

No. 41  
Winter 2005/06

# Dyffryn Gardens and Arboretum: Restoration and the Centenary

by Gerry Donovan

Dyffryn Gardens and Arboretum, nestled in the heart of the Vale of Glamorgan countryside, west of Cardiff, is an outstanding example of Edwardian landscape design. The stunning 55 acres boast formal lawns, a collection of themed outdoor garden rooms, which include a voluptuous herbaceous border and the recently-restored Grade II listed Pompeian room as well as many rare and unusual tree and shrub specimens from around the world. Registered Grade I by Cadw/ICOMOS UK the designation reads:

*The gardens at Dyffryn are the grandest and most outstanding Edwardian gardens in Wales. They are comparable to some of the most extravagant gardens of the period in Britain.*

In 2006 the gardens will be celebrating their centenary and restoration will be in the final stages of the £8 million project (£6.15 million from Heritage Lottery Fund), which began back in 1997. To understand why such investment is being made we must look at how the gardens evolved.

The story of Dyffryn Estate dates back to the 7th century when the then Manor of Worlton was given to Bishop Oudaceous of Llandaf. In the 16th century the Button family acquired the manor and the first house was built. The family occupied the estate for a number of generations. The name was changed to Duffryn, St Nicholas in the 18th Century when the estate was sold to Thomas Pryce, who built the first building to be known as Duffryn House. During the Pryce ownership there were some garden activities as evidenced by the appearance of such features as the walled garden and

dipping pools, the pleasure grounds and ornamental tree planting. In 1891 the estate was sold to John Cory who built the present house in 1893.

Two particular characters from this time stand out as having shaped the Dyffryn we see today – Reginald Cory and Thomas Mawson. Originally commissioned by John Cory, Thomas Mawson, an eminent landscape architect of the time, created the masterplan for the gardens (1903-04) and commenced in earnest in 1906. But this was not in isolation, as John's third son Reginald collaborated on the design and following his father's death in 1910 took over the running of the estate. Though having read law at Cambridge, Reginald pursued his true passion which lay in plants – studying, collecting, funding plant-hunting expeditions, plant hunting himself and recording the horticultural development of the time.

Perhaps Mawson best describes Cory in his book '*The Art and Craft of Garden Making*', in which Dyffryn is featured in the 1926 fifth edition.

*'Mr Reginald Cory is a typical example of the English enthusiast for horticulture and arboriculture at its best. He is a member of the council of the Royal Horticultural Society, a liveryman of the Ancient Guild of gardeners, a well-known writer on horticulture, and an experimenter whose researches have greatly enriched our store of knowledge in a vastly interesting field of human enterprise. His collection of dahlias, to name but one class of popular flowering plants, includes over six hundred varieties; and his collection of conifers and ornamental and flowering*

*View of Dyffryn House looking north along the canal in the Great Lawn*



© Dyffryn Gardens

*shrubs has been brought together from every quarter of the globe.'*

Such collaboration could not fail to create a unique and stunning designed landscape. Cory remained at Dyffryn until 1930. During this time he indulged in many horticultural highlights:

- having the largest bonsai collection in private ownership in 1912.
- trialling seven thousand dahlia plants spanning 1,000 cultivars in 1913–1914.
- sponsoring George Forrest's plant hunting expedition in 1917-1920 and 1921-1923 and H.F Coomber 1925-1926 and 1926-1927.
- plant-hunting himself with Lawrence Johnson (of Hidcote Gardens fame) and John Taylor to South Africa in 1927.
- establishing the Cory cup in 1923, still annually awarded by the RHS for the production of new hardy hybrids of garden origin.
- planting the many samples of seed and material sent to him from nurseries, plant hunters and fellow enthusiasts from around the world.

Cory did not keep these precious finds just to himself. His generosity was well known. In 1921 he wrote to Gilbert-Carter of the University Botanic Garden, Cambridge:

*'Just a line to enclose 8 packet of seeds from the last consignment of Forrest's and a few acorns (Quercus agrifolia) from J.C. Williams. Hoping you'll have luck with the lot.'*

In 1930 Cory married and move to Wareham, Dorset to establish a new home. Plant hunting expeditions took him to the West Indies in 1931 and the Atlas Mountains of North Africa in 1932. Unexpectedly he passed away on 12th May 1934 aged 63.

Ownership of Dyffryn passed to his sister Florence who died in 1937. The estate was purchased by Sir Cennydd Traherne who later leased it to the Glamorgan County Council in 1939. There followed a chequered period of institutional use as a police academy, dog training centre and education conference facility. During this time the importance of the gardens ebbed and flowed with some head gardeners championing a Mawson revival, for example in the 1950s, the introduction of a heather garden in the 1970's and a fine rose collection in the walled kitchen garden in the 1980's. But overall the significance of the gardens was fading.

In 1996 when the Local Government reorganisation took place, the Vale of Glamorgan Council stepped in to take on the property and purchased the freehold in 1997 whilst securing a £3.25 million grant for restoration works from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The works began in earnest in 1998 concentrating on the garden rooms. There then followed several delays (most notably affecting the second phase of works for new visitor and education facilities and horticultural compound) whilst consideration was made for the use of the house which had been a conference centre until 1996. Towards the end of 2005 the second phase of Heritage Lottery funding of £2.9 million was secured.

The centenary year, 2006, will see major construction, refurbishment and restoration activities on the site as the final items of the phase I works, in particular the walled garden and glasshouse and the lavender court restoration are undertaken as well as the building of new education, visitor and horticultural service facilities.

For a number of years the walled garden has not been accessible to the general public, however it would have once played a key role in Cory's 2,000-acre estate supplying the house with exotic flowers and vegetables. Restoration will see its return to its Edwardian heyday with the creation of two glass houses - one of which will house exotic plants such as orchids and cacti while the other will contain heritage fruit and vegetables. While the glasshouses are expected to take up around a quarter of this two-acre site, the remainder of the enclosure will be used for planting. Two original dipping ponds, which would have been used for watering and washing plants, have also been



*Aerial view from the north shows the Gardens and Arboretum*

© Dyffryn Gardens

rediscovered by the archaeologists and will be reinstated into the kitchen garden scheme.

Near the walled garden, an education facility is being developed, which will offer space for the equivalent of two visiting classes or seat 70 people lecture style. A sedum roof (otherwise known as a 'green roof') of living plants will complete the unit, which has been designed in keeping with its surroundings. The Dyffryn team has been working with educationalists for some time to develop the idea of this facility, which is programmed to open in August 2006. A preview day for teachers will take place in June 2006 and it is hoped that the new facility will be able to support schools, colleges and life-long learning establishments in a variety of areas including science, biology, maths, history and art.

To the west of this, the existing horticultural compound will be almost completely rebuilt. These improvements are essential to provide better facilities for the maintenance of the botanical collections and the propagation of historical plants such as original specimens collected by Chinese Wilson.

To minimise the intrusion of new build into the sensitive landscape of the gardens, the new visitor facilities will be based on the site of the original estate kennels and utilise the existing east lodge. The architectural style has taken into consideration the setting and the scale and character of the estate buildings whilst incorporating contemporary requirements such as access for all. The facilities will house the new tearooms and gift shop, administration offices and meeting rooms.

During the centenary year and into 2007, essential works to the main fabric of the house will be undertaken as a result of a £1.4million investment from the Vale of Glamorgan Council. This will constitute mainly works to the roof and the external stonework and are vital to the viability of the house in the long term.

It is an exciting time for Dyffryn as a whole, securing the sustainability of the house and gardens and looking forward to the next 100 years.

For more information on the restoration and the centenary events please contact us on Tel 029 20593328 or visit the Friends of Dyffryn Gardens Society's web site at [www.dyffryngardens.org.uk](http://www.dyffryngardens.org.uk). The gardens reopen to the public on 1st April 2006.

*Gerry Donovan has been Project Manager at Dyffryn since 1997 and was involved with the original bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund in 1996. She is a chartered Landscape Architect and has a joint honours degree in Botany and Zoology. She is a committee member of the WHGT South Glamorgan Branch.*

# WHGT Study Day at the National Botanic Garden of Wales

## 17 September 2005

I enrolled at the last minute for the study day held at the National Botanic Garden of Wales. It was too late to be sent a copy of the programme, so I approached the occasion as a potential blind date with an old fogey, since my preconceptions of studying botanic gardens involved lectures about order beds and dry chronologies of the founding of Pisa, Padua and like places. However, a WHGT day out is always illuminating, and it was time to catch up with progress at NBGW.

My relationship with Middleton is of long standing. I first visited in 1990 as a complete novice who had just happened to find the conference on Welsh Gardens Under Threat on my doorstep at Lampeter. Later I participated in fungus surveys that helped pinpoint the rich biodiversity of the site, and later still I edited the first visitors' guidebook – a task that seemed to reflect in microcosm the labours of setting up the whole garden.

The study-day programme was planned with a series of three lectures that put Middleton into context as a botanic garden of our time and for the future. Robin Whalley introduced us to the historical landscape, offering parallels in the work of Capability Brown and Humphry Repton that provided a useful background to Paxton's 'necklace' of lakes illustrated in Hornor's bird's-eye view of 1815. If his demonstration of the changing relationship of kitchen garden to house seemed a bit like generalized 'garden history', this was justified after lunch when we visited the walled garden. Was this utilitarian element part of Paxton's planned aesthetic landscape? I confess I forgot to check whether its walls would have been visible from the house. Nor did I see any swot filling in the questionnaire that was handed out. Sorry, Robin. What we all really wanted was to put on one of the green hard hats that entitle the wearer to poke about in the subterranean brickwork of the remains of the so-called peach house, which attracts historians' attention today just as it must, for different reasons, have lured the early Paxtons and Adamses and their guests. The bundle of mysteries and unanswered questions haunting this crumbling piece of the past is a welcome contrast to the makeover mode of the four main quadrants of the walled garden, although my original jaundiced reaction is mellowing as the fidgety patterns of paths are gradually softened by masses of plants. Given my early apprehension regarding order beds, it's ironic that the groundbreaking organization of three-quarters of the area according to new DNA concepts of plant evolution was hardly discussed. We were more interested in walls.

Anyway, before this post-prandial sortie we were entertained by an eloquent talk by Ivor Stokes. Taking a wide range of illustrations and a global perspective, he subtly engaged his audience with insights into what plants do for people, what people have done to plants, and the effects of all this on our planet. Gradually the mission of a new breed of botanic garden became clear and the focus turned to the founding of the National Botanic Garden. Stokes elucidated the decision-making behind the creation of the Great Glasshouse, with its Mediterranean climate that accommodates plants from threatened habitats on every continent. He also



*Robin Whalley expounds the structure of the peach house*

© Caroline Palmer

explained the philosophy behind other aspects of the planning and organization of the Garden, such as the emphasis on recycling and sustainability embodied in the Biomass Boiler and the Living Machine. Ivor's familiarity with the development of the Garden from the beginning made his insights into its successes and what we might call its difficulties particularly telling.

The final speaker was Trevor Roach, Head of Education. With its courses for adults on a wide range of subjects, the NBGW is committed to lifelong learning, but it was Trevor's desire to instill experiences of nature at an early age that set his talk alight. If enthusiasm could move mountains, he'd be reshaping the landscape. Citing alarming statistics about how few children are allowed to play out of doors nowadays, he described his ambition to 'facilitate the development of a strong environmental memory', in other words to get kids to do things that we used to take for granted, like making mud pies or walking through long grass. This should be a compulsory rite of passage for Assembly members as well as for schoolchildren – indeed, not just for anyone who goes to work wearing a suit, but for everybody in the land.

Both Ivor Stokes and Trevor Roach expressed the need for the Garden to promote and publish scientific research and thus establish its moral authority through sound academic credentials. The Garden was also intended to provide practical facilities for developing local agricultural and biochemical initiatives – symbolized by the Science Centre building (conceived as a 'business incubator'), whose laboratories still stand empty. There is, as yet, no library. A sound scientific and intellectual basis was one of the foundation stones on which the NBGW was conceived and one that seriously needs to be fulfilled. I hope any slightly wistful note I detected in the speakers' admission that these elements still appeared to be on the back burner was a mere figment of my imagination. As we see the physical garden just getting better and better, we need to be assured that the realization of these accompanying ideals is maturing with equal zeal and success.

*Penny David*

## Red tape in a Picturesque Park by John Hegarty

In 1785 a young George Griffies Williams inherited the Llwynywormwood estate from his maternal uncle as a consequence of the tragic and untimely death of his cousin. George was bit of a blade, but well educated, with an obvious eye for landscape and an imagination. He was also now very rich, later to have three wives and ten children and to acquire a baronetcy for no obvious reason other than that he became a friend of the Prince Regent.

The three thousand acre estate had a small gentry house built in a very fine situation and something of a park with good mature timber.

One can imagine the animated conversation at dinner discussing The Improvements. "Picturesque - Payne Knight or Price - what is the difference? Or perhaps something more in the Brownian style, a sheet of water, rolling lawns and some clumps. Let's have both! They fit so admirably into the richly varied landscape which is here".

So off they went with a gang of strong men and a team of mules, cut down a few trees and planted more and from the extraction of the lake basin built the causeway and dam. How graceful and simple!

Forward to the year 2000, a brave new world. The Park is still apparent, though suffering a hundred years of hard tenant farming: the loss of some trees, the older oaks looking a little battered though full of character and perhaps too many wire fences. In the bottom of the valley the bed of the lake is clearly discernible, the causeway which carried the alpine bridge in place at its head with the dam at its base, the overflow to the north and the gentle cascades, rockery and some planting traceable at the southern end.

It is not a pretty park, it is interesting and when illuminated by the soft, Welsh evening sunlight, framed by more distant woodlands and crowned by Myndd Myddfai it is Elysian.

A laser survey, a miracle of modern technology and creative archaeology gives a vivid picture and corroboration that the lake appears to have existed at two levels at different times.

An enthusiastic contractor was contacted who confirmed that this job was no trouble at all and from his experience of thirty years and the construction of more than two hundred lakes would present no problems. He indicated that no planning permission was necessary for the reconstruction of a lake like this and that the

Environment Agency should be avoided because of the delays they would be likely to cause. Better to present them with a *fait accompli*. How right and how wrong he was! A precautionary telephone call to the planning office revealed that planning permission would indeed be required and that for a hectare of water a £1,000 application fee was necessary. Oh well.

A further similar call to the Environment Agency produced the response "Touch that river without the necessary consents and you are dead!" A hastily arranged placatory meeting involving five officials (not including the National Fish Pass Officer who becomes a major player at a later stage) revealed the complex procedures and requirements involved. First stop the obtaining of planning permission which proved relatively straight forward, then a complicated dance with long forms, advertisements in the *London Gazette* and local newspaper.

It became apparent that much more information was necessary to present a properly prepared application to the EA and another meeting was arranged with the contractor who remained ever optimistic, proposed raising the level of the lake by a foot to reduce the amount of digging out though oblivious to the fact, later established by me, that this would cause upstream flooding and spoil the historic contours. He produced some simple drawings from the laser survey provided and some doodles representing the fish passes which had been indicated would be required. These were duly presented with great ceremony to the AE and passed onto the National Fish Pass Officer, a kindly and helpful person but one who knew what he wanted and that certainly was not what had been provided by the contractor who obviously had not the remotest idea what was required in these circumstances. It was gently pointed out to us that we would be well advised to appoint a civil engineer which we duly did. A long face, much sucking of teeth and a very large estimate for the work to be done.

In due course plans arrived and I began to think we were constructing Cardiff Bay barrage. I would guess this would involve at least fifty tons of concrete. An impressive set of drawings but what was that in the middle? It was the monk, a device for gently raising and lowering the level of water in the lake but it was upside down. Oh dear, back to the drawing board.

A second set of drawings duly appeared and these were



*The former lake lies in the valley beyond the ruins of Llwynywormwood mansion*

submitted to NFPO. These were eventually returned with eleven "suggestions". This exercise was repeated five times with the suggestions reducing as the plans became more elaborate.

The nub of the problem was that the lake was constructed on stream, that is built into the course of the river. NFPO was insisting that we had nine fish passes to take the water from its level in the reconstructed dam to the river bed below, in lieu of the old informal cascades, to allow the sewin which run up the Ydw from the Towy to spawn on the gravels above.

In addition he required the dam levels to be arranged so that only a calculated and limited flow of water would run down these passes, any excess being diverted to the overflow which required very careful adjustment of levels. He produced a complicated series of calculations and diagrams. These were not easy to understand.

Eventually we emerged from these negotiations but there was one small problem, NFPO insisted that the overflow channel be enlarged. Our little River Ydw is really only a brook but it can surge in times of heavy rain and rise five feet in as many hours so I am sure this was a wise precaution although the overflow empties into a boggy waste land which unfortunately we did not own. The area beneath the dam together with a large block of adjoining land had been sold to the Forestry Commission in the 1960's and planted with conifers. These had been recently felled but the land was now a tangle of brambles and scrub. So we wrote a nice letter to the Forestry Commission asking if we could acquire it. We held a good meeting with their land agent who informed us that Welsh Assembly policy was now not to sell forestry land but we might be able to negotiate an exchange. We produced heads of agreement and then silence.... Three land agents and four years later, yes four, the land is ours and at this moment our fencing contractor is up to his armpits in a boggy, tangled morass clearing a path for a new boundary fence, a condition imposed by FC although this area is already fenced and any stock trying to penetrate this jungle would have to be on a serious suicide mission.

Meanwhile, our CCW Tir Gofal management team were not happy with us putting mud on the bank. This was going to spoil their grass. Why didn't we cart 500 tons away off site somewhere? Never mind the cost, we are paying for it. They were eventually prevailed upon to relent and of course the area acquired beneath the dam would be very useful for this purpose. It is outside our

management agreement!

All this took a very long time and we had somewhat lost confidence in the contractor. However, he continued to phone me periodically and eventually I softened and sent him a copy of the final engineering drawings once I had established that we were going to be able to acquire the land from the FC. His original estimate rose from £8,000 to £30,000. So that was the end of that. Anguished correspondence and now a summons for a bill of over £3,000 for bad advice and an unacceptable estimate. So, hey ho, we are off to the small claims court.

This illustrates some of the problems one can run into on what is basically a very innocent venture. We have similar but unrelated problems with the National Grid Gas Pipeline which will affect us but that is another story.

Society is now technology driven. Schemes are often very expensive, their benefits shortlived and their environmental impact serious unless sensitively handled. Technology also changes rapidly. Projects are often driven by short-term considerations which are politically motivated. This is a flaw in our democratic process but until we can persuade government to think long-term these pressures will continue to build, along with those created by an increasing population with ever-growing consumer demands and bureaucratic gold plating which often ends up destroying the environmental object it was designed to protect.

I had news recently from Herefordshire of major restoration works on the River Lugg on a large weir complex. There they are using oak because green concrete is now considered to pollute the river.

George Griffies Williams and his friends had great vision and they put their money where their souls were. We still benefit from this largesse but for how much longer? Simon Thurley of English Heritage has just announced that half the historic parks recorded in England in 1918 have now disappeared, a total of 450,000 acres. What we have left does need to be ring fenced, defended more aggressively and treated more sympathetically and flexibly by the constellation of public agencies when restoration work is needed.

*John Hegarty and his wife Patricia have lovingly restored the farmhouse and walled garden associated with the ruined mansion. He represents Carmarthenshire on the WHGT.*

## Film Review

### Pity about the Sequoiadendrons

I fully support the general consensus that *Pride and Prejudice*, starring Keira Knightley and Matthew Macfadyen, was a sumptuous adaptation of Jane Austen's novel, which was initially written in 1797 and eventually published 1813. As the New York Times put it, British director Joe Wright and screenwriter Deborah Moggach have created a "fusion of romance, historical detail and genial social satire". Locations were lavishly chosen: Burghley House for Lady Catherine de Bourgh's Rosings, and Chatsworth for Pemberley. The endearing Donald Sutherland (Mr Bennet) his trying wife (Brenda Blethyn) and their variously marriageable daughters dwelt in a charming E-shaped manor house with tile stone roof and dormer attics. However if their dwelling had a feature which distinguished it from countless other potential Bennet homes, it was surely the giant Wellingtonias, *Sequoiadendron giganteum*, which framed the principal view of the house. The camera lingered lovingly on their vast circumference and upon



the luminous heroine leaning against one, deep in thought.

A pity though, in view of the fact that the very first Sequoiadendrons arrived in Britain in 1853 and first made an appearance in Veitch's catalogue in the December of that year. Perhaps a Historic Gardens Consultant could have steered them from making these time travellers such a dominant visual image of the film.

*Caroline Palmer*

## Chairman's remarks

This is when I think about the coming year: trees to be ordered and look forward to the first signs of emerging snowdrops. Looking forward always seem to vanquish the worst winter regrets whilst at the same time heralding the joys and challenges to come. And so it is with us at the WHGT where we regret not having been able to issue our business plan sooner (it is almost done) whilst looking forward to the challenges of next year (eg Vaynol, Hafodunos, and others).

I am glad to say therefore that, thanks to early warning by John Hegarty, we have made an early start in registering our interest in the issue of a new gas pipeline which is planned to be laid in the Towy valley and on into Breconshire and Herefordshire beyond. This is currently at the planning stage, with works on site due sometime in 2007 and beyond..... Yes of course we are aware that this is considered to be a matter of urgent national importance, which should not be needlessly delayed. But also we appreciate that the route may affect some of the most sensitive historic landscapes not only in the UK, but in Europe as well: there is no intrinsic reason why there should be any conflict between these two issues. The common problem however remains, that these works involve cutting a swathe some 50 yards wide within which virtually everything



is grubbed up and where there will be severe planting restrictions thereafter.....just imagine what that could do to a historic park with its archaeology, copses and vintage trees. We have therefore registered our interest as consultees, and will pursue the matter as appropriate, in close liaison with owners such as Mr and Mrs Gavin Hogg of Penpont who I know are, very rightly, most concerned about the impact on their own historic landscape just outside Brecon.

On a brighter but perhaps as fundamental a note, we have become aware of the prospective new legislative powers that the Assembly expects to obtain next year. As a result Assembly Government is casting its net wide by inviting suggestions from interested parties like ourselves. I wonder therefore if members could let us have your suggestions through your Branch Chairman for us to consider.

In particular you might like to ponder on instances relating to historic parks and gardens which, in comparison to elsewhere Wales, are getting a raw deal from its law-makers.

Which leads me to conclude with the very best of good wishes for the New Year: may they bring us all health, peace and contentment.....and maybe a little less rain than we had in November! Blwyddyn Newydd Dda i chi i gyd. Oddiwrth Michael Tree, Cadeirydd.

## Whither Vaynol? by Michael Tree

In the light of the long drawn-out saga of the Vaynol (Bulletins since winter 2001/2002) the editor has requested an update, but perhaps readers will first benefit from a short recap of current problems. In essence, the Vaynol is/was one of the great estates of Europe with its 1000 acre park listed grade 1 and containing at its core over 40 listed buildings including the grade 1 Vaynol Old Hall. It is enclosed by a massive twelve-foot stone wall, breathtakingly sited on the Menai Straight opposite the National Trust's Paget seat, Plas Newydd, and enjoying sublime views to Snowdon. It is one of Wales's most precious cultural assets, which, following the death of the last hereditary owner nearly twenty years ago, fell into divided ownership. Inevitably this has brought development pressure from the new owners, and a significant part of the park has been developed as a business park (i.e. large office buildings) by the WDA and others. Regrettably we know of no evidence of the amenity societies having been consulted during the planning process, yet the damage caused has been on a considerable scale.

This sad state of affairs came to something of a head when an organisation called The Book People sought consent to develop a factory in one of the lines of sight from the principal house to Snowdonia ( somewhat ironically, since, as a building with virtually no windows it neither needed nor could enjoy the views its presence was blighting). The WHGT thought that it had grounds for a judicial review at this juncture but was persuaded not proceed in return for closer and genuine consultation on such matters in the future.

As a result we accepted places on a steering group charged with obtaining a specialist conservation report from outside consultants. This document cost well over £30k and was funded in the main by the WDA (now a department of the Assembly). It

was understood that it was intended to be used as a blueprint for future decision-making by the planning authority, particularly in relation to their forthcoming Unitary Development Plan (UDP) proposals.

Nobody was surprised when early drafts of the report fully recognised the heritage importance of Vaynol and put forward many appropriate suggestions for its proper stewardship. But we were all deeply shocked and dismayed to find that the subsequent UDP contained proposals to connect the WDA business park to the core 40 listed buildings by a development strip of land above the house, in direct contravention to the specialist report findings. Of course we objected to this proposal with vigour, and indeed I had it from high authority at the WDA that they too were against this proposal which they recognised as being damaging to Vaynol.

We were therefore greatly relieved when shortly thereafter the proposal was withdrawn.

However fully in accordance with the adage about 'best laid plans of mice and men', this autumn not only saw the proposal reinstated but, for good measure, approximately doubled in size. Apparently this was being promoted by the WDA, (seemingly with full cooperation from the the County Council). So we are now faced with the prospect of a lengthy and very costly appearance at the public enquiry into the UDP....all so unnecessary given the status of Vaynol and the fact that the existing business park (Parc Menau) already has large areas not yet developed, with many buildings empty.

But what is really inexplicable is how two great departments of the Assembly ( ie Cadw and the WDA) are in effect promoting policies that conflict directly one with the other. We are pursuing the matter and will keep you informed....Dum Spiro Spero.

# Stackpole and the Cawdors: Evolution of a Landscape

by Arabella Friesen (2005)

Available from The National Trust, Stackpole Estate Office, Pembrokeshire.  
Tel. 01646 661 359.

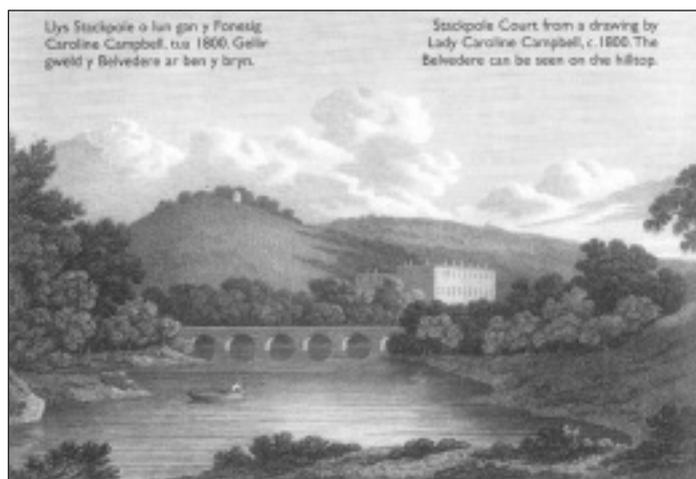
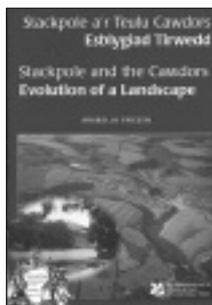
The major part of this 32-page bilingual booklet describes the evolution of the designed landscape at Stackpole from 1714 to 1976. It was during this period that several generations of the Campbells of Cawdor transformed an existing diverse landscape into a sublime ornamental park with sweeping expanses of woodland, lakes and pastures.

The introduction briefly summarises the history of Stackpole from the 12th century to the beginning of the 18th century, a period which saw the estate gradually grow through numerous acquisitions.

It was John Campbell who was responsible for the rebuilding of Stackpole Court in 1735 and the development of a hanging garden, walled garden and wilderness. The booklet contains an interesting account of the walled garden produce which included pomegranates, figs, grapes, cherries and nectarines.

His grandson, another John Campbell, inherited the estate in 1777 and undertook many projects to extend the picturesque features including extension of the lakes, creating a new deer park, and the construction of a new double walled garden with an extensive range of greenhouses.

There were further developments of the woods, deer park and lakes plus the planting of many exotic trees during the 19th century. By the beginning of the 20th century it must have been one of the most impressive of the Welsh picturesque estates. Unfortunately the 20th century saw no further development with the Court being requisitioned for World War II military accommodation and 6,000

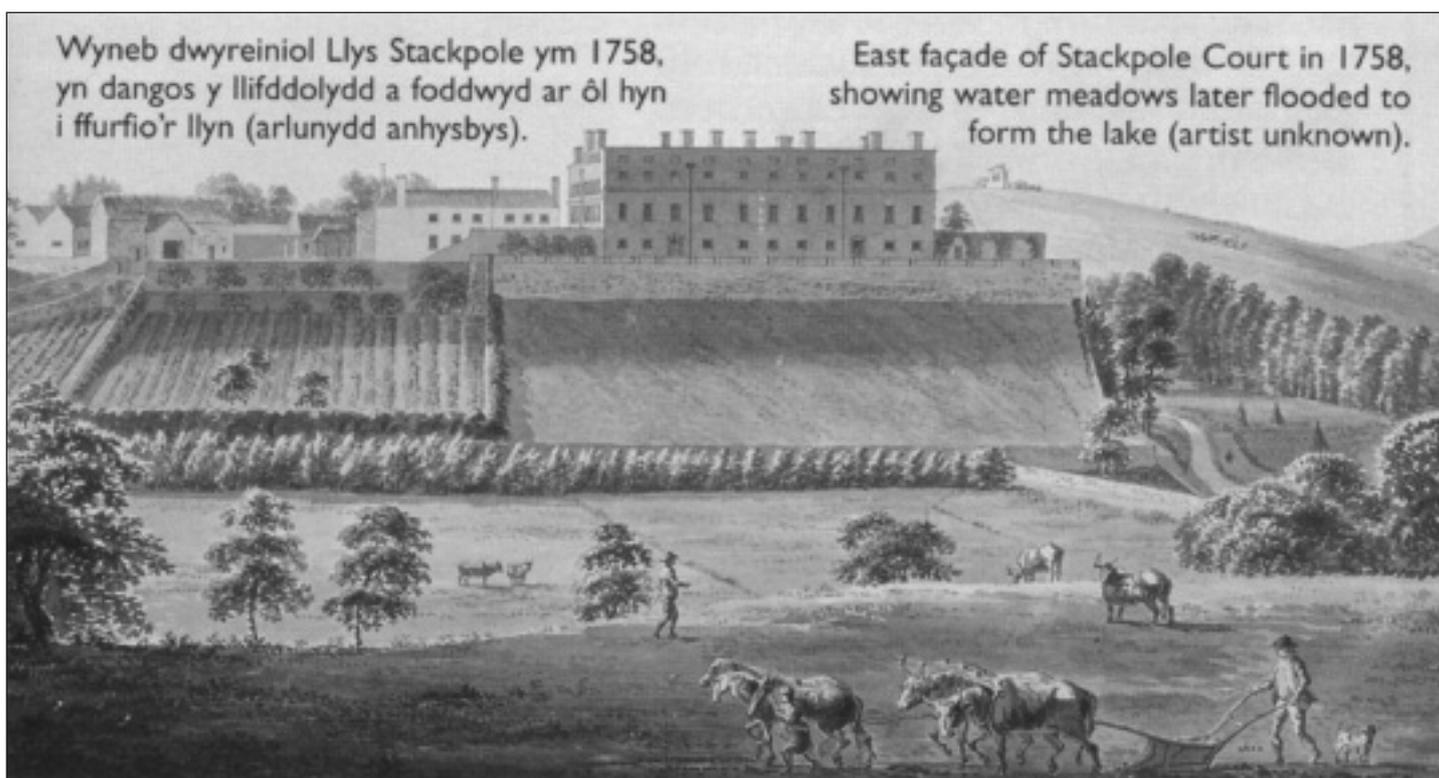


acres (Castlemartin) used as an Army Range.

The booklet ends with a sad account of the demise of the estate since World War II. Stackpole Court was demolished in 1953, the army still uses Castlemartin for training while the rest of the estate has been sold to South Wales Electricity Generating Board Pension Fund and The National Trust. Splitting up a large estate has caused many problems, particularly pollution from the farmland. Runoff from the upper pastures is now causing eutrophication and silting-up of some of the lakes. The walled garden lost the greenhouses in the 1970's but at least one of the gardens is still productive, being managed by MENCAP. The other is now in a very sorry state of decay.

Although the booklet is bilingual, we are spared the problem of having each illustration duplicated. There are 33 illustrations including reproductions from the 1782 Estate map and 1861 OS map, early sketches of the house and associated picturesque landscape, including one by J. 'Warwick' Smith, plus photographs taken over the last 115 years. Let's hope that the National Trust will publish further booklets on the designed landscapes of their other estates in Wales.

*John Savidge*



## Gerddi-WWW.

It may be too late for Christmas presents, but you can treat yourself in the New Year.

<http://www.shirebooks.co.uk/Garden/garden-bl.htm>

**Shire Books Garden History** Book List.

<http://www.goodgardenbooks.co.uk/>

A list of gardening Books by category. Click on History of gardens.

<http://www.gardensvisit.com/t/reviews/reviews.htm>

Reviews of books on **garden** design and **history**.

<http://www.amazon.co.uk>

The most popular source of books on the web. A search for books on Historic Gardens and you will get over 200 titles.

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

### **BRANCH CONTACTS**

#### **Brecon and Radnor**

**Mrs V.M. Scott**

**01874 754236** [vmsscott@yahoo.com](mailto:vmsscott@yahoo.com)

#### **Carmarthen**

**Mr John Hegarty 01550 720273**

#### **Ceredigion**

**Dr Caroline Palmer**

**01970 615403** [caroline-palmer@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:caroline-palmer@tiscali.co.uk)

#### **Clwyd**

**Mrs Sarah Furse 01352 770360**

#### **Gwynedd**

**Mrs Olive Horsfall 01766 780187**

#### **Pembrokeshire**

**Mr Gerry Hudson 01834 814317**

**Col. Richard Gilbertson**

**01834 831 396** [rh.gilbertson@virgin.net](mailto:rh.gilbertson@virgin.net)

#### **South and Mid Glam.**

**Mrs Val Caple**

**01446 775794** [val.t.caple@care4free.net](mailto:val.t.caple@care4free.net)

#### **West Glam.**

**Mrs Ann Gardner 01792 415453**

### **OFFICERS**

#### **Chairman:**

**Michael Tree**

Hendre House, Llanrwst, Gwynedd LL26 0RJ  
01492 642604 [Treeathendre@aol.com](mailto:Treeathendre@aol.com)

#### **Vice-chairman:**

**Sheila Roberts**

Derwen Deg, Hwfa Road,  
Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 2BN  
01248 354 415 [smr.bangor@btinternet.com](mailto:smr.bangor@btinternet.com)

#### **Administrator:**

**Ros Laidlaw**

#### **and acting**

Ty Leri, Talybont, Ceredigion SY24 5ER

#### **Membership Secretary**

01970 832 268 [historicgardenswales@hotmail.com](mailto:historicgardenswales@hotmail.com)

#### **Treasurer:**

**Jeremy Rye**

Brithdir Hall, Berriew, Powys SY21 8AW  
01686 640802 [jeremyrye@walesfineart.co.uk](mailto:jeremyrye@walesfineart.co.uk)

#### **Bulletin Editor:**

**Caroline Palmer**

The Old Laundry, Rhydyfelin,  
Aberystwyth, Ceredigion SY23 4QF  
01970 615403 [caroline-palmer@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:caroline-palmer@tiscali.co.uk)

**For information, details of the Guide to Historic parks and Gardens of Wales, and news see our website** <http://gardensofwales.org.uk>



Registered Charity No. 1023293



## New Subscription Rates for 2006

After much deliberation it has been agreed that it is necessary to raise the Subscription rates to the WHGT. As from 19th January the individual subscription will be £15, Joint subscription for couples £25, Corporate Subscription £50 and Life Membership £300.

A new membership brochure is being designed by Anne Carter and Sheila Roberts, and it is hoped that a new Membership Secretary can soon be found to ease this transition.

Branch members will be pleased to learn that the whole of the first year's subscription from a new member will go to their Branch, which should both assist Branch finances and create an incentive to local recruitment.

Existing members with even passing familiarity with an Access Database are urged to consider offering themselves for a stint in the post of Membership Secretary. The database has been set up and kept in good order by our valued former membership secretary Peter Williams and is currently under the care of our hardworking Administrator Ros Laidlaw. The task is therefore not very arduous, but someone must be found who can continue the good work.

### **Ceredigion Branch A.G.M. 2006**

Saturday 25 February at 2.0 pm  
At the Waun Fawr Community Hall  
Aberystwyth

To be followed at 2.30pm by an illustrated public lecture

## **The History of the Penglais Demesne** by **Caroline Palmer**



#### **Directions:**

From Aberystwyth, follow A487 up Penglais Hill, past University, turn right at top and then take 5th left onto Bryn Ceinion. Ample parking beside the hall. Tea and biscuits.