



Cyfarthfa Park c 1830s Private Collection

Regeneration of Cyfarthfa Park

Many thanks for the information and assistance provided by Ann Benson, Scott Reid, Lyndsey Handley and Keith Lewis-Jones

It was great news last December that Merthyr Tydfil CBC received a 'Parks for People' HLF award of £1.9 million towards the restoration of Cyfarthfa Park. This Grade II* historic landscape, the largest open space in Merthyr Tydfil, is the setting to the Grade I listed Cyfarthfa Castle. In 1801 Merthyr Tydfil was the largest iron producing centre in the world with four ironworks. The ironworks at Cyfarthfa were started in 1765 by two Cumbrians, Anthony Bacon and Richard Brownrigg, who leased the land from Lord Talbot. Charles Wood was brought in to manage the works which became the first in Merthyr to produce wrought iron.

Richard Crawshay (1739-1810) was a Yorkshireman who bought the ironworks lease at Cyfarthfa and became the sole owner of the works in 1794. Richard's son William Crawshay I (1764-1834) had less interest in the works but oversaw the company's selling agency in London. However, his son, William Crawshay II (1788-1867) expanded the works at Cyfarthfa and became manager of both the Cyfarthfa and Hirwaun works. He also bought ironworks at Treforest and the Forest of Dean. The Craw-

shay works supplied cannon for Nelson's fleet and iron rails for the rapidly developing railways.

William Crawshay II became the iron master when he took over the business from his father and built the family home, Cyfarthfa Castle 1824 -1825, as well as a mansion at Caversham Park in Berkshire. William II was known as the Iron King and Cyfarthfa Castle, a spectacular Regency mansion, is by far the most important iron master's home in Wales. It was designed by Robert Lugar, a renowned English domestic architect and garden designer who specialised in castellated buildings. The house has 15 towers and 72 rooms and is sited for commanding views over the family's ironworks across the Taff Valley. The house had the stables, coach house, dairy and other service rooms on the north side separated from the main house by an L shaped courtyard. The main house was on the south side arranged around a courtyard which originally contained a fernery, now an award-winning tea room. The principal rooms faced west and south whilst the double height kitchen faced east into the hillside rising behind the Castle.

Cyfartha Park was originally a Romantic and informal landscape. The original landscaping is interesting for the way the 160 acre estate was designed with features to service the ironworks whilst contributing to the aesthetic setting of the castle. Visually the lake is the most significant feature of the Cyfarthfa Park but it was also an essential reservoir providing water for the ironworks. The lake with its feeder canal is said to have cost as much as the house. The lake is fed from a sluice on the Afon Taf Fechan opposite the Gurnos quarry via the 1.6km long Gurnos feeder, a canal sometimes referred to as the *leat* above the earlier tramway.

In recent years both the leat and the old tramway had fallen into disrepair. The tramway was hewn into the rock face in 1792-4 by the engineer Watkin George for a horse drawn tram. The tram transported the limestone from the Gurnos quarries to the ironworks. The leat was made by cutting a ledge into the rock face parallel and above the tramway with a high limestone retaining wall of uncoursed rubble on the exposed side. Both the tramway, the leat from Taf Fechan and another leat from the Taf Fawr were taken across the Taff river on the Pont y Cafnau (bridge of troughs) designed by Watkin George to service the ironworks. Pont y Cafnau is the world's first iron railway bridge. The two leats powered the 50 ft cast iron water wheel for the ironworks.

A number of breaches in the leat wall threatened collapse and damage to the tramway below. The restoration of this leat ensures the water supply to the lake and preserves the old tramway as a recreational walking route into the Taf Fechan Gorge.

The Cyfarthfa lake is just one element of an extensive network of ponds and channels designed to feed the ironworks. The two woodland areas north and east of the mansion, Castle Wood and Garden Wood were laid out in the 1820s as mixed woodland to create a romantic setting to the house. Castle Wood has a flight of 4 small elliptical Upper Ponds. These are balancing ponds constructed soon after the building of the castle to regulate the water level of the lake. Originally these were fed from Bryn Cae Owen, a large kidney shaped pond, the highest of the ponds to the north east of the house. This was filled in for safety in the 1970s. The four balancing ponds will now be restored and the woodland pathways will be improved.

During the nineteenth century the Crawshays used Cyfarthfa lake for boating. Today the lake is a valuable habitat for wildlife enhanced by the islands added in the 20th century and is used by angling clubs. The southern end of the lake was filled in to prevent leakage.

The Crawshay's were self sufficient with their own dairy, brew house, icehouse, a 1.2 hectare kitchen walled garden and a farmstead, Pandy Farm.

The kitchen garden was laid out in terraces on the

hillside to the east of the Castle. It included a number of glasshouses for grapes, peaches and pineapples, surrounded by a brick and stone wall crenellated on the south eastern side. The conservation scheme will restore and enhance the kitchen garden and repair the glasshouses. The first pineapple in Wales was produced from the Cyfarthfa pine house (The pineapple is now the museum logo). The earth work terrace is all that now survives but it is hoped that the pinery can be reconstructed.

The park still retains some of the original planting of exotic trees from North America such as sequoia and a large number of evergreens including pines and cypress. The wild flower field meadows near Castle Wood were part of the original layout, reflecting Crawshay's interest in wild flowers. The area north of the west entrance was originally called the Pound, once used as a paddock for the family's horses.

The ironwork gate piers surmounted with large urn finials and iron work railings are all thought to be original, designed by Robert Lugar. Two fine sections of railings with ironwork gate piers and matching gates flank the driveway. The railings are attached at the outer ends to the castellated stone turrets which link to the boundary walls beyond. The ironwork has been painted in forest green and gold, the colours of the Crawshay livery. By 1873 the lodges at the southwest entrance had gone and in the late nineteenth century a more formal layout was developed around the mansion including the late 19th century fountain.

The iron industry was eventually superseded by steel and the ironworks closed in 1874. It was subsequently re-opened for steel production on two occasions and finally closed in 1919. The Crawshays eventually left Cyfarthfa Castle and moved to Caversham Park in Berkshire. In 1902 the property was sold to Merthyr Tydfil Borough Council and the grounds were developed as a municipal park.

Two terraces south of the main drive have been created to provide the park with a bowling green and tennis courts. Flower beds were also constructed. The bowls pavilion and the park bandstand will both be rebuilt.

The Castle has since housed a museum and art gallery and the Cyfarthfa High School. Students have gained an education at Cyfarthfa Castle since 1912 when it was a grammar school. A multi-million new build will enable the school to leave Cyfarthfa Castle next year. The school playing fields have been long established on the eastern side of the park.

The HLF programme will fund three new posts; a project manager, volunteer coordinator and a ranger. It will also support an apprentice programme to allow local people to train in skills including stone wall building. *Cyfarthfa Enterprise* provides disadvantaged members of the com-



Penry Williams watercolour from 1825 showing the feeder lakes behind the castle.
© Cyfarthfa Castle Museum & Art Gallery, Merthyr Tydfil

munity with training in horticulture on this site and the range and number of volunteers can now be increased. In 2011 the Castle museum and art gallery re-opened following a refurbishment. The redevelopment of Cyfarthfa Park has involved a £1.4 million catalyst investment to modernise the park. A new visitor centre, a splash pad/playground and works to improve the miniature

railway have helped place Cyfarthfa Park and Castle 8th in the list of the Top 50 Valleys Essentials. Community participation is an important element of this regeneration scheme and we look forward to seeing Cyfarthfa Park fully restored. In April the Queen visited Cyfarthfa as part of HM Diamond Jubilee tour.

Congratulations on NGS plaque

Congratulations to Helena Gerrish at High Glanau Manor near Monmouth, Chairman of the Monmouth and Gwent branch, on receiving a plaque representing a 1927 shilling with a message of thanks to celebrate the 85th anniversary of the National Gardens Scheme.

High Glanau is one of just four Welsh pioneer gardens open in 1927 in the NGS scheme.

High Glanau is listed Grade II* and was laid out in 1922 by H. Avray Tipping, the architectural editor of *Country Life* magazine. Original features include a pergola, Edwardian glasshouse, octagonal pool and the double west terrace with spectacular views towards the Brecon Beacons, Skirrid and Sugar Loaf. The mirror 100 foot herbaceous borders were reinstated in 2008. There are also rhododendrons, azaleas, orchard with wild flowers and camassias, vegetable garden and woodland walks. Tipping was on the first Committee of the NGS and wrote in 1928 of the twofold pleasure of visiting our

neighbours' gardens - 'you see the best gardens at their best moment; and at the expense of a shilling you pride yourself on being a philanthropist aiding the cause of the sick and injured.'



Medieval Parks, Gardens and Designed Landscapes of North Wales and the Shropshire Marches

Spencer Gavin Smith

WHGT is delighted that Spencer can share some of his recent research on the archaeological, historical, literary and visual arts evidence for the existence, distribution and use of medieval parks, gardens and designed landscapes. These landscapes are associated with castles and related high-status occupation in North Wales and the Shropshire Marches. Digital mapping of this work will ensure that the data collated can be made available to researchers, academics and organisations such as the WHGT. The current research follows the excavations directed by Spencer at Sycharth Castle (Denbighshire) in the valley of the river Cynllaith.

The llys or court at Sycharth and its surrounding landscape was the subject of a cywydd or praise poem composed c.1390 by Iolo Goch. George Borrow translated the poem for his travelogue 'Wild Wales', first published in 1862 (Rhys (ed.) 1910) and the poem has subsequently been quoted in part by Higham and Barker (1992: 144-146 and 300-303), Landsberg (2004: 11), Creighton (2002: 179-180, 2009: 101) and Liddiard (2005: 116-117) in the writings of an idealised medieval landscape.

The Sycharth cywydd is considered one of the finest of its genre, and is divided into two parts of unequal length. In the first part Iolo outlines his visit to Sycharth to sample the renowned generosity of its owner, before describing in the second part the llys buildings and their constructional details. The cywydd also provides information on the wider landscape around the llys, including an orchard, vineyard, mill, smithy and animals including peacocks and a herd of deer, which are described as being 'in another park'.

The llys at Sycharth was constructed on top of and adjacent to the earthworks of an earlier motte and bailey castle, dating from at least the early 13th century (XD2/1113). The site was subject to archaeological excavation in 1962-1963 (Hague and Warhurst 1966); a geophysical survey by the author in 1997 (Smith 2003), and a CADW funded project in 2009 (Gater and Adcock 2009). This revealed that the final phase of building could be recovered archaeologically (Hague and Warhurst 1966: 118-120) and that further buildings were present on the motte top and in the bailey (Gater and Adcock 2009: 3-7) and also in a field to the west of the castle (Smith 2003: 26). Excavations south of the bailey recovered a ditch which appears to have surrounded the orchard and vineyard described in the poem. Also the roadway into the bailey had a metalled surface which had seen at least three phases of repair.

The poem composed by Iolo Goch is now regarded as a more accurate reflection of the landscape surrounding Sycharth than was previously thought. The relationships between the praise poetry and the archaeological evidence is only now beginning to be explored. Possibly other designed landscapes of equal quality and importance may also be discovered through similar research.

The breadth of material available for study ranges from the documentary evidence for the creation of the parks by the removal of established communities to make way for them (Davies 1974: 11) to Welsh Uchelwyr or noblemen commemorating their love of hunting through the commissioning of grave slabs for themselves to display their love of the hunt (Gresham 1968).

The extensive corpus of poetry composed during the medieval period by the Gogynfeirdd prior to the Edwardian Conquest and the Beirdd yr Uchelwyr after the Conquest has been examined by The University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies. Within the corpus is the genre of praise poetry produced for the houses and landscapes of the Uchelwyr. Enid Roberts has highlighted the origins and development of this praise poetry and closely related genres in a series of articles from 1974 (Roberts 1974; 1975; 1976), along with a book (Roberts 1986) that brought together edited passages from poetry composed between 1350 and 1650.

Evidence of theft and other criminal misdemeanors from parks is also recorded, for example the material in the Dyffryn Clwyd Court Rolls. This has been examined previously (Jack 1968, Korngiebel 2007) but never specifically to identify the location of parks and park related crimes. The archaeological evidence of the husbandry of deer can be ascertained from the limited archaeological evidence obtained from excavations in Wales. The excavation of Caergwrle Castle (Flintshire) (Manley 1994) provided important evidence for late thirteenth century use and consumption of deer in north-east Wales through the preservation of large amounts of deer bone in the soil conditions. Other deer bones have been found during excavations directed by T. A. Glenn at Dyserth Castle in 1912 and Llys Edwin in 1934 (both Flintshire), however these remains have yet to be re-assessed using modern techniques.

The Medieval Park

The concept of the development and use of the medieval park in England is now well understood by landscape historians and archaeologists, and regional studies have been carried out for many of the counties of England (Herring in Wilson-North (ed.) 2002 for Cornwall; Moorhouse in Liddiard (ed.) 2007 for Yorkshire). In comparison, the study of the medieval park in Wales has been much more uneven. Where medieval parks have been identified in the historical and archaeological record the mapping of their boundaries, internal divisions and buildings contained within them has tended to be carried out for those examples which have a history that extends beyond the medieval period.

The 'Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special and Historic Interest in Wales' produced by Cadw, ICOMOS and the Countryside Council for Wales during the 1990s, (for example the volume on Clwyd published in 1995) provided baseline information to which further

examples could be added in the future. However, a project to identify and record the medieval parks of Dyfryn Clwyd (Denbighshire) (Berry 1994) was curtailed by the closure of the Clwyd Archaeological Service in 1995 with the reorganisation of the unitary authorities in Wales, when only two of a probable total of thirteen parks had been mapped.

One park which existed prior to the thirteenth century Edwardian Conquest of Wales and was at that time in the possession of the Princes of Powys Fadog serves to highlight the palimpsest of source material which relates to this topic. Park Eyton (RCAHMW Coflein 2004: NPRN 308744) south of Wrexham (Denbighshire) is recorded in a document dating from 1269 (Pryce with Insley 2005: 720) and some of the history behind this park has been examined by Cavell (2007). A poem was composed by Madog Benfras to the park during the fourteenth century (Johnston 2005: 148) and in 1388 and 1389 the receiver of Bromfield and Yale accounted for empaling the park of Eyton (Palmer and Owen 1910: 93).

Another example of where a medieval park has a well known historical and archaeological context is Mersley Park to the north west of the village of Holt (Denbighshire). Berry (1994b) brought together the post medieval historical sources for the park. Mersley Park has traditionally been associated with the castle constructed in Holt following the Edwardian Conquest of Wales; However, my recent findings show that Mersley was originally associated with the earlier motte and bailey Rofft Castle near the village of Marford (Flintshire) a mile to the north west.

Mersley Park has within it a sub-division known as Horsley (*Horse-Pasture*), illustrating that parks in the medieval period were used for more than one purpose. For example in 1387 there is a reference to the transportation of wood and charcoal from the 'Park of Glyn' (Rodgers 1992: 146) now the park associated with the National Trust property of Erddig Hall (Denbighshire). My fieldwork has identified and mapped several previously unrecorded medieval parks, including examples to the west of Caernarfon Castle (Caernarfonshire), to the north west of Criccieth Castle (Merionethshire) and to the west of Dolbadarn Castle (Caernarfonshire).

The Medieval Garden

John Harvey's seminal work 'Medieval Gardens', published in 1981 highlighted the range of source material available for the study of the medieval garden. Among the references he assembled were those for the gardens which were created at the Edwardian Castle of Conwy (Caernarfonshire). The subsequent preservation of this castle, now in the care of Cadw, has meant that the sites of these gardens are available to be examined with a variety of archaeological techniques.

Conwy castle had two gardens associated with it. One of the gardens was below the Royal Apartments within the inner ward of the castle, whilst the second larger garden, known as the 'Great Garden' was outside the

castle but within the town walls. By geo-referencing a map of the town and castle of Conwy dating from c.1600, by placing this map of over a modern map and digitally manipulating the two so that they overlie accurately, it has been possible to locate the garden features of both the gardens on the ground. Features on the map represent only one phase of the layout and design of the gardens, and given that the smaller of the two gardens was in use for over 200 years, the archaeological potential of this area is very significant.

The biography of the Welsh prince of Gwynedd, Gruffydd ap Cynan (1055-1137), known as *Historia Gruffudd vab Kenan* (GvK), compiled and written in the reign of his son Owain Gwynedd (1137-1170), highlights a physical and social transformation of a landscape. It includes the creation of an ordered and orderly network of llysoedd and churches, surrounded by a landscape filled with orchards, woodland and gardens (Jones 1910: 155). Although the text of the GvK does not refer to the island of Anglesey specifically, the evidence highlighted by Longley (2001) suggests that this is where this landscape transformation was carried out.

Medieval gardens which have recently been identified and recorded are at Dolbadarn Castle (Caernarfonshire) and Harlech Castle (Merionethshire), and these, together with examples discovered at Shotwick Castle (Cheshire) (Everson in Pattison (ed.) (1998)) and Whittington Castle (Shropshire) (Terra Nova 2002) provide an opportunity to examine the scale of garden design and creation during the medieval period.

The Medieval Designed Landscape

The concept of the designed medieval landscape around castles has been developed by authors such as Everson in Pattison (ed.) (1998), Johnson (2002), Creighton (2002, 2009) and Liddiard (2005). In tandem with this, the work by Queen's University Belfast for the 'Mapping Medieval Townscapes: a digital atlas of the new towns of Edward I' (Lilley in Williams and Kenyon (ed.) (2010)) has meant that the relationship between town and castle in these cases has been clearly defined and mapped.

One of the castles examined for evidence for a designed landscape is Dolbadarn Castle (Caernarfonshire). The architectural sophistication of the round tower at Dolbadarn Castle was noted by Richard Avent in his research into the castles of the Welsh Princes (Avent 1994). The design inspiration for the round tower is usually thought to have originated with the Marcher Lords at Bronllys Castle, Brecknockshire, Longtown Castle, Herefordshire and Skenfrith Castle, Monmouthshire, (Avent 2004:12). However there has been little discussion about the reasons for the construction of Dolbadarn Castle (Caernarfonshire), other than as part of a defensive network (Jones 1949).

My research suggests that a more relevant stylistic parallel for the design and construction of this tower is the Wakefield Tower, Tower of London, begun around 1220 as part of the new lodgings which were required in

order to bring the accommodation available up to the standard which could already be found at the royal sites of Winchester, Clarendon and Windsor (Thurley 1995: 37). Both towers have very similar internal arrangements and it does seem fairly certain that the king's great chamber was on the first floor of the Wakefield Tower (Thurley 1995: 41), an arrangement which appears to have been mirrored in the construction at Dolbadarn.

The sophisticated tower design and the garden and park dating from the medieval period all serve to demonstrate that Dolbadarn Castle was an important site for the Princes of Gwynedd during the medieval period. Other examples of designed landscapes with similar characteristics have been identified and mapped at Caernarfon Castle (Caernarfonshire), Flint Castle and Llys Edwin (both Flintshire).

There is a considerable amount of evidence for the presence of Parks, Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Medieval North Wales and the Shropshire Marches from before and after the Edwardian Conquest of Wales. *Spencer Smith is an Investigator for the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales currently undertaking PhD research on medieval parks*



Dolbadarn Castle with the medieval park behind and to the right of the castle © S.G.Smith

and gardens in North Wales and Shropshire. The original text for this article, together with the full bibliography can be found at:

<http://www.whgt.org.uk/documents/SpencerSmith.pdf>

The completed thesis will be placed with the National Monuments Record for Wales.

Landmark achievements at Penllergare

Penllergare Valley Woods north of Swansea are privately owned. After a decade of negotiations the Penllergare Trust finally secured tenure of the site for over 100 years with the signing of the leases on 26th April 2012. The Penllergare Trust has been successful in their bid for HLF funding to save Penllergare Valley Woods with a grant of £2.3 million from the 'Parks for People' programme for the restoration of this heritage landscape.

The woods are at the heart of the romantic estate of John Dillwyn Llewelyn who developed the picturesque landscape on property he inherited in 1831. The house no longer survives but the landscape includes an astronomical observatory which will now be restored. Llewelyn took the earliest photo of the moon from his observatory in 1857.

As a keen photographer and founding member of the Royal Photographic Society Llewelyn photographed this landscape many times, providing an excellent archive of how it was originally designed.

The grant also enables the restoration of the Upper Lake

and the installation the Archimedes screw micro hydro turbine adjacent to the waterfall. Planning permission has now been obtained for the rebuilding of the old stone arched Llewelyn Bridge, the focus of several historic paths downstream of the waterfall. Replanting of trees and ornamental shrubberies will be included in the restoration. There will also be new visitor facilities to provide for what should become an important tourist attraction.

This project will create three new jobs including: Estate Manager, Woodlands Project Warden and an Activities and Events Organiser.

The Penllergare Trust is committed to paying rent to the landlord and raising partnership funding. WHGT members interested in saving this landscape and supporting Penllergare Valley Woods should contact the Penllergare Trust on 01558 650735 / contact@penllergare.org For further details see www.penllergare.org

Alternatively you can write to Hal Moggridge, c/o Coed Glantawe, Esgairdawe, Llandeilo SA19 7RT.

A Blank Canvas at Hafod *Caroline Palmer (Trustee, Hafod Trust)*



Mrs Johnes' garden at Hafod freshly lawned and about to be planted with American shrubs © Caroline Palmer.

Many members may remember struggling in the undergrowth of Mrs. Johnes' Flower Garden, at the centre of the Grade I Listed Hafod Estate in Ceredigion. It has long been in a deplorable state, lost in a plantation of Sitka spruce, its walls breached by a forestry road which crossed through its eastern side.

The restoration of the garden has been the Hafod Trust's largest project over the past two years. This picture shows it in May 2012 with road re-routed, walls repaired

and freshly re-seeded with grass.

Mrs. Johnes was a keen plantswoman and contemporary authors described it as an American Garden. The marginal border is being planted with species of flowering shrubs from the eastern seaboard of North America which would have been available to her in the late 18th century. The planting design is by landscape architect Ros Laidlaw and the planting has been generously financed by a donation from the Finnis Scott Foundation.

Have the Traditional Orchards of Wales gone to seed?

The People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) is recruiting volunteers to take part in the first-ever survey of the remaining traditional orchards in Wales. Funding from the Countryside Council for Wales and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation is enabling PTES to carry out this project. PTES researchers are combing aerial photographs of the three and a half million hectares covering Wales; so far they have located 2,500 potential traditional orchard sites. The charity now needs volunteers on the ground to verify their findings by checking for characteristics of traditional orchards, as well as recording the species, age and condition of the fruit trees they find. Local knowledge and ground-truthing are vital components in making this inventory an accurate and robust data set. Volunteer surveyors will not only confirm the presence of a traditional orchard but collect additional survey data that is entered into the database and used to

produce a condition category for each orchard.

Traditional orchards are valuable wild life habitat which needs to be preserved. PTES also aims to raise the profile of local fruit and heritage varieties and contribute to orchard conservation wherever possible.

If you have an orchard or local knowledge get in touch and you will receive a free management and wildlife booklet.

If you can help please contact Steve Oram, Orchards Project Coordinator:

020 7498 4533 / steve.oram@ptes.org.

Further details are on the whgt website and at www.ptes.org.uk

Major upgrade at Dylan's favourite park *Don Williams*

Dylan Thomas was one of the greatest poets of the 20th century and has become Swansea's most celebrated son. He was brought up close to Cwmdonkin Park, where he played as a child and in due course it became an important source of inspiration, most famously in his poem "The hunchback in the park".

A memorial stone to Dylan Thomas was placed in the park in 1963, which includes lines from his famous Fern Hill poem. The poet once referred to the park as "a world within the world of a sea town".

At the end of June this year work began on a £1.39 million scheme to upgrade and restore the park. Amongst the new features is a central seating area with slate engravings of internationally famous work by the poet.

The Cwmdonkin Park restoration is funded by HLF and a Sustainable Tourism Convergence Funding grant. Swansea Council and the Friends of

Cwmdonkin Park are also making a contribution. The West Glamorgan branch took an active part in the early consultation process and are looking forward to the completion of this ambitious project for the celebrations which will mark the 100th anniversary of Dylan's birth in 2014.

Pergolas, Arches and Bowers Study Day *Caroline Palmer*

67 attended the study day in addition to the 17 trainees and trainers from the Heritage Horticulture Skills Scheme run by a group of associated gardens sites in Wales: Aberglasney, Bodnant, Cardiff City Council, Dyffryn Gardens, Newport City Council and St Fagans.

This event was transferred to the Plas Maenan hotel as the Bodnant Welsh Food Centre building was not completed on time. Joy Neal and Olive Horsfall are to be congratulated upon finding such a suitable alternative for re-arranging the meeting at such short notice.

The first speaker, Linda Farrar, spoke on the pergolas of ancient Rome, illustrating her talk with quotations and pictures, many of the latter from frescoes in the ruins of Pompeii. She emphasized that the Latin word *Pergula* could mean a shack or a shelter as well as a purpose-built structure. Understandably, people drinking and dining in a Mediterranean climate prefer to do it in the shade. Linda also showed many examples of Roman garden features: curved marble benches, urns (which were never, in those days, planted with actual flowers), and trellises fashioned of interlocking wood or reed, as bamboo had yet to be discovered. Reminiscent of today's mobiles and wind chimes was the Roman enthusiasm for *oscilla*: white marble masks of Pan, Bacchus or of a satyr's mask, dangling in arbours and moving gently in the breeze. From the same structure might trail the sculptural fruits of melons, gourds or cucumbers.

Jan Woudstra then immersed us in the cradle walks, berceaux and bowers of the 17th century and the immaculate engravings in the books of authors such as Jan Vredeman de Vries and Joseph Furtenbach which are

so valuable in aiding contemporary reconstructions of gardens. Jan is a landscape architect who has worked on the restorations at Het Loo Palace and the Privy Garden of Hampton Court. Unlike most pergolas, the round topped walks and bowers were of living trees, providing shade, shelter and privacy for promenade and conversation, but with strategically placed windows to overlook the view. Elm was often the tree of choice for walks and bowers, but in the light of Dutch Elm disease hornbeam now takes its place.

Troy Smith, the Bodnant head gardener, completed the programme with a romp through the history of Bodnant and its owners. A gentle watercolour showed the appearance of Bodnog, the original Georgian house, purchased by Henry Pochin, now hidden away inside the rock dressed cladding of the extended Victorian house. Troy's talk interpreted the many renovations and alterations which visitors now find in this famous 135 year old garden. Pools emptied and relined, pergola repaired and painted, yew hedges cut fiercely back, rose beds excavated, discarded and begun again. Many of the rhododendrons have been cut back to promote new growth from the stumps, and Troy sees his task as a surgical one – to cut deep now in the interest of future health of the garden. Perhaps most controversially the huge larches in the Dingle have been felled, a pre-emptive measure against the risk that they might become affected by *Phytophthora ramorum* and in turn infect the rhododendron collection.

The party then divided for a tour of Bodnant in the company of Troy or his very knowledgeable deputies.

WHGT AGM 2012 hosted by Clwyd Branch



Wynnstay

Clwyd branch arranged an evening tour of Capability Brown's Pleasure garden, the walled garden and a Jubilee tree planting of a Welsh oak to replace the 'Queen's Oak', shown in the old postcard. The Queen's Oak, reputedly the largest tree in Wales, stood in Wynnstay Park and was felled for new road development. Thanks to David Toyne for sourcing the beautiful tree; Pierre and Elizabeth Bartlett for providing the wine and John Snow who gave three cheers to HM the Queen. Many thanks also to Chris Henretty, Secretary to the Wynnstay Management Company for facilitating this event.

Jean Reader planting the WHGT Jubilee Oak at Wynnstay © Caroline Palmer.

Brynkinalt .

The AGM this year was held in Brynkinalt, Chirk, the ancestral home of the Trevor family and very many thanks go to Kate and Iain Hill-Trevor for being such superb hosts. The event was attended by about eighty people, all of whom were accommodated in considerable luxury, as the photograph below shows.

Once the business of the meeting had been completed thanks were given to three long-serving Officers of the Trust who had given notice of their intention not to seek re-election. These were the Chairman, Gwyneth Hayward; the Vice-Chairman, Anne Carter and the Treasurer, John Borron. All have served the Trust for many years and their skills will be greatly missed, although it is hoped that they will still continue to take an active interest in WHGT.

Steven Desmond then gave an amusing and knowledgeable talk on The Arts & Crafts House and Garden.

After lunch those prepared to brave the challenging weather were led around the grounds in two groups by Kate and Iain. The tours were fascinating as they included visits not only to the delightful completed gardens but also to the projects which are in progress.

Members were taken to the double walled garden, a layout from the French tradition involving a fruit enclosure within an outer ornamental garden. Iain and Kate explained the planned restoration which involves some new development for the gardens to become sustainable.

According to the plaque on the back of the house, the *Gothick* restyling of Brynkinalt and the picturesque landscaping was carried out in 1808 "From the Sole Design of Charlotte Viscountess Dungannon whose Genius planned and whose taste embellished the surrounding Grounds and Park".



Nearly 80 members attended the WHGT AGM © David Toyne

Whitehurst

Thanks also to Michael Kemp for hosting members in his lovely garden at Queen Anne's Cottage, Whitehurst. Whitehurst was the fruit garden built by the second Sir Thomas Middleton in 1651. Beyond Michael's property the site is a neglected derelict wilderness. The Clwyd branch would like the remaining Whitehurst garden developed as a community garden.

The Trustees would like to make special mention of the enormous amount of hard work undertaken by Glynis Shaw and Clwyd members to make the AGM such an enjoyable experience.

Book Reviews

Flowering Plant Families at the National Botanic Garden of Wales

based on the classification System of the Angiosperm Phylogeny Group by Dianne Edwards, Priscilla Spears and Alan Channing. (Copyright FIRST Magazine Ltd., 2011). Joint publication of NBGW, Cardiff University and Missouri Botanical Garden. 270pp. Pbk. ISBN 970-0-9546409-3-4. £20

This is an important publication, based on the original text and photographs of *A Tour of the Flowering Plants*, by Priscilla Spears, with modifications written by Dianne Edwards and coordinated by Alan Channing for the NBGW. For the layman this publication is a visual treat, the superb botanical photographs, supplemented by landscape views, providing a visual tour of the plants at the NBGW with particular emphasis on those in the double walled garden. Some of the families of flowering plants illustrated in the book are well known, some used for food, some with medicinal properties, some grown just for their beauty to enhance our gardens, and some the familiar wild flowers of the fields and hedgerows. On this level alone the book is informative and a delight to the eye.

For the botanist, amateur or professional, the book provides detailed information on a new system of classification of flowering plants (angiosperms), the guiding principle of which is monophyly, i.e. that taxonomic groups should hold all the descendants of a single ancestor and only its descendants. This new classification reflects the history (phylogeny) of flowering plants and has been adopted in the double walled garden at the NBGW. With the aid of branching tree diagrams differentiating basal angiosperms, monocots and eudicots, and with a diagram of the layout of the beds in the inner walled garden the whole design and content of the garden is explained and becomes intelligible even to a 'layman' such as the compiler of this note.

This is a serious academic publication on which the NBGW and its associates are to be congratulated. For the NBGW it is a showcase for the scientific work in progress there, it underlines the role of the garden in conserving threatened plant species, and it celebrates the rich diversity of plants in the garden. It will provide a reference book for present and future botanists and palaeobotanists. Yes, it is challenging to the non botanist but that should not deter anyone with a love of flowering plants and an interest in their vital role in the wider ecology of our planet from adding this richly illustrated volume to their bookshelves.

At £20 it is a bargain not to be missed.

Hilary M. Thomas

Boxwood Tours are offering a 5% discount for WHGT members on their garden tours including: *Gardens of Venice and Venito 4-8 Sept*, *Autumn Glory: subtropical Scotland 17-21 Sept*, *Gardens of a Golden Afternoon (Shropshire) 17-21 Sept*, *Hortus goes to Yorkshire 24-28 Sept*. For further details contact 01341 241 717
mail@boxwoodtours.co.uk or www.boxwoodtours.co.uk

Fern Fever by Sarah Whittingham

The story of Pteridomania

Published by Frances Lincoln, ISBN 978-0-7112-3070-5. £35

Let us be clear this book is written by a Pteridologist – one who studies ferns from an academic/scientific viewpoint and I am a Pteridomaniac – a gardener who loves ferns but suffers from fern madness. However we are both members of the British Pteridologist Society. Perhaps we are both mad!

In 2009 Sarah wrote a small book called *The Victorian Fern Craze*. *Fern Fever*, published in 2012 by Frances Lincoln Limited, is a fascinating expansion on the former with 150 illustrations and expanded text.

The introduction covers the history and explains how ferns existed millions of years ago and were the first plant forms. By 1855 fern fever had become so prevalent throughout the British Isles, the British Empire and the Americas that a name, Pteridomania, was coined for it based on the word pteridophytes, the term commonly used at the time for the group of vascular plants that reproduce by spores. Collecting ferns became a mania and a fashionable status symbol: in fact 'good taste'.

The book covers all aspects: read about ferns association with fairies, how best to collect ferns, how to cultivate ferns and a chapter on their unique life cycle. It is a large book of over 250 pages and beautifully illustrated with photographs from Sarah's own collection, one of which I recognise from when we were fern hunting together in Killarney. There are also historical reproductions from universities and libraries from all parts of the world. The craze also manifested itself in many books, porcelain, furniture, fashionable clothing, prints, souvenirs and of course the closely glazed Wardian Case which meant that ferns could be shipped around the world and also become a feature of drawing room furniture in many homes.

The first British Pteridologist Society was founded in 1871 and through various amalgamations is still a thriving society today and is closely associated with the American Fern Society. There are wonderful descriptions and illustrations of Victorian fern hunters with one intrepid hunter plunging to his death into the valley below.

In Wales it was noted that 'the Woodsias have no especial claim to be esteemed for their elegance; they are, however highly prized for their rarity'. *Woodsia* was first recorded by Edward Lhuyd in 1690 near the summit of Snowdon.

The chapter on cultivating ferns goes into details of the construction of the glazed Wardian case, conservatories, stumperies, architectural Pulhamite, tree ferns and the rise of specialist fern nurseries. This is followed by more details of designs of fern on lace, china, glass and iron-work from various parts of the world.

The book encompasses the wide interest in ferns in the past 200 years or so. It is scholarly in content in that it has recorded a period of our history in depth but in a readable and delightful manner. The beautiful illustrations form an important part and cover an exhaustive range of fern memorabilia.

Joy Neal

WHGT is delighted to welcome Jean Reader as the new WHGT Chairman.

Jean Reader, the newly elected Chairman, has been a WHGT member for ten years during which she has taken an active part in activities related to historic gardens. These include the Gateway Gardens Trust, Cowbridge Physic Garden and the Chairmanship of the South & Mid Glamorgan branch of WHGT. Jean has recently been awarded a doctorate by the University of Bristol for her work on the contribution made by women to gardens in Wales between 1750 and 1850.

Jean has an extensive knowledge of Wales. Her first school was in Felingwm (Carmarthenshire) and she spent most of her school days in Llanfairfechan and Bangor (Gwynedd) but has subsequently lived near Cardiff for many years.

Jean has also spent five years working in Malawi and has since held a number of pan-Wales appointments including Director of the Welsh Consumer Council, Co-ordinator of International Youth Year in Wales and Youth Exchange Officer for the Wales Youth Agency.

New Trustees

A warm welcome to new Trustees Helena Gerrish, Judith Holland and Sue and Jonathan Reeves who will help to lead and develop the WHGT through the coming year.

Elected branch representatives are: Maldwyn Rees (Brecon and Radnorshire); Caroline Palmer (Ceredigion); Glynis Shaw (Clwyd); Olive Horsfall (Gwynedd); Merilyn Anderson (Monmouth and Gwent); Neville Thomas (Montgomeryshire), Gerry Donovan (South and Mid Glamorgan) and Ann Gardner (West Glamorgan).

Congratulations also to Joy Neal the new Vice Chairman and Hugh Gardner the new Treasurer.

TOP TIPS from NFU Mutual

In the current economic climate, we are all looking at ways of saving money, and insurance is another area where people are looking to make savings.

But do take care when renewing your insurance that you know what cover you are paying for. It is very tempting to go for whichever quote is the cheapest without comparing the cover you are getting.

It is crucial to check that you have the correct cover you require for your individual needs and that, whether it is your car, your home, your business or even your pet, should the worst happen you have the right policy in place.

Visit www.nfumutual.co.uk for more details on our products.



NFU Mutual is The National Farmers Union Mutual Insurance Society Limited (No. 111982). Registered in England.
Registered Office: Tiddington Road. Stratford upon Avon.

The WHGT Bulletin gratefully acknowledges the sponsorship of NFU Mutual.

WHGT Officers:

President: Robin Herbert CBE VMH	01873 812164
Chairman: Jean Reader	(029) 2059 6742
Vice Chairman: Joy Neal	01654 781203
Treasurer: Hugh Gardner	01792 290014
Company Secretary: Jennie Macve	01970 626180
Conservation Officer: Ros Laidlaw	01970 832268
Membership Secretary: Ann Sayer	01348811145

Editor: Glynis Shaw

Firstly many thanks to WHGT members who provided comments and feedback on the March issue. Many thanks also to all contributors - every item large or small makes the Bulletin possible.

The Bulletin aims to provide authoritative and up-to-date information about Welsh heritage landscapes and their conservation, reporting on new planning proposals to affect listed landscapes, to let readers be aware of new research and to profile interesting gardens and parks hitherto little known.

Please remember to visit the website! The WHGT website will be undergoing an update and items can be posted at any time. The website has huge potential to reach new audiences and there is no restriction on the number of pages. I am delighted that Nicholas Collins has offered assistance as Copy Editor so the website should soon be much improved.

All ideas and suggestions are welcome at any time so please do get in touch. Please **do not** use any layout formatting as the Bulletin and the website use specialised software. Any images should be sent as separate jpegs at the highest resolution possible with copyright details.

Articles can be sent in the form most convenient for you: by e-mail to Bulletin@whgt.org.uk or sent through the post to Castell House, Bodfari, Denbigh, LL16 4HT
You can also call me on
01745 710261 or 07867 970086.

Items for the next issue should be sent by Dec1st.

Camarthenshire reborn!

Congratulations to Judith Holland who is working to re-instate the Camarthenshire branch. The first meeting will be hosted by Judith on 7th August at 6.30pm at the Dyfed Archaeological Trust Offices, The Shire Hall, Camarthen Street, LLandailo, to elect a committee and decide future events. Tea, coffee and biscuits will be available. **Everyone is welcome**

If you are in the Camarthenshire area do get in touch!
Contact Judith Holland: 01267 232144 (evenings)
email: j.holland@dyfedarchaeology.org.uk

Erratum

The incorrect logo for NFU Mutual was used in the March Bulletin. We apologise unreservedly for this error which has been corrected in the electronic version on the website.

Branch events

Brecon and Radnor Study Day 15th September at Llangoed Hall



ORANGERIES, GLASSHOUSES AND CONSERVATORIES

10.30 coffee

11.00 Lecture: Mr. Steven Desmond FIHort FLS

From Orangeries to Conservatories, Gardens under Glass

Steven Desmond is a landscape consultant, specialising in the conservation of historic gardens.

He lectures widely and regularly contributes to Country Life.

12.30 Walk around Llangoed gardens followed by lunch

2.00 Visit to Gwernyfed walled garden and glasshouse

Also it is hoped to visit **Old Gwernyfed gardens** to see the Pillars shown in the WHGT logo.

Members £35 non members £40

To book please send a cheque made out to WHGT to Jonathan or Sue Reeves

Pontsioni House, Aberedw, Builth Wells, Powys LD2 3SQ

reeves@aberedw.wanadoo.co.uk 01982 560 205

Ceredigion

September 12, Gardens of the Lower Teifi valley. TBA

Penny David for further details

lady.fern@virgin.net

01570 422041

Clwyd

July 31st Visit to Rhug Hall and a walk in the Repton Landscape. Meet at Rhug at 11.00. **pre booking only.**

Sept Visit to Brynbella

Oct 7th Orchard day at Wigfair Isaf, St Asaph, 2.30 pm

Glynis Shaw for further details

glynis@castell-photography.co.uk

01745 710261

Gwynedd

Wednesday 26th September Lecture with lunch at Carreg Bran Hotel, Llanfairpwll. Anglesey. 'The Labours of Hercules' (in the garden) Speaker Gaenor Price. Cost £22.00 per person to include coffee on arrival and lunch. October - There will be a Study day on Glasshouses.

Olive Horsfall for further details

oandmhorsfall@btinternet.com

01766 780187



Welsh Historic Gardens Trust, The Bothy, Aberglasney, Llangathen, SA32 8QH
admin@whgt.org.uk

Monmouthshire and Gwent

September 21st 7.00pm 'Historic Gardens of Herefordshire' by Dr Jane Bradney at Longhouse Farm, Penrhos, Raglan, NP15 2DE £15 including buffet supper.

Merilyn Anderson for further details

m.anderson666@btinternet.com

01600 780389

South and Mid Glamorgan

September 29th Wine tasting at Glyndwr Vineyard, near Cowbridge.

Val Caple for further details

val.t.caple@care4free.net

West Glamorgan

August 6th WHGT Stand at Gower Show, Penrice.

August 19th Strawberry tea nr. West Cross, Swansea.

September 27th 2.00pm "Hortus culture or how to grow a Roman garden" by Dr. Mark Lewis at St Paul's Parish Centre, De La Beche Road, Sketty, Swansea £3

November 17th Roman supper hosted by Ann Gardner.

November 19th Talk "Orchids and their evolution" by Dr. Kevin Davies at St Paul's Parish Centre, De La Beche Road, Sketty, Swansea £3

Ann Gardner for further details

01792-290014

WHGT AGM 2013 Saturday 8th June

Visit us online at www.whgt.org.uk