

February 2007

Number 39



## South and Mid Glamorgan Branch Newsletter

*Dear Member,*

The Branch is looking for a new Chairman urgently. Dan was persuaded to stay on for an extra year, but will retire at the next AGM. The Committee meets every 1 or 2 months, depending on issues requiring discussion, at a venue decided by the Chairman. Willingness to attend some of the national WHGT meetings held in Broneirion, Powis on 4 Wednesdays each year, is an advantage, but not essential. In addition the Chairman may be asked to represent the Branch at local planning consultations and events

Please offer your services if you want the Branch to continue to have an influence on the state of local historic parks & gardens in the local area

### **Annual General Meeting 25 June 2006**

#### **Election of Officers**

As the Chairman of the HLF Wales, Dan Clayton-Jones wishes to resign as Branch Chairman because of a conflict of interests. As no nominations had been received he agreed to stay on until a new Chairman was appointed

All the committee members agreed to stand for re-election for 2006/2007. All were unanimously elected. Paul Underwood was also elected to the Branch Committee.

#### **Treasurer's Report**

The Branch has about £529 in its account. The Treasurer's report was unanimously adopted. Membership now stands at 88

#### **Chairman's Report**

**Cowbridge Physic Garden.** The spadework for the project was started by the Branch 3 years and it was then passed over to the newly formed Cowbridge Physic Garden Trust (CPGT). Funding from Creative Rural Communities (CRD) has supported the project for 2 years and the landscaping is almost complete. Money for the features and trees has been received from various local sponsors. Volunteers, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), will start planting the trees and beds in the autumn and will also show people round the garden and organise events

**Rookwood Summerhouse.** Money could be made available by the HLF if a scheme for a restoration project was submitted by an independent body, e.g. WHGT

**Gazetteer/Book.** The chapters on 22 of the 24 gardens to be included have now been written. Hilary is currently gathering illustrative material. The Committee is looking for sources of grants to cover the cost of acquiring the illustrations and/or copyrights and the cost of printing the book.

**Recruitment.** The WHGT National Committee has agreed that the first year subscription from new members can be claimed by the Branch Committee. Members are asked to take copies of the membership form and recruit a friend

#### **AOB**

**Sophia Gardens.** Permission has been refused for the proposed siting of a 'temporary' marquee in the garden. Many thanks to Elaine for her hard work in submitting objections

**Bute Park.** The HLF has granted money for a major restoration project

**WHGT National AGM held at Monaughty on 24<sup>th</sup> June.** The crisis in Welsh Country Houses was discussed, and the worthwhile new relationship has been formed between the National Trust and the WHGT, particularly in connection with the Public Enquiry at Vaynol. The WHGT is not a statutory body but must be more in touch with local government

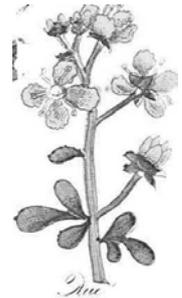
The AGM was closed at 3.15 pm. and was followed by an 'al fresco' talk by Wolfgang Bopp on the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens and Arboretum which is owned by Hampshire County Council. Because there are currently no 'blackout' facilities in Dyffryn Gardens, Wolfgang took



us on an imaginary tour of the Hillier Gardens and made comparisons with Dyffryn Gardens . The Branch was invited to make a visit to the Gardens

The afternoon concluded with a guided tour of Dyffryn Gardens, led by Gerry Donovan (Project Manager). The HLF funded work includes the restoration of the Mawson design for the garden and new visitor facilities.

After the tour tea was served in the marquee



### Dyffryn Gardens and Arboretum

The newly restored gardens were re-opened on March 1st, although work is ongoing on the gardens and house. The new car park has easy access to the gift shop and tearooms, as well as toilet facilities, which include a disabled toilet. These are outside the garden gate, and you can enjoy coffee, a light lunch or cream tea without paying admission charges.

Many of the events in the successful Centenary Year are in the programme for 2007. For more information visit [www.dyffryngardens.org.uk](http://www.dyffryngardens.org.uk) or phone 02930593328

### Cowbridge Physic Garden

The Physic Garden was opened to the public from October 1st 2007. The hard landscaping was completed on time and within budget. Thanks to donations from local sponsors benches, a fountain, 2 summerhouses, a Pope's urn and other enhancements have been incorporated.

A team of hard working volunteers continue to dig and plant trees, shrubs and herbs and this will continue ready for the official opening planned for spring 2008.

The Directors are grateful for the support of the Members of the CPGT as the garden will require a regular income to pay for the maintenance of the paths, structures and plants and for expenses such as insurance and services in the future

It has been exciting to see the garden develop week by week and to hear the enthusiastic comments of locals and visitors. Please visit the garden and you will be amazed at the changes since we held the Branch AGM there in 2004. It is open from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm every day See [www.cowbridgephysicgarden.org.uk](http://www.cowbridgephysicgarden.org.uk) for more information



## Cardiff Parks

Cardiff Council is still celebrating the success of attaining a gold award in the Entente Florale – a ‘Europe in Bloom’ competition with twelve member countries represented. Cardiff was nominated to represent the UK following its success in winning a Gold Medal and the Large City category of the Royal Horticultural Society’s 2005 Britain in Bloom competition. The award of the Entente Florale Gold medal is a life award and the city holds this status in perpetuity.

This news came in September 2006, soon after the confirmation of a Stage 1 award of £3.1 million Heritage Lottery Funding for the restoration and development of Bute Park and the retention of ‘Green Flag’ status for Roath Park, Victoria Park and Grange Gardens. Earlier in the year there was an Exhibition in the Old Library on the Pettigrew family – ‘The family who created Cardiff’s parks’, also funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The Parks Service in Cardiff is looking forward to another successful year in 2007. The RHS Spring Show returned to Bute Park for the third year running on the weekend of 20-22 April 2007. In May, the Parks Service will be exhibiting a show garden at the Chelsea Flower Show and the Council also hopes to retain its ‘Green Flag’ parks for another year, following judging in the early summer.

Councils are not required by law to provide parks and green spaces for their populations, but the first parks were developed in the nineteenth century to improve living conditions in the fast growing industrial cities. They created opportunities for the ‘mingling of the classes’ and provided opportunities for people to escape to improve and sustain their health. The rationale for providing public parks in the nineteenth century is still just as relevant today. Urban parks and green spaces make a huge contribution to the character and quality of modern cities and the health and well being of their citizens.

Cardiff’s parks help to raise the national and international profile of the city and encourage inward investment and tourism. In the future, parks will have an even more important role in helping to mitigate the effects of our changing climate, ensuring that the quality of urban life remains high and that affordable opportunities for formal and informal open air physical activity are available to all.

*Rosie James, Cardiff County Council Parks Services. [www.cardiff.gov.uk](http://www.cardiff.gov.uk)*



## Ruperra

Ruperra Castle received the attention it deserved on February 7th when a panel of historic conservation experts pleaded its case in Cardiff. The meeting was held in the Welsh Assembly building and sponsored by Caerphilly AM Jeff Cuthbert. At the end of the meeting it was decided that the panel of speakers should draw up a document to present to Caerphilly County Borough Council, to Cadw and to the Assembly Planning team.

There was total agreement that the castle was repairable, and the document is intended to inform the authorities of a different solution for Ruperra Castle which would not involve building houses on the historic setting. Many examples had been given of solutions for buildings in other areas, in an equally bad state as Ruperra. These solutions included compulsory purchase orders and public funding which could remove the need for any enabling development at all. Speakers included

- Tom Lloyd, author of ‘the Lost Houses of Wales’
- Adam Wilkinson secretary of SPAB (Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings)
- Oliver Leigh Wood of the Spitalfields Trust
- John Thorneycroft, former adviser at English Heritage having specialist experience with fire damaged buildings
- Dan Clayton-Jones, Chairman for Wales, the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Further news will be posted at [www.ruperracastle.hlogspot.com](http://www.ruperracastle.hlogspot.com) or local and national newspapers. *Pat Moseley, Ruperra Castle Action Group.*

## Ruperra visit April 30th 2006

We met at the Hollybush Inn, Draethen at midday for a very hearty 3 course lunch before setting off to Coed Craig Ruperra. Pat Moseley and Chris Jones Jenkins took us around the site, past the remains of the Lower Summerhouse (early C 19th ?) and on up to the site of the Iron Age hillfort/Norman motte and bailey (maybe Welsh/Norman). Most of us made it to the top of the C17th. Upper Summerhouse to enjoy spectacular views all around.

We made our way down to the Castle along pathways shown on the 1764 map, following many of the traditional ‘lights’ but arrived a little later than anticipated due to navigating various stiles along the route that are to be replaced with ‘kissing gates’. Ruperra Castle is a beautiful,

romantic ruin but it is alarming to see the degree of neglect and damage both to the Castle and the former gardens. However we were all thrilled to have the opportunity to inspect the site closely and spot aspects of the once grand, elaborately laid out Edwardian garden.

Then we set off for Lower Machen to be welcomed at Machen House by Mary Adams—what a wonderful tea awaited us in the Bothy. After we'd had time to refresh and revive, Mary took us around her very elegant garden, starting out across the lawn to the 'willow pattern' garden in the south then on around past the rockwork fountain and cascade to the second pond, across the front of the house and return to the Bothy before visiting the woodland which she and the gardener are lovingly restoring. We had a truly memorable day and the weather was exceptionally kind to us—the rain left off until the evening.

We thanked Mary, Pat and Howard Moore. I'm so sorry many of you missed this, as it a was really lovely day.

*Elaine Davey*

### Dewstow Garden and Shirenewton September 13th 2006

Twenty members of the WHGT and friends met at the tea room at Dewstow gardens on a lovely sunny day last September. We were

Shirenewton



guided around the garden and given a description of the challenges in restoring and maintaining this fascinating garden and underground grotto featuring the synthetic stone, Pulhamnite, the formula of which has been lost

We then drove to Shirenewton village and had an excellent lunch at the Tredegar Arms before crossing the road to Shirenewton Hall, where we were guided through the Japanese garden down to the pond at the bottom of the steep slope with views of the Severn and the bridge

Thank you Elaine for organising this wonderful visit

*Val Caple*



Dewstow

### The Mayflower Garden 3rd March 2007

Anthea Guthrie talked to a small group of members on the challenges of designing the garden for the RHS shows at BBC Gardener's world live and Hampton Court in 2006. She also demonstrated the methods the Pilgrim Fathers used to transfer the seed stock and plants during the hazardous crossing described the challenges they encountered before they were self sufficient

Anthea will be at the RHS shows in Cardiff and Chelsea this year with a new garden and would welcome visitors

### Diary

- 8 July 2007 at 3.00 pm. Branch AGM at Dyffryn Gardens in the new Education Centre when Dr Tim Mowl, the author of a series of books on English gardens, will talk about William Kent
- 27 May 2007: Visit to Eric Butcharts wood at Ty Fry, Tredodridge
- 23rd June 2007: Visit to Clevedon Court and Gardens
- Possible visit to Monaughty in September 2007

Please complete the attached form if you are interested in further details of these visits



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