

SPRING ISSUE 1996

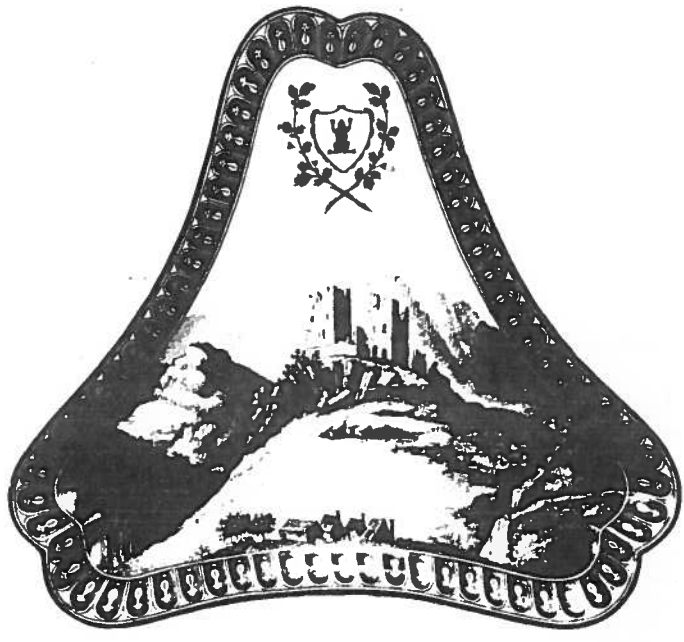
The Genius of Wedgwood:

A WELSH VIEW

by Bettina Harden

One of the highlights of the year in 1995 was *The Genius of Wedgwood* exhibition at the Victoria & Albert Museum. This exhibition was to mark the bicentenary of the death of Josiah Wedgwood and demonstrate those qualities of art and design which gave wedgwood wares such distinction. The exhibition was indeed full of treasures, most notably a display of a large number of items from one of Josiah Wedgwood's masterpieces, The Green Frog Service. Those of us who managed to get to the exhibition were seeing them for the first time outside Russia since June 1774, when the Service went on public display before being dispatched to the Empress Catherine the Great. Apart from being seized with desperate desire to possess the service for myself, I was also amazed by the wonderful topographical views which were used to decorate each piece of china. As Michael Raeburn says in his contribution to *The Green Frog Service* (1), it presented an image of Britain, one that contained "all that could be of Gothic Remains, of Natural Views, & of Improved Scenes and Ornaments in Parks & Gardens" (2) Given my own passion for all of these, I toured the exhibition seeking Welsh sites. The result is this short article.

Josiah Wedgwood set up on his own account as a potter in 1759. He spent the next ten years perfecting his craft, most particularly his creamware. In 1765 he supplied Queen Charlotte with a 'complete sett of tea things' in creamware, and, ever quick to realise the advantages of self-promotion, changed its name to Queen's Ware following his appointment as Potter to the Queen. Wedgwood and his friend and partner over 18 years, Thomas Bentley, were shrewd businessmen and targeted the nobility and rich patrons as customers, making them gifts and naming lines in their honour - today's sponsorship in reverse - knowing that where they led others would follow. Part of this fostering of custom involved creating one-off pieces and services, often very costly to Wedgwood, but acting as loss-leaders to attract more sales. The apogee of this was reached with the Green Frog Service. The second Service commissioned from Wedgwood by Catherine the Great, this Service was destined for her palace at Kekereksinen - in Finnish 'frog marsh' - and each piece carried a green frog on its rim, hence the name by which the Service is known. Manufactured and deco-

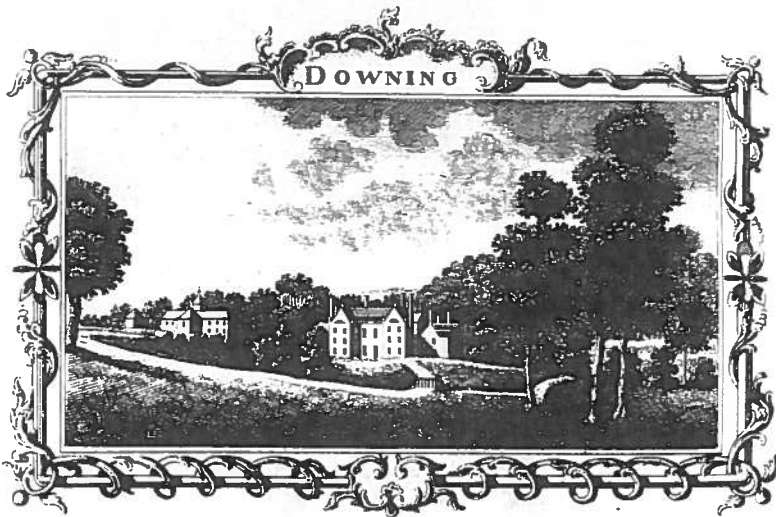


Dolwyddelan Castle, Gwynedd on a triangular dish. View taken from Buck's Antiquities... (State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg)

rated between 1773 and 1774, the Service comprised 952 pieces in creamware decorated with views of British antiquities, landscapes, parks and gardens "every piece having a different subject", As many as 33 artists were employed to create original drawings and to copy pictures, drawings and prints. The views depicted represented the Empress Catherine's passion for English landscape - "I love English gardens to the point of folly: serpentine lines, gentle slopes, marshes turned into lakes, islands of dry ground, and I deeply despise straight lines. I hate fountains which torture water to make it take a course contrary to nature; in a word my plantomania is dominated by anglomania". (3)

The decoration of the Frog Service was probably the first use of topographical views on ceramics and made use of a wide variety of sources. There were original drawings made, often of properties belonging to Wedgwood's influential clients as a flattering touch, but sets of prints and engravings from paintings were essential to the work. The first prints which Wedgwood's artists drew on were from *Buck's Antiquities or Venerable Remains of above four hundred Castles, Monasteries, Palaces &c, &c. in England & Wales*. These had been begun in 1726 by Samuel and Nathaniel Buck and were somewhat old-fashioned and stiffer in style than some of the other sources used. Nonetheless, transposed to china they made marvellous decoration. The Welsh views included the castles of Caernarfon, Carmarthen, Dinefwr, Dolwyddelan, Llanstephan and Pembroke, and Neath and Tintern Abbeys.

A newer series of prints by Francis Grose for his *Antiquities pro*



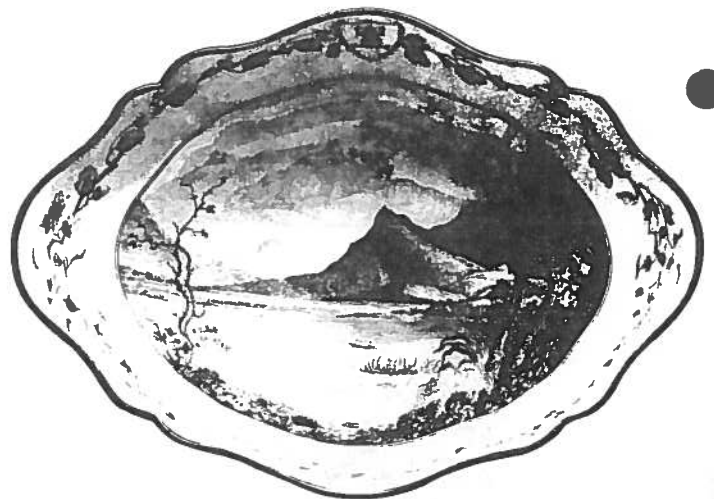
Frontispiece for A Tour in Scotland drawn by Moses Griffith and engraved by Peter Mazell. This was the view used by Wedgwood on a dessert plate of the Frog Service.

vided some more Welsh views such as those of St Cybi's, Holyhead, Anglesey and Lamphey Palace, Dyfed. Meanwhile, Wedgwood and Bentley's search for material with which to decorate this great service was greatly assisted by a Welshman, Thomas Pennant. His travels in Scotland, published as *A Tour in Scotland & Voyage to the Hebrides* (1774) and their illustrations provided the Scottish material used for the Frog Service. As the book was still in preparation at the time "Pennant asked his printer to make available all the as yet unpublished engravings, based not only on the original views drawn by his servant Moses Griffith..., who had accompanied him but also on other views he had collected..." (4). Thomas Pennant is chiefly known to us as the author of *Tours in Wales* (1778-81), but he was also a naturalist of distinction who corresponded with Linnaeus and was a Fellow of the Royal Society. At the end of his life he reckoned that "his works contained 802 illustrations prepared under his supervision" (5). It is tantalising to think that if he had begun his travels through Britain in his native land there might have been more Welsh subjects depicted on the service. Moses Griffith, another name to conjure with in Wales, came from Bryn croes on the Llyn Peninsula, Caernarfonshire and had been taken into service by Thomas Pennant in 1769. Pennant helped him study drawing and engraving and he accompanied his master on his travels. There is no doubt Griffith was highly valued by Pennant for all his somewhat grudging acknowledgement in *Tours in Wales* - "The drawings marked MOSES GRIFFITH, are the performance of a worthy servant whom I keep for the purpose... The candid will excuse any little imperfections they may find in them; as they are the works of an untaught genius, drawn from the most remote and obscure parts of North Wales"*. In his *Literary Life* (1793) Pennant added "The public may thank him for numberless scenes and antiquities which would otherwise have remained probably for ever concealed". Moses Griffith continued in Pennant's service until Pennant's death in 1798, living at Gwibnant on the estate at Downing. Pennant's son, David, continued his family's patronage until Griffith's death in 1819 (6). Thomas Pennant's help in achieving a broader geographical spread for the decoration of the Frog Service

was acknowledged by Wedgwood who used Griffith's drawing & engraving of Pennant's home, Downing in Flintshire**, on a dessert plate, described by Bentley in the catalogue of the public exhibition of the Service as the "country house of the celebrated naturalist, Mr Pennant, who has contributed to the utmost of his power to the perfection of this work" (7). Pennant was clearly a man after the Empress Catherine's heart, for at his estate at Downing he "enlarged...the fine scenery of the broken grounds, the woods and the command of the water" (8).

Some unknown artists contributed Welsh scenes to the Service including one of Pistill Rhaeadr, Llanrhaeadr-y-Mochnant, and another of Kidwelly Castle, Carmarthenshire, but the most dramatic views transposed onto the china were those created by Richard Wilson. Following a period of study in Rome where he had been deeply influenced by the work of Claude Lorraine and Poussin, Richard Wilson had returned home and undertaken a series of six paintings during a tour of Wales made between 1765 and 1766. The subjects of these paintings were Caernarfon Castle, Snowdon from Llyn Nantlle, Llyn y Cai on Cadair Idris, Pembroke Town & Castle, Kilgaren and the Great Bridge over the Taaffe, South Wales. A set of prints were made for sale on subscription in 1767***and it was there that Wedgwood considered for inclusion in the Service. He did worry, however, that they might not fit in with the Empress Catherine's avowed Anglomania, writing to Bentley in December 1773 that "most of them being mere Landskips, without any the least Pleasure ground I am afraid they are not proper for you". Luckily Bentley did not share this opinion and Wilson's evocative and emotive scenes were used on some of the larger pieces of the Service. Indeed "the painters...responded to the quality of the pictures and produced some of the finest decoration on the Service from them".(9)

Altogether 84 views of Wales were used on the Frog Service from impressive soup tureens, salad bowls and covers to tiny ice cups and sauce ladles; from the sweeping views of Snowdonia painted by



Oval salad bowl featuring Snowdon as engraved by William Woollett after Richard Wilson's painting. Thomas Pennant described this work 'as magnificent as it is faithful'. (State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg)

Wilson to small details of a yacht on the Menai Straits by an unknown hand. The Frog Service went on display to the public in June 1774 at Portland House, Greek Street. Admittance was by ticket only and demonstrated what Wedgwood had thought in planning it, that it would 'fully complete our notoriety to the whole island' and would 'show that we have paid many compliments to our Friends & Customers'. (10) Twenty two packing cases were required to transport the Service finally to Russia.

The Frog Service was one of Wedgwood's finest achievements and its display in London last year was also a great endeavour. A delight to the eye, it also provided food for thought. One such thought was this - why was there such a relatively small amount of Welsh material for Wedgwood and Bentley to work with? Timing had something to do with it - Pennant did not begin his tours in Wales until 1778; Capability Brown did not undertake any work in Wales until the late 1770's so his landscapes there could not be featured in any drawings or engravings. And yet, and yet... is there something more to it? Could it be down to that mist which surrounds Welsh achievement as perceived from the other side of Offa's Dyke? Watch this space for more thoughts on this subject.

My thanks are due to Michael Francis, The National Library of Wales, Michael Raeburn, Cacklegoose Press, and Hilary Young, Research Department, Victoria & Albert Museum, for their help and, where appropriate, permission to quote material from the publications used.

(1) *The Green Frog Service* (Cacklegoose Press, 1995), Eds. Michael Raeburn, Ludmila Voronikhina, Andrew Nurnberg.

(2) Letter from Lady Cathcart, wife of the British Ambassador to the Court of St Petersburg.

(3) Letter from Empress Catherine the Great to Voltaire, June 1772.

(4) *The Genius of Wedgwood* (Catalogue, Victoria & Albert Museum, 1995, Ed. Hilary Young).

(5) *Dictionary of National Biography* (Smith, Elder & Co, 1909), Ed. Sidney Lee.

(6) Moses Griffith 1747-1819: Artist & Illustrator in the service of Thomas Pennant (Catalogue, Welsh Arts Council/The National Library of Wales, 1979).

(7) ...as (5).

(8) ...ibid.

(9) ...as (4).

(10) Letter from Josiah Wedgwood to Thomas Bentley, November 1773.

* Bryncreos in 'the most remote and obscure parts of North Wales' is just three miles from my home at Nanhoron.

** This engraving was used as the Frontispiece to "A *Tour in Scotland*" & *The Hebrides*.

*** The set of prints were republished by John Boydell in 1775.

The 1995 Annual Lecture

Edward Lhuyd Horticulturalist and Botanist

The Annual Lecture was delivered by Dr Brynley F. Roberts, until recently Librarian of the National Library of Wales, in the Council Chamber of The National Library, on Saturday, 25th November, 1995. The Lecture was arranged and hosted by the Ceredigion Branch of the Trust, the chair being taken by Mr Donald Moore.

Dr Roberts' subject was Edward Lhuyd (1660-1709), one of Wales' greatest intellects, a true polymath whose career bridged the 16th and 17th Centuries. He was not widely recognised in his own time, though as Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum he was well known to Oxford scholars of the period, and was a member of the Oxford Philosophical Society. He was interested in a wide range of subjects, and corresponded at great length with his contemporaries throughout Europe. Many of his letters and notebooks are in the collection of the National Library of Wales, which mounted an exhibition of his work to coincide with the Lecture.

He travelled widely, studying archaeology, natural history, palaeontology, genealogy, botany, horticulture, and many other subjects, including astrology and anatomy. At the time of his death he was engaged on the compilation of an 'Archaeologia Britannica', a compendium of knowledge about Wales. He was born in the Marches, of Welsh parentage, and regarded himself as a true 'Briton', the Welsh language being referred to in England as 'British' in his period.

As a naturalist, he was an observer, collector, classifier, and describer, bringing his gift of precise description to each of the many subjects which engaged his attention. He preferred to study his botany in the countryside, rather than in the University Physick Garden. He spent four years on a tour of Wales and other Celtic countries, publishing the first volume of his great work under the title of 'Glossography' in 1707.

He was deeply interested in horticulture, his own garden at Llanforda, he described in great detail in a surviving letter to his mother. He was making a large pond, mainly for the study of its wildlife. The description of the various parts of his garden show that he was well read in the textbooks of garden design and management of his day. He worked closely with his own gardener, and included a 'Physick Garden' on his estate. Some of his letters to seedsmen still exist.

He produced some early road maps or itineraries. He loved Snowdonia, discovering, collecting and describing its Alpine flora. He had the gift of being able to recognise a new species, collecting and describing it for science.

Donald Moore

The News Pages

GWENT

May 16th. at 2.30pm: Visit to garden of Trewyn, with conducted tour and tea. The garden is being restored and is of considerable historic interest. The Vice-Chairman of WHGT hopes to attend to meet members. We hope to run a plant stall - please bring a plant as your entry fee.

September: We are trying to arrange a day visiting two gardens in Gwent - High Glanau, near Trelech, designed by Avray Tipping, and the Japanese garden at Shirenewton Hall. There will be more information on this later.

The NELSON SUMMERHOUSE GARDEN at Monmouth will be open on four Sunday afternoons during the summer, from 2pm - 6pm.

Dates and organisations stewarding are given below:

Sunday, 12th May - The Nelson Society.

Sunday, 9th June - The Monmouth Civic Society.

Sunday, 14th July - The Monmouth Field and Antiquarian Society.

Sunday, 11th August - Gwent Branch, WHGT

GWYNEDD

Our Programme for 1996 got off to a flying start with a meeting held at the Gwynedd County Archives in Caernarfon on Tuesday 19th April. Dr Stephen Briggs of the Royal Commission on Ancient & Historic Monuments in Wales demonstrated the working of the RCAHM's database, into which the Gwynedd Gazette of historic gardens will be incorporated. The Chairman invited archivists and planners from all parts of Gwynedd so that they could see at first hand how the system works and to draw their attention to the importance of parks and gardens in the heritage of Wales.

Sunday 28th April Llyn Gardens Day 11.00am - 4.00pm: Four gardens on Pen Llyn will be open in aid of the Gwynedd Branch and CRUSE Gwynedd. The gardens include Nanhoron, with 18th-century walled gardens, park and woodland walk, and Glasfryn, childhood home of Clough Williams-Ellis, with 18th-Century park and beeches, lake, hedged garden and lawns. Tickets, £5.00 to provide admit-

tance to all four gardens; coffee & tea available at Nanhoron.

Saturday 18th May The Plant Fair at Crug Farm Plants, Griffiths Crossing, Caernarfon 10.00am - 4.00pm Tickets: £1.50 (Children free) This is the third year of our Plant Fair and we do hope that WHGT members from outside Gwynedd manage to attend. This new venue for the Fair is much closer to the A55 than before - Clywd members, please take note Crug Farm Plants is itself a prestige nursery and the historic garden there will also be open during the Fair. Stalls will feature other nurseries, garden-related crafts, together with the Branch's own plant and cake stall.

Wednesday 12th & Thursday 13th June Gwent Garden Visit This two-day visit to South Wales has been made possible through the kindness of Gwent's Chairman, Sheila Thomeycroft, who has smoothed our path and introduced us to garden owners. The details of the day are as follows and we do hope that Gwent members will feel free to join us at any of the gardens we plan to visit. Details of the cost of this visit will be circulated to members shortly. This event could be reached by out-of-Wales members of the Trust - we would be delighted to see you.

Wednesday 12th June

The Nelson Garden, Monmouth Castle House, Usk (gardens in the ruins of Usk Castle)

Lunch at The Three Salmon, Usk Lower Farm House, Nantyerry, Abergavenny

Monday 22nd - Thursday 25th July The Royal Welsh Show Caernarfonshire is the 'feature' county at this year's show. The Gwynedd branch will be mounting a WHGT display in the Horticultural Tent and we look forward to seeing members from all over Wales there.

MID & SOUTH GLAMORGAN

Duffryn Gardens. St. Nicholas.

The future of these great Mawson Gardens after 1st April 1996 is still uncertain. When the two County Councils of Mid Glamorgan and South Glamorgan cease to exist, the gardens will probably pass to a single

authority, the new Vale of Glamorgan Council.

The Vale has put in a bid for Heritage Fund finance, both for the gardens and for the late 19th century house, now used as a conference centre. The Friends of Duffryn have obtained over 5,000 signatures to a supportive petition, such is the strength of local feeling and the desire to see the gardens survive.

Probably £2 million is required to return the gardens to the standards of excellence they enjoyed when first leased to Glamorgan County Council in 1939. Fortunately, the main structure of the Mawson layout is still there, as are the many rare trees, some of international importance, planted by the gardens' owner, Reginald Cory. The maintenance of the gardens however, has fallen away in recent decades, planting has suffered and some architectural elements are deteriorating badly or have been swept away. Cory's famous experimental dahlia garden, for example, has been grassed over and the pool garden filled in. The original soil level in the walled gardens has been altered and the central vista thereby lost.

The Branch welcomes the bid for outside funding, for the local authority alone will not have funds available on such a scale. But it must express concern for the future. The gardens will need to find a means to become self-supporting if the restoration, once achieved, is to be maintained.

Miskin Manor Hotel

The branch is gathering archival and oral evidence on the gardens and a start has been made on identifying the fine and unusual trees. As planning permission exists for development within the walled garden (still in family ownership), the Branch hopes soon to receive permission to make a survey and to trace the remains of once elaborate canalisation of the stream which ran through the walled garden before feeding the bog garden.

Craig-y-parc: A Mallows garden

Students from Pencoed Agricultural College are now preparing a detailed survey.

Talygarn

A small group, led by Derek Kingham and Celia Thomas of Coed Cymru, enjoyed a visit to the gardens, lakes and woods.

PEMBROKESHIRE

Mon 18th March 'Glories of the Past in Pembrokeshire'

Talk by Terry John of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park; includes Scotsborough, Uzmaston, Haroldston, and Kensington St Brides.

At Cottesmore, 7.30pm. Cottesmore is at OS 158/948187. Enter from the Haverfordwest - Fishguard road (A40) roughly opposite Withybush Airport and about 1.5 miles north of Haverfordwest. Lodge with railings on left,

Sun 15th April: Annual General Meeting of the Branch

Address by Bettina Harden, Vice-Chairman WHGT, on the Trust's work, activities, and aims.

Sun 12th May: Clyne Gardens: See W. Glamorgan.

Sat 15th June: Visit to Poyston 11.30am to see the garden reconstruction now in progress by Mr and Mrs Ellis. Then on to Treffgarne Hall at 2.30pm to see Mr and Mrs Brewis' restored gardens. Take a picnic to eat at Poyston, or lunch at Wolfcastle Hotel or Inn. Poyston OS 158/967198 - 2.5 miles north of Haverfordwest between the Fishguard and Cardigan roads. Treffgarne Hall OS 158/952236 - turn left from the Fishguard road 4.5 miles north of Haverfordwest.

WEST GLAMORGAN

Sun 17 March Dowsing : The History of Water Divining, with the chance to try your skills.

2.30pm. Gnoll Park Visitor Centre, Neath Dennis Smith

Sun 21 April Tour of the grounds of Rheola House in the Vale of Neath 2pm. Outside the main gate A465, at the factory entrance.

R M Rees

Sun 12 May Annual pilgrimage to Clyne Gardens and the magnificent Rhododendrons. Joint meeting with Pembrokeshire branch WHGT

2pm. Woodman Car Park
Ivor Stokes

Sun 2 June Rhododendrons, Cwm Ddu, Pontardawe. A small conserved valley with waterfalls.

2.30pm. Meet at Rhydyfro Post Office
Conducted tour.

Wed 24 Jul

6.30pm AGM Members only

7.00pm. Coffee - all invited

7.30pm. Illustrated Talk, Listing
Historic Welsh Gardens

Her Work with CADW Elizabeth Whittle

A Plea from The Secretary

The Charities Aid Foundation

Some members have recently tried to pay their annual subscriptions by CAF cheques. The Secretary hates having to return them, and you hate getting them back with a request for an ordinary cheque.

The small print on the back of some CAF cheques forbids their use for subscriptions; and others say they may not be used to pay covenants or where a service is expected. As we supply three or four 'Bulletins' and often a 'Newsletter' in return for a member's subscription, the Secretary finds himself unable to sign the statement he has to make before CAF will pay them. Your subscriptions remain uncredited and the Secretary write another begging letter.

Please, use CAF cheques by all means for donations, but not to pay subscriptions!

APPEAL FOR HELP

The Museum of Welsh Life, St. Fagans, Cardiff

The Museum of Welsh Life, St. Fagans, Cardiff is currently researching the gardens of the rural small holder/cottages from 15000. This research will be instrumental in helping us to recreate more historically accurate gardens for some of the houses on the site.

As the library at St. Fagans contains many of the more familiar agricultural/gardening, treatises, surveys and early 'Tours', as well as recent data from both CADW and RCAMW, the Museum would be particularly interested in more obscure, but factual, source material relating to Wales or the border counties of England. The archives of small estates of professional people such as clergymen or doctors could, for example, be very useful.

Areas of particular interest include:

- The appearance of such gardens, their layout, the size and shape of any vegetable plot or bedding system, the surrounding hedges, fences etc.

- The maintenance of such gardens, type of fertilisers used and how they were applied, weeding, pest control, watering, unusual methods of soil cultivation.

- The crops, including fruits and flowers grown. If possible the names, or a description of the actual varieties used. Notes on harvesting and storage.

It is essential that any information is supported by clear reference to the source material.

Please contact Andrew E. Dixey or Deborah Evans, Museum of Welsh Life, Department of Farming, Crafts and Cultural Life, St. Fagans, Cardiff.CF58XB.

The Association of Garden Trusts

The Association of Garden Trusts was set up to foster the work of the individual County Garden Trusts. It acts as a forum for the views of the rapidly growing number of these trusts and welcomes as observers to its Council representatives of such bodies as English Heritage and the Garden History Society. It is ready to act at national level with a unified voice on such issues as the preparation of planning guidance notes, statutory consultation etc. All members, after all, have a common interest in the national heritage of gardens in Britain.

The Welsh Historic Gardens Trust, as an independent charity, sends a representative to AGT Council meetings and has a vote, as has each individual county trust. However, any WHGT branch can secure direct mailings from the Association on payment of £25 p.a.

Several branches sent members to the very excellent Recording Seminar held at Warwick University last May. Further seminars are planned. There are workshop meetings on subjects such as planning updates etc.

Council meetings are held twice yearly: one in London, in March, the other hosted by one of the County Garden Trusts. Last year's combined meeting and weekend was held at Dartington. The Devon Trust laid on an admirable succession of lectures and garden visits, the highlight being the time spent at Endsleigh, a Grade I house with a Grade I garden, currently being restored with grant aid from English Heritage. Any member of the WHGT is entitled to participate in such events, the fees being kept to a minimum and the seminars run free of charge.

The planning workshop held in September had two clear messages applicable to all branches of WHGT. The first was the importance of the recognition of historic parks and landscapes in each and every local plan, with a suitable paragraph in their defence. The other was the vital necessity for liaison and communication between members of the trusts and local authority officers, potential developers, landowners, nature conservation bodies and so on. Relationships are better developed before crisis situations arise. Wide consultation at an early date can and of ten does lead to non-controversial change, with all points of view expressed and differences resolved.

SARA FURSE.

Sara Furse, Chairman of the Clwyd Branch, is WHGT representative on the AGT.

The Heritage Lottery Fund

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) is the branch of the National Heritage Memorial Fund which distributes lottery money to eligible projects. They are short of applications from Wales and are keen to get more. They have money to spend in Wales. Your Trust Secretary has recently attended a briefing by their Trustees and believes that they would be prepared to help suitable projects in our field of historic landscapes, parks and gardens.

They are keen on heritage and nature conservation. Designed landscapes and land of scenic, historical or scientific importance are eligible for help. They can help with acquisition as well as restoration and conservation, and while they cannot help with 'revenue' costs, they will help with on-going minor capital works after a garden has been restored. They will not help projects with a capital cost under £10,000. They expect to give a firm decision within five months of an application, but a fast track (about a month) is available for an urgent acquisition (e.g. a historic garden site which is up for purchase and re-development).

They will not help to create a new bit of heritage. They can help to restore, or recover, or protect heritage assets at risk. They cannot help private owners or commercial concerns, and insist on public access and general benefit to a community in projects they support. Partnership funding is required, but they will support substantially more than 50% of a desirable project. High quality is essential. They are prepared to accept volunteer labour, and donated professional services, as part of partnership funding. They would negotiate the 'credit' applicable case-by-case.

They are interested in Victorian public parks, regarding them as heritage assets contributing to the local economy. They have recently announced a special Urban Parks programme (including parks, gardens, other open spaces, including cemeteries etc) to last for three years. 1996 applications are invited between April and August, grants made in 1997.

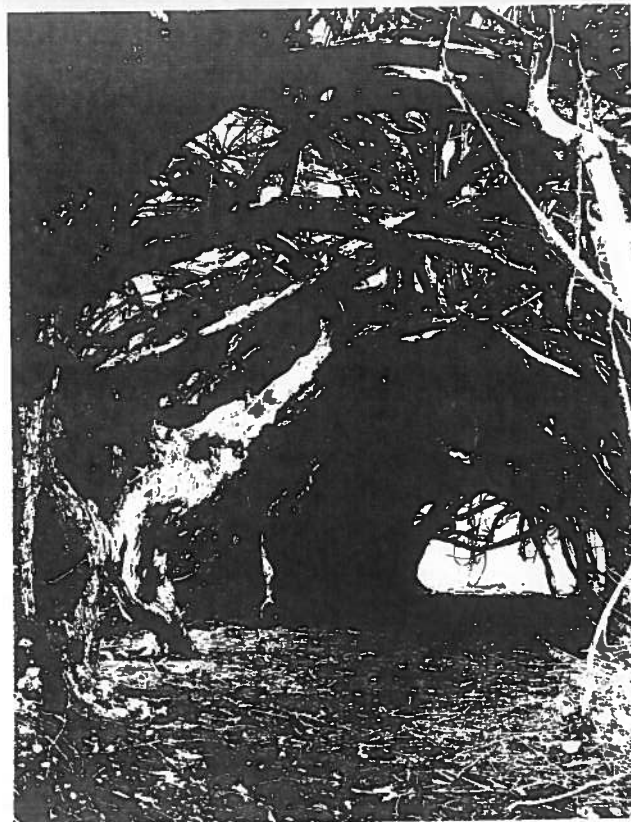
They do not want to be regarded as the grantmaking body of last resort. Don't wait until other grants have been approved before approaching them. If you have a worthwhile project but are still fund-raising for the 'partnership' element, they can approve a grant and hold it for up to 12 months while you continue to look for your share of the funds. You must not start work on a project before making an application.

Members will be delighted to know that the Vale of Glamorgan 'Unitary Authority' is preparing a mega-project for the restoration of Dyffryn Gardens to their original late Victorian form when they acquire them from Mid- and South Glamorgan in April 1996. HLF has recently provided a large proportion of the cost of the restoration of the Shell Grotto at Pontypool Park in Gwent, still on-going.

If branches have a major project in mind but cannot see how to raise the money, consult HLF at once. Write to The Heritage Lottery Fund, National Heritage Memorial Fund, 10 St James's Street, London SW1A 1EF, and ask for 'The Simple Guide'. This contains a straightforward check list which can show whether your project is eligible in principle. You can then apply for their Guidelines and application Pack which shows in detail how to prepare an application and send it in.

Do it now!

R H Gilbertson



*Through the Yew Tunnel at Aberglasney
Photo by John Reed*

PARKS AND GARDENS OF AVON

Edited by Stewart Harding and David Lambert

The county of Avon possesses superlative historic parks and gardens, both urban and rural, which brilliantly illustrate the history of gardening in England.

From the Middle Ages onwards, fuelled by wealth emanating from the Court and the Church, and later from Bristol, garden makers in Avon have explored the full repertory of garden styles - monastery gardens; the elaborate formal creation of the Tudor period; great baroque layouts of the 17thC.; landscape parks in the 18thC.; fine public parks and botanic gardens, as well as Regency Gothick, formal Victorian revivals and informal villa gardens, in the 19thC.; and, in our own time, a continuing inventiveness that often builds on the past. Virtually all the places described in this book still exist in some state of preservation - many of them accessible to the public.

Many famous gardening names appear in Avon - William Kent, Capability Brown and Humphry Repton among them - all influences were felt, both in horticulture (plant introductions, plant collecting, nurseries, botanic gardens, hothouses, conservatories and plantsmen's gardens) and in design (the imitation of Nature, the Sublime, the Picturesque, the Gothick, 'wild' gardening); and the philanthropic concern that led to the building of public parks and institutional landscapes in the nineteenth century.

Both editors are closely involved as officers with the Avon Gardens Trust. David Lambert is also Conservation Officer with the Garden History Society, and Stewart Harding works for the Countryside Commission.

Parks and Gardens of Avon.
ISBN 0 7291 0230 0. 227x150mm. 160pp. 120 illustrations in colour and monochrome.

The book may be ordered from:
Avon Gardens Trust, c/o Malcolm Douglas, 30 Hurle Crescent, Bristol BS8 2SZ.
Cheques for £7.95 (post free) should be made payable to The Avon Gardens Trust.

Book Review

POEMS IN A WELSH LANDSCAPE

by Anne Carter

The Third Day: Landscape and the Word.

Edited by Kathy Miles. Photography by John Reed. Gomer Press. £10.95.

It is surely no accident that so much of the poetry of the British Isles, whether written in English, Welsh or Gaelic, springs from a sense of place. Not for us the wide, endless plains, deep, sunless forests or great mountain chains: we know that what we see is all there is. A few miles on, across the stream, beyond the wood or round the hill, there is another world, a whole new landscape where even the light is different. We may stand in a high place and gaze around us, picking out the various landmarks and marvelling that we can see six counties: we might as well say six countries, for each one has its own much-cherished character and in the hearts of its people Wales is not more distinct from England than Sussex is from Kent or, indeed, North Wales from South. To the rest of the world, Great Britain is a batch of tiny islands: seen from Builth Wells, Llandrindod is a foreign country.

This does not mean that we are not capable of uniting. Far from it. In the face of a common threat, we understand one another perfectly. But the backyard we defend is a little different for each one of us, a small landscape of the heart by means of which, in some strange way, we define ourselves.

So that a book of poems dedicated not simply to the Welsh landscape, but to that landscape in association with the people who have lived in it, shaped it, loved and hated in it, provided a rare opportunity for the poetic imagination. The poems are related to or inspired by places which, since they are largely from a list prepared by WHGT, include many sites of gardens and designed landscapes, some ruined almost beyond recognition, others in process of restoration, one or two still well preserved. Hafod, Aberglasney, Middleton and Beaupre speak through their ruin. Castell Cock, Craig-y-Nos, Portmeirion and others live on in one way or another. But in all these places there is a sense of history, whether distant or close at hand, which invests them with a quality beyond their immediate physical presence, a quality which invites the poetic vision, in words and on camera. Most of the work is previously unpublished and the feeling of the book is unforced, without the sense of strain that can come from commissioned verse. The poets generally have grasped their opportunity with glee and in some cases outstandingly. Abi Hughes-Edwards' poem inspired by Pentre Ifan deserves a wide audience, and R.S.Thomas's melancholy, perceptive lines on Plas yn Rhiw will surely reach one.



*Llantarnam Abbey Gardener
Photo by John Reed*

"When summer arrives
The wrack has the smell
of the bitterest of flowers
but domesticated by sunlight.

The tones of the old ladies
are sea voices lingering
in a shell...."

Dannie Abse's fine "Meurig Dafydd to his Mistress", first published in *PN Review*, belongs perfectly with John Reed's handsome picture of half-ruined stone walls with ghostly flames rising in the empty hearth. Indeed, Abse's own "Welsh stanzas have more heat in them than the tumbling flames in the Minstrel hall of Bewpyr". His passionate identification with his subject contrasts effectively with Ruth Bidgood's detached, outsider's view of the same place, and here the picture is of Richard Bassett's three-storeyed inner porch, standing proudly within the roof less shell of his house.

The photographs, as much as the poems themselves, give this book its tone: a monochrome world of wintry hills, hurrying water and stone buildings from which the loud voices and the laughter have long departed, leaving only stillness and a few puzzled sheep. It isn't the whole story, but it makes you think.

There is an index of places, with brief description and map references, which is valuable, but it might have been helpful to append page numbers of the relevant poems, especially as the listed titles are not informative in this respect and some sites have more than one poem. Nor, a more serious omission, is there anywhere a list of authors. But these are small quibbles to set against what is, on the whole, a pleasing and thought-provoking anthology.

contacts:

- Brecon & Rad: Miss Anne Carter (01982 570 279)
Ceredigion: Mr Donald Moore (01970 828 777)
Clwyd: Mrs Sara Furse (01352 770 360)
Gwent: Mrs Sheila Thorneycroft (01600 83 334)
Gwynedd: Mrs Bettina Harden (01758 730 610)
Mid & S. Glam: Ms Pauline Richards (01222 564 750)
Montgomery: Mr John Gleave (01686 640 494)
Pembroke: Mr Brian Rogers (0134 882 168)
West Glam: Mrs Elizabeth Belcham (01639 721 868)
Trust Office: Coed-y-Fynnon, Lampeter Velfrey, Narberth,
Pembs. (01834 831 396)
Trust Secy: Col. Richard Gilbertson (01834 831 396)
The Bulletin: Anne Carter, Bettws Mill, Hundred House,
Llandrindod Wells, Powys LD1 5RP.
(01982 570 279)



CYNGOR CEFN GWLAD CYMRU
COUNTRYSIDE COUNCIL FOR WALES

TRAINING

EXCAVATION IN GARDEN ARCHAEOLOGY: DARTINGTON HALL 1996

Dartington Hall, Devon; Sunday 14th July -
Saturday 20th July 1996 inclusive.

Tutor: Christopher Currie BA (Hons.), MPhil,
MIFM, MIFA.

A one week (six day) training excavation by the Gardens Archaeology Project in the spectacular terraced gardens of Dartington Hall (the finest secular medieval building in Devon-Pevsner). Tuition in the exciting new discipline of garden archaeology teaches innovative sampling procedures pioneered by Gardens Archaeology Project. This year's excavation continues on the excavation of the late medieval 'tower' thought to have survived as a garden ornament into the 19th century, and re-embarks on the exploration of the garden remains beneath the upper terraces, thought to date from c. 1700. This will be the final season to look at the 'tower' ditch, which has produced a splendid assemblage of late medieval/early post-medieval finds.

The course caters for both beginners and experienced professionals of all ages. Tuition is geared to individuals.

Tuition: (over 21) £98.00; (under 21 and students) £68.00.

Excellent accommodation and camping facilities can be provided on application. Nearest BR station, Totnes 5km (3 miles). Local bus service.

“*God Almighty first
planted a garden. And indeed it is the
purest of human pleasures.*”

— Francis Bacon: Essays

Books on garden design, studies of great gardens and gardeners, and the most important works of landscape history are offered at:

*Peter J. Hadley, Bookseller
132 Corve Street, Ludlow, Shropshire*

Where a selective range of literature and works on the visual and decorative arts may also be viewed.

Open 10am-5pm, Monday through Saturdays; those travelling a distance are advised to telephone in advance and ascertain any temporary deviations from these hours. Catalogues are issued, and elusive titles sought upon your request.

telephone (01584) 874441 Facsimile (01584) 873027