



CLWYD BRANCH NEWS

May 2009

Llangedwyn Hall Gardens and Sycharth 21st June



Visit to LLangedwyn, by kind invitation of Captain Timothy Bell. Admission £3, plus a donation for tea. **Meet 2.00 pm**

Llangedwyn Hall (OS SJ188243) is 8 miles west of Oswestry. It lies on the B4396 to Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant about 5 miles west of the Llyncllys crossroads.

Bookings and further information contact: Elizabeth Bartlett
Tel: 01352 758023

The garden at Llangedwyn is listed in the Clwyd Register of Parks and Gardens in Wales. It is a rare example of a formal terraced garden from the late C17 or early C18. Sir William Williams-Wynn 3rd baronet inherited Llangedwyn Hall in 1718 on the death of his father-in-law Sir Edward Vaughn. Much of the original garden remains as well as the estate buildings and stables.

Llangedwyn Hall garden is thought to be laid out by his son Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn IV 4th baronet of Wynnstay, possibly the greatest patron of Arts in Wales. Designed as a country retreat, the garden was designed to enjoy views across the landscape to the south.

The approach retains the original oval sweep of the walled forecourt and semi-circular steps lead up to the house. Sir Watkin, influenced by classical ideas of his day, created a formal ordered garden, geometrical in design. The main parterre on the east of the house had gravity fed fountains and a pyramid roofed gazebo. Above this there is a narrow walled terrace against the hillside and two terraces below. A bowling green, still visible today is on the lowest level.

A contemporary bird's-eye painting of the garden c1728 depicts a canal but no evidence of this is to be found. The original lime avenue was replanted in the 1970s but the fine iron gates with an overthrow

between rusticated piers remains. The parterre west of the avenue was originally aligned with an earlier central wing and main entrance, since changed with a later remodelling and expansion of the hall.

Although the garden was a status symbol and evidence of classical learning it was also necessary that the garden and estate could provide self sufficiency for a large household and guests. There are three fish ponds above the hall, also an eel pond, pheasantry, warren, dovecote, orchards and the brick walls of the terracing provided for tender fruits.

The Stallion House in a paddock to the east of the house is particularly interesting as only two are known to exist. This is a C17 octagonal stone built barn which has circular openings above the segmental arched doorways and a pointed roof, providing four loose boxes for the mares. The paddock was originally divided into four enclosures. This feature of the estate reflects the past importance of horses. Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn 3rd baronet, an avid sportsman, died in 1749 after a fall from his hunter. He is thought to have owned the thoroughbred Wynn Arabian before it joined the Duke of Ancaster's Lincolnshire stud in 1726.

In the early nineteenth century the Tanat valley was discovered by the Romantics who came to visit Mathrafal, Sycharth and Pennant Melangell. When the Poet Laureate Robert Southey was a guest at Llandedwyn in 1820 he wrote:

When on Llandedwyn's terraces we paced

Together to and fro

Partaking there its hospitality,

We with its honoured master spent

Well pleased the social hours

Sycharth meet at 11.00



Mr Emyr Evans, President of the Llansilin History Group has kindly agreed to give a guided tour of the site at Sycharth.

Sycharth is a motte and bailey. The flat topped 8m high motte surrounded by defensive earthworks was possibly built before 1100. The origins of the site remain unknown but in the late C14 it was the manorial home of Owain Glyndwr's court and where he lived with his wife Margaret Hanmer and their children. Excavations in 1962 indicated that there were two timber halls on the mound, one of which was 43 m long.

This once remarkable place is described by poet Iolo Goch of Llewenni (1320-1398/1400) who includes the fine chimneyed mansion, bountiful gardens as well as the magnificent generosity of the house in the poem "Owain Glyndwr's Court" c1390, translated by Dr Dafydd Johnston 'Gwaith Iolo Goch' (1988).

"entered by a costly gate, Gothic arches adorned with mouldings, every arch alike, a tower of St Patrick in the elegant antique order, like a cloister at Westminster"

also

"A quadrangular church, well built and whitewashed chapels, well-glazed, plenty on every side, every part of the house a palace - an orchard and a vineyard well fenced, yonder below are seen herds of stags feeding in the park, the rabbit warren of the

Directions to Sycharth (SJ20522586)

Take the A 483 to Llynclys. At the White Lion turn right onto the A495 Llansantffraid road. About 1 mile after Porth-y-waen bear right on the B4396. After approximately 1 mile bear right onto a minor road signposted to Llansilin. After about 2-300 yards fork left. After about ¼ mile Sycharth is on the right. Parking space is just off the road. Sycharth is up a track on the left. Cattle may be grazing in the field but they are used to people walking around the site. It may be muddy under-foot!



chief Lord of the Nation. Implements, mettlesome steeds in fair meadows of grass and hay, well ordered cornfields, a good corn mill on a clear stream and a stone turret for a pigeon-house, a deep and spacious fish pond with pikes and mearlings and other fish in plenty"

Despite this pastoral image a sequence of events were to unfold, leading to Owain's rebellion when he became the self proclaimed Prince of Wales. Sycharth was burnt down in 1403 by Prince Hal, Harry of Monmouth who became Henry V.

See: http://www.derwas-read.co.uk/ancestral_poems_court-owain-glyndwr-sycharth.htm

An account of a mid C19 visit to Sycharth in 'Wild Wales: Its People, Language and Scenery' Chapter 66 by George Borrow includes his translation of Iolo Goch and is available online.

Picnic or lunch at the Green Inn (01691 828234 booking advised).

Queen Ann Cottage and Whitehurst gardens

Open as part of the Chirk Town gardens with 9 The Parklands and 81 Maes-y Waun
Sunday June 28 (2-5.30) Combined Adm £3.50

Dedwyddfa, June 14th

Summer Garden Tea Party

Dedwyddfa was built in 1886 designed by the eminent architect John Douglas. Originally the house was set in one acre of ground acquired from William Cornwallis West, protected by a covenant. Quarter of an acre was later sold off and the coach house demolished in the 1970's, when a new house was built there.

The garden was laid out in the 1880's when the level at the front of the house was raised to provide a flat garden. This made it visible when seated in the main reception rooms of the house.

The planting was carried out by Bees of Sealand. Apparently the practice then was to over plant the trees and shrubs and to thin as necessary a couple of years later. However, when the time came to thin, the lady of the house said in no uncertain terms that they were not to touch any of her trees! The garden has been overpopulated ever since!

Typical of the Victorian age, the main trees include a Wellingtonia, a Cedar and Copper Beeches, all of which remain. There are a large number of Yews and Hollies of many varieties, a Corsican Pine, an Ailanthus and two Horse Chestnuts in full maturity. Casualties have included a Weeping Elm, a Fern-Leafed Beech and a London Plane. Luckily our soil is very receptive to the seeds of many trees, so we have saplings of Beech, Elm, Cedar, Yew, Mountain Ash, Laburnum and Laurel.

Amidst all the trees there is a path, originally of tarmac, forming a loop so that the occupants could take a 'constitutional' after lunch!

There was once a tennis court at the rear of the house now turned to lawn. There are also flower beds and a terrace. A small semi-walled kitchen garden was created in 1974 -1984 which is still in use today.

Other interesting plants include the Hydrangea Petiolaris which occupies the north wall of the house, the large Box bushes at the side of the house (obviously original), the Banksia Rose and the Snow Gum.

Please note that the date of this event has now been rescheduled. Members of the Clwyd Branch, family and friends are welcome to this event kindly hosted by Ann and Basil Thomas.

Admission **£3**

Hope to see you there!

Booking and further information contact:
Elizabeth Bartlett Tel: 01352 758023



Jan's bedding plants at the North Wales Plant Fair at the Tweed Mill looked great. Thanks to everyone who helped with this stall. Most of the plants were sold despite the competition and the weather!

Bees Nurseries Sealand

Arthur Kilpin Bulley (1861-1942) a Liverpool cotton broker and keen amateur naturalist developed a garden and nursery for his new house Mickel Brow at Ness in 1898. This was given to Liverpool University by his daughter in 1948 with an endowment of £75,000 to continue the development of the Botanical Gardens.

A.B. & Co. (derived from his initials) was the original name of the nursery which developed from Bulley's passion for plants. In 1911 the nursery became known as Bees Ltd and moved to a thousand acre site at Sealand near Chester.

Bees Nurseries were important to UK horticulture as Bulley sponsored a number of plant hunters on expeditions to the Far East including George Forrest (1873-1932) the Scottish explorer) who made seven expeditions to China and F. Kingdon-Ward (1885-1958) on expeditions to Yunnan and Tibet, Bhuttan and Burma. Bulley believed that Chinese and Himalayan mountain plants could be introduced and grow in English gardens. In 1921 Bulley controversially tried to introduce Alpines from Tibet and China into Snowdonia.

Bees was the first firm to sell seeds in illustrated penny packets and offered the newly found species from the East to the public. As a lifelong socialist Bulley ran his nursery as a co-operative and allowed visitors into his garden free of charge all the year round.

Found

A 1916 William Goldring garden plan was discovered by committee member Jan Lomas Head gardener at Mostyn Hall. It is also great news that restoration of the Mostyn walled garden is now well under way.

Branch News

The Clwyd Branch of the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust held a successful study day on Walled Gardens at the Erlas Conference Centre, Wrexham. Karen Liebreich described her efforts to save the Chiswick Walled Gardens. Discovering that the council planned a retail development and corporate parking in what was a jungle of bindweed and bramble, Karen and a group of committed volunteers went into action. Strip by strip, the neglected garden was transformed into a productive and beautiful environment, providing recreational and educational opportunities for a wide community. Over 1,500 children enjoyed a Chiswick kitchen garden experience last year growing flowers, herbs and vegetables and eating the produce.

Once more the future of the Chiswick walled garden is uncertain as it is closed for major restoration. At present the garden is a bleak hard hat environment, the old trees have been uprooted, sheds moved and only two volunteers at a time are allowed on site. Recently the greenhouses were vandalised, the volunteers have no security of tenure and the council plans to introduce charges for school groups. We sincerely hope that Karen will be able to continue the valuable community work at Chiswick when the gardens reopen and that they will once again provide for productive leisure and pleasure.

Maureen Thomas introduced the work of William Goldring (1854-1919) an internationally acclaimed designer of more than 700 gardens, including Erlas, at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Maureen showed some early photos of the garden and the design for the 8 acre landscape at Erlas for Frederick William Soames a Wrexham brewer.

Ann Moreton, Project Officer at Erlas showed us the walled gardens which were restored in 2006 to provide opportunities for adults with learning disabilities to gain a basic training in conservation and horticulture. It was good that Emma, one of the Erlas students was able to describe her success in this garden project.

The mushroom shed, with newly installed Welsh slate beds and mushroom compost from Lincoln, is the most recent development of these gardens. The columns of the former Palladian temple were seen on the ground nearby awaiting re-erection and the impressive stone gate posts erected nearby remain a mystery.

Fiona Grant gave the final talk of the day on the Walled Garden Network. This is a virtual organization celebrating the heritage of the walled garden. The network offers support and advice on the conservation and restoration of walled gardens around the country. Fiona explained how walled gardens often need to reinvent themselves for community and

educational purposes in order to survive in an age where the gardens no longer serve the original house for which they were a highly productive food supply. Fortunately there has been something of a renaissance of the walled kitchen garden and some like Chiswick and Erlas in Wrexham have been saved, providing community education, health, well-being and leisure opportunities, as well as vegetables. The Walled Garden Network holds a forum and training events around the country.

THE FAMILY KITCHEN GARDEN by Karen Liebreich, Jutta Wagner and Annette Wendland Price, was published in May, based on the Chiswick Walled Garden experience. £16.99

Committee News

We are sorry to lose David Toyne as our Branch Chairman. Fortunately David will continue to serve on the committee providing much needed expertise in horticulture and arboriculture. We are also sorry to lose Jenny McNab and Sara Furse. Sara Furse who founded the Clwyd Branch will continue to help and advise the current committee.

Many thanks to Sara, David Jenny and for all their hard work and commitment to WHGT.

Congratulations to Elizabeth Smart who is our new Chairman and Beth Brunning who has joined the committee.

Elizabeth Smart	Chairman
Maureen Thomas	Secretary
Glynis Shaw	Planning
Pru Probert	Planning
Elizabeth Bartlett	Event Secretary
David Toyne	
Jan Lomas	
Beth Brunning	

Glynis will act as Branch Representative on the National WHGT Committee.

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