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Prospect of Llannerch Park from the East, English School 1662. Oil on canvas 157.5 x 231 cm (62 x 90½ in.) Image courtesy of Sotheby's

Llannerch Park, St Asaph Glynis Shaw

This picture is an extraordinarily early and large work of British topographical art which records an amazing lost Restoration garden in North Wales. The artist is unknown but thought to be from the English School. The painting is inscribed (top right hand corner) by a contemporary hand as "The prospect of Llannerch from the East side 1662".

According to John Harris, former curator at the Royal Institute of British Architects' Drawings Collection, this is the 'earliest oil on canvas bird's-eye perspective of a country house in Britain'. The primitive perspective gives an oblique angle as if from a balloon and focuses particularly on the Italianate gardens and fountain pools.

This painting failed to reach its reserve price when it was offered for auction at Sotheby's on Dec 3rd 2014.

The house at Llannerch once stood in an extensive deer park. It is said to have been rebuilt by Gruffydd ap Ieuan ap Llywelyn Fychan (c.1470-1520), a celebrated bard and linguist. In the early seventeenth century the house was remodelled by Sir Peter Mutton (c.1562-1637) Knight

of Llannerch Park, Chief Justice of North Wales and MP for Caernarfon. Sir Peter was the son of a modest landowner in the Vale of Clwyd, whose family had been prominent in the borough of Rhuddlan for two centuries. Sir Peter inherited Llannerch from his uncle Edward Griffith of Llannerch in 1601, together with its valuable library. His daughter Anne married Robert Davies of Gwysaney who obtained Llannerch *jure uxoris* including the library and the painting.

However, the remarkable Italianate garden at Llannerch, depicted in the painting, was created by Sir Peter's grandson Mutton Davies (1634-1684), eldest of six sons and seven daughters. Mutton inherited Llannerch from his mother Anne, co-heiress of Sir Peter.

Mutton, according to local and ingenious etymological tradition so called because he was born with ears like those of a sheep, gained military experience in France and the Low Countries as a Royalist émigré between 1654 and 1658. He also spent time travelling in Italy whilst his father, an active royalist, garrisoned his estate

Gwysaney for the king, was imprisoned in 1658 and compounded for £648 (fined by Parliament to retain his estate).

On returning from his travels Mutton married Margaret Wilbraham of Woodhey. He then took part in the failed Royalist uprising of 1659 led by Sir George Booth and was imprisoned in Chester Castle until his release on 28 Jan 1660. At the Restoration his father was nominated for the order of the Royal Oak, with an estate valued at £2,000.

After the Restoration, gardens continued to have a formal layout but became ever more extensive and elaborate; with fountains, statues, grottoes and other features, designed to delight their owners and amuse and impress visitors.

The style originated in Italy and was imitated throughout Europe. The creation of water gardens and fountains showed a sophisticated continental taste and a display of wealth.

At Llannerch a stone set in the plinth of the house dates the garden to 1662, and ascribes it to Mutton Davies: Llannerch is sited above the River Clwyd near St Asaph. In the 17th century the main entrance was approached from the south through inner and outer gated courtyards with a mounting block. Extensive gardens and orchards lay north and east of the house, descending towards the river in terraces.

A gate from the forecourt on the main axis of the walled gardens, opens onto a viewing terrace with a red brick banqueting house at each end. All three terrace walls on the cross-axis are decorated with stone urns filled with flowers. An elaborate semi-circular stairway descends to a garden on the second terrace. A central path leads, between two square flower beds edged by cypress trees, to a stone gazebo overlooking the circular jet fountain pond surrounded by four statues, on the terrace below. Steps at either end of this terrace lead down to the fountain and the facing corner summer houses on the opposite wall.

A stone balustraded split set of steps descends to the sloping orchards below, on either side of a cypress avenue which leads to a large circular Neptune pool. The pool is surrounded by a path above a rill bordered with cypress trees. A flight of four steps takes you down to the pool side where a monumental Neptune sculpture stands at the centre. Neptune holds a dolphin and water spouts from beneath the pedestal on which he stands, as if above the crest of a wave. The pool is fed from a seven step cascade terminating with the water tanks and associated buildings to the north. On the far side of the pool, still on the main axis, the path crosses the rill and



Image courtesy of Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection

leads to an ornamental stone bridge crossing the River Clwyd (seen on the right hand side of the painting).

The painting documents the garden in a well ordered working estate with a water mill in the middle distance. The park is stocked with deer, cattle and sheep, all enclosed within a picket fence or bounded by the river. The picture is animated by the huntsman with his spaniel and the two washer-women walking towards the house from the river. Two horsemen and a man running ahead are seen arriving at the main entrance.

A second, smaller, version of the Llannerch painting in the Yale Centre (above) is believed to be of a later date, although by the same hand. The pictures are not identical. St Asaph cathedral has been added to the horizon above the water mill, which is thought to signify an important relationship that Mutton developed with the Church after the painting of the original. Mutton had two sons who entered the church. His second son John was Prebendary of St Asaph and Hereford cathedrals. A sundial has been introduced in the outer courtyard and only one rider can be seen approaching the main entrance. The figures, livestock and planting differ in detail from the original and the Neptune fountain is now gated from the river path. Perhaps the Yale version was for a town house or to show friends and family whilst travelling.

The first Renaissance text to include garden design was *De Re Aedificatoria* (The Ten Books of Architecture), by Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472). Alberti based his work on the architectural principles of Vitruvius, with quotations from Pliny the Elder and Pliny the Younger, to describe how a garden should look and be used. Alberti thought that a villa should be both looked at and a place to look from. Ideally the house needed to be sited above the garden, where it could be seen and the owner could look down into the garden.

Mutton was influenced by the Italian Renaissance. He

may have seen the gardens at Villa d'Este (1550-1572) at Tivoli, a masterpiece commissioned by Cardinal Ippolito II d'Este, son of Alfonso I d'Este and Lucrezia Borgia and grandson of Pope Alexander VI. The glory of Villa d'Este is the system of fountains by Pirro Ligorio, fed by two aqueducts from the River Aniene. At the centre of the garden, the alley of One Hundred Fountains (actually two hundred fountains), crossed the hillside, connecting the Oval Fountain with the Fountain of Rome. On a lower level, another alley passed the Fountain of Dragons and joined the Fountain of Proserpina with the Fountain of the Owl. Lower still, an alley of fishponds connected the Fountain of the Organ to the site of a proposed Fountain of Neptune. (The modern fountain was built in 1927).

A number of other 17th century villas in the surrounding Roman Campagna were famous for their *giochi d'acqua* (water games). The Villa Pratolino by Buontalenti in 1577 was the largest of the Medici parks and filled with hydraulic wonders which may have inspired Mutton.

However, the most prominent feature in the Llannerch painting is the Neptune statue. This is particularly interesting as, at this date, it is extremely rare. Where did Mutton find his Neptune? Who was the sculptor?

Unlike other gods, no Greek or Roman model of Neptune, god of the sea, was known during the Renaissance so he is less deified and most often based on a bearded human model. Neptune represents strength and vigour. He carries a trident and rides a dolphin or a horse (he is also god of horses and horse racing).

The most famous Florence Neptune, 1563-65, is the Piazza della Signoria fountain by Bartolomeo Ammannati and his assistants. This Neptune's face resembles that of Cosimo I de' Medici. The figure was an allusion to the dominion of the Florentines over the sea. Neptune stands on a high pedestal in the middle of an octagonal fountain. The pedestal in the middle is decorated with the mythical chained figures of Scylla and Charybdis.

In Rome, an early work, a life size marble Neptune 1622-3 by Gianlorenzo Bernini, wields his copper trident in a firm gesture of command, astride the sea-god Triton who blows on his conch shell to the four corners of the world. Bernini's Neptune was originally surrounded by elaborate fountains and set above waterfalls at the upper end of a large oval pool in the garden of Villa Montalto.

However, Mutton's Neptune seems to be more closely modelled on an earlier sculpture of 1557 by Montorsoli, follower of Michaelangelo. This Neptune stands in the Piazza dell Unità fountain, looking towards the harbour of Messina in Sicily.

This single, raised, central colossal figure was a new form of fountain design, making an imposing and majestic monumental fountain. Montorsoli's tall Neptune with a trident in his hands and his right leg next to a dolphin was an implicit glorification of the Emperor Charles V whose coat of arms is on the base. This design may have influenced the Florence Signoria Neptune fountain.

In Denmark a larger than life size Neptune adorned the forecourt of Frederiksborg castle. This Neptune majesti-



Llannerch Neptune detail

cally rises on top of a pillar above the fountain base, which features Fama goddess of Fame amongst others, was by the Dutch artist Adrian de Vries, c.1617. These statues were later stolen by the Swedes and are now in the park at Drottningholm Palace.

Another early Neptune of 1606 -1613 is the oldest secular monument in Poland. It stands as the focal point of Długi Targ, the Long Market, in Gdansk. This bronze Neptune by the Flemish artist Peter Husen was converted to a fountain feature in 1633. According to legend, one night Goldwasser spouted out of the trident. Drunken locals threatened to damage the sculpture so it was surrounded by a wrought iron fence in 1634.

The Llannerch fountain is also encircled - by hedges, cypress trees and a water channel.

After the Glorious Revolution of 1688 Neptune became a political symbol of William of Orange, the new King of England, and features in several English landscapes.

A painting by Jan Griffier the Elder, c 1690, depicts a lonely Neptune in the water gardens on the South front of Sudbury Hall, Derbyshire. A Neptune statue on a plinth also stands in the canal along with Hercules at Westbury Court, Gloucestershire in a layout begun in 1696. The Neptune on a plinth, c1702, by Claude David, a Burgundian sculptor, acquired by William Blathwayt for his garden at Dyrham Park, Gloucestershire, looks similar to the Llannerch figure. The Dyrham baroque gardens are illustrated in a Kip engraving of 1712, descending in terraces, with a fountain of Neptune from which water cascaded 224 steps down the hillside.

Mutton became High Sheriff for Flintshire in 1670 and MP from 1678 -1681. He died 29 October 1684 and was buried in Mold. Foulke Wynn of Nantglyn wrote a cywydd gofyn (a traditional verse form of praise) at about this time. This tells of Mutton's travels to Rome and his return to Wales to create a paradise reflecting his experiences. 'Gwych y trosglwyddodd gwr / i'w erddi ffrydiau o oerd-dwfr: / da ei glod eiff i raddio, / i ardd fawr a urddodd fo: / ei lawr o gwmpas ei lys / a'i gastiau ydynt gostus.'

The man brilliantly transferred / to his garden fountains of



Llanerck, The Seat of Daniel Leo, Esq. Denbighshire. Engraved by Wilson from the drawing by M. Griffith for Sir Richard Colt Hoare. Published by J & J Boydell, London and dated 1792. Image by permission of Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru / The National Library of Wales.

cold water: / great is the praise of him who walks/ in the large garden which he has adorned: / his ground around his court / and his tricks are expensive' (*National Library of Wales MS 263B, p. 10*).

At the end of the 17th century Edward Lhuyd referred to the park as being well-stocked. Llanerch is also depicted as a paled park encompassing the house on the William Williams map of c.1720. In 1772 Llanerch was modernised and re-roofed by John Davies and according to Thomas Pennant, 'spoiled by modern alteration and frittered into an errant villa.' The gardens too were destroyed and remodelled in the 1770s, creating, what Pennant describes as 'a small but beautiful park, with a fine piece of water at the bottom.'

Pennant also wrote 'The former gardens were made by Mutton Davies, Esq., on his return from Italy, in the last century, and were fine in that sort of style, decorated with waterworks and statues, emitting water from the various parts, to the astonishment of the rustic spectators.' (*Thomas Pennant, Tours in Wales, first published London, 1778, edited by John Rhys (Caernarvon: H. Humphreys, 1883, 3 vols.), 2:171*).

Dr. Johnson in his *Journey into North Wales 1774* wrote 'We saw Llanerch, a house not mean, with a small park very well watered. There was an avenue of oaks, which, in a foolish compliance with the present mode, has been cut down. A few are yet standing. The owner's name is Davies.'

Philip Yorke of Erddig wrote in his *Royal Tribes of Wales, 1799, p 98* 'the old gardens at Llanerch are within my memory; they were made by Mutton Davies in the foreign taste with images and water tricks. Among the rest you

were led to a sun dial, which as you approached, spouted water in your face. On it was written 'Alas! my friend, time will soon overtake you; / And if you do not cry, by G-d I'll make you.'

The remodelled landscape can be seen in the engraving left. Neptune stands, looking towards the house, in a more natural water, in the parkland. He seems misplaced, without a dolphin and holding an incomplete trident.

The Llanerch painting shows many fruit trees. Espalier trees grow against the garden walls and there are extensive orchards north and east of the house, reflecting the wide interest in fruit growing at this time. Cider became the

national drink with more cider than ale houses licensed in London during the reign of Charles II.

There are also s great many Italian cypress trees depicted in the painting. Cypress trees surrounded the gardens, lined the main entrance to the house and were planted along the path on the main axis of the gardens to and around the Neptune pool. Perhaps Mutton had seen the cypress trees which once surrounded the fountain in the cloister of S Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri (St. Mary of the Angels and Martyrs at the Baths of Rome), the last great architectural project of Michelangelo. The cypress was much esteemed by the ancients for its scent and durability, and famously used for the original doors at the entrance of St Peter's.

Llanerch house assumed its present appearance in 1864 when it was restored by Dod Whitehall.

Today, Llanerch Hall can still be seen on elevated ground surveying the River Clwyd but the wonderful Italianate terraced gardens, with statuary, fountains and pavilions have all been lost except in the paintings.

The existing formal gardens were created by Percy Cane in the 1920s.

The Llanerch painting is probably the most important image of any Welsh garden and one of the jewels in the Welsh cultural crown. WHGT wholeheartedly supports the efforts being made by the National Museum of Wales to keep this image in Wales and for it to become accessible to the public.



Plas Cadnant © Glynis Shaw

AGM 2014 hosted by the Gwynedd branch

The weekend began with a champagne reception at Crûg Farm hosted by Bleddyn and Sue Wynn-Jones and included an interesting guided tour of the garden with a description of the natural home of the plants and stories of their collection. Crûg Farm nursery has become famous for its exotic plants, and it is a privilege to meet the collectors! Bleddyn and Sue annually make trips of several months collecting in places such as the Philippines, Nepal and Vietnam. Their client list includes Buckingham Palace and garden designer Arabella Lennox-Boyd and of course WHGT members.

The AGM was held at Plas Tan y Bwlch, the Snowdonia National Park environmental studies centre. This was the 19th century home of the Oakeley family who owned the slate quarry at Blaenau Ffestiniog. Many thanks to the National Trust Property Manager of Penrhyn Castle, Richard Williams, who stepped in at the last moment as speaker. Richard described how his experience with conservation of the built environment and objects in the NT care was significantly less challenging than the conservation of gardens. Richard outlined the difficulties of maintaining the aesthetics of a landscape whilst undertaking necessary replanting and how the needs for public access meant redesigning paths for heavy wear and tear whilst parking and public facilities had to be accommodated. Richard welcomed WHGT interest in the issues concerning NT gardens and expressed his hope for closer collaboration in the future.

The Plas Tan y Bwlch long terrace overlooks the valley of the River Dwyryd and the landscape comprises 13 acres of parkland and surrounding woodland. The sloping gardens were mainly laid out by John Roberts in the 1880s, but some of the large Himalayan rhododendron trees are

believed to be nearly 200 years old.

A tour with the Head Gardener, Chris Marshall, showed where William Edward Oakley planted firs in the shape of his and his wife's initials among the oaks on the south side of the valley. We also saw the devastation caused by the 100 mile an hour winds in the February storms. The site had to be closed for public safety but the National Park Authority have taken this opportunity to regenerate the garden and undertake new planting. Over the next five years the Grade II Victorian garden will be restored whilst taking climate change into consideration. The site is Grade II listed and also a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) so there is much effort in maintaining habitats for biodiversity. In August, six months after the storms, the grounds were re-opened to the public and a plan involving the planting of over 2,000 new plants and trees is now under way.

Members also enjoyed a visit to Plas Cadnant, owned by Anthony Tavernor, a WHGT Trustee, near Menai Bridge. After a warm welcome and an excellent introduction members had guided tours of what must be one of the best private garden restoration projects in Wales. Since 1997 a herb garden near the house has been established, the large walled garden restored, and recently there has been much effort in clearing and restoring the woodland and lower valley gardens. Original paths and cascades have been re-established with some sensitive and well placed stonework. New viewing points have been sited overlooking the waterfall and the river. Essentially a new garden has been created on an historic site and much of the new planting is of considerable horticultural interest.

Many thanks to Olive Horsfall and the Gwynedd branch for a most interesting and enjoyable weekend.

£600 was raised for WHGT.



Prince Charles meeting WHGT Trustees at Dyffryn Gardens images courtesy of the NT @ Dimitris Legakis of Athena

Every summer, Their Royal Highnesses Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall spend a week in Wales in their house at Llwynywermod, near Llandovery in Carmarthenshire, to tour various parts of Wales.

The theme for visits in 2014 was "Celebrating Wales, Past, Present and Future". On July 1st, TRH Prince Charles and The Duchess made a visit to Dyffryn Gardens, celebrating not only the £1.4m restoration of the house and gardens but also to mark the centenary of the Dahlia trials on the site. They met many of those who have who have been involved with the fund raising, conservation, restoration and research at Dyffryn over the past seven years.

During the Dyffryn visit, our Patron, the Prince of Wales, also made time to share the celebrations of the WHGT 25th Anniversary with the Trustees and to launch the WHGT Anniversary Small Grants Scheme.

Many thanks to Gerry Donovan, General Manager of Dyffryn Gardens and a Trustee of WHGT who hosted the visit. Thanks also to Becky Woszczycki, our Chairman Jean Reader's daughter, who made the delicious cake, Marilyn Anderson who provided teas and coffee and Helena Gerrish who presented His Royal Highness with the last copy of her book *'Edwardian Country Life, The Story of H. Avray Tipping'* as a token of thanks on behalf of the Trust. Prince Charles much admired the cover picture, with a fine show of delphiniums at High Glanau Manor, and ruefully explained that his plants had suffered from slug damage. Helena and Olive Horsfall were glad to offer our Patron advice on their slug proofing techniques as he left!

This was a memorable and most enjoyable day for all concerned on the forty-fifth anniversary of the investiture of His Royal Highness as the Prince of Wales.

Justin Albert, Director of the National Trust in Wales, also briefly met with the Trustees and promised to host the WHGT in the summer of 2015.

Cory's Dahlia Trials at Dyffryn

2014 is the centenary of the Dyffryn Dahlia trials carried out by Reginald Radcliffe Cory (1871-1934). Reginald, a keen gardener and plant collector, was the son of the coal and shipping magnate John Cory who built Dyffryn house. However, it was Reginald who created the 55 acre gardens in collaboration with the designer Thomas Mawson.

Reginald's love for gardens began in Cambridge through his friendship with Humphrey Gilbert-Carter, the Director of the University Botanic Garden 1921-1950, whilst studying law at Trinity College. In the 1920s Reginald funded the construction of Cory Lodge as the Director's residence. Reginald eventually became a Vice-President of the Royal Horticultural Society and President of the National Dahlia Society.

In 1913-14 these two organisations collaborated to trial over 7,000 dahlias in 1,000 cultivars at Dyffryn. From these trials only 'Glow' and 'Tommy Keith' now survive. Dyffryn has now had a replanting of dahlias featuring 100 varieties. The sun-loving, frost-tender plants are mainly native to Mexico and Central America and became the national flower of Mexico in 1963. Before the Spanish Conquest the Aztecs grew the tubers as a food crop. The first dahlia specimens in Europe were received by Abbe Antonio Jose Cavanilles, Director of the Royal Gardens of Madrid in 1789. By the time of Cory's dahlia trials they had become very popular throughout Europe.

Welsh Dahlia Bishop of Llandaff

Dahlia Bishop of Llandaff is a popular dahlia with dark-black divided foliage and warm-red peony flowers held well above the leaves. It was bred in 1928 by Fred Tresseder a third generation Cardiff nurseryman who spent 50 years breeding dahlias. This flower was selected by his friend Bishop Hughes from a bunch of Fred's best seedlings and won the RHS Award of Garden Merit 1928.

Chairman's remarks

I know I speak on behalf of all Trustees when I say how thrilled we have been with the ways in which members have celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of WHGT. It is a remarkable achievement for a small heritage organisation to be able to celebrate what it has achieved over the last twenty-five years and we have been delighted to hear of all the activities members have organised during the year.

All the branches have made efforts to enhance their programmes this year with special events and visits to gardens not visited before. Our thanks go to all those who have arranged talks, visits, tours and other events this year.

In the past the Trust has received many requests for small amounts of money to assist projects that aim to preserve, raise awareness of, and maintain historic parks and gardens in Wales. Whereas large financial grants are available from a number of sources, grants for small projects are often difficult to acquire and we decided to set up the Small Grants Scheme as a lasting project by which to mark our twenty-fifth anniversary. The scheme was launched in July in the presence of our Patron, HRH The Prince of Wales, with the aim of raising £25,000 to mark the quarter-centenary and to use this funding solely for such projects. Our first grants were awarded in November.

I would like to thank you all for contributing to it in so many ways and so generously. At the time of writing, we have received donations totalling £12,746.10.

As a result of the hard ticket-selling work undertaken by so many of you and because of the generous prizes offered by a number of donors the raffle, drawn in November, raised £2,471.00. We have also almost been overwhelmed by the generosity of so many in donating second hand garden-related books for our sale. Gaenor Price of the Gwynedd branch put in an enormous amount of work in pricing everything we received. This involved not only trawling through the shelves of antiquarian bookshops but hours on the internet seeing just what was available. We accepted her advice to offer our books at an internet price plus whatever it would have cost to post to a purchaser. There have been a number of sales around Wales during the year and the total book sales currently stand at £976.10. There is one more sale to go so I very much hope that will take us up to £1,000.

At the time of writing, our total fund-raising for the Small Grants Scheme has reached £16,193.20 and we feel hugely cheered to know that the project has been so well supported. Of course, there is still a way to go to reach our target of £25,000 so if you feel able to contribute towards the scheme please either send a cheque (made out to 'Welsh Historic Gardens Trust' and marked on the back 'Small Grants Scheme')

or

Donate via the website <http://www.whgt.org.uk>

Awards 2014

Congratulations to the successful applicants for the first awards from the new WHGT 25th Anniversary Small Grants Scheme who were each awarded £500.

Friends of Court Farm, Pembrey, Carmarthenshire. The grant will contribute to the funding of a geophysical survey in 2015. Friends of Court Farm were formed in 2006 and have since accrued nearly 10,000 volunteer hours with fund raising events and work on the site. Depending on the result of the survey, the Friends can restore the Tudor garden to the ruined Grade II listed manor house.

Nelson Garden, Monmouth. This garden was visited by Nelson in 1802 and the grant will be used for signage to explain the presence of the Britannia statue and brass medallions which bear the names of admirals in Nelson's navy and the battles in which they fought. These artefacts, originally from the naval temple on the Kymin hill above Monmouth, were donated to the garden by the National Trust for safekeeping. Replicas have now been replaced on the Kymin.

Plasturton Gardens, Cardiff. The Friends of Plasturton Gardens in the Pontcanna district were established in 2005 and have worked with Cardiff Council to improve the much-loved community gardens. The grant will enable the Friends to make necessary repairs to weather-proof and secure the Victorian park keeper's hut in the garden.

Whitehurst Gardens Chirk. The Friends of Whitehurst Gardens are a new group working with WHGT Clwyd to restore the terraced ornamental fruit garden developed by Sir Thomas Myddelton in 1651. The aim is to restore a unique triangular canal below the mound. The grant will contribute towards a geophysical survey of the site and be match funded by the Clwyd branch.

Many thanks to Advolly Richmond and Joanna Davidson for helping to establish this scheme and for those who were involved in assessing the applications. All the Trustees were pleased to have a scheme to directly aid conservation and restoration of parks and gardens in Wales.

It is anticipated that the WHGT Small Grants Scheme will continue in future years and so act as a lasting legacy. Thank you for supporting WHGT so loyally this year.

Jean Reader

Anniversary Raffle Winners!

Many thanks to Joy Neal, Jennie Macve and Maldwyn Rees for organising the raffle. Our congratulations to all the prize winners:

Melissa Palmer won the Roger Wagner oil study of Fron Fawr; Gerry Donovan a case of claret; John West a holiday at Parrog House, Mr. Mellor a holiday at a cottage in Bettws-y-Coed; David Leonard a holiday in a cottage in Kingsbridge; Lee Love a cash prize of £100; Steffie Shields a Kindle Fire and small prizes of £10 were won by Margaret Williams, Gilly Drummond and Mrs F. Williams.

The Gardens of Court



Court, Pembrey, in Carmarthenshire, not far away (as the crow flies) from the Dunraven garden featured in the previous Bulletin, is also linked to the Lordship of Ogmore.

Court remains one of the most significant unrestored multi-period mansions in Wales. William de Londres, Lord of Ogmore, was the father of Maurice de Londres. At his father's death in 1126, Maurice became the Lord of Ogmore and two years later was made Lord of Kidwelly.

Maurice de Londres granted the Manor of Pembrey to John le Boteler of Dunraven for his extreme loyalty in 1128. Evidence suggests that the le Boteler family, later anglicized to Butler, were the first to occupy a manor on the Court site. The Butler's coat of arms appears in St Illtyd's Church, Pembrey and a monument and altar-tomb of Sir John le Boteler c.1250 can be found at St Brides Major Church.

Six generations later Arnold, the last son, died without issue leaving his sister Anne, the last of the Butlers, heiress to both the Pembrey and Dunraven estates.

Anne married Sir Richard Vaughan, heir to the Bredwardine estate in Herefordshire. These two estates then formed part of the vast Vaughan estates. Richard was knighted in 1513 and became High Sheriff of the county in 1530. His son, Sir Walter Vaughan (1500 -1584) born at Dunraven Castle moved to Pembrey after his marriage. Walter rebuilt the main part of Pembrey Court during the 1560s, and this remains the only surviving Elizabethan manor house in Carmarthenshire. Walter became High Sheriff of Carmarthenshire in 1557 and MP. The last of the Vaughans, Bridget, travelled to London to find a rich husband. Bridgit married John Ashburnham in 1677 but never returned to Court. The property was retained for their agents to live in. Court was subsequently tenanted out, escaping modernisation in the Victorian or Georgian periods.

The 1878 Ordnance Survey map gives the first known ground plan of Court Farm, showing the original Vaughan L-shaped structure, with two wings enclosing a courtyard in the rear. Nearby, on the south side, is the large barn with an embattled parapet, indicating that it may have originally been a defensive construction

A large enclosed garden is outlined, together with Court Wood, both planted by the Vaughans. The gardens at Court, although smaller than those of Dunraven, are divided into three main areas:

The orchard to the northwest of the house still exists, albeit greatly neglected. Its rectangular shape on a slope can be found on old maps. Originally it was surrounded by a small stone wall with hornbeam hedging on its top.

The hedge has now grown extremely tall and the wall has collapsed. Sidney and Elizabeth Thomas were the last family to live at Court between 1929 and 1948. According to Dennis, their last surviving son, his mother made jams and jellies from the fruit of the orchard and said 'they were the best!'

A walled garden to the south east of the house was maintained as a lawn until the middle of the last century. It has a revetment wall to a lower terrace. Liz Whittle inspected the garden in 2010 for Cadw and reported that given its location, structure and relict planting it is likely that this compartment had at least a partial ornamental garden function in its past life.

No remnants of the former gardens are obvious and it is the intention of the Friends of Court Farm to undertake an archaeological investigation when funding becomes available.

The main walled garden has a very large Ash tree, a fine old specimen with considerable historic significance noted by our friend David Rice [arborist] during his survey of the trees at Court.

In 2010 Richard and Kath Pryce, Llanelli Naturalists and County Plant Recorders, came to visit. Amongst the fronds of ivy that grows on every wall of the house and barn they were thrilled to find a specimen of the Southern Polypody Fern growing on elder branches, a relatively rare fern. This is the second site recorded for this species in the O.S. grid square SN40 (the other being Kidwelly town walls and Castle) and only the sixteenth site record for Carmarthenshire.

In the spring many early flowering woodland plants can be seen in and around Court including Lesser Celandine, Lords and Ladies, Garlic-mustard, Red Campion, Herb Robert, Common Vetch and Ivy-leaved Speedwell. There is also an abundance of ferns growing in the shady areas including Soft Shield-fern, Scaly Male-fern, and Hart's-tongue. Bittersweet and Maidenhair Spleenwort grow in the barn and Pennywort and Alexanders

Right: The pond in the foreground has since been drained © Peter Davis collection

Left: Court Open Doors 2014

Below: Court Barn with embattled parapet as seen today.

can be seen on the walls.

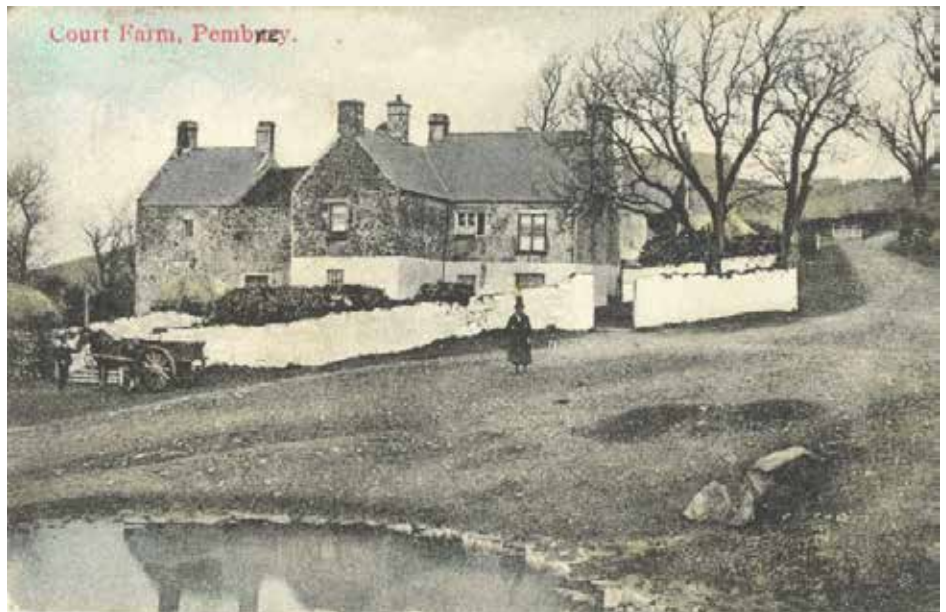
Below the walls to the south of the walled garden lie the remnants of probably two terraces. The middle terrace was cemented over in the 1960s to form a hard standing for silage that was then unceremoniously covered in black plastic with more than two hundred tyres. This was how it was left when the farm became redundant in the middle of the last century.

Over the past 8 years the Friends of Court Farm have carefully cleared the debris and brambles and disposed of the black plastic and tyres.

The barn is surrounded by hedgerows and bramble thickets which are part of the ancient hedgerows along Mucky Lane – the colloquial name for Ffordd Fawr, part of the sixty-four mile St Illtyd's Walk.

A group of Carmarthenshire Antiquarian Society members carried out hedge counting on Court land in 1979. This involves counting the number of different shrub species in every alternate 30 metre length on one side of the hedge and a similar count in the uncounted lengths on the other side of the hedge. Each species in the hedge approximates a hundred years. The Court hedges yielded an average count of five different species, suggesting that the hedges are nearly 550 years old [1]. Dormice are present, and in early spring nesting birds are to be found.

The woods original to the manorial land of Court are known as Coed Marchog (Knight's Wood), mainly consisting of oak trees with some holly and hazel. In the early 1800s women were employed in this parish, as in many others, to strip the bark of the oak which was taken



to the nearest tannery. The tannin was extracted and used to process the leather [2].

In addition to the land surrounding Court Farm, the Butlers controlled the vast area of flatlands known as Pembrey Burrows, or the Warren, and the greater part of Pinged Marsh, which is now part of Pembrey Country Park. The Butlers were also granted the extremely lucrative rights to all wrecks found on the Cefn Sidan sands as far as Caldicot Point and Tywyn Point .

When Bridget Vaughan married John Ashburnham in 1677, the Court land stretched over 7,568 acres. In 1823 the farm consisted of just 194 acres and 12 acres of marshland. Today the land in the scope of Court has been reduced to just less than three acres.

The Friends of Court Farm now need to undertake an archaeological investigation of Court's landscape. Until this is done there remain many unanswered questions about the early origins of the site. The aim is to restore them to its Elizabethan splendour, not as the Kenilworth of Carmarthenshire but to its rightful status within Pembrey, the county and Wales.

Patricia Neil

[1 & 2] Nicholson .J. A. *Pembrey and Burry Port – Some Historical Events and Recollections* p. 4 & 17



Masters of their Craft,

The Art, Architecture and Garden Design of the Nesfields by Shirley Rose Evans *Lutterworth Press 31/07/2014*

PB	97807 18893231	£30
PDF	97807 18842413	£31.80
EPUB	97807 18842406	£23.86

The well illustrated 'Masters of their Craft' describes the history of the Nesfield family their education and their work.

William Andrews Nesfield and William Eden Nesfield, father and son, worked on no fewer than 259 commissions in the British Isles. The Nesfields produced horticultural and architectural designs for the wealthy, as well as winning important public commissions at Kew Gardens and the Kensington museum complex.

William had an early military career, aspects of which enabled him to design the water features in many of his gardens. When he retired from the army in 1816, he became a watercolour painter, particularly of waterfalls, earning the praise of John Ruskin in *Modern Painters*. Whilst still exhibiting at the Old Water Colour Society, Nesfield began work as a professional landscape architect at the age of 40, with the encouragement of the architect Anthony Salvin. William produced grand formal designs but also was sensitive to the picturesque qualities of the landscape due to his painting.

His son Eden flourished in the artistic milieu in which he was raised and became an architect. Between 1886-89 Eden was in a partnership with his friend Richard Norman Shaw but his main passion was for Gothic detailing on small intimate garden buildings. He worked on many commissions with his father, influenced by the Arts & Crafts movement. Both played an important role in the nineteenth century revivals of the Jacobean, Renaissance and Gothic styles.

Nesfield commissions in Wales include Plas Dinam, Montgomeryshire (1872-4); Gwernyfed Park, Three Cocks, Brecon(1877); Bodrhyddan Hall, Denbighshire (1872-3) where the Victorian parterre is by William Andrews Nesfield, and William Eden Nesfield remodelled the house in 1875; Gloddaith Hall, Denbighshire was remodelled by Eden (1875-6); Treberfydd, Brecon is set in gardens with three geometrical parterres, planting, drives, and a walled garden re-landscaped in 1850 by W. A. Nesfield.

William Eden worked at Plas Kinmel, Conwy, where the Golden Lodge (1868) with ornamental sunflowers and stained glass was a copy of his Temperate Lodge at Kew and remodelled Kinmel mansion in the Queen Anne Style between 1871-74. The Venetian garden was laid out by his father.

Shirley Rose Evans gives the social context of the Nesfields' work at a time of great change and details their best work. Members interested in art and design as well as garden history will find this book both informative and interesting.

Save Kew Gardens funding

Kew Gardens, established more than 200 years ago, is the largest, oldest and biggest repository of plants and plant research in the world. There is an international campaign demanding that the £5m budget cut should be restored. Kew maintains the world's premier plant and fungal collections, including 30,000 living plants, one billion seeds and the DNA of 20% of the world's plant species. Kew is important for international plant conservation and part of our heritage.

The Government's and Defra's irresponsible action in cutting Kew's grant aid threatens the jobs of 125 professional staff members, its work and reputation. It is a national scandal that this hugely important centre of scientific and environmental excellence should face outrageous cuts and exposure to commercial interests. In June a petition signed by 100,000 was presented to the Prime Minister at 10 Downing Street by Tory MP Zac Goldsmith whose constituency covers Kew.

On 3 September 2014, the Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg, announced a reversal of the 2014 £5m cuts to Kew's operating budget. However, this welcome move will not reverse the damage of five years successive reductions to Kew's operational funding.

On 11 November the Commons Parliamentary Select Committee on Science and Technology announced a one-off evidence session addressing announcements made by The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, regarding its handling of a £5m "budget gap". An "evidence session" is used to inform and advise Parliament.

The campaign continues: The Committee state that they are happy to receive correspondence by email: scitechcom@parliament.uk or please write to the Committee, and present your evidence on Kew's national and international impact on research, education and advice, plant-related services, caring for world-renowned scientific collections which people can study and providing a resource that the public can learn from and enjoy.

It is not too late to sign and share the petition at http://bit.ly/save_kew. You can also write to your MP to express your concern. Please encourage them to support our demand to reverse and prevent further cuts to Kew's funding and ask them to support Early Day Motion 117.

Stop Press

Plas Brynkir, Dolbenmaen

by Mark Baker (Editor), Robin Bateman (Translator), ISBN: 9780993137303, from Amazon's Book Store. Paperback published 6 Dec 2014

A collection of essays record the research and archaeology of the ruins at Plas Brynkir over the past 3 years at Cwm Pennant. Brynkir means 'Hill of the Deer' in Welsh; and the former deer park has been identified along with a number of elements of the former gardens in this landscape. The Gwynedd Branch made a contribution to the geophysical survey of the site.

WHGT on Tour 2014

Right: Gwynedd branch travelled to Ireland to see gardens in Dublin and County Wicklow. The driver had a challenge to organise the plant packing to go home after a successful trip © Olive Horsfall

Centre: The Monmouth and Gwent branch went on a tour to Devon. It included a visit to National Trust Greenway, Agatha Christie's former holiday home on the River Dart. Members with Mathew Prichard, Agatha Christie's grandson, and Mahler © Lucy Pritchard

Below: The Brecon and Radnor branch organised a tour to the gardens of North Wales. Members visited Nanhoron, David and Bettina Harder's garden on the Lleyn Peninsula. This shows an enchanting rill which goes through the middle of the walled garden. © Jane Moyle

The Gwynedd branch has been running successful and enjoyable garden tours for WHGT members for some years and this year organised a visit to Ireland.

Two other branches arranged a special anniversary tour this year: The Monmouth and Gwent branch visited gardens in Devon and the Brecon and Radnor branch visited gardens in North Wales.

These tours are very enjoyable and participating members not only see a good number of wonderful gardens, enjoy a range of talks and lectures and meet some passionate gardeners but also have time to socialise in good company.

Many thanks to the tour organisers for all their hard work!

In 2015 the Gwynedd Branch has arranged a tour to visit the gardens in Yorkshire. Members who are interested should get in touch with Olive Horsfall or check the WHGT website for details in the New Year. Olive had a long waiting list for the trip to Dublin!

Brecon and Radnor plan to visit the gardens of the Loire in 2016.



Cardiff RHS show: 2014

For the first time WHGT had a stand at the Cardiff RHS show in the Learn to Grow marquee. This was a great success thanks to WHGT members who



Tools quiz at the Cardiff RHS Show. Image © Helena Gerrish

had taken turns to staff the stand. Thanks go to Caroline Palmer for the image of Newport Castle which was selected for a smart new screen to back the stand. The same image was also used on the cover of the 25th Anniversary Publication.

Special thanks to Merilyn Anderson who sourced the mystery garden items for a quiz on the stand. This certainly added interest and helped to engage the public with the work of the WHGT.

Congratulations to Sally Oates, from Tetbury, Gloucestershire who won the quiz at the RHS show competition. Sally not only knows about strange garden tools but also a great deal about plants and had just been awarded a contract to supply plants for Dyffryn Gardens.

Sally tracks down the plants that were grown in a particular period in history and specialises in the Victorian and Edwardian era but also likes doing other periods as well. Sally now enjoys regular visits to Dyffryn. We hope the prize of a years' membership of WHGT will be both useful and enjoyable!

Royal Welsh Show

A similar quiz was run by the Brecon and Radnor branch on the WHGT stand at the Royal Welsh Show.

No prize was awarded at the Royal Welsh as no one managed to correctly identify more than two items. This was after excluding the mystery item No.2 which was curiously not connected to horticulture or agriculture but to carpet laying!

Thanks to the Brecon and Radnor branch and all the WHGT volunteers for helping to manage the stand at this event.

LandLove Award nomination

WHGT has been nominated for a LandLove Award for 'Britain's Favourite Charitable Organisation'. Members can help by getting friends and family to vote for WHGT via the website: <http://www.landlove.com/awards> or email: landlove@burdamagazines.co.uk or fill in the form pg 73 in the Nov/Dec issue of LandLove and posting it to Lauren Morton, LandLove Magazine, Hubert Burda Media UK, The Tower, Phoenix Square, Wyncolls Road, Colchester, Essex CO4 9HU. You have until Jan 4th to vote.

Montgomery Memorial Garden

The Montgomery Memorial garden on the Pound has been redeveloped. The new plans involved the erection of a new granite stone to form a memorial to the fallen of both World Wars and a tablet with the names of the fallen inscribed. A disabled access, new seating and a flower bed were also created to ensure a lasting tribute to the fallen for the centenary of World War One.



A packed out service at St Nicholas Church was followed by the re-dedication in front of a huge crowd at the New Garden of Remembrance Sept 16th 2014. This marked the end of a community driven project headed by Paul Hodgson and Montgomery Town Council.

image © www.g17.co.uk".

Plan © Philip Humphreys Architects, Montgomery.



Bodnant

The centenary of the Great War is also the centenary of the terraces at Bodnant and this has been marked by a special rose planting.

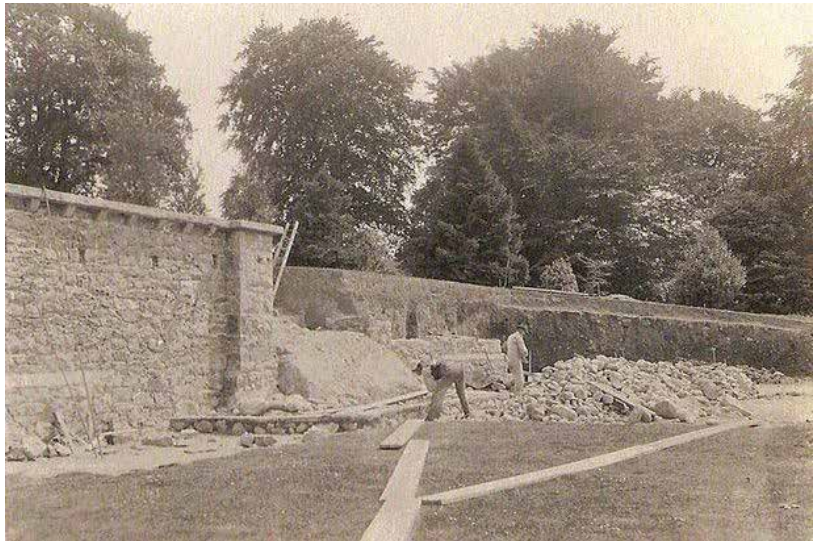
The five great Italianate terraces facing Snowdonia were landscaped between 1905 and 1914 by Henry McLaren, the eldest son of Laura, the first Lady Aberconway. Laura had landscaped terraces at Golden Grove in Llanasa, Flintshire, bought by her father Henry Pochin in 1877 after he had bought the Bodnant estate in 1875.

Laura was one of the finest horticulturists in Europe and designed the garden at the Château de la Garoupe, in the south of France near Antibes, built for Lord Aberconway in 1907. Garoupe has a magnificent park with a long stairway leading to the sea, was acclaimed as one of the most beautiful gardens of the Cote d'Azur, visited by the Duke of Connaught in 1919. Laura received the RHS Victoria Medal of honour in 1931. Both her son and grandson were recipients of this honour in 1934 and 1961 respectively and both served as Presidents of the RHS.

Henry shared his mother's love for gardens and was an extremely energetic gardener and enthusiastic in all horticultural activities. Encouraged by his mother, who always approved of change, Henry was entrusted with the care of Bodnant garden begun by Pochin which Laura inherited in 1895. Henry developed the gardens over a period of more than fifty years, and gifted Bodnant Garden to the National Trust in 1949.

Though undoubtedly a great plantsman, Henry devoted most attention to the design of the landscape of which the terraces were his greatest work. Granite for the great buttress walls was quarried from the surrounding estate. After 1914 many of those who laboured on the terraces went off to war, some never to return.

Members of the nearby St. Martin's church, have been working on a Heritage Lottery Fund project: *How the First World War affected Eglwysbach, Llansantffraid and the people living there*. This has identified three of the Bodnant gardeners; Eric Saunderson aged 25 and Thomas Oliver Owen age 23 who were lost in the war in



Construction of the Bodnant terraces, Images courtesy of the NT

France in August 1916 and Peter Williams aged 23 who died in France February 1917. Francis McLaren MP, the brother of the garden's owner, Henry McLaren, and a pilot is also listed on the war memorial. He was killed in 1917 aged 31.

The renovations of the top Rose Terrace in 2006 and the lower Rose Terrace in 2012 involved removing and replacing 500 tonnes of soil. Paths have been re-laid, the pergola restored and repainted and the beds have been replanted with David Austin's fragrant roses.

Henry's terraces are a lasting legacy and a major element of the Bodnant landscape which continues to provide much enjoyment today.

Lower Leighton Super Dairy

The High Court rejected the Welsh 'super-dairy' legal challenge by the Animal welfare group the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA). In dismissing the appeal, the court rejected arguments that the ministers had failed to pay 'special regard' to the impact that the development would have on the heritage assets. It accepted that ministers had given clear and unequivocal reasons and taken relevant considerations into account in deciding that priority should be given to the economic benefits of the scheme to the local community and the Welsh dairy industry in general.

Special Places in Wales

Cyfarthfa Castle has come second in the top Special Places in Wales according to the National Trust. Penarth Pier came first and the Lonely Tree in Powys made it into third place. Dyffryn House and Gardens were in the sixth place. Research has shown that childhood memories from places where we grew up (according to 44 per cent of those surveyed) are what makes a place truly special.

Royal Patronage

The Council and Trustees of the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust are delighted to announce that His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales has graciously agreed to continue to be the Patron of the Trust for the period of another five years.

Speaking on behalf of the Trust the Chairman, Jean Reader, said: "This news will be greeted with immense satisfaction by all our members and supporters. The Prince first became our Patron in 1991, less than two years after the Trust's inception, and he has continued to support us over the years. He has always taken great interest in the work we undertake to preserve historic parks, gardens and designed landscapes from neglect, indifference, insensitive planning and planting decisions and to conserve them for future generations. We are absolutely thrilled that he has agreed to continue to be our Patron".

Success! The Tywi Gateway, Bishop's Park, Abergwili

The Round 1 application to the Heritage Lottery Fund, 'Parks for People' programme, for the Bishop's Park has been submitted and accepted for determination.

The submission states that Bishop's Park at Abergwili combines nationally important cultural, historic and ecological features that, despite statutory designations, are deteriorating for lack of integrated management and conservation. Even the County Museum (the former palace) at its heart, is not immune.

This is all about to change as Carmarthenshire County Council are working towards "a park and museum for all" and the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust is helping bring this to realisation.

In this 'Garden of Wales' the Tywi Gateway will be an all-year destination with reinvigorated pleasure grounds, kitchen garden, a flood-plain meadow and ox-bow lake, complete with a secret island. With the Museum it will celebrate the beauty and history of the Tywi valley and the spiritual and academic heritage of Abergwili.

The degree to which local people are engaged with the park and its heritage will be the measure of the project's success.

The initial application is for a grant of £136,000 (71% of the total) to enable the development of the proposal in sufficient detail to prepare a Round 2 application for a delivery grant of an estimated £1.1 million. However competition for funding is intense and it is by no means certain that we will be successful when the result is announced in December.

Thanks to colleagues in the County Council, the County Museum and the Representative Body for their wholehearted cooperation, without which we couldn't have gone this far in such a relatively short time.

Michael Norman

New Council Members

We are pleased to welcome **Elizabeth Banks** of Hergest Croft, Herefordshire. Elizabeth is a noted landscape architect and former President of the RHS. Hergest Croft has been in the same family since the house was built in 1896. Three generations of great plantsmen have developed the gardens which have been open to visitors for more than 80 years. Hergest Croft has one of the finest arboretums in the country, with 39 champions.

We are also pleased to welcome **Clare Pillman**, a founder member of WHGT and Welsh speaker who lives in Flintshire. Clare has been a Director in the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) since March 2011. Clare also became a Trustee of the North Wales Building Preservation Trust in 2012.

The new council members will join Elisabeth Whittle (President), Lawrence Banks, John Borron, Sara Furse, Bettina Harden, Gwyneth Hayward, Robin Herbert, John Dixon Hunt, David Lambert and William Wilkins.

The Council is an advisory body to the WHGT. Whilst council members have no involvement in the direct running of the Trust their support is greatly appreciated, especially for the ambassadorial role they undertake to promote the interests of the Trust.

New Trustees

WHGT is also pleased to welcome two new Trustees:

Alan Fay of the Brecon and Radnor branch has worked as a planning advisor in the Highlands and Islands Forum. Alan will bring a wealth of planning experience to the Trust. Since the AGM Alan has organised a very useful planning seminar for those who respond to planning applications on behalf of the Trust.

Anthony Tavernor of the Gwynedd branch is well known to members in North Wales for the restoration of his garden at Plas Cadnant. Anthony, originally a Staffordshire fruit farmer, has restored derelict buildings and grounds on a heroic scale. The property has provided for his interests in history, architecture and gardens. Plas Cadnant has a two acre walled garden with a pool and an extensive woodland valley garden laid out in a picturesque style in the manner of Repton. Anthony's hands on experience in garden restoration will be invaluable to the Trust.

WHGT Officers:

President: Elisabeth Whittle	
Chairman: Jean Reader	029 2059 6742
Vice Chairman: Joy Neal	01654 781203
Treasurer: Hugh Gardner	01792 290014
Membership Secretary: Jennie Macve	01970 626180
Conservation Officer: Ros Laidlaw	01970 832268

WHGT, Aberglasney Gardens,
Llangathen, Carmar SA32 8QH
admin@whgt.org.uk

01558 668 485



Penllergare Valley Woods Upper Lake

Restoration began on the Upper Lake this autumn. Hundreds of tonnes of sludge were removed from the lake bed in a bid to restore the character of a key feature of the romantic landscape created by Dillwyn Llewelyn. The sludge removal has been funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and Veolia Environmental Trust. The silt will be reused on pastureland and the lake allowed to refill.

*Autumn Reflections on Upper Lake
image © Carey Beor*

Success! NBGW

The National Botanic Garden of Wales (NBGW) has gained Heritage Lottery Fund support towards the first stage of a £6.7 million plan to restore the historic Regency landscape at Middelton Park. (This landscape featured in the previous Bulletin Issue 67).

Archaeological survey work will be undertaken to reveal the secrets of the estate and the later Regency landscaping of one of the finest water parks in Britain. When restored, the landscape will once again feature the chain of seven lakes, cascades, falls and weirs created more than 200 years ago together with a restored Regency planting scheme in the parkland.

The heritage philanthropist Richard Broyd OBE, who suggested and supported the project from the outset, Garfield Weston Foundation, Welsh Government, the Mercers' Company and The Pilgrim Trust are all helping to fund the scheme.

Gwrych Castle

In April volunteers from the Gwrych Castle Preservation Trust began to clear the main drives and pathways and to clear litter from the site.

In July, thanks to the Mick Aston Archaeology Funding Grant from the Council of British Archaeology, supported by English Heritage and Cadw, a geophysical survey was undertaken by Tim Young of GeoArch and volunteers from Bangor University. They surveyed an area above the Conservatory and Melon House to check for the existence of entrances to Gwrych Castle, lost in the 1980s, when the area was used for jousting. During that time tonnes of earth were used to make the area flat. The survey identified a considerable amount of water several feet below the surface and the original conservatory floor. A subsequent archaeological dig confirmed the floor which has now been revealed.

A former fountain may also have been discovered. The Gwrych Trust is now hoping to secure funding for the Nicholas Pearson Partnership to produce a Conservation Management Plan next year.

WHGT a Great Garden Society

Most members will know this but now it's official as recorded in Country Life magazine. WHGT was listed as one of the 'Great Garden Societies' in the Country Life (CL)'Best of Britain' June 11, p105.

There has also been an article on the WHGT Small Grants scheme in Country Life on June 2, p 90.

Congratulations to Helena Gerrish as a photograph of her garden appeared on the cover of CL June 18 and the issue included an article by her on the garden at High Glanau Manor (p 86-8).



NFU MUTUAL CRIME PREVENTION CHRISTMAS MENU

STARTER: YOUR VEHICLE THIS CHRISTMAS

Sweet and Sour Spare Parts: with a sprinkling of broken windows
Never leave any personal items in the car, even in the glove compartment; it's where a thief will look first. Instead lock everything away in the boot, including coats, hats gloves etc. Also wipe down your windscreen to remove any signs that there was ever a satnav in your car.

Frosted Windscreens: To car thieves, frosty mornings are a Christmas gift
Don't leave your engine running if the car is unattended. Criminals are known to cruise housing estates looking for the tell-tale sign of steam rising from an exhaust and if the car is unattended, it takes only a few seconds for it to vanish. Unfortunately car owners will also get a cold reception from their insurance company as loss by leaving keys in an unattended vehicle is usually excluded from motor insurance policies.

MAIN: YOUR HOME AND ALL THE TRIMMINGS

Present filled parcels with a touch of tinsel
Give consideration to whether you leave gifts under the tree. While they look lovely to you, they are also very inviting to a criminal glancing through the window. If you do display gifts under the tree, leave it until much nearer to Christmas.

Secret Darkness

A house in darkness may indicate that no one is at home, so use timer devices to switch on lights, TV's and radios throughout your home. Close curtains after dark so thieves cannot see inside. If you are away for any length of time, arrange for a neighbour to leave their car on your drive and collect your post. Consider investing in outdoor sensor-operated floodlights, which could dissuade burglars.

Facebook Fool

Be careful not to advertise your home to burglars on social media! Burglars can use sites like Facebook and Twitter to scout for potential targets. Social media savvy families have a tendency to publish their whereabouts during the holiday season, including holiday plans. But this lets burglars know your house is empty - so be careful.

DESSERTS: OUTSIDE YOUR HOME

Valuable Delight
If you are buying expensive portable presents this year, like iPads, bikes, etc. mark them with your postcode. Permanent marking kits are inexpensive and could help you get your possessions back if they're stolen.

Trash & Biscuits
Dispose of packaging carefully as empty boxes left outside can advertise that you have new goods inside.

**Have a safe and Happy Christmas this year.
From the Affinity Team.**



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WHGT Annual General Meeting 2015 June 6th

at

the Old Hall University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Lampeter

hosted by the Ceredigion Branch

Speaker Elizabeth Banks

'The exotic trees at Hergest Croft and in their native habitat.'

Afternoon tea and garden visit at Llanllyr introduced by Mrs Loveday Gee

Friday 5 June Drinks at the Falcondale Hotel Lampeter

Sunday 7 June Guided visit to the Picturesque landscape of Hafod

Do consider making a weekend of it.

(There are accommodation options at the University and nearby.)

Events 2015**Carmarthenshire****7th February** Carmarthenshire are holding an afternoon of talks and cream tea. Speakers to be confirmed.We regret that there has been a delay with the publication of our book *Rooted In History - Carmarthenshire Parks and Gardens*. We don't as yet have a new publication date, but hope that if you have paid for a copy in advance you will be patient and happy to wait until it goes to print. We are very sorry if you were hoping to have your copy in time for Christmas. Anyone who would like a full refund should contact Judith Holland.

Contact Judith Holland for further details

j.holland@dyfedarchaeology.org.uk 01558 823121

Clwyd**7th March** 10.30 for 11.00. AGM Chirk Castle. 11.30 Talk on 'Hidden castles in parks and gardens' by Ray Bailey. After lunch there will be a tour of the garden with Head Gardener David Lock. Please book in advance.

Contact Sinah Harrison-Jones for further details

sinah@btinternet.com 01745 583433

**WHGT Study Day June 13th
Conservation of Plant Collections
and
their importance in the historic landscape**

Chaired by Lloyd Kenyon

Speakers to include Sophie Leguil, Plant Conservation Officer at Plant Heritage, Plant Hunter Bleddyn Wynn-Jones of Crûg Farm

Gwynedd**26th March** AGM at Plas y Brenin, Capel Curig, Conwy LL24 0ET. Speaker and details to be arranged.**7-9th July** Yorkshire Garden Tour staying in Harrogate. There will be a full programme of visits including one with the Yorkshire Gardens Trust.

Contact Olive Horsfall

oandmhorsfall@btinternet.com 01766780187

Great British Gardens This is a great new updated web guide available from www.greatbritishgardens.co.uk Unlike apps the guide is compatible with desk tops, lap tops, tablets and smartphones so you can use it anywhere.**Monmouthshire and Gwent****26th March** 7.00 pm. AGM at Clytha Park, Clytha, Nr. Abergavenny, Mons. Lecture on Marianne North, her life and paintings by Chris Mills, Head of Library, Art and Archives at Kew Gardens. Please book in advance with Anthea Prest: anthea@prests.com

Contact Merilyn Anderson for further details

m.anderson666@btinternet.com 01600 780389

Montgomeryshire**5 July 2015** The trees at Gregynog. Lunch, talk and walk by Tony Russell £24.50**29 August – 5 September** 'Picturesque Watercolour Landscape Tradition in Wales' an art exhibition in Montgomery Town Hall arranged by Anthony Mould. Donations to WHGT.

Contact Joy Neal for further details

joyneal@btinternet.com 01654 781203

West Glamorgan**15th January** 2:00pm Gardens of West Glamorgan from the Air by Toby Driver.**5th March** 2:00pm AGM followed by talk on the Life and Times of a Georgian Gardener by Jane Down from the NBGW.

Contact Phil Stevenson for further details

philip.stevenson1@ntlworld.com 01792 208431

For up to date information see: www.whgt.org.uk and the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust Facebook page.

Full branch programmes will be out in the New Year

Nadolig Llawen to you allEditor Glynis Shaw: Bulletin@whgt.org.uk 01745710261
Castell House, Bodfari, Denbigh, LL16 4HT

Many thanks to all contributors and everyone who has given assistance with this issue. I am sorry this is later than intended but I have been somewhat hampered by a broken wrist.

I owe a huge debt of thanks to Gaenor Price in the Gwynedd Branch who has volunteered to become a copy editor for the Bulletin. Gaenor has helped with the past two editions which have benefited from her expertise and advice. Thanks also to Jean Reader.

For the Spring Bulletin 2015 items should be received by early March.