



The Changing Fortunes of Brynmill Park, Swansea

by Ann Gardner

Public parks are of enormous historical significance, as significant as the private parks and gardens of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They are not museums, for they have always responded to change, while still retaining their historical integrity. Above all, we need to involve people in their parks because it is part of their history...'

Brynmill can be claimed to be the oldest surviving public park in Swansea, the construction of the South Docks having destroyed The Burrows for public recreation in the early nineteenth century. During Georgian and Regency times The Burrows, with its lawns, trees and gravel paths, had provided space for recreation for both residents and the genteel visitor at a time when Swansea had pretensions to becoming 'The Brighton of Wales'.² However, Swansea's natural advantages of easily accessible coal and a navigable river soon took precedence over its development as a seaside resort.

Substantial urban growth followed industrialization. But, as late as 1850, most of the population relied on springs and wells for their water supply.³ An attempt to address this problem was first made in 1837 with the formation of The Swansea Waterworks Company by about two dozen prominent gentlemen of the town. The company was given Parliamentary powers to create a reservoir at Bryn Mill. This was able to supply a quarter of the town's households with wholesome water, then only 1100 households.⁴ The Company wished to make use of certain 'ponds and reservoirs' fed by the Glamor stream, already used to run two working corn (grist) mills called the Upper and Lower Bryn Mills.

The Glamorgan Register⁵ states a reservoir was opened in 1828 and that in a plan of The Bryn Mill reservoir property it was already shown to be slightly ornamented with fringing woodland, with an entrance in the north-west corner and a path all around it. There is evidence that as early as the 1840s families were already taking picnics around the lake. So here are the origins of what remains the most important element of Brynmill Park, the reservoir.

All over the country, the park movement grew gradually throughout the 1830s and 1840s. The opportunities for recreation in green open spaces had tended to dwindle as the industrial towns grew and the problem was recognized when the Select Committee on Public Walks presented its report to Parliament in 1833. Not only were parks seen as important for improving the physical well being of the urban populace, but, by providing contact with nature and an alternative to the tavern – the only other form of entertainment open on Sundays – they would provide a civilizing influence. Memories of the urban mob and the French Revolution were still fresh.

Gifts of parks provided by benefactors or by subscription raised



The Reservoir, Brynmill, in 2001. Photo: Anne Gardner

problems for local authorities because they were not allowed to raise rates to maintain parks until the Public Health Act of 1875. This was a major enabling act allowing local authorities to acquire and maintain land for recreation and to raise government loans to do so. Previously, expensive and cumbersome individual legislation had to be undertaken for purchases of land.

Despite such obstacles, Brynmill was opened as a public park in 1872, £25,000 having been spent in its creation. According to the Glamorgan Register, the Ordnance Survey map of 1878 shows the recently created public park occupying its present area and the layout being much as it is today. There were access problems, however, and it was some distance from the town. Two landowners of adjoining fields came to the rescue and offered land for a roadway, fifteen foot wide, which would also shorten the journey. The street was to run diagonally from the hospital through the Rhyddings to the Brynmill Grounds. *The Cambrian* of 3 July 1872 notes that if such a plan were to be carried out 'it would open up important and valuable building sites'.⁶ Indeed there was a long history of the development of parks in conjunction with housing, e.g. Regents Park, London, where the park added value to the price of the properties whilst the sale of the housing helped to pay for the creation of the park.

Moving on to the Twentieth Century, the Bowling Green was made in 1907 and was the first in Swansea. Nationally, there was at this time, great concern about high mortality rates and the scourge of TB. In 1904, a government Report on Physical Deterioration had been presented following the concern felt over poor condition of

potential recruits to the Boer War. The need for physical exercise in the open air was considered as of paramount importance.

I do not know whether ladies were allowed to play on the bowling green at Brynmill from the beginning, but active sport was an important part of female emancipation, demonstrating that middle class women were, indeed, strong enough to take part in such activities.

By 1913 Brynmill Park had obtained not only the bowling green and pavilion, but also, the aviary. This is remembered with great affection by very many people in Swansea and there was a tremendous furore when it was closed last year. Many people remember going to see the monkeys in their childhood or taking their own kids to see the peacocks. It was closed last year, despite a petition of five thousand signatures, on the grounds of cost. As reported in the *South Wales Evening Post*,⁷ Mike Hedges, the then Leader of the Council, said it would cost £148,000 to bring it up to the standards of the Zoo Act, 1994. This, he said, was money the Council could not afford. At this time the Council was trying to attract funding for an Olympic-sized pool, which would make demands on the same leisure budget. In addition, the chairman of the Leisure Committee, Robert Francis Davies, was reported as saying 'he did not wish to see caged birds in city parks'.⁸

Perhaps it might be useful to look back at the history of aviaries. Menageries containing wild animals such as elephants and lions have been kept in Britain since the twelfth century. The preserve of monarchs for centuries, the aristocracy and gentry gradually took up the habit of keeping exotic animals and birds on their estates. According to Sutherill, 'Menageries were like formal gardens, a symbol of man's dominance over nature'.⁹ Birds and birdhouses became an obsession in the nineteenth century and a number of stately homes such as Waddesdon Manor in Buckinghamshire, built fine aviaries. Meanwhile, botanical and zoological gardens opened in increasing numbers for scientific and educational purposes. But it was not until the introduction of aviaries in public parks that the public, and especially children, could see such exotic birds and animals free of charge. The tendency to make greater provision for children came towards the end of the nineteenth century and a play area for small children was added in Brynmill Park. It was a time before the motorcar made family trips to regional zoos possible and before the television brought the wonders of the natural world into people's homes. Today our emphasis is more on working with nature – before it's too late – and of wanting to see wild birds and animals in their natural habitat, as the survey conducted on the future of Brynmill has overwhelmingly shown.

Despite the opportunities which the car can offer, it has contributed to the decline of small urban parks like Brynmill. Here in Swansea, families now escape by car to the Gower beaches on sunny days – something impossible when the park was created. And the car has enabled owners to reach country parks set up following legislation of 1970 and the creation of the Countryside Commission. For the first time grants became available to set up country parks on the edge of cities and in the open countryside. Thus the focus of both local authorities and the public was turned away from urban parks. Other legislation has also contributed to the decay of city parks in the last few decades. The Local Government act of 1988 introduced Compulsory Competitive Tendering. Across the country this led to the disappearance of the local park keeper in favour of maintenance put out to contract. As a consequence women and children felt less secure, there was more vandalism and often poorer maintenance.

Coupled to these problems was the change which occurred at Local Government Reorganization in 1974. Parks Departments were merged with Leisure Services, which meant they had to fight for their budgets against more fashionable leisure activities. Added to this, the fact that a budget for parks was not included in the government's Standard Spending Assessment formula meant that parks receive no revenue support grant for maintenance, plus the

threat of rate capping if they overspent.

So we can perhaps understand some of the reasons for the decay of urban parks, which is all too evident in Brynmill. Not only are there dilapidated buildings, but the vandalized toilet block had to be abandoned in 1999. Now, however, there is new hope with the City and County of Swansea planning to put in a bid for lottery funding so that this little gem of a Victorian park can be restored. We, at the West Glamorgan branch of WHGT, very much hope that having heard the outline proposal, we will be able to support the bid for Heritage Lottery funding.

As can be seen from my overview of the development of parks, they have always reflected the social, economical and political imperatives of the day. Let us hope, now that government is again turning its attention to urban centres, those parks, which were once the objects of civic pride, will again achieve acclaim.

It is perhaps apposite to end with a quote from a letter from George Grant Francis, an important campaigner for parks, in a letter to *The Cambrian* on 26 November 1862. In this letter he wrote: 'It is a curious fact that sixty years ago, Swansea did vastly more in Park-like provision than she has done during the last twenty years.' He went on to note 'tis some five and twenty years ago...and we regretted then, as we have done ever since, that Swansea got no share of that Public Grant of £60,000 made by Parliament for providing Recreation Grounds in growing Towns.'....'that opportunity, golden as it was, was allowed to slip away. Let us beware we lose not another chance (though in a different way) by supineness now'.¹⁰ This warning rings as true today.



The Bowling Pavilion, Brynmill Park, in 2001 Photo: Anne Gardner

¹ Conway, Hazel. 'Public Parks', Shire Garden History, Shire Publications Ltd, 1996

² Owen, J. Alun, 'Swansea's Earliest Spaces'. Studies in Swansea's History. City of Swansea, 1995. Pg15

³ (Owen, J. *op.cit.* pg.21)

⁴ (*South Wales Evening Post*, 12/10/72).

⁵ Cadw: *Welsh Historic Monuments, The Register of Landscapes Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales*, Part I. 2001

⁶ (quoted in Owen, J. *op.cit.* p.25).

⁷ *South Wales Evening Post* (31/5/2000)

⁸ *South Wales Evening Post* (20/04/2000)

⁹ Sutherill, Mike, 'Menageries', in *Gardens Illustrated*, September 2001.

¹⁰ Francis, Geo. Grant, 'What Does Swansea Now Want – No 5' in *Recreation Grounds for Swansea*. A series of pamphlets published by the Cumbrian Office, 1874.. Can be found in the Swansea collection, Main Reference Library, Swansea. SW 2995.

A fanciful garden at Dolwilym, Carmarthenshire

by Tom Lloyd

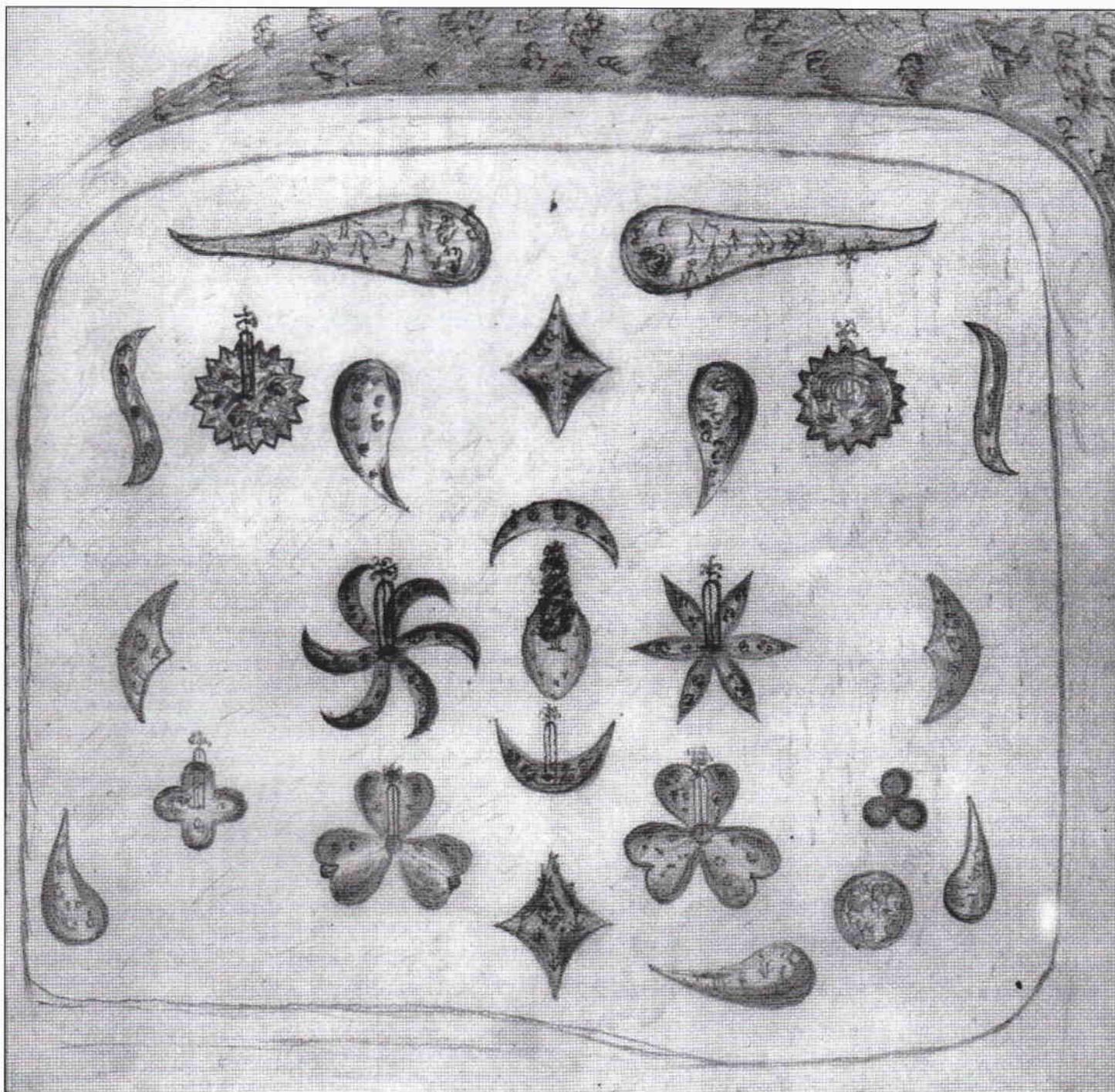
Dolwilym, in the Parish of Llanglydwen in north Carmarthenshire was the long time home of the Prothero family, ancient in lineage but only modest in estate. In 1842-1845 they rebuilt their old house in a fashionable tudor style with tall, (originally stepped) gables, paying compliment, perhaps, to Lord Cawdor's Golden Grove, a major work of the late 1820's, which is situated further south in the county. The house design was provided by local builder/architect John Phillips.

A flower garden, captioned 'Flower Garden Dolwilym' is depicted in a sketch drawn by a family friend of the Protheroes, a minor squire named William Fortune, of Leweston, near Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire. It appears in one of his several, carefully kept notebooks, and is dated 1844. Although not described in the notes, it seems likely, therefore, that it was brand new when Fortune recorded it.

There is no other record of this garden, and it is possible that it did not last long. The intricately shaped beds, are nearly, but not entirely symmetrical about the central axis, and eight of them were surmounted by arches supporting trained standards, possibly roses. The centre was marked by a small columnar tree. The form of the design may have been suggested by an illustration depicting pollen grains or elements of floral structure. Prior to the development of mechanical mowers, the maintenance of such a display would require much labour.

Dolwilym burnt down in 1907, and although reinstated, its heyday was over, and it only clung on until demolished, when a shell once more, in the 1980's.

Despite Fortune's interest in the world around him, - he sketched and recorded local wildlife with care - this is his only known venture into garden matters.



Flower Garden Dolwilym 1844. Sketch in the notebook of William Fortune. (© Private collection via Thomas Lloyd).

West Glamorgan Branch visit to Westonbirt – Saturday, 27th October 2001

Following a very popular visit to the “other” Hampton Court earlier in the season, some 30 members and guests enjoyed an autumn trip to Westonbirt Arboretum in Gloucestershire at the end of October. West Glamorgan Chairman, Ann Gardner, writes, “We visited the National Arboretum at Westonbirt which covers 600 acres and has some 18,500 specimens of trees and shrubs in its collection. It was founded in 1829 by Robert Holford and remained in the same family until 1956 when it was given to the nation in lieu of death duties and has been run by the Forestry Commission since that time.

During the nineteenth century, arboreta took on a new importance as many new plants were introduced into Britain by plant hunters. Sir George Holford, Robert’s son, continued his father’s work when he took over in 1892 and began to select and plant the finest of the new introductions from Western China. His introductions create the brilliant displays of autumn colour for which Westonbirt is famous.

Westonbirt is the third most visited ‘garden’ after Kew, and not only boasts 104 Champion Trees, i.e. the biggest of their kind in the UK but, also, 109 species listed as Red Data Species, rare, endangered or extinct in the world. The collection represents

regions from all over the temperate world. Two of the rarities at Westonbirt are *Dipteronia sinensis* and *Eucommia ulmoides*. The Holford Pine, a tall ornamental tree, is a hybrid that first arose at the arboretum. Its parents, coming from widely differing parts of the world were planted close together at Westonbirt. On the visit, I was rather taken with an extremely narrow pyramidal tree, the Siberian Pine.

Westonbirt’s primary aims are conservation and research. The arboretum contains rare genetic material which is becoming increasingly important as more areas of the world are becoming environmentally threatened. A research programme endeavours to establish what beneficial contributions to mankind these trees can make. The Pacific Yew has been found to contain taxol which is now being used in the fight against breast cancer. Another research programme is searching for an elm that is resistant against Dutch Elm Disease.

We had come to see the dazzling colours of autumn and the Japanese maples did not disappoint us. It was noticeable, however, that many trees were still very green as a result of our very warm October. This sent us away wondering what global warming might mean for our parks and gardens.

Ann Gardner

Ceredigion Branch Visit to Strata Florida - Saturday 22nd September 2001

with Professor David Austin

At the Ceredigion Branch AGM on 26th January, David Austin had already enthralled his listeners with a lecture on Strata Florida. The promised field trip was postponed from April because of foot & mouth, allowing a lengthy gestation period for expectations to grow. It was an ideal introduction to the subject: the theory first, then the fieldwork.

We began the excursion in the Strata Florida car park where, by way of orientation, and in felicitously windless conditions, David Austin laid out many of the maps, photographs and prints we had seen at his lecture in January. Without exploring the abbey precinct we headed straight for the uneven ground adjoining the Stedman house. This has sometimes been described as the field of graves, but its contours are more likely to reflect spoil heaps from various other activities. Ever since the Dissolution, the Abbey has made a handy source of stone for local builders. Then in the nineteenth century the railway surveyor Stephen Williams excavated the abbey site, and there have been later attempt to explore, or to tidy up. But by one of those tricks of light, a recent aerial photograph showed this field to contain a series of parallel ridges which could resemble the pulvilli or pillow-like beds in early botanic gardens. Members mused on these ambiguous traces. This is clearly an area to be archaeologically explored.

There are two distinct levels of garden history to seek here. The Cistercians must have grown physic herbs and vegetables in their mission to “make the waste places flower”. Professor Austin explained how Cistercian abbeys were laid out according to pretty predictable blueprints, so that informed guesswork could well locate different garden areas. Then, after the Dissolution, the Stedman family may have had formal pleasure grounds as well as productive gardens around their gentrified house. We scrutinized a copy of the eighteenth century Buck print for clues as to the garden layout behind the house in the Stedmans’ time, trying to distinguish the limitations of the medium from potential artistic licence.

Like all the best teachers, Professor Austin operates an active

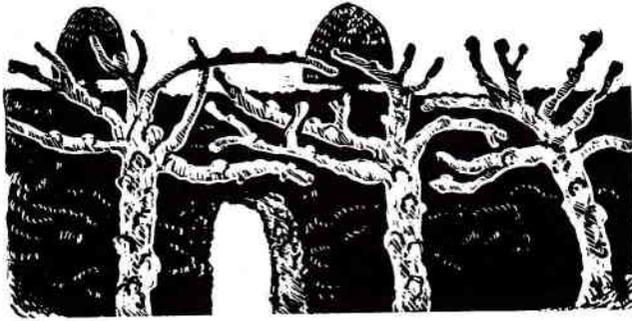


dialogue with his audience. On this Strata Florida visit his students were in possession of a happy variety of expertise. A Buck print to investigate? We have an art historian to hand. Building stone to be identified? A geologist comes forward. The county recorder of the BSBI is present to estimate the age of overgrown box bushes that once made neat hedging. A medley of gardeners, landscapers and historians chip in with various opinions.

From the field of lumps we explored the watercourse systems of streams, leats and ponds upstream of the monastery. After a picnic lunch, a fascinating exploration of the house, which creates an extraordinary impression on the unsuspecting visitor, of entering a series of time warps. Peter Smith has dated the building to about 1700, but Prof. Austin has other theories.

All this and a quick tour of the farmyard took most of the day, leaving no time for projected excursions to outlying remains. Serious digging at Strata Florida is in prospect and David Austin is fairly optimistic about the potential for the survival of artefacts in the waterlogged ground. The future for Strata Florida looks promising, as a major project to present the fascinating landscape and history of this area to a new generation of visitors looks set to succeed. This is likely to be the first of many visits.

Penny David



Ceredigion Branch AGM

Saturday 26 January 2002

2.15pm at The University of Wales, Lampeter

To be followed at 3.00pm by an *Illustrated lecture by Ivor Stokes, Director of Horticulture at the National Botanic Garden of Wales*

Contact Cecilia Barton (01570 422347) for directions.

Gwynedd Branch AGM

Thursday 14 March 2002

AGM Luncheon to be held at Oswald's in Bangor

Further details from Joan K. Jones (01766 522766)

West Glamorgan Winter 2002

Thursday, 31 January 2002

Talk - The justification of restoration? - 7pm

Tom Oliver, Landscape Manager at the National Trust's Croome Park in Worcestershire, draws on his experience at this nationally significant landscape under restoration in 2001, to talk about the justification of restoration. £2 entry fee to include light refreshments.

Thursday, 28th February 2002

The Historic Gardens of North Wales - 7pm

National WHGT Chairman, Bettina Harden, MBE, will talk about the gardens of North Wales. £2 entry fee to include light refreshments.

Thursday, 28th March 2002

AGM - 7pm

Please make every effort to attend as the Committee would like to hear members' views and programme suggestions.

Followed by a talk on *Old Fashioned Roses by Colonel Richard Gilbertson.*

Unless otherwise indicated, all talks 7pm at Memorial Baptist Church, Walter Road, Swansea. Entrance in Burman Street. WHGT members from other branches are always welcome

Other Winter lectures

London Historic Parks and Gardens Trust

At The Georgian Group Lecture Room
6 Fitzroy Square
London W1.

Monday evenings. 7-8 pm
Price for non members £8-00.

Tickets from The Events Secretary,
The London Historic Parks and Gardens Trust,
Duck Island Cottage, St James's Park,
London SW1Y 6HP

14 January 2002
A Royal Secret Revealed:
The Gardens of Buckingham Palace
Mark Lane, Head Gardener, Buckingham Palace

11 February 2002
London's Burial Grounds:
Conserving our Urban Spaces
Liz Goodfellow, Landscape Architect and Garden Historian

11 March 2002
The Thames landscape Strategy Mark Two:
from Kew to Chelsea
Richard Elvie, Landscape Architect, WS Atkins

15 April 2002
The distinctive Style of William Andrews Nesfield
in London.
Hazel Conway, Historic Landscape Consultant

The Association of Gardens Trusts and the Garden History Society

At The Gallery, Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ, at 2.30pm.
Thursday 21 February 2002

A Workshop on Post War Gardens

The purpose of the workshop is to discuss garden history for the post-war period with a view to adding post war gardens to the Register. A provisional list and typology will be developed. £10 per person, numbers limited. Please book with Sally Walker, AGT, 70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ.



Britannia Park- Paxton's Pleasure Park at Treborth Botanic Gardens

by Mary Garner

In the middle of the 19th century, just about the time when the famous Crystal Palace was being conceived in London, plans were being developed for a grandiose pleasure park in North Wales, on the banks of the Menai Straits, between the Britannia Bridge and the Menai Suspension Bridge. The scheme was put forward by the Chester and Holyhead Railway Company, following the opening of the line from Chester and Bangor to Holyhead and the construction of the Britannia Bridge. The company envisaged an enormous luxury hotel, and the park, to serve passengers using a new railway station there.

The man called in to create this pleasure park, who was also responsible for the Crystal Palace, was Joseph Paxton, Britain's most celebrated landscape designer of the day. The Bangor project was to have covered 25 acres and be known as Britannia Park.



Traces of Paxton's garden include a double row of limes leading to the Straits which were described in newspaper accounts of 1851 and 1852. Re-growth from the felled stumps identifies this avenue today.

University College of North Wales, and part of it became the University Botanic Garden.

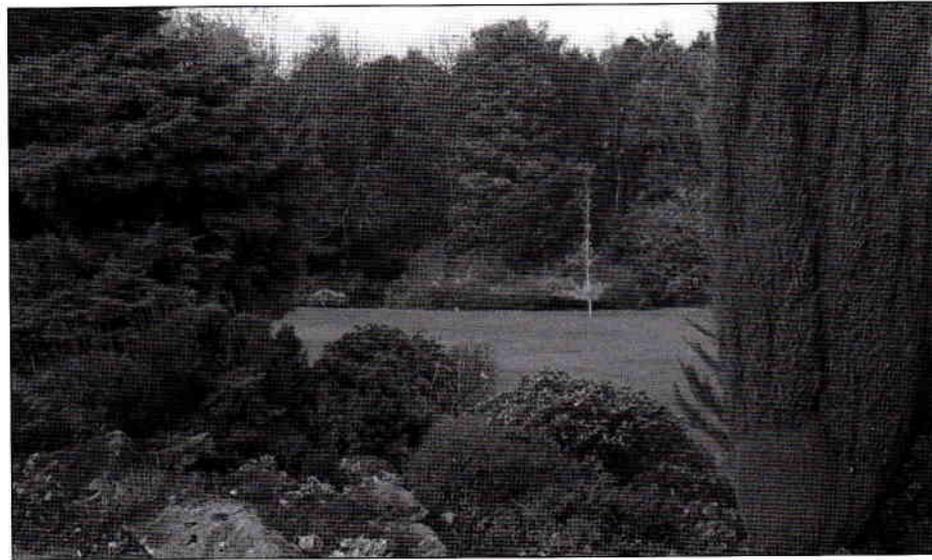
Between 1965 and 1977, under the then curator Len Beer, a leading plantsman who collected widely in the Himalayas, many trees and shrubs were planted in the Botanic Garden amidst expanses of lawn. The laboratory building and greenhouses were constructed, and Treborth became an integral part of biological science teaching at the University of Wales, Bangor. It combines a traditional botanical role, with some 2,000 species of wild and cultivated plants available for study in the garden, along with excellent opportunities to observe, collect and conduct experimental studies in a wide variety of ecologies of woodland, grassland, and seashore.

Plans for the Treborth's future are

impressive. Using the latest technology, a teaching laboratory and library on site has been provided with electronic access to a worldwide biological data base through a direct link to the University's advanced IT network. Further developments will bring the work at Treborth closer to the people. With the public concern about health, climatic warming, and diseases that afflict humans and animals, the Botanic Garden aims to provide an educational resource for people of all ages and levels of understanding on the theme Plants for People. Objective 1 funding will be sought and the Gwynedd Branch of the WHGT is supporting the Friends of Treborth Botanic Garden with a grant towards software and equipment to enable the provision of 3D computer tours of the gardens. This could include archaeological details, for in view of the fact that Paxton is known to have completed his gardens, with carriage drives, a lime avenue, waterfall, conduits, etc, there is certainly a "hidden garden" in the present woodland. With today's technology, the virtual tour could be presented in layers, starting with archaeology, planting, buildings, etc.

Paxton's actual plans for the pleasure grounds have not been traced, but archaeological techniques may reveal lost features. Some idea of the layout can be guessed from studying some of the surviving parks designed by Paxton, including Prince's Park in Liverpool and Birkenhead Park. A study of Paxton's writings also gives some clue to his ideas, and the newspaper articles and other documents available are helpful. Pauline Perry has carried out extensive research into Britannia Park, and we are indebted to her for much of what we now know about it.

(From Gwynedd Branch Newsletter, September 2001)



Part of Treborth Botanic Garden today. The re-grown lime avenue forms the back



Fig.1. A detail of the O.S.25" Survey of 1888. Shading indicates the extent of the Treborth Botanic Garden which was developed in the 1960's on part of the former Britannia Park.

Unfortunately the railway company ran out of money and the hotel was never built. However, in November 1851 the North Wales Chronicle reported glowingly on the visit of an observer to the site: "Ornamental grounds laid out by Sir Joseph Paxton are considerably advanced and from the specimen already afforded I am quite satisfied that Britannia Park will surpass in beauty anything of the kind in Europe." In a further report in September 1852, the newspaper indicated that the grounds had been finished.

There was little interest, however, from the local population and by 1867 much of the area had returned to farmland. The OS 25" Survey, dated 1888 still shows traces of meandering paths in woodland towards the east end of the former park. The western half was largely open farmland, crossed by a number of public footpaths. In 1960, after the sale of the Treborth estate, the former Britannia Park was acquired by the

Some books for Christmas

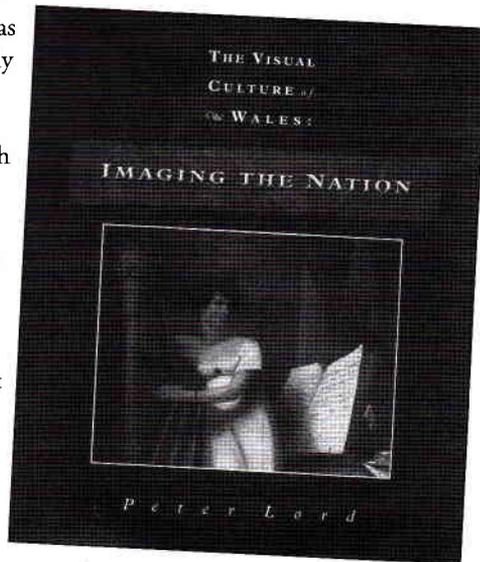
Imaging the Nation: The Visual Culture of Wales by Peter Lord, University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 2000 price £30. Published simultaneously in both Welsh and English (separate volumes)

If your near and dear were not quick enough to secure a copy of this volume immediately upon publication, then this year it should undoubtedly be on their Christmas list. For an amazingly modest price it is a bargain for the pictures alone, which are lavishly reproduced, invariably in colour, and to the highest quality. Indeed images familiar from other specialist texts gain a new vibrancy and life when encountered in this book. As its title implies, it offers a treasury of images of Wales, and it is an unparalleled treat to have so many absorbing pictures, familiar and less well known, gathered together between two covers.

It is, though, much more than a picture book. Peter Lord's scholarship is immense, and the visual material is set in the context of the development of ideas and artistic traditions over four centuries. Each chapter is a self-contained and lucidly readable essay, which brings the people and contemporary mores vividly to life.

Enthusiasts of garden history will find many representations of landscape, first nestling behind the sleeve of the gentry subjects of portraiture, then in the splendidly detailed bird's-eye representations of great houses such as Llannerch, Denbighshire in the 17th century, and later in the arcadian and picturesque depictions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In this context chapters 3 'A Sense of Place', 4 'Ancient Britain' and 5 'The Idea of Landscape' are especially fruitful. Perusal of the themes of the book will throw much light upon the varying representations dictated by style and fashion. A nice example is the pairing on a single page, of two contemporaneous views of Carnarvon Castle. Paul Sandby depicts a romantic ruin, set in an arcadian landscape, floating above its limpid reflection in a quiet backwater. In John Boydell's engraving of the same view, there is no neglect or languor. Instead we see a pristine castle, a busy sea port, a tight packed town at the castle's feet, and well ordered hedged fields stretching to the horizon. In the former picture no-one is making a living (except perhaps the artist, self indulgently placed in the foreground). The latter picture is a testament to boundless human energy.

If I have a criticism of this book, it is a small one. Inevitably, not every picture referred to is reproduced, (though an extraordinary number are). While illustrations are well indexed, and intelligently placed adjoining their appearance in the text, it is not always easy to establish whether an image referred to in passing is to be found elsewhere in the book. It is a small quibble indeed, which must be balanced against the elegance of a text not peppered with figure numbers placed in parentheses.



Pergolas, Arbours and Arches, Their History and How to Make Them, by Paul Edwards and Katherine Swift. Barn Elms 2001. Price £28-00.

This is another volume in the attractive easy-to-read format we have come to expect of Barn Elms garden books. Mouth-watering photographs from the historic to the present convince the armchair gardener of the need for an arbour or pergola, while parts 3 and 4, by Paul Edwards, provide practical inspiration. Chapters are devoted to the principles of design and of planting, and followed by six case histories of Edwards' work, where the design drawings are teamed with description and photographs of six completed commissions, including those at Painswick, Hidcote and Warwick Castle. By the end of the book one is convinced that one's dream pergola is only a phone call (and perhaps a few thousand pounds) away.

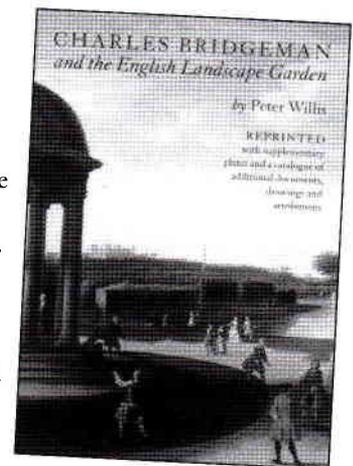
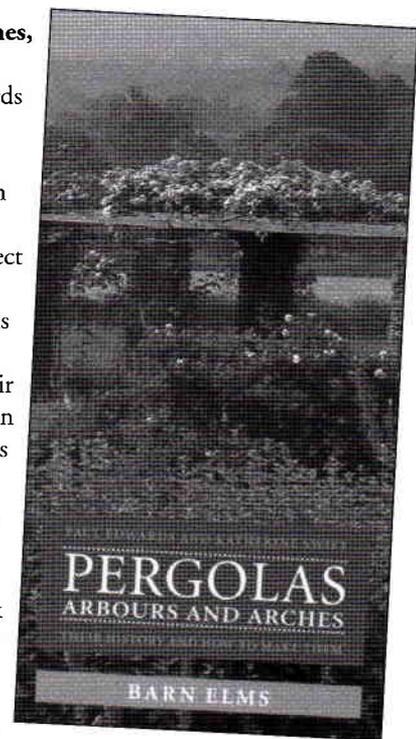
Part 1 of the book traces the history of the pergola from roman times (Linda Farrar), through the medieval (Sylvia Landsberg), the renaissance (Jan Woudstra), Victoriana and the Arts and Crafts (Robin Whalley) to the varied manifestations of the present day (Andrew Clayden). In part 2, Katherine Swift, who herself tends a medieval arbour, a grassy seat and a rope swagged Victorian rose border at the Dower House, Morville Hall, Shropshire, takes the reader on a tour of five fine gardens by well known designers: Hestercombe (Jekyll and Lutyens), The Hill, Hampstead (Mawson), Bodnant (McLaren), West Dean (Peto), and Great Fosters (Romaine-Walker and Jenkins).

The book is a riot of indulgent inspiration, replete, as one would expect, with wisteria, roses and laburnum. There is not much in it about small arches or pergolas, but perhaps this emphasis is intentional. A few hundred feet does seem an appealing length for a pergola or tunnel.

Charles Bridgeman and the English Landscape Garden

by Peter Willis (first published 1977). Reprinted 2002, with supplementary plates and catalogue of additional documents, drawings and attributions, by Elysium Press.

The first edition of this handsome volume was highly acclaimed. At a pre-publication price of £99 including postage and packing, (compared with £135 on publication) this is clearly an ideal Christmas opportunity. A flyer is included with this Bulletin. Or it can be ordered via www.elysiumpress.co.uk. Credit card purchase is not possible.



Caroline Palmer

Gerddi-WWW.

This issue I have again found a range of sites that I found interesting.

If you know of any more, particularly about Welsh gardens, please contact me.

Tel: 01446 775794. e-mail: val.t.caple@care4free.net

www.palmhouse.org.uk/

Information on the newly restored and recently re-opened Palm House at Sefton Park, Liverpool.

www.gardendigest.com/timetab.htm

The Spirit of Gardening site contains two main sections.

Quotes for Gardeners –quotes: poetry, sayings, proverbs, maxims, cliches.

The history of gardening from ancient times to the twentieth century - Noteworthy gardens, events, persons, publications and facts in the history of gardening.

www.londons-gardens.com/

London Historic Parks and Gardens Trust. The website, to be updated regularly, contains a unique seasonal guide to the most spectacular flowers and horticultural features for each month and the best London gardens in which to find them.

www.english-heritage.org.uk/knowledge/conservation/registercriteria.asp

A second visit by Gerddi-WWW to the English Heritage site.

Documents setting the criteria for including gardens in the National Monuments Record for England are available in full, with particular emphasis on the registration of Hospitals, Workhouse and Asylum landscapes. The register itself is not yet available on the web.



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IT/Gazetteer Subcommittee

Some members of the subcommittee met at Rhayader during November.

Among the items discussed was the necessity of finding funding for the Branches to help them record the gardens in their area that are not in the Cadw Register, but have local importance. Members of the subcommittee had agreed at a previous meeting that MS Access database software on PCs would be used to store information locally and nationally. A questionnaire had been sent to all branches to ask what hardware and software they would need. It is disappointing that no responses have been received. The subcommittee therefore decided to advise the WHGT that we would be looking for funding to purchase IT equipment for the Administrator, but that Branches will use the equipment they have for the time being.

If we were able to set up a WHGT National Database we would also need funding to pay for the services of the Administrator, who would be required to maintain the Database and to answer queries from members, planners and the general public. Alternatively we would have to look to other bodies, like the RCAHMW or the Association of Gardens Trusts, to maintain the information on their database.

The subcommittee is concerned that many branches have no one doing any surveys or archive investigations, or that it is being left to one person. Ceredigion Branch, together with Cambria Archaeological Trust, has applied for funding to cover the cost of a professional consultant to record the gardens in their area. We will continue to talk to the other three Archaeological Trusts to identify where we can help each other, and, if the Ceredigion application and project proves successful, it could provide a model for a similar approach to the project in other Branches.

Val Caple