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The Venetian garden at Kinmel Park and enveloping shrubberies around the hall.

Kinmel Park and Gardens Glynis Shaw

Kinmel mansion, designed by William E Nesfield in 1877, was recently sold at auction. Its exceptional surrounding 18-acre garden landscaped by his father William Andrews Nesfield, an eminent landscape designer, and his brother Arthur Markham Nesfield, makes Kinmel one of only 2 locations where all three members of the Nesfield family worked together: the other being Regent's Park. William Andrews Nesfield had a high reputation for designing formal parterres. His earlier military training enabled him to design water features and fountains, such as the spectacular Perseus and Andromeda fountain at Witley Court, for which he became famed. William Andrews Nesfield was also a tree expert and advisor to the London Parks and planned the National Arboretum at Kew. His son Markham, inspired by the Belgian nurseries he visited in Liège in 1862, developed what he described as a *Picturesque shrubbery*. This was first seen at the Colosseum Gardens in Regent's Park, adjacent to the London Colosseum, built in 1827 to exhibit Thomas Hornor's 'Panoramic view of London', where he planted over 150 different plants, with many exotic trees and shrubs, to be viewed from the circular walks.

The Kinmel mansion seen today is its most recent incar-

nation and its current plight was featured in the news earlier this year. Long neglected in the portfolio of Acer Properties Ltd, British Virgin Islands, since 2011 it was included in The Victorian Society's top ten most endangered Victorian and Edwardian Buildings in England and Wales in 2015. Kinmel is a huge problem; it has lain empty for over 25 years and, as the largest country house in Wales, with a 500ft long facade, 52 bedrooms and accommodation for 60 servants, it has been described as the Versailles of Wales.

Kinmel's long and ancient history can be traced through its landscape first recorded in the returns at the death of Baron de Lacey in 1311. Kinmel is also mentioned in a survey by Hugh de Becele of the Lordship of Denbigh in 1334, which included the main demesne, the Manor, Dinorben Fawr, together with the Parishes of Abergele and St George, the Hamlet of Kinmel and the Township of Wickwere (Wigfair). Dinorben Fawr included the hamlet of Mayrdreue (Vardre or Y Faerdref). There is an old Elizabethan manor called Dinorben with records of a much earlier house, close to Parc y Meirch, a large 8th-9th century BC hillfort on the Kinmel estate. The manor or lordship of Dinorben once held Llewelyn's court (Llys)



Left: Reverend Edward Hughes (1738-1815), of Kimmel and Llysdulas. British School, NMW.
Right: Old Kinmel 1781, Moses Griffith.
Below: Kinmael Seat of Rev. Mr Hughes, 1794, John Ingleby NMW



works in St. Helen's, Lancashire, the Temple brass mills in Buckinghamshire, and the copper and brass works at Greenfield near Holywell in Flintshire and at Penclawdd near Swansea.

The Greenfield and Penclawdd works manufactured copper and brass pots and pans especially for the Africa trade. They produced the Guinea kettles and neptunes, types of pans used by West Africans for cooking and for removing salt from seawater by evaporation. They also manufactured Guinea manillas (the Portuguese or Spanish word for bangle) used as a form of currency for slavers. By the late 1700s copper and brass goods were second only to textiles from India and Manchester in terms of slaving cargoes. The sugar plantations in the West Indies required copper boilers and stills for making sugar and rum. Shipping also required large quantities of copper as a new technique of sheathing ships' hulls with copper was widely adopted. This was first introduced by the navy for protection from shipworm, a serious problem in tropical waters. By the 1790s few slave ships were uncoppered as it increased sailing speeds, which reduced the death rates of slaves on the middle passage and prolonged the ships' lives. When the slave trade became illegal with the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act in 1807, slavers wanted fast ships to escape the patrolling Royal Navy. Prof Chris Evans in *Slave Wales* describes how the Welsh copper industry used slaves long after its abolition in the British Caribbean when they re-opened a copper mine in El Cobre in Cuba in the 1830s.

As one of the founding partners in the vast copper enterprise Edward Hughes gained a huge fortune. Between 1786 and 1813 he purchased an extensive landed estate including the Bodowen estate in Anglesey. His largest single acquisition was the Lleweni and Cotton Hall estate (where, according to gossip, his father had once been a stableboy) in the parishes of Denbigh, Bodfari, Henllan and Llanrhaeadr, which he bought from Lord Kirkwall in 1813. The Kinmel estate became one of the most extensive in North Wales. Hughes' great wealth and Whig loyalty saw his eldest son and heir William Lewis Hughes raised to the peerage in 1831 as the First Baron of Dinorben. His second son, Hugh Robert Hughes, settled at Bache Hall in Cheshire, and his third son, James Hughes became Colonel in the 18th Royal Hussars.

When William Lewis Hughes inherited Kinmel in 1815, he enlarged the Wyatt house. The fine Old Kinmel gardens remained in use. In the Gardener's Magazine 1826

East front of the Grecian Kinmel built for Lord Dinorben, designed by Thomas Hopper. The stables on the LHS were built for Hugh Robert Hughes between 1852-54, designed by William Burn.



Thomas Forrest, the Kinmel gardener, described his methods for growing mushrooms on a brick shelf rather than a cast iron one as used at Eaton Hall.

The Kinmel grounds were described in the Gardener's Magazine 1828: *A well-disposed pleasure ground commands extensive and interesting views of a large tract of country towards the Irish Channel....In the park, the beech and balm of Gilead firs are uncommonly stately;....The kitchen-garden eight acres with walls 12ft.high. The forcing-buildings are extensive, consisting of peach houses and pine stoves....The whole appears to be a forcing-establishment on a most respectable scale; as the surface of the glass contains no less than 6802 square feet.*

The Kinmel vinery was particularly acclaimed by a writer in the Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald in 1836. *The Grapery at Kinmel Park* also featured in The Gardener's Magazine in the same year: *the grapes were of the kind called the white Nice; a variety which sometimes grows to an enormous size; and, when the shoulders are tied up, they will measure 2ft., and often 3ft. each way. the weight of those spoken ofdoes not exceed 7 1/2 lb the black Hamburg grapes with us this year have been particularly fine. We have cut several bunches weighing 4lb each, the berries of which measured from 3 1/2 in. to 4 1/4 in. in circumference, and all well coloured.* Forrest presented 6 magnificent bunches of grapes to the Anglesey Horticultural Society Flower Show in the Assembly Room in Beaumaris. Forrest also described a caterpillar infestation at Kinmel destroying the pear trees, which he treated by painting the wood with coal tar.

William Lewis Hughes added the Adam and Eve Gate at the beginning of a sunken drive to the stables. This segmental archway springs from slight piers in the boundary wall of the garden and carries an entablature with two dressed figures, traditionally known as Adam and Eve, seated on either side of a crested Hughes coat of arms, commemorating the year of his elevation to the peerage in 1831.

In October 1832 Princess Victoria visited Kinmel, returning from a visit to Anglesey with the Duchess of Kent. When the Wyatt house burnt down in 1841 Lord Dinorben rebuilt Kinmel as a large Grecian mansion designed by Thomas Hopper. The bow-shaped north end of the Wyatt house was salvaged from the fire and retained. Much of the material used in the rebuild came from Lleweni Hall, which Hughes demolished.

The local news reported the celebrations of the Kinmel tenants and neighbourhood at the completion of the new house and its landscape in November 1844: *The north side of the mansion had a fine terrace, extending the*

whole length of that front, and commanding an interesting view of the Irish Channel and the Vale of Clwyd....The scenery from the house is rich and beautiful; the grounds are extensive, and the gardens tastefully laid out. His late royal highness the Duke of Sussex, for several years, spent some weeks here during the shooting season.

The main entrance to Kinmel at this time was from the village of St George marked by a fine iron gate and a neoclassical lodge thought to have been designed by Hopper to match the house.

When Lord Dinorben died in 1852, he was succeeded by his only surviving son, William Lewis Hughes, 2nd Baron Dinorben. He was disabled and died unmarried just eight months after his father, when the title became extinct. The late Baron's cousin, son of the Hugh Robert Hughes of Bache Hall, inherited Kinmel. Also called Hugh Robert Hughes, he became known as 'HRH', as a reflection of his grand lifestyle.

HRH immediately set about enhancing the Kinmel estate. He added a beautiful stable range by the architect William Burn in 1852-54, which extends at right angles to the South end of the main East elevation of Kinmel, above a series of 3 retained terraces. Burn also designed the Llwyni Lodge, also known as the Golden Lodge or Gate Lodge, closely modelled on a lodge at Kew Garden, in 1858, which became the main entrance; the Gamekeeper's House of 1862 and in 1865 the Agent's House. The Abergele mail coach road between Abergele and St Asaph which originally ran past the southern boundary of the pleasure ground was re-routed in the 1860s as the parkland boundaries were extended. The raised form of the old road can still be seen in the park today.

The Hopper house was grand but uncomfortable and inconvenient. HRH subsequently had the house substantially remodelled by William Eden Nesfield, the nephew of the architect William Salvin and pupil of William Burn. In 1866 WE Nesfield had successfully rebuilt the Kinmel home farm with a dovecote and dairy set about an ornamental garden laid out by William Andrews Nesfield.

Kinmel Hall was Eden's first great undertaking - its design inspired by Wren's Hampton Court and the 17th century Château de Balleroy. An entrance forecourt on the East front designed with new wrought iron gates referenced the cour d'honneur at Versailles. As well as enhancing the planting and improving the shrubbery walks, the



Nesfields designed a formal sunken Venetian Garden on the west side, behind the house, viewed from the most important rooms. From the terrace on which the house stands steps led down to a path lined with topiary between two symmetrical parterres to a large, tiered Neptune fountain. Its 15 m diameter circular basin has a rolled stone surround and four crouching hippocampi at its centre which support shell bowls. Above the shells cherubs ride dolphins whose tails intertwine around a central column supporting a shallow basin, once surmounted by a marble statue of Neptune - sadly stolen in 1995.

Neptune was the patron of horse racing; the ancients believed that he was the creator of the horse. The fountain possibly references the neighbouring village of St George / Llansaniôr named after a well in the parkland said to cure horse diseases. St George is the patron saint of horses. WA Nesfield's earlier army experience enabled him to design the hydraulics to operate not only the fountain but also a lift in the house from a reservoir in the parkland.

Box was used to edge the plant-like shapes within the parterre. Clipped box was known to have been used in Roman gardens. A pair of matching Tazzas were sited in the parterre-de-broderie with topiaried evergreens. Beyond the fountain were two matching omega shaped box hedges, each surrounding a red stone column with an inscription at their base which states that they are from Carthage, a surprising garden feature as excavations at Carthage were only begun in the mid nineteenth century. The columns were decorated with climbing plants for special occasions.

The brick gazebo at the southwest corner of the Venetian Garden has steps onto its roof leading to a balustraded viewing platform. A flight of steps up from the sunken garden leads south to a walk rising through shrubbery to the Broad Walk, which crosses the garden east west, south of the hall. This is joined by a rhododendron walk that is bridged over the sunken service drive to the stables and servant quarters. The Kinmel plantations and pleasure gardens had a huge range of trees and shrubs from all over the British Empire and was particularly renowned for

the scent of its Syringas (lilacs).

In 1877 HRH, then Lord-lieutenant of Flintshire, and his wife Lady Florentia Hughes held a grand ball for 350 guests to celebrate the completion of the new mansion. The Head Gardener provided bouquets of flowers for the ladies, and flowers for various artistic arrangements from the Kinmel gardens. A splendid conservatory, close to the ballroom and the grand staircase that contained the rarest plants and most deliciously fragrant flowers, was opened to the guests not dancing.

The Old Kinmel walled garden was at this time a show-piece and a pleasure ground. George Homer Beckett was the Head Gardener for HRH for 46 years. In 1912 his son John described the walled garden he remembered as a child and the famous gardeners who came to stay with them including Roberts of Tan-y-Bwlch, Barnes of Eaton, Flack of Cholmondeley, Speed of Penrhyn, Sanderson of Bodnant and Hay of the London Parks.

The 18ft surrounding walls and a central dividing wall supported trained fruit trees including apricots, peaches and figs. Herbaceous borders dissected the garden. There was an arbour covered with roses, honeysuckle, and wisteria at the west end of a border overlooking a flight of stone steps leading to the main herbaceous border and a summerhouse at the east end of the border. The borders were backed by espalier fruit trees. A square rose garden stood at a slightly higher level than the remainder of the gardens bordered by the late vineries and faced a high dry-stone wall, a masterpiece of local craftsmanship. A conservatory and a twenty-foot high yew hedge completed the square. Walks ran round the rose garden which had a fountain as a focal point.

John Beckett particularly remembered the scents of the garden and plants taken to the hall to be dried for potpourri and for drawers and cupboards. In her old age Lady Florentia enjoyed scented flowers such as *Allamanda grandiflora*, *Hoya carnososa* and *Dipladenia* in the conservatory on days when she could not sit out in the rose garden. Beckett listed the plants in *the melon ground, where most of the frames were situated, the south face of the brick wall was planted with magnolia grandiflora, chimonanthus fragrans, choisya ternata,*

Opposite page: The Neptune fountain in the Venetian garden, Clarendon School 1960, Francis Frith collection . Column from Carthage © Glynis Shaw
Right: Map showing Kinmel and Old Kinmel The Venetian garden with the Neptune fountain is top left on the west side of the house with the shrubbery and woodland walks leading south and east to Old Kinmel.



ceanothus, myrtle, jasmine, Calycanthus occidentalis, Carpenteria californica... The myrtle grew from a sprig from Queen Mary's wedding bouquet brought home by the Hon. Lady Mary Hughes, a lady-in-waiting to Queen Victoria. *At the foot of the wall hyacinths were planted, and another scented border of stock, verbena, geraniums, standard and dwarf heliotropes, the colour of this last plant being her Ladyship's favourite. The wall at its west end was pierced by an arch covered in wisteria and clematis.*

A large pool in the middle of the garden, with waterlilies and watercress, was supplied from the well which once served the fifteenth century hall. Its banks were planted with bulbs, lily of the valley, forget-me-not and polyanthus. The pond had a Napoleon's Willow, grown from a cutting of the tree which shaded the original tomb of Napoleon on the island of St Helena. Near the pool was a small rockery known as her Ladyship's garden as the alpiners and other dwarf plants, which she liked to tend personally, were the gifts of her friends.

According to John Beckett Old Kinmel garden had an orchid house, a camellia house, fruit houses, heated and cold frames and pits. Pineapples, melons, grapes, peaches and figs were all grown under glass. The kitchen garden provided for a household of 40 included a herb garden and a nuttery.

In 1906 the second annual Horticultural Show of St. George was held in what was described as the *magnificently-wooded park of Kinmel*. Lady Florentia and the Hughes family were present. The garden was open to those attending the show and the local papers described *the western garden, with its Italian-like terraces, statuary and fountain, its beds of artistically-arranged flowers in glorious bloom, the deer and pheasants close to the Long Walk, with its towering Wellingtonias, and the heavily-perfumed Saringa (sic) trees; the maze of walks and shady nooks, the extensive and incomparable gardens to the east of the hall, the ancient residence, the magnificent oaks in the park, and the unsurpassed views from the elevation...*The occasion was presided over by Mr Beckett who had recently attended the Royal Show in Lincoln. His rich display of exotics at the end of the large

marquee was much admired.

At the death of H R Hughes in 1911, Kinmel passed to Hugh Seymour Bulkeley Lewis Hughes. In 1914 Kinmel Park Camp was built, a training camp for Lord Kitchener's Army, with its own branch railway line connecting to the main line at Foryd Station in Rhyl. The notorious Kinmel Park Riots broke out in March 1919 due to delays in the repatriation of the Canadian soldiers on their return from France.

At the end of the war the estate passed to Henry Bodvel Lewis Hughes. Kinmel has since suffered various vicissitudes: first as Kinmel School for boys in 1929, which closed in 1934 after a fire. Kinmel Hall and gardens were then sold but HBL Hughes retained the parkland and much of the estate. Kinmel then became a rheuma spa until requisitioned by the military in 1940 for a hospital. Post-war Kinmel was briefly a hotel before being established as Clarendon School for girls in 1948. Another major fire in 1975 forced the school to close. After three years of dereliction the buildings were substantially restored by Eddie Vince who opened Kinmel as a Christian conference centre in 1979. This was the last ownership which saw the buildings and grounds cared for. In 2001 Kinmel was sold at auction. A proposed hotel development failed, and the property was sold again in 2011 and has declined ever since.

The recent sale at auction in May 2021 will be very important for securing Kinmel Hall and its special landscape. Both are now in urgent need of restoration.

Old Kinmel remains seriously neglected under a conifer plantation in a separate ownership with the surrounding parkland. The parkland was notable for its large number of mature *Quercus ilex* amongst other trees. The parkland has now been taken over by a large dairy enterprise of 500 cows which threatens the wooded pasture. There have been promises of an arboricultural survey, succession planting, and repairs to the icehouse.

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Gardens and Slavery:

In September 2020 the National Trust released its report into colonialism and historic slavery. Many of the NT parklands, gardens, houses and luxury objects were paid for by direct links to the slave trade between the seventeenth and nineteenth century. The NT report also documents the historic houses linked to the abolition of slavery and campaigns against colonial oppression. There are also many non-NT properties where wealth from slavery and related trade financed and changed landscapes across the country. This issue includes accounts of several Welsh gardens and landscapes which were enriched by the proceeds of slavery, and others in which the descendants of slaves became master of the property.

Some members might be interested in *Green Unpleasant Land: Creative Responses to Rural England's Colonial Connections* by Corinne Fowler, et al. published 17 Dec 2020 which includes an interesting chapter on Plants Gardens and Empire which details how gardening skills and plant knowledge from Africa helped to sustain the population in the Caribbean.

Piercefield Glynis Shaw

Piercefield, near Chepstow, is a Grade I landscape most famously linked to the history of slavery, bought in 1740 by a plantation owner Colonel Valentine Morris and developed by his heir and successor Valentine Morris II between 1853-1772 before he lost his fortune by 1784. Piercefield was eventually bought in 1802 by Nathaniel Wells, a man born into slavery.

The famous Picturesque landscape was created by the Creole plantation owner, Valentine Morris II, born in Antigua. His wealthy father Col. Valentine owned three plantations and slaves. Claiming descent from the Walter family who had owned the property from the 14th century until 1727, Col Valentine's Antiguan wealth allowed him to buy Piercefield in 1740.

Valentine Morris II inherited Piercefield in 1743. It was ten years later, in 1753, before he moved into Piercefield with his wife and enlarged the estate from 300 to 2,130 acres. Valentine immediately began a monumental landscaping scheme assisted by the satirical poet Richard Owen Cambridge. Cambridge had landscaped his riverside estate Twickenham Meadows (later known as Cambridge Park), to much acclaim --including that of Capability Brown. He had nearly bought the estate himself and had recommended it to Col. Valentine Morris. The landscaping at Piercefield was undertaken by the architect Charles Howells and the builder William Knowles of Chepstow who had worked at the nearby Tintern estate for the Duke of Beaufort.

Over the next 19 years Valentine Morris II spared no expense in creating the outstanding landscape of great romantic beauty. He landscaped 3 miles of natural wild woodland walks which originally had 23 prospect viewpoints with viewing platforms, seats and follies above the River Wye culminating at the Wyndcliff, the highest point on the Piercefield Walks.

Coleridge wrote that *the whole world seemed imaged in its vast circumference*.

Piercefield's landscape has been described countless times, in words, paint and pencil; its features included a druid's temple, a grotto once lined with spar and other minerals, a giant's cave, a gravity fed fountain and a bathing house beside a spring. Morris was said to have employed up to 100 men to make the walks, in some places cliffside paths were cut out of the rock along the cliffs high above the Wye.

Mr Morris had such a passion for improving Persfield, that he risked his Life, in order to lop the straggling Branches of a tree (disfiguring the appearance of the Precipice at the Lover's Leap) a service which all his Workmen refused, although offered a very large Recompense; and which he performed by Means of a Cord fastened round his Waist, and enabling him to descend above 50 Feet, where, had any accident happened, he must inevitably have been dashed to Pieces. Sotheby, William, *A Journal of a tour through parts of Monmouthshire and Glamorgan*, NLW ms 6497C, pp. 3; 94-97.

Morris generously allowed visitors to enjoy his creation without payment and provided refreshments, including fruits from his wall trees in the 3-acre walled garden. Visitors were advised to *carry some gunpowder and leave it with Mr Morris's gardener in order to fire some small cannon on the Rock as you pass by. The reverberating echo of which you will find has a wonderful effect.* A stone giant holding a huge boulder over his head, once stood above the cave entrance, as if to hurl it on the walkers below. This has since crumbled away.

Morris made minor improvements to his house as his attention was focused on the landscape and on the improvement of Monmouth's roads. He was instrumental in adding 300 miles of turnpike roads, which were crucial in the development of the Wye Valley landscape tourism as a cultural activity, and the dissemination of the ideals of the Sublime and Picturesque embodied in its landscape.

The Reverend William Gilpin, scion of a prominent family of sugar planters and Whitehaven tobacco merchants, advocated that the lakes and hills were to be celebrated as part of everyday life. Gilpin, moreover, was not the only prominent writer about landscape aesthetics with connections to the Atlantic slave trade: Edmund Burke had a brother who was a Caribbean land speculator and customs collector on the island of Grenada.

Piercefield was visited by many famous people including Joseph Banks in 1767 who wrote *I am more and more convinced that it is far the most beautiful place I ever saw.*

In 1771 Valentine incurred heavy expenses when he contested the parliamentary seat of Monmouthshire which he lost to John Morgan. The Morgans of Tredegar were a powerful family who attacked Valentine as an outsider, a Creole and a slave owner. Valentine's badly managed plantations in Antigua also failed over a succession of dry summers, and with his landscape extravagances, political activities and gambling, his precarious



View from Piercefield Walks, 1803
Amelia du Suffren, *A panoramic view of the Rivers Wye and Severn, showing boats and ships NLW.*

black sheriff in Monmouthshire and was commissioned as a lieutenant in the Chepstow Troop of the Gloucestershire Yeomanry Cavalry, becoming the second officer of colour in the British armed forces. The landscape painter Joseph Farington described Nathaniel in 1803 as *a West Indian of large fortune, a man of very gentlemanly manners, but so much a man of colour as to be little removed from a negro.*

financial situation caused him to take flight to the West Indies as Governor of St Vincent where he founded another Piercefield. Misfortune struck Morris once more with the forced surrender of the island to the French. Valentine returned to England, but he had spent so much of his own money on the island's defences that he landed in debtor's prison. He was forced to sell his plantations and Piercefield before receiving recompense and his release was only months before he died in 1789.

In Bulletin no. 39, Sept 2005, Ken Murphy and Liz Whittle describe the archaeology of the Piercefield walks, and how they were altered in the 1790s by the next owner, George Smith, for the growing number of visitors. Smith also had the house remodelled by John Soane but ran out of money. It was Mark Wood MP who completed the house and added a curving portico (now lost) and the flanking pavilions by Joseph Bonomi. Wood also built a stone wall around the estate.

In 1802 Piercefield once again became connected to the fortunes of the West Indies when it was purchased by the mixed-race plantation owner Nathaniel Wells. Nathaniel was born into slavery in 1779, the son of William Wells from Llandough, near Cardiff. William emigrated to St Kitts to become a slave trader and sugar plantation owner. After his wife and two children died shortly after their arrival, William fathered at least six children by different house slaves, including Nathaniel born to a house slave called Juggy. Nathaniel was baptised and given his freedom when he was 4, and all of William's other children and their mothers received annuities and freedom. Nathaniel, his only son, was sent to his uncle in London to complete his education when he was 10. In 1794 he inherited all three of his father's plantations, £120,000 and 146 slaves.

In 1801 Nathaniel married Harriet Este, the daughter of George II's Royal Chaplain and a year later moved into Piercefield. He served as Justice of the Peace, and as church warden and contributed to the upkeep of St Arvans where he funded the building of its distinctive octagonal tower 1820. In 1818 Nathaniel became Britain's first

Nathaniel was respected at all levels of society and seems to have faced no discrimination due to his colour. With his wealth he expanded the Piercefield estate to around 3,000 acres.

Nathaniel never returned to St Kitts where his plantations were run by agents. Abolitionists published an extreme punishment which occurred at one of his estates, exceeding the maximum 39 lashes then allowed.

When his wife died Nathaniel remarried in 1823 to Esther Owen, daughter of a clergyman, whose brother-in-law was the eldest son of the abolitionist William Wilberforce. By the time of the Slave Abolition Act Nathaniel had sold two of his plantations but he remained a slave owner until the slave emancipation of 1833 when he received government compensation.

Nathaniel allowed the public to visit the park on two days a week and by appointment for a small charge. One of the guides explained that *all the money given by visitors went to the gardener and that he paid them a shilling a day to shew strangers the walks and that for that they had sometimes to go five or six times up and down the walks in a day.* Clark, Charles B., *Tour of Wales in August and September, 1828*, NLW MS 15002A.

Due to ill health Nathaniel left Piercefield in 1850 for the waters of Bath. His tenants and later owners subsequently closed the house to visitors. When Nathaniel died in 1852 his fortune was divided between his 20 children.

The Chepstow Racecourse Company bought the estate in 1926 and opened the new racecourse in the parkland. The grade II* listed Piercefield House, John Soane's only work in Wales, has lain derelict since WWII when the estate was requisitioned by the army. Edward Strachan, an art dealer from London, attempted to buy the decaying building in 2011 but his bid of £1.3 million was rejected.

The Piercefield walk can still be followed today. Four of the viewpoints are scheduled monuments but a number of original features have been long lost. For more information see:

<https://sublimewales.wordpress.com/attractions/man-sions-and-grounds/piercefield/piercefield-features/>



*Glandyfi Castle, Francis Wood, 1838
Inscribed on the bottom left front:*

*Glandyfi dear,
I love thy cheer,
Thy kind old English manners,
I love the land whose festive board,
Is spread beneath thy banners.*

*Reproduced with permission of Miles Wynn
Cato*

The mixed race chatelaine of Glandyfi Castle Caroline Palmer

Few people these days struggle through Thomas Love Peacock's first novel *Headlong Hall*, published 1816, in which most of the dramatis personae at a Welsh country house Christmas eventually pair off to marry the available young women. It is a satirical work with a lot of dialogue exposing the contrasting opinions of three 'philosophers' Mr Foster the perfectibilian, Mr Escot the deteriorationist, and Mr Jenkinson the status-quo-ite. One theme they explore is a debate on the relative merits of a smoothly controlled landscape of lawns and mannered clumps of trees, versus the rugged Picturesque. Attending the Squire is Mr Milestone, a landscape gardener, modelled perhaps on Capability Brown, eager to smooth the rough escarpments of the Squire's Picturesque landscape. Highest drama arises when the Squire lights the fuse on a charge of dynamite which Mr Milestone has installed to remove an unsightly cliff beneath a ruined tower. Health and Safety not being yet observed, one of the house guests has chosen this very moment to climb to the top of the tower and is hurled over the parapet and into the lake below.

It is perhaps no surprise that the opinions of Payne Knight and Uvedale Price were grist to the novelist's mill in the early nineteenth century, but in this case there is a link between Thomas Love Peacock and George and Justina Jeffreys, the young couple who in 1815 found themselves in the happy position of being able to build a Regency Gothic castle as their new home near Machynlleth.

In 1810-11 the twenty-five year old Peacock, an aspiring poet, spent most of the year in Wales, lodging in Maentwrog, and also visiting Tywyn, Aberystwyth, Devil's Bridge and other places. It is known that he visited the intellectual widower Edward Scott of Bodtalog, and had already met his daughter Justina, who was some two years Peacock's junior. Scholars believe that the characters of Anthelia and her father in his second novel, *Melincourt*, were modelled on Edward Scott and Justina. Anthelia is described as a highly rational young woman brought up and educated in solitude by a man of *great acquirements and of a retiring disposition*.

Possibly the impecunious Thomas Love Peacock had romantic intentions towards Justina: he had certainly been engaged before, to Fanny Faulkner and had been rejected by that young woman's relatives. If so, his ambition was not fulfilled, for in 1814 Justina married someone with much more ready money, George Jeffreys, a young Shrewsbury lawyer, recently greatly enriched as a result of his elder brother's death. They promptly embarked on building a castle, a much smaller echo of the one which Robert Smirke was building at Eastnor for the 1st Earl Somers, Lord Lieutenant of Herefordshire at the same time. By 1818 their fashionable new home had been completed, on land which had belonged to the Jeffrey's family since the mid eighteenth century, but had hitherto been an industrial investment, for the mining of silver and lead, and the milling manufactories which could be set up on the fast flowing stream descending to the Dovey estuary. The location, on a bluff overlooking the estuary would formerly have been very remote, but with the arrival of the new turnpike road to Machynlleth, a sinuous drive could take the visitor through castellated gateposts and up through woodland to the castle above. Here the visitor would find a pretty castle, with round, octagonal and square towers and chimneys, flanked by plantations of beech, silver fir and sweet chestnut, and commanding a panoramic view over the estuary towards Snowdonia.

At a distance inland was a serviceable walled kitchen garden, not equipped with hot walls and greenhouses, but with bee boles set in one wall to yield honey and aid in fertilization. The house boasted a pretty octagonal library with views out over the Dovey – George or Justina were more literate than many a hunting Cardiganshire squire and his wife.

In 1820 Thomas Love Peacock, now employed at East India House, proposed by letter to Jane Gryffydd, daughter of the Vicar of Maentwrog whom he had last seen as a child in 1811. She came to stay with his old friend Justina Jeffreys and her husband at the castle in order that she and Peacock might be married by banns at Eglwysfach chapelry.

It is quite easy to overlook the role of women in the choice and style of home and landscape, while they may in fact have been highly influential. Justina's friendship with Thomas Love Peacock, her father's intellectual connections, and the very fact that her Shrewsbury-born husband chose to make his permanent home in remote Wales, all suggest that her influence may have been significant and her story merits closer inspection.

Justina had grown up at Bodtalog, a small country house near Tywyn, as the child of the bookish intellectual Edward Scott and his wife, the widow Louisa de Saumaise. But all was not as it seems, for Justina was not born a Scott. She was born in Jamaica in 1787 the daughter of the premier army man then posted to the island, Captain Charles McMurdo of the 3rd East Kent Regiment 'the Buffs' and a young woman called Susan Leslie. In eighteenth century Jamaica, bastardy was a very common phenomenon; on most pages of the parish birth records the children born in wedlock are the exception rather than the rule. I cannot believe that the church actively approved of this situation, but its clergy were diligent in recording the facts. Fathers are normally named, and race and status were a matter of record.

The parish register shows that Susan Leslie was a free mulatto, who underwent baptism into the Anglican church at the same time as her new daughter. A mulatto is a specific term, it means she had one black parent, and given the social structure of the slave economy it is highly likely that that black parent was a woman and a slave.

Justina's conception was more than a one night stand, for two years later her brother was born, also sired by Captain McMurdo, and named Charles McMurdo. There might have been more illegitimate McMurdos were it not for the fact that Captain McMurdo's posting in Jamaica came to an end, and he was sent off to Canada, where he eventually married a well-connected young woman from a loyalist family, named Isabella Coffin and started a second family. His first legitimate son was named Charles Alured McMurdo (the unusual second name being a nod to the Governor of Jamaica, Alured Clarke, under whom McMurdo had served).

Susan Leslie remained in Jamaica, and must, I believe, have been a handsome and sought-after young woman. She was soon the partner of a Scottish doctor, John Wright, by whom she had two more sons. She was, or in her lifetime became, a woman of property for her will, written on a visit to London in 1801, distributes her land, buildings and slaves among her three sons, and names both the fathers as executors of the will.

It is touching that in the will she leaves to Justina her *apparel, trinkets and her silver spoons*. In a subsequent codicil she rescinds these small gifts because her daughter has been amply provided for by McMurdo. So how had McMurdo provided?

Justina had been removed from her mother and adopted by Edward Scott, who during the Jamaica years had been Captain McMurdo's junior officer, First Lieutenant

in the same regiment. Edward, an impecunious younger son of an aristocratic Kent family had no children of his own, but when Justina was just three years old he had married, possibly for money, the wealthy widow Louisa, who happened to be the widow of his first cousin Count Louis de Saumaise. It was through Louisa, daughter of Welshman Lewis Anwyl, that he wound up living comfortably as the squire of Bodtalog with Louisa and Justina. I would speculate that when Justina was five or six years old she was shipped off to her new 'uncle'. She must have been quite young to have been so well-educated and nurtured as a Welsh gentlewoman, but not so young that her brother Charles did not remember her. While there is no evidence that the siblings ever met again, by the age of 20 Justina's brother Charles McMurdo was in Limehouse, London founding a family of several generations of boat builders. He and his descendants repeatedly named their daughters Justina.

Although Justina is named as Justina Scott in the marriage register at Tywyn her paternity was no secret, it was known to the Jeffreys family into which she married, and she identified her birthplace, Jamaica, in the census. Her high-status white father, McMurdo, would have been a subject of pride rather than shame, just as Mary Seacole, who we now venerate for her blackness, was openly proud of her Scottish military father. Justina's story is reminiscent of other examples of rapid social mobility of the mixed race offspring of English and Welsh gentlemen in the eighteenth century. The purchaser in 1803 of the Piercefield estate near Chepstow, for example, was the mixed race Nathaniel Wells who became the high sheriff of Monmouthshire.

George and Justina seem to have enjoyed a nice life in their pretty castle, and produced eight children all baptised at Eglwysfach church. Justina's relationship with her adoptive parents also appears to have been good, two of her children bear the names Edward and Louisa, and when the very elderly Edward Scott eventually died aged 90 his estate, barring various legacies, was placed in trust for Justina for her lifetime. The couple died not far apart, George in 1868 and Justina less than two years later, leaving their estate to pass to their eldest Edward and then to a second son, Charles. Three unmarried daughters lived in cottages on the Glandyfi estate. The later Victorian period saw the landscape enhanced with conifers and a good selection of hybrid rhododendrons and other shrubs.

Glandyfi Castle left family ownership in 1906 when it was sold by two of Justina's granddaughters. Several lines of descent from George and Justina have been extinguished in later generations, but some persist in New Zealand and America, and have been known to turn up on holiday to visit the castle. In 2020, after substantial restoration it went on the market for £2.85 million.

Note: A fuller account of Justina Jeffreys and her kin has been accepted for publication in Ceredigion IX, 2, (2022)



Left above: Hafodunos 1805, Moses Griffith, NLW
 Left below: Hafodunos June 5 1865, Frances Elizabeth Wynne from a sketchbook, NLW
 Opposite page: Hafodunos Terrace walks and the walled garden when Hafodunos was a school.



massive payment to Sandbach, Tinne & Company, the second-largest compensation made to any mercantile concern. The continued need for plantation workers in the West Indies led to the firm becoming a major coolie shipping line for indentured labour, mainly from India and China, until the 1920s. Samuel's eldest son, Henry Robertson Sandbach, was the gentleman who brought the compensation money from London to Liverpool on the abolition of slavery.

Samuel Sandbach became enormously wealthy. His fortune allowed him to move from a Liverpool townhouse to Aigburth, at that time a beautiful vale south of the city, above the Mersey, where a number of slave traders built fine houses. Samuel's mansion was called Woodlands (since demolished, its location is commemorated today by Woodlands Road) with a large garden. In 1828 he had a prize for best melon (*Gardener's Magazine*, p. 297). When Samuel retired in 1833 he turned to botany.

Hafodunos Glynis Shaw

Hafodunos is a 5,000 acre estate at Llangernyw which was bought by the merchant slave trader Samuel Sandbach in 1830. He was following in the footsteps of fellow Liverpool slavers, John Chambres-Jones of Bryn Eisteddfod and Richard Wilding of Llanrhaeadr Hall in buying a Denbighshire property.

Samuel was born in Tarporley, Cheshire, son of an inn-keeper and farmer. In 1789 he joined his uncle, who had made a fortune on a plantation, in Grenada. Samuel soon bought land in Tobago and a plantation called Respect in Grenada. In 1790 he joined a trading company which was founded in 1782 in Demerara, then under Dutch rule. In 1804 Samuel set up a Liverpool branch. Tinne, a Huguenot connected to the Dutch embassy in London joined the firm in 1813 and Sandbach, Tinne & Co in Liverpool became the company headquarters. Samuel's business partnerships became interwoven with his family by marriage, and they became known as the Rothchilds of Demerara. Samuel dominated the growing firm, which owned ships and plantations, and traded sugar, molasses, rum, coffee and tropical hardwoods from the West Indies to Liverpool and Glasgow. They also traded slaves from the Gold Coast (today Ghana) and became by far the largest owner of plantations and slaves in what became British Guiana (now Guyana). In 1807 the Abolition Act outlawed the Transatlantic Slave Trade, but slavery remained legal in the British Colonies. Sandbach was a member of the West Indian Association of Liverpool, a group which lobbied to receive compensation for the loss of their slaves. The Abolition Act 1833 resulted in a

The Hafodunos manor house with seven gables above a garden terrace had been built for the Lloyd family in 1674. Hafodunos was an astute purchase for a man interested in plants as it was formerly the home of John Lloyd (1750–1815), who had a wide interest in the natural sciences including botany, and a Fellow of the Royal Society. Lloyd was a close friend of Sir Joseph Banks and mentions his garden in 1783 when he wrote to Banks of an earthquake experienced in his garden: *Two of my sisters and a gentleman were walking upon the terrace in the garden by the side of a wall: they all perceived the noise, at first as if at a distance; but when it was greatest they perceived the wall to shake...*

In 1783 Lloyd tried to persuade Elizabeth Baker, formerly at Hengwrt, to become a housekeeper at Hafodunos as Lloyd was moving to an estate of his own but didn't want to leave the furnished family home empty. He expected to continue to spend several months of the year at Hafodunos, where he kept an agent, two maids and a gardener as he wanted to keep an eye on his new tree plantations. At Lloyd's death in 1815 his estates were left to his unmarried sisters and Hafodunos became the property of his nephew Thomas Hugh Clough in 1821.

Hafodunos means rest for one night as, according to tradition, the body of St Winifred rested here one night after her death as abbess of Gwytherin before being carried to the shrine at Shrewsbury cathedral. Hafodunos is beautifully situated, with the house overlooking a dingle with a stream, crossed by a rustic bridge and small cascade, which flows another 400 yards before passing through the middle of the old walled gardens with slop-



Terraced garden at Hafodunos 1950s when a School images courtesy Ms Gill Slater, Llangernyw, NLW

ing banks on each side. As a Fellow of the Royal Society Lloyd would have had unrivalled opportunities to receive the seed and plants of the earliest imports of some of the oldest and original plants in cultivation.

With the purchase of Hafodunos the Sandbach family was listed in *Burke's Landed Gentry*. Samuel was successively Bailiff, Coroner and Mayor of Liverpool, High Sheriff of Denbighshire in 1831 and a Justice of the Peace for Lancashire. He was also a founding shareholder of the Bank of Liverpool, renamed Martins Bank in 1918 and later bought by Barclays. Samuel also established a company to help landowners drain their properties. By the 1840s Samuel had returned to Woodlands in Aigburth where he died in 1851.

Samuel's sons succeeded as partners in Sandbach, Tinne & Co in 1833. Henry had married Margaret Roscoe in 1832, a minor poet and granddaughter of William Roscoe, an historian, art collector, lawyer and banker. Roscoe was also an early abolitionist who published pamphlets attacking slavery and a long poem in two parts called *The Wrongs of Africa* (1787–1788). As an MP for Liverpool in 1806 he helped to get the Abolition Bill through parliament and subsequently lost his seat, as much of the prosperity of Liverpool was based on the slave trade.

One might wonder what Margaret, granddaughter of a slave abolitionist, and Henry, son of a slave trader, could possibly have in common and one answer is botany. In 1803 Liverpool opened the first publicly sponsored botanic garden and one of its founders and first president was William Roscoe. He enlisted the help of the merchants who instructed their agents and ships' captains to bring back rare specimens on their return

journeys and encouraged their interest in botanical science; particularly as the economically valuable plants were crucial to the colonial commerce.

By 1820 the Liverpool Botanic Garden was gaining world-wide recognition for its collection of orchids, many of which came from the Liverpool merchant shareholders and plant collectors who donated specimens to the garden. The Botanic Garden also began to fund botanical expeditions: In 1809-11 John Bradbury led an expedition to seek rare plants in America. Roscoe himself studied the Monandrian plants (including the *Canna*, *Maranta*, *Zingiber genera*) and in 1804 was elected a fellow of the Linnean Society. Roscoe's *Monandrian Plants of the Order Scitamineae, chiefly drawn from living specimens in the Botanic Garden at Liverpool* was published in 1828. A number of the 112 plates were drawn by his daughter-in-law, the botanical artist Mrs. Edward Roscoe (née Margaret Lace). Her own work *Floral Illustrations of the Seasons: Consisting of The Most Beautiful, Hardy and Rare Herbaceous Plants, Cultivated in the Flower Garden*, was published in 1829. It included the broad-leafed penstemon and the California poppy, both from the west coast of North America, which were among the earliest flowers collected on the west coast to be grown in British gardens. Her daughter (also named Margaret), Henry Sandbach's wife, helped with the illustrations and was a regular visitor at Allerton Hall, then Roscoe's home. Allerton Hall, bought by the city in 1926, stands in the park now known as Clarke Gardens. The Grade II* house was probably built for the slave-trader and MP John Hardman who bought the estate in 1736 with his brother James.

Henry Sandbach became a patron of the botanical garden and in 1832 William Darlington, a Botanist in Pennsylvania, wrote to Sir William Jackson Hooker, the Professor of botany at the University of Glasgow, that he was sending a box of botanical specimens in the care of Henry R Sandbach of Liverpool. Henry was one of the sponsors of Thomas Drummond's plant hunting expedition to America. In 1835 Drummond wrote that he was sending Hooker, then Director of the Glasgow Botanic

things by a vessel going direct to Liverpool. Some plants were divided amongst Drummond's subscribers. Two boxes were sent to Henry Sandbach Esquire to go on the vessel 'Henry'; they contained *three species of Yucca*, possibly new to cultivation, and a new moss found on the trunks of the Palmetto.

In 1837 Curtis's Botanical Magazine, Volume 63, published a drawing by Henry of a beautiful orchideous plant, native of Trinidad,and of Demerara brought by Capt. Bispham, with several other rarities, to the garden of CS Parker. (Henry's friend in Liverpool). Henry and his new wife settled at Woodlands in Aigburth before taking a two year tour of Europe. In 1840 they took up permanent residence at Hafodunos and Henry embarked on a programme of improvements across the estate. He invested in the tenanted farms, improved housing, agricultural buildings, animal and crop husbandry, improved drainage, built the road between Abergele and Llanwrst, built a new school for Llangernyw and a church at Llanddewi, providing a great deal of employment in Llangernyw and its neighbourhood.

Over the next 12 years Henry and Margaret developed the 22 acres of gardens and pleasure grounds of Hafodunos. The old walled gardens became highly productive with a long range of glass for the cultivation of peaches, nectarines, and figs. There was also a vinery, and the gardener grew tomatoes, cucumbers and melons as well as ornamental plants such as chrysanthemums, begonias and cyclamens. The vegetable garden was divided by mature yew hedges. From the house a wide terraced garden led to the dingle and woodland. Shady walks among trees and shrubs were developed on the opposite bank of the dingle, crossing the stream. Trees and shrubs seldom found associated together in one place, and some indeed rarely seen beyond the walls of a botanic garden, were planted at Hafodunos.

A letter from Charles Sandbach Parker to Sir William Jackson Hooker on 14 May 1843 informed Hooker of his arrival at Southampton from Paris. Charles S Parker was a pupil of De Candolle who assisted William Roscoe in his monograph on Monandrian plants. Parker collected in North America, Guyana and the West Indies with a special interest in Pteridophytes which became a feature of the Hafodunos garden. He and Mr Parker intended to visit Hooker before his return to Liverpool. Parker added that he would like to show his companion Miss Sandbach the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. He also mentioned that Henry Sandbach and his wife would be joining him. This was soon after Kew Gardens were transferred from the crown in 1840 with Sir William Hooker as director.

Botany is often the subject of poetry by Margaret Sandbach. One poem described the garden at Hafodunos, published in 1850, in *Aurora, and Other Poems*:

*Here our garden's flowery ground
Spreads a loved enchantment round;
Here the rhododendron bed
shows spring its brilliant red;*

*rich and rare, of eastern birth,
Nursed in our ambitious earth;
There beside the murmuring brook,
Azaleas light and lovely look;
Daphne's fragrance scents the air,
And there stems the lilies rear.
here the pinks so small and sweet,
Flower mine eye delights to greet,
Favourite flowers! A gift to me
from one we never more shall see.
Roses spread their welcome bloom,
And their own unique perfume;*

Henry was an enthusiastic and scholarly arboriculturist who developed a fine conifer collection and employed the Scottish forester David Guthrie from around 1840 for over 32 years. Henry was a member of the Royal Scottish Arboricultural Society and had close friendship with the eminent Scottish horticulturalist Thomas Methven of Edinburgh who visited Hafodunos to see the trees. There were many rare and beautiful conifers including a large *Tsuga mertensiana*, *Juniperus recurva* (the weeping Indian Juniper) said to have been planted in front of the house about 1822 and many species of *Abies* and *Picea*. The *Picea religiosa*, a lovely silver fir introduced from Guatemala, a perfectly symmetrical *Abies albertiana* (Prince Albert's Fir), and *Sciadopitys verticillata* (umbrella pine) were among the many trees admired and measured for their size at Hafodunos. As Hafodunos lies between 700-800 ft above sea level and not far from the sea with considerable wind exposure there was much interest as to which species could thrive in this landscape. Walks which ran past the trees had to be moved, sometimes more than once, as the trees grew.

When Samuel Sandbach died in 1851 Henry inherited Hafodunos and Woodlands but sold the latter. Sadly, Margaret died the following year from breast cancer in 1852 aged just 40. Henry built a new school in Llangernyw as a memorial and placed a stained glass memorial portrait window by Ballantyne of Edinburgh in St Digain's Church, which he had restored earlier. Margaret was fondly remembered for sharing her love of floriculture with the cottagers by helping them to plant flower gardens and shrubberies and had established a Cottage Garden Improvement Society in Llangernyw in 1845, which was one of the earliest such societies.

Henry remarried in 1855 to Elizabeth, the youngest daughter of Martin Williams who had bought the Bryngwyn estate in 1813 with its handsome Palladian-style house designed by Robert Mylne in 1774 and its 60 acres landscape designed by William Emes. Martin Williams was descended from the Williams family of Pant Howell in Carmarthenshire, who had made their fortune in Jamaica with cattle farming and a sugar plantation at Old Hope, Westmoreland. Henry's son Major General Arthur Edmund Sandbach and his wife, the Hon. Ina Douglas-Pennant of Penrhyn Castle, inherited both Bryngwyn and Old Hope in 1903.

Henry continued plant collecting and fortunately many of the trees at Hafodunos withstood the harsh winter of



Above: Walled garden and glasshouses at Hafodunos c 1885 John Thomas, NLW
Below: The yew hedges in the walled gardens c 1950s, image courtesy Ms Gill Slater, Llangernyw, NLW



In 1883 an elaborate Messenger Conservatory was added to the house, designed by Gilbert Scott's son John Oldrid Scott. This housed camellias, ferns and the walls and pillars were covered with *Lapageria*, *Tasconias*, *Plumbagos* and *Passiflora*. By 1886 the garden had developed a large and judiciously selected collection of herbaceous and Alpine plants, the former cultivated in beds....

Henry also became a keen ornithologist; he arranged the bird collections of the Royal Institution and at Knowsley. When Henry died in 1895 his heir Colonel Samuel Sandbach, also an ardent arboriculturist continued the planting of trees and shrubs and visitors continued to enjoy the remarkable trees and gardens at Hafodunos. The Transactions of the Royal Scottish Arboricultural Society of 1895 noted two remarkably fine tulip trees, *Liriodendron tulipifera*. Many of the Hafodunos trees are described in *The Trees of Great Britain and Ireland* by Henry John Elwes and Augustus Henry in seven volumes published in 1906-13 and reprinted in 2019.

When the Sandbachs left Hafodunos Colonel Gee took a lease of the estate, who died on the bank of the River Chwythlyn, Llangernyw in 1912. In 1930 the house was sold but the family retained much of the estate. Kent House School for girls was evacuated to Hafodunos from Sale during the war. When the school closed in 1969, Hafodunos became an accountancy college owned by Caer Rhun Hall in the 1970s and after that, a residential home for the elderly which failed in 1993. The unused buildings fell into disrepair and succumbed to dry rot. In 2001 plans for a hotel and 70 lodges on the site raised many objections and in 2004 the property suffered an arson attack. Hafodunos was sold once again in 2010.

The grounds have suffered many losses of valuable trees and the conservatories are empty of plants. Recent efforts have been made to restore the gardens and to retain what is left of the landscape with its terraces and woodland dell, but the building is still in dire want of repair.

1860-61 although they suffered elsewhere.

Between 1861-66 Henry replaced the old Hafodunos manor with a new house designed by George Gilbert Scott in the Venetian style. The three storey house with a clock tower and sculpture gallery (Henry and his first wife Margaret were important patrons and friend of the sculptor John Gibson RA, who had been supported and patronised in his early career by William Roscoe) lay more or less on the footprint of the old house but was re-orientated so that the main rooms overlooked a long south facing terraced garden looking across the dingle. Mary Howitt, the poet, and author of the famous poem *The Spider and the Fly*, was a family friend. She described the garden on one of her visits in 1866, soon after the new house was finished, published in *Mary Howitt: Volume 2: An Autobiography* (Mifflin, 1889): *where tulip-trees, great magnolias, hemlocks and other pines from America mix with native oaks and beeches, beyond where ferns from all parts of Great Britain, Ireland, Switzerland, and New Zealand grow with curious hardy plants from the Continent, and a winding walk leads to the old kitchen gardens, with their clipped yew hedges.....the drawing room opened onto the terrace, gay with masses of sweet scented flowers,...*

Henry maintained an interest in orchids: in 1873 *The Gardener VI* reported that a quantity of *Orchis* and *Ophrys* from Italy were received at Hafodunos - many while still in flower. Most survived and flowered after a winter in a cold frame.



Mynydd Llandegai from the slopes of Moel y Ci. The cottages are shown with their long plots © Stemonitis

Penrhyn Castle Glynis Shaw

The Hafodunos conifer collection was only rivalled in North Wales by the rich collection in the park at Penrhyn Castle, including large specimens of *Cunninghamia sinensis*, *Cephalotaxus pedunculata fastigiata* as well as many of the rarer species of *Abies*, *Picea* and *Pinus*.

The fortune of Richard Pennant, a slave owner, anti-abolitionist MP and Irish peer who became the first Baron Penrhyn in 1783, was based on the largest plantation holdings in Jamaica. The Pennants originally came from Flintshire. Pennant was Chairman of the West India Committee, an organisation of merchants and plantation owners. From 1788 he chaired a special sub-committee to organise opposition to the abolition of slavery. Pennant never saw his plantations at first hand as he relied on agents to run them and wrote to his agents that his slaves and cattle should be well treated. At one time Pennant owned nearly 1,000 slaves and a place in Jamaica is called Pennant.

Pennant acquired the Penrhyn estate in Caernarfonshire on his marriage in 1765 to Anne Susannah Warburton, the daughter of General Hugh Warburton. Richard Pennant was able to rebuild Penrhyn Castle with the proceeds of his Jamaican sugar production that used hundreds of slaves. Money from sugar and rum also allowed Pennant to make substantial investments in the estate. From 1782 he established the North Wales slate industry, and the Penrhyn Slate Quarry became the largest and most productive slate quarry in the world.

As well as the well documented park and garden of Penrhyn Castle, now owned by the National Trust, the sugar and slate fortunes of the Penrhyn estate changed a far wider landscape. This included the enclosure of huge areas in Llanllechid and the Llandygái parish on the lower slopes of the Ogwen valley in Snowdonia, creating estate farms and quarry facilities.

Higher up the valley, at Mynydd Llandygái, a distinctive pattern of cottage gardens can be seen with unusually large and long plots in front of the houses. This is said to be based on the slave housing pattern which provided provision grounds, common in Jamaica. Slaves were expected to grow food to sustain and improve their diet otherwise dependent on imported rations when not occupied with forced labour.

James Grainger in 1764 advocated provision grounds for slaves. Grainger was an Ameliorationist, who believed the slave system should be reformed so that better treated and better fed slaves would be more productive. Plantation owners believed that provision grounds would save costs on imported food and that the slave attachment to the garden plot would reduce the numbers of runaways. In *Seeds of Memory* the botanical legacies of the African Diaspora have been explored by the professor of geography at UCLA, Judith Carney. In the West Indies it led to a pioneering cultivation of food crops and developed a cuisine which was a fusion of African, Creole, Amerindian, Indian, Chinese and European.

The slave gardens became an important part of the local economy as any surplus could be sold in the market. Many ex-slaves from the Pennant estates in Jamaica took the family name and today some now own a considerable acreage in Jamaica.

Cultivating the plots at Mynydd Llandygái helped with local food production in a remote location far from any market. In the Napoleonic period the Penrhyn estate encouraged quarrymen to grow potatoes. Today many of these plots lie derelict which is not surprising considering the challenges of growing anything on such an inhospitable landscape.

The family also created a special landscape at Ogwen Bank. This was an elegant cottage ornée designed by Benjamin Wyatt in 1792. The cottage was sited on the

Ogwen Bank, Bethesda, c.1815, Cambria Depicta, 1816, Edward Pugh.

Bank of the River Ogwen, beside fine meadows outside Bethesda, opposite the slate quarries, as a showpiece arcadian experience. Visitors could be provided with refreshments otherwise unavailable. There was a lavish display of slate both externally and internally. Early accounts detail a dairy, and between the kitchen and stables visitors could rest in an elegant bayed sitting room overlooking the river. A piggery, poultry yard and potato-steaming furnaces to provide fodder for the pigs were sited behind the house. Water-powered mills were used for breaking gorse and churning butter. However, it was the remarkable landscape of

Ogwen Bank that most impressed visitors. Catherine Hutton's *Tour of Wales*, in 1800 writes: *On a green bank above a river, stands an elegant cottage called Ogwen Bank, built by Lady Penrhyn, and surrounded by a flower garden; a thing utterly unknown before, in these desert wilds. Her ladyship frequently brings cold provisions, and dines in this retreat.*

Richard Fenton's diary noted that he visited on *Wednesday, July 25th, 1810, ...On the right, not far from the Quarry of Slates, saw a Neat Villa, a new creation out of a spot lately covered with rocky excrescences and surrounded by bog and turbary, now displaying pleasure grounds, grove, and gardens walled and cropped with fruit, and fine meadows, occupied by a superintendent of the Mines, called Bryn Derw....*

Fenton in *Tours in Wales (1804-1813)* writes: *The Entrance to this little Paradise of sweets is through an avenue, the sides of which are decorated with knots of flowers in the form of Baskets of different shapes, with handles covered and wreathed with creepers of various sorts. To the right a winding walk through a plantation takes you to the mushroom walk, over rocky ground mixed with mossy and short grassy spots, where artificial mushrooms are scattered nicely imitative of nature, and a few of a gigantick size serving as seats.*

The cottage was set in pleasure grounds, and according to Fenton; *a happy mixture of kitchen, flower, fruit Garden and shrubbery, including an Apiary so contrived and placed as to admit of seeing that wonderful insect at work, and supplying Virgin honey without the usual murderous process.....*

Ogwen Bank's picturesque landscape is also described in *A Journal of a Tour into N. Wales* by Sophia Hoare, 1808: *the Cottage is highly ornamented on the outside – and the most lovely Plants & Flowers growing in at the Windows in the highest state of perfection & luxuriance – Quantities of large Trees beside and a pretty little winding*



Walk down to the Waterfall which is a beautiful Object from the House.

Although some of the plantations survive, the arcadian landscaped gardens have long been lost. Today Ogwen Bank is a holiday park for caravans and lodges set within 12 acres of woodland.

Erratum: Memorial Garden at Panton Place

It is thanks to Hazel Formby that we can correct the item in the last Bulletin concerning the octagonal pillar, which bears the date 1855, in the Memorial Garden at Panton Place, Fron Park Holywell. This stone was not from the churchyard but was removed from its original site in Well Street where Chapel Street branched left. When the Holywell inner ring road was built the area was demolished so the stone was removed to the Memorial Garden.

The memorial monument to Sergeant TE Roberts was from St James Churchyard where it was erected in 1857. Roberts died at the age of 29 trying to save the life of an injured Company Officer at the storming of Redan, Sevastopol, in the Crimean War, and his monument was funded by subscription of his surviving colleagues. As the monument had fallen into disrepair it was restored and removed to the more prominent position in Panton Place in 2017. It was rededicated by a direct descendent of Sgt Luke O'Connor who was a friend and comrade of Sgt Roberts, who himself was injured in the battle but survived and was later awarded the Victoria Cross.



A bird's eye view of the state, Thomas Hornor in 1815

A Heritage landscape Awaits Angharad Phillips

The Regency Restoration at the National Botanic Garden of Wales was a five-year project which has restored features of a Regency period landscape, created in the late 18th and early 19th century for Sir William Paxton, in what is now Waun Las National Nature Reserve.

The parklands were an early example of Picturesque ideals being utilised in landscape design, characterised by the contrasts that nature can show – at one moment, beautiful tranquillity, and at the next the drama of tumbling water over cascades, a weir, and waterfall. We have access to six of the fifteen paintings by Thomas Hornor who was invited by Sir William Paxton to paint a series of viewpoints throughout the estate in 1815. The intricate details in these paintings of the parkland and lakes have provided the designers and engineers with a wealth of information on which plans for the restoration were based.

Over the last three years, the restoration site has been a hive of activity. The very warm summer of 2018 bore witness to large machines undertaking the mammoth task of removing 22,000m³ of silt from Llyn Mawr which had built up over the preceding decades. Clay was then extracted from borrow pits within the adjacent fields to create the dam and this was compacted with a machine called a pad foot or sheep's foot roller. During Paxton's time this compaction would have been carried out by families using wheelbarrows and flocks of sheep – hence the modern machine's name. Each layer of compaction was tested with geotechnical tools, to ensure the dam would meet stringent Reservoir Act requirements. Llyn Mawr is one of the largest lakes at the Botanic Garden – over 68,000m³ in size, that's nearly three times bigger

than the existing lakes combined! The dam is 350m long, and has three spillways to take water over the dam. Spillway one is used in everyday conditions, while the other two are engineered to cope with bigger floods.

Llyn Felin Gât was also transformed, with a natural looking cascade created with a long weir. There is a rustic handcrafted oak bridge running over the weir, so that visitors can stand with the water gently cascading beneath their feet. The project's talented heritage stonemason, Selwyn Jones, was instrumental in the restoration. He was responsible for the refurbishment of a Grade II listed bridge, Llyn Mawr's cascade (spillway one), the historic cascade walls at Llyn Felin Gât, and the waterfall. To enable Selwyn to work on this iconic waterfall, cantilevered scaffolding was erected which was quite a feat of engineering in itself and the water was diverted via a pipe to the side of the waterfall. In Thomas Hornor's painting the bridge looks somewhat suspended in mid-air but this is definitely not the case with our new bridge, which is firmly fixed!

There are six bridges in total which link up and provide a series of walking circuits which snake through the landscape. The two steel bridges fabricated in Swansea by Afon Engineering were craned into place in August 2019. The four remaining bridges were installed during the summer of 2020.

One of the most important parts of the landscape restoration are the paths. They tend to go unnoticed, but provide the network that links the features, and draw visitors into the landscape. The project has seen a new path through Fairy Wood created that meanders past the fairy houses and toadstools, providing glimpses of Llyn



Above left: Bridge and cascade at Llyn Felin Gât. Right: The waterfall fully restored Below: Drone picture of the fully restored Llyn Mawr which is the Garden's largest lake

Mawr and the parklands beyond. A viewing platform, hidden for over a century, gives you the opportunity to see and feel the vast scale of Llyn Mawr whilst also giving you a look at the two steel bridges and the vast dam.

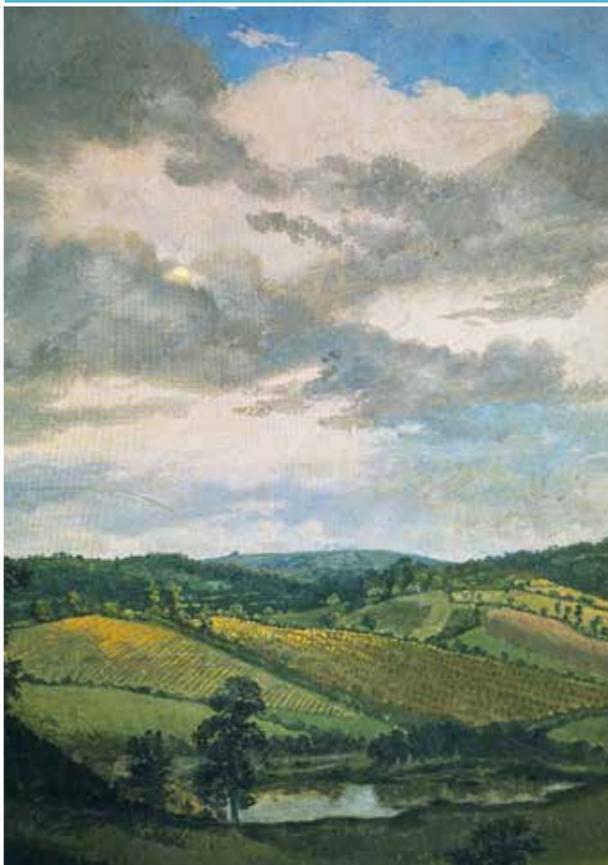
Sadly, due to the Covid pandemic, the final completion and the opening of the restoration site was delayed last year but on Saturday 27th March 2021 the Garden in accordance with Welsh Government restrictions reopened to visitors and this included the restoration site. Over the last few weeks, it's been wonderful to see visitors exploring this new area of the Garden and enjoying it as much as the project team has enjoyed restoring it over the last three years.

Come and visit very soon to see this amazing transformation for yourself!

The Garden Shed

The Welsh First Minister revealed he was been self-isolating in a garden shed during the coronavirus pandemic. Mark Drakeford said his wife and mother are shielding due to their underlying health conditions, so he's been taking extra precautions.

The shed is *very miniature* but *has enough in terms of facilities to be able to get by in*, the First Minister added.



The pool at Pencerrig. Thomas Jones 1772 V&A



The Old Oak Pencerrig, watercolour Thomas Jones 1795 Radnor Museum,

Study of Rocks, near Pencerrig, Wales 1796, Watercolor on medium, moderately textured, cream laid paper Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection



Pencerrig House Sue Reeves

The Brecon & Radnor branch have been campaigning for far too long to find a resolution for Pencerrig, a Grade II house and garden in Llanelwedd, Powys.

The Tudor mansion belonged to the Powell family from 1500. In 1720 Pencerrig was sold to the Hope family before being inherited by Hannah Jones of Trefonnen. Hannah and Thomas Jones built a new mansion on the site of the old house in 1760. The Jones were an important family of Radnorshire Dissentors who derived their wealth from the famous mineral springs discovered in Llandrindod Wells in the 1730s.

Thomas Jones II (1742-1803) was the second son, who unexpectedly inherited the Pencerrig estate from his brother, Major John Jones, in 1787. Thomas was intended for the church but chose instead to be an artist. In 1761 following a year in William Shipley's drawing school he became a pupil of Richard Wilson for two years training in classical landscape painting. Jones kept a detailed diary, *Memoirs of Thomas Jones of Penkerrig* (NLW) which remained unpublished until 1951, which is today recognised as an important and entertaining account of an artist's training and his time spent in Italy in the second half of the eighteenth century. Today Jones is much admired for a series of original plein air studies of Rome and Naples where he stayed between 1776-83. The earliest of his plein air works were made in oil on paper on a visit to the Pencerrig estate in July 1772, after an absence of five years, (see above).

His Welsh connections probably led to the Thomas

Johannes commission for views of Hafod in 1786. His only surviving drawings of that visit are found in the *Hafod Sketchbook*. Jones had numerous commissions to paint Picturesque scenes around country houses in England, which probably influenced the Pencerrig landscaping.

On gaining his inheritance Jones married his Danish lover, Maria Moncke, whom he met in Italy where they had two young daughters. They returned to Pencerrig in 1789 and Jones settled down as a country squire, improving his estate, developing new plantations and a New Garden, only painting for himself in his spare time.

Pencerrig means 'at the top of the rocks.' The house stands well, sited above 50 acres of parkland. In 1791 Thomas wrote a poem entitled *Petraeia* about his love for Pencerrig (cerrig, 'stone' in Welsh, is 'petra' in Greek). Jones records his expenses in developing the Pencerrig landscape in the *Day Book of Thomas Jones, Pencerrig 1757-1797* (NLW).

Jones refers to both an Old and New Garden, which seem to be walled gardens. In 1791 he purchased Ethiopian broccoli and American lettuce as well as 400 larch trees for a new plantation by the pigeon house. Jones was very keen to increase the tree landscape at Pencerrig and over the next five years he planted hundreds of trees; in the Great Wood behind the house with mainly oak and larch trees and transplanted 325 young oaks from his two tree nurseries into a newly enclosed planta-

tion. At Castle Hill Jones created a new enclosure with a 5 ft high drystone wall where he planted 400 scots pine, and 81 larch, spruce and sycamore trees. He also planted up the bank behind the house with 250 scots and spruce firs, where he created new walks.

Jones continued to visit and exhibit in London and in 1794 he ordered an interesting variety of trees from Watts & Co nurserymen in Piccadilly, including:

100 Balm of Gilead (*Abies balsamea*) introduced to Britain from North America from 1773 for scenting the air on moist spring days.

50 white American spruce

50 black American spruce,

200 Spanish chestnut,

100 filberts, 100 stone or Italian pine,

100 pine ashes and 100 cluster pine,

which he planted in a nursery in the Old Garden. Jones also bought a quart of *Quercus ilex* acorns (about 500), which were added to the planting on the bank behind the house, in the three plantations around the house and in the Great Wood, and a box of garden seed. Jones made several purchases of garden seed and as there is no mention of flowers or shrubs they seem to have been for the productive garden. Jones' Naples accounts show that he daily bought a huge variety of fresh vegetables, fruit and salad, in the market which makes it seem certain that he would have grown as wide a variety as possible. Some trees from the garden and the bank behind the house were later planted at Castle Hill.

James Baker's *Picturesque Guide to the Local Beauties of Wales* (1794), says *there were no estates in all these parts where the native oak groves are more carefully preserved than on this which, blending with the majestic rocks and romantic hills abounding thereon, form great characters of beauty and delight.*

In 1795 Jones purchased 50 fruit trees for the New Garden including peaches, apricots, nectarines, plums, cherries and apples. Jones had already sourced pear trees and bought some beehives.

The lake which can be seen from the house is an important element of the Pencerrig landscape, first painted by Jones in 1772. By 1795 what was originally known as the Great Pool had become badly silted and Jones had it drained and dug out, a major undertaking. The Pencerrig stream was dammed on the northern side to form the enlarged lake of about five acres with an island created at its eastern end. In 1796 Jones recorded the accidental drowning of his servant Jack Smith in the garden pool.

In 1796 Jones had a reservoir made in the New Garden. The pinasters and cluster pines bought from London, which had survived the harsh winter of 1794/5, were transplanted from the Old Garden to the bank above the New Garden, to the little dingle above the Old Garden and the bank behind the house.

Jones' final construction seems to have been the building a new road farther to the east of the old main Builth Llandrindod Road which was prone to flooding.



Pencerrig lake, Percy Benzie Aberly 1877-1948, NLW

When Jones died in 1803 he had largely rebuilt the eighteenth century house and estate buildings and developed the designed landscape.

Between 1832-39 his descendants remodelled the house in the Tudorbethan style. In 1863 Miss Clara Thomas (1842-1914) was the last of the family to inherit Pencerrig. Although mainly living at Llwynmadoc, Clara spent three months of the year over Christmas at Pencerrig where one of her visitors was the Rev Kilvert of diary fame. Clara carried out improvements to the house, including a new servants' wing to form an L-shaped plan enclosing a small service courtyard and added a second drive to the Builth Road with new planting.

Following Clara's death in 1914 the property deteriorated until Pencerrig was bought by Evan-Thomas who restored the house as a shooting estate until 1952. The Pencerrig estate became fragmented after two auctions before 1978, when the present owner, a South African Indian living in Istanbul, bought the house and immediate gardens for a hotel. An ugly late twentieth century extension staff block built on the east side and a modern terrace has been added to the front of the house. The Pencerrig Gardens Hotel Ltd failed in 2009.

The Brecon & Radnorshire branch was alerted to Pencerrig's recent state when high wire mesh gates were erected by the main lodge. A site visit found that the house and gardens have gone to rack and ruin. The huge copper beech still stands on the lawn and a very large old yew survives to the right of the drive sweep. People still connected to the site aggressively objected to our enquiries. We are concerned that the fine eighteenth century landscape, so well documented by Thomas Jones, is now at risk of becoming a lost landscape.

Once the Covid problem is behind us the Brecon & Radnor branch hope to arrange a meeting with the Local Planning Authority to discuss the state of this site and how it might be saved.

15-Minute Heritage

15-minute heritage is a Cadw initiative inviting us all to step outside and discover the heritage on our doorsteps. The recent lockdowns have been a powerful reminder of the value and importance of the local environment to communities. We are encouraging people to take a closer look at their everyday surroundings to discover more about their local heritage and to strengthen connections with the place they live.

The source of the idea is a planning concept called the 15-minute city, which is a place where everyone can meet most of their needs within just a short walk of their home. Daily necessities and the services that support wellbeing are all within easy reach.

This has inspired us to think that everyone should be able to benefit from heritage within a 15 minute walk of their front door, whether they live in a city, a town, or the countryside. Not everyone has a castle on their doorstep, but everywhere has heritage that is local and personal, because every neighbourhood has been shaped by the people who have lived and worked there, and every place takes on meaning from the ways in which people have experienced it and related to it.

The objective of our 15 Minute Heritage initiative is to encourage people to step outside and discover the heritage that is on their doorstep. We are exploring a range of ways to do this and hope that as the initiative develops, it will offer many routes to encountering heritage in different forms and in unexpected places.

Telling Stories of Place: We want to explore and share different ways of looking at heritage in very different places.

Queen's Platinum Jubilee, Plant a Tree

Planting a tree is a *statement of hope and faith in the future*, says Prince Charles.

Communities across the UK are being encouraged to plant trees in an initiative to mark the Queen's platinum jubilee or a *tree-bilee*. The Queen's Green Canopy (QGC) scheme has been launched to encourage people to plant trees during the tree-planting season – October 2021 through to the end of 2022 – to mark Elizabeth II's 70 years on the throne. The official planting season, runs from October to March.

WHGT would like to contribute with planting trees in Welsh parks and gardens of historic interest. We are interested to know of anywhere where there is a lack of succession planting of park trees, the exotic specimen trees which can help with the landscape interest and biodiversity. Trees are sometimes the oldest and most interesting surviving feature of a site. We hope that trees planted today will provide the same interest and enjoyment for the future.

Many parks and gardens have seen tree losses during the recent years of stormy weather. Any member who

To do this we are using StoryMap, a proprietary web-based platform which uses maps combined with narrative text, images, and other media to create digital stories of place. We hope that these stories will inspire people to look with new eyes at what is around them. Our first StoryMap is about Bedwas, where Cadw's main office is now located. Bedwas is not particularly noted for its heritage, but a close look at its buildings reveals a fascinating story. We found part of the story in listed buildings, which provide snapshots of Bedwas from its origins as a medieval settlement to its growth as a mining community in the twentieth century. But we found a lot more by looking at its unlisted buildings. We saw prosperity and ambition reflected in the quality of its commercial and public buildings; we saw a distinctive architectural identity created out of small variations in the design, materials and detail of housing built in just a few decades around the turn of the nineteenth century. We also found excellent examples of the kinds of public housing built in the aftermath of both World Wars. We will be adding more StoryMaps over the coming months and hope to include a range of examples, including a look at the heritage in public parks.

Participation: We have prepared a new package for schools and home teaching, called **15 Minute Heritage History Detective Mission**. This invites children to investigate the history on their doorsteps and to come up with ways of sharing their findings within their communities. Find out more at

<https://cadw.gov.wales/learn/15-minute-heritage>

can recommend an appropriate tree planting should let their branch representative know so that the Trustees can arrange to get trees for planting in the autumn.

The Queen's love of trees was explored in a 2018 documentary *The Queen's Green Planet*, in which Sir David Attenborough visited Her Majesty at Buckingham Palace, and toured the grounds. The Queen has planted more than 1,500 trees around the world throughout her reign. WHGT Patron, Prince Charles, in his role as Patron of the QGC, was joined by his mother to plant the first Jubilee tree, a Verdun Oak, in the grounds of Windsor Castle in March 2021.

To help the environment and make local areas greener, people will be urged to create this special gift for the Queen, in her Platinum Jubilee year.

Jubilee tree plantings can be loaded onto an interactive map on the QGC website from October so that everyone can share and inspire others, as well as creating a green canopy of projects to cover the country.

Philip Brown

I was immensely saddened to hear of the death of Philip Brown, botanist and plantsman, who passed away on 12 February at the age of 84. Philip spent half his working life in North Wales, and countless visitors to its gardens have – mostly unknowingly – enjoyed his skill and artistry in choosing and placing trees, shrubs, ferns and flowers. Those of us lucky enough to have walked these gardens in his company will never forget his wiry energy, his brimming passion for plants, his encyclopaedic botanical knowledge, and his starbursts of observation and opinion.

Philip's love of the natural world began in childhood, spent first in Prees, Shropshire, and then in Lancashire, where he attended Bolton School – not quite as a contemporary of Roy Lancaster. After reading Natural Sciences at Christ's College, Cambridge, he moved first to Birmingham, studying bryophytes for the British Antarctic Survey, and then to the University of Leicester, where for 15 years he worked as a taxonomist in the Botanic Garden.

Here he started advising in private gardens (notably at Stoneywell, now in the hands of the National Trust), always being collected by clients in their own cars since he never learned to drive. His partner Briony, who he met when she came to him seeking advice on growing a bonsai camellia, did once try to teach him on Black Rock Sands but, she told me, "never again".

Philip's move to Wales happened in 1981, following a chance meeting with Susan Williams-Ellis in the display gardens of David Austin Roses. From then, until his retirement in 2002, he was engaged in the restoration and development of the Pleasure Grounds at Portmeirion. Exploiting every nuance of microclimate and habitat, and planting with such sensitivity that it appeared as if nature had done most of the work, he turned them into one of Britain's most magical coastal gardens: rocky slopes strewn with Chinese rhododendrons, gulleys of tree ferns and skimmias, lime-green beech woods electrified with violet *Rhododendron augustinii*.

The tender, lily-scented white rhododendrons of the Madenia clan were a particular speciality, and in assorted forms – such as 'Fragrantissimum', 'Suave' and 'Logan Early' – he planted them with panache both in the village and in the woods. Each May when I went to stay in Portmeirion, I would find a vase of them waiting for me, accompanied by copious handwritten notes. It didn't take long for me to be smitten, too.

After retirement, Philip and Briony moved to Menai Bridge, and together they formed a design and consultancy practice, Hortus Monensis. Among their projects was the restoration of Plas Rhianfa, inspired by the Loire Château of Chenonceaux, and the creation of a tree fern courtyard for Brigantia Building Bangor University which won two national awards.

Philip was also asked by Anthony Tavernor to help in restoring the walled garden and waterfall dell at Plas



Cadnant. As Anthony used to say, "I design and Philip plants." The result is another great legacy, a superb essay in plantsmanship and pictorial landscaping, spanning colour-themed herbaceous borders, bog and woodland borders, and a panoply of dazzling blue hydrangeas. Philip has been buried in Llan Ffestiniog where, on his grave, grows a cutting of that same camellia that brought him and Briony together, and where, from the churchyard, the eye travels down the valley towards Portmeirion. I shall miss him.

Stephen Lacey

Chinese cannon in an Anglesey garden

A Chinese cannon which dates back to the 1780s was found in an Anglesey garden. The family have been using the 258kg bronze cannon as a garden ornament. It dates back to 1789, during the Qianlong Period. The cannon has been with the family for about 120 years and was spotted by an expert who had come to value other items at their home as they were moving.

Duke's of Dorchester auction house valued the cannon at £100,000. Managing Director and Head of Asian Art Lee Young said that *the 258kg (40st 9lb) military cannon was a particularly unusual find in Britain, as they were seldom seen outside of Asia. You can see these a lot in places like Beijing but they are not things that will often find their way back from China so to see it in someone's back garden is a bit of a surprise.*

Wynnstay

In November 2020 WHGT Clwyd responded to a Planning consultation on Reserved Matters at Wynnstay. It relates to a housing development on an area of parkland where outline planning was granted years ago.

Members will know that Grade I Wynnstay is a very rare example of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown's work in Wales. The proposed housing is on what was once part of one of the most magnificent parkland landscapes in Wales, laid out by Capability Brown, who is internationally recognised as the most important landscape designer of his day, and one of the greatest figures in the history of Landscape Design.

It is highly regrettable that this fact and its protective heritage designation has not saved the site from development creep. The landscaping of a housing development on such a site should not only enhance these houses but acknowledge the fact that this is an exceptional development allowed on a well-documented Capability Brown heritage site. This scheme would not be allowed almost anywhere else in Britain; its landscaping should therefore be outstanding.

The first phase of the housing development of up to 319 houses is for 131 houses. The landscaping of phase 1 should set the tone with a high quality design referencing the controversial siting on part of the Wynnstay Hall parkland. An effort to recognise the 'Sense of Place' on this special site might be expected. Instead, the proposed landscaping is over suburban with a minimal park around the surviving ornamental pond with a very small children's play area for the eventual 300+ houses.

It is good news that a few oak trees by the pond will be spared and that there will be some repair to the haha. The pond, haha and oak trees are the only surviving monuments on this development site and date between 1777 and 1782. They should be more prominent in the scheme so that they can be better appreciated.

The public spaces in this scheme should reflect something of the lost idealised landscape and perhaps

replace some of the eighteenth century trees lost to weather, poor management or over maturity. Park trees are different from suburban housing-estate trees as they are planted with longevity and statuesque qualities in mind. The scheme could provide an element of succession planting for future generations. It would be good to see a Brownian tree planting in the scheme including a cedar of Lebanon or beech - a quintessential Brownian tree, with oak, evergreen oak (*Quercus ilex*), and lime (*Tilia x Europaea*) along with other plants often used by Brown.

Some properties in this development might benefit from a larger public space and smaller private space - this layout assumes everyone has the same level of garden interest. The ornamental borders in front of some of the houses are particularly suburban in style. Brown typically had grassland up to the house - and perhaps a meadow style landscaping would be more appropriate.

The boundary treatment and planting perhaps could be more sensitive to the eighteenth century parkland landscape. The dotting of trees around the gardens does not allow for individual choice nor provide any special landscape feature. A few gardens have no trees - and all the trees seem to be boundary planting. It might be better to consider small clumps of trees across a group of properties.

The varied hedge, fence, railings idea in the proposed landscaping may not look coherent - it might look as if the money has run out or that it was designed by different people at different times and emphasises the fragmentation of the site rather than providing any sense of unity.

Planning for suburbia today should surely include cycle paths and footpaths for health and well-being and provide an alternative to cars. It is important that modern landscaping on this site is of the highest quality and unique in design. Wynnstay is a national case study of a significant lost landscape and its subsequent treatment will be studied by many.

garden enthusiasts from all over the world. We have had some encouraging feedback and owe many thanks to the lecturers, two of whom were new to the skill of Zoom lecturing.

These initial lectures were offered free to our members, but an Autumn series will involve a small cost. We hope that more of you will engage with the Autumn series but please let us know if you have any particular problems and it may be possible to match those not technologically confident with someone more expert living nearby.

We would also be delighted if any members would like to join the Zoom team to help with future lectures or if you would like to suggest a subject of interest.

WHGT Zoom Lectures Joanna Davidson

With great trepidation a small band of Trustees set about learning how to run Zoom lectures this Spring. Thanks to encouragement from Trustee Advolly Richmond and David Marsh of the Gardens Trust, WHGT became more digital. Sandra Pullen from the Garden's Trust was our infinitely patient guide offering mentoring and training sessions. Four lectures in April formed part of the Garden's Trust series on Unforgettable Gardens and was intended to prepare us for running our own series in the Autumn.

The four lectures; on Hafod by Jennie Macve, Plas Cadnant by Anthony Tavernor, Aberglasney by Penny David and the National Botanic Garden of Wales by Angharad Phillips, were very successful, each viewed by

Gazebo at Nant Clwyd y Dre



The Lord's Garden, Nant Clwyd y Dre

The Inspector Declan K Beggan dismissed the Appeal concerning a planning application for a large house on the site adjacent to the Grade I Nantclwyd y Dre, Wales's oldest town house, 100 metres north of the entrance to Ruthin Castle.

The Lord's Garden lies behind Nantclwyd y Dre and is Grade II listed for its connections to Ruthin Castle with records going back to the 13th century. A restored gazebo, recorded in prints from 1715, has fantastic views over the Clwyd valley and nearby landscape. This is a particularly significant feature and prominent in the view of the garden seen from the house.

The proposed building was just 5.5 meters from the boundary wall and gazebo. The scale, height and sheer proximity of the building would have had an enormous detrimental impact on the listed garden in the Conservation Area at the heart of Ruthin.

Broiler farm at Frochas rejected

We are pleased to report that the planning application for the huge broiler chicken farm at Frochas, in a beautiful valley near Welshpool, has been rejected.

The planning was refused due to the visual impacts of the industrial scale, 7,200 sqm development for an intensive poultry unit (IPU) designed for 1 million broiler chickens for meat per year, and the adverse impacts of airborne pollution and smells from its site. The proposed broiler farm was only 300 metres from the Grade II* Llanerchydol Hall, with registered parkland and gardens, and close to the RHS garden at Dingle Nurseries, less than a mile from the centre of Welshpool High Street, a mile from Powis Castle, and close by national walking routes such as Glyndŵr's Way, meaning that the development would inevitably affect businesses and tourism.

Many thanks to members who have been involved in this campaign and also to members in The Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales (CPRW) who have been very active in campaigning against Frochas farm and similar developments.

The planning application was submitted to Powys CC on June 21, 2019 and refused in Feb 2021.

Penllergaer Giant Redwood tree felling

Enzo's Homes Ltd and their boss, Fiorenzo Sauro, tried to overturn their conviction of 2019 for destroying 73 protected trees and a landmark Giant Redwood at Swansea's Penllergaer Valley Woods. They were fined a total of £300,000 and the tree surgeon, contractor Arwyn Morgan, was fined £120,000.

Sauro and Enzo Homes appealed against the convictions and fines while Morgan appealed against the level of his fine. Barrister Annabel Graham Paul, for Swansea council, told the court that Sauro and Enzo Homes had already challenged their convictions by seeking a judicial review of the decision. This was rejected after receiving their written and oral submissions, when the case was ruled 'unarguable'.

It was ruled that Fiorenzo Sauro was properly charged over the destruction of the protected trees at the original trial after his lawyer submitted he had been convicted under the wrong subsection of the Town and Country Planning Act - an argument rejected by judge Christopher Vosper QC.

Aberglasney



Susan Bogue

We are pleased to welcome Susan Bogue, who is now the WHGT Administrator at Aberglasney and handles membership enquiries.



Grape Picker Extemporising

The Grape Picker Extemporising was part of the original garden design when Henry Avray Tipping built High Glanau Manor and laid out the gardens in 1923. The statue was removed in the 1960's but when we bought the house in 2002 I wrote to the previous owner asking them to consider selling it back as I felt it was important as part of the original design. Nearly sixteen years later they offered to sell it as they were downsizing, so at the end of last year my husband, Hilary, managed to acquire it as a present for me for a significant birthday. It is now positioned near the front door for visitors to enjoy. It is very exciting to have the Grape Picker back where he belongs!

The WHGT Small Grants Scheme contributed towards the plinth on which he now stands. The statue of a Grape Picker Extemporising, by Francisque-Joseph Duret was exhibited in Paris at the Salon of 1839. The semi-clad Neapolitan youth improvising on a mandolin has his hair dressed with fruiting vines as he leans against the coopered grape pickers barrel full of grapes.

The original bronze statue is still in the Louvre in Paris.

gardens by Donald Smith. These are all accompanied by a series of charming illustrations of nature by Professor Geyer-Kordesch, a testament to her determination to relearn skills which she had prior to her stroke.

Throughout the book we are introduced to some very interesting Scottish characters, gardens and landscapes and, having visited only a handful of Scottish gardens up to now, I feel compelled, post lockdown, to seek out and explore some of the sites so evocatively described by the authors.

This is a book for anyone who wants to understand the connection between nature and human culture. The author urges us to stop and listen to the rhythms and cycles of nature.

Since early March 2020 when Covid-19 reared its destructive head, nature has brought people solace whether it was taking up gardening or exploring green spaces on their daily lockdown walks. These experiences and the need for self care have made many of us revise our relationship with gardens and landscapes.

My only niggles were the lack of an index and some of the images in the first part could have been sharper. Nevertheless, as a garden and social historian myself I thoroughly enjoyed this book. This is a very personal book calling on us all to reflect on our gardens and their history. I wish Professor Geyer-Kordesch well as she continues to heal. In many ways gardens matter today more than ever.

There is a discount on purchases through the Luath Press website with 20% off orders over £20 with the code LUATH2020 and 30% off over £50 with LUATH3050.

<https://www.luath.co.uk/>

31 October 2021 marks the sesquicentennial anniversary of the birth of Reginald Radcliffe Cory (1871 -1934), best known in Wales for the garden he created at Dyffryn in the Vale of Glamorgan. Dyffryn has been described by Cadw as *the grandest and most outstanding Edwardian garden in Wales*. Elsewhere, he is remembered for his extremely generous donations to a wide range of organisations and individuals including the Cambridge University Botanic Garden, the Lindley Library of the Royal Horticultural Society, the British Museum and the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, as well as for his sponsorship of such plant collectors as George Forrest (1873-1932) and Frank Kingdon Ward (1885-1958). During his lifetime he knew most of the movers and shakers of the horticultural world of his day. Henry McLaren (later 2nd Baron Aberconway) of Bodnant, declared Cory to be *the most delightful of companions, courteous and unselfish, always in the highest spirits, most interestingly informed on a great number of subjects and the very best and most loyal of friends*.

To mark the 150th anniversary of Cory's birth the Royal Horticultural Society plans to bring out a publication to mark his life and achievements, but other events will depend on how well the transmission of the virus is curtailed. I have been researching Cory's life and work for the last decade and hope WHGT members might be intrigued by one of the mysteries surrounding him. It touches on his life outside horticulture and illustrates the unexpected paths down which a researcher can be drawn.

Reginald Cory was the youngest of the four children of John and Anna Cory. In the middle of the nineteenth century John and his brother Richard established Cory Brothers, a business dealing first in shipping and then in coal. It was extremely successful, made the family wealthy and the brothers became generous philanthropists. Reginald was brought up to follow his father in charitable giving and there are many organisations and individuals who benefitted from his generosity. One of these appears to have been a woman called Blanche Badcock (1892-1957).

Cory does not come across as a man who showed a marked fondness for the company of women or to have been especially attentive to them. He guarded his privacy carefully and did not marry until 1930 when Rosa Kester of Cambridge became his bride. On 6 January 1932 he made his will. This included instructions that his executors should burn all his papers at Dyffryn and his London home. The result has been that many things about his life have been difficult to ascertain. One of these concerns the following clause in his will:

I devise and bequeath free of duty all my fowl farm at Frimley Green in the County of Surrey known as Coleford Paddocks and containing some ten acres or thereabouts as it stands to Miss Blanche Badcock who is now residing there and running the poultry farm.

Until recently nobody at Dyffryn had any knowledge of his ownership of the farm and the identity of Miss Badcock has been such a mystery that the National Trust, which took over the running of Dyffryn in 2013, declared it was unlikely anything more could be discovered about the lady. This was an opinion with which I concurred until, in 2019, at a Gardens Trust event in Oxfordshire, I found myself seated beside a lady from Bristol. We chatted about our horticultural interests and the conversation came round to my research on Cory. She asked how difficult a task this was in view of the destruction of his papers. As an example, I mentioned the will and bequest to Blanche Badcock. My companion asked where the farm was – it turned out she had been brought up in Frimley and knew where it had been located, though long since replaced by houses. She put me in touch with a volunteer in the Surrey History Centre where the people with whom I've been in contact have been enormously helpful. In the last couple of years there have been the usual stops and starts involved in research. What follows shows how one thing can lead to another, resulting in a tale which strays far from matters horticultural.

There is an active research group at Dyffryn and the prospect of finding something new about Cory caused some excitement, not so much because of the possibility of revealing some snippet of salacious gossip, but to find out more about the man who had created such a marvellous garden and was renowned to be the supporter of so many good causes. Was Blanche Badcock one of these? Within days, a colleague, experienced in family history research, came up with an enormous amount of information on Blanche's family. Her father, Francis Badcock (1846-1925) was born in Taunton; by 1867 he was living in India, an employee of the Indian Civil Service. He married in 1878 but was widowed a year later when his wife died following the birth of Percy, a healthy son brought up by his grandparents in Somerset. There was a certain frisson of excitement over the possibility of a family connection with Wales when the word 'Llandudno' appeared in records following Percy's death in October 1940, only to discover that this was because the Principal Probate Registry had been relocated to the town during the Second World War. Percy's effects, amounting to £1,378 6s 11d were left to Blanche.

By 1888 Francis Badcock was an Assistant Magistrate in Bengal and in 1891 he remarried. His new wife, Adele Margaret, born in Bihar state in 1868, was the daughter of James Minden Wilson, a Scottish born Magistrate and his wife, Janet Margaret McKenzie. Their first child, Blanche Margaret Mary Badcock was born in 1892; a second daughter, Adele Joan, was born a year later. By this time Francis was a District and Sessions Judge but in 1895 he retired to England where two other children (Milden Francis and Estelle Janet) were born.

The family lived first at Detling, in Kent, where the 1901 census reported the presence of a Governess, presum-

ably for Blanche and Adele, and five servants. By 1911 the family had moved to Cheltenham where they lived in a property recorded by the enumerator as 'Not Cottage Lawn'. In fact, they lived at 1, College Lawn, an elegant house which still stands and bears an address unique in Great Britain because there is only one property so named. All four of Francis and Adele's children were there in 1911, as was the thirty-one-year-old Percy. Blanche and Adele appear to have completed their education for there was no longer a governess and the two youngest children were at school. The household still employed five servants.

Mention of Blanche is next found shortly after the outbreak of war, in December 1914, when she became a Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) nurse with the Red Cross at Suffolk Hall Hospital in Cheltenham. There she is likely to have carried out a range of positions including nursing, transport duties, and the organisation of rest stations, working parties and auxiliary hospitals. She served there as a volunteer, terminating her service in January 1917.

The hunt for Blanche then went cold with no record of her whereabouts being discovered until 1926 when her name appeared in the newspapers because she was a competitor for the Sovereign's Prize at Bisley. This very prestigious competitive event is known as either the King's or the Queen's Prize depending upon the sovereign and in the early years was restricted to those who, male or female were serving or had served in the armed forces and volunteer organisations. Blanche was not the first riflewoman to shoot in the competition - records show that one woman had taken part in 1919. An article in the same publication reported that Blanche was permitted to enter because she had been a motor driver with the Royal Army Service Corps (RASC) during the 1914-18 war. To date, no record of this has been found in the RASC records. In the competition she did well in the eliminating rounds but missed qualifying for the final by only one point. It was enough to interest the national newspapers in her life at the poultry farm, none of which mentioned Reginald Cory who may have been the owner of the farm at that time.

It is unclear when Blanche took up shooting but the claim in the newspaper that this had been *as recently as last October, so she is a greatly accomplished novice considering that some of the experts described her shooting as being as good as that of former winners of the King's Prize* seems implausible. Much more likely is the comment discovered in a Pathé News clip from 1930 which suggests Blanche may have started around 1925: *Miss Badcock has been competing for five years and there are some other women in the competition.* The speaker was Marjorie Elaine Foster (1893-1974) who seems to have been involved on the poultry farm with Blanche. In the years that followed Blanche's name was often in the sporting press, not so much for her own efforts but because Marjorie, already an up-and-coming riflewoman, was to become a greatly revered name in the shooting world.

1930 was a year in which several women excelled in areas previously assumed to have been the prerogative of men. They became the celebrities of the day. From 5-24 May Amy Johnson flew to Australia; on 5 July Winifred Brown won the King's Cup Air Race; on 19 July Marjorie Foster won the King's Prize at Bisley. She was the first woman to do so and, as a winner of the prize, had the distinction of being named Champion Shot of the Empire for the year which made her famous overnight. Over the years Blanche was almost always mentioned in the press coverage concerning Marjorie's successes which has made it possible to find snippets of information about life at the poultry farm at Coleford Paddocks in Frimley Green. It is unclear when Blanche took up residence there, but her name is recorded as being on the Electoral Registers for the property from at least 1925 to 1939.

Reginald Cory died in 1934 so, by 1938, the transfer of the business at Coleford Paddocks to Blanche was, presumably, completed, after which she would have been recognised as the owner of the farm. The 1938 Camberley Directory records her presence there and even gives her telephone number as Farnborough 494. The following year both Blanche and Marjorie Foster's names appear in both the Electoral Register and the 1939 Register which was produced in preparation for the wartime national identity card. In the years following the war both women appear in the Electoral Registers for Coleford Paddocks every year until 1957, the year of Blanche's death.

It is difficult to ascertain how things were organised at the poultry farm. Cory's name is never mentioned in the press coverage, neither do we know how Blanche and Marjorie shared the responsibilities of running the farm. Both women seem to have been active in the business but there is no indication whether they were partners in the business or whether Marjorie was employed by Blanche. Perhaps the most fascinating indication of their lifestyle is to be found in the previously mentioned Pathé News clip where Marjorie can be seen taking the eggs off to market in the sidecar of her motor bike.

Little has yet been discovered about what happened at Coleford Paddocks during the 1939-1945 war. It is understood that Marjorie was a senior commander in the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) and was badly wounded when commanding a transport company. Blanche, presumably, would have been busy on the farm helping to keep the nation fed.

Both women continued to shoot to a high standard for many years. There was a Rifle Club at Frimley Green with a small-bore rifle range on the Recreation Ground, but it seems likely, from the description in the Pathé news clip, that most of their shooting was on Saturday afternoons at the National Rifle Association at Bisley, about six miles away. This was probably through the auspices of the South London Rifle club which had moved from Staines to Bisley in 1892 - at one time it was the only club to admit women members. The names of both women featured in the national news again in the 1930s: in 1932 Blanche reached the final of the King's Prize and in 1939



Members of the 1932 Hampshire County short range championship shoot for teams of eight shooters and two target coaches. Blanche (left) and Marjorie (right) had made the highest scores of 141. Image courtesy National Rifle Association.

Marjorie was the runner-up for the same prize. It was to be many years before another woman, Joanna F. Hos-sack, was successful in the competition, winning the Queen's Prize in 2000.

The 1932 photograph above shows Blanche and Marjorie as members of the Hampshire County team, understood to be the County short range championship shoot for teams of eight shooters and two target coaches. Blanche and Marjorie are seated at opposite ends, each having made the team's highest scores of 141.

In her international shooting career Blanche's affiliation was to India, the land of her birth. In 1937 she represented the country as a reserve in the Kolapore Match, the premier short range international match in the annual National Rifle Association Meeting. The event has been in existence since 1871, the trophy being a pair of silver challenge vases named after the Rajah of Kolapore which today is competed for by teams from all over the world. As a reserve she would have had considerable responsibility, being present behind the firing point assisting her team colleagues in checking their sight settings, issuing ammunition and being prepared to take over in the event that a shooter was incapacitated in some way. In 1938 she was a shooting member of the Indian team. In 1936, 1938, 1939 and 1946 Blanche was a member of a twelve-person team competing for the Mackinnon Trophy, an international match established at Bisley in 1891, which still takes place. Each team member shot ten shots each at 900 and 1000 yards, conditions that continue today. It involves representatives of the home countries of the UK and other nations such as Australia, the USA, Canada and South Africa. In 1946 India was represented by Blanche and servicemen with Indian connections.

Blanche died on 20 January 1957, with Probate granted in London on 11 April of that year. Her effects, amounting to £7,302 10s 6d, were left to her widowed sister Estelle Janet Whyte-Melville Maunsell-Smyth.

As to how Cory came to own the farm, how he knew Blanche, when or why she began to run it, I'm afraid no evidence has been found. He must have been aware of the shooting success of the two women by at least 1930. One can only presume he approved of both Blanche's shooting prowess and her management of the farm, hence his decision in 1932 to bequeath Coleford Paddocks to her. It goes without saying that any information which can add to this tale will be most gratefully received.

To enjoy the Pathé News clip see:
<https://www.britishpathe.com/video/miss-m-e-foster/query/Foster>

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AGM 2021 7,00 2021

AGM 2021 Monday 13 September at 7.00pm

This year we are unable to run the AGM at Hay Castle as planned by Brecon and Radnor. Due to Covid disruption the works at Hay Castle will not be completed in time.

Instead we will hold a Zoom AGM open to all members.

The AGM 2021 will be held on Monday 13 September at 7.00pm with a lecture by Tony Russell on The gardens of Sir Clough Williams-Ellis (Portmeirion and Plas Brondanw).

We hope you can join us!

Booking details will be sent out with the Annual Report and will be available via the WHGT website.

You can join us on your computer or mobile device.

For anyone who is not familiar with Zoom - it is easy to join a meeting and please do get in touch if you would like any help.

WHGT Trustee news

Jennie Macve is stepping down as WHGT Secretary but has kindly offered to continue as Membership Secretary. WHGT is therefore looking for a new Secretary. If anyone feels they would like to take on this role please contact Jennie or Joanna - who would love to hear from you. A huge thanks to Jennie who has been Secretary for many years providing a great service to the WHGT.

Nominations to elect or re-elect Trustees should be received by July 26.

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**Congratulations!**

Friends of the City of Swansea Botanical Complex in Singleton Park have received the 2021 Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. The award is given to outstanding groups of volunteers whose level of initiative and impact are truly exceptional, and it recognises the benefit they give to the local community. The award was created in 2002 to celebrate The Queen's Golden Jubilee.

Volunteers at the botanic gardens have helped to rehabilitate stroke victims, cancer patients, and people suffering with mental health issues. During Covid the Friends sold their plants through local shops and donated the food grown in the vegetable garden to foodbanks. The groups will receive their award crystal and certificate from Lord-Lieutenant of West Glamorgan, Louise Fleet later this summer. Furthermore, two volunteers from each group will attend a garden party at Buckingham Palace in May 2022 (depending on restrictions at the time).

Acknowledgements:

Many thanks to everyone who has contributed to the WHGT Bulletin and helped to make it happen.

Glynis Shaw, Editor

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