



Winter 2003/2004

The National Botanic Garden of Wales at Middleton A Garden On Borrowed Time?

As we go to press the fate of the National Botanic Garden of Wales at Middleton still hangs in the balance. It would be a tragedy if all the hard work, energy and commitment that has been put into the creation of a National Botanic Garden for Wales within what is a unique and beautiful historic landscape should be lost. It is hard to imagine that Wales might lose the first Botanic garden created for the 21st century. Quite apart from the modern innovations underpinned by academic science and botany and the forward looking plans of the NBGW, so much good work has been done to preserve the integrity of the remarkable landscape within which it sits. The preservation and restoration of the double-walled garden, the stable range, Principality House (preserving what was the servants' wing of the now-demolished mansion), the establishing of the footprint of the mansion, the care that has been taken to preserve the vistas both looking in and out of the site are all things that have been carried out within the total vision of the Garden.

It should not be thought that the Garden is a failure. It is a fact that as at the end of Summer 2003 the NBGW was the third most popular tourist attraction in Wales and the most visited garden in Wales. That this was achieved in spite of handicaps is remarkable. If you are planning a garden tour along the M4 you can visit the gardens of St Fagan's Castle for nothing, courtesy of the National Assembly's decision to allow admission to the National Museums and Galleries of Wales free. The unassisted NBGW managed to compete in spite of admission charges necessarily as high as £6.50 a head. Reading about the trials and tribulations of the Garden in press reportage over the past few months, I was astonished that none of it ever mentioned the terrible blow dealt to the Garden with the onset of the Foot & Mouth epidemic in 2001. There was the Garden, poised to build on what had been a really happy and successful first year of operation. Without warning the rug was pulled from under its feet as, being a working farming estate, it *had* to close its gates to the public. With the disease breaking out again in the Brecon Beacons just when people thought it might all be over, it meant that the Garden had to remain closed from April to October, employing all the staff, tending the plant, machinery and gardens. At the end of it all it was then further crippled by the decision that it was not eligible for the tourist-based compensation allowed by government. So, what was supposed to be a high-achieving year, bringing in more visitors, raising the Garden's profile with the public, was replaced with a big black hole of debt. Trying to get out of that hole has led directly to the problems that beset the Garden today.

Wales needs its own Botanic Garden. It ought to be a matter of national pride that a country that can boast of some of the most lovely landscape anywhere in Great Britain should have a garden to match Kew, the Royal Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh and the rest of Scotland or Glasnevin in Dublin. As with these gardens it should also have the

support of its government. A Botanic Garden is not just a tourist attraction but also a place for important scientific work, investigation and study. Wales should have this essential facility as much as any other part of the United Kingdom. Of course I am biased. As a one-time Trustee of the NBGW until I resigned to devote myself to the Gateway, I have been intimately involved with its development, opening and plans for the future. The garden is a beautiful and fascinating place that inspires devoted hard work, enthusiasm and affection. On this basis alone it should survive. However, all members of the WHGT have another reason to seek to ensure its survival – the integrity of the estate as a whole.

Planned landscape in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century was a vision of ideal nature and, in the case of Middleton, represents the tremendous personal commitment and endeavour on the part of Sir William Paxton, its creator. The series of water features in the wider estate of Middleton Hall is unique in Wales. There is no other early-nineteenth-century park in Wales that offers such a range of lakes, rills, cascades and other water features. These are amazingly undamaged in terms of water supply because the 18th/19th century hydrology is still pretty much intact. It has ever been the intention of those involved in the creation of the NBGW that the wider park and all its landscape features should be restored, creating a perfect impression of the original landscape that, in terms of excellence and innovation for its time, would reflect the excellence and innovation of the 21st century landscape that is now the Garden.

Seeking to restore the ethos of the Picturesque pleasure grounds and park at Middleton is the right thing to do if the NBGW has a future. Benign neglect in the past has meant that no adverse development has affected the estate parkland. The grassland is largely intact and there is no arable desert. It is wonderful that the estate is



Today's generation of Sea Scouts (during a Golden Jubilee Gateway visit in 2002) admiring themselves in the Reflecting Pool at Middleton, with Principality House in the background.

Photograph © Sharron Kerr. The Gateway Gardens Trust.

still in single ownership as multiple ownership is a blight that has destroyed so many landscapes. The existence of a contemporary map and accompanying watercolours mean that all the components of the early nineteenth-century landscape can be identified. They provide unique evidence of what was on the ground in Paxton's time. Earlier layers of the landscape can be identified through early maps and with archaeology revealing ancient woodland, the old manor house site, its fishponds and so on. Carrying out this work as a first stage would provide the answer to the crucial question of what should be recovered and restored at Middleton. All of this was in the mindset of those who first dreamed up the idea of Middleton as the site for a National Botanic Garden for Wales – and they were all members of the WHGT. The Trust and Middleton have been hand in hand for the past 15 years.

If you do not want to see this magical place with its reflections of over 200 years lost to the people of Wales there is still time to lobby your Assembly Member and Member of Parliament at Westminster and, most importantly, the First Minister. Write to:

The Rt Hon. Rhodri Morgan MP, AM, The National Assembly for Wales, Cardiff Bay, Cardiff CF99 1NA or e-mail: rhodri.morgan@wales.gov.uk

Finally, keep going to the garden. It is still open and will remain so for as long as the Trustees can manage to keep the many balls they are juggling in the air.

Bettina Harden

People

OBITUARY

Dr Peter Elmes, MBE

1921 – 2003

It was towards the end of the year that we learned with great sorrow that Peter Elmes had lost his long battle with cancer. A founder member of the WHGT, Peter was Chairman of the Mid & South Glamorgan branch for ten years and was Vice-Chairman for six years until he stepped down at the AGM last June. It was a great privilege to be asked to deliver an appreciation of Peter's work for the historic environment of Wales at his funeral. What follows is extracted from both that appreciation and the splendid leaflet on Peter's life and achievements that was given out to those of us who managed to get to Bridgend.

Peter was born in Devon where his father, formerly a tea planter, ran a small farm. He had a happy rural childhood learning the farming, forestry and wood-working skills that provided his means of relaxation in later years. He was educated at Rugby and Christ Church, Oxford where he read medicine. The beginning of what was an outstanding career in medicine was marked with his winning the Radcliffe Prize in Pharmacology while up at Oxford. A Rockefeller Foundation Studentship took him to America in 1942 and, after his finals he began his working life at Hammersmith Hospital. Experience in Somerset was followed by a return to Hammersmith in 1950 and the beginning of his life-long interest in Chest medicine.

It was while working in as Lecturer, Professor and Consultant Physician in Therapeutics and Pharmacology at Queen's University, Belfast throughout the 1960s and early 1970s that Peter began his pioneering work towards the better understanding of asbestos-related lung disease. 1976 brought him to Wales when he was appointed Director of the MRC Pneumoconiosis Research Unit at Llandough Hospital, Penarth. While Director he supervised patients suffering from chronic chest diseases, many of them ex-miners. This meant that a quiet retirement was not for him: he was retained by Turner & Newell to inspect conditions at their asbestos producing factories from Nigeria to India; he acted as an expert witness in the USA for cases involving asbestos in buildings; he was a medical examiner for the Miners' Compensation Scheme – he retired from this *after* his 80th birthday!

In his retirement it was for 'relaxation' he became involved with the WHGT! It would be hard to imagine anyone better for the part of Vice-Chairman. Peter was a constant source of wisdom: calm and shrewd, nothing fazed him. When the WHGT was going through a very lean financial patch, it was his common sense advice that got us through and

ultimately saved the day. He was my ambassador in South Wales whenever the geography of Wales defeated me and I could not get down to Cardiff and he was a constant prop and stay without fail in the 9 years that we were in harness together. While I deferred to his age and experience, I never really felt he was old enough to be my father. That wasn't possible when you were dealing with someone who was always at the cutting edge of things. His IT skills were legendary and he was way ahead of all of us in getting on line, using digital photography, telling us what sort of equipment we should be using. And that was not all, he was up to date in every aspect of life: the latest novel; wrinkles in the planning system as it affected parks and gardens; new developments in medicine; new technology in clever cars – he had them all at his fingertips. He was young at heart.

His passion for heritage and conservation was constantly demonstrated to us within the WHGT, and to those whom he joined when the Ruperra Trust was established to try and rescue that special place with its castle, gardens and woodland. When The Gateway Project emerged as the WHGT's Millennium project, Peter was one of its strongest supporters. He encouraged us to grow the idea of including all Wales's disadvantaged community in its garden heritage, reaching out to people who had no idea that beautiful parks and garden were on their doorstep waiting to be discovered and enjoyed. When the going got tough and money

was tight he was there with practical advice and support – he was very good at responding to late night, sometimes downcast, e-mails from me with cheering and often very witty replies. It was only fitting that he should become one of The Gateway Gardens Trust's first Trustees.

And his reward? He certainly had our undying gratitude and affection and his honour was richly deserved. My father, on getting an OBE, declared it wasn't really for him but "**Other Bugger's Efforts**"; an MBE might be described as being for "**My Best Efforts**". I feel that Peter's MBE was for **Many Brilliant Endeavours** in so many fields. I shall miss him hugely: for being interesting and interested; always delightful with a twinkle in his eye, offering hospitality and wonderful home-made bread; for himself. Our love and sympathy go out to Margaret and all his beloved family for whom he cared so much – daughter Ann, sons John and David and grandsons Ciaran, Sebastian and Guy.

To paraphrase Horace: "This was one of my prayers: for a parcel of land not so very large, which should have a garden and a spring of ever-flowing water near the house, and a bit of woodland as well as these." Peter had achieved this for himself with his lovely garden at Dawros House – if you will allow the swimming pool to stand in for the 'spring of ever-flowing water' – and he acquired his 'bit of woodland' with the wonderful work he did in helping the Ruperra Trust buy Coed Ruperra. I am certain that in heaven Peter has a garden.

Bettina Harden



Peter Elmes receiving his MBE from HRH The Prince of Wales in March 2003.

The Post of Chairman

It has been a significant disappointment that Tom Lloyd has not in fact been able to take up his appointment as Chairman of the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust. Primarily this has been on account of Cadw unexpectedly requiring him to stay on as Chairman of the Historic Building Council for Wales for an extra year. This, together with other unforeseen work, has meant that Tom has been unable to fulfil his commitment to us. We are therefore looking for a replacement right away. We have drawn up a Job specification and application form and these are available from Ros Laidlaw. The closing date for any application is 1st March 2004. If you could possibly think of someone who might be suitable, then can you please put him or her in touch with Ros.

Following on from the veritable fireworks display of talent and energy from Bettina Harden, the Trust has to recognise that that sort of lucky appointment happens once in a blue moon. We have been busy reorganising the structure of the Trust so that any new Chairman's commitment should not exceed two days a week, at most. The post should therefore be a joyful opportunity for someone with a passion for the Welsh landscape, knowledge of planning procedures, an ability to 'get things done' and plenty of energy! In effect, it could be a golden opportunity to 'put something back'.

This is an exciting and challenging time for us all, as projected working groups made up of branch members take on more of the central activities. Consolidation and organic growth with perhaps two or three special pilot schemes, allied to a measure of strategic vision from the Chair, is likely to keep us well occupied for the next year or so.

Michael Tree, Vice-Chairman

The Cwrt Study Weekend

13th & 14th September 2003

'Exploring the Past to Save the Future'

The WHGT in association with The Georgian Group

What started out as a handful of enthusiasts drooling over an unrestored farmhouse turned into an oversubscribed event, drawing people from as far afield as Scotland to study this small estate in a wonderfully original condition. Add to this magnificent weather and a sumptuous dinner laid on by Alan and Gwynedd Hayward of Berry Hill House on the Friday night and you begin to get an idea as to how the event turned out.

Most appropriately, given our title of 'Exploring the Past to Save the Future', our studies commenced with a most informative address by Emma Plunkett Dillon, Historic Properties Adviser for the National Trust in Wales. The vital importance of undertaking a thorough assessment of an historic park and garden before any work was undertaken was stressed. This enables the Trust to identify issues, threats and vulnerabilities, and then put together policies for future management, presentation and interpretation. Detailed topographic, archival and archaeological surveys of the designed landscape often reveal evidence of earlier phases of occupation as well as explaining the development of the present landscape. All these are then incorporated into management plans for the site. This formula is applicable to any site as well as ones belonging to the National Trust.

A tour of the property revealed a veritable Marie Céleste of interesting features and artefacts: a house barely changed since being built in 1800, with an odd and charming intimacy of family and service rooms that occupy more than their usual share of the ground floor; a stand-alone kitchen with bell cote, a Victorian winnowing machine, the walled produce gardens plus pleasure grounds and park. Few of us had before this event seen a stone malting floor.

On returning to the house, Julian Orbach, co-author of *Buildings of Wales: Pembrokeshire*, gave a fascinating talk upon the possible evolution

of the house and the fragments that revealed its past, trying to link the known history of this gentry family with the evidence of the buildings on the ground. For example, the last member of the original family, a 'Squireson' or hunting parson, the Reverend Mortimer was reputedly an agricultural improver. Did this appear in the farm buildings that everyone saw? He made the point that, noting how up-to-date Cwrt seemed for its time, given the apparent remoteness of the location, we should remember that access was usually by sea (to Fishguard) and Cwrt was thus not quite as remote as it seems.

Jon Avent of Mann Williams was any listed building owner's ideal consulting engineer: innovative, practical and committed to conservation as opposed to steel installation and unnecessary intervention. With the use of some judiciously chosen modern materials it was demonstrated how it is possible to save more of the fabric of a neglected listed building than ever before. He reinforced the view as to how fortunate we are today with these changing attitudes, as compared with a few years ago.

This was all fine stuff, but ultimately, as they say in *The Archers*, "A man belongs where he pays his way". Thus, sadly, if the restoration of such a building is really beyond the pocket of an owner, then a sale could be the best for both building and owner. Jonathan Major from Strutt & Parker (Chester) lifted the curtain on an estate agent's procedures that are designed to ensure that best value be obtained. In effect, any effort spent on enhancing the presentation of such properties is usually well rewarded. Before selling, take advice. For example do not sell off parts like barns for conversion as it could devalue the whole. Buyers yearn for the opportunity to restore properties of this quality so it is not necessary to spend large sums "doing it up" to sell. You are not guaranteed to get your money back. Concentrate on enhancing the presentation, mainly outside, as first impressions create the impact.

Graham Holland, our conservation architect, gave a tour-de-force address on practical conservation: quite the opposite of the usual moan of "interfering outsiders telling me what to do". Explaining the rudiments of conservation, and, as it was a Sunday morning, detailing the advice given in the Old Testament "To teach when it is unclean, and when it is clean." (Leviticus 14, verse 57) caught us all by surprise.

Finally, we had an illuminating talk on lime technology by Nigel Gervis of Ty Mawr Lime – this is a "must know" issue for any historic building owner – well illustrated by Nigel's discovery of the cause of the dreadful rising damp in one back room at Cwrt – linoleum over the whole floor trapping the moisture underneath. This reflects the problem so often found with restoration of old houses – the mix of technologies that has evolved over the years, especially when owners did not have access to the necessary skills and materials. It underlines the importance of understanding the mechanics of the building you are restoring.

Of course we all got different things out of the weekend, but for me two things stood out: (i) that Cwrt must be saved and conserved for future generations – we must not be the last to enjoy its splendours, and (ii) that the best consultant of all is the "informed client".

Michael Tree

Useful addresses:

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Plas Draw, Ruthin, Denbighshire LL15 1RT Tel: 01824 704 709

Jon Avent, **Mann Williams**, Consulting Engineers
53 Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff CF10 5LR
Tel: 02920 464 333 e-mail: cardiff@mannwilliams.co.uk

Jonathan Major, **Strutt & Parker**, Estate Agents
19 Grosvenor Street, Chester CH1 2DD
Tel: 01244 320 747 e-mail: jonathan.major@struttandparker.co.uk

Nigel Gervis, **Ty Mawr Lime Ltd**
Ty Mawr, Llangasty, Brecon, Powys LD3 7PJ
Tel: 01874 658 249 e-mail: tymawr@lime.org.uk

Bodnant, Conwy

The National Trust has re-submitted its plans to Conwy Borough Council for the development of the underpass, Visitor Centre and various garden arbours to be erected at Bodnant during 2004. It was doubly unfortunate that they forgot, once again, to consult the WHGT and Cadw *before* submitting the revised plans. There are still some issues that need to be resolved but it is a huge relief to be able to report that the plans for a huge 'band stand' shelter have been abandoned as has a very ornate Chinese-style pavilion deep in the Dingle.

The whole issue throws into relief the importance of consultation **at an early stage** with those bodies who have a watching brief over Grade I parks and gardens in Wales – ourselves, Cadw and the Garden History Society, together with relevant historic period bodies such as The Georgian Group and the Victorian Society. Early consultation before plans have been drawn up and been carved into tablets of stone means that everyone's point of view can be taken into account, expert advice can be sought in good time and the whole matter becomes one of partnership rather than confrontation. None of us wish to see sympathetic development stopped. Beautiful parks and gardens have to grow and develop and find a place within the historic environment in the 21st Century.

Bettina Harden

Bute Park, Cardiff & Margam Park, Port Talbot

At the time of going to press the results of these two public enquiries have yet to be published and decisions are pending on whether the proposed developments should go forward – an unsympathetically placed new visitor centre in the first instance and a wind farm in the second. July seems a long time ago, but we will let you know the outcome as soon as possible.

The Deep Blue Sea: Y Faenol 2003 *et al.*

This, one of the greatest of the Welsh Estates, has been the cause of much heartache over the years, on account of development pressure: on the face of it Mammon reigns there supreme – or does it? We shall certainly find out: we have been invited to join a small steering group [the County Council and the WDA are the other members] superintending a strategy report that aims to secure the integrity of the estate for the long term future. Dr. Sheila Roberts and I have been going forth on your behalf. Of course, we were suspicious of everyone's motives to begin with, and that's no bad thing. Indeed, we have made it very clear that we reserve the right to walk out and disassociate our name from the project at any time should we wish to do so. *But* all goes well so far: B.D.P. have been appointed as consultants and we are developing a good working relationship with all concerned. Our next big step is to put forward our own views for the future of this remarkable piece of our heritage, as convincingly as possible, and to ensure that full account is given to all other specialists in the subject. We still remain convinced that we are better off within the working group than without, even though we may not eventually agree with the end result.

Michael Tree

Cilwendeg, Boncath, Pembrokeshire



An artist's impression of how the Shell House will look once restoration work is completed.

Pen & wash drawing © Suzannah Fleming.

Heritage Lottery funding is really beginning to make an impact on Wales's historic environment. A recent grant of over £29,000 has been made to the Temple Trust to enable them to restore the deteriorating structure of one of Wales's only two remaining Shell Houses – the Shell House at Cilwendeg in Pembrokeshire (the other is the Shell Grotto at Pontypool Park).

The Cilwendeg estate (Grade II*) has an extraordinary series of farm buildings built over a generation or so for the family of Morgan Jones Jr. The Shell House was possibly constructed during the early nineteenth century and the interior is adorned with shells and corals while its remarkable and beautiful geometric floor is carried out in sheep and ox bones. The building probably originally had a domed roof. The aim of the restoration and archaeological work is to rescue this important garden building along with its secluded and mysterious woodland setting. Once repaired and restored, public access to this amazing building will be secured. The Cilwendeg Shell House Preservation Fund will also act as an endowment for the long lasting future of the site.

The Pembrokeshire branch has already given its support to this initiative and we will bring you a progress report from time to time.

The Temple Trust is an historic building preservation trust for England and Wales devoted to the preservation of ornamental garden buildings.

For more information please contact:

The Temple Trust,

7 Southampton Row, London NW5 4JS

Tel/Fax: 0207 482 6171



The Shell House at Cilwendeg in 2001. Photograph © Roger Clive-Powell.

Poultry palace at Cilwendeg

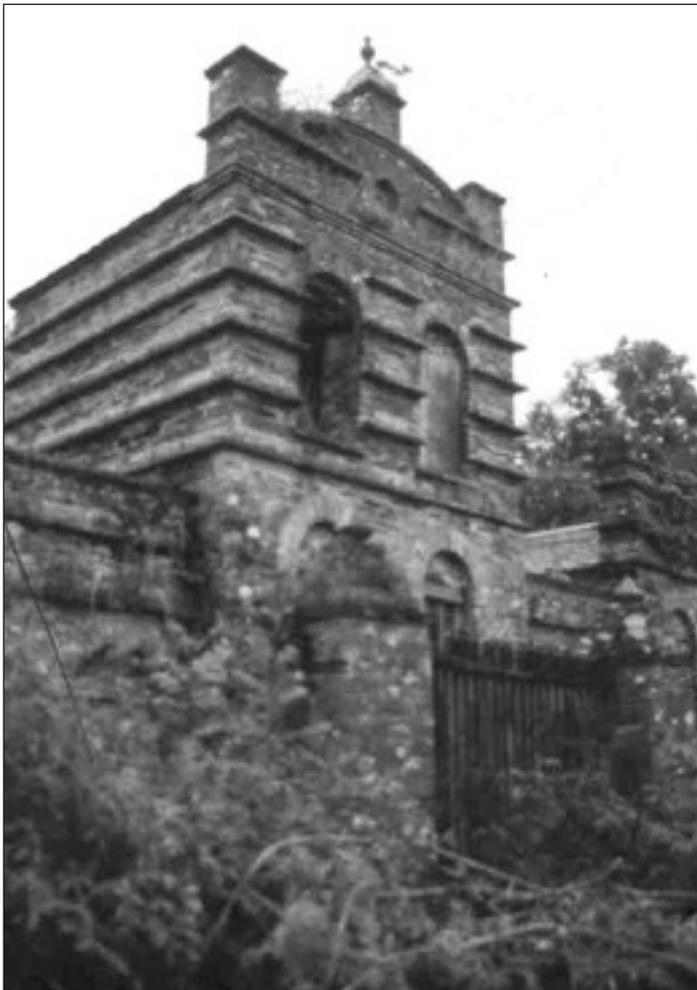
It is excellent news that the Temple Trust has secured funding for the dilapidated Shell House at Cilwendeg, whose interior ornament betrays a West Indies origin for many of its shells and corals.

However an even greater challenge for conservation lies nearby, in the form of the extraordinary poultry house, a palatial building, turreted, buttressed and set about with slate-built walls, iron gates, and a deep, formal duck pond. Constructed of local high-quality slate slabwork, the façade is of three linked towers, each two windows wide, and the central tower rises to a full three storeys, topped off with a segmental pediment and small turrets. Projecting courses of slate set regularly into the walls give a remarkable ribbed appearance, designed to provide perching ledges for the doves that occupied the upper lofts. Below, the interior was apparently set out to accommodate the less aerobatic members of the collection, chickens, ducks and geese.

All this is severely dilapidated now, roof and windows decayed, the pool empty and the setting a riot of brambles and nettles nourished by encroaching farm slurry, but the quality of the masonry is such that the building which rears from the wasteland is as sharply defined as when it was built in 1835. A perusal of Lucinda Lambton's *Beastly Buildings* (Jonathan Cape, 1985) indicates that few poultry, anywhere in Britain, enjoyed a finer nineteenth-century home.

The problems for rescuing this building are substantial, for there is no public access, and while the adjoining agricultural buildings are in contemporary use, and Cilwendeg mansion serves as a residential home for the elderly, the poultry house is stranded between them and is likely to continue to decay, unknown and unmourned.

Caroline Palmer



The Poultry House, Cilwendeg.
Photograph © Caroline Palmer.

Poultry Cottage & The Fowl House, Leighton, Welshpool



The magnificent Fowl House at Leighton (on the left) dwarves the charming little Poultry Cottage.

Photograph © The Landmark Trust.

Inspired by the Poultry House at Cilwendeg, I thought I would bring another splendid example of a *palais poulet* to your attention. Leighton Hall with its High Victorian formal gardens, ornamental woodland and parkland was built for John Naylor in the 1850s. With the vast resources of a Liverpool bank behind him, Mr Naylor spared no expense in creating a model estate for himself and his family.

The landscape and gardens (Grade I) were designed and laid out by Edward Kemp, a pupil of Joseph Paxton. It is famous for its trees and plantations including the grove of immense California redwoods that now belongs to the Royal Forestry Society. (As an aside, the now notorious *Cupressus Leylandii* was propagated at Leighton). The Poultry Yard was added to the estate in 1861 at a time when there was a great vogue for keeping ornamental fowl. In the Fowl House each species of bird, whether large or small, ornamental, water or domestic hen, had its own meticulously designed quarters. There was also a storm shed, scratching yard, pond and the delightful poultry-keeper's cottage where you can now stay for holidays. The Fowl House was probably designed by W.H. Gee of Liverpool, who was responsible for Leighton Hall itself.

Welshpool is a splendid centre for exploring some of the best gardens in Wales – Powis Castle, Glansevern Hall, Vaynor, as well as Leighton itself. Timed to coincide with the Spring or the rose season, for example, and you could have a garden break to remember. Poultry Cottage is available to let through The Landmark Trust and full details of all 178 Landmark Trust buildings are available in the Landmark Trust Handbook, price £9.99 inc. p&cp, refundable against the first booking.

Bettina Harden

The Landmark Trust is a building preservation charity that rescues and restores architecturally interesting buildings at risk, giving them a future by letting them for self-catering holidays. Once a building becomes a Landmark its holiday rental income pays for its upkeep but money to save other buildings at risk has to be found elsewhere.

The Landmark Trust

Shottesbrook, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 3SW

Tel: 01628 825 925

www.landmarktrust.co.uk

Llanover, Abergavenny

The name of Llanover is forever linked to its remarkable *chateleine* in the nineteenth century, Lady Llanover, known in Welsh as 'Gwenynen Gwent' [The Bee of Gwent], her Bardic title. The launch in October 2003 of Cymdeithas Gwenynen Gwent or The Lady Llanover Society, means that the lady and her work for Wales and the revival of Welsh culture has come back into the spotlight.

Augusta Waddington was born on March 21st 1802 at Ty Uchaf, the house that her father, Benjamin Waddington had purchased in 1792 as part of the Llanover Estate. Aged 21 she married their neighbour, Benjamin Hall and consequently the two neighbouring estates became one unit. Initially MP for Monmouth later Marylebone, Benjamin Hall became the first Commissioner for Works. Amongst other things he planned London's water supply and laid pipes to feed fountains 'So that the poor would not need to quench their thirst at gin shops.' He was instrumental in arranging for the huge bell to be cast and installed in the clock tower of the then new Houses of Parliament, forever afterwards known as 'Big Ben' – he was 6' 7" tall.

At home in Wales Sir Benjamin (he was created a Baronet in 1826) and Lady Hall commissioned the building of the vast Jacobean-style mansion of Llanover Hall from Thomas Hopper, erected between 1828-39. In the 1820s and 1830s Thomas Hopper was responsible for a number of Welsh houses or their alterations and was clearly popular with the landed families of the day. The great neo-Norman pile of Penrhyn Castle was his (1820-37); he created a dining room for Erddig (1826-7); he rebuilt Kinmel Park, Denbighshire for its 1840s incarnation; he designed Margam Abbey in West Glamorgan (1830-5), for C.R. Mansel Talbot and was the Duke of Newcastle's architect at Hafod.

The great mansion was to become a centre for Welsh culture, particularly in the Abergavenny area. Lady Llanover, as she became in 1859 when Sir Benjamin was elevated to the peerage, had an enthusiasm for all things Welsh, particularly its music. A harpist was always in residence in the house to play the triple-stringed harp and to instruct others in the art. Lady Llanover encouraged the manufacture of these unique Welsh instruments on the estate and persuaded local wealthy families to award them (they were very expensive) as prizes in the Abergavenny Eisteddfod.

All the houses on the Llanover Estate had Welsh names and the agricultural workers and domestic staff spoke Welsh. In addition, she did her best to revive the manufacture of Welsh flannel in Monmouthshire, invented a Welsh costume and insisted that all her house servants wore it. Less popular with her staff and workers was probably the purchase of all the inns in the district to convert them into coffee houses. She was determined to keep her tenants sober and only 'The Goose and Cuckoo' tucked away in the hills above Llanover has survived. Lady Llanover died on January 17th, 1896

having outlived her husband and practically all her friends. Betha Jones, one of the surviving friends, remarked in a letter after the funeral '... it is best she should be at peace and at the age of 94, she died as she had lived, a worker'.

As for the gardens at Ty Uchaf (Grade II*), there are 2 main elements reflecting the fact that there were two houses within the estate. The 15-acre garden around Ty Uchaf is believed to have been laid out in the late eighteenth-century when the house was extended. The Rhyd y Meirch stream on the site was divided, redirected and canalised to create ponds and cascades. There was a good deal of tree planting and there are walled gardens.

William Emes (1730-1803) might have been the landscaper as he is known to have enjoyed creating water features, to have worked in Wales, and to have known the architect Anthony Keck (1726-97) who is thought to have designed the Georgian north-east front for Ty Uchaf for the Waddingtons in 1792. For example they both worked together on the creation of Penrice in West Glamorgan from 1773-80. In 1779 Thomas Mansell Talbot, the owner of Penrice, "asked Emes to help with Margam, the Mansell's old home. Emes produced a design for a new orangery which was given a final appearance and built by the architect Anthony Keck some years later." (1787-90). (David Jacques, *Georgian Gardens*, 1983, pp. 115-116). Emes' work in Wales extended from the 1760s until the 1790s. There is no written evidence that either Emes or Keck worked at Ty Uchaf, but many of the architectural and landscape features at Llanover bear the stamp of their work that can be recognised from properties where they are known to have worked.

Of Llanover Hall only the stables remain today as the house was demolished in 1935. However, surrounding the house there were formal gardens and pleasure grounds

laid out while the house was being built in the 1830s. The gardens had wide gravel paths bordered with flower beds, lawns featuring specimen trees, a large circular pool complete with fountain, a wide straight walk through the woodland where there was a large lake with islands, one linked with a rustic bridge. The natural springs in the wood were planted around with ferns and bamboos and the whole was noted for its many rare and beautiful plants. This part of the Llanover Estate remains a sleeping beauty for the time being, its bones preserved beneath grass and undergrowth.

Llanover is a place of great beauty and the modern arboretum there contains one of the largest and most extensive collections of Magnolias in Wales. Seize the chance to visit the gardens when they open again in March (see under **Gwent** in **Garden & Branch Events in Wales**).

Cymdeithas Gwenynen Gwent/The Lady Llanover Society

Secretary: Helen Forder

e-mail: gwenynen.gwent@ukonline.co.uk

<http://web.ukonline.co.uk/gwenynen.gwent>



One of the weirs that form part of the water features at Ty Uchaf, Llanover.

Photograph © Elizabeth Murray



The round garden, cascade and ponds seen from the roof of Ty Uchaf, Llanover.

Photograph © Elizabeth Murray

Plas Newydd, Llangollen



One of the romantic rustic timber bridges in the pleasure grounds at Plas Newydd, Llangollen c1830.
Watercolour by Lady Mary Leighton (née Parker). Denbighshire Heritage Services.

Major restoration is in hand at Plas Newydd (Grade II*) under the supervision of Head Gardener Gary Lovelock. With funding of £900,000 in place from HLF, match-funded by Denbighshire Council, the first phase of the work should be completed by the end of January. Many members of the WHGT know all about this legendary site, but for those of you who don't the following may inform you. Plas Newydd was the home of the renowned 'Ladies of Llangollen', Lady Eleanor Butler and Miss Sarah Ponsonby. Daughters of noble Irish families, they scandalised society when they left Ireland together in 1778. After travelling through Wales they finally settled in Llangollen in 1780, calling the cottage they purchased together Plas Newydd.

"Professedly living in retirement from the world, they moved in local society, received successions of distinguished visitors en route to and from Ireland, espoused eccentricity, and made it their business to become a legend in their lifetime."

(Edward Hubbard, *The Buildings of Wales: Clwyd (Denbighshire & Flintshire)*, 1994).

Quite apart from transforming the cottage into Plas Newydd, the Ladies set about creating a remarkable romantic garden. Originally fields ran up to the front of the house and they made their garden behind the house with wild planting, rustic-style arbours and timber bridges, enhancing the deep dell, The Glen, with pools and cascades. Mostly completed by c1800, including a Shrubbery with winding paths, it was wonderfully Picturesque and contemporary visitors thought it a fine example of romantic gardening. Lady Eleanor's Bower overlooked the valley with its lovely view, rustic bridges, fencing and seats.

Over the years the pretty rustic structures fell into disrepair and vanished and a more formal garden style emerged. However, the basic structure of the garden remained and was never encroached upon, so the foundation was there to base the restoration work on.

So far two main areas of the garden have been restored: the top avenue of beech leading up to the house. This has involved monitoring the state of the beech trees, replacing with native beech as necessary. The late nineteenth-century parterre created in front of the house for the then-owner, General John Yorke, which had been neglected, has been restored as far as possible to how it was 50 years ago. The woodland area has been opened out to regenerate the woodland wildflowers. The garden buildings have also been restored including Lady Eleanor's Bower. The stable block is now open as a coffee shop.

The next stage of the restoration is the subject of a landscape contract beginning this month and due to continue until January 2005. In part of the woodland the river garden was badly flooded a few years ago, resulting in damage to pathways and the landlogging of a bridge. Dry stone walling work will be done to restore the original path of the river, with the majority of the HLF grant being spent on restoring pathways.

The work will also include the restoration of the Shrubbery at the back of the house, currently totally overgrown. Working mainly from the Ladies' diaries the plans are to restore the Shrubbery as far as possible as it was. For example, Sarah Ponsonby's day-book in 1789 listed 44 different varieties of rose that they were growing including Maiden's Blush, Rosa Mundi and Rose d'Amour. The Shrubbery featured lilacs, laburnums, syringas [Philadelphus] and white broom. The thought that it will be restored gives us much to look forward to: the Ladies' great friend, Anna Seward, left us this description:

"The wavy and shaded gravel walk which encircles this Elysium, is enriched with curious flowers and shrubs. It is nothing in extent and everything in grace and beauty and in variety of foliage; its gravel as smooth as marble."

(Elizabeth Mavor, *The Ladies of Llangollen*, 1971, p.104)

January, February, March, April

We include lectures, exhibitions and fairs in our listing. As before the numbers in [] indicate the garden's place in The Guide – do consult it to get road directions &c.; ** indicate gardens not to be found therein.

Brecon & Radnor

TRETOWER COURT, Tretower, Crickhowell [84]

This recreated late-fifteenth-century garden with its tunnel arbour, enclosed arbour and chequerboard garden with fountain was largely the design work of Elisabeth Whittle. While at its best in June when the roses are in flower, it is always a fascinating place to visit. Tretower re-opens for the season on Monday 1st March, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Admission: £2.50, £2.00 concessions. Tel: 01874 730 279

Carmarthenshire

Carmarthenshire Branch members are reminded that they are always welcome to attend events organized by the Pembrokeshire Branch.

MIDDLETON, NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDEN OF WALES, Llanarthne [56]

THE GARDEN IS STILL OPEN! As at the time of going to press, the garden is open until the end of January and it is hoped that it will remain open throughout February. This is a good time to start visiting the garden again as the snowdrops are coming into their own. Admission: £3, children £2, RHS members free. Open daily 10 a.m. – 4.30 p.m. Telephone to check details of February opening. Tel: 01558 668 768

Ceredigion

Branching Out in Ceredigion

It is with great pride that we announce the forthcoming publication of *Historic Parks & Gardens of Ceredigion*. Most people know about Thomas Johnes' Hafod, but what about the other gentry parks and gardens in the same county of Cardiganshire, practically forgotten today? Research by the Ceredigion Branch has identified some 150 of them, including some whose story deserves to be more widely known and appreciated. This groundbreaking book is written and researched by Caroline Palmer with Penny David and Ros Laidlaw and aims to be both scholarly and accessible.

Lavishly illustrated, the book is scheduled for publication at Easter. For details (including pre-publication discounts) please contact: Michael Norman on 01558 650 735, e-mail: michael.norman@coedglantawe.fsnet.co.uk

LLANERCHAERON, Aberaeron [42]

April DAFFODIL DAY – date to be decided, please contact the Estate Office for detail Tel: 01545 570 200

Open from 31st March, Wednesday to Sunday, 11 a.m. – 5 p.m. Admission: £2.40, children £1.20.

Clwyd

CLWYD BRANCH EVENT

Saturday 28th February ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & LECTURE

Eighteenth-Century Landscapes by David Whitehead
12.30 p.m. The Manorhaus, Ruthin. Contact Elizabeth Bartlett for further details. Tel: 01352 758 023

BODELWYDDAN CASTLE, Bodelwyddan, Denbighshire [18]

Saturday 24th & Sunday 25th January BIG GARDEN BIRD WATCH 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Part of a nationwide event with RSPB representatives will be on hand to help identify species. Any birds seen will be added to RSPB statistics used to monitor the state of Welsh garden birds. This event might act as a spur to bring you in to see this fine landscaped park dating back to the eighteenth century and the walled garden originally laid out by Thomas Mawson. Admission: £2, children £1. Tel: 01745 584 060

BRYN EISTEDDFOD, Glan Conwy, Conwy [15]

This is a garden well worth a visit at any time of year, offering, as it does, superb views of the Conwy Estuary as well as a delightful nineteenth-century walled kitchen garden. The Arboretum has rhododendrons, azaleas, specimen conifers and fine displays of snowdrops and bluebells. Snowdrops and bluebells do not always appear on a precise date, so Dr Senior suggests you telephone him to enquire when either the snowdrops in February or the bluebells in April are looking their best.

By appointment: Dr Michael Senior. Tel: 01492 581 175

CHIRK CASTLE, Chirk, Wrexham [27]

Saturday 7th & Sunday 8th February and Saturday 14th & Sunday 15th February SNOWDROP WEEKENDS Garden ONLY open 12 p.m. – 4 p.m.

Walk and view the snowdrops. Snowdrops on sale per pot. Admission: £1.50, children 75p. Tel: 01691 777 701

ERDDIG, near Wrexham [25]

Sunday 14th March NGS OPEN DAY 12 p.m. – 3 p.m.

Special opening of Erddig's historic gardens in aid of the National Garden Scheme. Tours with the Head Gardener. Teas available. Admission: £2.00. Tel: 01978 355 314

PLAS NEWYDD, Hill Street, Llangollen, Denbighshire [26]

Sunday 21st March NATURE UP CLOSE:
11 a.m., 1 p.m. & 2.30 p.m.

Explore the grounds of Plas Newydd with head gardener Gary Lovelock, and discover the vast array of flora and fauna in their natural surroundings. Admission free. Suitable for all ages.

Easter Sunday 11th April. EASTER EGG HUNT

10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Look around the house and grounds and track down the Easter eggs. Free with admission ticket to the house: £3, children £2. Re-opens for the season on 1st April 2004, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. For further details contact Rose McMahon: 01824 708 223

Gwent

Gwent members are cordially invited to go along to Mid & South Glamorgan events. Contact the Branch Secretary, Val Caple for details of those taking place in 2004 –
Tel: 01446 775 794, e-mail: val.t.caple@care4free.net



An Autumn view across the pool to the dovecote at Ty Uchaf, Llanover.

Photograph (c) Elizabeth Murray

** LLANOVER, near Abergavenny

Sunday 21st March NGS OPEN DAY at TY UCHAF
12 p.m. – 5 p.m.

The arboretum here has an extensive collection of magnolias, Spring bulbs and camellias. Home made teas. Welsh folk dancing performed by Gwerinwyr Gwent.

Lady Llanover Society Lecture 6 p.m.

At the Angel Hotel, Abergavenny, the Lady Llanover Society will be hosting a lecture given by Emeritus Professor Hywel Teifi Edwards, speaking in English about "Abergavenny and its Eisteddfodau".

TREDEGAR PARK, Newport [78]

Early eighteenth-century walled formal gardens. Orangery Garden restored with mineral parterres, espaliered fruit trees and box hedging. Gardens open from Wednesday 7th April, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Tel: 01633 815 880

Gwynedd

GWYNEDD BRANCH EVENTS:

Wednesday 17th March GRAFTING WORKSHOP with Ian Sturrock 11 a.m.

Penybont Nursery, Cyttyr Lane, Bangor LL57 4DB

Ian Sturrock has made a study of grafting from historic varieties of apples, for example, to be found in old gardens in Gwynedd. Admission: £2.50.

Tuesday 30th March ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & LUNCH 11 a.m.

Bron Eifion Hotel, Criccieth.

Coffee & registration: 11 a.m., AGM 11.30 a.m.,
Lunch 12.30 for 1 p.m.

For details, lunch reservations &c. contact Maud Williams
Tel: 01286 672 700.

Saturday May 1st GWYNEDD BRANCH PLANT FAIR

Please make an advance note of the date of the well-known Gwynedd Branch **PLANT FAIR** at Crûg Farm. For details please contact Sue Wynne Jones at Crûg Farm, Griffiths Crossing, Caernarfon, Gwynedd LL55 6TU.

Tel: 01248 670 232,

e-mail: bleddyn&sue@crug-farm.co.uk

BODYSGALLEN HALL, Llandudno [16]

Saturday 6th March RHS GARDEN TOUR (with lunch) 11 a.m.

This Grade I listed house stands in 200 acres of gardens and parkland and has a lovely parterre garden. Event (to include lunch) – RHS members: £32, non-RHS members: £36. **Advance booking essential through the RHS – 0207 821 3408.**

CRUG FARM PLANTS, Griffiths Crossing, Caernarfon [9]

The Nursery and walled garden re-open on 28th February. Open Thurs – Sun and Bank Holidays. Tel: 01248 670 232

Sunday 11th April NGS OPEN DAY 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Teas available. Charge not yet set.

PENRHYN CASTLE, Bangor [12]

Saturday 7th & Sunday 8th February and Saturday 14th & Sunday 15th February

SNOWDROP WEEKENDS 12 p.m. – 4 p.m.

Carpets of snowdrops and wonderful views. Admission: £1.00.

Sunday 29th February ST DAVID'S DAY GARDEN OPENING 12 p.m. – 4 p.m.

Free Admission. **Tel: 01248 353 084.**

PLAS BRONDANW, Llanfrothen, Penrhyndeudraeth [4]

This beautiful garden, developed by Sir Clough Williams-Ellis over 40 years, looks wonderful in Winter as its outlines are so clear. Highly recommended for a visit on a crisp clear day when the 'borrowed' landscape appears to great advantage. Open daily 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Admission: £1.50, children 25p.



The Orangerie at Plas Brondanw with Moel Hebog behind in February.

Photograph © Bettina Harden.

PLAS NEWYDD, Llanfairpwll, Anglesey [10]

Good Friday 9th April NGS OPEN DAY 11 a.m. – 5.30 p.m.

Spring flowers enhance the Italianate Terrace Garden; flowering cherries, camellias and azaleas add splashes of colour. There are daffodils, bluebells and wood anemones in the Woodland Walk. The Rhododendron Garden is a riot of colour and scent!

Tel: 01248 714 795.

PLAS YN RHIW, Rhiw, Pwllheli [7]

February SNOWDROP WEEKENDS

The snowdrop walks here are beautiful and well worth a visit. Please telephone to check with the Property Manager for the best dates and times to see the snowdrops. **Tel: 01758 780 219.** The gardens open from 31st March, daily except Tuesday and Wednesday, 12 p.m. – 5 p.m. Admission: £3.20, children £1.60.

Saturday 10th April EASTER EGG HUNT 12 p.m. – 4.30 p.m.
Admission: £1.

Montgomery

GLANSEVERN HALL, Berriew, Welshpool [31]

The snowdrops at Glansevern are very beautiful and can be viewed in February *by appointment only*. Card-carrying fully paid up members of the WHGT now have free admission provided they have their membership card with them.

Tel: 01686 640 200.

POWIS CASTLE AND GARDEN, Welshpool [30]

MOTHERING SUNDAY 21st March.

Powis Castle and Gardens opens for the season. Special offer in the restaurant – buy a main course meal and Mother gets a free roulade dessert! Special tours in the garden (£3 per head) and a Spring quiz.

Thursday 15th April SPRING SEED SOWING 2 p.m.

A Powis gardener will talk about this specialist area of work. £3 + Garden Entrance, advance booking advisable.

Advance notice of Garden Talk/Demonstration –
Booking advisable.

Thursday 29th April LAWN CARE 2 p.m.

New opening arrangements from 21st March 2004:

open Thursday to Monday (closed Tuesday and Wednesday)

Castle and Clive Museum 1 p.m. – 4 p.m.,

Garden 11 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Admission to garden only: £5.80, children £2.90.

Pembrokeshire

PEMBROKESHIRE BRANCH EVENTS

All evening meetings will continue to be held at the **Camrose Community Centre** at 7.30 pm. The Centre is down a short turning to the left off the Haverfordwest – St David's Road, just North of The Pelcombe Inn. Carmarthenshire members should note that they are very welcome to join in Pembrokeshire events.

Monday 19th January Gardens Reflect the Ethos of the Age:

Col. Richard Gilbertson will talk on the way gardens have developed since the Middle Ages. If the weather is very severe, check by telephone! **Tel: 01834 831 396.**

Monday 16th February TALK

Nicky Evans, the archaeologist at **Llanerchaeron**, will talk on her researches in the garden and the structures she found there.

Monday 15th March The Gardens at Aberglasney

Graham Rankin will talk on the planning and development of Aberglasney.

COLBY WOODLAND GARDEN, Amroth, Narberth [55]

Informal woodland valley garden with fine rhododendrons and lovely Spring colour.

Open from 1st April, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Admission: £2.80, children £1.40.

PICTON CASTLE & WOODLAND GARDENS,

Haverfordwest [49]

Tuesday 20th April RHS LECTURE: Spring in the Woodland Gardens 2 p.m.

(please register by 1.45 p.m.). The lecture includes a practical walk and demonstration in the nursery, tea and another walk in the gardens. Lecture closes at 5 p.m. RHS members: £7.95, non-members £9.95. **Advance booking through the RHS – 0207 821 3408.** 10% discount on plants bought on the day.

This year, for the first time, the gardens will be open from **Sunday 1st February** on an honesty box basis at a reduced price of £2. This is so that visitors can see the camellias and magnolias that have often finished their flowering season by the 1st April. The gardens open for the full season on Thursday 1st April, daily, 10.30 a.m. – 5 p.m. Admission: £3.95 to gardens only. RHS members free.

Website: www.pictoncastle.co.uk **Tel: 01437 751 326**

Mid & South Glamorgan

MUSEUM OF WELSH LIFE, St Fagans [73]

Wednesday 25th February ROSE PRUNING IN THE ROSERY 2 p.m. – 4 p.m.

The exquisite Rosery is one of the highlights of the formal gardens, now restored to its former glory. Discover how to prune tea roses and hybrid teas to give your plants the very best start this year. Drop-in session, admission free.

Wednesday 10th March DIVIDING AND PLANTING SNOWDROPS 2 p.m. – 4 p.m.

Snowdrops are a real sign that Spring is on its way again, and Spring is the best time to divide and plant them ready for future years. Come along to the Mulberry Lawn to find out just how to do this! Drop-in session, admission free.

Wednesday 24th March TAKING DAHLIA CUTTINGS 2pm – 4pm

A great source of colour in your garden, dahlias are also easy to grow, and straightforward to propagate. See how easy it is to increase your stock by joining us in the potting shed for a demonstration! Drop-in session, admission free.

Wednesday 31st March PLANTING POTATOES IN THE PREFAB GARDEN 2 p.m. – 4 p.m.

Potatoes were one of the staples of the gardens in the 1940s and 1950s, when gardeners supplemented their food rations with whatever they could grow. Find out which types of potatoes to plant in your own garden and how to look after your crop for the best results.

Call **02920 573 403** to reserve your place. Admission: free of charge unless stated otherwise.



West Glamorgan

WEST GLAMORGAN BRANCH EVENTS

All Branch Garden lectures are at 2 p.m. in St Paul's Church Hall, Delabecche Road, Sketty, Swansea.

Thursday 8th January GARDENS IN SOUTH WEST WALES Dr Ivor Stokes

*Thursday 11th March ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & LECTURE:
FRENCH GARDENS Colonel Richard Gilbertson
2 p.m. - 4.30 p.m.*

Don't forget we list your events free of charge - just give us the information!

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Apologies

Penllergare, Swansea



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

Photograph © Penllergare Trust.

The Editor must apologise for getting a little muddled with the pictures for the last edition of *The Bulletin* and including a picture that nothing whatsoever to do with Project Penllergare. The correct photograph that should have appeared is reproduced above.

Current news from Swansea is that at long last the Council has promised to sort out the dysfunctional legal agreement dealing with the management of Penllergare as a (failed) country park. Meanwhile the Trust is commissioning a survey by Cambria Archaeology to inform restoration proposals for the walled garden complex.

New Year's Resolutions



New Year's resolutions tend to focus on smoking, drinking and exercise. But in 2004 it is more important than ever to concentrate on money as well. No-one can ever predict what will happen to the economy, tax rates or stock markets. But many economists are forecasting a year of slowly rising interest rates that could put a squeeze on family and business finances. Fortunately there are several ways to give your money a boost this New Year.

Here are just five simple steps to consider.

STEP ONE: Pay less tax. Most of us think we pay too much tax already, without paying any more on our savings and investments. Fortunately it's possible to enjoy tax-free growth and income with a variety of savings plans. Tax-friendly Isas are one thing to consider. Individual Savings Accounts let you put up to £7,000 aside each tax year and you don't even have to declare them to the Inland Revenue. Other products also offer a variety of tax benefits – NFU Mutual's Flexibond, for example, is structured so that basic rate taxpayers may not face any further tax liability when they cash in or withdraw money from their bonds. So you don't need to worry that too much of the money you make by saving or investing will end up in the taxman's hands.

STEP TWO: Save regularly. The good news is that you don't need to be rich to start saving and investing. Many investments let you save each month, and give you the flexibility to start, stop or change the amount you save whenever you want. NFU Mutual's Isas and its Flexibond let you save from just £25 a month, for example, so they really are within reach for most savers.

STEP THREE: Think long term with shares. Stock markets are still down on the peaks they reached in 2000, but shares remain an important part of long term financial planning. 'If you want to make real returns you should consider asset-backed investments alongside other savings,' says NFU Mutual personal finance expert Phil Bruce-Moore. And you don't have to take the risk of choosing your own individual shares. 'A broadly-based fund run by a professional manager will hold dozens of different shares to spread your risk more widely,' says Phil. NFU Mutual has a variety of broadly-based investments to choose from, including its Isas, Flexibond and Portfolio Investment Plan.

STEP FOUR: Kick-start your pension. Surveys constantly show we are all saving too little for our retirements – indeed the Association of British Insurers talks of a worrying £27 billion savings gap, the difference we need to put aside for a comfortable old age and the amount we are all actually saving. So don't let another year go by without tackling the problem. If you have access to a company pension scheme it is worth finding out more details about it soon. Or consider a low cost stakeholder pension or another personal pension plan.

STEP FIVE: Talk to an expert. Money isn't always a simple issue to tackle, especially if you are juggling day to day demands with worries over everything from your mortgage repayment plan, your children's future school fees and your own pension savings. So speak to an expert with a company you trust for more advice. NFU Mutual's Phil Bruce-Moore says a financial review should be like an annual medical check up or car MOT. 'We should all step back each year and check whether we are on track to meet our financial goals or if we need to change a few things to get there.'

Call NFU Mutual on 0800 622 323 for more information on its full range of investment products and financial planning services. Your enquiry may result in a call from an NFU Mutual Financial Consultant, who advises exclusively on NFU Mutual products and services. For security and training purposes telephone calls may be recorded and monitored.

Gerddi-WWW.

The sites featured in this issue are both closely related to the work of the WHGT:

www.gatewaygardenstrust.org.uk

The new website of the Gateway Project, now the Gateway Gardens Trust. Bettina Harden says 'Do take a few minutes to browse through it – all sorts of friends will discover they are mentioned – and you will discover all sorts of things that we get up to.'

<http://www.britarch.ac.uk/heritagelink/>

Heritage Link brings people together who care about our heritage to formulate policy, influence opinion and achieve change on issues of common concern. It acts as a hub through which information is shared between members, including the WHGT

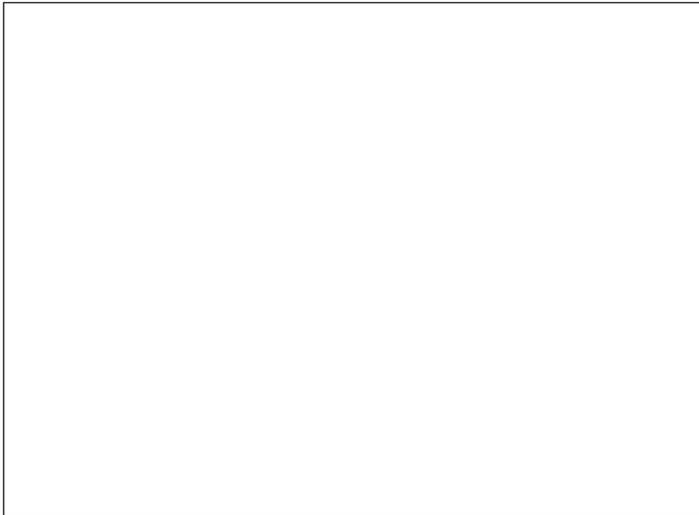
Please send me photos of gardens or information on local events, news etc for our own website <http://gardensofwales.org.uk>

Val Caple, Milestone, Penllyn, Cowbridge, CF71 7RQ
Phone 01446-775794 e-mail: val.t.caple@care4free.net

Malicious damage at Powis Castle

Even when gardens are closed to the public, they are still vulnerable to theft, vandalism and the ravages of the weather. Sadly, serious damage was done by young vandals at the end of last year to some of the beautiful lead statues that adorn the terrace above the Orangery at Powis Castle. Due to their age and the materials they are made from, their repair and conservation will cost a considerable sum of money, estimated at some £20,000 – the need for scaffolding to remove the lead statuary to specialist workshops accounts for a good deal of this cost. Repairs to damaged stonework will be carried out *in situ* once there is no longer any danger of frost.

Whether your garden is famous and open to the public, or private for your own use and that of your family, do remember to protect yourselves from outside attack of whatever kind. Photographs; anchoring statues, urns and garden benches firmly in place; remembering to shut and lock gates; telling friends you are going to be away; attaching some sort of code to pieces of garden artwork: all of these will be of great help should disaster strike. Familiarity with garden benches and other features that have always been in your garden may blind you to the fact that they are probably worth a lot of money. Imagine the hole if they were gone and take care accordingly.



The Orangery Terrace at Powis Castle showing some of the lead statues recently vandalised.

Photograph © National Trust/Ian Shaw

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 April**. 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:

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For information, details of The Guide and the very latest news, see our website: <http://gardensofwales.org.uk>



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