

The Bulletin

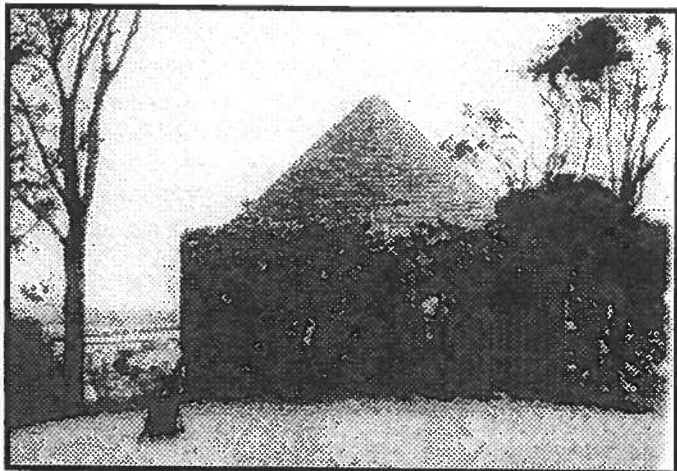
WINTER ISSUE 1998

The Follies at Pontypool Park

by Richard Hanbury Tenison

The earliest parts of Pontypool Park were laid out in the 1680's by Capel Hanbury, who built the present house (since altered) in 1681. Further land was included in 1698 by Capel's son, Major John, who built the surrounding wall and, in 1703, fitted up the splendid wrought-iron gates, presented to him on his second marriage by Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough. The park included a number of existing oaks and the new timber planted, some of it in avenues, was mostly Spanish chestnut and beech. It is doubtful whether any of the original beech survive but there are still a few very ancient chestnuts. When Archdeacon Coxe stayed with the family in 1799 he remarked on the naturalness with which the trees were disposed - by then presumably the avenues (still visible on a plan of 1750) had been broken up. The fallow deer, introduced in around 1700, were dispersed in 1918.

The principal monument in the park is the Grotto, which was built by Capel Hanbury Leigh at a high point of the park in 1830 and was part of a scheme to provide work for the large number of unemployed at that time. The architect is believed to have been a Mr S.G. Tit, of Bath. The interior was decorated with an enormous number of coloured stones, shells, bits of bone and deer antlers and the conical roof, covered with huge stone tiles, is supported internally by wooden columns originally wreathed in live ivy.



It is said that Capel Hanbury Leigh's first wife was influential in getting the Grotto built but there is no truth in the popular legend that it once contained a hermit! During the second half of the 19th century the Grotto was used for picnic lunches on days



when the adjoining covers were shot. There was a rather awful occasion in 1882 or 1883 when the Prince of Wales was shooting at Pontypool Park and the two magnums of champagne provided for lunch in the Grotto turned out to be corked. The Grotto, together with the rest of the park, passed to the new Pontypool Council in 1919 and their successors. Torfaen County Borough Council have set in train a major programme of repair. The Grotto can again be visited and will soon be in pristine condition, but it entails a stiff walk uphill - not recommended for the elderly on a hot day. The park is still beautiful, despite the introduction of a Rugby football stadium (the scene of many historic contests) and a dry-ski slope, and is a great asset to the town of Pontypool.

At the very summit of the same hill was an octagonal battlemented tower known in earlier times as the Watchtower (a nearby cottage is still called Twr-watch). This monument was built in about 1765 by young John Hanbury of Pontypool Park, who had just inherited from his father. John Hanbury was keen on racing and the good grass on top of the Little Mountain made the best gallops on the estate for his bloodstock. However, the ground is undulating and it was mainly to enable him to see how his horses ran that he ordered the building of an octagonal tower with a room at the top. As originally constructed the tower had neo-gothic windows and arrow-slits overlooking the hill-top and the valley respectively, and seems to have been influenced by the Sanderson Miller 'castle' at Hagley, which John Hanbury's father, Capel (who was a friend of the Lyttletons) will have known.

In the Spring of 1799, Capel Hanbury Leigh rode out to the Tower with Archdeacon Coxe, who warmly commended the views from the top. But Pontypool stone does not wear well, and the site is an exposed one, so that the folly needed extensive

reconstruction in 1830, when the 'gothic' windows were replaced with the more durable round-headed ones shown in the illustration.

By the mid-20th century the Folly was again in poor condition, although much visited in summer by the people of Pontypool. Early in the last war, however, when the authorities were busy painting out the names on signposts, it was decided that the Folly might be a useful pointer to German bombers seeking the Royal Ordnance factory three miles away and it was accordingly blown up by the Royal Engineers. Gone, but not forgotten, for

in 1991 a group of Pontypool enthusiasts, who kindly asked me to be their President, began the long haul to raise money to restore the Folly exactly as it had been before. Five years ago their efforts were rewarded and the completed Folly, externally precisely as it had been when blown up in 1939, was re-opened by the Prince of Wales. The internal arrangements, which had in any case all gone by the 20th century, were not restored and visitors now ascend by an iron staircase to the battlemented roof, from which there is an unrivalled view. The Folly is kept open by volunteers every weekend during the Summer months. It is well worth a visit.

Tapping Sources of European Money for Parks and Gardens

Certain districts in Britain have higher than average unemployment and lower than average wages in comparison with their urban counterparts. Such rural districts qualify for European funding under Directive EU 5B from the European Regional Development Fund. Garden projects assisted under this directive must be considered to generate rural employment and develop quiet tourism. Such gardens need not be publicly owned to qualify, though privately owned gardens receiving grant aid do have to make reasonable provision for public access. The success of an application depends upon a fixed cost estimate, and careful accounting for monies spent, income obtained and so on. Owners do need to demonstrate the need for public assistance in the first place.

The Hereford and Worcester Gardens Trust has pioneered a scheme to use this source to aid parks and gardens in West Herefordshire. They also enjoy the cooperation of the County Council which added a 12.5% grant to the 50% available from Europe. The work of the Garden Trust in research, planning and supervision of projects is assessed as donation 'in kind' and counts as part of the matching funding contribution necessary to attract European money. Thus the owners of the properties get garden and landscape work done for a fraction of its total cost.

So far a total of £100,000 of European money has been attracted by this initiative. Sara Furse reports briefly on some of the recipients in West Herefordshire.

Bryans Ground near Presteigne. Owners David Wheeler and Simon Dorrell run a nursery garden and are co-editors of 'Hortus'. Grant aid is being used to restore the greenhouse and hard landscaping of paths, steps and walls of the three acre Arts and Crafts garden, which opens under the National Gardens Scheme.

Broxwood Court Victorian designer W.E. Nesfield's formal yew enclosure is to be planted as a late Victorian rose garden.



Court of the Noke, Pembridge

A private garden where the formal canal gardens which replaced the Medieval moats are to be cleared and restored with a new water source.

Elton Hall, Ludlow

A new setting for a Queen Anne house with gothic fenestration. The ha-ha has been restored and the E.U. commissioners are funding a series of eclectic pavilions to enhance the landscape.

Holme Lacy The College of Agriculture plan to refurbish the deer park, replanting the trees, and reinstating the formal approach with an avenue and traditional iron paling. Warner Hotels wish to restore the formal gardens to the south side of the house.

Foxley, Mansel Lacy

Uvedale Price's famous landscape includes a string of ponds along the bottom of the Foxley valley. The grant will help complete the restoration of the ponds which was begun several years ago by David Davenport. The cascade will be reconstructed.

Hampton Court, Leominster. The new owners Sola Scriptorum intend to open the grounds of the 15C mansion to the public. A new garden with maze and elaborate water features is planned. The E.U. grant is being used to restore existing elements, the walled garden and its greenhouses, the quarry garden, and an Edwardian rose garden. The ha-ha is being rebuilt and much parkland planting is taking place.

While neither the booming south coast of Wales or the north east coast of Wales qualify for Rural 5B money, large areas of rural Wales do so. Hafod, in Ceredigion is one Welsh recipient of E.R.D.F. grant. Other worthy applicants whether public or privately owned might co-operate with their local County Council to similar good effect.

Sara Furse

ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND BILINGUAL LEAFLETS HIT THE STANDS!

The Guide to the Historic Parks & Gardens of Wales

April 1998 is going to see the realisation of an ambition which I have held for nearly two years - for the WHGT to produce a Guide to the Historic Parks & Gardens of Wales open to the public. We have been aware of the need for such a guide for some time, but it has taken a lot of manoeuvring and negotiation to bring it about.

Encouraged by Wales Tourist Board, we set about determining what was needed and what it would cost. What seemed like something relatively simple and inexpensive to produce soon turned out to quite complex, costly and very hard work. The expense was certainly going to exceed anything Wales Tourist Board could help us fund on our own. So we turned to seeking sponsorship to bring our ideas to fruition - and we have succeeded!

I am delighted to be able to report to members that, thanks to the generosity of The Principality Building Society, the Guide will be available throughout Wales in time for Easter. The Principality will support the production of the Guide for three years and will see that copies of it are available in all their branches. This splendid gesture ensures that the Trust really is fulfilling its remit of raising the profile of the historic parks and gardens of Wales. The more we can encourage visitors to Wales to realise what a wealth of beautiful places there are to be discovered and explored, the better. The Trust is enormously grateful to The Principality for this support.

The distribution costs of getting the Guide into all the local Tourist Information Centres, to the parks and gardens featured, and to mail it in response to enquiries both to ourselves and

to Wales Tourist Board, are being picked up by another benefactor - The National Grid Company Plc. I thought that the by-line "Distributed through the National Grid" would look tremendous on the Guide, and so did they! This is an example of networking at its best - thank you The National Grid.

This commercial sponsorship of the Trust by companies such as The Principality and The National Grid is so important and very exciting. However, we would never have got so far if it hadn't been for the help and encouragement we have received from Wales Tourist Board and The Countryside Council for Wales. Their response to our ideas and the generous matched funding we have applied for will ensure the Guide sees the light of day. I long for a day when we might be rich enough to support initiatives like this on our own. That may be a pipedream, but the help of another charity concerned with our heritage has also helped us to make the guide as comprehensive and beautiful as possible. The National Trust has allowed us to reproduce beautiful images from their Picture Library free of charge and will feature the Guide in all their outlets in Wales. This sort of partnership and collaboration is heart-warming and really valuable in terms other than money. It is very important to us that the Guide is bilingual and we are delighted that funding for the Welsh translation will be forthcoming through the Welsh Language Board.

A thousand thanks to the kind and generous companies and organisations who have made it possible to produce the first Guide to the Historic Parks & Gardens of Wales - The Principality, The National Grid, Wales Tourist Board, CCW and the National Trust. What a terrific partnership - long may it last.

Bettina Harden



ADVANCE NOTICE - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

at Penpont House, near Brecon on 9 May 1998

*Christopher Dingwall will lecture on Picturesque
Landscaping and Tourism in the Eighteenth Century*

Coffee - A.G.M. - Lunch - Lecture - Tea

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STUDY DAY AT ST. FAGANS

The Study Day, Saturday 7th & Sunday 8th March is one of the many events set up to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Museum of Welsh Life at St. Fagans. Flyers should already have dropped through your letterboxes and your expertise is urgently needed. Here Andrew Dixey sketches the aspirations of the Museum, while Bettina Harden suggests how members can contribute to the restoration of the Rosery.

The History of Horticulture at the Museum of Welsh Life by Andrew Dixey

St. Fagans Castle and its gardens were given to the National Museum of Wales by the Earl of Plymouth in 1946. The gardens had evolved over a period of many centuries, and had been extensively remodelled in the 1850's alongside the Castle redevelopment of the time. From the 1930s onwards the gardens had been deteriorating gradually, but declined rapidly during the war years. By 1946 many areas were considered by the Museum to be irreparable. During the early 1950's much of the groundwork was laid for the restoration of the formal gardens as they now appear, building on the original layout and plantings where possible and adding others where necessary. In addition to the Castle gardens, garden areas were laid out around the historic houses as they were re-erected, and thus a complex of large and small gardens developed on the site. Some significance was acknowledged for the formal castle gardens, in keeping with its stature as a country house, but in the other areas historical accuracy was largely a secondary consideration throughout.

Greater historical accuracy was aimed for in the 1983 Castle Gardens development plan and many of these recommendations have gradually been implemented. However, little attempt has been made to interpret these changes to the visitors. It is now realised that historic gardens can only thrive and develop within the Museum context by having the same specialised curatorial input as is apparent in other spheres of the Museum's work. Such an approach would be complementary to developments such as the Welsh Botanic Garden.

The Museum of Welsh Life has on its site buildings dating from the 15th century to the 20th century, but with the Museum of Welsh Life celebrating its 50th anniversary in 1998, the Castle and its environs are being concentrated upon and are to be recreated and enhanced. Part of the scheme will involve the restoration of the formal gardens surrounding the Castle, to include the Rosery and the Parterre, together with the restoration of original sets of wrought iron gates, fountain and statuary. Black and white and colour contemporary photographs (taken between 1890 and 1915) will form the basis for this scheme, together with the original plan from 1904, which will allow us to recreate the Rosery as it was at the turn of the century, including ornamental trellis work, arbour, and a circular brick canal. The sundial seat will be returned to its original position from the knot garden. The three sets of ornamental gates dating from the late 18th century are also to be restored.

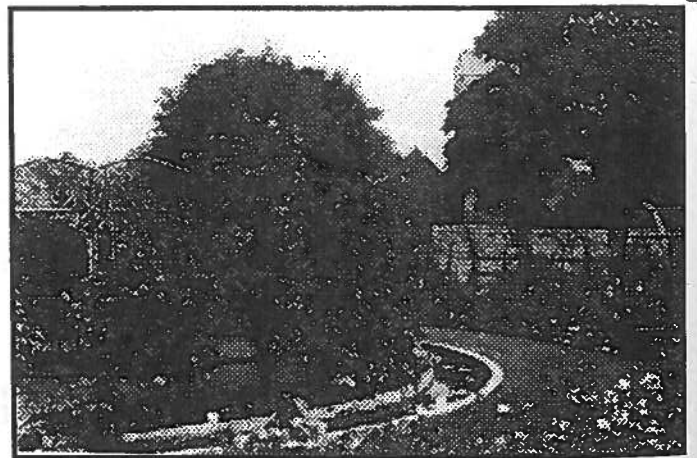
Fortunately the plan also includes a complete list of the roses grown at the time. (Some varieties may no longer be available but appropriate replacements will be found). The list includes some that are no longer commercially available, including one that seems to have originated in Cardiff itself - 'Mrs Stephen

Treseder'. If anyone has any information as to the whereabouts of specimens of this rose today, we would be extremely interested to hear of it.

This present Castle Gardens development, however, should be seen simply as a starting point for a scheme which should ultimately encompass the 'cottage gardens'. This is very much a neglected area of display throughout Britain, the main emphasis in 'Garden History' being in the large gardens and grand designs of the gentry. There are a number of representations or reconstruction's of (usually Late-) Victorian gardens, but of these, few are interpreted to any great extent. Continental Open Air Museums have a better history of this with some having cottage gardens recreated according to local environmental patterns and conditions, although even these tend to be based on oral evidence and, as such, tend to date from 1890 onwards.

Development here at MWL will be aimed towards the creation of period and socially accurate display gardens, what might be termed *period horticulture*, which would include not only historically accurate plants and planting schemes but would also display the gardening methods which would produce authentic period finishes.

As we start to assimilate the research needed to achieve this, it is obvious that there are gaping holes in our knowledge of the real small domestic gardens in Wales.



A detail of The Rosery at St Fagans Castle c1905 showing the moat and the rather charming rustic style of the arches and trellis on the central island.

COTTAGE GARDENS IN WALES

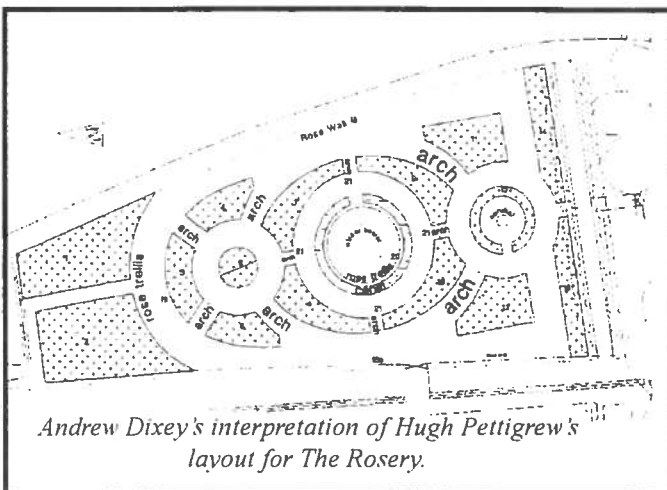
What were cottage gardens really like? Leap with us from the pretty picture on a chocolate box into the little known reality of the common garden prior to 1820. Sources include archaeology, literature, art, catalogues. Bring your knowledge to the study day to help St Fagans improve the authenticity of cottage gardens there.

The Rosery at St. Fagans by Bettina Harden

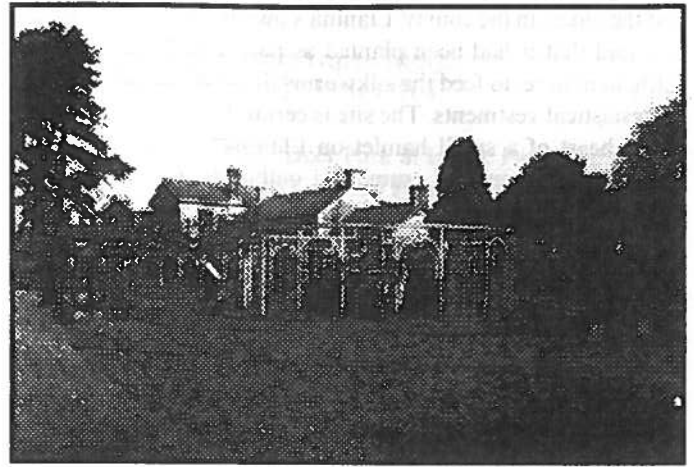
When Ros Laidlaw and I visited St Fagans last Autumn we were given a wonderful tour of the gardens by Andrew Dixey the Estate manager of St Fagans. He described at great length his plans for The Rosery, based on the original designs of the then-Head Gardener, Hugh Pettigrew, in 1890. A lot of the information Andrew has been working on exists in original photographs of the gardens taken between 1890 and 1915 and in a splendid pamphlet produced by Mr Pettigrew - *Hand List of Roses Cultivated in the Gardens at St Fagans Castle (Glamorganshire) and at Hewell Grange (Worcestershire) (1904)*. Christine Steven's excellent article reproduced in our Newsletter, No. 5, January 1992 gives the history of The Rosery in detail, but I include Mr Pettigrew's own description to give you some idea of what Andrew Dixey is trying to achieve:

"THE ROSERY, which is situated opposite the Church of St Fagans, and separated from the rest of the garden by a very old wall, is of recent formation. The ground was made and levelled and the beds completed in the spring of 1899, but it was in the following winter that the trellising and arches were erected, the moat made, and the Roses planted. Until then the Rosery occupied the site of what is now known as the Italian Garden, a position too shut in to attain the best results in Rose culture. The enclosure in which the present Rosery is situated was formerly used simply as a manure and rubbish yard, with the exception of one part on which were two beds of asparagus."

Andrew has spent nearly a year trying to track down all the different varieties and cultivars mentioned in that list in order to make his recreation of The Rosery as true to the original as possible. So far he has managed to purchase 250 of the 1000 roses he needs.



Andrew Dixey's interpretation of Hugh Pettigrew's layout for The Rosery.



The Rosery restored in the 1920's. The central trellis has been rebuilt in a rather more workaday style and many of the roses seem to have disappeared

It occurred to me that we should do something positive to assist in this great enterprise. I have suggested that the WHGT create a 'Sponsor a Rose' scheme for the Rosery. A beautiful book will be purchased and as members, their families, friends and anyone else interested in the project, produces the money for a rose bush, their name and the variety chosen from Andrew's list will be inscribed therein. The book will be on display at St Fagans. As I am a great admirer of the present Marchioness of Salisbury and her wonderful garden work, I propose to start the ball rolling and sponsor her, described in the list as the *Marquise de Salishury*.

On a return visit to St Fagans this week, Ros and I were able to inspect The Rosery site - all the modern roses, which had been laid out rather unimaginatively before, had vanished. In their place were the carefully marked outlines of the new rosebeds, faithfully echoing Mr Pettigrew's layout. The little plan reproduced in the *Handlist* had given no accurate dimensions so the central round bed had been estimated at 12ft in diameter. As careful excavations began the 'moat' reappeared. It is a circular canal about 2' across, all beautifully lined in Victorian terracotta tiles. In a few weeks the trellis and arches will be put in place and the planting begun - all working up to a suitable climax in July. Do, please, assist the Museum of Welsh Life in this splendid exercise to recreate the glories of the past, and sponsor a rose.

Members who would like to 'Sponsor a Rose' and wish to obtain a list of the roses needed should write to me in the first instance: Bettina Harden, Nanhoron, Pwllheli, Gwynedd LL53 8DL.

P.S. I am currently involved in making a radio programme about the gardens at St Fagans, both the ones associated with the house and those associated with the Museum, for BBC Radio Wales. This will be broadcast on one of the two May Bank Holidays later this year.

THE TIDE TURNS AT LLANINA

by Penny David

Members of Ceredigion Branch visited Llanina Mansion, near Newquay, on Saturday 20 September, drawn by an invitation to take 'Tea Around the Mulberry Tree' that some say is the largest and the oldest in the county. Llanina's owner, Mr James Maurice, was told that it had been planted as part of an early monastic settlement here, to feed the silkworms that supplied material for ecclesiastical vestments. The site is certainly ancient. The house is the heart of a small hamlet on Llanina Point with its own huddle of cottages and crumbling outbuildings, a tiny ruined chapel and the parish church of St Ina (the county's smallest). Across Tresaith Bay to the west is the 'new quay' that was built when the draught at the older Cei Bach became too shallow for shipping.

Thomas Lloyd dismissed Llanina in the first edition of his *Lost Houses of Wales* as a 'shell' which had once been 'a perfect example of a small old gentry house, of great C18th charm'. For once his pessimism was unfounded. James Maurice, who bought the property in 1988, has until recently given priority to bringing back the house from the brink of dereliction and turning it into a welcoming home. Now, as rebuilding work nears completion, more attention can be given to the grounds.

The house and immediate surroundings are sheltered from both land and sea in a series of walled enclosures as well as by somewhat neglected woodland, probably ancient but now heavily colonized by sycamore. The 'front door' opens on to an attractive small courtyard to the north-east, but it is the walled garden to the south-west that holds greatest promise for the garden historian - and for the gardener of the future. High stone walls enclose a rectangle of some three-quarters of an acre.

Today it presents almost a blank canvas (although a start has been made with the creation of a new shrub border): a carpet of grass mown to manageable length (not yet 'lawn'), dominated by the imposing presence of a giant mulberry tree. A handful of old apple trees completes the scene.

Scant evidence remains in place to enable history sleuths to picture what must have been a productive garden at some past heyday. The walls are not brick-lined to retain the heat, and show little trace of having had fruit trained along them. (The only hard structure of note within the enclosure is a semicircular flight of steps in the south-east corner leading to a stone building outside the walls, formerly the coachhouse, where Dylan Thomas once stayed.) Two of the old apple trees provide a clue. They are outgrown espaliers, and their orientation serves to waymark where main cross-paths must once have run. Sure enough, looking eastwards, you find an alignment with the large gates set in the east wall. An auger would no doubt encounter gravelly soil here.

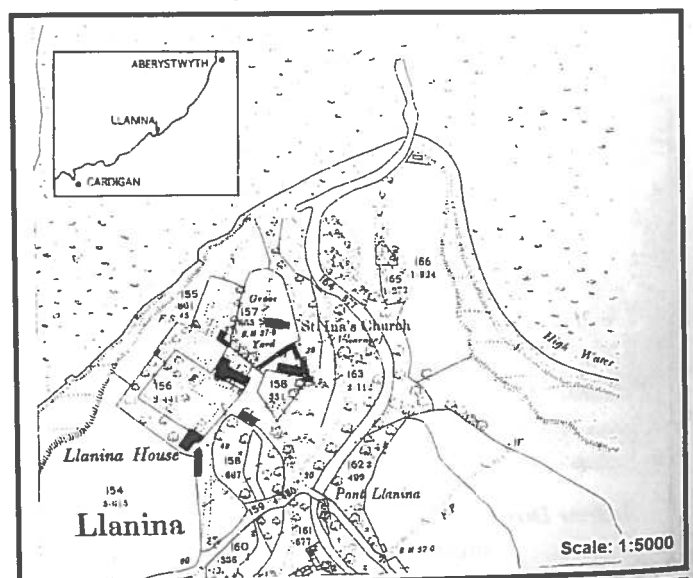
Corroboration comes from old maps. The First Edition Ordnance Survey of 1888 shows paths subdividing the garden into four panels and running round the walls. A glazed structure (greenhouse? cold frame?) stands near the centre in the northernmost quarter. The revised OS map of 1904 shows two additional small strips of glasswork in the southernmost section

as well as some glazing against the north-west-facing wall near the house, suggesting a degree of enhanced interest in the garden and its produce towards the end of the century. Sadly this later edition lacks the detailed treatment of trees that makes its predecessor so useful in deciphering old gardens and landscapes. The 1888 map shows a scattering of the three-lobed 'fruit-tree' symbols clearly in the walled garden, though none seems to stand quite where the mulberry now reigns: the section nearest the house is treeless and blank.

Our teatime visit to Llanina was less concerned with gardening in the usual sense than with exploring a hidden settlement and guessing its missing history. As with the best tea parties, there was a lively exchange of ideas and information. Mr Maurice told us what he had discovered about the history of Llanina, and entertained us with anecdotes of Dylan Thomas and others. Gardens Trust members, in their turn, were able to share their experience of the art of discovering hidden features and offer some advice on the identities of ancient apple varieties and the practicalities of hoggin paths.

The Maurices now face the challenge of how to utilise their walled garden. In this domestic setting questions of restoration or authenticity do not arise: what is needed is an attractive, manageable scheme that meets the needs of the owners. On the other hand, it would be satisfying to pay homage to the past - perhaps by beginning with a ground plan based on those cross-paths; this would instantly make sense of the weird directionality of the venerable espaliers, and suggest positions for further punctuating plants and plant structures. A first stage might be to try the design out by closely mowing the potential paths and giving the 'planting areas' a higher cut, a technique effective in 'meadow gardening' as at Great Dixter.

Llanina is a place steeped in atmosphere. Beyond the wall, pushing his way among dilapidated outbuildings swathed in ivy and brambles, James Maurice conjured another vision, of creating a romantic garden amid the ruins - and I had a sudden image of the Caetanis' luxuriant garden in the deserted streets of Ninfa south-east of Rome. Perhaps Llanina faces as exciting a future as it has a venerable past.



Editorial

The Editor would like to be considered a sweet natured person of temperate disposition. To maintain this impression, contributors to **The Bulletin** are urged to send copy in **before** deadlines, especially if it is in manuscript form and needs to be retyped. More technologically adept contributors can enhance the quality of their work by sending a floppy disc preferably formatted in word 2, word for dos, or text, and a paper copy just in case. Such discs will, of course be returned. The deadline for the Spring issue is, definitely, April 30 1998.

Caroline Palmer

Reports from Branches

GWYNEDD

The Gwynedd Branch welcomes the New Year with its new Chairman, Mary Garner. A well-known local journalist, Mary has been a long-serving member of the Gwynedd Committee. Members in other parts of Wales will have met her when she and Joan K. Jones manned the WHGT stand at the Royal Welsh Show in 1996. Her retirement from the *Caernafon & Denbigh Herald* last year has only meant that she has thrown herself into even more work, taking the helm in Gwynedd for the WHGT, writing articles and planning a book.

Tuesday 22nd April Clough Williams-Ellis & Garden Design Garden Tour 2.30 p.m. Tea & Lecture from 4.00 p.m.

This important lecture, to be given by Richard Haslam at the Hercules Hall at Portmeirion, is a major event in this year's calendar. It will be preceded by a guided tour of the Gwyllt gardens that surround the famous mediterranean-style village created by Sir Clough from the 1920s onwards. Tickets for the Garden Tour & Lecture, to include tea and admission to Portmeirion, are £7.50 for WHGT members, £10.00 for non-members. Members from outside Gwynedd who wish to attend should apply to: Margaret Mason, Penhyddgan, Boduan, Pwllheli, Gwynedd LL53 8.

Saturday 2nd May The Plant Fair 10.00 a.m. - 4.00 p.m. Our major fund-raising event of the year takes place once again at Crug Farm Plants, Griffiths Crossing, between Caernarvon and Bangor. All members of the Trust are welcome, with their friends, to enjoy a delightful venue - the walled garden at Crug is full of wonderful things - as well as the opportunity to purchase plants, trees and shrubs from specialist nurserymen from all over the North-West.

Saturday 20 June Anglesey Gardens Day

Tuesday 29 September Michaelmas Lunch & Garden visit Maes-y-Neuadd near Harlech

Thursday 8 October Lecture by Thomasina Beck: Gardens in Silk and Gold, Penrhyn Castle. Note: book review opposite.

MID AND SOUTH GLAMORGAN

Saturday 23 May G.T. Clark Centenary Celebrations at Talygarn, Pontyclun, Glamorgan. 2-6.30p.m. Flower festival in St. Anne's Church nearby.

Sunday 20 September Visit to Duffryn Gardens, Vale of Glamorgan 2.00 p.m.

For further details contact Dr. P.C. Elmes.

CEREDIGION

Monday 9 March Lecture: The Vanished Gardens of Dynefor, by Donald Moore, Llangeitho & District Gardening Club, Schoolroom, Methodist Chapel, Llangeitho. Contact Mrs J.H.

Roberts 01974-298149

Saturday 21 March Coach Trip to Aberglasney nr Llandcilo
Please Book: Penny David 01570 422041

Sunday 7 June Medieval Deer Park at Lodge Park, Tre'r-ddol.
Leaders: Ros Laidlaw and Caroline Palmer

Saturday 20 June Day School 'Iolo Morganwg' (F.O. N.L.W. and Ceredigion Antequarians) Contact: Mark Mainwaring 01970-632800.

Saturday 27 June. Hafod Information Day, and visit by Shropshire Gardens Trust. Contact Michael Norman 01558 650735.

CLWYD

Sunday 31 May Expedition to Bryn Bella, Tremeirchion

Saturday 27 June Visit to Bryn-y-Neuadd, Llanfairfechan
Contact Mrs E. Bartlett, Leeswood Hall, Mold 01352 758023

The planned **Study Day** with the Montgomery Branch has not proved possible to arrange at this time.

Book Review

Gardening with Silk and Gold: A History of Gardens in Embroidery, by Thomasina Beck. David and Charles, 1997. £19.99. ISBN 0 7153 0487 9.

What a joy to browse through this beautiful book, better still to own one. Coloured illustrations, in generous number, delight the eye and reveal intricacies of stitchery. An equally generous number of black and white illustrations recall more familiar plans and engraved views, and find their reflection in the details of the embroideries. This book is an up-date of the author's 1979 *Embroidered Gardens* and its title is taken from a phrase of William Morris', 'gardening with silk and gold thread', used in a lecture in 1881.

In general, embroidery is only occasionally cited as a source for garden history. The Stoke Edith panels are well known, as are flowers embellishing gowns and waistcoats. In this book our knowledge is greatly extended, thanks to the author's researches over a quarter of a century in the collections of the V & A and among materials in museums abroad. The book moves chronologically from Elizabethan times to the present day, introducing its fragile sources. Wall hangings, bed hangings (particularly their valences), upholstery and cushions, clothes, caps, stump work, samplers, brash Berlin woolwork, gentler Morris colouring, oriental embroideries - all yield illustrations of gardens, garden features, flowers or fruit, and are shown to mirror the garden fashions and influences of their time. For the present-day embroiderer there are contemporary garden pictures to emulate, using modern embroidery techniques; but even those who cannot sew on a button will experience great enjoyment from this book, and the garden historian is presented with an exciting new source for study.

Patricia Moore

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"THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF GARDENING"
ILLUSTRATED LECTURE BY ROY LANCASTER
SATURDAY 9th MAY 1998,
UNIVERSITY OF WALES, ABERYSTWYTH

- 12.30pm Fork Buffet in the Upper Dining Room Penbryn Hall
- 2.00pm Illustrated Lecture by Roy Lancaster the distinguished Botanist and Horticulturalist, Victoria Medal Holder, Fellow of Institute of Horticulture and Fellow of the Linnean Society.
- 3.00pm Opportunity to walk in the grounds which has many interesting plantings including the commemorative trees and plaque celebrating Clay Jones' life and work.
- 4.00pm Tea in the Upper Dining Room, Penbryn Hall

FREE BUS AND CAR PARKING INCLUSIVE TICKETS £17.50.

This event is supported by U.W.A. Aberystwyth and the Wales in Bloom Foundation in aid of the Clay Jones Scholarship Fund.

Please send cheque payable to "The Clay Jones Memorial Lecture" and enclose a stamped addressed envelope for tickets and plan of Campus to:

Mair Waldo Thomas, Rhiwlas 82 Cimla Road NEATH SA11 3TS or
Richard Bowering, Deildy, Sunnybank, BRECON Powys LD3 7RW

*The W.H.G.T. regrets that this event co-incides with
their own A.G.M. at Penpont, Brecon (see p3)*

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