



# WHGT BULLETIN

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*Plas Teg 1991 Oil on panel. 50" x 32"*

## From Wales to Hollywood Jonathan Myles-Lea, Artist born 1969

Jonathan Myles-Lea has been one of the UK's leading landscape painters of country houses and gardens for over twenty years. His career began in Wales in 1991 when he was asked to assist Cornelia Bayley in her ambitious project to restore Plas Teg in Flintshire. Ms. Bayley was attempting to return the fine Jacobean house to its former glory and the twenty-one year old artist was in search of a stimulating environment for his first studio.

Jonathan's oil painting of Plas Teg at the age of twenty-two became his professional calling card. To date he has executed more than sixty major commissions, painting portraits of houses, gardens and estates in ten countries.

With a degree in History of Art & Architecture from the University of London, Jonathan developed a unique and distinctive approach to the depiction of houses and gardens which involves a great deal of academic study and historical research. His ambition to position himself as a leading proponent of the British Landscape Tradition was achieved, surprisingly early in his career, when the historian John Harris described him as "*the modern master of the country house capriccio*" in the catalogue for the 1997 exhibition *The Artist & the Country House*

– from the fifteenth century to the present day which he curated at Sotheby's. *Country Life* dubbed him a "*Living National Treasure*" the same year, and in 2009 a feature appeared in the same magazine which described him as; "*The Successor to Stubbs and Constable*".

In 2014, Myles-Lea's archive will move to the Bodleian Library at Oxford University in recognition of the artist's contribution to the arts in the UK. The archive consists of over three and a half thousand sketches and compositional drawings of some of the UK's most important stately homes. Burghley House and Highgrove are richly represented, as well as estate and garden plans of properties such as Stowe Landscape Gardens, Cliveden in Buckinghamshire, as well as several important Edwin Lutyens/Gertrude Jekyll collaborations.

What is not so widely known is that running parallel to his career as a landscape painter, Myles-Lea has a life-long passion for writing and photography. His documentation of The Laskett spans twenty years, recording the artist's friendship with Sir Roy Strong. He was commissioned to paint the property in 1994. More recently Jonathan has helped Sir Roy open The Laskett Gardens to the public

by creating a new illustrated map and a guidebook featuring his garden photography.

Raised in Lancashire, Jonathan spent most weekends climbing the fells of the Lake District with his family. Educated at Malvern Boys College, Worcestershire, he climbed the hills behind the school in order to follow in Elgar's footsteps and survey the three counties from their summit. His Officer Training took place in the Brecon Beacons and it was in Wales that Jonathan first found something close to the wilderness after which he hungered. It was in Wales that Myles-Lea spent his formative years as an artist. The artist cites the Welsh landscape as a major inspiration and it appears in many of his early canvases.

At Plas Teg Jonathan had the opportunity to study the huge library of architectural books that Cornelia Bayley had amassed. He discovered the images of 'The House and Garden of Llanerch Hall, Denbighshire' painted by an anonymous artist in the mid 17th century. The naivety of this work had great appeal and Jonathan decided very early in his career to avoid a style of painting which slavishly relied upon photographs. He has endeavored to create a self-consciously naive style. What mattered above all, was the creation of atmosphere, aiming to paint iconic landscapes and achieving effects only possible with oil paints.

Another self-consciously anachronistic decision was to paint on handmade surfaces produced in his workshop, avoiding the purchase of commercially manufactured canvases. For each commissioned work Jonathan makes his own gesso by mixing hot rabbit skin glue with chalk

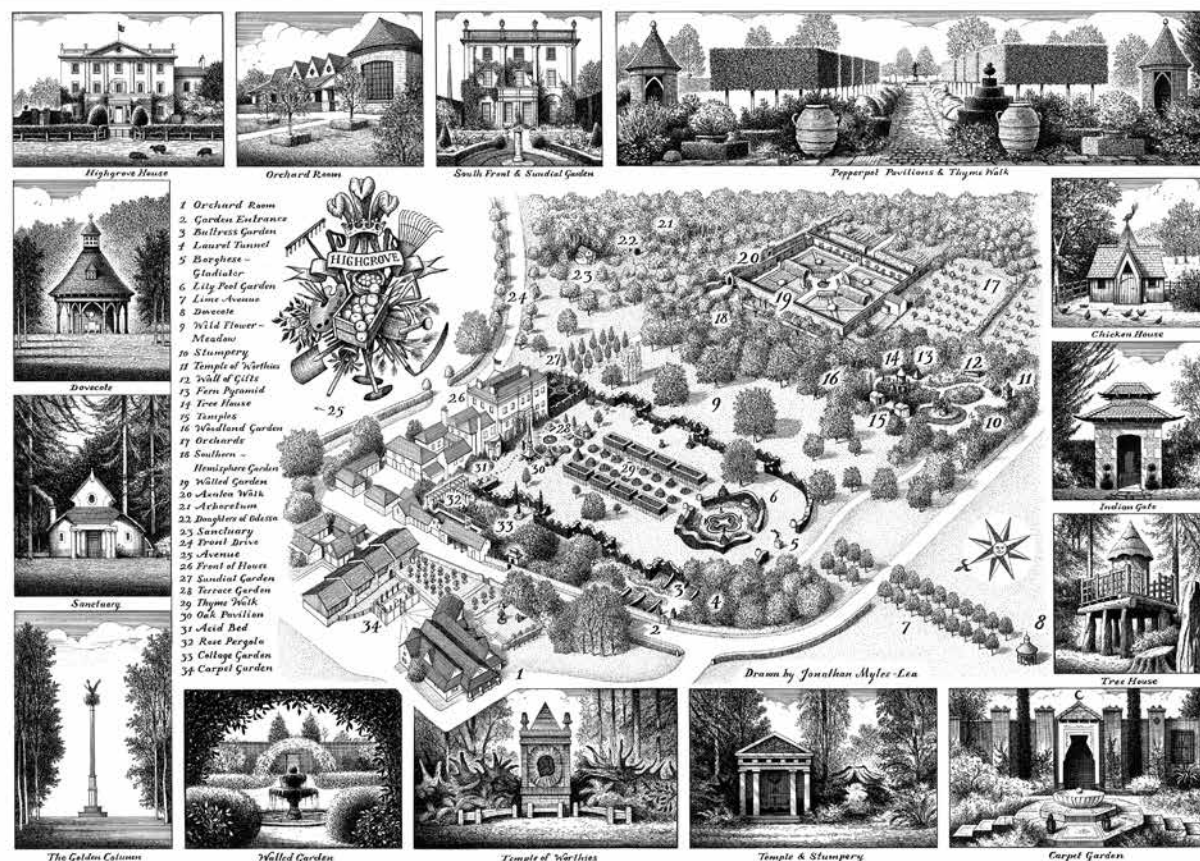
dust which is applied to linen laid onto timber panels. His paints come from a company in Holland which once supplied Jan Vermeer, manufactured in the same way since the 17th century, by grinding the pigments between porphyry rather than steel rollers. This ensures that the colours remain true and are unlikely to fade.

Jonathan also makes his own picture frames, which closely resemble three hundred year old Dutch or Italian examples. The framing of his paintings are a vital element of the commission and essential to completion before the painting leaves the studio.

After leaving the famously atmospheric Plas Teg where its menagerie of cockatoos and macaws would fly freely in the kitchen and the library, Jonathan moved to a deserted hilltop chapel in Powys. Here he supervised the restoration of a non-conformist meeting house several miles from the village of Berriew with the owner of the shooting estate on which it was built. Berriew is where St Beuno brought Christianity to Wales at the end of the 6th century, and the landscape seemed to Jonathan the perfect place in which to establish his second studio. Ancient woodlands flanked steep, single-track lanes through narrow valleys winding up from the village to the chapel.

When Jonathan walked into the building for the first time, dust-covered teacups lay strewn between the box-pews and tickets to 'Tea & Eisteddfod' dated 1941 were scattered on the floor. The remoteness of the place appealed to the artist and he spent three years there. The only vehicle that passed the chapel on a daily basis was a van driven by the postman and he would regularly speak

Illustrated map of Highgrove, home of WHGT Patron, HRH The Prince of Wales.



to no one for weeks at a time. He didn't own a television and he claims to have survived perfectly well on a diet of art books, Bach, Handel and Purcell. He traded his home-baked bread for eggs with the nearest farmer's children and planted an orchard of 22 apple trees. At the chapel Jonathan painted portraits of some of the most modest properties in his portfolio, as well as some of the grandest.

Llanfendigaid is a simple stone house on the Cardigan Bay coast in the Snowdonia National Park. The Nanney-Wynn family established a large estate on the land in 1241 and their ancestors continue to live there. In 1993 Mr. William Nanney-Wynn Garton-

Jones commissioned a painting of the house that presently stands on the site. Jonathan depicted Llanfendigaid in a very dramatic and romantic manner as though a storm is approaching from the North. This is a 'Wales meets Salvator Rosa' style and there's a definite Italian Baroque feel to the canvas.

Llanfendigaid means 'Parish of the Blessed' and the name "Nanney-Wynn" first appeared around 1750 with William Nanney-Wynn. He was the son of Robert Wynn of Maes-y-Neuadd in Gwynedd (which Myles-Lea has also painted), and Lowry Nanney of Maesypany and Llanfendigaid. Both the Wynns and the Nanneys were influential Welsh families who could trace their descent back through Osborn FitzJohn living in Wales in 1108, to the Fitzgeralds of Southern Ireland, to the Geraldines of Normandy and, finally, to the Gherardini of Northern Italy. The Nanneys were related to both Llywelyn Fawr (Llywelyn the Great) and Owain Glyndwr, the famous Welsh rebel mentioned in William Shakespeare's *Henry IV Part I*.

A macabre but fascinating story related by William Nanney-Wynn Garton Jones in 2001, tells of Owain Glyndwr being invited to hunt at Nannau. During the hunt an attempt was made on his life, but during the skirmish Owain killed the assassin, his body being later thrust into a hollow oak tree.

During the 19th century, the oak tree was hit by lightning exposing the assassin's skeleton. A picture of this "Blasted Oak" hangs in the drawing room at Llanfendigaid which explains why Jonathan included a similar tree in his painting. At this time Jonathan was also studying the work of the Dutch 17th century painter Jacob van Ruisdael and the influence is evident in not only the palette the artist has used but also in the broken tree on the right hand side of the composition.

Whilst living at the chapel near Berriew Jonathan created some of his most important early works such as



'Burghley House' for Simon and Lady Victoria Leatham and 'The Laskett' for Sir Roy Strong. He then went on to paint Gresgarth for the garden designer Lady Arabella Lennox-Boyd which led to his painting the Royal Palace in Brussels for one of her childhood friends, Queen Paola of the Belgians. Jonathan relocated his studio to Brussels for a year in 2003 to paint many formal gardens in Belgium, Germany and The Netherlands.

In 2004-5 a move to New York for a year led to the addition of portraits to his portfolio. The late Evelyn H. Lauder, daughter-in-law of the cosmetics company founder Estée Lauder became his first sitter in America. Her recent death has led to the request for further family portraits which has expedited Jonathan's move earlier this year to Hollywood.

Jonathan now divides his time between his studio at 'The Folly' in Sir Roy Strong's garden in Herefordshire, and his new American home in Hollywood, California. In America Jonathan continues to create portraits of British country houses as well as new work inspired by the Californian landscape. With an appetite for mountainous challenges he has set his sights set on painting The White House in Washington DC.

One day Jonathan hopes to return to Wales to realise his dream of buying a house and creating his own formal garden in Monmouthshire.

Jason Trotter

*Images are copyright of the artist. To see more of Jonathan Myles-Lea's work: [www.myles-lea.com](http://www.myles-lea.com)*

*Photoblog: [www.leflaneurbleu.blogspot.com](http://www.leflaneurbleu.blogspot.com)*

*Writings about art, museums and travel features on: [www.whilethepaintdries.com](http://www.whilethepaintdries.com)*

## Capability Brown: A Dissident View

Gaenor Price seeks to place Brown in context in the evolution of the landscape, garden and park, and asks to what extent celebration of his work is appropriate, especially in Wales, where his works are few.

*Of when I've seen some lonely mansion stand  
Fresh from th'improver's desolating hand,  
'Midst shaven lawns, that far around it creep  
In one eternal undulating sweep ...  
Tir'd with th'extensive scene, so dull and bare ...*  
Richard Payne Knight, *The Landscape*, 1794

Lord Cobham's garden at Stowe was an early and influential example of the *landscape garden*, planned from 1719 and worked on for decades. The initial layout to the west of the formal central axis, by Charles Bridgeman, was severely geometrical, with an angular lake, avenues focussed on a multiplicity of buildings, and a surrounding terrace walk with views outward over open country and woodland and inward to the Home Park pasture. By the 1730s the eastern side was being developed in a more naturalistic style with the advice of William Kent, who was no plantsman but adept at sketches showing the desired effect. The layout included a serpentine river, varied tree-planting, assorted buildings, and a haymeadow.

Lancelot Brown was appointed Head Gardener in 1741, having gained considerable experience in tree-planting, drainage and the re-grading of rough terrain at Kirkharle in Northumberland. The work in this decade included naturalising the lake margins, further breaking-up of the angular geometries of Bridgeman's planting, and a new venture, the Grecian Valley focussed on the Temple of Concord and Victory. Interest was given to the waterless declivity by refined planting, probably based on Kent's sketches, of deciduous and evergreen trees arranged in dense thickets, crown-lifted open groves, and close groves underplanted with showy and fragrant shrubs, through which serpentine paths wound.

At Stowe, Brown was supervised by Cobham rather than carrying out his own ideas. He was, however, given time off to work on commissions for Cobham's friends, and further refine his already considerable expertise in design, planting, water management and, additionally, plan architectural features. After Cobham's death, Brown left Stowe to set up as an independent consultant in 1751.

*The Arcadian landscape garden* (also known as Rococo or Eclectic) is largely inspired by Stowe. These gardens, frequently detached from the house, typically consisted in a circuit walk, often round a lake, through a variety of scenes, open or wooded, conveying a series of emotions - wonder, melancholy, delight - and enlivened by classical temples and buildings in other styles. These gardens were the individual creations of the owner and might take decades to reach completion, such as the famous and influential Stourhead and Painshill, both begun in the 1740s. The *ferme ornée* forms a sub-class of this type of garden.



*Croome Park, Worcs © Gaenor Price. Typical Brown park elements: serpentine river, grass, trees, house as focal point. Low ridge near house given importance by planting; cattle enliven the scene.*

*The Picturesque landscape garden* is the term used for the layouts made by the fortunate possessors of suitably wild and rocky terrain, the *Burkean Sublime*, from the 1740s. At Hawkstone, Piercefield and Hackfall Wood the walks took advantage of sudden and surprising views, enhanced by planting and enlivened by buildings, usually Gothick or rustic rather than classical. These landscapes were again worked on over a long period by the owners.

These developments were taking place at exactly the same time as Brown, as an independent consultant, was offering his clients his classical landscape park.

Croome Park, in an unpromising marshy hollow, is a transitional landscape and Brown's first big independent commission, for the Earl of Coventry. The damp house was rebuilt to Brown's design; he naturalised an existing serpentine river and succeeded in draining the morass into it. Importance was given to the low ridges behind the house by belts of trees, a walk laid out through shrubberies embellished by Robert Adam's Temple Greenhouse and a small lake with grotto and Island Pavilion at the head of the serpentine. Between the house and the walk, protected by a ha-ha, cattle grazed the pastureland along the river, which was diversified with clumps of trees. In later years further features were introduced on the perimeter.

Coventry was a plantsman whose collection was said to be second only to that of Kew; the exotics were displayed in the greenhouse and the hardy subjects along the shrubby walks. These were probably laid out in the graduated or theatrical style, with plants ranked in rows at carefully calculated distances to rise from low-growing flowers and bulbs at the front to forest trees at the back, in a ribbon along the walk; the style could also be used in island beds. It is this form of planting which was probably used by Brown in his many later commissions for pleasure grounds.

At Croome, while the circuit walk with incidents is related to the Arcadian gardens discussed above, the rest of the landscape shows the elements which would become

the essentials of the Brownian park: the perimeter belt of trees, the lake or serpentine water in the middle distance, the pasture with grazing animals, the tree clumps of native or naturalized species and the house as an important focus in its surroundings, which was not usually the case in the Arcadian or Picturesque garden.

The sites discussed above were essentially regarded as gardens and differentiated from the exterior landscape whether agricultural land, deer park, or woodland.

In the *Landscape Park* as developed in the second half of the eighteenth century, the garden as such disappeared from view and an expanse of grass flowed seamlessly from park to house. There might be a pleasure ground near the house with flowers, ornamental shrubs, and a collection of exotics, but it was screened by a dense planting of trees and protected by a ha-ha.

An early essay in this style by Brown, whilst still at Stowe, was for the Duke of Grafton at Wakefield Lodge, a neighbouring sporting estate.

*“All Brown offered the Duke was a serpentine lake to focus the views from the Lodge, and, beyond the lake, a great smooth lawn extending to the fringes of the forest, which he manicured in the Grecian Valley style.”* (*Gentlemen & Players: Gardeners of the English Landscape*, Timothy Mowl, 2000).

The Duke was delighted; with his recommendations and the Cobham network, Brown's career was established. In the course of the next few decades most of the earlier formal gardens were naturalised, and most of the aristocracy and gentry aspired to a park of grass, water and trees which would not necessarily contain any garden buildings.

It should be noted firstly that this style of park was basically a gentleman's layout, as pointed out by Tom Williamson in *Polite Landscapes: Gardens and Society in Eighteenth-Century England* (1995). Gentlemen liked to shoot things. Earlier in the century the targets were partridges, flying low over stubble and roots. Later improvements in the sporting gun rendered it possible and fashionable to shoot pheasants flying. The best habitat for breeding pheasants, hitherto cosseted as ornamental fowl, was found to be woodland margins; thus clumps and tree belts acquired added importance. Ornamental buildings or expensive plants might be inappropriate in this context, and park planting consisted in the main of native or naturalized species with the addition of larch and cedar.

Secondly, the style was exclusivist. The perimeter belt shut out the external world, and lodges and gamekeepers guarded from ingress. While Arcadian gardens might include vineyards, hayfields, and views over farmland, the development of the park led to whole villages and all evidence of farming activity to be moved out of sight. The only allowable display was of prize sheep, horses and cattle. There was little to entice one out to walk in the park; all was clear and open from the house windows, from which the owners could contemplate their



Capability Brown, Nathaniel Dance (later Sir Nathaniel Holland, Bt) © National Portrait Gallery, London

untrammelled acres with smug satisfaction. Alternatively, the house in its grassland could be viewed by the gentlemen in the course of their sport, or by the ladies and the less fit from the statutory carriage drive around the perimeter.

It must be asked at this point whether this mindset and the resulting style of park is really such as should be celebrated in the twenty-first century?

Brown was not the only improver. *“It seems that Brown's style was the style of his time rather than being his personal invention.”* (David Brown, *Lancelot Brown and his Associates*, *Garden History* vol. 29:1, 2001)). Richard Woods and William Emes were also independent landscape consultants, whilst others such as Adam Mickel, Jonathan Midgely and Nathaniel Richmond worked sometimes for Brown as associates or sub-contractors and sometimes on their own account.

Brown's standing as the foremost practitioner amongst these men involved several factors: his network of prestigious contacts among the aristocracy and gentry; his eye for terrain which enabled a rapid and successful marking-out of the outlines of lake and woodland; his efficiency in delegating the implementation of his plans to the landowner and his estate team or to his associates, while at the same time making back-up visits to ensure that all was going well; his hard work and honest desire to provide a good service. We should not discount the effect of his colossal self-confidence, smugly displayed in his portraits and his reply to an Irish invitation, that he *“had not yet finished England”*, which may well have mesmerized his patrons, who competed to entertain him in their houses.

The more independent-minded continued to pursue

their personal vision, or, in some cases, preserved their ancestral geometric gardens.

At Wrest Park Marchioness Grey commissioned Brown to form a naturalistic river out of stretches of the circumferential canal, but the formal woodland core designed by her grandfather was sacrosanct. The Grey family thought him *"a very odd Mortal, but entertaining for a little while,"* *Brown's work in Wales* includes some architectural work and tree-planting at Cardiff Castle c.1775. Brown also visited Dinefwr in 1775 and wrote that *"Nature has been truly bountiful, and Art has done no harm."* It is believed that most of the landscaping at Dinefwr was designed by the family, but five beech clumps (surviving) were planted on Brown's recommendation and he may have advised on the path up to the ancient Castle. He also submitted plans for the kitchen garden and walls.

At Wynnstay Richard Woods was employed 1771-4 to turn the formal canal into a lake, and, perhaps a flower garden. Possibly to carry out other work, Brown made several visits between 1771 and his death in 1783. A cascade and grotto was also built but the planned second lake was implemented on a smaller scale after Brown died. It is not possible to assign the standard planting of perimeter belts, clumps and plantations between Woods and Brown. The most noteworthy Brownian features are the walled kitchen garden, the Pleasure ground with his Temple Dairy in the corner and the associated ha-ha. An early-nineteenth century estate map shows planting with well-spaced trees and shrubs, but this is not a typical Brown pleasure ground with graduated shrubbery and, perhaps a flower garden. If it were ever possible to carry out a re-creation, the plans for Tottenham Park 1760s, Brocklesby 1772 (both with surprisingly symmetrical features) and Burton Constable 1772, as documented in *The Flowering of the*

*Landscape Garden: English Pleasure Grounds 1720-1800.* Mark Laird, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1999, would be useful models, supplemented by the planting lists available for Petworth and Croome. By the end of the eighteenth century criticisms were being made that landscape parks, made to a standard model, were boringly similar. Where the modern garden visitor finds a Brown park interesting, it is often because of later modification: flowery terraces and parterres (Harewood, Bowood, Blenheim) or arboreta (Blenheim, Bowood, Corsham). At Blenheim, it is Vanbrugh's bridge, partly flooded by Brown, that gives his lake its particular magnificence. The best loved layouts, as in the eighteenth century, remain the individual works of art such as Stowe, Studley Royal and Stourhead.

So to what extent do we really want to celebrate Brown?  
Gaenor Price

For information concerning Brown's Tercentenary see:  
<http://www.capabilitybrown.org>

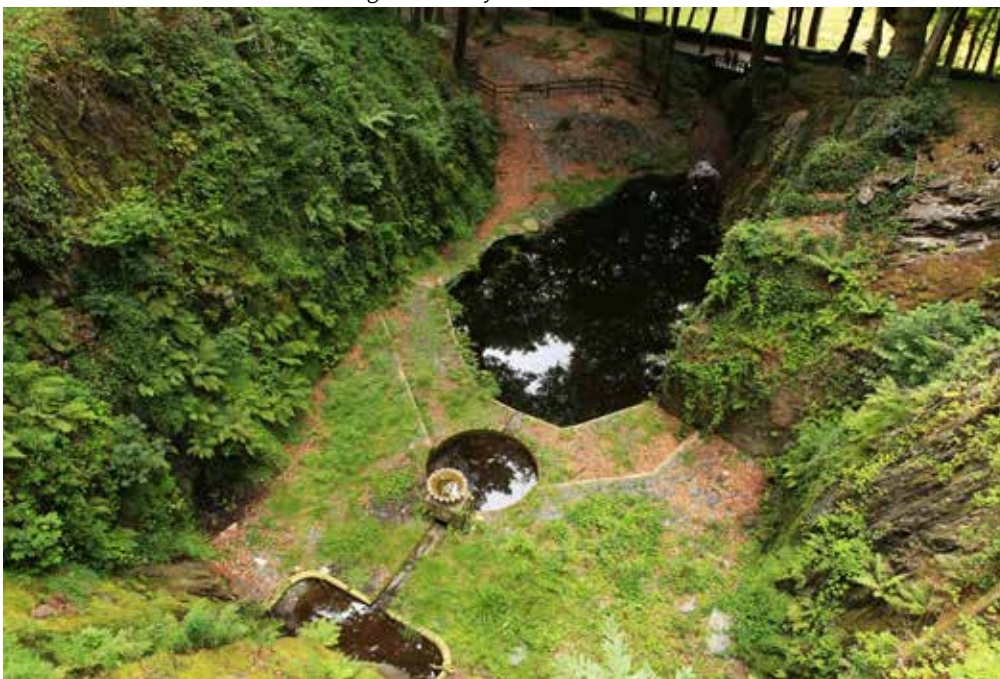
### Pantglas Hall tourist village

The proposed Llandeilo development on the Pantglas Hall estate for a £50 million tourist village for the Chinese has now been withdrawn. Inspectors considered the scheme was "inappropriate" in design and it was widely criticised for its scale. Maxhard Ltd planned a 100 bed hotel, 80 holiday homes with a swimming pool, 10 shops and a car park, aimed at a *select international clientele*. It expected to attract 20,000 visitors a year, and create up to 70 jobs.

The developers intended to submit revised plans in June of this year, but none have been submitted.

## Restorations at Plas Brondanw in Garreg Llanfrothen

*Brondanw Chasm from the Flaming Urn @ Glynis Shaw*



Richard Broyd has generously funded some park and garden restorations at Plas Brondanw, home of the architect Clough Williams-Ellis, creator of the Italianate village, Portmeirion.

From the Flaming Urn it is now possible, once again, to see the water features in the Chasm. This is the landscaping in the old Brondanw Isaf Slate quarry pit, which has been rescued from overgrowth and brambles.

The Folly Castle, a wedding present from his fellow officers of the Welsh Guards when Clough married in 1915, has also been restored.

## Gwerclas Hall, Cynwyd

WHGT were consulted by the owners, Susan and Bruce Wallace, of Grade II\* Gwerclas Hall, when its setting was threatened by an insensitive planning application for a new house, on a site now in another ownership, beside the driveway to the entrance. The complete complex of buildings together with the landscape and walled garden makes Gwerclas an unusual and beautiful property. It was praised by Marcus Binney President of SAVE Britain's Heritage, who included it in his *'500 Best Buildings in Britain and Ireland'* Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2007.

Gwerclas is now undergoing a sympathetic restoration. The Georgian east front was remodelled for H Hughes Lloyd and his wife Margaret in 1767. Thomas Lloyd, author of *The Lost Houses of Wales*, says: "I use Gwerclas in my lectures to show the difference between an architect-designed house and one run up by a local builder using a pattern book."

Whilst the house was listed in 1952 and the associated farm buildings have been recognised, the historic landscape, which relates to an earlier castle or house, was less well documented, particularly the large rectilinear walled garden adjacent to the west side of the house.

Extending south and protected by a shelter belt, it slopes to a high terrace above the house. At the centre of the terrace on the west wall, reached by a steep flight of steps, is a two storey banqueting house open to the garden, sited for views towards the river and the Berwyn mountains beyond. The banqueting house is centred on a much overgrown box lined path which crosses the garden east west, south of the house. The First Edition OS map show paths parallel to the banqueting house terrace and probably other terraces in the garden have been flattened as the site has since been used as a paddock. The banqueting house, hidden for years in ivy, and brambles, was revealed by Bruce and Susan who have restored it, re-slating the roof with randoms found on site. Behind the banqueting house up more steps, is a wide sheltered terrace overlooking the house, once an orchard, from which there are steps leading to the roof space and a hole for the installation of a clock mechanism. The clock on the banqueting house, once visible from every room on the west side of the house, is long gone.

An arched garden entrance on the sloping north wall is next to a 4 seater privy which is integrated with the garden wall. The privy has Gothic openings and blocked up windows but as no record of a chapel at Gwerclas has been found, this seems a curiously adapted building.

The back of the Gwerclas house has ancient stone work and an Elizabethan mullioned window survives at basement level. There is also a deep trench, perhaps a casement for a water wheel. North and above the house is a small woodland where there is a spring fed leat and a reservoir, which may have powered a mill at one time and certainly supplied the house. A bog area below the reservoir may have been a former pond or spillway.

The site of the planning application has a number of



Gwerclas banqueting house © Glynis Shaw

trees which are specimens worthy of retention and conservation. These trees were originally part of the screening and windbreak protection for the house. The landscaping in front of the house has been cut off from a promenade overlooking the river by farming activities. The *Gwerclas mound*, also recorded in historical documents as *Llangar, The Mount*, marked on the OS map as a 'cairn' beside the river, is an important feature incorporated into the original Gwerclas curtilage, but it was sold to the Rhug estate in 1989.

WHGT is pleased that the garden features and the walls are now properly listed and a Tree Protection Order (TPO) has been successfully applied to the significant trees on the site of the planning application. It is now hoped that the *setting* of Gwerclas can remain unspoiled as the importance of this landscape is better recognised.

Glynis Shaw

## Lower Leighton Farm Super Dairy

The outcome of the Public Inquiry in March concerning the Lower Leighton Farm super dairy, was finally made public on Oct 30th. The 1,000-cow dairy next to a school at Leighton near Welshpool was given the go-ahead despite the Public Inquiry Planning Inspector recommending the application be rejected.

Planning Minister Carl Sargeant decided that the economic benefits of the super dairy outweighed the many social and environmental objections and the heritage value of the surrounding landscape to tourism.

Expert planning advice at both the local and national level has been ignored and the planning process disregarded. Unfortunately this Public Inquiry seems to have been an entirely pointless exercise.

## Cestyll Garden, Wylfa, Anglesey



*Cestyll Garden with Mill top left © Glynis Shaw*

Cestyll Garden lies in a small valley running north to the sea, overlooking Porth y Felin between Cemaes and Cemlyn Bay, Anglesey. Traversed by the Afon Cafnan and divided by streams and bridges, it is essentially a rock garden featuring a large variety of unusual plants. Cestyll is Grade II in the Register for its historical importance as few gardens from the 1920s have survived in such an unspoiled way. When the Carreglwyd estate, was broken up in 1918, Cestyll was bought by the Hon. William Walter Vivian as a present for his favourite niece, Violet Vivian. Violet was maid of honour to Queen Alexander and a particular friend of Princess Victoria, daughter of Edward VII, who was interested in gardening and designed a small lower area of Cestyll.

Initially Violet used Cestyll as a summer house but later made it her permanent home, taking great interest in the development and design of the garden. The first plantings were made without the benefit of any shelter other than the natural shape of the ground, but later a shelter belt of conifers was added. Some 12 gardeners helped to create the garden. Violet's Royal connections provided her with assistance from experts at Kew who advised on the selection of plants which could be adapted for this coastal area. In the 1920s tons of soil were brought into the garden by hand, to enable shrubs to grow on the rocky terrain. The east-facing rock escarpment was covered in top soil and was planted with over 3,000 bedding plants each year.

A 19th century mill, now owned by the National Trust stands in the garden. A mill has stood on this site since the 13th century.

Violet died in 1962 aged 83 and her ashes were scattered in the garden, as those of her uncle had been, and there is a memorial tablet to them both. The house and garden, inherited by Lady Astor Hever, was sold to the Central Electricity Generating Board (CEGB) in 1983 on condition that the Cestyll Garden should be maintained and cared for as a memorial to the two Vivians responsible for its creation.

Violet had begun opening the garden to the public, and

this practice which lapsed after her death was reinstated in 1985, opening in May when it is at its most colourful. By the time Cestyll was included in the Register in 1998, the house had been demolished because it was unsafe. Only a few outbuildings in a poor state still remain. The walled garden is completely overgrown, although a row of fruit trees has been identified.

Wylfa Nuclear Power Station began generating electricity in 1971 on the site adjacent to Cestyll. The Power Station managed by Magnox Electricity plc is now reaching the end of its useful life and is due to be decommissioned.

Wylfa Newydd is now on the drawing board. This will be built by Horizon Nuclear Power who are fully aware of the sensitivity of the site and the close proximity of the new station to Cestyll garden. Horizon arranged a site visit on 18th October for all organisations concerned about the new development. There were representatives from the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, the Gwynedd Council Planning Department, including tree specialists, Lisa Figges from Cadw, and Gwynedd Branch Chairman, Joanna Davidson representing WHGT.

Concern was raised about the proximity of a new major access route, within 16 metres of the shelter belt protecting the valley garden from south easterly winds, and the impact on the vital sea view by a new breakwater and unloading facility. The garden would be greatly reduced in setting and size and its context almost totally lost with the demolition of the walled kitchen garden, access tracks and the bathing hut, leaving just the valley garden.

It was suggested that a thorough recording programme be set in place, recording both structure and planting, particularly of the kitchen garden, starting immediately with an investigation of the apple trees. Ian Sturrock was to be approached about undertaking this.

The other main issue of concern was the Dame Sylvia Crowe landscape around the existing power station. The essential conifers are in a poor and overcrowded state and the continued maintenance of these was discussed at length. It was suggested that some of the trees should be felled and replaced with native broadleaf trees but it was pointed out that this would alter the view of the power station, making it visible in a way never intended, for six months of the year.

This was an initial meeting and there will be further opportunities to discuss these matters again and to open up the subject of mitigation and possible compensatory measures, which might in some small degree offset the loss of much of the listed area. Horizon are very keen to reach an acceptable resolve for all parties, with regard to both the historic landscape and ecology of the site.

Olive Horsfall and Joanna Davidson



## The WHIGETS v the Eggheads



Back row: C.J., Barry, Pat, Judith and Chris (The Eggheads)

Front row: Mike Ward, Jean Reader, Tom Parkinson, Advolly Richmond, Alison Ward and Liz Whittle (The WHIGETS)

The Welsh Historic Gardens Trust will be celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2014 and will also be featuring on the BBC!

Some members may be familiar with a long running quiz show on BBC2 called *The Eggheads*. It turns out that our Chairman Jean Reader is a great fan of this show.

**The Eggheads** are a team of seven, of which only five take part in each game, are the ultimate quiz show champions in the UK. Each weekday a new team of challengers take on this amazing team for an opportunity to win the cash prize. If the Eggheads win, the prize money increases by a £1,000 each game.

In an unguarded moment Jean decided that it would be a good idea to get a WHGT team together to challenge the Eggheads, thus garnering publicity for our forthcoming celebrations. The clarion call was sounded for suitable candidates - some may say victims, to come forward. I heard the call and answered, as did Tom, Mark and Liz along with Rosie our reserve. Once we had convinced ourselves that we were all of sound mind we had to come up with a name for our team.

We quickly settled on The WHIGETS (Welsh Historic GardEns TruSt). This was a name Jean heard for the first time at the Brynkinalt AGM in 2012 when it was suggested by a WHGT member. Please let us know who you are so we can thank you!

Not long after our application had been submitted we had an audition which we survived. Then for two weeks we waited with an equal measure of excitement and apprehension for, as Jean put it, the smoke to emerge from the Glaswegian chimney of the Eggheads' production team.

When the call finally came to tell us that we had been

shortlisted and would be appearing on Eggheads, further mixed emotions ensued. We all had to decide on our strongest and weakest subjects, out of the nine possible options, in order to come up with some kind of strategy which could help us to defeat the mighty Eggheads.

The logistics of The WHIGETS converging at BBC Scotland was a challenge in itself and nearly sent Jean over the edge. Due to various unforeseen circumstances Mark and Rosie could no longer participate and Alison dutifully stepped in as reserve and kindly brought her son Mike to act as our new substitute.

Towards the end of October and against all the odds, the WHIGETS found themselves blinking under the recording studio lights facing 'real live' Eggheads.

Well, what can I say? **Nothing!**

The WHIGETS are unable to disclose or comment on the outcome of their audacious run in with the finest quiz show champions in the country. The programme will be transmitted in 2014 as part of the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust's 25th anniversary.

We will be able to give notice of the exact date of transmission nearer the time so please keep a look out for further information in the Bulletin, on the WHGT website or on our facebook page.

Advolly Richmond

#### ERRATUM

Sincere apologies to Advolly Richmond who wrote the excellent article in the July 2013 Bulletin No.65 on *The Royal British Bowmen Society and the diversion of Archery* for the mistaken identity.

Advolly can be contacted at: [ilex@advolly.co.uk](mailto:ilex@advolly.co.uk)

## Iscoyd Park

The Clwyd branch enjoyed a recent visit to Iscoyd Park, traditionally in Flintshire Maelor, or Flintshire Detached, now in the County Borough Council of Wrexham. Here a new garden has been successfully added to an old landscape. References to this site go back to the 12th century. In 1738 a manor house, farm buildings, dove-cote and kiln were sold by Thomas Deaves to William Hanmer who wanted a new house as the water supply to his property Fenns Old Hall had failed. Hanmer began building the red brick house you see today in 1740. At his death in 1754 the house remained unfinished but he had created the surrounding parkland, mainly to the south east of the house.



*Iscoyd Park © Henry Carpenter image courtesy of Iscoyd Park*

Iscoyd passed to William's wife Elizabeth and then their daughter Esther who left Iscoyd on her marriage to Lord Assheton Curzon of Hagley in Staffordshire in 1756. Iscoyd was sold to Rev Richard Congreve, a rich clergyman from Leacroft in Staffordshire, in 1780. Congreve began house improvements to plans drawn up by Elizabeth Hanmer and purchased a further 180 acres of land to add to the estate.

In 1780 Congreve commissioned a landscape design by William Emes (now in the Shrewsbury Museum). However in 1781 he had another plan drawn by the surveyor Thomas Richardson. The original longer driveway is seen on the Emes drawing but Congreve re-routed the public road and re-designed the drive. The Richardson scheme shows the new drive curving through a boundary wood screening the house from the road, and across the park, allowing for the enlargement of the shrubbery. The rectangular pond and mount on the north-west of the park belong to the earlier 16th and 17th century history of the site and are shown on these 18th century plans. Most of the 18th century layout survives: a farm court, the former coach house with a granary above, laundry, stables with a bell tower and lead cupola and a large walled garden. On Congreve's death Iscoyd was inherited by his wife and then his daughter Marianne who enlarged the estate further and funded a new church at Iscoyd/Whitewell as a monument to her father.

In 1843 the heavily mortgaged estate was bought by Philip Lake Godsall from Cheltenham and Iscoyd has remained with the Godsall family ever since. Philip Godsall of Long Acre, London, made the family fortune as a successful coach maker between 1776-1810. Philip Lake Godsall commissioned Thomas Jones, a Chester architect, to improve the house 1844/45. Rejecting a Gothic styling, he chose plans which maintained the Neo-classical character of the house. A new porch and single storey dining room were added. He also expanded the estate and by 1900 Iscoyd had some 1,800 acres.

His son Philip William Godsall, an enlightened landowner,

built cottages with smallholdings so the farm labourers could have their own tenancy, providing better security than the tied cottages.

In 1851 John Grogan of Manchester designed the terrace around the house; a bronze axe was found in 1855 whilst digging the terrace wall (one of four presented to the Whitchurch museum by Major PT Godsall). When paving the cow sheds 1879, 4 early sculpted stones were also found including a Norman and an Early English nook shaft. Philip William Godsall commissioned the Shrewsbury architect S. Pountney in 1879 to design a drawing room with a two storey bay on the south side of the house overlooking the garden terrace, and the bathrooms, cleverly designed within a turret were added in 1894.

Unoccupied for almost a decade from 1925 the house was eventually leased to Sir John and Lady Reynolds. During WW II Iscoyd was occupied by St Godric's Secretarial College evacuated from Hampstead and the parkland was requisitioned by the American army in 1942. They levelled a valley and removed trees for a 1,500 bed military hospital which later became a hospital for Polish refugees.

It wasn't until 1957 that Iscoyd was finally returned to the Godsall family. Three generations of the family have been involved in its restoration ever since. Cricket, established in the 1850s, returned to the parkland in 1961 when Col. Philip Godsall invited Fenns Bank club to play at Iscoyd, now renamed the Iscoyd and Fenns Bank Cricket Club.

In 2009 Phil Godsall and his wife Susie undertook a major restoration of the house to develop Iscoyd Park as a top wedding venue. The restoration, under the architect Clare Craven a WHGT member based in Clwyd, was one of three properties commended at the Historic Houses Association/Sotheby's Restoration Awards 2011. Wedding ceremonies take place in an elegant light and airy garden room with large arched windows overlooking the garden. Old service buildings were removed and a permanent marquee accessed from the house is discreetly

sited in the garden for the larger receptions.

The Pleasure Garden has been completely redesigned by the leading landscape architect Michael Balston. Michael believes that a garden is a place to be 'lived in' and at Iscoyd is an important setting of the house for wedding shoots.

The garden lies to the west of the house leading from the terrace to the square brick dovecote with a slate pyramidal roof known to the family as the *Pigeon house*. A remarkable harmony between the house and garden has been achieved through successful design and planting despite the extensive new leveling, terracing, new walls and balustrading.

The award winning Xa Tollemache designed the planting. A lavender garden, scented herbaceous borders, a pleached hornbeam hedge around the Pigeon house (to be turned into a bridal suite) and the woodland walk all add a sense of romance to the garden. Further rose planting against the house is being developed by the gardener Archie Scott who has ensured that the garden is beautifully maintained. The garden was completed just weeks before the first wedding in 2010. It is hard to believe that it has become so well established in just 3 years. Everyone thought that the new garden suited the historic landscape.

The large walled garden is accessed from the farm court walled on three sides with the south

side fenced with iron palings. Only the remains of the nectarine house still survive but there were once extensive glasshouses against the north walls. The brickwork of the garden walls is sound so this will be a project for the future!

Iscoyd has developed a successful family business in a family house which has retained a warm family atmosphere and has a beautiful new garden. Clwyd members enjoyed the garden despite a torrential downpour and very much enjoyed the family's hospitality.

Glynis Shaw



Iscoyd pleached hornbeam hedge © Prue Probert

## Blind Veteran's UK Centre Craig-y-Don, Llandudno

In June Gwynedd Branch received a call from Joanna Tann, the Volunteering Development Officer for Blind Veterans UK (formally St.Dunstons) at Craig y Don in Llandudno. The charity opened the building as a training centre and holiday venue for blind service men two years ago after extensive renovations and improvements to the former Medical Centre.

The house, built as a Convalescent home in 1902 by Lady Forester in memory of her husband for workers from the industrial midlands, is set in very pleasant grounds. The house backs on to elevated woodlands and two sides of the property have wooded areas which were planted when the house was built, planned as a woodland walk for the patients. Joanna is planning a Sensory Woodland Walk which once completed '*would give the Blind Veterans access to both evergreen and deciduous woodland areas to walk and interact with the natural environment, providing enjoyment, therapy and relaxation*'.

The reason for requesting WHGT involvement was to identify planting that dates back to the original Edwardian period before necessary extensive clearance was commenced. A well known garden designer had visited the site and been very enthusiastic about the possibilities. He had drawn up a plan of pathways, planting and seating, and although giving his services for free, his scheme would cost several thousand pounds to instate.

Joanna Davidson and I went to visit Craig-y-Don on a damp Monday and spent a very enjoyable morning in the woods. The trees are predominately fir, holly and laurel which Joanna said was typical of the period as she identified several interesting trees and shrubs, including variegated acer and arbutus, which should be retained. Joanna Tann took careful notes and following our visit put markers on the planting to be spared. Inspired by our visit Joanna believes a very pleasant area can be achieved in the spirit of the original concept. Although a professionally built level path is needed, much could be achieved by volunteers.

Since our visit volunteers from HSBC Llandudno branch have spent three days giving the area a dramatic makeover. They planted herbs and flowers and helped to clear, re-mark and open up the old woodland area. Seating, sensory sculptures and other wildlife friendly features will be added in the next phase. This effort has been supported by the *Business Supporting Communities Project*, funded by the Big Lottery and delivered by North Wales County Voluntary Councils, which works to help bring businesses and communities together.

We were very pleased that Joanna had thought to involve WHGT, and hope that we have made a useful contribution to this worthwhile project.

Olive Horsfall

## Hendrefoilan House, Sketty

Hendrefoilan House 1855, a Grade II\* Victorian house in Sketty, Swansea, was built for Lewis Llewelyn Dillwyn and his family on the site of a medieval farmhouse. The South Wales Miners' Library is now located in the restored Grade II listed Stables.

A stone lodge with nearby gates gave entrance to the main drive from Gower Road. This original drive was flanked by fields, trees, streams, woods and statues. The view of Swansea Bay and Mumbles Head could be seen from the drive and the house. Hendrefoilan was enhanced by ornamental gardens, woodland walks, specimen trees, drives, lanes and paths. The south facing walled gardens once had greenhouses and cloches for fruit and vegetables, large glasshouses supplied grapes for wine and the orchards had apple, pear, peach and fig trees. The home farm supplied the house with meat.

Many shades of rhododendron, different varieties of Magnolia and colours of Camellia grew around the house. The garden had shrubberies, interesting cobbled woodland paths, a bamboo plantation and specimen trees including redwood and monkey puzzle. There were ponds, tennis courts and an archery field/ rifle range. The water supply came from the mountain streams which cross the estate.

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Whilst the historic heritage remains well hidden and somewhat forgotten the beautiful bluebell woods and many mature trees can still be seen today. Public foot paths lead around the hill behind the stables to an old chestnut plantation and the quarries, offering fine views of Swansea Bay, Mumbles, Devon and Carmarthenshire. In the past the area around Hendrefoilan was used for coal mining, quarrying and timber industries.

The Picton-Turbervilles resided at Hendrefoilan after the Dillwyns and later Sir John Bryn Edwards of the Dyffryn Tinplate Works in Morriston. During the war Hendrefoilan became an auxiliary hospital and the fire service had offices on the site. Red brick WW II air raid shelters are found between the house and stables.

In 1964 Hendrefoilan was purchased by Swansea University as a residence for male students and later used for teaching. It has since fallen into disrepair and was listed by the Victorian Society in the 2012 Top Ten most endangered buildings in Britain. Today the area is a green space well used by local students, walkers, cyclists and runners. Both house and grounds contain many original features which need some help to regain their beauty before time and deterioration affect them further!

This year the house was finally made watertight.

Christine Williams



*Hendrefoilan House, image courtesy of Peter Davies collection*

## Bodnant Yew Dell

Many thanks to Hugh and Harriet Geddes who hosted numerous meetings concerning the Yew Dell at Bodnant. After much consultation throughout the summer, members of the Clwyd branch met with the National Trust (NT) management: Adam Ellis-Jones, Assistant Director of Operations (Wales), Emma Plunkett-Dillon, Head of Conservation and William Greenwood, Bodnant Property Manager who assured us that the proposals for the play facilities in the Yew Dell have now been withdrawn. It is recognised that the Yew Dell is an important and beautiful element of the garden, with a special atmosphere, which will be opened to the public from next March.

WHGT is delighted that there is a commitment to open all of the garden gifted to the NT by 2016. The NT now intends to establish a Conservation Management Plan for all its gardens, including Bodnant and to reduce the excessive signage. It was agreed that the essence of the landscape, *the spirit of the place*, its design and planting should be preserved.

Closer collaboration with WHGT could help to promote a wider appreciation of Bodnant's special qualities and plant collections. The Clwyd branch is planning a Study Day on *'The Conservation of Plant Collections'* at Bodnant in Spring 2014 in collaboration with the NT, Institute of Horticulture and Plant Heritage.

## Ruthin Castle

The Management of Ruthin Castle are forming a Charitable Foundation to preserve, restore and maintain the estate. WHGT Clwyd are collaborating with the management in relation to the garden and parkland. This is a huge and challenging project including the picturesque landscape established c1826 in the castle ruins with the scheduled monument medieval castle walls.

Urgent conservation of the gate house is needed and a section of the perimeter wall which collapsed earlier this year needs restoration. WHGT is assisting with a survey of the current planting and the garden history of the site.

## Pool Park, Ruthin

Pool Park is destined to be another of Wales's lost landscapes. WHGT Clwyd objected to planning for a 'Care Village' at Pool Park, which has now been granted. Whilst welcoming the reuse of the old mansion and ancillary buildings, the objection was to the development across the listed landscape. Pool Park, once one of the five deer parks connected to Ruthin Castle, became part of the Bachymbyd and Rhug estate acquired by the Salesbury family in the 16th century. William Salesbury split the estate with Pool Park and Bachymbyd left to his younger son, Charles. It became a country house of the Bagots when Charles' only surviving daughter married Sir Walter Bagot in 1670. The house built in 1826-9 by William 2nd Lord Bagot, with balustrades from Bachymbyd old house and a frontispiece said to be by Inigo Jones, replaced an earlier house. The picturesque landscaping includes a mound in front of the house with an Ogham stone, sundial and yew tree, extensive terracing, woodlands, shrubberies and a large walled garden.

Pool Park, allegedly lost to the Bagots on a bet at the races, was sold to tenant farmers and a Llanrwst timber merchant who felled many of the trees, including the ancient avenues. The unsold house was leased to Sir Henry Tate as a retreat from his Liverpool sugar enterprises.

In 1937, Pool Park became a psychiatric convalescent home for 80 male patients, expanded to 120 during the war when a POW camp was established in the grounds. Women were accepted in 1949 when it became a mental health hospital and the gardens were worked by patients as occupational therapy. Produce from the large kitchen garden also supplied Denbigh Hospital. These gardens were maintained until 1989 when the hospital closed.

Bought by a developer in 1992 the property has been allowed to fall into ruin. Now the landscape is to be sacrificed to save the house. This development outside a settlement area, and without transport infrastructure is in conflict with Planning Policy Wales and contravenes ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) directives concerning the enhancement of heritage sites and the Denbighshire Local Development Plan adopted June 2013, which seeks to protect and enhance the natural and built heritage of the County - including landscape. Local opposition from Efenectyd Community Council, led AM Darren Millar to request a 'call in' of this planning application. Sadly this was refused.

Land banking and allowing a site to become so derelict that both its heritage status and planning law can be disregarded is an unscrupulous practice which must be stopped or other properties will also be at risk.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Penrhos, Holyhead Anglesey

Penrhos, dating back to Henry VIII, once surrounded the mansion of the Owen family - the 18th century artist and letter-writer Edward Owen was from Penrhos. In 1763 Sir John Thomas Stanley gained Penrhos through marriage. The Stanleys, a powerful and long-lived Whig family with lands in Anglesey and the north of England, may have been patron to the poet of the 14th century romance 'Sir Gawain and the Green Knight', in which Holyhead is mentioned. Much of the Penrhos landscape dates from the first decade of the 19th century including some associated Grade II listed buildings: the Betting Stand or Rotten Tower to view horse racing on a private racecourse, various service buildings and the Candle Tower. Although not in the *Register*, various garden features remain including a number of gateways, lakes, and the remains of a fernery. The Penrhos woods were planted in 1816, with trees from the Stanley property at Winnington Hall. Bluebells, daffodils and snowdrops flourish to this day alongside the wild cyclamen, descendants of house plants put into the garden.

Penrhos remained with the Stanleys until after WW II. The mansion was demolished in the 1960s. Since 1972, landowners Anglesey Aluminium Metal Ltd have granted public access to 200 acres as a nature reserve (the whole site spans 600 acres). Penrhos is popular with locals and tourists and the third most popular tourist site on Holyhead Island. The entire site is now to be sold to Land & Lakes, for a *Center Parcs* style village with 494 lodges, leisure facilities, access roads, and footpaths at Penrhos. The development also includes Cae Glas with 315 leisure lodges and facilities and Kingsland with

320 houses for workers involved with developing Wylfa Newydd. The developers claim 600 jobs will be created in this scheme on the three adjacent sites.

The *Save Penrhos* group believe the scale of development will have an adverse impact on the local wildlife and restrict public access to a large section of historic woodlands. A large portion of the nature reserve will be deforested and Holyhead will lose the integrity of this heritage asset of ecological importance. The Penrhos nature reserve headland Gorsedd-y-Penrhyn was designated a *Regionally Important Geological and geomorphological Site (UKRIGS)* in 2009 and is in an *Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)*. This calls for the unique landscape, natural beauty and its special qualities to be "conserved and enhanced for the benefit of present and future generations".

In September Holyhead Island Planners recommended the scheme go ahead. However, the Councillors voted against it on October 2nd, stating that it would have a detrimental effect on Anglesey's AONB and lead to over-development in the countryside. On 6th November the rejected and controversial scheme was approved! Land & Lakes had said it would appeal if the original decision was not reversed. Was the threat of an appeal enough to reverse a decision made just a month previously? Campaigners have now requested a 'call in' and a Public Inquiry in view of 11 planning breaches and lack of Welsh language assessment.

The Gwynedd branch has involved the archaeological trust in site recording and documenting this site.

Liza Jones

## Rooted in History: Celebrating Carmarthenshire's Parks and Gardens



*Penny David's great-grandfather John Fairchild Taylor, former head gardener at Alltyferin (in retirement) digging potatoes*

**Congratulations** to the Carmarthenshire branch on their successful bid for the Heritage Lottery Fund's 'Sharing Heritage' grant.

The £5,700 award will fund a new publication *Rooted in History: Celebrating Carmarthenshire's Parks & Gardens* in association with the Dyfed Archaeological Trust (DAT). Penny David, Carmarthen-born and well-known for her book *A Garden Lost In Time: The Mystery of the Ancient Gardens of Aberglasney*, will author a comprehensive, accessible and lavishly illustrated introduction to the history and development of Carmarthenshire's heritage of parks and gardens, to be published in 2014.

Glance at an old map of the county and you'll be immediately struck by the number of parks and gardens there are; Dinefwr is of pivotal importance to Welsh history and culture; Middleton, now the National Botanic Garden, and Aberglasney, spectacularly restored. Golden Grove and the Bishop's Palace at Abergwili are also recognised as being of national importance. Carmarthenshire has every reason to call itself 'The Garden of Wales'.

What then of the others? Some, albeit in varying degrees of repair, remain in private ownership and may not normally be open to the public. Many gardens now exist only in the archival records or in people's memories. Some are now in poor condition and their historic value

unappreciated, even by their owners. Once celebrated tree nurseries also sprang up in the county, meeting landowners' desire to plant woods and groves, but these too are now hard to trace. These all-but-forgotten places are all part of our social and cultural heritage and their stories and those of the people associated with them deserve to be rediscovered and celebrated.

Penny and her team of volunteers will study maps, plans, surveys, publications and archival material as well as photos, paintings, sketches, contemporary and modern, including air photographs and even post-cards. The team will also visit owners by appointment and, with their permission, record the current condition of their sites.

However, it is suspected that much of the information will not to be found in the official records, but in people's scrap-books, photo albums, and their memories. The photo of Penny's great-grandfather, one-time gardener at Alltyferin Mansion, is from the family album. If anyone has such memorabilia please get in touch. *All material will be returned and acknowledged if so requested.*

Jennifer Stewart, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund Wales, said: "*Sharing Heritage is a wonderful opportunity for communities to delve into their local heritage and we are delighted to be able to offer this grant so that the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust can embark on a real journey of discovery. Heritage means such different things to different people, and HLF's funding offers a wealth of opportunities for groups to explore and celebrate what's important to them in their area.*" Volunteers to help with this research are always very welcome!

Michael Norman

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*or Carmarthenshire WHGT 01558 823121*

*J.Holland@dyfedarchaeology.org.uk*

**The Daffodil:** *the remarkable story of the world's most popular spring flower* by Noel Kingsbury (Author), Jo Whitworth (Photographer), Timber Press, September 24, 2013

Noel Kingsbury provides the history, cultural significance, science and botany of the daffodil, a national emblem of Wales since Lloyd George wore it in his buttonhole on St David's Day and in the ceremonies of the 1911 investiture of the Prince of Wales. With over 25,000 cultivars, there are two varieties, the Tenby and the Welsh daffodil or Lent Lily, which are unique to Wales. Plant lovers and gardeners will enjoy the stories, cultivation notes and recommendations. This book is beautifully illustrated with photos by Jo Whitworth. Kingsbury knows most things about daffodils but seems unaware of Llandudno's bid to become Daffodil capital of Wales in 2012. On October 27th 2013 Llandudno's *Marie Curie Field of Hope* in the Grade II listed Happy Valley was officially opened by the Mayor Garry Burchett.

## WHGT Small Grants Scheme

In 1988 Sir Roy Strong wrote: *'The Gardens Trust Movement is one of the exhilarating new impulses in what tends to be a doom-laden time. Its aim is to preserve our heritage of gardens and guard against their devastation through neglect and bad planning.'*

The Welsh Historic Gardens Trust was founded in 1989 so 2014 marks our 25th anniversary. Sir Roy's words are as pertinent today as they were in 1988. As I think about the WHGT achievements in the last quarter century I feel very proud, and excited about how we might celebrate our successes during our celebrations next year. The Trustees and branches are planning a range of special events for next year.

A new project to be launched in 2014 is a **Small Grants Scheme**. Every year the Trust receives many requests for small amounts of money (up to £500) to assist projects aiming to preserve and maintain historic parks and gardens in Wales. Whilst large financial grants are available from a number of sources, grants for small projects are often more difficult to acquire and, at present, we do not have the funds to help.

A number of Garden Trusts in England have set up such schemes and the Gwynedd branch has funded several local projects. The financial help provided has been greatly appreciated. It would be wonderful if WHGT could raise £25,000 in 2014 for a **Small Grants Scheme** so that the first grants could be available in 2015. This project would provide a lasting legacy in celebration of the WHGT 25th Anniversary.

This will require much fund raising, so please think about how you can help to achieve this target; by organizing a garden related event, a coffee morning or tea party.

We also hope to have an enormous second-hand book sale related to gardening, garden history or historic gardens and landscapes. If you are able to donate any books please let me or your branch contact know and we will organise a collection. We are also ready to receive the first cheques! If you feel able to contribute to this fund please make one out to: *WHGT Small Grants Scheme*. It will also be possible to contribute to this fund via the WHGT website.

I am also very keen to hear memories of those WHGT events and projects in the last twenty-five years which you recall with particular fondness or feel have made a considerable difference to the gardens and landscapes of Wales since 1989.

Please contact me at: [jeanreader@btconnect.com](mailto:jeanreader@btconnect.com)

or

*WHGT, Aberglasney Gardens, Llangathen, Carmarthenshire. SA32 8QH.*

I wish you a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful 2014, when I shall hope to see you all at lots of WHGT events!

Jean Reader, WHGT Chairman

## New Anniversary Logo 2014 !



**Many Thanks** to Mark Blenkin who has designed the WHGT 25th Anniversary logo. Mark is an artist and model maker who has worked in a range of settings and currently employed in the Art department of a London school. In 2014 he begins an MA in children's book illustration at Anglia Ruskin University Cambridge. We wish him every success. A High Resolution JPG in black or green is available from the editor.

**Many Thanks** to Clare Robson for volunteering to scan the early Bulletins to complete an online archive for 2014.

**Congratulations** to Ann Benson on gaining an MA in Garden History. Ann will be teaching next year on the new Garden History MA at the Institute of Historical Research (IHR) at University College London.

## TOP TIPS FROM NFU MUTUAL

Sponsors of Welsh Historic Gardens Trust

Weather forecasters are once again promising us a cold winter, but weather forecasts looking further ahead than a week rarely seem to give an accurate picture of what's to come, so it's best to prepare for whatever our unpredictable climate can throw at us.

- ✓ Make sure gutters are clear of leaves and other debris.
- ✓ Ensure chimneys are regularly swept and that wood burning stoves function properly, especially in thatched properties.
- ✓ If you have installed extra insulation in your loft, put plenty of extra lagging round your water pipes.
- ✓ Make sure pipes in vulnerable areas are protected with lagging at least 5cm thick in diameter.
- ✗ Do not insulate underneath loft tanks – warm air from the room below will help to prevent it freezing.
- ✓ Fit heavy duty padlocks on sheds, garages and outbuildings.
- ✓ Use SmartWater to mark valuable possessions.
- ✗ Don't leave valuables on view.
- ✓ Keep garden tools secure and out of sight.
- ✓ Consider outside security lighting.

For more information visit [nfumutual.co.uk](http://nfumutual.co.uk)

The National Farmers Union Mutual Insurance Society Limited.



WHGT Bulletin is sponsored by NFU Mutual

## Branch events

For up to date information see: [www.whgt.org.uk](http://www.whgt.org.uk)  
Welsh Historic Gardens Trust Facebook page

### Brecon and Radnor

**Thursday 5 December** Winter Lecture at Llangoed Hall. Catherine Beale will talk about her book, *Champagne and Shambles*, a fascinating record of the trials and tribulations of the Arkwright family of Hampton Court in Herefordshire, throughout the agricultural depressions of the late 19th century. Followed by a typical tea at Llangoed!

**2-5th June 2014** A three day stay at Portmeirion, in Gwynedd, to visit some of the lesser known gardens of North Wales.

**6 or 13 July 2014** Summer Garden Party at Evancoyd Court near Presteigne.

Contact Jonathan Reeves for further details  
[reeves@aberedw.wanadoo.co.uk](mailto:reeves@aberedw.wanadoo.co.uk) 01982 560205

### Carmarthenshire

**24th February 2014** Branch AGM

**29th March 2014** Talks at the Vestry, Llandeilo by Nick Wray, Curator Bristol Botanic Gardens and Jean Reader, Chairman of WHGT.

**17th May 2014** Guided morning walk of Cowbridge Physic Gardens and guided afternoon walk at Dyffryn Gardens.

**June 2014** visit to Gellideg (private garden) - date to be confirmed

Contact Judith Holland for further details  
[j.holland@dyfedarchaeology.org.uk](mailto:j.holland@dyfedarchaeology.org.uk) 01558 823121

### Ceredigion

**22 February 2014** 2pm Branch AGM at Waun Fawr Community Hall, Aberystwyth followed by a lecture 'Deeds and Dinner Plates: Some Primary Sources for Hafod, by Jennie Macve.

Contact Penny David for further details:  
[lady.fern.virgin.net](http://lady.fern.virgin.net) 01570 422041

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Many thanks to all contributors and everyone who has kindly assisted with the *WHGT Bulletin*, all help is much appreciated. Please send news or details of threats to the heritage of parks and gardens in Wales, or news concerning sites undergoing change or conservation, or stories of any gardens and parks connected to WW I. Items for the Spring issue should be received by Feb 28th. Very best wishes for the festive season!

### WHGT Annual General Meeting 2014

## Plas Tan y Bwlch

Snowdonia National Park Centre  
Saturday June 7th, hosted by Gwynedd Branch

Speaker Justin Albert  
National Trust Director for Wales

The 13 acre Victorian Picturesque landscape includes a water garden, a Japanese garden, a fern nursery, an azalea walk and a wildlife garden, all with unusual and exotic specimens.

### Clwyd

**February 2014** Members are invited to a Snowdrop walk through the woods at Bryn Eisteddfod, Glan Conwy. Please ring Dr.Michael Senior 01492 581175 to check when they are at their best.

**March 8th** 10.30 for 11.00, Branch AGM at Ruthin Castle followed by Walk and talk 11.00 of the picturesque landscape (an indoor presentation if the weather is bad.).

**April/May** Study day on Conservation of Plant Collections in collaboration with the NT, Institute of Horticulture and Plant Heritage.

Contact Sinah Harrison-Jones for further details  
[sinah@btinternet.com](mailto:sinah@btinternet.com) 01745 583433

### Gwynedd

**April 3rd 2014** Branch AGM, Oriel Plas Glyn-y-Wedd, Llanbedrog. Speaker to be confirmed. Full details and booking form available early New Year

**May 3rd** Annual Plant Fair, Crûg Farm Nursery, Caernarfon by kind permission of Sue and Bledwyn Wynne-Jones.

**May 22nd** Joint visit with Friends of Treborth to Dunham Massey and Quarry Bank Mill.

**June 25th** Visit to Plas Newydd, Llangollen home of the Ladies of Llangollen.

**July 8th – 10th** Gardens of Dublin and Co.Wicklow 3 day visit staying in Bray. Visits are planned to the National Botanic Gardens Glasnevin, Hunting Brook, Tinode, and Helen Dillon's garden.

Contact Olive Horsfall for further details  
[oandmhorsfall@btinternet.com](mailto:oandmhorsfall@btinternet.com) 01766 780187

### Montgomeryshire

**30th March** Daffodil Day at Gregynog. (The librarian will be running a hall tour at 2.30 on the same day - tickets £3) If you know of anyone in the area who might be interested, please bring them along as the Montgomery branch is keen to welcome new members.

Contact Karen Armstrong for details  
[enquiries@gregynog.org](mailto:enquiries@gregynog.org) 01686 650224

### West Glamorgan

**16th January 2014** 'One Thousand Years of Botanical Art' speaker from National Museum of Wales.

Contact Ann Gardner for further details:  
[hughgardner@virginmedia.com](mailto:hughgardner@virginmedia.com) 01792 290014