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Ice house at Mostyn Hall, Flintshire. This was originally the inner doorway; a 3m.long entrance passage leading to it has collapsed

Gin and ice-cream: the search for Welsh ice-houses

Eurwyn Wiliam

Before refrigeration became available in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, ice and sometimes snow was harvested in the winter and stored in purpose-built ice-houses. Most large country houses in Britain from about 1750 to 1900 had such a house in which ice could be kept for use in spring and early summer. Storing ice was practised very early in the Middle East, but the earliest ice-house recorded in Britain dates only as far back as 1595. The first recorded British ice-house is at Ormerod House, Lancs, and another at Ashby Hall, Lincs, is also claimed for the same year, 1595.

British ice-houses are usually subterranean chambers, often egg-shaped, covered by a mound, and frequently of considerable size. We know of at least a hundred examples in Wales, though unquestionably more were built and await discovery.

Ice was regarded as necessary by most upper-class households. It was used in cooking and for medicinal uses. Food could only be preserved by drying, salting,

pickling and by placing it on ice before the advent of the refrigerator and the freezer. Dairy products, game, and to a lesser extent meat, were kept fresh in cool-rooms, supplied by ice brought at periodic intervals from the ice-house. Some food appears to have been kept in the ice-house itself on occasion, while larders were sometimes placed above an ice-chamber.

Ice was used in the making of ice-creams and other similar delicacies for the dinner table and for cooling wine. Having drunk the wine the unfortunate guests would, of course, suffer from a hangover, whereupon they could be provided with that pre-aspirin prescription for a headache, the ice-pack. Ice was also the most efficient way of keeping fevers in check, and is still so used in some cases even today.

The known location of ice-houses largely reflects the distribution of nineteenth-century landed wealth in Wales. The definition used by The Return of Owners of Land, 1873, the most comprehensive list of the landed gentry of England and Wales since Domesday Book, for a great

landowner was one who both owned over 3,000 acres of land and had a yearly rental in excess of £3,000. 157 such persons had seats in Wales. Some of them owned more than one country house: the Earl of Cawdor owned Golden Grove and Stackpole Court (both with ice-houses), while Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn owned Glan-llyn and Llangedwyn in addition to Wynnstay itself (two out of the three seats having ice-houses). However, it is quite clear that some large houses never had an ice-house, and it is possible that old-fashioned owners may have resisted what they might have seen as a new fad.

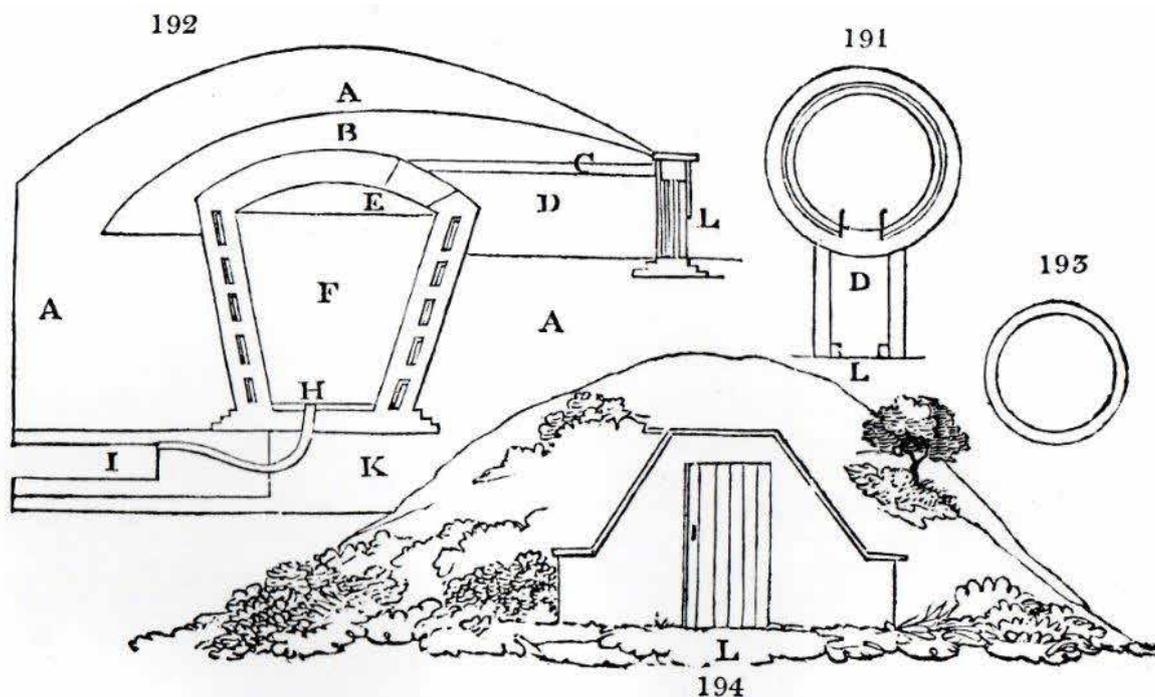
Many ice-houses are found at the homes of progressive gentry, but at least as important in the development of the idea that large houses should have an ice-house were innovatory architects, in Wales particularly the vast Wyatt clan of architects and estate agents. The book that had most influence on owners and designers alike was Philip Miller's *The Gardeners Dictionary*, first published in 1731. It was re-issued and amended in numerous editions throughout the eighteenth century, and was edited after the author's death by Thomas Martyn as *The Gardener's and Botanist's Dictionary* of the late Philip Miller. Works by other authors such as J. C. Loudon were also influential.

How does one identify an ice-house? Their external appearance can vary, though usually within a fairly limited range. They are either located on flat ground, in which case there is a mound above them (though this

can on occasion be now completely destroyed), or they can be built into the side of a hillside or slope, so that the mound somewhat resembles a wartime bunker. In this latter case it is often only the tunnel leading into the chamber which has a mound above it.

The mounds can take three forms. The first is the upstanding earth mound, grassed over, looking much like a prehistoric barrow – Caerhun, Cefn Park, Falcondale, Middleton Hall, Maes-mawr, Emral and Gredington are examples. The ice-house at Rhaggatt was actually built into a prehistoric burial mound, a special brick cell being constructed to exhibit the stone cist behind the chamber. There may be a mounded tunnel also, as at Maes-mawr, or an open trench, entered by a series of steps, as at Gredington. A few mounds are rectangular rather than round even when the chamber is circular. This is the case at both Plas Heaton and Kinmel, where there is a front facing of stone, and in the latter case a rear revetment as well.

The second type of mound is a more formidable structure. One of the best examples is at Dinefwr Castle, which has a mound 9m in diameter, rising by means of a step at the level of the passage roof to a height of 3m. The top of the mound is now bare, revealing the brick dome of the chamber, but it may originally have been covered in stone slates like the other two tiers of the mound. The mound at Leeswood Hall likewise has a central stone step, with the dome also now exposed. The

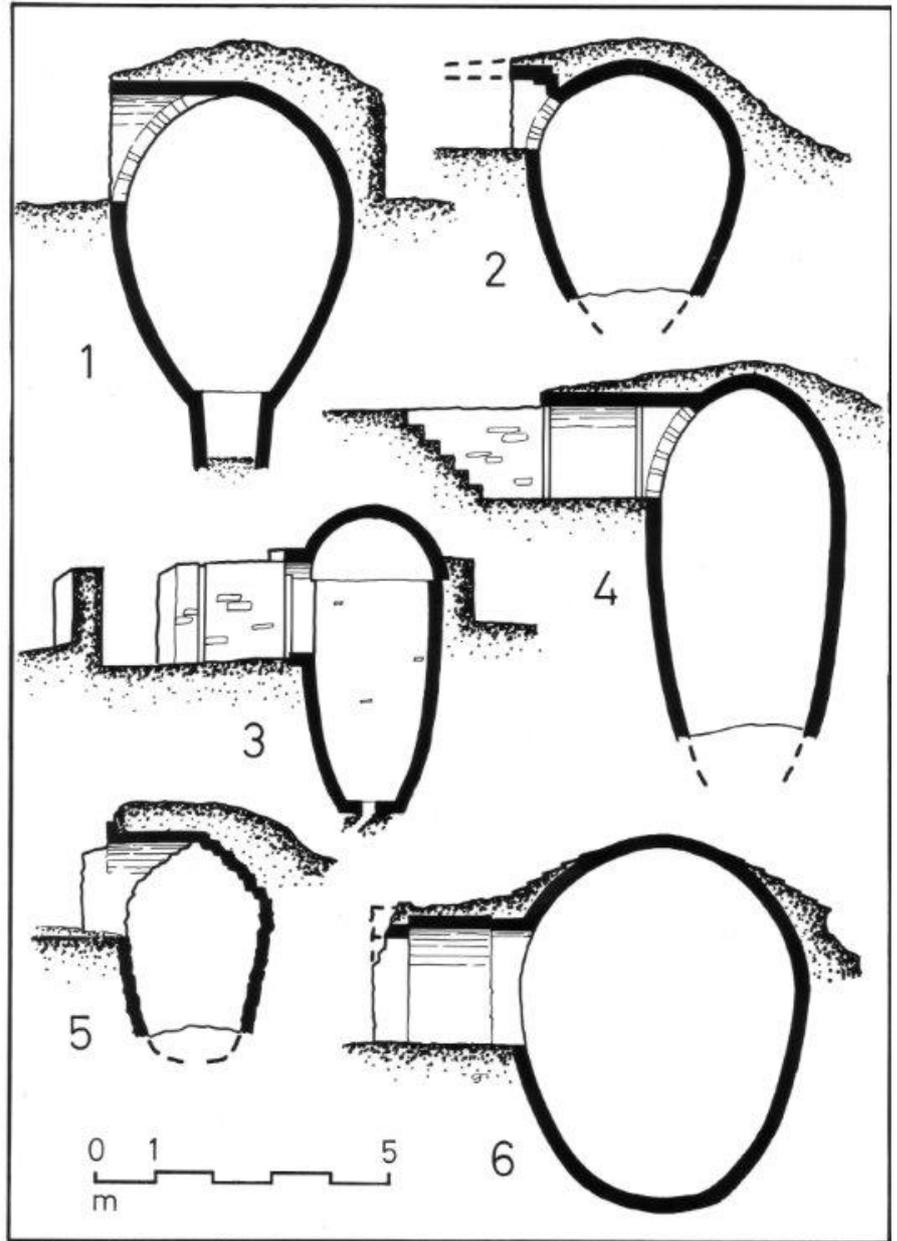


“(Fig. 191. Ground-plan. Fig. 192. Section in the direction of the entrance passage. Fig. 193. Ground-plan of the well. Fig. 194. Elevation. A. Upper covering of earth. B and K. Strata of clay. C. Wall of the arched roof of passage. D. (figs. 191. and 192.) Entrance passage. E. Entrance aperture of the well. F. Well. In its side-walls may be seen the cavities for the retention of the warm air, which would otherwise make its way to the well. H. Pipe for carrying off the water or moisture. I. Drain of it. L. (figs. 191, 192, and 194.) Door of passage.”

How to build an ice-house, taken from J.C. Loudon's An Encyclopaedia of Gardening, 1822.

Cross-section of typical Welsh ice-houses:

- 1 Mostyn Hall, Whitford
- 2 Penrice Castle, Penrice
- 3 Stouthall, Reynoldston
- 4 Gredington Hall, Hanmer
- 5 Falcondale, Lampeter
- 6 Newton House (Dinefwr), Llandeilo



examples at Bodelwyddan Castle and Cyfarthfa Castle certainly had domes which at the end of their history were exposed, the former still bearing traces of the cement render which coated it. It is however quite possible that these exposed domes were originally thatched, as the great brick ice-house at Holkham Hall in Norfolk still is today. Thatch is one of the best insulators known and although requiring more maintenance would no doubt have kept the heat and damp from penetrating into a chamber equally as well as an earth mound. It was no doubt in an effort to combat damp-penetration that slates were placed on top of the brick dome at Baron Hill, presumably forming a damp-proof course between the bricks and the earth piled above. At Llanwysg, where the small ice-house was built into the slope, the stone tunnel-vault of the roof was covered with a single-pitch roof of stone slates, in turn covered with earth.

The third type of chamber-cover is more elaborate still. Here there was a building actually above the chamber or its entrance. At Dunraven Castle a stone castellated folly,

serving as a summer-house, sits almost directly above the chamber, but with no direct link between the two. At Craig-y-don on the Menai Straits, an octagonal structure like a small summer house covers the top of the ice-house, an arrangement duplicated at Bedwellty House in Tredegar. The most elaborate of all is the Ice Tower at Penrhyn Castle.

The entrances of most ice-houses face in a northerly direction. Most commentators noted that an ice-house should not face the midday sun if it could be avoided. If the ice-house had for some reason to be built into a south-facing slope, then the passage leading to the chamber had to be formed in such a way that at least one right angle would be present to prevent the direct warmth of the sun penetrating to the ice. Another solution was to screen the entrance with trees. Most ice-houses have a passage penetrating the mound through which the chamber could be reached. If the chamber was largely below ground-level then the passage itself would have steps leading down to it, but if the chamber was

built into a slope then the passage would be entered directly from ground level. Depending on the complexity of the passage there might be up to four doors.

The ice-chambers themselves took two main forms. The commonest form was a domed tapering shaft or well, the walls being usually of brick since it was easier to construct an intricate shape in this material than in stone. The domed shaft was clearly an ideal form of construction for a largely-underground feature. Since it was arched on every section of its surface, earth pressure externally would keep every brick in place. In the largest examples the shaft could be up to 6m. deep and capable of holding up to 40 tons of ice. Quite often the shaft is egg-shaped. Sometimes, as at Stouthall and Glyn-hir, drain-holes survive. Only one double-shaft ice-house is known in Wales, at Pontypool Park. Considerably less common was a rectangular tunnel-vault which could be constructed in either brick or stone, though the vault itself was often of brick even when the walls were of stone.

The ice to fill these ice-houses came from ponds and rivers. Estate workers would break up the ice and load it onto carts and wagons then slide it down into the ice-house, often dousing it with water to ensure that it re-froze. Straw was then used to cover the ice and fill the passages until it was required. Some ice-houses were a considerable distance away from the house and the outdoor staff had to bring sufficient for several days at a time to a cool-room: there is a circular example at Clytha Park. An alternative was to use the larder or even a trough.

The golden age of the ice-house in Wales lasted only a century, with their decline beginning in the mid-nineteenth century. Technological developments (both the importation of frozen foods and the development of new methods of keeping food fresh) coincided with a decline in the frequency of winters harsh enough to produce ice, and these two factors together brought an end to the tradition. Most ice-houses were allowed to fall into disrepair once disused. That at Hafod, however, was used to store ice for Aberystwyth hospital, and during the Second World War one or two were turned into air-raid shelters. Only the commercial ice-houses at the ports continued in operation, but by the 1950s they too had either been demolished or converted to ice-producing factories.

Eurwyn Wiliam

Eurwyn contributed a list of Welsh ice-houses to the definitive book on British ice-houses, Sylvia Beamon and Susan Roaf's *The Ice-houses of Britain*, 1990. This was based on fieldwork carried out in the early 1980s. Since then Eurwyn has been intermittently updating a gazetteer on Welsh ice-houses and writing a book about them and now hopes to bring this work to a close.

Can you Help?

Members of the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust can help by contributing to **The Welsh Ice-house Gazetteer**. This can be accessed on the WHGT website:

<http://www.whgt.org.uk/icehouse.gazetteer>

Eurwyn would be delighted if readers could:

- check the accuracy of ice-house observations and the locations – are the descriptions and the map grid references correct?
- Add any other examples, existing or to be found only on old maps, whether Ordnance Survey maps or estate maps and documents?
- Can anyone remember an ice-house in use?

To contribute

Please complete the online form or send Eurwyn the following details:

New entries

- Name, civil community/parish, and National Grid Reference*
- Relation to and distance from house and possible source of ice (eg. 300m. NE of house by pond)*
- External appearance (eg. built into bank, earth-covered mound)*
- Internal appearance (eg. passage, doors, building materials, form and dimensions of ice-chamber, any drainage arrangements)*
- Condition*
- Any published references (eg. article, old OS map)*
- Name and address/contact details of recorder*

Updated entries

- Name and location as above*
- Any information to be updated (eg. more detail, better description, change in condition, etc)*
- Name and address/contact details of recorder*

Please, remember that most ice-houses are on private land, and many are extremely dangerous to examine. If the ice-house is not in your ownership, please ensure that you have permission to visit, that somebody knows you are going to do so, and preferably be accompanied.

Information can be sent to
Dr Eurwyn Wiliam
42 St Fagans Drive
St Fagans
Cardiff CF5 6EF.

Penpont garden wall restoration

Gavin and Vina Hogg would like to thank the Brecon and Radnor branch for the incredibly generous grant the WHGT gave towards the repair of the walled gardens.

In July 2015 work began on the Penpont high wall in the walled garden. This southern wall is built with stone on the inside and brick on the outside. As it is the first wall you come to from the rest of the garden it is really noticeable. A large area of stone had fallen out so that this section was tackled first to prevent any more stones coming away. Work then started at the beginning of the wall next to the main entrance doorway.

The restoration is being carried out by a 'semi-retired' builder who is delighted to have a project which he can quietly get on with, as and when the weather permits. He is using lime mortar, re-using the original bricks and cut stone but putting a modern waterproof membrane underneath the flag coping stones to prevent water working its way down through the wall.

Vina and Gavin believe they are getting real value for money by doing it this way as opposed to engaging a full-blown building team. To date the project has cost approximately £6,000 for labour and materials.

In the next 2 weeks the repair work will end until next summer. The aim is to complete that section of southern wall as Part 1 of the walled garden repairs.

Penpont's walled gardens were first built in 1794. Today the garden is in full production. A wide range of organic vegetables, fruit and cut flowers are grown within its two sheltered acres. The garden has been registered with the Soil Association for 15 years. Vina works the gardens with the help of a full time grower.

There are 3 polytunnels in the top walled garden and the vine house has been restored. The old pineapple house needs about £150,000.00 to fully restore and will depend on a win at the lottery!

Sales are from a small farm shop and to a few local pubs and cafes. The gardens operate an eight year rotation and aim to balance aesthetics with sustainability and productivity. Green manure crops are grown to provide fertility and condition the deep sandy soil.

A detailed account of Penpont's early gardens and landscape by Jonathan Williams, Vina's nephew, can be found in Gerddi Vol V. (See <http://whgt.org.uk/documents/gerddi/GerddiVolume5.pdf>)



Images © Vina Hogg.



Members looking at Plenck's *Icones Plantarum Medicinalium* © Caroline Palmer

Herbals and Floras at Lampeter

Back in the 1990s I remember chatting to the respected nature columnist Bill Condry about his visits to the Founders' Library at Lampeter. In those days this library was a nineteenth century time capsule, its shelves packed with fine leather bound volumes in the tall bookcases on the upper floor of the C.R. Cockerell designed quadrangle which is the heart of the university. I remember too a very territorial librarian, inclined to disapprove of those who too casually withdrew a volume for inspection, and rigorous in enforcing the wearing of white cotton gloves. Bill used his erudition and charm to work his way under these defences, and was thrilled to study and record the collection of no less than 28 herbals and floras spanning from the late fifteenth century to the early nineteenth century. Such a collection is remarkable, both for its range and quality, and for the fact that they are there, in spite of the fact that botany was never taught at Lampeter. This is probably thanks to the catholic book collecting habits of the London Welshman, Thomas Phillips, an East India Company surgeon who handsomely endowed Lampeter with shares, scholarships and antiquarian volumes on many subjects. Parcels of books, acquired from London bookshops and auctions were still arriving at the Founders' Library after Phillips' death in 1851.

Founders' Library has since been stripped of its dingy splendour, but the herbals and floras are safe, in the bright new Roderic Bowen Library on the campus, and it was here that WHGT members at the AGM got the opportunity not just to look, but to handle many of these exquisite volumes. About half the collection was laid out for our perusal by the helpful librarians. Not even white gloves were needed! (Current conservation practitioners consider clean dry hands to be kinder to old manuscripts than clumsy cotton.) So we turned the pages respectfully, uncovering new delights at every turn.

The oldest volume was the small *De Viribus Herbarum*

published in 1498 under the nom de plume Macer Floridus. This was challenging to the reader, both for the gothic script and for the Latin verse text. However, the illustrations, two inch square, line drawn woodcuts, were easily enjoyed; the lily, rose and violet readily identifiable and also that timeless favourite, the opium poppy.

Half a century later the advances in printing technology were exemplified by *Botanicum Medicinale; an Herbal of Medicinal Plants on the College of Physicians' List* by Norwich author and illustrator Timothy Sheldrake (1759). Many small and insignificant herbs, such as a speedwell and daisy are gracefully illustrated, in gentle colour in oval frames. The botanical descriptions beneath are meticulous, whilst the medicinal qualities are on the vague side e.g. "Accounted good for old ulcers and for inflammation of the eyes". Sheldrake clearly aspired to a

European market. Plant names are provided in Latin, English, Italian, German, French, Spanish and Dutch. The 120 copperplate pages are elegant and informative; you could go out identifying plants with this volume, though it would need a largish rucksack.

Thereafter the floodgates open for truly lavish folio volumes destined for gentlemen's libraries. We clustered around a table to admire three volumes of *Icones Plantarum Medicinalium* by Joseph Jacob Plenck. Seven volumes were published in Vienna between 1788-1803 and an eighth and final volume was produced in 1812 edited by Joseph Kerndl. Each volume has 100 full-page plant illustrations, each labelled with the Linnean binomial Latin name. Some were exotic plants, but most are common European wildflowers. It is pleasing to find species such as the humble Cow Parsley afforded such respect. Even larger in scope was the *Hortus Romanus*, edited first by Giorgio Bonelli and later by Niccola Martelli (1772- 1784) published in Rome. This work consists of seven outsized folio volumes with darkly dust-stained untrimmed pages. On each is a hand-coloured engraving in a pale blue frame, with just a few lines of Latin beneath. How many of these choice volumes must have been broken up in the last century to frame the individual prints for decorative use?

But for sheer luxurious impact the best came last: Robert John Thornton's *Temple of Flora, Garden of the Botanist, Poet, Painter and Philosopher* (1807), which illustrates 28 of "the Choicest Flowers of Europe, Asia, Africa and America". Thornton employed, at his own expense, top class painters and engravers, and the venture, coming at the time of austerity caused by the Napoleonic wars, was to ruin him.

It is tempting to imagine this book (or rather the first edition of 1799) in Johnes' Library at Hafod, a veritable check list of the exotica a serious aesthete would like to display in their conservatory. Achievable from this selec-



Image by permission of Roderic Bowen Library & Archives, University of Wales Trinity Saint David

tion are the north-American *Kalmia latifolia*, Tulips, Roses and *Lilium superbum*. More challenging for gardeners of the day would be the Night Blooming Cereus (a West Indian cactus), *Strelitzia* (the Bird of Paradise flower), *Stapelia* (the Carrion Flower), and the tall insectivorous *Sarracenia*.

A botanical artist painted the flower while a landscape specialist filled in the atmospheric backgrounds to each bloom. My favourite of them all was the Dragon Arum, *Dracunculus vulgaris* (shown above), which I was only recently admiring in the rocky scrubland of northern Crete. This giant arum spathe thrusts upward from a sinisterly mottled stem and white spotted dark green leaves. It smells bad and attracts flies. In

Thornton's book it is magnificently represented, against a background of erupting Etna and accompanied by a sentimental verse dwelling lovingly upon its toxicity. If Johnes did have a copy at Hafod, it would have been consumed in the fire of 1807.

This book is so glamorous and so rare that to this day the Roderick Bowen Library receives reproduction requests from all over the world.

Caroline Palmer

Reference: William Condry, *From Herbs to Florals: The Illustrated Botanical Works in the Founders' Library.* (The University of Wales, Lampeter) *Trivium*, Volume 29/30, (1997) 31-44



Marianne North, her life and paintings

The Monmouth and Gwent branch enjoyed an AGM talk on Marianne North given by Chris Mills, Head of Library, Art and Archives at Kew Gardens.

Marianne North (1830-1890), the pre-eminent botanical artist of the late Victorian period, was endearingly described as a painter, traveller and rebel. Born into a privileged and artistic family she travelled widely in Europe with her parents. However, Marianne's travels began in earnest when she was thirty nine following the death of her beloved father. Eschewing the social life and dances more usually enjoyed by women of her position, she was encouraged and inspired by some of her friends, Charles Darwin, Edward Lear and the first two Directors of Kew gardens, to use her artistic talents to show plants in their natural surroundings.

Over the next sixteen years she visited more than seventeen different countries over six continents.

Marianne was intrepid and brave, visiting some of the most inhospitable terrains in search of rare and beautiful plants. She visited places unknown to male explorers at the time, dealing with robbers and brigands through the sheer force of her personality.

Marianne always showed the greatest respect for local people and their knowledge of the local environment, many of whom helped her to seek out plants of interest. Marianne recorded what she found by painting.

Largely self taught, her paintings, usually oil on paper or board, were botanically correct but with some artistic license. The paintings often included amusing touches

to show the local environment, the landscape and the setting of each plant. In fact her paintings were so accurate that it is often possible to identify where she sat to paint. Marianne did not seek artistic fame and rarely signed her work. Marianne's mission was to bring to life the origins of these foreign plants for people who had rarely travelled and had no idea where these plants came from. Marianne also collected and sent specimens back to Kew thereby finding new species. Hooker gave the genus name of the tree *Northia seychellana* in her honour in 1884.

On her return, Marianne North paid for and built a Gallery at England's Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew to exhibit her paintings in an unusual form of display. Commissioned from the celebrated architectural historian James Fergusson, the gallery resembles a Greek temple, with high windows, preserving the paintings from sun damage. More than six hundred of her paintings are now owned by Kew representing an important historic collection. Marianne also brought back two hundred and forty six different specimens of wood which comprise the dado around the lower walls.

Amusingly, the then Director, Sir Joseph Hooker, refused her request to have refreshments available in the Gallery so she painted a tea and a coffee plant over the arches at either end of the gallery. It took a year for Marianne to mount and frame her pictures before the gallery opened in 1882. The terms of Marianne's bequest are that the paintings are grouped according to where they were painted and the presentation of the work cannot be changed. Suffering from ill health after returning from

Chile she retired to Alderley House in the Cotswolds in 1886.

At the end of the evening John Vaughan, a great nephew of Marianne North, entertained us with some family recollections.

John Vaughan describes how an album by Marianne North came to be in Wales and has now been generously donated to Kew.

"The album of oil paintings by Marianne North (done over a long period and haphazardly assembled), and the two stuffed animals brought back from her travels, came to the family through her younger sister Janet Catherine Symonds, an equally accomplished artist. In turn this became the property of her daughter and Marianne North's niece, Margaret Vaughan - who died young and was my grandmother.

My grandfather married again, and after his death my step-grandmother gave the album to my father. However, she kept the armadillo and duck-billed platypus which have been mine since 1966. Since my father's death the paintings have been the joint property of my (determinedly anonymous) brother, my sister Diana Vasicek and myself: I am more grateful than I can say to both my siblings for agreeing without demur that now is the right time to give the album to Kew."

John is also donating his armadillo and duck-billed platypus to Kew which will add interest for children visiting the gallery and help to convey Marianne's love for animals as well as plants. Sir Henry, an opossum

mouse whom Marianne fell in love with in Tasmania and brought back with her, is buried beneath the sundial in her once lovely garden.

Chris Mills' lecture left everyone inspired to visit the Marianne North Gallery at Kew to see this very particular place which tells the story of an extraordinary woman of her time.

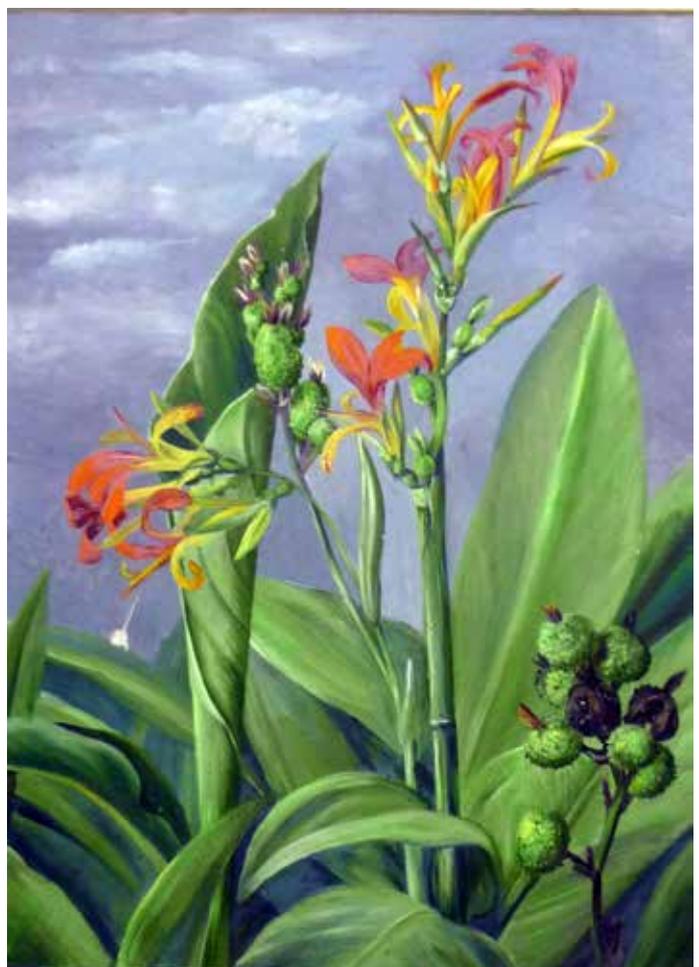
A group of us visited Kew in October. In the library we saw a current exhibition of publications on the theme of Dig for Victory with market gardens; some early and rare examples of botanical books with a manuscript from 1380 - the *Hortus Sanitatis* on medical uses of plants and animals. Chris Mills had also put out for us some of Marianne North's paintings and the album brought in by John Vaughan with the armadillo and duck-billed platypus nearby.

We were then led through the gardens to the Marianne North gallery, to witness the success of the conservation programme completed in 2008 which had rescued the collection and building from neglect and damage. The range of subjects was enthralling, and we all realised that one visit was not enough.

To quote the artist, *"Did I not wander and wonder at everything?"*

Clare Whately, Rosie Humphreys and John Vaughan.

*Opposite page: the Marianne North Gallery, Kew
Below: album paintings by Marianne North
Images by permission of the Trustees of the RBG, Kew*





Yggdrasil, the Tree of Life gazebo at Littlethorpe © Olive Horsfall

Gwynedd Visit Yorkshire

For several years now the Gwynedd Branch have organised a three day visit to gardens that are too distant for a day trip. Clwyd members have always supported us and for the last two years members of the Friends of Treborth Botanic Garden (FTBG), who share many of our members, have also joined us. This year Sarah Edgar, FTBG Chairman and also a WHGT member helped with the organisation of the July visit to Yorkshire choosing gardens not too far from our base at Harrogate.

Our first visit, the RHS garden Harlow Carr, was an obvious choice and we were not disappointed. So many different garden themes which blended into each other so well. The main borders, stream-side garden and kitchen garden were all splendid, but everyone was most impressed with the Alpine House. The gardens are an excellent show case for our top gardening organisation and were a good start to the holiday.

Next day we visited Ripley Castle, owned by the Ingilby family for over 700 years. The kitchen gardens had a rare vegetable collection and the Grade II listed glasshouse had some interesting tropical plants, but the herbaceous borders were not at their best which was disappointing. The visit was worth while if only for the splendid 'Capability' Brown landscape; the view across the lake to the deer park was surely the vision that Mr. Brown intended.

After lunch we joined members of the Yorkshire Garden Trust for a visit organised by Val Hepworth to Littlethorpe Manor Gardens on the outskirts of Ripon, a private garden, open to visitors by arrangement. The Thackray family who own Littlethorpe have a long history in Leeds of surgical instrument manufacture and helped with the development of the first total hip replacement.

John and Christin, who is from Norway, bought Littlethorpe, set in 11 acres of neglected land, in 1985. The outstanding garden seen today has been largely designed and developed over the past 15 years by Head Gardener Eddie Harland and is a credit to him. It is difficult to adequately describe this wonderful garden - stunning, amazing, immaculate are words that come to mind. He is helped by his wife Michele, also a gardener, and Tina Kendall. Some members said this was the best garden they had ever visited.

The heart of the estate is the old walled garden, originally the kitchen garden; it was redesigned as a garden of

seasons. At its centre is a twisted metal gazebo with a symbolic 'tree of life', *Yggdrasil*, the World Tree of Norse mythology, covered by an exuberant rambling rose Francis E. Lester and a honeysuckle. "*All the seasons run their race in this quiet resting place*" is etched into the stone at its base.

In each corner of the garden is a small patio with a charming bronze statue of a young girl which Christin had commissioned to represent the seasons.

The sunken garden has a box parterre with a stylized version of the White Rose of York, surrounded by beds of herbs and old roses and is overlooked from the terrace at the side of the house. A bespoke wooden gazebo provided shelter for alfresco dining. A herbaceous bed and a pergola led back to the cutting garden and a small quiet garden by the estate office, all of which had different styles of planting.

From the back terrace the main formal axis of the garden sweeps down across lawns to the small lake and a classical pavilion. Eddie told us that when he arrived at the garden there was an inadequate wall supporting the upper lawn and the steps to the lower level did not line up with the steps from the terrace.

Eddie commissioned a higher 85m serpentine retaining wall which took enough bricks to build a house, he realigned the steps and planted an avenue of pollarded limes in the park below, leading to the lake, fulfilling Mr Thackray's ambition to create a '*mini arcadia*'. This was a huge undertaking involving a fountain pool and planting over 1500 trees alongside established trees such as the 150-year-old Irish Yew and a walnut tree dating back to the mid-1800s. The lake was edged with late summer perennials and a boardwalk, alongside a classical stone pavilion. However, the lake had an algae problem and the usual cures had been tried, bales of barley straw etc.

all to no avail. The next step was a very expensive dose of a special bacteria. It was comforting to realise that Littlethorpe was not absolutely perfect after all.

On our last morning we sat at the entrance to Harewood House waiting for the gate to open. This was another splendid garden developed over a much longer period, dating back to 1772 when 'Capability' Brown was commissioned to improve the park surrounding a new mansion built by Carr of York. Each generation has enhanced the estate. Sir Charles Barry laid out a broad terrace in 1843 with an elaborate box parterre which has been restored and is very impressive. A long herbaceous border is sheltered by the upper terrace wall and was everything such a border should be with an impressive collection of colourful perennials. At one end by some steps was another splendid specimen of the rambler Francis E. Lester. Against the wall of the next level was the Archery border, so called because the lawn was the archery field in years gone by. This garden was a complete contrast with many exotic plants. The gardeners were busy working, and told us they had experimented last Winter by leaving some of the tender plant in situ with some protection while others were taken to the glasshouses for the season. It seemed those left in the ground had done much better, but this might not have been the case a couple of winters ago. I think this border is at its best later in the year as suggested by a picture in the 'Garden' magazine.

The grounds are so vast that buggies run a shuttle service; unfortunately they do not go to the walled kitchen garden which was on the far side of the lake but it was worth the pleasant walk. Along the way we visited the Himalayan garden in the glade originally set out as

Paradise Gardens: Spiritual Inspiration and Earthly Expression by Toby Musgrave.

Pub: Frances Lincoln September 2015

This is an ambitious undertaking covering some 5000 years of garden history and seventeen different beliefs. Toby Musgrave, author, lecturer, and television presenter, takes us on a journey of amazing gardens, both historical and contemporary. Beautifully illustrated, the book is divided into five themed sections illustrating the different ideas of paradise and the importance of plants in religions around the world. Paradise is shown as a concept in heaven or the afterlife as well as in the creation of a designed paradise on earth.

Paradise takes many guises. The Abrahamic faiths relate to paradise as the Garden of Eden located on earth, where man enjoyed fruit without labour before the fall from grace and a place to be recovered by the virtuous dead. The Qur'an describes a paradise of rivers, perpetual fruit and shade.

For the ancient Egyptians, paradise was a field of reeds for afterlife in a heaven, an ideal hunting and fishing ground, above the universe.

a rock garden in the 1930s. The area was redeveloped with plants from various Himalayan zones in 2000 and the Stupa was built in 2004 by local craftsmen under the supervision of Lama Sonam Chopel from Bhutan. Two of our group asked a gardener about the distinctive cobra lily (*Arisaema nepenthoides*) and she proceeded to describe the 19 different ones in the glade – perhaps too much information. The walk back from the walled garden took us through the bird garden, exotic birds in large aviaries by the lakeside. We saw the flamingoes but did not have time to find the penguins. There was so much to see we were pleased that we had arrived early.

Our last garden visit before we left Yorkshire was to York Gate on the outskirts of Leeds. The house and garden were bought in 1951 by the Spencer family and the garden was originally developed by Robin who tragically died at an early age. His mother Sybil who was an exceptional plantswoman continued the work and left the property to Perennial, formerly the Gardeners' Royal Benevolent Society.

At just an acre we thought this would be a quick visit but were astounded by how many different areas and interesting plants could be packed into such a small space with so much taste and style. The enthusiastic Perennial gardeners have maintained the spirit of the garden and I am sure Sybil Spencer would be delighted if she saw the garden today.

Back in North Wales everyone left the bus with mementos of the trip, plants purchased to put in our own gardens as a reminder of the wonderful places we had visited.

Olive Horsfall

The Chinese Isles of the Immortals located in the China sea has mountains and special plants to prolong youth. Pure Land teachings of Buddhism present a paradise for enlightenment. Pond and paths for contemplation and places to enjoy peace are elements of a Buddhist paradise. A Zen paradise is minimalist, an uncluttered landscape with a few plants and stones grouped in gravel raked into waves creating an abstract version of nature. Native American Indians considered paradise to be closer to the bountiful hunting grounds in the majestic wilderness.

Toby shows how certain elements of paradise are common to people of very different faiths and how man still strives to create paradise. The Leichstag Family Healing Garden in San Diego is a modern paradise for the children's hospital, offering both respite and stimulation. Toby also explores the religious iconography of plants and gives a fascinating account their ritual uses.

Glynis Shaw

WHGT Annual General Meeting 2016
Saturday June 11 hosted by Carmarthenshire



Gelliwig Moorish arches © M. Mason

Gelliwig Plas, Botwnnog

Grade II Gelliwig Plas is a small estate of 11 acres hidden in woodland next to the Neigwl farmland. In the 15th century the township of Neigwl was a large stretch of land granted to the Cistercian monks of Cymer Abbey, Merioneth. Ynyskellywyk, (island of Kelliwig) was the medieval name given to one of the plots in the township, where streams form three of its boundaries, and is perhaps the earliest reference to the site where the Plas now stands. In those days there was no significant building except perhaps for a mill house. The township passed from the monks to the Crown to private ownership, with plots within it rented out or sold.

In about 1670 a small boat came in to Porth Meudwy, Aberdaron, with refugees from Scotland fleeing the chaos brought about by religious strife of that time. The Sortons, Randolph and Elizabeth, brother and sister, were amongst the refugees who stayed a while at Cwrt farmhouse to recover from the sailing from Solway Firth. On the Llŷn their fortunes began to change upon integration via marriage with local families.

Randolph married Anne Ellis of Gwynfryn, daughter of David Ellis, an attorney, and they bought a home with farmland at Gelliwig, very likely the old mill house, no longer extant in its original state. In his will of 1700 Randolph names his property Killiwig, as if the old name Ynyskellywyk was still in memory. The eighteenth century Plas was built between 1700-1731 some yards distant from the mill house, perhaps to accommodate a growing family or a home for his eldest son, John. When

Randolph died in 1733, his wife Anne who lived until 1752 became his heir.

There is a carved keystone dated 1671 with letters ES/MS. Who they are is a puzzle - for now at least.

The mill house waterways are nowadays one of the permanent features of the garden. The feed stream that comes down the 1000' hill behind the Plas, crossing farm, woodland and garden courtyard, is stone lined through the wood and garden. The leat took the water to the paddles of the long gone 30-40' diameter wheel, to turn the grindstones. The outlet for the stream at the base of the wheel housing passes deep underground through a channel leading to the lowest part of the gardens.

Some yards directly above this hidden underground water passage is another, stone clad, leat running along the surface in small descending steps to accommodate the lie of the land towards the lowest part. The surface channel may have been a device of the millers, an occasional diversion route for the feed stream, to allow servicing of the wheel or its housing, or to spare the wheel from work when not needed. It is possible that the wheel house itself may have been incorporated into the original mill house.

On the wall of what is likely to have been the mill house, a keystone dated 1731 (but carved at a much later date) with the letters MPE, under a wind mill, with an ecclesiastical key above that, is possibly a reference to the Cymer monastery.

John Sorton (1701-1774), eldest son of Randolph, married Anne 2nd (family name unknown), who died in 1764 having born three children, Anne 3rd, John and Catherine. The last short-lived child was likely named after John Sorton's second wife Catherine, who was in turn likely to have been be a close friend or relative of his first wife.

John Sorton, after completing the Plas, developed the gardens; the original fields and woods to the east were made into terraces descending to a lake with slate-stepped walk-ways by it and a little hump-back bridge over the boundary stream, to provide an eighteenth century prospect and park. John also directed the building of a south-facing stone coach house, perhaps abutting it to or incorporating part of the old mill house, so that it formed one side of a sheltered enclosure. this created a homestead courtyard, with stone barns surrounding a central stone clad round pond with a pillar for a dovecot. In the park, below the homestead yard, a 5 foot stone boundary wall was raised to protect the kitchen gardens from the SW winds.

On his death John Sorton shared his fortune between his second wife Catherine and his surviving daughter Anne 3rd: Anne (1749- c1830) inherited Bodvall farm, with all its working implements, in tribute to her capable nature. Anne was a remarkable long-lived woman, married and widowed three times: 1. Hugh Hughes of Bodfan, a farmer, who must have been a lot older than her; 2. John Jones of Llanfihangell-Bachellaeth, a surgeon,

who died young at age 40 in 1783, with whom at the age of 23 she had her only child, Evan Jones; and 3. John Jones Councillor of Llynnon, also an older husband. Throughout her various marriages she lived mainly at Gelliwig Plas, taking care of the parkland and farmlands with a strong mind and practical judgement and was a great benefit to this rural estate to the end of her days.

Evan Jones, her son, 1771/2-1821, joined the 23rd Welsh Fusiliers in 1791, fired up perhaps by revolutionary fever and Byronic influences of the time. He travelled far in his impressionable days and returned as a Colonel, having distinguished himself in the Battle of Alexandria, with grand ideas outside the experience of his kin back home.

Evan took over Gelliwig in 1801 and embarked upon the second major addition to the Plas, extending it southwards with neo-Gothic embellishments and Moorish arches, and made a number of internal adjustments. Using wood (mostly Scots pine, but also oak) from his plantations at Bryncroes, his joiners made the ornate arched and pillared sky-lit Moroccan corridor, the butler's glass fronted cupboard, the doors and pillars, favouring arches in their design. He called the whole his mansion, where he loved to entertain.

In 1808 he married Anne Maria Kenyon, a niece of Lord Kenyon of Cefn, a socialite with pretensions to high living, who did not get on with her mother-in-law. Evan died in 1821 heavily in debt, whereupon his wife took as much as she could out of the house, and moved out, disassociating herself from Gelliwig and the debts. His mother, the redoubtable Anne 3rd aged 73, returned from Llynnon, her third husband's home, to protect what she could of the estate. Anne became Tenant for Life pro tem until the debts were settled, resumed her role as head of the house and, it is said, bequeathed the Plas on her death to her son's natural son, Evan Bach, product of a liaison with her cook, Col. Jones' marriage having produced no other child. Natural children were cropping up quite often through the old township lands at this time.

From his tenure the Plas went to Abram Jones Williams (1812-1887) of Saethon, a surgeon specialising in limb surgery, whose rooms in Pwllheli were much used by the



Pillar for a dovecote © M. Mason

shipbuilder patients there. Abram Jones Williams planted the native and specimen trees including mulberry, ginkgo, Peasgood Nonsuch and Blenheim Orange apple trees, Williams pear, and London Plane. Abram also extended the double-row box hedging, adding the iron hoops across the original crossways; made the garden wall higher; embellished the gateway with a double arched portico, Arabian in style; capped the high wall with thick slate slabs except where it arched to reflect the hoop shapes and Moorish inner gateway, a most unusual and harmonious blending of features; built a second shelter garden wall of brick at the top of the box garden; added a row of brick kennels of pleasant design and the potting and propagation sheds in the box garden and coach house courtyard, where there was also a heated greenhouse.

Col. Gough bought the estate in 1901 and added a small annex to the north end of the Plas, known afterwards as 'Col. Gough's Library'. His wife was Mary Georgiana Lloyd of Nanhoron, whose dogs' graves can still be seen in the orchard.

Gelliwig Plas has remained much as it was then, a place closely linked to and harmonious with the landscape in which it is placed, a subtle blend of centuries in the garden as in house, and in the land beyond. This is its memorable charm.

Anne Godfrey

Good News! £1,190,000 from the heritage Lottery Fund has been awarded for the restoration of the Grade II Wrexham Victorian garden cemetery. The cemetery lies between Bersham Road, Ruabon Road and Wat's Dyke and was originally landscaped by Yeoman Strachan who owned the nurseries off the Mold Road (now the post office depot).

Congratulations to Simon Baynes, the new Montgomery branch Chairman. Simon and his wife Maggie are keen gardeners at Bodfach Hall in Llanfyllin. The Montgomery branch aims to have a recruitment drive for new members in the area and also seeks a Planning Officer. Anyone interested please contact Joy Neal: joyneal@btinternet.com

The Prince of Wales visits High Glanau Manor



Left: Prince Charles visited Tipping's study to see the original photographs and books written by him.
 Right: Helena and Prince Charles at High Glanau Manor.

It was a great honour this summer, on the 9th July, to welcome HRH Prince Charles to this listed Arts & Crafts house set in 12 acres of gardens. HRH was very interested in the planting, the view to the Brecon Beacons and the architecture of the house and was extremely charming to everyone he met.

Prince Charles enjoyed a garden tour viewing many of the original 1922 features including formal terraces, an octagonal pool, glasshouse and pergola.

The gardener and two trainees of the *Work and Retrain As a Gardener Scheme* (WRAGS) who have been gaining practical experience at High Glanau were

presented to HRH. *The National Gardens Scheme* (NGS) Gwent team and garden opener Marilyn Anderson, the treasurer and two gardeners from the Monmouth Nelson Garden and members of the *Council for the Protection of Rural Wales* (CPRW) were also presented to HRH.

After tea and cake (decorated with the article on High Glanau by H. Avray Tipping written for *Country Life* in 1929) Prince Charles unveiled a slate plaque for an acer tree planted to commemorate his visit.

Helena Gerrish

Dyffryn Gardens voted 'most special place' in Wales 2015!

Congratulations to Gerry Donovan, property manager and WHGT member, and all of her team!

Thousands of people across the country voted for 12 weeks as part of National Trust Wales' search to find the nation's most treasured place.

Nominated for its 55 acres of landscaped Edwardian gardens, Dyffryn scooped more than a third of the final votes.

Three of the garden rooms were selected to be restored this year and this work was completed with great success.



John Gleave

John Gleave died peacefully at his home on Sept. 6th, aged 87. John was the founder Chairman of the Montgomery branch until 1998. He was a quiet man and no one meeting him would have suspected the varied, distinguished and frequently exciting career in World Health which lay behind him. With his wife, Betty, he travelled the world, from Hong Kong to India, Nepal, Burma, Thailand, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iraq, Vietnam and China, making a very real difference to the lives of leprosy sufferers, the disabled and war victims and meeting a host of major world figures from the Queen and Margaret Thatcher to the Secretary General of the United Nations.

John was a keen gardener and the garden at his home Abernant in Garthmyl, Montgomery, was much loved by NGS visitors over many years. John and Betty planted more than 3,000 trees and retired there in 1987.

John was also hugely knowledgeable in other fields, a committee member of the Oriental Ceramics Society and Chairman of the North Powys Decorative and Fine Arts Society among others. He was a mine of information on garden ornaments and could both make and restore them. In fact there seemed very little he couldn't make, from ingenious problem solving in his working life to small things around the house.

Among his last successful campaigns for the Trust were protests against an application to build in the walled garden at Leighton Hall and another to site a huge livestock market below Powis Castle.

A landscape painter, a genial host and family man, John was a delightful companion to his many friends and will be much missed. WHGT was very lucky to have him as a member.

Anne Carter

Public Inquiry at Broadheath

A planning application for two broiler sheds for 80,000 birds was refused in 2013. The council then withdrew its objections to a resubmitted scheme in February 2014. The decision to approve the scheme was quashed following a Judicial Review in which Powys County Council conceded to judgment on the basis of "failure to take into account the cumulative effects of the development".

The applicant, Upper Heath Farm, then appealed against the refused original planning application of June 2013. At the Public Inquiry held in September 2015 the Inspector Emyr Jones determined that the development should be permitted. He decided that the effect of odour and noise on the setting of the Registered Park and Garden and buildings at the Grade II listed Broad Heath House, and concerns over the chemical impact of dust on the planting of the historic garden were "not supported by any substantive evidence". The proposal also was considered to contribute to the viability of the farm business. See more at: <http://www.theplanner.co.uk/decision/ap-peal-poultry-farm-approved-at-presteigne-wales#sthash.J8AssxBF.dpuf>

Registered Parks & Gardens and the Historic Environment (Wales) Bill

The Historic Environment (Wales) Bill was introduced into the National Assembly for Wales on 1 May 2015 by the Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism, Ken Skates (AM).

The Bill seeks to amend existing legislation governing the management of the historic environment of Wales and will create new measures for the positive management of change in the historic environment. Most importantly for historic parks and gardens, the Historic Environment (Wales) Bill will place a new statutory duty on the Welsh Ministers to compile and maintain a comprehensive register of parks and gardens of special historic interest in Wales. Therefore, the Historic Environment (Wales) Bill proposes to change the status of registered historic parks and gardens from a non-statutory to a statutory register. This provision means that when a park or garden meets the published criteria, it must be included on the register.

The Bill does not introduce a formal consent regime for sites on the register in the same way as listed building consent may be required for works to a listed building or scheduled ancient monument consent may be required for works to a scheduled ancient monument. However, as is the current situation, the impact of development on registered parks and gardens and their settings may be a material consideration in the determination of a planning application.

As part of a package of measures to complement the Bill, the Welsh Government's Historic Environment Service (Cadw) has prepared new draft planning policy and advice as well as other historic environment good practice documents. Cadw is currently working on guidance on *Managing Change in Historic Parks and Gardens* and guidance on the *Setting of Heritage Assets*. All the guidance documents will be subject to consultation during 2016.

To accompany the Bill, Cadw is developing an online database of designated historic assets, which will include information on registered historic parks and gardens. The intention is that the publicly accessible online database will be launched early in 2016.

The Historic Environment (Wales) Bill is currently being scrutinised by a Committee of Assembly Members and will be debated in the Senedd on a number of occasions over the next few months. It is anticipated that the Bill will receive Royal Assent in spring 2016.

For further information about the Historic Environment (Wales) Bill, please visit the Cadw website <http://cadw.gov.wales/historicenvironment/policy/historicenvironmentbill/?lang=en>

Lisa Fiddes, Cadw Assistant Inspector of Historic Areas

The Gardens Trust (TGT)

On 24 July, at their respective AGMs in Newcastle, the Garden History Society (GHS) and the Association of Garden Trusts (AGT) voted to merge to become **The Gardens Trust (TGT)**, a new body created to harness the strengths of the two existing organisations. WHGT and Scotland's Garden and Landscape Heritage (formerly GHS Scotland) both have ex-officio, non-voting places on the Trust.

The main aims of the merger of the GHS and AGT are: to speak with a more powerful voice for the protection of parks, gardens and designed landscape; to play a key garden conservation role in the planning system as a statutory consultee for England. (WHGT is currently in discussion with Cadw about taking on this responsibility in Wales); to provide support to strengthen the local activity of the County and Country Gardens Trusts and to be an internationally regarded centre of excellence in the study of garden history.

Early indications suggest that there is great interest in working with WHGT. Margie Hoffnung the TGT Assistant Conservation Officer contributed to the WHGT planning seminar in Rhayader in October. The TGT are also planning a garden tour to Carmarthenshire in 2016.

Jean Reader

Events

Brecon & Radnor

Thursday December 3 Winter Lecture The Gardens of Wales by Helena Atlee and tea at Caer Beris Manor, Builth Wells.

Saturday March 12 AGM followed by a tour of the Castle at Hay on Wye and tea.

May 9-14 Visit to The Loire Valley, France to see châteaux and gardens.

Contact Maldwyn Rees
reesm@pc-q.net

07974 311320

Ceredigion

Saturday March 12 AGM and annual lecture Council Chamber, National Library of Wales 2pm. Lecture commences 2.30pm

"The most glorious and richest prospect I ever beheld"

Bettina Harden MBE will give an illustrated lecture on her researches into garden visiting in Wales 1639-1900.

Her book on the subject will be published by Graffeg in June.

All welcome, non-members £1-00

Contact: Caroline Palmer
caroline-palmer@tiscali.co.uk

01970 615403

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Chairman: Jean Reader	029 2059 6742
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Treasurer: Maldwyn Rees	07974 311320
Membership Secretary: Jennie Macve	01970 626180
Conservation Officer: Ros Laidlaw	01970 832268

Clwyd

Wednesday November 25 7.00 for 7.30 Theatr Twm o'r Nant, Station Road Denbigh LL16 3DA. "The March of Archery: An amusing look at archery as an elite pastime 1780 - 1900" by Advolly Richmond, based on the activities of the Royal British Bowmen and the various estates and families in the Denbigh/Clwyd and Shropshire/Wales Marches area.

£7.50 including mulled wine and mince pies.

Saturday March 5 AGM followed by 'Moving Heaven and Earth - Capability Brown's Gift of Landscape' talk by Steffie Shields, Photographer, writer, Cambridge tutor, and Vice-President of The Gardens Trust. Details TBA.

Contact Sinah Harrison-Jones
sinah@btinternet.com

01745 583433

Montgomeryshire

May Bank Holiday Monday 30 Gardens Open at Bodfach Hall, Llanfyllin.

Contact: Joy Neal
joyneal@btinternet.com

01654 781203

Monmouthshire & Gwent

Tuesday March 22 2.00 pm AGM at Tredegar House, Newport. Lecture by Richard Wheeler, National Trust Historic Gardener.

Wednesday June 22nd June Visit to Badminton House and Gardens to trace the historic connection between the Herbert and Somerset families who later became the Dukes of Beaufort. By the end of 16th century these two great families had created at Raglan, a castle and gardens considered the equal of any other in the kingdom. The castle was surrendered to the Parliamentarians in 1646 and the Beauforts moved to Badminton House where many portraits and landscapes of this era are found. Our morning tour of the house will include several of these paintings which hang in the private rooms. The Head Gardener will lead a tour of the gardens in the afternoon.

Places will be limited so book early! Travel by coach to/from Monmouth. Tickets £75

Contact: Marilyn Anderson,
m.anderson666@btinternet.com

01600 780389

West Glamorgan

Thursday 19th November 2:00 "The History of the Fuchsia Collection of Margam Park" by Raymond Butt, former General Manager at Margam Park and Director of Fuchsia Research International.

Thursday 21st January 2:00 "Middleton: Paradise Regained, Restoring a Regency Rarity" by Louise Austin, Regency Restoration Project, National Botanic Garden of Wales, Llanarthne.

Thursday 3rd March 2:00 AGM Speaker to be confirmed.

Thursday 21st April 2:00 "The History of the Clyne Valley Country Park" by Chris Grigson, Chair of the Clyne Valley Community Project.

All talks will be held at St Paul's Parish Centre, De La Beche Road, Sketty, Swansea SA2 9AR. Doors open at 1:30pm.

Contact Phil Stevenson
philip.stevenson1@ntlworld.com

01792 208431

Items for the next Bulletin should be sent to: bulletin@whgt.org.uk or to Glynis Shaw, Castell House, Bodfari, Denbigh, LL16 4HT.

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