

No. 44
Autumn 2006

Plas Rhianfa - Victorian villa on the Menai Straits

by Sheila Roberts

In 1828 John Hay Williams of Bodelwyddan in Clwyd, later the second baronet, wrote in his journal which he had been keeping meticulously for the previous 10 year:

'My father and mother gave me Bryn Melyn in Anglesey. I was full of plans to build a villa there.'

It was not until 1848 that his aspirations came to fruition when the house and garden were constructed with the intention of providing a dowry house for his wife, Sarah, and her daughters because, having no male heir, he was to be succeeded in the event of his death by his younger brother. Lady Sarah described how the name that was given to the site - Rhian-va, was derived from classic Welsh and can be interpreted as 'Lady's Bower'.

Between 1848 and 1851 Sir John and Lady Sarah Hay Williams together created and controlled the building of the house and garden in association with a professional architect, Charles Read of Liverpool. Their ideas were influenced by their travels in the Loire Valley where Lady Sarah, a competent artist, had sketched the features of buildings such as the sixteenth century Renaissance chateau of Chenonceau which had interested her and was to provide inspiration for their designs. Her sketchbooks are still in the possession of her family.

The house was built into the cliff. Today we would describe it as 'split level' with the living rooms on the second floor - a design which maximised the impact of the spectacular views across the Menai Strait to the distant mountains of Snowdonia - the ultimate in borrowed landscape.

The rocky outcrop where the house was to be built was covered with a poor thin soil, exposed to the strong coastal winds and



(Fig. 2) The garden today, planters employed as pools

© Sheila Roberts



(Fig. 1) Plas Rhianfa. Engraving, 1879 from 'The English Flower Garden', by William Robinson

coloured with the gorse which gave the land its name. (Bryn Melyn = Yellow Bank).

The garden which Sir John and Lady Sarah created shows, perhaps, a lesser French influence, possibly as a result of the restrictions of the site. It was a garden unusual for its time on account of its less formal design and freer planting which used Mediterranean-style species. In 1851, contemporaneously with the building of the house, work began on the structure of the grounds. The first consideration was the provision of shelter from the wind. Trees were planted at the sides and transverse axes were staggered to avoid wind-funneling so that advantage could be taken of a microclimate afforded by the mild winters of the Menai Strait.

This resulted in rapid plant growth in the garden.

Formal terraces were constructed and back-filled as dictated by the sloping site. Within the proposed parterre, shapes were built up and fashioned into the bedrock, to hold imported soil for the planting.

This extensive parterre was a major feature of the garden. It was situated to one side of the house with a central axis that started at the seat under the cliff, passing down the stone steps, through the parterre, and down to the water garden with its spring. Below the gardens were the stone quay and a bath house, which became a later boathouse. The pattern of the parterre was based on the Polish crown jewels as exhibited in the Great Exhibition of 1851. The patterns were planted with bedding in bright colours to resemble jewels, and particularly with geraniums which Lady Sarah grew in her conservatory. There were four raised planters in which shrubs were grown. Although dated 1915 with the initials of Margaret Verney, similar planters are clearly shown in the engraving of 1879 (Fig. 1) so it is possible that these were a replacement. Two survive and have been filled with water to form pools (Fig. 2).

The kitchen garden was sited on the opposite side of the road and accessed by a tunnel, now blocked, but located in the wall of the neighbouring garden.

Sir John died in 1859, but Lady Sarah was to reside at Rhianfa until her own death in 1876. The aviary was constructed in 1860. This striking building still stands at the end of the terrace, but is in urgent need of restoration (Fig. 3). In 1874 a teahouse was built on the lawn below the house. Photographs suggest that the design was later altered to the attractive 'Tŷ Te' whose foundation and flooring is still apparent, together with an attractive inscription.

Lady Margaret Verney, John and Sarah's elder daughter inherited the house and in 1877 built the tenants' hall on the site of Lady Sarah's conservatory adjacent to the house to serve their expanding Anglesey estates. However in 1894 her husband, Edmund, inherited his family estate at Claydon and they moved to live mostly in Buckinghamshire. Lady Margaret retained an interest in the garden and in the local community, although the house was often tenanted. In Edwardian times considerable planting was undertaken by the tenants.

In 1879 William Robinson visited and wrote about Rhianfa in *The Garden* magazine and later in his book 'The English (sic) Flower Garden' in which he condemns rigid formality and the use of bedding plants and praises the garden at Rhianfa:

'But one may here and there see a better way, and at Rhianva, the free growth of evergreens and climbers and the delightful interlacements of hardy flowers, ferns and creepers make the garden beautiful.'

He also describes the gardens:

'...a number of supporting walls were built to form terraces; and, by the help of a protecting sea-wall the flowers were carried down to the very edge of the water.' He describes the red fuchsias and blue and pink hydrangeas which grew rapidly to hide the stone walls:

'Myrtles and Camellias and some Acacias were found to thrive out of doors...In summer the luxuriant abundance of the Roses, climbing from bush to bush, the Cypresses, the Tamarisk, and the vines; and the sea and the purple mountains in the background, seem to belong rather to the Lake of Como than to Anglesey. All the borders are mossed over with small green plants; large hardy exotic ferns are spread into groups; and a lacework of Ivy, Vine, and creepers is seen in many parts. A mixed order of planting is pursued, but in many cases the shrubs and plants are allowed to spread as they will, and the climbers take picturesque shapes. Rhianva is an example of the error of the notion



(Fig. 3) *The Aviary*

that a terraced garden should only be arranged as a "bedded-out" garden'

After the death of her husband in 1910 and the marriage of her son in 1911, Lady Margaret Verney moved back to live permanently at Rhianfa until 1930. It was inherited by her son, and later gifted as a wedding present to Dr and Mrs Andrew Verney who moved to live and work in London, selling the house in 1955.

A wealth of interesting planting survives in the garden. From the 1850s there are yew hedges, the massive noble fir and large holm oaks. From the Edwardian era there are *Crinodendron hookerianum*, Chusan palms, cordylines, *Yucca gloriosa*, Japanese maples and probably the mulberry. There is a large rhododendron 'Pink Pearl' which must have been planted close to the date of introduction in 1900. Also planted close to dates of introduction are *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* from the 1940's and *Rhododendron yakushimanum*, (the species from which modern dwarf rhododendrons have been hybridised) in 1970.

After the house was sold, only 3 acres remained as the garden. The parterre was truncated by a beech hedge, and half of it now lies under the lawn of the neighbouring house, its extent demonstrated by scorch marks in this year's hot dry summer. The remains of the water garden lie in the undergrowth below. The boathouse has been converted to a modern holiday home and houses have been built in other parts of the grounds and the walled garden. The conservatory, which had been relocated to the west garden when the Tenants' Hall was constructed, had already been replaced by a squash court and then became the building site for a new house.

Despite this fragmentation many of the old garden features survive and it is to be appreciated that recent judicious clearance and replanting work has done much to recreate the ambience of the original gardens with a sympathetic restoration. The ethos of current work undertaken by Hortus Monensis for the owner, Peter Bailey, echoes that of Sir John – 'using the most desirable plants available; sympathetic to the existing planting and situation, but leaning towards the exotic and unusual.'

The European Landscape Convention

By Richard Kelly

Head of Sustainable Landscapes Section, and Historic Landscapes Officer, Countryside Council for Wales

This note does not necessarily reflect the official view of the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW).

We've lost the 'Great British Sausage', the pint and the pound weight, and as I write, with September drawing to a close, I learn that the 'Great British Loaf' is also about to be tossed into oblivion by the European Union. So, why not make a right sandwich of it all and let them have our landscapes as well? Pass the butter, please! But alas, I'm afraid that went into a European mountain a long time ago!



That, on the face of it, might be one's immediate reaction to yet another piece of quasi-legislation to emerge out of the European Union. But, Euro-sceptical jesting aside, the European Landscape Convention (ELC) is not a European Union, but a Council of Europe missive. The Council of Europe is an altogether different body, with more stratospheric, and culturally focussed, aspirations for the Community, than the fiscal and regulatory, "one size fits all" concerns of the European Parliament.

So, how should we regard the ELC in Wales? Is it life threatening, or more to the point, does it affect our inalienable right to enjoy the pleasures of historic gardening and parkery? In short, no is the answer, on both counts, and if one takes time to adsorb the details, the ELC is neither regulatory nor mandatory, being much more of a treaty about people, communities and places, and about encouraging the appropriate treatment of landscapes everywhere, and not just in 'special' areas.

For me, the ELC hits the right note from the start with a concise, and some would say, egalitarian definition of landscape as "an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors." I think we can be fairly united on that definition from Brynsiencyn to Bridgend!

The ELC is the first international treaty specifically on landscape, and it came into effect on 1 March 2004. It was signed by the UK Government on 21st February, this year, and after due Parliamentary approval, has become ratified, a process which includes the devolved Welsh Assembly Government. That means we now have to start doing what it says.

The ELC stresses the following principles (which I have unashamedly copied from the proceedings of a recent conference on the ELC, sponsored by ICOMOS UK (The International Council on Monuments and Sites):

- Put people – from all cultures and communities – and their surroundings, at the heart of spatial planning and sustainable development.

- Recognise that landscape exists everywhere, not just in special places and, whether beautiful or degraded, is everyone's shared inheritance.
- Increase awareness and understanding of landscape and its value, as a unifying framework for all land-use sectors.
- Promote a more accessible, integrated and forward looking approach to managing inherited landscapes and shaping new landscapes.

Cynics will no doubt sniff at the 'feel good' element in this prose, but there is also, very much a 'hands on' side to it, in that the ELC aims to promote the protection, management and planning (including - and of particular note here to Trust members - the active design and creation) of Europe's landscapes, both rural and urban, and to foster European co-operation on landscape issues. Countries who sign and ratify the ELC are making a public and national commitment to upholding these principles, within, (and I have emphasised the following in italics), *the context of their own domestic legal and policy frameworks.*

This is important, because it allows us to operate within the existing mechanisms that we have for dealing with our landscapes. No one is asking us to go back to the drawing board and do away with our National Parks, areas of outstanding natural beauty or, for that matter, our landscapes, parks and gardens of historic interest. We can keep all these.

Equally important, the ELC takes a realistic and forward looking view, rather than a preservationist one; creating future landscapes is regarded as being just as much an aim as managing sustainably those we have inherited. So, why not have some new parks and gardens in Wales that will convey something of our age and sentiments to our descendants?

The ELC stresses that landscape is not mere scenery, but links culture with nature, past with present and has many values, not all tangible, but above all, it matters to people, because it is they who create and value landscapes. CCW champions this view and over the coming months we shall be assisting the Welsh Assembly Government and our partners, on how we can all embrace and help to deliver the ELC's principles. This means above all else, making people and places matter more at the heart of landscape planning everywhere in Wales, and not just within the 'official' line on the map!

The Trust has already done much to promote this approach in raising awareness of the country's legacy of designed landscapes and in promoting access to it. CCW is pleased to have been able to support the Trust with some of this work, and also to continue to offer our support for ELC-compliant activities.

For members wishing to read the full text of the ELC, it can be found at:
www.coe.int/Cultural_Co-operation/Environment/Landscape.

From a secret Haven for Imperial Measures somewhere north of Brynsiencyn, I shall willingly raise my (metric sized) glass to Europe on this one!

The Cowbridge Physic Garden

Great progress has been made in the last few months and the garden is rapidly taking shape. The hard landscaping is all but complete and it is anticipated that the contractors, Landcraft, will have left the site by the end of September. The garden is now embellished with two Palladian-style pavilions and a central fountain, the two stone garden sheds have been restored, one to serve as a potting shed the other to provide a workroom for volunteers, and the breach in the east wall has been filled in.

Public support for the garden has been expressed in pledges received from private individuals and companies to sponsor items in the garden ranging from trees and benches to fountain and pavilions. A brass wall sundial has been given to the garden by Cowbridge Rotary Club to celebrate Rotary International's Centenary and has been affixed to the north wall.

One important landmark event for the Physic Garden in July was the handing over of a twenty-five year lease of the site by the leader of the Vale of Glamorgan Council. The lease, granted on a peppercorn rent, was formally handed over at a ceremony on site.

Volunteers have already made a substantial contribution to clearing and tidying the beds in the garden through the summer while the workmen have been busy with walls and other construction work. It is volunteers who will maintain the garden once it is established and their support and commitment is vital to the long-term success of the project. In this context, the appointment of a Volunteer Co-ordinator was deemed essential and such an appointment was made at the end of May. The position is financed by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Structured programmes are being prepared to ensure that the activities of the willing and growing number of volunteers best meet the varying needs of the garden. There have been concentrated sessions of digging and ground preparation in advance of planting which will



© Hilary M. Thomas

begin in mid-September, and the planting plans for each area of the garden are being scrutinised in advance of the imminent arrival of the first (large) consignment of box, yew, lavender and other plants.

The garden was open to the public on European Heritage Day (16 September) and will be open on a permanent basis from 1 October onwards. With these dates in mind, brief information leaflets have been prepared. Planting and other gardening work will continue on site throughout the autumn and winter when visitors will see the garden evolve from bare earth to finalised planting... and yes, the beds and individual plants will be clearly labelled. There is a lot to be done in the coming months!

This update for readers of the Bulletin is but a brief outline of the vast amount of work undertaken and achieved in recent months to transform a long neglected site into The Cowbridge Physic Garden.

Hilary M. Thomas

Unusual garden feature at Lydstep House



© Gerry Hudson



In the first decade of the 20th century, the future Viscount St Davids, having made his fortune in the City, built a mansion close to the beach at Lydstep Haven (Bay), a few miles west of Tenby in South Pembrokeshire. The bank rises steeply behind the house and a platform was carved such that part of the formal garden and lawns were at roof level. This feature is shown in the OS 25" map as two curved structures north and west of the house.

The northern one (see photo) is the most complex and consists of three, and part of a fourth, concentric semicircles of limestone walls with a system of mostly hidden stone steps rising to the top lawn. The diameter of the lowest circle is almost 10m, and backed by an unbroken wall about 2m high which retains a grassy platform. The next two platforms are lower and are penetrated by central steps. Large beach pebbles ornament the tops of these walls (a later addition?) and form troughs in which there has been planting.

The southern "amphitheatre" is simpler, and has a retaining wall across the diameter which holds back a semicircular garden. A flight of (now derelict) steps around the margin provide an alternative access to the top lawn.

The writer has seen nothing similar elsewhere. Are these merely terraces to facilitate planting, or is there an intentional echo of the Roman amphitheatre?

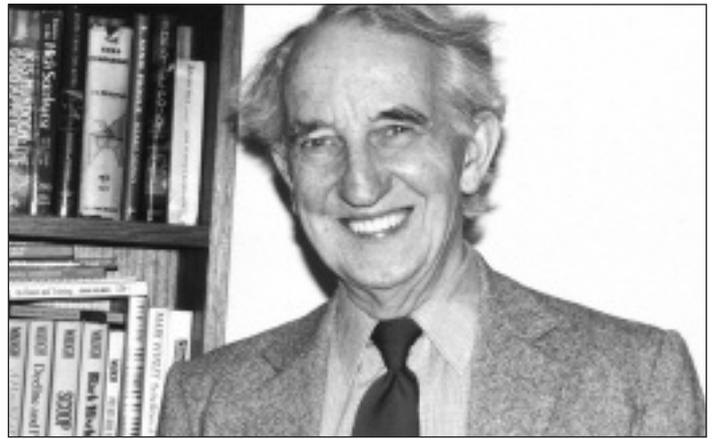
Gerry Hudson, Recorder, Pembs Branch

Peter Williams

Peter Williams, who died on the 15th August at the age of 79, will have been known to many members as the first person to welcome them into the Trust. He was a Membership Secretary to dream of, for not only did he completely overhaul and computerise our membership records but he ran the system for many years without a hitch. A difficult act to follow: so difficult, indeed, that he was obliged to carry on far longer than he would have wished and finally shed the burden only a short while before his death, handing it over in such apple-pie order that the transition was accomplished with ease. Even in his last illness he remembered to remind us, kindly but firmly, about things we had left undone.

Peter joined the Trust, with his wife Hilda, who predeceased him, after their move to Crickadarn, near Builth Wells in 1993 and they became keen members of the Brecon and Radnor branch. Before very long, Hilda was a stalwart member of our committee, and later, combining the offices of Secretary and Vice-Chairman, an invaluable support to me as Chairman of the branch. Peter, loyally ferrying her about, was soon prevailed upon to use his talents for more than dealing with the wine at branch events and it was more or less inevitable that both would rapidly be elected to Trust Committee, where they very quickly proved their worth.

Peter was a modest man who made light of his achievements but, until his early retirement in 1982, aged 55, he had a distinguished career in the Civil Service, travelling frequently to



Brussels as an authority on such subjects as air pollution. For some years after retirement he and Hilda were undecided where to settle but at last, to the Trust's good fortune, circumstances brought them back to Peter's native Wales where they soon made a niche for themselves and Hilda planted a fine collection of old roses. To people meeting them at this time, Hilda seemed to take the lead: she was the ball of fire and Peter stood behind her, gentle, efficient and supportive, but their partnership was far more equal than those words suggest. What is perhaps more surprising to those who met this kindly, humane and humorous man in later life, is to learn that both of the Williams's earlier hobby was pistol shooting. They would have been very good at it.

Anne Carter

Lady Strickland and Plas yn Rhiw

A letter from John R.E. Borron

It is possible to add a little more to Corrie Price's interesting article on Plas yn Rhiw. (Bulletin No 43) Lady Strickland was Frances Marie, daughter of General Tatton B. Grieve. She married Sir Edward Strickland in 1877 as his second wife. Sir Edward died in Australia in 1889. It seems improbable that Lady Strickland could have rented Plas Yn Rhiw before 1890, following Sir Edward's death. If the garden is shown in the 1889 Ordnance Survey map then it seems unlikely it could have been designed by Lady Strickland. It could have been given her name because she devoted particular care to its maintenance.

Lady Strickland's tenancy of Plas yn Rhiw lasted until her death in Italy on 11 January 1906. She almost certainly spent

her winters in Florence and her summers at the Plas. In the 1903 edition of Whitaker's Peerage, Lady Strickland's addresses were given as Plas yn Rhiw and Palazzo Feroni Via de' Serragli, Florence. Lady Strickland died intestate and as her personal estate was under £1000, she must have had an income from trust funds to maintain her lifestyle. At her death, her closest relative was a nephew, Frank Tatton Brown, who was a Captain in the Royal Artillery, living in Belfast.

It is puzzling that Lady Strickland should have settled, after her husband's death, in so remote a place with which her family appears to have had no connection. It seems likely that she must have had a friend in the area, possibly the widowed Mrs Lloyd Edwards of Nanhoron.

New this season! WHGT Christmas cards

Two designs,
pack of ten for £4.70,
see enclosed order form
for details.



Your purchase advertises the Trust to your friends and also contributes to Trust income.

Hensol Castle changes hands



© Vale of Glamorgan County Council

Hensol Castle from the south. This formal garden is thought to date from after 1927 when Hensol became a hospital.

Hensol Castle, near Pendoylan in the Vale of Glamorgan, is a substantial late 17th C or early 18th C mock Gothic mansion. Originally the home of the Jenkins family, it passed in 1721 to Charles Talbot, who later became Lord Chancellor and Baron Talbot of Hensol. In 1735 Talbot added east and west wings, a very early example of Gothic revival in Britain. The house then passed through several hands and received a further remodelling about 1840 under the hand of the ironmaster Rowland Fothergill. In 1927 the house and park of 1105 acres were bought by Glamorgan County Council for a mental hospital. Later part of the NHS, the hospital has now been closed and the estate taken over by the owners of the adjacent hotel, golf and spa resort.

The house is listed Grade I for its 18th century fabric in the Gothic style and also for the quality of the early Victorian remodelling. The park is listed Grade II for the survival, more or less intact, of the main features of an important landscape park.

These include a large number of mature specimen trees, established woodlands, a serpentine pond and a large lake.

The park was developed from the mid 18th century onward. In 1804 Benjamin H Malkin described the park and its lake and ponds and recorded that it was William, Lord Talbot who planted the park “on the inseparable principles of good taste and utility” so it seems clear that the major landscaping was already in place. The 1877 Ordnance Survey map shows all the main features and these remain today. On the north side of the lake is a wood with a path known as the Tulip Walk; to the north the wood is bounded by a ha-ha. A small wooded island in the lake has a turreted stone-built folly; the island is now ‘out of bounds’ because of the presence of otters.

Below the lake there is a walled kitchen garden, now partly overgrown and reed-filled. One large and two small greenhouses remain in a neglected state but they retain most of their framework and some glass. A vine still grows in the large one.

It is understood that the new owners plan to develop the castle and parkland as part of the adjoining hotel and spa development. Planning permission was granted by the Vale of Glamorgan Council as their preferred option of offices/business park seemed unlikely to be realised. Former ward blocks in the grounds will become apartments and some chalet-type houses will be built. The castle will become a spa. On the positive side the writer has been told by the owner that the walled garden will be restored to grow organic vegetables and fruit to be used on site, and that the development as a whole will respect the historic nature of the site. The South and Mid Glamorgan branch of the WHGT has been watching developments, and we hope for the best.

Derrick Kingham



© Vale of Glamorgan County Council

The 18th century lake east of the castle was admired by Benjamin Malkin.

William Kent – Architect, Designer, Opportunist

by Timothy Mowl, (Johnathon Cape, 2006) 298pp,
16 pp illustrations, colour and B&W, ISBN 0224073508 £25

In the case of the painter, architect and designer William Kent, the grist to the biographer's mill is scant to say the least. There are some contemporary accounts, such as the writings of George Vertue, which appear to throw light upon Kent, the man, but, as Mowl points out, these writings, like those of any commentator, may be biased, bitchy, inaccurate. Mowl certainly opines to this view in Vertue's case.



Every biographer seeks to unearth new sources about his subject, but Kent has personally left a very limited trail of clues. He was a scant and inarticulate correspondent, so his letters give little on which to build, other than a putative diagnosis of dyslexia, or a poor report for Bridlington Grammar School which Kent probably (though there is no documentary evidence) attended. To be fair, many of the other correspondents of the time, (bar Pope, whom Mowl finds ungracious and unfunny) were pretty poor at letter writing, spelling and syntax too.

Kent certainly seems to have traded upon his charm and what are today called networking skills. Born Cant he re-spelt his name, Mowl says, as a mechanism of social mobility, acquired wealthy patrons and spent 12 years in Italy training as a painter and hosting and guiding the stream of well-connected English grand tourists who came his way. Mowl explores every trace of Kent's work and concludes that he was never more than fourth-rate as a painter.

Charm and social skills notwithstanding, Kent's sexuality, despite every scrutiny, remains unclear, which must be particularly disappointing for a biographer accustomed to the likes of William Beckford and Horace Walpole. Perhaps Kent just liked people and they him. His playful sketches of gardens and garden buildings, often featuring urinating pet dogs, or indeed himself similarly occupied, are far more endearing than his written words.

As a protégé of a succession of wealthy men, Kent returned to England, lodging with Lord Burlington, who was part of a caucus eager to impose a British concept of Palladianism on Georgian England. Mowl's exploration of the aesthetic views and mores of the many players in the politics of architecture in the time of

George I is extremely thorough and exposes many of them in a new light. Here there is plenty of evidence for his analysis.

Kent meanwhile was increasingly an interior decorator and sometime painter, but in the latter capacity, according to Mowl, a pretty poor one, whose better works may have been by the hand of someone else.

By the middle of the book, quite a bit of contemporary Mowl slips into the period account. Mowl is, for example, clearly very annoyed by the inaccuracies in the present guide book to Kensington Palace, concentrating as it does far more upon Diana Princess of Wales' designer frocks than upon the correct interpretation of the Georgian ceiling paintings. He also fires a broadside at the Georgian Group, some of whose lady members apparently walked out of a lecture exposing the raunchy side of Horace Walpole (presumably by the author himself).

The first trace of a garden comes in Chapter 11 with Kent torn between the naturalistic garden ideas of Princess Caroline at Richmond, and the Palladian aspirations of Burlington at Chiswick. His work for both these clients, for Pope and for Henry Pelham at Esher Place are carefully assessed, and Kent's natural liking for the Gothick emerges in his sketches and finished designs. Thence it is upward and onward through Arcadian landscape to the crescendo the sexually explicit Temple of Venus and and the politically charged temples of Ancient and of Modern Virtue at Lord Cobham's Stowe. While Mowl remains unable to throw light on Kent's actual sexual proclivities, he was clearly no prude in satisfying the tastes of his clients. A fitting climax to the book is Rousham in Oxfordshire, where Kent's lavishly decorated erotic interiors and a virtuoso performance in 'horticultural pornography' was designed for the eccentric and randy old soldier General James Dormer. Mowl tells us that the nude statuary which focus the walks, figures acquired by the General including Emperor Hadrian's lover Antinous, Venus, Pan and a predatory satyr by Van Nost were explicitly painted in full flesh tones. While visitors to Rousham today may feel in secluded and reflective mood, Mowl's interpretation is far more vigorous and one which, he claims, in acknowledging the unabashed sexuality is in conflict with the prejudices of many contemporary Georgian enthusiasts. Personally I have never been able to contemplate landscapes of secluded exedras, cold baths and well-endowed statuary without assuming a varied and lewd agenda.

Caroline Palmer

WHGT Publications

Historic Parks and Gardens in Ceredigion goes to second printing.

(reviewed in Bulletin No. 37) ISBN 0954752503

Historic Parks and Gardens in Ceredigion by Caroline Palmer, Penny David and Ros Laidlaw will already be familiar to many members, who bought the first edition in 2004.

The publishers, The Ceredigion Branch of the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust, are delighted to have sold the entire print run of 750 copies in less than two years.

The reprint has given the authors the opportunity to update certain entries in the light of new information which has come to light as a result of readers' knowledge. The selection of 31 gardens described in detail remains the same, but as Caroline says:

"Real enthusiasts who have already purchased a copy may also

want the second imprint, for they will find significant amendments in the entries concerning Trawsgoed, Cilgwyn, Glandyfi Castle and Tanybwllch. It was also particularly exciting to be able to incorporate a newly-discovered architect's design, believed to be by Thomas F. Pritchard for Penglais mansion. At Trawsgoed also, a damaged estate map of 1756 has now been painstakingly restored by the National Library of Wales and can be reproduced in this edition and more accurately interpreted".



The book is distributed through the Welsh Books Council and costs £12. This means that it should be readily available to order through any bookshop. Copies can also be obtained from the authors as before.



Corinne Price

Meet the Membership Secretary

Corinne Price is our new membership secretary and is looking forward to dealing with any queries you may have about your membership - and making sure the subscriptions are up-to-date! Corinne worked as a Charity Administrator in Cardiff before re-training as a gardener a few years ago. Landing the post as Gardener-In-Charge at Plas yn Rhiw enabled the family (husband Tim and 14-year old twin daughters Christina and Charlotte) to move back to the Llyn Peninsula, where Corinne grew up. As well as gardening, Corinne is passionate about garden history and her most treasured possession is her collection of books on the subject.

If you have any questions about your membership, please contact Corinne - her details are given at the back of *The Bulletin*.

BRANCH CONTACTS

Brecon and Radnor Mrs V.M. Scott
01874 754236 vmscott@yahoo.com

Carmarthen Mr John Hegarty 01550 720273
johnhegarty@tiscali.co.uk

Ceredigion Dr Caroline Palmer
01970 615403 caroline-palmer@tiscali.co.uk

Clwyd Mr David Toyne 01978 790576
david-toyne@beeb.net

Gwynedd Mrs Olive Horsfall 01766 780187
oandmhorsfall@btinternet.com

Pembrokeshire Mr Gerry Hudson 01834 814317
Mrs Gwyneth Hayward 01239 620654

South and Mid Glam. Mrs Val Caple
01446 775794 val.t.caple@care4free.net

West Glam. Mrs Ann Gardner 01792 415453

OFFICERS

Chairman: Michael Tree
Hendre House, Llanrwst, Gwynedd LL26 0RJ
01492 642604 Treathendre@aol.com

Vice-chairman (North): Sheila Roberts
Derwen Deg, Hwfa Road,
Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 2BN
01248 354 415 smr.bangor@btinternet.com

Vice-chairman (South): John Hegarty
Llwynywormwood Park, Myddfai,
Llandoverly, Carmarthen SA20 0NQ
01550 720273 johnhegarty@tiscali.co.uk

Administrator: Ros Laidlaw
Ty Leri, Talybont, Ceredigion SY24 5ER
01970 832268 historicgardenswales@hotmail.com

Membership Secretary: Corinne Price
Plas yn Rhiw, Rhiw, Pwllheli, Gwynedd LL53 8AB
01758 780298 Corinneprice@aol.com

Treasurer: Jeremy Rye
Brithdir Hall, Berriew, Powys SY21 8AW
01686 640802 jeremyrye@walesfineart.co.uk

Bulletin Editor: Caroline Palmer
The Old Laundry, Rhydyfelin,
Aberystwyth, Ceredigion SY23 4QF
01970 615403 caroline-palmer@tiscali.co.uk

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



Registered Charity No. 1023293



What will your home insurance be doing this Christmas?



Every year there are 'Christmas misery' stories in the local papers – stories about people who have had their presents stolen or ruined by flooding and so on. Gifts waiting to be given and presents received mean that you probably have a higher value in the house over Christmas than you would normally. Make sure that this isn't something you have to worry about by checking that your home insurers automatically increase your contents sum insured over the festive period.

Luckily, this isn't something NFU Mutual home insurance customers have to worry about. That's because during December, NFU Mutual automatically increase the amount you've insured your contents for by 10% or £5,000 (whichever is the most). They also insure your Christmas shopping before you get it home in case there are any accidents on the way – up to £2,000 for any one claim.

So if you have a sneaking suspicion that your existing insurance might let you down this Christmas (or indeed any other time of the year), do call us and find out how NFU Mutual might be able to protect you better. For details of your local office, call 0800 975 0600*

NFU Mutual is The National Farmers Union Mutual Insurance Society Limited (No. 111982). Registered in England. Registered Office: Tiddington Road, Stratford upon Avon, Warwickshire CV37 7BJ. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority. A member of the Association of British Insurers. *For security and training purposes, telephone calls may be recorded and monitored.