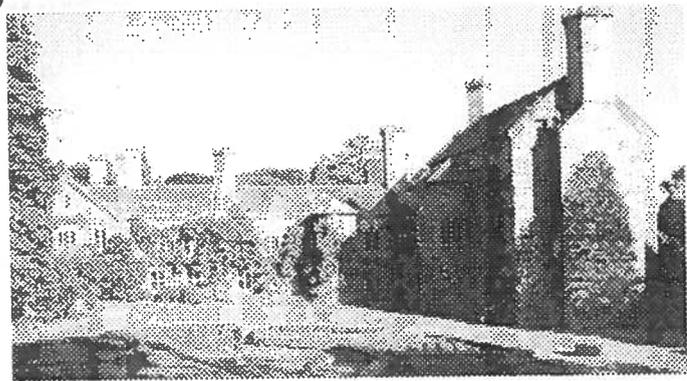


# Layers of Garden History at Gwydir Castle

by Peter Welford

The gardens at Gwydir have long been famous, though perhaps more for their peacocks than for their antiquity. Whilst much has been published about the house, and the illustrious Wynn family who built and occupied it for the first two hundred years, little has been said of the nature and evolution of its setting. An article on the gardens was produced in *Country Life* in 1901 which, whilst it provides us with little more than a marvellous photographic record, nevertheless shows the high regard in which

courtyard is the earliest, dating to the mid 16th century. This bears the carved initials of John Wynn ap Meredith (d. 1559), together with eagle and lion carvings in the spandrels, which derive from the arms of the family. It is possible that this arch has been relocated in the early 19th Century. Whatever else belonged to this early period is uncertain, although the Great Terrace, on the north-east side of the house, may be contemporary.

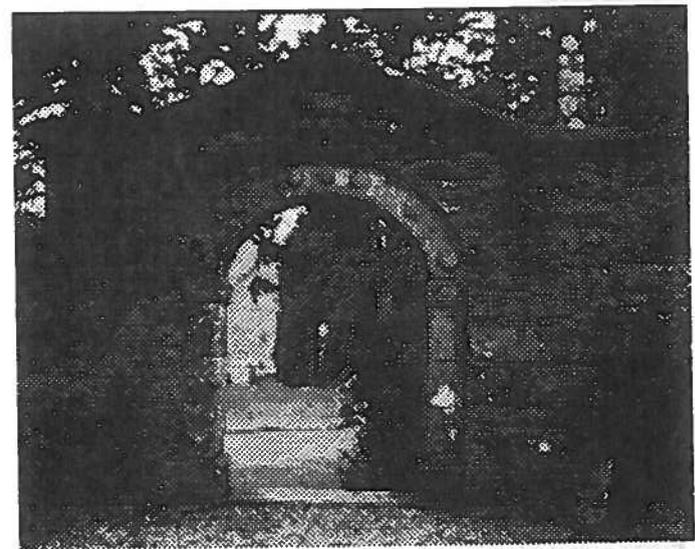


*Gwydir Castle from the South East*

they were held at that time. But the 20th century has not been kind to Gwydir and two fires in parts of the house and years of neglect and inappropriate planting in the gardens have taken their toll. Both house and garden are, however, now undergoing restoration and during the last three years much progress (chiefly in clearing and taming) has been made in the latter; the end, whilst by no means near, is at least now dimly in sight!

Arguably the most significant period, that relating to Sir John Wynn, the first Baronet, is rather better represented. In his time (1553 - 1627) the gardens are known to have been of some sophistication, with 'alleys and walks', a labyrinth, two bowling greens and various garden structures of wood, topiary and stone. Of the latter, a pigeon house of 1597 and a 'pleasure house' dated 1592 are recorded; both are now gone. Oranges, lemons and bay trees are known to have been amongst the exotica grown here. Still standing at the end of the Great Terrace is a fine classical pedimented arch, with heraldic and initial carving to the terrace face, together with obelisk finials, recently restored to their original size. This arch retains its accompanying walls with moulded slate copings originally surmounted by carved trefoil finials. These were reused, for the most part, to decorate the roof parapets in the 19th century.

The garden at Gwydir occupies some ten acres, and in fact represents something of a palimpsest, with early and later 19th century elements overlaying those of the Tudor and Stuart periods. Despite partial 'reinvention' of the garden during the later periods, much relating to the earlier site layout is nevertheless still recognisable, including various surviving garden structures, some early plantings and clear evidence of terracing in several places.



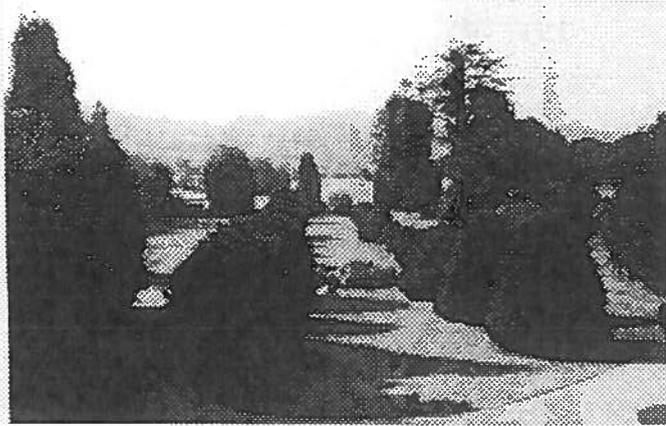
*The Classical Arch at the end of the Great Terrace*

The arch leads into the main garden to the north-west, via a flight of contemporary steps. This, called the 'Old Dutch Garden' in the 19th Century, shows evidence of having formerly had a series of terraces leading down to an octagonal fountain; these were flattened out to form an incline probably in the 1820s, though

It is the garden layout which relates to this early period, the period of the Wynn occupancy, which is historically perhaps of most interest and importance. This period, commencing with the rebuilding of Gwydir around 1500, spans the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods (during which years the house and gardens reached their zenith), and ends with the family's eventual decline in the last decades of the 17th century.

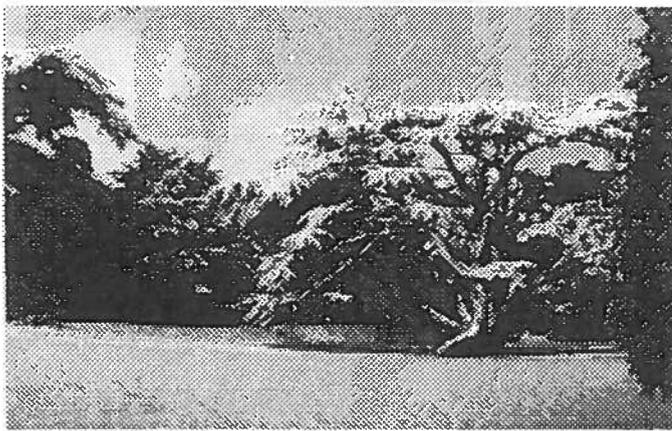
Of these Wynn-period features, a Tudor-arched, late Perpendicular garden entrance at the south east side of the

the fountain survives. In the 1660s the fourth Baronet, Sir Richard Wynn, is known to have established a 'new garden', none other than Mytton Davies (creator of the fabulous former gardens at Llanerch, near St. Asaph) being recorded as having contributed plants to this; perhaps this explains the garden's 19th century appellation. The famous Yew avenue may in essence relate to this phase, although some of the trees, at least, are 19th century replacements.



#### *The Old Dutch Garden*

Formerly cut into topiary, the avenue trees are now much overgrown and await restructuring and restoration. The fountain is in fact a perpetual fountain, its source being 'the Grey Mare's Tail', a waterfall almost one mile distant; the water is transported along a partly rock-cut leat through several fields and a small wood, where finally it enters a large slate header tank from whence it is piped downhill to the garden. Although the fountain basin is now overlaid with late Victorian quartz boulders, it is in essence a 17th century feature and therefore of great interest.



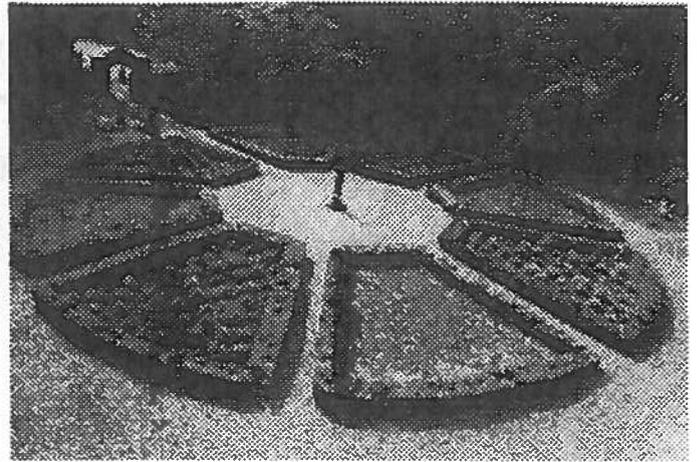
#### *One of the Cedars, reputedly planted in 1625*

One of the most interesting aspects of the Stuart garden is the survival of four venerable cedar trees, 12 of which cedars of Lebanon are traditionally said to have been planted in honour of the wedding, in 1625, of King Charles I and Queen Henrietta-Maria. Two yew trees, the 'Lover's Tree' or 'Giant Yew' and the 'Terrace Yew', represent the oldest things on site; estimated to be at least 600 years old they apparently predate the present house.

Further yew trees and a huge sycamore are apparently placed in alignment with the 'Chinese Walk', a raised Elizabethan causeway of cyclopean construction, still extant towards the south-east end of the garden.

In the 1820s Lord Willoughby De Eresby rejustified the house and gardens following the demolition of some of the Elizabethan

additions. As part of this intervention he appears to have employed Sir Charles Barry, the famous 19th century architect (of, amongst other things, the Houses of Parliament) to design a kitchen wing and lay out a knot garden in the courtyard. The knot garden, conceived in the shape of a Tudor rose, is currently undergoing restoration.



#### *The Knot Garden by Sir Charles Barry*

The wisteria on the hall range façade, together with the peacocks, are said to have been introduced at the same time. In the late 19th century and 20th century, the Earl of Carington (subsequently The Marquis of Lincolnshire) made some minor additions, including the 'Royal' and 'Statesmen's' gardens. Here, in 1899 and 1911, members of the Royal Family such as the future King George V and Queen Mary, together with various senior statesmen and foreign dignitaries, planted trees (chiefly oaks), some of which still retain their commemorative lead plaques. Continuing in this tradition of commemorative tree planting at Gwydir, H.R.H. The Prince of Wales planted a Cedar of Lebanon in the Upper Garden in July of this year.

Over the next few months it is our intention to subject the site to a systematic programme of analysis which will enable the recording and interpretation of its various visible elements. In conjunction with this, documentary research will be undertaken and the resultant pool of knowledge will then determine a strategy for the future restoration of the gardens. If, as seems likely, more evidence will emerge about the nature and extent of the early gardens at Gwydir, careful decisions will have to be made about how these revelations might affect the character and integrity of the later historical periods. At the very least an archaeological assessment of the most pertinent areas should hopefully increase our understanding of how such great Tudor houses as Gwydir related to, and were enhanced by, their contemporary gardens.

*The present owners of Gwydir Castle, Peter Welford and Judy Corbett recently attracted news coverage for their remarkable feat in reclaiming the oak and leather panelled dining room (which was purchased by newspaper magnate Randolph Hearst in 1921) from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and reassembling it where it belongs. The house and gardens are open daily 9-5pm.*

*Peter Welford is an architectural historian. He is joining the ranks of WHGT trustees.*

## Designer Dossier

John Davies has submitted a further selection of dossiers, four of which are published below. Readers who can shed further light may like to contribute to this ongoing column - or write to John Davies, 117 Mauldeth Road, Withington, Manchester, M14 6SR.

**William Pamplin** Llwycelyn, Merthyr Tydfil, was the first home in South Wales of Richard Crawshay, who employed a William Pamplin to design the garden. The house has been demolished. Pamplin is said to have been a Londoner, but no record of him has been found.

**Thomas Greening** From 1724 - 27 Thomas Greening laid out the formal gardens at Gnoll, Glamorganshire, for Sir Humphrey Mackworth.

Sir Humphrey's son and grandson extended the grounds in the fashionable landscape manner with follies and grottoes, but features also remain from the earlier period. Any information on Thomas Greening would be welcome.

**John Evans** John Evans (1723 - 95), of Llwyn-y-groes, Llanymynech, Montgomeryshire, merits an entry in the "Dictionary of Welsh Biography" as a cartographer, but no mention is made of his work as a landscape gardener.

In 1783-85 he was working at Wynnstay, Denbighshire, completing the grounds after the death of Capability Brown, including the construction of the now vanished lower lake.

Tom Lloyd in "The Lost Houses of Wales" states that Evans laid out the grounds of Llwyn, Llanfyllin, Montgomeryshire. It would be interesting to have further information on this Welsh landscape gardener.

**Sir William Hooker 1785 - 1867** The name of Hooker will always be associated with Kew Gardens, where father and son, Sir William Jackson Hooker and Sir John Dalton Hooker were successively Directors from 1841 to 1888.

Traditionally Sir William Hooker advised on the grounds of Llanover, Gwent, for Sir Benjamin Hall (after whom Big Ben is named) Can anyone confirm the tradition concerning this important 19th century garden?

### And a Lost Garden?

**T. R. Hayes** Between the wars the firm of T.R. HAYES & SONS of Ambleside created a number of impressive rock gardens. One of the best examples is at Eyarth House, near Ruthin Denbighshire, designed 1933-4 by A.G. Hayes.

In a letter to the author, Mr P.R. Hayes writes, "I was responsible for another huge rock garden built into the cliff at Llanduno for a gentleman whose business in St Helen's produces brass portholes for shipping. He had another garden in Bowden, but I am afraid my memory does not go back that far for names and addresses"

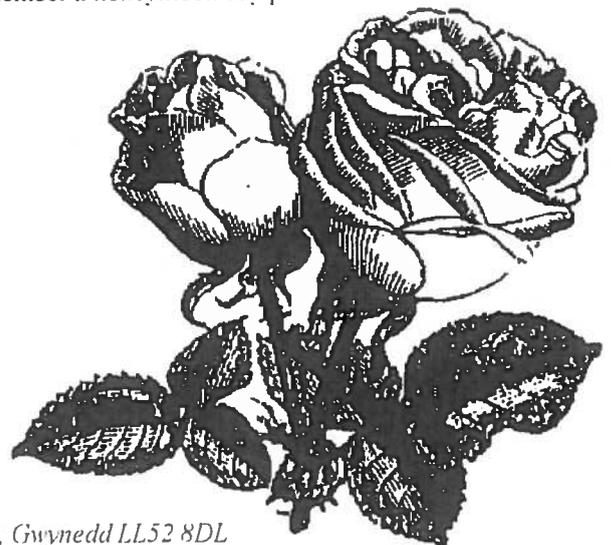
Can anyone identify this garden and say if it is still in existence?

*John Davies*

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## Sponsor-A-Rose Scheme

Since I last reported to you, over £1,000 has been received, paying for more than 50 varieties of old roses for the restored Rosery at St Fagans. Money has come from all over Wales, and, indeed, from outside Wales, and the donors represent a wide cross-section of ages and professions. The idea of being able to commemorate someone you love with a favourite or appropriate rose has clearly struck a chord: roses have been sponsored for a sister called Beryl, to remember a honeymoon day passed at Malmaison (Souvenir de la Malmaison), to summon up memories of fathers who walked regularly in the gardens of St Fagans or who loved growing roses themselves, charmingly, to provide "a small pleasure for those who visit here", and most movingly, Angharad Williams (aged 9) saved her pocket money to sponsor Souvenir d'un Ami for her best friend, Teleri, tragically killed in a road accident. If you have not got around to sponsoring a rose yourself, do, please, write to me and I will be happy to send you a list of the roses and a sponsorship form. Alternatively, several branches of the WHGT - Gwent, Gwynedd and Pembrokeshire have clubbed together to sponsor several roses from the branch. Perhaps we could aim to have sponsorship from all ten county branches? Members, please inform your Branch Secretaries if this is something you would like to do. I am enormously grateful for all the support so many of you have given to the scheme.



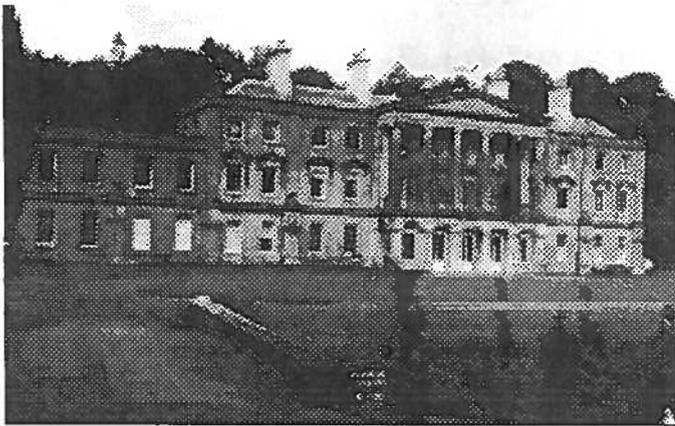
*Bettina Harden, Nanhoron, Pwllheli, Gwynedd LL52 8DL*

# Chairman's Remarks

## Some Hot Conservation Issues

### Glynllifon

Earlier this year the mansion, lodges, parkland and one of the walled gardens at Glynllifon in Gwynedd were put on the market by Coleg Meiron-Dwyfor, the agricultural college which has been on the site for nearly 50 years. The package on offer included the unique site of Fort Williamsburg, the only Seven Years War 'toy' fort which survives in the United Kingdom in an undamaged



*Glynllifon Mansion*

state. By the time that sealed bids were due to be handed in rumours abounded that the property was at risk of being sold off piecemeal, thus destroying the integrity of an important historic estate, the parks and gardens of which are listed as Grade I on The Register for Gwynedd.

Vigorous representations were made by the WHGT, and many other organisations, stressing the importance of the site and the havoc that would be wrought should the site be sold off as single cottages and parcels of land. By July we were informed that a purchaser had come forward who had made an offer for the whole package and that 'we would not be upset' by their plans for Glynllifon. Silence then reigned until a whisper began to grow that the plans of the prospective purchaser (who has yet to sign a contract) put the parkland under serious threat. We understood that a golf course, with its club house sited at Fort Williamsburg was proposed!! Talking to the Planning Office at Gwynedd County Council has confirmed the rumour although no plans have yet been lodged. It is very depressing to realise that, in spite of all the work that amenity bodies like ourselves have carried out over the past decade, premier sites like Glynllifon can be threatened by such unsympathetic development. Given the plethora of golf courses in Gwynedd, the worry is that, if such development went forward and then the business failed, this would open the way for 'enabling development' to safeguard the jobs created and make use of a landscape already damaged, inserting the thin end of the wedge to make way for cottages and chalets in the park. We will keep up the pressure on the planners to prevent such an occurrence at all costs - watch this space.

### Powis Castle

The castle and gardens of Powis Castle represent the jewel in the crown for The National Trust in Wales - unless you think that it has been topped by the on-going purchase of Snowdon! Certainly Powis attracts more visitors than any other National Trust site in Wales and anyone who has spent time lingering on the magnificent terraces there, or wandering further afield in The Wilderness, will know what a very special and wonderful place it is. The red castle stands high over the Severn plain flying its flag as an important Marcher garrison. Now imagine, as you approach from the English border, a huge site for a Livestock Mart covering some 26 acres, dominated in turn by a building the roof span of which covers some 4 acres.

Hardstanding for 600 lorries is proposed and the only landscaping on offer is a rim of single trees! The Mart will fill the view as you look towards Powis Castle, and as you look out from The Wilderness over the River Severn, it sits immediately below you. The present Livestock Mart at Welshpool operates within the town itself, holding sales two days a week. The vast new scheme will clearly have to operate seven days a week in order to be commercial and will thus generate greatly increased traffic and pollution.

It had been suggested that objections to the Mart should be carefully considered as they might be deemed 'anti-farmer'. Speaking as a farmer's wife myself, very aware of the plight of farming in Wales, of shrinking margins and markets, the size of the scheme alone is a matter for wonder. No-one is suggesting that there should not be a Mart at Welshpool, so historically important for the Welsh sheep farmer. But to decry this scheme, which would need considerable input from business other than farming, is not anti-farmer but anti-unsympathetic development.

This scheme was put forward in April, and although the National Trust lodged their own objection, no other heritage body in Wales was asked to consult on the impact such a scheme would have on one of the premier historic landscape sites, not just in Wales, but in the United Kingdom as a whole. Outline planning permission has been deferred "pending resolving Welsh Office objections" to the scheme. There is therefore a window of opportunity for objections to the scheme to be lodged with Powys County Council.

The Montgomeryshire and Brecon & Radnor branches have submitted objections, as has the Trust as a central body. The Georgian Group, Garden History Society, Save Britain's Heritage and other similar organisations have also written expressing their dismay at the proposal. We would be grateful if individual members of the WHGT and The National Trust, especially those who live in the area could also write expressing their opinion of the proposed plans. The plans can be viewed at the Council Offices in Welshpool.

While writing of the National Trust, we should highlight the current purchase of the Hafod-y-Llan and Gelli Iago Estates incorporating the peak of Snowdon. While not 'planned landscape' of the sort that we in the WHGT strive to protect, Snowdon and its inspiration is definitely one of the most important 'historic' landscapes in Wales. Richard Williams, the vendor, should be congratulated for resisting the temptation to sell to the highest bidder and ensuring that Snowdon would belong to Wales for ever. The National Trust has until the end of October to raise the £3 million necessary to secure the property. A special "Snowdon" Auction is being planned for the end of October at Penrhyn Castle and we will circulate details of this in due course.

*Bettina Harden*

# News from the Branches

## BRECON AND RADNOR

In June the branch visited Bryan's Ground, near Presteigne, which has walled gardens, walks and much innovative new planting by *Hortus* Editor and publisher David Wheeler and Simon Dorrell.

**Sunday 6 September** Visit to Monaughty, Radnorshire, late Elizabethan Manor House and garden being restored by Douglas and Sophie Blain.

**Sunday 27 September** Branch AGM at Glanwye, Builth Wells. Supper, and Lecture by Robin Whalley on Knot Gardens.

## CEREDIGION

An exploration of the former deer park at Lodge Park, now submerged in a Forest Enterprise estate, was attended by a small but enthusiastic and learned group of members who together with the leaders Ros Laidlaw and Caroline Palmer, added greatly to the sum of knowledge on the site. The Branch once again manned a stand at the Llanerchaeron fete.

**Saturday 10 October** Visit to Mallwyd (in conjunction with the Ceredigion Antiquarians) Contact Mary Burdett Jones 01970 612342 by 20 September.

**Saturday 21 November** Lecture: Details to be announced.

## CLWYD

Elizabeth Bartlett writes: A very enjoyable afternoon was spent in May visiting Bodrhyddan, the home of Lord Langford, where the gardens have been developed over four centuries. The branch also visited Brynbella, a neo-classical Georgian house, with a wonderful view over the Vale of Clwyd and the mountains, where the owners are busy recreating the garden. In July, members visited an Edward Milner garden at Bryn-y-Neuadd hospital, with wonderfully restored classical fountain and magnificent trees. They then visited Bodysgallen and toured the extensive garden and admired the restored knot garden. Amazingly, on both days, the sun shone.

## GWENT

Sheila Thorncroft writes: The present branch chairman Charles Smart resigned in July owing to pressure of work. The branch is grateful to him for his period of chairmanship and for his work in increasing our membership. We are fortunate that David Freeman has agreed to take his place.

David was Keeper of Tredegar House, Newport for seventeen years and has done a wonderful job bringing the house and garden to life from a sad state of dereliction. He is a graduate of Leicester University, an archaeologist and historian.

**Thursday 22 October** Lecture: Dr. Tony Dukes on Ruperra Castle

## GWYNEDD

The guided walk at Glynllifon took some twenty members to lesser-known parts of the park. In June members visited three Anglesey gardens: Maes y Porth, where David Lea Wilson and his wife are restoring the walled garden built in 1808, and have a twenty-year plan for the estate, Pencarreg, home of Miss Grace Jones, whose mature shrub and flower garden adjoins the Menai Straits, and Plas Cadnant, where Anthony Tavernor is tackling the years of neglect of the manor house, park, lawns, shrubberies and walled garden. On September 5 the branch will visit Bryn-y-Neuadd (see Clwyd) and Plas Mawr, Conwy, a 16th century townhouse recently restored by Cadw, for which a small contemporary courtyard garden is now being planned.

**Tuesday 29 September** Michaelmas lunch at Maes-y-Neuadd Hotel, Talsarnau.

**Monday 12 November** AGM Lunch at Dolmelynlyn Hotel. Glanllwyd. Details Margaret Mason 01758 721577

## PEMBROKESHIRE

**Sunday 20 September 2.30** Tour of Trewarren, guided by Tom Lloyd meet at St Ishmaels Church car park

**Monday 19 October 7.00pm**, Cottesmore. Talk -Osterley and Chiswick by E.C.R. Fawcett OBE, garden consultant with the National Trust at these properties. Role of dowsing and archaeology in garden restoration.

**Monday 16 November 7.30pm**, Haverfordwest Library. Professor Charles Stirton, Director of the Welsh National Botanic Garden at Middleton. The meeting will promote the work and aims of both Middleton and the WHGT

**Monday 21 December 7.30** Cottesmore, Branch Christmas party.

## SOUTH AND MID GLAMORGAN

The Talygarn tree survey has been completed with the assistance of Dr and Mrs Savidge, and was displayed on 23 May when house and grounds were open to the public. Copies have been sent to the relevant official bodies, and are available to members price £1.00. Many of the trees were judged to date from the time of George Thomas Clark, who bought the property in 1865. Some of the oldest, three magnificent Spanish chestnuts, estimated at about 250 years old, reach back to a more modest house the history of which is little known.

The branch is collecting information on Lanelay, Pontyclun, (now headquarters of the Fire Service) where outbuildings and walled garden have survived better than the pleasure gardens, but several notable oaks and wellingtonias remain. The Ruperra Conservation Trust is also monitoring developments at Ruperra Castle, where the castle and 18 acres of land have been bought by Mr Ashe Barracat, while parkland and woodland containing traces of rides and views may soon be sold off in lots. The branch AGM will be held on September 7 and will be hosted by Sir Brook Boothby, (a member of the Branch) at Fonmon Castle.

## WEST GLAMORGAN

**Sunday 20 September 2.00pm** A tour of Duffryn gardens will take place jointly with the South and Mid Glamorgan branch. Ceredigion Branch has also been invited. This will be an opportunity to see the progress of Lottery-assisted restoration of the garden.

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## This Bulletin is useful!

Readers may remember that Sarah Furse recently provided us with an article on ERDF funding of garden restoration projects in West Herefordshire. The Association of Garden Trusts has asked permission to reproduce this feature "Tapping Sources of European Money for Parks and Gardens" (published in our Bulletin - Winter 1998 issue) for the benefit of their members attending the AGT Annual Conference which is being hosted this year by the Staffordshire Gardens Trust on the theme of 'The Ferme Orné'. The Editor is well aware that reproduction is the sincerest form of flattery and we may be justly pleased that our news stories should be recycled for a wider audience.

# Vicarage Gardens- A Vanishing Resource

By Sara Furse

In Flintshire a dedicated handful of Clwyd WHGT members have produced an inventory of gardens of local historical interest with a view to their inclusion on the Sites and Monuments Register (SMR) held by the Clwyd/Powys Archaeological Trust. Checking gardens to augment or correct archival research has led to many interesting discoveries and, so far, one practical result in protecting the garden of Cilcain Old Vicarage.

Vicarage-gardens are rapidly disappearing as church property is sold off and the new incumbents housed in modern standard buildings. The ancillary farm, stable or small holding buildings may be converted to separate housing and the gardens built over. Thus Wales loses a vital part of the core character of so many of its parishes. These areas surely reflect more cultured times when a resident vicar was respected as a man of letters and of integrity and was housed accordingly, the farm or small holding augmenting his stipend. The setting and gardens to these buildings deserve respect.

Diocesan records in the National Library at Aberystwyth and parish records (in Flintshire's case in the local Record Office) provide evidence of the far-reaching reforms and changes in the running of the Anglican Church, particularly in the first half of the nineteenth century.

The value of livings varied enormously and it took longer for residence and plurality reforms to be carried through in Wales because of the poverty of many of the rural parishes. However loans were available from Queen Anne's Bounty to modernise or build new parsonage houses and thus provide a decent house for the resident clergyman. In Northop, for example, the terrier for the 1791 cites:

*"To the Vicarage belongs one old house or cottage consisting of 3 bays (17 x 6 yds) and a cross bay (5 x 4 yds), the materials are part stone laid in clay and part sods plastered over with clay... all earthen floors and all the house covered with straw... a chimney and fireplace made by the present vicar, no ceiling but a false roof made over one apartment with sods and white-washed... There is a garden across the road of about a quarter of a yoking (to match another adjacent to the house)"*

Needless to say at that time the vicar lived elsewhere. The present vicarage dates from 1826 and its garden is well described in a terrier of 1856. It is a two-phase garden looking over the glebe land and most of the ancillary buildings described in the terrier still survive. Just inside the gate and opposite the steps to the churchyard a well built brick privy links garden and drive. Huge mature beeches flank the drive and a raised walk along a ha-ha divides garden from glebe. Sadly there is no evidence so far of what sort of building closed the vista.

Ysceifiog Old Vicarage, restored recently with help from a Conservation Area grant from CADW, has a similarly situated privy but its stable buildings are converted to separately owned housing. Both Northop and Ysceifiog were considered good

livings and therefore attracted incumbents who could afford to develop their gardens.

Cilcain Old Vicarage is part of the Village Conservation Area. The ancient road from Mold to Denbigh passed that way. The building may be earlier than the 1791 terrier for there are plans to enlarge a similarly described house dated 1809 and further records for improvement in 1836. The last owner applied for planning permission to build a house on a portion of the garden (two previous applications had been turned down). Flintshire County Council refused permission and it went to appeal. The Old Vicarage was spot-listed by CADW Grade II after inspection and archival research: the garden then became the setting to a listed building, giving it more protection under the planning laws. The Appeal Inspector's report stated

*"I consider that the Old Vicarage and its grounds form important features of interest in the Conservation Area. The appeal site, its walls, trees and spacious layout contribute much to the character of the lane and historic evidence shows that the appeal site has always been a garden, an area of open space to accompany the Vicarage building."*

The Inspector noted in his report that the Old Vicarage garden would be included in a forthcoming gazetteer of gardens of local historical interest in Flintshire.

*"and whilst this does not afford it statutory protection, it is an acknowledgement of its local historic value."*

Work on a Denbighshire Inventory is under way but little work has yet been done on Wrexham - nor, for that matter, on Conwy. We have a lot to learn but find it fascinating and very rewarding.

*A 'Terrier', meaning a register of landed property, describing site, boundaries, acreage, tenants and rents has been in usage since the 15th century. So has its other meaning, as a small dog.*  
Ed.

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## Royal Welsh Show

Our stand at the Show was once again sponsored by British Gas, and the excellent information boards produced for us by British Gas last year were displayed in a more accessible fashion with different counties on show on different days. The stand was manned for four days by members of the Brecon and Radnor branch with the assistance of some Officers, and a number of new members were attracted. Speakers in the horticultural tent, both of whom attracted a large and appreciative audience were Col Richard Gilbertson on Old Roses, and Bettina Harden on the The Guide to the Historic Parks and Gardens of Wales.

## The Guide to Historic Parks and Gardens

This pamphlet has been a runaway success. Not only garden owners and visitors but also sponsors have been so delighted that extra funding will be available for an even larger print run next year. Some stylistic modifications will be made to make it more similar to other specialist brochures which all tumble out of an A4 folder distributed widely to tour operators and overseas enquirers by the Welsh Tourist Board.

Any modifications to the text of entries should be submitted to the Secretary by 1 December 1998.

Caroline Palmer

## Book Review:

# Penarth: The Garden by the Sea

by Barry A. Thomas. Published by Barry A. Thomas 1997.  
£12.99

Coal, railways and shipping could be said to have created Penarth. Within a hundred years, it had grown from a handful of cottages around a sheltered, south-facing beach, into a thriving town of hotels, shops and handsome public parks, but what caused Penarth to become known as "The most beautiful little town in South Wales" was not the industries themselves but industrial wealth. Docks it had, and the railway, but the town turned its back on them. It was not the mud-flats of the River Ely which brought money to Penarth, although they played their part in its early development, but the well-heeled folk grown rich from the nineteenth century's booming trade.

Barry Thomas' account of the town's history is detailed and fascinating. He has trawled all available records, digging out small gems from meetings of the Town Council, the local press and many other sources and the characters who emerge from these investigations bring the place alive as if it were today. There was, for instance, the affair of 'The Great Smell' in the summer of 1926. This occurred during the construction of the new promenade. Seaweed, washed up by the high tides, had lodged between the old wall and the new and was rotting there odoriferously, doing no good to the tourist season. The Contractor at first argued that the smell came from horse dung on the beach and refused to clear it but when the Council took him to court he changed his tune, claiming that the smell was long established and not a nuisance, or, if it were, it was the Council's responsibility as owner of the site. He lost, was ordered to cleanse his Augean stable and the great smell ceased to be.

For Professor Thomas, though, the true history of Penarth is in its parks and gardens which are the objects of his special enthusiasm. While not the earliest of their kind, they are certainly among the best laid out and it is a tribute to their designers that so much still remains, through two world wars, a depression and the neglect which, until recently, has been a feature of our times. The first was the Windsor Gardens (see *The Bulletin*: Summer 1997), the northern part of which opened in 1880. It was followed by Alexandra Park, Cliff Walk, Penarth Head Open Space, Arcot Street Shrubbery and the Plassey Street Recreation Ground, all laid out on land donated by Lord Windsor.



Looking towards the Pier from Alexandra Park

Alexandra Park, opened in 1902, occupies a prime site overlooking the pier and the sea and was provided with a bandstand from which music could be heard - rather too clearly for the comfort of some nearby householders, who complained, unsuccessfully - from June to September. It was even equipped with electric lighting - 12 lamps in the shelter and 48 in the bandstand - at a cost of £26.3s.3d. There was a list of 35 Council Bye-laws which included a prohibition against persons beating carpets or bleaching linen in the park, causing a beast of burden to enter it, betting, swearing, washing in the ornamental water, upsetting the birds or, yet more heinous, any officer of the Council.

One of the most attractive of the town's gardens did not appear until 1926, as part of the seaside development. This was the Italian Garden on the Esplanade, initially called the Beach Rock Garden. It was the brainchild of the first lady Chairman of the Council, Mrs Constance Maillard, and her friend Ursula Thompson, the first woman to graduate as a gardener from Kew Gardens, who worked on the restoration of gardens in Italy. A plaque in memory of Mrs Maillard, who lived to 103, has been placed in the back wall of the garden.

In addition to its informative text, Penarth is a treasure-house of photographs and early postcards, some of them in spectacular colour, and the printing is excellent. Some of the earliest pictures



A Picture Postcard sent in 1910

offer an amazing wealth of detail and the ones of the gardens are particularly useful. There is also an incidental but recurring delight in the poems quoted from the *Penarth Times*, a tradition that paper maintained faithfully over the years.

*'Oh Sol, don't hide behind the clouds  
And disappoint the surging crowds  
Who'll come to gaze (we hope) upon  
Our monster new pavilion!  
We want, Oh! Sol, a sunshine bath  
At Whitsuntide, in fair Penarth.'*

The book is available to WHGT members, from the author, Barry Thomas, Ynys Einion, Eglwysfach, Machynlleth SY20 8SX.  
Price £13.00 including p&p. Anne Carter

## Book Review:

# The Klingenberg Garden Day-Book 1659 - 1722

by **Annie Christensen** translated into English by **Peter Hayden**  
Published by Rhodos International Science & Art Publishers Ltd,  
36, Strandgate, DK - 1401 Copenhagen K, Denmark.  
Price £27.00 ISBN 87 7245 7104 (291 pages)

The objective of this beautifully produced, large format volume is to give the reader a more complete picture of gardening in the seventeenth century. The history of how this book has come to be discovered and published is a rich and complex tale in itself. The original manuscript was written in German (Holstein and Low German), discovered in the Danish Public Record Office by Dr. Annie Christensen, translated into Danish, and now translated into English by Peter Hayden. Previously unpublished contemporary plant drawings from Danish sources have been used to complement the material, as have quotations from The Garden Day Book of Sir Thomas Hanmer (1659) reprinted in 1991 with a preface by Peter Hayden. Hence the connection.

One of the fascinating aspects of this presentation of the Klingenberg Garden Day Book is that, although translated, the idiosyncrasies of the style in which it was written have been kept, and this is most noticeable after 1690, when, following the death of Postmaster General Paul Klingenberg (1615 - 1690), the Garden Day-Book was continued by his son, Paul von Klingenberg, in continuous, unpunctuated prose written in Gothic German script. It was, of course, never intended for publication, but any garden history enthusiast must be indebted to Dr. Christensen and Peter Hayden for making this unique record available to us.

One of the most valuable aspects of both this Garden Day Book and that of Sir Thomas Hanmer, is that they give such an insight on what was happening during a very important period in garden history, particularly in the field of vegetable cultivation when there was a wide and serious interest in the production of improved strains. An abundant amount of literature would have been available to Paul Klingenberg the younger in an age when experimentation with cold frames and hot bed and glasshouses was becoming widespread. A further advantage to the Klingenbergs would have been that the Dutch were Denmark's closest trading partner, and the Dutch had already established a sophisticated system of importing and exporting plant material at a time when much attention was given to the cultivation of newly introduced species.

It is clear from the Day-Book that both father and son were passionate plantsmen, though purely out of personal interest. Paul Klingenberg the younger was a lawyer by profession. The father probably acquired an interest in gardening, in particular the design and laying out of gardens, through his marriage to Elizabeth Berns. In later years he seems to have become something of an expert in fruit trees: he must have been considered as such because he bought fruit trees for Frederik III.

The commentary on the text is excellent, offering fascinating insights: there was interest in and consumption of salad vegetables throughout Europe, though not in Russia where such foods were

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ridiculed as being only suitable to be given to animals. In the kitchen garden, Paul Klingenberg the elder didn't just grow a wide variety of vegetables, he tested the particular strains and planted the best, artichokes from England for example. Like Sir Thomas Hanmer, the Klingenbergs had the financial security to indulge their interest and experimentation in the cultivation of plants in an age of increasing availability of species through trade and discovery. As a consequence, it is interesting to note from the Day-Book the kinds of tools and implements that were available to their gardeners. However, financial security did not necessarily allow free range. We know that Paul Klingenberg the elder edged beds with small box plants - but how big should a box hedge be? "According to Viescher's instructions they should be kept clipped. Three finger-widths high and three finger-wide was the maximum acceptable." Unlike Sir Thomas Hanmer's manuscript which was intended for publication, the Klingenberg's Day - Book contains a lot of the moans and groans we are all still making today - the laziness and incompetence of gardeners: "my tuberose ranunculuses and jonquils have suffered rather considerable damage because the gardener Henrich Muller planted them in far too rich soil as a result the greater part have gone mouldy" - the list of complaints goes on.

There can be only one small criticism, and not of the author or translator, but, one supposes, of the publishers: no information regarding typesettings, lithography, or printing. However, this publication presents the owner with something of a dilemma: it is too scholarly a work to be left on the coffee table - too beautifully produced to be left on the shelf. N.P.

*Nigel Pittard is Administrator to the Trustees, Ymddiriedolaeth Gerddi Plas Tan y Bwlch Gardens Trust.*