

Ymddiriedolaeth Gerddi Hanesyddol Cymru Welsh Historic Gardens Trust

Ceredigion Branch

Chairman's Report 2014-15

Branch membership stands at 72, nine of which are joint memberships so 82 individuals.

The Branch AGM was held on Saturday 22 February and followed by a lecture by Jennie Macve entitled Deeds and Dinner Plates; some primary sources for Hafod. She reviewed recently discovered sources of historical information including sketches, photographs, items in the Deeds collection now deposited at the Ceredigion County Archive, and the Derby porcelain Hafod dinner service.

Members enjoyed four events in the course of the summer.

On 20 May a visit to look closely at the two flower gardens at Hafod, Mrs Johnes' garden, recently replanted with 18<sup>th</sup> century cultivars by Ros Laidlaw, and Mariamne's Garden was followed by a delicious tea at the Hafod stables.

On 18 June the Branch hosted a social event at the Conrah County Hotel to mark the WHGT's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary and to raise funds for the launch of the Small Grants Scheme. It is anticipated that this scheme, which was launched in September, will encourage owners undertaking restoration projects, and attract publicity for the Trust. Attractions included the sale of raffle tickets, a sale of second hand garden books amassed by the branches and a 'photo booth' opportunity to pose in costume below the ha-ha in the style of the earlier owners of The Conrah in the 1920's. Overall the event raised £252 for the scheme.

On 23 June the Branch and the Cardiganshire Horticultural Society enjoyed a joint excursion organised by Philip Ellis on the Rheidol Railway to Devils Bridge. Much work has been recently undertaken on the restoration and creation of appropriate railway gardens at each stop, and this special train allowed members to inspect every garden along the route with stops at Capel Bangor, Nantyrnonen, Aberffrwyd, Rheidol Falls and Rhiwfron. At Devil's Bridge we enjoyed a lavish lunch before retuning.

On 30 July we had an excursion to Alltyrodyn where Mr and Mrs Donald Usher also entertained us to a splendid tea under a cloudless sky. There was so much to see that some members could barely tear themselves away from the gardens at 5-30. There was much discussion of the 'Orangery' which we now believe to date from the Stewart family ownership in the 1930s.

The proposed visit to one or more Teifi valley gardens in September was postponed due to Penny David's commitments researching for the Carmarthenshire county book.

The Branch presence at the Royal Welsh Show on Wednesday 23 July was, in the event, limited to a half day, and this was attended by Jennie Macve and Ros Laidlaw. The Branch will not be involved in 2015 owing to other commitments hosting the National AGM at Lampeter. In future years the Branch would prefer to have responsibility for a full day, and thus receive four free passes for its members.

The committee met twice to organise the programme and will form a sub-committee to manage the National AGM on the weekend of 6-7 June. Members are reminded that they are able to choose such elements of the programme which appeal to them and sign up for those individually.

The Chairman has accepted the resignation from Committee of Mr David Barnes, (elected 2013). Although very supportive of the WHGT Mr Barnes has found his working abroad has clashed with almost all our meetings.

