



# WHGT BULLETIN

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*Gwrych Castle, The Seat of Lloyd Hesketh Bamford Hesketh, Walton, W.L., fl. 1834-1855, engraver, circa 1840, NLW*

## Gwrych Castle, a Picturesque landscape Glynis Shaw

Gwrych Castle was saved for the nation in June 2018 thanks to support from the UK government-funded National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF), SAVE Britain's Heritage and a major grant from the Richard Broyd Charitable Trust. Mark Baker, Chairman of the Gwrych Castle Preservation Trust, must be congratulated for his tenacity in campaigning to save Gwrych over many years.

Designed in the Picturesque tradition, Gwrych Castle is an exceptional example of the Regency taste for irregular Norman castellated mansions. West of Abergele, it spreads across a wide prospect terrace, on a limestone escarpment with views out to the sea.

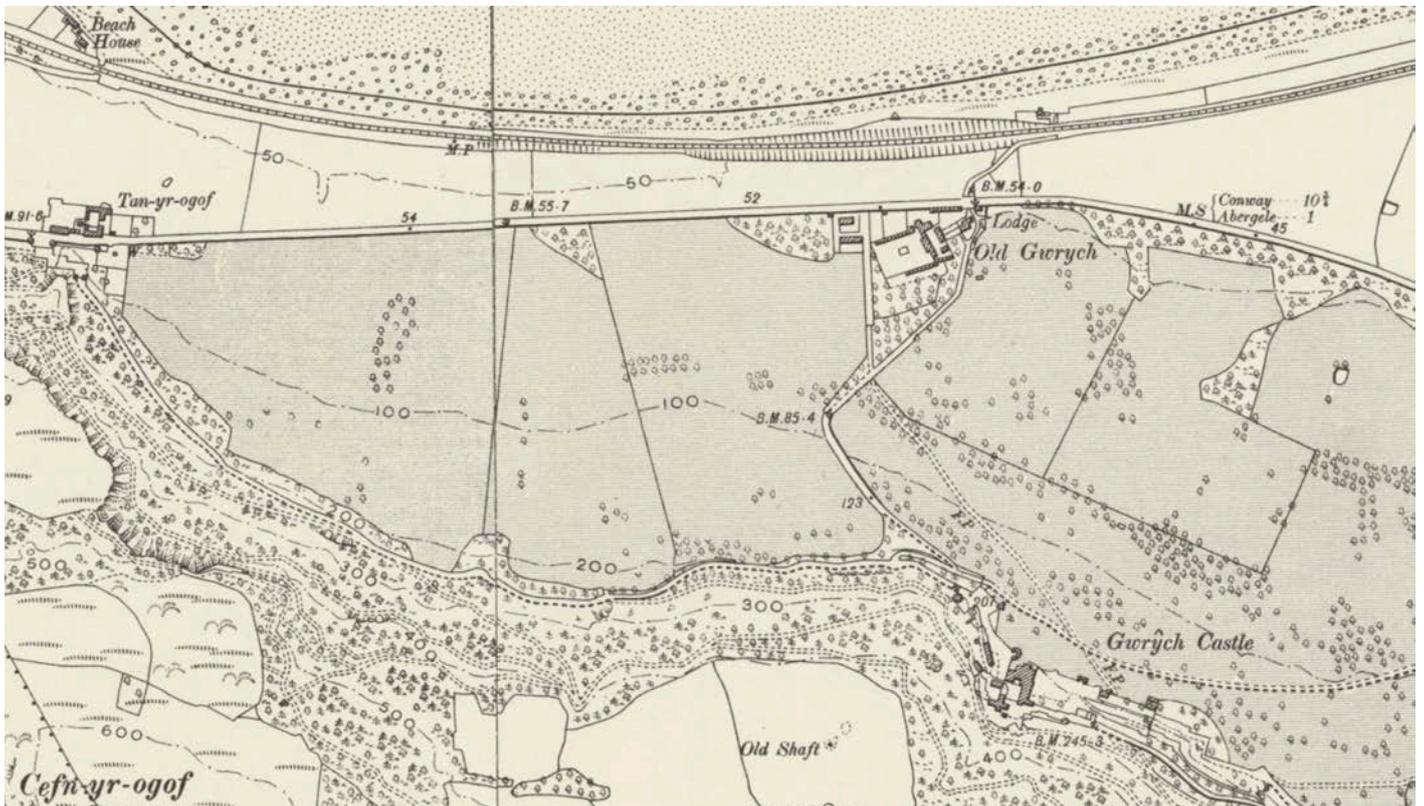
In 1814 Lloyd Hesketh Bamford Hesketh succeeded to the Gwrych estate, which came into the Hesketh family through Lloyd's mother, Frances Lloyd, whose family can be traced back to David Lloyd of Plas yn Gwrych in 1608. The old house, Hen Wrych (Old Gwrych), with its walled gardens and orchards north of the Castle, near to the sea, remained an important part of the estate.

Lloyd commissioned Charles Augustin Busby (1788-1834) to design a castellated mansion, the drawing for which was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1814. When Busby left for America in 1816, Lloyd commis-

sioned Thomas Rickman (1776-1841), a notable Gothic Revival architect and architectural antiquary, whose designs were mainly in the Perpendicular style of the 14th century. Rickman had introduced cast iron in the construction and decoration of churches from 1812. Cast iron Perpendicular-style windows from John Cragg's Mersey Iron Foundry were incorporated into a Romantic Gothic fantasy, largely of Lloyd's own design, with the first stone laid in June 1819.

The new castle was substantially completed by 1822, the date on the Hesketh tower, the tallest of the 18 towers and turrets of the Gwrych landscape. Most of the windows contained stained glass and the hall accommodated a collection of ancient armour from Vienna, spoil looted by the French and purchased by Lloyd. Few of the towers were functional; a water tower, an icehouse, or the brew house, but many are an ornamental shell for visual impact or viewing points, all integrated into the extensive curtain walling of the Picturesque landscape.

Lloyd planted a landscape to compliment the castle. Following Sir Walter Scott's example at Abbotsford, any bare hillside was soon planted up with trees forming the hanging woodland framing the castle. The old highway



Detail of OS NLS 1888-1913 showing the terracing and woodland walks above south and west of the castle. Top left is the beach house north of Tan yr Ogof and Old Gwrych is seen north of the castle.

alongside the castle was relocated to a lower position (now the main drive) in 1822. Originally a bridge crossed the highway to access the walled gardens at Hen Wrych. The parkland was further expanded in 1833, when the new main road (the old A55) was built, and enclosed by a great wall with six lodges, designed in the same theatrical, castellated manner as the house.

The landscaping surrounding the castle has changed little from the layout shown on the Tithe map, the 1st edition OS map of 1873 and the OS maps of 1900 and 1913. Today a golf course lies across the eastern park and the western park is used for grazing. The castle and forecourt of the main terrace are entered under Tudor archways, with the gardens, lawns and shrubberies mainly on the east side of the house, behind and above a castellated retaining wall with corner bastions and a large Gothic window looking out to sea. East and above a walled garden the landscape becomes wilder and ascending steps lead to a series of higher terraced walks. The slopes between the terraces were densely planted with shrubs. On the western side of the accommodation block, the tops of the faux towers of the retaining wall formed viewing platforms looking north across the park below and out to sea. Numerous walks east and west from the castle terrace lead through the wooded hillside. Lady Eleanor's Tower, a simple square castellated summerhouse, with far reaching coastal views, is strikingly sited on a wooded cliff top west of the castle.

The Gwrych landscape was recognised before Lloyd built his castle. In 1813 Gwrych is described as *a pretty seat of a Welsh gentleman named Hesketh, with hot houses and other luxurious appendages, which seemed*

*not to accord with the stern features of the country.* (West, Jane, Mrs [née Iffe], (1758-1852), *Tour to Wales and Ireland*, Cambridge University Library, add. MSS 738, f 10-26 f. 5v).

The productive walled gardens with hothouses and orchards had been established at Hen Wrych by the eighteenth century. This once substantial property, was the childhood home of the celebrated poet Felicia Hemans (née Browne), whose family tenanted Gwrych between 1800 and 1809, following her father's financial collapse in Liverpool. The illustration (opposite) by Mrs Browne shows Hen Wrych before it was remodelled and reduced by Lloyd in the 1820s after which it became the gardener or land agent's house.

Lloyd's horticultural interests included both ornamental and productive planting. In 1827 Lloyd wrote about his *American Aloe in the open Garden – About eight years back I pulled down one of my hot-houses, in which stood a large American aloe (Agave Americana) known to be sixty-eight years of age. It was in a box about two feet square, and the plant was so large that I determined not to put it into the new house then building: it was in consequence placed alongside the south wall in a corner (not expecting it to live), where it has been ever since, never having been watered in summer, nor matted nor attended to in winter, and it is now as vigorous and as healthy (if not more so) than before. The box was not buried in the ground, and is now falling to pieces. The garden is about 100 yards from the sea.* (*The Gardener's Magazine and Register of Rural & Domestic Improvement*, Volume 2, by John Claudius Loudon, 1827, pg 351.)

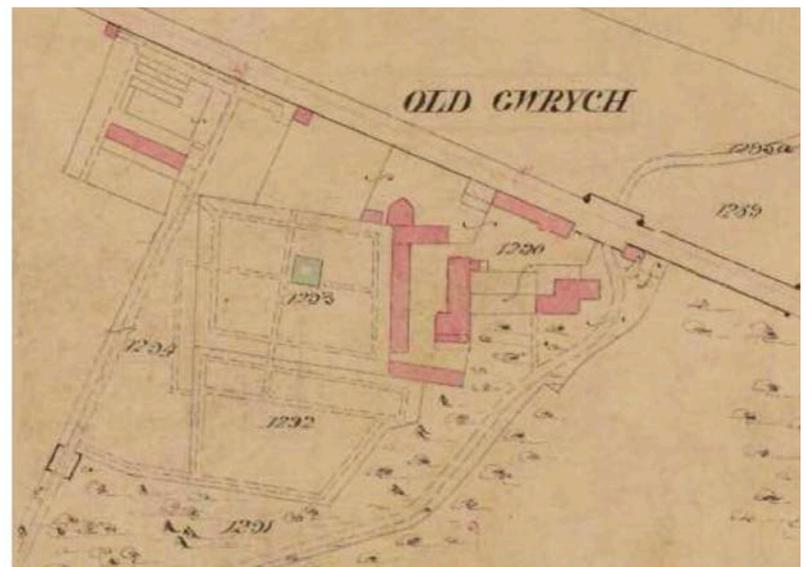
The landscaping was ongoing: *The Sportsman*, Volumes

Right: *Gwrych* by Mrs Browne c1800. Inscribed: Oh! grant me kind heav'n, some peaceful retreat, Above a thatch'd cottage, below a proud seat! Below: Detail of the productive gardens at Old *Gwrych*, Tithe map 1839



4-5, pg 96, 1835, praised Lloyd for living on the estate and employing between 30 and 40 men constantly building and improving.... the gardens are arranged to accommodate the formation of the turrets, bastions, curtains, scarps and counterscarps, as they advance.

The *Pembrokeshire Herald and General Advertiser* 1845 reported on a visit made by the loyal Hesketh Lodge of Oddfellows who enjoyed a procession up to the castle. They admired the magnificent and commanding scenery of the trees, the luxuriant growth of the evergreens, and above all, the truly commanding position of the Castle...



Lloyd planted different varieties of pine trees, including the *Pinus pinea* (also known as the Italian stone pine), which is one of the symbols of Rome, lining historic Roman roads, such as the Via Appia. It was also an important aesthetic element of the Italian Renaissance garden, long associated with the classical landscapes in Italy. By the nineteenth century pine specimens were available from around the world. The 6th Duke of Devonshire and Paxton developed the Chatsworth Pinetum, between 1830 -1831, one of the earliest in the country. In the 1830s William Barron developed a pinetum at Elvaston Castle, Derbyshire, the seat of the Earls of Harrington, where Barron promoted the planting of pines in groups as well as single specimens for their picturesque effect.

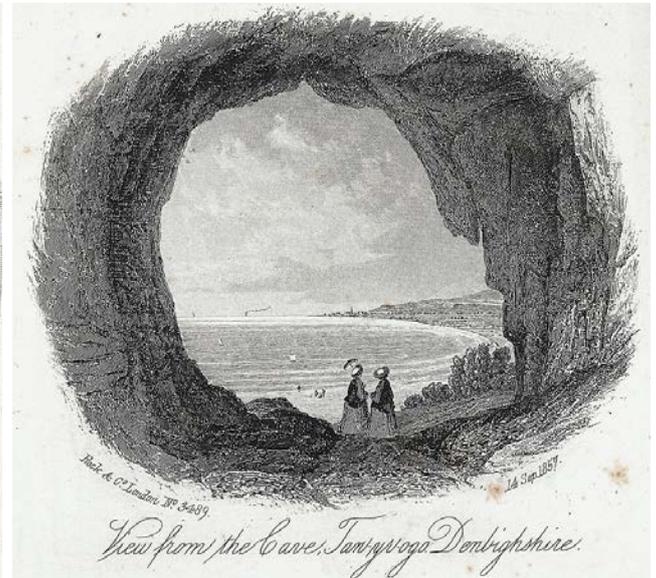
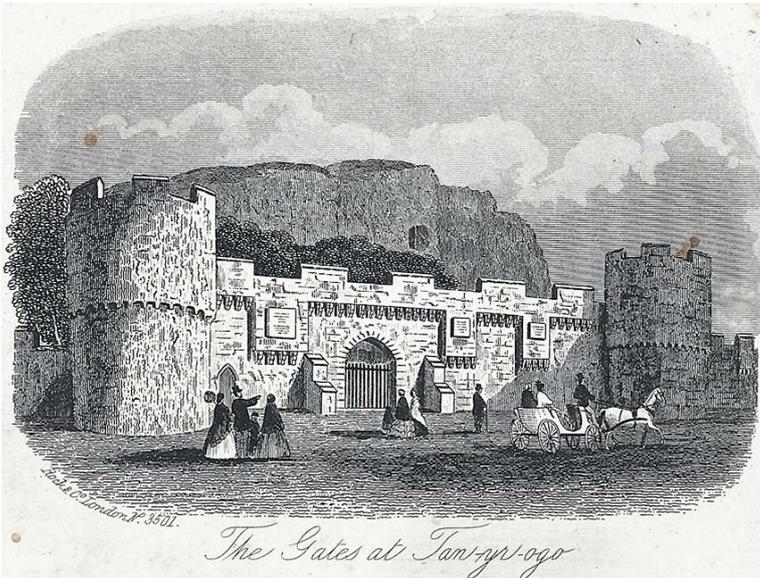
Lloyd developed a collection of coniferous trees at *Gwrych*, including a great many yews, amongst which was the *Harringtonia*, commonly known as the Japanese or Korean plum-yew, named in honour of Charles Stanhope, 4th Earl of Harrington, one of the first to grow the plant in a European garden, at Elvaston; its columnar habit was highly valued. In the 1840s yews and other evergreens were much admired for their picturesque qualities: John Murray's *A handbook for travellers in North Wales*, 1868, described how the beautiful grounds which surround the house abound with cypresses, with which a party of Turks from Liverpool were so pleased that they vociferated Stanboul, Stanboul!

In 1843 Lloyd commissioned a new hot water heating system for his hothouses from the Scottish iron founders Caldwell, Parker and Co., who claimed that it prevents the scorching of plants, so common to flues, and keeps the house in one regular temperature, with a saving of fuel and labour. This may have been in anticipation of the extravagant Coming of Age celebrations of Lloyd's son, Robert Hesketh, in 1846. This joyous event was reported in *The North Wales Chronicle*. After a day of processions and feasting at the castle, the celebrations concluded

with a grand dinner at The Bee Hotel, Abergele, with flesh, fish and fowl, including turtle and venison, the pines, grapes, peaches, and other fruit sent from *Gwrych* castle were excellent. Sadly Robert missed his birthday celebrations as he was on duty with his regiment. *The Chronicle* described how Lloyd had spent the past two years carrying out great improvements and additions to the castle for the occasion, including a new iron staircase.

The incredible weight of grapes and peaches from the improved hothouses grown by Mr James, Lloyd's gardener, was documented in *The Gardeners' Chronicle and Agricultural Gazette*, 1846: 12 Peaches out of the Peach house 6lb. 4 oz. avoirdupois. One of the 12 weighed 11oz., another 9oz.; one bunch of Hamburg Grapes weighed 4 ¾ lbs., another 4lbs., another 3 ½ lbs., and the least of eight 2 ¾ lbs. The berries fine, not too thick or too thin, with a splendid prospect next year for both Vines and Wall trees.

As well as improving the productive garden, Lloyd was developing shrubberies in the landscape. Between 1845-48 Lloyd listed fifteen shrubs for the garden, including new introductions by the Scottish plant hunter Robert Fortune. Usually, new seed or plant specimens were only given to Fellows of the RHS to grow in their gardens. *Weigela Rosea* was one of the most important of



Left :Tan yr Ogo Gates commemorating battles fought in this pass c 1865. Right: View from the Tan yr Ogo cave ,1857, NLW

Fortune's discoveries. Found in a grotto-garden on the Island of Chusan (now Zhoushan) in North China, it was imported in 1845. (*Journal of the Horticultural Society of London, Vol I, 1846*). *Daphne fortunei* and *Forsythia viridissima* (green-stemmed forsythia), also amongst Fortune's introductions from China, were on Lloyd's list. *Daphne fortunei* was first found in 1843 in a garden near Shanghai. The following year he found it growing wild on the hills in Chekiang (now Zhejiang). Fortune, Curator of the Botanic Garden of the Society of the Apothecaries at Chelsea, described the first flowering of this azalea in the Chelsea garden. (*Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society, Volume 2, 1847*). The *Forsythia viridissima* was also discovered in Chekiang.

In December 1847, in *The Gardeners Chronicle & New Horticulturist*, Lloyd's gardener, Mr James, described the spectacular flowering of the American Aloe, now said to have been 90 years in the family, as well as the shrubs and trees that were grown in the mild climate at Gwrych: *there are many things nursed in greenhouses in the midland counties that thrive upon this coast: for instance Myrtles flower, and grow large bushes. Plants of Paulownia imperialis, out three years are strong and healthy; the Leycesteria ripens its seed and grows like a weed; the Araucaria and Deodar grow rapidly.* The Araucaria (monkey puzzle tree), from Chile was a rarity at this date as the seeds only became widely available from the Veitch nursery after 1860.

Lloyd's hothouses were used for nurturing trees, as well as flowers and fruit. Mr James described receiving *instructions to risk a Norfolk Island Pine out-of-doors, which has been for many years in a stove house, but for the two last removed into a colder one, to prepare it for its new berth; every care and attention will be paid to it, but I am not sanguine of acclimatizing it.*

The *Excursions in North Wales, 1853*, edited by John Hicklin, was one of many guides that praised the magnificent views from the terrace of the cave at Tan yr Ogo, which, on a clear day, include the hills of Cumberland,

Westmoreland and the Isle of Man as well as the local landmarks along the coast. The cave was undoubtedly the most sublime element of the Gwrych landscape and attracted many visitors. Its 30-foot high mouth, facing the sea, was said to resemble an arched entrance of a Gothic cathedral. Inside was a huge central rock pillar and the ceiling and sides of the cavern were decorated with stalactites and stalagmites. An English army is said to have once retreated into the cave and that at no spot in the Principality has more blood been shed, in ancient battles between the Welsh and English, than in the defile of Cefn Ogo. The battles are commemorated on four plaques at the Tan yr Ogo lodge entrance.

Thomas Roscoe in *Wanderings and Excursions in North Wales, 1853*, likened the *stalactical cave* to the *Italian Grotta di Sibylla*. Roscoe criticised the castle for its *architectural inconsistency* and likened it more to *an Italian or Syrian convent, built upon the acclivity of Monte Cassino or Mount Libanus, than a castle*. However, despite its defects, Roscoe did recognise its picturesque qualities, particularly of the *Tribes of the Hedera genus* on the walls, *.....while many-leaved and many-coloured flowering shrubs and green plantations present themselves from every point of view.*

An estate plan of 1849 shows a series of hotbeds and a glasshouse on the prospect terrace east of the castle. The hotbeds are not seen on the Tithe or the OS maps. The glasshouse seen on these maps was probably for displaying flowering exotics from Hen Gwrych up at the Castle. Gradually more trees and shrubs were planted east of the castle. Lloyd's shrubberies and evergreen planting continued to be admired by a stream of visitors to Gwrych.

Thomas Jackson gave extravagant praise of the dense planting in his *Recollections of four days' wanderings in Rhyl and its neighbourhood, 1857*. Jackson's party was notified that pedestrian visitors were banned from the grounds *as persons walking through the grounds had destroyed the flowers,.....*However, after giving

suitable references the visit was allowed: *While walking through the grounds, the profusion of blossoms, in all the wild luxuriance of nature, diffused the most delightful fragrance. ....The humble shrub aptly contrasts with the lofty tree; and though confined within narrow limits, like un aspiring poverty, it is not less necessary than its type to fill up the interstices, and to complete the plan of creation. It is said you may walk about the gardens and pleasure grounds for three days without seeing the whole.*

Lloyd's son and heir, Robert Bamford-Hesketh (1826-1894), succeeded to the estate in 1861. Robert's wife was deeply religious and a chapel, designed by George Edmund Street, was added to the Castle. Robert also added to the Gwrych estate, which grew to 3,424 acres across Denbighshire, Cheshire and Caernarvonshire. The basic layout of the Castle grounds was little changed, but Robert added a number of new paths, particularly to Castell Cawr (the Giant's Castle) locally also known as Tan-y-Gopa, an iron age fort above Abergele, south-east of the Castle and to Ffos-y-bleiddiaid (Ditch of the Wolves), where in 1860 James Halliwell-Phillipps had identified the excavations of a Roman lead mine on the hillside. A new service drive was made between the Castle and Hen Wrych, which had new greenhouses. Robert also enlarged the entrance to the Tan yr Ogo lodge to give a more imposing approach for visitors to the cave.

When some 80 members of the Chester Natural History Society visited Gwrych in 1876, they came by rail. Provided with a guide they first visited Tan yr Ogo, with some members climbing on up to Castell Cawr. Members collected fossils and geological specimens as well as a large collection of 'good' plants and ferns from various heights.

The interest in ferns led to unwelcome visitors. *The Rhyll Journal* 13th February, 1897, reported the theft of ferns by a labourer, George Edwards, who was charged with *doing malicious damage to growing ferns* and was ordered to pay a fine of 2s 6d and costs.

Winifred Bamford Hesketh (1859-1924), the sole heiress of Robert, was the last of the family to permanently live at Gwrych. Winifred married Douglas Mackinnon Baillie Hamilton, Lord Cochrane 12th Earl of Dundonald and succeeded to Gwrych in 1894. Lord Dundonald was a soldier who saw action at the Relief of Ladysmith in the Second Boer War; he spent little time at Gwrych.

There seems to have been a growing interest in the historic features of the estate. In 1905 the Antiquarian Association came to visit Castell Cawr. The party was led by Mr Inglis, Agent of the Gwrych Estate, *The first point of interest was Ffos y rhufeiniaid or Ffos y Bleiddiau (The Wolves' Ditch) as it is differently called by historians..... crossed at two points by small bridges made when the walks were laid by the late Mr Hesketh. A number of steps have been constructed, and these lead up to the higher elevation, where two lines of earthworks are plainly discernible, which served with the natural ditch*

*and deep declivities of 150 feet or more on the north and east sides to form a fortress apparently impregnable. (Rhyll Journal, 28th October 1905)*

When the Llandudno Field Naturalists visited, they started at Hen Wrych before the ascent of Castell Cawr..... *the winding path through the beautiful wooded slopes of Gwrych..... one shrub in particular commanded attention. This was the Cotoneaster.....It is a native of the Orm, and was growing in great profusion on the banks of the drives.* Ferns such as Hart's tongue (*Asplenium scolopendrium*) and the common Polypody (*Polypodium vulgare*) were abundant and they collected the blue fleabane (*Erigeron acris*). They also found the Yellow-wort (*Blackstonia perfoliata*) used for dyeing, *the green hellebore (Helleborus viridis).....Variegated ivy and purple heather will complete the last of botanical specimens. (The Welsh Coast Pioneer and Review for North Cambria, October 24, 1907).*

On December 2, 1907, when Lady Dundonald gave a speech to the tenants and townspeople, following the torchlit processions at the Coming of Age Celebrations of Lord Cochrane, she announced that *the house of Gwrych had existed in Wales from times immemorial. The name in Welsh signified The Hedge, and according to tradition, it was at Gwrych that the first hedge in the country was seen.* Unfortunately Lord Cochrane missed his birthday, as he was laid up with a cold, but arrived in Abergele to join the house party at Gwrych the next day.

In 1919 Lady Dundonald sold 750 acres with some of the old buildings on the estate, the Llanddulas limestone quarry and some mines. Her son, Thomas Hesketh Douglas Blair, Lord Cochrane, 13th Earl of Dundonald, sold Gwrych Castle in 1946 along with the remainder of the estate.

Today the mansion block is a ruin, Hen Wrych and the lodges are in separate ownerships, and most of the shrub planting and many of the trees are lost. However, the towers, turrets, retaining walls and much of the network of paths and terracing survive and the essence of the landscape, designed for visual impact and glorious views, remains.

The reinstatement and restoration of the Picturesque landscape with suitable planting will enable the public once again to enjoy the Grade II\* Gwrych landscape, created by Lloyd Hesketh Bamford Hesketh, as described and recorded in the journals, guides and press over more than a century.

We look forward to the appropriate consultations and necessary planning applications as the Gwrych Castle Preservation Trust take their work forward. Perhaps the local hedgerows merit some research too!

For Lloyd Hesketh Bamford Hesketh's plant lists see *Gwrych Castle An official Guide* by Mark Baker.

Also see: Hen Wrych by Gill Jones and Anne Morgan, *Discovering Old Welsh Houses* 2016 [http://discoveringoldwelshhouses.co.uk/library/Hhistory/con%20163\\_HH\\_54\\_HenWrych.pdf](http://discoveringoldwelshhouses.co.uk/library/Hhistory/con%20163_HH_54_HenWrych.pdf)



Left to right: Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex; The Prince of Wales; Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall; Meghan, Duchess of Sussex.



Left to right: Elaine Davey; Simon Baynes; Joanna Davidson; Malwyn Rees; Glynis Shaw.

## The Prince of Wales's 70th Birthday Garden Reception at Buckingham Palace

Simon Baynes, Joanna Davidson, Maldwyn Rees, Elaine Davey and Glynis Shaw were honoured to represent WHGT, one of the 386 of the charities that Prince Charles supports, at a garden party held on May 22, 2018, for his 70th Birthday Patronage Celebration at Buckingham Palace.

The occasion was also the first official post wedding appearance of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, the newly-anointed Duke and Duchess of Sussex, following their wedding.

Prince Harry gave a warm, heartfelt speech about Prince Charles's enthusiasm, energy and support, over nearly fifty years, for the many charities he patronises. During his speech Harry was understandably thrown momentarily off course by a bumblebee. Quickly regaining his composure, he finally teased his father for celebrating his birthday six months early with the words: *How very Royal!* The day was brilliant, warm and sunny so we were glad

the event was May rather than November!

Throughout the afternoon we were treated to the sounds of music including the Band of the Welsh Guards, who played Michael Jackson, the mixed voice Borough Welsh Choir, the Caldicot Male Voice Choir, the National Youth Pipe Band and a gospel choir.

Away from the main lawn, it was hard to believe that there were over 6,000 people at the event when we went for a stroll round the lake. Here it was quiet and tranquil and in the heart of London.

WHGT has enjoyed Royal patronage for nearly thirty years and I am sure all members will want to wish our Patron, Prince Charles, a very Happy Birthday, with all our Best Wishes, and our many thanks for his continued support.



Rose bed and tulip border in front of Ty-Olwen hospice.

## The Gardens of Morryston Hospital, Swansea 1942 – 1970

For many, the term 'hospital garden' probably conjures images of small, pragmatic spaces used to divide vast, imposing buildings. However for me this term has a special significance. It takes me back to my childhood, living in the grounds of Morryston Hospital in the late 50s and early 60s with my mother, sister and father.

My father, Herbert Stacey (better known as Bert), was the Head Gardener from the Hospital's inception in 1942 until his retirement in 1970. He was a man of great horticultural knowledge and would often give lectures at gardening societies and provide gardening advice on the radio. As Head Gardener at the hospital he designed and oversaw large ornamental grounds that would not have been out of place in a stately home. Growing up in this environment inspired my own lifelong love of gardening. More importantly however, the gardens were a source of great pleasure to the patients and helped their convalescence.

My father had been apprenticed at Newport and Rickmansworth, and was a trained propagator. His versatility extended into all branches of horticulture. He cultivated grapes, tomatoes, melons, cucumbers, and asparagus, all used by the diet kitchen. His displays of begonias, fuchsias, and chrysanthemums decorated the various hospital functions such as the Nurses' Prize Giving Day. The garden pre-dated the hospital, as it was originally the garden of Maesygwernen Hall, which began as a farmhouse before being renovated and extended in 1885 by William Williams, the Swansea MP and the owner of the Worcester Tinplate Works.

I have very fond childhood memories of going with my father to Maesygwernen at the weekends. I would help him in the walled gardens and on occasion we would be treated to biscuits and coffee, or an ice cold drink in the conservatory. I have a vivid recollection of going down

into the dark cellar to put coal in the boiler to heat the house and the greenhouses. As a child of around nine or ten, the building had an enchanting quality. Regrettably Maesygwernen Hall was demolished in 2017, as it was considered too costly to bring it up to current building regulations and make fit for modern healthcare purposes.

When my father first started work at Maesygwernen it was owned by the late Mrs Laura Williams (who I believe was William Williams' daughter-in-law). When the house and land were purchased by the Ministry of Health on February 1, 1941, under the Civil Defence Act 1939, it was described as being *remarkably well-built, with the outer walls constructed of red-faced brickwork and having a slated roof, standing in its own park 300 feet above sea level, facing south and occupying a dry and healthy position about five miles from Swansea. It had a large stable yard with stabling, a coach house, harness room and loft. There were gardens and pleasure grounds, which were well laid out and cultivated. The walled-in kitchen garden contained greenhouses, a vinery, two ranges of hothouses, a conservatory, potting shed and a boiler house. A lodge stood at the entrance gates of the drive.* [Dewi Glannant Williams (1993) *Morryston Hospital: the Early Years*, Morryston Hospital Golden Jubilee Fund] My family lived in the coach house.

When the Ministry took over the grounds to build an Emergency Hospital, they also took over Maesygwernen Hall to accommodate the Medical Superintendent and Medical staff. Mrs Laura Williams went to live in the coach house and my family was moved to the Lodge at the bottom of the drive. This is where I was raised until it was demolished in the late 1960s to make way for the M4 motorway.



Above: Roses at Maes y Gwernen Hall.

Below: Hay rick and some of the glass houses; the meadow was cut twice a year before the hospital carnival in June and the agricultural show in August.

The building of an Emergency Hospital for injured service men commenced in 1941 and was completed in 1942, taking just 18 months to build, and was officially opened in 1942 by Mr. W.J. Brown MP, Minister of Health. The hospital was originally only intended to last for 10 years with 700 beds and was spread over a large area, a design that was common for this period to give maximum protection to the wards in case of bombing. At the end of the war the hospital changed to a general hospital to meet the demands of a large waiting list in the area.

Most of the greenhouses were already established on the site, before the hospital was built, to provide fruit, flowers and vegetables all the year around for the family and staff of Maesygwernen Hall. When the hospital was built the existing garden at Maesygwernen Hall was preserved in order to provide fresh fruit and vegetables for the hospital kitchen. The numerous greenhouses were heated by two large coal boilers and piped water during

the winter.

The hospital grounds were maintained with a meticulous attention to detail. Dewi Glannant Williams describes the garden: *The boundary wall was verged by a large belt of pine trees, behind which was a large meadow containing oaks, beeches, a walnut tree and alder. The trees in the meadow were ringed with daffodils and narcissi, while the long drive was lined with rhododendrons and azaleas.*

Dr Duncan Davies, the Medical Superintendent, took a personal interest in the gardens and would accompany my father to choose particular trees or shrubs for the hospital grounds. As well as the numerous cherry, magnolia, beech, horse chestnut, silver birch, willow and oak trees, there were also some more unusual specimens such as a *Liriodendron tulipifera*, (tulip tree), *Davidia involu-crata* (paper handkerchief tree) and the rare *Ginkgo biloba* (maidenhair tree). I remember that the latter stood near the kitchen garden. I also recall a large *Sequoiadendron giganteum* (giant sequoia) positioned outside the junior staff quarters which was decorated with coloured lights at Christmas time. Near Maesygwernen Hall was a very large *Araucaria araucana* (Monkey puzzle tree). The trees provided the garden with structure, which was enhanced by the flowerbeds and herbaceous borders. There were arbours and pergolas, which held a collection of over 500 roses, one of the biggest rose gardens in South Wales.

My father was responsible for building most of the walled gardens around what

is now Ty Olwen Hospice, and a sunken garden near to Maesygwernen Hall. The sunken garden has sadly been demolished, however some of the walled garden remains, though it is no longer maintained as it once was. A plaque in the alcoves of the garden opposite what was the new Outpatients Department, near the wishing well, gives the names of all those who had a hand in building the gardens and the well itself.

A great deal of interest was taken in the gardens during the early years of the hospital with visits from gardening societies and various organisations. There was an annual Agricultural show in the hospital grounds and the hospital also entered large displays of vegetables fruit and flowers for many shows in the area, which often won prizes. A hospital Carnival was held in June each year organized by the Morryston Hospital League of Friends. Much has been written about the enormous mental health benefits that can be gained through gardening and spending time in green spaces. I appreciate that

budgetary restraints are such that it is unrealistic to expect publicly funded hospitals to maintain gardens on the scale and standard of the one I grew up playing in, but I also feel that much more could be done to bring a sense of joy and creative expression to these green spaces.

Gordon Stacey  
 Images © Gordon Stacey

## Horatio's Garden

The National charity Horatio's Garden has now begun work at the Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital (RJAH) in Oswestry, with a breaking ground ceremony held on 22 November 2018, following a tremendous fundraising campaign that achieved a target of £675,000.

The League of Friends raised £260,000 towards the garden, more than double their original commitment of £125,000. The Lady Trevor, Vice Chairman of the League of Friends, said: *It is our pleasure to be donating this sum of money towards what will be an extremely special garden for patients and their relatives.*

The Oswestry Horatio's Garden has been designed by Bunny Guinness to include social and private spaces, free flowing water in a rill, a garden therapy area and greenhouse, and a level surface throughout with smooth pathways for wheelchair and bed access. There will be a garden room designed by Andrew Wells of 3W Architects with automated doors, an accessible kitchen, screen for cinema evenings and a wood burning stove for cooler months, ensuring the garden will be used and admired all year round.

Work on the garden will start immediately and is due to be completed in late spring 2019.

Gordon is hoping to publish his vast collection of photographs and accompanying stories to ensure that the Morryston hospital gardens are not forgotten, can be appreciated, and most importantly, can inspire future generations. Anyone who is interested in helping with this endeavour please contact Gordon at:

[gstacey1949@gmail.com](mailto:gstacey1949@gmail.com)

26 Pengors Road, Llangyfelach, Swansea. SA5 7JE.

## Gwydir Castle flooded again, 2018

Gwydir Castle has been hit by flooding twice this autumn with Storm Bronagh and Storm Callum.

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) have not helped with any flood alleviation measures for this Grade I listed building and garden as they consider that protecting the castle as a heritage site would be a matter for the Welsh Government as it is outside of NRW's remit. NRW flood risk manager Keith Ivens said: Our earlier impartial economic assessment concluded that we couldn't fund any further work through NRW flood programme, as our flood alleviation schemes are prioritised by risk-to-life.

The owners Peter Welford and Judy Corbett have now embarked on a 300m sandbag bund flood protection. This endeavour has been supported over recent weeks by teams of volunteers in the hope of saving the gardens and its notable trees. The sandbag bund will also help to prevent flooding causing structural damage to the buildings.

An estimated £350,000 is needed for a permanent flood wall. It must now be hoped that the Welsh Government will recognise the importance of this unique heritage and take action to protect it.

Early this year the knot garden, designed in the nineteenth century by Charles Barry, was restored with grant support from the Gwynedd branch. The diseased box plants have now been replaced with new yew plants.

*Below: Gwydir Castle grounds flooded by Storm Callum, September 2018*





*The fine pierced gnomon of a sundial in a North Wales garden owned by the National Trust.*



*A vertical sundial painted on wood on the gable wall of a private country house in Powys. The wall faces west of south and so indicates time from 8am to 6pm.*

## Time in the garden

The sundial is a feature often used to embellish the landscaping and planting of our gardens. Sundials may provide a focal point within the garden design, in the same manner as a fountain, urn, statue or obelisk. Sundials can be sited on a lawn or patio, usually on the south side of the house, sometimes separate from the overall garden scheme, in which case the dial is likely to have performed a primarily utilitarian rather than decorative function. Sundials in the gardens (as well as churchyards) of Wales include some of the finest in Britain and tell us much about the scientific interests, sophistication and wealth, as well as the metropolitan connections, of their original owners and those who commissioned them.

Most of the sundials in Welsh gardens are horizontal dials, with dialplates usually of brass, occasionally of slate, set on a stone pedestal. The dialplates may be circular, octagonal or square, and vary in size. The earliest tend to be square and small; this would be easier to cut with early hand tools than a large circular dial. The gnomons, which cast the shadow to indicate the time, may be solid triangles (the earliest), S-shaped or elaborately pierced, as the one shown. The pedestals may be of local stone and made by local masons, or they may be designed by the architects of the house using the same stone used for the house or for its internal features such as fireplaces.

There are other types of dials. Vertical dials are set on walls, adorning the building and viewed from the garden. There are heliochronometers dating from around 1900,

which are intricate, and were comparable with the clocks of their day for accuracy. There are decorative armillary spheres and cube dials set on tall pillars, and there are complex multi-faceted dials (especially in seventeenth century Scottish gardens but rare in Wales). Whatever their type, no two dials are exactly alike: each historic garden dial was designed for its precise position in relation to the sun, namely its latitude.

We are not considering here the sundials commonly sold in garden centres and usually made in China. They may provide an attractive addition to a garden design but can never indicate the time. The dialplate is rarely correctly delineated and the gnomon is often set at an angle of around 30 degrees, rather than pointing at the pole star, and therefore set at an angle corresponding with the latitude of the location of the dial.

The horizontal sundial on its pedestal was one of the earliest scientific instruments, primarily designed for determining time, rather than as a garden ornament, which is how we usually regard them today. They were made by scientific instrument makers, and later also by clockmakers. The early clocks, although improving in accuracy over the centuries, were unreliable, and a sundial was needed to give the correct time to restart a stopped clock or to check its accuracy. As clocks became more widespread in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, so did sundials. These sundials would be positioned on a patio or lawn near the house.

*Above left: This heliochronometer c. 1900 is an attractive focal point in the rose garden. It sits on a brass plate with pointers naming the summits and other places of interest visible from the high point of this important National Trust garden in north Wales.*



*Above right: In a North Wales garden stands a cube dial on a classical pillar. The cube has gnomons on four faces, which incorporate a dolphin, part of the family coat of arms. A globe dial tops the cube.*



*Below left: Sundial mounted on a white marble pedestal, matching fireplaces in the house. The low box hedge surrounding it prevents easy access, and shows that the sundial has outlived its original function of regulating the clock on the nearby stables. The sundial and clock were from the same Liverpool maker, Harrison, and dated 1799.*



*Below Right: A dial which has been moved within living memory from its original location in the stable block courtyard of a North Wales country house. It would originally have been used to regulate the stable clock. The dial is from a high quality London maker, but a heavy green patina on the gnomon and especially on the dialplate makes it difficult to read the details of the engraving.*



However, we know from owners and from historic records that horizontal dials have frequently been moved from their original position, in order to fit in with a later garden scheme, especially when the sundial's function as a time-keeper became redundant. It was only in the nineteenth century, with the coming of the railways and the introduction of standard time, that the sundial lost its primary role in showing local sun time. However, it is interesting to reflect that a traditional clock or watch may keep time, but only a sundial can find time, using the position of the earth in relation to the sun.

On a lawn on the side of a house in North Wales is a fine brass sundial. The gnomon is inscribed with the name of the maker, 'Harrison, Liverpool' and the stable clock has the same name, as well as the date 1799. The sundial is located conveniently close to both the house and the stables, to provide a means for regulating the stable clock as well as the household clocks and watches. The pedestal is of white marble and matches the fireplaces in the house. The eighteenth century gardens are on the other side of the house, enjoying the best vistas.

Most of our sundials date from the eighteenth century, and gardens in Wales have some excellent examples

from this period as well as some fine nineteenth century examples. In the Llŷn peninsula is a remarkable combined sun and moon dial, signed and dated by a local mathematician, Isaac Morris, 1803.

In North Wales there are a few early dials with dates in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. These are simple pillars made from local stone and have no metal dialplate; the top of the pillar has the hour lines engraved into it. In most of these unusual early dials the gnomon is a simple flat metal triangle or is missing, perhaps not surprising after over 400 years.

Many sundials have mottoes inscribed on them; some of these are familiar, usually admonishing us to make the most of our time and to consider our mortality. Sundials in Wales display the same mottoes as seen elsewhere in Britain, usually drawn from classical literature or the Bible. There are fewer than ten known dials with Welsh mottoes; most are in English or Latin. All but one of the Welsh mottoes are on churchyard dials and are mainly from classical Welsh poetry. Exceptionally, a London-made dial in a Flintshire garden displays the family motto in Welsh, as well as the family coat of arms. If you are commissioning a new sundial for your garden, perhaps



*Left: This dial is a survivor and one of the few early sundials remaining in North Wales. It originally stood near the house, but is now at a meeting of paths through the garden. The initials on the pillar are those of the house owners, confirming that the dial is still in its original home. There is no dialplate and the hour lines, now weathered, are inscribed directly into the top of the pillar. The stub of a simple triangular iron gnomon is just visible in this illustration.*

*Below: This dial in a Flintshire garden is signed and dated (1804). It is special in displaying a saying in Welsh which is part of the family motto.*



to commemorate a special event, do consider dipping into Welsh literature for an original motto for a 21st century dial in Wales. An appropriate motto for a garden dial is engraved on a square dial in a North Wales garden. Along each side of the square is a line of the rhyme. Several variations of this have been used elsewhere:

*Midst summer flowers I tell ye hours  
When winter steals ye flowers away  
I tell ye passage of there day  
Beyond the tomb fresh flowers bloom*

The register of the British Sundial Society contains around 7,000 dials; less than 200 of these are in Wales, fewer than in many English counties. Most of them are in Clwyd, Gwynedd and Powys and many of them are churchyard dials. It is certain that there are many more still to be recorded, hidden away in the historic gardens of the Principality. Welsh makers in Bala, Bangor, Caernarfon, Conwy, Denbigh, Llanfair Caereinion, Nefyn, Ruthin, Welshpool and Wrexham signed some of the known sundials in Wales. It is highly likely that more makers are waiting to be discovered; there must surely have been makers in South Wales. Makers in Chester and Liverpool (as mentioned above) signed some sundials in North Wales, but many of the dials in Wales are by some of the finest and best-known London makers of their day.

Age is not treating our sundials kindly, Welsh slate is faring best. Brass dials are being damaged from the corrosive effects of acid rain and bird droppings. Gnomons are becoming loose or broken. Stone pedestals are often unstable and the dialplates may no longer be horizontal. In some cases the dialplate has become loose and may

have been re-attached with unsuitable iron screws, which are now rusting and damaging the dialplate further.

Although the weathering may give an attractive blue or green patina, it causes an irretrievable loss of the detail of the original engraving. But if you are the happy owner of a historic sundial please don't be tempted to use metal polish, it merely adds to the corrosion. Lost, loose or damaged gnomons can be faithfully restored or refixed in place; unstable and leaning pedestals can also be remedied. Overhanging trees, shading out the sun and providing perches for birds whose droppings create damage, can be pruned back. All these defects can and should be addressed as soon as possible so that the dial can continue to *mark the sunny hours* and give pleasure for centuries to come.

Sundials are part of our scientific, cultural and garden heritage and deserve to be recognised, enjoyed and appreciated as such. It is thrilling to find an old sundial in its original garden location, still telling us the local sun time as it did centuries ago, but often telling us much more, too, about the education, taste and status of the original owner.

Irene Brightmer

Images © Irene Brightmer

The British Sundial Society can provide help and advice to owners of historic sundials and has an attractive and informative website at [www.sundialsoc.org.uk](http://www.sundialsoc.org.uk)

The Friday evening of the AGM weekend began with a visit to Bryngwyn Hall near Llanfyllin, hosted by WHGT member Auriol, Marchioness of Linlithgow. The photo shows members in the Poison Garden during the guided tour by Head Gardener Andrea Atherton. image © Simon Baynes.



## WHGT AGM 2018

A successful AGM was held at Bodfach Hall, Llanfyllin, hosted by WHGT Chairman Simon Baynes and his wife Maggie. Liz Whittle stepped down as President of WHGT, and was thanked for her contribution to the Trust since its inception. We were delighted to welcome Stephen Lacey, our new President, who introduced himself with an entertaining account of how he had become a garden writer. We were also very pleased to welcome Leigh O'Connor our new Treasurer. Leigh is qualified in bookkeeping and accounting and mad keen on gardens.

We were delighted that Jill Butler of the Woodlands Trust came to launch a new Coed Cymru leaflet at the AGM. In the afternoon Jill also conducted a walk to some of the veteran trees on the Bodfach parkland, explaining that the protection for the root area of trees for planning and agriculture was generally wildly under estimated.

Bettina Harden introduced her book, The Most Glorious Prospect, Philip Nanney Williams introduced his book on Nannau and generously offered to donate to WHGT £5 per copy sold to members with the enclosed flier. Short presentations were made by Dewi Morris who talked about his work with the community project at Cae Bodfach, Susan Paynton on the North Powys NGS and Peter Elvis on the Welsh Beekeepers Association of which he is a Trustee. Many thanks to Simon and Maggie for their hospitality. Members also enjoyed wonderful visits to Bryngwyn Hall and Bryn-y-Llidiart over the weekend.

## WHGT Small Grants Award 2018

The following projects were granted awards of £500 in 2018: Conwy Incredible Edible, for a physic and sensory garden for the new Conwy culture centre; the restoration of a rose garden at Wyndcliffe Court, St. Arvans, Monmouthshire; Edging for an ornamental pond at the Nelson Garden, Monmouth; and the creation of a fernery at Wepre Park, Connah's Quay. We look forward to the completion of these projects in the New Year.

## Maldwyn Rees

Maldwyn stepped down as WHGT Treasurer at the 2018 AGM but kindly assisted our new Treasurer, Leigh O'Connor, during a transition period of several months. We would like to thank Maldwyn for his service to the Trust during which time he maintained meticulous accounts and organised the annual financial report for the Charity Commission and Annual Report with great patience and efficiency. Fortunately Maldwyn will not be lost as he continues to serve as a WHGT Trustee and is active as a Secretary to the Brecon & Radnorshire branch. We very much hope that Maldwyn continues to enjoy the WHGT!

## Website index of Past Bulletins

The WHGT website now provides a complete archive of pdf files of back numbers of the WHGT Bulletin, in addition to pdf files of its other publications Gerddi and Trafodion. This has been completed thanks to Judith Holland who generously undertook the scanning of a considerable number of issues which were not already archived, Glynis Shaw who added the digital files to the website archive under Publications and Caroline Palmer who coordinated the correct sequencing of early editions which had employed different numbering systems from the present.

All significant articles in WHGT publications are indexed by author and subject by the National Library of Wales as they are received, but readers wishing to see these items have hitherto had to visit the reading rooms. Now they can be accessed online.

We are most grateful to the National Library of Wales for providing us with output from their electronic catalogue which is the basis of the searchable Publications Index on our website. We now hope to maintain this index with regular updates.

Thanks also to Simon Baynes who has offered to archive a WHGT set of master copies at Bodfach Hall.



*First planting of fruit trees by Llanfyllin Primary School pupils with the Mayor, Cllr Ann Williams, in 2013.*

*If you are inspired to establish a similar community green space, please contact Simon Baynes, Chairman of WHGT.*

[baynes@bodfach.com](mailto:baynes@bodfach.com) 07880 786573

## Cae Bodfach Community Field and Wetland, Llanfyllin

Cae Bodfach Community Field and the adjacent Wetlands make up Llanfyllin's public open space of about 10 acres, including wooded grassland and a stretch of the River Cain. This is a relatively new amenity for Llanfyllin, established over the last decade, which demonstrates what can be achieved by a partnership between the local council, environmental groups, volunteers and local landowners. It aims to provide an engaging public open space for all ages and abilities by making improvements to the nature conservation value, its biodiversity and, in particular, creating a forest garden.

It began with planting 700 native woodland trees to provide windbreaks, shelter and habitat. The local community planted 35 fruit trees to start the orchard. 56 Welsh heritage varieties of apple and pear trees were planted with the help of the Llanfyllin High School's Land Based Studies classes and pupils from the Primary School. 27 rare varieties of Cider apple and Perry pear trees were also planted, as part of The Heritage of Orchards and Cider Making in Wales, managed by the Welsh Perry and Cider Society.

Dewi Morris, a community volunteer, gave training in biodiversity and site maintenance for the schools. Students helped with creating Permaculture Guilds by positioning a diverse mix of plants and shrubs under trees to reduce pests and improve fertilization and pollination. Llanfyllin Transition Group donated £500 worth of plants for this companion planting. Dewi also secured funding with the Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust and a professional artist to work with the A Level Art classes, to create an oak archway entrance for the orchard.

Sector 39 Permaculture Design Academy worked with local volunteers who raised £500 from Kew Garden's Grow Wild fund to promote herb rich meadows and native plants. Dye plants, medicinal herbs and bee friendly wild reed flowers and bulbs will be added over the winter to enhance wildlife and bio-diversity.

The Wetland next to Cae Bodfach, owned by Llanfyllin

Town Council, is a sustainable drainage scheme for water from the upper High Street and the town car parks. The water is filtered through pools and reed beds to remove diffuse pollution before being released into the river Cain. The Wetland also provides a popular recreation area and wildlife habitat. The Wetland is maintained by the Cain Valley River Group (CVRG) who was responsible for the original tree planting at Cae Bodfach and for creating some shallow wetland scrapes across the river. This Wild Acres area has enhanced the biodiversity of Cae Bodfach, annual thistle cutting being the only regular maintenance. The CVRG also maintains nest and bat boxes in this area and any Pied Flycatcher chicks (on the endangered Red List of British birds) are ringed. Recently some Black Poplars (*Populus Nigra*), the most endangered British native tree, were planted here.

The Severn Rivers Trust has delivered activities at Cae Bodfach with the Cain Valley River Group, Sector 39, Close Encounters with Nature, RSPB Cymru and with the local schools, with the Big Lottery funded Monty Rivers Project and the River Friendly Severn funded by the LEADER Arwain project (a European Union and Welsh Government Fund). The pupils from Llanfyllin Primary School celebrated the 2018 World Fish Migration Day by comparing the invertebrates in the river Cain and those in the wetland.

The River Cain and the Cain Valley River Group are central to the work of Severn Rivers Trust as we pride ourselves on working in partnership with local communities to improve water quality in the whole River Severn catchment.

Cae Bodfach is administered by Llanfyllin Town Council who hold quarterly meetings with all the organisations involved in the Community Field to ensure that everyone's interests are fully taken into account. In August 2017 the Llanfyllin Wetland won the Green Flag award.

Simon Baynes

## Wepre Victorian Herb Garden

Last year the Flintshire Countryside Service working alongside the Wepre Old Hall Garden team were successful in gaining a £500 award from the WHGT Small Grant Scheme, for a project to convert an untidy and neglected bank, near the garden and Visitors Centre at Wepre Park, Connah's Quay, into a Victorian herb garden.

The Visitor Centre, built on the site of the Old Hall in 1989, was substantially rebuilt in 2003 following an arson attack. More recently, with a grant from HLF, the centre has been extended and there has been some restoration of the Victorian garden.

As well as formal gardens and lawns, Wepre Old Hall was surrounded by parkland, including lakes, lily ponds and a summerhouse, dell and meadows. Ewloe Castle, a fine 11th century ruin, sits at the head of the valley looking over a woodland between the castle and the Old Hall site.

The work on the herb garden began in the spring of 2018. Steve Davies and Louise Peters of the Old Hall Garden Volunteers led the project, with Countryside Ranger Stephen Lewis making the orders of plants and goods for them. Both medicinal and culinary herbs were planted and the culinary herbs will be used by the Old Hall Café in the Visitor Centre.

The first job was to clear the bank of weeds and plants that were not needed. This was not an easy task, and Steve and Louise worked with the Flintshire Local Volunteer Council (FLVC) and Coleg Cambria students. Other volunteers helped during the development of the garden including Arch volunteers, Flintshire Countryside volunteers and volunteers with learning difficulties.

*Top right:: Volunteers from the FLVC clearing the bank;  
Centre: Students from Coleg Cambria begin planting the bank;*

*Below: Louise Peters and Steve Davies of the Old Hall Volunteers by the interpretation panel of the new herb garden.*

Once the weeds were removed, the herbs were planted. Despite one of the driest summers on record the new herb garden looked fantastic and well established by the autumn. Forest Stewardship Council certified Oak labels were used to identify the herbs for the public.

The success of this project has led to plans for further development of the Victorian garden with a fernery planned for next year.

Stephen Lewis



Gardens and Gardening in Early Modern England and Wales 1560- 1660 by Jill Francis: Yale University Press, 2018. 412 pages, 177 color + b/w illus. ISBN 978-0-300-23208-0 h/b. Price £35.00.

Beautifully designed, and with a generously legible typeface, this book is the result of research at the University of Birmingham supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Paul Mellon Centre. By tackling both the design and processes of gardens in one volume, it highlights important garden writers as well as influential garden owners and their workers.

*What then, about women in the garden?* the author asks on p. 146. Well, not a lot, and Jill Francis resorts to Queen Henrietta Maria's dedication in John Parkinson's *Paradisi in Sole Paradisus Terrestris* as evidence of the royal enthusiasm for fine garden flowers. Wales is highlighted largely through the writings of Sir Thomas Hamner, but in addition to quoting from his Garden Book, she also investigates his notebooks describing plans for a garden at Lewisham. An appendix contains a previously unpublished essay by Hamner on gardening which is preserved in the Bettisfield MSS at the National Museum of Wales.

There is a whole chapter on garden ornament, now once again a fashionable element of Tudor garden restorations. Illustrations include garden plans, town maps (notably the Agas map of London), botanical paintings, portraits and illustrations copied from early gardening books. John Evelyn features prominently, and continental influences are discussed particularly in relation to kitchen

gardens. The chosen period largely excludes monastic gardens, though some survived in secular ownership, but there is very good coverage of the relevant literature through end-notes and an appendix listing gardening literature published in English and significant related literature from c. 1558 to 1657.

Readers in Wales expecting to find extensive discussions of Welsh gardens may be a little disappointed, but those which are featured are placed in a wider context and their distinctive features highlighted. The work of gardeners in the 17th century is discussed in chapter six, and mentions related activities such as beekeeping and ditching and the influence of the Gardener's Company. For those with a particular interest in the gardens of Early Modern England and Wales, the book offers much detailed analysis and also demonstrates the diversity of gardens during this period.

My main reservation is that by focussing on design elements there is little attention paid to the influx of novel plants from abroad (including the first Tradescant introductions from North America), though there is a fine photograph of their family tomb in Lambeth.

John Edmondson

First pineapple grown for 100 years at Scolton Manor



Simon Richards outside the pineapple house



This year the unusually warm summer led to tropical production in some Welsh gardens. The Head Gardener, Simon Richards, produced a pineapple cultivated at the recently restored Victorian pineapple house at Scolton Manor, near Haverfordwest, in September.

The pinery has furnaces sunk into the ground to heat the earth around the fruit and encourage growth.

Simon described how *the pineapples need high humidity so we come in and create mist in the house so it makes a great growing environment. It's all steamy and warm.*



Gwrych Castle An official Guide by Mark Baker, Published by The Gwrych Castle Preservation Trust (GCPT) 2018 ISBN-10: 0992724112 Paperback: 122 pages

Visitors will be glad to have this guide book which brings together many images of this spectacular building. Picture credits for historic images are almost without exception labelled 'Private Collection' or 'GPCT', which seems surprising since I imagine many derive from the collection deposited at the National Library of Wales by the Earl of Dundonald in 1942.

The book charts the ownership through the Lloyds, the Bamford Heskeths and the Countess of Dundonald and the embellishments to the building from 1819 till 1914. It is interesting to see images of Gwrych's first commercial function as 'Showplace of Wales', a theme park before the term was invented. In the 1950s and 60s ten million tourists passed through its doors, for jolly enactments of jousting, medieval banqueting and even riding on a miniature train. Then came the disastrous decades while author Mark Baker was growing up when the building passed between absentee owners with unfulfilled hotelier ambitions and the empty building became a target for new age travellers and asset strippers. The house which is at the core of the array of towers and battlements looked handsome as recently as the 1960s with striking interior decor by Detmar Blow. Now it is a roofless floorless shell with little but a damaged stone chimneypiece to hint at its past glory. The massive battlements, ranged along the hillside have fared better than the house.

Later sections concern the gardens and the wider estate and there are some interesting transcribed plant lists showing what was being purchased in the 1840s. A useful timeline lists the sources of evidence for developments in the grounds. However there is a lack of clarity in the interpretations of the landscape. It is confusing to find a structure variously interpreted as a melon house and as a deer shelter, or Lady Emily's picturesque tower on a crag designated a hunting lodge. The five arched recesses in the stable courtyard wall do not appear to be correctly interpreted as kennelling for hounds.

The book badly needs an index, a family tree and a modern map identifying the lodges, drives and other features of the estate to enable the reader unfamiliar with the site to get the most out of its contents. The text also poses many questions to the reader which will hopefully be answered in later editions.

However its most remarkable feature is the pervading enthusiasm for ghost stories and paranormal experiences mostly from the last 50 years. The descriptions of the castle and grounds are awash with accounts of sightings of red ladies, white ladies, cavaliers, knights in armour, witches and balls of fire, indistinct wraiths, will o'wisps and knocking sounds. Even the ghost of Lord Dundonald's charger, which was returned, dead, from the Boer War, has been recently spotted in the grounds. Mark Baker clearly has a leaning towards the Gothick and offers his own encouraging interpretations of such sightings: *There have been reports of a knight in armour... but could this particular entity be a shade of an*

*agent of Cromwell?* (p89). Surely not—the clothes would be all wrong! He also records any gruesome details associated with each structure: the gamekeeper who shot himself, the psychic woman who in the 1970s suffered chest pains at the precise spot where the butler died, the man who slept badly after excavating the centre of a hill fort and finding nothing there but virgin soil.

The GCPT has already developed a reputation for spooky community events such as the Halloween party of 2017 which is an introductory image in the book, and perhaps a paranormal party dimension will be an important component of its public fundraising. However this is at heart a Grade I listed building, an extravagantly picturesque Romantic castellated mansion set in a Grade II\* landscape, and it is for this merit that the Trust was given funding by the National Heritage Memorial Trust and the Richard Broyd Charitable Trust for its purchase earlier this year.

I suggest that in future there should be two separate books, a historic guide and a ghost hunters' handbook. Colourful accounts of sightings and feelings of dread soon generate further 'experiences' in the susceptible, and there will be many visitors who will be longing to add their own paranormal visions, emanating as much from Game of Thrones as from their actual surroundings, to the mix.

Caroline Palmer



*Emmenopterys henryi* flowers in Roath Park © Cardiff Council

## A rare Chinese Blossom in Wales

The summer heat wave is believed to be the reason behind the blossoming of the *Emmenopterys henryi*, which flowered for the first time since it was planted over a hundred years ago, in Roath Park last August.

The rare tree belongs to the Rubiaceae family, which is found in southern China and Vietnam, and was first introduced to Europe in 1907 by renowned plant collector Ernest Henry Wilson. It took 64 years for its first recorded European flowering, in the Villa Taranto gardens on Italy's Lake Maggiore. The Roath Park tree planted in the early 20th century is also a Champion tree, the biggest of its kind in the UK.



Left and right: Llanover Pea © Adam Alexander

## A Call for Seeds

In his preface to Carwyn Graves' book *Apples of Wales* (Carrreg Gwalch 2018), Will Ritchie, Curator of the National Botanic Garden of Wales, says that this country has an affinity for cultivation and that the sharing, breeding and movement of plants tells us many stories about who we are and who our ancestors were. Apples and orchards are just one small part of this story.

The bounty of the kitchen garden has been all but ignored up until now.

It was a pleasant October afternoon for a 'pop-up' members' tour of Pontypool Park with stout boots and 4x4 transport essential. My wife Julia and I were invited to ride with Elizabeth Murray, who, I was to discover, is also the owner of an estate that was once home to a very special Welsh pea. For some of us who are passionate about preserving and restoring the not inconsiderable edible treasures of Wales' historic gardens and parks, finding further forgotten or neglected edible treasure is of special interest and important social and cultural value.

The Heritage Seed Library (HSL) is, for me, the jewel in the crown of a charity of which I am a trustee, Garden Organic, originally known as the Henry Doubleday Research Association. The library is home to some 850 varieties of heritage, heirloom and ex-commercial varieties of vegetables, making it the largest and most important gene-bank of its type in the UK. I have been seeking out, saving and sharing rare and endangered vegetable varieties from all over the world for the last thirty years. Many I have grown out in my role as an HSL seed guardian and keep in my own library too. Since moving to Wales from just across the border in the Forest of Dean five years ago I have been particularly interested in identifying varieties that have their roots in Wales. It

is always surprising when, having given a talk about my work as a seed detective, someone from the audience gives me some of the seed from their own garden and the particular variety has a special provenance. I have grown two black-seeded runner beans, Brecon Black, a prolific and reliable cropper, and Rhondda Black, a fine exhibition bean. Another is Stenner, secure in the HSL and probably the most famous competition bean of the last forty plus years. For much of the seventies and eighties it was the undisputed national champion runner bean, bred by Brython Stenner of South Wales. Another runner bean in the HSL is Pwllmeyrick, donated by David Chapell. So, are there other local heirlooms throughout Wales that have a story to tell about how, where and who bred them? And do they taste good too?

Unlike England and Scotland, Wales does not have a well-documented history of breeding of garden crops. From what I can ascertain, most Welsh growers bought from English seed companies. There do not appear to have been any local breeders. I stand to be corrected and will be delighted if anyone has any information that can help to enlighten me. Yet there are examples of native varieties. I think of the Denbigh plum as one. I understand there could be a Flint gooseberry, although it is probably extinct. Monmouthshire is famous for its apples and there has been much work done using DNA coding to determine just how many distinct Welsh apples varieties there are, thanks in no short measure to The Welsh Perry and Cider Association. What I find particularly exciting about the work with apples is that the public is literally buying into cider made from Welsh varieties as well as culinary apples sold in farmers' markets. Part of the work I am involved in with the HSL is to raise public

awareness about the social and cultural value of local garden crops and to get people growing them. The stories behind these crops are important in helping to connect people with their food culture and to appreciate the culinary benefits of growing local and delicious varieties. To that end I am on a quest to seek out varieties that are unknown or forgotten. Examples of Welsh varieties already in the library include heirlooms like a climbing French bean from Cardiff called District Nurse, grown for the first time this year at Aberglasney, or an un-recorded ex-commercial cherry tomato that has been grown in the same street in Roath for more than half a century, suitably named and equally delicious to eat, Graham's Tom Thumb.

The ambition of the project is to encourage other gardeners to grow these local varieties themselves and to save and share the seeds amongst neighbours and friends. A locally run gene bank of Welsh varieties is also part of Garden Organic's medium-term aspirations. I am also encouraging chefs and small-scale growers to promote Welsh heritage vegetables. There is nothing more effective than appealing to a Welsh stomach to raise awareness of the country's horticultural history. Do you know of anyone who is growing varieties of edible crops that are local? Have you any records from Wales' historic gardens that might shed light on what was being grown in kitchen gardens and orchards in the last one hundred years? Might you have some long-neglected seeds in a box somewhere that I can revive?

And what of that very special Welsh pea? Now safe in the HSL, it is the Llanover pea; named after the estate from which it came. The story goes that a WW1 German POW who worked there stole the heart of a local girl. After the war he returned to marry his sweetheart and brought with him a pea from his homeland. It was grown on the estate for decades and some seed was passed to the HSL for safekeeping. This was indeed fortunate as all seed on the estate was lost a few years ago due to a flood. As a result of that drive through Pontypool this rather lovely pea can flourish once more in its true home. The Llanover pea, Brecon and Rhondda Black runner beans are also being grown at Aberglasney and St. Fagans where the HSL hopes the many thousands of visitors will have the chance to learn something about Welsh horticultural heritage. The charity would be very happy to see Welsh vegetables in the National Plant Collection.

Finally, did you know that there appears to be no native Welsh leek? Surely it cannot be possible that the national emblem of Wales doesn't exist? So yes, I personally am devoted to discovering the true Welsh leek. Surely there is a gardener somewhere growing a leek that is unique to this country.

Adam Alexander, Trustee of the Heritage Seed Library

If there is any way in which you might be able to contribute to this work please email Adam.  
adam@veggingoutwithadam.com.



Sarah Green

## Planning and Conservation

Sarah Green has recently joined the national WHGT committee as its Planning Officer, to provide planning and conservation support when this is needed.

Over the years Sarah has worked both as an archaeologist and a chartered landscape architect in the planning departments of several planning authorities as well as for English Heritage, Natural Resource Wales and the National Trust.

Sarah will be happy to discuss and to contribute to individual planning cases, as well as covering planning issues in Pembrokeshire. Cadw's website provides guidance and links to a suite of guidance documents on the care and understanding of the historic environment [// cadw.gov.wales/historicenvironment/protection/historicparksandgardens/?lang=en](https://cadw.gov.wales/historicenvironment/protection/historicparksandgardens/?lang=en)

*Managing Change to Registered Historic Parks and Gardens in Wales* (May 2017) sets out principles to follow when considering how changes to a historic landscape may impact its particular heritage significance. The statutory register will come into force once consultation with landowners and statutory bodies on the finalised boundaries of the registered areas has been completed, probably in spring 2019. These will then be found, with the other designated sites, on Cadw's online resource for the national historic assets of Wales - Cof Cymru. [//cadw.gov.wales/historicenvironment/recordsv1/cof-cymru/?lang=en](https://cadw.gov.wales/historicenvironment/recordsv1/cof-cymru/?lang=en)

The Welsh Historic Gardens Trust is named in this guidance as a body that local planning authorities may approach for guidance and expertise although, unlike the Gardens Trust in England, we are not statutory consultees.

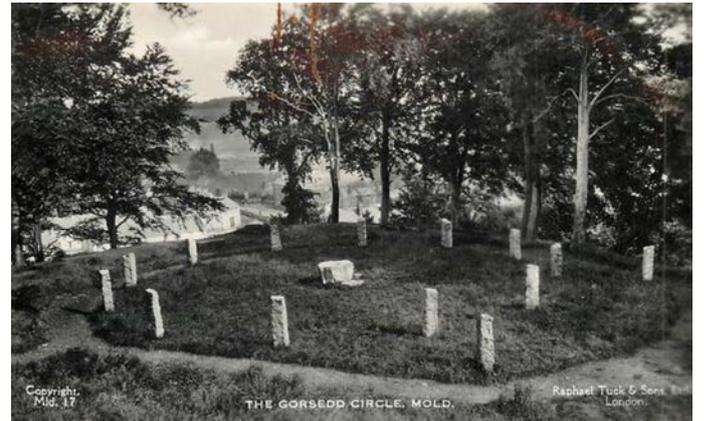
Cadw's position statement on the historic environment in Wales is set out in 'Priorities for the Historic Environment in Wales' published in September 2018 by Lord Elis-Thomas, AM, Minister for Culture, Tourism and Sport.



friends of  
**BAILEY HILL**  
ffrindiau  
**BRYN Y BEILI**



Above : Cow parsley on Bailey Hill © Eira Hughes Top left: View of Mold with Baily Hill, Warwick Smith. c.1784- 1806. NLW Bottom left: Gorsedd circle, Bailey Hill c.1940.



Bailey Hill Park, in Mold, Flintshire, is a Scheduled Monument in a Conservation Area. It is also a public green space in the middle of Mold, with a convergence of interests, ranging from heritage, recreational and environmental. In July we were delighted to learn that the Friends of Bailey Hill were awarded a £963,700 Heritage Lottery Grant to improve Bailey Hill Park. The Friends have successfully established a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), with an Association model, to support, protect and enhance a well-wooded and biodiverse park, sited upon the remains of Mold Castle. Bailey Hill is hidden behind the former Pendref Chapel at the top of the ascending High Street and surrounded by a high wall, trees and shrubs. Beyond the church, its entrance is behind the Cenotaph.

Bailey Hill has a long history, from its earliest beginnings in the centuries of borderland strife as a Norman castle c.1072 built on an existing earthwork. By 1790s the motte and bailey was a ruin and Bailey Hill became enclosed as a private park for Lord Mostyn who planted trees over the site and added a bowling green on the inner bailey in 1849.

The Town Council purchased Bailey Hill, by public subscription, from Lady Augusta Mostyn in 1870. Fundraising celebrations followed to raise money for *beautifying the property and laying it out as a place for public recreation and amusement*. In November 1872 storm damage brought down three trees with some damage to the walls of Bailey Hill. In 1878 the surveyor of the town reported that 3 trees were down and that 200 shrubs were needed for the site.

For many years, Bailey Hill was opened on Whit Monday for the summer season, when a number of Friendly Societies celebrated their anniversaries with dancing and other amusements, under the patronage of the Mold Local Board and the gentry of the neighbourhood.

By 1888 the tennis courts were laid in the outer bailey where the Mold lawn tennis club held its finals. A number of flower shows were also held on Bailey Hill.

In September 1905, a fete was held by the Mold Urban Council in aid of the fund to develop the pleasure ground with The Brymbo Steel Works Prize Band playing for the afternoon entertainment and dancing. Bailey Hill was also the venue for other fundraising and society events such as Mold Cycle Carnival for the cottage hospital in 1904. Bowling teams representing Bailey Hill and St. Matthew's (Buckley) Recreative Society met for the first time in July 1908 in the presence of a large number of spectators. The green had been relaid by Messrs. Dicksons, Ltd., a Chester nursery and landscape business. In 1923 the Gorsedd circle was erected for the first Mold Eisteddfod.

Sadly, in recent times, the site has fallen into decline.

The HLF grant will enable a restoration of Bailey Hill, including the improvement of paths and access, a community facility by the entrance and an open air performance area. The Friends are looking for volunteers and invite walkers, parks people, gardeners and nature-lovers, and all those who care about the heritage of Wales, to enjoy this green space and to assist them in improving and caring for the Park. In October 2018, members of the Clwyd branch met with the Friends over lunch at the Fat Boar, followed by a visit to Bailey Hill. We are keen to offer our support and wish the Friends every success.

For further information and to join the Friends contact Mike Bunting at [fobh@gmail.com](mailto:fobh@gmail.com) or

Chairman of the Friends, Eira Hughes 01352 752383

## Treborth Botanic Garden

On 16 November 2018, the Clwyd Branch enjoyed an interesting visit to Bangor University's Treborth Botanic Garden (TBG) on the shore of the Menai Strait. Due to recent storm damage, and the installation of new heating boilers, the Temperate Glasshouse was out-of-bounds. However, members visited the Tropical House, the orchid collection, the carnivorous plant greenhouse and the grounds outside, including the Chinese Garden and the 'Rhizotron' (underground soil and root laboratory).

Director Dr Shaun Russell gave an update on recent historical research at Treborth. It is well known that the Garden occupies the site of the Britannia Park Pleasure Ground first planned by Sir Joseph Paxton in 1849. In her September 2001 article in the Gwynedd Branch newsletter (reprinted in the Autumn 2001 WHGT Bulletin), Mary Garner wrote that: *Paxton's actual plans for the pleasure grounds have not been traced, but archaeological techniques may reveal lost features.*

Ten years later in the Clwyd Branch newsletter, May 2011, Elizabeth Davey noted that the Chester and Holyhead Railway had acquired the Treborth site in the 1840s, in order to disperse the excavated spoil from the Bangor Tunnel, and to provide the approach to the Britannia Bridge crossing of the Menai Strait. Britannia Park would be built on the site and was intended to have a 500-bed hotel, along with luxury villas dotted around the pleasure grounds.

The Britannia Bridge was completed in 1850 and work began on the Britannia Park gardens and hotel foundations during 1851-2. In *Trafodion - Occasional Writings for The Welsh Historic Gardens Trust, issue No. 1*, November 2011, Bettina Harden speculated that Joseph Paxton's assistant, Edward Milner, might have assisted with the Britannia Park scheme. In her meticulously

researched article for the WHGT Bulletin, May 2016, Gaenor Price noted how occupied Sir Joseph Paxton was in the early 1850s, with the construction of the Crystal Palace in London. She also suggests the possibility that Edward Milner might have taken-on some of the responsibility for Britannia Park, as he had done for earlier Paxton projects such as Prince's Park in Liverpool. Gaenor mentions a surviving plan of 1853 and that a geophysical survey might help to locate hidden features of the Britannia Park development. She concludes by saying that *more remains to be discovered.*

During our visit to Treborth, Dr Russell was able to show us a full-size colour copy of Paxton's 1853 lithographic plan for Britannia Park. It bears many similarities in style to Edward Milner's plan for the adjacent Treborth Hall garden which was drawn up twenty years later.

Paxton's Britannia Park plan indicates the position of the Grand Hotel, which coincides exactly with a large, rectangular landform feature in the woodland at the TBG that has been revealed by LIDAR (light detection and ranging) imagery.

Dr Russell then showed the results of a geomagnetic ground survey at the site, commissioned in 2018 by the Friends of Treborth with sponsorship from WHGT. The study was carried out by Dave Hopewell and David Burman of the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust and shows many *large ferrous anomalies* beneath the soil surface near to the predicted position of the Grand Hotel.

Bangor University is now sponsoring two students to carry out work on the estate history and archaeology of the Treborth site during 2019. Dr Russell is hopeful that this will contribute new information to support a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for visitor facilities that will make the Garden's natural and cultural treasures more accessible for the public.

## Parks & Gardens UK (P&GUK)

This leading on-line resource for historic parks and gardens, with half a million hits per year, will be re-launched in the new year.

P&GUK was rescued by the Hestercombe Gardens Trust, which now manages two data bases: the P&G archive with records of over 9,100 historic designed landscape sites and over 2,400 biographies of associated people and organisations, and the Hestercombe archive, which contains a significant collection of documents, photographs, plans and manuscripts relating not only to Hestercombe itself (with its eighteenth century landscape garden and also its Jekyll/ Lutyens gardens) but to other parks, gardens and designed landscapes in the UK. The combination of the two databases, by offering economies of scale and ease of access between them, will provide a powerful research resource unmatched elsewhere. It also allows for expansion by maintaining and developing the existing close relationship between

County Gardens Trust and The Gardens Trust, as well as the development of new relationships with like-minded organisations.

With a new server and an open source database replacing the old bespoke system, the new P&GUK will be mobile friendly, have a better search engine, and an intuitive upload facility. It is hoped that new data can soon be added including information on nurseries and head gardeners. The menu will be simplified and there will be a capability for high resolution images.

Hestercombe is also developing a national archive of Conservation Management Plans (CMP). Many of these have disappeared from Local Authority files. HLF are digitising the plans relevant to their funding, and then plan to shred them. Several thousand original documents need to be saved, and added to the P&G website. 500 have been collected so far.

For further details contact [info@hestercombe.com](mailto:info@hestercombe.com)

# How Green Is My Valley

## Gardens and Industry in South Wales

WHGT 30th Anniversary Weekend, Angel Hotel, Abergavenny, 10-12 May 2019



*Detail: South Wales Industrial landscape, Penry Williams c.1825, NLW*

A weekend exploring the ornamental landscapes developed in the midst of the industrial revolution of South-east Wales, which today can be enjoyed for recreation. From the late eighteenth century the area witnessed some of the greatest industrial activity in Europe, not only leading the world in iron production and coal extraction but also saw the world's first steam train.

**Dr Peter Wakelin:** Independent author, curator and former Director of Collections at National Museum Wales, opens the weekend with an introduction to the early development of the iron and coal industries and their impact on the landscape.

**Dianne Long:** Garden historian specialising in Georgian industrialists' landscapes will explore the ornamental landscapes developed by the industrial entrepreneurs whose names still resonate throughout the Valleys today - the Hanburys, Homfrays, Crawshays and others. We will discover how industrial elements were incorporated into gardens, which then in turn provided infrastructure for the ironworks.

Visits include the fine parks and green landscapes at Pontypool, Cyfarthfa Castle and Bedwelty House and a tour of the World Heritage Site of Blaenavon.

**Dafydd Elis-Thomas AM:** Minister for Culture, Tourism and Sport will be our guest speaker at the Angel Hotel on Saturday evening.

**Pontypool Park:** locally known as the People's Park, is a Grade II site of 64 hectares with the American Gardens, an ice house and a shell grotto. A footpath from the park leads to the Folly Tower.

**Cyfarthfa Park:** The Grade II\* park covers 65 hectares in a prominent position overlooking the town of Merthyr Tydfil and the Cyfarthfa Ironworks.

**Bedwelty Park:** The Grade II 26-acre Victorian garden and park was designed as a Dutch garden around which one could walk or ride without being confronted by gate, fence or outside features. There is an unusual listed icehouse, a rock grotto and the Long Shelter, a listed structure built for the Chartist movement.

**UNESCO World Heritage Site of Blaenavon:** the birthplace of the industrial revolution.

Early arrivals on Friday will be offered a guided tour of the Priory Church of St Mary, Abergavenny, noted for its outstanding mediaeval monuments including the glorious wooden fifteenth century figure of Jesse.

Booking forms and further details will be available in the New Year at [www.whgt.wales](http://www.whgt.wales)

Enquiries: Elaine Davey [elainemdavey@gmail.com](mailto:elainemdavey@gmail.com)

## How Green Is my Valley; Gardens and Industry in South Wales

From early modern times gardens were being created amidst the pioneering iron and tin industries of South Wales. These pleasure grounds were not spaces far from the industrial smoke and clamour, but contiguous with and often integral to the industrial operation. South-east Wales has probably more such gardens extant than anywhere else in the United Kingdom. WHGT's 30th Anniversary Conference will explore some of these industrialists' gardens.

The concentration of industrial activity occurred largely in the old counties of Brecknockshire, Monmouthshire, and Glamorganshire. The older iron furnaces and forges were mainly in the mountainous hinterland and the later burgeoning copper and tin smelting took place around the ports of Swansea and Briton Ferry. At the end of the eighteenth and early decades of the nineteenth centuries, while the industrialists around Swansea moved away from the noxious fumes of their works, the ironmasters in the valleys were constrained by topography and mostly remained living close by their works.

The integration of the industrial and the ornamental landscape can be seen in several different ways. For example, by-products of the ironworks were used to ornamental effect, like the blue-black lustrous scoria blocks in walls, or un-moulded 'rocks' as in the garden of the ironmaster's house at Blaenavon, or the slag encrustations decorating grottos like that at Pontypool. However, by far the most significant feature unifying the aesthetic with the industrial was the use of water. Not only was water one of the cardinal elements of a landscape garden, but it was also the vital power for industry, with and without the steam engine. The ornamental and the industrial roles of water worked together in many ironmasters' landscapes.

Pontypool Park is one of two designed landscapes in South Wales that stand out as having a long history of combining aesthetic and industrial interaction, the other being The Gnoll, at Neath. Begun in the seventeenth century, by 1752 its formal gardens occupied nearly eleven acres. These were largely to the south of the house: a terrace with a series of walled or fenced enclosures of planted beds, trees and espaliers sloped towards the river, whilst to the east a flat lawn, possibly a bowling green, was bordered by a long canal below which a pond in the Little Park connected to a much larger pool in the Park. This had a feeder to the Forge, clearly in view of the house. Elsewhere, in the park to the south east, the Nant y Gollen stream flowed down through a tear-drop shaped pool, probably by a hammer mill, merged with a stream from a long rectangular pool to join the outfall from the Forge before powering the Cutting Mill on the banks of the Afon Llwyd. All these interlinked water courses, some with cascades, were essential for the industrial processes while enhancing and animating the park landscape.

Archdeacon William Coxe who stayed at Pontypool for a week or more in 1799, considered that the gardens were

*.....in the style of the last age, not consonant with the genius of the place. But these specimens of false taste will soon be removed, a lawn of verdure will gradually slope from the house to the torrent and harmonize with the native beauties of the scenery.* Accordingly, the canal was soon drained and grassed over.

Anthony Bacon, from Whitehaven, and his partner William Brownrigg founded Cyfarthfa in 1765. Bacon's earliest house, built in 1765 with a pleasant lawn and shrubbery, was in the midst of the works on the banks of the River Taff. In 1786 Richard Crawshay took over from Bacon but continued living at Llwyncelyn, which overlooked a separate part of the ironworks known as Ynysfach. He had a large garden for which he employed a skilled London gardener, William Pamplin. On 2 September 1796, Pamplin wrote to a friend in Chelsea that his employer was *a very strange man and does not take that delight in his garden that I wish.* However, at last Pamplin was allowed to build the hothouses he had planned, *I proposed to him to have the stock of pines from you, he said he could have enough from his friends, a method I don't like. I represented to him the advantage of clean stock, so he told me he should like to know your price.*

Pineapples were to be a family favorite as thanks are often expressed in the letters from William Crawshay who was living at Stoke Newington on the outskirts of London to his son, William II, for sending one or more pineapples, melons and grapes.

The Crawshay family also built Gwaelod-y-Garth on the edge of the Cyfarthfa Estate with the ironworks of Penydarren and Cyfarthfa below. Set in ornamental gardens and parkland surrounded by farmland, it was the home of William Crawshay II until he built Cyfarthfa Castle on the hill above the works in 1824/5. An integral feature of the Cyfarthfa grounds and built at the same time as the Castle were the complex series of reservoirs. The Bryn Cae Owen Pond at the highest point fed a flight of four elliptical ponds, which were controlled with sluices to their south-west and linked into a leat. This fed the large puddled clay lake below the Castle, with another feeder leat which was formed by a ledge cut into the rock above the Taf Fechan (or Gurnos) tramway. Like Pontypool, the mansion looked down on the industrial source of the family wealth.

The investment and majority of the great entrepreneurs of the period originated from outside South Wales, but they founded dynasties that had a long and profound impact on the economy and culture of South Wales. Necessity may have driven their inventive integration of the industrial and the ornamental, but it has left a unique garden record.

Dianne Long

# WHGT Celebrates 30th Anniversary 2019



## WHGT AGM 7th September 2019

at

**Plas Cadnant, Cadnant Rd, Menai Bridge LL59 5NH**

hosted by the Gwynedd branch

Please note the later date of the AGM in 2019

### Congratulations!

**The Gwrych Preservation Trust** must be congratulated on securing the spectacular Grade I Gwrych Castle ruin in June. **Mark Baker** received the Point of Light Award in September for his campaigning to save Gwrych castle. Every week day the Prime Minister recognises an inspirational volunteer with the Daily Point of Light award. Mark was the 1,006th winner of the Point of Light award.

**Insole Court**, the Grade II\* listed neo-Gothic mansion in Llandaff saved by community effort, won the public vote based on all fifteen of the projects shortlisted for an award for **Wales's Heritage Angels**. People who have played a special part in caring for Wales's heritage were honoured at a special awards ceremony, sponsored by the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation, at Caerphilly Castle on 8 November 2018, which marks the first Heritage Angels ceremony in Wales.

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