

Press release: Holiday home where Dame Daphne Du Maurier wrote her first novel to be listed

The holiday home where Dame Daphne Du Maurier wrote her first novel has been given Grade II listed status by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on the advice of Historic England.

The Former shipyard was the holiday home of the Du Maurier family where author wrote 'The Loving Spirit' and 'Gerald: A Portrait'.

Originally developed as a boatyard and quayside in the 1800s, Ferryside in Cornwall was bought by the Du Maurier family in 1926 and it was there she wrote The Loving Spirit, which was published to critical acclaim in 1931 and later Gerald: A Portrait, a biography of her father.

She is said to have written the book after discovering the wreck of schooner 'Jane Slade', named after a woman who became the inspiration for the main protagonist in The Loving Spirit. Its owner gave Du Maurier the figurehead which she had installed underneath her bedroom window and a replica now resides in the same location. Du Maurier later remembered "The Loving Spirit was inspired by the sense of freedom that my new existence at Ferryside brought".

The building is a former shipwright's workshop, yard and quay, constructed of local granite in the early 1800s. It is an important survivor of Cornwall's maritime heritage and reflects the social developments in the region. The changing needs of the owners of Ferryside are also shown in the alterations and extensions to the building over the last 200 years. At Ferryside the original quay was turned into a domestic garden, the sail loft becoming bedrooms and a bathroom, and the former boat store becoming the family sitting room.

The Du Maurier family's transformation of the building into a holiday home in the late 1920s reflects a wider trend for second homes which began in the 19th century. These second home buyers formed a crucial part of the Cornish economy in the 20th century. The protection of the house and quay is in recognition of its connection to Dame Daphne Du Maurier and to reflect on its wider architectural and historical significance.

Christian Browning, Dame Daphne Du Maurier's son said:

My mother adored the house and fell in love with Cornwall which was to be the backdrop of her most famous novels. I feel sure that she would be immensely proud that Historic England have granted Ferryside a Grade II listing.

It was my grandmother, Muriel du Maurier, who in 1926 purchased

what was then a run down boatyard called Swiss Cottage and turned it into an enchanting holiday home for her family and renamed the house Ferryside. It was here that my mother wrote her first novel, 'The Loving Spirit'.

I am most grateful to my friend, Collin Langley and his Team who embarked on the difficult task of researching the history and origins of the building and his book 'A Cottage by the Sea' must have been of great help to Historic England in their decision to give the house a Grade II listing, which is much appreciated by my family.

Heritage Minister John Glen said:

Ferryside is the site where Dame Daphne Du Maurier's love affair with Cornwall began – the region that inspired her works, which are some of the greatest novels of the 20th century. I am pleased that Ferryside and its quay have been listed and I hope that both the building and Du Maurier's work continue to inspire people for many years to come.

Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive of Historic England said:

Ferryside is one of many precious, historic buildings across England which have the power to captivate and delight. The former shipwright's workshop and its quayside setting inspired Dame Daphne du Maurier and her work, and the building in turn reflects the family's life there. These places bring our history to life; they give it a personal dimension which transcends time." □

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