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WELSH HISTORIC GARDENS TRUST.

NEWSLETTER.

June 1990.

Dear Members,

We begin our first newsletter with a item which will be of great interest to you all; the following press release will be going out to the media at the end of this month,

WELSH BOTANIC GARDEN INITIATIVE.

The Welsh Historic Gardens Trust announced today that, with the assistance of Dyfed County Council and Kew Gardens, they are commissioning an in-depth report on the creation of a National Botanic Garden for Wales in Dyfed.

Mr William Powell Wilkins, Chairman of the WHGT, said: 'There can be no question that Wales needs a Botanic Garden to take its place alongside those of Kew and Edinburgh. Today there is a widespread recognition of the importance to us all of the world of botany and the vital part it will play if we are to live in harmony with the natural environment in the next century.

It is also clear that, as a nation of gardeners, such a centre would be a source of great joy and very popular'. Mr Wilkins explained that, after twelve months of study, significant progress had been made by a team of experts who contributed to an initial feasibility study. 'We are delighted that Dyfed County Council and Kew Gardens are providing the finance and expertise for the detailed planning to commence', he added.

It was emphasised that the Botanic Garden will be a place of beauty which people from all walks of life may enjoy at their leisure., but it will also be the site of scientific endeavour and achievement. It aims to provide extensive new facilities to complement and serve the botany departments of the National Museum of Wales and the University Colleges in the Principality, where much valuable work is already in progress.

The Trust's vision is one of a major landscape work which will become part of the Welsh heritage and will stand as a symbol of late 20th century cultural achievement.

Serious consideration is being given to a site at Middleton Hall, near Carmarthen in Dyfed. This late 18th century parkland is within striking distance of the whole of urban South Wales, via the M4 (A48), and has

impressed Professor G.T. Prance, Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, who has given his backing to the project. He commented: This site is eminently suitable for a major botanic garden. It would be unique among existing gardens in its beautiful historic parkland setting - it also presents splendid opportunities to the contemporary botanic garden designer. Above all, a botanic garden of our time should provide a favourable habitat for the conservation of threatened native plants. West Wales offers an ideal climate and atmosphere for many species which cannot stand up to the pollution afflicting other major botanic gardens'.

For Dyfed County Council, the Chairman, Cllr. Myrddin Evans said: 'This is a very exciting idea and will create much needed employment in the area and beneficially increase tourism. As a national park service for Wales as a whole it will be an excellent thing. We are all more conscious of the importance of our environment and it is fitting that a new institution of this nature be situated in an area of traditional and unspoiled beauty.'

It is understood that a number of prominent institutions and individuals are supporting the scheme. The final report - commissioned from a leading firm of consultants - is expected in the Autumn of 1990.

'Whether it is visited for learning or for leisure, we are certain that this leading Welsh garden will attract schoolchildren, students, families and senior citizens in large numbers. Britain has not seen the creation of a new Botanic Garden on a scale such as this for well over a century' Mr Wilkins concluded.

The press release will be accompanied by a photograph taken at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. Cllr E.A.B. Thomas, Chairman of the Economic Development Committee of Dyfed County Council, will present the cheque to William Wilkins, Chairman, WHGT, in the presence of Professor Prance, Director, Kew, and also possibly David Attenborough. The press release has been handled through the Press Office of Kew Garden.