



SPRING 2001

A once proud family home - Insole Court, Llandaff

By Patricia Moore

Insole Court is a large house in Llandaff, on the north-western outskirts of Cardiff. Dating from 1855, with later significant elaboration, the house is listed grade II, and is now owned by the City and County of Cardiff. Its garden is listed grade II* on the Cadw/ICOMOS register for Glamorgan. It is there described as an example of a grand Victorian and Edwardian town garden.

An arc of rising ground forms a backdrop to the low-lying town of Cardiff. Today these slopes are covered with the bricks and mortar of the city's suburbs. Formerly they were farmland, green fields and woodland, and it was to this higher ground that wealthy families moved during the second half of the nineteenth and the early years of the twentieth century, to build substantial mansions in the pleasant countryside. Today, too large and too costly to run as family homes, many of these houses have been demolished, to be replaced by modern dwellings or apartment blocks, more in tune with present-day life. Some have found institutional uses. Insole Court, one of the most architecturally ambitious of those houses remains, but reduced from its earlier size, lacking much of its original interior decoration, and exuding an institutional air as it strives to find new uses serving the community.

The name Insole comes from the family which built the house, and their rags-to-riches story reflects that of many families which engaged in trade through Cardiff docks or made fortunes from the exploitation of Glamorgan's mineral wealth. The first Insole to arrive in Cardiff was a carpenter and wood merchant. In 1827 George Insole and his family moved to Cardiff from his native Worcester. He was among the early settlers, bringing talents and an ambition to seek new opportunities in an area just beginning to show its potential for development. When business as a brick and wood merchant faltered, Insole developed a trade in exporting coal. At first he dealt in other people's coal but then decided to mine his own. In the 1830s he leased Maesmawr colliery, which produced good bituminous coal, suitable for domestic and industrial uses. Insole also traded in steam coal from Lucy Thomas's famed Waun Wylt colliery, and he realised that there were expanding markets for this commodity. He found the steam coal seams in the 1840s, at his Abergorky colliery, above Treorchy, as the exploration and exploitation of the Rhondda valley's resources were beginning. At a greater depth, a later Insole generation in 1876 reached the same seams at Cymmer. The good quality steam coal which was produced came at the time when ships were converting from sail to steam, and the lucrative contracts which Insole procured with the Navy assured his family's prosperity and continuing accumulation of wealth.

In 1851 George Insole died, and was succeeded by his son James. In 1855 James Insole bought some fields at Llandaff, lying between the lane to Fairwater and one to Ely. He built a pleasant, modest, double-fronted villa, which he named 'Ely Court'.

Continuing affluence encouraged more ambitious projects, and when James Insole handed on the business to his sons in 1874, he retired, still in his early 50s, to spend his energy on enlarging the house in a style which reflected the gothicising work then being undertaken at Cardiff Castle by William Burges for the Marquess of Bute. Indeed Insole employed many of the craftsmen whose

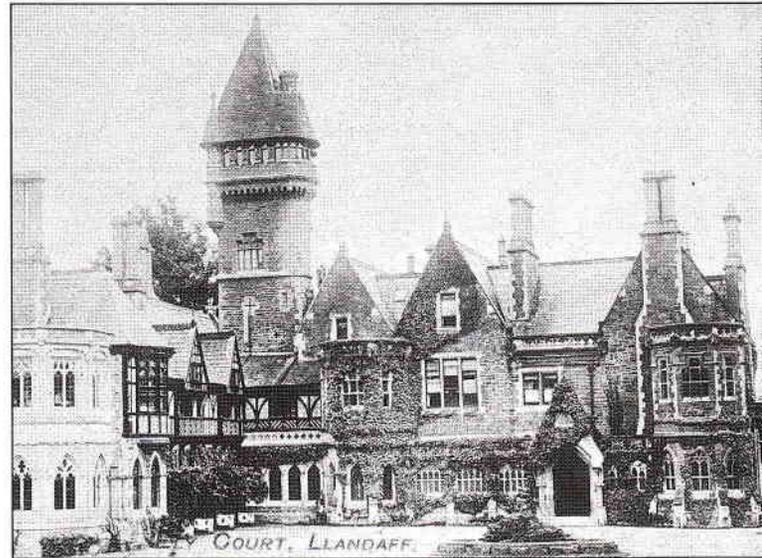


Photo (c. 1904) of 'Ely Court' reproduced courtesy of Matthew Williams (from Insole Court Llandaff - The Story of a Victorian Mansion (1998) Friends of Insole Court)

skills had been developed at the Castle, masons, sculptors, wood-carvers, painters and workers in metal. The resemblance to the Castle was strengthened by the building of a seventy-foot tower (with a smoking room at the top under a steeply angled roof), admittedly only half the height of the Castle's Clock Tower, but none the less sufficiently striking in its setting to attract comment in the local press. The family's wealth also purchased land for development elsewhere in Glamorgan, and a sporting estate in Somerset, Luxborough, where they could live as country gentlemen. The College of Arms was approached and the family acquired a coat of arms. Armorial griffons now sat atop gate pillars, a griffon gasolier graced a newel post in the staircase hall, and armorial devices were painted on walls inside the house. A

north wing was added in the 1890s. The house was again enlarged at the beginning of the twentieth century, this time improving the kitchen and domestic offices, adding a porte-cochère, and transforming some of the Victorian decoration to an Edwardian taste. The house was re-named 'The Court'.

The house had been built a little way down the south-facing slope, with its north lodge on the road to Fairwater. In the 1860s Mr Treseder, a local nurseryman (another in-comer to the area and presumably of Cornish origin), was called in to design the garden and to plant a curving avenue of horse chestnuts (some still remain) leading down from the lodge to the area in front of the



Balustrades at Insole Court by Clarke of Llandaff. (photo: Patricia Moore)

north entrance door. As the ground fell away gently, to the south of the house, it was terraced, and the balustrades and steps (by Clarke of Llandaff) which outline the main terrace, give a firm line to the overall design. No personal papers have been found from the family, so no plans or letters survive to document the garden's development. It is to successive editions of the 25-inch Ordnance Survey plans that one turns to see differences in the internal design and arrangement of the garden, its extension to provide an artificial water garden, wider parkland, and a south drive and south lodge on the road to Ely. Trees and shrubs, two great cedars, copper beeches, rhododendrons, azaleas, camellias, bamboos, a fine magnolia and a patterned-bark myrtle *Myrtus luma* against the house, remain to give an indication of the richness of earlier planting. The ornamental iron frame of a conservatory hints at former elegance, and there had once been an indoor fern garden, under the staircase, shown in an old photograph.

The garden was renowned for the alpins which it held. The appropriate setting for planting was achieved by the introduction

of a large number of shaped rocks. The stone came from the nearby Radyr quarries, and were put in place, according to the firm's ledgers, by W.S. Clarke of Llandaff, whose workforce was active in local ecclesiastical and domestic building. The great stones bring to mind the work of James Pulham, but no documentary evidence has as yet been found to prove his involvement. Whether designed by, or influenced by Pulham, may never be known, but Pulham had done work in the 1870s at St Fagans Castle, not five miles away. If the Insoles had copied the Marquess of Bute in their house, they may have as easily taken a cue from the Windsor-Clives in their garden. Great stones also created a grotto (now swept away) and a slightly grotesque summerhouse (still standing). There was also a tunnel arch of gigantic boulders (still in place), leading to one of the glasshouses (now gone).

Further glasshouses and the kitchen garden were sited to the north-east of the house. Some indication of the importance of the warm, intermediate and cool greenhouses, and the plants they contained, can be gained from lists given in the recently discovered (and published) diary of a foreman gardener at The Court who worked there between 1910 and 1912. Joseph Farley, who had held similar positions in other large houses, recorded the range of plants raised and cared for in the glasshouses, including an impressive list of over 150 different orchids. He lists, too, the fruit trees in the orchard, the varieties of vegetable seeds sown, bedding-out plants assigned to numbered flower beds, and the bulbs forced. His brief diary entries document the day-to-day work in the gardens and glasshouses, with details of the vegetables and flowers used in the house, the exotics raised in the glasshouses, and the soft fruit and surplus vegetables used for jam making or sterilising in jars, for out-of-season use. Pests and problems occupied some of his time, the treatment of mildew or spraying of flies. It is illuminating to have even this brief glimpse of the garden through the eyes of a gardener. How one wishes the papers of Violet Insole had survived, a fourth generation daughter of the family, who was a well known devotee of alpins and developed new strains of irises in the garden.

By the fourth generation, however, family members no longer took such an active part in the direction of the company, leaving matters to managers. With the greater use of oil, not coal, after the First World War, the family's main source of income was threatened. In 1930, however, it was a different development which was to sever the Insole link with Cardiff. An orbital road was planned which would drive straight through The Court's parkland, cutting the house off from its south lodge. A compulsory purchase of the house and its adjoining land gave Cardiff City Council the land it needed for a dual-carriageway, and by 1939 pleasantly laid out roads of new houses covered the parkland, right up to the boundary of the pleasure garden. The family moved away from South Wales. Cardiff Council took over the house, which fulfilled various roles in wartime, but suffered dilapidation. During the seventy years of Council ownership the future of the building (first re-named Llandaff Court, and now Insole Court), has been, and still continues to be, precarious. The City of Cardiff is to be applauded for restoring some of the elaborately painted rooms, but is unable to open them, unsupervised, to the public. In the garden municipal annual planting schemes bring brightness to the scene, a colourful setting for wedding photographs. Local mothers bring their infants to play on the lawns, twelve-year-olds kick footballs until a gardener remonstrates, the Friends of Insole Court keep watch on the general situation, but at night there is no one to chase away vandals. Such is the fate of a once proud house and garden, a familiar fate shared by many others.

Patricia Moore

Obituary: Brian Morris

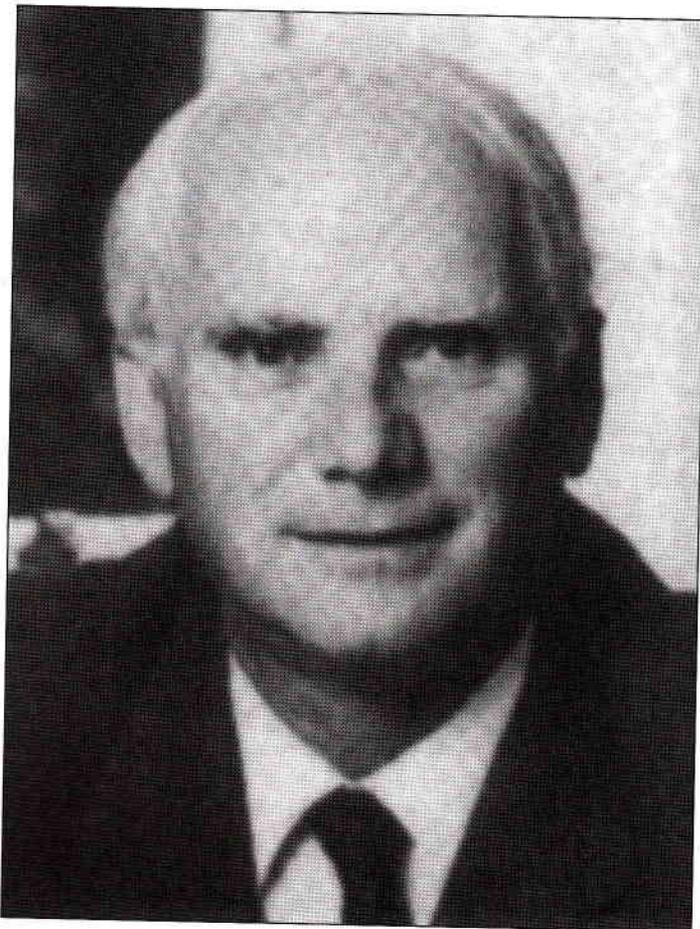
Lord Morris of Castlemorris

MCMXXX – MMI

When I first sat down to write my 'Chairman's Letter' for this edition of *The Bulletin*, I little thought that I would also be writing this obituary for our President, Brian Morris, Lord Morris of Castlemorris. Many of you will know him only from his cheerful, brisk, cogent chairing of our Annual General Meetings (he only ever missed two, when he first became ill with leukemia) and from those you will have gathered something of his shining intelligence and sharp, enquiring mind. The personal memoir by William Wilkins, our first Chairman, that follows this, reveals how important Brian Morris was to the original inception of the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust. From that day on he never stinted in his help and encouragement for everything we tried to do. He was always on the end of a telephone, ready to offer help and advice whenever it was needed.

The obituaries in *The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph* tracked in detail Brian Morris's considerable achievements in a life that we all wish had extended beyond its three score years and ten. For those of you who missed these, you should know that he was a distinguished English scholar – he taught English Literature at the Universities of Birmingham, Reading and York and became Professor of English at Sheffield University. He considered his time as Principal of St David's University College, Lampeter, something of a coming home to Wales after many years away. His scholarship ranged widely, as General Editor of the *New Mermaid* drama series and the *New Arden Shakespeare*, as Chairman of the Museums and Galleries Commission, a Trustee of the National Heritage Fund, a member of The British Library Board and as Deputy Chairman of the Trustees of the National Portrait Gallery (he was largely responsible for the placing of the nineteenth-century collection from that gallery that now hangs in Bodelwyddan Castle). He was made a Life Peer in 1990. One very important part of his literary life was his fine poetry, encouraged by that great Welsh poet, R.S. Thomas.

Last Saturday John Borron and I drove to the heart of the Peak



District, to Foolow in Derbyshire where Brian and his wife, Sandy, had their home. It was a beautiful day. St Hugh's tiny church was filled to overflowing with family and friends, lilies and candles. Brian's love of the English language was reflected in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer service, his deep Anglican faith appeared in the joyous Easter hymn "Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son," his Welsh roots were echoed in "Guide me, O Thou great Redeemer". We gave thanks for a marvellous life, splendidly lived. It was a privilege to be there as it was to have known him.

Bettina Harden

Lord Morris of Castlemorris

A personal memoir

I first met Brian Morris in 1988 when he was Principal of St David's University College, Lampeter, as a result of an introduction from Professor John Dixon Hunt. John suggested that I should try and enlist his aid in the cause of Middleton and Aberglasney, and thus, one misty day, I met Brian and showed him around the derelict, dismembered remnants of Middleton Hall. At the end of the tour I took him to the site of the house and through the damp veils we surveyed the scene. 'Right,' he said, 'what do you really want to do here?'

This was certainly one of the defining moments in my relationship with Middleton, and I have always felt that it was typical of Brian that when properly engaged by a subject he wanted to get to the heart of it, and he wanted to help other people get to the heart of it. A man of great enthusiasm and intensity himself, with an absolutely grand sense of fun, he encouraged those qualities in others. His assistance and support were most valuable in the early days of setting up the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust and his interest in and support for, the creation of a National Botanic Garden at Middleton hall critical.

He gave advice and introductions, including the crucially important one to John Elfed Jones and Welsh Water (as it then was). And throughout the early days of setting up the Middleton Trust, which coincided with his intense activity as a front bench Opposition Spokesman in the House of Lords and Chairman of the Prince of Wales's Institute of Architecture, he continued to find time to advise me and help whenever possible.

There were of course many other benefits from his company, especially the discovery of his poetry, including a beautiful one about Aberglasney, and the delight in listening to him read the poetry of others, as he did so memorably in his 'Green thoughts in a green shade' lecture for the WHGT in Swansea. There were also splendid lunches and dinners that he gave at Lampeter, drawing together people from all sorts of walks and disciplines. His interest in other people and their ideas and his love of company and a good story made these occasions of great pleasure.

His obituaries have made clear the range of his abilities, interests and services to the country, but apart from his advice and friendship, what I shall miss most is his wonderful sense of joy, in ideas, foibles, confusion, beauty, in short, in life. All of us who knew him are diminished by his parting.

William Wilkins
May 2001

Chairman's Letter

It is some time since I have written a Chairman's letter for The Bulletin. Indeed, I am amazed at how much had happened. What I did not expect to write about was the sad death of our President, Lord Morris of Castlemorris. Personally speaking, I shall miss him enormously. Filled with a vitality that far exceeded his small frame, his humour and



passion for all that he undertook was wonderful to behold. He was a marvellously witty speaker – once, at a time when he was dashing up and down between Lampeter and the House of Lords, he was asked where he lived – "on the M4"! When I last spoke to him, about a month ago, while we planned details for this year's AGM, he made light of the long, tedious, tiring treatment he was undergoing for his leukemia, which had, alas, returned after two year's of remission. He was looking forward to our gathering together at Hawarden, but his last words were "It might be a good idea to have an understudy on hand." It proved a prophetic remark. Well, we do have a superb understudy on hand – a star in his own right – in the person of my predecessor as Chairman of the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust, Professor Tom Pritchard. When I approached him, on learning the news of Brian Morris's death, he said that it would be a privilege to step into Brian's shoes as our President. We are enormously grateful to him for undertaking to fulfil this role and for agreeing to join us in June at such short notice.

Over the Autumn and Winter much time has been taken up with fund-raising for The Gateway Project. This WHGT Millennium Project turned out to be a huge success. It was clear that we had to do all we could to ensure that it continued to carry on when the original Heritage Lottery funding came to an end in January 2001. Two bids were prepared, one to expand the project beyond our original horizons by creating the 'Education & Garden Heritage' initiative and appoint an Education Officer – this was targeted on HLF – and another to fund the core project, i.e. the work of Sharron Kerr, our Access Officer. This was targeted on the National Lottery Charities Board (now The Community Fund). In this world, you win some and you lose some – so I am delighted to tell you that the HLF has awarded us some £250,000 over three years. This will fund the Education initiative and our Education Officer, and contribute to *The Guide to the Historic Parks & Gardens of Wales*. We have advertised the post of Education Officer and are now in the happy position of going through a large number of applications.

In addition to these bids, Sharron and her assistant, Dawn Watton, put together a splendid bid to Barclays Bank PLC for a special educational project targeted on schools for children with special needs throughout Wales. We were simply thrilled to learn that we had been successful and that Barclays have awarded us £15,800. Sharron and Dawn are beavering away setting this up and we will launch the scheme at Duffryn Gardens on June 5th with Ysgol Hendre from Neath. These children, all teenagers, are non-readers so Dawn has created a tape to tell them all about Duffryn and the people involved in its history which they can listen to at school before the visit. During the visit they will have a special pictorial quiz to introduce them to herbs, trees, and the magnificent men who discovered the trees abroad and brought

them home. This is to give you a snapshot into all the work involved in creating just one Gateway visit.

Considering the huge amount Sharron and Dawn achieved last year, it makes it doubly hard that we were unsuccessful in our bid for core funding to the Charities Board. In spite of being a "highly recommended 'Yes'" we failed due to their lack of funds! As a result we have been spinning like tops trying to raise the funding to keep Sharron in post. It says an enormous amount for her commitment to The Gateway Project that she has allowed us to appoint her in three-month tranches until we are successful in attracting a large amount of funding. So far we have managed to raise £22,000 to maintain the project, administer the Barclays initiative, and generally keep going. The next major funding round is not until September so anything you can do, either as branches, or as individuals, to raise money for The Gateway would be hugely appreciated. In the long run I am certain of success. It is the short term that is rather harder to manage. At the recent National Trust Conference on gardens in Bath we were hailed as the way forward for historic gardens. We cannot afford to trip and fall by the wayside at this stage. Please help us.

Fund raising is important for the work for Trust as a whole, not only through the Gateway Project. Membership is rising slowly but inexorably. Your £12.50 is so valuable – can you help us to get more subscriptions? If we all went out and found a friend our membership would double and bring us an income of some £17,500. What we could achieve with that kind of bedrock underneath us! In the meantime, we continue to be very grateful to the Countryside Council for Wales who support our publications budget – without which you would not get this Bulletin – and to those generous commercial sponsors of *The Guide to the Historic Parks & Gardens of Wales* – Premier Gardens Wales, Historic House Hotels and Boxwood Tours. We have found new friends recently in NFU Mutual, who are contributing generously to supporting our work and will also be offering some very good insurance packages to members.

The 2001 edition of the Guide is now distributed, and for the first time some gardens offer concessions to WHGT members. Two tickets for the price of one will be available at: Plas Tan-y-Bwlch, Gwydir and Nanhoron in Gwynedd, Carreglwyd on Anglesey, Glansevern Hall in Powys, The Walled Garden at Pigeonsford and Old Cilgwyn Gardens in Ceredigion, Manorowen, Hean Castle and Colby Woodland Garden in Pembrokeshire, Fonmon Castle in the Vale of Glamorgan, and Treberfydd and Dingestow Court in Monmouthshire. We hope that this scheme will be extended in 2002. When canvassing your friends you can really tell them that apart from Meetings, Outings, Study Days,

and news and views on historic gardens in Wales (The Bulletin and Gerddi), there are more advantages to becoming a member than ever before.

The foot and mouth epidemic has hit parts of Wales very hard and some gardens including Powis Castle and Chirk Castle, remain closed to the public. These are big and beautiful gardens and the National Trust's back is probably broad enough to support the losses incurred. But there are many gardens and other tourist enterprises badly hit throughout Wales. Please go out and use our Guide on every occasion to spread the word of what there is to see in Wales. Your support, as in all things we try to do, will really make a difference.

Bettina Harden

Please use the AGM as an opportunity to ask questions, or you can always e.mail me at bettina.harden@farming.co.uk.

Thought from the Study Day: Invasion of the Glasshouses

The earliest glasshouses, or greenhouses in Britain, such as the first orangery at the Chelsea Physick Garden were built to give winter protection to ornamental citrus trees, and date from the late seventeenth century. These were followed in the eighteenth century by a proliferation of stove houses: lean-to glasshouses which were heated by hot air running in flues in the floor or rear garden wall. Plant pots were plunged in tan beds of composting tanner's bark, which also emitted gentle heat, and the discriminating gardener or plant fancier thus was able to raise a wide variety of newly available exotic plants both edible and ornamental. Special structures were dedicated to the cultivation of pineapples (pineries) or grapes (vineries).

The nineteenth century saw advances in heating technology, as the hard-to-control peat fired flues were replaced by hot water-pipe heating systems, while the advances in iron working and in sheet-glass manufacture offered dazzling opportunities for designers of free-standing glasshouses and conservatories attached to the polite quarters of mansions and villas. By the late nineteenth century, scarcely a substantial villa in Wales was without some sort of conservatory, while the great houses had amassed a range of greenhouses from a lengthier past.

In view of this it seems noteworthy that the combined scholarship of Garden Historian May Woods, Pembrokeshire branch recorder Gerry Hudson, and Cadw garden expert Liz Whittle have failed to identify a single example of a Welsh-manufactured glasshouse. Glasshouses, it seems, have invariably been imported from over the border. I have pleasure in reproducing here May Woods' list of glasshouse catalogues, in hope that it will stimulate readers' researches in two separate areas:

Look out for the manufacturer of any glasshouse you meet (late nineteenth century glasshouses often have the name embossed on greenhouse metalwork or door handles). Branch recorders would be delighted to hear from you.

A Welsh glasshouse architect has yet to be discovered. Surely there was at least one, somewhere in the country?

Caroline Palmer

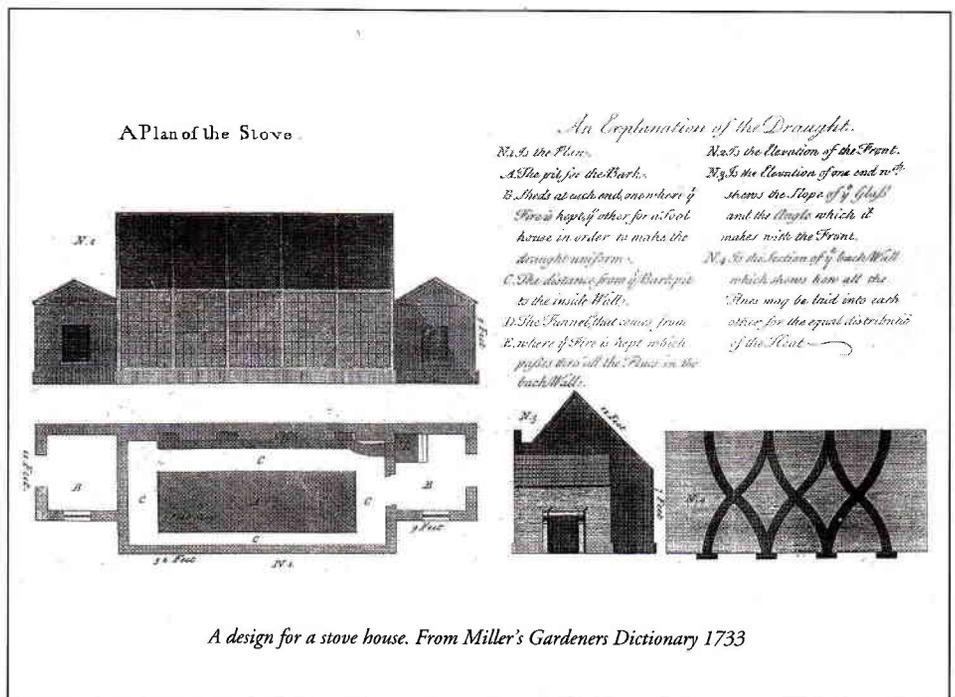
The Study day on Glasshouse at The Museum of Welsh Life was a very successful event, attended by 50 people. Patricia Moore is to be congratulated on organising this excellent day. More detailed accounts by the contributors will appear in a future edition of Gerddi.

CONSERVATORY MANUFACTURERS' CATALOGUES

Collected by
May Woods

In the Lindley Library:

Alton Greenhouses
Aluminium Greenhouses
Aston Home Extensions
Astley, Brook and Co Ltd
Baco Leisure Products
Banbury Buildings Ltd
Barnes and Pye
Alexander Bartholomew
T Bath and Co
Boulton and Paul (11 editions)
British Celanese Ltd.,
Burt, Boulton and Haywood Ltd
Byron Horticultural Engineering Ltd
Carter and Howard
Castol Ltd
Cambridge Glasshouse Co Ltd
Clear Span Ltd
Concrete Greenhouses Ltd
Crittall MPG Co Ltd
Crompton and Fawkes 1899
Edenlite Greenhouses Ltd
English Brothers Ltd
Gabriel, Wade and English
Garden Relax
Garrods (Sheetmetal) Ltd
Guernsey Glasshouses Ltd
Guildhall Garden products Ltd
Hancock Industries Ltd
Hartley, Vand N Ltd



In the RIBA Library

W Cooper 1903
Messenger and Co 1897, 1907, 1925
Wrinch and Sons 1882-82

G Hayward and Co
H R Hayward Ltd
Hook, Barry Associates
Kent Furniture Distribution Ltd
Geo W King Ltd
Loadtree Ltd
Machin Designs Ltd
MacFarlane, Walter and Co (cast iron parts)
Mackenzie and Moncur Ltd
Marley Greenhouses
Medway Buildings Ltd
Messenger and Co

F Pratten and Co
W Richardsons and Co (3)
Roberts Electrical Co Ltd
Robinsons of Winchester Ltd
Simplex of Cambridge
Skinner Board and Co Ltd
G F Strawson and Son
Wm Duncan Tucker and Sons Ltd (Duncan Tucker, Tottenham)
Vent-Axia Ltd
J Weeks and Co 1900
C H Whitehouse Ltd
Worth Buildings Ltd

In May Woods' library

Messenger and Co (5th ed.) c 1923
William Wood and Sons, c.1925

Aberglasney - Archives and Archaeologists

A cutting from the *Gardeners' Chronicle*, December 1892,
submitted by Penny David

TRAINED YEWS AT ABERGLASNEY, CARMARTHENSHIRE.

THE accompanying illustration represents a remarkable avenue or bower of trained Yews at Aberglasney, a quaint Jacobean mansion and garden belonging to Mr. Lloyd Phillips. The avenue is formed from a single row of Yews, the branches of which are carried over in an arch-fashion from the left, as seen in the illustration, and planted in the earth on the right, from which position numerous branchlets spring up from the ground obliquely. The effect of the bower as viewed on the spot is delightful, a peep of the old garden being seen at the end of the avenue. Similar work with trained Yews has on former occasions been illustrated in the *Gardeners' Chronicle*, as in the well-known and remarkable work at Hatfield called the Vinery, and the beautiful Lime bower at Rothamsted; in all instances the trained Yews are associated with Jacobean or Elizabethan mansions.

At Aberglasney, there is a small but remarkable old piece of gardening close to the house and Yew bower. There is a moderately large quadrangle in front of the windows; in the quadrangle, a large stone-bordered pool of water has been formed, with a fountain, aquatic plants, and gold fish in the centre. On three sides of the quadrangle there is a kind of covered walk, under a stone roof, supported by stone columns, with a stone balustrade above. Curiously enough, a second broad walk, with garden beds as borders, is carried over the walk below, so that persons from the trim garden above can look down on to the trim garden with its cool water and fountain below.

The whole effect of the place is delightful, beautiful, and curious. It requires but little effort on the part of a wanderer in this charming garden of old times to people the place once more with the gentlemen and pretty ladies of Jacobean times.



FIG. 117.—TRAINED YEWS AT ABERGLASNEY, CARMARTHENSHIRE.

A letter from Mr Peter White, Secretary, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales

Dear Editor

I am writing to you in connection with Kevin Blockley's piece about Aberglasney in the current WHGT Bulletin. Your members may find it helpful to be aware of issues which have not been addressed in that paper, or in the two preceding references you have published.

It is important to note that a good deal of the comment about Dr Briggs's paper has focussed on his suggested origin of and use for the garden structures. The Briggs paper however is long, and apart from the author's detailed discussion and the reasoning behind his interpretation, it brings together valuable specialist reports, upon some of which Kevin Blockley also relies for his present interpretation. Those reports demonstrate the benefit of applying a scientific method, for example dendrochronology, to assist archaeological investigation and interpretation.

Archaeological excavation is also based on scientific method, and necessarily so, because, unlike dendrochronology, it actually destroys the evidence as it proceeds. The excavator of an archaeological site therefore has a unique responsibility, when describing his or her evidence, not only to identify the intrinsic nature and, if possible, the date of artefacts which may have been exposed, but also to identify their context and the method used for their exposure. Indeed it is the context of such 'finds' which is so critically important.

Context is important too for the interpretation of structures. Their construction method and form, together with documentary evidence, can of course give a guide to intended use; scientifically based retrieval and analysis of deposits in and around a building are likely to be a valuable guide to actual use. The brevity of Kevin Blockley's piece inevitably gives no clues at all about this aspect of his work.

It can be said that the 'real' debate about the sustainability, or otherwise, of Dr Briggs's and Mr Blockley's respective theories about the garden structures has yet to begin, therefore. Dr Briggs's paper was scrutinised by Commissioners and independently refereed before publication. On the other hand, the publication status of the Interim Reports of work at Aberglasney is unclear — they are certainly not easy to locate and consult — and the contribution you have recently published is, as I have attempted to point out, not sufficiently complete to determine the whole nature of the primary evidence. Hopefully, Kevin Blockley's promised publication in the British Archaeological Reports series will address these issues, and help to resolve the present differences of interpretation about Aberglasney.

I trust that you will feel able to bring these points to the attention of your members.

Peter White,
Secretary, Royal Commission on the
Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales,
Crown Building,
Plascrug,
Aberystwyth.

Book Review **INDIGNATION** by Mavis Batey, David Lambert and Kim Wilkie.

Published by Kit-Cat Books, 93 Castlenau, London, SW13 9EL.

£6.50, or £7 including postage from the publishers. (A 25% discount for orders of 10 copies from recognised amenity societies).

This important and provocative booklet consists of three essays by the authors. In her essay Mavis Batey traces the development of the modern conservation movement from Ruskin and Morris. I must confess that I have never understood the spell that Ruskin cast in Victorian England and still to some extent does today. A writer of endless turgid volumes which are daunting even to look at. An architectural fanatic who built a house of ill-planned ugliness in one of the loveliest situations in the Lake District. A delightful artist in watercolours. Yet these never seem to come together as a whole. Morris was totally different. It is impossible to walk round the perfect quiet beauty of Kelmscott Manor without realising the genius of Morris. For some of us he far outdistanced his master.

David Lambert's essay on Indignation Today is a fascinating and controversial account of Heritage Today. This comes out most strongly in David Lambert's attitude to the National Trust. Repelled by the snobbery of James Lees-Milne's diaries he does less than justice to the National Trust's bravery in saving representative examples of country houses after the war. This was an essential campaign if many country houses with their parks and gardens were to be saved. It was matched by the National Trust's inspired campaign to save the coastline in Operation Neptune. This was top-drawer leadership at its most successful. By contrast the National Trust's present policy of buying

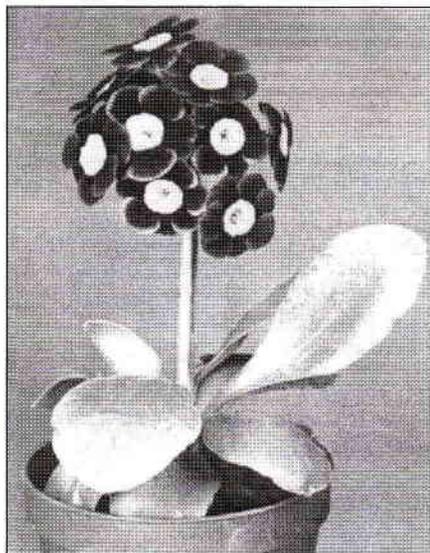
terraced houses in Liverpool or areas of unthreatened land in North Wales or the Lake District seems aimless and uninspired. It may be politically correct but it is a far cry from the vision and courage it showed after 1945. It may, as David Lambert suggests, be a more democratic notion of heritage but perhaps that only shows that heritage cannot safely be left to democracy.

Kim Wilkie's essay on Indignation Tomorrow is an interesting, if for this reviewer, a depressing programme for the future. In practice as in the Thames Landscape Strategy Wilkie is one of the ablest landscape architects practising today. This he describes well. It is his belief in the populist dimensions of heritage that I find myself disagreeing with. It may be true that to some 'Seeing the tree on the village green felled can seem more tragic than watching the Grade 1 town hall go up in flames'. This can only be true of those who totally lack qualitative judgement. Perceptions of beauty must always depend for their success on leadership by a few. If left to a local democratic decision PVC windows would be universal in Conservation Areas. I fear that for all their able arguments Lambert and Wilkie are pursuing a chimera. However much they may disagree with it, all who are interested in conservation should read Indignation. It will interest, amuse and perhaps rouse indignation.

John R E Borron

Clwyd Branch Auricula Show

If, like nations, WHGT were to consider taking a flower for its emblem, there would be a very good case to be made for the auricula. Small, neat, infinitely varied in its colour and design, Gerard's description of 'this beautiful and brave plant' seems entirely apt. Gerard was writing of the alpine or 'mountain' auricula, 'you may call it in English, Beares-ear', and he esteemed it for its herbal virtues, in curing cramps, palsies and convulsions. Sir Thomas Hanmer grew them from seed in the 17th century and writes of Leathercoates, with mealy leaves, of Purples' Murreys, Tawneys and others, with evocative names



like Belle Brunette and Royall Oreng. The botanist John Rea grew them in Shropshire, as did his son-in-law, the Rev. Samuel Gilbert. The stage auricula, compared by Sacheverell Sitwell to the most exquisite Meissen porcelain, the first sight of which is 'akin to the sensation of falling in love', is the product of a later age, of the 18th and 19th centuries. From about 1750 onwards, we find the edged varieties coming in: Grime's Privateer, Popplewell's Conqueror, Gorton's Champion. By the early 19th century, working men were growing them and Auricula Societies were being founded.

But though bigger, brasher imports may take the headlines, auricula fever still survives and the Clwyd Branch, where auriculas are grown with passion, has made its annual Show a very special event.

This year's, despite a late season and the foot and mouth outbreak which moved it from its accustomed venue to a car park in Mold, was still a ravishing affair. The great central display stand was surrounded by adoring fans uttering little moans of delight and then rushing off to buy their favourites. People wandered in off the street ('What are auriculas?') to descend on the cake stall and chance 50p on an unnamed seedling. The weather was kind, the flowers beautiful and everyone was happy.

Anne Carter

Owing to the late season some plants are still available and a list can be obtained by writing, with S.A.E., to Sara Furse, Nerquis Hall, Mold, Clwyd, CH7 4EB. Plants can be sent, bare-root, by post or collected in person.

Penllegare – a Registered Charity

The Penllegare Trust has been registered as an independent charitable company. Its founding Trustees are David Harris, Hal Moggeridge and Richard Morris. Proposals for the future management of the cultural landscape are being discussed with Swansea Council. The National Trust has offered support and advice.

Following concerted opposition by organisations and individuals, and the continued failure of the developer to comply with the S.106 legal agreement, an application to build houses within the boundaries of the newly registered park was recommended for refusal by Swansea planners. The application was then withdrawn.

The community development programme continues with guided walks, talks and other activities, with particular emphasis on involving local primary schools. A bird usage survey by the Shared Earth Trust (Denmark Farm) is in progress.

Michael Norman

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e-mail: Michael.Norman@care4free.net

Gerddi-WWW.

This issue I have been looking at sites which I have found useful in researching the history of gardens. If you know of any more, please contact me as I and others who are working on the gazetteer of gardens need this information:

Tel: 01446 775794.

e-mail: val.t.caple@newscientist.net

<http://www.ngs.org.uk/>

The National Garden Scheme

Information on over 2000 gardens open for charity, including many not normally open to the public. The database can be searched by area, garden or what is open 'this week'

<http://www.old-maps.co.uk/>

Historical maps from Ordnance Survey County Series 1:10,560 First Edition maps of the 1880s. The database can be searched by county, place name, postcode (use capital letters) or grid reference. It is an ideal way of checking up on a garden that interests you, but printed versions of the map from the site are poor – you will have to buy prints through mail order.

<http://www.ordsvy.gov.uk/>

Ordnance Survey

The get-a-map service can find modern OS maps from the place name, postcode or grid reference. The map can be used to check on the present state of gardens.

<http://www.tree-register.org/>

The Tree Register of the British Isles

Some free information is available on trees of local and historical interest, but you have to join the charity to gain access to the full database with details of more than 125,000 trees.

<http://www.nhm.ac.uk/>

Natural History Museum.

The Postcode Plants database is useful for finding native plant species that grow in the area covered by the postcode. This information may help to identify 'exotics'.

Val Caple



Registered Charity No. 1023293



CYNGOR CEFN GWLAD CYMRU
COUNTRYSIDE COUNCIL FOR WALES

Foot & Mouth

It goes without saying that foot & mouth disease has played havoc with the branch programmes of visits, and caused much heartache to members of the Trust whose lives are intimately involved with farming.

Members considering joining any event already advertised in the Winter edition of The Bulletin should be sure to make enquiries with the branch representative to establish whether there has been a cancellation or change of plan.

CONTACTS

Brecon & Rad: Miss Anne Carter (01982 570279)

Carmarthen: Contact Administrator.

Ceredigion: Mr Donald Moore (01970 828777)
Ms Ros Laidlaw (01970 832268)

Clwyd: Mrs Sara Furse (01352 770360)

Gwent: Mrs Gwenllian Jones (01633 894338)

Gwynedd: Mrs Joan K. Jones (01766 522766)

Montgomery: Mrs Carrie Dalby (01686 625613)

Pembrokeshire: Mr Gerry Hudson (08134 814317)

South & Mid Glam Dr. P. C. Eimes (01222 512102)

West Glam: Mrs Sharron Kerr (01792 390261)

Administrator: Ms Ros Laidlaw, Ty Leri, Talybont, Ceredigion, SY24 5ER (01970 832268)

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Bulletin Editor: Dr. Caroline Palmer, The Old Laundry, Rhydyfelin, Aberystwyth, SY23 4QF (01970 615403)

Membership Sec: Mr Peter Williams, Llangunnor House, Crickadam, Powys, LD2 3PJ (01982 560288)

Conference Call - opportunities to participate in:

POINTS OF CONTACT:

PERFORMANCE, HOMES AND GARDENS

Friday 27th – Monday 30th July 2001

The itinerant conference will engage with domestic space, through field trips, performances and presentations, at The National Botanical Garden of Wales, Aberglasney, Portmeirion, Llanerchaeron, Hafod, and Plas Tan Y Bwlch (nr. Maentwrog).

Contact: Antony Pickthall, Centre for Performance Research
6, Science Park, Aberystwyth, SY23 3AH
Tel: +44 (0) 1970 621571 Web: www.theopr.org.uk

GETTING IT RIGHT

Landscape Detailing for Historic Parks and Gardens

Friday 8th – Saturday 9th June 2001

Contact: The Architectural Association School of Architecture
36 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3ES

THE WALLED KITCHEN GARDEN FORUM

Saturday 13 October 2001

At Hellens, Much Marcle, nr Ledbury
Contact: Vicki Russell, Hereford College of Art and Design,
Folly Lane, Hereford HR1 1LT