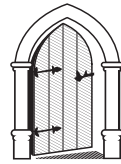


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COWBRIDGE
PHYSIC GARDEN
GARDD BERLYSIAU'R
BONT-FAEN

Newsletter

Issue 28 November 2016

Green Flag Awards

To celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Green Flag Awards there was a regional event for Wales and the South West held in the Pump Rooms in Pitville Park Cheltenham, itself a recipient of a Heritage Award.

The awards were presented by the Mayor of Cheltenham and Lesley Jones the chief executive of Keep Wales Tidy. Graham and I picked up the Community Garden award on behalf of the Physic Garden for the 9th time. We were given the opportunity to explain what a Physic Garden was and its formation. We had the opportunity to speak to other volunteer groups while enjoying afternoon tea in the magnificent Pump Rooms.
Sue Duffield

Iris and I attended the local ceremony on Barry Island. The awards were presented by Dr Rhys Jones, who remembered Barry Island Promenade as a child. The Council were celebrating the 1st Green Flag award for the Promenade plus 6 other Vale Parks and Gardens including Victoria Park, Barry and Belle View, Penarth. There were also 7 other Community award winners, including Old Hall Garden which received it for the 1st time. We all watched as the flag was raised – Iris and I are in the background!

The buffet, by Whitmore and Jackson, was very moreish, and even all the Vale garden staff could not make a dent in the supplies. Again it was called the Psychic garden but the MC, John Greatrex, DID know the correct name – Mary Wallis taught him at Pencoed College! *Val Caple*



Message from the Chair, Jo Homfray



If the summer has been a little mediocre this year, we have had a spectacular autumn in my view, and visitors have continued to flock to the garden to survey the beds, learn about medicinal plants, and sit in the sun purely to enjoy. The colours are beautiful there, all doing their bit – buttery yellows, coppery hues, reds and tans, as well as the greens still from the evergreens or those trees which have not dropped their leaves yet. The Michaelmas daisies have been a picture as well, and the bees enjoying some late harvesting! Birds and butterflies have been enjoying the seed heads and fallen fruit which have been deliberately left for them to feast on before winter sets in.

This is such a great time of year. The first two lines of John Keats' well known 'Ode to Autumn' may have become rather clichéd, but I urge you to read the whole of it, as it sums up the last two months so brilliantly. So I will finish with the last few lines... 'and now with treble soft, the redbreast whistles from a garden-croft; and gathering swallows twitter in the skies.' In the run up to Christmas, all of us from the Physic Garden send our very best wishes.

Volunteers News

May/June 2016

June is surely the time to enjoy the labours of the year and look at the results of our efforts in 2016 as we celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the Garden!

The garden was looking grand for the Members' Garden Party – the temples have been renovated, the fountain has been cleaned by the Maintenance Group and Gareth has clipped the box – it looks beautiful. The Shrubbery is at its best with Vipers' Bugloss, hardy geraniums and Astrantia topping the bill! The Pergola Bed has been much improved by seeding it with grasses including Crested dogstail grass! The Snakeshead Fritillaries have flowered beautifully and the wild deep pink gladioli looked spectacular amongst the grasses.



June is, of course, the month for roses and Tina's lovely bed of our old roses looks wonderful. As I walked round the garden a week ago a couple of less showy but interesting flowering plants caught my eye such as the Woolly foxglove in the Heart and Blood bed and elsewhere the Goat's Rue with its pea-like flowers. And sparkling in various beds is the lovely annual blue flowered Flax.

We have had plenty of groups visiting during June – often on their way to Dyffryn Gardens – we certainly seem to be making a mark and the Physic Garden is becoming better known as we look forward to the next 10 years of spadework!

July/August 2016

I brought my 10-year old grand-daughter to the Garden and set her the task of identifying the tallest plants which have now reached their zenith. She set too with a will and she found that the Childbirth Bed with its Tansy, Thistle, Fennel and Elecampane tied 2nd with the Digestion Bed with Tansy and Fennel, Marsh Mallow and Chicory. But the Kidneys Bed had five tall plants: Mullein, Chicory, Elecampane, Purple Loosestrife and Hollyhock. So for a small 10-year old the Kidneys Bed had it! Whichever bed takes your fancy, we have had lots of visitors and plant sales have gone extremely well. We have one customer who seems to come in every Thursday as he restocks what seems to be an empty garden!

Meanwhile, the Maintenance group have been busy replacing both the rotting water barrels – we are now the proud owners of 2 smart new water butts with complex pipe systems running into them! They have also replaced many of the vine eyes on the walls and strimmed the Pergola Bed which is now a small meadow. The fountain has been cleaned as well. So many thanks to all involved. Also a thank you to Brendagh for her endless contribution of various jams and marmalades which are sold in the garden.

It has been a good year for our pleached apples, most of which have had a bumper crop, and the Fig Tree is covered in fruit for once. The Quince has struggled with blight and has not produced fruits but there are good pears on some of the trees. The *Verbena bonariensis* and *Echinacea* continue to delight. The Chaste Tree is coming into flower I think for the first time and tiny *Cyclamen hederifolium* are brightening the borders. Our juvenile robin is colouring up his red breast and we saw a squirrel hurrying along the West wall the other day.

So we look forward to September, with a careful eye out for the dreaded Box caterpillar (which doesn't seem to have reached us yet) or indeed the dreaded Box blight!

Val Thomas for the Gardening Group. See the website for the latest Volunteers Newsletter

Visit us at: www.cowbridgephysicgarden.org.uk



Meet the Volunteer



Melanie Hurst

My interest in gardening started more than 40 years ago when we were faced with the challenge of creating a garden out of a building site in our very first home in Llantwit Major. Since then, we have moved home a number of times, including a period spent in Southern Africa, where I was intrigued to learn lots about the indigenous plants and their unique health-giving properties. Even earlier than that, the best man at our wedding, whom we met in Zimbabwe, was a renowned medical herbalist, with a vast horticultural knowledge who inspired me to get my hands and fingernails dirty.

We settled in Llysworney 28 years ago and our walled cottage garden, on three separate levels, gives me enormous pleasure (as well as taking a lot of hard work!)

A while ago, we were the subject of a TV programme, "Open Gardens" which featured gardens around the UK, opening for the National Garden Scheme (I am part of the Glamorgan and Gwent organizing committee). Carol Klein filmed in our garden and made some constructive suggestions. I thought the TV production company would undertake the makeover work, but no! We had to do everything ourselves. So much for the glamour of TV!

One of the highlights of my plant and horticultural life was a trip in 2006 to Namaqualand, South Africa, to see the wildflowers in all their glory; amazing varieties and colours, as far as the eye could see...and all totally natural, with no human influence or interference. Stunningly beautiful, as the picture shows.

As a volunteer I am always anxious to learn more from the experts and contribute, in a small way, to the beauty of our very special garden; it's such a joy to be involved.

RHS It's Your Neighbourhood Award



The garden received the award for the 2nd time obtaining LEVEL 5 – OUTSTANDING. The comments included 'A real treat to visit such an established garden, maintained by a horticulturally competent group, who are proud of what has been achieved. Good leaflets, labelling and interpretation throughout, and a desire to constantly improve. Good to see so many volunteers involved, and the efforts for plant sales and propagation. Good access for all, and specific reference made for partially sited people.'

Members' Garden Party

The Party was the highpoint of my 1st year as a volunteer. I had heard a great deal about it and looked forward to it with great excitement. It was a super evening in all respects and certainly lived up to my expectations.

The weather was wonderful and the warm midsummer evening sunshine showed the garden in all its glory. Looking around I thought how much it highlighted the hard work and dedication of the team of volunteers. That evening the plants were the hosts and they were dressed in all their June glory. It was delightful to see so many people wandering around enjoying the great variety of beautiful fragrances, glorious flowers and superb planting.

We were treated to delicious canapés, supplied by the Quarter Penny café, and copious amounts of liquid refreshments. There was an amazing celebratory cake made by Myfanwy and very kindly donated by Jo. Our thanks also to P.A. Black for their generous donation.

Delightful music serenaded us provided by the beautiful harp playing of Ioan Wardhaugh. This provided a sublime background for the members, volunteers and guests to mingle, meet new friends and learn more about the establishment and development of such an outstanding garden. The party was very special as it marked the garden's 10th anniversary. The speeches were in gratitude to those who have been involved with the garden, in so many ways, over these years.

A highlight was the auction of one of Gillian's beautiful paintings.

Happy anniversary and congratulations to all who have been part of the garden since 2006. It was an evening to remember! Roll on June 2017. I shall certainly be attending the next Garden Party! *Mary Parsons*



Visit us at: www.cowbridgephysicgarden.org.uk

Restoration of the Summer House

The family of Sir William and Lady Asscher were invited to the Garden Party to see the plaque installed in their honour. Sophie Hughes, writes:

"I just want to say how much the family enjoyed the Anniversary Party on Friday. The restored Pavilions really are a wonderful place to sit and take it all in. The plaque is beautiful and brought a tear to the eye. It will hold a very special place in our hearts. Thank you for the very fitting idea to remember our dear parents and to all who are involved in the Garden." *Photo by Mike Wilcock*



Gift Aid update

Since the Garden opened we have received over £25,000 in Gift aid which has been an enormous help in the running of the garden.



What is Gift Aid? Gift aid is a scheme from HM Revenue & Customs that allows us to reclaim an extra 25% on your subscriptions and donations.

Who is eligible? To be eligible to sign up for Gift Aid you must be a UK taxpayer and pay Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for the year of donation at least equal to the tax treated as deducted from your donation.

What if you have not paid sufficient tax? If you have paid less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all your donations in that tax year it is your responsibility to pay any difference.

Are you a higher rate tax payer? There is an extra benefit for higher rate tax payers as you are able to reclaim tax on the amount you have donated. We, as a charity, can claim the basic rate of tax on the value of your gift, and you can reclaim the difference between the higher rate (40%) and basic rate (20%).

Gift Aid Declarations If you have not already made a Declaration and would like to do so, the form is on our website or ring 01446 774534 to request a form.

If you have completed a Gift Aid Declaration please notify us if you:

- Want to cancel your declaration
- Change your name or home address
- No longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains

Genevieve Thomas

Visit of the Friends of Whitehurst Gardens (FWG), Chirk.

Members of FWG visited South Wales to learn more about restoring and sustaining historic gardens. Elaine Davey (Welsh Historic Gardens Trust) arranged visits to Insole Court, Cardiff, which has recently been restored, and the Cowbridge Physic Garden. We were delighted that Lisa Fiddes (Cadw) and Val Caple could also join us.

After outlining the history of the site Val explained how the garden has been successfully sustained and managed. The garden is maintained by up to 20 Volunteers and is supported by the 400 members of the Trust.

The design is based on a formal physic garden layout of the 18th century with plants chosen for medical properties as well as culinary, dyeing and perfumery qualities. The FWG were interested in the period planting as some might be suitable to the Whitehurst Gardens.

Whitehurst was originally the walled garden built by the Myddelton family of Chirk Castle in the mid-to late-17th century for productive and ornamental purposes. The photo shows a detail from the 1735 engraving of the castle and park by T Badeslade & W Toms labelled 'Fruit Garden of 12 Acres with Circular Walk & Terraces &c. belonging to Chirk Castle'. Whitehurst contains tiered curving fruit walls, gates, a banqueting house and a mount. Twentieth-century cottages now occupy part of the garden.

The Friends of Whitehurst Gardens hope to restore this rare and unusual British Civil War period Garden for everyone to enjoy once more.

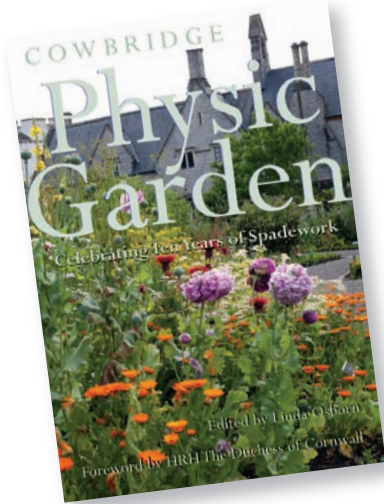
The members of FWG very much enjoyed visiting the garden which is beautiful and remarkably well established for what is a relatively young garden. This visit was particularly inspirational as it shows the power of volunteers, and what can be done to provide a wonderful community asset and amenity from a derelict site.

Glynis Shaw and Val Caple

For more information see <http://whitehurstgardens.weebly.com/>



Cowbridge Physic Garden Gifts



Our splendid book of the garden is going to make a lovely Christmas gift for lots of people this year. It's informative, engaging and at the special Members' price of just £10 it's terrific value. You can obtain members copies in the garden on Thursdays, just ask one of the volunteers, or from The Bay Tree. Alternatively contact Genevieve Thomas on 01446 774534

Christmas presents all wrapped up in 160 pages!

Full price copies are always available at The Cowbridge Book Shop, W H Smiths and Dyffryn Gardens bookshops.

The tea towel, cards, notelets and umbrellas are on sale at The Bay Tree, Cowbridge. Merchandise and plants are also for sale in the Garden on Thursday mornings.

Dates for your diary!

Walking Nativity

Churches Together in Cowbridge and district are staging the 'Walking Nativity' on the 9th & 10th December. They will be passing through the Physic Garden on their journey to Bethlehem.

CPGT AGM

March 8th 2017. The talk afterwards will be by Helen Picton from Picton Garden and Old Court Nurseries.

Plant Fair

Saturday 29th April 2017

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