

“Such Friends”

“...and say my glory was I had such friends.”

—W B Yeats

W. B. Yeats, Lady Augusta Gregory and the Founding of the Abbey Theatre

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For further reading

Coxhead, Elizabeth. *Lady Gregory: A Literary Portrait*. London: Secker and Warburg, 1966. One of the earlier biographies.

Ellman, Richard. *Yeats: The Man and the Masks*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979. Very good standard biography.

Jeffares, Norman A. *William Butler Yeats: Man and Poet*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1949. Another of the standard biographies.

Kohfeldt, Mary Lou. *Lady Gregory: The Woman Behind the Irish Renaissance*. London: Andre Deutsch, 1985. Kohfeldt has a more female point of view than others.

Maddox, Brenda. *George's Ghosts: A New Life of W. B. Yeats*. London: Picador, 1999. Focuses on his late-life marriage, and is a really good read.

O'Connor, Ulick. *Celtic Dawn: A Portrait of the Irish Literary Renaissance*. London: Black Swan, 1984. The best history of the whole time period and the characters involved.

Rodgers, W. R., ed. *Irish Literary Portraits: Broadcast Conversations with Those Who Knew Them*. London: BBC, 1972. Just delightful. Transcriptions of a radio program that interviewed people who knew Yeats and others.

Yeats, W. B. *Selected Poetry*. Ed. with an introduction and notes by A. Norman Jeffares, London: Macmillan, 1990. The best collection of his best poems; the introduction is a good overall mini-biography.

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Other Resources

The Abbey Theatre [<https://www.abbeytheatre.ie/>] is still chugging along, on Abbey Street in Dublin, but they have come up with a very creative schedule for a COVID19 2020 season, so there is a lot you can experience on line. You can follow their Facebook page for updates and there are clips of quite a few of their productions on YouTube. They also have a very detailed archive if you are searching for anything.

Coole Park [<https://www.coolepark.ie/>], Lady Gregory's home about 35km south of Galway city, near Gort, is now a national park, without the house but with the autograph tree. Once it is open again, it is well worth a visit when you are driving around the west of Ireland. Here is a video tour that shows the autographs on the tree really well, but has annoying music: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pM4JX_rzfnM.

The Dublin Literary Pub Crawl [<https://www.dublinpubcrawl.com/>] is my main Dublin tip, particularly for your first night in the city. Two actors lead a group of tourists around the main part of the city, stopping to do scenes from Irish literature and theatre, punctuated by drinks in pubs. Great way to get the lay of the land. Until the COVID 19 shutdown is over, you can buy their book from the website.

The National Library of Ireland [www.nli.ie], easy to find on Kildare Street in downtown Dublin, has the best exhibit about Yeats and all his "Such Friends," and I've seen a lot of them. Available on line [<https://www.nli.ie/yeats/?fbclid=IwAR0p5i634POEE33MVnKY5b0wOrGS9xzhH9KeYCVDiWOJ-3Cm24tnYdNTJj8>] and, eventually, in person. Great gift shop—and, ladies, use the downstairs restroom. Trust me.

Philomena Mason [philomenamason.wordpress.com] is an Irish playwright and, full disclosure, a friend of mine. She has written plays on Lady Gregory and her husband, Sir William, as well as other Irish characters from history, which have been performed in Ireland and the UK. They are delightful. Excerpts are up on her new website, and she will be adding info in the future.

Thor Ballylee [<https://yeatsthoorballylee.org/home/>], Yeats' tower, is near Coole Park, and also worth the trip when it is open again. They often sponsor events in the summer around his June birthday. Philomena's play, *Lady Gregory: A Galway Life* was performed here a few years ago.

And, of course, you can follow my blog, www.suchfriends.wordpress.com, where I am currently chronicling, "100 Years Ago: The Literary 1920s." Hopefully, soon to be a book...