

Sculpture Trail

Start from the car park and walk into the gardens. The house is to your right.

Protected under a covering on the terrace there is a Roman bath. This was brought to Emo by the 3rd Countess when having a bathroom installed but it was found not to be practicable to put in the bath: the story is either that it was too heavy to be lifted up the stairs or that it was so heavy when it was installed that it fell through the ceiling!

The **urns** on the terrace were originally on the roof of the house along the balcony. They were brought down to the terrace by Mr Cholmeley Harrison in the early 1970s.

Continue to the statue of **Polyhymnia** at the centre back of the house.



Polyhymnia in Greek myth was the Muse of Sacred Poetry, and also of Agriculture. She is often pictured with her finger to her mouth, as though in thought.

This statue is cast in bronze and was purchased by Cholmeley Harrison. The statue was cast in bronze by Von C Kessler c.1850 (see side of pedestal).

Turning towards the field, there are the statues of the **Four Seasons**: these are placed so that they can easily be seen from the windows of the house.



These statues date from the time of the Dawson-Damer family and, when the Jesuits were in residence, they were often used as a practice audience for sermons and for elocution.

Spring and Summer are the nearer pair - Spring on the left as you stand with your back to the house.

Autumn and Winter are the pair nearer the field.

In the shrubbery on the left near the statue of Winter there is a lovely statue of a **hunter and his dog**. This was hidden for many years in the laurel bushes.



Walk down towards the field and turn right onto the yew walk. At the end of the yew walk can be seen the statue of a classical **lady**.

Following the path beside the small pool (which was known as the *Grotto* in the time of the Jesuits who had a statue of St Bernadette here and who completed the paving), you pass a statue of **Ceres** at the pool on the left.



Ceres was the Roman goddess of agriculture and grain, a kind and benevolent goddess also known for her motherly love. She was known to the *Greeks* as Demeter. She was loved for her service to mankind in giving the gift of the harvest. The Romans had a saying "Fit for Ceres", meaning "excellent, splendid".

Ceres is often depicted holding a sceptre or farming tool in one hand, and a basket of flowers, fruit or grain in the other. Sometimes (as at Emo) she wears a garland made from ears of corn. The word *Cereals* is derived from her name.

There is a graceful statue of a young **girl** on your right near the azaleas.



Turn right to walk across the grass to the area known as the *Grapery* where once upon a time there was a hop garden. In the shadow of the trees, there is a finely sculpted statue of **Bacchus**.



Bacchus was the Roman God of wine, known as Dionysus to the Greeks. He represents the social and beneficial effects of wine, as well as its intoxicating power. He is usually represented, as in the case of the statue in Emo Court, with a bunch of grapes in one hand. A vine climbs up beside him.

At the back of Emo Court, on the garden facade under the portico, there is a plasterwork frieze showing a procession led by Bacchus.

Walk up the path towards the house, noticing the very large **urn** on the lawn. This is made of Coade stone and may once have been a fountain. Go through the gate on the left to the front of the house and the heraldic **tigers** at the steps.

The back of the shield held by the left tiger as you look at the house is signed and dated by the Cork sculptor Richard Barter 1854. The shield denotes the Dawson quarter of the coat of arms of the Dawson-Damer family, and the proud stance of the two tigers emphasizes the importance of the family. (Look up to see the coat of arms dating from 1796 over the portico)



The heraldic tigers are made from reconstituted stone, and the panels on the front of the house are of Coade stone. Mrs Eleanor Coade was a well-known and very able businesswoman in London and many Georgian architects used the wide range of architectural products made at her factory in Lambeth. It began production in 1769 and continued after her death in 1821 until the early 1840s.

Mrs Coade advertised her terracotta products as "artificial stone", and the extensive building of large town and country

houses around the beginning of the 19th century, together with their landscaped gardens, created a market for her. It was not cheap to develop the prototype models, but many copies could then be produced and hand-carved stone was a far more expensive option. Mrs Coade benefited by her acquaintance with such fashionable architects as Adams and Wyatt who used her many designs for busts, monuments, tombs, animal sculptures, coats of arms, vases, urns and so on. In general, Coade stone weathers well, as may be seen from the two panels (see links on the website) on the front of the house representing Art and Architecture and a pastoral scene.

Other Coade stone examples in Ireland may be seen in Dublin at the Rotunda Hospital where there is a frieze of ox skulls and drapery below the dome, and also at the Duke of Richmond's Fountain in Merrion Square, decorated with urns, plaques and roundels.

This is the end of the sculpture tour at Emo Court.

However, in the Roman Catholic church in Emo village, there is a very fine example of Victorian sculpture - the **marble tomb** sculpted for Aline, 3rd Countess of Portarlington who died in 1874.



The tomb was sculpted by Sir Joseph Edgar Boehm R.A., an Austrian born in 1834 who came to London in 1848 to study and who rose to become the Sculptor in Ordinary to Queen Victoria. He executed many commissions, including the Wellington Memorial at Hyde Park Corner, and also the portrait head of Queen Victoria for the 1887 coinage. He was very friendly with Princess Louise, the Queen's daughter, who built a studio for him in the grounds of Kensington Palace. He died in 1890.