

Gerddi



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Foreword

by Michael Tree, Chairman of The Welsh Historic Gardens Trust

While we introduced *Gerddi IV* in colour with some mild apprehension late in 2006, we need not have worried, for the new format and editorial style were well received. In fact that formula did successfully combine the scholarly with greater accessibility for our readership.

The articles presented here once more raise issues about ongoing change and natural decay on our major historical estates in both town and country. Over the past fifteen years Penpont, a Georgian house and its landscape, have been stabilised under sympathetic and energetic new ownership. Here we print a history of its landscape development before 1783 and look forward to having an account of its later history. The Victorian estate, of Penllergare, today largely in public ownership, now enjoys the attentions of an informed and enthusiastic restoration group (The Penllergare Trust). Its walled garden area is of particular importance and the surviving remains of the orchid house described here are unique and demand serious conservation attention. For many years the Ruperra estate's ownership fragmented while the fabric of the castle itself began to fall down. An evolving seventeenth-century landscape of national importance, it is now in serious danger of falling prey to residential development inappropriate to its standing as both historic garden and planned landscape. Conservation there is currently supported by two campaigning trusts (The Ruperra Castle Trust and the Ruperra Conservation Trust) set to confront these proposed developments at a planning appeal. We wish them every success. We rehearse here the Hafod *Archaeological Guidelines* because although originally written in 1995, we believe them to be still an important policy template for those dealing with picturesque woodlands or landscapes where the imprints of man and nature are closely related and the boundaries between remain fugitive.

Once more we are delighted to present a selection from Peter Davis's marvellous collection of postcards, this time devoted exclusively to topiary and ornamental clipping. I am sure you will agree that this collection continues to justify great interest and that it has been set here in an appropriate historical context. As this collection is truly of national significance not just as a record of gardens, but for Welsh topography generally, it would be good to see a national institution taking an initiative to acquire it for the nation, or at the very least to scan most of its content.

For the present volume we are as ever indebted to a number of supportive partners. We must again thank the Countryside Council for Wales for continuing to help finance the journal, as well as for ongoing advice and goodwill in all our activities. We are also indebted to the generous owners or guardians of all the many properties who allow us to visit and examine the gardens and landscapes in their care. We particularly thank the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales and the National Library of Wales for their help in resourcing this volume.

I hope readers will again enjoy reading this as much as I have. It remains to thank Dr Stephen Briggs and the WHGT's editorial committee for continuing their sterling work.

Editorial

As there are few journals of garden history in Britain, in my first editorial I invoked readers to consider making a contribution to this one to help raise the profile of the subject in its many component parts: arboricultural and horticultural practice, architecture, landscape aesthetics and design, and the problems of conservation, preservation and restoration. Thankfully, some responded to the call, with the result that virtually all these matters are touched upon in the five articles published here.

It may be worth noting that the alterations to presentation and editorial style that were made in the last *Gerddi* have been adopted here with only minor change. Those intending to submit articles for future volumes may find it useful to read the *Notes for Contributors* that have been included at the end of this one. Adherence to even the most basic principles of uniformity and scholarly protocol can very much assist the editorial process.

The Editorial Committee would like to express its thanks to all who have personally contributed to this volume, as well as to those who have lent institutional support. The Trust has been well served by both the journal's designer, Ceri Jones, who has undertaken the layout and graphic design, and by Paul Williams of *Y Lolfa* press, Talybont, who have provided an incomparable service. And finally, the Editor himself again expresses his thanks to the Editorial Committee who have helped in many ways, and to Caroline Kerkham for proof-reading and much bibliographical advice.

C. Stephen Briggs

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‘Sweetly variegated with culture and woods’: the gardens and landscape at Penpont, Breconshire 1666-1783

by J. P. D. Williams

Abstract

Penpont, Breconshire (OS SN 971288) is a substantial gentry house of c.1666, once the centre of an estate of over 6,000 acres (2,500ha). An estate map of 1738 provides detailed, although problematic, evidence for a formal layout which included walled gardens, parterres, gravel walks, a wilderness, garden buildings, claires-voies, avenues, orchards and nurseries. Some features may have been contemporary with the house, but others had most likely been added in the early eighteenth century. During the 1770s, the steep valley to the south of the house was landscaped, as recorded in the diary of the owner and on an estate map of 1794: several smallholdings were merged into the demesne, a road diverted, and the land ‘levelled’, drained, planted and walled to create a 100 acre (40ha) deer park on the upper slopes, with large park-like pastures, meadows and fish ponds below. This work was probably planned and supervised by the owner himself, aided by local and travelling artisans (and a good library), to create a multi-purpose landscape which combined aesthetic, productive and social functions. Around the house, however, significant formal elements were retained into the 1780s.

Introduction

Penpont is a greater gentry house on the south bank of the River Usk, about eight kilometres west of Brecon. This stretch of the upper Usk valley, which narrowly escaped being drowned under the ‘Big Usk’ reservoir in the 1960s, has long attracted praise for its beauty. In 1775 tourist John Cullum found his route: ‘as delightful as if it went through a cultivated Park ... all the environs ... have a neatness about them rarely to be met with in these parts. Their situate [*sic*] is in a most delightful Valley, surrounded with Hills sweetly variegated with Culture and Woods ... I never saw any spot in S Wales I should like to live in so well as this.’ (SRO E2/44/2.3, 47).

A century later, Francis Kilvert was struck by the: ‘... beautiful rich woodland country highly cultivated, with lovely dingles and deep green meadows, and a fine gleam of sunshine and sunset lit the dingles and hill slopes and set the gorgeous woods aflame. The country around Aberbran, Abercamlais and Penpont seemed to me unusually beautiful’ (Kilvert (ed.Plomer) 1969, 2:71).

While this beauty owes much to the natural topography, it is also the product of generations of landscaping by the owners of Penpont and their neighbours. Henry Skrine, writing in 1798, found that: ‘The views throughout all this charming territory are wonderfully striking ... and the whole is kept in that perfect order which indicates a wise and zealous administration’ (Skrine 1798, 43-46).

This article explores the designed landscape at Penpont from its early formal stages to the creation of a park-like landscape in the 1770s. The abundant – although far from complete – evidence provides an excellent opportunity to study a middle-sized estate that, unlike many comparable Welsh examples, remained the sole residence of its owners (and remains the residence of their descendants today). A further article is planned to cover later developments.

Background

The buildings

Penpont is a late seventeenth-century (post-1666), square-built house of five wide bays, added to an earlier building retained as a service wing. An illustration of 1738 (FIG.1) shows a house of two storeys with attic dormers; its hipped roof, probably of stone slates, having a locally typical swept profile. The rubble stone walls appear to be covered in decorative render. The elaborate doorcase, flanked by columns, has an ornamented, semi-circular head. Penpont was altered in 1803 and again in the 1830s, but much of the original house, including a fine staircase, survives.

The house is complemented by stables, coach house, barns, pigeon house and bridge of contemporary or early eighteenth-century date, while the unusual round-ended and pedimented ‘Lodge’ dates from 1779. Bettws Penpont chapel completes the grouping; this was rebuilt by George Gilbert Scott *c.* 1864 (Haslam 1979, 367), but the lower stages of its round tower, and the family monument nearby, date from the 1770s. Other estate buildings were added later.

The family

The Williams family of Penpont claimed descent from Sir Thomas of Boulogne (or Bullen, hence their bull emblem) a somewhat obscure follower of Bernard Newmarch, the Norman conqueror of Brecon. Further – highly speculative – genealogy led them to claim kinship, through the Bullens of Blickling, with Elizabeth I (Jones 1809, 697–699). What can be said with more certainty is that, in the mid-sixteenth century, a branch of this minor gentry family moved from the Talgarth area to Llansbyddyd parish, adopting the English-style surname Williams and establishing a dynasty of squire-clergymen at Abercamlais, half a kilometre west of Penpont.

John Williams (*c.* 1618–1680), a younger son, continued in the clerical tradition, becoming vicar of Llywel in 1640 and marrying Margaret daughter of Hugh Penry, the notoriously self-seeking vicar of Defynnog (*idem*, 692, 700). John’s own career suggests he was both politically dexterous and acquisitive. Unlike most Anglicans, he avoided ejection during the Commonwealth and even secured a pluralist appointment to his father-in-law’s old parish. After the Restoration, he served William Lucy, the quarrelsome and nepotistic Bishop of St David’s (then based in Brecon), accumulating further church appointments – and enough wealth to ensure his heirs had no need to follow him into the church (Richards 1923, 450–1; 1927, 148).

By tradition, the Penpont estate owed its establishment to the 1666 marriage of John’s son Daniel Williams (1643–1707) to Blanche, daughter of Hoo Games of Newton (Jones 1809, 699–700). However, while marriage into this powerful Breconshire family – descendants of Sir David Gam – undoubtedly brought status, the documents tell a more prosaic story: much of the estate was actually purchased piecemeal by John, Daniel and their successors. The little we know of Daniel suggests he was out to impress: in 1684 he treated the Duke of Beaufort, passing on his progress through Wales, to a ‘neat banquet of Sweetmeats and Wine’ (Banks 1888, 221). Daniel was appointed JP in 1669 and High Sheriff in 1673 (Phillips 1975, 277; Jones 1930, 289). During these years he was building his fine new house and, most likely, laid out the first phase of the garden, although we have no contemporary evidence for this.

It was Penry Williams I (d.1743), son of Daniel’s second wife Sybil (daughter of George Gwynne of Llanelwedd), who inherited Penpont in 1708. Penry I made another good match, to Anna-Jane daughter of Samuel Sheppard of Avening, Gloucestershire (a wealthy clothier whose descendants were to build Gatcombe Park). Penry I commissioned the 1738 survey which forms our main evidence for the landscape he and his father had created.

Penry I was succeeded by his son Penry Williams II (1715–1783), who had married Anne, daughter of Thomas Smyth of Stoke (Shropshire, near Tenbury) in 1737 (until Penry I’s death, the couple lived near her

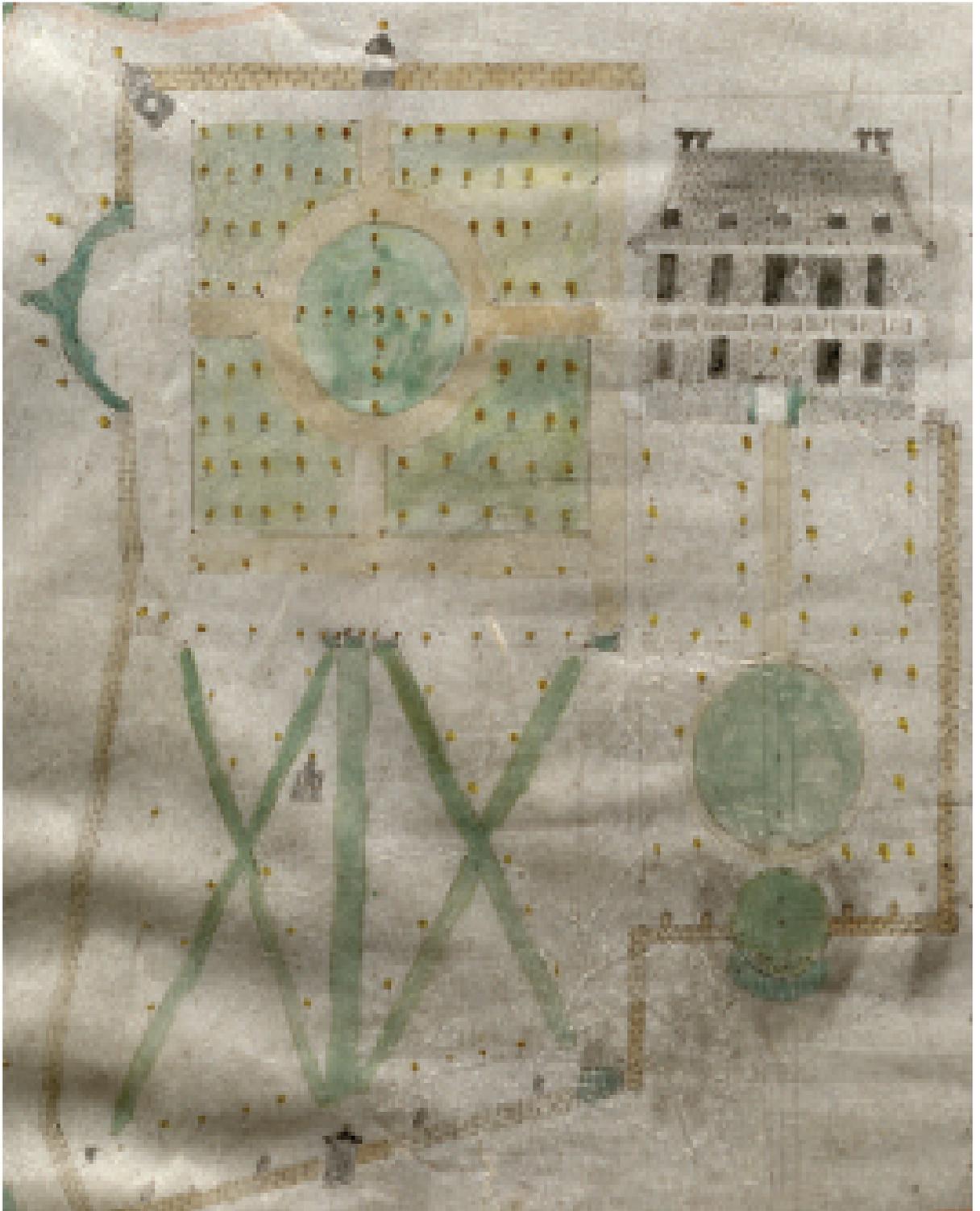


FIG.1 Enlarged inset of Penpont house and gardens from an estate map of 1738 surveyed by John Withy (FIG.3A). North is to the right (private collection).

father at Court of Hill). In birth and death, Penry II was an almost exact contemporary of both ‘Capability’ Brown and of the amateur designer Sanderson Miller. In wealth and status he and Miller were not dissimilar, and both attended Oxford. However, while Miller gravitated to more prestigious circles, Penry II moved mainly in local society, being related to most of the major Breconshire families, including the Penrys of Llwynycntefyn, Powells of Castle Madoc and Jeffreys of the Priory (where his son took guests to visit the grounds in 1772). He was also acquainted with George Rice of Newton (Dinefwr, Carmarthenshire), which he visited in 1772, and with the Morgan family of Tredegar (Monmouthshire).

An agricultural improver, Penry II was one of the founders, in 1752, of the pioneering Brecknockshire Agricultural Society, and Arthur Young remarked in passing on his turnip fields (Young 1986, 17). Since almost all Penry II’s income came from land, this interest is hardly surprising. An active JP, he was also involved in commissioning Brecon’s new Gaol, local turnpikes and bridges; this activity brought contacts with artisans as well as local gentry. From 1770–1780 Penry II kept a daily diary which forms a record – although often terse and incidental – of his agricultural and landscaping activities.

The Gardens in 1738

The earliest evidence for the gardens at Penpont is an estate map of 1738, surveyed by John Withy (FIG.3A), which includes an enlarged inset of the house and gardens (FIG.1). This fascinating source is not unproblematic. First, why was it prepared? Was it purely a survey of existing features or did it include

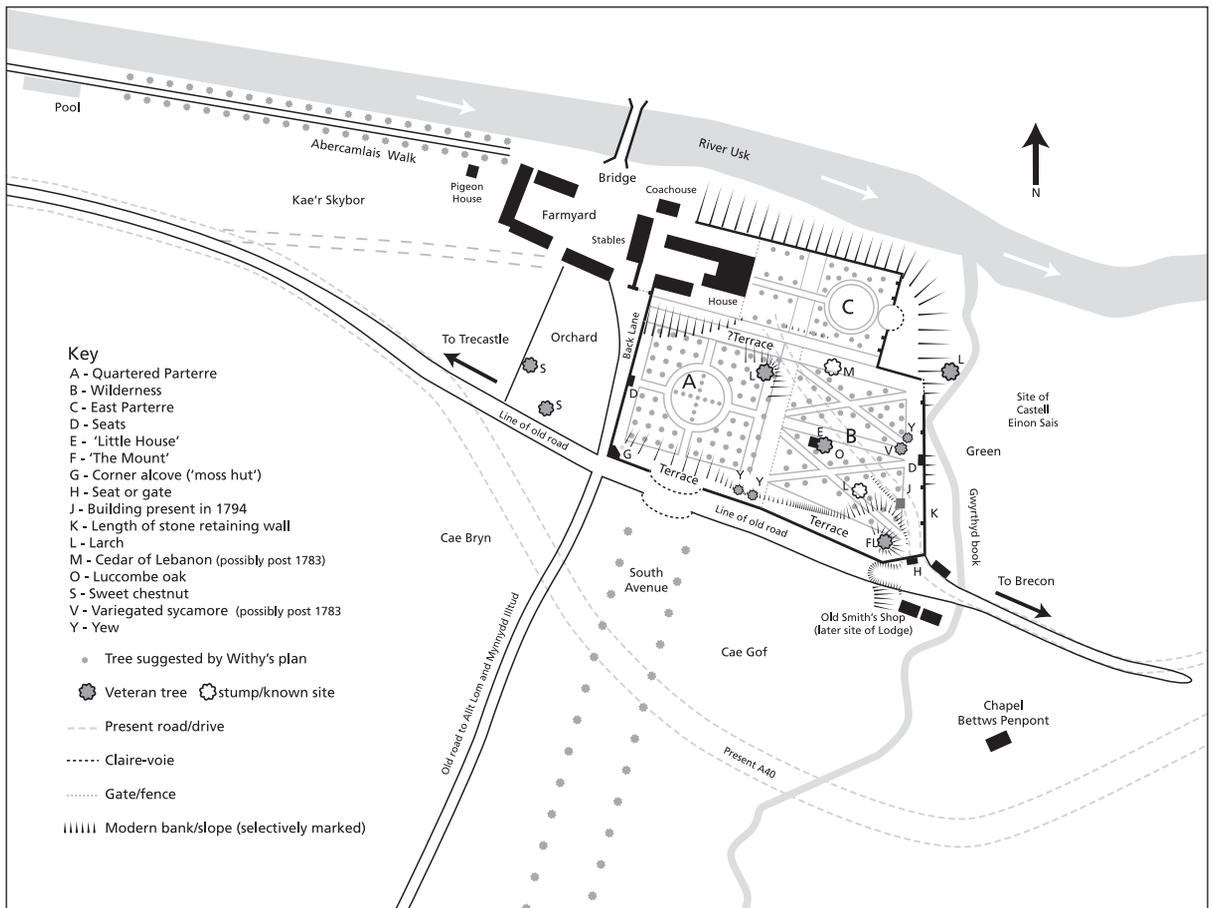


FIG.2 Suggested reconstruction based on John Withy's 1738 estate map (author).

proposed, and perhaps never executed, designs? Second, while the draughtsmanship is detailed, it is not skilled, and so is hard to interpret. Finally, the layout appears ill suited to the markedly sloping site. To attempt to reconcile this evidence with the situation on the ground today requires detailed analysis (FIG.2).

The garden walls

Withy shows walled gardens covering three acres to the south and east of the house (restricted by the Usk to the north, the old Brecon–Trecastle road to the south, the Gwyrthyd brook to the east, and a back lane to the



FIG.3A Penpont demesne. From the estate map of 1738 surveyed by John Withy. North is to the right (private collection).



FIG.3B The same area from an estate map of 1794 surveyed by M[athew] Williams. North is to the right. Number 31 is The Park with the coed-cae either side of the number and hill wall to the right, 25 is Waun Fawr, 28 Gwaun Pyscodlyn, 30 is Pen y Tir Bach with the Great Pond below, 21, 23 & 24 are in the area of that was Demesne in 1738 (private collection).

stables to the west). As now, the east was the principal front (although not an approach) and the boundary wall on this side appears more elaborate, having piers topped by ball finials. None of these walls are upstanding today, although portions of the bases of the east and south walls might survive as retaining walls.

Within the walls were three main areas, described below.

The quartered parterre

To the south of the house, Withy depicts a quartered parterre with gravel paths and a circular central feature. Similar forms had been common since the early seventeenth century, as at Llanerch (Denbighshire; Whittle 1992, 27), Llanllŷr (Ceredigion; Palmer 2004, 61) and locally at Gwernyfed (Briggs 2006, 9, 26). At Llanerch and Gwernyfed there was a central fountain, but on Withy's plan all the compartments appear to be grassed with small trees arranged in a grid. This layout has marked similarities with the frontispiece of Ralph Austen's 1653 *Treatise on fruit trees*; however in the central circle, where Austen shows an ornamental parterre of low growth, Withy has more trees – a curious arrangement which might have blocked any central vistas.

Withy has chosen to colour these trees, in common with all those in the formal gardens and the avenue to the south, in gold rather than the green used elsewhere. What this colouring represents is open to interpretation. It might denote newly planted trees, or trees that are only proposed. Alternatively, it might signify a specific type of tree (e.g. coniferous or evergreen). This latter interpretation could be consistent with the depiction of ball and cone topiary, common in early eighteenth century gardens such as Newton House (Dinefŵr, Carmarthenshire; Whittle 1992, 38).

The wilderness

East of the quartered parterre, Withy draws an area criss-crossed by green paths: two diagonal crosses, lined with more gold-coloured trees, flank a wider central path. This pattern suggests that Withy was probably trying to draw a formal 'wilderness' of paths and clipped hedges punctuated by specimen trees. Such features were commonplace in early eighteenth-century gardens, usually placed – as here – so their high hedges would not block the main vistas from the house.

This area was entered from the west through five gates; presumably hedges or fencing ran between these, perhaps something like the palings visible in contemporary paintings of Newton House, Dinefŵr or Margam (Glamorgan; Moore 1975). The east–west walk along the north side of the wilderness ends in a narrow *claire-voie*, perhaps of iron railings.

A veteran larch (4.6m girth) and a large yew (4.6m) near the eastern edge of the gardens could be survivors from this formal layout.

The east parterre

The third area is an elongated parterre extending east from the principal front of the house. Withy shows a path running from the main door to a large circular feature, probably turfed, beyond which a smaller circular feature projects through the east wall forming a semi-circular, railed *claire-voie*. This has similarities with the 'Iron Spikes' which terminated the 'Dyall Walk' at Squerries (Kent) in a design of c.1705; Jan Woudstra suggests these were typical of that period (Woudstra 2003, 38–40). Paths and perimeter are shown lined with more gold-coloured trees.

Today, this area is flat, level lawn. A low bank runs along its southern side, but may be late nineteenth century, when tennis courts were created here. There are very faint traces of depressions near where the circular features depicted by Withy might have been, which may merit further investigation.

Garden buildings

In the centre of the west wall, overlooking the quartered parterre, Withy depicts a small pavilion or seat, its domed roof topped by a gilded ball. This might have enjoyed a vista across the garden to a similar, but apparently pitch-roofed, structure beyond the wilderness in the east wall. There is no trace of either building today.

Where the west wall joins the south, Withy shows a corner pavilion, again with gilded finial. A building still exists in this location today. Refurbished in the nineteenth century as a rustic seat (dubbed the ‘moss hut’), its rubble stone walls are plausibly survivors from an earlier incarnation, which was perhaps something like the late seventeenth-century corner alcoves at Rhual (Flintshire; Whittle 1992, 37). In front of this Withy draws an indistinct, round feature which might represent a small pool.

Within one of the wilderness compartments is a small, free-standing building, topped with a tall feature – perhaps a lantern – and another golden ball. There is no trace of this today, but it apparently survived to be mapped in 1794. It was probably a small summerhouse or banqueting house, perhaps ‘the little house’ mentioned by Penry II in 1773 (see below). Its off-centre position may imply that it was a survival from a layout earlier than the wilderness.

The ‘mount’ area

The north-east corner of the garden is difficult to interpret. Today, this contains a feature known as the ‘mount’. This is a natural bluff, enhanced by the cutting of the old Brecon-Trecastle road to the south. On it grows a veteran larch (4.4m girth, see also below). It is not possible to identify this on Withy’s map, but he does mark a feature in the wall nearby, perhaps another seat or, given its roadside location, gateway. A small building was mapped near the foot of the mount in 1794, but probably not in quite the same place.

The south claire-voie

Piercing the south wall, adjoining the public road, Withy draws a wide and elaborate curved screen, in a design suggestive of iron railings, with gilded finials and an ornate central overthrow. The main map implies that this was a pair with a similar screen across the road (see FIG.4), allowing a vista along the south avenue (see below). Such features would have been remarkably impressive – and



FIG.4 Detail of FIG.3A showing the house, gardens, orchard, bridge and chapel. The ‘Abercamlais Walk’ is to the right, the ‘Green’ to the left. North is at the bottom (private collection).

expensive – so it is surprising to find no other evidence for them. A *claire-voie* marked in this location on the 1794 estate map (FIG.3B) is straight (although two curved bays were marked on the far side of the road).

Terracing

Today, the ground level at the south of the garden is about 10m higher than that at the house, with a naturally graded slope between. Presumably Wither's formal layout would have required substantial terracing, but he gives no indication of retaining walls, banks or steps. This might lead one to doubt whether it could ever have been a reality. However, there are enough examples of formal gardens on sloping sites – such as Llanerch above – where the terracing has now vanished, to suggest that Wither's plan is plausible, even if his depiction is wanting.

Site evidence suggests that the path along the southern boundary, linking the corner alcove in the west with the Mount in the east, may once have been a raised terrace walk. Its western portion is now little more than a flattening of the slope, but further east it is still markedly raised on a bank. Later re-landscaping of the quartered parterre area might have raised the ground level on this side, burying any upper terracing; and similarly the north side may have been correspondingly lowered, removing any lower terracing (and providing spoil to use on the south side). In support of this, where the north-east corner of the parterre would have been, is a massive veteran larch, sited on a promontory of slightly higher ground; it is possible that this preserves the earlier ground level, lowered elsewhere but retained around an already established tree.

Two large yews (3.3m and 3.4m girth) midway along the terrace walk may be overgrown formal specimens. The bank between these is now eroded in a manner which hints that something has been removed. This point corresponds roughly with the end of a north-south path on Wither's plan (separating the quartered parterre from the wilderness) and is perhaps a likely location for steps. Perhaps these were 'the steps in the garden' which Penry II records taking away in 1777.

Despite the lack of detail in Wither's plan, we can tentatively reconstruct a garden on several levels. The highest, to the south, was the raised terrace walk. A few feet below this was the flat or gently-sloping quartered parterre. To the east, and probably a little lower, was the wilderness. On the lowest level, to the north, was the house and the parterre before its eastern front. Between the house and quartered parterre there was probably an intermediate level, perhaps forming another east-west terrace walk terminating at the small *claire-voie* in the east wall.



FIG.5 The 'Abercamlais Walk' c.1914 (private collection).

Abercamlais walk

Outside the walled area, to the west of the house, Withy shows an avenue running along the riverbank to a small pond (at OS SN 969 289; FIG.4). A path continues to a gate into the grounds of Abercamlais. This oak avenue, just over 200m long and known as the ‘Abercamlais walk’, survives today. It has trees of mixed sizes, suggesting periodic replacement; remnants of one of the largest, now fallen, suggest it was planted *c.*1720–1730.

The pond, depicted dry by the Ordnance Survey 25-inch plan of 1886, has been recently restored. It is likely that the path once ran along its main dam, but today drops below it. With shorter end dams to east and west, today’s pond is 45m long by 12–15m wide. The south side is now irregular (as is Withy’s drawing), but the earthworks imply something more rectangular, perhaps even a short canal (FIG.5).

The south avenue

The most surprising feature on Withy’s map is the great avenue striding southwards for 1.5 kilometres (nearly a mile), to end in a circle at the highest point of Penpont land, 200m above (OS SN 967 272). Doubts over this avenue’s reality are increased because these trees are once again shaded gold, and because its line has clearly been drawn by connecting points rather than by survey, entirely ignoring field boundaries. No mile-long avenue appears on later maps, so did it ever exist?

The 1794 estate map does show a vista cutting through woodland on a line similar to the upper 400m of Withy’s avenue. In 1798, Henry Skrine described how, after 1783, Philip Williams ‘allowing one great avenue to intersect the park, clumped the rest’ (Skrine 1798, 43-6). At this date ‘park’ probably referred specifically to the upper slopes, suggesting that Philip might have removed the lower portions, leaving just a few trees to lead the eye (perhaps including the large oaks at OS SN 969 282). The Ordnance Survey of 1886 confirms the 1794 map, marking some of the innermost trees on the vista as conifers; a few Scots pine survive here today, and with girths of up to 3.8m could be eighteenth century plantings. If Withy’s avenue were coniferous, this might explain the gold shading. There were contemporary parallels: locally, a pine avenue at Llanfihangel Court, Monmouthshire was planted *c.*1670 (Parkinson 1979, 125). Parallels can also be found for avenues running arbitrarily across field boundaries (as at Warwick Castle in 1690, WRO CR1886 M6).

We must conclude that something similar to Withy’s avenue did exist, but its planting date and composition are less certain. Inaccuracies in Withy’s survey make his precise line problematic, particularly in the middle section (which would actually have been hidden from the house by the contours).

Design or reality?

So, why was Withy’s map made, and how far did it depict reality? Estate surveys frequently coincided with planned alterations, themselves often triggered by a change of ownership. But by 1738, after 30 years in charge, Penry Williams I was no new broom, and one explanation for Withy’s commission may simply be opportunistic; there were few surveyors in Wales at this date and Withy is known to have been working nearby during 1737–8 (on his only other known commission, mapping the Breconshire and Gloucestershire estates of Walter Pryse; Davies 1982, 9; Steer *et al* 1997, W565). However, we also know that in 1737 Penry I received £4,000, the lion’s share of his son’s marriage portion, so funds for alterations would have been newly available (NLW Penpont Sup. 2266).

We have seen evidence that several features Withy depicted did exist, and clear parallels for other features elsewhere. It is also apparent that the problem of topography is not insurmountable, and we will see below that there is descriptive evidence for formal elements, broadly compatible with Withy’s, from the 1770s. We can therefore dismiss the possibility that Withy’s plan was pure fantasy.

We can also speculate on the dating of individual features. The perimeter walls, raised walk, corner seat

and quartered parterre are all theoretically consistent in style with a garden laid out by Daniel Williams some time after the house was built c.1666. The ‘little house’ might also date from this period. Other features – the eastern parterre with its elongated shape and circular features, the curved *claires-voies* and the wilderness – are more suggestive of an early eighteenth century ‘second phase’, probably after Penry I inherited in 1708. Tree dating evidence suggests that we should ascribe the Abercamlais Walk to this period.

However, we cannot exclude the possibility that some features drawn by Withy in 1738 were merely proposals. At this date the ‘natural style’ was barely embryonic and Withy’s formal layout would be quite plausible as a new design. In that case, some elements may have been realised differently – or not at all. Particular suspicion must fall on the elaborate curved screen on the south boundary. Archaeological investigation might provide some clarification, but later landscaping will have destroyed much evidence.

The gardens in the 1770s

From Penry Williams II’s diary we learn that formal elements were retained right through the 1770s. He records rolling the ‘great, top, and bottom walks with the great roller’; references elsewhere to the ‘upper, lower and middle walks’ may be synonymous with these. The use of height distinction implies these ran east–west, the ‘upper walk’ probably being the terrace walk inside the southern boundary. There were ‘gravel walks’ which were dug and ‘scuffled’ (*sic*); it is not clear which walks were gravel, but the ‘great walk’ was scuffled.

He also refers to the ‘yew edge corner’, suggesting an area of clipped yew, perhaps the wilderness of 1738. Skrine confirms that ‘clipped hedges’ were removed after 1783 (Skrine 1798, 43-6). In 1775 Cullum remarked on some – by then seriously unfashionable – topiary: ‘But I would give Squire Williams any money to destroy two foolish Yew Lions, with wooden Heads thrust into the top of them, that stare at you in the Front of his Garden’ (SRO E2/44/2.3, 47). It is hard to find parallels for this remarkable combination of carving and topiary. Cullum also records that the Chapel yard is ‘made quite a Garden’ by a local clergyman (probably Canon John Williams of Abercamlais, although Penry II also planted here – see below).

In 1778, Penry II added a sundial, still at Penpont today. A more enigmatic entry from 1777 records putting ‘large stones into the river’ – whether for practical purposes or picturesque effect is unclear.

Bowling Green

In April 1773, Penry II records that he ‘Began to mow the bowling green’. Withy’s map depicted no obvious bowling green, but an area east of the Gwyrthyd brook was labelled simply ‘Green’ (FIG.4). This is near the presumed



FIG.6 Abersefin farm and the ‘persevin’ garden, from an estate map of 1744 surveyed by Meredith Jones. North is to the right (private collection).

site of Castell Einon Sais, which may explain an otherwise obscure diary reference to the ‘castle bowls’. Like so much of this landscape, this area has been ‘levelled’ subsequently: Theophilus Jones claimed the

'foundations and rubbish' of the Castle 'were cleared away about 1789' (Jones 1809, 696).

Vegetables, fruit and flowers

No kitchen garden appears on Withy's map. However, Meredith Jones's 1744 survey of Abersefin farm, just north of the Usk, shows a 'Garden' of nearly 1.5 acres (0.6ha) (FIG.6). Too large for a farmhouse, this must belong to Penpont. It was hedged and divided into eight regular beds by tree-lined paths; a building in one corner might be a gardener's cottage. In April 1771, Penry II sowed cabbages in 'Persevin garden', probably this area.

He also grew vegetables in other areas, including 'by the big tree under the red door that goes to the back lane', 'at the pidgeon house' and by the 'yew edge corner'. There was an 'artichoke garden', 'asparagus beds', 'gooseberry quarter', 'nursery' and 'little garden', where seed was sown in 'boxes'. In the 'melon ground' (which was at least partly walled) hotbeds were made, there were 'frames' of one, three and four lights (probably portable), and a 'gooseberry pane'. However, there is no record of any glasshouses at this date.

The hotbeds and frames were used for cucumbers and melons, early carrots and cauliflowers. In the open ground lettuces, 'curled' parsley, coriander, 'scurvy grass', early cabbage, 'turnip rooted' cabbage, 'Russia' cabbage, winter cabbage, red cabbage, green and yellow savoy, 'dutch' turnips, celery, artichokes, 'cardums', asparagus, broccoli, fennel, leeks, peas, hotspur peas, beans, kidney beans, black kidney beans, endive, onions, shallots, radishes, parsnips and potatoes were grown.

Withy marked a three quarter acre (0.3ha) orchard on the far side of the back lane. Penry II's diary also mentions two 'Persevin orchards' in 1775; one of which is probably the orchard of nearly two acres (0.8ha) marked in 1794. He planted 'two brussels apricocks' as standards in the melon ground, and a total of seven peach trees. Cherries were harvested and dispatched as gifts, and there were gooseberries and raspberries. It took three days to gather all the 'garden', 'field' and 'espalier' apples (grown on 'lash poles'), some of which were made into cider.

Flowers grown in the 1770s included carnations, winter crocus, hollyhocks, larkspurs, lupins, 'Queen Margaret', African marigolds, French marigolds, pot marigolds, mazereon, pinks, 'primrose trees', 'ten week' stocks, sweet william, sunflowers, 'perennial' sunflowers and violets. Flower seed was sown in 'boxes' or on hotbeds, but more usually directly into 'borders', some edged with thrift. One border, near the back lane, was probably along the west wall of the garden; another was at the 'side of the house' and a third 'at the top of the garden', presumably near the southern boundary. Somewhere was a 'great border', and annuals were also sown outside the garden either side of the road.

The parkland of the 1770s

Comparing the estate map of 1738 (FIG.3A) with that of 1794 (FIG.3B) it is



FIG.7 Parkland at Penpont (looking SSW): Waun Fawr is in the foreground with the 'Park' beyond. Towards the centre the trees and rougher ground mark the location of one of the old coed-cae. Scots pine to the left are probably of eighteenth-century origin, possibly avenue remnants. Beech from the hill wall belt are just visible on the horizon. Trees to the left hide the round pond and fishponds of Gwaun Pyscodlyn. A substantial ditch lies behind the hedge above the meadow (photo: author 2008).

immediately apparent that the steep valley of the Gwyrthyd brook south of the house ('Cwm Lodge' on later OS maps), had been utterly transformed. It is clear from Penry II's diary that this mainly occurred in the 1770s.

In 1738, the demesne consisted of just 100 acres (40ha), divided between ten relatively large fields, an acre (0.4ha) of 'nursery' and a half-acre (0.2ha) wood. Some fields were edged with belts of woodland, probably young plantations. These large fields and plantations suggest that some limited 'improvement' had already taken place. Higher up the valley were a number of smallholdings with an average field size of just three acres (1.2ha). They included some woodland, mainly in wood-pasture fields named 'coed-cae'.

By 1794, four smallholdings had been merged into a larger demesne of 280 acres (113ha), divided into just a dozen very large enclosures. The biggest was 'The Park' of 100 acres (40ha), entirely above the 260m contour. This included 30 acres (12ha) of 'woods and nurseries': half 'coed-cae' or other existing woodland, half new plantations, including a 1.2km perimeter belt inside the 'hill wall' which separated the park from the mountain common Allt Lom. Cae'r Gof (smith's field) was an enormous pasture of 35 acres (14ha), Pen y Tir Bach was 25 acres (10ha) and most other pastures over 10 acres (4ha). Below the Park were two meadows: 35 acre (14ha) Waun Fawr (big meadow) (FIG.9) and 10 acre (4ha) Gwaun Pyscodlyn (fishpool meadow). Included with these fields were 16 acres (6ha) of wood and nursery. Towards the head of the valley was the three-acre Great Pond (OS SN 974 271), a string of five small fishponds in Gwaun Pyscodlyn (OS SN 970 276), and a small round pond below (OS SN 969 278).

The deer park

Penry II's diary opens in August 1770; he first refers to landscaping in March 1771 when he 'planted spruce fir in the nursery on the hill' and by June the park was ready to receive eight fawns sent by George Rice of Newton. Venison dinners formed an important part of the social round: at Penpont meat was obtained from several sources (including Tredegar; Llwynycntefyn; Birchir, Herefordshire; Glanbrân, Carmarthenshire; and a Mr Holland of Ludlow), but clearly serving one's own was more prestigious. However, the deer park may not have been a great success; Penry II only once records eating his own venison and there are no records of deer after 1780.

The livestock also had an ornamental aspect. In 1772, Penry II's son-in-law Richard Davies sent 'a [ball] faced fawn from Gwernevet [Gwernyfed] park'. This joined a flock of 'spotted' sheep collected from local farmers. Cattle and horses were also turned out to graze in the park. Penry II had a 'huntsman' – who was responsible for the deer and for maintaining muskets and a blunderbuss – and kept hounds, but he never records hunting himself.

Roads and walks

In 1738, a minor public road to Allt Lom bisected the Penpont demesne, starting from a cross roads by the back lane. In October 1773, Penry II had this stopped up, purchasing the land for two guineas (NLW Penpont Sup. 1271), while lining out a replacement further west, out of sight from the house. This was complete by May 1774, when local contractor Philip Morgan of Defynnog's workmen started making good the old road. In September, Morgan was paid £1.7.0 and by December the area was being hedged.

Within the park further 'roads' were made, which the huntsman was given the task of completing in 1777. Penry II records riding in the park frequently, often with a male – just once with a female – companion. He only records walking when it was too icy to ride, while his new chaise (purchased 1770) was used mainly on the recently turnpiked roads. There was, however, a 'walk' somewhere in the park, which was sown with hay seed in 1777.

Ponds and pools

Construction of the string of fishponds in Gwaun Pyscodlyn probably began during 1771. In August 1772, Jenkin Griffith was employed to ‘take care of the water’ and one of the pools was drawn; two carp were sent to Abercamlais and two put in the upper pool. In 1773, we hear of ‘three fishpool meadow’, suggesting that two of the five pools mapped in 1794 were added later. By 1777, production had increased: 11 ‘meat carp’ were taken and a further 24 moved between pools. Remains of five simple, straight earth dams survive today, diminishing in size as they rise up a small side-valley, the lowest and largest 45m long.

In March 1773 ‘Edwards the bridge builder’ was paid a guinea for ‘viewing the bridge, fishpool etc’, suggesting he provided advice and perhaps plans. Frequent visits to a ‘fishpool’ in May and June 1773 imply that further work was taking place. This might reflect the construction of the round pond below Gwaun Pyscodlyn. This has an almost semi-circular earth dam with inner masonry revetment and, although perched at the top of a steep slope, holds water today. Positioned on the edge of woodland, this might have doubled as a wildfowl decoy.

Penry II first records visiting the ‘great pond’ – or perhaps its intended site – in November 1773. With a dam 120m long, 3m wide at the top and up to about 4m high, this was a challenging undertaking. On parts of the outer face dressed stone retaining walls are visible, stepped in the highest portion. In plan, the dam forms a shallow ‘v’, perhaps to brace against water pressure. In October 1776, ‘Jones Brecon Waterman’ was paid a guinea for ‘an insignificant draft [ie a small or unsatisfactory plan] of the pool head’. Construction probably began in September 1778 as from then until November Penry II records regular visits to the ‘great pool’. A ‘Grazebrook waterman’ who dined in September might have been involved and Philip Morgan provided two masons.

Watercourses

In 1774, Penry II mentions a ‘great watercourse’, and the following May eight of Philip Morgan’s men were at work on ‘the Trench’. As well as helping with drainage, these watercourses may have supplied water to the fishponds, and perhaps to the house.

In May 1776, a new watercourse was begun, starting above the park on land belonging to Howell Jones (possibly at springs around OS SN 972 268) and continuing along the lower slopes of the park, where Penry II was ‘levelling’ its course. It was to be ‘4 feet wide in the bottom and the bottom to be level in every part and to fall with the edge’ and cost 1 shilling per perch. In June that year ‘Lewis drainer of the ground or Gripper’ and his men were at work in the meadows and elsewhere. These references may record the creation of the wide, contour-hugging ditch inside the lower boundary of the park, perhaps as a ‘catchwork’ main to ‘float’ Waun Fawr below as a watermeadow. John Clark noted that this practice was widespread locally, for both flat and sloping fields, and it was certainly in use at Penpont in the next generation (Clark 1794, 17-18; NLW Penpont 3955).

Trees and planting

Planting for pleasure and profit has been a major theme of the Penpont landscape. The larches of Penpont have achieved particular fame: three veterans surviving today, while not the tallest in Wales, are amongst the most massive. A nineteenth-century photograph of one (now 4.5m girth) shows an already huge tree (FIG.8). They reputedly date from before 1743, and have been claimed as the earliest in Wales (Hyde 1977, 53-54; Linnard 1979, 100-102; 2000,166). This dating is unexplained, but might reflect a tradition of planting by Penry I, who died that year. Limited quantities of larch had actually been available since 1620 and Miller’s *Gardener’s Dictionary* of 1741 dubbed it ‘now pretty common’ in nurseries. This makes the claim for priority suspect, but a planting date anytime during Penry I’s tenure (1708–1743) perfectly plausible.

The contorted bases of these larches has been taken to indicate that they were initially pot grown, supporting a planting date when the species was a relative rarity; a similar tree at Chirk Castle (Clwyd) grows in an area landscaped c.1708 (Whittle 1992, 28-9), while another at Dunkeld (Scotland) was planted c.1738 (Sinclair 1814, I 498). It is even plausible that some of today's larch might be trees depicted on Withy's 1738 plan (FIG. 8 and FIG.9).

Iolo Morgannwg was so impressed by the Penpont larches that he recommended widespread planting. After just 40 years, some were 60ft high and over 8ft in girth. Apparently 'hundreds of the largest' had recently been cut down, suggesting these were not garden ornaments but plantation trees (Linnard 1979, 100-102). Iolo's manuscript is undated, but is probably post-1803. Larch became a fashionable plantation tree around the 1770s, mass plantings at Dunkeld starting c.1774 (*idem*, 100). We know that Penry II sowed larch seed in 1772 and 1773: Iolo may have viewed the results of this. Penry II also continued to use larch as an ornamental, planting 18 (gifts from his son) in the Chapel yard in 1778.

There had clearly been other early planting. We have already noted the plantation belts of 1738 and discussed the south avenue. By 1771 one 'fir' was large enough to be sold to the builder Andrew Maund as a ladder; in 1773 he bought more. In 1744 Meredith Jones mapped two circles of trees, probably pine, in a field below Trallong.

In the 1770s, the species most often planted in the new parkland was beech, followed by fir (probably Scots pine), spruce fir (probably Norway spruce) and ash. Planting here peaked around 1775. Some of the hill wall beech survive today;



FIG.8 Penpont from the SE showing one of the veteran larches. Photographed no later than 1904, probably significantly earlier (private collection).



FIG.9 The same larch today (photo: author 2008).

although the ‘fir’ (perhaps planted as ‘nurses’ to protect the young beech) have gone (FIG.10). The east side of this plantation was defined by a straight bank and wide ditch. There is also a line of large beech along the park’s south boundary, and two specimens of over 5m girth remain from the small, once fenced, plantation at OS 969 273, along with a sweet chestnut (5.3m) (FIG. 11). Just a few large oak (including pollards of 5m girth) and sycamore survive in the area of the old coed-cae.

‘Firs’ were also planted ‘below’ Trallong church. In 1935 a stand of 15 Scots pine at Penpont (probably in the dingle of the Gwyrthyd stream) were deemed the tallest in Wales, at over 120 feet, suggesting an eighteenth-century origin (Hyde 1935, 37).

Most of these trees were probably grown from seed, either *in situ* or in the estate’s nurseries; there may have been no commercial tree nurseries in Wales at this date (Linnard 2000, 136). Where possible, seed was gathered locally: in December 1776 the ‘tyler’s wife’ received 6d for a bushel of ash keys, while in 1776 a total of £2.6s.3d was paid to locals for hawthorn berries. To encourage similar practices, the Brecknockshire Agricultural Society offered premiums for collecting seed and establishing trees (Linnard 2000, 142).

More exotic trees were also planted: ‘eating chestnuts’ in November 1772 (just possibly the veteran chestnuts growing today in the area of the 1738 orchard) and soon after a ‘chestnut cobby’ in Abersefin dingle. The ‘red or evergreen Oak’ planted ‘by the little house’ in April 1773 was presumably a Luccombe or similar hybrid, probably that surviving today (6.1m girth) near the site of the little building in the wilderness (FIG. 12). ‘Yellow willow’ were also planted by the



FIG.10 The Hill Wall Plantation, looking south with the Brecon Beacons in the background. The hill wall is to the right of the beech trees, the inner ditch and bank to the left (photo: author 2008).



FIG.11 Sweet chestnut in the old orchard (photo: author 2008).

‘brookside’. These trees were probably supplied by nurserymen. One supplier was presumably the ‘Mr Shiells Nurseryman’ who visited twice in 1779; probably James Shields of Lambeth who specialised in willows, mulberries and tree seed (Harvey 1974, 87). In 1775, three cedars and three cypress trees were delivered, and in 1778 unspecified ‘evergreens’ arrived from London.

Resources for landscape design

With no indication that a professional designer was involved, how were the knowledge and manpower for landscape design found in this relatively remote location? The evidence suggests that a variety of connections were exploited, sometimes in a rather *ad hoc* manner.

Garden staff

In 1772, Penry II mentions an ‘Evan Gardiner’ who ‘went away’ in November 1774. His replacement was ‘Jack Gardiner’, who lodged at Trallong where he ‘fetched his goods’ in 1775. Jack was dismissed in November 1778. His replacement Edward Richards arrived on 22 December and had his annual contract renewed in 1779.

In his job application, Richards (reached care of Mr Addis, gardener, in Monmouth) claimed to understand ‘pruning, pleasure garden and kitchen garden’ and labouring. He was not a professional – which ‘I understand you do not want’ – so would work for just £12 a year instead of £20. He knew less about the ‘nursery’ but was ‘not afraid of doing it By your Directions’ as ‘your Honour says you understand gardening so well’. Penry II added some notes: ‘has he had the smallpox?’, ‘answers not planting’, ‘was hiring out’ and ‘can he talk welch?’ (PCA A//13/3/4–18). Richards’ letter underlines Penry II’s ‘hands on’ approach, confirmed by his diary, where he records showing the gardener ‘where to plant’.

The diary also mentions an under-gardener, Will, whose son possibly worked as a garden boy. Other staff worked on a more *ad hoc* basis: John Pritchard, who was ‘very deficient’ in his main work cleaning plate, ‘seems to understand the raising of cucumbers and melons’, although not well enough to prevent his dismissal (PCA A//13/3/4–31).

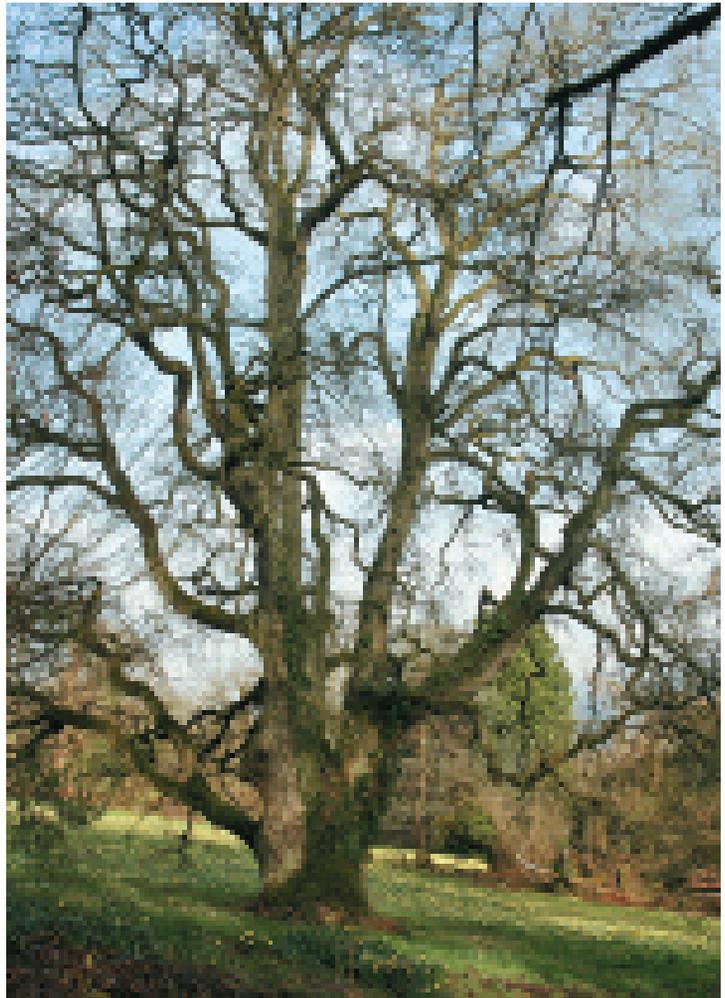


FIG.12 Luccombe type oak (photo: author 2008).

Artisans and contractors

The Philip Morgan who provided labourers and masons for work at Penpont may be Philip Morgan of Defynnog (1748–1815) whose diverse activities apparently included leasing Defynnog Mill and collecting the dues of the Great Forest (Glanusk 1930, 136; NLW Penpont 894; Lloyd 1905, 25). Morgan was of sufficient status to be invited to dine, as was the carpenter-architect Andrew Maund of Brecon (builder of the Gaol), who worked on several projects at Penpont.

It seems to have been especially difficult to find a satisfactory water engineer: Jones the ‘Brecon waterman’ was only used once (see above) and later Penry II dealt with John Pashley ‘yorkshire puddleman’ (introduced by Maund), a ‘staffordshire poolmaker’ (perhaps contacted through neighbour Penoyer Watkins), and one ‘perry the puddler’. A Glamorgan millwright, Awbrey, called on several occasions, but dined with the servants and was not employed. ‘Grazebrook waterman’ was probably more local; he (or perhaps a relative) was also a plumber. In 1776, when there was a breach in one of the fishpools, mason Benjamin James was paid a guinea to mend it.

At least one contact resulted from Penry II’s role as a JP: ‘Edwards the bridge builder’ (see above) was probably Thomas Edwards (son of William Edwards 1719–1789; Lloyd 1959, 198–199), who Penry II had met at Llandovery in relation to a new bridge. Other contacts came through relatives: Mr Bryan of Painswick, who brought an ornamental urn in 1777, was probably the Painswick mason John Bryan (c.1717–c.1787), perhaps contacted through Penry II’s cousin Charles Sheppard of Paradise House, Painswick. While Bryan was installing the urn, Penry also prevailed on him to design a steeple for the chapel.

Books

A good library could go a long way to compensate for a lack of professional help. This was realised by the Agricultural Society, which invested 30 guineas in books. With no local bookshop, Penry II commissioned travelling friends to acquire them. We know he possessed husbandry books by the Marquis de Turbilly, Duhamel du Monceau and John Mortimer, and works on forest trees, fruit trees and draining. Items from a later catalogue which may have been acquired by the 1770s include Gerard and Parkinson’s *Herbals*, Evelyn’s *Sylva*, Philip Miller’s *Gardener’s Dictionary* and *Calendar*, an unspecified work by Arthur Young and John Love’s surveying primer *Geodesia* (NLW Penpont 1317).

The surveying volume is particularly interesting. On a number of occasions Penry II records ‘levelling’. This may simply refer to smoothing the land surface, but he may have owned some sort of surveying instrument, since in 1775 he noted ‘level out of order’. He probably had at least enough surveying knowledge to line out watercourses and walls.

Finance

Why did Penry II, owner of Penpont since 1743, wait until c.1770 before undertaking this major landscaping? A lack of financial resources may be one explanation. In 1769 Penry II’s son Philip married Anna, heiress of Edward Williams of Llangattock. We don’t know whether – as in 1737 – the bridegroom’s father received any direct payment, but it seems possible that in some manner this provided the necessary resources (NLW Penpont Sup. 2133-4, 2326).

Discussion: the nature of the 1770s landscape

The landscape of the 1770s was by no means purely aesthetic or recreational: it was multi-functional. It provided carp and venison, grazing and hay; trees gave timber for use and sale, as well as shelter and cover for game (one clump even doubled as a repository for stones cleared from the land – OS SN 978 272). It was also a proving ground for new crops and techniques which, if successful, could be shared with tenants and

neighbours through the Agricultural Society. Even the process of landscape creation itself had a social element, guests being taken to ride around the park, view work underway and – doubtless – discuss future plans.

While this landscape was essentially park-like, only a portion of it was actually described as a ‘park’, the majority being large pastures or meadows. Large park-like pasture fields were also landscaped c.1765 at Downing (Flintshire), an estate of comparable size; here they actually formed the main setting for the house, while once again an entirely separate area was named ‘The Park’ (Williams 2002). The Penpont landscape underlines that what we tend to think of today as simply ‘parkland’ was actually something quite varied and complex; in the words of John Phibbs, it was ‘an engine of agricultural change ... a centre for agricultural wealth and ... experiment’ (Phibbs 2003, 132).

Although Penpont’s new landscape could be viewed from the house, it cannot be said to have formed a setting for it; this function was still served by the surrounding formal gardens. The fragmented nature of the estate’s landholding, and the adjacent Brecon–Trecastle road, presented obstacles to placing the house within a naturalistic setting which it would be left to subsequent generations to overcome.

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Abbreviations

NLW	National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth
OS	Ordnance Survey
PCA	Powys County Archive, Llandrindod Wells
RCAHMW	Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales
SRO	Suffolk Record Office, Bury St Edmunds
WRO	Warwickshire Record Office

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Unpublished Sources

Archives :

Most of the Penpont archive is held at the National Library of Wales, with a few items in the Powys County Archives. However, some of the most important material for this study is in a private collection including:

- Estate map of Penpont demesne, surveyed 1738 by John Withy;
- Map book of the Penpont estate, surveyed 1744 (and later) by Meredith Jones;
- Diary of Penry Williams II, 1770-1780 (fragment also in NLW, Penpont Sup. 1272);
- Estate map of Penpont demesne, surveyed 1794 by M Williams.

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The Orchideous House of John Dillwyn Llewelyn, Penllergare

by Richard L. Morris

Abstract

John Dillwyn Llewelyn's orchid house at Penllergare is said to have possibly been the first of its kind, with a heated waterfall and heated pool allowing the plants to enjoy the atmosphere of their original moist habitat. Surviving correspondence suggests that his interest in orchids began around 1835, creating a special stove for their cultivation at Penllergare, and by the early 1840s this had developed into its final form described in the (Royal) Horticultural Journal for 1846. As a friend of William Jackson Hooker at Kew, he was able to obtain specimens from the various expeditions carried out by botanists in South America. In addition, various articles, especially in Curtis's Botanical Magazine, illustrated specimens grown by Llewelyn, surviving correspondence and family diaries also enable the majority of specimens he grew there to be listed. Although his son, Sir John Talbot Dillwyn Llewelyn had an interest in orchids, he appears to have converted the building into a camellia house.

Introduction

Interests focusing on the landscape and gardens of the Penllergare estate have been ongoing over the past two decades (Briggs and Ward *forthcoming*; Locock and Howells *forthcoming*; Pert 2005-6). This article is concerned with its early orchid house. Brief accounts of it have already appeared elsewhere (Morris 1992; 1993; 1999; Yearsley and Morris 1995). To some degree this study repeats the 1992 article, but it is more detailed and updates all the known archival evidence for activity at the orchid house during its formative years and later in the nineteenth century. It also documents many of the orchid types known to have been cultivated by the Dillwyn Llewelyn family during that period.

Remains of the orchid house structure constructed by John Dillwyn Llewelyn in the 1830s stand within the walled garden area (FIG 1) that at one time also enclosed formal garden features as well as houses for the cultivation of grapes, melons, pineapples and even tea. According to Whittle (1992,70):

Perhaps the saddest Welsh loss [to the history of Welsh horticulture] is the pioneering orchid house built in 1843 by John Dillwyn Llewelyn at Penllergare. It was an epiphyte house for non-terrestrial orchids. In it he attempted to create a tropical landscape, based on the Essequibo rapids, where one of the orchids he wanted to grow, *Huntleya violacea*, had been discovered. Above a central pool hot water splashed down in a series of rocky ledges, creating a hot, steamy atmosphere. The orchids flourished and visitors were amazed by their 'wild luxuriance'. Now all that remains is an untidy and overgrown jumble of stone. Thirty years later an orchid house was a standard element in the grander garden.

For many years the actual location of the Orchid house at Penllergare was forgotten, not only because there were few people around who recalled the estate before the family left following the death of Sir John T. Dillwyn Llewelyn in 1927, but also because, sometime, either late in the nineteenth or early twentieth centuries, its use was changed by Sir John to that of a camellia house. Those few with any memories suggested it was in fact attached to the former mansion, where there had once been the Conservatory, which had indeed also included some orchids, if only grown in pots according to photographic evidence left by his father.

A chance discovery about sixteen years ago by people living in the Lower Lodge led them to contact the

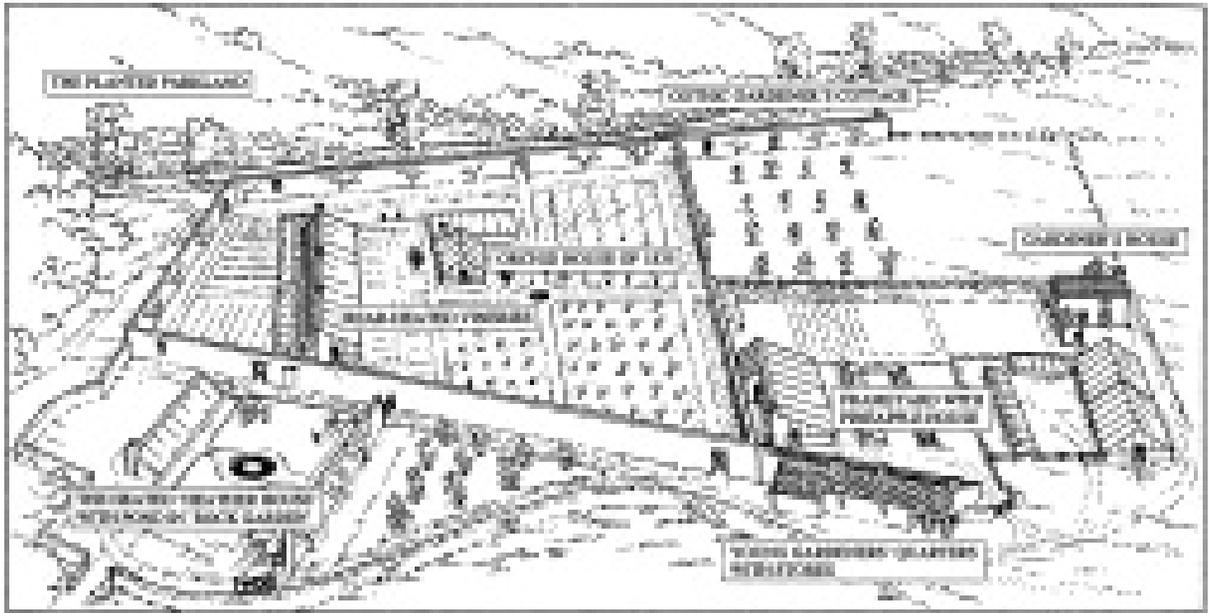


FIG 1. Reconstruction plan of Penllergare Kitchen Garden by G.A.Ward (RCAHMW Crown Copyright).

present writer to ascertain what they had found and it turned out to be not only the walled garden but the orchid house, or what remained of it.

John Dillwyn Llewelyn and the First Orchid House

The estates of Penllergare and Ynysygerwyn had been willed to John Dillwyn Llewelyn (Morris 2004) by his maternal grandfather Colonel John Llewelyn following the latter's death in 1817, but they were held in trust until John's coming of age (see Gabb 1998, 132). John's father, Lewis Weston Dillwyn (Hyde 1963; Jackson 2004), who headed the trust, was very astute in buying and selling adjacent land to make the estate more manageable. In 1833 John Dillwyn Llewelyn married Emma Thomasina Talbot, the youngest daughter of Lady Mary and Thomas Mansel Talbot of Penrice. Emma was herself a very keen gardener, as was her mother. Whilst on honeymoon in Europe John arranged for work to begin on the estate starting with the construction of the mile and a half drive from Cadle, near Fforestfach, about 12 miles from Swansea, up to the house.

The year 1835 was a great spending spree on plants for John when he visited his father in London. He arrived in Bath on Thursday 19th March from Swansea and wrote to Emma, who was staying with her brother C.R.M. (Kit) Talbot, at Penrice.

As we passed Millers garden I halted according to my plan and leaving my Portmanteau at a turnpike close by, issued forth full of horticulture.

I soon found a guide and rambled about in the midst of a terrible scene of temptation .. however I have only bought 8 plants...

My prudence was sorely tested by 1000 other things but it held out and I escaped with no further loss (of money) or acquisition (of plants)

My Botanical smattering came of some use to me as I was enabled to name some of Millers unnamed plants for him and to tell him some things which he did not know before.

It is rather curious that at the commencement of my horticultural Rambles this morning, the very first thing I received was a parcel that was lying for me at the Coach office and which proved

to be the notice of my admission to the London Horticultural Society

I took it as a good omen...

Having arrived in London John started his rounds of the horticulturalists and wrote home on Friday 20th March:

I think that in speaking yesterday of Millers garden I passed it over in rather an unhandsome way and did not sufficiently describe how much I was pleased. It is indeed very fine

His Orchis store too was to me peculiarly interesting from the number of new and unnamed species which he has lately imported from Demerara several of his sorts were in bloom some very splendid and all very curious

But you know that I am mad about the Orchis tribe, and my present expedition is, I fear, likely to add full to the mania.

Thus by early 1835 John was already cultivating orchids. On the 25th of March he wrote home again having visited both Loddiges' and Knight's nurseries. In this letter he recalled especially his visit to Knight's. For further mention of these nurseries and their nurserymen see below.

Knight has a fine Collection of plants and my prudence was again put to a sore trial ... His collection of Orchises is very fine and I bought a few at a very cheap rate –

Wednesday morning Mr Sabine [probably Joseph Sabine, a founder member of the Royal Horticultural Society: Boulger 2004b] had joined our party and I picked up some more horticultural information from him

I am to go today to see a garden which he is making for flowers exclusively at the Zoological Society ...I have just returned from my second visit to Knight's nursery garden, which I was obliged to make principally for the sake of giving the necessary directions about sending my different sort of plants off ...For example the orange trees must travel per wagon (sic) and the Orchises per coach... I bought a green and a black tea tree which as they only cost 2/6 each, I intend to turn to good account and close my dealings with Twining [the tea merchants] –

But the question is, where were all the new orchid plants to be grown? The answer is to be found in a letter to his father dated Friday 29th July the following year, 1836.

My own garden [at Penllergare] is just beginning to put on its autumnal gaiety ...but the wet weather which is favourable to the growth of the Dahlias spoil all their flowers, and my hopes from the approaching horticultural show are but small ... The stove has a great promise ... all know that

The back of the stove which I had left unfinished, in doubt whether to turn it into a common shed, or another stove, I have now determined on glazing

It will be only small and entirely given up to Orchis 100 degrees of heat and an atmosphere saturated with water, is the enjoyment I promise myself and my pets

I intend them to flower then and to rest after the exertion in a dryer and cooler place

The building was inside the walled garden. What it looked like we do not know, but it must surely be the basis for the stove described in the first *Journal of the Horticultural Society* for 1846 (frontispiece, pages 5-8; for site and tentative reconstruction see Briggs and Ward 2000: here FIGS.1, 4-6).

In the archives of the Botanical Gardens, Kew are letters from John referring to a forthcoming expedition to Brazil by Mr [later Sir] George Gardner (Boulger 2004a). The recipient was William Jackson Hooker, the director (Fitzgerald 2004), and the letter dated 15th October 1836 from Penllergare (RBG, Directors' Correspondence Vol. 8. 1835-6 Letter 52):

At page 226 of the first volume of the companion to the *Botanical Magazine*, and again at the commencement of the second volume, I find a notice of an expedition to the Brazil mountains undertaken by Mr George Gardener who proposes to offer collections of the flora of that country to those who may subscribe for them - Now though the terms for dried collections are there mentioned, the particulars of the subscription for seeds and plants are not specified, nor is the place or manner mentioned in which application for shares should be made, and I trust that my wish to procure this information will be sufficient excuse for this trespassing upon your time. It is orchideous plants, in which the district Mr Gardener proposes to explore, is so rich, that I should be most anxious to procure, and as they can be transported with greater ease than most other plants I suppose that he contemplates sending home the living pseudo-bulbs for distribution.

Turning to the diaries of his father, Lewis Weston Dillwyn for 1837, there are references to John meeting one of the notable figures in the world of orchid growing, James Bateman. The Diary records for 25th May that John and his brother Lewis, whilst in London, went to breakfast with Mr Bateman and in the evening John and his father to the Royal Society, where John was admitted Fellow. The following day John went with Mr Bateman to Loddiges and on the 26th June he went with his father to Chelsea [Physic] Garden where the Hon. Mr Hutchinson and Mr Bateman dined with them.

Later that year, in September, John and his father travelled to Liverpool for the British Association for the Advancement of Science (BAAS) meeting being held there, and on 8th September they paid a visit to Mr Bateman at Knypersley Hall where they saw a splendid collection of Epiphytes and rambled about the grounds and gardens of the Hall. At Knypersley, James Bateman's home, he cultivated orchids, an interest he had started whilst at Oxford in 1833. He later gave popular lectures for the Royal Horticultural Society and in 1840 moved to Biddulph Grange, now a National Trust property (Carlyle 2004).

The next day, Saturday 9th:

Accompanied by Mr Jas Bateman we drove to Congleton & thence posted on to Crewe Station where we embarked in the Rail Road & reached Liverpool at 4. We took up our Quarters at the Adelphi Hotel.

On Sunday 10th they all went to Church and afterwards John and Mr Bateman went to see the Gardens of Mr Horsefell, finally attending the BAAS session on the Monday.

The next reference to Bateman is again in the Diary of Lewis Weston Dillwyn for Friday 13 August 1841. Both John's family and the Dillwyns had gone to Malvern and then on to Cheltenham. Dillwyn 'Walked with John to the Rail Road station & saw him start for Birmingham on his way to visit Bateman at Knypersly [sic].'

Returning to the year 1838, on January 13th, Lady Mary Cole of Penrice wrote in a letter that she 'Walked to see the Epiphytes,' though without stating they were in the Orchid House. But the fact that she wrote 'walked' indicates more than going into the Conservatory attached to the house.

A second letter, dated December the 16th, without a year but filed with the 1841 correspondence at Kew, is again on the subject of Mr Gardner's expedition, written by John from Penllergare, and addressed to Hooker [RBG Director's Correspondence Vol. 16, 1841, Letter 240].

My dear Sir

Some time ago you were kind enough to write in my behalf to Mr Gardener who was then collecting in Brazil and thus, through your means, my collection of Epiphytes has been enriched

by a great number of very interesting species, some of which have already flowered and many others will do so in all probability in the course of the ensuing spring.

Now if among them any should prove new species or such as have not been already figured in the Botanical Magazine, and these could be of any service to you, it would give me great pleasure to send, as they appear, either the flowers themselves or drawings of them - at this moment there are none of Gardener's plants of any peculiar interest in blow - but I have a spike of the pretty Guatemalan Epidendrum Skinneri in flower and many of the Species from the islands of the Indian archipelago which I received from Cumming grow and flower freely in my Stoves any of which as they blow would be entirely at your service.

Also in December 1841 Lewis Weston Dillwyn recorded in his Diary that John introduced some tropical birds into the Orchid House and on 22nd John again contacted Hooker, sending some flowers of Epidendrum Skinneri along with a rough sketch showing its mode of growth. He stated that it had been given to him that summer by Mr Bateman who in turn had received it through Mr Skinner from Guatemala. He added that it had been attached to a rough log of elder wood. Unfortunately the picture sent with the letter is not in the file [RBG English letters XVI, Letter 241].

In 1841 and 1842 there are two further letters to Kew again to Hooker. The first is from Penllergare [RBG Director's Correspondence Vol.16, 22nd December 1841, Letter 241].

The first flower of the spike of a plant which I take to be an *Aspasia* has just opened in my stove - it is very different from the species figures at 3679 of the Botanical Magazine - and should you think it worth while I will send the flower spike when it is more expanded. It is a pretty plant. - I have also *Brassavola glauca* now in blow [= bloom] - certainly the best species of the genus. I have amused myself with making Daguerreotype portraits of this, and other species, and from their exact accuracy they are interesting-, tho' the want of color [sic] prevents them being beautiful as pictures.

On 24th January he again wrote from Penllergare [RBG Director's Correspondence Vol.17, Letter 372/324. Several letters are given two numbers, probably indicating re-numbering at some time]:

I am sorry that I have at present no better Botanical Daguerreotypes to offer you. I have one of *Arides odoratum* which I made in the spring.

Most of my specimens have been given away, and my camera is now undergoing some re arrangements which will I hope improve its work.

Should you however consider the enclosed of interest, I shall be very happy to send you other examples as I bring them to greater perfection.

I also send a portion of the Guatemalan plant which I suppose to be an *Aspasia* - unfortunately the *Brassavola glauca* had already faded when your letter arrived.

I find the Box too heavy for post and send it this day per coach.

In a letter written on 3rd February 1842 from Penllergare, there is a further tantalising reference to the Daguerreotype [RBG Director's correspondence. Vol.17, letter 326].

I can assure you that the Daguerreotype drawing I sent you - cost me much less of time and trouble than you give me credit for having bestowed upon it - and if you consider it of any interest or curiosity I beg that you will keep it as a specimen of Botanical Photography - Would the flowers of *Phaius bicolor* be of any service to you?

I have a plant which is now throwing up a flower spike - which is to me a novelty.

The reference to John using the Daguerreotype process (a laterally reversed image created by mercury vapour on silver plated copper) is probably the first time that anyone seriously used a photographic process to record botanical specimens for the purpose of identification. Henry Fox Talbot had made photogenic drawings of plants and flowers in his early experiments in photography, but these might be said to be no more than using what was available and not for serious botanical purposes, though he did title most of them. Talbot himself actually wrote to John on one occasion calling him the first botanical photographer (Morris 1980; 1997; 1999).

There is much further correspondence between Hooker and J.D.Llewelyn prior to the Horticultural Society article in 1846 that positively shows he was deeply into the cultivation of orchids long before it appeared. For example, in a letter to his father dated November 22nd 1843, three years before, he refers to his continued interest in orchids.

for my part I am getting again deeply into all my old pursuits experiments horticultural & agricultural [...] in the garden especially busy [...] the orchis house in especial delights me [...] and the plants in the damp atmosphere of the fall seem to forget their captivity, and spread out their roots in all directions to drink the misty air.

Together with the Kew correspondence this would seem proof that certainly in 1843 he had already built the heated waterfall and orchid house as it is today. But there is an earlier clue in *Curtis's Botanical Magazine* article number 3962 (in 1842). In referring to *Aspasia Epidendroides* the author says

We have already figured one species of ASPASIA (*A. variegata*) at Tab. 3679 of this work. The present is that upon which the Genus is founded, and our specimen was kindly communicated in the early spring of 1842 from the rich collection of ORCHIDEÆ at Penllergar [sic], by its possessor, DILLWYN LLEWELLYN [sic], Esq.

So if by the spring of 1842 such a specimen was possible, it would date the present building to at least 1841. Yet another article, number 3970, on *Dendrobium Macranthum* refers to the specimen supplied as sent in April 1842.

That same month John and his father went to London where they stayed at Hatchett's Hotel and whilst there they dined with Sir E. Wilmot, Robert Brown (Mabberley 2004) and Hudson Gurney (Osborne 2004). On 23rd April they went to Kew and met Sir Joseph Hooker (Endersby 2004), staying with him for three hours. In the same year, possibly on that day, John presented four orchids to the Botanic Gardens which are listed in the Gardens Inwards Book for 1828-46, for the year 1842, as *Epidendrum Selligerianum*, *Phajus bicolor* from the East Indies, *Maxillaria* sp. and *Maxillaria S.America*.

Another of John's friends and correspondents was George Bentham (Stevens 2004) who had visited Swansea in 1848 for the BAAS meeting and stayed with the family. On 10th March 1849 John wrote to Bentham and in his letter mentioned having recently acquired 'a few Javanese orchids - 2 or 3 *Oxida Vandas* - *Saccolabiums* and *Cypripedium* which have throw me into a fresh access of orchidomania' [RBG, Bentham correspondence Vol.6, letter 2520].

A later letter to Hooker is dated 16th July 1855 from Penllergare and John refers to an outdoor heated pond. [RBG English letters Vol. 33, letter 265].

I have sent off today by rail a spike of *Schomburghia* which is new to me, and I should feel much obliged if you would be kind enough to let me know what it is -

If the variety should prove a new one, and if you should think it of sufficient interest to insert in the *Botanical Magazine* - I shall be most happy to furnish you with leaves and bulb

John's daughter Theresa was also a keen botanist and communicated with Bentham. Theresa was in fact only the second woman to have a paper read to the Linnean Society which was on *Cardaminum Hirsute* on 17 March 1857. She had written on 3rd March 1857: 'Notes on some exhibited examples of young plants of *Cardaminum hirsute* growing from buds formed on the upper surface of old leaves of that plant (Linnean Soc. MS: SP.714). Here she also wrote:

I saw a list of Orchises, which bloom in January to February in the *Gardeners Chronicle* in which one, which we have had in bloom for some time in the greatest perfection, is omitted. It is *Dendrobium Speciosum*, our plant has six long and very handsome spikes in full bloom, on it.

Several articles describing the orchid house appeared over the years. The first so far traced was in 1837 in *The Floricultural Cabinet* (see below, Appendix I).

Evidence on the building's appearance comes from a watercolour by George Orleans Delamotte from 1846 (FIG.2; Morris 1999, 48-49; Pert 2005-06, 46) a few faded albumen photographs of the interior (for e.g. FIG.3), probably taken by John (Morris *idem* 51).and the drawing of the waterfall (FIG.4; Llewelyn 1846, frontispiece) and plans of the layout (FIGS.5-6).

Further references to either the Orchid House or to 'Natural Arrangements in Planthouses', as the *Gardeners' Chronicle* refer to it, are of relevance as they add to the importance of John's experiments. The issue for the 9th of March 1850 carried an article relating to taste and plant



FIG 2. Interior of the Orchid House by Delamotte, 1846 (Private family archive).

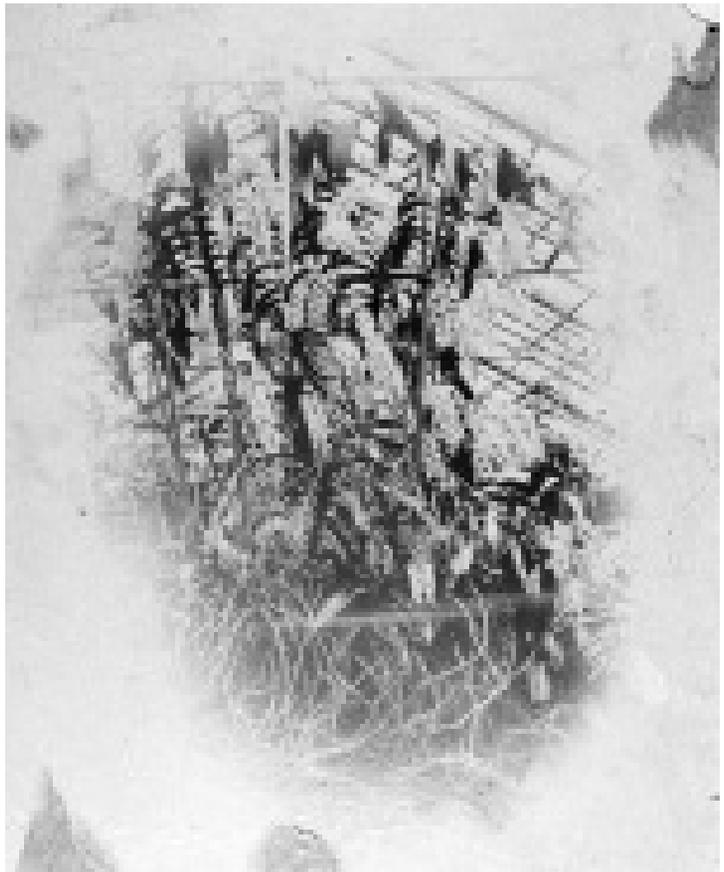


FIG 3. Interior of the Orchid House, photograph by J.D.Llewelyn (Private family archive).

houses (Anon 1850a 148). The author stated that to achieve an authentic scenario:

it is necessary to acquire a distinct idea of what tropical picturesqueness consists in, and to study the nature of those marvellous groupings of foliage to which we have no parallel in European scenery. We must give up, too, our excessive fondness for mere flowers, and learn to appreciate the value of the Ferns, and Palms, and Arads, &c. &c., to which a tropical foreground owes so much of its peculiar beauty. Those who wish to study the possibility of producing great effects by such means, should study the admirable work of KITTILITZ, or any other faithful representations of tropical scenery. To explain what we mean we reproduce the frontispiece of 'The Vegetable Kingdom,' in which the accuracy of details is guaranteed by the authority of Von Martins.

Nor is this at all impossible of accomplishment. A very near approach has been already made to such a scene by Mr DILLWYN LLEWELLYN [sic], to whose house we shall probably refer next week, when we explain, in some detail, how such a plan may be

worked out without interference with the possibility of that minute and special supervision to which our English system has sacrificed so much. In the meanwhile we shall be thankful for any hints or suggestions which the experience of our readers may be able to furnish.

The issue for March 16th (Anon 1850b) did indeed carry a description of the orchid house and repeated the illustration of the cascade that first appeared in the Horticultural Society's *Journal* in 1846. Most of the text was also taken from that source. Its introduction is interesting in using upper case letters to emphasise the *Gardener's Chronicle's* insistence on good taste.

The stove constructed by Mr DILLWYN LLEWELLYN [sic], to which we referred last week



FIG 4. Waterfall in Orchid House (from Llewelyn 1846).

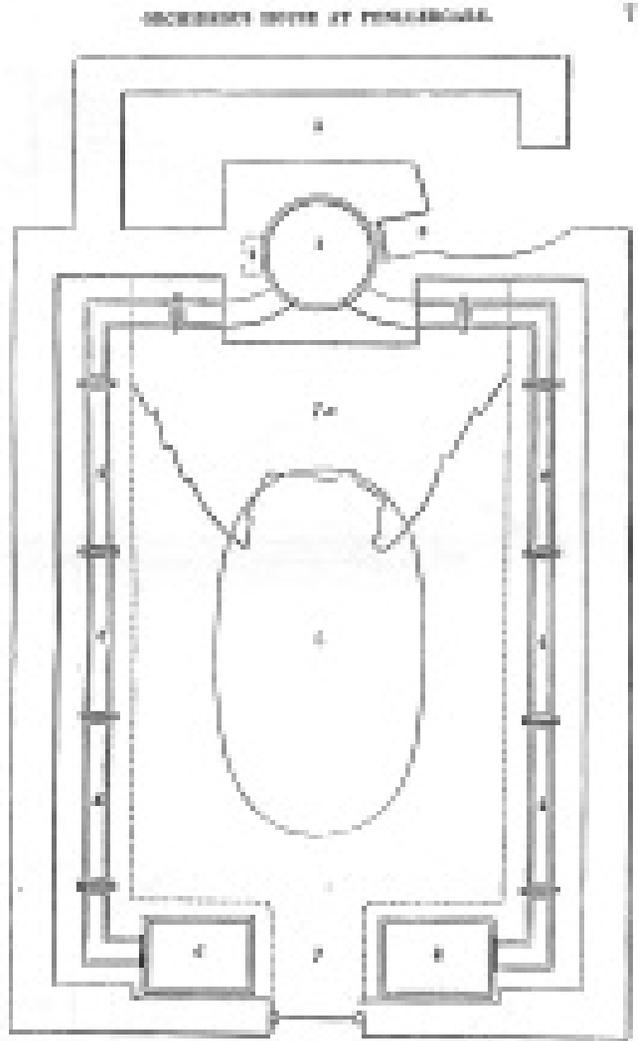
as an example of the possibility of introducing TASTEFUL and natural ARRANGEMENTS IN PLANT HOUSES, was described in the Journal of the Horticultural Society some time since.

In the 'Penllergare Book', a scrapbook put together by John's daughter-in-law Caroline Julia (family archives) there is a quote from the *Gardeners' Magazine* of 21st September 1895, written by The Revd. H. Honeywood D'Ombrain, a Victoria medallist of the Horticultural Society.

the late Mr Llewelyn was a keen horticulturist, and I believe he was one of the very first who took up the cultivation of orchids and in conjunction with Mr Bateman sent out collectors to the East Indies and other places for the purpose of obtaining and sending home those floral treasures...

Amongst various publications on orchids is one by James Bateman *The Orchidaceae of Mexico and Guatamala* [sic] (1837-1843) which includes an illustration of *Laelia Majalis* of which the original watercolour was by Emma Llewelyn. In her journal for 1857 Thereza Llewelyn (FIG.7 p.39), John's eldest daughter, also makes reference to the site of the Orchid House (MS in private possession).

We went up to the Garden, & found ours looking very nice - There are two beautiful orchises now in blow, 'Dendrobium pulchellum': which is a delicate lilac-buff flower, & very beautiful - and 'D aggregatum' wh. is entirely yellow, the centre being of a darker yellow - The Dendrobiums are one of my favourite sorts of orchises - In the evening I examined a specimen of 'Nitella flexalis,' which we have growing in the Aquarium, with the Microscope; the structure of the seed capsule, is very curious, and in this plant the flow & reflow of the sap is very clearly discernable; it flows up, one side and down the other, without their being any partition - between the two currants! - A great number of infusoria &c were with, or growing on the plant, some of which were very beautiful.



1. Boiler and flue. 2. Flue-pipe. 3. Chimney. 4. Hot-water pipe. 5. Water tank. 6. Exhaust-pipe. 7. Down-pipe. 8a. Hot-water. 8b. Pipe with hot water to fill over the cold-water. 9. Cold-water pipe. 10. Stop-cock. 11. Boiler. 12. Jacket.

FIG 5. Plan of Orchid House (from Llewelyn 1846).

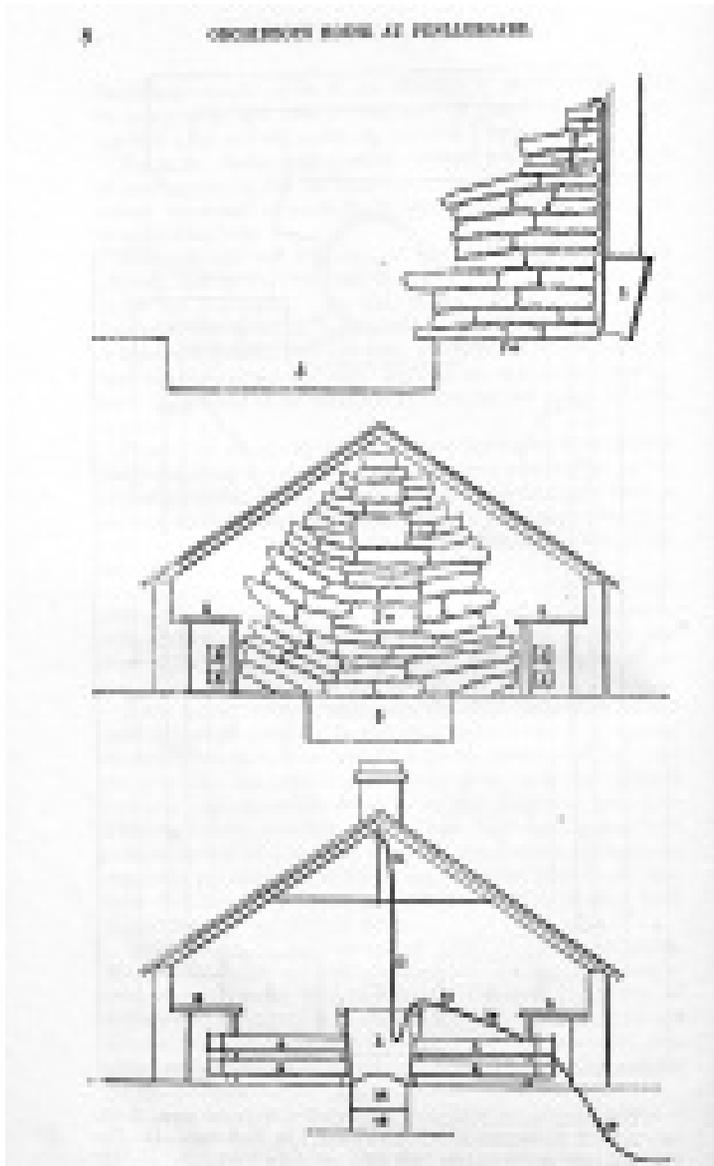


FIG 6. Sections of Orchid House (from Llewelyn 1846).
See FIG.6 for key.

walls and is urgently in need of attention. It remains up to the level of the stone shelves around the exterior wall but many of the stones from the waterfall have vanished, possibly lying around or more likely used elsewhere off the estate. The central pond still has loose bricks built up around it for the growing of camellias.

Luckily, there is a very full list of specimens grown in it, and in the 1880s two botanical journalists visited the area and were able to write up their descriptions of Penllergare as a whole and the walled garden and orchid house in particular. Such articles are a great help in the present conservation work being carried out by the Penllergare Trust.

A journalist from *The Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener* visited Penllergare in the person of A.Pettigrew, gardener to Lord Bute in Cardiff, in June or July 1886, after John's death but whilst orchids were

The Later History of the Orchid House

After John's death in 1882 at Wimbledon, where he and Emma had moved a few years earlier, the orchid house appears to have been converted, at an unknown date, to the growing of camellias of which John's son, Sir John Talbot Dillwyn Llewelyn, was an expert. This added to the difficulty of locating its site. From photographs it would seem that the Orchid house was still roofed up to the time of the Welsh Bible College moving to Penllergare following the sale of the estate and auction of many of the house contents in 1936. There was serious vandalism during the war years when units of General Omar Bradley's troops were billeted there. Vandalism has continued on the estate almost unabated ever since.

After the death of Sir John in 1927, the walled garden area, containing the orchid house, was rented out as a market garden to Mr William Ede of Bridgend. Luckily in 1994, when I was searching for information he was still alive and willing to correspond on the subject. He could even recall, with reasonable accuracy, the layout of the area complete with paths. Subsequently some clearing has been done within the area and the original paths were discovered. He also kindly supplied me with a plan of the orchid/camellia house as he remembered it.

The orchid house itself is now in a parlous state with trees growing out of the

still being grown in the stove (Pettigrew 1886). He described all aspects of the estate and especially the orchid house. He wrote:

After leaving the Melon ground with its many objects of interest, we were shown through the forcing and plant house... Next to this is an Orchid house, which contains a rich collection of well-grown plants, clean and healthy. Mr. Llewelyn is a good orchidist, and perhaps it would not be too much to say that he inherits his love for them from his late father, who was deeply interested in their introduction and cultivation, that he and another gentleman employed a collector of Orchids between them long before Orchideæ became so common in this country. The following are a few of the varieties that were in favor or throwing up spikes at the time of my visit - *Cypripedium barbatum*, *C. Lowi*, *C. niveum*, *C. caudatum*, *C. Pearcei*, *C. superbium*, *C. Lawrencianum*, *C. Parishii*, *C. concolor*, *C. hirsutissimum*, *C. venustum*, *C. purpuratum*, and *C. Stonei*. In closed proximity to the latter was a large plant of *Peristeria elata* throwing up five spikes of great strength, and five large clumps of *Dendrobium nobile* in 14-inch pots, each pot having a little forest of pseudo-bulbs. Besides these there were fine pieces of *D. Dalhousianum*, *D. Wardianum*, *D. macrophyllum*, *D. pulchellum*, and others growing in boxes 2 feet square. There were also good pieces of *Aerides odoratum*, *A. crispum*, and a large plant of *A. odoratum purpurascens*, with seventy spikes, *Phalænopsis grandiflora*, *Vanda Cathcarti*, *Phaius maculatus*, *Dendrobium filiforme*, *Oncidium ampliatum* with strong spikes 2 feet long. Besides these, there were large batches of *Calanthes* and other winter flowering varieties, some large plants of *Eucharis* strong and healthy, and a few specimen Pitcher Plants.

As already noted, *The Gardeners' Magazine* for September 21st, 1895, also visited Penllergare, in the person of the Revd H. Honeywood D'Ombraïn, and by that time John's son had been created a baronet and was also a Member of Parliament. D'Ombraïn wrote that 'Orchids were especially well done and *Aerides odoratum purpurescens* eleven feet high, with thirty-six growths, which sometime had as many as ninety-two spikes, and was a marvel of success in culture.'

When Sir John died in 1927 *The Orchid Review* of August that year printed:

We much regret to record the death, which occurred on July 7th, of Sir John T. Dillwyn-Llewelyn, Bt., in his 92nd year. Born on May 25th 1836, he was the only son of Mr John Dillwyn-Llewelyn F.R.S., of Penllergaer, [sic] one of the earliest Orchid amateurs. It was Schomburgk's graphic description of explorations in British Guiana that induced Sir John's father to construct a special house for the cultivation of Orchids. An account of this structure was communicated to the Horticultural Society of London in 1845 and published in the Society's Journal, together with the illustration herewith reproduced [the waterfall]. Schomburgk's description of a small island whose vegetation had 'that peculiar lively appearance which is so characteristic in the vicinity of cataracts, where a humid cloud, the effect of the spray, always hovers round them' was followed by Mr. Llewelyn, for he caused water to fall over rough pieces of projecting rock, thereby producing a misty spray. The pipe conveying the water was so arranged that it passed through the boiler fire in order that the temperature of the house should not be injuriously lowered.

The presence of so much atmospheric moisture marked a great advance on previous methods of cultivation, for Mr. Llewelyn stated that the plants have a wild luxuriance about them that is unknown to the specimens cultivated in the ordinary manner. Different species intermingle in a beautiful confusion, *Dendrobium*, *Camarotis* and *Renanthera*, side by side, with wreaths of flowers and leaves interlacing one another, and sending their long roots to drink from the mist

of the fall, or even from the water of the pool beneath.’ It was in this house, in the year 1839, that the first flowers of *Laelo majalis* (grandiflora) were produced under cultivation.

This old-time collection was for a long period maintained by the late Sir John Dillwyn-Llewelyn, who was never more happy than when relating little incidents concerning the early days of Orchid collecting. He was justly proud of the fact that a plant of *Aërides affibe* once carried more than eighty flower spikes, and of a similarly fine specimen of *Saccolobium guttatum*, and believed that these were the first Orchids ever placed before a photographic camera.

Many of the plants were obtained from collectors sent abroad by his father and by Mr Bateman, while others were procured from Loddiges, of Hackney. They comprised various Stanhopeas, *Oncidium* species, *Peristeria elata*, *Phalænopsis amabilis*, *Cypripedium insigne*, *Dendrobiums*, *Vanda cœrulea* and *V. teres*, as well as *Calanthe vestita* and *Catasetums*.

The Orchid House Today

The importance of the Penllergare Orchid house is probably best summed up in a letter from Carlton B. Wood, 1989-90 (Martin McLaren Research Fellow), quoting from his thesis for the Planning Unit, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. He refers to the Orchid house as unique:

First and foremost, Mr Llewelyn’s orchid house appears to be one of the earliest (if not the first) documented glasshouse display in Britain which attempted to recreate the naturalistic feel of a tropical landscape... Thirdly it appears that Mr Llewelyn was quite a knowledgeable man when it came to the culture of orchids. He was one of a handful of men who used nature as his guide when it came to creating environments in which orchids might flourish... The other important aspect of Mr Llewelyn’s orchid house is the role it played in influencing other horticulturists. It was featured [by anonymous writers], 1850 *Gardeners’ Chronicle* and *Agricultural Gazette* and [by Llewelyn himself] in the 1846 *Journal of Horticulture*, and in *The Cottage Gardener* and *Country Gentleman’s Companion* of 1856.

The walled garden which encloses the Orchid House, is currently neglected and sadly in need of care and conservation. It includes the remains of hothouses where grapes, coffee, tea, pineapples and other exotic fruit were grown by John Dillwyn Llewelyn (FIG.1). It is an historically important part of the Penllergare estate, considered by many to be both nationally and internationally important (for e.g. Bell 2004; Cadw 2000) and one of the few surviving such areas in Welsh gardens. Surveys have now begun to reveal the original path work system (Briggs and Ward *forthcoming*; Pert 2005-6). John’s interest in orchids was pioneering, and though the orchid house today is but a shadow of its former self, enough remains, together with the plans and sketches in the Horticultural Society journal of 1846, the watercolour by George Delamotte and the few photographs by John, to enable conservation work to be carried out and even perhaps a complete restoration, and even perhaps a complete restoration, before it succumbs to the surrounding invasive trees. This must be done urgently before there is further vandalism, though as, at the end of 2007 it became a Scheduled Ancient Monument under Section 1 of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act of 1979 (no. GM596 (SWA)) any future vandalism should carry serious penalty.

Acknowledgments

To my wife, Sue, for without her I would never have discovered the Dillwyns. Too all those who over the years have sent me snippets of information regarding John’s botanical interests and especially on the orchid house. Several important references were originally provided by Jennifer Woods, then of the Edinburgh

Botanical Garden. Mr Arthur Chater kindly checked the botanical lists, and the *Gerddi* editorial provided and clarified bibliographical background material mostly unavailable to the author. Thanks are also due to the RCAHMW for permission to reproduce FIG 1.

Any quotations not given locations are from correspondence or diaries in private hands and are not available to the public. The diaries of Lewis Weston Dillwyn were on loan to the National Library of Wales but are currently back in the family. Plans are afoot for a collaboration between myself and Swansea University to make these freely available via a University web site plus other Dillwyn material.

Appendix I: The Earliest Description of J. D. Llewelyn's Orchid House, 1837

By C.Stephen Briggs

The first two phases of John Dillwyn Llewelyn's celebrated orchid house, reputedly begun in 1835, are at present best-described from an account in his own hand submitted to the *Gardeners' Chronicle* a decade after its erection (Llewelyn 1846). Given the importance of this novelty, and of Llewelyn's growing reputation as a gardener-botanist at the time, it must have appeared strange that he should have waited so long to make known its success to the horticultural public. Obviously he didn't write about its beginnings in the *Gardeners' Chronicle*, or that would have been picked up by historians before now. It is, however, well to note that there were other regular horticultural magazines serving a similar clientele. Among them was the *Floricultural Cabinet*. This was established on a monthly basis by Joseph Harrison in 1833. Harrison had been Lord Wharncliffe's head gardener at Wortley Hall, near Sheffield, before establishing his own business as nurseryman florist at Downham Market in Norfolk in 1837. The *Magazine* ran to 22 volumes by 1859 and in 1860 was replaced by *The Gardener's Weekly Magazine and Floricultural Cabinet* which was edited by Shirley Hibberd from 1861-5 when it became extinct (British Library online catalogue).

Harrison's monthly magazine is today best-known to those print collectors who cannot afford to buy, or who have difficulty accommodating the size of Curtis's masterpiece hand-coloured engravings. Harrison's plates were more modest in size and quality. Whatever their worth or quality, some of the accompanying texts offer unique information and should not be overlooked. In this regard, the following extract, submitted anonymously, assumes considerable interest to the history of orchid-growing.

Floricultural Cabinet 5, 1837, pp 85-7; ARTICLE VI—ON THE CULTURE OF THE ORCHIDEOUS EPIPHYTES BY A THREE YEARS PRACTITIONER.

In the summer of 1833, a number of plants in bloom of this singular and interesting tribe, came under my notice in the collection of Messrs. Loddiges of Hackney Nursery, which at once determined me on commencing their culture, having a great deal of glass. I purchased one hundred pounds worth of plants to begin with, and had them placed upon a back flue in a vinery, at eight feet from the glass. The period of the vines being in leaf, the plants had the advantage of a partial shade; in this situation they did well in the summer of 1834, but when the winter approached I found them declining in vigour and looking unhealthy, with all the attention I could give them, following the direction of Messrs Loddiges, and Mr. Cooper of Wentworth. I immediately had a house erected to grow them in, I have it heated on the hot water system, three feet above the pipes going round the house, I have a ribbed trellis three feet broad, upon which I have a quantity of plants, they flourish amazingly. At the centre of the house, I had also constructed with a wall three feet high, the breadth of the pit is eight feet, mid length thirty two hot water pipes are bid up the centre, and a floor one foot above, where the top pipe is laid in tiles. On this floor laid one foot of moss, and upon the moss I placed my plants, growing in pots, wicker baskets, &c., they flourished amazingly too. Since I commenced growing this tribe of plants I have had considerable opportunities of trying experiments on their culture, as well as



FIG 7. Laelia Majalis from James Bateman's The Orchidaceae of Mexico and Guatamala [sic] (1837-1843) from an original watercolour by Emma Llewelyn (see p.34).

ascertaining the practice, of most of the celebrated cultivators. I now possess eight hundred and six specimens. Most of them I have purchased, and in consequence I have carefully examined the soil in which I have received the plants. The following system of management is what I practise in general with all the kinds, and none can boast of more healthy, or finer specimens for the period I have had them.

In the specimens I have had from Messrs. Rollinson's of the Tooting Nursery, I found a small garden pot inversely placed inside the pot in which the plant was growing, of course it was much smaller pot than the pot which held the plant, around this small pot was placed two inches deep of small broken potsherds. This forms a very efficient draining, which is of great importance to a successful culture of the plants; the plants are grown in two parts of broken potsherd, with one of peat. I have followed the same system of management as to potting, excepting substituting one portion of sphagnum moss for one of the broken potsherds. I find the plants thrive better in this, than in that which Messrs. Rollinson's plants were retained in. I observed that Messrs. Rollinson's mode of potting has been as follows. A small inverted pot, around which were a good portion of largish potsherds, upon those a few smaller, then a layer of peat in pieces near an inch square, on the top of this a layer of small potsherds, and so proceeding till the pot was filled, finishing with the potsherds at the surface. Messrs. Rollinson's plants look very healthy and grow vigorously.

In heating by hot water there is the advantage of a moist atmosphere; I have two open tanks from which is considerable evaporation. In addition, I water the mossy surface between the plants twice a day, and sprinkle them over the tops twice a day, during the season the plants are in a growing condition, that is from February to November. I do this with water that is warm, I do not give as much in these sprinklings as to wet the soil, but only to moisten, the foliage. I keep the temperature for the above named period, at seventy degrees by night, and from seventy to eighty by day. At the season of rest, I keep the temperature at sixty two by night, sixty eight by day. I have a quantity of plants in baskets made of sticks, nailed together at the corners, allowing spaces between the sticks, the roots protrude through them. The plants flourish well by this mode of treatment.

I have for two seasons, several plants of Dendrobiums, Oncidiums, and Epidendrums, secured to pieces of sycamore wood branches, about five or six inches in diameter, I placed a quantity of sphagnum moss against the wood, then the roots of the plant, and over them more of the sphagnum, the whole secured by metal wire. Some of them I have suspended in the house, others I placed in the pit where the wood becomes warm, the latter have hitherto done best; a few of those growing best, I placed upon an end in a deep pot, and then filled around the wood with pots, peat and sphagnum, since which, they have grown very vigorously. In hot sunny days I have a close meshed net thrown over the glass roof. My house is double-roofed, admitting a great deal of light, which renders the covering very necessary in hot weather.

How do we know this was written by J.D.Llewelyn and not another orchid grower? The answer is that James Bateman, his main rival, also wrote for Harrison, but he usually identified himself. Besides, the date is right and the description of what is known about the Penllergare orchid house fits from this account. Richard Morris, who is familiar with Llewelyn's writing style, kindly observes that the language is also similar to his.

George Loddiges' nursery was one of the best-known in nineteenth-century Britain (Hayden 2004; Solman 1995). His catalogues encompassed most plants known to the early Victorians and in 1844 he published one devoted entirely to orchids. It is unclear whether or not this was his first. Ignorance of precedence notwithstanding, it was remarkably comprehensive, and named the countries of origin as well as giving dates of introduction for each species (Soc.Ants Lond. MSS 872/3). An earlier catalogue in the same collection, still in manuscript, is prefaced by a list of buyers or suppliers (the hand is unclear). These included Bateman,

Herbert, the Horticultural Society, Knight, 'Lewis the Hopper', Schombergk, Tweedie, Warren and Herschel, but not Llewelyn.

Acknowledgement

The writer thanks Caroline Kerkham for loan of the *Floricultural Cabinet* and useful discussion of Loddiges' Nursery, and Heather Rowland, Head of Library and Collections at the Society of Antiquaries of London for help accessing the early Loddiges' catalogues.

Appendix 2: Llewelyn's plants listed in Curtis's *Botanical Magazine*

The following articles appeared illustrated in colour with specimens of orchids from John Dillwyn Llewelyn's orchid house.

[Many of the orchids referred to in the nineteenth-century literature either no longer exist or have been re-classified. Original spellings have been left unaltered as they were both in the various quoted articles and in family letters especially as I am informed that they are, yet again, undergoing a major change. *There are some 25,000 species so modernising will take a long time.*]

3951	<i>Epidendrum Skinneri</i>	(Illustrated June 1 1842)
3962	<i>Aspasia Epidendroides</i>	(1842)
3970	<i>Dendrobium Macranthum</i>	Volume XVI
4078	<i>Phajus Bicolor</i>	Vol XVII. Illus: dated April 1 1844
4163	<i>Eria Dillwynii</i>	Illus: dated June 7 1845
4916	<i>Cattleya Skinneri</i> var. <i>Parviflora</i>	Illus: dated May 1 1856
5667	<i>Laelia Majalis</i>	Illus: dated Oct 1 1867.

Appendix 3: List of Orchids Grown in Llewellyn's Orchid House

In addition it is possible to compile a list of plants that grew in the Orchid House over the years from family letters of the period, *The Journal of the Horticultural Society* 1846; *Botanical Magazine* as listed above, 1842-1867; 'Tiddle Taddle' 1857; *Orchid Review* 1927; correspondence at Kew and *The Journal of Horticulture & Cottage Gardener* 1886.

Aerides affine (multiflora)

Aerides odorata

Aspasia epidendroides

Barkeria

Bletia hyacinthina

Brassavola glauca

Camarotis

Catasetum barbatum

Catasetum macrocarpus

Catasetum warcewiczii

Cattleya skinneri

Dendrobium crumenatum

Dendrobium macrophyllum

Dendrobium speciosum

Dendrobium superbum (macranthum)

Epidendrum selligerum

Eria bractescens (dillwynia)

Huntleya violacea

Laelia anceps

Laelia autumnalis nobile

Laelia majalis (grandiflora)

Lycaste skinneri

Mormodes

Paphiopedalum insigne

Phaius tankervilleae (bicolor & wallichii)

Renanthera

Rhynchostylis retusa

Saccolabium guttatum

Schomburkia undulata

Vanda caerulea

Vanda teres

The following are listed in the *Journal of Horticulture & Cottage Gardener* by A. Pettigrew, 22nd July 1886, 75-6:

Cypripedium barbatum
C. Lowi
C. Niveum
C. Caudatum
C. Pearcei
C. Superbieus
C. Laurencianum
C. Parishii
C. Concolor
C. Hirsutissimum
C. Venustum
C. Purpuratum
C. Stocei
Peristeria elata
Dendrobium

D. Dalhousianum
D. Wardianum
D. Macrophyllum
D. Pulchellum
Aerides odoratum
A. Crispum
A. Odoratum Purpurascens
Phalaenopsis grandiflora
Vanda Cathcarti
Phaius masculatus
D. Filiforme
Oncidium Ampliatum
Calanthes
Eucharis
Pitcher Plants

From *The Gardener's Magazine* 21st September 1895, 594-6.

'*Aerides odoratum purpurescens* - eleven feet high with thirty six growths which sometime had as many as ninety-one spikes'

'...a fine plant of *Nepenthes Rafflesiana* bearing thirty-six fine pitchers'

The following references are from John Dillwyn Llewelyn's unpublished letters:

19 March 1835:

bought from Millers at Bath - 8 plants including *Bletia Tankervillea*, *Cyrtopodium andusona*, 'a new *Epacris* resembling our *nivae* but with flowers larger and of a brilliant crimson, *Boronia serulata*'

23 March 1835: bought from Loddiges, London -

7 specimens unnamed

25 March 1835:

bought from Knights, London - '...a few very cheap' - unnamed

10 March 1848:

letter to Bentham at Kew:

refers to 'a few Javanese orchids - two or three *Orida Vandii* - *Saccolabinus* and *Cymbidium*' (RBG - see previous comment as to unknown references)

3 March 1857 From Theresa Dillwyn Llewelyn to Mrs Bentham. *Dendrobium Speciosum* 'has six long and very handsome spikes'(as above).

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The Hafod Archaeological Guidelines

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Abstract

Concerns were expressed from the late 1980s about how management regimes within the Forestry Commission for increased access and recreation might affect the archaeological integrity of Thomas Johnes's Wilderness Picturesque Landscape, created at Hafod Uchtryd c.1780-1815. Accordingly, comprehensive Archaeological Guidelines were commissioned and drafted in 1995 that made several recommendations resulting in important landscape management innovations. These have included reconnaissance survey, a GIS sites and monuments database and excavation. The results from these continue to usefully inform conservation work on the demesne. The Guidelines are shown to have considerable potential for application on similar landscapes elsewhere.

Two centuries on, few features could be easily discerned of the 'Wilderness Picturesque' landscape which Thomas Johnes created at Hafod Uchtryd after he inherited the Cardiganshire estate in 1780 (*cf.* Macve 2004, 17-22). The series of walks, which had previously provided views that proved so delightful to early visitors (Cumberland 1796), were largely overgrown and in places along the steep gorges the path had completely fallen away. At the same time, modern afforestation swamped the original woodland cover and obscured what architectural features remained. The mansion itself was blown up in the late 1950s (*cf.* Lloyd 1989, 51 and 120-21) and the heart of the ancient demesne had to suffer the ignominy of being used as a caravan site.

In spite of this degradation, the underlying landscape still retained much evidence of the additions and alterations that had been made to it by both Johnes and others before and after him (*cf.* Kerkham and Briggs 1991). Whilst a state of abeyance helped to preserve most remains, popular interest was aroused by the story told in the book *Peacocks in Paradise* (Inglis-Jones 1950, with numerous reprints) and with the burgeoning study of garden history in the late twentieth century made rediscovery inevitable.

The Friends of Hafod formed a local society in the 1980s to promote the history and protection of the site and the Forestry Commission as the landowner set up a conservation advisory panel in March 1990 (Kerkham 1991, 207). In November 1991 the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust put forward a strategy for restoring the original circuit walks and thereby 'revitalise, conserve and interpret the Picturesque, working landscape' that Johnes had created (Sclater 1991). A formal partnership agreement was signed the following year with Forest Enterprise, an executive agency of the Forestry Commission, and an initial phase of works was implemented to restore part of the First Walk, or Lady's Walk, and to reinstate the 'Alpine Bridge' across the River Ystwyth. The complexity of the general programme led to the formation of a separate body in October 1994, known as Ymddiriedolaeth yr Hafod – The Hafod Trust, which subsequently took over the partnership role (Norman 1995).

The scale and ambition of the overall project, together with the speed of its undertaking, gave rise to disquiet about the extent of protection that was being given to the original sensibilities of the place and its fragile historical remains (e.g. Briggs 1996-7). Other criticism was levelled against the quality of background research undertaken (Briggs and Kerkham 1995) and issues were often strongly debated (for example, Kerkham 1996; Moore 1996). Amidst these concerns, and prior to relinquishing direct involvement, the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust commissioned an independent review of the archaeological requirements from the writer, who at the time was Chief Archaeologist and Head of Northamptonshire Archaeology. The resulting guidelines and related references are reproduced here in their entirety without alteration or updating.

Whilst the suggested integration of recording and mapping techniques is now standard practice, at the time it represented a new way of analysing landscape. Similarly, other recommended methods have since become commonplace but it is precisely for this reason that the guidance retains some usefulness as well as having historical curiosity.

HAFOD ARCHAEOLOGICAL GUIDELINES

Introduction

This report has been commissioned by the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust in order provide general archaeological guidelines to accompany the *Hafod Conservation Strategic Plan* (1991). Its recommendations are based upon background reading of relevant published archaeological and historical studies, together with consideration of the Strategic Plan, papers of the Hafod Advisory Committee, and other documents such as individual project specifications and the proposed Hafod Trust programme 1995/96.

A field visit was made between 13 - 15 March 1995, during which time interviews were held with Commander D. Moore, Director and Chairman of the Hafod Trust, Mr A. Dauncey, Forest District Manager Ceredigion, Mr A. Mills and Mr and Mrs R. Hallett of the Friends of Hafod, Dr C. S. Briggs and Ms C. R. Kerkham, and the Secretary and individual staff members of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales. The restoration work carried out to date and proposed programme of future works were discussed on site with Dr A. Sclater and Mr M. Norman, with subsequent telephone consultation upon the archaeological issues with Mr C. H. Houlder.

Archaeology and the Hafod Demesne

The *Hafod Conservation Strategic Plan*, in offering the vision of positive management of conflicting conservation interests, recognised that in many areas existing knowledge was neither exhaustive nor by any means adequate to establish a sensitive balance among the ecological, historical and human dimensions of the demesne. Thus, for areas of ‘special historic interest’ the need for further research was highlighted (*CSP*, Section 4.3.2 - pages 45-6 - with plan 5). In practice, however, related survey, appears to have been carried out on a wholly *ad hoc* basis, chiefly comprising the identification of individual paths or walks prior to reconstruction but also including stone-by-stone survey of the remains of the Alpine Bridge. This is unsatisfactory since any features need to be understood as part of the wider landscape. The identification of how features may inter-relate is essential to interpretation and with the recognition of patterns of spatial and chronological variation, as well as assessment of surviving condition, will permit grading of their quality and thereby raise issues for future decision.

The archaeological perspective is especially important in the present instance where the conservation brief is oriented towards a single period, with Johnes’ concept of the picturesque landscape. Its aesthetic and sublime character can only be understood through an awareness of what had gone before and by understanding the effects of what came after. Archaeology is a powerful tool to discover the details of these earlier and later periods and its findings must bear upon the balanced approach to future management. The features associated with past water management, sites of sawmills, the Dologau ‘barrage’, and recent forestry history are all part of the local landscape development. Together with any vestiges of the earlier use of the demesne, they have influenced to varying extent the present ecology as well as local social and economic history.

A rigorous approach to the use of historical evidence of all periods, with archaeological survey in particular, should satisfy the need for objective factual information that is required both to assess the consequences of proposed restoration and to establish future management plans. Archaeological investigation should be applied not merely to underpin the authentic restoration or re-creation of specific features but,

more importantly, provides the means of identifying areas of potential sensitivity and importance, often highlighting tension between preservation and enhancement.

The speed of undertaking the present programme of works at Hafod is of concern to several parties and it is fair criticism that archaeological survey and cognate investigation have not been undertaken either systematically or sufficiently ahead of the main works as to permit proper consideration of their results. The interpretation of individual features has further suffered through concentration upon single aspects to the detriment of the wider landscape context. The situation should be handled more effectively by a comprehensive consideration of the archaeology of the entire demesne, which could be arranged through incremental studies and therefore need not be expensive.

The first requirement is for a rapid reconnaissance in order to identify both sites and zones of potential archaeological sensitivity and importance. These should include features of both the pre-Johnes' landscape and later development. Locations should be mapped using a single series of reference points which must form the basis for future surveys, whether designed for archaeological or ecological management purposes. The information should be supplemented by simple written descriptions of the surviving features, with comment upon condition as well as character. The details could be entered into a computer-based GIS to allow quick retrieval and interrogation of constraint-information, and to provide a database that can be enhanced with additional information as arising.

This basic 'sites and monuments record' is an essential management tool to identify any archaeological impacts which should be evaluated through an appropriate combination of desk-top study, detailed topographical survey, remote-sensing, and targeted trial excavation. The results should be assessed according to priorities for preservation based upon rarity, historical significance, and condition, so that suitable mitigation measures can be identified. These might range from preservation *in situ* to preservation by record. The information will contribute directly to aspects of restoration design.

This type of staged approach can be applied regardless of scale and complexity and should extend equally to standing buildings and other structures. The detailed specification for both evaluation and subsequent action will vary according to circumstance. It is important, however, to ensure throughout that all work is undertaken to a consistently high standard by suitably qualified persons.

General Principles

1. A database of archaeological information should be established, linked to a constraints map.
2. This basic record should be regularly reviewed and enhanced as appropriate by non-intrusive survey which, possibly with small-scale excavation, should aim eventually to provide a comprehensive archaeological profile of the area, embracing archaeoenvironmental and historical (documentary) information.
3. All fieldwork and related examination should be carried out within an overall research framework of investigating landscape-development, including the contributions of owners prior to Thomas Johnes and subsequent to him.
4. The various components should be graded according to rarity of survival, condition, and value for understanding the landscape of different periods. Active consideration should be given to achieving Conservation Area designation.
5. Evaluation of the likely archaeological impacts as well as potential to contribute to understanding must be the prerequisite of future management and restoration design proposals.
6. In accordance with the national importance of the Hafod landscape, the presumption must be to protect the integrity of its surviving remains by preservation *in situ*.
7. Careful consideration must be given to non-intrusive methods of tracing path-alignments through detailed

- surface examination, contour-survey and geophysical prospection as appropriate.
8. Disturbance of the original paths must be avoided wherever possible and careful consideration must be given to tree-felling and other clearance, particularly where it might cause bank erosion with the consequent loss of archaeological features and information. In some situations the potential for damage should be mitigated by making alternative route.
 9. It must be accepted, however, that there may be instances where alteration or damage is unavoidable, and preservation *in situ* cannot be ensured. In these cases there should be full specialist investigation and analysis so that there is preservation at least by record. It is important also to ensure that any former path-evidence will not be lost by integration with new metalling or through erosion from use. It is recognised, however, that an intervention layer, such as a geotextile membrane, may not always be practicable in these situations and there may be rare occasions where it will be best to remove the historical fabric in its entirety rather than leave it to become contaminated.
 10. In general, new paths should continue to be laid *on top* of the existing ground with fresh scalplings added to build up the surface, thereby avoiding direct contact with original features.
 11. Similar considerations must apply to the restoration of structures, where new elements should be distinguishable from the restored original parts. Advice should be sought from Cadw and RCAHMW upon the correct approach to the consolidation and reuse of specific surviving remains.
 12. A full and proper record should be made of all restoration or remedial works, including those already carried out as well as planned. The documentation should comprise plans and elevations as appropriate, in addition to before and after photographic views.
 13. All archaeological work should be carried out to appropriate professional standards and in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (1986).

Standards of Practice

Assessment of individual site conditions should include historic features and identify any threats to the historical value of the land. The study methodology should bring together historical research, an archaeological field survey and a survey of the landscape structure (trees, structures, landform-features) in order to document and provide a clear understanding of the present landscape and its origins. The following standards are recommended as a guide to good practice.

1. Desk-based study

Desk-based assessment is often regarded as distinct from field evaluation (DoE 1990; ACAO 1993; IFA 1994a) since it involves the bringing together of existing archaeological information rather than the collection of new information. It usually occurs, however, as the first stage of an unfolding archaeological evaluation strategy. In principle, a wide variety of sources may be consulted, including historic plans and other documents, early prints, paintings and photographs (*cf.* Lambert 1991) but at the minimum it should include:

- a) Consultation of the Dyfed Sites and Monuments Record and relevant sources cited therein.
- b) Check upon air photograph records. Where appropriate, all aerial photograph plotting should be by computer rectification and should be presented at 1:2500 scale for significant sites and 1:10000 to demonstrate the overall landscape context. Mapping standards and conventions should take account of published national guidance notes (CBA 1994; IFA 1993). The source photograph(s) for each plot should be identified.
- c) Identification of statutory and advisory heritage constraints.
- d) Identification and, if appropriate, mapping of solid geology and soil conditions, together with current land-use and physical constraints which might restrict geophysical survey or other analytical techniques.

2. Field survey

Comprehensive site-inspection should provide a full record of archaeological features through systematic reconnaissance of the estate and by plotting any remains on a 1:2500 base map which might also show the effects of previous ploughing and other land-use. The survey must be related to the National Grid, with all recorded levels or spot-heights relative to Ordnance Datum.

Accurate and precise surveying is essential and should be recorded electronically using Total Station theodolite for greatest accuracy.

The following should normally be mapped and their nature and condition described:

- a) Earthwork remains, with the extent and nature of any degradation, together with the impact of vegetation, e.g. by root-growth, tree-throw, etc.
- b) Buildings and structures, including the deliberate alteration of landform to create ledges, caverns, ravines, etc.
- c) Walls, fences, gates and other boundaries and access points.
- d) Stands of old trees should be assessed in relation to the known historical development of the estate, with note of the existence of earlier trees, particularly if they occur within areas of more recent planting.

A comprehensive photographic record should be assembled.

3. Earthwork survey

Earthwork surveys should normally be carried out at 1:1000 scale, or 1:500 to show greater detail. They should be presented at standard mapping scales of 1:1250 or 1:2500 as appropriate. Hachured surveys will normally be adequate for most earthwork remains but detailed contoured surveys are essential for tracing path alignments and accurate analysis. RCAHMW recording conventions and standards should be adhered to.

Earthwork survey should only be carried out in suitable ground visibility conditions. On pasture this will usually restrict survey to late autumn - early spring or after the grass has been cut back. Any residual earthworks on arable land should be surveyed before they are obscured by crop growth. Identifying and surveying earthworks in woodland often poses considerable practical difficulties and may only be possible in winter.

4. Geophysical survey

A considerable variety of techniques come under the heading of 'geophysical survey' (IFA 1991) and standards for their conduct and reporting have been recently defined (EH 1995).

No geophysical survey should be carried out without first assessing the conditions in terms of land-use, geology and other complicating factors (e.g. tree-cover and roots). If appropriate, soil samples should be tested prior to implementation of the survey. It is important that the survey technique selected is the most appropriate to the ground conditions and the specific objectives.

Most geophysical techniques produce computerised data from which images can be generated. It is important to obtain the highest quality *raw* data and specify how it has been used, in particular assessing the likely effects processing. Plots should normally be at 1:1000 or 1:500 scale for detailed survey.

5. Buildings and standing structures

Where historic buildings and standing structures need to be surveyed, investigation should follow the recording standards (and drawing conventions) defined by RCHME (1991), generally comprising a written record with measured drawings and photographs. There are five broad levels of survey:

- a) visual
- b) descriptive
- c) fully analytical

- d) fully analytical and contextual
- e) photographic

6. Excavation

A number of different excavation strategies may be employed (cf. IFA 1994b, 1994c) but in every instance it is an explicitly archaeological exercise and must be under the direct control of an archaeologist, who will be responsible to ensure that recording and sampling strategies are implemented to a high standard. Excavation will normally be carried out by hand and the excavation area should be cleaned sufficiently to allow the identification and planning of archaeological features which should be recorded as follows:

- a) All archaeological deposits must be given a separate context number. Finds should be dated and stored by context, with adequate labelling and packaging (IFA 1992; Watkinson 1987).
- b) Finds with particular importance for dating or of an intrinsic interest should be recorded by grid reference and height related to Ordnance Datum within context.
- c) Any finds of human remains should be left *in situ*, covered and protected. If excavation is necessary, it can only take place under appropriate Home Office and environmental health regulations.
- d) Individual contexts or deposits should be recorded on pro-forma sheets which require a description, assessment of any relationship to other contexts, interpretation, and a checklist of associated finds. The description should include details of dimension and shape, together with soil components such as colour, texture and consistency.
- e) Spot-heights must be taken to relate the deposits to Ordnance Datum.
- f) Complex sequences of deposits should be additionally recorded by a stratigraphic matrix to show interrelationships and relative chronology, or phases.
- g) Archaeological features and the extent of layers within individual excavation trenches should be planned at a scale of 1:20 or 1:50 as appropriate. Where exposed, the sections and profiles of features should be drawn at scales of 1:10 or 1:20 as relevant and related to Ordnance Datum. Trench sides should also be drawn where they contain significant archaeological information.
- h) A photographic record must be kept, comprising black and white negatives and related prints, together with colour transparencies, to show all significant features as well as overall views.
- i) All excavation should include archaeoenvironmental assessment, covering macroscopic plant remains and microfossils, invertebrate remains, sedimentology and soil science. Where deposits likely to have a high archaeoenvironmental potential are identified it will be necessary to obtain specialist advice.
- j) All excavated data must be compiled into a site archive with appropriate cross-referencing. Any summary of the results should include an assessment of the potential of the evidence for further analysis.

7. Reporting and archiving

A report must be prepared for each instance of fieldwork, summarising the scope of the work and the methodology adopted, and containing sufficient supporting information to validate its conclusions. An abstract should be prepared for publication in national, regional, local specialist periodicals, and the local SMR as appropriate, with the scope of the published report varying with the scale of the particular undertaking and the significance of its results.

A microform or other copy of the site archive and narrative should be made to RCAHMW standards and supplied to the National Monuments Record for Wales.

It is recommended that the collection of material from all work is centralised in a single repository or museum approved for the purpose by the Museum and Galleries Commission. National standards for the preparation of excavation archives for storage have been set by the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation

(Walker 1990).

Any artefacts and ecofacts not to be archived, for whatever reason, must be appropriately analysed and reported upon; this might include unstable archaeoenvironmental samples. National guidelines on the selection and deselection of material for archiving have been published by the Society of Museum Archaeologists (SMA 1993).

8. Staff Competence

Archaeological work must be undertaken by a suitably qualified person with proven competence, who will be responsible for ensuring that all staff, including specialist sub-contractors, are qualified and experienced for their project roles. Where work is not personally supervised in the field, it is particularly important that the assistant who carries out the work should be able to demonstrate competence for work of that type and at that level of responsibility.

It is essential throughout that all works are conducted within Health and Safety guidelines.

Future archaeological management

It is important to establish an approach to the future management of the Hafod landscape which takes full account of the overall setting if its balance and quality are not to be compromised. Individual landscape-features must be appreciated as part of the wider system, and there is the compelling need for a rapid reconnaissance to map the extent of surviving archaeology of all periods as the basis for future management decisions. Proposed schemes of work could then be assessed against this background of information, and specific evaluation requirements or actual constraints can be more easily identified.

In accordance with the Agreement between the Forest Enterprise and the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust (October 1992) it would be appropriate for the specialist members of the Hafod Advisory Committee to develop a more active curatorial role. In addition to advising upon the suitability of submitted proposals, the Committee should require archaeological assessment to be carried out from the earliest stage of planning new schemes, and through the Forest Enterprise could issue an independent brief identifying the requirements for evaluation. This would be in line with current best practice and follows the recommendations of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (DoE 1990).

The imminent transfer of the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust's local responsibilities to the Hafod Trust is an appropriate time to define this role for the Hafod Advisory Committee and for the Forest Enterprise to ensure that basic archaeological information is compiled for the demesne. The Alpine Bridge, currently being restored, lies at a crucial point as it links the northern and southern parts of the estate across the River Ystwyth. It is vital that any phases of work planned beyond it, relating to both the Gentleman's and New Walks, should be governed by a careful archaeological approach.

Brian Dix

Northamptonshire Archaeology

25 April 1995

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Postscript

Although designed to aid the protection and preservation of vulnerable remains, the management advice contained in the Guidelines also recognises that a point must come when you either restore or lose the heritage asset. In such situations, character and use may be sustainable rather than intrinsic physical remains (*cf.* Fairclough 1999). It is therefore paramount in forward planning to identify what is most significant about the archaeological resource in order to determine how it should be treated in the future.

The Guidelines propose a methodology to enhance understanding, starting with a digital map-based sites and monuments record to which information from more detailed surveys and specific excavations can be added. Such a database run on a GIS-based application can incorporate a diverse range of research material using various media. Furthermore, the use of map-overlays with appropriate hot-links allows different classes of information to be accessed and displayed, thereby facilitating direct comparison (Demers 2000). A dynamic system like this can be developed to form a powerful management tool, taking regard for the ecological as well as the archaeological significance of sites.

The Hafod Archaeological Database was created in 1996 by the Dyfed Archaeological Trust (titled Archaeoleg Cambria Archaeology from 2000-2008) on behalf of the Hafod Partnership. Initial information from the regional Sites and Monuments Record was augmented by data taken off historic maps and supplemented by the results of walkover survey and other field investigation. As well as having a basic description, individual sites are graded according to their condition and importance based upon the national criteria for scheduling ancient monuments (Murphy 1996). The records have been subsequently enhanced by the analysis of relevant aerial photographs together with the results from detailed investigation and other studies at specific sites (e.g. Ludlow 1999). The scope of the Database has also been enlarged to include adjacent areas outside the Forest Enterprise estate but still within the core of the historic demesne (e.g. Murphy 1998). Similar databases have since been created for other historic estates in Wales, such as Penllergare near Swansea (Pert 2006), and comparable sites and monuments records are maintained by bodies like The National Trust as an aid to management and planning at heritage properties (*cf.* Fretwell 2001, 63-5).

The importance of the Hafod Archaeological Database as the starting point for more detailed investigation was fully recognised in the *Hafod Management Guidelines* which Forest Enterprise and The Hafod Trust jointly issued in 1998. Further studies to assess the likely impact of proposed works and other changes were considered essential to forest operational planning, where the woodland history of the estate could also be used to guide sensitive felling and restocking, and thereby recover some of the original picturesque quality. The ecological and archaeological heritage thus became central to developing conservation policy on the demesne, and the Director, Forest Enterprise Wales submitted proposals for operations as well as projects to

the Hafod Advisory Committee for consideration and recommendation prior to final decision.

The expertise of the Committee ranged across archaeological, historical, wildlife, landscape and countryside interests, and individual members could be – and often were – called upon to provide an impartial curatorial viewpoint. Individual brief and work specifications might thus be vetted to ensure compliance with established principles and professional practice. The availability of independent archaeological advice ceased when the Advisory Committee was dissolved in 2001.

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Ruperra, Glamorgan: from Prehistory to Public Inquiry 2009

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Abstract

Ruperra is a ruined seventeenth-century house and estate near Caerphilly in Glamorgan at OS ST 219 863 surrounded by relict estate features as recent as the early twentieth century. The site includes elements of an important but largely fugitive formal landscape. Both castle and historic landscape setting are of national interest. An outline history is given, highlighting details of some specific events relating to the management of the estate and upkeep in recent times. The establishment, objectives and achievements of Ruperra [Castle] Conservation Trust (founded 1996) are also explained. The Trust has already addressed threats of inappropriate change to the site and its landscape setting and in 2000 bought the adjacent Craig Coed Ruperra woodland which overlooks and forms an integral component of the former historic estate. The Trust has so far successfully campaigned against applications to develop the site and together with the Ruperra Castle Preservation Trust (founded 2008) is currently set to confront the developer's appeal against refusal to permit development, in 2009.

Introduction

Ruperra Castle lies at the core of the eponymous estate at OS ST 219 863, within the borders of Caerphilly County Borough, very near the Rhymney River, which forms the present boundary with Newport County Borough, and on the edge of Monmouthshire, of which it was once a part. It stands in a triangle of unspoilt rolling countryside, some four miles (6 km) wide, between the rapidly expanding conurbations of Cardiff and Newport, the ruin of a foursquare Jacobean castle erected on the site of a mediaeval house, sheltered to the north by the wooded hill of Coed Craig Ruperra.

The castle is a Grade II* Listed Building (1964) and a Scheduled Ancient Monument (GM379). The estate woodland of Coed Craig Ruperra has been in the ownership of the Ruperra Conservation Trust since 2000 (FIG.1). What remains of the core estate land lies within the Caerphilly County Borough Conservation Area and Special Landscape Area (CBUDP: *Countryside and Nature Conservation*, 1-18 and *Historic Environment*, 1-6) and is listed Grade II on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens in Wales (Cadw/ICOMOS 2000, 30-1). In the Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan (LDP 2008) currently under review (replacing the Unitary Development Plan (UDP), Ruperra is mentioned as a place of significance only for nature conservation, even though now one of the few remaining undeveloped green spaces in this part of Wales. Its archaeological and landscape values and importance as the setting for a listed building rate no mention.

A brief History of Ruperra and its Landscape

Origins

It is believed that the sheltered site below Coed Craig Ruperra was first occupied by the Lewises of Llanbradach during the fifteenth century but the use of the name Ruperra or Rhiw'r Perrau, the hill of



FIG. 1 Ruperra Castle and Gardens 2004: Aerial View (Commission Air copyright Ruperra Conservation Trust)

pear trees, is not recorded until around a century later (Pierce 1996).

The estate came to Thomas Morgan in 1595 through his marriage to Margaret Lewis of Ruperra. Thomas was the seventh son of Edmond Morgan of Penllwynsarth, himself the fourth son of John Morgan of Machen. Incidentally, he was also first cousin to the Buccaneer, Henry Morgan, later Governor of Jamaica. As steward to William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke at Wilton, - he was knighted in 1623 by King James I at Wilton - Sir Thomas was a man of wealth and power and he began building up the estate. Between 1623 and 1626 he demolished his father-in-law's mediaeval house and replaced it with the castle which was later badly damaged by fire in 1785.

An anonymous drawing of 1770 depicts what was very clearly a 'pageant castle' (FIG. 2) - a square Jacobean house with round crenellated towers at each corner. Recent, as yet unauthenticated research by John Thorneycroft, raises speculation as to whether after his stay at Ruperra in 1645 following the battle of Naseby Charles I may have sent Isaac de Caux from his Office of Works to advise Philip Morgan, Thomas's grandson, on the design of the formal gardens (CAR 2006).

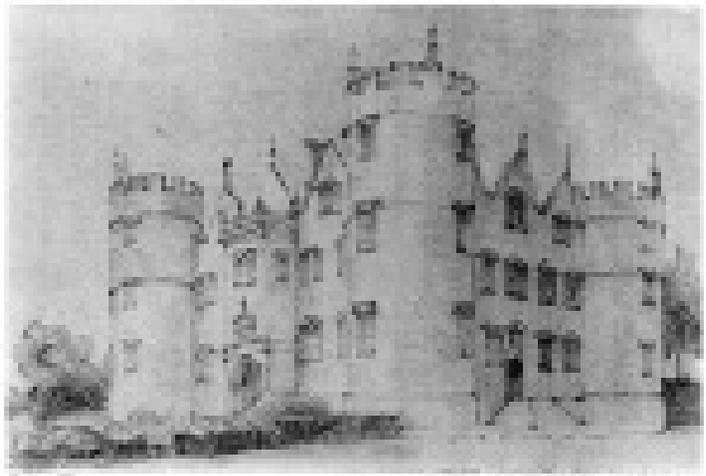


FIG. 2 Ruperra Castle 1770 by an unknown artist (Crown Copyright RCAHMW).

Ruperra became part of the main Tredegar Estates in the early eighteenth century, and whereas the architect of the first castle is unknown, Thomas Hardwick (1752–1829) was responsible for rebuilding after the fire of 1785.

The Early Estate Layout

Something of the original layout of the estate nucleus is known from a sketch made by Thomas Dineley in 1684. Dineley was amanuensis to the Duke of Beaufort, President of the Council of Wales and the Marches, on his progress through Wales in 1684. His now well-known depiction of the castle (FIG.3; Banks (ed.) 1888, 358), shows regular square or rectangular walled enclosures arranged as an approach along a single axis focused on the castle. The enclosure nearest the castle was entered through an architecturally attractive gatehouse opposite the castle's front door,

long since gone, possibly in the 1780s (Worsley 1986, 1279). Dineley sketched it with its own terraced forecourt, echoing the more imposing one before the house. The strange upright features depicted along these enclosure walls could be stylised fruit or ornamental espaliers. Equally, they could have been trees that Dineley chose to decapitate in order to enable a clearer picture of the courtyards. Given that this is one of about a dozen such plans which records similar high status formal garden layouts made during Beaufort's progress in Wales (Banks 1888 *passim*), archaeology could prove to be a particularly valuable tool here in evaluating Dineley's accuracy.

The Deerpark

Like many contemporary gentry estates, Ruperra had its own deerpark. This is believed to have occupied the western side of the castle grounds from medieval times. Sir Thomas's passion is evident in his care for it (Cadw 2000, 30 and *passim*). It was certainly flourishing in 1684, when Dineley enthused about the view to be had during his brief passage from Cefn Mably: '.. through a Proud Park of Deer ...to Ruperra, His Grace's Lodgings and [also to] view the majesty of the old Oaks'(Banks 1888, 364). The deerpark was still in existence at the beginning of the twentieth century when William Beechey, farmer at Ruperra Home Farm, wrote in his diary on

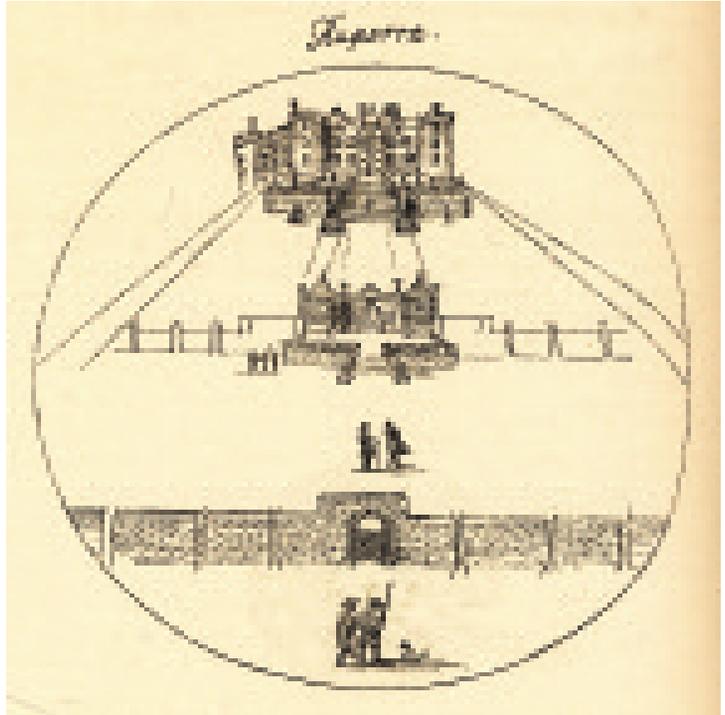


FIG. 3 Sketch by Thomas Dineley 1684 (from R.W.Banks (ed.) 1884, 358).



FIG. 4 The Deer sheds at the present time (photograph by Warren Marsh).

September 29th 1900: ‘Skinned a fawn. Done five’ (Beechey *unpubl.*) Another estate employee testified that in 1906 ‘there were lovely deer and my brother used to work there feeding them. There were deer stables there and a pump house further over’(FIG.4; Moseley 2006, 110).

Avenues

Avenues of lime, sweet chestnut or oak, became increasingly popular in the course of the seventeenth century (Couch 2001). Some lined carriage drives, while others were blunt statements of ownership and influence in contemporary landscapes. At Ruperra, evidence of original avenue alignments, if not also of trees, survived into the twentieth century (Cadw-ICOMOS 2000, 33). The avenue of oaks known as ‘the General’s Walk’ marked on the estate map of 1764 as the Great Walk and running across the park from the western entrance to the castle grounds was the creation of another Thomas Morgan, Judge Advocate General 1741- 68. That no longer exists, although huge oaks can still be seen in the avenue running parallel to the Rudry to Cefn Mably Road. Those lining the old south-west drive to the castle were probably planted in the early twentieth century to replace those that had died (Cadw-ICOMOS *idem*). A servant referring to Colonel Freddie in 1907 said ‘The Colonel was a terror for oaks. If one fell down he’d replace it immediately’ (FIG.5: Moseley 2006,110).



FIG. 5. Oak Avenue from the St Mellons road to the Castle in 2005 (photograph by P. Moseley).

Later formal ‘baroque’ design

The Jacobean garden pattern was either replaced, or equally likely it evolved into a more sophisticated baroque design around the end of the seventeenth century. Quoting from William Winde’s well-known letter to Lady Bridgeman in 1699 John Davies muses how: ‘the idea that one of the great baroque garden designers worked at Ruperra is an exciting one and it is to be hoped that further investigations can be made. The famous terraced gardens at Powis Castle are attributed to him and he seems to have also worked at Chirk Castle’(Davies 1998; *cf.* Cadw-ICOMOS 2000,33).

Picturesque Influence

The footprint of this baroque landscape was eventually swept away in its turn as fashions changed towards the end of the eighteenth century. Unsurprisingly,



FIG. 6. The recently-restored Ruperra by J.P. Neale 1821 (from Neale 1818-23).



FIG. 7 Part of the 1764 Estate map (NLW MS 1027) by Permission of the National Library of Wales.

therefore, eleven years after the fire of 1785 James Baker (1795, 79) commented on the informality of Ruperra's gardens and parkland, a landscape later to be drawn by J.P. Neale and engraved and printed by T. Higham in 1821 (FIG.6; Neale (1818-23), Views 5). This new landscape contrasted starkly with the almost geometric layout still to be seen on the original 1764 Estate map (FIG.7). Capturing the spirit of the new Picturesque Landscape Movement in his first tour of Wales, Benjamin Heath Malkin explains how 'From Ruperrah the gardener conducted me across the park. The prospect was uncommonly attractive. The harvest moon at the full was just risen. The effect of it shining on the Bristol Channel, with the bold hills of Somersetshire beyond, was in a high degree beautiful and has a powerful effect upon the mind, as seen by a bright moonlight' (Malkin 1804, 151).

Hillfort, Motte or Viewing Platform, and Summerhouses

The 1764 Estate Map

An undated copy of the 1764 map annotated in an unknown hand raises some interesting speculations as to how much the early history of the site was known to previous generations. The first of these annotations reads:

The upper summerhouse – the same is an ancient British or Welsh castle consisting of a flat topped conical mound surrounded by a fosse the summit of which was most probably occupied by some timber structure protected by pallsades (sic) in its original condition but in later times probably early in the last century the top was surrounded by a wall within which was built a square summerhouse of two storeys where the family used to drink tea in the summer time.

The *British* or *Welsh* castle is an Iron Age hill-fort (NPRN 226513). The fosse and timber structure is a Norman motte and ditch (NPRN 91997), and the wall described is the curtain wall for a summerhouse, which

might even have been there when Charles I visited in July 1643, possibly part of the landscaping for Sir Thomas Morgan's castle (FIG.8). The style is not modern but whether the 'last century' referred to is seventeenth, eighteenth or even nineteenth, there is no means of knowing.

An investigation of the top of the motte in 2002 uncovered the remains of the first summerhouse - a very substantial feature suggesting that it might have been built on an earlier medieval structure (Clarke 2002). A letter of Revd W. Watkins c. 1762, records the bizarre discovery of an erect skeleton in a room some eight feet (2.5m.) square during the digging of the foundations of a summerhouse at Ruperra (Owen 1922, 847). If the digging was being done in 1762, it disproves the theory that the summerhouse was built at the same time as the castle, unless the Revd Watkins was recording an event from a century earlier. This part of the story is made even more intriguing by reference to G.T.Clark's *Limbus Patrum* (p 34): 'Gwilym of Rhiwperra, second son of David ancestor of Thomas of Llanbradach...had ten children. Also of base children...Cadwgan who built and died in the tower long called after him at Rhiwperra'.

Little is known of this illegitimate son of the Lewises who built the original house except that he may have been born in around 1430. Although James Baker saw the first summer house in 1794 (Cadw 2000, 30), G.T.Clark did not mention it in the 1860s and neither is it marked on the Michaelstone y Fedw Tithe Award Map of 1839 (NLW). Clark did not mention the lower summerhouse either, although that is plainly marked on the Tithe map.

The Trust has recently uncovered and

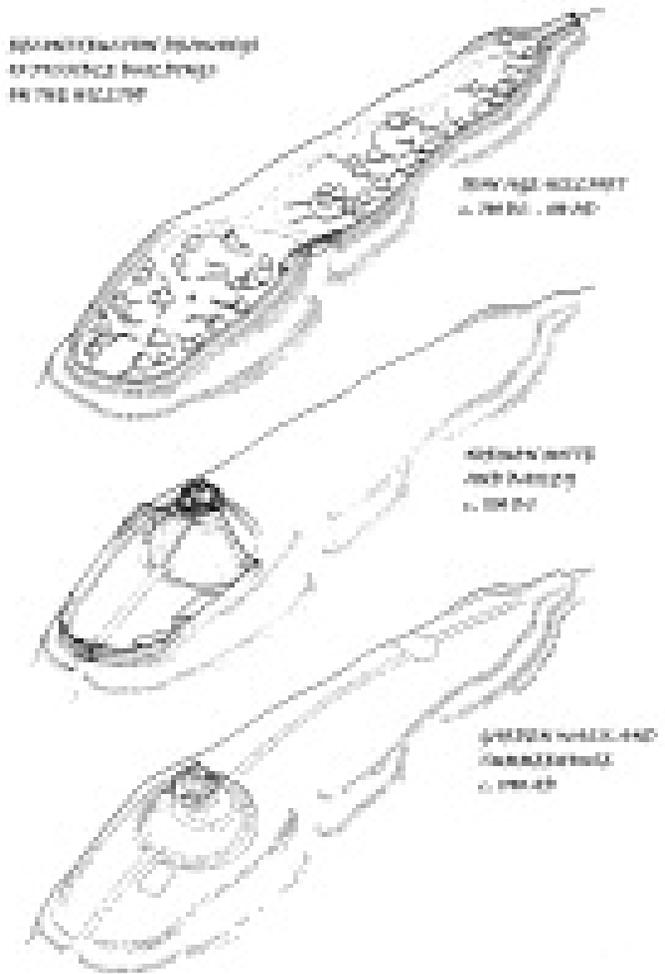


FIG. 8 Reconstruction drawings of the site succession on Craig Coed Ruperra (graphics by Chris Jones-Jenkins 2000).

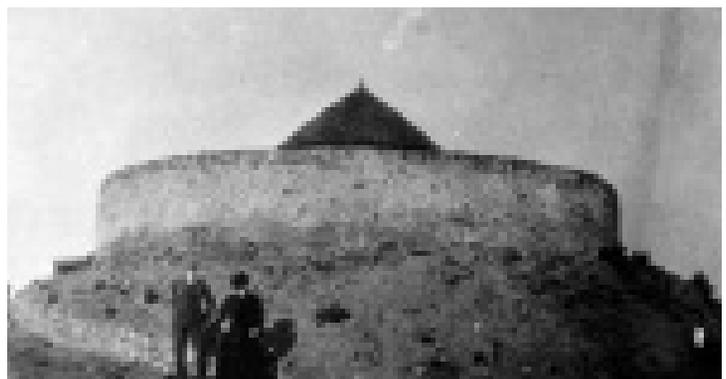


FIG. 9 The Upper Summerhouse in 1920, showing Agnes McKinnon and her son Robert who had lost an arm in the 1914-18 War (photograph courtesy of Ian McKinnon).

repaired the walls of both summerhouses and is looking at ways to leave the attractive cobbled floors of the Lower Summerhouse exposed for visitors to enjoy (Caroe and Partners, Llandaff, u.d.; Site Archaeological Services, Monmouth, u.d.) The path from here, recently reinstated by the Trust, emerges on to the Castle Drive opposite the little garden house in the castle grounds, now unfortunately vandalized. It is a less strenuous walk than the climb to the Upper Summerhouse and connects the walker more obviously with the castle gardens. The path also provides a splendid view of the castle.

This annotated map also offers antiquarian speculation about how an Iron Age hillfort probably looked and might therefore be dated after about 1850, by which time earthwork monuments were beginning to attract considerable interest among antiquaries (FIG.8).

In the early twentieth century a new summerhouse was built on the site of the first. It is remembered by people living today as a split log construction with a thatched roof, a seat round the walls and a wide door-less opening to the south (a form conventionally known as a Moss House). The Trust has not reconstructed it, but hopes one day to replant the yew trees along the sides of the spiral ramp. Although the remaining yews are luxuriant and give the impression of great age, they were obviously planted about 1920 as testified by the picture of Agnes McKinnon, the head gardener's wife and her son Robert, who had lost an arm in the 1914-18 war (FIG.9). A useful later image of this structure in the 1940s, portraying William Greenaway, a former gamekeeper and his wife, shows that it was of a rustic design like the lower summerhouse. It survived well into the 1960s (FIG.10).



FIG. 10 The Upper Summerhouse in the 1940s showing Mr Greenaway previously the gamekeeper, and Mrs Greenaway. (photo Mrs Eileen Woodward)

Coed Craig Ruperra: access and management

The interpretation panels now mounted on Coed Craig Ruperra provide explanations of all the landscape features, natural and built. The Trust plans to restore the Iron Age hill-fort's scheduled area to short grassland. This includes another historic landscape feature, namely the Estate map's 'semi circular arbour of yew trees by the side of the walk having a break light cut in front of it'. Cadw has part-funded the whole of the construction of a new wooden arbour with a seat. This was airlifted into place by the combined efforts of Rolls Royce and the Royal Navy. The Morgans would surely have been impressed (FIG 11)! However there will be no 'break lights' as shown on the 1764 map, since the scheduled area is to be stripped of its trees. 'Break light' is here used as an alternative term to 'ride' – the gaps left unplanted for access and as fire-breaks. Eventually it will have to be decided what period the area is returned to. The Trust could not afford an excavation to establish how far re-planting yew trees would damage surviving archaeology.

Walking up from the castle to the hill-fort, the visitor may pause at each 'light' to look down upon the castle, the castle drive and the countryside stretching as far as the Bristol Channel and beyond. Although

these lights are not in the scheduled area of the hill fort, they present a conservation problem, since stripping them of vegetation will affect the habitats of the dormice (a protected species), and to some degree will affect the flight paths of the greater and lesser horseshoe bats from the castle. One solution would be to leave the mature native trees standing at the bottom of the slope, since they do not obstruct the views of the countryside beyond. These were obviously spared felling after the First World War, when Courtenay, Lord Tredegar as the first president of the Welsh branch of the newly-formed Forestry Commission in 1921, sacrificed most of the ancient woodland in favour of replenishing the wood stock with quick-growing conifers (FIG.12).

In the 1990s these conifer plantations were clear-felled in their turn. They harmed the native flora and fauna over time because vegetation cannot grow beneath them, so native wild flowers and habitats of the wildlife can be stifled, if not destroyed. The Trust has now replaced the conifers with native broadleaves. The replanted Coed Ruperra is an infant which many of us will not see to maturity.

Before conifer planting, the rides or paths through the trees were said to be 'like lawns, all grassed-over. All the paths were beautifully kept and even if you went off the beaten track it was easy to walk between the trees. There were some huge oak and beech trees there (Moseley 2006, 89). This forest was carefully managed for centuries, some of the trees being coppiced to produce charcoal for the local iron industries right up to the middle of the nineteenth century (Owen 2005).

In 1935 six-year-old Elwyn Edwards walked with his parents over to Ruperra Castle from the Hollybush Inn. He noticed that it was a quiet walk because of the depth of the needles in the conifer wood. He saw the castle from the top and asked:

'Does a king live here? Because I couldn't get over it! Down on the paths not a weed, not a leaf out of place. Everything prim and proper, drives swept, wrought iron gates and marvellous lawns like bowling greens. Just inside the gates there were gravestones to dead pets' (Moseley 2006, 116).



FIG. 11 The new arbour on site in Coed Ruperra in 2008 (photo by P.Moseley).

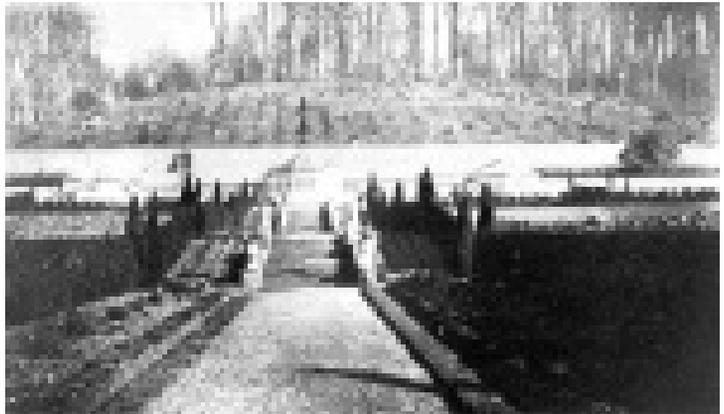


FIG. 12 The new planting after the end of World War I to the north of the castle, that is the southern slope of Coed Ruperra (photo provided by D. Thomas).

Garden Maintenance

Elwyn Edwards's memoir came just a year after the death of Angus McKinnon, head gardener of Ruperra from 1894-1934. Almost the only information we have about the years preceding his arrival comes from an item in *The Western Mail* of July 20th 1932 explaining that 'Mr McKinnon followed the late Mr James Jones who had been head gardener for 40 years and had succeeded his father who had held the post for 45 years.' Evidently head gardeners at Ruperra were in no hurry to leave, unhappily nothing has as yet been uncovered about father and son Jones, which is the more frustrating as their tenure went all the way back to the Picturesque landscape which had so impressed Benjamin Heath Malkin.

One small exception to this absence of information comes from William Beechey, who was obviously conscious of the passing of time. He pens down one sentence about this period in his entry for August 18th 1899: 'in the summer of 1844 the first holly trees were planted in the drive' (Beechey *unpubl.*) Sadly few holly trees now survive although people remember that as late as the 1930s one Ivor Coslett was given the job of trimming them all along the drive from the Home Farm to the Castle (Moseley 2006, 63).

Head Gardeners and Estate Management

Angus McKinnon (Ruperra 1894-1934)

Angus McKinnon was clearly a great man of his time, remembered with great affection and respect. He was brought forcibly to mind not long ago when his great grandson, a cheerful young Australian, arrived on a visit and very keen to explore all the places connected with him.

Angus's grandfather and namesake was a charcoal burner in 1841 in a place isolated except by sea and still known as McKinnon's Bay on Loch Linne in Argyll. Iron was being worked and smelted there for export at the time. With great fortitude the family worked its way up the ladder of land agency and gardening. In 1881 at the age of twenty-two Angus was head foreman at Falkland Palace in Fife. A year later, now married to Agnes Dobbie, he had become a gardener at Frimley Park in Surrey, where the gardens had been laid out by John D.Craig from Perthshire, at one time head gardener to Sir Joseph Paxton. Special mention is made in the Frimley Park Estate sale catalogue in 1918 of 'ornamental woodlands, interspersed by remarkably fine rhododendron walks' (Burgess 2000, 13).

At some time during the 1880s he was gardener at Rookery Hall in Cheshire, the home of Baron Schroeder (*Western Mail* 20th July, 1932). After that, his next move was to become head gardener to W.E.Heard, JP, at Machen House and then, in 1894, he was engaged by Colonel Freddie Morgan, younger brother of Godfrey, Lord Tredegar, to become head gardener at Ruperra. He was then thirty five and would remain at Ruperra for the rest of his life.

In the absence of any significant details about the Ruperra woodlands, one can only wonder if the rhododendrons along the drive at the north side of the Castle grounds were

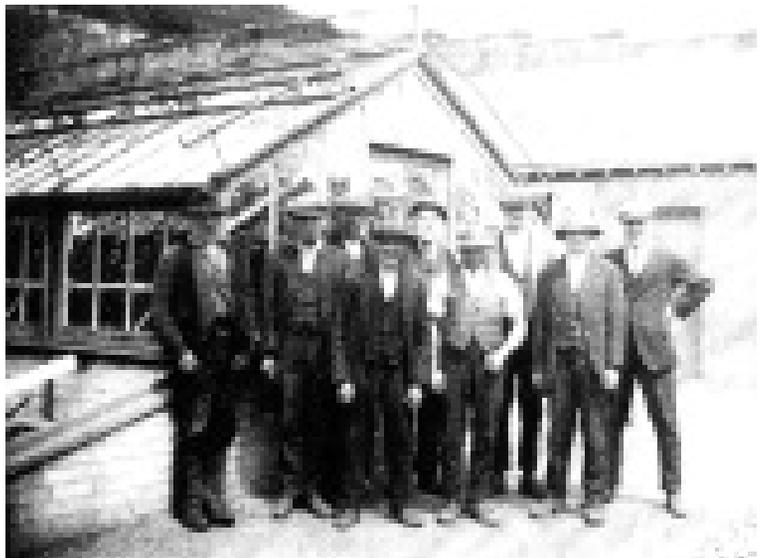


FIG. 13 Angus's garden boys in front of the kitchen greenhouses (photograph by D.Thomas).



FIG. 14 Ruperra Gardens in the 1930s, with the glass house in the background, taken from the castle roof (photograph D. Thomas).

already there when Angus became head gardener in 1894, or whether he was instrumental in planting them. Today of course they are considered by many conservationists to be alien species which damage the native flora, but fortunately Ruperra Conservation Trust, which owns the woodlands Coed Craig Ruperra, has decided that they must be spared as part of the historic landscape of the estate. And when they are in flower in May and June they are very beautiful.

The McKinnon family continued to live at Park Field House opposite Machen House at Lower Machen until 1910, when they moved to the Bothy at the Castle. By now Angus had made his mark in the local community. He was a church warden and the founder of the Machen Flower Show (*Western Mail* 20th July, 1932). Although several gardeners worked under him, little is known of his activities, though pictures exist illustrating the breadth of his gardening achievements (FIGs 13 and 14).

Colonel Freddie, whose home was at Ruperra, died unexpectedly in 1909, before his elder brother, and it was Freddie's son Courtenay who set in train the many refurbishments at Ruperra. Courtenay loved the house and wanted his son Evan to live there. Unfortunately, Evan who had little taste for country life had no

intention of doing so. Vast sums were spent and since Angus McKinnon's career coincided with these refurbishments, his life must have been fulfilling and rewarding.

Garden Improvements in the Twentieth Century

In 1912-13 the great glasshouse was built by Mackenzie and Montcur (NLW Tredegar MS 298, no.10 (per Cadw 2000, 36)). They had built glasshouses at Kew Gardens and the Palm House at Sefton Park in Liverpool, which was restored between 1996 and 2001. Carnation houses flanked either end of the structure at Ruperra (FIG.14). An undated cutting (from the *South Wales Argus* 1920) mentions that Viscount Tredegar loaned Ruperra Castle for the reception after the wedding of Mr Rodney Forestier-Walker and Miss Mollie Vincent Clifford Wing at Michaelstone y Fedw Church . 'The oak panelled banquetting hall was laid out as a buffet'.. [and].. 'masses of lilies, azaleas and hydrangeas lined the silver grey staircase, with pink and red carnations as the decoration.' Supplied, presumably, by Mr McKinnon and his staff.



FIG. 15 Agnes and Angus McKinnon.

The ha ha and boundary wall were built at this time, together with the ornamental gardens on the south side of the castle. But by this time the place was used mainly for hunting and shooting by other members of the family and their friends. The footings of the main kennels to the south west of the castle, today lying in ruins, occupy an area as large as the castle itself. At Preserve Cottage the nest boxes for the pheasants, and retriever kennels can still be seen. When interviewed in the late 1980s, Bert Stradling, an estate worker said:

They used to rear about four thousand birds a year at Ruperra and they had a couple of very big shoots there. You could earn 5/- a day for beating. Ruperra and Cefn Mably used to have a shoot one week after each other. If the birds were heading from the one place to the other they'd let them go, ready for the next week but if they were flying away they'd take a shot at them. The 'toffs' used to have their lunch at the Castle and we'd have ours in the Bothy where the gardeners were. We'd have a good feed; Mr McKinnon the Head Gardener would put a shovelful of onions in the ashes under the grate.

McKinnon was a good old stick. If I'd go in the garden, he'd come along and have a chat and he'd raise up the strawberry nets and say 'Go in under there and help yourself.' A good old stick, old Mac (Moseley 2006, 57).

Perhaps it was the death of his own two daughters from tuberculosis in 1916, aged 26 and 21, that prompted Angus's kindness to children. He was evidently much beloved by them. One lonely little girl, granddaughter of one of the gardeners, recalled:

Sometimes I'd go up through the woods and then down towards the castle to see if Granpa was ready to come from there and if he wasn't, sometimes Mr McKinnon would see me and if it was summer time he'd say 'go and pick the strawberries or a few apples and he'd push me under the net for strawberries. And I'd stay in the garden then until my Granpa was ready. When

he'd come out and find me there, he used to get annoyed and say that I mustn't come during his working hours. 'Come and meet me and sit on the top' he'd say. There used to be trees up there all fallen down and you could sit on them and have a squirrel perhaps by the side of you (Moseley 2006, 82).

Another young girl, Mary Thomas, cleaning her aunt's little cottage under Ruperra on a Saturday morning, remembered that:

Mr McKinnon used to come across (along the Ruperra drive) and bring the morning sticks for the week and veg more than likely and Auntie would give him this hot beer. Anyway, whatever Mr McKinnon had in the garden he used to give me some of it to bring home. In the Spring he used to give my father seed potatoes and things like that. He always had yellow and red tomatoes in the greenhouses and the yellow were gorgeous. There were peaches, dates and figs growing outside against the wall and an orchard between the castle and West Lodge. After Mam died he'd always give me flowers to take to the churchyard. He was a nice person (Moseley 2006, 71-72).

At this time Angus's well-tended gardens would have been at their most perfect. In 1932 he and Agnes celebrated their Golden Wedding at Tredegar House. Newspaper reports were lavish in praise of Angus and it is good that before he died he was aware of the great respect in which he was held; *Western Mail* 21st July,

1932). Agnes McKinnon died in 1934, the year that Angus retired, and the way that things had changed at Ruperra is explained by Mary Thomas, who had grown up to cook and clean for the garden boys:

'And Evan Morgan never said he was sorry when Mrs McKinnon died in 1934. He was awfully upset about that because if it had been Evan Morgan's father, Courtenay, it would have been different. Courtenay Morgan would go in and have a cup of tea with them at the Bothy. And he'd walk around the gardens with Mr McKinnon and both of them would sit on the front steps to talk.'



FIG. 16 The Castle in 1948; a nissen hut, the roofless castle and the gardens untended (aerial photo given by M. Thomas).

Angus McKinnon died in 1935 (FIG. 15). In that year the gamekeeper, Bill Blackburn, was obliged to exchange his role of tending the pheasants for that of estate caretaker, continuing throughout the Second World War. The estate was proving hard to sell and perhaps Angus was spared that at least. He was buried with his wife and daughters in the churchyard of St Michael and All Angels in Lower Machen. The inscription on the gravestone reads simply: *Angus McKinnon of Ruperra Castle Gardens*.

Estate fragmentation and the later landscape

An account of the Morgan family's fortunes through national changes in agricultural policy and the general decline of the estate until the end of the Second World War has been outlined elsewhere (Moseley 2006; 2009). The demise of the estate came suddenly and catastrophically, following abandonment of the burnt-out castle in 1948. The sorrow of the British soldiers who escaped with their lives the night that an electrical fault caused their castle home to burn down in December 1941, illustrates their appreciation of its former beauty (FIG.16; Moseley 2001, 92-102). By the



FIG.17 Ruperra Castle viewed from Coed Craig Ruperra (photograph by Allan Nutt, 2002).

1980s, with the castle a ruined shell and the gardens wild and overgrown, the once well-managed woodlands to the north with their Iron Age hilltop mound and summer houses, became submerged by the 1980s in a suffocating and uninteresting conifer plantation. The inability of Evan Morgan and his cousin John, the last Baron Tredegar, to take steps to rebuild the castle – the insurance was valued at £45,000 - may have contributed to the subsequent lack of interest in Ruperra (GRO TE MSS).

As it currently stands, the estate has been gradually fragmented by sales to a succession of different owners. The castle and seventeen acres around it were sold to a developer in 1998 by the farmer owner of the 350-acre dairy farm. The new owner apparently acts for a ‘consortium of international business men,’ which belongs to a company registered overseas.

The growth of conservation and site designation

Encouragingly, the world of conservation and learning gradually recognised Ruperra's historical and architectural significance over the last thirty years. The castle was recommended for designation by RCAHMW in 1981 (p.xxiv) and more recently its estate nucleus was included in the Register of Gardens and Parklands of Special Historical Interest in Wales (Cadw/ICOMOS 2000). Both before and during the ongoing campaign to save the site from further dereliction and inappropriate development, a number of reputable scholarly authorities have commented upon its architectural quality (Airs 2003; A.M.S. 2006; Georgian Group 2002; Lloyd 1986, 92; Newman 1995, 545-6; SPAB 2002; Worsley 1986), argued and documented its historical significance (Girouard 2008; Knight 2005, 93-5) and have drawn attention to its historic gardens (Whittle 1999). Virtually all have praised its considerable importance while lamenting its deterioration and decrepitude.

Eventually a Trust – the first - was set up to ‘save’ Ruperra in 1995. It was titled the *Ruperra Castle Conservation Trust*. ‘Castle’ was dropped in 2000 at the suggestion of the Charity Commission. This enabled

the purchase of Coed Craig Ruperra and took into account that the castle became privately owned in 1998. There were many protests when proposals were submitted for a housing development in the castle grounds in 2002 which would have destroyed the historic setting of the building it purported to save (Moseley 2003a and b). Five years later, still with lamentably few satisfactory reports submitted, the application was repeated, but this time requesting ‘an increase in the amount of new build from 15 to 18 because one of the outbuildings originally intended for conversion was needed to house the protected species of bats.’

Coed Craig Ruperra had become Forestry Commission property in the 1960s, then was sold to an insurance company which clear-felled many of its conifers during the 1990s (Moseley 2000). While development plans for the immediate castle site were fermenting between 2000 and 2003, in 2000 the Trust made a successful bid for funding from both the Heritage Lottery Fund and Cydcoed to buy the woodland for £35,000. The 1764 estate map was then used to authenticate its original extent and form. The spirit of this bid supported the 2004 recommendations of the European Landscape Convention (ELC 2006), namely that landscape is a shared inheritance linking culture with nature and past with present. Above all, it matters that people should have access to this cultural and natural landscape (ELC 2000 ratified 2004 WAG Reports). Although the Trust owns only Coed Craig Ruperra, funding has enabled meaningful onsite visitor presentation of the entire historic landscape, of which the castle forms an integral component (FIG. 17).

In December 2007, Caerphilly County Borough Planning Committee Councillors showed appreciation of their responsibility for a truly remarkable piece of Welsh Heritage and rejected the application for a housing scheme which would have destroyed the castle’s historic setting. In consequence of this, six trustees from the *Ruperra Conservation Trust* established a new charity in 2008: *The Ruperra Castle Preservation Trust*. This group aims to address the specific planning questions likely to need confronting in the forthcoming Public Inquiry in April 2009. All six members belong to both trusts.

When the *Ruperra Conservation Trust* originally began campaigning to prevent desecration of the castle’s historic setting in 1998, some authorities on historic architecture and landscape lent their very powerful support to argue the case for the castle’s future. Ten years later (most of which was spent waiting for the current owner to finalise his planning application), some of them will be giving their services *pro bono* as expert witnesses at the Public Inquiry planned for April 2009. Having been granted Rule 6(6) status, enabling it to present its own case at the Public Inquiry. Consequently, *Ruperra Castle Preservation Trust* must now find the funds to pay its barrister.

Whatever the outcome of the Inquiry, it has to be remembered that Planning Inspectors usually only make recommendations: the outcome then lies with the Welsh Assembly Government, where the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing, will have the last word, and that decision may take several months.

Conclusion

Today the Castle and grounds are very different from those in existence at the turn of the twentieth century. Beneath the fallen south east tower can be seen the remains of rubble that the owner recently cleared away, possibly taking archaeological evidence with it; the roof of the stable block accidentally burned in 1998 shortly after the present owner took possession; is still open to the elements, vegetation colonises the south front and porch of the castle, and the bare drive into the north entrance of the castle lost early twentieth-century exotic trees to the axe in 2003 (Moseley 2005; Moseley and Wilding 2005).

This contrasts starkly with the images and verbal accounts of contented life supporting sustainable garden and landscape management at Ruperra in the first part of the twentieth century. These recent historic facts are now in a public domain appreciated alike by senior scholars, councillors, politicians, public servants and the general public. Let us hope that these disparate sectors of society will now speak corporately in the pursuit of this important common goal - the preservation of a heritage asset highly valued by the nation.

Acknowledgments

I offer sincere thanks to all who have helped produce this paper. Although an exhaustive list is not possible here, special mention should be made of local residents who have loaned or given photos, newscuttings or other documents. All copyright holders including the RCAHMW have generously waived fees. The *Gerddi* editorial has provided much guidance and many background bibliographical references.

Publication aside, the Trust's work has been supported with advice, expertise, funding and research by many individuals and organisations. Their number includes the Rudry Local History Group which helped found the first Ruperra Conservation Trust; professional consultants and writers (often without asking payment), AMs and MPs, particularly those of Caerphilly. Resourcing has been forthcoming from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Cadw, the Manifold Trust, Prince Charles Foundation and the Forestry Commission.

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The Early Ruperra Landscape: A Footnote

A very full account of the history and architecture of Ruperra Castle was provided from detailed investigation by the RCAHMW in 1981 (262-8). The RCAHMW also later produced the most comprehensive account of the hillfort and ‘motte’ in Coed Craig Ruperra in 1991 (59-61). The garden and parkland is described comprehensively in the Register (Cadw-ICOMOS 2000, 30-37). Most of what is currently known of the castle and its landscape is owed to these investigations. Perhaps one of the best stimuli to research its landscape potential came in 1986 from Giles Worsley when he began to unravel some of the wider problems of earlier formal landscapes focusing on Ruperra. The main text for such an exercise was evidence from both the original estate map of 1764 (here FIG. 7), and from the later annotated copy used by Worsley (1986, Fig.6, p.1279). The suggestions that follow are largely documented from these four sources, together with the results of the later summerhouse excavations (Clarke 2002).

The precise design of the original castle structure and the identity of its architect have long been the subject of speculation. Its design is so remarkable that the Elizabethan architect Robert Smythson (1535 – 1614) was at one time suggested (Girouard 1966; RCAHMW 1981, 263). It was in fact Girouard (1966, 93, 172 and Pl.133) who introduced the notion of a ‘pageant castle’ (*cf.* the eighteenth-century drawing in RCAHMW 1981, 264). But as we now know the castle was probably not built until a decade after Smythson’s death (RCAHMW 1981, 262-3; *contra* Friend 1985,1), he now seems an unlikely candidate. Much is known of Smythson’s fashionable settings, however, so we can conjecture what his successors’ clientele would have required. Therefore, even if not one of Smythson’s creations, a house of Ruperra’s architectural quality would have been surrounded by a garden reflecting contemporary high taste in formal landscape planning.

The question is, how would such a landscape have looked? Some conceptual adjustment is probably necessary when considering Thomas Dineley’s 1684 sketch of an approach through successive courtyards over half a century after the castle was erected (FIG. 3). Whereas courtyards and their gatehouses were certainly in vogue before the Civil War, little is known about the degree to which they were modified, or of how formal garden design was affected generally, by the sort of threats to property posed by the Civil War (1642-51). Some formal courtyards were almost certainly employed for drilling soldiers (for e.g. Cholmley House, Whitby), and it must be remembered that in 1684, Beaufort was at Ruperra not to tour its gardens, but to inspect the county militia.

Worsley first drew attention to the landscape potential of the surviving features above the castle also in 1986. He saw the 1764 depiction of an approach to the motte and its summer house on Coed Craig Ruperra as decorative. Furthermore, he noted how in 1764 the approach passing through the wood nearest the house was divided by the row of five ‘lights’ above the gardens. He saw these features as a potentially important component of the original, if not developing, formal landscape, and explained how it would have been possible to look hillwards up them at the plantings above, and down them upon the spectacular garden and pageant castle below. It might be added that these ‘lights’ may well at one time have separated plantings of more unusual or decorative trees, or even of exotic bushes in the way advocated by Sir Francis Bacon. By the time the map was produced in 1764, long after formal gardens had ceased to be made, these ‘lights’ could have become part of an attempt to soften the edge of what by then may have been a more Brownian-type rolling landscape.

The 1764 map also depicts a path running along the head of these woodland ‘lights’, first to a semi-circular arbour of yew trees (Worsley *idem*), and then to a circular feature labelled ‘Summerhouse’ which then sat atop

the earthwork ‘motte’ which was ascended by a stone-revetted path to the summit around its west face (RCAHMW 1991, 59-61; here FIG.18).

This ‘motte’ in Coed Craig Ruperra certainly carried a ‘square two-storeyed summer house and surrounding wall [that] had been raised by the [Morgans on the motte] before 1764’ (RCAHMW 1991, 61a; it is worth observing that not having seen Tredegar plan 1027, the RCAHMW assumed the annotations on its copy had been of 1764. But as is suggested above it is likely that the annotations post-dated it by up to a century).

The Iron Age hill-fort mentioned above was re-identified as recently as 1980 (Spurgeon and Thomas 1980). Although its surmounting mound has the appearance of a motte and has been classified as a monument likely to have originated in early Norman times, there is no historical certainty that this mound ever was such a defensive feature (RCAHMW 1991, 61b). Its height and position nonetheless suggests the possibility of defensive use (*idem* fig. 24, p.60), and pottery of the eleventh-twelfth centuries was discovered during the recent excavations (Clarke 2002).

In the later age of formal landscaping, however, abandoned mottes made ideal garden viewing platforms, sometimes even being used for banqueting hall or summerhouse sites (Briggs 1991, 148-50; *cf.* Cadw-ICOMOS 2000,34-5, where the mound’s status as a motte is noted and its siting as a summer house is not in doubt, though the recent RCAHMW survey is not mentioned). And where there was nothing to build on, new viewing platforms could always be raised. In his essay ‘Of Gardens’, published in 1625, Sir Francis Bacon ‘commends broad walks, low hedges and pyramids, decorative wooden columns and a thirty-foot-high mount in the middle [of the garden] with a banqueting house on the top of it’. He also advocated planting a ‘natural wilderness;’ without trees but with thickets of sweet briar, honeysuckle and wild vine (Strong, 1979.135).

In suggesting William Winde (c.1645-1722) as a potential candidate for these creations (a suggestion

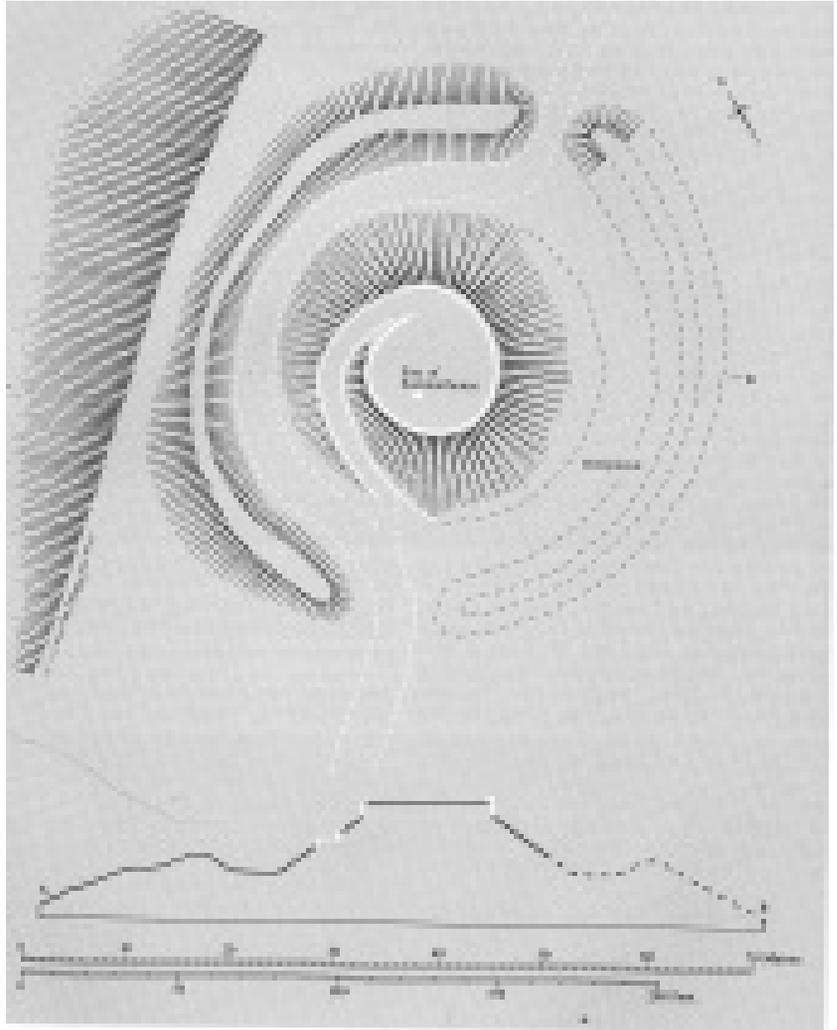


FIG.18 The Viewing Platform at Ruperra from RCAHMW 1991, FIG 24 p.60. (courtesy of RCAHMW; Crown Copyright).

followed in the Cadw-ICOMOS Register (2000 *passim*), Worsley rightly observed how ‘this is clearly a carefully thought out sequence, for early gardens in Wales are little recorded. It would be fascinating to know more about its origin.’ But there remains equally good reason for proposing that this summerhouse may have been part of an original landscaping already present as early as July 1643, when Charles I visited Ruperra.

Besides these more obvious garden features, the early (1764) map also depicts the castle’s two entrance courtyards and gatehouse – the lower courtyard considerably expanded in size from that depicted by Dineley. Given this evolution in design and space, it remains unclear how long the castle was approached through an architecturally attractive gatehouse opposite the castle’s front door. It is clear, however, that this gatehouse probably disappeared in the 1780s (Cadw-ICOMOS 2000, 35; Worsley 1986, 1279).

Archaeological investigations on the motte in 2002 uncovered the remains of this first summerhouse. Its substantial fabric and the presence of 11th-12th century pottery suggested that it might have been built on an earlier medieval structure (Clarke 2002). Excavation also uncovered ‘very substantial footings of a square building which have survived to ground level... six metres square with walls just under a metre thick [which were] presumed to be the foundations of the first summerhouse on the mound. An area of superstructure laid on these foundations was constructed of bricks similar to those used in Ruperra Castle itself... [suggesting]... that the first summerhouse was built in the 17th century...’ (Clarke 2002). It has also been suggested above that this structure may have been the original ‘tower’ built as the predecessor to the present castle, by Cadwgan around 1430.

At this point it becomes important to discuss what may have been meant by a tower, and to consider the relative merits of building one on the motte on the hill-top above, as apposed to on the site of the present castle. Interestingly, when discussing the origins of the motte in 1991, RCAHMW did not consider that it may have been surmounted by a fifteenth-century tower. So the question of where Cadwgan originally lived remains open, and only non-invasive reconnaissance and excavation can now demonstrate conclusively whether or not there is any lineal or spatial relationship between the surviving summerhouse base and the tower known to medieval documentary history.

Most of the questions first raised by Girouard in 1966 and by Worsley in 1986 remain unanswered, though important suggestions were made in the Cadw-ICOMOS register (2000, 30-37). Some of these questions are probably unanswerable. It is clear, however, that from the 1620s Ruperra must have been an extremely important formal garden in the Mannerist style, and that the potential to recover information about it archaeologically needs to be afforded a central role in future plans for the site, including its development or conservation. It is therefore vital to speculate about its formal design, as compared to sites where exemplar formal landscapes have survived. And equally, it is crucial to consider what major landscape theorists like Bacon were advocating in their day. Armed with such information, it should be possible both to propose and execute all future building, garden and landscape investigations, with a high degree of confidence.

C Stephen Briggs

Garden Topiary and Ornamental Shrub-Cutting on Welsh Post Cards

by C.Stephen Briggs and Peter E. Davis

Abstract

The history of topiary and ornamental shrub cutting is reviewed briefly, with particular respect to Wales. Although documentary evidence demonstrates these skills both before and during the period of formal garden making, the art became unfashionable after c. 1700. Few sculpted trees are believed to have survived the first part of the eighteenth century. Graphic evidence from post cards suggests that most surviving Welsh topiary is of nineteenth-century or later date.

Introduction

In the last *Gerddi* we reproduced twenty postcards, mainly of the Edwardian period, to draw attention to their value in researching garden history (Briggs and Davis 2005-6). This article sharpens the focus of interest, concentrating particularly on Welsh postcards with topiary or ornamental cutting. It begins with a brief survey of topiary in Britain; then an understanding of what is known of topiary in Wales is addressed from observations in the literature, mainly the historic gardens registers, before considering the cards themselves in the light of that historical background.

Some of the cards' subject-matter is illustrated. This includes ornamental shrub or tree-clipping at a variety of locations throughout the Principality, ranging from high-status gardens and landscapes, to public parks and vernacular cottages between c. 1900 to c. 1960, though mainly inclining to the earlier date. An attempt is made to offer preliminary analyses of the dates and styles they represent, though usually in the absence of any planting histories.

Topiary: a brief historical background

There is a considerable literature on topiary which cannot be reviewed in any depth here. It ranges from practical instructions for Renaissance gardeners (listed in Couch 2001) to more popular texts about its history and current practice (for e.g. Baker 1969; Glenn 2002; Hadfield 1971).

Topiary has Roman, if not earlier roots (Curtis and Gibson 1904, 7-9), reaching its highest point in the sixteenth century (*idem* p.4). It is therefore hardly surprising that from medieval times ornamental clipping was a familiar art for the aspiring ascendancy of Wales. Topiary is accordingly described by the poets of the Welsh Princes, and we find that even Huw Machno the poet (*fl.* 1585-1637), was cut on horseback in the garden at Gwydir, Caernarfonshire (see below).

As formal gardens burgeoned in Elizabethan times, topiary became a commonplace for those of any social standing. And as fashions of parterre evolved, initially in the palatial gardens of dynastic families connected with Elizabeth's court, like the Cecils, Hattons and Treshams (Strong 1979), clipped trees became essential decorative components upon and around them. There is no doubt that Elizabethan formal garden-making was well-practised in Wales (Briggs 2005-6; Whittle 1992, 13-24), but while the only written evidence for ornamental clipping is at present princely poetry, there is every reason to believe that ornamental plantings were also an integral component of that contemporary horticultural tradition.

Later to be affected by planting influences from France and Holland, the art of topiary reached a high degree of elaboration under Charles II (1660-1685). It was at its height in Williamite times (1689-1702; Curtis and Gibson 1904, 16-17). In Wales these trends are confirmed by limited evidence from the visual

record, like the three well-known oil paintings of Newton House, Dinefwr, probably executed c. 1660-1720 (cf. Moore 1994, 210-230). These colourfully depict two, if not three generations of formal garden, some of which is punctuated by neat miniature topiary. Other graphic images that included Welsh topiary are known to date from the later seventeenth century. These include Llannerch (Flints; Whittle 1992, 27), Tre-worgan (Mons) and Margam (Glam; Moore and Moore 1975;1980).

Topiary went hand in glove with formal landscape design until around 1700. And although the decline of formality proper would take another half century, it was around then that the clipping as a fashion began to wane. This came about partly owing to what Curtis and Gibson (*loc.cit.* 21-23) describes as a ‘crusade against topiary’, of which the two main proponents were initially the essayist, Joseph Addison (1672 – 1719) and the poet Alexander Pope (1688 – 1744; Curtis and Gibson *idem* 24-30). An excess of topiary apparently led to its downfall. But the true agents of its destruction were Charles Bridgeman (1690 – 1738) and William Kent (1685- 1738) who, it is alleged ‘.. not only cleared away the sculptured trees, but destroyed splendid close hedges as well, throwing open to all eyes and all winds, gardens that had been delightfully enclosed and secluded’. Capability Brown (1716-1783) and other contemporary landscapers continued this carnage of a well-established British garden tradition by helping to remove ornamental plantings with such efficiency that ‘topiary as a part of garden design was [thereafter] practically non-existent for a hundred years’(Curtis and Gibson *idem* 31).

Topiary persisted into the first half of the eighteenth century, nonetheless, to be seen on bird’s eye views like those Thomas Badeslade produced for Chirk and Erddig, and more conventional views like those of the brothers Buck for Picton and Peter Tillemans’s also of Chirk (see below).

That some earlier topiary occasionally escaped this net of destruction is demonstrated by Jonathan Williams’s discovery of a feature so far quite unparalleled from the historical record, in an eighteenth-century tourist’s account of the garden at Penpont (Brecs) in 1775. It describes ‘two foolish Yew Lions, with wooden Heads thrust into the top of them, that stare at you..’(Williams 2009, 15).

The Survival of Topiary in Wales

The following preliminary survey draws mostly from those examples of topiary or clipping that appeared in the Cadw-ICOMOS historic gardens registers (1994-2002), though it includes some sites mentioned elsewhere in the literature. While not claiming to be exhaustive, the examples are believed to be representative mainly of what has survived, though some that have disappeared are also included.

Although it is possible to clip a great variety of trees ornamentally, box is probably the most popular to have been used for clipping into hedges, whereas in the British Isles yew tends to be the tree of preference for individual sculptural work. Unlike some evergreens, it does not normally shed its small, needle-like leaves, and its potential to dense growth ideally suits the sculpting medium. Unsurprisingly, therefore, most topiary mentioned in the Historic Gardens Registers for Wales is of yew. Yews hold an iconic place in the British landscape because associated with the Druids by Classical writers. Believed to be among the longest surviving of its trees, their age is often exaggerated (Hyde 1977, 38) as was demonstrated when the ‘yew tunnel’ at Aberglasney was examined in the late 1990s. At one time claimed to be a thousand years old, the ‘tunnel’s’ origins were shown by dendrochronology more likely to be around 1800 (Briggs 1999).

Once we begin examining the evidence, it becomes clear that in common with what is believed of Britain generally, most extant Welsh clipping was begun in the nineteenth century or later. Although generally-speaking little topiary is evident as early as 1870 around the major country houses of southwest Wales (Allen 1871), exceptions are known. There were small topiary trees on the rear lawn of Glanbrân (Carms) visible on a photo by Isaac Haley c. 1870 NMR; (Briggs 1997,101)).

At Bryngwyn (Mons), the design of the formal garden with its topiary, is said to have been by W.A.



1. Erbistock Hall, Denbighshire



2. Bodrhyddan, Flintshire

Nesfield *c.* 1875, and it is felt to lean towards the later Victorian fashion for ‘old fashioned’ gardens (Cadw-ICOMOS 1995, 31). At Wern (Caerns), topiary is associated with a garden designed by Thomas Mawson just after the turn of the twentieth century (Cadw-ICOMOS 1998, 311-13). Mawson’s work for Cory at Duffryn even included a ‘Topiary Garden’ characterised by clipped box edgings (Thomas 2007a, 74, 79 [illus]; Torode 1993; 2001). At Mathern Palace (Mons), the association is with an Arts and Crafts garden of Avray Tipping, created 1894-1900 (Cadw-ICOMOS 1995, 95). A topiaried hedge of unstated age has gone from Pwll y Wrach (Glam) in recent years (Cadw-ICOMOS 2000, 276). At Miskin (Glam), the surviving topiaried yews may be of undated late-nineteenth-century Edwardian plantings (Thomas 2007b, 174, and photo p.178). Other good topiary work spanning the end of the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries was to be found in a garden designed by Gertrude Jekyll, at The Court, St Fagans (Moore 2001a; *cf.* Tooley 2001) and around ten years later, in one at Raithwaite, Penarth (Glam) also built by Thomas Mawson (Moore 2001b).

Accomplished clipped-work on yew begun in the late nineteenth century continued at St Fagans (Castle) until the post-War years (Evans 2003; Thomas 2007c, photos 208-9) and is still maintained (Thomas *idem* 211). Topiaried yews at Lamphey Court (Pembs) were probably in place by 1900, though it is not known who designed the garden of which they form a part (Cadw-ICOMOS 2002, 238-9).

The modest topiary surviving at Derwydd (Carms) seems likely to date from the last two decades of the nineteenth century (Cadw-ICOMOS 2002, 10) and topiary upkeep at Edwinsford in the nineteenth century may have belonged to that phase of formality the Register (Cadw-ICOMOS 2002, 21) attributes to the Gardenesque, rather than to the High Victorian period.

Although zig-zag clipped yew hedges have disappeared from the south-east lawn at The Hendre (Mons), some balls of clipped golden yew still survive on it. At the time the Register was compiled there were still four overgrown topiary peacocks on the south lawn (Cadw-ICOMOS 1994, 46). Photographs of Bodfach (Mons) dating from the late nineteenth century show a formal garden with clipped topiary pyramids on the north front of the forecourt (now lost) with standard ‘lollipop box’ and spirals on the raised terrace running along the east front of the house where mature topiary balls, spirals and standard ‘lollipops’ are still planted (Cadw-ICOMOS 1999,8).

In 1967 there was a significant example on topiary yew in the front garden of Yew Tree Cottage, Llanddewi Skirrid (Mons; SO 3354816378) as shown on a photograph by Clayton for Batsford (BB67/6541 in NMR Wales). This brings to mind the examples that were at one time at Yew Tree Cottage, Pontypool, and at Glyn Aur, Abergwili (see below, nos 16 and 17).

Yew topiary continues to be created as an important component of gardens in Wales, as witness the trees sculpted by Simon Dorrell at the Neuadd, near Rhayader during the 1980s (Dorrell and Wheeler 1989), and the recent elephant hedge sculpted by Gavin Hogg at Penpont, Brecknocks (Jonathan Williams *pers comm*).

The Postcards

The following brief inventory of postcards is arranged arbitrarily according to the potential age of the features described, from the potentially earliest to the most recent.

1. *Erbistock Hall, Denbighshire*: PRN 266481, OS SJ 351425. Titled *Erbistock Hall*. Postmarked *Ellesmere Ju 24 09*. Black and white.

This card shows two large, rotund topiaried yews (perhaps 12 ft [*c.* 4 m] high and 8 ft [2.5 m] in diameter) crowned by opposed crouching birds, the right atop a mushroom-shaped feature, the other sitting directly onto the clipped cylinder.



Chirk Castle from S.

3. Chirk Castle, Flintshire 1897



4. Chirk Castle, N.W., Flintshire

According to the Register, spectacular yew hedging and topiary survive there at the present day. 'This appears to be ancient, and certainly dates to well before 1818, when it is shown as mature in a drawing by Frances Elizabeth Wynne. The formal structure of the garden [and] some or all [of the trees] may date to the creation of the garden when the house was built in 1720. The 1818 drawing also includes topiary hedging that has now gone. The hedges divide the garden into formal areas, and the topiary, some of which is clipped into giant 'mushrooms' helps to define the axes' (Cadw-ICOMOS 1995, 67). The Register entry makes clear that virtually nothing is known of the history of the site, so it is unclear whether or not the ornamental features shown on this card are of eighteenth-century origin, as the Register suggests some surviving trees may be.

2. *Bodrhyddan, Flintshire*: PRN 266211, OS SJ 0460 7877. [This is a photograph, not a post card. It was probably taken c.1930, to judge from the ladies' dresses and hats.]

Here the image shows a series of tall yew cones joined together by round-headed arches trained over an arterial garden path. Bodrhyddan Hall dates from late medieval times and these yews are located to its south in a formal garden area, the origins of which may date to the seventeenth century. This 'flanking yew topiary' was planted in the 1830s and the trees were recently described as 'large tapering bushes, some joined by arches overhead' (Cadw-ICOMOS 1995, 21). As seen in the photo, the arches are comparable to those present at Levens Hall c.1904 (Curtis and Gibson 1904, *frontispiece*) and similar arches formerly at Talygarn (Glam), flanked either end of a 'yew walk' early in the twentieth century (Kingham 2007, photo p. 231).

Chirk Castle, Flintshire: PRN 86629; OS SJ 268 380.

Although topiary graced the northern flank of Chirk c. 1730 as attested by Peter Tillemans' landscape (Musgrave 1954,4), this was long since swept away and we are here dealing with gardens 'laid out over the earlier formal terraces to the east side of the castle, after 1872. Planted by Richard Myddelton Biddulph ... the yew hedge backing the northern end of the terrace at the east end of the garden probably also dates from this period'. Yew hedges and topiary bordering the terraces and lining their gravel paths 'have reached a large size' and now form a major feature. The 'individual bushes are generally clipped as tall cones, the hedges sculpted as battlements, punctuated by higher cones. At the south end is a yew arbour known as the 'Crown on a Cushion' (Cadw-ICOMOS 1995,41).

3. A notable feature is the presence of a small turret immediately behind the south east drum tower. Along with other skyline elements to the castle roof, this has now gone, probably having disappeared during restoration and alterations of 1911-13 for the eighth Lord Howard de Walden (Hubbard 1986, 122-3). This shows quite economical use of the planting medium, with no more than a dozen examples of topiary on the terrace. Some cones appear to be angular rather than round, though such fine definition may be an optical illusion. Close inspection gives an impression that there may have been at least one clipped bird near the centre of the terrace. Is this the Edwardian formal garden as made by R.M.Biddulph in 1872?

4. Titled 'Chirk Castle, N.W.' The next card is sepia and unused with no indication of photographer or printer and shows the same view of the south east terrace after a significant lapse of time. Here are topiaried cones that may be the predecessors to, or even those described in the Register. This image does not differ markedly from one (not included here) in black and white postmarked Wrexham 1939, where the card gives a greater impression of contrasting shades in the climbers covering the castle wall. Precisely similar topiaried cones were still in evidence in 1954 (Musgrave 1954, pl. 24), when they could also be seen in plan alongside the low-cut box hedges on an Airviews aerial photograph (*idem*. back cover).



5. Chirk, lower formal garden



6. Erddig, Denbighshire

5. The next card of Chirk is also sepia and untitled. It was published by Valentine's, is coded W 1128, was registered in 1937, and depicts a series of topiaried cones interspersed with small sphere-topped puddings shapes. They were planted alongside the detached garden area to the east of the castle, well beyond the formal gardens containing those ornamentals already noted. They cannot be seen on contemporary aerial photos (*Coflein*: accessed 1 iii 09) so were probably lost later, in the twentieth century.

6. *Erddig, Denbighshire*: PRN 86570, OS SJ 327482. Titled 'Erthig Hall Wrexham', this is unused, in sepia, and is in the Excel Series.

Erddig has enjoyed a long and horticulturally distinguished history (Cadw-ICOMOS 1995, 278-82). During the early eighteenth century its landscape was the subject of a bird's-eye view by Thomas Badeslade (*fl.* 1710-30), but little, if anything, survives of it. The plantings it depicts demonstrate great traditional arboricultural skill. On this card, the house façade faces the centre of the eighteenth-century lawn, illustrating modern clipped standards of a type and style that is still commonplace, particularly at visitable country houses.

7. *Gwydir, Caerns*: PRN 86386; OS SH 7960 6104. The first of two cards here, in colour, is titled: 'Gwydyr Castle, Llanrwst. The Dutch Garden'. In the Grosvenor Series, 109, it was apparently marketed by Ashton's Southport.

Posted on 2nd October 1918 this depicts the celebrated 'Dutch garden'. A well-known view, it looks at right angles towards the east façade of the house over the lawn which is still bordered with topiaried yews and a central fountain (*cf.* Briggs and Davis 2005-6, no.18). As noted above, a sixteenth-century to early seventeenth-century bardic praise poem mentions that one of the poets – Huw Machno – was himself cut in topiary here (Briggs and Lloyd 2006, 21; Roberts 1986, 23-4). That this is traditionally known as the 'Dutch Garden', might suggest it was made in the last decade of the seventeenth century or the first of the eighteenth, but it is clear that this is a nineteenth-century creation and these yews are mainly of contemporary growth (Cadw-ICOMOS 1998, 104; Welford 1998), as is attested by a Bedford *carte de visite* of the 1860s showing trees then of very low stature.

8. The second card of Gwydir presents a more unusual image. Published by the 'L.P. and P.A.P. Llandrindod Wells, No.282', it is in colour and postmarked –12 06. This depicts some remarkable plantings behind the house at the turn of the twentieth century. The scene is unusual because it combines a record of the fussy, tiny box hedging of a High Victorian or Edwardian knot garden with images of two apparently more ancient clipped yews. One is of the massive mushroom variety, standing perhaps 8-10 m high (*c.* 25-30 feet), the other a more modest 2.5-3.0 m (*c.* 7-10 feet).

9. *Horsley Hall, Flintshire*: (PRN 266396, OS SJ 3656 5502). It is titled 'Horsley Hall from the Dutch Garden. Nr. Gresford' and was published by Lilywhite Ltd, Triangle, Halifax, Copyright GSF 8. This card is sepia, unused, and of *c.* 1920.

The site was sold for demolition in 1934 and Horsley Hall is now gone, largely demolished in 1963. The outlines of an accomplished Edwardian garden laid out by G.H. Kitchen (1907-12) can still be traced. When visited for the Register during the mid 'nineties, yew hedges were still discernible (Cadw-ICOMOS 1995, 136). This card shows how Kitchen's vision included both clipped hedges and modest topiary cones set on an extensive paved terrace punctuated by small plant beds. It also suggests a name for the style of garden its owner aspired to, a name that otherwise appears not to have survived – Dutch Garden.



7. Gwydir, Caernarfonshire, 'The Dutch Garden'



8. Gwydir, knot garden



DEYBOUT
1881 B.

HORSLEY HALL FROM THE DUTCH GARDEN. MR. DRELFORD.

W. & A. G. BARNES, 11, MARK LANE, LONDON, E.C.

9. Horsley Hall, Flintshire



Kinmel, near Aberystwyth

W. & A. G. BARNES, 11, MARK LANE, LONDON, E.C.

10. Kinmel Park, Denbighshire



11. Plas Newydd, Llangollen, Denbighshire, c.1900



12. Plas Newydd, Llangollen c.1930-1960

10. *Kinmel Park, Denbighshire*: PRN 86617, OS SH 982748. Titled 'Kinmel Park, near Abergele'. Published by: Egerton Leigh & Co Abergele and Pensarn, 57083. Valentine's Series. Postmarked *Abergele Ap 30 07*.

The image is of a Victorian parterre punctuated by both wide and narrow topiary cones set amongst very low clipped pennisular box hedges. According to the Register this parterre 'is of about ..1875 [when] the present house was completed. The designer of this formal garden, known as the Venetian garden, is said to [have been] W.A. Nesfield, the father of W.E. Nesfield, the architect of the house. It is similar in spirit to the gardens at Witley Court designed by W.A. Nesfield, representing the simpler layouts of his later designs as compared with the highly complex and architectural Italianate gardens of his earlier years (Cadw ICOMOS 1995, 144).

11-14. *Plas Newydd, Llangollen, Denbighshire*: PRN 266455, OS SJ 21814171

The publishers of early postcards mostly regarded themselves as providers of memorabilia for a public curious about visitable venues, not as records of changing landscape. But some sites have a legacy of successive snapshots that may cover up to a century of evolving garden fashion. Such images can be compared and contrasted, sometimes assisting recognition of significant points in a garden's development. Difficulties can arise where original photographs were published several times over a long period, their subjects having been doctored to accommodate change, as was done on some early cards by James Valentine, the Dundee publisher (see St Andrew's University Valentine's website). Included here are four images of Plas Newydd, Llangollen. Now a public park, it is perhaps best-known as the residence of the celebrated Ladies of Llangollen, though that was well before the plantings represented by any of these images. Taken between c. 1900 and 1960, they offer a microcosm of insight into changing topiary fashions nationally.

11. *Plas Newydd, Llangollen, Denbighshire*: Written from Llandegla on the 8th and posted in Mold on the 9th August, 1904. Titled: 'Plas Newydd The Wrench series, No 4471'. Printed in Saxony. This is principally of interest in showing incipient use of topiary under the influence of the then owner. At this stage he (H.G.Robertson; *vide* Cadw ICOMOS 1995, 208-211) had planted none along the front house wall.

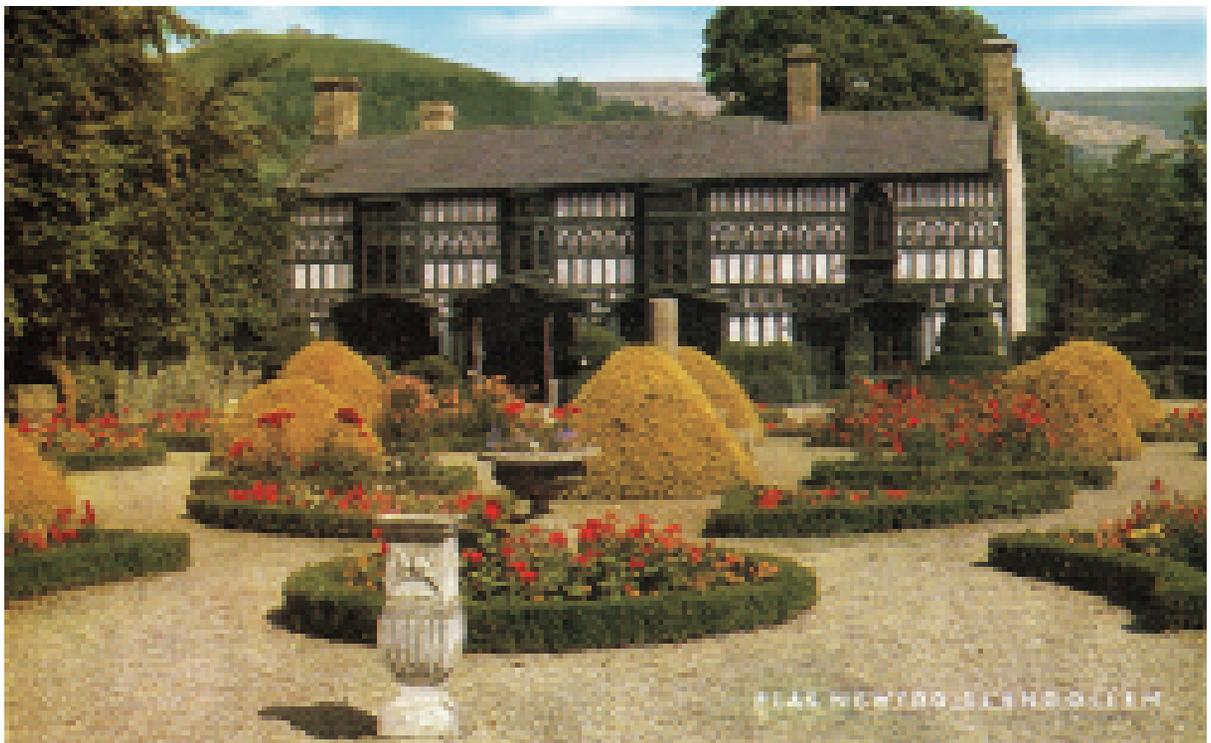
12. This image could have been taken at any time between the 1930s and 1960s. Entitled 'Plas Newydd, Llangollen 16186'. Black and white, its obverse reads 'Copyright J Salmon Limited Sevenoaks: Salmon Series.' This demonstrates the full development of mature topiary along the house façade – cylindrical forms topped by knops and what appears to have been intended as a 'dog kennel'. It is unclear what shrubs were involved, though box seems more likely than yew. There also appear to be more complex sculptings, though their forms are not clear.

13. On its obverse, is explained that the next, titled 'Plas Newydd, Llangollen A 670' [registered in 1934] is an 'Art Colour Postcard Copyright from an original watercolour by Edward H Thompson, Valentine & Sons Ltd, Dundee and London.' Showing the house in a somewhat idealised setting, this image is principally of interest because of the three sculpted topiary forms skirting the lawn at right angles to the house. One is of a bird, one of a 'candy stick' and the third is of a simple cylindrical shape. Other forms – two squared bases set with balls and a simple cone are to be seen skirting the more wooded area to the right hand side.

14. Finally, comes an unused, full colour image titled 'Plas Newydd, Llangollen' described on the obverse as 'A Salmon Cameracolor, Copyright J. Salmon Sevenoaks 1-12-04-11. This could have been taken as late as c. 1960. It shows the garden beds bounded by small tiny hedges of box, together with wide topiaried cones of yellow variegated yew. Examples of the forms from the earlier planting are still present along the house façade and fuller box hedging is visible at the right hand side of the house.



13. Plas Newydd, Llangollen c.1934



14. Plas Newydd, Llangollen c.1960



15. Ruthin Castle, Denbighshire, after 1897



16. Glyn Aur, Abergwili, Carmarthenshire



17. *Yew Tree Cottage, Pontypool*

15. *Ruthin Castle, Denbighshire*: PRN 266366, OS SJ 1220 5800. This is titled ‘Ruthin Castle and Gardens’ and ‘26349’ [registered 1897]. On the reverse is written ‘26349 ‘Valentine’s Valesque Series Copyright Picture (registered)’. In colour, it is postmarked Godalming 30th Nov. 1948. It shows a delightfully colourful display within a mixed Edwardian garden, setting off modest rounded topiary cones all half a century old when the card was posted!

16. *Glyn Aur, Abergwili, Carmarthenshire*: PRN 494, OS SN 436 216, sepia and unused, It is titled ‘On the march to Noah’s Ark’ and on the reverse ‘Copyright Glyn Davies, Glyn Aur, Abergwili’. The delicate animal forms achieved on this card are virtually unsurpassed on any other record, except for those others in the series published by Mr. D. Davies of this address, some in colour. His garden has now gone.

The Davis collection includes a dozen different cards of the Glyn Aur topiary (four in colour and eight in sepia or black and white). These are made up of at least eleven different scenes and include the six first mentioned by Tom Lloyd in 1995 when four were published. Copies of Tom Lloyd’s are lodged with the National Monuments Record in Aberystwyth (C 10334-9). Their titles include ‘The Crucifixion’, ‘The Flight to Egypt’ [two versions are now known], ‘The Garden of Eden’, ‘The Masterpiece – The Last Supper’. Additional titles include ‘King Herod Feast and John’s Head on the plate’ and ‘The Guarding Angel’. The two without titles read simply ‘Part of the Garden’ and ‘Glyn Aur, Abergwili’ (see front cover illustration).

17. *Yew Tree Cottage, Pontypool, Glamorgan*. A colour image, it is titled in red ‘Yew Tree Cottage, Pontypool. T A. Jones Photographer, Pontypool.’ The postmark is of 1905. The present site of this house and garden have not been ascertained. The image is of two elements. There is an arch over the garden gate. But the larger and more elaborate composition appears to spring from three trees belonging to or behind the front hedge of the

house. Central to this is a possibly free-standing 'mushroom'-shaped sculpture. This is flanked to left and right by two narrow tubular twirls, and each is attached to the central mushroom by what may best be described as three links of a chain. The whole edifice is decorated with small, fussy off-shoots.

Glyn Aur apart, this is one of the most ambitious pieces of topiary recorded on a Welsh postcard. But that nothing else is known of it might suggest it had been shortlived.

Discussion

Few topiaried trees more than two hundred years old are known to survive anywhere in Britain. Claims of great age are still sometimes made nevertheless, though difficulties in dating arise because careless authorities are fond of repeating old myths, particularly about the great age that might be achieved by yews. From the foregoing, it is possible to suggest the survival of old plantings only at Erbistock and Bodrhyddan. Beyond that, virtually all the topiary recorded on these postcards is nineteenth century or later.

What is particularly interesting is that high quality of clipping was by no means restricted to country houses. Among the most accomplished figures were those at Glyn Aur and Yew Tree Cottage: cottage gardens kept up by amateur effort. Institutional parks and gardens have perhaps fared less well than the larger houses, however, and, though still remarkably good horticulturally, the high quality of topiary at one time to be seen at Plas Newydd, Llangollen, has not survived into the twenty-first century.

For those who lacked the skills of those amateurs mentioned above, supplies of sophisticated trained yews were to be had from professional dealers, like the Kew Nurseries, owned successively by John Klinkert and G.A.E. Marshall over the decade before World War II. Their catalogues advertised sculpted trees that would have been the envy of any ambitious clipper (Klinkert 1930s; Marshall [?] 1938). Today, box trimmed into cones, pyramids and spirals, is still readily available from garden centres.

In general, an examination of these Welsh postcards raises similar questions about historic topiary fashion to those being asked elsewhere in Britain. A limited amount is known of clipping in the formal garden period. And for a better understanding of garden history during the eighteenth century, a greater familiarity with contemporary travellers' accounts, bird's-eye views, paintings and sketches of individual sites will no doubt sharpen insights into the planted landscape generally. The nineteenth century still offers great potential for researchers into clipped trees and shrubs. Offering encouragement to train more practitioners and ensure the future endurance of topiary as an art is now vital.

Acknowledgements

The writers thank Thomas Lloyd and Jonathan Williams for useful discussion and bibliographical help. Every effort has been made to contact the copyright holders of these images. However, changes in the ownership and publishers' addresses make this a near-impossible task. The authors therefore apologise if any copyright source has been overlooked, and request that concerned parties contact them.

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Websites

Garden websites which may be found useful include:

Coflein (on the RCAHMW website) coflein.www.gov.uk@www.rcahmw is a GIS map-based comprehensive database coverage of all sites and monuments in Wales;

The Association of Gardens Trusts' developing GIS map-based database at: www.parksandgardens.ac.uk already illustrates some postcards from the Davis Collection, including all 9 images of the Glyn Aur topiary which can be accessed at www.parksandgardens.ac.uk/component/option.com_parksandgardens/task.site/id.5725/tab/Item.id-293/. The authors thank Caroline Palmer for this reference.

Appendix I

Gardens with Topiary or shrub clipping on the CADW-ICOMOS Historic Gardens Registers 1994-2002.

Aberglasney (Carms); Alexandra Park, Penarth (Glam); Bodfach (Angl); Bodrhydden (Flints); Bodyscallen (Denbighs); Bryngwyn (Flints), Buckland House (Brecknocks); Cefn Tilla (Mons); Chirk Castle (Flints); Colomendy (Flints); Corsygedol (Mer); Dderw (Brecknocks); Derwydd (Carms); Derwydd (Radnors); Dyffryn (Glam); Edwinsford (Carms); Erbistock (Flints); Erddig (Flints); Glanbrân (Carms); Glan-y-Mawddach (Mer); Glasfryn (Caerns); Glen Usk (Mons); Glynllifon (Caerns); Golden Grove (Flints); Gregynog (Monts); The Hendre (Mons); Kinnel (Flints); Lamphey Court (Pembs); Mathern Palace (Mons); Miskin Manor (Glam); Picton (Pembs); Plas Brondanw (Caerns); Plas Dinam (Monts); Plas Llangattock (Brecknocks); Plas Nantglyn (Caerns.); Powis Castle (Monts); Pwll-y-Wrach (Glam); Ruperra (Glam); Rhual (Flints); St Fagans Castle (Glam); Soughton (Flints); Talygarn (Glam); Tan yr Allt (Caerns); Trewyn (Mons); Vaynol (Caerns); Wern (Caerns) and Wyndcliffe Court (Mons).

Biographies of Contributors

Biographies of C. Stephen Briggs and Peter E. Davis appear in *Gerddi IV*, p.83

Brian Dix

Brian Dix specialises in the archaeology of historic gardens and other designed landscapes. He is a member of the English Heritage Historic Parks and Gardens Panel and the Historic Royal Palaces Gardens Strategy Group, and is Chairman of the International Conservation Board of the Park Mużakowski/Muskauer Park, a World Heritage Site on the border between Poland and Germany. He served on the Hafod Advisory Committee from 1996 until its demise in 2001.

Pat Jones-Jenkins

Born in Rhymney in 1934. Pat Jones-Jenkins (formerly Moseley) obtained a BA Honours degree in History in Queen Mary College, London and Certificate in Education. After teaching history at West Kirby Girls Grammar school, on marriage and a move to Cardiff in 1960, she changed to the education of children with reading problems. Until retirement in 1994 the only involvement with her first love was a secondment to prepare history materials for secondary age children with reading problems. This year she moved to Kenfig and now exhausts herself driving along the M4 to Cardiff, continuing the quest begun in 1996 to rescue Ruperra Castle.

Richard Morris MPhil, FRPS

Richard Morris has had an interest in John Dillwyn Llewelyn (JDL) since marrying into the Dillwyn family. Initially it was JDL's role as pioneer photographer. Later, it encompassed his other achievements, including the development of the Penllergare estate; his observatory and his pioneering interest in orchids. Richard is a director of The Penllergare Trust, set up about ten years ago to conserve and possibly restore the estate. He has written articles and a book on JDL; researched for TV programmes, and gained an MPhil when a member of the Design Department at Brunel University. 2010 is the 200th anniversary of JDL's birth, and celebratory events are planned.

J.P.D. Williams

Jonathan Williams studied history at Trinity College Cambridge (mat. 1978) but switched to a career as a graphic designer. Later on, he took a certificate course in historic building conservation with Cambridge University's Department of Continuing Education, followed by their certificate and diploma courses in garden history, devised by Dr Twigs Way. He has been researching the history of the Penpont estate, its landscape, architecture, economy and people, since 1991. He has also worked on the landscape of Downing Hall, Flintshire, home of the naturalist Thomas Pennant.

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Some useful sources

Council for British Archaeology (CBA) 1991. *Signposts for Archaeological Publication*, 3rd edn, London. This includes the CBA 'list of standard abbreviations' as Appendix A. It can be obtained from: Council for British Archaeology, Bowes Morrell House, 111 Walmgate, York YO1 2UA; telephone 01904 671417.

Modern Humanities Research Association (MHRA) 1996. *MHRA Style Book, Notes for Authors, Editors and Writers of Theses*, 5th edn, London. This is available from W.S.Maney and Son Ltd, Hudson Road, Leeds LS9 7DL.

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