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who led stem cell research**  
Professor Dame  
Julia Polak, page 50



# Register

## Obituaries

# David Wynne

Prolific sculptor whose dynamic work, from Guy the Gorilla to Fred Perry, adorns many public spaces

A sightseeing tour of London might involve many of David Wynne's dynamic, elegant public sculptures, such as *Boy with a Dolphin* (1974) in Chelsea, which shows a child suspended in mid-air being propelled along by a dolphin as he hangs on to the animal's fin with one hand.

His 1984 bronze statue of Fred Perry greets visitors at the entrance to the All England Club. Every year, before a roof was built over Centre Court, Wynne's dripping wet bronze Perry gracefully playing a volley was appreciated by millions as it became a stock image on TV screens when rain stopped play. Last year the statue provided a poignant background for a picture of Andy Murray celebrating his Wimbledon victory — the first Briton to do so since Perry.

The self-taught Wynne was often sneered at by the artistic cognoscenti for his lack of art school training and refusal to pander to Modernist abstraction, but his instinctive feel for movement and obsessive research made him a favourite with the royal family.

His first study of the Queen in the mid-Seventies started inauspiciously as he turned up to sculpt her head for the relief that would be used as the profile on the Silver Jubilee medal. "Whose van is that parked in my space?" she demanded. Wynne timorously owned up

## He suspended a sitting with the Queen so that she could watch racing

and offered to move it at once. His second encounter with the Queen involved a trip to the Tower of London, but luckily for Wynne not through Traitor's Gate, after his earlier indiscretion. He asked the constable of the tower if he could borrow the Edward I crown, worn by the Queen for her coronation, for a bust that would ultimately stand in the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths' hall.

When he informed her of the constable's refusal, she replied: "Indeed, Mr Wynne, we shall see about that." On entering Buckingham Palace the following day the crown was glittering on a table. "You see, Mr Wynne, there are times when one must exercise one's authority to make sure it is intact."

He faced her with a bag of clay at his side, and asked: "Have you been sculpted before, Ma'am?", to which she replied, "Yes, I have, but I hope you don't smoke." Wynne put her at ease, "Not in a ladies' drawing room and, more particularly, not in yours, Ma'am." The Queen rejoined. "Ah, I'm glad." A previous portraitist had chain-smoked through the sitting. "Why didn't you ask him to stop?" asked Wynne. "I thought it would spoil his concentration," she replied.

Wynne proved himself equally adept at



Wynne's instinctive feel for movement is exemplified by *Boy with a Dolphin*, above, which would find a home in Chelsea

charming the Beatles and introduced the Fab Four to the Indian guru Maharishi Maheshi Yogi — a meeting which inspired the Beatles, and popular music in general, into a new paradigm.

Having persuaded their manager Brian Epstein to let him sculpt their heads, Wynne turned up at their hotel in Paris in January 1964. He battled through thousands of screaming girls to get through the door, only to be accosted by an alluring young woman. "Give me five minutes with the Beatles and you can do anything you want for the rest of the day in my bed," she promised. Wynne declined, telling her he was married. When he finally gained entry to the hotel suite, the band knew nothing about the sculpting assignment and John Lennon was complaining about the smell of the clay that Wynne had ordered to have put in the bathroom. Wynne's ability to speak French rescued his commission. "They wanted steaks. I summoned a decent breakfast and our friendship began." The Stowe-educated sculptor became a mentor to the young and naive working-class Liverpoolians, whom he helped to introduce to the high life. He was closest of all to George Harrison, who once gave him a huge piece of marble as a birthday present and told

After sculpting the heads of the Beatles in 1964 Wynne became a great friend of and mentor to the Fab Four

Wynne's son: "Your father's a great man. He told me about the Maharishi and meditation. He did me a great favour."

The showcasing of renaissance sculpture in Kenneth Clark's landmark 1969 BBC series *Civilisation* was a boon to young sculptors. Wynne was flooded with commissions in public places, such as *The Dancers* (1971) at Cadogan Square Gardens, *Girl with a Dolphin* (1973) near Tower Bridge, and *Embracing Lovers* (1973) at the Guildhall — his subjects often daringly cantilevered over the plinth. He adored animals and one of his best-loved pieces of animal sculpture was his 1961 study of the London Zoo star attraction Guy the Gorilla, for Crystal Palace Park. Wynne was delighted to see children clambering all over his tactile ape. He cast an acclaimed bronze of Shergar, after the horse's abduction by the IRA in 1983. It celebrated the tragic racehorse at full pelt and became precious to the heartbroken owner.

Wynne's association with the royals began when he designed a bust to commemorate Prince Charles's investiture as Prince of Wales in 1969. He was later commissioned by the Prince to design the controversial Queen Elizabeth Gate at Hyde Park Corner in 1992 to commemorate the Queen Mother's 90th birthday. Critics rounded on him with glee when the gate was unveiled. Even loyal supporters admitted that the experimental brightly coloured stylised lion and unicorn looked garish and out of place. However, his most important critic, the Queen Mother, loved it.

David Wynne was born in 1926 and studied zoology at Trinity College, Cambridge. He did not thrive and his despairing dons, noticing artistic flair, entrusted him to the classical scholar

Alan Gow to study fine art. Jacob Epstein recognised his raw talent and helped it to blossom. This nurturing resulted in Wynne's early commission for a study in the Festival Hall of the conductor Sir Thomas Beecham dancing on the podium, his baton flashing.

Wynne retained boundless energy. In his late sixties he approached rhinos and elephants in the wild nearer than was comfortable for the animals in order to gain the electric charge of mutual recognition that he needed. He donated profits from these sculptures to conservation charities.

He enjoyed mixing in glamorous circles. His friend Count Rossi once gave a dinner for him in St Moritz and said: "Of all the women in Europe whom would you like to sit next to?" When Wynne arrived for dinner, he found a smiling Audrey Hepburn sitting in the seat next to his.

His wife, Gilli, died of lung cancer in 1990 and he is survived by their elder son, Edward, who founded the cult alternative band Ozric Tentacles. His second son, Roly (a musician, whom Wynne used as the model for *Boy with a Dolphin*), died in 1999. He is also survived by his stepdaughter Nicola, a writer. His stepson, Jonathan, died in a motorcycle accident in 2007.

He was appointed OBE in 1994 after more than two decades of royal commissions, which included one occasion when he suspended a sitting with the Queen so that she could rush to the nearest television to watch one of her horses racing at Newmarket.

David Wynne, OBE, sculptor, was born on May 25, 1926. He died on September 4, 2014, aged 88

## Lives remembered

### The Rev Ian Paisley



Richard Needham writes: Years ago I was attending a fundraising event at Stormont. Ian Paisley (obituary, Sept 13) espied me and boomed "Kilmorrey" (he called me

by my Irish title — no one else did!) "In the darkness and the misery that you British ministers have brought to the decent loyalist people of Ulster, there has been the occasional flash of sunlight. One such occasion was the day you left us!" I responded: "You don't mean that Ian." "Oh yes I do," said he. He didn't. At the end he had become a friend.

### Sir Donald Sinden



Lord Lexden writes: Donald Sinden (obituary, Sept 13) once told me of a meeting he had with Enoch Powell in the 1990s. He told Powell in long and extravagant terms

that he had always held him in the highest regard. When the torrent of eloquence ceased, Powell turned a piercing eye on Sinden and said, "Thank you. And, might I ask, what line of business might you be in?"

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