

Gerddi



The Journal of the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust
Cylchgrawn Ymddiriedolaeth Gerddi Hanesyddol Cymru

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Foreword

by Michael Tree, Chairman of The Welsh Historic Gardens Trust

It is a real pleasure to be able to introduce this new edition of *Gcrddi*, the first since I became Chairman of the Trust. It is also something of a landmark in itself with a new editor, Dr Stephen Briggs, whose association with WHGT goes back to its very beginnings. It has a new format and cover design and, for the first time, the introduction of colour, which in a journal dealing with gardens, we have long felt to be essential.

None of this would have been possible without the help and support of our many partners in the never-ending battle to preserve the gardens with which the Principality is as richly endowed as any part of the United Kingdom but which, even now, are not always recognised for the treasures that they are. We are grateful to the Countryside Council for Wales; not just for helping to finance this journal, but for advice and goodwill in all our activities. We also thank the generous owners or guardians of the many properties who have permitted the investigation of their gardens great and small. We particularly thank the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales, the National Library of Wales, Cambria Archaeology and Engineering Archaeological Services Ltd, for help in resourcing this volume. However, it is not only in the matter of the present journal that our partnerships are vital to the work of the Trust. Scholarship, restoration work, and the enthusiasm of our members count for a great deal, but we also need to communicate with the wider world, and for this we rely on a host of other bodies, public and private. Without them, we would be isolated indeed.

The articles within demonstrate very clearly how deeply the subject of gardens and landscapes is embedded in our national history. The articles on Gwernyfed and Penllergare show the engagement of families with their land, and, in the latter case, just how urgently resources are needed for conservation and consolidation. Those on Cilwendeg and Marl Hall offer a gleam of hope through the detail of meticulous research and restoration, while Peter Davis's marvellous collection of postcards is a reminder of past glories and miraculous survivals. I hope readers will enjoy it all as much as I have.

Editorial

Gerddi IV is this editor's first. Its appearance sees a number of changes in presentation as well as of editorial style. These include colour images, a glossy cover, a slightly larger typeface, and minor differences in textual format. Overall, the aim has been to try to help both contributors and readers.

This volume owes a great deal to the forbearance of its contributors during a difficult gestation period when we were all on a steep learning curve. The Editorial Committee would like to express its thanks to all who have personally contributed, as well as to those who have lent institutional support. Such support is not always readily quantifiable. It includes not only grant-in-aid from some quarters, but it means that some authors were able to prepare project work for publication as a part of their professional employment.

The Editor has also been well served in his new role by the support of an experienced Editorial Committee, to whom he offers his grateful thanks. Collectively and individually they have helped in many ways, particularly by proof-reading and thereby saving us from the more obvious howlers nowadays gratuitously provided by the vagaries of the unprovoked *Spellcheck* in Microsoft's *Word* Programme.

The contents of Volume I were conference papers and Volume III was devoted to Edwardian Gardens. The present one has a strongly archaeological flavour and it is hoped that some future issues might also be thematic in content. Contributions permitting, they could be themed to include for example, arboricultural and horticultural practice, studies of garden aesthetics and design, or the problems of conservation, preservation and restoration.

Finally, in welcoming the submission of would-be contributors' material on all topics relating to garden history, we hesitate to mention that one of the main reasons for the non-appearance of scholarly journals, or for their apparent dormancy, can be editors' inability to find suitable copy to fill them. We hope, therefore, that the contents of the present volume will inspire or provoke its readers to help raise the quality of the next one by writing and remitting us the fruits of their own research.

C. Stephen Briggs

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Old Gwernyfed: an Elizabethan Garden in History and Poetry

by C.Stephen Briggs *and* Nesta Lloyd

Abstract

An Elizabethan house and the earthwork remains of its garden in Gwernyfed Park, near Talgarth, (Brecknockshire) Powys (OS SO 174336) are described from ground and aerial survey, maps and written evidence. The earthworks, centred on a quartered parterre, may represent all or part of a garden prepared during the major estate refurbishment described in a Welsh wedding poem of 1605 when groom and householder, Sir Henry (Harry) Williams (1580-1636) married his local bride, Eleanor Whitney. In style the poem falls between the Welsh bardic tradition and the English, Jacobean Estate or Country House genre of poetry. Its text appears to be factually accurate in certain detail and it is an important aid to understanding the creation of the garden and estate refurbishment. Gwernyfed offers the rare survival of a minor gentry Tudor house and earthwork garden. Its history and a brief consideration of contemporary Welsh gardens, suggests that by c.1600, Welsh-speaking areas were enjoying the full penetration of European Renaissance ideas through the involvement of Welshmen in English courtly circles and travel abroad after the Acts of Union (1536-43).

Introduction

A deerpark of medieval origin, Gwernyfed Park lies on rich clay-loam farmland below the scarp of the Brecknockshire Black Mountains on the south side of the wide, Middle Wye Valley, 4 km northeast of Talgarth, 8 km south of Hay and 16 km north northeast of Brecon (FIG.1). Formerly, Gwernyved, Gwernywett, Gwernyfette, or Gwernyfet, Old Gwernyfed is a stone house in late-Elizabethan style located in the park's south-western corner (FIG. 2). It probably occupies an earlier site and was best known to Victorian antiquarian tradition principally because Charles I was entertained there.

The building acquired the prefix 'Old' only after a new house and garden by the younger Nesfield were completed c.1880 about 1.5 km to its north, just off the present main Brecon-Hay road to the west of The Three Cocks. For many years a period hotel and retreat, Old Gwernyfed again became a private residence in 2003.

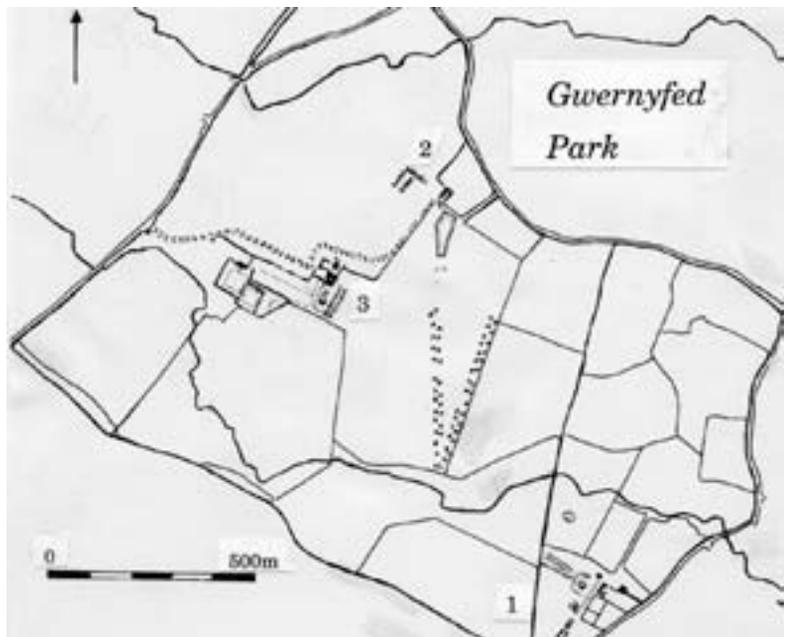


FIG. 1 Gwernyfed Park showing location of (1) Old Gwernyfed; (2) Cae Ronnen Farm, and (3) House by W.E.Nesfield c 1880, now Gwernyfed School (from Briggs 1991a; © C.S.Briggs and Council for British Archaeology).

During the 1950s Old Gwernyfed's architectural importance was recognised when it was designated a Grade One Listed Building, together with gateposts and dovecotes (Jones and Smith 1964 [here FIG.3]; Haslam 1979, 318-19; Hilling 1976,107, fig.70; Cadw listing details). Its spacious eighteenth to nineteenth-century farm buildings were later listed Grade Two for group value.



FIG.2 Aerial Photograph of Old Gwernyfed in 1992 (Crown copyright RCAHMW; neg. no. 925040/45).

Following their recognition in 1988 (Briggs 1991a and b) the extensive garden earthworks to the north and west of the property (FIG.4) were Scheduled as an Ancient Monument (17/3728/BR193 (POW)), and the site designated Grade II* on the Cadw/ICOMOS Register of Historic Parks and Gardens in Wales (Cadw 1998, 182-5: PGW(Po) 5). The Register's separate treatment of this older site from that of the Victorian house and garden (Cadw 1998, 112-16) is perhaps unfortunate, and introduces potential confusion on some aspects of the Park's history, the later development of which will be traced in detail elsewhere (Briggs *in preparation*).

Several lines of research have been pursued since the garden earthworks were first recognised. They include: aerial, ground and geophysical reconnaissance, documentary research, and translation from the local dialect of a Welsh language wedding poem which describes garden-making and house-building in 1605. All are explored here in varying degree to help paint a fuller picture of the estate's history, its garden and parkland landscape.

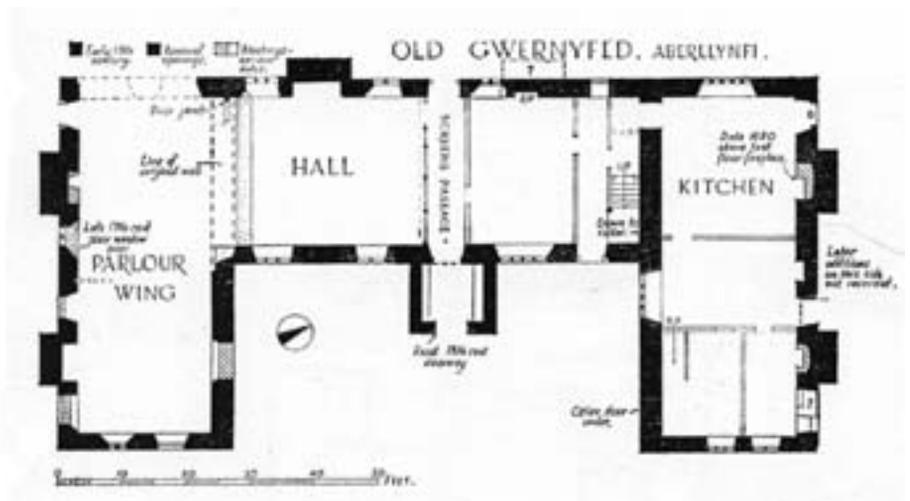


FIG.3 Plan of Old Gwernyfed from Smith and Jones (1964, p.84, FIG.10; Reproduced by permission of the Brecknock Society).

Compiled before

much of this research had been evaluated, the 1998 Cadw-ICOMOS Register currently offers the most detailed accounts of the park and estate. It proposes that some ponds may pre-date 1600 and that some of Old Gwernyfed's earthworks could be as late as the eighteenth century. It is confused about the origins of the avenues and suggests that Theophilus Jones himself visited the Nesfield house; that that house occupied the site of the earlier Lodge, and furthermore gives the impression that Old Gwernyfed was not abandoned until the nineteenth century. These, together with all other traditions and theories relating to the history of the place, clearly demand more detailed examination of what is an unusually complex but potentially important site.

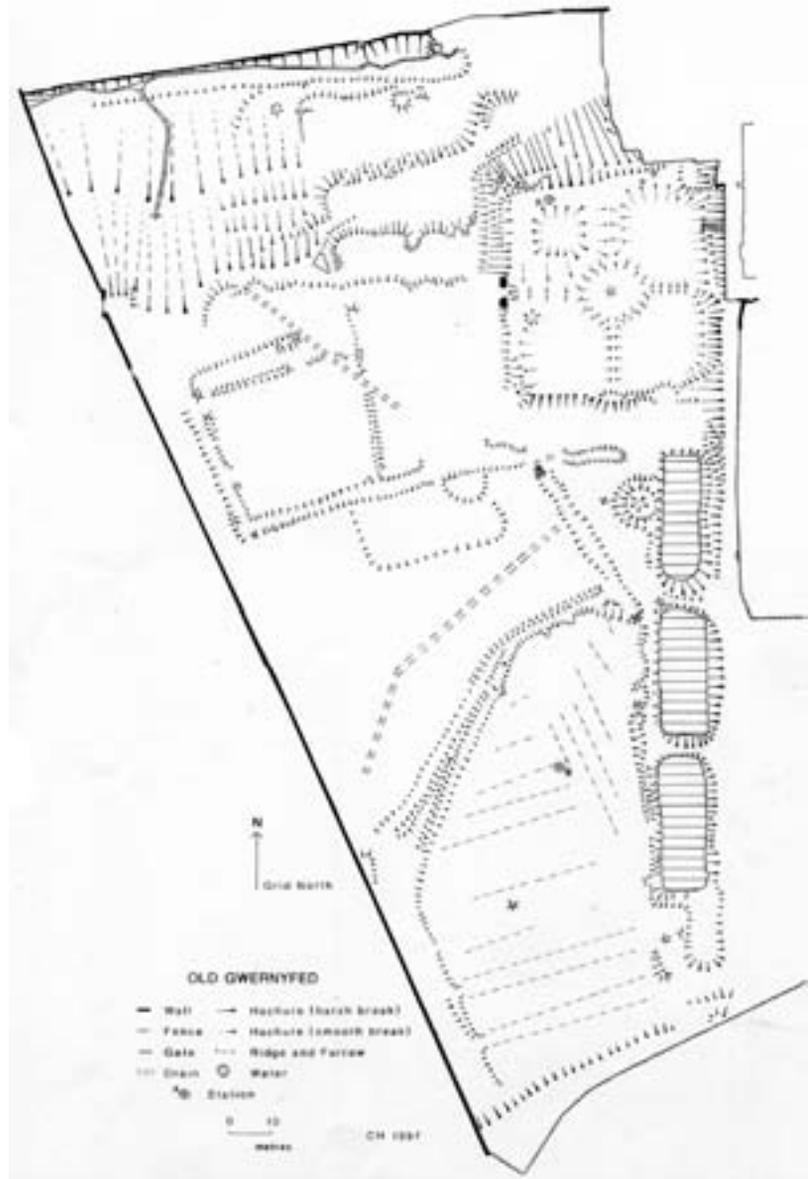


FIG.4 Plan of earthwork garden at Old Gwernyfed as surveyed by Dept of Archaeology, University College, Cardiff, 1997, © Crown Copyright RCAHMW.

A History of the House and Park

Gwernyfed Manor may have been gifted by Bernard Neufmarché to Sir Peter Gunter at the time of the Norman Conquest of Breconshire (Dawson 1918, 301). It was next the seat of Griffith Gunter Fychan at the time of Henry VIII (Dawson *idem*) and was then purchased in 1600 by Sir David Williams. An ancient pedigree of Gwernyfed compiled in the mid-eighteenth century at one time in the hands of the Brecon antiquary Joseph Joseph (Nicholas 1872, 94) may shed further light on this early history.

In the early 1990s a survey of the house by the RCAHMW recognised roof trusses (A.J.Parkinson *unpubl.*) probably all that remains of a sizeable hall of c.1450 which the Gunters could have built. As it stands, however, the place seems to be of a piece. It is an E-shaped, two-storeyed building in Old Red Sandstone rubble with a symmetrical façade, the middle section of five bays dating to c.1600-1620 and of roughly the same dimensions as St Fagans, Glamorgan (FIG.3; Haslam 1979, 318; Jones and Smith 1964, plan fig.10, 84; *cf.* RCAHMW 1981, 244-55, Fig.78). Some fine early seventeenth-century woodwork and wall paintings survive within, and the cross passage is screened by fluted wooden columns and panels with a gallery over (Haslam 1979, 318-19) and an intriguing carved cipher hidden at the top of the screen, uncertainly early seventeenth century in origin (Leitch 1976-7).

Sir David Williams (1536?- 1613) Judge and Landowner

This Sir David Williams, who ‘went to the English Bar’, was born Dafydd Ap Gwilym at Blaen Newydd or Blaen Nedd in Ystradfellte (Blaen Nedd Isaf and Uchaf OS SN 90 15; Glanusk 1909, 81). His considerable achievements are well recorded (*DNWB*; *ODNB*) and he was immortalised by a remarkable monument in Brecon Cathedral (Thomas 1991, fig.97). Noteworthy as the first of his family to adopt an English surname, in 1602 he became one of the twelve Justices of the King’s Bench (Glanusk *loc.cit.*).

By around 1600, and more so by the time he died in 1612, Sir David had accumulated great wealth from his private legal practice, having been awarded extensive grants of land which were to be supplemented by judicious purchases, including the Gwernyfed estate. Locally, he held lands in Ystradfellte and Defynnog. He ‘became a bencher of the Middle Temple in 1590...[then] ...in Easter term 1594, he was made a serjeant-at-law, the patrons at his creation being the earls of Warwick and Worcester and Lord Howard of Effingham. His principal real patron is thought to have been Lord Burghley... He ... [became] ... active as counsel in Westminster Hall, and was soon under consideration for the bench. Burghley considered him for a vacancy in the exchequer in 1598, despite his ‘small living’, and in 1599 Sir Robert Cecil proposed his appointment to the common pleas. The preferments were opposed by Dean Goodman of Westminster, who needed Williams’s continued services as counsel’ (*ODNB*). In spite of, or perhaps even stimulated by Lord Burghley’s pronouncement on Williams’s ‘small living’ in 1585 (Jones 1809, 381, quoting from *Desiderata Curiosa* p.182), Sir David went on to hold numerous manors in Breconshire, Radnorshire, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire and Berkshire (Dodd 1981, 622-3). Burghley’s apparently stark judgement on this rising provincial lawyer should be qualified by an appreciation that his own family, the Cecils, had in relatively recent times acquired great wealth, and was among the most influential in Britain.

Theophilus Jones (1809, 382) suggests that Sir David ‘seldom if ever resided’ at Gwernyfed. It seems likely he preferred to live on the lands in Oxfordshire which his second wife brought on their marriage in 1597 (*ODNB*). And though he would appear to have built a house at Cockthorpe, his main seat was Kingston House, Kingston Bagpuize, near Abingdon which would have enabled easier access than Gwernyfed to his extensive legal practice in London. Kingston was a modest contemporary gentry house, demolished c.1710 after its replacement nearby in 1660 (*ODND*). Sir David Williams never forgot his roots, however. And accordingly his will established numerous local charities remembering the poor, particularly of the Gwernyfed area. He also left twenty shillings per annum to be paid out of the tithes of Gwenddwr towards repairing the

road from Felindre passing Old Gwernyfed to Tŷle Glâs. Because of increased rental incomes, the value of these legacies grew significantly in the nineteenth century (Lewis 1834-1844, *s.v.* Aberllynfi, Glasbury and Velindre; *cf.* Thomas 1991,83-4).

Sir David gifted Gwernyfed to Henry, his eldest son by his first wife, Margery, daughter of John Games, of Aberbrân, Breconshire. Father and son were both knighted by James I in the Coronation honours of July 23rd in 1603, and two years later Sir Henry (Harry), clearly an eligible match, married Eleanor Whitney, daughter of Eustace Whitney of nearby Whitney Court, Herefordshire. As will be seen, their wedding was probably the most important event recorded in any detail which at present can be associated with the early development of this house, its garden and the estate.

Sir Henry (Harry) Williams 1580-1636, MP and Garden Maker

At the time he took possession, Harry was about twenty. (He is henceforth identified as Harry to distinguish him from his son the Baronet Henry, who died in 1652). Harry had been educated at Shrewsbury School, then at St John's College, Oxford, where he matriculated on 16th April 1594, aged 15, before a period at the Middle Temple, though he does not seem to have practised as a lawyer. He did, however, follow in his father's footsteps as the Member of Parliament for Brecon Boroughs in 1601 while still only twenty-one. Following Theophilus Jones (1809, 381-2), some later writers mixed up the life of father and son, and in the absence of access to the scattered records, the first Harry's later activities have long continued to be confused with his son's achievements (Cadw 1998, 183). It was not this Harry, but his son Henry who was created Baronet in 1644 and died in 1652. It does, however, appear, that Harry served as MP for Brecknockshire in 1620-2, 1624-5 and probably 1628-9. He was also elected a Member of the Council of the Marches of Wales on 9th August 1617 (Glanusk 1928, 271; *DNBW*).

Gwernyfed Park is split between the parishes of Aberllynfi and Glasbury. In the seventeenth century the Williamses seem to have patronised Aberllynfi church, the decrepit ruins of which can still be seen on the meandering Wye flood plain north of the park and immediately behind Tŷ Mawr, Aberllynfi (at OS SO 1724 3798). This is where Sir Harry most probably worshipped. He may even have given the decorated octagonal font dated 1635 which at one time stood 'at the adjoining farm house' (Tŷ Mawr: Lewis 1834, *s.v.* Aberllynfi). And here he was certainly buried in 1636, for at one time the church housed an elaborate wall-mounted memorial celebrating his life. Edward Lhuyd himself saw and sketched it at some point, probably in the 1690s (FIG.5). This is one of very few original drawings to survive in Lhuyd's own hand, as distinct from those



FIG.5 Sir Harry Williams's Tomb by Edward Lhuyd., the tomb of Sir Henry Williams, Aberllynfi. (Rawlinson MS c 920. By permission of the Bodleian Library, Oxford).

drawn by an amanuensis or later copied by a scrivener. Its subject demonstrates Lhuyd's adherence to the Elizabethan antiquarian heraldic and genealogical tradition, whilst he was himself establishing a radical new brand of archaeological recording and analysis. This approach, manifest elsewhere in Britain and Ireland (*cf.* Briggs 2006, fig.5), explains how he came to draw a monument probably then only sixty years old. It was well he did, for when Aberllynfi church fell into dilapidation during the eighteenth century, all its memorials appear to have been lost. Some idea of the cultural context of Sir Harry's can be had from the one to his brother Thomas which survives in Winchcombe Church, Gloucestershire (R.Silvester, *pers.comm*). They both died the same year.

Although the Victorian antiquary R.W.Banks felt Lhuyd's drawing not worth reproducing (Banks 1879), in the absence of any known portrait, this record of Harry Williams's memorial now assumes greater significance, as it offers a graphic image of the most likely progenitor of Old Gwernyfed and its ornamental garden.

The Wedding Poem of 1605

As has already been briefly noticed (Briggs 1998, 70-71; 2000, 59-60), an exceptionally important source bearing on the fabric and design of Gwernyfed and its Elizabethan landscape exists in the form of a Welsh wedding poem of 1605. Here the opportunity is taken to present a full translation by Nesta Lloyd and use it as the basis of a discussion about the site's surviving garden features.

This poem was first published by Prof. G.J.Williams (1964; [note 1]), who gave two reasons for publishing it. First, he considered that the unknown poet was probably local to the Brecon/Radnor border and that the poem was a rare example of the language of that area. Secondly, he felt the description of the *plas* worthy of attention because it was so much more detailed than the more formal pictures given in the medieval praise poetry. Here the second point is to the fore, since it is the detailed description of the house of Gwernyfed, and in particular the description of the layout of its gardens that commands attention. Indeed, if they are taken as an accurate portrayal of events of the day, they provide important evidence for the state of the gardens at a specific date - the year 1605, when Sir Harry Williams married Eleanor Whitney. But in view of the growing interest in the genre known as 'the country house poem', or perhaps more correctly now, the 'estate poem' (Fowler 1994, 1; Hibbard 1956), the relation of the poem to that genre is also important (see below, pp. 24-25).

A Welcome to Gwernyfed

1. Listen to the welcome, fine lady, now I shall be so bold,
Wife of a strong, young knight like a splendid Launcelot or Jason;
This is the woman, fairest her form, that God himself has fashioned,
Cheeks of wine no one had [like] her; she excels fair Dido;
Welcome, now, lady, most able in Christendom, to Gwernyfed court.
2. The name of the man who did not seek the [?Rine] of the just king
Is Sir Harry Williams, handsome man, of the same strength as Samson;
The name of the girl on whom his love was bestowed through marriage, true greetings,
Is Eleanor, fairest living, of the lineage of Whitney of high breeding;
Welcome, now, lady, most able in Christendom, to Gwernyfed court.

3. This is a son of the great justice who is now the equal of Solomon,
Highest on King James's Bench, Sir Dafydd Williams the just;
There is no man at his side of greater sense than he,
And everything here unfailing surpasses everyone directly,
Welcome, now, lady, most able in Christendom, to Gwernyfed court.
4. Listen, lady of great fame, you can be content
To see your estate in all places and your houses and white towers;
God gave graces, fair is the house of white-wash and clear glass,
The sun rises on windows without shadows throughout the day;
Welcome, now, lady, most able in Christendom, to Gwernyfed court.
5. Hall, parlour, wine cellar and also an orderly kitchen;
Buttery, pantry behind it, to feed a thousand men;
Ale and beer for all men, wine and clear yellow bragget;
Boiled and roast, I will not attempt to boast it, white [bread] and venison, great is the cost;
Welcome, now, lady, most able in Christendom, to Gwernyfed court.
6. And your tables are full of dishes, very sweet they taste;
And your great venison pasties available warm at every hour,
He has a gilded platter cover, greater than two earls,
Every vessel on the table of the fine man himself are silver dishes;
Welcome, now, lady, most able in Christendom, to Gwernyfed court.
7. And rooms, truly the finest within the land of Albion,
Of carved [?notable] work, God knows that they are magnificent;
And the beds and their appurtenances gold and silver in their hangings,
Excellent cambric, under them lordly princes could sleep.
Welcome, now, lady, most able in Christendom, to Gwernyfed court.
8. A brewery, a bakehouse in addition, where drink is prepared for the servants,
And a place to bake white bread for strong and weak when they may come;
An excellent mill, a sty for the churn and with that, rooms for the poultry
And a rare house for the capons and a hunting-house for the hounds.
Welcome, now, lady, most able in Christendom, to Gwernyfed court.
9. And by the Court there is a garden of handsome plants, pure plants
A mile of tidy, neat meadow, the finest under the crown;
And on these there are flowers, numerous as the dew falling in the morning;
Princes could walk gracefully around the garden along each side.
Welcome, now, lady, most able in Christendom, to Gwernyfed court.

10. And your fine orchards are the place which bears white apples,
 Costards like white sugar, quince and red corslings;
 And every tasty thing that can grow on a live tree
 Fine is the smallest part of the flower, splendid is the root that fails nothing.
 Welcome, now, lady, most able in Christendom, to Gwernyfed court.

11. Six or seven fish ponds without counting construction or/greensward,
 Until they draw into them the pure cold springs from every place;
 Fine fish, these frequently play on each ripple,
 Banks, repaired paving on which the privileged could walk.
 Welcome, now, lady, most able in Christendom, to Gwernyfed court.

12. And your red falcons in straight enclosures and your fine, large hay meadows,
 And your magnificent stables and your stallions grazing oats excessively;
 A country which produces hay freely; fine indeed is the land where it is to be had;
 And splendid barns and ?bins full of wheat to the doors.
 Welcome, now, lady, most able in Christendom, to Gwernyfed court.

13. Nothing is missing except the park, do not worry that we do not see it.
 We shall make it ready, shortly, full of young, brown animals;
 Indeed, there is no man in the county better for a plump young animal,
 The park of the squire, [a] conynger, that is preparation for fine fare.
 Welcome, now, lady, most able in Christendom, to Gwernyfed court.

14. Let us give earnest thanks to God, we are quite content,
 To have an aristocratic, gentle Welshwoman to listen to the complaints of the poor;
 Hear now, dawn's flood, there is a great welcome for you,
 You are the head of Breconshire, long life to you, my knight;
 Welcome, now, lady, most able in Christendom, to Gwernyfed court.

15. A thousand and six hundred exactly without sadness, was the age of Christ,
 And five also, by the grace of God, when the fruitful marriage occurred;
 Pretty lady, give me permission to say two words to you over our drink;
 After receiving without fail, you also must be generous.
 Welcome, now, lady, most able in Christendom, to Gwernyfed court.

16. God give to you the gift and grace and reputation which Tegau Eurfron received,
 And from your soil, the flowers of our language, six or seven sons,
 And each, fair his descent/form, as fortunate as the old man
 Their grandfather, to whom God above gave most luck there ever was.
 Welcome, now, lady, most able in Christendom, to Gwernyfed court.

[Some of these readings are tentative. The complicated rhyme scheme with two and sometimes three internal rhymes in each line means that there are many words that add little to the meaning – they are there simply to carry the rhyme].

What does this poem say about the state of Gwernyfed, and in particular of the gardens, when Eleanor Whitney came to live there in 1605? We learn that the house belonged to the rich heir of an opulent family. It gleamed with whitewash and sparkled with glass. Its interior was fashionably carved, the beds sumptuously furnished with gold and silken drapery laid with fine cambric. The ‘carvings’ noted by the poet in Stanza 7, might refer to the wooden carvings of the surviving passage and its screen (see above, p.10).

Abundant fare was prepared in bespoke rooms to be served on silver and gilt tableware. Bragget (verse 6), the type of beer apparently on offer, is commonly mentioned in contemporary bardic hospitality poems (Haycock 1999, 8-9; Roberts 1989,54).

Outside the house stables, sties, poultry houses, a falconry and kennels are noted and the delights of the garden listed. Nearby was a productive vegetable garden and perhaps the ‘mile of tidy, neat.. meadow full of flowers’ took up some of the area today under pasture between Gwernyfed and Felindre (see below, p.35)? That the garden was so designed that ‘Princes could walk gracefully around’ it might be taken to indicate that it was being laid out to match the most up-do-date in garden fashion. The use of the word *aislys* [aisles] to describe its paths gives it a strongly formal flavour.

There were orchards of sweet apples like costards; also corplings and quince, as well as other gourmet delights from flower, fruit and root. Costards were a form of white apple, a great favourite in the thirteenth century, but now quite extinct (Taylor 1945, 19, and fig.4).

An interesting, if not tantalising detail mentions six or seven fish ponds fed by springs, some apparently unfinished but surrounded by paved banks. As will be argued elsewhere, it is possible that the trapezoidal pool and the avenues leading to Cae Ronnen Farm also belong to this early phase of landscaping (Briggs *in preparation*). In fact, excepting a Victorian reservoir near the house (seen on FIGs 11a and b), it seems reasonable to propose that all the other ponds could date to around or before 1605 (see below p.35). Currie (1990) has discussed the various functions of early garden ponds, and, accordingly, it could be proposed that the considerable sheet of water originally dammed by an embankment adjacent to Felindre Brook first shown on the 1756 map (FIG.8b), may have been a *servatorium*, a pond for managing large-scale fish breeding. The three rectangular ponds forming an alignment to the southwest of the house would probably have been for showing off specimen fish, most notably of table-ready carp. If these are the ponds with ‘banks, repaired paving’ at the time the Gwernyfed poet wrote stanza 11, they could well predate the layout of 1605 (as seems to be suggested in Cadw 1998, 184).

As to the source of the water supply, when in 1993 an excavation was undertaken ahead of intended planning developments on the site, under the provisions of PPG 16, a feature was discovered to the east of the building complex. It ran roughly from south to north. This feature, described by the excavators as a drain measuring about 1 m in section and carefully constructed of large stone slabs (Thomas and Morris 1993) seems more likely to have been a water culvert intended to bring water to the site, probably from Gwernyfed Commons to the south (FIG.6). Its flow on the site was probably controlled by one or more of the reservoirs shown on the 1888 OS (FIG.9c) plan or by a predecessor mechanism (see below, p.37).

Although the estate makeover seems to have been almost ready for its new mistress by this time, the park was not yet quite finished. It still needed stocking with young animals – though whether just rabbits or deer were intended also, is unclear; probably both, as warren building was underway not far off.

How far does the present house reflect this one Sir Harry Williams was re-modelling in 1605? The answer must be that it has changed little since. And in 1979 (p.318) Haslam presciently suggested the place was ‘built, probably ... between 1600 and 1613’. Its walls were originally rendered in an encrustation of lime mortar to protect the porous local stone, a tradition ubiquitous in pre-industrial Britain. Loss of render in recent times at Gwernyfed is traceable through early photographs (for e.g., FIG.12b). As often happened, liming would have been discontinued at some point in the nineteenth century owing to cost or changing

fashion, so that most, if not all the rendering has now fallen away leaving exposed stonework, some of it pointed in a modern cement-based compound. But as the poet reminds us (in stanza 4), its regular application was not only a preservative; limewash also emphasised a house in its surroundings. This visual quality was recognised in several bardic poets' descriptions of the lordly *plas* (see below 000).

As can be seen, the surviving evidence for the main features mentioned by the poet - particularly the house, but also probably representing important features of the garden - is still quite impressive.

The Later Seventeenth Century

Although the Schedule of Gwernyfed Deeds and Documents in the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, suggests that one of the four documents in the bundle known as Gwernyfed NLW Ms GD 31 is the marriage settlement of this Sir Harry and Eleanor Whitney, it is in fact a settlement made in 1631 on the marriage of their son and heir, the first Baronet Henry Williams. His bride was Anne, fourth daughter of Sir Walter Pie, The Minde, Herefordshire. This is relevant as it describes Gwernyfed and its demesne a quarter of a century after the poem. Most of the features correspond, but there are a few differences. For instance, the park, unfinished in 1605 but shortly (*virder*) to be stocked with young brown animals (verse 13), was 'nowe stoared with deere', and the conynger squire of the poem now has 'all the warren of conies with th'appurtenances ... called Gwernevett warren and neere adioyninge to the said demeane'. A further settlement, of 1688, in the same bundle of documents, again refers to a 'Parke stored with deere'. This also mentions a warren and corresponds to the outcome of the 'meare'-recording exercise of 1665, from which we learn of the park boundary 'pale joyning to Tyle Glâs', and a 'great Oake in the Warren, wherein 17 acres, with part in the Cwm, is in Radnors's'e joyning to the Old Shepherd's house in Glâs' (Williams 1870,320).

It was the first baronet Sir Henry, Sir Harry's son, who famously entertained Charles I on the 6th August 1645 at the Williams's 'fair seat', on his way from the Battle of Naseby (Williams 1870, 308; Rees 1962, 3). But unfortunately, his residency marks the beginning of a century and a half of park management for which the historic record is very poor, although the property seems to have been well maintained by him and under his immediate successor, Sir Edward.

Attention has already been drawn to Edward Lhuyd's historical collections. As he must have passed this way when he drew Sir Henry's memorial - it is likely that some of the information in his *Parochialia*, compiled in the closing years of the century, was also acquired at first hand. So it is here relevant that he was at Hay in 1698 (Gunther 1945,400). In *Aberllynfi* parish, he notes 'An Inpropiation belonging to S^r Edward W^{ms} of Gwernyvet one village consisting of a^{bt} 9 houses. This par. is in y^e Hamlet of Pipton (Piberton) in Glassbury par & Aberllynfy. There is a place in Gwernyvet Park y^l goes by y^e name of twyn yr hên gastelh' (Morris 1910, II, 30). He remarks that Tymawr [Aberllynfi; OS SO 1712 3797] belonged to Gwernyvet and goes on to say 'twyn y Klommendy [Dovecote Hill] is suppos'd to be an old Krîg. Coed bolyn is partly in this and partly in Glasebury, a part of Gwernyvet war'en in this parish...Champion ground and somewhat woody...Charles Pritchard, an old serv^ty^l formerly belonged to Gwernyfed is ab^l.100 and 10. Tyles and table stones [are] dug^d in y^e park and Coed Bollyn'. Some minor detail is then repeated under the heading *Hamlets*, where he reiterates how Gwernyfed falls between the two parishes.

As implied by the Gwernyfed poet in verse 13, warrening



FIG.6 Transected culvert after excavation in 1993 (Photo: C S Briggs).



FIG.7 The 1756 Estate Map. By permission of Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru/The National Library of Wales



FIG.8a Detail from the 1756 Estate Map of the rectangular feature on the site of Aberllynfi Gaer. This is believed to have been a deer corral.



FIG. 8b Detail from the 1756 Estate Map: fish pond on Felindre Brook.



FIG. 8c The site of Old Gwernyfed: from the 1756 Estate Map.



FIG. 8e Old Gwernyfed from the Tithe Map of Glasbury 1850.

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was an activity close to his lord's palate. But that venison was expensive in 1605 might imply that it had to be bought in and could hint at management neglect of the deerpark under or even after the Gunters – a problem then perhaps arising from Sir David's absence.

Warrenning continued right through the seventeenth century and after, and although there were deer in the park in 1688 they are not mentioned by Lhuyd in the 1690s. It is of incidental interest that the park's resources also included tile and flagstone quarries, and of more than passing significance that Lhuyd provided the first record of the hillfort now known as The Gaer, Aberllynfi (OS SO 1750 3759; RCAHMW 1985, 108-112, fig.137,p.109), a site which would later be re-used. Indeed, the hillfort is stylised onto the 1756 estate map, not as an ancient enclosure, but re-used as a trapezoidal compound for corralling deer (FIG. 8a). Such re-use of an ancient earthwork was apparently not unusual (Spencer Smith *pers.comm.*) The location and original status of 'twyn y Klommendy' [dovecote hill] remains unclear. Lhuyd could be referring to one of the small 'mottes' (or were they perhaps viewing platforms?) near Aberllynfi Church. Alternatively a high point of The Gaer might equally have suited a dovecote.

DISCUSSION: The Wedding Poem

As one of the most fundamental sources of information with the potential to date parts of the site and re-identify some of its earliest features, it is now important to consider the historical setting of the poem and its poet.

The Bardic Tradition

In her *Tai Uchelwyr y Beirdd 1350—1650*, Dr Enid Roberts of Bangor has collected a number of poetic references to the gardens of houses owned by the native aristocracy of North Wales (Roberts 1986). Of course, the poets tend to be idealistic to the point of self-parody in their praise of their patrons. Nevertheless, their descriptions are of interest, though if the linguistic poetic quality is lost in translation, yet more is lost with the disappearance of the *cynghanedd* or consonantal chime which is its very life-blood. The delight of the Welsh poet becomes prose at best. Most of the following introduction to the bardic tradition derives from Dr Roberts's work.

The *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr*, or Poets of the Nobility or Gentry have bequeathed the richest source of information about social life in Wales during the later Middle Ages and early modern times (Williams 1994). From the second half of the sixth century down to the mid-seventeenth century, the poems of official poets are associated with the courts of the men who led, governed and protected society, be they kings, princes, or later the *uchelwyr*, the nobility (Payne 1955). Over the centuries, Welsh poetry mirrored their thoughts, activities and way of life.

The period referred to as that of the Poets of the Gentry covers roughly three centuries, from the mid-fourteenth to the mid-seventeenth centuries (c.1350-1650). During this period thousands of eulogies, elegies and poems of request were composed in honour of the greater and lesser nobility. A large proportion of it still remains in manuscript form, while the works of other poets lurk in unpublished theses; but even from the small amount available in print, it is possible to get some idea of what life was like around the homes of the Welsh gentry.

Here a note of warning should be added: it can be difficult to know what the true interpretation of these poems ought to be, so both a detailed knowledge of late medieval Welsh and an appreciation of contemporary poetic forms are desirable. Unfortunately, these bards preferred metaphor to simile, so transformed and exaggerated both person and places of their eulogies to fit impossibly hyperbolic exemplars. Without an appreciation of these drawbacks, translations may not always make good sense (Roberts 1989,39-40).

The potential of bardic poetry to illuminate early garden topographies is demonstrable at several named sites, though generally-speaking its content is less likely to inform the interrogation of surviving features.

Descriptive courtly bardic poetry recently came to public notice in relation to the creation of a new garden at Aberglasney, Llangathen, Carmarthenshire, on the site of a minor gentry house (David 1999, 11). Major Francis Jones (1970, 4) at one time proposed that a poem by Lewis Glyn Côthi (*fl.* 1447-86) related specifically to the site. However, its reliability as a record of accurate observation was later questioned when it became clear that the poet wrote similar poems about neighbouring properties (Briggs 1999, 246). In his stylised description of a whitewashed building surrounded by nine gardens planted with orchard trees, a vine and high oaks, it seems likely that the poet was proffering a typical aspirational courtly composition, adjustable to the status of the listener. So besides demonstrating deftness in composition, a certain mystery and personal allusion gives these bardic odes an entertaining and flattering edge. But it can be difficult to tell which, if any, provide reliable descriptions.

The first serious attempt to correlate a bardic poem with a principal *plas* was, however, made for archaeologists by Enid Pierce Roberts at Sycharth Castle forty years ago (Enid Roberts in Hague and Warhurst 1966, 109-113). In 1962 Douglas Hague excavated the flat surface of a large motte on the Denbigh side of the border at Sycharth (OS SJ 205 258), southwest of Oswestry, a site generally accepted as Owen Glyndwr's home (Hague and Warhurst 1966). The place was eulogised by his court poet Iolo Gôch around 1390. Although very long, part of it is accessible in Tony Conran's *Welsh Verse* of 1986 and later editions. Sylvia Landsberg (1995, 11) quotes from Conran in the context of medieval gardens, though without reference to the excavation.

The Sycharth excavation report concludes: 'One does not expect a poet to produce an objective specification or a schedule of dilapidations. But despite the sycophantic and evocative language this, like other poems (without parallel in English literature) is a source from which a wealth of information could be gleaned' (Roberts in Hague and Warhurst 1966, 112). However, whereas those excavations offered only limited confirmation of some features mentioned by Iolo Gôch: a motte and bailey, fishponds, timber-framed buildings, a gatehouse, bridge, tower house and mill (Hague and Warhurst *idem*, 121-22), more recent investigations on the site have brought to light greater detail (Spencer Smith, *pers comm.*).

Gardens in Later Bardic Poetry

During the sixteenth century, bardic poetry reflected changing and more ambitious garden fashion among the gentry (Payne 1955; Roberts 1986; 1989.71-3). Indeed, these poems suggest that by about 1550 every prestigious Welsh house had its gardens, for vegetables, fruit-trees and ornament. A formal hedge of small trees or shrubs, with one or more entrances skilfully cut in it, formed the garden surround. The beds were formal, using more herbs than flowers, and since herb foliage varies in colour from light grey to dark green, it could form attractive patterns with a pleasant scent which would be very acceptable at a time when laundry and washing were not common. The garden at *Mysoglen*, Llanfair-y-Cwmwd, Anglesey (OS SH 4505 6728 [now Maesoglen]), described by Robert ap Ifan in the late sixteenth century had: 'A thousand herbs, how beneficial, Set in their linking patterns...' The gardener was even named as Richard of Bangor (Roberts 1986, 23, 26).

It has been noted that the main emphasis of the poets was then on trees and shrubs. But layouts of long walks or avenues, known to the Bards as 'streets' were also popular. Perhaps the *Isllys* of the Gwernfyfed poet were their south Powys equivalents? Sometimes trees were planted in parallel rows with branches interwoven, 'small wattling of the complex growth', to form a tunnel, occasionally supported on a wooden frame. Arches could be cut in the sides, with nooks, or towers formed to include cages with singing birds. In thick groves a chamber, hut or house could be cut, with raised seats of turfs, covers with herbs such as camomile or thyme

(Roberts 1986, 22-3).

Topiary was a new and fashionable craft; and Huw Machno the poet was himself cut on horseback in the garden at Gwydir, Caernarfonshire (OS SH 7960 6104), where box or lavender was also probably formed into a maze (Roberts 1986, 23-4). Mounds accessed by steps might be raised on the open lawn and on the mound's summit would be a summer house or tree (Roberts *idem*). These were clearly viewing platforms, commonly recognised among the historic garden earthworks of central and eastern England (Taylor 1983). In Wales they are known by the blanket descriptive of defensive 'motte', though it seems most probable that for many of these sites the symbolic high status role of defensive site and that of practical viewing platform were interchangeable (Briggs 1991a, 150).

Attention has usefully been drawn to two other sixteenth-century poems offering unusual landscape detail. The first was at Plas-y-ward, Llanynys, Denbighshire (OS SJ 1169 6045), where Simwnt Fychan described a lady's garden with a summer house and a lake with swans (Roberts 1986, 28). Around 1550, Siôn Brwynog wrote another poem about Bodorgan, Llangadwaladr, Anglesey (OS SH 3859 6736) lauding a woodland view and scented herbs, an orchard and pool stocked with fish (Roberts 1986, 27).

Although there are over 50,000 poems encompassing the medieval period to the eighteenth century (Anon.1997), many describing high status houses and their settings, their investigation is only now beginning and a great deal of historical and archaeological information is likely to be required in their scholarly interpretation for topographical information.

The Welcome to Gwernyfed

It will be appreciated from this brief introduction that the Gwernyfed Wedding poem comes towards the end of a long Welsh bardic tradition, though a tradition, it must be said, which had begun to wane after the mid-sixteenth-century Acts of Union. This was because these Acts saw fewer wealthy Welshmen patronising their own language. Indeed, the increasing attractions of life at an English court and the honours they could bring would all detrimentally affect the bardic tradition.

Therefore, when considering the background to the Gwernyfed poem, it is important to ask: What are its literary parallels? Was its poet a bard exclusively serving the Williams family, or might he have been retained by the Whitneys, the bride's family? Could the poem's metre or content draw upon influences from literary traditions beyond Wales? And does the poem record real events as they happened, or is its text coloured by aspirational detail?

The author of the *Welcome to Gwernyfed* is unknown, as is the copyist who wrote it down in an educated, legible secretary hand, on sheets of paper which were later bound into a composite manuscript. It is unlikely that the poet himself wrote this copy since it would then be difficult to account for scribal errors such as *corn* for *court* in line 5 and 'yn' for 'yu' in line 15 and many more similar examples. It was, however, written early in the seventeenth century.

The poem is written in a free metre (as opposed to the strict metres of mediaeval Welsh poetry) which was a growing trend in the early seventeenth century. It consists of sixteen quatrains, plus a fifth line as a kind of chorus which is abbreviated in all but the first verse (see above p.000). This still shows a typically Welsh partiality to embellishment, in its quite complicated rhyme schemes, though they are not always strictly adhered to in the poem in its present form [note 2].

The intricacy of the rhyme scheme suggests that the poet was not an unpractised songster; on the other hand, frequent use of English words and rhymes which would be unacceptable to classical Welsh poets visiting Breconshire and Radnorshire at the beginning of the seventeenth century raises questions about the author's exact status. Among the poets who visited these border counties were Lewis Dwnn, and the father and son Rhŷs and Siôn Cain. These three were also very accomplished genealogists and Dwnn was a Deputy

Herald appointed by the College of Arms (*DNBW*). Whilst their standard of what was linguistically acceptable was not as rigid as those of the poets of the fifteenth century, the solecisms of this poem would be unlikely from their tongue or pen.

The Gwernyfed poet was familiar with the well attested convention of composing songs at wedding feasts. These *neithiorau* especially those of virgin brides (*riain wyry*) were occasions when poets would gather for bardic contests; they would be 'graded', and

there are elements in the mediaeval laws, and in the so-called Statute of Gruffudd ap Cynan, which suggest that in pre-Christian times the chief-bard had a priestly role in the wedding and was rewarded for his participation. It is not necessary to believe that pre-Christian rituals persisted into the seventeenth century, but there is no doubt that the poets were aware that there was a role for them in the marriages of important patrons (MacCana 1970).

This poet also followed tradition in comparing his patrons favourably with the heroes of legend and song; in this case alluding to Sir Lancelot, from the Arthurian legends, Jason and Dido from classical sources and Solomon from the Bible - of these, only Lancelot and Solomon were stock figures. References to Jason and Dido were much rarer, but not entirely unknown in Welsh literature (Bromwich 1976). The most significant reference is in the last verse, where the poet wishes upon Eleanor Whitney the gift, grace and reputation of *teg eirffron*. This jumble of letters must be an approximation of the name Tegau Eurfron, 'Tegau Gold-Breast', the only lady at Arthur's court successfully to pass a chastity test when a testing talisman of a mantle or cloak was sent to the court. The property of the mantle was that it would completely cover any chaste wife, but it would be revealingly short on an unfaithful lady.

In an eighteenth-century manuscript, but one which contains much early material, the lady who sends the mantle to court is King Arthur's sister, the wife of Urien Rheged who lived in Tinbot Castle, Llananno, Radnorshire, not many miles from Gwernyfed, the location of this poem. The poet therefore, could have been drawing on local traditions in wishing that Eleanor Whitney should have the chaste reputation of Tegau Eurfron (note 3).

Ironically, it having preceded the Elizabethan poetic tradition which idolised the Virgin Queen in visual art, verse and landscape, the older tradition of allusion and comparison of the living with Classical heroes was to be re-introduced from Renaissance Europe into Britain, and would again pervade those media after her reign ended. It is just possible that this Marcher composition carried a spirit of parody, even perhaps mimicking English poetic welcomes to Elizabeth the Virgin Queen.



FIG.9 Ball finialled gateposts on parterre 1989 looking in from outside
(photo: C.S.Briggs).

The Gwernyfed poet also shared the classical Welsh poets' understanding of the relationship between the *uchelwyr* in his house and the society of the countryside around. This relationship was identified in Saunders Lewis's seminal article on the poetry of Dafydd Nanmor (*fl.*1445-90; the dates are suggested by Ruddock 1992), as early as 1925 (Lewis 1925; 1973) and has been acknowledged ever since as the dominant theme of Welsh praise poetry in the classical period. It has been reiterated succinctly by Prof. Dafydd Johnston in the introduction to his English translation of the poems of Iolo Gôch, (c.1325-c.1400):



FIG. 10 Ball finialled gateposts from within the *parterre* 1989, showing the recesses probably intended for small statues (photo: C.S.Briggs).

The central element in the relationship between patron and poet was the nobleman's house. It was customary for the wealthy landed gentry of the later Middle Ages to build themselves fine houses as imposing symbols of their social status, which served as focal points for the surrounding communities. The poet's work would be performed in their halls as entertainment at feasts, and the hospitality extended to him there was representative of the nobleman's generosity and care for his people. This paternalistic ideal was held by all the Welsh praise poets. It was a profoundly conservative social philosophy, setting great store by aristocratic lineage as the means of noble virtues, just authority and land (Johnston 1993, xiii).

In his own way the Gwernyfed poet is expressing this ideal. He is wholly in the tradition when he reminds Eleanor that she will have obligations as well as all the good things that await her at Gwernyfed. She will be expected to listen to the complaints of the poor and because she has received [much], without fail she in turn must be generous (*gwedi y chael yn ddy ffail Raid y chwithie fod yn hael* 1.74). It is a salutary reminder of how deeply enmeshed in the collective consciousness of the bards these ideals were, for this poet was not very skilful, his language was heavily contaminated with English words (*acsylo* 1.4), (*lyfyng* 1.17), (*venswm* 1.27), (*kivro, gyldo* 1.28) are a few examples in the first six stanzas alone), and yet even on the very borders of England and as late as the first decade of the seventeenth century he was obviously versed in the conventions, he knew the lore and the etiquette of his craft and he carried out the same functions as his predecessors had been doing for centuries in Welsh Celtic society.

The same ideal is identified by G.R.Hibbard as surfacing in England at the beginning of the seventeenth century and the above quotation can be compared with Hibbard's analysis of what he calls Ben Jonson's 'view of life' in 'To Penshurst' (*cf.* Fowler 1994, 53-62):

‘To Penshurst’ then presents in concrete terms a whole and consistent view of life in which not only man’s relation to man, but also to God on the one side and to nature on the other, are given due place. It is not merely a complimentary poem about a house and a family, it is a poem about a way of life, which is embodied in the house and expresses itself through it (Hibbard *idem*, 165).

Hibbard makes many similar statements, for example, ‘the main theme of the poem [Penshurst], namely the function of the house in the community as the centre of a complex web of relationships which makes up the fabric of civilized living’ (*idem*, 164); ‘Penshurst has a place in men’s lives, it satisfies emotional as well as practical needs, it stands for something. It is the embodiment of a natural bond between lord and tenant’ (*idem*.) Compare these statements with Saunders Lewis’s rather more exotically expressed interpretation of Dafydd Nanmor’s ‘vision of life’. ‘He understood that this was the quintessence of a noble civilization, and that this is the masterpiece of mankind, namely to establish the great principle of conservatism and nobility, the communion of the generations, with the House [capital] as a dignified symbol of the unbroken sacrament’ (*idem*, 88, transl. N. Lloyd).

Hibbard sees the end of the genre in Andrew Marvell’s ‘Upon Appleton House, to my Lord Fairfax’, written probably in the 1650s when Marvell lived there (*idem*. 169-70; *cf.* Fowler 1994, 281-301). After Marvell, the poet became less dependent on the patron; and while the country house became grander than before and even continued as a cultural centre for another century, it no longer occupied that focal position in the life of the nation which it held during the first half of the seventeenth century (Fowler 1994 *passim*; Hibbard 1956, 171).

According to Hibbard (1956, 171 and *passim*) therefore, the genre of the Country House Poem, of which this is an example, albeit in Welsh, flourished in England for a mere half-century. In 1994 Fowler, when he re-named it Estate Poetry, extended its period of popularity from 1560 to 1700. Even so, it was always a minor, if interesting tributary in the great flow of English poetry. In Wales, however, poetry relating the quality of the court to the aspiration of its master was the *raison d’être* of the poets from at least the end of the fourteenth century, with Iolo Gôch’s poems to specific courts until at least the third quarter of the seventeenth century with the many poems of Edward Morris (*fl.c.*1633-89) to his chief patron, Thomas Mostyn of Gloddaeth, for example, including a metrical *tour de force* praising and describing Gloddaeth itself. Johnston gives examples of courts, like ‘Owain Glyn Dŵr’s Court’, ‘The court of Ieuan, Bishop of St.Asaph’, and ‘The Court of Hywel Cyffin, Dean of St. Asaph’, all dating from the 1390s (see Johnston 1993, 38-42; 70-4; 80-2 for translations).

In 1703, in his *Gweledigaethu y Bardd Cwsc* [The Visions of the Sleeping Bard] Ellis Wynne saw in the Street of Pride, great unroofed mansions littering the landscape like rotting carcasses because the pride of their owners had driven them to England and France to look for what it would be far easier to find at home. He lamented that instead of the good old charity-giving, stay-at-home folk who used to dwell there, there were now only owls, ravens and magpies keeping house. If it were not for Pride, he maintained, these great ruins would even yet be a magnet for good men, a sanctuary for the weak, a school of all goodness and peace and a blessing for a hundred of small neighbouring homes (Lewis 1976, 13-14). Wynne’s book was a prose work, but it brings clearly into focus one of the recurrent themes of all seventeenth-century poetry, namely, that there had been a catastrophic decline in patronage as the *uchelwyr* became more Anglicized and London orientated, and Welsh estates fell into English hands through the marriage of heiresses.

Likewise, Hibbard sees in Alexander Pope’s *Epistle to Burlington* the same moral outrage.

Pope’s main target throughout the epistle is not the vice of prodigality, but the vice from which prodigality springs, and which throughout his work he sees as the chief source of human misery, the vice of pride.

The language Pope uses is the plainest possible indication of his attitude; the poem is an attack on those

who follow false gods and put the satisfaction of their own pride and vanity before the needs of the community (Hibbard 1956, 173).

This poetic genre can offer unusual insights into contemporary society. Thus, throughout the seventeenth century, poets were admonishing their patrons for dallying too long away from home, usually in London or Ludlow or sometimes because they were on the Grand Tour. Edmwnd Frys's *cywydd* pleading with young Sir John Wynn of Gwydir to return home from France and not to go 'over the Alps' to Italy is a good example. He was needed at home by his tenants and his wisdom was missed on the local bench; it was to no avail, Wynn went to Italy and died at Lucca in August 1613 (Lloyd 1993, 82-5; 351-2).

The new owners knew nothing of the age-old understanding between patron and poet and the ultimate degradation was the (albeit somewhat exaggerated) picture presented by Ellis Wynne. His apocalyptic vision came a century later than the sunny and thoroughly optimistic description of her new home presented by the Gwernyfed poet to Eleanor Whitney, when she came there as a bride. However unskilful he was in comparison to Iolo Goch or Dafydd Nanmor, Ben Jonson or Andrew Marvell, this poet was quite certain in his own mind of his place and role in a civilized and ordered society. He was perfectly confident of the welcome that his ancient status and lineage would command as he presented this poem of welcome to the new young bride who came to Gwernyfed in 1605.

The Survival of the Gwernyfed earthworks

It is difficult to be certain of the precise moment when Gwernyfed was abandoned. However, unpublished research on the estate's later history suggests that abandonment probably ultimately resulted from financial difficulties and the failure of the male line of the first Baronetcy at the end of the seventeenth century. Indeed, there are indications in contemporary documents to suggest that the newly-established second Baronetcy, of unrelated Williams pedigree from Tallyn, also in Breconshire, may have moved their seat from Gwernyfed to Llangoed not long before 1720 (Briggs *in preparation*).

Gwernyfed and the Renaissance Gardens of Wales

In 1979 Sir Roy Strong wrote a scholarly and accessible account chronicling how Renaissance ideas from Europe came to Britain inspired by the travels of noblemen and courtiers abroad; how these principally affected garden design under Henry VIII, then waned when England went Protestant on Elizabeth's ascent to the throne in 1558 (Strong 1979, 45). Initially, Strong inclined more to strong influences of Classical architecture and landscape aesthetics on the English garden, but reviewing his approach twenty years later, he felt it also important to be reminded of the significant legacy of Britain's medieval gardens (Strong 1999,3). He also now inclines to lay stronger emphasis on the Renaissance contributory component of north and west European origin, as well as that from the Mediterranean. These new ideas had at first been brought direct through diplomatic activity or trade contacts, and since Henry VIII's day by a newly-gentrified upwardly-mobile class of courtier. Whether or not able to travel more freely on the continent, these courtiers grew significantly richer under Elizabeth. Many would build their own grand houses with gardens to match, the finer ones designed sumptuously like palaces specifically for royal entertainment. Set within extensive regular, geometric square or rectangular enclosures incorporating gardens both for production and display, the more sophisticated sites were complemented by excavated terraces, ashlar or earthen walkways, watercourses and ponds, all appropriately planted with trees, shrubs and flowers.

These gardens developed quickly with the high aspirations which developed and the generous means which became available in the decades following the Dissolution of the Monasteries. Although in 1979 there was felt to be 'surprisingly little evidence concerning garden planning between 1550 and 1600,' it then being possible to discuss only five sites in detail, viz: Kenilworth, Theobalds, Wollaton, Wimbledon and Nonsuch

(Strong 1979, 49), field archaeology soon after added significant material evidence to the record (Steane 1977; Taylor 1983; RCHME 1979), though, frustratingly, much of that is still poorly dated.

Though the idea of raising the house on a terrace to improve the view of a knot garden is seen at Kenilworth in 1575 (Strong 1979, 51), not all the better-documented sites built on that scale are directly relevant to what survives at Gwernyfed. By 1580, Wollaton House was set within a strictly four-way symmetrical layout and overlooked a parterre quartered in knots set around a central fountain (Strong *idem*, 59). Wimbledon had similar quartered parterres, and orchards were also an important component of its plan (*idem*, 60-63). The quartered parterre around a circular or bossed centre with fountain or statue was a near Europe-wide hallmark of the new fashion. It characterised many gardens in Britain for a century or more after 1570. Several survive as earthworks, like Holdenby (1580-87), Harrington and Kirby Hall. These gardens were first recognised by John Steane in his pioneering work on the Northamptonshire sites in 1977 (390-401). A number of others, laid out on a more modest scale, are known from contemporary estate maps or from paintings, including early bird's eye views (Harris 1979; 1995), though most of these images date to the later seventeenth century and some certainly record the formal garden in a slightly more developed state.

The Renaissance Garden in Wales

How were Wales's gardens changed by the innovations which so affected England? Interestingly, it was for long a commonplace in British scholarship that the Welsh landscape was remote from mainstream developments and the view that few early formal gardens had ever been made, let alone survived there, was reflected in the *Oxford Companion to Gardens* as recently as 1988 (Jellicoe *et al.* 1988, 592). Since then, however, it has been shown that all the major stages of garden fashion and design are reasonably well represented in the Principality (Whittle 1992), where arguably some fashions were even helped develop. Furthermore, with strong medieval roots, it is clear that many Welsh gardens incorporated Renaissance elements (Briggs 1991a and b; 1998). Some of the best-known and potentially influential sites may be considered briefly.

In common with the rest of Britain, contacts with both Italy and the Low Countries brought architectural styles and gardens to Wales with some of the components which reflected the broader intellectual culture of Reformation and Renaissance Europe. This process is reflected in grandiose buildings like the gatehouse at Old Beaupré (Cadw 2000, 260-2; Hague 1965; RCAHMW 1981, 46-63). By the late sixteenth century its repertory would include Saint Donat's Castle, Glamorgan (Whittle 1999), and Raglan Castle in Gwent (Whittle 1989).

A painted bird's eye view of c.1600 (in Turner 2000, 12) demonstrates how these fashions were by that time already well-established in North Wales. That painting shows both the Castle and Plâs Mawr at Conwy, where the former was shown 'with rare and exceptional ... accuracy' (Harris 1995,7) and the gardens of the latter had probably already been laid out in quartered parterres for up to 25 years. The creator of Plâs Mawr's garden, Sir Robert Wynn (1520-1598) is said to have travelled extensively in northern Europe (Turner 2000, 7). His near-contemporary, Sir Richard Clough (*d.*1570; *ODNB*; *DNBW*) certainly brought important influences from Holland to post-medieval north-east Wales, an area also so affected by Mediterranean ideas that Peter Smith once dubbed it 'the Tuscany of Wales' (Hilling 1976,107). Clough's Flemish influence not only included the importation of tulips, but culminated in his creation of two unusual, continentally-inspired houses, Bachygraig and Plas Clough near Denbigh (Smith 1988, 228,265; Hilling 1976,7, 106 [Plas Clough]; Smith 1988,133 [a reconstruction of Bachygraig, long since demolished.] The poet Simwnt Fychan actually drew attention to Bachygraig's connection with the Low Countries in a poem composed before 1570 (Roberts 1986, 36).

In an area where the well-known horticultural writer Sir Thomas Hanmer of Hanmer (*ODNB*) and Sir John

Salisbury of Lleweni (*ODNB*) were leading figures in contemporary gardening, the Trevors of Trefalun (now Trefalyn Hall) already had a Dutch gardener in 1599 (Roberts 1980,8, quoting from unpublished research by Miss Nia Watkin Powell). And although it was at one time suggested that Llanerch, also in Clwyd (in 1662 the subject of perhaps ‘the first bird’s eye view of a house in British painting’ (Harris 1979, 41)) was set in a ‘remote’ and ‘wild’ part of Wales (Harris 1995,7), any such concept of cultural wilderness is difficult to uphold in the presence of such well-travelled Welshmen. As Brinley Roberts (1980, 8) so pertinently remarks: ‘this was no provincial backwater’.

Certain other Welsh courtiers and travellers knew high European, if not more particularly, Italian Renaissance fashion, at first hand (Davies 1981); men like Sir John Stradling (1563-1637; Davies *idem*, 40-46; *ODNB*). The son of the likely creator of the terraced gardens at St Donat’s Castle, Glamorgan, Sir John Stradling even employed Latin verse to describe the gardens, thus ‘reflecting the Stradlings’ belief in the Renaissance ideal of improving nature by art’ (Davies *idem*,43; *cf.* Briggs 1998 and Whittle 1999). St Donat’s still preserves its terraced enclosures, even hanging gardens, stretching, Mediterranean-style, down to the sea. One of several terraced sites in Wales, mostly built into valley sides where they survive on a more modest scale (Briggs 1991,143-44), this Stradling house amply illustrates the European dimension in Welsh courtly culture around 1600.

Another Glamorgan family who created a notable Renaissance house and landscape were the Bassetts of Llantrithyd (RCAHMW 1981, 175-81, plan no.54; Briggs and Leighton *forthcoming*). This place, now in an advanced state of decay, boasts a remarkable ashlar walkway, some 90 m long, probably of seventeenth-century date, overlooking fishponds, the survival of which demonstrates the effective translation of a quintessential Renaissance-style pleasure garden onto a Welsh canvas (Briggs 1999, 263). St Fagans has an axial walkway which is closely comparable to Old Gwernyfed’s east-west terrace (RCAHMW 1981, 246, fig.77b). In fact there is more than a passing resemblance between St Fagans and Gwernyfed (Roger Betham *pers comm.*) not only in the size and style of the house structures, but also because both overlook aligned fishponds and enclosures of similar shape and dimensions (RCAHMW *idem*, 244-255).

Who created the Renaissance Garden at Gwernyfed?

Having described the site and considered the evidence, the crucial questions remain: who built the garden at Old Gwernyfed, and when? Did its earlier owners, the Gunters, begin to design and build a Renaissance garden in the late sixteenth century? A very old and respected Breconshire family, the Gwernyfed branch had been noteworthy, although the glory had departed by the time John Gunter sold Gwernyfed to David Williams in 1600. He was the grandson of Gwilym Thomas Gunter and his wife Eleanor, one of the numerous progeny of the famous Sir Rhÿs ap Thomas, in his day the virtual ruler of the whole of South Wales (Griffiths 1994 *passim*). It can be surmised that there is little in the basic layout at Gwernyfed today that could not have been built as early as 1575, and as John Gunter would have been familiar with contemporary garden fashion he should not be ruled out.

There is a much stronger imperative, however, to attribute the surviving formal layout of the site to Sir David or Sir Harry Williams. But could they have achieved such noteworthy splendour (albeit unfinished) in the five years between its acquisition in 1600 and Harry’s marriage? It is evident that there was no shortage of money in the family, and labour for the requisite excavation and construction work would have been cheap and plentiful. We have seen that wealth was scarcely a problem for them at this time, and as the Principality had been increasingly assaulted both north and south by continental influences during the later sixteenth century, it would be hardly surprising if such ideas had not been absorbed in southern Powys by an ambitious, well-educated lawyer like Sir David Williams and his status-conscious son. Both had been exposed to the changing layouts of Oxford college gardens. More significantly, as Sir David Williams was so dependent on

Lord Burghley and on Cecil patronage, both must have been familiar with their palatial homes and concomitant garden-building. The Cecils' several celebrated properties, then under development, included Theobalds, Burghley and Wimbledon. The Williamses would also have seen many other estates being created by their nouveau-riche peers and are likely to have been familiar with Dudley's Kenilworth. It would have been expected that people of their standing might emulate these nouveau-riche courtiers. So Gwernyfed's surviving earthwork garden could have been made mainly by Sir David and Sir Harry Williams around 1605, to be modified by their successors-in-title until near-abandonment of the site at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Conclusion

This investigation brings together evidence from diverse sources. It particularly concentrates on the remarkable survival of a Welsh Renaissance gentleman's house and its earthwork garden at Gwernyfed, and on the equally remarkable Welsh wedding poem of 1605 which described important features of the site then mainly under construction. Stylistically this poem combines anachronism with precocity. It represents an unusual literary survival, its text looking back to the long-established Welsh Bardic tradition and looking forward to the more short-lived mode of Later Jacobean English Estate poetry.

It is proposed that Sir Harry Williams built the house as well as its earthwork garden in the years soon after 1600. His likely creation of a quartered parterre must be taken to signal that Welsh families of the Williams's status were well to the fore in contemporary taste and that the garden fashions they introduced to Gwernyfed were inspired from a variety of sources at home and abroad, though most of all they were likely to have reflected immediate English courtly *mores*.

The survival of the garden earthworks in such good condition was owed initially to an eighteenth-century abandonment, then to orchard planting and in part to the site's (apparently deliberate) maintenance as 'wilderness'. Thereafter its use as a family retreat, a hotel and finally a private house, would secure its original state for posterity.

Besides the formal garden earthworks on the Elizabethan site, the site of a lost house and another, much smaller, formal garden has also been identified within the curtilage of the historic deerpark (Briggs 1991, 151). That site almost certainly had Jacobean origins, though it was continuously developed until the early nineteenth century and is now all but obliterated. Originally known as Gwernyfed Lodge and subsequently as Keeper's Lodge, it was laid out astride what is now Cae Ronnen Farm. Initial documentary researches seem to suggest that it was maintained fashionably under mid-eighteenth century tenancy and became a minor country seat of the Wood family before New Gwernyfed was built 1877-1880 (Briggs *in preparation*).

Old Gwernyfed has an important place in garden history: its earthworks represent a landscape created by Elizabethan or Jacobean minor gentry and survivals on such a modest scale are rare in Britain. Indeed, any garden earthworks of this period are at present still scarce in Wales (Cadw 1994-2002 *passim*). Whereas quartered-bossed parterres were probably a commonplace in most high status gardens during the last half of the sixteenth century, few survive today and those that do, like Burghley, Holdenby, Kenilworth and Kirby, tend to be in gardens of far higher status than Gwernyfed. Furthermore, as gardens of the Tudor and Stewart gentry were regularly re-fashioned, most have now entirely disappeared and their cultural development is poorly understood in consequence. The coincidence of the Gwernyfed survival and its descriptive wedding poem with such useful insights into estate life and landscape has provided an opportunity to discuss some remarkable, if tantalising, evidence about the aspirations of one Welsh gentry family, probably when it was at its most influential, around 1600 and during the first half of the seventeenth century.

Notes

(1) This poem is found in one manuscript only, NLW 13178 B (also known as Llanover E 16), folios 18a-19b. It was copied in the first half of the seventeenth century in an unknown hand and the author is not named. It was published, posthumously with a very short introductory note by Professor G.J. Williams, after Mrs. Elizabeth Williams, his wife, found it amongst his papers (Williams 1964). Another copy is to be found on pages 72-3 of the MA thesis presented by H.Meurig Evans in 1937, *laith a Ieithwedd y Cerddi Rhydd Cynnar*. G.J. Williams does not refer to that copy and his version differs in some respects from that of Evans's, mostly in their different readings of minims. Evans's copy, however, for some unexplained reason, misses out completely verse 14, which Williams includes.

(2) The poem...NLW 13178 B / Llanover E16, 18a - 19b: *Llên Cymru*, 8 (1964), 81-3; H.Meurig Evans, *laith a Ieithwedd y Cerddi Rhydd Cynnar*, Traethawd MA, Prifysgol Cymru, 1937/4, 72-3.

(3) For further details of Tegau Eurfron's place in European legends see Bromwich 1976 and Thomas 1970.

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Aerial Photographs

RAF Verticals 1946 cover (Available at NMR Wales and NAW Cardiff); Cambridge /University Collection; RCAHMW Black and White 905055/16; 905075/15 View across the park; 905075/14 View from SW looking E across Southern Park segment with house and fields N of Tregoyd; 925040/45 View from N looking at N façade and earthworks; 2nd December 2004 views from above W; view from above South.

Maps and Plans

NLW Map 1. Gwernyfed Estate Map NLW: PE 5020 Map 7037 (1756). (Here FIG.7, p.17)

'An Estate in the Parish of Glasbury belonging to the Hon^{ble} Sr Edward Williams Bar^t 'mappd and measurd in the year 1756 by R.P.P.Surveyor.

NLW Map 2. Gwernyfed Estate Map NLW: PE 5026 Map 7034 (1776)[*cf.* Gwernyfed 7601].

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Photographs c. 1890- present day.

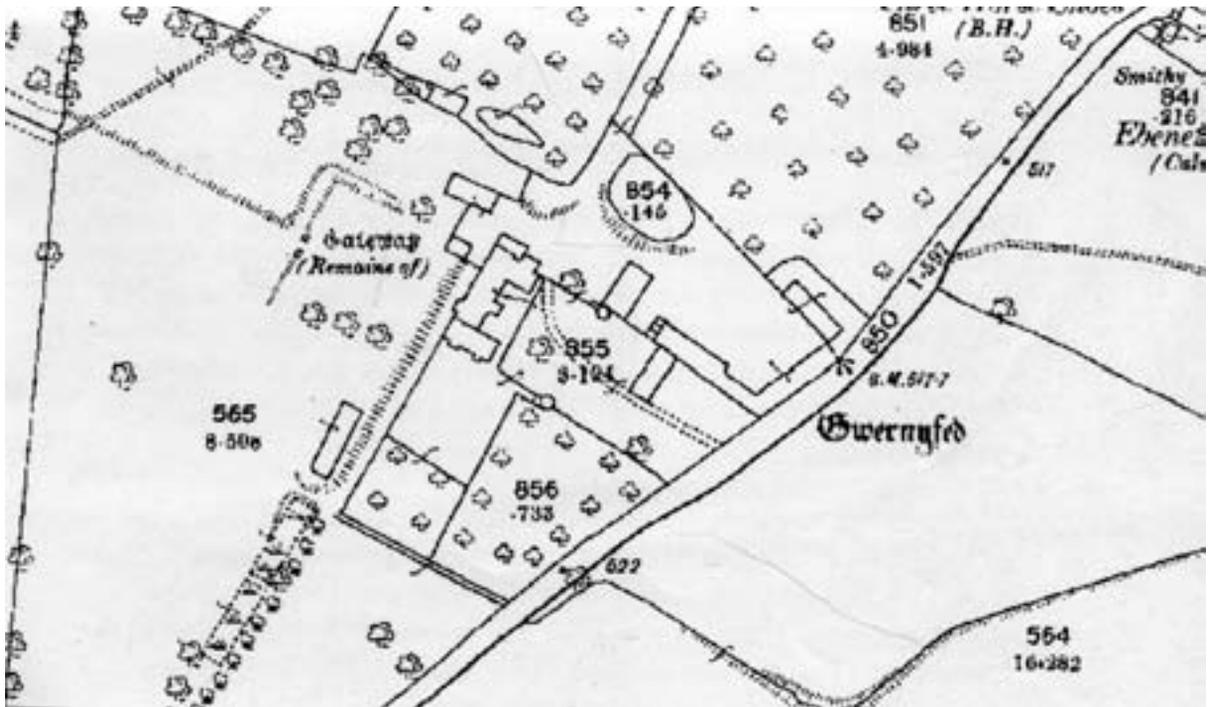


FIG. 11a. Site plan of Old Gwernysfed from the First Edition OS 25-inch plan 1888.

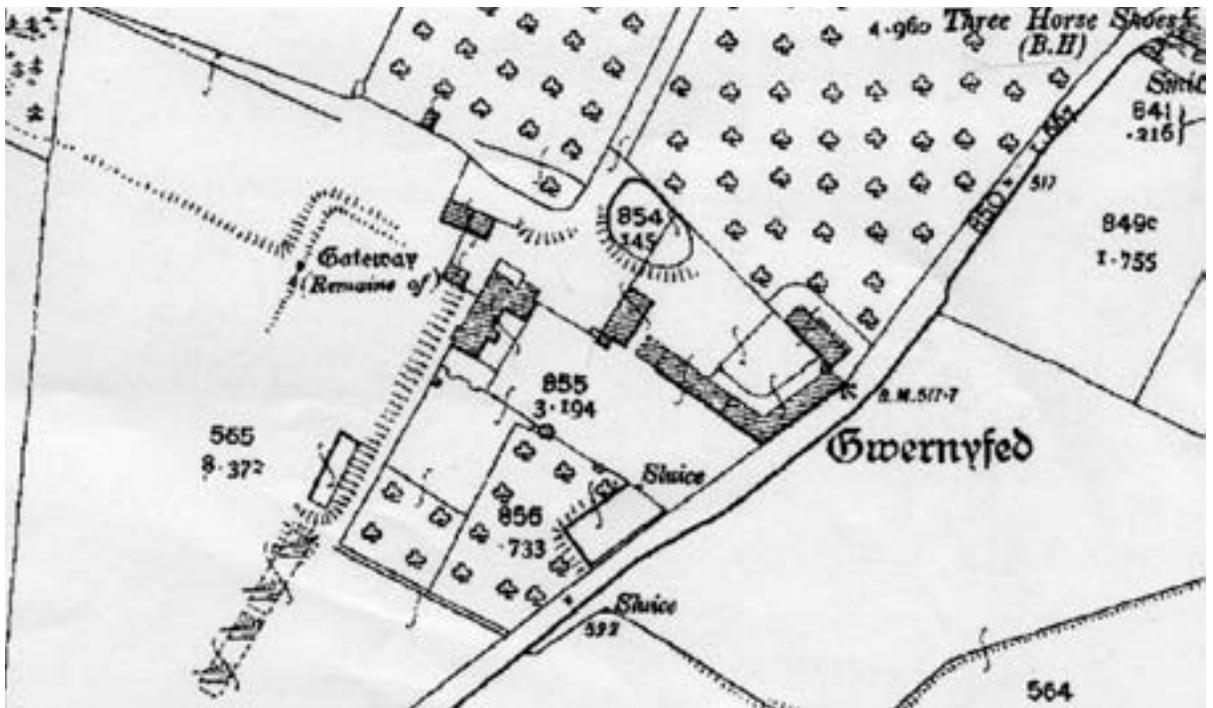


FIG. 11b. The same plan from the Second Edition OS 25-inch plan 1904.



FIG.12a. Ball finialled gateposts on parterre c 1890;



FIG. 12b. Gwernyfed front elevation c 1880

(Both from the collections of the National Monuments Record of Wales. © Crown Copyright RCAHMW)

Appendix I:

A descriptive and Summary History of the Site and its Features

The surviving estate or garden features are described with reference to the structures and activities mentioned in the wedding poem and an attempt is made to correlate the surviving landmarks with those mentioned or depicted on historic documents.

The Earthwork Garden Nucleus (FIG.4)

The original garden and meadow area

Low earthwork garden features now occupy a roughly triangular area under about 8 acres (c.3.5 ha) of pasture mainly to the west and northwest of the old house. This makes up about a third of the chord of farmland or garden sliced off the southern part of the Park roughly SSW-NNE. Originally, the rest of this component may have been given over to meadow and could have been the ‘good clean mile’ alluded to in 1605. Later, it boasted extensive orchards until the mid-twentieth century and aerial photographs of the 1940s still hint at a slight ‘humped’ rig and furrow arrangement which suggests considerable longevity of orchard husbandry. It is possible that further earthworks, or formal gardens at least, may have lain in the field to the south of the house on the other side of the county road (centred on SO 1839 3646), but that they were abandoned relatively early in the history of the site.

In 1973 a potentially ancient feature - a ‘barrow’ site - was noted under cereal crop (at OS SO 1818 3672). It measured 40 ft (c.12 m) by 24 ft (c.7 m; Pye 1973). More recent examination of vertical air photos suggests this to have been one of several large tree bole bases, rather than a viewing platform as was at one time suggested (by Briggs 1991a, 151).

The Ornamental Garden

Three main designed components are currently recognisable in the area immediately surrounding the house: its the southern entrance; the garden earthworks proper (including the ‘lost sunken carriageway’ area to west of the house) and the Victorian farm garden.

The house is approached from the county road by a drive of c.1950 set at right angles to both house façade and county road. Much changed since the house was a farm, this entrance incorporates two of three pairs of ornamental gate piers now on the site. The first, by the road, are surmounted by Victorian finials of lions cast in a stone amalgam. In 1935, the Wood family brought them from Nesfield’s main entrance gates of c.1880 on the north of the park (Cadw 1998).

Closer to the house there is a pair of rusticated Ball finialled Jacobean gate piers about 2.5 m high. They are said to have been moved c.1930 from a site to the northwest (most likely at the point where the sunken track meets the present-day county road). A third, very impressive pair about 3.5 m high stands *in situ* midway along the lost north wall of the parterre (FIGs 9, 10 and 12a). Haslam places both in the ‘late C 17’ and compares them to the ball finials on Hay Castle gates (Haslam 1979, 319; *cf.* Hay Castle *idem* p.324). There was a fourth set at Trebarried, a later seventeenth-century house, as shown on a water colour by Jeston Homfray around 1800 in an extra-illustrated copy of Theophilus Jones’s *History of Brecknockshire* (1805-9; NLW MS). At one time there was a fifth set at Brecon Priory, now known only from their depiction on a Buck print of 1741 (Parkinson 1994,6,fig.3; Briggs 1999). Around 1600 both Gwernyfed and the Priory found common ownership through Sir David Williams, so it is tempting to suggest that all these pier sets were the work of a local craft school patronised by his family. They might just date to Sir Harry’s early refurbishment in the first quarter of the seventeenth century, though with the Williams family connection, they may equally have late seventeenth century in origin, as Haslam (1979, 319) implies.

Two striking circular, conical-roofed dovecotes flank the right and left of the current residential approach from the county road within about 30 m of the house. They are first seen on the 1756 map, where one was built into the house curtilage wall alongside the county road about 50 m. to the southwest of the present entrance (FIG. 8c). It appears the other tower always stood to the west of the house forecourt. It is tempting to connect them with the 'white towers' of the poet's fourth stanza and thus with Sir Harry Williams's 1605 works.

A third 'tower', perhaps not quite so striking in design, is depicted on Price's map of 1756 built into the garden wall of the Lodge at OS SO 1787 3760.

The Garden Earthworks (FIG. 4)

A grass terrace falls away quite steeply to the north-west of the house separating it from the earthworks below. The house, in fact occupies what is now a prominent ridge up to 3 m high, running southwest beyond the length of the house some 25 m southwest of the old building. This serves as an impressive natural axis or walkway overlooking and extending into the original pleasure garden which originally must also have included what were until recently the farm garden compartments on its east. Enclosed by modern white iron railings, today it gives access to the formal garden down a dozen concrete flagged steps.

These steps descend to the parterre. The Gothic script drawing attention to two gate piers on all the larger scale O.S.maps since 1888 signals the presence of an unusual feature to the north of the house (FIGs 11a and 11b). In fact from its elevated position on the terrace, the rear of the house overlooks a sunken, quartered parterre or knot garden about 50 m (c.160 feet) square. A remarkable survival, it has a slightly raised central boss, probably a fountain site, and from the combined observations of seasonal grass parching, geophysical (Hamilton *unpubl.*) and conventional survey, three of its quarters appear to be of a similar design, whilst a fourth (the most northerly) is a sunken feature about 10 m square, possibly intended as a bowling green, though another use is not be out of the question.

Originally, the feature was accessed from the terrace down what is now a semi-circular earthwork which probably ghosts some lost stone steps beneath it. These steps were directly opposite the ornamental gate piers still punctuating what was once the north-west boundary wall (although not obviously evident on FIG.12a). If its original height is to be gauged from the gate-piers, this wall could have stood up to 4 m high, and if the exposed sections of its base are representative of the whole, the outer skin was probably clad in local sandstone rubble with an inner facing of small 'Flemish' bricks. In the main, however, the wall has gone, its course now indicated only by intermittent interventions to its basal courses from sheep erosion, usefully offering seen through keyholes created by the roots of a mature chestnut and an oak on the western alignment and northwest corner. It is thus difficult to divine whether the original wall collapsed or was deliberately slighted and removed for safety or economy of maintenance. Mid-way down each side of the ornamental gate posts the walls are recesses to take statues. There is a particularly good view of this garden from the first floor main bedchamber and attic windows.

The eastern boundary of the knot garden is scarped and beyond it the ground falls away quite steeply in three terraces. Their outer edges are aligned north-south and descend the slope into the partially waterlogged north-east corner of the site. These terraces, rather eroded by animals and nature, are now about 10 m wide and fall away up to 3.0 m depth. It is interesting to speculate that they may have taken ornamentals like roses, though sensitive orchard fruit such as those mentioned by the poet in stanza 10 are not out of the question.

Important both ornamentally and functionally, early ponds are today to be found at four main locations on the estate. At the height of its function as a farm, between the two first editions of the 25-inch plan (1888-1904; FIGs 11a and 11b)), a small reservoir was installed on the side of this garden nearest the county road (at SO 1829 2348). On the First Edition 25-inch plan there was another, circular feature, probably a reservoir

immediately north of the house (at SO 1830 3658). This seems likely to have intercepted the culverted supply and then descended immediately to the northwest. Partway downslope of this, on the First Edition 25-inch in 1888 (FIG. 11a) lay a smaller, elongated lozenge-shaped pond (at SO 1825 3620) with an uncertain smaller pond at the foot of the slope (at SO 1823 3660). All three are now lost, but they could have held key functions in maintaining the pressure for the head of water servicing the knot garden's fountain and by serving perpetual irrigation requirements.

Close to the westernmost point of the present garden and lying roughly parallel to the original sunken carriage drive is an alignment of three ponds. All are rectangular and each measures roughly 8 m by 15 m. Separated by substantial earthen dams, they lie in the path of a drain or spring which keeps them adequately filled. The middle and northeasternmost are partly enclosed on their southern sides by what appears to be a relict hedge line. They are lined in local stone, and during the 1990s still showed signs of paving, though some of this is probably recent restoration rather than original. They may have been built as fish ponds (see above p.15) but in their present state – with islands – they are probably more connected with sporting activity. Although the northeasternmost was in use in 1888 and 1904, the two more southerly were overgrown and silted up until the late 1980s, when they were re-excavated.

There is a small square island in the first, and near the north-west corner of the northeasternmost is a small, circular raised platform about 5 m in diameter and standing up to 1 m high, probably the site of a small garden building like a summer house or even a fountain (at SO 1819 3650).

A much larger pond is sited, and has been filled intermittently, on the stream which skirts the northeast of the estate nucleus, actually within the park. Quite substantial earthworks were created before 1756 to create a dam next to the Felindre stream (the *servatorium* suggested above p.15). The banks have been repaired in recent years and the pond restored to use. The earthworks of a mill pond and leat on the park's northern boundary are so substantial that at one time they were mistaken for a prehistoric enclosure (Glanusk 1909, 94; RCAHMW 1985, 112-13).

The Victorian and Twentieth-Century Farm Garden

Until 2003, the south side of the terrace or walkway overlooked working kitchen garden enclosures. As already noted, these probably developed on the site of the original formal garden, becoming a productive farm garden in the eighteenth century or later. At some point, probably in the 1930s, a grass tennis court also appeared, only to disappear after the Second World War. The enclosure nearest the house has now been appropriately re-created as a small knot garden. Originally, such a feature would have been meant to be viewed from the bedchamber in the westerly wing which is now deserted. It is not known if this re-creation was informed by on-site garden archaeology.

An archaeological excavation and survey at the Shell House, Cilwendeg, Pembrokeshire

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Abstract

An archaeological survey and excavation were undertaken at the nineteenth-century Shell House, a building on the Cilwendeg estate near Boncath in Pembrokeshire to inform a restoration programme. The interior of the building, which includes a series of shell-decorated panels and a bone decorated floor, were recorded in detail. The building forecourt area produced large quantities of finds probably originating from both ceiling and wall panels. The forecourt was flanked by two large soil banks, faced with rows of quartz boulders and associated with rockeries of the same material. The character of the access path to the Shell House was also investigated. This exercise usefully informed the restoration project.

Introduction

An archaeological survey and excavation was undertaken by Cambria Archaeology at the Cilwendeg Shell House in August 2003 (Hughes 2003) on behalf of the Temple Trust prior to a programme of repair and restoration of the building and the provision of public access to the site. Located between Newchapel and Boncath in northeast Pembrokeshire (FIG. 1), the site lies in the grounds of Cilwendeg mansion and close to its home farm (OS SN 2233 2870). It is today approached from the west by a drive off the B4332. Cilwendeg is listed in the Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales (Cadw 2002, 186-190) and the Shell House itself is a Grade II* listed building.

The buildings of the present estate at Cilwendeg were largely the work of Morgan Jones and his nephew, also Morgan Jones, during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Much of the family's wealth derived from the income obtained from the Skerries lighthouse off the coast of Anglesey. The core of the present mansion house was probably built in the 1780s by the elder Morgan Jones. However, the younger Morgan Jones was responsible for many of the splendid farm buildings, the



FIG. 1 Cilwendeg: Site Location Map (Cambria Archaeology).

majority of which were constructed between 1826 and 1840. The most extravagant of these buildings was an elaborate fowl house built in 1835 complete with sawn slate nesting boxes (Palmer 2004). More detailed history and descriptions of the estate and its history appear elsewhere (Anon. 2004; Orbach 1995; Cadw 2002; Fleming 2002, Lloyd *et al* 2004, 81-2,83,87,89, 150-52, 315).

The Shell House lies within a small area of woodland to the southwest of the mansion. The façade has a central doorway, flanked by two windows in the Gothick style and the building probably dates from the younger Morgan Jones's time - perhaps 1820-30 (Lloyd *et al* 2004, 151, pl.88). The entrance façade is in rough quartz, with clasping corner buttresses of locally quarried slate ashlar. The façade has a stepped parapet topped with large angular quartz blocks, two of which had fallen prior to the recent work. Two further quartz blocks were located on the two corner buttresses. The other elevations were cement-rendered when the roof was rebuilt in 1991. The internal wall faces are plastered and decorated with panels of inlaid shells although other decorative materials have also been used including polished stones, minerals, small fragments of cut coloured glass, and small quartz crystals (FIGs 3 and 4).

Prior to this recent restoration programme, the building had fallen into disuse and although it was re-roofed in 1991, the ceiling had completely collapsed, and the shell panels were in poor condition. The floor of bone- and tooth-decorated motifs was beginning to break up. Unwanted material from the 1991 restoration, including shell, bone, glass and plaster, was swept out of the building into an external forecourt. This forecourt is flanked by crescent-shaped garden features, and is approached by a slate-gravel path.

Objectives

The general objective of the archaeological investigation was to inform the programme of repair and conservation. It was hoped that the archaeological work might: recover artefacts and shells from the plaster dump in front of the Shell House for possible reuse in the restoration and find fragments of window glass that might indicate the original colour schemes used in the window and door panes; inform reconstruction of the form and decoration of the original ceiling; the accurate restoration of the shell panels; determine the character and form of the forecourt garden features and determine the character and form of the access path to the building.

Methodology

A topographic survey of the building and its immediate environs was undertaken using an EDM theodolite with data recorder. The front external elevation of the Shell House and internal elevations and floor were all drawn at a scale of 1:10. In addition all internal features and panels were recorded using digital photography. Several elements of the shell panels were drawn at 1:1 allowing the preparation of a composite drawing of a (nearly) complete shell panel. Detailed photography and a scale drawing at 1:20 were also made of a dump of roof timbers to the northeast of the building (FIG.2, feature 1016).

The main area of excavation (FIG. 2, Area 1) was located in the forecourt in front of the building and measured 10 m by 8 m. This included the cobble apron, associated with the verandah lying immediately in front of the building entrance. The apron was cleaned and features relating to the verandah roof were recorded. A mound of debris deposited in the forecourt was divided into 2 m grid squares and fully excavated. The raised crescent-shaped garden features flanking the forecourt were also cleaned and examined. Two further trenches (Areas 2 and 3) were excavated across the line of the approach path in order to determine its character (FIG. 2; Area 3 to the S of this plan and not therefore shown).

All the features and deposits were recorded using an open-ended numbering system and all significant features and deposits were drawn at an appropriate scale (not less than 1:20) and photographed in both analogue and digital format.

Excavation Results

The forecourt cobble apron was overlain by a thin layer of silty loam, much of which had been trodden into the surface between the cobbles. This overlying material was gridded then excavated and small quantities of coloured glass and other material were collected from it. Most of the coloured glass fragments were green but small quantities of blue, purple and orange glass were also recovered. The exposed cobble surface was made of small white or light coloured cobbles set within diagonal lines of darker grey cobbles. The surface was edged with notch-decorated slate kerbs. Traces of four pillar bases which had presumably supported the roof of the verandah, were identified at the front of the cobble apron. These lay on a double brick cement foundation which, in two cases, were overlain by a notched slate block with a central spindle hole.

The forecourt area in front of (i.e. south of) the cobble apron was overlain by a series of plaster and soil dumps forming a deposit up to 0.2 m thick. The area to the northeast of the forecourt, adjacent to the building, contained a higher proportion of plaster fragments and shell debris. All these dumps were gridded at 2.m intervals, systematically excavated and the numerous lumps of plaster thus collected were examined. Many of them were lath-impressed on the reverse, suggesting they originated from the ceiling rather than the walls.

Shells were attached to the smooth face of the three large lumps, suggesting that at least part of the ceiling was shell-decorated. Cockles, mussels and limpets were identified on these fragments, none of which appeared to be have been moulded to make a domed ceiling. However, all the fragments were very small with none more than 0.2m long. Several slate slabs were recovered from the plaster dumps including one large piece. These clearly originated from the roof of the verandah.

The shell and plaster dumps contained significant quantities of other items, many of which were presumably used as decoration in the ceiling and wall panels. These included polished stone and marble objects, fragments of faceted quartz crystal, small pieces of coal and gunflints. In addition, several hundred small fragments of coloured glass were recovered, the vast majority less than 30 mm long. It seems likely that they exceeded the quantity that might be accounted for by the window and door panes and, consequently, the majority were presumably used as decoration in the ceiling or walls. This suggestion is supported by traces of plaster adhering to one side of several of the glass fragments and the fact that many appeared to have been cut to diamond or triangular shapes. Most of the recovered glazed pottery fragments came from a single, large, earthenware storage jar with an internal brown glaze.

The underlying forecourt surface was a compacted silty loam with no evidence of any artificial surface material, suggesting that it may have originally been a lawned area. However, there was an area of olive grey clay and slate fragments forming a rectangular area of hard standing (FIG.2, feature 1012) immediately in front of the cobble apron approximately 2 m long by 1 m wide. This may have originally formed a step up to the verandah.

To either side of the forecourt were raised earth banks associated with areas of small, angular quartz boulders. These areas of quartz formed what appeared to be small, irregular-shaped rockeries. The inner face of each of the two banks (FIG.2 features 1013 and 1014) was defined by a row of larger quartz boulders forming a kerb either side of the forecourt.

The approach path was excavated at two locations. In Area 2, immediately to the south of the forecourt, the path was laid in a thin layer of small slate fragments approximately 2m wide (FIG. 2, feature 1016). This surface widened as it entered the 'mouth' of the forecourt FIG. 2.feature 1015). However, there was no evidence for the slate surface of the path to the north of the large tree stump that lay just beyond the southern entrance to the forecourt. In Area 3, located approximately midway along the access path to the Shell House, the gravel surface of the path was again approximately 2 m wide with no evidence for any flanking kerb.

The shell panels, floor, ceiling and windows

The survey included internal and external elevations and a detailed examination of the internal shell panels and these are described in the client report (Hughes 2003). Briefly, a number of repeated motifs were apparent on all the shell panels. These included stylised floral designs centred around the ten conch shells, each of which forms the focus of a panel and are set in the wall like sconces above a polished stone (FIGs 3-4). On all the larger panels a series of mussel shell pairs were used to create a border in the form of a gothic arch. The foot of all the larger panels was defined by a row of large oval otter shells and a row of large oyster shells with worm-cast surfaces.

Based on the information from the surviving panel fragments, it estimated that a total of 13,502 shells was originally required for the Shell House walls (Table 1).

Trying to match this estimate with the total numbers recovered from the excavation was difficult. In

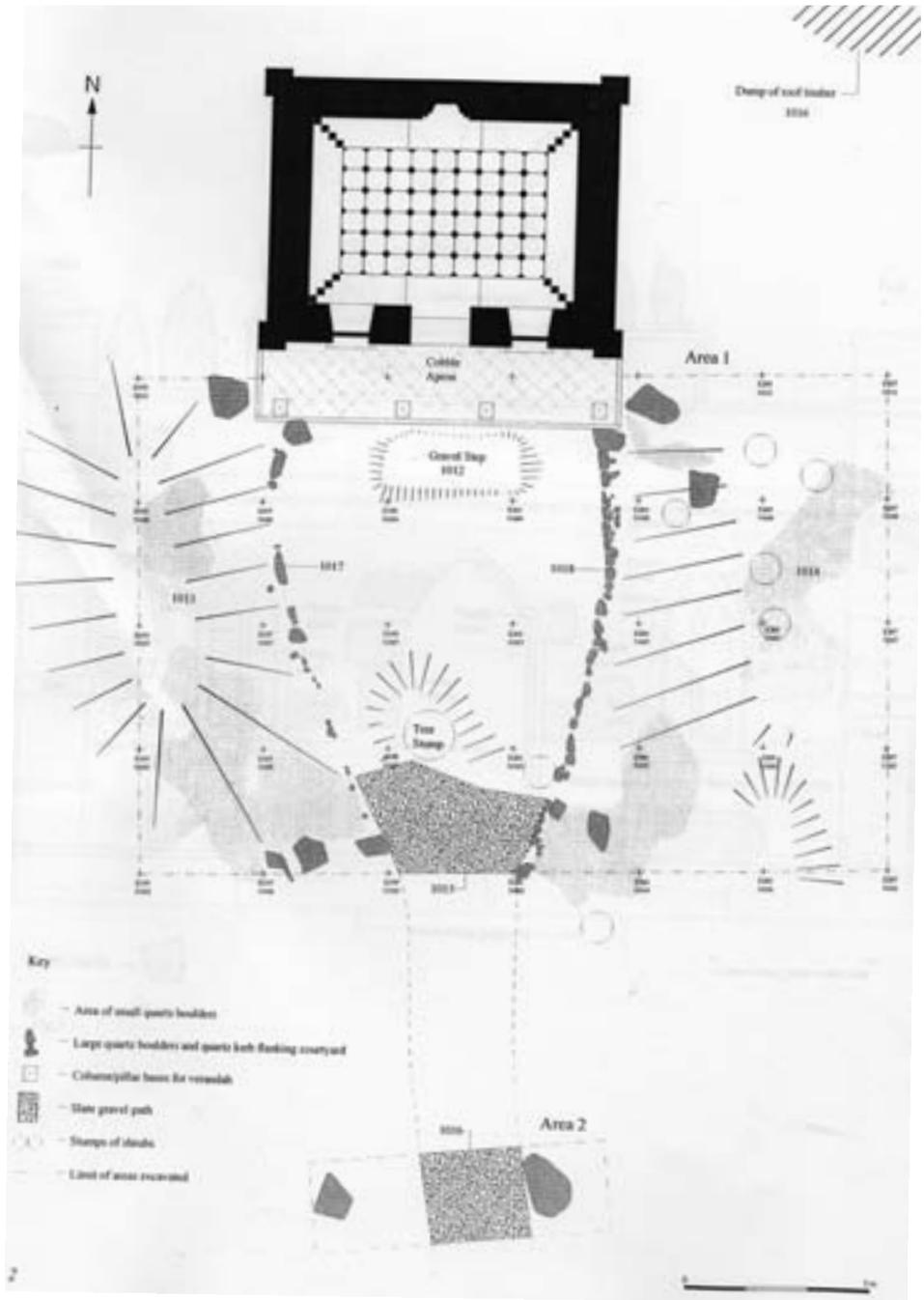


FIG.2 Cilwendeg: Plan of excavation (Cambria Archaeology)

general only complete shells were retained and quantified. Inevitably the more fragile shells (for example mussels, otter shells and razors) were under-represented in the recovered sample. With the exception of the conches (which are almost certainly of West Indian origin) the shell material could all have been collected on local beaches.

	No/sq m covered	Estimated original total no of shells
Mussel	271	5569
Cockles	121	2487
Oysters	41	843
Razors	8	164
Whelk/Periwinkle	79	1623
Limpet	94	1932
Otter Shells	43	884
Total		13,502

Table 1 – estimate of the total numbers of shells used in the shell panels

In addition to the shell decoration, numerous other items were used as decoration in the panels but generally in very small quantities. These included fragments of window glass and faceted quartz crystal which were particularly noticeable in the panels associated with the window recesses. Other common items included fragments of cut and polished stone and, as indicated above, these were often used as the central focus for floral motifs. It is noticeable that the number and variety of decorative items collected from the shell dump in the forecourt seems to far exceed the number that might have originally been present in the wall panels. This leads to the conclusion that at least some of them were used in the ceiling.

The central area of the floor consisted of octagonal, lime-concrete tiles inlaid with animal bone and tooth decorative motifs. Smaller slate tiles were set into the corners of the concrete tiles. The floor was drawn at a scale of 1:10 and a series of overlapping digital photographs were taken. The combined information from these two recording formats was used to produce a detailed archive drawing of the floor. It is noticeable that the central tiles are less worn than the outer tiles. This seems to suggest that the central area of the room may have been protected from general wear and tear by some form of floor-covering or a table.

The pattern of notches, sockets and ledges on the internal front and rear elevations gives possible clues as to the original form of the ceiling (Hughes 2003). Together with the fragments of ceiling plaster recovered from the forecourt excavation and a dump of timber to the northeast of the building, they provided clues as to the original form of the ceiling and informed the subsequent restoration. For example many of the ceiling fragments were decorated with shells, glass and faceted crystal quartz, hinting at the decorative motifs used in the ceiling.

Using the evidence from both the surviving glass fragments still attached to the window frames and the few that were collected from the surface of the cobble apron, it was possible to suggest the colour scheme that was used in the windows.

Conclusion

The excavation in front of the Shell House has provided a significant amount of information on the associated garden features and access path. Several miniature rockeries consisting of small quartz boulders were set into the top of the two raised earth banks either side of the forecourt. The absence of the access path in the

interior of the forecourt appears to suggest that this area may have been lawned. There was no evidence for any other surface feature apart from a rectangular area of hard standing leading up onto the Shell House verandah.

Analysis and understanding of the excavation results usefully informed the restoration of the building, particularly by improving an understanding of the appearance and character of the original ceiling, the window glass and the type and quantities of shell used in the wall panels and the external garden features.

Led by the Temple Trust, restoration included repairs to the external elevations, a new verandah, and the restoration of the magnificent internal shell panels, ceiling and floor. Work was completed in the summer of 2005 and the Shell House opened on June 1st 2006 for admission (Wall 2006).

Opening Hours

The Cilwendeg Shell house is open every Thursday throughout the summer from 09.00 to 18.00 hrs. Entry is free but site donations are warmly welcomed. For further enquiries please contact The Temple Trust 0207-482-6171.

Acknowledgements

The excavation and survey was undertaken by the author with the assistance of Ken Murphy and Hubert Wilson from Cambria Archaeology. We are very grateful for the assistance of students from the Universities of Lancaster, York and Exeter and from Clitheroe Grammar School, who participated in the fieldwork and who helped to process and record the finds. Particular thanks are due to Benjamin Vis from The Netherlands and Stephen Gaston from the USA, who were students with the University of York fieldschool, for all their hard work.

Many useful discussions were held both before and during the fieldwork with Suzannah Fleming (Temple Trust) and Roger Clive-Powell (Architect). We are also very grateful to Alun Bowen for all his help, support and encouragement during the project and to Dr Caroline Palmer for her useful comments on the origin of the shells.



FIG. 3 Cilwendeg: Wall panels with conch and shells prior to restoration (Photo: Caroline Palmer)

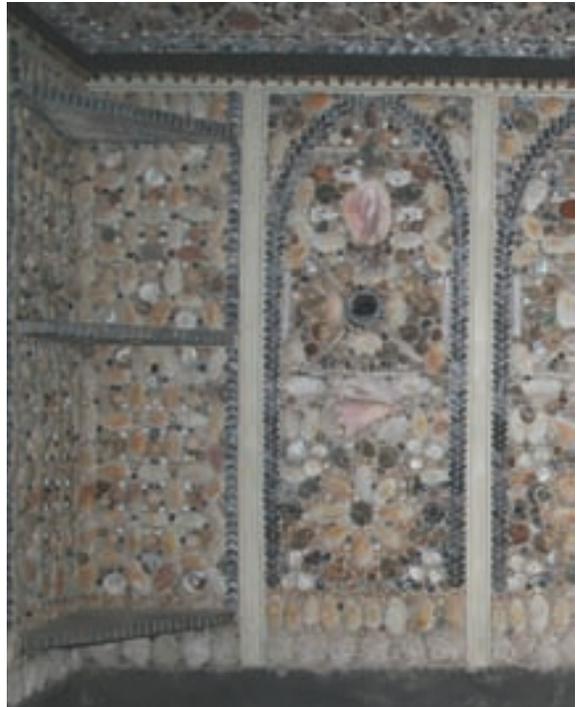


FIG. 4 Cilwendeg: Wall panels post-restoration (Photo: Cambria Archaeology)

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The Penllergare Cultural, Archaeological and Historic Landscape Database

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Abstract

The creation and purpose of a Cultural, Archaeological and Historic Landscape Database for Penllergare, Glamorgan (OS SS 623 991) is explained. The digital database runs on a GIS-based application accessed through layered thematic maps with the facility for ongoing input and development. Its purpose is to be a first point of reference for educational use and heritage resource management.

Introduction

The Penllergare estate, located a short distance to the northwest of Swansea (OS SS 623 991) is regarded as one of the finest Victorian landscapes in South Wales (Cadw 2000, 180-84; Morris 1999; Whittle 1992, 65,70). Incorporating many romantic and picturesque features, it was designed and fashioned by John Dillwyn Llewelyn between 1831, upon his coming of age and inheritance of the estate from his father, and his death in 1882 (FIG.1). Here he created an environment where he and his family could pursue particular interests and advance learning in the fields of photography, botany and science.

Over the last century or so, the estate core has incrementally retreated under the encroachment of residential housing and industrial development. Such developments have inevitably carried serious threats of vandalism, left unchecked by corporate neglect. This note explains how a serious attempt is being made to address these problems and establish a long-term plan to restore some parts of the parkland to their former glory and make them accessible.

John Dillwyn Llewelyn: the creation of the landscape

Dillwyn Llewelyn's landscape was created within the valley of the Afon Llan. At the north end of the estate this flows through a steep-sided, rocky gorge, where it provided a naturally dramatic backdrop for about a third of Dillwyn Llewelyn's plantings. These valley sides become broader and more gentle as the river passes through the estate from the north to the southern boundary at Cadle. Because of its siting within the Llan watershed, little of the encroaching perimeter development is visible from within the parkland (with the exception of the DVLA offices at Llangyfelach, and the new Bellway housing development which abuts onto the west side of the former kitchen garden).

It is evident from Dillwyn Llewelyn's photographs



FIG.1 John Dillwyn Llewelyn, self-portrait
(Photo: Richard Morris).

and from contemporary written accounts, that his efforts and those of his son, John Talbot Dillwyn Llewelyn, established a landscape filled with diverse colour from native and exotic flora, set against a background of crags and water (FIG.2). The estate was particularly famed for its rhododendrons and azaleas, the former being propagated on an impressive scale. According to Pettigrew (1886): ‘Thousands of seedlings from the best species and varieties are raised annually in boxes and planted out in nursery lines in succession, where they remain until they are large enough to be planted permanently in favourable situations in the woods or elsewhere’.



FIG.2 The Shanty on the Upper Lake (Photo Richard Morris).

John Dillwyn Llewelyn employed new technology to enhance the horticultural diversity of the place. For example, he designed one of the first purpose-built orchid houses in Britain (FIG.3) constructed by the summer of 1836 (Morris 1999, 49) within his kitchen garden. The structure was modified around 1843, when a hot waterfall was added. The inspiration for its design came from contemporary accounts of Robert Schomburgk’s visit to the Essequibo river in Guiana. A hot waterfall was needed to re-create the humid tropical environment required to cultivate tropical, non-terrestrial orchids.



FIG.3 Interior of the Orchid House (Photo Richard Morris).

Formation of the Penllergare Trust

As already noted, the Penllergare estate is today derelict. The family home long ago disappeared and its site is now occupied by offices of the Neath-Port Talbot borough council, surrounded not by neatly clipped lawns and flowerbeds, but by a car park. On the broader canvas, the former estate parkland is encircled by industrial developments and housing estates, the northernmost part of the pleasure grounds being taken by the course of the M4. However, although abandoned by the Llewelyn family since the 1920s, and despite decades of neglect and vandalism, the estate core still retains much of its original character. And indeed, many of the features and even some of the planting, are still evident (FIGs.4a and 4b).

Against the background of expanding housing and industrial development, around 1990 the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust became involved and in 1991 commissioned a preliminary desktop survey from Landskip and Prospect, which appeared in 1993. Later, an independent charitable company led by Michael Norman and

Richard Morris was formed as the Friends of Penllergare/Cyfeillion Penllergare. Its principal aims are to further the protection, conservation, restoration and maintenance of Penllergare's cultural landscape (Norman 2000). Much work has already been done to raise the profile of the site, for example by publishing Richard Morris's book: *Penllergare – a Victorian Paradise*. Although public awareness of the site's importance has been heightened, unfortunately continuing neglect of the landscape itself still poses a serious threat from vandalism.

The GIS Database and Archaeological Survey

As a historic landscape survey was clearly needed to assess what remained of the fabric and structure of the surviving estate, in 2001 the new Trust approached Ken Murphy of Cambria Archaeology to create a Geographical Information System (GIS) database encompassing its cultural, archaeological and historic landscape. This was particularly appropriate, as he had already undertaken such an exercise at Hafod (Murphy, *forthcoming*).

It seems important to explain the *raison d'être* for this particular approach. GIS offers several advantages for this kind of work, principally because it enables layers of mapped digital information to be viewed in conjunction with a digital base, like layers of acetate over a paper map (Demers 2000). In the case of Penllergare, each mapped layer is dependent upon a separate dedicated database to which information can be added. The system enables individual features to be identified on the map and selected (written) data accessed accordingly. Additional to the mapping layers and related site data, it is possible to add visual information, such as printed maps or aerial photographs, to enhance the user's understanding. Depending on the quality of available data, GIS is thus a powerful tool for spatial analysis, accessible to a wide and flexible range of information and media.

The degree to which GIS can be used in isolation as a tool for public interpretation is, however, limited, since only a small amount of textual or numerical information can be held in the simple accompanying tables currently available. It is, however, possible to make more in-depth, qualitative information available by interfacing with other computer programs. For example, if the viewer wants to know more about a particularly



FIG.4 The Upper Falls, as photographed by Dillwyn Llewelyn (Photo Richard Morris).



FIG.5 The Upper Falls in 2002 (Photo: Penllergare Trust).

fine conservatory, clicking on 'conservatory' within the GIS opens a *Word* document on that feature. Similarly, given sufficient resources, photographs, web pages and even video-clips of the conservatory might be made available for viewing, thus providing a greater level of information to the user than is available through the GIS alone. This capability is known as *hot linking*.

Databasing Methodology

As a considerable body of research data had already been assembled on the estate's history before this undertaking began, a desktop assessment was undertaken to absorb it and examine all available published and unpublished material about the estate. Complementary fieldwork involved a walk-over survey. The Penllergare Cultural, Archaeological and Historic landscape database was created between October 2001 and January 2002 using a MapInfo GIS programme by Ken Murphy of *Cambria Archaeology*. This programme should become the principal basis upon which to build research projects, and it will also help inform future planning and management decisions.

In producing the Penllergare database, a number of sources were consulted, including:

Photographic and other graphic archives

An unusually extensive photographic archive is available. This documents the lives and pastimes of the family as well as the landscape of the estate. An important component is the photographs taken by John Dillwyn Llewelyn, who, besides being a gardener and botanist, was also a pioneer of early photography, following closely in the footsteps of William Henry (or Fox) Talbot, a cousin of his wife, Emma (Morris 1999).

Dillwyn Llewelyn's photographs of the plants at Penllergare are amongst the earliest examples of botanical photography (Morris 1999, 49). Indeed, calotype images exist from the 1840s documenting the plantings of both park and garden. A founder member of the London Photographic Society in 1853 (later the Royal Photographic Society) he was awarded a silver medal for his photographic study of motion at the Exposition Universelle in Paris, 1855. These photographs are not just valuable for their historical information. Many are also remarkable for their beauty. Indeed, the quality of the images was perhaps unequalled amongst Dillwyn Llewelyn's contemporaries (FIGs 4b;5).

In 1856 Dillwyn Llewelyn invented the Oxymel process. This enabled a delay between exposure and processing of images from glass plates which freed the photographer from having to develop images quickly either using a portable darkroom or returning home to a darkroom. It also enabled travellers and tourists to

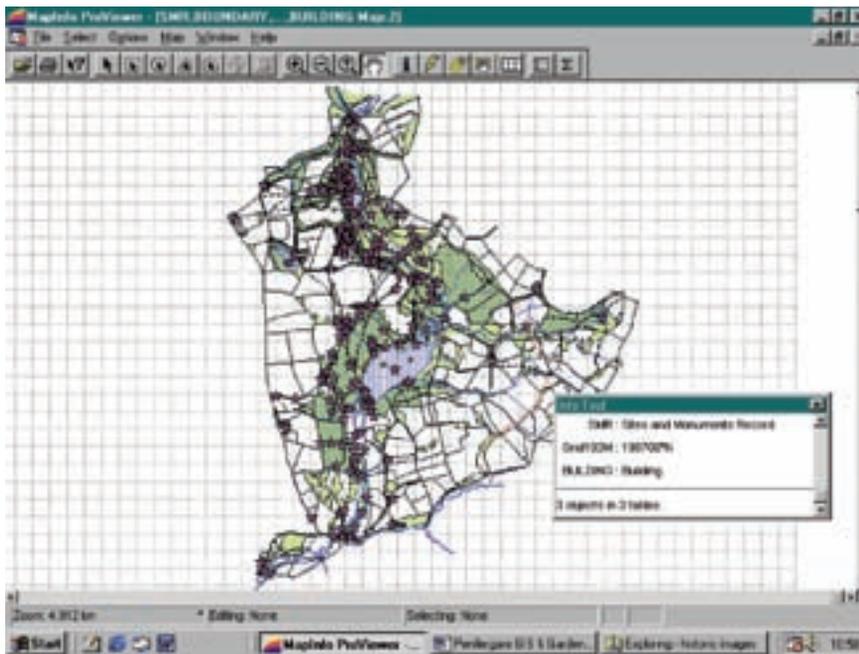


FIG.6 Screenshot of the Penllergare Cultural, Archaeological and Historic Landscape Database.

take photographs for development in the laboratory or at home perhaps weeks later.

Some 155 historic images, mostly photographs of the estate by Dillwyn Llewelyn of the 1840s and 50s, were incorporated into the database alongside relevant watercolours painted by family members and other illustrations of the house and garden. Seventy-five modern images of the estate were also scanned in, the majority taken during recent fieldwork.

The landscape survey phase of the survey also examined RAF vertical aerial photographs of the 1940s. These showed how dense tree cover then obscured much of the parkland. However, the kitchen garden and Orchid house are clearly visible on them, as are the Nissen huts of the troops stationed there during the Second World War.

In the quest for complementary information on the site's history, members of the local community were also consulted. Their testimonies proved useful in the interpretation of several landscape features. In particular, Mr William Edge, who ran a market garden from the walled garden during the 1920s, provided a sketched plan of the garden from memory (Briggs and Ward 2000, 2).

The 2001 field survey focused on the identification and re-location of those features marked on the various maps studied. An attempt was also made to locate the scenes or features captured by John Dillwyn Llewelyn in his pioneering photographs.

The GIS (FIG.6)

When completed, the desktop assessment and fieldwork information was incorporated into the GIS. All images were scanned in and related to digitised Ordnance Survey maps. Unfortunately, pressure upon time precluded addition of the 1838 Tithe Award assessment (see below). All the other identified historic landscape component features were recorded in the database, assigned a record number and given a short verbal description. More important sites were then *hot-linked* from the map layer and database to *Word* documents in which more comprehensive descriptions could be compiled. Personalities associated with the estate and individual estate structures were also *hot-linked* from the database. This technique enables the user to make more complex associations between localities and personalities. These images can be accessed either by clicking on the photograph icon on the GIS map (which relates to the position where the photograph was taken), directly through the database of images, or by *hot-linking* to those which relate directly to people or places for whom a long text description exists.

One of the system's most valuable functions is to enable users to directly compare and contrast photographs; for example those taken by Dillwyn Llewelyn can be seen alongside images taken from the same



FIG. 7 The Upper Lake by Dillwyn Llewelyn (Richard Morris).

position in 2001. This function doesn't only document the neglect of an estate which, in its heyday, was a centre of photographic, scientific and horticultural excellence; it also illustrates just how much estate fabric does still survive, hidden from view by rambling rhododendron.

Information has been incorporated into the database on the people who lived, worked or visited the estate during its heyday in an effort to illustrate their level of social influence. The greatest amount of information was collated on Llewelyn family members. Seventeen records briefly describe their individual and locational associations in the database. Where possible, records of these personalities include portraits. These are *hot-linked* to related personalities or locations so that the written or graphic material being sought appears onscreen.

Records have also been made for other significant individuals with estate associations. These briefly outline their connection to the place, *hot-linking* them to other associated records. Finally, outline records have been created for fifty-four of Dillwyn Llewelyn's tenants as listed in the 1838 Tithe Schedule for the Parish of Llangyfelach. At present these only include name, occupation, payment, acreage, and the name of the property. It is, however, hoped that this level of comprehensive reference will act as a catalyst to further research by interested local historians or genealogists, leading to the addition of valuable social information to the database.

The Penllergare Cultural, Archaeological and Historic Landscape Database was designed to include all the available information on the estate within one dataset as the primary reference point for estate research. Storage of this wide ranging information in a form accessible through one portal is meant to help future estate managers and inform the decision-making process for change through planning and conservation. Its format also enables access by an interested public. Indeed, public access to the database was one of the requirements stipulated by the Penllergare Trust from the outset of the project.

To facilitate that access, the completed database was distributed on CD to a number of locations, including the local Archaeological Trust's Sites and Monuments Record, the County Record Office and local libraries, as well as to the National Monuments Record and Cadw. This distribution was helped by the commercial programme, *ProView*, produced by *Mapinfo* and freely distributed to organisations using *Mapinfo* GIS, a facility enabling users without GIS to view the data, though not to edit it.

The database master copy is retained at Cambria Archaeology, where it remains available for ongoing editing and research. Future enhancements could incorporate terrain models, building surveys, ecological reports, sound and video clips, virtual tours and links to garden history websites or those on the history of photography. Even without such developments, the Penllergare GIS has already demonstrated how modern technology can usefully present research material for interpretative purposes and to aid conservation management at a site of major cultural significance.

Acknowledgments

The creation of the database was made possible through public funding from the Swansea Development Fund managed by the National Assembly for Wales, and also by a generous donation from the Gower Society. The author worked on a student placement for the Penllergare Trust from the Department of Computer Studies at Lampeter College.

A Note on Archive Sources

The principal archival sources consulted include the Ordnance Survey 6-inch and 25-inch maps in the first four editions. Additionally, an Ordnance Survey 2-inch surveyor's sketch map of 1813 in the British Library and the 1838 Llangyfelach Tithe Award map were used. The latter is particularly useful because it shows the estate in the course of improvement - depicting the newly-created carriage drive and the massive stonework

dam needed to create the Lower Lake then under construction. As mine workings honeycombed the bedrock underneath the estate, maps for the three collieries sited closest to the estate were consulted: Mynydd Newydd, Tir Donkin and Carn Goch. These workings were traced, and by scanning and georeferencing it was possible to add a GIS layer mapping the buried environment at Penllergare.

Other sources consulted included Cadw (for Scheduled Ancient Monuments lists); the National Library of Wales; Glamorgan County Record Office; Swansea Reference Library (for census returns), and Maps of the Estates of the Lord Bishops of St Davids (1815).

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Marl Hall Gardens

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Abstract

An archaeological assessment of woodland adjacent to Marl Hall (OS SH 8000 7890), a minor gentry house in Conwy, has brought to light a number of man-made features probably representing an eighteenth-century garden. They include a walled garden, terraced walkways and water features in a formal layout adjacent to the hall, with a series of informal paths leading to viewing points in the woodland above. Following a brief consideration of sparse documentary sources, and comparison with similar sites elsewhere, it is suggested that the features recorded are probably contemporary with the house when it was occupied by the Williams family in the early part of the eighteenth century. The investigation provides an invaluable insight into a lost early garden layout in North Wales, on a site where the future examination of buried soils may prove extremely informative.

Introduction

Coed Marl Hall is a 12 ha part semi-natural and part replanted ancient woodland site situated 1 km north east of Llandudno Junction, in the lower Conwy Valley. Once an integral part of lands associated with Marl Hall, a property dating back to at least the seventeenth century, the woodland is now divorced from the Hall and leased by the Woodland Trust from Warwickshire County Council. In advance of woodland management work an archaeological assessment of the woodland was commissioned by the Woodland Trust. During this assessment a group of hitherto unrecorded garden features were observed. Subsequently a visit to the grounds of Marl Hall, itself, was made to add to the record made of the garden layout.

Historical Background

Marl Hall has had something of a turbulent history. It is thought to date to at least the early seventeenth century when it belonged to William Holland of Conwy (Holland 1915, 102). By 1641 the property was owned and occupied by Bishop John Williams (Calendar of Wynn Papers no. 1690). Bishop Williams also possessed the Conwy ferry and successive owners and tenants of Marl appear to have regulated the ferry (Davies 1942, 210). The house was rebuilt in 1661, probably by Sir Griffith Williams, heir of Bishop Williams, who was created a baronet at about this time (Williams 1835, 134-5). The property stayed in the ownership of the Williams family and then by marriage to the Prendergasts until the 1780s (Davies 1942, 199). It was significantly damaged by fire in 1750 (Lewis 1834, s.v. Eglwys-Rhôs),



FIG. 1 Marl: Site Location Map (Copyright EAS Ltd).

and rebuilt again in the 1780s when ownership is thought to have passed to businessman Thomas Williams of Llanidan, Anglesey, sometimes referred to as the ‘Copper King’ (Williams 1973, 15). During the nineteenth century the property was mainly let to tenants (Tucker 1957, 69) and by the end of the nineteenth century only the south wing was habitable (Marl Hall 1896). In the late nineteenth century the property was first rented to, then purchased by the Birmingham Hospital Saturday Fund and major renovations brought the building back into full use as a convalescent home (Tucker 1957, 70). In 1971 the property was bought by Warwickshire County Council as an Outdoor Education Centre (Graham Jones, Warwickshire County Council *pers. com.*) Within the last ten years the property boundary to the north-west has been bifurcated by the A470 road and the immediate environs of the house have seen many adaptations for modern day use.

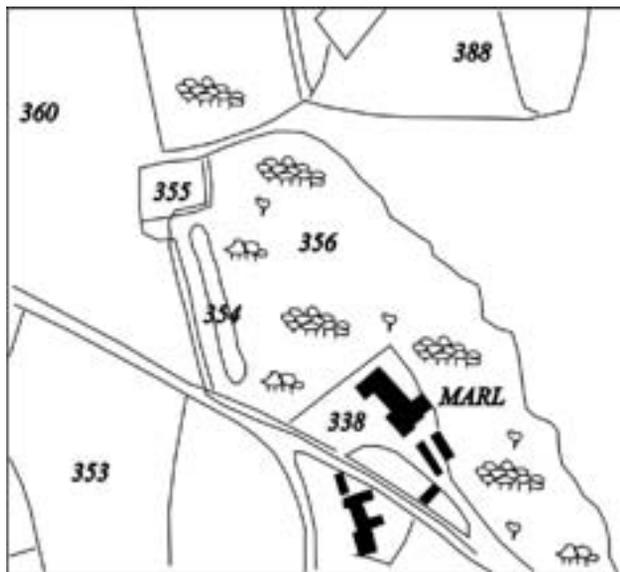


FIG. 2 Marl: after the 1846 Tithe Award Map showing the walled garden (355) and reservoir (354). (Copyright EAS Ltd).

The earliest historical details of the gardens associated with Marl Hall date from 1846 when the Tithe Award map shows two distinct features within the woodland to the northwest of the hall. A square feature is described as a ‘brick garden’ in the accompanying schedule while a long thin feature between it and the hall is described as a reservoir (FIG. 1). The map accompanying a sale catalogue of 1885 describes this brick garden as an orchard (Gwynedd Archives, XSC 0119). The Tithe Award map also shows a number of pathways traversing the northeast quadrant of the woodland. In particular, one route runs in a straight line from the northeast side of the hall to the brick garden. Late nineteenth-century Ordnance Survey (OS) 25-inch maps show in addition a more extensive network of pathways extending up into the woodlands and a well to the north east of the brick garden. Curiously, the feature described as a reservoir on the Tithe Award map is absent from the 1889 OS First Edition 25-inch map but reappears on the Second Edition in 1900. A possible explanation for this is that the woodland had become so dense in the second half of the nineteenth century, perhaps in line with the misfortunes of the property, that this feature was not then evident to the surveyors, but that towards the end of the nineteenth-century property renovations included new woodland management work which re-established the location of this feature. The 1885 sale catalogue describes the property as follows:

The front is adorned with remarkably fine green African Oak. The land is generally well cultivated, has a good depth of rich soil, is interspersed with fine trees, and has a good stream running through it... The brick walled gardens are extensive, and well stocked with fruit trees. There is an ample and never failing supply of spring water... (Gwynedd Archives, XSC 0119).

Field Observations

The reality of what remains on the ground today is far less romantic than the advert. The hall and its woodland, now under separate management, are divided by large fences and a modern road junction has encroached upon

the western edge of the property. While some aspects of the old garden layout are preserved as upstanding features within that woodland, others survive only as more subtle archaeological features among trees and undergrowth.

The walled garden is evident today as an enclosed area 40 m square tucked into the northwest corner of the property boundary (FIG. 2). The walls, of hand made bricks, survive on the west side to a height of approximately 2 m, being capped with modern brick. On the east side the brick wall survives to five courses, on the south as a limestone block footing only and on the north it has mostly been removed for a modern feature along the property boundary. No evidence for the internal arrangement of the walled garden is seen above ground and the whole is overgrown with trees. The garden sits within an area deliberately levelled into the base of the natural slope, the surviving ground level within the garden is slightly lower again, suggesting that the visitor stepped down into it.

Directly to the east of the walled garden are two terraces stepped into the slope

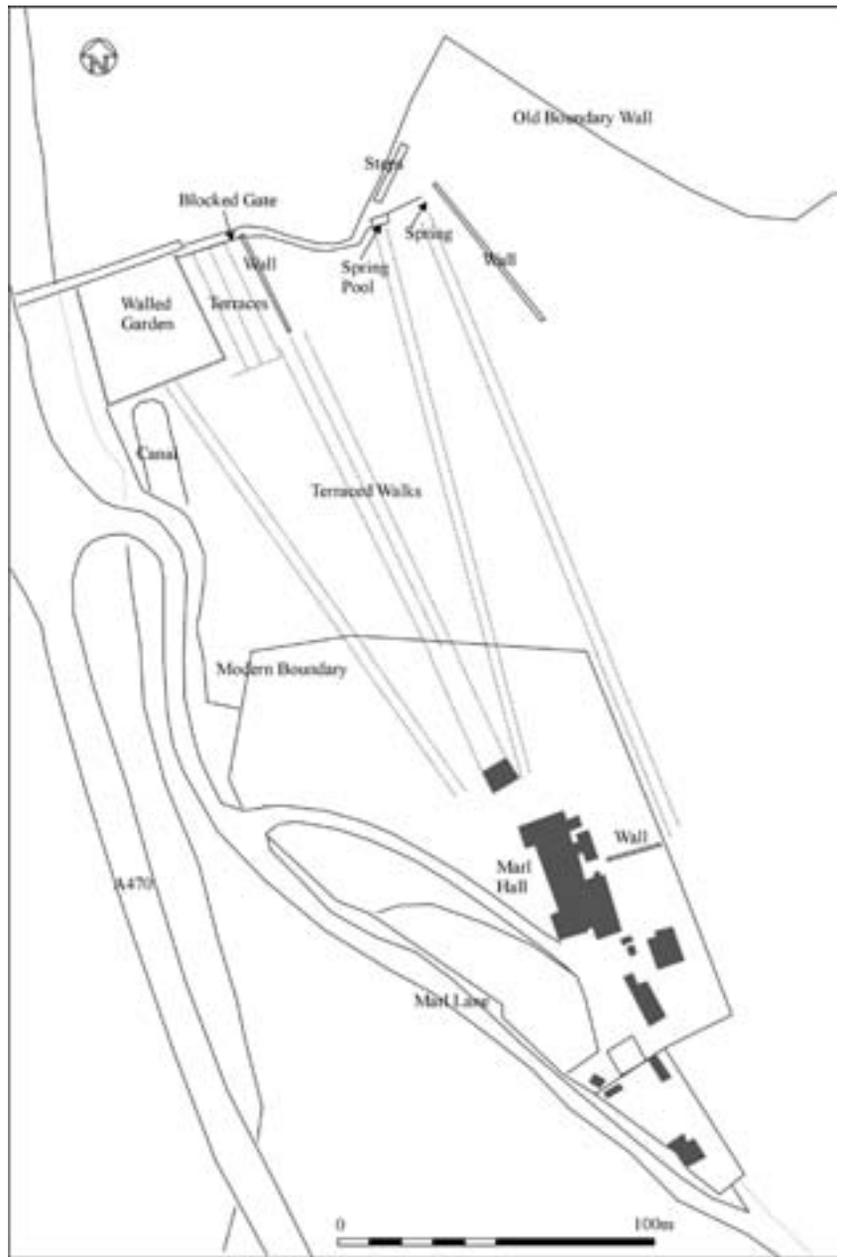


FIG. 3 Marl Hall outline plan showing early garden surveyed features in relation to the present-day site (Copyright EAS Ltd).

overlooking the garden wall and mirroring its length. To the south of the walled garden a 30 m length of a 6 m wide shallow ditch appears to be the remains of the reservoir seen on the Tithe Award map, now truncated by the modern road junction. Evidence of tumbled limestone blocks at the north end of the feature suggests that it was once stone-edged or lined. Although now dry, this feature is known to have held water until relatively recently (Graham Jones, Warwickshire County Council *pers. com.*). A nearby stream, now culverted, would seem the likely source of water for this feature in the past. Its precise function is unclear but it may

have provided a water supply for the garden as well as creating a canal-like water feature.

Walking upslope through the woodland between the hall and the walled garden a series of longitudinal earthworks are encountered. Further exploration reveals these to be a series of terraced walkways radiating out in straight lines from the northeast side of the hall to the northern boundary of the property. Each walkway proceeds to a particular element of the garden layout. The lowest runs to the assumed position of an entrance into the walled garden. A parallel pair, the uppermost of which is assumed to have been for planting, can be traced from a levelled lawn area adjacent to the house, possibly a more recent feature, to a blocked-up entrance in the northern boundary wall. Another terminates in a feature referred to as the spring pool at the location of the well marked on the early OS 25-inch maps. This is a square man made pool defined by a series of low walls and steps collecting water flowing from a natural spring nearby. While the feature is recently maintained it clearly sits on older footings. The highest walk is particularly indistinct but can be seen between the rear of the hall to the point where the natural spring which feeds the spring pool erupts from a natural rock face. Its apparent line is probably that taken by a modern path, which runs parallel to the rear of the hall.

There have been many recent alterations within the hall grounds. The main drive now approaches from the east as opposed to the south and the grounds have been modified to accommodate the demands of the present day. It is, however, possible to trace the southern ends of the walks. Additionally, the remnants of a limestone block wall seem to indicate that a flight of steps led up from the rear of the house to the path running parallel to the rear of the building.

The features so far described occupy a topographically more gently-sloping area adjacent to the hall and clearly represent an area of more formal gardens directly adjacent to the Hall. Just north of the spring pool a flight of limestone block steps lead upslope to a series of more irregular informal paths meandering through the woodlands, some of which lead to viewing points which overlook the Conwy estuary. Thus the property combines aspects of both the formal garden and the Picturesque pleasure ground.

Discussion

It has, unfortunately, been impossible to discern from currently available records precisely which of the numerous owners and tenants designed and laid out the gardens at Marl. The cartographic evidence indicates that a garden was already well-established by the mid-nineteenth century. The archaeological evidence shows a garden layout originally more elaborate than the cartographic evidence would seem to suggest and that by the mid-nineteenth century, lack of maintenance had rendered it unrecognisable in a near-wild woodland.

It now remains to consider if the stylistic evidence can help resolve the absence of a date for the layout. The garden appears to include elements of what is described by Whittle (1992, 26) as a 'baroque garden'. These gardens were formal but of an increased scale with walks and avenues continuing the axes of houses into the gardens and out across the landscape. Besides this, terracing, gravel walks, parterres, groves, avenues, canals, fountains and statues were also desirable. They were first established in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century in Wales and examples on a grand scale survive at Chirk, Powis, and Erddig. In North Wales survivors on a more modest scale include Leeswood Hall, southeast of Mold, thought to have been designed by Stephen Switzer between 1728 and 1732 (Cadw 1995, 147), while Nerquis Hall, south of Mold, was planned and started in the early eighteenth century but not completed until later (Cadw 1995, 178). Certain elements added to earlier layouts or which were largely superseded by subsequent remodelling have survived elsewhere.

In a strictly more local context, Gloddaeth, 2 km to the northeast, forms a most interesting comparison. Like Marl, the site layout is governed by topographic constraints. This includes a canal of similar proportions to that at Marl, sitting at the foot of a slope below the house which has been landscaped into a series of terraces with level walkways and gardens. To the west a piece of woodland is intersected by a series of rides

radiating from a central statue, while woodland to the north has a series of less formal paths. Although subject to nineteenth-century improvements, much of this layout is associated with early eighteenth-century landscaping and planting by Sir Roger Mostyn (Cadw 1998, 94). Pennant, writing in the second half of the eighteenth century describes Mostyn's efforts as 'laid out, according to the taste of his time, in straight walks, intersecting each other or radiating from a centre, distinguished by a statue' (Pennant 1781, 339).

Bodysgallen, the neighbouring property to the north, has formal terracing extending to the south west of the house probably of seventeenth century origin (Haslam 2005), though in its present state the site apparently also owes much to early eighteenth-century landscaping (Cadw 1998, 62). A feature known as 'the terrace walk' located away from the house to the southwest, just over the boundary between, and on a similar alignment to, the formal walks at Marl, overlooks the Conwy estuary and was described as already 'neglected' by Pennant in the later part of the eighteenth century (Pennant 1781, 337).

Marl also retains an arrangement of radiating walks continuing the longitudinal axis of the house to the northeast and leading to other features within the garden layout, canal, walled garden, terraces, gate and spring pool. With these key elements, the Marl landscape clearly retains significant components of a later formal style, perhaps definable as 'Baroque' in style. Its significance today lies in the fact of its survival, having been abandoned in the eighteenth century, perhaps as early as 1750 when the house itself was damaged by fire. With the exception of some informal routes across the site and the continued use of the walled garden, this landscape was never subjected to remodelling or alteration. What survives therefore appears to represent the layout in its original form.

Smaller 'Baroque-style' garden layouts are unusual, since most were replaced or modified by subsequent re-modelling and additions. Consequently, the survival and discovery of this one at Marl offers a rare insight into the garden fashion of a minor country house. While relatively compact and in miniature, its layout encompasses the minimal desirable key elements probably typical of a Welsh minor gentry estate garden in the earlier eighteenth century.

An important conclusion drawn from making this survey is that, although undoubtedly a valuable tool, cartographic evidence alone can sometimes be misleading, and examination of features on the ground in detail is crucial to a fuller understanding. Although incomplete and indistinct, Marl Hall garden remains a potentially valuable source of information for the garden researcher. Its landscape may still hold buried deposits, preserved after between two and three centuries of neglect. These may not only yield further detail on its layout and phasing, but could also shed light on plantings and gardening activity. In this respect this site and others like it are worthy of preservation and of safeguarding for the future. At Marl the findings of the archaeological survey informed the management decision for sensitive removal and sympathetic thinning of timber. Here a horse was employed in preference to more potentially damaging mechanical means.

Finally, this unexpected discovery draws attention to the need to be watchful for similar survivals with equal potential for valuable insights into garden history.

Acknowledgements

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Postcards and Garden History

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Introduction (P.E.D.)

Picture postcards have been published for over a century, but their value as a resource for garden historians has only lately been fully appreciated. Commercial photographs of parks and gardens, or including glimpses of gardens, incidental to views of the houses they adorned, became generally available in the late 1850s. These were mainly in the form of stereoscopic cards (an entertainment that persisted well into the twentieth century) or topographical *cartes de visite*, miniature photographs given to friends or collected as souvenirs, which were very popular in the 1860s and 70s, becoming scarcer towards the end of the century. Larger formats were also available, often from the same negatives as the stereos or *cartes*, but were of course correspondingly more expensive. Artists such as Francis Bedford, G.W.Wilson, James Valentine and Francis Frith built their reputations (and comfortable incomes) on the sale of these images. Perhaps the most significant was C.S.Allen of Tenby, whose red, leather-bound albums commissioned by the landed families of south-west Wales, portray their houses and estates. Examples of these or copies from them can be seen at the National Library, the National Monuments Record and in some local South Wales record offices.

However, none of these early images could rival in popularity the inexpensive picture postcard ('penny plain, tuppence coloured') which was well established by 1900. Picture postcards were first authorised by the British Post Office in 1894, but sales initially were slow, probably because the regulations required that one side of the card should be reserved for the address, leaving the other side to be shared by the images and space for a message. The small size of the original 'court card' also restricted the size of the images (there were often several tiny vignettes). Some of these early cards, especially those printed in colour, are very attractive, but they do not provide clear pictures. Larger cards were allowed by 1900, but it was not until 1902 that the regulations were changed again, to allow the message to share the reverse with the address, and the picture to cover the whole of the front. Sales of postcards now exploded, creating probably the biggest collecting craze of the twentieth century, and well over ten billion cards had been sold by 1914. Many of them still exist. The enthusiasm died away during the First World War and never fully revived, though picture postcards have been produced in moderate numbers ever since. Today there are many collectors, especially of the pre-1940 issues, and high prices are paid for scarce and desirable cards.

Only a tiny proportion of postcards show parks and gardens, though there are many thousands that do. The private collection of Welsh postcards that gives rise to the present paper contains upwards of five thousand cards in this category. Naturally, the incidence of cards of any particular garden reflects the number of visitors to that garden, so that places such as Bodnant and Powis Castle are well represented. So too are the public gardens of the major holiday resorts and towns, many of which date from the late Victorian or Edwardian eras. Sales of such cards were large enough to attract the attention of the big national postcard publishers, like Valentine, Tuck, Photochrom, or Wrench. Most of their earlier products are 'printed' photographs, reproduced from plates prepared mainly by the halftone or collotype processes. 'Real Photo' postcards, produced more directly from the photographic negative, and giving images of finer grain, took an increasing share of the market during the 1900s. They provided an opportunity for a host of small operators to supply postcards of their localities, in much smaller runs than the nationals could sustain. Many postcards of properties that

opened to the public only occasionally were commissioned from local photographers, or published independently by them. These local tradesmen also undertook private commissions to photograph houses and gardens which were seldom or never opened, and to produce postcards for the owners, who used them for personal correspondence and greetings. So also did amateur photographers, who often had their pictures printed with postcard backs. Real Photo postcards in these latter categories are now rare and in demand.

The question of accurately dating an image often arises, since many cards were not postally used, and when they were, the postmark date might be some years later than the photograph. Very occasionally the picture's caption included a date (on photographs of garden fêtes for example), or the sender's message indicates a recent date. Often, however, one has to fall back upon the style of the card, or the type of stamp used, or upon external evidence about the period when the photographer was active, or the history of the property itself. With experience, a card can usually be dated with some confidence within a decade or so, and often more precisely.

Readers who wish to learn more about the use of postcards in garden history are advised to consult the excellent extended note on the subject by Brent Elliot (2004).

Commentary

It was naturally a prime intention for Victorian or Edwardian estate owners to create the impression that the environs of their homes were being maintained to the highest standards of contemporary horticultural skill; that the fabric of their estates was well-managed and perhaps, most of all, that their property was still developing in tasteful style. Unsurprisingly then, building facades, conservatories and parterres are not uncommon themes amongst the postcards. These records were found to be particularly useful when Thomas Lloyd came to chronicle the loss of Welsh houses (Lloyd 1986,1989).

Scenes of wooded parkland were also popular, and these appear to have been intended to convey a sense of rural tranquillity as well as good land management, animal husbandry and even conservation practice.

Householders seem to have found it particularly useful to combine imagery of their gardens with architectural shots of their homes, and to this end they commissioned a litany of views of formal garden beds. The most satisfying were colour-tinted and, with these, an occasional change in colourist and consequently of colours could have a profound effect by appearing to upset the integrity of a planting scheme. There are so many views of parterres, or of beds grouped in a formal style, that a catalogue of such planting schemes on the national scale could well be of great interest to an understanding of tastes in later Victorian planting.

Glimpses of kitchen gardens tend to be rare, so in a statistical sense the selection presented here is unrepresentative. To catch sight of the gardeners themselves is more unusual, particularly to capture them at some particular task in the kitchen garden. Sightings of humans in the greenhouse are even more fugitive, though such discoveries are particularly interesting.

Some significant post cards

Twenty cards have been chosen from the Davis collection. The reasons for this particular selection are varied: some depict unusual features that it would be useful to know more about, and several offer valuable insights into the social milieu of the day. All illustrate features which, if not now entirely lost or destroyed, have probably changed beyond all recognition.

The list is organised by theme alphabetically. The place-names adopted follow those recommended by the Board of Celtic Studies, and appear here as used on *Coflein*, the RCAHMW's on-line database of sites and monuments (www.rcahmw). Each place-name is then followed by the site's Primary Reference Number (PRN) from the same database. An eight-figure grid reference locates estate nuclei usually from a point



1. Dyffryn House and Gardens, Glamorgan



2. Gloddaeth Hall, Caernarfonshire

within the main building, which is usually a residence unless otherwise stated. An attempt has been made to give brief histories or descriptions explaining the importance of each image. The authors welcome further observations or inquiries from interested or curious readers.

General Views of Estate Nuclei

1. *Dyffryn House and Gardens, Glamorgan*. PRN 307771, OS ST 095 723. An aerial photograph by an unknown publisher posted 24th November 1953. Shows the main axis of this Mawson-designed garden mainly of 1905-31, from the south looking as far north as the pond axis and fields beyond. Kitchen garden area to the left with Pompeian and other garden complexes intact (Cadw 2000, 228-234; Torode 1993;2001). The northern axis depicted here is today hardly traceable; great additions have been made to the buildings on the west (left) of the house, and the glasshouses visible in the kitchen garden have now been twice replaced.

2. *Gloddaeth Hall, Caernarfonshire. Entitled Boarding School for Girls, near Llandudno'*: [Now St David's College]. PRN 86379: SH 8021 8070. Unused card by Pan-Aero Pictures, Kingston-on-Thames, no. 6484, perhaps c. 1930. An aerial photo taken above the woodlands to the west of the house, showing the seventeenth-century estate nucleus overlooking a long sloping area covered by first, lawn, then extensive glass houses and kitchen gardens. These are set against a backdrop of woodland, with pasture in the foreground next to the kitchen garden (Cadw 1998b, 92-7). This view partially replicates that of a painting attributed to William Williams c.1763 (Margam 1994, p.10, no.1).

Victorian-Edwardian formal gardens

The great diversity and potential value of the cards depicting Victorian-Edwardian gardens has already been mentioned.

3. *Baron Hill, Anglesey*: PRN 265104, OS SH 5985 7659. An unused card from the Frith series probably of c.1905. Entitled 'Beaumaris, Baron Hill, The Fountain'. It depicts a fountain of 7-10 metres diameter spouting perhaps 5 m into the air, set against a circular pillared pavilion and a background of mature shrubs. Neither fabric nor landscape of Baron Hill have fared well, the house walls being unroofed and the entire grounds today heavily overgrown (Lloyd 1986, 12-13).

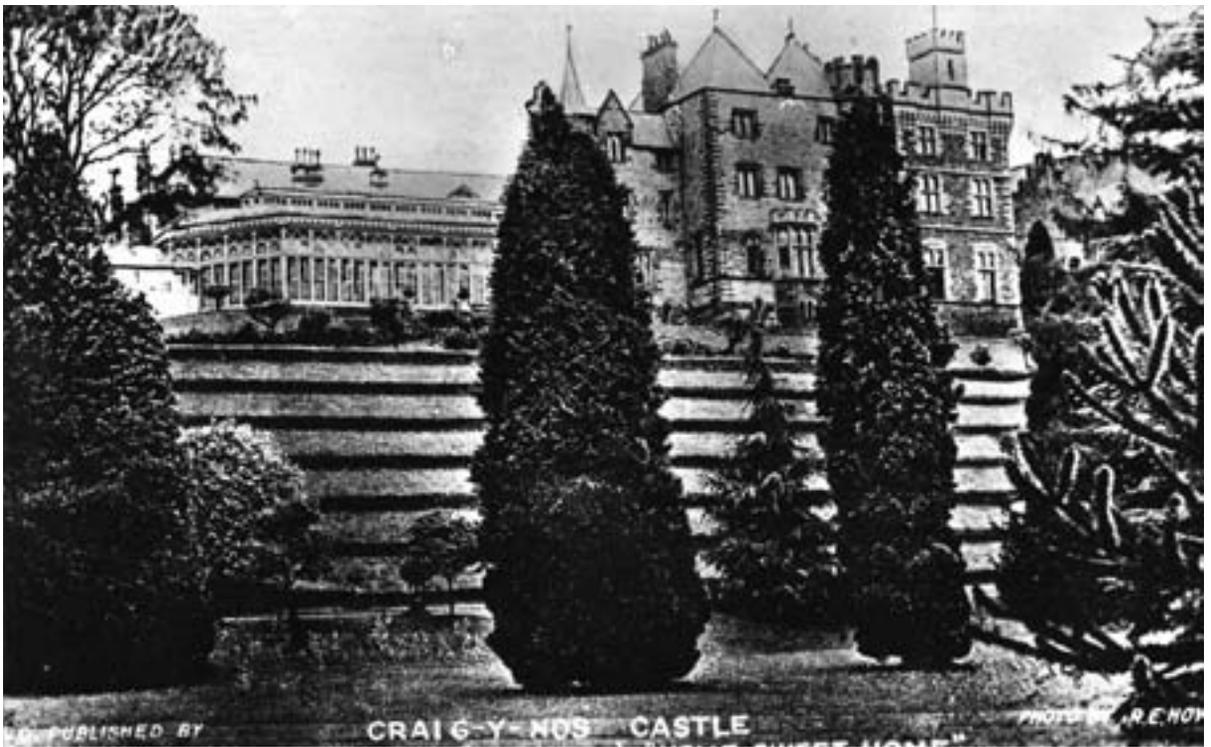
4. *Craig y nos, Brecknocks*: PRN 86034: OS SN 840 153. Published by Lake, Ystradgynlais, photo by R.E.Howells (on image). Posted Sept 12th 1912. This shows seven terraces with Madame Adelina Patti's 'castle' and massive conservatory dominating. The conservatory was dismantled and rebuilt in Victoria Park Swansea after 1920 (Cadw 1999, 44-50). Although not stated in the Register, there were originally 5 terraces below the house (as depicted on OS first ed. 25-inch Breccs XXXVII: pl 16, 1887). By 1904, they had increased to the seven (*idem* 2nd ed.) depicted on this card and which survive today.

5. *Derry Ormond, Cardiganshire*: PRN 56782; OS SN 5916 5243. Published by Park of Newtown, from a photograph by D.J.Davies of Lampeter. This was not posted, but the date June 6th 1911 has been inked in on the top left hand corner.

A view taken across a terrace at right angles to the front of the house. This has steps leading from an upper terrace, and is itself stepped. Below are possibly two elongated garden beds, also at right angles to the house and in an unusual regular planting pattern. A lean-to conservatory complements the upper end of the house, and the whole scene is dominated by either a summer house or terrace-set conservatory. As the Register (Cadw 2002. 106-12) considers this terraced area to have been one of the most important parts of the designed



3. Baron Hill, Anglesey



4. Craig y nos, Brecknock



5. Derry Ormond, Cardigans



6. Dinefwr, Carmarthenshire



7. Glanusk, Brecknock



8. Penrhos House, Holyhead

landscape (Cadw idem.110), there can be no doubt of the interest presented by this card. The house was demolished in 1953 (Lloyd 1986, 52 and *cf.* photo; Palmer *et al* 2004).

6. *Dinefwr, Carmarthenshire*. PRN 266170; OS SO6143 2253. Entitled 'The Old Castle From Dinevor Flower Garden ...Llandilo', this was published by 'Williams, Llandilo' and sent Aug 17, 1906. An unusual view, this was taken from a now lost garden to the south of Newton House. It carefully frames the castle within an arch formed by two trees. The garden itself is formal with tiny box hedges and appears to have been only recently planted (*cf.* Cadw 2002, 68-73).

7. *Glanusk, Brecknock*s: PRN 86056; OS SO 1952 1949. This bears the brief but interesting message: 'On Sale at W. Howells, Victoria House, Crickhowell' – the name and address are from a rubber stamp. It was posted Aug 3rd 1909, addressed to 'The Hon^{bl} Lady Glanusk, Glanusk Park, Crickhowell.' It seems likely this card was given away by her soon afterwards as much of the Glanusk archive was lost 1939-45 when the house was used by a succession of military units, before being left empty and uninhabitable, to be demolished in 1954 (Lloyd 1986,47). The card bears an attractive view looking to the house up wide stone steps rising from a complex parterre. It is hand coloured to reflect flowered borders (*cf.* Cadw 1998, 88-95).

8. *Penrhos House, Holyhead, Anglesey*: PRN 265404; OS SH 6303 8073. This card is unused and is not dated but is probably pre-1914. It depicts the forecourt of an Edwardian-looking L-shaped house, its geometric parterre in colour, the individual shaped beds being interspersed with large white urns. The dating is suggested after comparison with a card postmarked 1906, where different colours are employed for the garden beds. This house and its extensive Victorian gardens, both formal and utilitarian, have now all but disappeared (Lloyd 1989,12).

9. *Gredington, Flintshire*: PRN 266247; OS SJ 4458 3869. Unused card, no details, though with address of Pte Gwilliam no.13395 A.Compy, 2 Platoon 8th Battalion, South Staffs Regt. B.E. Force, suggesting a date between 1914 and 1918.

Entitled *The Blue Garden*, this shot is taken within a walled enclosure facing a round-headed recess housing a small statue within a shadowy niche. A ball-mounted nymph, possibly of metal, is surmounted on a stone-panelled plinth set at the crossing of two paths one of which terminates in the niche, the other in a stone bench set on lion-headed pediments. The walls are covered in climbers, perhaps wisteria, which may have lent its colour to the name of the garden. At the time of survey for the Register (Cadw 1995, 96-99), this particular garden was overgrown and its former make-up could only be conjectured (Cadw *idem.*, 98). The house was demolished in 1982 (Lloyd 1989, 33,120).

10. *Rhual, Flintshire*: PRN 86655; OS SJ 2208 6484. This is entitled 'The Yew Tree Arbour, Rhual, nr Mold' and is an unused card by Bevan, Haswall.

The view is probably taken in late summer or early autumn over the arbour looking across a parterre of individual geometric beds set within a background and wide paths of finely-crushed white stones. The picture is framed at the rear by an Arboretum, one tree possibly a Douglas Fir. Set in a formal garden with elements dating from the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, its subject is a yew arbour which still survives and may be of nineteenth-century origin (Cadw 1995, 220-223).



9. Gredington, Flintshire



10. Rhual, Flintshire

11. *Penbedw, near Nannerch, Flints*: PRN 266234; OS SJ 165 681. [Posted August 3rd 1911]

View looking down on a small stone-set pond (from its appearance, probably of the do-it-yourself pre-cast variety) which forms the central component to a parterre accommodated within a St Andrew's Cross. Apparently at one time the centre of the pond was surmounted by a loggia of columns which now support the porch of the present farmhouse. This garden is now gone and its site covered by a tennis court (Cadw 1995, 186-9, *partic.*188).

Kitchen gardens

12. *Crosswood, (Trawscoed) Cardiganshire*: PRN 265332; OS SN 6707 7307. The card is dated October 30th 1908 and bears the message 'I am sending you a card of our Bothy here at Crosswood ... B Benstead'. The image shows one older and two younger gardeners in front of an ivy or creeper-clad cottage in the north-west corner of the kitchen garden. It displays a full flower border. The finial of a free-standing greenhouse appears to the right. This was all demolished in the 1950s when MAFF took up residence in laboratories there and these in turn were demolished *c.* 2000 prior to proposals of residential development within (Cadw 2002, 146-8; Ceredigion Branch 1995; Morgan 1997; Palmer *et al* 2004).

13. *Hilston Court, Monmouth*: originally *Hilston House* (First Ed OS 25-inch) now Hilston Park PRN 265922; OS SO 4466 1874. The card is addressed from 'The Gardens, Hilston Park, Nr Monmouth; Nov 22nd 1904.' The image is of a gardener (probably the sender, Tom Davies) in the greenhouse tending plants of unknown varieties beneath luscious hanging melons and other soft fruits. According to the Register, although the walled kitchen garden of *c.* 1840 survives, the glasshouses were derelict in the early 1990s (Cadw 1994, 52-4).

14. *Penrice, Glamorgan*. PRN 265707; OS SS 4968 8838. The image is entitled 'Penrice Gardens' and the card dated Sept 15th 1915. It carries the message requesting that Mr J.G. Bevan of Lower Duffryn, Grosmont, should bring some rabbit wire because he cannot get any fine enough in Swansea. The view looks down at the North wall of the kitchen garden which has equidistantly-set espaliered trees. A second walled enclosure in the foreground includes the glasshouses, one set at right angles to the camera.

15. *Ruperra Castle, Glamorgan.*: PRN 265743; OS ST 2198 8631. The card was posted July 22nd 1907. This view looks towards the castle across the kitchen garden with a long central free-standing greenhouse in full view and a smaller one to its right. The corner of another glasshouse is visible in the right hand side corner. The site here appears as on the 2nd Edition OS 25-inch map of 1900, capturing the brief moment before Commander Courtenay Morgan began to transform the northern part of the garden in 1909. In 1912, the small glasshouse (perhaps already a conservatory) which appears on the 3rd Edition OS 25-inch map of 1920 was transformed by Messrs Messenger and Co into a five-bay conservatory (Cadw 2000, 30-37;), and that map shows that these earlier glasshouses were then also swept away. The entire site of Ruperra has been under threat from development for many years and is in desperate need of official attention (Lloyd 1989, 92,125; Moseley 2006; Whittle 1999).

16. *The Garden, S. Wales Training College, Carmarthen*, later Trinity College: PRN 301196; OS SN 3974 2030 (probable site only). A card in the "Myrddin Series". Published by D. Williams, 19-20 King Street, Carmarthen. This shows a group of horticultural enthusiasts in a productive kitchen-style garden with a rear wall against which is a high forcing frame has been built. This is about 7 m long with two- and three-light movable frames, some open. The rest of the site appears to be enclosed by a hedge. Although the Training



11. Penbedw, near Nannerch, Flintshire



12. Crosswood, (Trawscoed) Cardiganshire



13. Hilston Court, Monmouths



14. Penrice, Glamorgan



15. Ruperra Castle, Glamorgan



16. The Garden, S. Wales Training College, Carmarthen



17. Piercefield, Monmouths



18. Gwydir, Caernarfonshire



19. Roath Park, Cardiff



20. Thompson's Park, later, Victoria Park, Cardiff

College grounds are depicted on three editions (out of four) of the OS 25-inch plans for 1890, 1906 and 1936, the mapped topography is difficult to relate to this photographic image. If the formal grid pattern of paths is indicative of kitchen gardening, it would appear that a substantial proportion of the college grounds was already given over to gardening in 1890. Situated within that same enclosure, it seems likely that the frame was located at SN 3966 2034, and that it was present before 1906 and continued in existence at least until 1936.

Parklands

17. *Piercefield, Monmouths*: PRN 266015; OS ST 5235 9192. The card was sent July 31st 1920. It is one of *The Cambria Series*, a Photograph by W.A.Call, of the County Studios, Monmouth.

This portrays the mature parkland of Valentine Morris's picturesque estate parkland in tranquil mode on a site today best known for its wild sinuous paths above and along the Wye cliffs. Rather domestic in spirit, this view was taken looking east towards the house, with cattle grazing beneath mature trees. The odd new young tree protected by wooden fencing is visible and a carriage turning circle can be seen clearly in front of house (Cadw 1994, 120-122; Waters 1995). Recently the subject of a detailed survey by Ken Murphy of Cambria Archaeology (Whittle and Murphy 2006), the landscape of the estate was for long quite neglected following the dereliction of the house (Lloyd 1989,99), which is now on the market for restoration, promoted as an appropriate hotel or conference venue.

Features from older gardens

18. *Gwydir, Caernarfonshire*: PRN 86386; OS SH 796 614. This card was posted on 2nd October 1918 and it depicts the 'Dutch garden'. This is a long lawn set on either side with topiaried yews and a central fountain looking towards the east façade of the house. Although there is a sixteenth-century bardic praise poem describing garden topiary here and it has been suggested that these trees may belong to a seventeenth-century phase of the garden's history, it is acknowledged that the present yews appear to be mainly of nineteenth-century growth (Cadw 1998b; Welford 1998) and could as easily have originated then as earlier.

Public Parks

19. *Roath Park, Cardiff* PRN 96548: OS ST 185 795. Entitled 'Aerial View of Roath Park, Cardiff', Photographed by Terence Soames, Cardiff. Strand Series, Copyright. Probably c.1930.

Roath Park was the first publicly owned public park in Cardiff, ambitiously conceived to provide a wide range of recreational, sporting, and educational facilities for east Cardiff residents. It is a very fine, extensive late Victorian public park, laid out by William Harpur and planted by William Pettigrew 1887-94. It remains intact, with much of its original framework, although layout and planting have been simplified and built structures replaced. The large lake is an unusual and outstanding feature. The park still contains all the typical elements of an urban public park of this period and continues to serve most of its original recreational functions. The site is still surrounded by villa residences built to take advantage of the pleasant lakeside setting. This aerial shot offers some idea of the valuable contribution the site makes to the history of town-planning in the expansion of Cardiff during the inter-War years (Cadw 2000,70-73).

20. *Image entitled Thompson Park 7742*. Probably PRN 301658: OS ST 155768. An unused card. The site of the image is difficult to locate precisely, but this was probably the site which later became Victoria Park on Thompson Road (Cadw 2000, 90-93). The card depicts people in Edwardian dress walking or standing in a setting mirrored on the calm surface of a small foreground pool enclosed by an irregular, apparently unmortared stone bank. There is a further pool in the middle ground with a fountain and houses in the

background behind trees. The ponds and garden beds are set within lawns and paths.

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Bibliography of *The Bulletin* of The Welsh Historic Gardens Trust 1992-2006

The Bulletin has been a somewhat erratic feature of the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust since 1992. Its purpose, unlike the later, more scholarly journal *Gerddi*, has been primarily as a vehicle for keeping members in touch with events throughout Wales and indeed the wider world, but it has always aimed to entertain and to inspire, as well as to inform. We, its editors past and present, have done our best to involve our readers in all those concerns of the defence, research and enjoyment of historic gardens for which they joined the Trust, and contributions of all kinds are sought and welcomed.

What the *Bulletin* has never had, in part because of its initially ephemeral character, is an index, although its style and content have developed to a point where, with *Bulletin* no 37, a systematic numbering system was introduced. It probably would not have an index now but for the impetus provided by Stephen Briggs, the new editor of *Gerddi*, who has compiled an author-based bibliography of Wales-related garden publications in which *The Bulletin*, *Gerddi*, and its short lived predecessor *The Newsletter*, are all included. It is intended that this will be published shortly.

The bibliography presented here is based upon that list, and identifies the wealth of material which has been published in *The Bulletin* ranging from original research on gardens, and comment on conservation issues, to reviews and simple snippets about pots, plants or garden furniture. It does not include items of personal news, such as honours and obituaries, or notices of events, which are considered to be ephemeral.

It will also appear on the Trust's website at www.whgt.org.uk. A more in-depth bibliography of gardens (as well as on architecture and industrial topics) for South-West Wales is already available on the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust's hosting of the Wales Archeological Research Agenda (at www.cpat.org.uk/research/index-htm). Readers may find useful references on historic gardens elsewhere on that website on the regional components dealing with the medieval and post-medieval period. Researchers interested in other parts of Britain may find the Research Agenda websites of related county archaeology units in England rewarding for both bibliographical and descriptive material on landscapes and gardens of the same periods.

Members or researchers requiring a photocopy of any article in this particular bibliography may apply to The Administrator, Ros Laidlaw, Tŷ Leri, Talybont, SY24 5ER submitting a fee of 50p per item requested. Back numbers of *The Bulletin* should also be accessible in a number of libraries including the National Library of Wales and the National Monuments Record at Aberystwyth and in the National Museums of Wales, Cardiff.

This Bibliography is complete to Autumn 2006 (no.44). We propose to update it from time to time, to keep pace with future issues of *The Bulletin*. There are also plans to produce a more accessible subject-based index to cover all the work published by WHGT in *The Bulletin*, *Gerddi* and *The Newsletter*.

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Biographies of Contributors

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Dr C. Stephen Briggs is a Yorkshireman and graduate of the Queen's University Belfast. He recently retired from the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales at Aberystwyth where, over a career spanning 33 years, his duties included investigating sites and landscapes of all periods. In recent years he helped establish a database on historic gardens as part of the Commission's online map-based sites and monuments database, *Coflein*. His published work includes several papers on garden archaeology and history. He supports the Walled Kitchen Garden Network and is a Life Foundation Member of WHGT who seeks greater government commitment to the conservation and preservation of gardens, together with informed programmes of recording and surveying.

Peter Davis

Peter Davis was born at Bradford in 1928, and educated at Woodhouse Grove School and (after military service) the University of Leeds. A keen ornithologist, he worked from 1951 to 1963 as a bird observatory warden, successively at Lundy, Skokholm, and Fair Isle. Following an interlude with the British Trust for Ornithology at Tring, he joined the Nature Conservancy in 1966, based initially at Tregaron. Here he became involved with Red Kite research and conservation, an interest he still actively pursues in retirement. Peter and his wife Angela are dedicated gardeners, at home in Aberarth and as long-term volunteers with the National Trust at Llanerchaeron. They joined the WHGT in 1992. Both are also unbridled collectors of old things, especially photographs and postcards. Peter served on the Hafod Advisory Committee from 1992 to 1998.

Gwilym Hughes

After studying archaeology at the University of Southampton, Gwilym Hughes, FSA, worked for a short time on excavations in Italy and Wales before spending four years in Zimbabwe. There, he undertook research and established a conservation programme at the World Heritage sites of Great Zimbabwe and Khami. Returning to Britain in 1989 he spent 12 years at the University of Birmingham directing archaeological excavations throughout Great Britain. He has published numerous books and articles detailing the results of his fieldwork. In 2000 he was appointed Director of Cambria Archaeology (Dyfed Archaeological Trust). He is an Honorary Research Fellow of the University of Birmingham and a Visiting Research Fellow of the University of Wales, Lampeter.

Kathy Laws

Kathy Laws, BSc, MIFA, studied Field Archaeology at the Dorset Institute of Higher Education, Weymouth, and Archaeological Conservation at the University of Wales, Cardiff. She held a variety of posts before becoming a Director of Engineering Archaeological Services Ltd (Blaenau Ffestiniog) in 2000. Now specialising in field survey, she undertakes topographical survey and geophysical survey projects on archaeological sites and historic landscapes of many types and periods. As will be appreciated from her contribution, Kathy stumbled across garden archaeology, quite literally, whilst undertaking more general field survey to inform the management of an ancient woodland.

Nesta Lloyd

Nesta Lloyd was educated at Holyhead Comprehensive School and at the University of Bangor where she studied Welsh and Welsh History. She later gained an MA and a Diploma in Archive Administration, also at Bangor, before going to Linacre College, Oxford where she studied for a D.Phil. She taught in the Department of Welsh in the University of Swansea for twenty five years before taking early retirement. Since retiring she has written several books, mainly on seventeenth-century Welsh poetry.

Tom Pert

Tom Pert worked on the development of the Penllergare Cultural, Archaeological and Historic Landscape Database following his graduation from the University of Wales, Lampeter, with a BA (Hons) in Environmental Management and Resource Development, and Post-Graduate Diploma in Cultural Landscape Management. Since 2002, he has been Archaeological Mapping Officer for the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales. He is currently seconded to a project funded by CyMAL (a division of the Welsh Assembly that supports the development of local museums, archives and libraries services), developing methods for the delivery of heritage information to mobile devices.

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Notes for Contributors

The journal welcomes well-researched articles on historic gardens, particularly about those of Wales and the Marches. Papers will be considered on historical aspects of gardens which include conservation, preservation and restoration, design and aesthetics, plants, and horticultural practice of up to 7,000 words.

Proposals to publish longer texts, or texts on more esoteric topics, should be discussed with the editor.

It is important that the style of contributions should follow precisely that adopted in the present volume, so queries about consistency, for example of citation or bibliography, should be addressed to the editor before final submissions are prepared.

Ideally, contributions, complete with graphics, should be submitted in digital form, either on CD or emailed to the editor, preferably in Word or RTF. Regrettably, at the moment we are unable to deal with texts in Acrobat PDF, or with Mac generated material.

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