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PLANTING FIELDS FOUNDATION / PLANTING FIELDS ARBORETUM, OYSTER BAY, NEW YORK / SPRING 2014 NEWSLETTER



Magnolias at Planting Fields



PHOTO BY BILL BARASH

Tea House by Elsie de Wolfe,
Planting Fields 1915



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DEAR MEMBERS,

Last year was notably memorable for the future of Planting Fields because ground was broken for the new Sensory Garden. Trustee, Peter Tilles, made a magnificent donation of \$400,000 to build the garden and he and other trustees have raised an additional \$375,000, mostly from generous local supporters to ensure that the project is completed. New York State Department of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation has committed \$400,000. Thank you to everyone for their support.

Also in 2013 the Foundation was awarded a major grant in the amount of \$250,000 from the Environmental Protection Fund for the restoration of the Camellia House where work is expected to start in 2014. From the New York State Council on the Arts we received \$11,700 to help support our school programs in the park. Last year we increased the number of students in those programs by 25%. Furthermore, New York State Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation was awarded \$700,000 in funding through the Green Innovation Grant Program for the installation of pervious pavement, and bio-retention structures in our visitors parking lot.

It is largely free editorial coverage in newspapers that draws visitors to events at Planting Fields. Our recent press has been remarkably good. For this year’s annual Camellia House Weekend we were featured in *Newsday* three times in one week, each with one or more color photographs, and the event was a huge success. *Newsday* is consistently generous with articles about Planting Fields. In November last year the *New York Times* published a Sunday Metropolitan section feature article about the Arboretum’s centennial year and the hundred works of art and artifacts that had been added to the collection at Coe Hall. We have had a *Times* feature every year over the last five years. The *Anton Newspapers*, the *Locust Valley Leader* and the *Oyster Bay Guardian* are also phenomenal Planting Fields boosters. Thank you to all of the editors and writers on those newspapers. In February PBS broadcast a documentary in their Treasures of New York series “Gold Coast Mansions”, where Planting Fields was one of the featured estates. For us this is tremendous promotion.

For 2014 we have a full roster of events, including four new exhibitions, concerts, lectures, musicals in the park, and this year a new program of poetry readings presented in conjunction with the Poetry Society of America. Some of these events are listed in this newsletter and more will be announced for the summer and fall. I look forward to seeing you at Planting Fields.

With Warm Regards,

Henry B. Joyce
Executive Director

WE WARMLY WELCOME
FOUR NEW TRUSTEES
TO PLANTING FIELDS FOUNDATION

MARY CIULLO has spent close to 25 years volunteering her time within the community. She was actively involved with the Green Vale School, served as the President of the Parents’ Association, was a trustee and officer of the Green Vale School and served in many capacities including two Strategic Planning Committees. Mary is a former member of the Parents’ Committee for Villanova University and was a trustee and officer of the Maurer Foundation for Breast Health Education for many years. She resides in Glen Head with her husband, Robert and has four children, C.B., Katharine, Peter and Brian and two grandchildren. Mary is currently a member of the Knights and Ladies of the Holy Sepulchre.

JEFFREY LEE MOORE and his wife, Susan, started visiting Locust Valley from New York City in 1995 and moved out full time in 2007, with their three young children and two dogs. Growing up in Louisiana and Texas, Jeff developed a love of the outdoors and nature and spent many summers on his Grandfather’s farm outside Elk City, Oklahoma. He also has an interest in architectural history, which he first studied in high school in New Orleans. Jeff is a Managing Director of Steadfast Financial, a \$5 billion hedge fund based in New York City. He earned an MBA in 1991 from Harvard Business School and a BA in

Economics in 1986 from the University of Virginia, where he met Susan, a 1985 University of Virginia graduate, former CBS News “48 Hours” producer, and native of Portsmouth, Virginia.

JOHN P. CASALY is a retired lawyer who started his legal career at Donovan Leisure Newtown & Irvine and was later a partner in Jones Hirsch Connors & Bull, both in New York City. He is a graduate of Columbia College and Harvard Law School. John has been involved with many non-profit organizations through the New York City Bar Public Service Network, which works with both charitable institutions and volunteers to identify and fill pro bono positions and mentor volunteer relationships. He has held a number of volunteer positions in New York City and on Long Island and has served on the

boards of non-profits such as the Nassau County Museum of Art and Foundation House. John and his wife, Louise M. Parent, reside in New York City and in Mill Neck. John’s interests include the visual arts and architectural history.

ANDREAS MAXIMILLIAN STENBECK is currently the Chairman of Verdere Sarl, a Swedish investment company, a principal at Basset Investment Group, LLC, a private investment group who provides capital to startup e-commerce and technology driven entrepreneurial businesses, and is a board member at Modern Holdings, LLC, a private equity investment fund. Max attended New York University where he concentrated in economics and history. He is co-chair of the North Shore Land Alliance Heritage Committee.



A magnolia in flower at Planting Fields

PHOTO: ED FOOTE

A NEW EXHIBITION OPENS AT COE HALL
SATURDAY MARCH 29TH

Fabulous INTERIORS

BY ELSIE DE WOLFE &
CHARLES DUVEEN 1915-1945

Right: Detail of Everett Shinn's 1915 mural in the Tea House at Planting Fields



Elsie de Wolfe (1865-1950), the most successful, famous and influential American interior designer of her age, and Charles Duveen (1871-1940), owner of the established antiques and interior design company known as Charles of London, both worked at Planting Fields for Mr. and Mrs. William R. Coe.

BY HENRY B. JOYCE

In 1915 Elsie de Wolfe consulted on the interior design of the Italian Garden's Tea House, commissioned by Mai Coe. Five years later de Wolfe was involved with the decoration of Mrs. Coe's bedroom and bathroom-dressing room at Coe Hall as it was being finished in 1920 by architects Walker & Gillette. At the same time Charles of London oversaw

the furnishing of the many Elizabethan style interiors, a much bigger job than de Wolfe's.

Apart from old photographs very little of Elsie de Wolfe's work survives, which makes the Tea House extremely rare and historically important because its trellis interior, utterly distinctive of her French eighteenth century revival style, survives with all its

original furniture and fittings. Its gorgeous murals in the French rococo style by Everett Shinn (signed and dated 1915) glow with brilliant colors against the blue-green trellis ceiling, and the room's furniture is exquisitely painted by Shinn with garlands of flowers. He also painted a charming silhouette portrait of Mai Coe on the crest rail of one of the seat backs. Between about 1910 and 1915 de Wolfe had

hired Shinn to paint murals for several private commissions in and around New York City. Surviving in the Tea House today are its six original wrought iron electric light fixtures made to look like bouquets of flowers painted in naturalistic colors. They evoke the famous Sèvres porcelain flowers made in the 1760s for Madame de Pompadour. The Tea House room is a masterpiece of de Wolfe's

most creative interior design. Despite its diminutive scale it is one of Planting Fields' great treasures. This year between March 29 and Sept 30 the Tea House will be open every day 12:30-2:00pm, free admission.

The exhibition explores the rarefied world of fine interiors by two firms whose styles of design were very different. Elsie de Wolfe was committed to a vocabulary that was based on high-style French interiors of the eighteenth century, with a focus on light reflected by mirrors

and enhanced by painted walls and furniture, essentially her work is a re-interpretation of the Paris-based tradition of informal, luxurious small rooms—the boudoir convention—that had originally been designed more for the use of women than men, starting in the late seventeenth century. The style has been a continuous current in fine rooms ever since. In America one of its most successful adherents and promoters was de Wolfe, from about 1905 when she set up her New York City-based decorating business in a male dominated

profession. It was de Wolfe who made the use of beautifully printed and colored floral chintzes and toiles *de rigueur* for curtains and upholstery and she promoted the use of white painted interiors to enhance the effects of light. Very early in her career de Wolfe received the 1905 commission to design the rooms of the exclusive new women's Colony Club on Madison Avenue which were a stunning success and quickly established her name as a fashionable decorator. An equally impressive coup was winning the 1913 job to decorate

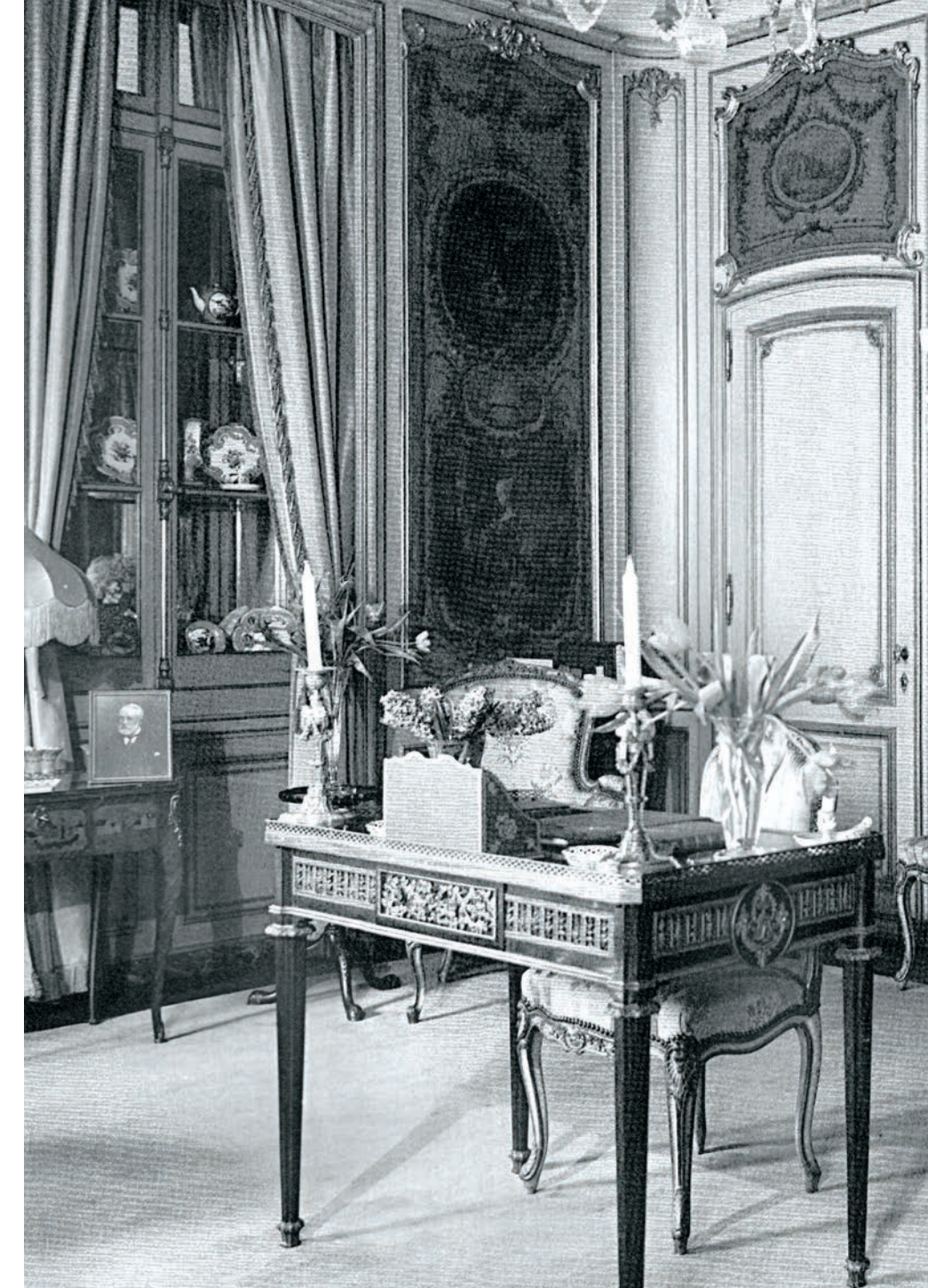
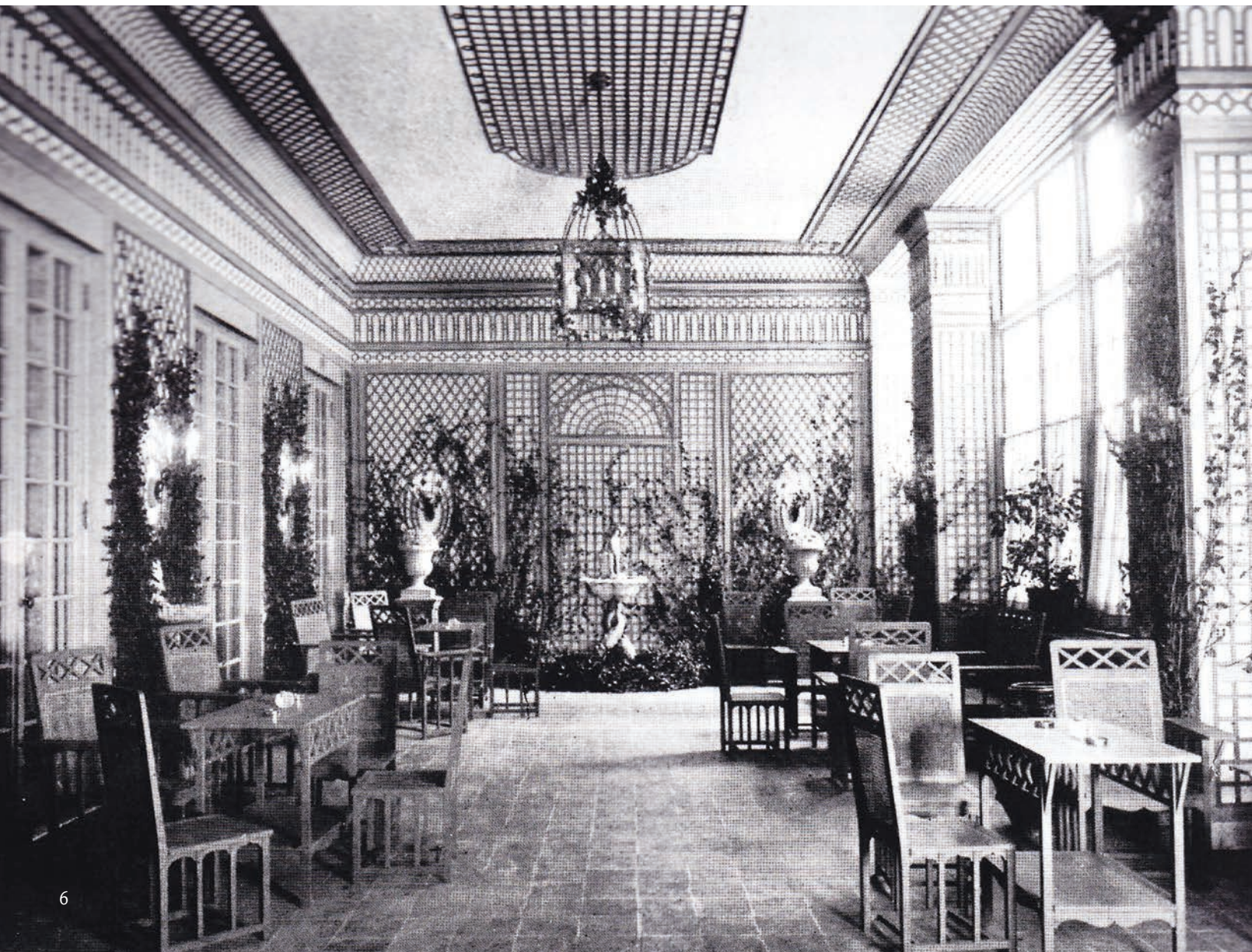
the second floor of Henry Clay Frick's new mansion on 5th Ave (now The Frick Collection) in the French eighteenth century style (both commissions have been altered). In contrast, Charles Duveen, brother of the famous art dealer Lord Duveen of Millbank, is credited with making the Tudor style of dark paneled rooms a prevalent taste in expensive houses on both sides of the Atlantic, using oak furniture. It is a vocabulary based on the formal court interiors and state reception rooms of sixteenth century English monarchs, a more masculine than feminine style of work. Both firms were able to flourish at a time of tremendous growth of American wealth, when big new houses and apartments were being built on an impressive scale. Very importantly Elsie de Wolfe made the interior design profession one where women could flourish. She herself built on the models of both Candice Wheeler (1827-1923) and Edith Wharton (1862-1937) who were, in different ways, successful forerunners in the world of decorating. In the twentieth century de Wolfe firmly established a place for ambitious female interior designers to succeed.

De Wolfe's first career had been as an actress on the New York stage, where she was well known more for her exquisite costumes and the stylish way she wore them rather than for her average acting skills. It was there that she met her close friend, and probably lover, Elizabeth Marbury, who was from a prominent New York family, and was a highly successful theatrical

agent. They lived together for over 25 years. From the mid 1880s they spent several summers in France at Versailles where they had friends and eventually owned a large house, Villa Trianon. De Wolfe became passionately interested in eighteenth century French interiors. This experience along with the 1900 redecoration of her and her partner's New York house by the

Opposite: An Elsie de Wolfe interior at the Colony Club, 120 Madison Avenue, New York City, about 1907

Above: A private room of Mrs. Frick's 5th Avenue, New York City, about 1915



**At Planting Fields
Elsie de Wolfe created
stylish and whimsical
rooms for Mai Coe.**

architect Ogden Codman, in the French style that he had promoted in the book he wrote with Edith Wharton, *The Decoration of Houses* (1897) helped give de Wolfe the confidence to launch her own career as an interior designer. Her business grew rapidly after her work for the Colony Club which opened in 1907. Many club members, all of whom were well-to-do women, were out-of-towners and gave de Wolfe commissions as far away as the Midwest and California. She began to make a lot of money and opened a bigger office and show room on 5th Avenue. In 1910 she and Elizabeth Marbury bought a fine house on East 55th street which de Wolfe decorated and published. She was now a star; she gave lectures on decorating which were turned into a book, ghost written by journalist Ruby Ross Wood, *The House of Good Taste* (1913) which was a best seller. Wood went on to be a highly successful interior designer in her own right, influenced the de Wolfe look. There grew to be a whole raft of mainly women decorators working successfully in New York City between about 1920 and 1960, who were to a large degree influenced by Elsie de Wolfe. Among them, in addition to Ruby Ross Wood, were Nancy McClelland, Dorothy Draper, Francis Elkins, Rose

Cummings, Sister Parish and the Thedlow firm (Lottie Handy, Theresa Chalmers and Edna de Frise) who worked at Coe Hall in 1928 for the third Mrs. Coe, Caroline Graham Slaughter (after Mai Coe died in 1924). They worked here again in the 1950s decorating a new residence, the Manor House, with elegant French inspired rooms, where Caroline moved after her husband's death.

After World War I, Elsie de Wolfe lived at her Versailles house, or her apartment in Paris for at least half of every year, and she no longer lived exclusively with Elizabeth Marbury. Villa Trianon was then partly paid for by Anne Morgan (daughter of J. Pierpont Morgan) who was close to both Elsie and Elizabeth. Elsie continued to work, but the New York business was run by her brother and sister-in-law. De Wolfe occasionally designed for a few special New York clients that included the publisher Condé Nast. However she lavished attention on her beloved Villa Trianon where she entertained European high society and Americans abroad, including Cole Porter, whose first musical comedy (1914) de Wolfe had designed sets for, and the future Duchess of Windsor who was a close friend and client, along with the Prince of Wales. Immersed in the French *beau monde* de Wolfe's interiors began to reflect a contemporary chic that she saw around her in Paris, which, until

World War II, was the international center of new art and design. She began using clear bright colors instead of her earlier more muted palette. She started to use leopard and zebra printed fabrics mixed in with her habitual floral chintzes, along with luxurious fur rugs and throws. There was just a hint of fashionable art deco in her work of the 1920s; more sparkle in polished metal surfaces, more mirrored glass for walls than twenty years earlier.

In 1926, on her marriage to Sir Charles Mendl, a British diplomat, she became Lady Mendl. Now in her sixties her life in France continued at quite a pace, and she continued to give her famous Sunday lunches at Villa Trianon. In 1936 she published a memoir, *After All*, which was successful, but the following year, because of her brother's mismanagement she was forced to close her business, Elsie de Wolfe, Inc., and declared bankruptcy (none of her archives survive). She spent the war years in Beverly Hills, Los Angeles, in a house she named *After All* which she decorated, using her famous end-of-career black and white motif, with the help of the young designer Tony Duquette. She helped launch his extraordinary career. In 1946, she returned to her Versailles house and died four years later, her ashes were interred at the famous Paris cemetery, Père Lachaise. Elsie de Wolfe's life and work are legendary.



Portrait of Miss Elsie de Wolfe at the James Hazen Hyde Ball, January 31, 1905. From the Collection of the Museum of the City of New York.



Bronze bust of
Charles Duveen
(Private Collection)

Apart from Coe Hall's architects Walker & Gillette, Charles Duveen, as head of his antiques business, did more to shape the style of the rooms than any other person.

By the 1880s his antique dealer family, who were Jewish and Dutch, had created the famous art dealer and decorating business, the Duveen Brothers of Paris, London and New York. Charles's father was Sir Joseph Duveen and his older brother was the famous old master paintings dealer Lord Duveen of Millbank. There had been various family quarrels about business which led to Charles heading his

own independent operation. Lord Duveen paid Charles an annual fee so long as Charles agreed not to use the Duveen name. At Coe Hall, his firm, Charles of London, supplied roughly 80% of the furnishings. There were over twenty established antique dealers who also sold furniture to Mr. Coe including Stair & Andrews, Partridges, Lenygon & Morant, Jacques Seligmann, Elsie de Wolfe, Inc., and French & Company. But today in the archive room at Coe Hall there are a limited number of bills or letters between 1920 and 1923 for each of those firms, but for Charles of London there are hundreds. He supplied over four hundred decorative art objects, including light fixtures, tapestries, tables, chairs, cupboards, beds and even china and linens. Mr. Duveen's

correspondence with William R. Coe is mostly cordial, though there are some disagreements about costs. It was one of Coe Hall's architects, A. Stewart Walker, who seems to have had the most trusted relationship with Mr. Coe. It appears from their few surviving letters (where they address each other by their first names) that they were quite friendly and their wives also corresponded. In the course of building and finishing Coe Hall, architect and patron had their ups and downs but Mr. Coe seems to have taken advice from Stewart Walker as leader of the entire project. After the building was finished in 1920 and as furnishing continued for at least three more years, bills from Charles of London were sent, not to Mr. Coe for payment, but to the

Detail of a watercolor showing Mr. Duveen's own house in England (Private Collection)





Detail of a watercolor showing Mr. Duveen's own house in England (Private Collection)

architects who continued their oversight. At the same time Charles Duveen and Mr. Coe communicated directly about what purchases were appropriate for the house. In 1923, Mr. Coe wrote to Frank Partridge, one of his London dealers, that Charles Duveen “had been responsible for a great deal of the decoration and furnishing of my house and I have paid him an enormous amount of money.”

Although the Coe Hall archives might not be complete, the invoices that are extant for what was supplied by Charles Duveen totaled roughly \$450,000 (about \$6 million today). Mr. Coe spent a further \$75,000 (about \$950,000 today) on purchases from other antique dealers.

By 1920, the rather conservative Tudor or Elizabethan style of room

decoration was a taste that had been established for over twenty-five years, both in England and the United States, where it had been widely promoted in books and magazines. In 1920, Charles Duveen was very successful; he lived in New York City, had a house in Hastings-on-Hudson, where he sailed on the river, and a house in England. He ran a large show room in mid-town Manhattan where his

antique and interior design business was highly regarded (even if a little old fashioned compared with the lighter touch of Elsie de Wolfe’s newer design successes).

Mr. and Mrs. Coe were intensively involved with the building and decoration of Coe Hall. They often asked for furnishings and paintings to be delivered pending approval; in September 1921, Mr. Coe wrote to the Paris dealer Germain Seligmann about a tapestry that was at Coe Hall on approval, asking that it be exchanged because, “it has been hung and it looks very dead in the

house.” Similar issues arose from time to time with paintings. Mrs. Coe had the seat furniture, today in the reception room, delivered, also owned by Seligmanns, to see if it would work well in the room, it did, and they bought the suite. The curtains for her bedroom were made from fabric that she had on hand and passed on to Charles of London to be sewn up. These kind of details recorded in the archives, of which there are many more, enable us to recreate the rich and fascinating history about the building and decoration of Coe Hall, one of the few great surviving mansions on Long Island.

More of this story is told in our new exhibition, with rare and fascinating artifacts kindly loaned from descendents of Charles Duveen. It opens at Coe Hall on Saturday March 29th (Members Preview Friday, March 28th 5:30-7:30pm) and runs through September 30th.

A recent photo of the den at Coe Hall





FANTASTIC FLOWERING CHERRIES

Facing page: *Prunus serrulata* ‘Shirofugen’. Above: *Prunus mume*

BY VINCENT A. SIMEONE, DIRECTOR OF PLANTING FIELDS ARBORETUM

One of the most striking floral displays each spring at the arboretum are the cherry blossoms. Each year, dozens of trees put on a spectacular floral display of white, pale pink and rosy pink that illuminate the landscape.

These clouds of pastel colors can be found dotting the landscape around the Main Greenhouse, Camellia Greenhouse, Coe Hall, Manor House, Haybarn and the Main Lawn. The two biggest concentrations of ornamental cherry groupings are at the Play House and flanking the drive between both the Main and Camellia Greenhouses.

Ornamental Cherries (*Prunus* sp.) date back to the Coe family, who also used them regularly in the landscape. Early photographs show beautiful weeping cherries flanking the drive from Coe Hall to the greenhouse. However, since the 1970s, many new species and varieties have been added to our collection. Among our most notable specimens are the Weeping

Higan Cherries (*P. subhirtella* ‘Pendula’) along the Camellia Lawn to replace older specimens that had died, massive Yoshino Cherries (*P. x yedoensis*) planted along the North Border, and the early blooming Okame Cherries (*P. x* ‘Okame’) planted as single specimens or groupings near the Hay Barn, Manor House, and the Synoptic Garden.

One especially spectacular variety of cherry that is also ideal for the home gardener is a variety called ‘Hally Jolivette’. This semi-dwarf variety can be found in the Italian Garden, and along the Tea House. This old fashion variety offers petite, pale pink flowers and a rounded growth habit to about 12’ tall. In the summer, the small pointed leaves are deep, emerald green turning brilliant shades of yellow, orange and red in the autumn. One of the newest species of *Prunus* that have been added to our collection is the very early blooming flowering Apricot (*Prunus mume*). These adaptable, durable plants come in a wide variety of colors, and typically bloom in

March while most other cherry species bloom in May.

But probably the most popular and favorite of all of the spring blooming cherries is Oriental Flowering Cherry (*P. serrulata*). Two very striking varieties include ‘Shirofugen’, with pure white, ruffled flowers surrounded by new bronze foliage, and ‘Royal Burgundy’ with deep burgundy foliage accented by showy pink flowers. Many interesting varieties of Oriental Flowering Cherry can be found near the Manor House, Haybarn and the Play House.

Ornamental Cherries are a significant spring feature at the

arboretum attracting thousands of visitors who want to gaze at the colorful clouds of flowers that they offer.

The cherries are a great complement to other flowering trees, such as magnolias and dogwoods, and typically flower along with these other garden favorites. One unique feature of the flowering cherries is that as their flowers fade, the soft petals fall to the grounds giving the feeling that it is snowing in spring. Like many other popular landscape plants, we will continue to plant new and improved varieties of Ornamental Cherries for the visiting public to enjoy.

1914: A GLIMPSE OF THE COE FAMILY ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

BY FRANK J. SMITH, CURATORIAL ASSISTANT

Mr. and Mrs. William R. Coe had purchased Planting Fields in December 1913 and so the following year, exactly one hundred years ago, they were able to embark on ambitious improvements to the property that they had rented since 1911 and for which they, undoubtedly, had all sorts of plans in mind.

Since 1910 Mr. Coe had been President and C.E.O. of the marine insurance firm, Johnson & Higgins, and was also a director of the Virginian Railway, which had been founded in 1907 by his father-in-law, H.H. Rogers, and from which his wife Mai was receiving a considerable income. Owning a fine property on Long Island's North Shore was part and parcel of a particular way of life for a family with social ambitions—the equivalent of a box at the opera or building an art collection, or all of the above. The convention of a country house as an escape from the noise and bustle of city life has existed since antiquity and the magnificence of Planting Fields, and its surviving completeness, makes it one of the last great examples of its type. Both the rolling landscape and the revival style of the house are in the English manner, and were designed for a man—Mr. Coe—who was born in England and came to America as a teenager; it was here he made his fortune. The English, because of their vast and expanding wealth between about 1600 and 1900, came to build more fine country estates than anywhere else in Europe, and these places were recognized signs of high social standing. They became a model for

grand country places in the United States. English estates usually grew in their magnificence over several generations of ownership, but here in the United States, one hundred years ago, during extraordinarily fast industrial and economic growth, huge numbers of country estates were built and embellished in one single generation, with all the bells and whistles of places that had once taken a hundred years or more in Europe. The economic cost of World War I and its aftermath caused the failure and destruction of many English country houses, but in America in 1914, three years before entering the war, the continuing prosperity, at least for many like the Coe family, permitted the building of estates. It was the great crash of 1929 that caused the end of estate building on Long Island, and by that time Planting Fields was a prime example of the last great flowering of country estate building.

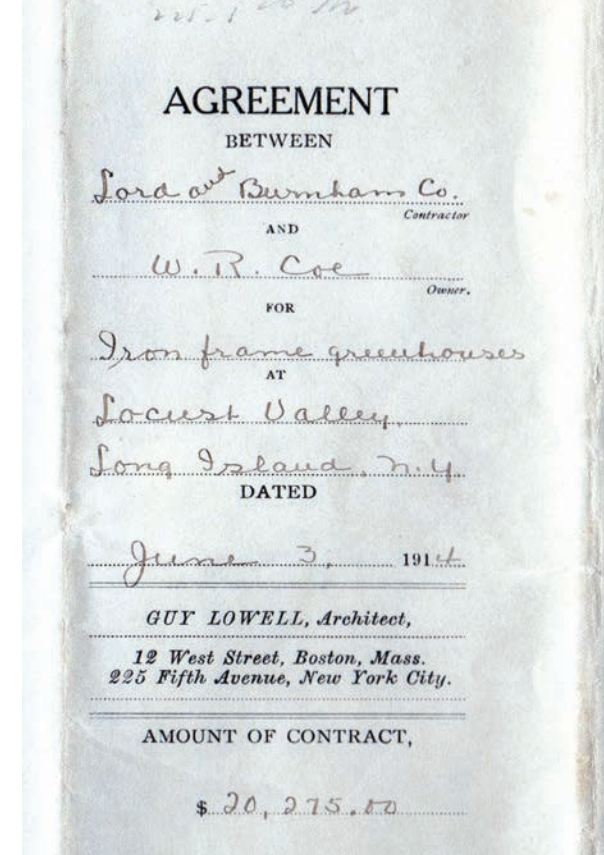
To begin their embellishment of the property, the Coes hired the architectural firm of Guy Lowell and A. Roland Sargent. Guy Lowell (1870-1927) came from a distinguished Boston family, and graduated from Harvard and M.I.T. He had also studied at the École des Beaux Arts, the famous art school in

Paris. Lowell's partner and brother-in-law, A. Robeson Sargent (1882-1918) was a fellow Harvard graduate, where his father was a professor of arboriculture and first director of the Arnold Arboretum. Sargent's father was a friend of Mai Coe's father, H.H. Rogers, which is almost certainly how he and Lowell came to work for the Coes.

The most significant project for 1914 was the building of the Main Greenhouse, and by no means was this a modest greenhouse of its time, even before the Hibiscus house, the largest of the spaces which was added in 1929. Designed and supervised by Lowell and Sargent, construction commenced under the building firm, Lord and Burnham, well known for building the best greenhouses in the Northeast. The foundation and glass frame for the structure was \$20,275 (about \$474,265 today) and there were also a few unforeseen expenses that the Coes incurred for this project, adding \$20,180 to the initial cost (about \$472,040 today). By summer construction was continuing rapidly and by November Mr. Coe wrote to his son, Robert, who was away at school, that "the greenhouses are finished and are stocked." A multitude of equipment, heating systems, plumbing and supplies were required to get the greenhouse started. The Kohler Brothers were used to install the plumbing, and while on the property, also installed several fire hydrants. In the finished greenhouse flowers were grown and sent to Mrs. Coe daily for their New York City home, as well as fresh fruits and vegetables, giving the greenhouse a practical use as well.

Sargent also aided Mr. Coe in the selection of gardeners, and made several recommendations for him including a gardener who worked on the estate of J. P. Morgan. Coe mandated that at least one gardener live in the greenhouse "so that matters of fires, etc., would be continually under his supervision." He was an insurance executive after all!

Other tasks carried out in 1914 included the planting of the parkland with many tree seedlings, purchased from the New York Conservation Commission, which had been founded in 1902 to promote the reforestation of areas in New York State that had been decimated by logging. Today the Conservation Commission is part of the state's Department of Environmental Conservation (they give out tree seedlings on Arbor Day each year at Planting Fields). The trees ordered and planted were cedars, scotch and red pine, and oak. Other shrubs and trees came from the former Fairhaven, Massachusetts estate of H.H. Rogers, who died in 1909 (His country house was to be torn down in 1915). These plantings were the cause of some confusion because Mr. and Mrs. Coe had selected several trees without realizing H.H. Rogers Jr., Mai's brother, who had first pick, had not already made his selections; eventually the problem was resolved. The lawns around the big house were also renovated, since they were very thin and full of weeds. Sargent proposed working in humus to 9.5 acres of lawn. Minor improvements included the replacement of the gutters on the existing main house



Contract for the Main Greenhouse, 1914

that had been built in 1906 by Grosvenor Atterbury for James Byrne and his wife. In 1914 the Coes also paid New York Telephone to bury the unsightly overhead telephones wires underground at a cost of \$285 (about \$6,200 today). Improvements to the farm included buying six new work horses. While the family wanted to improve and expand many aspects of the estate, they also wanted to buy some of the furniture owned by the Byrnes, from whom they had bought the property; three payments totaling \$4,600 (about \$101,000 today) were paid for the furniture.

Along with Planting Fields the Coe family also owned their residence at 6 East 83rd St. in Manhattan, and their ranch at Irma Lake, WY. During 1914, the ranch was expanded to 100,000 acres which accommodated 10,000 cattle. When in Wyoming they did not want to be removed from the events happening in New York, and had copies of the



Detail of the gallery at Coe Hall



Mai Coe and her daughter, Natalie, in 1914

New York Herald and the Sun forwarded to the ranch.

The projects at Planting Fields must have been exciting to watch unfold, especially for children. The two oldest of their four children, William Rogers Coe, age 13, and Robert Douglas Coe, age 12, were enrolled at St. Paul's School in Concord, New Hampshire. The letters William and Robert sent home and Mr. Coe's replies provide an intimate glimpse into the Coe's family life, as well as the rigors of boarding school life during this time. The youngest children, Henry and Natalie, age 7 and 4 respectively, remained with the family under the care of a governess. St. Paul's School was founded in 1856 as an Episcopalian boarding school for boys which was modeled on the English public school tradition. Graduates of St.

Paul's include three presidential candidates, six members of congress, and 13 ambassadors. Eventually Robert D. Coe was one of these ambassadors, serving as American ambassador to Denmark during the Eisenhower administration. William, the oldest son, was attending the school as early as 1912, and Robert's first year was the fall of 1914. A typical school day at St. Paul's according to Robert Coe's letter of September 1914, consisted of the following: the students would wake at 7:00am, eat breakfast at 7:30am, attend chapel at 8:15am; the first session of classes was from 8:45am to 12:45pm. The students had a break between 1:00pm and 4:40pm where they ate lunch and had some free time. Classes resumed at 4:40pm and lasted until 6:15pm. Supper was served at 6:30pm, and from 7:10pm to 8:10pm was the designated time to study. Lights out was at 9:00pm sharp each night. Packages sent to the children were monitored by the faculty, and in November of 1914 Robert had to write his father to tell him that the sending of cake was not allowed.

The class schedule at St. Paul's included many diverse subjects, several of which would seem unusual in a high school classroom today. During 1914 William took classes in Latin, Greek, French, Algebra, English, History, Sacred Studies, Arithmetic, and Manual Arts. Robert's course load was much the same, but substituted Sacred Studies for Mythology. Their marks were a frequent point of conversation in the letters between Mr. Coe and his sons. William's

performance was about average to somewhat below average, and Robert usually excelled and hovered around second and third highest in his class. Mr. Coe motivated his children to do their best at school with a mixture of rewards, encouragement, and admonishment. In one harsh letter Mr. Coe wrote that if William did not improve his performance, "You will be the laughing stock of the school and of everyone who knows you". Mr. Coe and Mrs. Coe visited St. Paul's once during the year, and stayed at the Alumni House.

When not studying or attending class, William and Robert were involved in several extra-curricular activities. Both boys played football, and Mai wanted to make sure their uniforms were warm enough. The football games at St. Paul's were divided into three teams called "clubs." William and Robert played on the "Isthmian", which they considered the best team. The other teams were "Old Hundred" and "Delphian." William played left guard and Robert was right tackle. Robert spent the better part of half a page outlining the "trick play" the team intended to use in their upcoming game. Robert ran track, William was a member of the choir, and both enjoyed ice skating.

Mr. Coe considered writing home frequently to be essential and even considered letter writing a part of their education. Robert was always more diligent about writing home, and Mr. Coe sometimes asked Robert to tell his older brother to keep in more frequent contact.

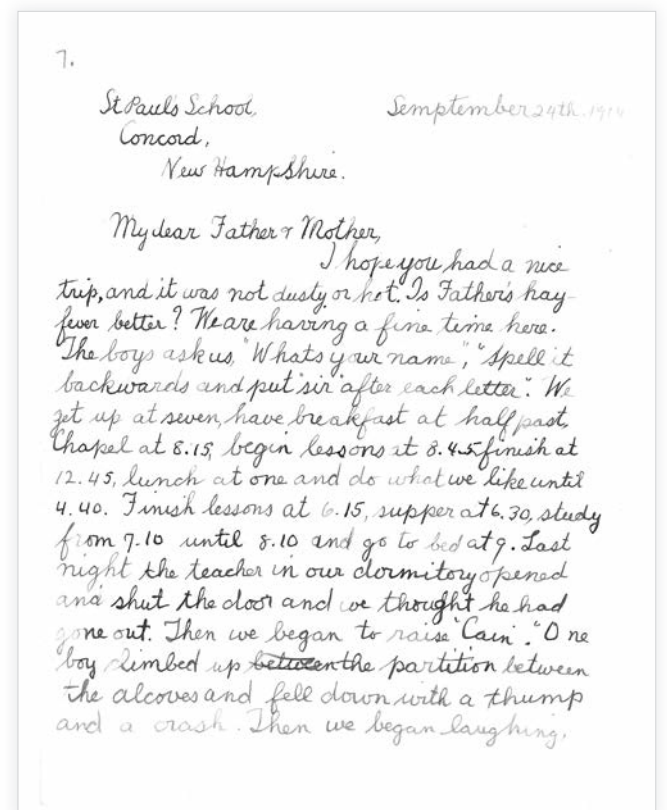
When not discussing school work both the boys and Mr. Coe loved to discuss the fortunes of the race horses their father owned. The boys took considerable interest in their success and even borrowed newspapers from classmates to try to follow the races. Mr. Coe would also often include in his letters how the horses were doing. The horses, "Election Bet", "Piping Hot", and "Molly Gray" did well, while the horse "Hafiz" turned out to be a disappointment and was sold at the end of the year. Other topics of interest included the ranch in Wyoming, the family dogs, and Mr. Coe's hunting and fishing trips.

Mr. Coe and his wife kept busy socially and belonged to a myriad of different social and sporting clubs. One club Mr. Coe belonged to in 1914 was India House. This club, which still exists, was established that same year and the membership was predominately of gentlemen involved in the marine business. The club was conveniently located close to the office of Johnson & Higgins, and must have served as a place for Mr. Coe to entertain and network while he was President and CEO of Johnson & Higgins. When not socializing at a club, the Coes also enjoyed theater. The ledger for 1914 reveals that the family spent \$194 on theater tickets

that year (about \$4,200 today). They also loved travel, but their trips abroad were curtailed by World War I. They visited France in April of 1914, but that was their last trip abroad until the end of hostilities in 1918. They supported a wide variety of causes through charity. The Coes helped support the community in Oyster Bay, and donated to the Oyster Bay Fire Department, Oyster Bay Library and hospitals. The Coes did not fail to recognize the destruction World War I was inflicting on the people of Europe and gave \$600.00 (about \$13,000 today) to aid the people of Belgium who suffered invasion by the German Army.



Above left: Mr. and Mrs. Coe and their two eldest children, William and Robert about 1914, at Niagara Falls.
Above right: Letter from Robert Coe to his father, 1914



WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHY

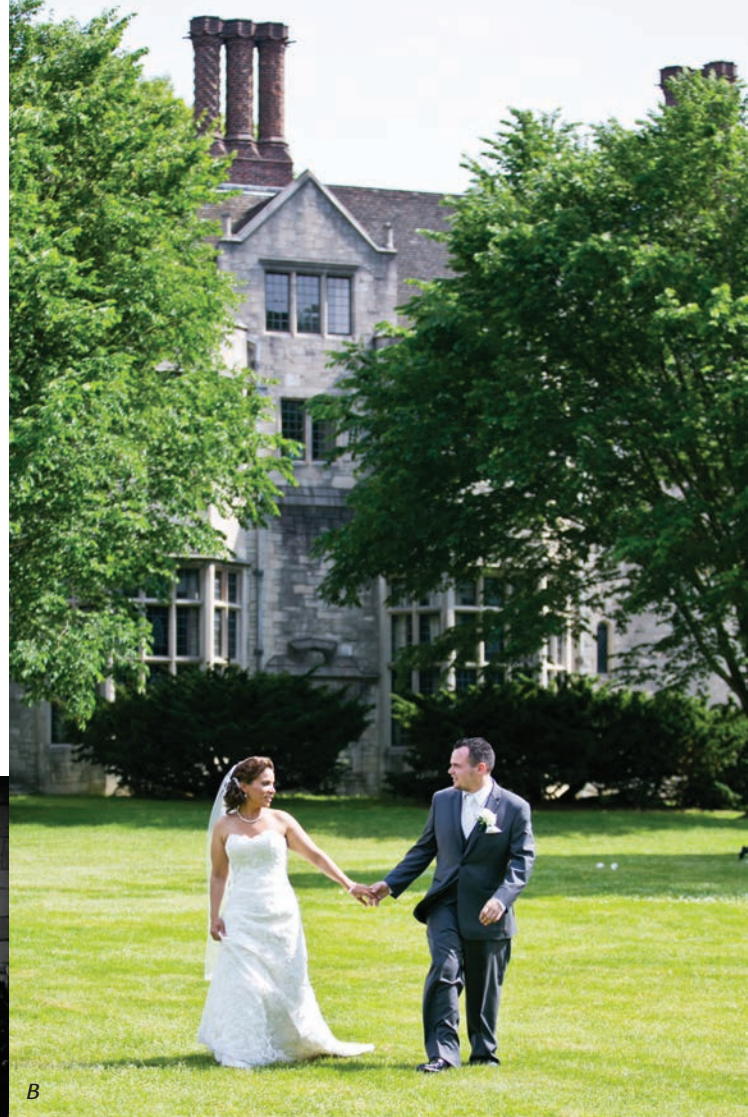
AT PLANTING FIELDS

The tradition of wedding photographs at Planting Fields started with Natalie Coe's wedding in 1934. Since then the arboretum and beautiful gardens surrounding Coe Hall have been a perfect setting for couples who wish to chronicle their wedding day and begin creating memories that will last a life time.

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For more information about obtaining a photo permit please contact the parks permit office at 516-922-8604.

MARCH - MAY
CALENDAR OF
EVENTS

MARCH

FRIDAY, MARCH 28, 2014
**Opening Night & Preview Party –
Fabulous Interiors by Elsie de Wolfe &
Charles Duveen, 1915-1945**

5:30pm – 7:30pm at Coe Hall
\$10 members / \$20 non-members

*Fabulous Interiors by Elsie de Wolfe &
Charles Duveen, 1915-1945* is the new
spring 2014 exhibition at Coe Hall. Enjoy
sounds of the American Songbook on our
newly restored 1913 Steinway grand piano
played by Jack Kohl. Dress is fashionably
festive with the color blue (Elsie de Wolfe’s

favorite hair color) or red (Charles Duveen’s
trademark velvet color) encouraged.
Wine and cheese will be served.
For more information or reservations call
Jennifer Lavella (516) 922-8678 or email
jlavella@plantingfields.org.

SATURDAY, MARCH 29TH, 2014
**Fabulous Interiors by Elsie de Wolfe &
Charles Duveen, 1915-1945**

On display daily 11:30am – 3:30pm
March through September at Coe Hall
Members free / \$4.00 non-members
no parking fee

Exhibition opens and continues through
September.

SATURDAY, MARCH 29TH, 2014
Broadway Sings Cole Porter at Coe Hall

7:00pm – 10:00pm at Coe Hall / \$20 Members / \$40 non-members / no parking fee

Stars from Broadway’s biggest shows including Lisa Howard from *25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*,
Jerry Gallagher from *Guys and Dolls*, Kelly McCormick from *Les Miserables*, and John Cudia from *Phantom of the Opera*
sing Cole Porter’s best known songs and gems from Broadway hits. All songs are accompanied by our 1913 Steinway
grand piano played by pianist Jack Kohl. Join us after this special concert for a chance to meet the performers at a wine
and cheese reception! For reservations call Lilly McGurk (516) 922-8676 or email emcgurk@plantingfields.org.



SUNDAY, MARCH 30TH, 2014
Glamorous Design Lecture at Coe Hall

Eileen Kathryn Boyd, interior designer of New York
and Long Island speaks about her design work,
design trends and influences

2:00pm / Members free / \$15 non-members / no parking fee

Eileen Kathryn Boyd, interior designer, whose stylish residential
and commercial interior design projects have been featured in
House Beautiful, *Traditional Home*, and *New York Spaces* will
join us in the Great Hall to talk about her colorful, glamorous,
and fashionable projects. Meet one of the country’s top
designers who works right here on Long Island and Manhattan
with a range of discriminating clients, and has a textile collection
with Durable fabrics. Find out top design trends and what has
influenced her in designing and decorating exciting spaces.
www.ekbinteriors.com. For reservations and more information
call Jennifer Lavella (516) 922-8678 or email
jlavella@plantingfields.org.



APRIL

SUNDAY, APRIL 6TH, 2014
**Lecture at Coe Hall –
Charles of London, The English
Country House & Coe Hall**

2:00pm / Lecture is FREE
with \$4 admission to Coe Hall
and \$8 parking fee

Admit it, watching *Downton Abbey* gives
you goose bumps. You have always
wanted to live in an English country
house or at least have thought about it.
Hear about Coe Hall’s interior designer,
Charles of London (Charles Duveen
from the famous Duveen family of art
dealers), who was borrowing straight
from English country houses and their
eclectic antiquarian styles. His interiors
at Coe Hall and influences for the
design will be discussed at this lecture
by Gwendolyn L. Smith, Curator of
Planting Fields Foundation.
Reservations are required. For
information call Antigone Zaharakis
(516) 922-8668 or email
education@plantingfields.org.

FRIDAY, APRIL 11TH, 2014
**Preview Reception
Exhibition in the Manor House –
Watercolor Orchids at
Planting Fields by Andrey
Avinoff (1886-1949)**

5:30pm – 7:30pm
Members free / \$10.00 non-members
reservations required

Russian émigré Andrey Avinoff painted nearly one
hundred watercolors of orchids, many of the specimens
owned by William R. Coe of Planting Fields. Mostly
painted in 1947 and 1948, the watercolors are now
privately owned. Thirty paintings will be on loan for
the Manor House exhibition. Several watercolors
show orchids which we still grow in the Main
Greenhouse at Planting Fields. This show is in
conjunction with the Nassau County Museum of Art
“Garden Party” exhibition.

Please call Michelle Benes to make a reservation for the
Preview Reception at (516) 922-8682 or email
mbenes@plantingfields.org.

SATURDAY, APRIL 12TH, 2014 – MAY 11TH, 2014
**Exhibition in the Manor House – Watercolor Orchids
at Planting Fields by Andrey Avinoff (1886-1949)**

Exhibit open to the general public / 11:30 - 3:30 daily / free with \$8 parking fee



SATURDAY, APRIL 19TH, 2014
The Adventures of Peter Rabbit, presented by the Theatre Three of Port Jefferson

3:00pm – 4:00pm at Coe Hall / free with \$4 admission fee to Coe Hall / \$8 parking fee

Coe Hall will become a theatre for Theatre Three’s production of their original play *The Adventures of Peter
Rabbit*. Hop over to Coe Hall for this fun and spirited production! General seating, come early.
Information: Antigone Zaharakis (516) 922-8668 or education@plantingfields.org.



SATURDAY, APRIL 26TH AND SUNDAY, APRIL 27TH 2014
2014 Arbor Day Family Festival

10:00am – 5:00pm (rain or shine) / \$20 per car load
Once inside the park all activities are FREE!

New performances by steel drummer Robert Mitrea in the Main Greenhouse,
and Frank Pedulla’s Brass Band! Live musical shows by the crowd favorites
Peat Moss and the Fertilizers, Strummin N Drummin, kid’s tree climb by
Wonderland Tree Care, petting zoo, face painting, TR Sanctuary, caricaturist,
plant clinics, tree planting with Smokey the Bear, FREE self-guided visits of Coe
Hall and enjoy FREE admission to our new exhibition about Elsie de Wolfe and
Charles Duveen on display at Coe Hall. The festival is a collaborative effort
between Planting Fields Foundation and the New York State Office of Parks,
Recreation and Historic Preservation. For more information contact Jennifer
Lavella at (516) 922-8678 or email jlavella@plantingfields.org.



MAY
CALENDAR OF
EVENTS

SUNDAY, MAY, 4TH, 2014
Edna St. Vincent Millay Poetry Reading

2:00pm / Coe Hall / free with \$4 admission
\$8 parking fee

Join us for a special poetry reading of Edna St. Vincent Millay's poems read by Alice Quinn, Executive Director of the Poetry Society of America and Mary Stewart Hammond, a celebrated contemporary poet.

FRIDAY, MAY 9TH, 2014
Move Night at Coe Hall – To Catch a Thief

7:00pm / free

Join us for this classic. Take a tour of the *Fabulous Interiors by Elsie de Wolfe & Charles Duveen, 1915-1945* exhibition. For more information contact Jennifer Lavella (516) 922-8678 or email jlavella@plantingfields.org.

SATURDAY, MAY 10TH, 2014
MOTHER'S DAY WEEKEND Family Pancake Breakfast at Coe Hall

10:00am – 11:30am
\$8 parking fee
\$15.00 Members, adults & children
\$20.00 non-members, adults & children

Bring the family to a fun and entertaining pancake breakfast. Enjoy an original recipe called Barbara Pancakes from Elsie's book *Recipes for Successful Dining*. These delicious pancakes topped with whip cream, vanilla ice cream, chocolate sauce, and walnuts were a favorite of Elsie's. Enjoy breakfast at Coe Hall, watch a master balloon twister and a take a tour of the *Fabulous Interiors by Elsie de Wolfe & Charles Duveen, 1915-1945* exhibition. Call Michelle Benes at (516) 922-8682 or email mbenes@plantingfields.org for reservations or more information.

SATURDAY, MAY 17TH, 2014
Into the Garden: Plein Air Painting with Annie Shaver-Crandell

10:00am – 3:00pm / free with \$8 parking fee / meet at the end of the west parking lot by the Main Greenhouse

Elsie de Wolfe, subject of Planting Field's 2014 exhibition, loved the garden as an influence on her interior designs. Come be inspired by the gardens and landscapes at Planting Fields and paint with Annie Shaver-Crandell, member of the Salmagundi Club in New York. Materials are artist's choice (oil, acrylic, or watercolor) and space is limited to 20 participants. Bring a bag lunch or purchase snacks at the café. A list of suggested materials will be emailed to participants prior to the workshop. For more information contact Jennifer Lavella (516) 922-8678 or jlavella@plantingfields.org.



Plein Air Landscape Painting with Annie Shaver-Crandell

SATURDAY, MAY 24TH, 2014 – MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND
Summer Concert in the Park at Coe Hall (West Portico)

5:30pm – 7:30pm / free / no parking fee

"Red, White & Blues" Brass Ensemble, Performed by Chamber Players International. Bring a chair, blanket, and an outdoor picnic to enjoy the beauty of great music, Planting Fields and Coe Hall! For more information contact Jennifer Lavella at (516) 922-8678 or jlavella@plantingfields.org.



IN MEMORY OF
GORDON E. JONES

BY VINCENT A. SIMEONE

Gordon E. Jones passed away in Oneonta, New York on December 16th, 2013, he was 92. Gordon was a legendary figure in horticulture and served as the first Director of Planting Fields when it transitioned from a private estate to a public facility, from 1957 to 1993.

Gordon lived a full and amazing life, touching so many along the way. He grew up in upstate, New York in Jefferson County and attended Cornell University studying Ornamental Horticulture. After graduation he served in the U.S. Army with the 17th Airborne Division, also acting as the aide to General Joseph V. Phelps. Upon leaving the Army with the rank of Captain, he joined Robson Seed Company and was in charge of flower seed research and seed trials.

In 1957, after interviewing for the job by the urging of a colleague, he became the Director of Planting Fields. Gordon loved Planting Fields and was greatly influential in building the large holly, magnolia and conifer collections. He also helped to enhance an already impressive rhododendron collection. Gordon adored the vast collection of

camellias in the Camellia Greenhouse and the tropical plants in the Main Greenhouse. In the early 1960s, he, along with the arboretum staff, designed and built the 5 acre Synoptic Garden, which is still the largest and most unique of its kind in the U.S. It is a diverse collection of trees, shrubs, perennials and bulbs that are arranged alphabetically by botanical name and is still used regularly by students, professionals and homeowners. In 1993, when Gordon retired from Planting Fields, the garden was officially named the Gordon E. Jones Synoptic Garden. In his honor, the hybrid rhododendron 'Gordon Jones' was introduced, a tribute that he was very proud of. This special rhododendron is still available in the trade today and can be found in the North Rhododendron Park near Coe Hall.

He played important leadership roles in numerous plant societies and horticultural organizations including The Holly Society of America, the American Rhododendron Society, the American Association of Botanical Gardens and Arboreta and the New

York Hortus Club and received numerous horticultural awards including the Gold Medal Award from the American Rhododendron Society and the Gold Medal of Horticulture Award from the New York State Nurseryman's Association, The Long Island Nursery and Landscape Association's Man of the Year and was given an honorary lifetime membership by the New York Hortus Club.

I met Gordon in 1992 when I started as an intern at Planting Fields. While we only worked together for a year and a half, we kept in touch and would walk the grounds together during many visits he would make to the arboretum. There is no doubt that Gordon Jones played a major role in developing Planting Fields into a world-class arboretum. Gordon was a kind and gentle soul and had the unique ability to motivate people to work towards a common goal.

On January 4th, I attended a memorial service along with former Assistant Director, Dave Barnett. It was a touching ceremony filled with fond memories and amazing stories.

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Planting Fields view northeast, summer 2013

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PLANTING FIELD FOUNDATION'S GARDEN LIBRARY

BY LILLY MCGURK, DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

THE FOUNDATION'S GARDEN LIBRARY IS TRULY
ONE OF PLANTING FIELD'S HIDDEN GEMS

Gardeners and readers alike are surrounded with a comprehensive collection of books and periodicals that specialize in all things horticulture. Members can explore diverse subjects in botany, gardening, botanical art, composting, rain gardens, landscape design and Long Island's history. All are welcome to browse.

There are several features within the library that will make your visit a unique experience all on its own. The Sophie Coe Collection contains an array of books and reference materials donated by Dr. Michael Coe. Originally, the Garden Library's collection began with donations from individuals and organizations as well as some from the personal collection of William Robertson Coe, which reflected his interests in landscape design, plant cultivation and horticulture. His bedroom study housed a notable anthology that helped to institute this special section. Some of The Sophie Coe Collection is also part of a larger non-circulating rare book section that includes archives about the Arboretum and Long Island as well as serving as a diverse repository for early 19th and 20th century literature, reference materials and botanical illustrations. Many of these resources have become so

obscure that they are no longer available at local libraries. While the Garden Library is mainly a reading and reference library specializing in horticulture and botany, a new collection has been recently established and is dedicated to Long Island's history. With over 165 books and pamphlets, some dating back to 1865, you are sure to find something of interest here.

The library provides significant historical resources that help to support the Foundation's mission.

Rosemarie Papayanopoulous is the Garden Library's librarian and manages the entire collection, along with a dedicated group of volunteers. Together they catalog, acquire and archive all of these wonderful treasures that are just waiting to be discovered.

The Garden Library is located at the Haybarn Visitor's Center. For more information about access to the library, please contact Rosemarie Papayanopoulous at 516-922-8631. The library is open Tuesdays from 10:30am -4:00pm and Thursdays from 9:30am to 4:00 pm.



Rhoda and Hal Fishkin

WITH GREAT APPRECIATION TO ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS

BY ELSA EISENBERG, GROUP TOUR & VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

After retiring from teaching many years ago, Rhoda Fishkin decided to follow in her husband Hal's footsteps and become a part of the volunteer staff at Planting Fields in 1984. Hal had "signed up" the previous year. Last year Hal received his 30 year pin, the first person ever to achieve that milestone. And now Rhoda has achieved that remarkable distinction as well.

Rhoda and Hal have been married 66 years; they have two married children, three grandchildren, one great grandchild, and one more on the way.

In addition to being a Coe Hall docent, Rhoda has been involved with many things at Planting Fields

over the years, including being on a number of winter festival committees and even leading garden tours for a while. As a testament to her outstanding volunteer work, in 2001 the Junior League of Long Island, which used to hold an annual event to honor volunteers from various non-profit organizations on Long Island, recognized Rhoda as Planting Fields' volunteer of the year.

Hal and Rhoda have not only given their time and energy to Planting Fields, but financial support as well. How fortunate we have been for all these years to have these two special people here, who have made such a huge commitment and had such a profound impact.



MISSION STATEMENT

Planting Fields Foundation collaborates with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to preserve and interpret Planting Fields Arboretum State Historic Park as a premier Long Island Gold Coast estate and arboretum by providing educational and enriching experiences.

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Evergreen is published by Planting Fields Foundation.
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Graphic Design by Amy Herling
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