in Liverpool Royal Infirmary recuperating, his only family visits were from his sister Susan.

Armstrong-Jones was educated at Eton and Cambridge, where he studied architecture. While at Cambridge, he coxed the winning Cambridge boat in the 1950 Boat Race.

After university, he took up a career as a photographer in fashion, design and theatre. As his career as a portraitist began to flourish, he became known for his royal studies, among which were the official portraits of Queen Elizabeth II, and the Duke of Edinburgh for their 1957 tour of Canada.

Twice Married

Armstrong-Jones has been married twice.

He was married first to Princess Margaret (1960 to 1978) and second to Lucy Mary Lindsay-Hogg (1978 to 2000).



Margaret Rose (b. 21 Aug 1930 – d. 9 Feb 2002; 71 yrs)

After his divorce from Princess Margaret, Lord Snowdon married Lucy Mary Lindsay-Hogg (née Davies), the former wife of film director Michael Lindsay-Hogg, on 15 December 1978. Their only child, Frances Armstrong-Jones, was born seven months later, on 17 July 1979.

From 1976 until 1996, Snowdon's mistress was Ann Hills, a journalist; she committed suicide (paracetamol and champagne) on 31 December 1996.

Lord Snowdon and Lucy Mary Lindsay-Hogg separated in 2000 after the revelation that Snowdon, then aged 67, had fathered a son, Jasper William Oliver Cable-Alexander (born 30 April 1998), with Melanie Cable-Alexander, an editor at Country Life magazine.

"Baron" Armstrong-Jones

On 16 November 1999 Lord Snowdon was created Baron Armstrong-Jones, of Nymans in the County of West Sussex.

This was a life peerage given him so that he could keep his seat in the House of Lords after the hereditary peers had been excluded. An offer of a life peerage was made to all hereditary peers of the first creation (i.e., those for whom a peerage was originally created, as opposed to those who inherited a peerage from an ancestor) at that time.

End

--()--

<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/nymans/>

<http://www.campbellmgold.com>

30072012