

SUMMER ISSUE 1994

## A Message from the Chairman

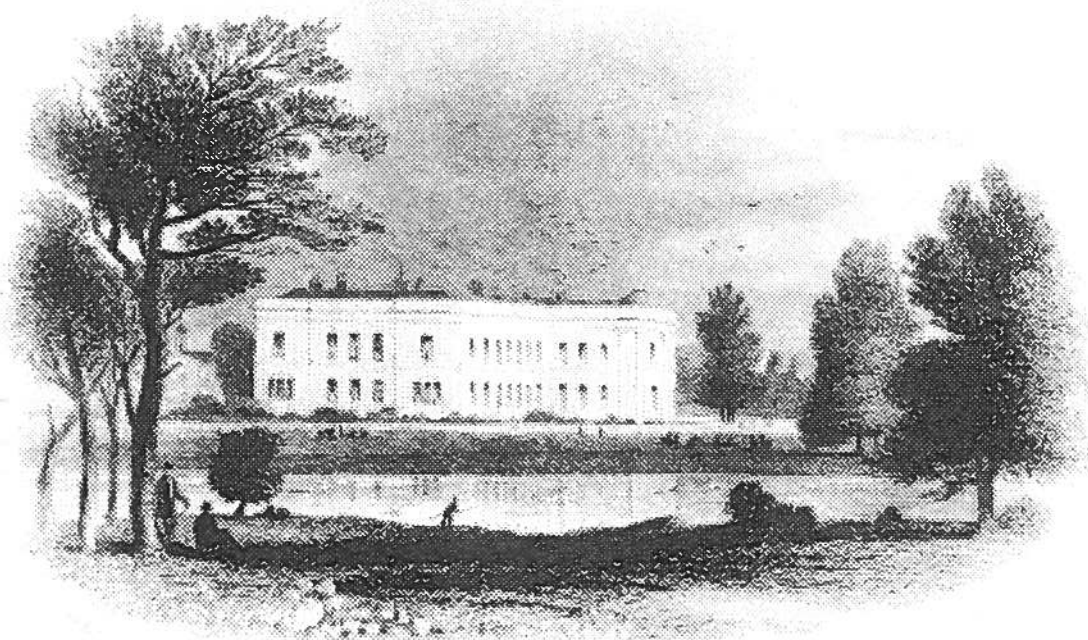
At its annual general meeting on Saturday 14 May the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust reached an important milestone in its history. After some five years of vigorous and imaginative work by the committee and county branches, led by William Wilkins, it finally became a charitable trust and a registered company limited by guarantee. I am pleased to have been elected the chairman and look forward to expanding the horizons of the Trust and consolidating upon the excellent work that has already been achieved. Our President, Lord Morris, in paying tribute to William Wilkins, reminded us on that day about the achievements of the past and the tasks ahead.

I would like the Trust to achieve three targets quickly. First, we must reorganise ourselves and streamline our administration and communication mechanisms based on a principle that the branches should always be seen as the leaders and centres from which members can expect and receive encouragement and support to get the work done on the ground. What matters at the end of the day is gardens and their restoration. Secondly, I would like to see us find new sources of funds by increased membership and, above all, through convincing other organisations and individuals to support us financially. Lord Morris, William Wilkins and I are sending out a joint letter to seek such

support. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, we must show that we are seriously needed as an organisation in Wales. We are in a position to care for a section of our heritage which relates to, and which is as important as, many others, like nature and landscape, historic buildings and stately homes. We also relate to several official and well established bodies in these fields and we must cooperate with them. The Countryside Council for Wales is generous and enthusiastic in support of our work. I hope to seek similar commitments from other statutory bodies, and the local authorities. Soon, it will be appropriate for a conference to be called of the leading bodies—the National Trust, the Countryside Council, the Wales Tourist Board, Cadw, WDA, local authorities and others—to examine how collaboration to save historic gardens can be improved in Wales.

At the AGM Ms Janie Burford, the Director of the Painshill Park Trust in Surrey, talked about her work in leading the restoration of one of Europe's finest 18th century landscape gardens. It is remarkable what she and her colleagues have achieved. Their work is an inspiration to others, including the WHGT. I look forward to joining in the challenge facing us in Wales.

**Tom Pritchard**



*Wynnstay: steel engraving c. 1840. See article page 3.*

# VISIT TO SINGLETON PARK

by West Glamorgan Branch

The weather was bitterly cold, and Wales were playing France at home. On the face of it the afternoon of Saturday 19th February was not a propitious choice of dates to have arranged an outdoor meeting of the West Glamorgan Branch of the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust! However, the hardy are not deterred by cold, and many were overjoyed at the prospect of an afternoon's escape from the T.V., while their partners watched the rugby match.

Singleton Park in Swansea proved to be the place to be. Over 75 people joined Ivor Stokes, of Swansea Parks, the 'tour guide' for the afternoon.

Gardens at this time of year are emerging from dormancy, and it is always encouraging to see new shoots from the ground, as well as blossom appearing as heralds of spring. Singleton Gardens are burgeoning with blooms, and if so much can be seen in February, surely repeat visits throughout the year will offer garden enthusiasts constant inspiration.

Singleton was the home of the Vivian's, and much of the framework of the Park and the layout and content of the gardens can be attributed to John Henry Vivian (1785–1855) and his wife Sarah, who were avid collectors of plants. Now owned by Swansea City Council, the botanical interests have been maintained, and many more species have been added to the collection.

The tour began with waterworks. The watering of the walled gardens was achieved by technical means, and the features have been re-discovered. A waterwheel was used to pump water to a round tower at the top of the park, which then held a head of water. The original undershot wheel in the wheelpit, has been replaced by an overshot wheel. Beneath lofty mature trees, the site, albeit now surrounded by ornate iron railings for public safety, is a feature within the park, being emphasised by additional planting.

The walled gardens now hold some of the growing houses of the City's admirable bedding plants, and over three quarters of a million plants a year are grown for Swansea and neighbouring Borough parks displays. The herbaceous border promised to be a sight to see in the summer, although Ivor Stokes remarked that with white stick labels, borders can often look like pet graveyards at this time of year!

Efforts to restore the gardens have constantly been thwarted by vandalism, and the water feature once included what became known as the bionic boy—so damaged and often repaired was the figure that little of the original remained. Finally a less striking and more everyday statuette replaced him.

Past the rockery, through which a 'mountain stream' ran, spanned by a timber bridge, the group gathered to hear how the terraced area behind us had been created. It was to form part of a site once proposed for the botanical glasshouse complex which now occupies a previously derelict industrial site in the city centre—Plantasia.

Passing a range of flowering camellias, azaleas and rhododendron, we reached the octagonal herb garden bordered by the rosemary hedge which contains a range of culinary and medicinal herbs. Just outside the gateway, at the edge of the parkland

separating Singleton from Sketty Hall stands a feature of great curiosity. Invited to venture an opinion as to the likely reason for the walls of pennant sandstone, with 18" high granite ledges, the best came from a lady who recalled that as children, she and friends had always thought them to be fossilised upright pianos!

Returning to the walled gardens, the sheltered areas contained the small flowers of the winter aconites and *Anemone blanda*. Overhead the delicate blossoms of *Prunus subhirtella 'autumnalis'*, the winter flowering cherry, contrasted with the evergreen foliage shrubs. Within the confines of the walled areas, what had been the 'natural order beds' now acted as trial beds for demonstration purposes. The enjoyment by the public of the spaces is paramount. A great deal of effort has been put into making the paths easily accessible for wheelchairs and a ramped access has been provided to the new glasshouses, which are still being landscaped. The old timbered structures have of necessity made way for aluminium. Old methods of glasshouse growing have also made way for new, but that does not necessarily mean a loss; in fact the public benefit by the improvements. Had John Henry Vivian owned the gardens today, he would surely have had the most up to date facilities in which to house his orchids, and marvelled at their number and the artistry with which they are displayed, in a more natural style. The warmth within the glasshouses, as well as the marvellous colours of the flowers, encouraged us to loiter. Ivor Stokes was seen to lead a party into the glasshouses only to run back to give the end of the line the benefit of the same talk! With the chill temporarily abated, we confessed ourselves game for the walk across the park to the Italian gardens of Sketty Hall, once the home of Richard Glyn Vivian who bestowed the Art Gallery on the City.

The Italian gardens suffered considerable vandalism as works were in progress to recreate them. Much of the original marble statuary with which the garden was adorned, was stolen. Replacement with modern urns and statuary can only give a representation of the original. The gravelled paths and newly created steps, lead through the four central pillars which are entwined with climbing plants. In the middle stands an enormous urn, on a plinth. Sketty Hall is currently being renovated for Swansea College, and the adjacent woodland garden is also being tastefully renovated to accommodate the public.

Whilst Singleton and Sketty gardens can no longer be termed historically authentic, and much has made way for modern and public use of the grounds, it is understandable that sacrifices have had to be made to authenticity, in the light of the social pressures of the day. If the Vivians had opened their gardens to the public, for the scale of use they receive today, they too would have had to make compromises. It is to the credit of the Parks Department that a haven of botanical interest remains, a pleasure to all who care to visit.

The Welsh Historic Gardens Trust, West Glamorgan Branch, wishes to extend its thanks to Ivor Stokes of Swansea City Council, for a most enjoyable and informative afternoon. And Wales won the match!

# WYNNSTAY – 9 April 1994

by Stephen Briggs

Considering the weather—some travelled through snow in the Bedwyns and Cambrian Mountains to reach their venue—it was encouraging to see so many enthusiasts attend this Study Day organised for the Clwyd Branch by Mrs Sara Furse.

Ably chaired by Mr John Borron, the two introductory morning lectures were given to a receptive but cold audience. In the first, delivered by Archdeacon T.W. Pritchard, FSA, of Berriew, the history of the estate was traced from medieval antecedents to the successor dynasty of Sir John Wynn and subsequent Sir Watkin Williams-Wynns, who were responsible for the estate's aesthetic and economic development from 1675 until the present century. Archdeacon Pritchard chronicled a list of architects, builders, gardeners and surveyors of national standing who had been connected with the place: Robert Adam, who didn't build there around 1770; Badeslade; C.R. Cockerell; John Ingleby, who sketched the facade in 1793; Francis and William Smith, who built the house in 1736–9; James Wyatt, who altered facades in the 1780s; and other names, such as Byres, Bandon, Gibbs, T.F. Pritchard, Wood (possibly of Bath) who made the top lake—all of whom had close connections with family or buildings.

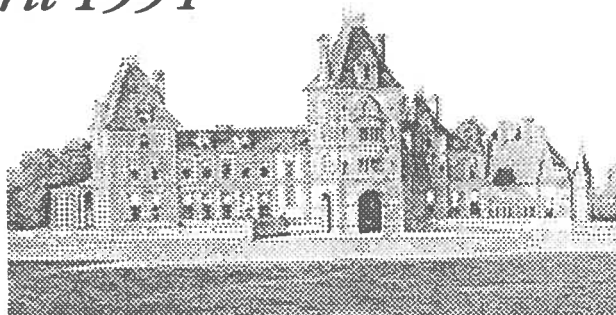
Capability Brown's connection with Wynnstay dated from at least as early as 1777 and to him, and to his successor, John Evans, can be attributed the dairy and lower lake. As no plans survive, the point at which the gardens immediately around the house assumed their present form seems unclear.

Archdeacon Pritchard was followed by a discussion of other Brown landscapes by John Phibbs, principal of the Debois Landscape Survey Group. Mr Phibbs pursued a provocative line over past interpretations of Lancelot Brown's landscape perceptions. Drawing upon examples of features noted during survey work he had undertaken at some forty or so Brownian estates in England, Mr Phibbs amply outlined the difficulties of distinguishing genuine Brownian from some earlier and from other contemporary and later landscapes.

These papers were followed by a good lunch and a post-prandial circuit of the house, an exploration which demonstrated that the main building housed a number of curious and exciting architectural features, including a fine 18th century organ (brought from the Wynns' London house). Especially noteworthy were the stencilled and painted ceilings, walls and doors and magnificent fireplace of one downstairs chamber—now sunk to the office of geography room—and some ostentatious floor tiles.

From the cool house, members were turned out into the cold grounds. Tree clumps, some statuary, the dairy, a defunct fountain and the original kitchen garden with its heated walls were examined in this all too brief perambulation. Time had to be called before the more curious could climb into the old sawmill complex, test the frozen waters of the upper lake, abseil the obelisk. The day was suitably brought to a close with a short discourse on the history of Ruabon church, delivered, appropriately, from the pulpit by Archdeacon Pritchard.

Although the sombre outlines of Wynnstay have been brought



c. 1870. Rebuilt after the fire of 1858.

closer to the passing public since a fast road has been constructed through the park, few nowadays are likely to agree entirely with the late Douglas Hague who wrote in 1968 that the house comprises a vast and very ugly mansion in a Franco-Dutch style with the utmost disregard for any form of planning.

Like the previous one at Talacre, this day was well-planned, in the Clwydian branch manner, and all those involved are to be congratulated on its success.

For further reference, see T.W. Pritchard: 'An Architectural History of the Mansion of Wynnstay, Ruabon', *Trans. Denbigh Hist. Soc.*, vols 80 and 81, pp. 9–36 and pp. 7–21.

---

## CASTLE HALL, MILFORD HAVEN

The Castle Hall estate is on the edge of the town of Milford Haven. The whole estate has been sold by the Ministry of Defence to a developer, who has been sympathetic to suggestions that the derelict gardens should be restored for use by the public if funds can be found.

The original house was built at the turn of the 19th century by an American Quaker in the whaling industry; the garden is therefore originally of Regency framework, though greatly altered by successive owners during the middle of the century. Most of them became bankrupt, possibly as a result of the work they put into the gardens! Early in this century, the house became a convent, and was later bought by the Admiralty to serve as the residence of the officer in charge of the Mine Depot. They pulled down the old house (an interesting Regency mansion, with later Italianate additions), and the garden is now dominated by a 1930s large married quarter. However, neither the nuns nor the sailors seem to have laid so much as a billhook on large parts of the garden, and the major structures remain, with some interesting plantings.

There are terraces, some statuary, a large but plain masonry grotto, a range of greenhouses refurbished early in this century, and above all a very large Pinery; from which 300 ripe pineapples were harvested annually for the household. There is a large

*Continued on page 5*

## BRECON AND RADNOR BRANCH

The launch is now planned for September and a meeting is being arranged at which Dr Stephen Briggs will be the speaker. Date to follow.

## CAMARTHESHIRE BRANCH

11 June Garden Painting and Drawing with tuition from a well established artist in the garden of Derwydd Mansion. £15 p.p. buffet included. By kind permission of Mr and Mrs Stepney Gulston.

26 June The Pottery, Rhandirmwyn, 2.30 pm. A large cottage garden kindly opened to us by Mr and Mrs Marno. Bring a picnic.

Contact: Mr and Mrs Marno 0550 6206

10 September Garden Workshop 11.00 am with Ivor Stokes at the kind invitation of Dr and Mrs Walters at their home, Plas Glanrhyd, Pontantwn, Kidwelly. Bring a picnic. £5 p.p.

Contact: Gwenydd Walters 269 860380

8 Oct Tour of Hafod with Dr Andrew Sclater. Joint transport arrangements.

Contact: Andrew Sclater 0558 685567

## CEREDIGION BRANCH

### Forest Visit, Nant-yr-arian

Fifteen members met at Nant-yr-arian Forest Centre, an attractive modern building which overlooks a magnificent view of the Rheidol Valley. The philosophy, aims and methods of present-day forestry were explained by Mr Alec Dauncey, District Manager, Ceredigion District, assisted by Mr D. Fryer, and the party was led around a forest walk.

### Conservation at Hafod

Further restoration is planned on the Cumberland Walks. Specimen lengths are being examined archaeologically as a preliminary step. Work will begin shortly to conserve the Alpine Bridge abutments, with finance now assured.

### Trawsgoed

A recording project was launched on 26th February at a lecture in Trawsgoed Mansion by Mr Gerald Morgan, of the University of Wales, Aberystwyth. Maps of the estate have been obtained, and two visits have been made by the recording

## News from the Branches

team. The Branch appreciates the facilities afforded by the Welsh Office Agriculture Department (WOAD).

### Lecture

The Branch Chairman gave an illustrated lecture to the Pont Society of Llanybydder on 'Historic Gardens of Wales'.

## CLWYD BRANCH

18 June John and Sue Harrop will welcome us to their walled garden near Llanfair D.C. 2.30 pm. It is on the Clwyd proto register.

## GWENT BRANCH

Wednesday 8 June 7 pm Illustrated lecture by Mrs Ruth Hayden of Bath: 'Mrs Delany and the 18th Century Garden and Park', followed by Buffet Supper, at Penpergwm Lodge, Nr Abergavenny. Tickets £6. All members very welcome. Enquiries to Mrs Boyle 1873 840208.

Sunday 19 June, Sunday 3 July and Sunday 21 August, 2-6 pm Nelson Summer House Garden, Monmouth, open. Access to Garden from Chippenham Car Park.

Thursday 13 October Illustrated lecture by Mrs Anna Tribe: 'The Nelson Factor'. Details to follow. Mrs Tribe is the great-great-granddaughter of Admiral Nelson.

## GWYNEDD BRANCH

On Wednesday, 18 May the Gwynedd Branch held its first Plant Fair in the grounds of Glynlyfon. A cold but bright day brought 420 adults and many children to the car park and conservatory where twenty-one stalls had been set up.

On sale were books, old and new, on gardening and landscapes, watercolours of gardens, quilts covered in garden flowers, oils and vinegars scented with herbs and flowers and, of course, the plants: trees, shrubs, alpines, herbaceous, acres of bedding plants and any number of rarities. And lastly, a variety of beautiful

containers for planting out. Alongside the professionals, were the results of Trust members' hard work, seeding, potting and growing on. Refreshments vanished as fast as they could be put out and a memorable day was set to become a regular annual event. Oh, and we made a lot of money, too.

Thursday 16 June Visit to Talhenbont Hall, Chwilog. This house is a very old Welsh mansion, and our visit offers the chance to see how the building and garden have been adapted to meet the demands of 20th century living.

Thursday 7 July Plas Newydd and Penrhyn Castle. With the cooperation of the head gardeners at both sites, we will spend the morning at Plas Newydd, lunch at Penrhyn Castle, and spend the afternoon going round the gardens.

Sunday 24 July Branch AGM (coffee 9.90 am) followed by a Lecture by Peter White on the Extended National Database.

## MID & SOUTH GLAMORGAN BRANCH

### WHGT second annual lecture

The Mid & South Glamorgan Branch organised the Trust's second annual lecture on 27 April at County Hall, Atlantic Wharf, Cardiff. The Chairman of South Glamorgan County Council hosted the occasion and offered the 65 people present generous refreshments. Sir Cennydd Traherne took the chair.

John Sales, Gardens Adviser to the National Trust, gave an illustrated talk on 'Dilemmas and Decisions in Garden Restoration', taking his examples from N.T. properties, including Bodnant, Powis Castle and Erddig in Wales. He suggested to his audience that 'Conservation is about negotiating the transfer of maximum significance from the past to the future'.

### Branch AGM

The Branch AGM was held on 29 April at Craig-y-Parc, Pentyrch, a house and garden designed by C.E. Mallows (1913). Members toured the garden and some also explored the Arts and Crafts house, now a Spastics Society school, which still retains many of its original features.

### Spring visit

In company, with members from the Ceredigion Branch a most enjoyable afternoon was spent exploring Middleton in Carmarthenshire. Its attractions included the outlines of great lakes, a double-walled garden with its microclimates, impressive stables converted for residential use, and a well-preserved ice-house. Double-daffodils, known in the 18th century and particular to the site, were in bloom in the spring sunshine.

Proposed Summer Visit in June to the gardens at Merthyr Mawr, near Bridgend.

### PEMBROKE BRANCH

Sunday 26 June Tour of Merixton and site of Kilgetty House. Meet in car park of Begelly Arms 2.30.

### WEST GLAMORGAN BRANCH

9 June Visit to Gelly Farm, Cymmer. Four small gardens grouped around an historically listed farm. Open annually, but a special opening for our visit. Ten miles NE of Port Talbot on A4107. Half a mile beyond Cymmer, towards Treorchy, turning off road on right. 7.00 pm.

14 July Our AGM. Meet our new national chairman. 7.00 pm, Swansea Museum.

17 September Trip. Golden Grove. A tour of the gardens including the walled one. 11.00 am, Gelli Aer car park.

23 October Gnoll, Neath. Autumn colours and an update on progress. Steve O'Donovan. 11.00 am, car park by lake.

## Editorial

From small beginnings among a group of enthusiasts determined to publicise and if possible save two all-but-forgotten gardens in the Tywi valley, the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust has grown into a national body concerned with gardens and landscapes in every part of Wales.

For that initial impetus thanks are due in large part to the work of the Trust's first Chairman, William Wilkins. Reaching out from that local start to draw in all of Wales was an awesome task. Perhaps if the time had not been right and the same impulse stirring in other Welsh counties, as it had been for some years already in the English regions, the thing could not have been done. But it was done and this issue of the Bulletin, stuffed as it is with accounts of branch activities, bears witness to its strength. Now, entering our sixth year, with a new Chairman and a new phase of development ahead, we need, more than ever, the support of all our members. Because we care about all Welsh gardens, from the great landscapes such as Hafod down to tiny, vulnerable enclosures like the Nelson Garden at Monmouth, we must be ever-vigilant, and for that we need more members. Because we need to record and where possible to rescue gardens at risk, we must have money. Because the best way of saving anything is to convince people of its value, we need to voice our concern: in protest where protest is called for, but also by the enjoyment we raise about the things we care for. The words 'pleasure' and 'gardens' traditionally belong together. Our pleasure in Welsh gardens can help to save them.

Anne Carter

*Continued from page 3*

pond, and scores of self-sown trees, some now of very large size. There are a few original trees, and some cordon fruit trees in a derelict orchard.

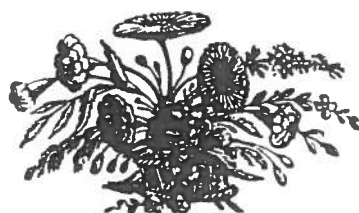
The involvement of the Trust started with the concern of local people. The Castle Hall Heritage Group was already doing sterling work in researching the history of the site and raising awareness of its significance, both as an important example of local heritage and a public amenity. Before the formation of the Pembrokeshire Branch as such, Susan Muir carried out further extensive archival research and provided invaluable evidence to enable the Trust to reinforce the Heritage Group's efforts. The support of Preseli Pembrokeshire District Council and the new owners, Waterfront Developments Ltd., were crucial factors.

After long negotiations the Trust set up an ad hoc project team under Peter Holden, chairman of the newly-formed branch, and—along with the local authority and the owners—the CCW and the WDA were persuaded to contribute to a feasibility study to determine whether and how the gardens could be conserved and reinstated for public benefit. The study amply confirmed the importance of the site and recommended a plan for conservation, reinstatement and interpretation, in conjunction with commercial development. As a result a steering committee is being formed by Milford Haven residents with support from the Pembrokeshire Branch. It is hoped that an independent charitable trust will be formed to restore the garden in collaboration with the developer, and with the assistance of Preseli Pembrokeshire District Council.

Richard Gilbertson

## The Beauties of Creation – 3

'This plant has been admitted into our gardens, from the richness of the colour, and the beautiful form of the numerous leaves. Nothing can be more splendid than their golden hue. With respect to the disposition of the leaves, they seem as if Flora had particularly disposed them into the form of a crown, for her own embellishment. The leaves are not only beautiful in themselves, but they are



DOUBLE MARYGOLD

allowed, by physicians and botanists, to possess great medicinal virtues: they are said to cheer the spirits, by their infusion, as much as they cheer the sight by their appearance. Their flavour is likewise so agreeable, as to have caused it to be mixed among the herbs that are usually boiled in our broths and soups. Thus, after delighting us in the parterre, they heighten the delicacies of our tables.'

---

## ROYAL COMMISSION ON ANCIENT AND HISTORICAL MONUMENTS IN WALES by Stephen Briggs

An integral part of the work of RCAM W is to create and service an Extended National Database (END) of sites and monuments. This will be used in conjunction with, and is part-dependent upon, the Sites and Monuments Records at the four Archaeological Trusts and similar records at CADW and in related organisations. The database will permit relational accession of physical, archaeological, cultural and architectural features. In its present shape and in its future form, it will serve national and local planning demands, act as a research tool for conservation and preservation policies and, together with the existing documentation in the National Monuments Record, also provide material for academic, educational and publication requirements.

In April 1994, work began on a project, the initial task of which is to list all sites of gardens and parklands, past and present. This is being achieved by thorough search of early twenty-five inch maps and aerial photographs. A continuing aerial photographic reconnaissance programme by the Royal Commission facilitates database formulation, fieldwork and publication programmes. Although the development of appropriate END datasets for gardens will take time, basic county lists of core data—names and grid references—should be completed by April 1995. The project is complementary to and supportive of the ICOMOS register currently being compiled at CADW by Mrs Elizabeth Whittle.

Because of other demands upon the project manager's time, initially, fieldwork will be kept to a minimum. Sites and landscapes under threat are those most likely to attract attention for survey at present, though in the long term it is hoped to resource detailed surveys of important exemplar gardens for the National Monuments Record. These will include earthwork (or 'archaeological') gardens as well as more traditional gardens and possibly some modern living parkland landscapes.

The Royal Commission can provide a good starting point for this study, in that it already possesses grid-referenced indices to some 55,000 individual buildings in the Principality. These and other records are made available for public consultation at the Commission's office through the National Monuments Record, a *Recognised Place of Deposit* under the Public Records Act. Copies of original photographs and surveys of several thousand historic properties or their environs are held, mostly the work of investigating staff, but with many others demonstrating the skills of well known early photographers, and some copied from important private photographic collections or documentary sources. These records are archived in a form available for public consultation and research study.

Although not hitherto occupying a role central to its work, the architecture and archaeology of gardens has actually formed a component of it almost from the Royal Commission's establishment in 1908. It will be recalled that at that time there was no Statute to protect, and no Royal Warrant to investigate houses and gardens built after c. 1714. So recording much of the finest eighteenth century architecture did not get under way until well into recent post-war years, and most early Commission investigators would not have considered garden earthworks

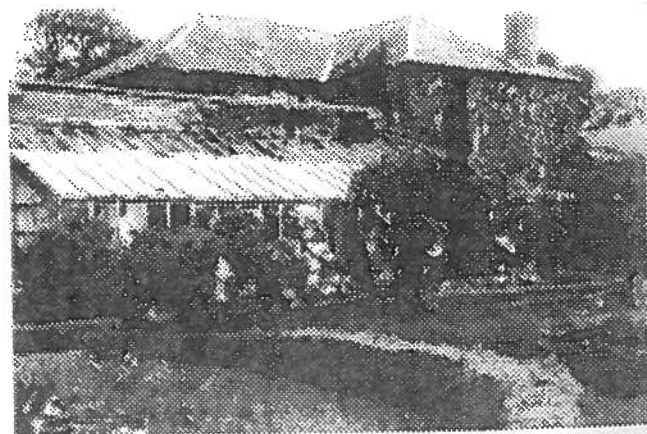
to be important at a time when Gertrude Jekyll was still building gardens, and when Avray Tipping had not yet started.

Investigating staff have nevertheless included historic gardens in their recent surveys. Llanfihangel Place and St Fagans are described in the *Inventory of Glamorgan Houses* and the forthcoming *Inventory of Glamorgan Castles* will include a detailed description of the Stradling family's Renaissance terrace garden at St Donat's. Visits to or flights over well-known buildings like Old Gwernyfed, Penpont, Glanusk and Trebarried in Breconshire, or Coedcernlas Farm, Haroldston and Landshipping in Pembrokeshire (the latter stimulated by Mr Thomas Lloyd's discoveries on the ground), have brought to light a previously unsuspected wealth of garden earthworks and surviving walled garden features in Wales dating from as early as the late sixteenth century.

Royal Commission staff also helped complement the documentary research undertaken by Caroline Kerkham at the History Department, University College Aberystwyth, in a systematic archaeological survey of the Hafod demesne during the mid-eighties. The emergence of conservation and development plans for renewed life as country parks, golf courses, hotels and nursing homes, makes it clear that all changes to gardens and parklands constitute threats requiring comprehensive archaeological survey and architectural record, whenever possible.

Concerned that the ICOMOS Register would not include a majority of the gardens known in their own localities, members of some county branches of the Trust have already helped compile site gazetteers to help draw attention to their existence. It is hoped that this work can be afforded proper recognition and in due course the full value of the database, together with the Royal Commission's surveys, will be realised cooperatively with Cadw's ICOMOS initiative and the Trust's membership, to achieve appropriately high standards of conservation, preservation and recording in historic parklands and gardens throughout Wales.

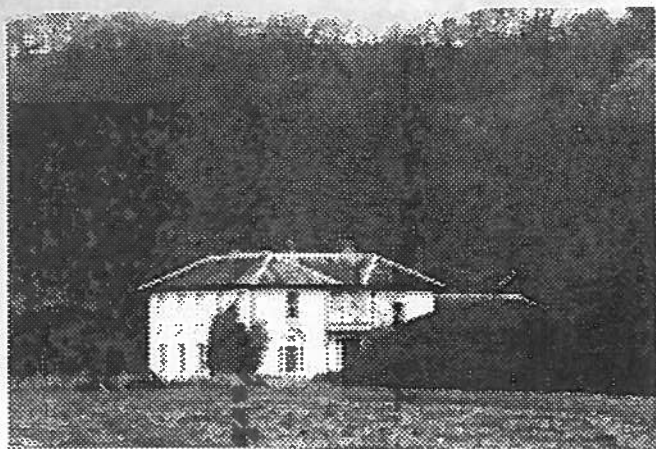
For further information, contact Dr Stephen Briggs, Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments Wales, Crown Building, Plas Crug, Aberystwyth SY23 2HP.



Part of the walled garden, Llanerchaeron

# Day-school at Llanerchaeron

by Donald Moore



There has long been curiosity in Ceredigion to know more about Llanerchaeron, not only its past but also its future, so the Branch joined with the Ceredigion Antiquarian Society to hold a day-school there in collaboration with the National Trust. The house and estate are situated two miles south-east of Aberaeron in the beautiful Vale of Aeron, off the road to Lampeter.

Llanayron, as it was once called, was a self-contained agricultural estate of the traditional Welsh kind, with some remarkable farm and horticultural buildings and two walled gardens. The house was designed in classical style by John Nash in 1794/5 for Colonel William Lewis; at that time the seaside town of Aberaeron did not exist.

The surviving estate of some 1,600 acres was bequeathed to the National Trust in 1989 by the late John Ponsonby Lewes. In 1991 the National Trust invited the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust to commission a report on the whole site. It was completed within five months by Mr Marc Morfe and has been an essential background for subsequent assessment.

The day-school on 7th May began with a welcome from Mr Philip James, the National Trust Land Agent, who disclosed the good news that the legal process for transferring the property to the National Trust had been completed on 25 March 1994. Restoration and conservation could thus be planned with confidence; a sum of £2 million would be needed over the next ten years. Cyngor Dosbarth Ceredigion had guaranteed one

year's restoration costs under a Welsh Office scheme, and the National Trust would be launching its own appeal.

'The House in Context' was the subject of the first lecture, given by Mr Richard Suggett of the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments. He spoke of

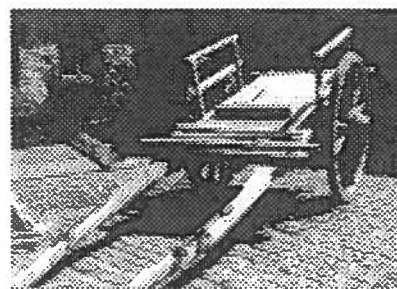
the architect John Nash, with special reference to his 'Welsh period' (1784-96), and instanced some of his buildings in Wales. The house at Llanerchaeron was modest and compact; a service wing was added to the back and terminated in a pleasant courtyard.

The descent of the former owners, the Lewis family, was traced by the second speaker, Mrs Mair Lloyd Evans, who is currently researching the subject for the National Trust. An interesting diary had survived, of William Lewis, who was High Sheriff of Cardiganshire in 1792. The family is seen to have been a generous landlord to its tenants over a long period.

After a delicious buffet lunch served by a team of National Trust volunteer helpers, Dr John Savidge of the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, described the evolution of the estate and its gardens. The whole concept involved a combination of the utilitarian and the picturesque.

Finally, in spite of indifferent weather, the members made a tour of the grounds. They saw the advanced technical features which had been embodied in the greenhouses and their heating systems, and which were now revealed by clearance. Trial excavations of a presumed parterre garden were explained by Mr C.H. Houlder, formerly of the Royal Commission of Ancient and Historic Monuments. A visit was made to the house, where the fine double-return staircase and a few rooms were open for inspection, and then to the little church of St Non nearby, which had been generously supported by the Lewis family.

The Branch Chairman, Mr Donald Moore, presided over the event and Mrs Mary Burdett Jones, Secretary of the Ceredigion Antiquarian Society introduced the second speaker. Over forty people were present, the maximum that could be accommodated. Many applications had to be refused, so it is hoped to arrange a similar event again within the next twelve months. In the meantime members have numerous opportunities of joining guided tours arranged by the National Trust at 2.00 p.m. on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays during the summer. For fuller details and charges telephone 0794 821237.



Gwerfoddolwy Llanerchaeron Volunteers

*In the stable yard*

## NELSON SUMMER HOUSE GARDEN, MONMOUTH

Members visiting the Nelson Summer House Garden at Monmouth have frequently wondered about the round, lunette-type decorations around the cornice of the Summer House. The wife of a former bank manager, who lived in the Bank House fifty years ago, told me that they were the lenses of ships' lanterns—a tribute to the Admiral.

The present summer house was thought to have been built around 1830 but, very curiously, there seems to be no record of the architect, the builder or whoever instigated the building. A local historian suggests that it might be by one of the prolific Maddox family of local architects. We are hoping for enlightenment as to its history. The original summer house, where the Admiral and his party took coffee, was demolished in 1954 but the Admiral's seat was preserved and installed in the present 1830s building.

Sheila Thorneycroft

## DISPLAY SCREENS

The Trust now owns a set of display screens, which will be stored in Pembrokeshire and can be booked through the Trust Secretary.

There are three panels, each double-sided and 3ft 6ins, high, 2ft 6ins wide. They hang between 6ft wooden poles, mounted in iron 'shoe' feet. They can be arranged in 'crinkle-crinkle' or radiating from a central pole, for all-round viewing. A fourth screen will be added shortly, for use by the branch booking the display for its own projects and information. They are made in varnished softwood with olive green inserts or 'faces'.

Three of the six 'faces' are now complete, but could be improved. They cover the Aims of the Trust, the Nelson Garden, and Hafod; Penllergaer, and Talacre; and Aberglasney and some Pembrokeshire venues, respectively. The Archivist has promised material for a fourth 'face' on Archival Research. As each 'face' is completed (with bilingual captions) it will be heat-sealed for durability and general appearance.

*We ask Branches to contribute one or two good photographs, etc., to complete the remaining 'faces'. Photographs should preferably be in colour, not larger than A4 size. Maps and drawings can be black-and-white, photocopies are very good. We need some accompanying information, and will write the captions from your material. Boots the Chemists charge £4.59 for A4 enlargements.*

The stand has already been shown in Gwynedd, and has been booked by Brecon and Radnor for the Royal Welsh Show. West Glamorgan are trying to get it to the Eisteddfodd; but the calendar is otherwise empty. What about a stand at your County Show, or a local Flower Show?

Richard Gilbertson

## LABURNUM HEDGES IN WEST WALES

Patricia Moore has received so much information on this subject that she is now preparing a full-length article which we hope will appear in the Autumn Bulletin.

## Notes for Members

### THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR LOCAL HISTORY

is running a weekend conference, 'History in the Landscape', at Aberystwyth from 1-3 July 1994.

The course is being run by Dr Huw Owen of the National Library of Wales and Donald Moore and Elizabeth Whittle are among the speakers.

The non-residential course fee is only £8 for BALH members, and residential accommodation is available at an all-in fee of £93. A supplementary charge may be raised against non-BALH members, but try your luck!

If any WHGT member is going, please let me know as I am asking for their permission to run a recruiting stand.

Registration forms from Dr D. Huw Owen, Department of Pictures and Maps, The National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, Dyfed SY23 3BU

R.H. Gilbertson  
Secretary,

WHGT Pembrokeshire Branch

## CONTACTS

Trust Office:	Plas Tyllwyd, Tanygroes, Cardigan SA43 2JD Phone/Fax: 0239 810 432
Brecon & Radnor:	Miss Anne Carter (0982 570 279)
Ceredigion:	Mr Donald Moore (0970 828 777)
Clwyd:	Mrs Sara Furse (0352 770 360)
Gwent:	Mrs Sheila Thorneycroft (0600 83334)
Gwynedd	Mr Simon Evans (076 685 324)
Mid & South Glamorgan	Ms Pauline Richards (0222 564 750)
Montgomeryshire	Mr John Gleave (0686 640 494)
Pembrokeshire	Mrs Eileen Wheeler (0239 820464)
West Glamorgan	Mr Chris Adam (0639 850 763)

### GEORGIAN HEREFORDSHIRE

Members within reach of Hereford may like to know of an exhibition to be held at Hereford City Art Gallery from 11 June to 16th July 1994 under the title *The Picturesque Landscape: Visions of Georgian Herefordshire*.

The exhibition is to celebrate the 200th Anniversary of the publication of two influential books: *Essay on the Picturesque* by Uvedale Price (1747-1829), who lived at Foxley, a few miles west of Hereford, and *The Landscape* by Richard Payne Knight of Downton, near Ludlow (1751-1824). The illustrated catalogue will also include essays on related subjects.

### THE GARDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

Apologies to members who may have been misled by our information about the Garden History Society's AGM at Bangor. The lecture by Professor Pritchard is already fully booked, as are the other events of the conference weekend.

Advertisement Rates Full page £20 Half page £10  
Classified: 50p per line Boxed: 3 lines minimum, from £2.50