



Autumn 2003

# The Hendre Gardens, Monmouth

*Almost exactly a century ago, in its issue of September 26th 1903, The Gardeners' Magazine published a long article about The Hendre in Monmouthshire. With development for this major site – Grade II\* in the Cadw/ICOMOS Register – on the agenda, we thought it was a good time to remind everyone of what this important garden was like in its heyday and at this time of year, by printing an extract from Charles H. Curtis's article. With its descriptions of the plantings, colour and sheer scale of the enterprise, we are presented with a wonderful snapshot of High Edwardian style right down to the fact that the gardens still have to look their best in the shooting season in September/October. We have also asked Elisabeth Whittle, Chief Inspector of Parks & Gardens for Cadw and resident in Monmouthshire to place The Hendre in its context within Wales and beyond.*

The Hendre stands in a finely wooded park of a thousand acres' extent, and is reached from the county road by a long drive of about two miles. This drive was made by Mr H.E. Milner, from his Lordship's own designs [Lord Llangattock]. It passes through plantations of the finest conifers, winding upward by easy gradients through oak wood and copse, revealing here and there broad stretches of open park bedded with bracken and peopled with herds of deer.

The judicious removal of a few trees at various points of vantage has opened up charming views that extend into neighbouring counties. On a clear day the famous Sugar Loaf stands up boldly, beyond Abergavenny, and still further afield may be seen the tops of the Brecknock [sic] Beacons; while if the weather is favourable, the Black Mountains can be discerned to the northward. Falling slightly, the drive is carried over a small stream by a fine, stone bridge, and from here the first view of the mansion is obtained. The double gorse and the double bramble have been planted in clumps along the roadside, while Canadian poplars, the red-fruited elder (*Sambucus racemosus*), and a few other trees and shrubs have been employed to render Nature the little assistance she required. The landscape is well wooded, oak being the principal feature, but beech thrives equally well, though not so plentiful, and there are some grand old yews at one particular spot.

## Mansion and Conservatory.

Built of brick, and set in a slight depression, the mansion is picturesque rather than palatial, homely rather than magnificent; it is an extensive, many-gabled structure, clothed with ivy, cotoneaster, and ampelopsis, and furnished within in a manner befitting the home of a peer of the realm who not so very long ago was the host of our present Prince and Princess of Wales. ...."

Attached to the mansion and entirely in harmony with it, is a handsome conservatory. This is a large building, and makes a famous winter garden, or extra withdrawing room for the family and friends, but it is not exactly an ideal place from a plantsman's point of view. The several kentias do remarkably well here, and some of them are of large size and considerable age. One specimen is notable because of the small amount of root-room it has; it was temporarily planted in a pocket in the tufa that is arranged along one side, but it so took possession of soil and rock with its tough roots that removal becomes well-nigh impossible, and so the palm has been left to its fate. It is not suffering in the least, but one of these days the tufa pocket will be rent asunder. ...."

## The Gardens.

Taken as a whole, the Hendre gardens do not lend themselves to any stereotyped form of description. They are free and varied. At no point is there an obvious striving after effect, such as mars many a modern garden. All things seem to have "grown" like the notorious



*Part of the Long Drive at The Hendre.  
Photograph ©The Royal Horticultural Society.*

Topsy; they do not seem to have been planted, but rather to have “arrived” in the proper order of things.

The little sunk flower garden is in exactly the right spot, and its central fountain, stone steps, flower-filled vases, and surrounding balustrade are all in harmony, and in keeping with the house itself. The geometrical design is filled in with bright leaved pelargoniums, ageratums, begonias, and many another gay subject, the whole producing a very effective combination. Divided from the latter by the raised central walk is yet another sunk garden, wherein are a number of low, close-cropped box hedges, arranged in a broad design, each formed so η, so as to form two sheltering bays for perennials that bloom late into the autumn. To each bay one kind of variety only is assigned, and, needless to say, *Aster amelius bessarubicus* and *A. acris* are largely planted, as well as *Anemone japonica*, *tritomas*, *Sedum spectabile*, *Zauschneria californica*, *Rudbeckia speciosa*, *coreopsis* and other plants that flower when shooting parties are the order of the day, as well as such useful annuals as China asters, zinnias and marigolds.

#### Select Trees and Shrubs.

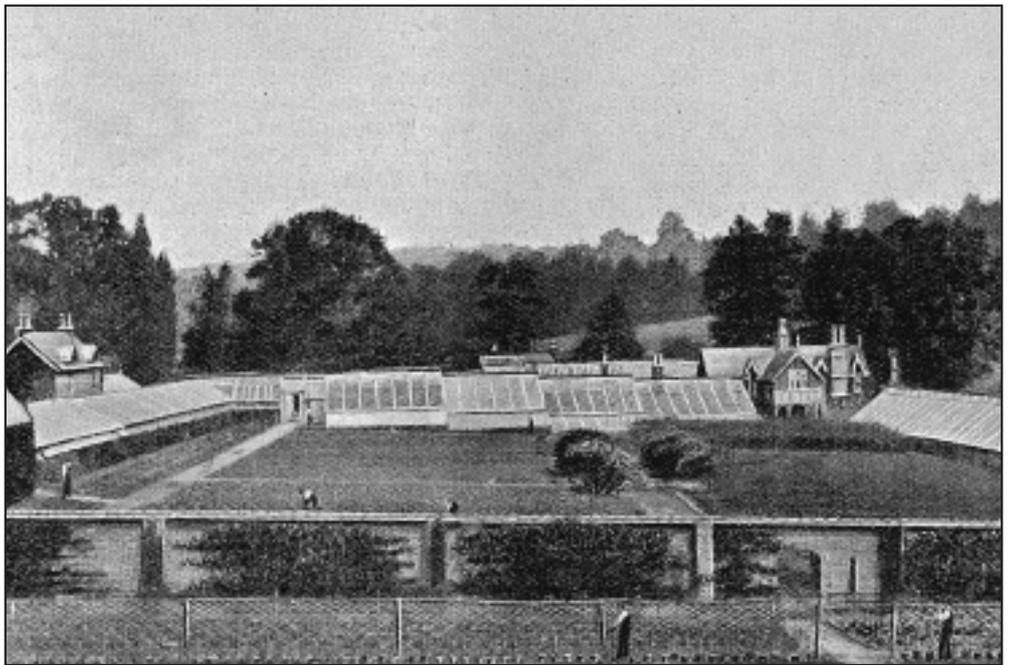
Quite a different scene is provided by the little lake and its environment of beautiful trees and shrubs; many of these have bright-coloured foliage, and their brilliance is freely reflected in the water. Here, and extending along the adjacent garden boundary, are many choice things, some of which I will name for the guidance of intending planters: *Abies pungens glauca*, *A. nobilis*, *A. concolour*, *Juniperus chinensis aurea*, and the golden forms of *J. japonica* and *J. communis Canadensis*, *Cupressus Lawsonianus lutea*, *Thuia occidentalis aurea*, and not far way, beds filled with such retinosporas as *filifera*, *pisifera*, *plumosa aurea*, *squarrosa*, and *leptoclada*; these are all in the best of health, and will succeed in most gardens where conifers can be grown. Free use is made of Golden Queen holly, but care has been taken to provide it with a suitable background.

Among trees and shrubs remarkable for their flowers, the following may be mentioned to show that the collection is an up-to-date one: *Magnolia Soulangeana*, *M. Lennei*, *Prunus triloba*, *Pyrus malus floribundus*, *Berberis stenophylla*, *B. Thunbergi*, *Olearia Haasti*, *Diplopappus chrysophyllus*, and *Spirea japonica* in variety, all planted around the water. A little further away we find *Forsythia suspensa*, *Hydrangea paniculata grandiflora*, *Rhus cotinus*, *R. glabra*, *Philadelphus Lemoinei*, *Hypericum Moserianum*, *Lycasteria formosa*, the quaint *Buddleia globosa*, good groups of *Cornus Spaethi* and *C. elegantissima*, and elegant acers in great variety.

The fine growth of the trees has already been noticed, but a further reference may well be made. There is at The Hendre a famous Cypress Walk, or, at least it ought to be famous for the beautiful specimens of Lawson's cupressus and Lobb's Thuia that it contains. The Douglas fir does well, rising to a height of 78 feet; Thuia Lobbi is 60 feet high; Sequoia sempervirens reaches 78 feet, and has a girth of 12 feet; while the silver lime rises to 75 feet, and the variegated form of *Acer pseudo-platanus* ascends to 40 feet.

#### Fruit Culture.

Indoors and out alike the same pains and care are taken to maintain the high reputation the Hendre gardens have so long held. Peaches are grown excellently well and Mr Coomber [*the Head Gardener*] has



*Kitchen Garden and Fruit Houses, The Hendre. Photograph ©The Royal Horticultural Society.*

been induced to give the readers of the GARDENERS' MAGAZINE an account of the methods he pursues. A giant Negro Largo fig is now yielding a splendid crop of fruits, and in the late vineries there is equal evidence that Mr Coomber's skill is not confined to any one or two subjects. The pineapples are not a feature in the sense that they do not stand out conspicuously, for they do not; they are simply managed in first rate style, as is everything else. The houses are all in good condition, and much of the work has been done by Messrs. J. Weeks & Co., Lim., of Chelsea. ...."

#### Kitchen Garden.

In the kitchen garden the same order and cleanliness prevails as in the houses and the far-off orchard. Even in this dull season no weeds are to be seen, for the hoe has always kept them from putting in an appearance. Peas, cauliflowers, celery, onions, the strawberry plantations, and the long rose border in the kitchen garden, as well as the pelargoniums, carnations, dendrobiums, cypripediums, etc., in the plant houses, all have the same tale to tell, which is that his Lordship does not expect bricks to be made without straw, and that his Lordship's able gardener is one of the most thorough, and one of the most successful, as he is also one of the most modest of men in the horticultural profession.

*The Hendre is the grandest and most important Victorian park and garden in Monmouthshire, the home during much of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries of the Rolls family, of which Charles Rolls was a member. Despite the superimposition of a golf course on the park and the neglect of the garden, it is still possible to grasp its essential historic character. It has the advantage of a very picturesque position in rolling, as yet unspoiled, countryside, of which the long winding drive, designed by H.E. Milner, takes full advantage. The high quality of the landscaping at The Hendre is reflected in the work of Milner in the park, the rockwork of James Pulham & Co., including an artificial cascade, and the arboretum of specimen trees. On the utilitarian side, the walled kitchen garden at The Hendre is one of the best-preserved in Wales today, including two glasshouses in good condition, one by Messenger & Co and one with its original Black Hamburg vine. The Hendre is a precious part of the cultural heritage of Wales, parts of which are in a parlous state. There is great scope here for sympathetic conservation.*

*Elisabeth Whittle*

## The Annual General Meeting, Saturday 7th June

For the first time the A.G.M. was held at Aberglasney. It was the best attended and most successful that the Trust has yet held. So many people came that the meeting was moved from within the mansion to the adjacent Village or Temperance Hall.

It was the last A.G.M. to be held under Bettina Harden's Chairmanship. Professor Tom Pritchard, as President, paid a moving tribute to the achievements attained by her. As he said, her enthusiasm and drive had made an enormous contribution to the success of the Trust in recent years. In her final speech Bettina had explained that the success of Gateway Project had been such that it was now becoming an independent charity and she was looking forward to continuing the work begun under aegis of the WHGT as Chairman of the new charity, The Gateway Gardens Trust. She thanked everyone who had helped make her work for the WHGT so rewarding and enjoyable, in particular the members of the Council and Committee. The business of the meeting saw the election of a new triumvirate to run the affairs of the Trust for the next three years: Tom Lloyd as Chairman, Michael Tree as Vice-Chairman and Jeremy Rye as Treasurer. Finally Tom Pritchard made a presentation to Bettina as thanks for all that she had put into the Trust. He also made a presentation to both Dr Peter Elmes (in his absence) and John Borron, who were retiring as Vice-Chairman and Treasurer respectively. Graham Rankin, Director of the Aberglasney Gardens Trust welcomed all members to the gardens and brought us up to date on the progress of the restoration that will hopefully extend to the mansion in Autumn 2003.

After the formal meeting Susan Campbell gave a delightful lecture on the history of the Kitchen Garden. Her breadth of knowledge was present in her slides as well as in her discussion of all kinds of remains to be found in old kitchen gardens and the story they tell. We all came away from the lecture with knowledge heightened and none of us will look at walled gardens in the same way again.

After an admirable buffet lunch provided by the catering staff at Aberglasney, largely eaten outside in glorious weather, members walked round the gardens that were looking superb. A most enjoyable day which will be hard to rival in the future.

*John R.E. Borron*

**Editor's Note:** *We owe the staff at Aberglasney a great debt of thanks for all the hard work they put in to making the A.G.M. such a success. Their efforts were much appreciated by everyone concerned in setting up the day for WHGT members, especially as they were opening their very attractive new shop with the help of Sian Phillips that afternoon.*

## The Royal Welsh Show

This was a 'Royal' Show for us in every way. The Trust was honoured with a visit from H.R.H. The Countess of Wessex, who stopped to ask about our work. Carrie Dalby explained the role of the Trust in researching and advising on the restoration, preservation and conservation of historic gardens. The Countess remarked that maintaining historic gardens could be expensive and was told the purpose of the Guide in encouraging people to visit gardens to generate income. Her Royal Highness wished the Trust well in its endeavours.

The stand was designed and set up by Ros Laidlaw and Anne Carter and manned by a valiant band of Trust members, many from the Brecon & Radnor Branch whose home ground it is. Generous sponsorship from CCW enabled the hire of new green boards, which gave a softer background for our pictures. Without The Gateway this year, the emphasis was on the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust with Bettina Harden's show-stopping picture of Gwydir in the fore. Anne's large potted *Alchemilla mollis* attracted much attention from visitors who seemed glad to recognise something that they had at home amongst the flashy glory of the trade stands.

We were grateful that the stand was inside the Floral Marquee as the weather was distinctly variable. The rainy periods often played into our hands as people who might not have found us, came in to shelter. There being no new printed Guide this year, we wrote our new website,

[www.gardensofwales.co.uk](http://www.gardensofwales.co.uk), in the back of older editions and gave them to people who showed interest. As a return to the Royal Welsh Show, who so generously provides us with the space for our stand, the WHGT always takes part in the rolling programme of talks and demonstrations that go on throughout the event. On Wednesday, Richard Gilbertson, armed with a bouquet of his lovely roses, gave an excellent talk on Old Roses in the Lecture Room, being kept well beyond his allotted time with enthusiastic questions. He happily answered many more questions during the afternoon.

Anne Carter and Michael Tree represented the Trust at a lunch hosted by NFU Mutual who have given us the sponsorship that, among other things, has helped to improve the quality and size of *The Bulletin*. NFU Mutual were celebrating winning the General Insurer of the Year Award presented by the British Insurance Industry and were happy to strengthen cordial relations with the Trust.

During the four days of the Show, a rota of members and friends manned the Stand. As always, we found the level of informed interest grows from year to year. Visitors from every part of Wales turn up at the stand with problems, inquiries and information and we all come away feeling we have made new friends, some new members, given out a good deal of information and, in the process, learned an immense amount ourselves.

*Carrie Dalby*

## Gazetteer / IT Subcommittee

Ros Laidlaw and Val Caple accepted an invitation from the Association of Garden Trusts (AGT) to represent the WHGT at a meeting to discuss a bid to Heritage Lottery Fund on behalf of the 'Parks & Gardens Database Partnership'. 15 English members of the AGT were represented, together with English Heritage and the Garden History Society. The Project Plan will include:

1. The development of a database of 'Green Spaces' to meet the needs of PPG 17 (not Wales), address concerns on the lack of information on the total picture of the Green Spaces in the UK and for education purposes
2. The database will store Core Data supplied by the individual Garden Trusts
3. Any written descriptions will remain the copyright of the individual Trusts
4. All other data and documentation, maps etc will remain with the individual Trusts
5. The storage of the data on a computer in York University – one concern of the HLF Monitor was that the database must be kept at a permanent site with staff that will be responsible for its maintenance.

There are still many issues to be resolved – what data will be made available to the general public and what is only available through contact with individual Garden Trusts, what comprises 'core data', definition of a thesaurus so that we all use the same terminology, where the income will come from to maintain the database after the 3 years of the HLF funding &c., &c. The privacy of the garden owner was discussed, and it was decided that this would be left to individual Trusts to ensure that they have the cooperation of garden owners and to generally use their discretion. It would also be up to individual Trusts as to which gardens they record or research (using written archives, but with no garden visit) and what features they record in a garden (which often depends on the interests of members)

The Project Plan was submitted to the HLF in August. If the bid were successful, the information gathering would involve no more work than the current commitment of the WHGT to load Core Data on the most important gardens of local interest to the Welsh Archaeological Trusts for their Sites and Monuments Record. The WHGT would retain all additional information on their own database or archive and would continue to have control over what gardens and data were included.

The WHGT would like to thank Microsoft Ltd for the donation of a free copy of MS Access for storing the data that is being gathered for the Welsh database, and the offer of further MS software at a reduced price.

Could any Branches who have data please send me a copy (MS Access or Excel) so that I can start to analyse what information we have with a view to combining it in the WHGT database of gardens

*Val Caple*

## Urban Parks – An Enlightened Vision for the 21st Century

As readers are aware, the historic environment is constantly changing but this needs sensitive management. The West Glamorgan Branch study day, *Urban Parks – An Enlightened Vision for the 21st Century* set out to explore the implications, challenges and need for investment in urban parks, the pressure valves of urban life.

Delegates were welcomed by David Evans, Director of Culture & Recreation for the City and County of Swansea – Wales' 3rd largest Unitary Council – heading a department with responsibility for sport, recreation, arts, culture, library, archives and parks in a city with a population of 230,000. The Department employs 1,000 staff and has a turnover in excess of £30 million. It has responsibility for 58 urban parks including Clyne Gardens, Singleton Botanical Garden and the city's first urban park, Brynmill Park, the subject of a major restoration scheme if a bid to Heritage Lottery Fund proves successful. Like so many present, David Evans was concerned about the years of lack of investment in public parks, how a value can be attributed to them and what would any city be without its beautiful parks – themes that were referred to by speakers and delegates throughout the day.

First of the keynote speakers was Dr Stewart Harding. Dr Harding is Director of The Parks Agency, a not-for-profit company launched in 2002. In his professional and voluntary capacities he has been in the forefront of the movement to repair, restore and improve parks and gardens since 1985. These roles are numerous but include monitoring and advising on HLF projects, including more than 150 public park restorations, establishing and managing the Urban Parks Programme for the Heritage Lottery Fund, awarding £170 million to 250 urban park restoration projects all over the United Kingdom and running the Task Force Trees historic parks and gardens scheme for the Countryside Commission on more than 50 restoration projects in the South West, including the Lost Gardens of Heligan, Trebah Gardens and Hestercombe Gardens. He is also a Director of the Urban Parks Forum, committed to the promotion of parks and open spaces and the gathering and exchange of best practice in the field.

As reported in the Summer *Bulletin*, it was his address to the WHGT's AGM in 2002 that provided the spark that ignited this event. Dr Harding opened with a thought-provoking and lively address urging Wales to get on with the preservation and restoration of its Urban Parks. Dr Harding firmly believes that public parks and open spaces have been, for decades, the Cinderellas of national strategic planning for leisure and recreation. They have not benefited from the promotional activities and guidance enjoyed by other areas of leisure and cultural heritage provision.

The number of and quality of the UK's public parks were, for more than a hundred years, an international symbol of horticultural excellence and enlightened social policy. Since their inception in the Public Health Movement of the 19th Century they have proved to be eminently adaptable to meeting the recreational needs of successive generations and are considered by some as enduringly popular and powerful icons of civic pride. He also believes that the report, *Urban Green Spaces Taskforce – Green Spaces, Better Places* (DTLR: London, 2002) is an important

document, setting the framework for the role of public parks, gardens and open spaces in urban regeneration and contains some 50 recommendations for action. The key message concerns urban renaissance and regeneration and says “*The provision of good quality green spaces can make an important contribution to regeneration and renewal projects, and enhance the image of a neighbourhood, or whole town. Parks are an essential element in creating a sense of place, which is an attractive place for people to live and for business to locate. The potential of parks and green spaces in enhancing and contributing to the changing economies of towns and cities should therefore underpin regeneration programmes.*”

Dr Harding also put forward a possible model for study to help improve urban parks in Wales with the aim of supporting the regeneration of public parks and gardens for environmental, social and economic benefit. The method would be to join with public park managers, including local authorities, in a study exercise, the objectives of which are geared to achieving this outcome. The WHGT could take the lead, perhaps using a consultant, in seeking to promote, for example, the setting-up of a forum for all those committed to and involved in improving the quality of the design, care and management of public parks and gardens in Wales and among other suggestions, to assist the partners in determining priorities for the implementation of policies and improvements in urban parks. The West Glamorgan Branch is grateful to Dr Harding for providing these ideas and they will form the basis for a second Urban Parks Study Day in June 2004.

Our other keynote speaker was Peter Wilkinson, Head of Parks Development at Bristol City Council, an authority managing some 450 park sites, covering around 3,200 acres of green space. The city has a history of public parks dating back to 1174 and has one of the most impressive heritage portfolio of parks and open spaces anywhere in the country, with several magnificent heritage estates, Victorian urban parks, nature reserves, sites of special scientific interest, community parks and informal recreation areas. Peter, who is responsible for developing and managing an investment programme to regenerate the city's large historic estates and parks, principally through attracting Heritage Lottery and other external regeneration funding, gave a fascinating illustrated account of how Bristol has tackled the enormous task of the work done so far including restoration management programmes for Blaise Castle Estate (£5m), Ashton Court Estate (£8m) and Arnos Vale Cemetery (£5m) through Heritage Lottery funding and developing public/private partnerships.

In addition to the two keynote speeches, there were 2 workshops run by David Lambert and Professor Charles Stirton:

David Lambert has been involved in the campaign for urban parks for over a decade. He was joint author of one of the first reports on the subject: *Public Prospects* in 1993, and in 1995 was instrumental in persuading HLF to set up its Urban Parks Programme. He has written many books and articles on the subject including histories of the parks of Bristol and Weston-super-Mare, and an appreciation of the new urban parks of Paris. He was one of the two advisers to the House of Commons Select Committee inquiry into town and country parks in 1999 and also to the inquiry the following year into cemeteries.

His workshop highlighted the need to balance conservation with public amenity. He cited Central Park, Southampton as a good example of initial capital work creating an attractive space, a workable management and maintenance programme and a policy of public ownership. Security in parks is an endemic problem and

difficult to solve but Southampton has encouraged increased use by incorporating cycle ways as well as pedestrian paths. The era of park keepers to enforce bylaws had passed and although gardeners and park rangers can provide a physical presence in parks vandalism will always be an issue.

David was adamant that one should not try to turn the clock back to some previous Golden Age as the Victorian had created parks in a totally different social era. Victorian parks were designed and built by Borough Engineers who put an immense amount of thought into planting and water features. There is, however, a need to look carefully at what you have and acknowledge that most people do value old things, be they veteran trees or glasshouses, hence the palm house restoration at Sefton Park, Liverpool.

The public does not generally react kindly to imposed solutions and implicit in the concept of regeneration of urban parks is the involvement of people. Bristol has successfully formed a Citizens' Panel, which has changed the local government perspective. A good balance had also been struck in Wrexham with a miners' park, designed by miners, utilising their local knowledge and understanding of the context of the landscape. Local tensions, wishes and needs have to be properly addressed and the voice of youngsters heard as they traditionally are frequent park users and often request shelters rather than bandstands! In the past it has been hard to access HLF for anything other than faithful conservation work, whether appropriate or not, but the climate is slowly changing. There is a wider recognition of the importance of providing a modern public amenity and the need to take risks and not to nail down the future as a mere replica of the past.

Professor Charles Stirton is a distinguished botanist with an international reputation. Known to us as the first Director of the National Botanic Garden of Wales, he is the author of four books and 115 scientific publications. Throughout the day there were references to how important urban parks are in individual's lives and not relating to a town or city as a whole. Many people can map their life's milestones in relation to being in their local park – riding a bike, a first kiss, having wedding photographs taken, walking the dog, taking children and then grandchildren to play. Professor Stirton's thought-provoking workshop on biophilia, the inherent spiritual and psychological need for humanity to relate to nature, developed this theme. He is passionate about plants and about urban parks, "If we do not use urban parks all year and we do not engage visitors, especially children, they will be built over. They will be lost forever." Participants were invited to list five ways of engaging people in urban parks and to think about how important their local park or outside space was to them. Before leaving, participants were invited by Professor Stirton to make one positive commitment to improve their own local urban park.

In an increasingly urbanised environment, the relevance and importance of public parks and green spaces in our towns and cities cannot be over-emphasised. If we neglect them now, what will be left of them for future generations to enjoy? The West Glamorgan Branch is extremely grateful for the support of the City and County of Swansea and CCW, support that will continue with the organisation of the second Urban Parks Study day mentioned above in June 2004 and aiming to bring the issue of urban parks further up the political agenda of Wales.

*Dr Harding prepared extensive notes for circulation on the day. If members would like a set please contact Sharron Kerr on 01792 390 261 or e mail: [SharronLimpert@aol.com](mailto:SharronLimpert@aol.com)*

*For further information about the Urban Parks Forum contact The Urban Parks Forum Ltd, Caversham Court, Church Road, Caversham, Reading RG4 7AD. Telephone: 0118 946 9060.*

## Country Parks – Country Cousins?

In the light of the growing interest in urban parks, their future, restoration and redevelopment and the need to bring these to the attention of the National Assembly, we should also spare a thought for the plight of country parks. This is very relevant to the WHGT as many of them, including sites such as Margam Park and Penllergare, are also historic parks included in the Cadw/ICOMOS Register. Country parks emerged as a concept a century or so later than their urban predecessors and were all the rage by the early 1980s. In the twenty-first century (delete) Today many of them are in decline, very largely because of lack of funding from the local authorities responsible. With the future of 'green spaces' very much on the political agenda at the moment, country parks clearly deserve consideration as much as urban ones. In England the Countryside Agency has prepared the excellent *Towards A Country Park Renaissance*, looking at the future for country parks. in England (delete) There is the suggestion within this document that CCW should be involved in "...the improvement process" but it is currently unclear whether or not CCW have formulated a policy for the future of country parks in Wales. We cannot find much on the current or future role of CCW with regard to country parks on their website, there is a passing reference to them in *A Living Environment For Wales (Overview)* – albeit in the past tense – and there is nothing specific in the 2010 vision statement, *A Better Wales*. We are actively seeking information as to CCW's position on country parks, particularly in helping with their revival. A reply is awaited! (delete) As we go to press, there is an announcement of 27 programmes, with a budget of £89 million, aimed at improving the states of parks and public spaces as part of the Deputy Prime Minister's Sustainable Communities Plan in **England!!!** Come on Wales.

*Bettina Harden & Michael Norman*

### People

## The WHGT Council

We now have a restored and revived Council whose rich and varied expertise can be called on at any time to support the Trust. We have said goodbye to some valuable Council members over the years, and we owe them our grateful thanks. Most recently the death of Lord Aberconway has deprived us of a long-serving and valued supporter. Mavis Batey, doyenne of the Garden History Society, has decided to retire from the Council, as has Professor Sir Ghilleen Prance. The membership of the Council is now as follows:

**President: Professor Tom Pritchard**, well-known to members when Chairman of the WHGT, is distinguished for his work for the natural and historic environment in Wales.

**The Most Hon. The Marquess of Anglesey**, has been a champion of both the built and natural heritage all his life. The first chairman of the Historic Buildings Council in Wales, Lord Anglesey is also a passionate gardener.

**W. L. (Lawrence) Banks Esq, CBE**, is a distinguished dendrologist, responsible for the beautiful gardens at Hergest Croft in Herefordshire.

**Professor Dianne Edwards, FRS, CBE**, heads the Department of Earth Sciences, University of Cardiff. A notable botanist, she represents the National Botanic Garden of Wales as its Head of Science.

**Bettina Harden, MBE**, Chairman of The Gateway Gardens Trust, dedicated to affording access to historic gardens for all members of the community.

**R. A. E. Herbert Esq, CBE**, his distinguished career has involved bodies ranging from the Royal Horticultural Society and the National Botanic Garden of Wales to the Countryside Commission for England & Wales and the National Trust.

**Dr John Dixon Hunt** is Professor of History & Theory of Landscape, University of Pennsylvania and a noted author on garden history.

**Dame Jennifer Jenkins** was formerly chairman of The National Trust, as well as serving in the same capacity for the Historic Buildings Council for England and the Consumers' Association.

**The Hon. Christopher McLaren**, a member of the family that created Bodnant, is the owner of one of the most beautiful gardens in North Wales at Maenan Abbey.

## September, October, November, December

*As this is a time of year when out-of-door events are less common, we have included lectures, exhibitions and fairs in our listing. As before the numbers in [ ] indicate the garden's place in The Guide; \*\* indicate gardens not to be found there.*

## Brecon &amp; Radnor

## BRECON &amp; RADNOR BRANCH EVENT

*Thursday 9th October*

**AUTUMN LECTURE** John Claudius Loudon 7 p.m.

Stephen Desmond on the life and work of the influential nineteenth-century garden designer.

Admission: WHGT members – £4 (to include coffee); Guests are welcome @ £5 per head.

## Carmarthenshire

**ABERGLASNEY, Llangathen** [58]

*Saturday 6th & Sunday 7th December*

**WINTER FAIR** 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.

This popular event has been extended to two days. It features musical entertainment all day, superb stalls in the Mansion, seasonal demonstrations and mulled wine. Admission as for the garden.

**NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDEN OF WALES,**

**Middleton, Llanarthne** [56]

*Friday 31st October*

**HALLOWEEN HIGH JINKS** *An Evening for Children:*

Spooky Stories, Ghostly Games.... Are you brave enough to spend Halloween at the Gardens?! Admission: £3.50.

*Saturday 29th & Sunday 30th November*

**CHRISTMAS CRAFT FAIR**

10 a.m. – 4.30 p.m. Admission: free with garden entry.

NB Sunday entry is free to all OAPS.

## Ceredigion

**HAFOD, Pontrhydygroes** [37]

*Saturday 18th October 2003*

Following the success of last year's well-attended event, the Hafod Partnership is pleased to invite WHGT members to visit again and catch up on progress at Hafod. The day will include a walk through the dramatic scenery of the Ystwyth Gorge, crossing the new Chain Bridge. This is a not-to-be-missed experience for devotees of the Sublime.

A buffet lunch will be provided, and the cost for the day will be £12 per person.

To reserve a place, please send a deposit of £4, payable to the Hafod Trust, to:

Jennie Macve, Hafod Estate Office, Pontrhydygroes, Ystradmeurig, Ceredigion, SY25 6DX.

*Places cannot be guaranteed unless booked before 19th September.*

**LLANERCHAERON, Aberaeron** [42]

**APPLE WEEK** *Saturday 25th October – Sunday 2nd November*

11 a.m. – 5 p.m. daily, (closed Monday & Tuesday).

## Clwyd

**CHIRK CASTLE, Chirk, Wrexham** [27]

*Saturday 13th & Sunday 14th September*

**CRAFT FAIR** 10.30 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Admission: £2 Adults and under-16s free for Craft Fair only, otherwise NT charges apply.

*Saturday 11th October* **TEDDY BEAR DAY** 12 noon – 4 p.m.

Normal NT admission charges.

*Saturday 18th October* **FAMILY FUN DAY** 12 noon – 4 p.m.

Normal NT admission charges apply, but there may be a small charge for some activities.

*Friday 31st October* **HAUNTED HAPPENINGS**

12 noon – 4 p.m.

Normal NT admission charges apply, with free admission for any child in a spooky costume.

**ERDDIG HALL, near Wrexham** [25]

Gardens open 11 a.m. – 5 p.m. until 2nd November, Saturday – Wednesday, 4 p.m. until 21st December. Last admission 1 hour before closing. Admission: free to NT members, otherwise £3.40, children £1.70.

*Sunday 14th September* **UNICORN ARCHERY** 1 p.m. – 4 p.m.

*Saturday 4th & Sunday 5th October* **APPLE FESTIVAL**

11 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Apple tasting, cider tasting, dancers, children's games, stalls and much more besides.

*Sunday 26th October* **HALLOWEEN HOOTINGS**

1 p.m. – 4.30 p.m.

## Gwent

**\*\*LLANOVER, near Abergavenny**

**NGS Open Day: Sunday 12th October** 2 p.m. – 5 p.m.

Admission: £2.50, children free. Teas.

This important site that contains the remains of the High Victorian garden of the renowned Lady Llanover, has a superb arboretum well worth seeing for its Autumn colour.

**Advance Notice: January 28th 2004 Evening Lecture by Robin Whalley on Restoration & Garden History.**

On behalf of The Friends of Tredegar House & The Ruperra Trust. WHGT members particularly welcome Times and costs to be announced. For details contact pat.moseley@ukgateway.net

TREDEGAR HOUSE & GARDENS, Newport [78]  
*Wednesday 29th October – Friday 31st October HALLOWEEN*  
*AT TREDEGAR HOUSE* Evenings only, booking in advance  
01633 815 880, not suitable for under-8s.

*Saturday 13th & Sunday 14th December*  
**CHRISTMAS AT TREDEGAR HOUSE**  
For details and booking in advance please telephone as above.

## Gwynedd

### GWYNEDD BRANCH EVENTS:

*Tuesday 30th September MICHAELMAS LUNCH,*  
*Penmaenuchaf Hall, near Dollgellau*

Guests welcome. Contact Olive Horsfall at Esgairrolwyn,  
Talsarnau, Gwynedd LL47 6YB.

### *Saturday May 1st 2004. Early Warning:*

Please make a note of the date of the justifiably well-known  
Gwynedd Branch **PLANT FAIR** at Crûg Farm. Bookings for  
stalls will be taken soon from special interest nurseries. Please  
contact Sue Wynne Jones at Crûg Farm, Caernarfon, Gwynedd  
LL55 6TU. [bleddyn&sue@crug-farm.co.uk](mailto:bleddyn&sue@crug-farm.co.uk)

**PENRHYN CASTLE, Bangor** [12]  
*Wednesday 17th – Monday 29th September, 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.,*  
daily except Tuesdays, Margaret Stevens, the well-known Botanic  
Artist, is exhibiting her work. Normal grounds admission charge.

**PLAS NEWYDD, Llanfairpwll, Anglesey** [10]  
*Lecture & Lunch Series:*  
10.30 a.m. in the Tearoom. £14 to include morning coffee, lunch  
and the lecture.

*Sunday 19th October AUTUMN PLANT SALE 2 p.m. – 5 p.m.*  
A wide selection of hardy shrubs and perennials as well as a variety  
of houseplants for sale. In aid of Friends of Treboth Botanic  
Garden.

*Thursday 27th November*  
*Wild Flowers & Scenery of North Wales* Jeff Blattershout  
*Thursday 4th December*  
*Thomas Telford – Journey from Dover Docks to Menai Bridge*  
Mike Blackburn

**\*\*TREBORTH BOTANIC GARDEN, Bangor**  
Overlooking the Menai Strait, part of the gardens and woodland  
here were originally designed by Joseph Paxton and there is always  
plenty to see, including good Autumn colour.

## Montgomery

**GLANSEVERN HALL, Berriew, Welshpool, Powys** [31]  
*NGS Open Days, Fridays 12th & 19th September.*  
12 noon – 6 p.m. Admission: £3.00, senior citizens £2.00,  
children free.

**POWIS CASTLE AND GARDEN, Welshpool** [30]  
Open 11 a.m. – 6 p.m. until 2nd November, Wednesday – Sunday.  
Admission: Free to NT members, otherwise £5.00, children £2.50.  
Tel: 01938 551 920



The gateway  
autumn fair

Saturday 18th & Sunday 19th October  
At Glansevern Hall by kind permission of  
Mr & Mrs Neville Thomas  
10 a.m. – 4.30 p.m.  
Admission to include the garden: £3.00 or £5.00 for both days.

A wide range of stalls ranging from trees from the National  
Collection of Viburnum, through Gardening books &  
Accessories to Food & Wine and much, much more!

*Thursday 11th September ANCIENT HEDGES 2 p.m.*  
Accompany the intrepid hedging team as they describe their annual  
work at this time of year in caring for the giant hedges at Powis.  
Please book in advance (meet at the garden entrance).

*Sunday 14th September AUTUMN FOOD FAIR*  
*11 a.m. – 4 p.m.*  
A range of food and drink from local producers and suppliers will be  
available to taste and buy in the Courtyard, Shop and Restaurant,  
enabling visitors to stock up in plenty of time for Christmas.  
Entrance to the Fair is free with normal admission to the Castle and  
Garden.

*Thursday 2nd October LEAF AND BERRY 2 p.m.*  
As autumn starts, then many plants begin a colourful process in  
preparing for another winter ahead. Enjoy the beautiful colours in  
the garden with a walk looking at the marvellous variations available  
for gardeners to enjoy at this time of year. Please book in advance.  
(meet at the garden entrance).

*Thursday 16th October AUTUMN PLANT PROPAGATION*  
*2 p.m.*  
Join the nursery staff at the Edwardian glasshouses for a behind-the-  
scenes tour including demonstrations on seed collection, a chance to  
learn about seed dormancy and sowing techniques, and the  
preparation of the nursery for the coming winter. Please book in  
advance (meet at the garden entrance).

## Pembrokeshire

**COLBY WOODLAND GARDEN, Amroth, Narberth** [54]  
Open daily until 3rd November, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. NT admission  
terms apply. Although there are no special events planned, this  
beautiful garden should be seen at this time of year for its lovely  
Autumn tints and berries.

**PICTON CASTLE & WOODLAND GARDENS,**  
**Haverfordwest** [48]  
*Saturday 6th September PLANT SALE 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.*  
featuring local nurseries, a Pig Roast and Children's Entertainer.  
Admission: £2.50, children free. The Castle is also open at a cost of  
£2.00 to include the Chapel, not usually open to the public, but  
there will be no guided tours.

*Tuesday 9th September RHS Lecture:*  
*Ferns, Native & Exotic Roddy Milne 2 p.m.*  
Admission: £7.95 for RHS members, otherwise £9.95 to  
include Afternoon Tea. The lecture includes a practical walk  
through the garden.  
**Advance booking preferable through the RHS: 0207 821 3408**

## Mid & South Glamorgan

### MID & SOUTH GLAMORGAN EVENT

**Friday 26th September Visit to Wenvoe Castle 2.30 p.m.**

The bones of an eighteenth-century landscaped park and gardens, surrounding what was a Robert Adam mansion (only the stable block remains as the club house of Wenvoe Castle Golf Club) explained and interpreted by Elisabeth Whittle and David Randolph, whose family owned the property for hundreds of years. For details, costs &c. please contact Val Caple.

### DYFFRYN GARDENS, St Nicholas [72]

Admission: free from 31st October.

**Saturday 20th & Sunday 21st September**

### EUROPEAN HERITAGE WEEKEND

10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Free admission as part of the Civic Trust's European Heritage weekend with an exhibition:

**Impressions of the Gardens.**

**Sundays, 28th September, 26th October, 23rd November & 21st December:**

**Head Gardener's Walks: 2.30pm – 4.00pm.**

Bring sturdy footwear. (September – focus on herbaceous borders and yews; October – Champion Trees Trail; November – focus on trees).

### MUSEUM OF WELSH LIFE, St Fagans [73]

Admission: free of charge unless stated otherwise.



**Wednesdays 3rd, 10th, 17th & 24th September**

**Drop in sessions in the Italian Garden 2 p.m. – 4 p.m.**

A chance for visitors to learn more about this recently restored garden, its history and plantings &c.

**Friday 12th September**

**Family Bat Walk with the Bat Conservation Trust 7.30 p.m.**

A twilight tour of the Museum of Welsh Life grounds. Visitors should bring a torch, a flask and sensible shoes! Booking in advance 02920 573 466

**Saturday 27th & Sunday 28th September**

**HARVEST FESTIVAL 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.**

A celebration of Welsh food and farming, with traditional customs, harvest time entertainment, craft demonstrations and a Thanksgiving Service.

**Friday 3rd October TRADITIONAL SKILLS FAIR**

(with the Heritage Information Trust)

**10 a.m. – 4 p.m.** Stalls selling traditional products, with demonstrations &c.

**Tuesday 14th October AUTUMN IN ST FAGANS 2 p.m.**

A guided walk round the Museum grounds looking at Autumn colour and plants of interest. Meet by the Site Map beyond the subway.

**Fridays 17th October, 14th November & 21st November**

**GHOST TOURS AT ST FAGANS**

**6.30 & 8 p.m.**

Booking in advance – 02920 573 466 – Tickets £6, children £3. Don't forget your torch!!

**Friday 31st October.**

**ALL HALLOW'S EVE 6 p.m. – 9 p.m.**

An ancient festival to mark the beginning of winter and Celtic New Year, All Hallow's Eve is also the most enchanted night of the year when ghostly spirits roam the earth. Find out what was done to keep them at bay, enjoy a scary story or two and keep your little monsters entertained with some chilling activities. Don't forget a torch and suitable costume. Booking in advance as above; Tickets £4, Family (2 adults + 2 children) £10.

**Tuesday 11th November**

**The Formal Gardens of St Fagans Castle 2 p.m.**

Your chance to find out more about the history of the castle gardens and the plants within them. Guided Tour – meet by the Lead Cistern in front of the castle door.

**Wednesday 3rd – Friday 5th December**

**THE CHRISTMAS TREE 6 p.m. – 9 p.m.**

Get into the festive spirit at St Fagans and explore Christmas through the ages from the Mummings Plays and toffee making to the arrival of the Christmas Tree itself, discover what a traditional Welsh Christmas really meant. The old customs come to life against the backdrop of decorated cottages while you enjoy mulled wine and mince pies, seasonal stories and entertainment and, of course, a visit to Father Christmas. Booking in advance as above; Tickets £4, Family (2 adults + 2 children) £10.

## West Glamorgan

### WEST GLAMORGAN BRANCH EVENTS

**Thursday 9th October**

**BEARS' EARS AND PAINTED LADIES**

**7 p.m.**

Illustrated talk on the history of auriculas by branch members Pat Inman and Robin Fisher. At Memorial Baptist Church, Walter Road, Swansea (entrance in Burman Street).

**Saturday 6th December**

**EDWARDIAN CHRISTMAS EVENING**

in an historic Gower house (fancy dress optional). For further details contact Sharron Kerr on 01792 390 261.

## Bute Park, Cardiff

Considerable objections have been raised to a proposal by Cardiff City Council to insert 2 large buildings, designed in a modern idiom, which would protrude into the rectilinear open space in front of Cardiff Castle. The buildings are intended to provide a visitor centre and a restaurant on the site. The objections have been on three grounds – damage to the archaeology, to the setting of a listed building and to the landscape. This last is of particular importance as it is one of the few surviving examples in Wales of the work of ‘Capability’ Brown in the 1770s. The whole matter was subject to a public inquiry in July in Cardiff and the decision is pending.

## Glynllifon, Caernarfon

After seven years on the market, the Plas at Glynllifon was recently sold together with 12 acres of the park. Within the month an application for detailed planning permission was lodged for conversion to a hotel and conference centre and included an admirable statement of intent for a landscape conservation plan to restore the historic features of the grounds. The WHGT were invited to meet the landscape architect, which enabled us to stress the significance of this unique Grade 1 landscape. The restoration of the gardens will be supported by the vast Glynllifon archive recently purchased by the Gwynedd archive service with HLF funding.

An estate map of 1771 shows typical early eighteenth-century garden structures in the region of the development site. Although these were subsequently removed by later landscaping, recent hot dry weather has revealed substantial scorch marks of the old stable block and garden features. Full archaeological investigation is indicated together with a photographic record, archival research, a conservation plan and a management plan – all before work is commenced on the garden restoration. Other issues discussed were the urgent need for repair of listed structures; wide consultation with conservation organisations, liaison with other owners within the park to protect important vistas; the siting of car parking and (bearing in mind the planting record available) appropriate re-planting.

The possibility of co-operation of all owners within the park may reap the benefit of supportive funding, and there is so much potential for this project. We look forward to following the progress.

*Sheila Roberts*

## Margam Park, Port Talbot

The public inquiry into whether the controversial wind farm can be built overlooking Margam has come to an end (July 2003), but it is likely to be September at the earliest before the campaigners, including the WHGT, who have fought the plan find out who has won. Community Power Ltd appealed against Neath Port Talbot Council’s decision to refuse planning permission for the 11 turbines

on Margam Mountain. The National Assembly now has to examine the conclusions to be drawn from the inquiry, which lasted more than two weeks. It is worth noting that ‘scores of members of environmental groups spoke out against the scheme’.

*Sharron Kerr (with thanks to Swansea Evening Post)*

## Penllergare, Swansea

The new website [www.penllergare.org](http://www.penllergare.org) was launched in June. Funded mainly by Environment Wales, the site provides an overview of the history of the estate and its setting – the place and its people – as well as current activities (centred on the community and education programme) and The Penllergare Trust’s future objectives.

**Ecological Surveys** In preparation for an interest in tenure and raising the necessary funds for restoration, the Trust has commissioned an initial (Phase I) report on the ecology of the park and adjoining amenity land. Including a survey of exotic trees and shrubs, the report will be an important contribution to a future Conservation Plan and is already on the Penllergare GIS Database. A public reference copy of the report (together with other project documents) is lodged with the West Glamorgan Archive Service at Swansea County Hall.

**The Lower Lake** The token replica of John Dillwyn Llewelyn’s design demanded by the S106 agreement is now finished. Although a fair-sized body of water is a potential asset in any landscape, the Trust had voiced serious misgivings over the design and execution of this project, including a spillway in one of the most sensitive localities on the site. The Trust had asked for an archaeological watching brief for the spillway and this was vindicated by the unearthing of the remnants of a plateway from the adjacent quarry.

**Schools Programme** With contractors in possession of most of the site, the Spring Walk and Talk programme for Year 6 of local schools had to be put off until this summer term. Sponsored by the Forestry Commission Wales, this year’s *Picture Penllergare* art competition was won by Jonathan Lee of Penllergaer Primary School.



*Year 6 of Pontlliw Primary School being told about the wildlife by Keith Clements, a volunteer warden. Photograph © Penllergare Trust.*

*Further information about Project Penllergare is available by telephoning Michael Norman on 01558 650 735, or by e-mail: [contact@penllergare.org](mailto:contact@penllergare.org).*

*Michael Norman*

## No progress at Ruperra.

It would not be unreasonable to expect that there would be news of progress on the application to Caerphilly County Borough Council, made in June 2002, for development at Ruperra. There is no news alas, unless we consider the involvement of the Countryside Council for Wales whose bat officers, when visiting Ruperra following the submission of the application, suggested that the owner commissioned a nature conservation survey. The survey shows that the roosts of the young male lesser horseshoe bats, first logged in the 1990s, have been joined by a maternity roost of greater horseshoe bats. This is one of only five maternity roosts in Wales and is extremely important since the 'greater' species are already in serious decline and thus heavily legally protected. They have to be monitored over a period of three years to establish their permanence. Last week new babies were found to have increased the numbers to forty.

The Chief Planning Officer at Caerphilly County Borough Council is still awaiting the additional information requested a year ago to supplement the listed building application and believes that a structural engineer is now in talks with Cadw. He said that no progress would be allowed until Cadw is satisfied with the proposals.

Meanwhile all action at Ruperra, save exercising the polo ponies, is suspended. The seventeenth-century deer park and hidden terraces, the grassed-over Victorian kitchen gardens and the 1913



*The glasshouse at Ruperra today.* Photograph © Alun Teagle.

Mackenzie & Moncur glasshouse are lying dormant. It is interesting to note that a firm of glasshouse specialists in Newcastle, Paul Scott Ltd, have taken up the mantle of glasshouse reconstruction from the now defunct firm and recently completed the restoration of the Mackenzie & Moncur Sefton Park Palm House in Liverpool. In the early 1960s, before it fell into disrepair and was vandalised, I used to visit it, with my children in their pushchair, almost daily.

A sympathetic local supporter remarked that he couldn't bear to think of the traumatic effect the present state of the Ruperra gardens would have on Angus McKinnon, head gardener at Ruperra for 40 years until the early 1930s. Mary Thomas who cooked and cleaned for the garden boys in the 1920s said *'People used to say that Ruperra could never go on without McKinnon. He worshipped it. Even when he went on holiday to Leicester he used to think about it all the time and imagine he could see the Bristol Channel. He had yellow and red tomatoes in the greenhouses and the yellow were gorgeous. There were peaches, dates and figs growing outside against the wall and an orchard between the castle and West Lodge. Courtney Morgan, (the Third Baron and Second Viscount Tredegar, who died in 1934) would go in and have a cup of tea with Mr and Mrs McKinnon at the Bothy. And he'd walk around the gardens with Mr McKinnon and both of them would sit on the front steps to talk'*



*Angus McKinnon in the 1920s.* Photograph © The McKinnon Family.

Meanwhile up on Coed Craig Ruperra, with the support and guidance of Cadw, plans are afoot for fencing off the whole area of the Scheduled Ancient Monument. This will not only stop the horse riding current on the scheduled site but enable grazing to keep down the vegetation. The arbour is included in the scheduled area and we are looking into funding for an investigation to prepare for its restoration, complete with seat and a yew hedge.

*Pat Moseley, August 2003.*

## Y Faenol, Bangor, Gwynedd

The Study Brief to be commissioned to look at the whole of the Faenol Estate on behalf of Gwynedd Council, the Welsh Development Agency and the WHGT has been finalised and, at the time of going to press, we are at the stage of drawing up a shortlist of consultants to tender for the work. There is no doubt that this 'Strategy for the Future' is essential for such a valuable Grade I site, already targeted as a venue for major events such as the Bryn Terfel Festival that takes place annually over the August Bank Holiday, and the National Eisteddfod, scheduled for 2005. The firm of consultants appointed will be evaluating the whole site, providing an analysis of the planned landscape and associated historic buildings, identifying the land use aspirations of the many owners/groups who have an interest in Y Faenol and proposing a 'Strategy for the Future'. In the meantime, there are plans to meet the directors of the National Eisteddfod on site in September to help them assess and consider the impact their plans will have on the landscape.

Finally, we await with great interest the showing of the Welsh edition of BBC2's *Restoration* when Vaynol Old Hall will be one of the 3 Welsh sites to be voted into the final, offering the prospect of millions of pounds that might be made available to fund the restoration of the winning building. Having watched most of the series so far, the problem is clearly going to be that viewers are going to spoil for choice amongst a plethora of deserving cases, ranging from enormous windmills and early Wesleyan chapels to magnificent houses and immense factories, all seeking a viable future. Our fingers are crossed, but we are not hopeful.

*Bettina Harden*

## Tax Help for the WHGT!!

You may already help us by having completed a Gift Aid Form when you renewed your subscription or gave us other funding. If you fill in your tax return yourself, you can help us further by giving through your self-assessment form. The Inland Revenue has announced a new scheme – from April 2004 Self Assessment taxpayers will be able to donate their tax repayments to charity using the tax return. This new way of giving has the potential to generate a considerable amount for those charities that participate. The WHGT has registered with the Inland Revenue so that we can benefit in this way. Don't forget us when you come to complete your tax return!

# Goodbye The Gateway Project – Hello The Gateway Gardens Trust

When the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust was set up 14 years ago, its founders could have not have imagined the impact it would have on the historic garden scene in Wales and how many visions it would indeed turn into reality. Some of these visions are now household names, The National Botanic Garden of Wales and The Aberglasney Restoration Trust, for example. So, in true WHGT style, when the Trustees first discussed the idea of widening participation in the garden heritage of Wales by offering financial help and practical assistance to disadvantaged community groups and schoolchildren, I believe it's true to say, they did not realise *then*, the extent of the impact and success such an innovative approach would have. Only *now* in 2003 does social inclusion appear to be at the top of the heritage agenda elsewhere. The idea was named The Gateway Project, and once again, following the WHGT tradition, thanks to the support of the Trustees and members throughout Wales, this idea is now about to become an independent charity in its own right and stand on its own two feet as The Gateway Gardens Trust.

Since the germ of the Gateway Project was discussed way back in 1998 and launched in February 2000, the Project has secured and raised more than an estimated £660,000 in Wales alone, thanks to the dedication and determination of former WHGT Chairman, now Gateway Gardens Trust Chairman, Bettina Harden, MBE. The money has come from a huge variety of sources and has taken an enormous amount of hard work. It includes £362,000 from Heritage Lottery Fund, and the remainder made up of grants from The Countryside Council for Wales, Barclays Bank, Lloyds TSB Foundation, HSBC, corporate sponsors, small charitable trusts, anonymous donors, WHGT members and the general public, from people buying our plants, home-made preserves and second-hand gardening books to young schoolboys emptying their pockets of copper coins. Thank you everyone.

Every penny raised has made a difference. It has helped us



*Looking forward to the future - one of our special Gateway visitors in the double-walled garden at the National Botanic Garden of Wales, Middleton this Summer.*

© The Gateway Gardens Trust



*One of our first educational visits at Tretower Court in 2000.*  
© The Gateway Gardens Trust

produce jointly with the WHGT, the 2000, 2001 and 2002 editions of *The Guide to the Historic Parks and Gardens in Wales*, one of the most popular free publications ever and a significant boost to raising awareness of the country's garden heritage. Since our very first snowdrop walk with Kitchener Primary School from Cardiff at Aberglasney in February 2000, we have introduced some 7,000 people of all ages and backgrounds to the glorious garden heritage of Wales. We have worked with disabled groups, carers, the bereaved, the elderly and very frail, youth groups, ethnic and new communities, children and adults with special needs as well as schoolchildren and Lifelong Learners. I don't wish to blind you with too many statistics, but it's worth considering that in May and June this year, our Learning and Access Officer, Jean Reader, single-handedly masterminded and accompanied 22 visits to 11 gardens by 860 people!

Please remember, too, that the vast majority of our visitors, be they young or old, have never visited an historic garden in Wales before and that nothing like this happens anywhere else in the UK. Next year, however, we plan to see Gateway Gardens Trust visits taking place in the equally wonderful historic gardens of the West Midlands and I am currently researching an Audience Development Plan for the region, thanks to a Project Planning Grant from HLF West Midlands and with support from English Heritage. The response from gardens and the public there so far is enormously encouraging.

The Gateway Project has gone from strength to strength but this it could not have done without the ceaseless support of the WHGT Trustees, Branch Committees and members, too many to mention individually, but made up of those who have given advice and detailed information about particular gardens, have been volunteer helpers on visits, to those who have baked scones, buttered bread and cut cucumber sandwiches, who have rattled our collecting tins, raffled our bears, generously given donations, pushed wheelchairs, mopped our brow and listened to our woes. We may now be venturing forth on our own but please don't stop supporting us!

*Sharron Kerr, Access Director, The Gateway Gardens Trust  
August 2003*

## Gerddi-WWW.

<http://www.walesontheweb.org/>

<http://www.cymruarywe.org/>

CAYW- Wales on the Web/Cymru ar y We. This is the subject gateway to material of Welsh interest on the World Wide Web. This is an online guide to high quality, validated websites offering dependable information relating to Wales and all aspects of Welsh life and includes the WHGT website.

[www.ntni.org.uk](http://www.ntni.org.uk) National Trust for Northern Ireland, including 7 sites listed under gardens.

[www.gardensireland.com](http://www.gardensireland.com) Houses, castles and gardens of Northern Ireland and Eire. As I find new websites I am placing them on the Links page on <http://gardensofwales.org.uk>. Please let me have your favourites

## Remember we now have our own web site

<http://gardensofwales.org.uk>

Since the launch in May the website has had 100 visitors to the Membership pages and 158 visitors to the Gardens Guide. By publishing on the Web we are reaching a wider audience and we hope this has encouraged more people to become a member of the WHGT and to visit a Welsh Historic garden.

In order to improve the resources on the website I am currently working with Elisabeth Whittle of Cadw to include a full list of the gardens on the ICOMOS Register

**Could all Branches or members please let me have more information and photographs so we can make this a website that visitors will want to return to.**

Please send me photos of gardens in the Guide or the Cadw Listing or information on other Welsh gardens of interest to our present and future members. Also Branch events, news, suggestions for making the web site more exciting &c., &c.

Val Caple Milestone, Penllyn, Cowbridge, CF71 7RQ  
Phone: 01446 775 794 e-mail: [val.t.caple@care4free.net](mailto:val.t.caple@care4free.net)

## NFU Mutual wins Insurer of Year Award



NFU Mutual

NFU Mutual has generously supported the WHGT for the past three years with funding that is largely devoted to assisting us reach out to our members through the medium of The Bulletin.

Founded by a group of Warwickshire farmers in 1910, NFU Mutual has grown into one of the UK's 10 largest general insurers but still adheres to its founders' belief in mutuality as the best way to serve customers' interests over the long term. NFU Mutual has won the top prize in this year's insurance industry awards. The rural insurer took the General Insurer of the Year prize at the British Insurance Awards in July.

"We're absolutely delighted – it's a terrific achievement to win this award against competition from the whole of the insurance industry," said Bob Newton, General Manager.

It's a tremendous accolade to the professionalism, hard work and dedication of our staff and agents throughout the UK. "Coming after our success in last year's awards – when we won the Customer Service Award – our latest success clearly demonstrates that we really do deliver our vision: to be recognized by our stakeholders as setting the market standards in terms of all round value, service and trust"

NFU Mutual is a broad-based insurer offering general insurance, life, pensions and investments, finance and risk management Services. It focuses on serving people who live or work in the countryside and insures over two thirds of the UK's farmers.

## Editor's Note

Views expressed in signed articles and letters are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor or of the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust.

The copy deadline for the next issue of *The Bulletin* is **14th December**. If branches want their events highlighted in *The Bulletin* they **must** supply The Editor with the necessary information in good time. Copy should be supplied preferably as a word attachment sent via e-mail, although typed copy or a floppy disc is fine; pictures can be sent as a jpeg or as original photographs or slides. They should be addressed to:  
The Editor, Nanhoron, Pwllheli, Gwynedd LL53 8DL  
Telephone: 01758 730 610  
e-mail: [bettina.harden@farming.co.uk](mailto:bettina.harden@farming.co.uk)

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### CONTACTS

Brecon and Radnor	Miss Anne Carter (01982 570279)
Ceredigion	Mr Donald Moore (01970 828777)
Clwyd	Mrs Sara Furse (01352 770360)
Gwent	Mrs Christabel Hutchings (01633 215376)
Gwynedd	Dr Sheila Roberts (01286 831 601)
Montgomery	Mrs Carrie Dalby (01686 625613)
Pembrokeshire	Mr Gerry Hudson (01834 814317)
South and Mid Glam.	Dan Clayton Jones (01443 227 373)
West Glam	Mrs Sharron Kerr (01792 390261)

### Or E-mail us

Tom Lloyd	<a href="mailto:tom@thomasloyd.abel.co.uk">tom@thomasloyd.abel.co.uk</a>
Michael Tree	<a href="mailto:hendregarden@aol.com">hendregarden@aol.com</a>
Jeremy Rye	<a href="mailto:jeremyrye@walesfineart.co.uk">jeremyrye@walesfineart.co.uk</a>
Ros Laidlaw	<a href="mailto:historicgardenswales@hotmail.com">historicgardenswales@hotmail.com</a>
Carrie Dalby	<a href="mailto:carrie.dalby@btopenworld.com">carrie.dalby@btopenworld.com</a>
Sheila Roberts	<a href="mailto:dai_roberts@yahoo.com">dai_roberts@yahoo.com</a>
Dan Clayton Jones	<a href="mailto:dan.clayton-jones@talk21.com">dan.clayton-jones@talk21.com</a>
Sharron Kerr	<a href="mailto:Skerr41170@aol.com">Skerr41170@aol.com</a>
Val Caple	<a href="mailto:val.t.caple@care4free.net">val.t.caple@care4free.net</a>
Anne Carter	<a href="mailto:anne@bettws-mill.fsnet.co.uk">anne@bettws-mill.fsnet.co.uk</a>
Richard Gilbertson	<a href="mailto:rh.gilbertson@virgin.net">rh.gilbertson@virgin.net</a>

### Welsh Historic Gardens Trust

Administrator	Ros Laidlaw
Registered Office:	Ty Leri, Talybont, Ceredigion SY24 5ER
Tel:	01970 832 268
e-mail:	<a href="mailto:historicgardenswales@hotmail.com">historicgardenswales@hotmail.com</a>
Treasurer	Jeremy Rye, Brithdir Hall, Berriew, Welshpool, Powys SY21 8AW
Tel:	01686 640 802
e-mail:	<a href="mailto:jeremyrye@walesfineart.co.uk">jeremyrye@walesfineart.co.uk</a>
Membership Secretary	Mr Peter Williams Llangunnor House, Crickadarn, Powys, LD3PJ
Tel:	(01982 560288)

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