

June 2008

Number 40



South and Mid Glamorgan Branch Newsletter

Dear Member,

My apologies for the late publication of the Newsletter, but the Committee is still working hard selling copies of the book 'Historic Gardens of the Vale of Glamorgan' and other matters have been delayed.

We have arranged two garden visits for the second half of 2008 and hope you will attend

Minutes from the Annual General Meeting Sunday 8th July 2007

Matters arising from the AGM held on 25th June 2006

Rookwood Summerhouse. Cardiff Council has erected scaffolding over the building to prevent further deterioration

Ruperra. Ms Pat Mosely is awaiting the new date for the public meeting concerning the planning meeting which was originally planned for July 11th and was postponed at the last moment. Pat had already sent out 300 notices of the meeting and will inform interested parties of the new date.

Election of Officers

Dan Clayton-Jones resigned as Branch Chairman. Paul Underwood was nominated as Chairman and was unanimously elected.

Hilary Thomas thanked Dan for all the sterling work he had done for the Branch and the book since his election in 2003.

All the committee members agreed to stand for re-election for 2007/2008 and were unanimously elected. Steven Parker was also elected to the Branch Committee.



Members at the AGM

Treasurer's Report

The Branch has about £422 in its account. The Branch has already secured financing for the book, but more fundraising may be required. The Treasurer's report was unanimously adopted. Membership now stands at 80.

Chairman's Report

Dan thanked the current members of the Committee for their contributions during the year. He repeated that he now wished to step down from the position of Chairman of the South and Mid Glamorgan Branch of the WHGT.

Gazetteer/Book. Dan reported that the Branch will have reached a main objective for the year with the completion of the book. Looking back on his chairmanship, the Branch also successfully launched the Cowbridge Physic Garden Trust and has maintained its role in making people aware of the importance of historic gardens and their houses.



AOB

The AGM was closed at 3.50 pm. and was followed by an amusing and informative talk by Tim Mowl, Reader in Architectural and Garden History at the University of Bristol, on the life and work of William Kent who worked for King George I and Queen Caroline.

'Historic Gardens of the Vale of Glamorgan' edited by Hilary M Thomas

The book was published just in time for the launch, which was held in the Reginald Cory Education Centre at Dyffryn gardens on Sunday 25th November 2007.

Thanks to the support of Branch members in distributing flyers to various local organisations, over 200 copies were paid for in advance.

Everyone who had subscribed was invited to the Launch, plus other people who helped in its publication, a total of 188, plus guests. As we received 108 acceptances we realised that we would have to 'expand' the Education Centre and we are very grateful to Sir Brooke Boothby for his sponsorship of a marquee, and to Dyffryn staff for organising its installation



Paul presents Hilary with a bouquet of flowers



Luckily the weather was on our side and there was a buzz in the air as the guests arrived. Hilary gave a short introduction to the book and described her favourite gardens from the book. Paul presented her with a bouquet of flowers before she was overwhelmed with people queuing for her signature on their copies

Currently we have sold over 400 copies of the book and would especially like to thank local bookshops—Cowbridge Book Shop, Nicklebys (Llantwit Major), Siop Yr Fro (Barry), and Windsor Road Bookshop (Penarth)—for their support. We are also grateful to several owners of local gardens for selling the book through their shops, or allowing us to sell books on NGS open days, particularly the current owners of Dyffryn Gardens, St Fagan's Castle, Nash Manor and Penllyn Court. We are constantly looking for new outlets, and would be grateful for any help from members in distributing flyers or contacting potential outlets.

Finally we would like to thank Hilary for her devotion in seeing the project through, despite the 'challenges' which arose during the final months
Val Caple

Ruperra Castle to date.

As most people know – and if you don't, - please visit www.ruperracastle.blogspot.com – Caerphilly County Borough Council Planning Committee rejected the proposals for enabling development by the owner of Ruperra Castle in December 2007. This was ratified in January 2008 and a letter informing him about the rejection sent out by a Planning Division which had recommended acceptance.

Naturally it is not only Ruperra Conservation Trust that is delighted by the councillors' decision: yet anyone who cares about the future of this unique piece of architectural history is holding their breath to see whether the owner will appeal within the required six months and whether decisions will then be made in time to stop the further deterioration of this seriously damaged building at risk

Ruperra will hold a 'Celebration of Work in the Woodland' on June 28th 2008. More than £360,000 has been spent on Coed Craig Ruperra during the last eight years, quite a lot of it on the Historic Garden element and funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Forestry Commission and Cadw. If you would like to attend please phone Mrs Dorothy Thomas on 01633 896003, or write to Dorothy at 2 St Benedict's Court, Bassaleg, Newport, NP 10 8LY or emailing Pat.Moseley@btinternet.com

We look forward to seeing you.

Pat Moseley, Ruperra Castle Action Group.

Bute Park

However it is interesting to see that we made it in Facebook on the web—a modern method of raising the profile of issues such as this. The entry included this information

‘The Council are planning to put a new access bridge into Bute Park - this is immediately opposite the end of Corbett Road (i.e. off North Road and opposite Optometry). In fact these are plans that will change the face of the park as we know it - the bridge is to be 9 metres wide! - this is to let 2 articulated lorries pass each other - a new, very wide road then drops over the feeder canal and down into the park near the nursery. Many trees will be removed - amazingly a large number have already been removed without any planning permission approved - you can see the gash in the tree line.’

‘A very large turning circle will then be tarmaced on the Park i.e. on the grass (so lorries can turn left or right) - a new 4m wide road will go through the nursery with a new road the other side to link up with existing roadways (which will be widened). large trees will be lost, and others severely lopped this means that the Park of Bute Park closest to Psychology will never be the same - the roadway will break the isolation from the rest of the adjacent city.’

‘The council want the roads for events in the Park but they also claim that the biggest need is for new roads for lorries is to bring bedding plants into the park!’

The WHGT was aware of the problems with the new access road into Bute Park and the damage to trees as part of the restoration project which we supported. Thanks to local objectors and intervention by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the work is now on hold until a planning application is submitted. The Branch Committee will continue to watch developments, but you can also help by contacting Julian Stedman, Development Manager at: developmentcontrol@cardiff.gov.uk, Richard Cole, who is in charge of this application: rcole@cardiff.gov.uk or, by post, Julian Stedman, Development Manager, City Hall, Cardiff, CF10 3ND’

Cowbridge Physic Garden

The main planting of the garden is almost complete, but as the garden develops, decisions will have to be made on the long term management of the garden

Heritage Lottery Funding between June 2006 and December 2007 allowed the trustees to employ Jacky Thorne as volunteers co-ordinator for 3 days a week and further funding is allowing

them to employ Jacky for 1 day each week until October 2008. The Trustees are also funding her for the same period for another day so that we can continue to draw on her excellent horticultural skills. The volunteers are a precious asset and the grant has been used to train them in various aspects of horticulture as well as enabling them to visit places like Llanerchaeron and the Chelsea and Petersfield Physic Gardens.

As a result of informal discussions over many months a group of volunteers has now taken on the organisation of the way in which the garden is run. The volunteers have elected a ‘Garden Management Group’ comprising seven people and Jacky as an *ex officio* member. Since September the group have organised all maintenance and planting activities in the garden including the ordering of new plants and the reorganisation of the volunteer room. One of the members of this group, has recently become a Trustee of the garden

The Trustees hope to continue to increase the membership, which currently stands at 384, and fundraise to pay for the running of the garden

If you can help as a volunteer, Jacky is in the garden every Thursday, or phone 07870858079 or e-mail jacky.thorne@ntlworld.com

If you would like to become a member so that you can support the long term success of the garden, please contact me.

Entry to the garden is free and it is open from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm every day
See www.cowbridgephysicgarden.org.uk for more information



Jacky and volunteers accept a gift of local wine from the Clisson (France) twinning committee

Val Caple

Dyffryn Gardens & Arboretum: Walled garden update

Progress is being made on the repairs to the listed stone walls. Once the ivy was removed it has been easier to assess the detailed conditions of each section. Fortunately the herbaceous border wall is better than assumed. Sadly this is not the story for the dividing wall between the two garden compartments and additional works will be required.

As ever, Dyffryn is a wildlife sanctuary, and as normal we have been working within the constraints of protected species. To add to this dimension this season, nests in the climbers to the back of the old display range is delaying works in this area. It is hoped that works over the winter and into the spring will make up for this lost time and enable the walled gardens to be opened later in 2009.

For information on events visit www.dyffryngardens.org.uk or phone 02930593328
Geraldine Donovan, Restoration Project Manager



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South and Mid
 Glamorgan Branch

Visit to Ty Fry



10 members of the Branch Committee were invited to visit this garden near Pendoylan.

Although the weather was damp, the rain held off and we were able to appreciate this woodland garden designed, planted and maintained by the Butchart family in recent years. After the walk around the walled garden, wood and ponds we were offered refreshments. In appreciation of the enjoyable afternoon Eric Butchart was presented with a copy of 'Historic Gardens of the Vale of Glamorgan'

Val Caple

Diary

The visits this year are a unique opportunity to see two gardens featured in the book

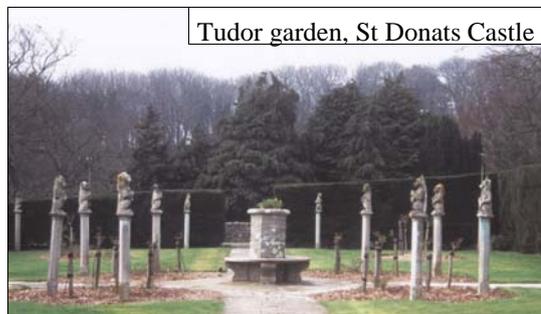
- **6th July 2008 at 2.30 pm. Branch AGM at St Donat's Castle, St Donat's.**

Two Committee members have resigned during the year. If you would like to join us please contact Val Caple. We meet once every 2 months in Penllyn Village Hall, near Cowbridge. We work to support the survival of historic gardens and assess the plans of the local unitary authorities which affect gardens in our area. We also visit other gardens where the owners limit the number of visitors

After the business meeting you will be taken on a tour of the Grade I listed garden by **Elisabeth Whittle, an inspector with Cadw.** This includes a steep Tudor terraces leading down to the sea. The garden has been partly restored and features added to during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Tea will be available for £3 each but we must know the exact number. Please return the application form before 1st July.

Tudor garden, St Donats Castle



- **21st September 2008 at 2.30 pm. Visit to Coedarhydyglyn, St George's super Ely.**

Thanks to Rhodri Traherne and family a chance to see the Grade II* garden.

Non-members are very welcome to both visits so please invite you friends

Please complete the attached form if you are interested in these visits.

Paul Underwood
 (Chairman)

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*Drawings from
 Culpepper's
 Complete Herbal
 1826*