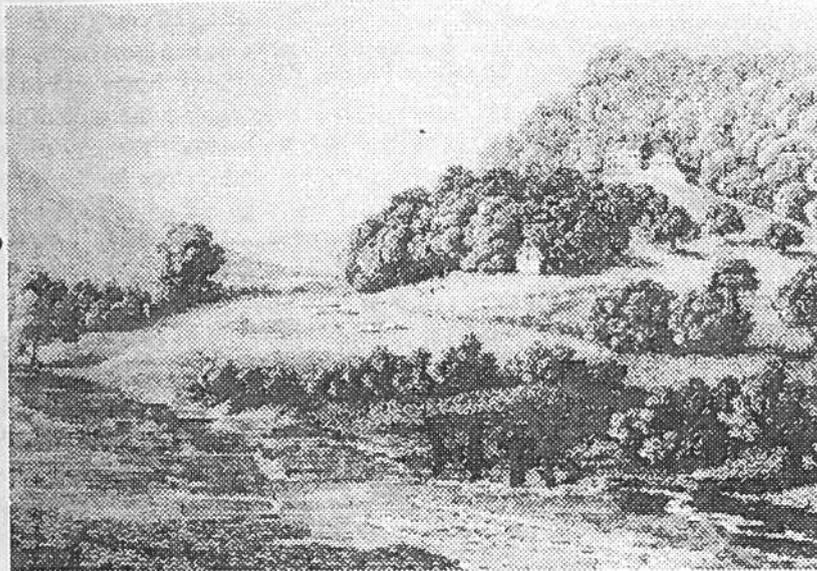


# The Bulletin

AUTUMN ISSUE 1997

## Lottery Money for Plas Tan-y-Bwlch, Maentwrog by Bettina Harden



From a Water Colour of Plas Tan y Bwlch, dated before 1790. Gwynedd Archive Service, Courtesy of The Friends of Tan y Bwlch

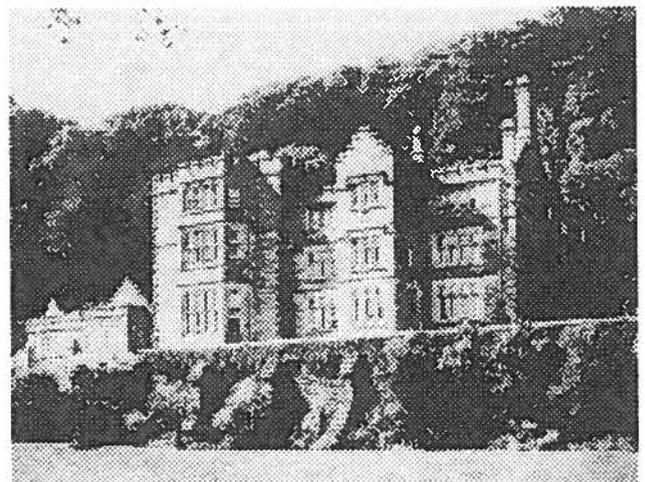
One of the many things I do for the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust is to represent it as a Trustee on the Plas Tan-y-Bwlch Gardens Trust. I am delighted to be able to report to the WHGT that the Gardens Trust's application to the Heritage Lottery Fund has proved successful and we are about to embark upon a building and restoration programme which will establish these gardens as one of the jewels of Snowdonia and ensure their survival well into the 21st Century. While there is a serious and learned article to be written on the history of these gardens, I thought I would set out the development and history of the gardens and explain what we hope to achieve with our Lottery funding.

The gardens at Plas Tan-y-Bwlch have a magnificent setting on the steep south-facing slopes of the Vale of Maentwrog, overlooking the River Dwyryd, with a backdrop of the higher, densely-wooded slopes of the valley. Little is known of the site before the 18th century, but as soon as written evidence can be traced it is clear that it has always been a place of great beauty. A poem by Ellis Rowland in 1722 tells of "A curious castle on a beautiful spot ... a house unsurpassed in Gwynedd for heathers with sweet bushes all around and where wine and mead were in abundance". Thomas Pennant in his *Tours in Wales*, written in 1769, was one of the first writers to extol the virtues of "the stupendous mountains of Caernarvonshire. ... In this country, the Vale of Plas Tan-y-Bwlch, a narrow, but beautiful tract, ... composed of rich meadows, the sides edged with groves; and

barren, precipitous mountains close this gem, as it were, in a rugged case. ... Above it is a house, embosomed in woods, most charmingly situated on the side of the hill."

Plas Tan-y-Bwlch itself was then a relatively simple house in a superb natural setting, unimproved by walks, cascades or follies. By the late 1790s changes were apparent and Sir Christopher Sykes in his *Journal of a Tour in Wales* (1796) describes how he "walked upon a hill beyond Mr Oakeley's beautiful (sic) Wood and walks." By 1800 another traveller in search of the Picturesque, the Reverend John Skinner, gave a description that demonstrates how lovely the place was "Here, wood and water, rich pasture and towering mountains, unite together in producing one of the most fertile and picturesque scenes that ever met the eye. The house is surrounded by a grove of oaks and timber trees, rising quite to the summit of the hill, intersected at intervals by a variety of winding walks, everywhere diversified by rocks, cascades, rustic seats, and bridges."

William Oakeley was the man who provided the money and energy to effect this transformation, having married Margaret Griffith, heiress to the house mentioned by Pennant. The magnificent terraces, still such a feature of the gardens today, were enlarged by him, and the River Dwyryd, snaking through the valley below, was given new embankments.



Plas Tan y Bwlch, Remodelled in 1878, Photograph 1989  
Courtesy of the Friends of Tan y Bwlch

The Picturesque inheritance of Plas Tan-y-Bwlch has always been in evidence, but it was the Historic Landscape Survey, commissioned for the Heritage Lottery Fund and prepared by Nicholas Pearson Associates, that has now put it into context. In 1989 Malcolm Andrews' *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape Aesthetics & Tourism in Britain 1760-1809* made no mention of it as a site visited and remarked on by eighteenth-century travellers. Simon Bonvoisson's work for the Gardens Trust has produced not just an abundance of written and artistic evidence, but also delineated the extent of the wilderness walks, cascades and torrents that run through the woods above the more formal gardens of the Plas. As a result it is hoped that Part 2 of the restoration and development of the gardens will take the picturesque setting in hand.

The 19th century progress of the gardens reflected the growing prosperity of the Oakeley family. Increased revenues from their slate quarries provided the impetus to acquire more land, improve the estate and further enhance the gardens. The mansion was remodelled in 1878 by W.E. Oakeley and he lavished money on the setting of his larger, grander house. As you walk through the gardens today there is evidence everywhere of a vast and imaginative planting of specimen trees and shrubs.

The development of the gardens reached its height in the 1880s under the Head Gardener, John Roberts. With a team of eight gardeners and four under-gardeners Mr Roberts planned and planted, amongst other things 'the most elaborate carpet bedding in the principality'! He was also in command over an extensive walled garden containing glasshouses that produced peaches (1,000 in one year), nectarines, grapes, melons, figs and, unusually, the fruit of *Passiflora edulis*. There was a vast array of vegetables and, for the house, highly scented and decorative cut flowers, *The Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener* of March 15, 1888, describes "long ranges of earth pits, full of Violets ... literally masses of flowers, though gathered daily."

One particular point of interest is that the author of that article travelled to and from the gardens via the Ffestiniog Railway, something that you can do again today by purchasing a combined ticket for the railway and the gardens. What is remarkable about the site is that all Mr Roberts' work, and that of his employers, has only embellished the place. The bones of the earlier layout and Picturesque development is still intact, if a little blurred. Our restoration of these gardens will be aimed at 1888 in spirit, using contemporary evidence and plant lists to guide our new plantings and recreating the old.

The decline in the slate industry also saw the decline of the Oakeley family fortunes and the estate. The last member of the family to live at Plas Tan-y-Bwlch, Mrs Inge, still employed a team of gardeners in the 1950s, but with her death the ruination of the gardens was rapid. The walled garden with its wonderful array of glass, was razed to the ground and matters were not helped by the decision to build chalets in the grounds in the 1960s. The gardens began to revert to wilderness. The rot was stopped when the estate was acquired by the Snowdonia National Park in 1969. Although little was done to develop the gardens, they were rescued, and, in 1991 the Park Authority commissioned a report from the distinguished garden designer,

Lucy Huntington, on the feasibility of restoring the gardens. From that study came the establishment of the Plas Tan-y-Bwlch Gardens Trust.

A massive programme of clearing brushwood and *ponticum*, re-planting borders and regenerating trees was put in hand to recreate the garden setting of this lovely place without disturbing the flourishing wildlife that has made the gardens their home. It was obvious that the gardens needed their own entrance to control access and sell tickets to raise revenue to run them. Through the generosity of the Snowdonia National Park and our own fund-raising, the Trust now employs three gardeners, but their facilities until now have been rather minimal.

Our scheme for the Heritage Lottery Fund will create entrance facilities (which include a selling area, cafe and loos) on the site of the walled garden, as well as a gardeners' bothy and work area elsewhere. These will be in keeping with the style of the mansion, using local stone, slate and wood. The cost of re-opening the original quarry which provided stone for the house was prohibitive, but we have been lucky enough to purchase a redundant set of local barns which should provide all our building needs.

Work should begin shortly and by the end of 1998 we will be well on the way towards achieving our aims. I do hope that as many of you as possible will take the time to make your way to the Vale of Maentwrog and see for yourselves what a beautiful spot Plas Tan-y-Bwlch is.

**Plas Tan-y-Bwlch is open daily at 10.00 a.m.  
from April 1st - October 31st  
Admission £2.50 (Family £5.00)**

### **The Wellsprings Fellowship**

New W.H.G.T. member Jan Shivel is a founder member of the Wellsprings Fellowship, a group of individuals who seek to identify, record and preserve ancient wells and springs in Wales. For many historic wells, only oral history preserves their identity and associated history.

The Fellowship anticipates that W.H.G.T. members could greatly contribute to their archive on well sites.

The fellowship can provide expertise in restoration, educational resources and talks.

**Contact:** The Wellsprings Fellowship, The Lodge, Penbont, Brecon, Powys, LD3 8EU. 01874-638065.



*Bishop Gower's Well, North of Brecon*

# A tale of two Tanybwlchs

by Caroline Palmer



*The N.E. Elevation of Tanybwlch in 1890, when architects Tatham and Flower drew up plans for the extension. The whole edifice was then cladded in rock dressed stone.*

Nestling in the woods at the far end of the shingle bay which arcs south from Aberystwyth is a grey stone mansion of some twenty bedrooms. It too is named Tanybwlch. Used in the past sixty years successively as a hospital, a hall of residence for the College of Librarianship, and as a catering college, it has recently been sold and returned to private ownership.

Readily dismissed as a ugly Victorian structure of rock-dressed stone with yellow brick window dressings, closer inspection has revealed that a much older house is enrobed within it, encased in a cladding of Victorian stone to integrate it with the large and utilitarian extension of 1892. This earlier house was a neat late eighteenth century villa, similar to those designed for Welsh gentry by John Nash, with a seaward facade consisting of a two storey canted bay flanked by a tall single storey reception room on either side. Large 15-pane Georgian sash windows open onto the terrace, and the central stairway is lit by an octagonal cupola. High quality internal plasterwork and woodwork survives.

This attractive dwelling was built on a new site by Major General Lewis Davies of Tanybwlch, who is best remembered for his military career and distinguished successes in the Peninsular wars. He retired in 1811. Around the house was a two and half acre pleasure ground, with contoured paths, viewing platforms, and several linear clearings, reminiscent of those at Ruperra, allowing sunlight to stream down the slope from the south. A diamond shaped walled garden was situated a short walk from the separate farm buildings.

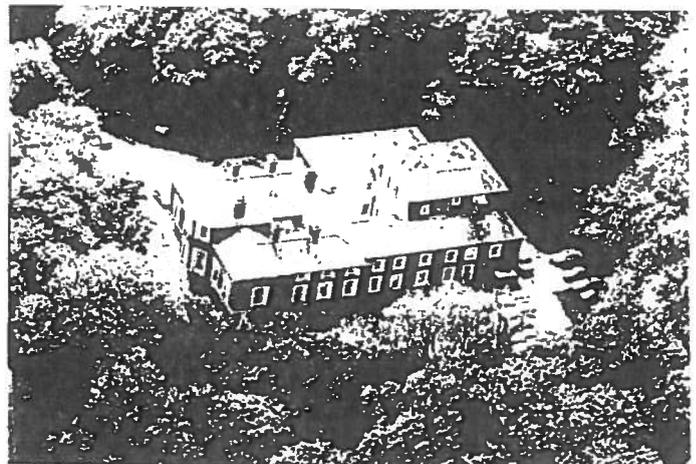
All these features except the farm survive, though the grounds are heavily overgrown. The estate underwent little change until Major Davies' grandson, Matthew Lewis Vaughan Davies, married a wealthy wife and embarked upon a massive programme of improvement. The mansion disappeared into its crust of cladding, topped off by a castellated rampart over the

front entrance. On the shore west of the house he built a castellated stone summerhouse, reputedly for his assignations, while adjoining the walled garden he built a stable block around a tiled courtyard with capacity for 12 horses and 8 grooms, and over the hill, a laundry and gamekeeper's cottage.

Following his years as Liberal M.P. for Cardiganshire, he was elevated to Lord Ystwyth. In 1936, following his death, the estate of 678 acres was divided into lots and sold.

It may be of mutual benefit for scholars of the two Tanybwlchs to be on the look-out for ambiguous cataloguing, which can obfuscate valuable evidence of the history of each.

*The author is preparing a fuller article for Ceredigion on this subject*



*The much extended Plas Tanybwlch  
Photographed in 1995*

# The News Pages

## W.H.G.T. Stand at Royal Welsh Show

The Trust stand at the Royal Welsh Show was our most ambitious yet, thanks to the generous sponsorship of British Gas. Every branch contributed and the resultant graphics presented a strong vision of the immense variety and quality of Welsh gardens and the doom which hangs over all too many, from neglect, unsympathetic development or outright destruction.

Perhaps with hindsight, there could have been a greater emphasis on the hands on work achieved by the Trust-(Montgomery members hacking about in the overgrown rockery at Broneirion attracted plenty of attention)-and, (owing to last minute budgetary problems not of our making which necessitated some cutting back on the straight forwardly advertising elements of the stand) our impact from a distance was somewhat muted. But there was no doubt about the interest aroused in those who came to read what we had to say, look over - and buy - the material we had on offer and talk endlessly about gardens old and new. The workers on the stand, a stalwart contingent from Brecon and Radnor backed up by several members of the committee, ended their days hoarse from conversation and only the presence of the lemonade stall outside the flower tent saved us from complete dehydration.



*The Secretary adds up the takings at the end of the day*

*Anne Carter*

## Study Day at Monaughty, Radnorshire

This Study Day, sponsored and arranged by the WHGT, was a ground-breaking event for most of those involved in the day. We had set ourselves the task of appealing to historic garden owners, not necessarily members of the Trust, and were not at all sure how such an event would appeal to them. With the help of our own **Bulletin**, coverage in **Historic House** (the HHA magazine) and **Gardens Illustrated**, and the efforts of friends and enthusiasts, we spread the word. The result was that we were a full house at Monaughty and had to turn away disappointed applicants. People came from both sides of the border, from as far away as Dorset, Pembrokeshire and Anglesey. The weather was fine, the setting magical and the food delicious. All of this helped to set off the excellent lectures provided by our four speakers.

The Chairman of the Trust, Bettina Harden, set the scene, using her own experience at Nanhoron to demonstrate how to go about using the sources available to build up a picture of the past of an historic garden. Sophie Andreae, our hostess for the day, provided a graphic and enthralling description of the work undertaken by herself and her husband in rescuing what was once the largest Tudor house in Radnorshire from generations of neglect and decay. The fact that we were able to go out into the garden and see for ourselves what had been achieved was inspirational. It would have been hard to believe it had been conjured from bare ground and very little historic evidence had we not seen the 'before' slides. After lunch, Elizabeth Banks showed us some of her own distinguished work on the restoration of historic gardens. She revealed the hard work, pitfalls and problems associated with running one of the most attractive gardens in England, Hergest Croft. Tom Lloyd, Chairman of the Historic Buildings Council, Wales, rounded off the day by discussing the new approach to the setting of historic houses now entertained by the H.B.C. body. While promising nothing, it was clear that times have changed considerably and that bridges, fountains, lake dams and garden gates all

might be eligible for funding if a good case is made. It is planned to hold Study Days such as this on an annual basis and details of the next Course will be published in good time next year.

*Bettina Harden*

## Houses and Gardens in Welsh Poetry

Over fifty people came together for a very successful day-school arranged by the Friends of the National Library of Wales at Aberystwyth in association with the W.H.G.T., the Cambrian Archaeological Association, and Ceredigion Antiquarian Society. The meeting was chaired by Trefor Owen, Chairman of the Friends. There was simultaneous translation of the three lectures which were in Welsh, the first of which was by Arwel Jones of the Department of Manuscripts and Records of the National Library. With the aid of a large television screen he showed how the Computer Index to Poetry in Manuscripts can be used to trace poems in manuscripts, theses, and printed sources on various subjects including houses and gardens. This service will shortly be available on the World Wide Web on <http://www.llgc.org.uk>. Researchers could be employed to follow up these references and translate the results.

Dr. Enid Pierce Roberts, (formerly of the Welsh Department in Bangor and author of a pioneering booklet on medieval houses with illustrations by Douglas Hague,) spoke next and pointed out the wealth of information for the social historian in the poetry of the gentry. This ranges from the fourteenth century poem to the court of Owain Glyndwr at Sycharth to seventeenth-century poems, such as those which tell of a labyrinth, a summerhouse, and topiary at Gwydir. There was a well set-out vegetable garden at Mysoglen, Llanfair-y-Cwmwd, a lake in the orchard at Plas Bodorgan, Llangadwaladr, and a gem of a summer house in a fair green lawn and below the lawn a lake with swans at Plas-y-Ward, Llanynys.

Richard Suggett of the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales was introduced by Professor Brynley Roberts, and spoke of recent dendrochronological research which has dated a number of medieval hall houses to the period of recovery after the destruction caused by the revolt of Owain Glyndwr. He also talked about the Welsh love-affair with wood, often the preferred material for building even where stone was available, and the poets' use of terms from the craft of the carpenter.

Another member of the Royal Commission, Dr. Stephen Briggs, gave a brief history of garden archaeology in Wales, taking in Aberglasney where a poem may shed light on this site, and introducing Gwernyfed in Breconshire where some recent archaeological work has revealed the course of a conduit for a water feature. Bettina Harden, also introduced the other speaker on Gwernyfed, Dr. Nesta Lloyd, who explained what an early seventeenth-century poem to welcome a new bride to Gwernyfed has to say about the gardens with their symmetrical layout and paths, and discussed documentary evidence. Among other exhibits outside the Council Chamber where the lectures were held were the manuscript in which this poem occurs and a contemporary document describing the estate.

The last speaker was introduced by Donald Moore. People were enchanted by the slides Douglas Blain showed of Monaughty, an important sixteenth-century house in Radnorshire, which he is restoring. According to a reference in a poem the gardens were laid out by James Price, the builder of the house. They have been excavated and replanted to great effect. It is hoped to publish the transactions of the day-school together with additional contributions in a volume to be edited by Mary Burdett-Jones, Dr Nesta Lloyd, and Richard Suggett

*Mary Burdett Jones*

# Editorial

*It is with trepidation that I launch the autumn issue of The Bulletin, fully appreciating the well honed skills which produced earlier issues. Anne Carter, my predecessor, in addition to her own formidable abilities, was fortunate in her collaboration with a skilled volunteer exponent of desk-top publishing. Moving the editorship to Aberystwyth has occasioned the use of a local printing firm, Repro 2000, for both typesetting and printing, and it is hoped that this new and untried team will prove equal to maintaining the standard expected by the membership.*

Caroline Palmer

## Reports from Branches

### CEREDIGION

In September Branch Members visited **Llanina**, by kind invitation of Mr James Maurice and took tea besides the ancient mulberry tree, (more on this topic in next issue, Ed) The Branch A.G.M. will be held in the Ceredigion Museum on **22 November 1997**, Ros Laidlaw will speak on 'Landscape at Lodge Park'. **Trawscoed** mansion has recently been put on the market once more, stripped of some of its estate building, and selling with just 10 acres for £340,000. Recently sold and subject of a planning application is **Bronpadarn**, Llanbadarn Fawr, where housing in the Victorian garden is planned.

At **Hafod** a management plan has been drafted by Forest Enterprise and the Hafod Trust, and a new partnership agreement has been signed. The Management Plan will be presented to the Hafod Advisory Committee and other consultees.

The restoration of paths at Hafod has been curtailed pending the adoption of the plan.

### CLWYD

A joint meeting with Montgomery, probably on the subject of **Leighton Hall**, is planned for 1998.

### GWENT

On 5th June the branch thanked Sheila Thorneycroft for many years stalwart service as Branch Chairman. Charles Smart succeeds her in the post and drew attention to the need for enhanced membership, fund-raising and the Gwent Garden Handlist. Thursday **30 October**, 7 p.m. at Penpergwm Lodge, Abergavenny. Col. Richard Gilbertson will talk on the Garden Heritage of Wales.

### GWYNEDD

Ray Bailey, Lecturer at the University of Wales, Bangor, gave us an entertaining and discursive talk on Medieval Gardening on Saturday 4th October. Very well attended, one of the charms of the afternoon was the venue and its setting, the Medieval Hall at **Penarth Fawr**, Chwilog. Keith & Liz Houghton, the owners are developing plans for a recreation of a medieval garden on the site. Thursday **6th November** 6.00 p.m. Oriol Ynys Môn, Llangefni, Anglesey. A.G.M. & Lecture on Anglesey by Ian Skidmore the well known local broadcaster & author.

### MID AND SOUTH GLAMORGAN

The Branch has been active in the campaign to prevent the sale in 1999 of **Talygarn House and Gardens** formerly Talygarn Miners Convalescence Home, by the Bro Taf Health Authority. The Talygarn Forum have produced an impressive lobbying document making a strong case that Talygarn should remain in public ownership for the benefit of the people of South Wales. More details from Dr. P.C. Elmes. Letters to The Secretary of State are needed.

### MONTGOMERY

The Branch mounted a successful protest against a planning application to build eight quality dwellings in the Walled Gardens at **Leighton Hall**, Leighton. The Rockery at **Broneirion**, restored by branch members, is maturing nicely and has been handed over to the Guides Movement for their maintenance.

### PEMBROKESHIRE

A programme of winter meetings at **Cottesmore** has been arranged:

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>20 October</b>  | Jane Stokes on the CADW Register                                   |
| <b>17 November</b> | Dr Sian Rees on the Haverfordwest Priory and its monastic garden   |
| <b>15 December</b> | Informal evening, report by Gerry Hudson<br>Branch Gazette Officer |
| <b>19 January</b>  | Tom Lloyd - Some recent historic garden discoveries in West Wales  |
| <b>16 February</b> | John Powell M.B.E. on the Campbells of Cawdor                      |
| <b>16 March</b>    | Dr Caroline Palmer - on some Gardens and Parks in Ceredigion       |

### WEST GLAMORGAN

The Branch's very real difficulties and concerns at **Penllergare** are addressed in Michael Norman's article (p6).

## Forthcoming Events

### LECTURES

#### London

The Garden History Society Winter Lectures. Continuing the series on the theme **Great Gardens and their Makers**, lectures will take place on Wednesdays 4, 11, 18, 25 February and 11 and 18 March, 1998, in the Scientific Societies Lecture Theatre, New Burlington Place, London. Tickets, on the door, or from, The Garden History Society, Winter Lecture Series, 77 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6BP (S.A.E. required).

#### Aberystwyth

The Department of Continuing Education. **Visions of the Past**, a course of ten lectures by Donald Moore, commence 8 October at the University of Wales School of Art, Buarth Mawr, Aberystwyth. 2.15-4.15 p.m.

#### Cardiff

Department for continuing Education & Professional Development. **The Inspiration for British Gardens, Garden Plants: Their Origin & Use in design**, courses of lectures by Robin Whalley. Thursdays 2-4p.m. Also, Summer courses and Day Schools, visits to Shropshire, Gloucester and Scottish Gardens led by Robin Whalley.

### Study Days:

#### The Association of Gardens Trusts

##### Maddingley Hall, Cambridge

Workshop on Research & Recording Historic Gardens  
Sat 8 Nov 10-4pm

##### Kimbolton Castle, and Huntingdon Record Office

Sat 15 November 10-4 pm

#### Applications to

Hazel Fryer, Grovewood, Ashow, Kenilworth CV8 2LE

# The Plight of Penllergare

## by Michael Norman

### Background

The site of Penllergare mansion is now a car park. Behind are six lanes of traffic; to our right, another four. Before us the flags of the executive show homes wave defiance at the housing estate with attitude on the opposite flank of the valley. A couple of miles further on is the city centre of Swansea. And, down - in between - lie the vandalised and scorched bones of one of the finest, late Picturesque garden landscapes in Wales. Among the first sites outside the Tywi valley identified by the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust (WHGT) as being under serious threat, seven years later its future is still just as precarious.

John Dillwyn Llewelyn (1810-1882) was a scientist of distinction, an amateur photographer, an astronomer and a plantsman. During his ownership of Penllergare he created a landscape to a design that "... is essentially simple, yet highly sophisticated and integrated". His design exploited the dramatic quality of this site of great natural beauty in a manner that is almost unrivalled in South or Mid-Wales: "... it is a secret and magic place". Today the Penllergare landscape is in advanced dereliction. The northern and western boundaries have suffered encroachment through road building and urbanisation, and the mansion - the focus of the landscape, blown up in 1961, - has been replaced by the Civic Centre. Nevertheless, the core structure of the landscape is still largely intact, including the remnants of the paths and the Drive, the lakes and cascade, together with the walled gardens within which is the notable orchideous house, one of the first of its kind. Furthermore, "no other Welsh landscape, and probably very few in the world, has such an extensive archive of (contemporary) photography of outstanding quality", supported extensively by other imagery and documentation. The site is likely to be registered as Grade II in the forthcoming Cadw/ICOMOS Register for Glamorgan.

### WHGT Involvement

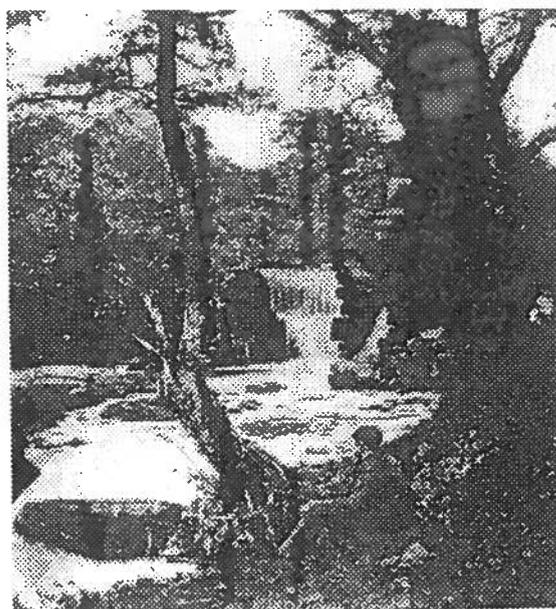
In response to local calls for action, and as a result of preliminary research and surveys (1), the WHGT set up a project team in 1992, consisting of Lliw Valley Borough Council (the then local planning authority), West Glamorgan County Council, Countryside Council for Wales (CCW), Wales Tourist Board and bj Group plc (the developer), together with the Welsh Development Agency to assess the feasibility of the co-existence - to mutual advantage - of this garden landscape with the commercial and leisure development which was the subject of the planning consent granted in July 1991. The initial report entitled 'Penllergare Heritage Landscape' was issued in February 1993. It confirmed the historical importance of the site and contained an assessment of the visual impact of the proposed development, as well as options deserving of further study. The second phase of the study has been delayed, firstly to enable bj Group and the Borough Council to discuss the allocation of housing land, and then suspended in early 1994 when bj Group's option for building was transferred to Bellway Homes Wales Ltd. Although serious visual damage to the designed landscape has not been averted, the area of the Upper Lake - which is the core of the designed landscape and co-terminous with the walled gardens - had been cleared and made accessible by bj Group, in accordance with the conditions of the original Permission, albeit not to the high standards that might have been expected

on a site of such historic importance. Subsequently - following submissions made by the WHGT - the Walled Gardens have been removed from the zone previously designated for housing, and the City and Council of Swansea (the successor planning authority) is required to acquire them on lease from the Penllergare freeholders.

### Agenda for Action

The West Glamorgan Branch of WHGT has re-affirmed its intention to continue to further the protection, conservation, restoration and interpretation of the historic landscape of Penllergare for public benefit. However, the protection and enhancement of the diversity of species and habitats is recognised as an important ancillary objective. In these respects the CCW policies for 'urban fringes' are particularly relevant to Penllergare, adjacent as it is to Wales's second city(3). WHGT continues to support the view (as noted in the 1993 report) that the Walled Garden, the Landscape Garden (Zone 1) and the Outer Park (Zone 2) should be regarded as the main elements of a site that was designed as an entity and should continue broadly to be managed as such. Thus the forthcoming design brief and its implementation should comply with the provisions of Welsh Office Circulars 60/96 & 61/96, entailing appropriate and detailed historical, archaeological and ecological surveys and associated research. In the case of the Walled Garden, WHGT will continue to urge Swansea to undertake the following actions:

- (a) a study into the feasibility of conserving, restoring, managing and interpreting (the site) for public benefit.
- (b) as a matter of urgency, to preserve the defined area by archaeological record before further dilapidation or dereliction occurs, and:
- (c) security measures against vandalism and robbing, made the more urgent as the nearby housing development gathers pace. In time there should also be provision for visitor facilities to compensate for their proposed deletion from the plans elsewhere.



*The Waterfall at Penllergare. Photo: J.D. Llewellyn.  
Reproduced Courtesy of Richard Morris.*

In the Landscape Garden (Zone 1, and already re-opened to the public) WHGT will continue to press for it to be given the highest priority for greatly improved standards of conservation and restoration, and interpretation. For the Outer Park (Zone 2) WHGT recommends that the proposed dredging and reinstatement of the Lake should be postponed, and instead the Outer Park should be managed as a wilderness for the protection and enhancement of wildlife, accessible for quiet enjoyment by people on foot.

Current proposals for a Woodland Centre and a Water Facilities Centre are considered to be neither of public benefit, nor financially viable. WHGT therefore strongly recommends that both should be deleted from the current Agreement. In the light of the foregoing recommendations WHGT has therefore proposed a full and integrated re-appraisal of the landscape by all parties and a review of the financial consequences of that reappraisal. Management and business plans should follow those reviews.

### Easier Said than Done

Much of this strategy was written in 1993 but there has been little progress since then and the landscape continues to suffer. Any commercial development in a prime site adjacent to a city and with motorway access - but within a designated 'green wedge' - was obviously going to need a very careful balance of commercial gain and public benefit. The 1991 planning agreement attempts to achieve that balance, albeit in almost mind-boggling complexity. Including substantial areas for 200 houses, there are no less than eight new and distinct uses for the site, a number of which - in the light of further examination (2) - now look insufficiently researched in terms of public benefit, landscape impact and revenue consequences. The depreciation of the commercial value of the site in terms of housing development has also upset the carefully constructed equations, as have the stringent cash limits in local authority budgets. That the site is owned by five separate companies or trusts, together with three privately owned enclaves, coupled with the fact that there were less than cordial relations between the then planning authority and developer - (both of which have now handed over to their successors) - added to the sense of prevarication and delay.

For seven years the WHGT has acted as a catalyst for consultation and action at Penllergare. It has kept the historic landscape on the planning cum development agenda, even though the Trust's influence has been reduced, latterly, to purely voluntary effort. Whether that unaided effort is adequate to safeguard the interests of an historic landscape of such quality, deserves urgent consideration.

Michael Norman is the Project Manager of the Hafod Trust but has been involved with the Penllergare project since its inception.

(1) Sclater, *Penllergare Conservation Strategy (Interim Report)*, for WHGT, February 1991

(2) John Brown & Company and Landskip & Prospect, *Penllergare Heritage Landscape*, for WHGT et al, February 1993

(3) CCW, *The Welsh Landscape*, July 1997 (especially Policies 5, 6 & 7)

## Book Review

### My Christmas List

by Bettina Harden

#### PRIGS: Seven Virtuous Lady Gardeners

Engravings by Edwina Ellis. Verse by Caroline Palmer.  
Smith Settle (£5.95)



This delightful small volume will certainly feature on my Christmas list and, I hope, on yours. As the introduction says "First there were Edwina Ellis' prints ..." These are a series of beautifully-drawn colour wood engravings inspired by the thought of the Virtues as gardeners.

Created from three engraved blocks per print, the reader never gets to see these ladies in the flesh - each print gives you the decorated packet of seed from which Caroline Palmer's humorous verse has sprung.

As a change from the prose we associate with her articles on gardens and gardening in *The Cambrian News*, her verse conjures up visions of these energetic ladies hard at work in their respective plots. From **Faith's** struggles with an inhospitable site, through **Charity's** experience of opening her garden to the public (all members of the WHGT should read this), to **Temperance's** economical self sufficiency, there is a verse and a view for everyone. For those of us who garden in Wales I offer the last verse for your delectation:

#### FORTITUDE

The Aga's cold, the bird bath froze  
Edwina wonders why she chose  
To garden on this windswept slope  
Eschewed by Prudence, scorned by Hope,  
While the phlegm drips down her nose.

The ground is clay bound hard with ice  
The corms and bulbs sustain the mice  
The Albertine's blown off the shed  
The Pieris and the Acer dead.  
But the summer views were nice.

The septic tank has overflowed  
And frozen sewage skins the road.  
She's made a desperate proposal  
To Plynlimon Waste Disposal.  
But they don't work when it's cold.

The trellis flaps. The beech trees roar.  
Her head and throat are getting sore.  
But February's just the middle  
Of the West Wales country idyll.  
June will come once more.



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CYNGOR CEFN GWLAD CYMRU  
COUNTRYSIDE COUNCIL FOR WALES

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## Exhibitions

**THE PARADISE GARDEN**  
National Museum & Gallery, Cardiff  
October 11 - February 22

**The Paradise Garden** tells the sometimes enchanting, always engaging stories behind the art of botanical illustration from the Dark Ages, through the dawn of Enlightenment, to the eve of a new millennium.

The exhibition starts with the mystical scripts of the thirteenth century Physicians of Myddfai, whose system of health-care recommended plugging nettles into one's nostrils to cure a nose bleed, or placing a slab of raw beef on one's neck for a headache. As the exhibition demonstrates most botanical illustrations in medieval times were crudely diagrammatic or fanciful, of little practical value in identifying the correct plant to pick and use.

By the seventeenth century, debates about the classification of species started putting the sex lives of plants at the tip of the botanical illustrator's pen, much to the consternation of 'polite' society. The exhibition will feature the work of Swedish naturalist Carl Linnaeus, who studied the sexual systems of plants.

In the eighteenth century the Great Voyages of Discovery, provided further momentum for botanical illustrators. The exhibition features illustrators who accompanied Captain Cook on epic voyages to record and collect bizarre and beautiful exotic plants in Australasia, Asia and South America. One of the most famous was Sir Joseph Banks, the unofficial director of Kew Gardens.

The Age of Scientific Innovation further revolutionised the style of botanical illustration and new photographic techniques allowed the first true-to-life representation of plants as recorded in the famous "Pencil of Nature" by Fox-Talbot. The later sections of the exhibition show how the application of the art of botanical illustration developed to the present day.

*For further information, guided tours, workshops, please contact: Sian Hughes, Press Officer Tel 01222 573485*



*Dryopteris* by W. J. Hooker © National Museum of Wales

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### Droitwich

**The Hereford & Worcester Gardens Trust** exhibition of paintings illustrating parks and gardens of the two counties is at Hanbury Hall near Droitwich 2-6 p.m. Sun-Wed. until October 29, courtesy of the National Trust.

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