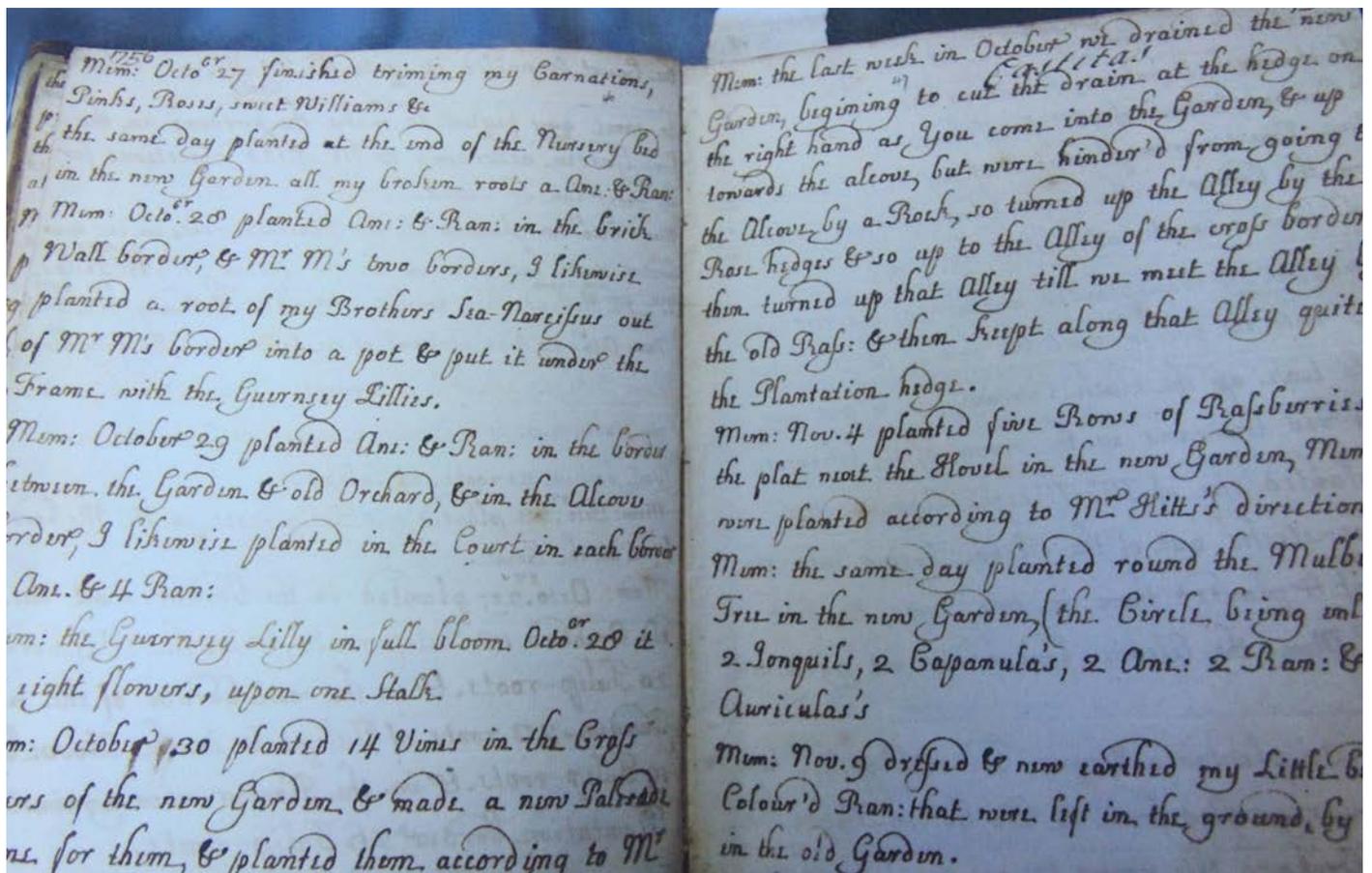




WHGT BULLETIN

ISSUE 77 SPRING/SUMMER 2019



Elizabeth Morgan's garden diary, Henblas Manuscripts, in the Archives and Special Collections, Bangor University.

The Garden Diary of Elizabeth Morgan Mary Gwynedd Jones

Elizabeth Morgan's Garden Diary (1754-1772), written in English, is a personal record of plants grown, their origins, methods of cultivation and the design of the garden. The diary provides a unique insight into the gardening practices of a country squire's wife in Anglesey in the eighteenth century and is evidence of the contribution made by women in creating gardens at this time. Elizabeth was a hands-on gardener with high expectations of herself and of those she employed. The stunning massed drifts of snowdrops scattered throughout the woodland at Henblas, Llangristiolus, Bodorgan, remain a legacy of her gardening.

Born in Shrewsbury, Elizabeth was the second eldest of five children, the only daughter of John and Honora Davies, christened at St. Chad's Church on November 5, 1705. Her name appears simply as Elizabeth Davies with no record of her date of birth, almost as an afterthought, following the full entries for her four brothers in the genealogy of the Davies family of Gwysaney in Flintshire.

Elizabeth's mother, Honora was daughter of Ralph Sneyd of Keele Hall, Staffordshire, and Frances, daughter of Sir John Dryden of Canons Ashby, Northamptonshire, first

married to Thomas Ravenscroft MP of Broadlane Hall (now Hawarden Castle), Flintshire. After Ravenscroft's death Honora married Elizabeth's father, John Davies of Gwysaney, fourth son of nine children of Mutton Davies and his wife Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Thomas Wilbraham of Woodhey, Chester. The lineage of the Davies of Gwysaney dates back to the time of Rhodri Mawr, first King of Wales, in the ninth century. Mutton Davies acquired the Llannerch estate in Denbighshire by marriage in 1631, where he created a magnificent Italianate garden in the mid 1600s.

Following his ordination at Cambridge, John Davies was appointed Doctor of Divinity in 1715. The family moved to Kingsland, Herefordshire c.1711-1712. This is where Elizabeth spent the greater part of her childhood and where her father became the incumbent of the parish in 1721, as well as holding offices as Prebendary of St Asaph (1697) and Hereford (1711) cathedrals and Precentor of St. David's (1717), all of which would have considerably enhanced his income. Elizabeth's mother died when she was nine years old.

An early nineteenth century description of Kingsland



Elizabeth Morgan, artist unknown, the Brynddu collection

informs us that *the parsonage house, a respectable building in the old style, with extensive gardens is situated in the centre of a large and productive glebe*. Sited W.S.W. of the parish church of St. Michael and All Angels, it looked out across woods and open countryside. It is likely that that this is where Elizabeth developed her great love and interest in gardening.

Close ecclesiastical ties had long existed between the Bangor and Hereford Dioceses. Elizabeth married Henry Morgan of Henblas, Llangristiolus, Anglesey, on August 3, 1732. He was the son of a Chancellor and grandson of a Bishop of Bangor Cathedral. A marriage settlement of £2,000 provided for Elizabeth in the event of her husband's death.

A recent exciting discovery, of a beautiful dress, thought to be Elizabeth's wedding dress, made from a bluey / turquoise moiré or watered silk and embroidered with trailing plant designs in multi-coloured silks and metallic thread, will be exhibited this summer at Bangor Museum. The splendour of the dress may reflect the aristocratic links of Elizabeth's stepmother, Isabella (Belle) Danvers, a Lady of the Bedchamber to Queen Anne before she married.

Henblas is a Grade II* early eighteenth century stone house, incorporating a smaller earlier house. The main house, c.1700, still stands on the south west of the Isle of Anglesey, four miles from Llangefni, with an impressive view of the mountain range of Snowdonia to the south. A pair of elegant stone gateposts, topped with large acorn

finials, thought to be 18th century, stand at the entrance to the driveway. In the Morgans' time the extensive grounds of the estate descended to the edges of the flooded tidal inlet of the Cefni estuary and Malltraeth marsh.

The many references in Elizabeth's diary to the *old garden* and *old orchard* indicate a well-established garden at Henblas before her arrival in 1732. Also *Mr. M's walk*, *Mr. M's borders* and the many plants referenced in the diary associated with Henry Morgan are likely to have predated their marriage.

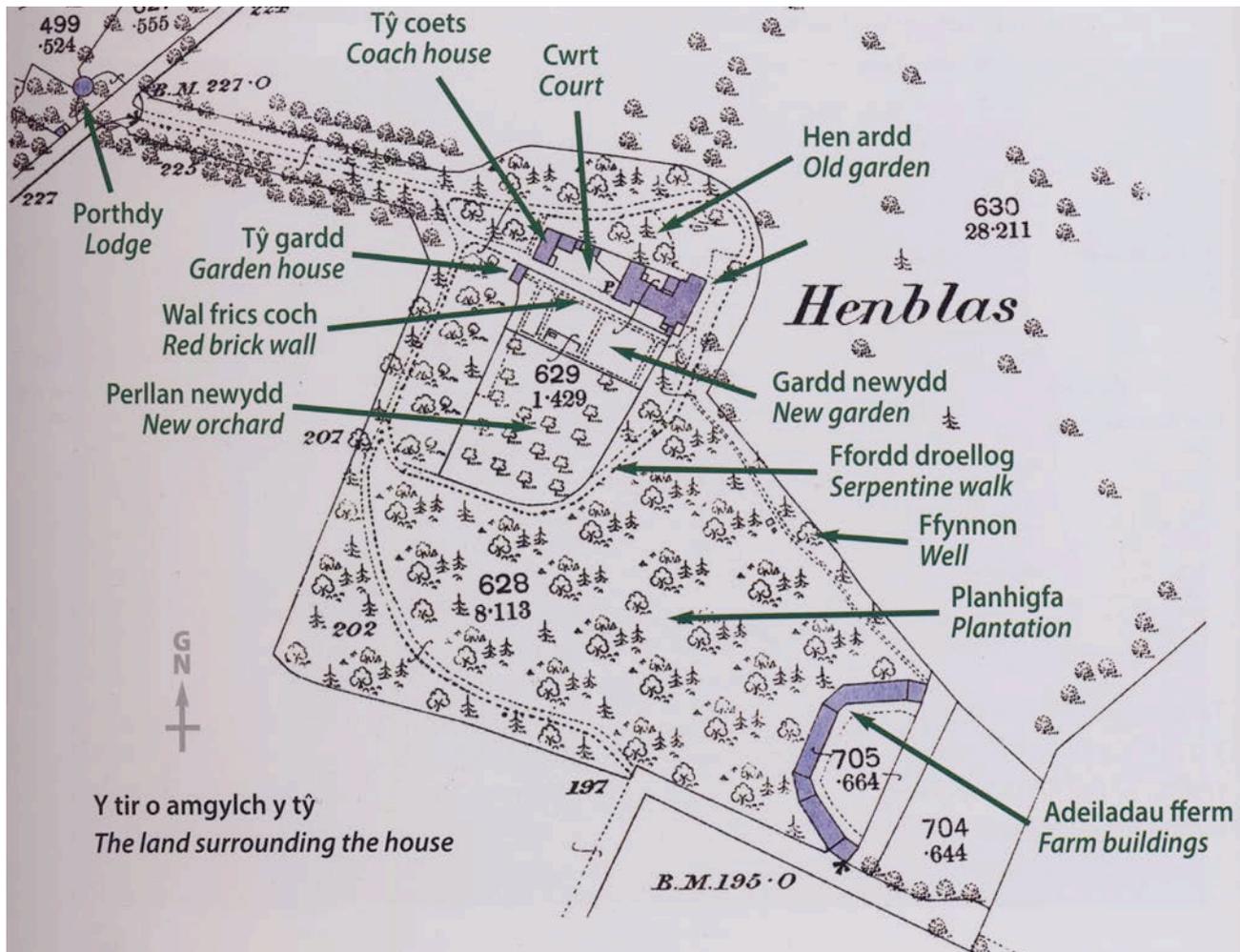
Anglesey's reputation for the fertility of its land goes back to the Middle Ages when it was thought capable of feeding the whole nation, hence the title *Mon Mam Cymru* or Anglesey, the Mother of Wales. The land became neglected during the Civil War but the more settled political climate in the early eighteenth century saw renewed efforts towards improving productivity on the island. In 1704 William Morgan of Henblas, Henry's father, is recorded as having limed his lands. Anglesey was blessed with a rich and almost inexhaustible supply of very finely crushed shells, brought in boatloads from the shores of Red Wharf Bay and Aberffraw, which was used to fertilise the fields. Gardeners such as Elizabeth Morgan used this *sea sand* to prepare compost.

Early in the marriage a red brick wall was built to surround a new garden. This was a costly status symbol at that time. Elizabeth would have been familiar with the walled rectory garden of Kingsland and the wonderful walled garden of Croft Castle nearby. At Llannerch, her grandfather's home, depicted in a painting c1667, a veritable explosion of red brick walls and banqueting houses ornamented the terraced garden of the imposing stone mansion.

More importantly, Philip Miller's *The Gardeners Dictionary* (London, Printed for the Author, 1735), known to have been used by Elizabeth, advised *of all materials proper for building walls for fruit trees, brick is best in that it is not only handsomest, but the warmest & kindest for the ripening of fruit...and best conveniency of nailing*.

A copy of *Notes* written in 1882 by a relative, Edward Evans of Eyton Hall, handed down the family to descendants now living in South Africa, records the poignant history of the brick wall at Henblas: *During Henry Morgan's life the present garden wall was begun. One side & the angle with door & steps was completed when his only child Dulcibella an infant died & the work was never afterwards continued - previously the garden was on the other side of the house*. This tragedy must have been devastating for the couple.

In Elizabeth's time the red brick wall would have been 73 yds in length, 9 ft high and 2ft 6ins deep. During the twentieth century almost a third of the wall was removed, possibly to allow more light into the west facing kitchen and living quarters of the house. A brick garden house, *the hovel* in the diary, is extant adjoining the northern



aspect of the wall. Circular steps, also extant, provide an entrance to the south. This enclosed space was Elizabeth's new garden. Here in the brick wall border was a protected area in which to grow her prized collection of florist flowers and exotics. An auricula alcove and auricula frame provided shelter for the large number of auricula plants she acquired and exchanged with relatives and neighbours. At the back of the diary there is a recipe for the cultivation of auriculas from Miss Molly Lloyd of Plas Coch: *Fresh earth, cow's dung & the slush out of the bottom of a river, of each an equal quantity. Mix well together, if it is kept any time before it be used, it ought to be frequently stirred and mixed up.*

Peach trees, apricots, cherries and vines were also grown here. Hot beds gave the warmth needed for tender melons and cucumbers.

To the east of the house lay the shrubbery, old orchard and old garden. Within the old garden espaliered fruit trees grew in borders edged with pinks, flower beds jostled alongside vegetable beds together with nursery borders for sowing seeds. These established growing areas continued to be used for feeding the household during Elizabeth's time. It made perfect sense to continue to utilise and improve upon the fine tilth produced by generations of gardeners. The production of food was essential to the viability of a squire's household on a country estate.

A sheltered area bounded by walls and a *palisade* lay within the Court to the north of the house near the *castle*

and *little stable*. Today a solid stone wall has replaced the dividing fence which stood between the Court and the old garden. In Elizabeth's time alternating honeysuckles, jasmines and roses were grown along the wall nearest to the house in the Court area. Sweet briar trees were planted along the palisade with annuals, auriculas, polyanthus and tulips bringing splashes of colour at the border edges. Visitors arriving in the Court would have had a beautiful welcome to Henblas, and pots of Elizabeth's horticultural treasures would have provided added interest.

On her marriage Elizabeth began an inventory of the household contents, written on vellum. Her account book details the hiring of staff and help in the garden. Competent gardeners were a necessity in order to feed the household and large workforce. On October 7, 1754 Elizabeth *Hire'd Isaac Lilly to work in the garden; at seven pence per day, lodging & a buttery diet* and in January 1759 she wrote *Morris Jones began work in the garden*. The number of gardeners fluctuated, depending upon the amount of work at any given time. Experienced gardeners, who were also growers who supplied plants, were employed for short periods for specialised tasks such as pruning the fruit trees. Henblas was no different to other gardens at that time in the hiring of women for weeding. The garden diary commences in 1754, but references to plant acquisitions of earlier dates indicate that an earlier diary is likely to have been lost.

The early eighteenth century estate would have been



Eighteenth century entrance gates to Henblas © Mary Gwynedd Jones

a hive of activity. Walks from the gardens led through the plantation to substantial stone farm buildings, which today are in separate ownership. Livestock would have been everywhere; chickens in the farmyard, ducks and geese in the pond, sheep, cattle and horses in the fields and pigsties backed onto the north of the new garden. In the mid-eighteenth century Anglesey had no direct link to the mainland of Britain. By the early eighteenth century the old post road ceased to cross the Lavan Sands to Beaumaris and instead used the more reliable ferry crossing at Porthaethwy to Penmynydd. It is incredible that when journeys were so lengthy and hazardous, plants and trees arrived at Henblas in such numbers and from so far afield.

During the Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland, Dublin became the second city of Britain and Ireland, with its own Viceroy Court. Anglesey benefited from the important post road link and sea passage between London and Dublin. The garden diary records many purchases of Irish plants, seeds, flowering shrubs, apricots, cherry trees, elm and lime trees with baskets to pack them in. Chester was also a good source of plants. Mr. George Geary of Chester supplied Elizabeth with pear trees, plum trees, *Dutch gooseberries*, apple trees, *scarlet honeysuckles*, vines and an *Indian yucca*, which cost 2s. Amongst plants from London were *Old London ten-week stocks*, *London Brompton stocks* and tuberose (polianthus tuberosa) bought by her sister-in-law, Dulci, along with *London large marrow fat pease*, *Winsor beans* and *London cabbages*.

The household accounts indicate Elizabeth visited Denbighshire, which would more than likely have included Llannerch, following her marriage. In 1759 she wrote that she *planted double sweet bryar & winter cherry from Llannerch*.

The diary records many plant exchanges between relatives and neighbours. One such person was Elizabeth

Trygarn. She inherited Plas Berw in 1746, a hall house of 1480 with a deer park, due south of Henblas, across the Malltraeth tidal marsh, following the death of the Rev. Thomas Holland, a widower and Elizabeth Morgan's uncle. Mrs. Trygarn continued the kindnesses of Uncle Holland giving Elizabeth hollyhocks, tulips and blue periwinkles.

Mr Owen Holland of Plas Isa, Conwy, was another horticultural devotee, who exchanged plants with Elizabeth. Owen seems to have been an enthusiastic botanist and plantsman. In 1754 he gave Elizabeth 34 crocus, hyacinths, chequered tulips (Fritillary) and double meadow-sweet. They exchanged auriculas, she gave him 6 doz auriculas in the August of the same year, and he supplied her with quantities of *fine ranunculus*.

The Trefeilir and Bodorgan estates were closer to Henblas. Trefeilir was the home of Henry Morgan's sister Margaret and her husband William Evans. Their eldest, Charles, was a frequent visitor to Henblas and he inherited the Henblas estate. The close family ties were mutually beneficial for their estate gardens, sharing plants, gardeners and facilities. For example, Elizabeth sent plants to be grown on in the Trefeilir hot beds when she ran out of space in her own.

Bodorgan was just four and a half miles from Henblas, where the Meyrick family came to prominence in the fifteenth century after the battle of Bosworth. Owen Meyrick, the last of the Welsh-speaking members of the family, seems to have had good relations with his neighbours. He gave fir seed to Henry Morgan and gifts of a melon, lobster and crab are recorded in the household accounts. Elizabeth exchanged and acquired many longed-for plants, such as carnations, through her friendship with Mrs. Meyrick and the gardener Simson.

There is no doubt that Elizabeth had a passionate interest in flowers. The more unusual and distinctive they were the better she favoured and cherished them. The eighteenth



Entrance to Elizabeth's garden and view from within the garden © Mary Gwynedd Jones

century saw a veritable flood of new plants arriving into the country from overseas and she was eager to acquire them. Of particular interest to serious collectors at that time were the florist flowers. These were the carnation, tulip, anemone, ranunculus, auricula, hyacinth and polyanthus. Elizabeth grew all of these in her garden.

She also grew a vast selection of herbs. 50 saffron bulbs were planted in the old and new garden in 1755. Wormwood, used for stomach ailments such as thread-worms, grew alongside chamomile with its well known anti-inflammatory and antiseptic qualities. Also *tea-sage*, which suggests a variety for a soothing herbal infusion used for colds and tonsillitis. In the pot herb bed were purslane, angelica, sweet marjoram, variegated silver and gold mint, white savory and winter savory, chives, pennyroyal, lemon thyme, mustard and parsley. In September 1765 Elizabeth wrote: *To be near my hand in winter planted a few roots pot herbs between the parsley in the shrubbery.* The culinary and medicinal value of herbs at that time was significant but so too was garlic, the antibiotic of the day. The quantity of garlic grown at Henblas is astonishing. In March 1762, *twenty-one rows of garlic were planted, six in a row.* It is not known how much garlic was

used in cooking for the household but a recipe to treat a sickly calf shows how garlic was used medicinally for the animals as well as the residents of Henblas.

It is interesting to speculate as to whether or not Elizabeth was typical of her generation of squire's wives in regard to her industry in the garden. It is likely that other squire's wives on the island had similar responsibilities but the garden diary reveals her to have had an elevated interest in the cultivation of plants. It is also probable the garden was a solace following the loss of her only child.

Elizabeth created serpentine walks at Henblas and added elements of design such as Chinese style fencing and gates in the fashion of the day.

As Elizabeth grew older the daily toil affected her health and particularly her hands. On October 21, 1763 she wrote: *at this time had the rheumatic in my left hand & could scarce put the roots into the ground.*

Elizabeth Morgan was buried at Llangristiolus church on 9 August 1773 alongside her daughter Dulcibella.

Elizabeth Morgan's garden diary is amongst the six manuscript volumes associated with Elizabeth in the Henblas Manuscripts, held in the Archives and Special Collections at Bangor University. It will be exhibited alongside her portrait and wedding dress at Storiol (Museum and Art Gallery) Bangor from 2 May to 2 November 2019.

Elizabeth Morgan, eighteenth century Anglesey gardener, a publication by WHGT member Mary Gwynedd Jones, will accompany the exhibition and provide further information on Elizabeth Morgan.

To obtain a copy please contact Mary Gwynedd Jones Marygwynedd@hotmail.com

Elizabeth Morgan: 18th century Gardener

at Storiol (Museum and Art Gallery) Bangor
2 May 2019 - 2 November 2019

An exhibition, designed to enrich our understanding of Elizabeth Morgan.

Friday 7 June 2.00 pm

Edwina Ehrman, Senior Curator from the textile department at the V&A will reveal some of the mysteries of the embroidered wedding dress, thought to have been Elizabeth Morgan's. £5



Reception at Buckingham Palace

Stephen Lacey, The President of WHGT, and Simon Baynes, the Chairman, were honoured to represent WHGT at The Queen's Reception at Buckingham Palace on 5 March to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the investiture of our Patron, HRH Prince Charles, as Prince of Wales.

We particularly enjoyed speaking with HRH The Duchess of Cornwall, Patron of the Cowbridge Physic Garden near Cardiff which WHGT was instrumental in restoring. We are very fortunate to have Prince Charles as our Patron given his tireless work in championing the gardens, parks, heritage and environment of Wales.

Listed status: Should it Protect Parks and Gardens in Wales?

Saving and conserving important parks and gardens in Wales seems ever more challenging as they continue to come under relentless pressure for development and cost saving.

Two recent pieces of legislation, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and The Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016 might be expected to help protect the Welsh heritage. Public bodies are now supposed to think about the long-term impacts of development and new development is required to be sustainable.

However, it is clear that listed status in the *Cadw/ICO-MOS Register of Parks and Garden of Historic Interest in Wales* is no guarantee of protection. The Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016 was designed to give more effective protection to listed buildings and scheduled monuments; to improve the sustainable management of the historic environment; and to introduce greater transparency and accountability into decisions taken concerning the historic environment.

Therefore we were shocked to learn, last December, that a Giant Redwood was felled at Penllergare, Swansea, a Grade II site, by the developer Enzo's Homes. Enzo Sauro, director of the scheme for eighty homes on an adjacent site claimed this was a mistake.

A huge mistake! The 179 year old giant sequoia, planted by the estate's original owner, John Dillwyn Llewelyn, a nineteenth century botanist, was approximately 27m (88ft) tall and 1.6m (5ft) wide with a Tree Protection Or-

One Thousand Members to mark the 30th Anniversary of WHGT

The Trustees of WHGT have set the target of reaching 1,000 members in 2019, our 30th Anniversary year, and we hope you can help us achieve this. Currently we have 960 members so one more push will see us reach our target. It is easy for your friends to join via our website www.whgt.wales or email admin@whgt.wales or ring Gail Davies at Aberglasney for a membership form 01558 668485

Members of the Trust, are the lifeblood of WHGT and, when we reach our 1,000 target, we will have increased our membership by 25% in three years which bodes very well for our future and is against the trend of many similar organisations. Not only does this strengthen our financial position but it also increases our influence in safeguarding gardens and parks in Wales as each member is an ambassador and champion of our cause.

Many thanks to all members for your support and to our Trustees and ten branches who have worked so hard to increase our membership so strongly across Wales.

Simon Baynes

der (TPO). Its location, outside the development site, was clearly marked on a plan available to Enzo's Homes. The Penllergare giant redwoods were planted a decade before the seeds were widely credited with being brought to Britain, so this was a fine mature specimen and a significant landscape feature.

Felling this tree shows an astonishing level of vandalism on the part of the developer. It is not something easily done and shows a total disregard of the planning system designed to protect trees. How did the developer find a tree surgeon willing to fell a specimen tree on a listed site - presumably without a licence as these are awarded by Natural Resources Wales? Was this a gross mis-management, or was there some advantage to the developer in going to the trouble to remove such a very large tree? What other huge mistakes might have been made in this development?

More than 2,000 people signed a petition to demand that the authorities took appropriate action and that the developer should face serious penalties. What is the cost of raising a healthy 179-year old specimen tree? The developer has offered to replace the tree! It will be interesting to see how he intends to do this!

A feature of the register, unique to Wales, is the identification of the Essential Setting of a listed site which is a concept developed to safeguard areas adjacent to the historic parks and gardens which, although outside them, form an essential part of their immediate background and

without which, in their present state, the historic character of the site in question would be diluted and damaged.

It was, therefore, disappointing earlier this year to learn that planning permission was granted by the Welsh Government for an estate of 110 houses on a green field site at the Pentywyn Road/ Marl Lane junction, Deganwy, impacting the setting of the Grade I Bodysgallen Hall, Llandudno following a Public Inquiry last September.

Beech Developments first proposed the speculative development, on a site outside the original Local Development Plan (LDP), to Conwy County Borough Council (CCBC) in July 2016. The CCBC planning committee looked at all the evidence, including more than 1,300 objections, and refused planning permission in 2017. The developer subsequently appealed to the Welsh Government, and the Inspector found in the developer's favour. Unfortunately this is not an isolated incident. Another greenfield site in Conwy lost a similar appeal by the same developer in 2016, allowing building to go ahead at Sychnant Pass on the edge of the Snowdonia National Park. One of the reasons for allowing these developments is due to the Welsh Government's revised figures for LA's requirements for a 5-year housing land supply. Developers are exploiting these targets to coerce local authorities into allowing unsustainable development on greenfield sites.

In February 2019 the current 20 year housing projections were considered seriously flawed. The new regional guidelines now expect housing need in the six councils across North Wales to grow far more slowly between now and 2037/8 than previously stated.

The success of the Deganwy appeal is an example of local democracy being overturned by the national Planning Inspectorate. The cost of the original LDP was around £1 million. Sites not allocated for housing in the LDP were either not deemed suitable or were not adequately scrutinised for the sustainability in terms of well-being of the economy, health, transport, and environment; all issues raised by the many objectors from the local community. Instead of discounting what is considered nimbysism, these are the very voices which should be heard, coming from those who best understand the lack of services in an area already stretched by development.

An article in the Guardian, 19 April 2019, described how investment funds buy up land on the edge of green belt hoping to exploit the weakness of the planning system to develop it. This was exactly the situation in Deganwy, involving a Birmingham pension fund with no obvious links to the area. Our heritage is at risk if land value escalation for development is allowed to overrule the intangible value of any site.

Meanwhile, if developers can build houses anywhere, often in conflict with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, and without taking account of the Historic Environment Act, parks and gardens in Wales continue to be at risk. If the setting of a Grade I property such as Bodysgallen cannot be protected from

an encroaching suburbia, it is unlikely that the setting to any historic park or garden or any greenfield site is safe. There is a distinct feeling that developers have far too much power and that it is time for communities to have a much greater say in how they wish to develop.

Developing brownfield sites in the UK is supposed to be a priority. It would be interesting to know what percentage of new build in Wales is on a brownfield site. A new analysis by the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) suggests that one million new homes on brownfield sites could transform towns and cities in England. Mapping of brownfield sites in The Welsh Government's proposed National Development Framework (NDF) could show a similar potential to help save the environment by reducing the need to destroy greenfield sites.

The Grade I status of both house and the garden at Gwydir does not seem enough to secure its protection. The owners Judy Corbett and Peter Welford, both long-standing members of WHGT, have laboured for years to save this unique Welsh heritage.

The recent flooding has been devastating at Gwydir, threatening the very survival of the site. NRW claim to protect lives, homes and livelihoods - all of which are the case at Gwydir, as well as it being a very special heritage site. It is difficult to see why the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and The Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016 can't secure a property so important to the culture and identity of the nation.

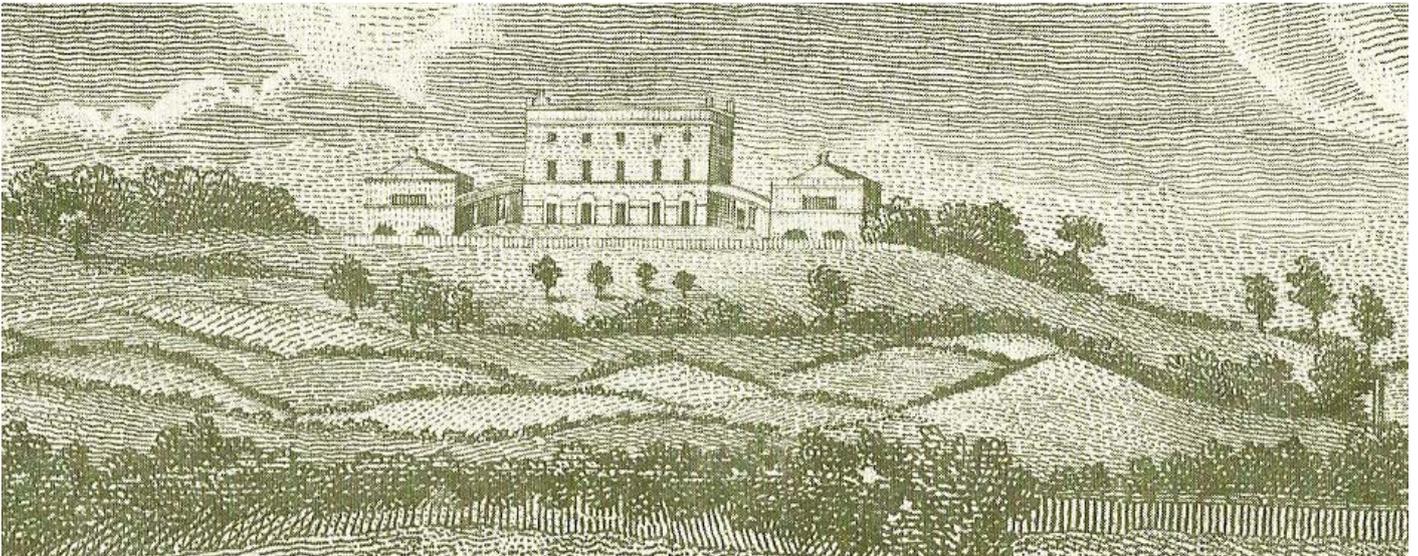
Heartfelt thanks to the tenacity of the owners and the heroic and loyal group of volunteers who have worked tirelessly, for months, building a sandbag bund to save this site. Until the bund is completed, the rare seventeenth garden landscape with ancient trees and the wonderful gateways remains at risk of destruction. Surely the Government should help to save a site important to tourism and the local economy.

In November Glynis Shaw and Caroline Palmer presented at the Historic Landscapes Assembly in York, organised by the Gardens Trust, on twentieth century gardens in Crisis: Caroline documented the plight of the Aberystwyth Penglais Campus where a sophisticated 1960s planting scheme has been grubbed up with no regard to its listed status, its period design, botanical interest and diversity; and the part designed by Brenda Colvin has been degraded and seriously neglected. Glynis spoke about the John Summers garden at the redundant and vandalised Shotton Steelworks Headquarters, also landscaped by Brenda Colvin, which is now almost entirely lost to neglect. Both these two relatively modern landscapes have not been protected or saved and will now require significant resources to restore.

Unless the listing of landscapes is upheld by a far more robust planning system, and the Historic Environment Act and Well-being Act applied to all agencies, it is difficult to see how parks and gardens in Wales can be saved for future generations.

Glynis Shaw

Caring for Morrision Park: Swansea's oldest garden?



Clas Mont from the South East, Seat of J Morris, 1792. Thomas Rothwell: National Library of Wales

In 1911 Swansea Corporation purchased land on the western slopes of the lower Swansea Valley, ostensibly as a location for a reservoir to service the Town's rapidly growing, east side population. Under pressure from the longstanding campaign for open space provision, instigated by *Pioneer-Champion of Open Spaces* William Thomas of Lan Manor, it was resolved to purchase additional land to form a public park.

Morrision Park officially opened to much fanfare in 1912. One paper noted, somewhat acerbically, that the local population should be much more productive in work now that they had such a magnificent facility in which to spend their leisure time. Despite this utilitarian perspective, the park was instantly a huge success with the public. For several years it gained investment and new facilities. It once incorporated a large ornate bandstand, swimming baths, lido, aviary, cricket pitch, changing rooms, kiosk and even a 9-hole golf course. It hosted many popular activities, carnivals and musical performances.

But all these assets have now gone, and the recent history of Morrision Park is characterised by rapid decline and institutional neglect. Also long gone are the fifteen gardeners, groundsmen and park-keepers that once impeccably maintained the 47 acres of typical Victorian/Edwardian, public park design. However, despite a relentless loss of original features that gradually reduced it to its bare bones, the park's landscape remains essentially unchanged from its inception. On this fact alone, Morrision Park merits Cadw listing alongside Swansea's other parks of the same period, namely Brynmill, Victoria, Cwmdonkin and nearby Parc Llewelyn. For some reason however, perhaps a combination of apathy, embarrassment and neglect, it has thus far failed to achieve this status.

In July 2017 a small group of concerned residents, worried about the rapidly declining state of the park, formed a constituted, voluntary organisation called Friends of



Bandstand at Morrision Park c 1917, postcard: J Stewart

Morrision Park / Ffrindiau Parc Treforys.

Three priorities were identified for the first twelve months: to restore a rock-garden that surrounded the Grade II listed War memorial; to address the barely functioning drainage that caused regular flooding, turning swathes of the park into a barren quagmire; and to re-develop the dilapidated children's play area. Although progress was made with the first two priorities, it became clear that significant funds were needed for the third, as well as to address other urgent infrastructural issues, such as the very badly maintained and decaying pathways. Without any prospect of enhanced funding from the Council, and in the face of considerable local community ambivalence towards rejuvenation initiatives, it was resolved that a concerted drive to change attitudes towards the park was required.

A first step to achieve this was to further research and promote the park's landscape lineage. In so doing, an even more compelling reason to recognise Morrision Park's historical significance emerged, as today's park occupies a major portion of what was once the estate garden to one of Wales's foremost eighteenth century houses, Clas Mont (later Clasemont). This was a three storey, symmetrically fenestrated, Palladian mansion and



Above: Prospect from Morryston Park 2018 © S J Phillips

home to the copper industry pioneer Sir John Morris, 1st Baronet of Clasemont.

Clasemont was built in 1775 and demolished by his son in 1821. Its material was transported across town, away from the increasingly industrialised Swansea Valley, for a new mansion in the leafy suburbs of Sketty, which became Sketty Hall. Contemporary accounts describe Clasemont Park as extremely picturesque, consisting of rolling lawns extending over steep slopes, a wooded wilderness area and panoramic vistas.

The most obvious eighteenth century garden feature remaining today is a magnificent, *stolen landscape*, a vista that was originally designed to obscure the industrialised scene below. It projected from the grass terraces below the former house, across the park's Great Lawn and ancient woods, towards the east banks of the Swansea Valley and Mynydd y Drumau. The presence of this feature provides basis for a claim that Morryston Park may be Swansea's oldest garden.

This information has been presented at public meetings, talks, guided walks, through social media (we have a very active Facebook page) and articles such as this. There has also been a concomitant practical drive from the committee, forming special-interest sub-groups for ground-maintenance, gardening, wildlife & conservation, and children and young persons' interests. This has increased public engagement and drawn in a greater number of wonderfully dedicated volunteers who are determined to contribute to the park's rejuvenation. Feedback gained from surveys and public meetings point to an appreciation of the Friends' efforts and a significant increase in visitor attendance. Recent initiatives include: rejuvenating the extensive flower beds and shrub borders with plants received as donations; creating a wildlife garden with four local primary schools; developing new bog and fern gardens; and a particularly successful commission of animal sculptures, which saw the park make the national press.

We feel our strategy is beginning to bear fruit. Until recently the Local Authority provided only sporadic bouts of grass mowing and hedge strimming. We now have joint management meetings with Council officers with whom we are developing a coordinated fund-raising strategy, and we are working closely with a very supportive Council Parks and Trees Department to formulate a joint Garden Management Plan. They recently purchased



Animal sculpture at Morryston © S J Phillips

and planted a new ornamental cherry avenue, something that was unthinkable less than three years ago.

The objective of Friends of Morryston Park / Ffrindiau Parc Treforys is to raise awareness of Morryston Park, raise funds to improve the park and carry out activities to make it a place people can enjoy all year around. We were not initially aware of the particular and, at times, daunting challenges we would face in attempting to restore and maintain an *industrial heritage park* resting within public ownership.

We now want to commission an historical landscape review to help us properly understand how to restore, maintain and develop the park's varied, beds, borders, woods, ponds and gardens. However, we now feel more prepared for any challenges that remain ahead of us and are optimistic that Morryston Park will continue to go from strength to strength.

Steffan John Phillips, Chair, Friends of Morryston Park / Ffrindiau Parc Treforys
friendsofmorrystonpark@gmail.com

Centenary Fields - a living legacy of parks and green spaces



Cenotaph in Alexandra Park, Penarth

Fields in Trust is a charity which champions and supports the UK's parks and green spaces by protecting them for people to enjoy in perpetuity. Once lost, they are lost forever. As an independent charity with over 90 years' experience protecting parks and green spaces, Fields in Trust works with landowners, community groups and policy makers to promote the value of our parks and green spaces and to achieve better protection for their future at local, national and UK level. The Charity currently protects 2,809 parks and green spaces across the UK, of which 288 are within Wales.

Centenary Fields: This is one of our recent protection programmes encouraging landowners to dedicate memorial gardens, parks or playing fields that contain a war memorial or other valued green spaces with some significance to World War I. Working in partnership with The Royal British Legion, the Centenary Fields programme protects parks and green spaces in perpetuity to honour the memory of the millions who lost their lives in World War I. The programme was launched by Fields in Trust President, HRH The Duke of Cambridge, at Coventry's War Memorial Park on 16 July 2014. Two years later, at the mid-point of the commemorations, The Duke unveiled a Centenary Fields plaque at Kensington Memorial Park and planted poppy seeds with local school children. This UK-wide heritage programme has been embraced in Wales, where a total of twelve sites are currently protected – with another twelve undergoing final legal agreements.

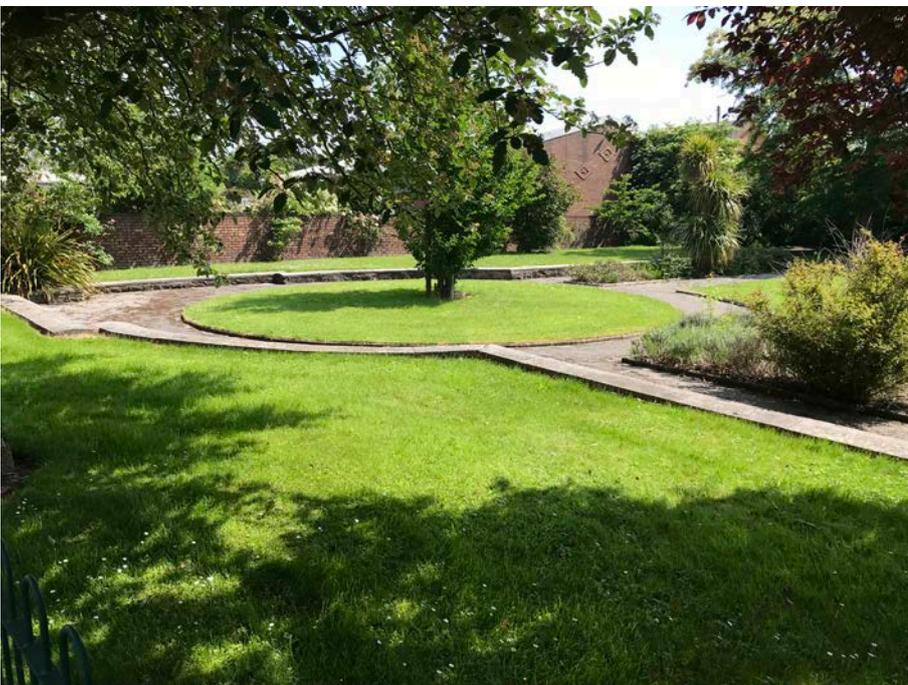
Remembrance takes many forms and as you might expect the spaces protected as Centenary Fields are varied in nature, from the expansive War Memorial Park at which the programme was launched to smaller gardens and village greens. It's not just scale that varies though, as we have found over the anniversary period, the links that green spaces can have to World War I can be equally varied. Below we set out the stories of some of the parks and gardens in Wales, which are now protected as Centenary Fields.

Alexandra Park is a well-preserved Edwardian public green space in Penarth, which overlooks the Bristol Channel. The park retains many of its original features that date back to when it was laid out in 1901/2. A Cenotaph in memory of those who fell during World War I was added and unveiled on 11 November 1924. The memorial designed by Cardiff-born sculptor and Royal Academician Sir William Goscombe John RA to the *Men of Penarth* comprises a white granite stepped obelisk with a winged Victory figure on the side of the obelisk facing the sea. Victory holds both wreath and sword and stands on the prow of a ship. The original octagonal bandstand on the site was removed in the 1950s but some of the seating, the park gates and boundary fencing are original.

A Garden of Remembrance and topiary work were added in the 1920s. Whilst the initial plan to add planting with a botanical interest was not achieved, many of the conifers, such as the Lawson's cypress and Monterey pines all predate World War I.

Taibach Memorial Park This is a small, well-preserved Grade II listed urban park, close to the centre of Port Talbot, with a fine central bandstand and a war memorial which is a bronze sculpture representing 'victorious peace' on a granite pedestal; it was unveiled on 4th July 1925 by Field Marshal Sir William R Robertson. The memorial remembers those from the area who lost their lives in World War I. The commemorative character of the park is emphasised by the main gate, which is dedicated to Rupert Price Hallows, who received the Victoria Cross in 1915. The medal award to Hallows was made posthumously and presented to his mother and brother at Buckingham Palace. The citation says he showed *conspicuous gallantry* in battle at Hooges in Belgium with the shrapnel wounds he sustained causing his death five days later.

Second Lieutenant Hallows VC is unique in our story as he is associated with two separate Centenary Fields; a memorial garden in Redhill Surrey, his birthplace, has a



Above: Taibach Memorial Park
Below: Coronation Gardens, Buckley

VC Commemorative stone laid to remember him.

Coronation Gardens Another Victoria Cross recipient is remembered at Coronation Gardens in Buckley, Flintshire. During World War I around 410,000 service personnel signed up to serve in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF). One of those travelling from Australia to fight on the Western Front was Frederick Birks VC MM. Born in Buckley in North Wales in 1894, Birks had a difficult start in life; he was five years old when his father died in a coal-mining accident, yet he was a diligent student and was awarded a school medal for attending his whole school career "without ever being absent or late".

In August 1913, Birks migrated to Australia. He joined the Australian Imperial Force within weeks of the start of the war and travelled back to Europe. He saw service in Gallipoli and at the Battle of the Somme. Birks was awarded the VC for his actions at Glencorse Wood in Ypres on 20th September 1917 when, alongside a corporal, he forced a garrison to surrender and later

captured 16 men in another attack. A shell killed him the following day, while attempting to save some of his men who had been buried by enemy shelling. Birks tried to dig out these men, but, standing exposed, another shell killed him and four others before he could save them. He is remembered with a Victoria Cross Commemorative Paving Stone at Coronation Gardens in Buckley, which is now protected in perpetuity as part of the Centenary Fields Programme.

Coronation Gardens is an attractive open space with grassed areas, seating and shrubberies. The gardens are fronted by rose beds and contain mature trees, which were completed to commemorate the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

Queens Gardens in Colwyn Bay, formerly known as Rydal Gardens, are mainly laid to lawn with planted beds, surrounded by footpaths intersected by bench seating areas. Lord Colwyn unveiled a bronze memorial statue of a World War I soldier standing at ease, by John



Entrance to Bailey Park, Abergavenny

Cassidy, in front of the original town hall on 11 November 1922. The statue was relocated to Queens Gardens when the Town Hall was demolished in 1964. It stands together with a panel depicting returning servicemen and nurses whilst plaques commemorate the 174 from the area who fell during World War I. Later panels acknowledge the sacrifice of 38 local servicemen from World War II and one from the Korean War.

Bailey Park in Abergavenny has a very direct connection with World War I; it was used as a meeting point for The Royal Monmouthshire Regiment (nicknamed The Royal Mons) in readiness for going off to the front. When war was declared on 4 August 1914 the order to mobilise the 3rd Mons was received at 6.10pm on the same day. Throughout the night the companies from the various towns and villages mustered and caught trains to Abergavenny: the whole battalion gathered outside the Market Hall at dawn on 5 August. Later, they marched on to Bailey Park, where they were given tea.

After the Armistice a Mark IV tank was placed on a tank planter within the park after the war but was later removed. The Abergavenny Civic Society has since placed an interpretation board next to the planter to give the history of the tank.

The park with a grand entrance, with Grade II listed wrought iron gates and railings, was laid out by Crawshay Bailey, (1841-1887) a prominent ironmaster. It hosted public events such as a Grand Military Tournament for up to 4000 people. After 1890 it passed to the Improvement Commissioners, and then to Local Authority care.

Cardiff Parks: Two sites in Cardiff are under consideration. Once the legal process of protection is completed, **Alexandra Gardens**, home to the Welsh National War Memorial, and **Grange Gardens**, the site of the Grangetown War Heroes Memorial will also become Centenary Fields.

The National War Memorial in Alexandra Gardens was unveiled by the Prince of Wales in 1928 and commemorates those servicemen who lost their lives in World War I. It also contains an additional plaque commemorating those who lost their lives in World War II. The Grangetown War Heroes Memorial in Grange Gardens was unveiled on 7th July 1921. Commissioned at a cost of £1000 it contains the names of local residents who died during World War I, as well as the names of the members of the committee established to raise funds for its installation.

Community memorials: In each of these examples we should not forget the efforts that local communities made throughout Wales after the war to create these memorials and the gardens which surround them. Whether it was people coming together to pay a subscription to install a memorial in a park or a bereaved relative gifting land to their community for a memorial garden for a loved one, we can today enjoy their dedication. One hundred years ago people would have taken for granted that these gardens, parks or recreation grounds would always be there. Now, as part of the Centenary Fields programme, these memorial gardens are protected with Fields in Trust, ensuring they will not be lost and that they become part of the valuable legacy created from World War I centenary commemorations.

Speaking at the launch of the Centenary Fields



programme in 2014, Fields in Trust President, The Duke of Cambridge, said of local memorial parks and gardens *every one is valued by its community and each moment of play or leisure that takes place on a Memorial Field is an act of remembrance.*

The Centenary Fields programme publicly demonstrates our gratitude to the World War I generation in a unique way and the commitment of landowners across Wales – and the whole of the UK - means that when the centenary commemorations are over their local communities will always have somewhere for play, sport – or a quiet moment of reflection. A living legacy.

Rhodri Edwards

Rhodri Edwards is Manager of Fields in Trust Cymru and is based in Cardiff. rhodri.edwards@fieldsintrust.org

To find out more about the Centenary Fields Programme see: www.fieldsintrust.org/centenary-fields-legacy

Images © Fields in Trust Cymru

Above: Grange Gardens, Cardiff

Below: Alexandra Gardens, home to the Welsh National War Memorial,



Welsh Parks at risk

In February there was a welcome Government announcement of £13 million for parks. Critics warn that this is not enough to reverse the chronic underfunding of recent years. Councils will be handed money to repair playgrounds, create new parks and redevelop derelict land. Research found £15 million was cut from green spaces in 2017 as around half of local authorities slashed funding. Parks are one of the most important legacies of Victorian and Edwardian Britain, important to not only urban areas but also part of the landscape of almost every town and many villages. Henry James called them *an ornament not elsewhere to be matched*. They are a unique heritage as places for all, regardless of wealth and class.

Playing in the park is a normal experience of British childhood and parks are central to many communities. They are extremely diverse, offering a range of opportunities. For many they improve the quality of life in providing a small glimpse of nature, greenery and fresh air and some provide beauty, solace and freedom. Parks provide for dog walking, recreational activities and sport. Most can be freely accessed, without the process of passing through a ticket office or commercial outlet.

It is vital that these public assets are well protected, that there are no encroachments or parts sold off for development by cash-strapped councils.

The National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces (NFPGS) is the umbrella organisation that aims to amplify the voices of Friends Groups. Their research shows that parks cost little in relation to the benefits they provide. They estimate that the total expenditure on Open Spaces in the UK is about £1.2 bn per year- only 0.15% of public expenditure.

Once lost these public assets will not be replaced. It is important that parks are properly maintained for enjoyment now and in the years to come. Planning policies are needed to ensure that increased housing both maintains and increases the green spaces necessary for healthy communities to thrive.

Council pressure to drive down costs mean that many of these landscapes have recently received poor maintenance. Low maintenance planting means that the variety is reduced with corporate planting that becomes uniform and boring and lacking in biodiversity. The rare trees and historic planting frequently lack specialist care and interest.

Underfunded parks soon become ugly. Fountains and structures such as benches, bandstands, playground equipment and park keepers' lodges become derelict and abandoned. The historic designed landscapes suffer from random planting, overuse of herbicides and chainsaw pruning reducing plants to crude hedge shapes, all common results of inadequate funding and lack of expertise.

Parks and Gardens, like museums and galleries, have had to become more commercial. This is not just in the matter of providing refreshments, which often begins

as a small kiosk but then develops into large premises with outdoor terracing and seating spreading into areas once used for play; it also means that the park becomes a hired venue for events which take over the landscape thus denying free and public access. Often these events are prohibitively expensive for local people.

In the case of listed parks it is important that they are not re-designed for inadequate budgets. Landscapes that are horticulturally rich and beautiful must not be reduced for convenience and easy maintenance, littered with bins and seats and ever-wider paths for machinery.

In January 2019 Crispian Huggill began an e-Petition: *Save Our Parks in Wales* on the National Assembly for Wales website.

This petition is to galvanise support to save our parks, playgrounds and open spaces from being lost forever, to serve the needs of today's and those of future generations and to uphold the obligations councils in Wales have under the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 and the Historic Environment Act 2016.

Save Our Parks in Wales want:

- 1) A statutory requirement for councils to ring-fence funding for parks at £30 per household per year.
- 2) There to be a legal duty for all green space to be managed to a good standard.
- 3) New rules banning the development on, selling off or the inappropriate use of, parkland.
- 4) A new Welsh Government fund to provide emergency help for parks most at risk and ensure the long-term future of Wales's green open spaces.
- 5) A legal requirement for all councils to operate an Open Spaces Strategy in accordance with the Fields In Trust standards, the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015, and the Historic Environment Act 2016 and to work with Fields In Trust to protect and enhance all public green open spaces in Wales.

To sign see:

www.assembly.wales/en/gethome/e-petitions

A number of WHGT branches have been long involved with park restoration but without ongoing financial support the capital investment as well as countless hours of volunteer time and effort will be wasted and our rich park heritage will continue to decay.

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.



The nurseries are behind this red-brick wall (Image: WalesOnline/Rob Browne)

Bute Park 70th anniversary

On 30 March 2019 Cardiff's Bute Park celebrated its 70th anniversary since it was first opened to the public.

Bute Park is a Grade I listed historic landscape. Bute Park & Arboretum comprise an extensive area of mature parkland easily accessible from the city centre. Flanked by the River Taff, Sophia Gardens, Pontcanna Fields and Cardiff Castle, Bute Park is the "green heart" of Cardiff full of historic and wildlife interest. At 56 hectares it is one of the largest urban parks in Wales and comprises a broad mix of historic landscape, urban woodland, sports pitches, arboretum, horticultural features and river corridor. Few cities have such a spacious green area in the heart of their city.

The Bute Park Nurseries, which lie hidden behind the tall red brick walls at one end of the park's famous herbageous border, were opened to the public for the first time on the special day of celebration. Although the whole area was only open to the public for one day, a new entrance has been added so people can go inside part of it to access the sales nursery area. Plants and flowers from the nursery provide the greenery for all of Cardiff's park and city centre planters.

Visitors celebrated the work of Andrew Pettigrew, who was Head Gardener to the third Marquess of Bute between 1873 and 1903 and responsible for the remodelling of the grounds at Cardiff Castle. Andrew Pettigrew worked closely with architect William Burges to create a landscape that went with the ornate work of the castle. He created expansive lawns, carefully grouped trees and shrub borders.

The Fifth Marquess of Bute gifted the castle and grounds to the people of the Welsh capital in spring 1949. The

Cardiff Corporation bought more land and Bute Park was developed throughout the second half of the century by the Director of Parks, Bill Nelmes.

The park now contains more than 2,500 trees including some Champion Trees, known to be the biggest examples of their species anywhere in the UK.

WHGT Planning Seminar

Plas Dolerw Conference Centre
Milford Rd, Newtown SY16 2EH

Friday 18 October 11.00 am

WHGT is holding a Planning seminar for all branches to discuss planning issues and share best practice.

We are very pleased that Lisa Fiddes of Cadw is able to attend.

This seminar is suitable for members who are interested in the planning issues facing Welsh historic parks and gardens.

If you have any particular planning interests or concerns, please contact Sarah Green who is the Planning Advisor for WHGT: ls.green@tiscali.co.uk

Historic park records destroyed

WHGT Trustees were amongst the 148 who signed a letter to *The Times* by John Phibbs (Principal, Debois) concerning the National Heritage Lottery Fund's (NHLF) destruction of Conservation Management Plans (CMP). Other signatories included: Christopher Boyle QC (Chairman of the Georgian Group), Stephen Daniels (emeritus professor of cultural geography at the University of Nottingham), Lady Mary Keen (garden designer and journalist), and John Sales (vice-president of the RHS).

Since 1996 more than 2000 parks throughout Britain have benefited from restoration and conservation projects and in the process a considerable hard copy archive was developed, which was estimated to have cost over £50 million. This has now gone up in smoke.

These plans documented the history, design, planting, archaeology and the connections with local families and community together with the process of restoration and conservation.

What is disturbing is that the archive was never catalogued. It was destroyed due to high storage costs, despite Parks & Gardens UK at Hestercombe offering to provide an archive facility for this material. The offer was apparently refused due to NHLF concerns over copyright complexities.

The destruction of publicly funded material was raised in the House of Lords in the hope that such a valuable historic resource, developed in the public interest, can never again be lost in such a manner.

Bodnant Hybrids

The landscape enjoyed at Bodnant Garden today owes a great deal to the special relationship between the owners, the McLarens, and three generations of the Puddle family of Head Gardeners over a period of 85 years.

Frederick Puddle began as Head Gardener at Bodnant in 1920. At this time Henry Duncan McLaren, 2nd Baron Aberconway, CBE (1879 – 1953) and his mother Laura McLaren, who had inherited Bodnant in 1895, were developing the beautiful landscape. Laura McLaren received the RHS Victoria Medal of Honour in 1931.

Both Frederick Puddle and Henry McLaren were avid horticulturists and took an interest in the breeding of rhododendrons and magnolias. Henry sponsored several botanical collectors, including George Forrest, and *Rhododendron aberconwayi* is named in his honor. Together they developed a plant-breeding programme producing many hybrids, especially rhododendrons, from the new plant discoveries. Frederick's skill took Bodnant Garden to gold success at several Chelsea Flower Shows and he was awarded the RHS Victoria Medal of Honour alongside his employer in 1934.

From 1947 Frederick's son Charles followed in his footsteps as Head Gardener. He was famed for his expertise with camellias and also awarded the RHS Victoria Medal of Honour for his horticultural achievements. Charles was the Head Gardener when Bodnant Garden was given to the National Trust in 1949. As a young boy Charles

Some CMPs survive in the collections of The National Trust and other archives and these also need to be preserved.

It is not known to what extent the destroyed archive involves Welsh parks and gardens. Cadw's advice as set out in *Conservation Principles, Para.6 Documenting and learning from decisions is essential*, applies to all information gathered during a project, not just CMPs.

Para 6.1 *The information and documentation gathered in understanding and assessing the significance of an historic asset should be retained by the owner and manager of that place, and a copy placed in a public archive. This will ensure that future generations will benefit from the knowledge gained.* So it is for the creator of the information to place it in a public archive.

This system doesn't guarantee conservation of the original material and relies on the creator looking after the documentation and archiving it correctly. Many parks are in the ownership of the LA. In the case of Plas Newydd, Llangollen, Denbighshire claimed the CMP had been misfiled and 30 years was a long time... only by luck did one of our members find a draft, which contained information that helped to secure the site of the community garden.

It might be helpful if future CMPs are archived centrally at the NLW or with Cadw. It would be good to know where they can be found and that they remain safe.

helped pack a gift of Bodnant rhododendrons from Lord Aberconway destined for the King of Sweden's collection at Sofiero, the Royal Garden. Two crates were sent with between 80 -100 plants. The rhododendron was King Gustav VI's favourite plant.

Charles's son, Martin, went on to be Head Gardener from 1982 and contributed to Bodnant becoming one of the finest gardens in the country. Sadly the Puddle dynasty of Head Gardeners came to an end when Martin died in 2005. In 2011 a Puddle Garden was established at Bodnant as a tribute to these very important gardeners.

The third Lord Aberconway, was also a keen horticulturist who served as President of the Royal Horticultural Society for 23 years and also received the RHS Victoria Medal of Honour.

Of the 330 hybrids developed at Bodnant less than half still remain. Bodnant is keen to source any that might survive elsewhere. Not all the Bodnant hybrids were Rhododendrons; *Paph. F C Puddle 'Bodnant' FCC/RHS* was registered in 1932, one of the most famous complex white Paphiopedilums in its early days, and the ancestor of over 1100 modern hybrids.

Please send any evidence of Bodnant hybrids to the Property Manager, William Greenwood:

william.greenwood@nationaltrust.org.uk



Above: Wallowing Pool, Ham Manor Llanwit Major © Jon Boston

Below: Ham Manor, Llanwit Major, postcard © Peter Davis collection



Lost Spa in Llanwit Major

The ornamental fish pond of Ham Manor, Llanwit Major, Vale of Glamorgan, is the centrepiece in the walled garden and remained largely undisturbed since the manor house, designed by the prominent architect Sir Matthew Digby Wyatt, was built in 1869. The Victorian manor house was destroyed by fire in 1947, but its landscaped grounds still survive, and host around 100 park homes for people in or near retirement.

When the pool was drained for restoration they found what historians describe as a perfect example of a Victorian wallowing pool. The sunken structure at the pond's centre is surrounded on its four sides with what look like terraced stone benches built of locally quarried Welsh bluestone. The wallowing pool was fed by natural rainfall, which ran down from its circular enclosure.

On sunny warm days the Victorian residents of the manor could relax either knee deep on the top benches

or chest deep on the lower tiers.

There will be no more wallowing these days. The pool has long been a fishpond, home to koi carp who were returned after the pond was restored.

Few examples of these structures still exist and no others are known of in the area. Has anyone come across any other wallowing pool.



Left: *Stymlin Seat of Wynne ESqr, J Ingleby 1790 © The National Library of Wales*

Right: *Jack Black of Ystumllyn, 1754 Artist unknown, Plas Dinas, Caernarfon*

John Ystumllyn, a talented gardener.

John Ystumllyn, or Jack Black (c.1740 – 1786- 1791) lies buried in the churchyard of St Cynhaearn's Church, now in the care of the Friends of Friendless Churches, south of Pentrefelin in Gwynedd, at the end of a long and ancient causeway. The church is sited on a former island in Llyn (Lake) Ystumllyn. The tombstone is dated 1791 and inscribed with a verse, (englyn) in Welsh by Dafydd Siôn Siâms, musician, poet and bookbinder, of Penrhyn-deudraeth:

Yn India gynna'm ganwyd a nghanrau / Yng Nghymru'm bedyddiwyd / Wele'r fan dan lechan lwyd / Du oeraidd y'm daearwyd.

India was the land of my birth / but I was Christened in Wales / This spot, marked by a grey slate/ is my cold, dark resting place.

John's abduction as a young child, when playing by a stream, whilst trying to catch a moorhen, possibly in West Africa, is related in a pamphlet *John Ystumllyn, neu, 'Jack Black'* in 1888 published by Alltud Eifion, the bardic name of Robert Isaac Jones (1813-1905), a Tremadoc chemist, printer, publisher, poet and editor, whose grandfather had been the doctor who cared for John Ystumllyn at the end of his life.

In the eighteenth century the Wynne family had a schooner, which traded in West Africa. The crew gave him the nickname Jack Black and he was brought to the Wynne's Ystumllyn house, which can be seen from the church. The ladies in the family taught John Welsh and English and he was baptised John Ystumllyn. At Ystumllyn John became a talented and proficient gardener, a knowledgeable plantsman, a skilled craftsman and a free man. According to Alltud Eifion, John was very fond of flowers and a good florist. He also relates how when the gate to the garden was left open by mistake a sow strayed in causing great damage. In trying to remove the trespasser John broke the sow's leg, so he consulted the clergy-

men on how to inform the family. They thought he should say that the misfortune took place as the sow was going over the wall, *No, no*, said John *I'll not sell my soul to the devil in order to try to save myself*. When the mistress asked John; *who broke the sow's leg?* John confessed and said *I'll break the leg of anyone who comes into the garden again to destroy my work*.

John courted Margaret Gruffydd, one of the maidservants who was later employed at Criccieth. When Margaret went to work in Dogellau, John followed and they married in 1768. They found employment at Ynysgain Fawr and later John worked at Maesyneuadd near Talsarnau, another Wynne home. John and Margaret had seven children, five of whom grew to adulthood, and their descendants still lived in the area in Alltud Eifion's time. Their only son was Richard Jones who served as a huntsman at Glynllifon for 58 years.

Towards the end of his life John and Margaret returned to Ystumllyn and lived in a cottage called 'Y Nhyra Isa' or Nanhyran, close to the church, surrounded by a large garden with a small field in front of the house given to them by Ellis Wynne, in recognition for his service. Sadly John died young, of jaundice, aged about 46. On his deathbed he confessed to playing the fiddle on a Sunday.

The reference to India on the epitaph has led some to believe that John was perhaps born on a plantation in the West Indies, and brought from there to Wales as a child.

In the 1960s or 1970s an English translation of Alltud Eifion's *John Ystumllyn or 'Jack Black': the history of his life and traditions about him since his capture in the wilds of Africa until his death; his descendants, etc. etc., together with a picture of him in the year 1754*, appeared in Criccieth.

<http://www.black-boy-inn.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/blackJackHistoryEnglish.pdf>

Naturalistic Planting Design, The Essential Guide Nigel Dunnett. *Filbert Press, 1 Mar 2019, ISBN 9780993389269, Hardback, Pages 240*

I couldn't wait to get my hands on Nigel Dunnett's latest book, *Naturalistic Planting Design*, as I have been a fan of his for many years since attending a talk he gave to The Society of Garden Designers in the early 90's. His work then, in Sheffield, was so new, fresh and innovative, particularly his approach to urban planting; gone were the boring grass verges dotted with trees, gone were the formal bedding replaced twice every year. In their stead were Pictorial Meadows, amazing displays of wildflowers mixed with grasses and perennials, giving a blaze of colour for months on end.

These schemes are among the many featured in this book. Others of note are his plantings for the Olympic Park, in collaboration with James Hitchmough, in London 2012. Stunning colour; high banks and spectator walkways massed with glowing golden blooms, much admired by the crowds.

At the Barbican the plan is to minimise maintenance and water consumption, providing sustainable, ecologically valuable planting. Swathes of orange Achillea, white Lychnis, deep blue Salvia and fiery Crocosmia 'Lucifer', scattered in an apparently random fashion, gloriously clashing colours that work so well. But there is nothing

Tudor Book of The Garden *Tudor Times Graffeg Limited, 8 Apr 2019, ISBN-13 9781912654666, Hardback, Pages 192*

If you are looking for a garden history of the Tudor garden you will be disappointed. This is not a book for the specialist or garden historian and it reveals no new research. This is actually a garden diary and this should perhaps be made clearer in the title.

The book is divided into seasons and months and combines elements of Thomas Tusser's *Five Hundred Pointes of Good Husbandry*, first published in London 1573 by Richard Tottle. This was a long poem written in rhyming couplets recording the country year reprinted from Tusser's original *One Hundred Pointes of Good Husbandry* of 1557. The Tudor garden book also gives tips on modern garden practice.

There is a brief introduction to the Tudor garden with lists of Tudor gardens of the past and those restored, lists of gardeners associated with Tudor gardens and lists of tools. There are also lists of plants from Tusser's Tudor garden and those found in the works of Shakespeare.

The diary begins in March at the beginning of the growing season. Many pages in the book are for you to record information on your own garden and you are guided as to what information you might include in a garden diary, including your garden layout and preferences.

This has been authored by *Tudor Times* the online repository for all things Tudor and Stuart (1485–1625).

Glynis Shaw

random about these plantings, every last detail has been meticulously planned to create maximum impact throughout the year.

At the Trentham estate, drifts of perennials, grasses and ferns are interwoven to create a naturalistic design in restoring Burke's Wood. Planting in established woodland is notoriously difficult, Nigel makes it look easy with a mixture of native N America perennials and British woodland flowers. Primroses, epimediums and pulmonarias, tiarellas and dicentras form a Spring carpet. Annuals then burst into jewelled brilliance throughout the summer while asters give late colour followed by fluffy seedheads to contrast against the delicate flowering stems of tall grasses. Do go and visit if you can.

Diagrams and notes, on planting, seeding and maintenance will give you the knowledge to try these ideas for yourself, but this book is not a gardening tome. So many amazing photos, so much information, so many wonderful ideas, it is an inspiration for a new generation of planting for the future.

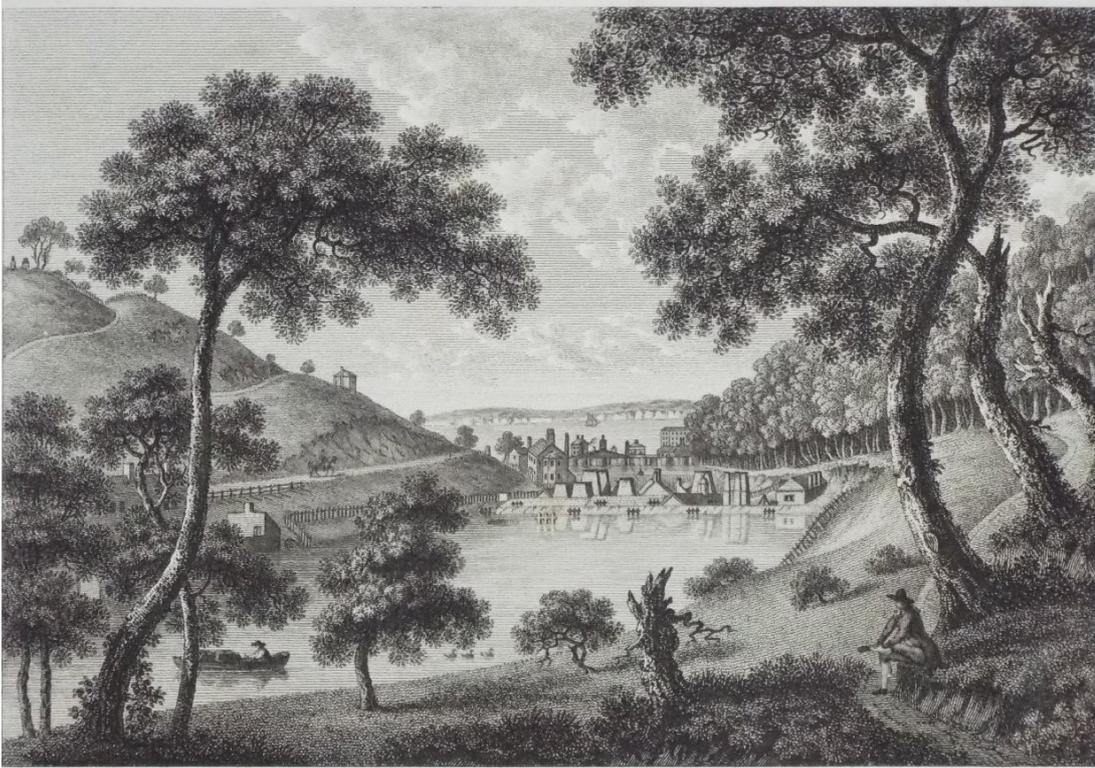
Kate Roscoe

Stop Press!

Opening of the Elizabeth Morgan exhibition at Storiell, Bangor. Right: Mary Gwynedd Jones with the new publication *Elizabeth Morgan, eighteenth century Anglesey gardener*. Left: Emma Hobbins who collaborated with the exhibition and provided flower illustrations for the book.



Now we are 30



Copperworks near Holywell, Belonging to the Mona Company Flintshire, 1792, John Ingleby © NLW

From Industry to Recreation

To celebrate the 30th anniversary WHGT is focusing on the historic park and garden landscapes which are particularly linked to the industrial heritage of Wales.

The Monmouthshire and Gwent branch hosted a study weekend in Abergavenny to explore the designed landscapes of Pontypool Park, Cyfartha Castle and Bedwellty Park together with a tour of the World Heritage Site of Blaenavon. Led by Dianne Long, members were shown how these ornamental landscapes were formed by the industrial entrepreneurs of their day and how they survive as post-industrial landscapes.

It is interesting to see how landscapes evolve and change over time. The Clwyd branch held its AGM at Greenfield Valley, which stretches over 2km from Holywell Town to Greenfield harbour on the River Dee.

Ray Bailey gave an interesting talk on the site, which embodies an early industrial heritage powered by the forceful flow from the spring of St Winefride's Well sited in a beautiful Chapel built by Henry VIII's grandmother Margaret Beaufort.

The monks of Basingwerk Abbey, founded in 1132 by Ranulf de Gernon, 4th Earl of Chester, were the first to harness the power of the Holywell stream for a corn mill and to treat the wool from their sheep.

After the Dissolution of the Monasteries during the reign of Henry VIII the land went to lay owners. Holywell grew to become the largest town in northeast Wales and by the sixteenth century various industries, particularly lead smelting, were established. In 1590 people enraged by the toxic fumes pulled down one of the smelting build-

ings. New technologies in smelting and copper working added to the industrialisation of Greenfield. A dock was built at the mouth of the Holywell stream where it joins the River Dee to facilitate trade with Liverpool and Chester and for the import of copper from the Parys Mine Company in Anglesey to be turned into bowls and manillas (used to buy slaves in West Africa). In 1787 the Greenfield Copper and Brass Company built a copper rolling mill at Greenfield on land leased from Sir Piers Mostyn of Talacre. They supplied the huge demand for copper sheeting to protect the hulls of the wooden ships, sailing in the tropics, from damage caused by burrowing sea worms.

By the 1780s, copper and cotton factories dominated the valley. Courtaulds was established in 1794 and eventually employed 3,000 people on the Greenfield site. In 1821 a paper mill was established in the valley, which for a time became the largest in Wales.

The narrow and steep-sided valley eventually became home to nine major water-powered mills, factories and works producing Copper and brass, (wire and sheet) cement, dyes, wool (flannel), corn, paper, cotton, snuff, red lead and various chemicals. It reached a peak of production in the 1780s.

The main line of the Chester and Holyhead Railway later ran along the coast south of the harbour and a branch line was taken up the valley in 1869 (the steepest-graded conventional standard gauge railway in the UK) to serve the Greenfield industries, Holywell Town as well as the lead mines and quarries beyond. Unfortunately this failed

to stop the industrial decline, as most of the mills and factories were too small to compete with the much larger industrial enterprises of the nineteenth century in Manchester, Liverpool and elsewhere. As they fell into disuse the industrial buildings became derelict.

From 1974 the council of the day began to reclaim the site for a country park with work to restore three of the five dams. Today this once important industrial site is now a peaceful parkland. The tree-covered valley has a sequence of lakes developed from the reservoirs, which formerly served the mills. The 70 acre site is now a Heritage park with a medieval motte and, on our visit, Ray Bailey led us to the northernmost section of Wats Dyke towards the top of the valley. The park includes the beautiful Basingwerk Abbey ruins and the old railway track is now a walk leading down to the harbour.

Abbey Farm was purchased to develop a museum and visitor attraction. We enjoyed a guided tour with the Museum's Officer, Sophie Fish. Reconstructed local historic buildings including a sixteenth century farmhouse, a Victorian farmhouse and a Victorian school (where our AGM took place) were added to the site and Kimberley Clark Company offered an old barn from their site. This was a 17th century timber framed building, but rebuilt in brick in 1753, which now houses old machinery relating to the site.

Recently volunteers have established period gardens surrounding the historic buildings. Trees and flowers flourish where there were none in the 1930s. This is a landscape designed by past industry, which is now turned into a park. It has huge recreational value including new garden projects.

Greenfield Valley is owned by Flintshire Council and managed by the Greenfield Valley Trust.



Richard Morris: an appreciation

Richard Morris sadly passed away earlier this year and he will be sadly missed as a valuable member of the Penllergare Trust. Richard's unique and unswerving commitment to the saving and restoring of Penllergare arose from his familial connections and a passionate interest in photography, notably that of John Dillwyn Llewelyn. Accordingly, when he learned of plans for commercial development in the walled gardens, threatening the orchid house, it was his appeal to the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust that triggered the start of the project as we know it today.

The publication of his *Penllergare - A Victorian Paradise* was instrumental in raising the profile of the place to a wide and influential audience and its profits provided the starting capital for the Penllergare Trust, of which he was a founder member. Thereafter he continued to contribute unstintingly his encyclopaedic knowledge of JDL's Penllergare and its photographic legacy.

He was appointed Trustee Emeritus in December 2014.

Michael Norman

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Brecon & Radnor, Jonathan Reeves jhwreeves@outlook.com	01982 5602015	President: Stephen Lacey	
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West Glamorgan, Ann Gardner avbgardner@icloud.com	01792 290014		

WHGT Events 2019

Brecon and Radnor

July 4 Garden party at Brilley Court

kindly hosted by Mr & Mrs Bulmer

July 22-25 Royal Welsh Show

Can you help? Volunteers much appreciated for the WHGT stand. Please contact Jonathan Reeves.

August 5 Visits to Brampton Bryan Hall and Gatley Park

Kindly hosted by Mr & Mrs Edward Harley and Mr & Mrs Philip Dunne. Picnic lunch

November 7 Lecture on Walled Gardens by Julie Hudson at Penpont kindly hosted by Mr & Mrs Gavin Hogg.

Further information: Jonathan Reeves 01982 560205 / jhwreeves@outlook.com

Carmarthenshire

Saturday 12th October 2pm Talk by William Wilkins

at Llanelli House, SA15 3UF. William Wilkins will give a talk about the formation and early achievements of WHGT.

£5 An additional charge of £6.50 to tour of the house afterwards.

Further information: Judith Holland 01558 825992
j.holland@whgtcarms@gmail.com

Ceredigion

Tuesday 4 June 11.30 am Gelli Aur, Carmarthenshire

Meet at Country Park.cafe SN596198 / SA32 8LR to visit the Arboretum, begun in the 1860s, with many veteran and champion trees. We will be guided by Ivor Stokes. After lunch, provided in the café, we visit the walled kitchen garden with its champion *Liriodendron tulipifera*. £15 per person to include lunch.

Wednesday 17 July 2pm Visit to St David's College, Lampeter, SA48 7ED. Meet at north end of Old Building. Arthur Chater will lead a tour of the grounds to identify the tree species and cultivars that are growing there and see how the grounds have evolved during nearly two centuries. £5.

7 August 2pm Visit to Strata Florida SN745657 SY25 6ES Meet in the carpark. Professor David Austin, Florida Trust Chairman, will update us on the research and plans for the site, and lead a tour of the immediate environs. Our interest is focused on the monastic gardens of the Cistercians, and the Tudor/Stuart gardens when the Stedman family owned the estate.

Further information: Sheila Jones 01970 828280
tegfian60@btinternet.com

Clwyd

29 May 2.30 Visit to Garthgynan, Llanfair Dyffryn, Ruthin LL15 2ES Kindly hosted by John and Sue Harrop. A well preserved Grade II* small seventeenth century walled garden featuring banqueting house, raised terrace and bee boles. Below this garden lies a terraced orchard and former ornamental fishponds. £8

Wednesday 26 June 2.30pm Garden Visit to Crewe Hill, Farndon, Chester CH3 6PD. Kindly hosted by Michael and Inger Trevor-Barnston. Members are invited to see the beautiful gardens surrounding Crewe Hill Hall, with panoramic views over the River Dee and into the Welsh countryside. The gardens include a stumpery, moongate and amphitheatre, walled garden, a nut walk and an exotic tropical garden. £8

July 21, Visit St David's College, Gloddaeth Hall, Wormhout Way, Llandudno LL30 1RD. (details TBA) Gloddaeth Hall, the former mansion of the Mostyn family, is now a school. The Grade I site includes terraced gardens and a 17th-century formal canal and also extensive 18th-century plantations and parkland. The house dates from the early-16th century. £8

Sept Visit garden in Farndon

Nov Talk theatre Twm o'r Nant

Further information: Dee Jones 01745 710495
dee@valeside.co.uk

Gwynedd

Thursday 13th June Visit The Dorothy Clive Garden and Betley Court.

2nd - 4th July Three Day trip to South Wales.

September 6th -8th National AGM weekend AGM at Plas Cadnant Menai Bridge LL59 5NH kindly hosted by Anthony Tavenor. Speaker Debs Goodenough, Head gardener to The Prince of Wales at Highgrove.

Sunday 8th September 10.30 am Visit to Treborth Botanic Gardens, guided walk given by the Friends of Treborth. Tea and coffee provided.

Saturday 12th October Study Day at Plas Tan y Bwlch After Repton, Picturesque Movement in Wales and The Borderlands, Speaker David Whitehead.

Further information: Olive Horsfall 01766 780187
oandmhorsfall@btinternet.com

Montgomeryshire

Weekend 14-16 June Gregynog Montgomeryshire Literary Festival Gwyl Llên Maldwyn sponsored by WHGT
www.montylitfest.com

Friday 14th June: 7pm Sir Simon Jenkins speaking on Welsh Architecture.

Saturday 15th June 6pm **A Celebration of Gregynog Hall and gardens** with Trevor Fishlock and Prue Keely Davies, sponsored by WHGT.

Sunday 23 June: 2- 6pm **Vaynor Park, Berriew.** Open garden. Extensive gardens with dramatic views set in fine parkland. Of particular note are the beautiful herbaceous borders and rose garden. Teas will be served and large plant stall.

Weekend 20- 21 July 10.30-5.30pm: Bryngwyn Hall, Llanfyllin, SY22 5LJ. Summer Fayre held in the Grade II* 9 acre listed gardens with a poison garden Tickets cost £5 (under 12's free) See www.bryngwyn.com

Further details: Simon Baynes 07880 786573
baynes@bodfach.com

Monmouthshire and Gwent

Monday 24 June garden tour to Iford Manor Gardens & Great Chalfield Manor and Garden. These are two beautiful and contrasting Grade I sites. A morning tour of Harold Peto's Italianate masterpiece, Iford Manor Gardens, including the private kitchen garden, followed by lunch in the medieval Great Hall of Great Chalfield Manor and tour of the house and garden.

Wednesday 2 October coach to Aberglasney Gardens & The National Botanic Garden of Wales. In our 30th Anniversary year, a chance to reflect on two gardens which have been closely associated with the WHGT and to see how they are continuing to develop. Joseph Atkin, Head Gardener, will be our guide at Aberglasney followed in the afternoon by a 'hard hat' tour of the Regency Restoration Project *Middleton: Paradise Regained*, reclaiming a Regency rarity at the National Botanic Garden of Wales.

Further details: Anthea Prest, anthea@prests.com
Tel: 01594 531007 or 07887 787953

NEWS and Events

For up to date information please see www.whgt.wales
Also see the WHGT Facebook page

Please send or share any items or news which may be of interest to WHGT members

Pembrokeshire

June Upton Castle

July Lanfallteg Gelli deg

August Bishops Palace

October Slebech

November Talk at Picton Castle

December Talk at Picton Castle

Further details: Stephen Watkins:
welshcountrymilk@aol.com

South and Mid Glamorgan

Friday 7 June 2.00pm **Visit to Llandough Castle,** Llandough, Cowbridge CF71 7LRT

Little is known about these gardens until the late C18th/ early C19th when a succession of families created magnificent gardens, introducing glasshouses, a rose garden, wild gardens, woodland walks etc, and planting a wide variety of trees including walnuts, Scots pines and evergreen oaks, a few of which survive today. Rhian Rees has sympathetically, re-ordered' the gardens, A kitchen garden with a Mediterranean twist and a sculpture garden sit comfortably alongside formal lawns and borders, a stumpery and a wildlife pond (once a lily pond, later a swimming pool!!).

Tea/coffee and cake will be included with an additional donation on the day.

£5

Further details: Val Caple, 01446775794
Val.t.caple@care4free.net

West Glamorgan

Tuesday 11 June **Coach trip to Picton Castle and gardens** (details to follow)

Sunday 7 July **Strawberry tea in Penmaen,** Gower (details to follow)

Thursday 10 October 2.00 pm **Talk by Simon Bonvoisin,** Specialist historic landscape consultant with Nicholas Pearson & Partners, landscape architect and lead designer on the Regency Restoration project at Middleton
Thursday 7 November 2.00 pm. **Talk by Steffan Phillips,** Chair of the Friends of Morrision Park, part of the 18th century estate of John Morris, developed as a Victorian park for the public.

Further information Ann Gardner 01792 290014
avbgardner@icloud.com

WHGT 30th Anniversary 2019



WHGT AGM 7th September 2019

at

Plas Cadnant, Cadnant Rd, Menai Bridge LL59 5NH

hosted by the Gwynedd branch

Weekend programme

Friday 6 September Garden Party at Bryniau, Llangoed, LL58 8ND Anglesey, home of Huw and Ruth Parry.

Saturday 7 September AGM at Plas Cadnant, Menai Bridge, LL59 5NH

10.00 am Coffee on arrival

10.30 am AGM

Followed by a talk by Debs Goodenough, Head Gardener at Highgrove, title to be announced.

1.00 pm Lunch, followed by a tour of Plas Cadnant and an opportunity to explore the gardens further.

Later in the day there will be an opportunity to visit another local garden, to be announced closer to the date.

Sunday 8th September 10.30 am Visit to Treborth Botanic Gardens, guided walk given by the Friends of Treborth.

Tea and coffee provided.

Lunch will be available at Plas Cadnant

Bookings: www.whgt.wales

or book with Joanna Davidson jo.davidson57@gmail.com

Plas Cadnant Hidden Gardens have undergone a dramatic transformation over the last 23 years. With contrasting formal and picturesque elements, they extend to some 10 acres. There is plenty to see at Plas Cadnant. The two-acre Walled Garden with its pool, leads on to valley gardens planted with a huge array of interesting and rare specimens, all set off by interesting topiary. Not to be missed is the River Cadnant with its waterfalls and dramatic rock formations. You may also catch sight of one of our Red Squirrels. During late summer, the view from The Balcony, below the herbaceous borders overlooks mass plantings of Hydrangea 'Preziosa', a superb shrub which has large, blushed mauve sterile florets that gradually deepen in colour to rose and purple. As the flowering is successional there is a constant mix of colours across the group.

We also have several Eucryphias, including a particularly beautiful double-flowered variety of Eucryphia glutinosa positioned near the Secret Passage; and our largest specimen of Eucryphia at Plas Cadnant in Mrs Fanning Evans 'Secret' Garden; at almost ten metres tall this Eucryphia x nymansensis 'Nymansay' can be seen from all corners of the garden at any time of year, but in summer when covered in scented flowers from tip to toe, it is a magnet both for visitors and bees.