

COWBRIDGE  
PHYSIC GARDEN  
GARDD BERLYSIAU'R  
BONT-FAEN

Patron: HRH the Duchess of Cornwall  
President: Dan Clayton-Jones OBE, KStJ, TD, DL

# Newsletter

Issue 20 January 2014



## 2014 AGM 19th March 2014



We are extremely fortunate this year to have secured a very special speaker to talk to us after the "business" side of the AGM has been dealt with.

He is Mr Justin Albert, Director of the National Trust for Wales and therefore responsible for all its properties in The Principality. Most, if not all, National Trust houses in Wales have gardens with a fascinating history and Justin's talk is entitled: **"Enjoying, interpreting and protecting the great Gardens of Wales."**

Justin became Director for National Trust Wales two years ago, following an illustrious career in broadcasting and documentary film making. During his time in office the National Trust has taken over the management of both Dyffryn Gardens in the Vale of Glamorgan (see photograph) and Tredegar House in Newport.

He is also vice president of the Hay Literary Festival and the Brecon Jazz Festival.



Make sure you secure your place for what promises to be an interesting and informative evening. Tickets are now available at £5 each.

# Message from the Chair, Jo Homfray



As I write this we have nearly completed a whole month of the New Year 2014. May I wish all members a Happy, Healthy and Fulfilling New Year. 2013 had many highlights for the Cowbridge Physic Garden – the visit from Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Cornwall, and the renewal of her Patronage for another five years, the celebration of Big Birthdays for some of the loyal Volunteers, and some successful charity events held in the Garden also. We welcomed some super new Volunteers and we were awarded yet another Green Flag for our excellence as a community green space. The garden throughout the year was kept to the highest of standards and much frequented by visitors as well as being a haven of peace and calm for regular local people to enjoy. It is indeed a gem in the locality.

There were however a few sadnesses, one of them being the loss of Marylyn Cope, wife of Robert Cope, a founder Trustee of the Physic Garden. She was a loyal friend to us all and will be much missed, and Robert has been very much in our thoughts.

January has swept in with gusty winds and torrential rain which will have tested all those who are reading this! I am glad to say that the Garden has weathered it surprisingly well — the only major victim has been the White Mulberry – this has had to have its roots pruned and be hauled with stakes back up to an upright position. I thank Gareth Esplin for this magnificent man work!

Despite the grey and rain filled skies Spring is already being heralded by a host of golden aconites, set against red cornus and flanked by native hellebores. A hopeful sight if ever there was one! I look forward to seeing you at the AGM on 19th March when our Guest Speaker will be Mr Justin Albert, Director of The National Trust for Wales, and also at our very popular Plant Sale on Saturday 26th April.

## Volunteers News

### September 2013

The season of mists and mellow fruitfulness is upon us in the Physic Garden. The Medlar is covered in its rather rude looking fruits (I understand that both Shakespeare and Chaucer played with both the name and unusual appearance of the fruits!) and the damsons have been picked to be used for making preserve. The rest of the garden still looks good. Mary tells me that after 6 years the Black Mulberry has at last begun to put on some new growth. We are delighted!

The Michaelmas daisies in particular are in fine form. We are gradually cutting back the giants but we are careful to leave some seedheads such as *Elecampane* for the birds and have been rewarded by quite a few goldfinches perching on the heads. Where we have cut down the *Elecampane*, we have tried to leave the stems for insects to use. Other magnificent giants are our Cardoons – take a quick look at the one near the plant sale area as it begins to go over – it resembles a great tree!



Another impressive giant is our splendid *Acanthus* – *Acanthus mollis* or *Acanthus spinosus*. A common name of the plant is Bear's Breeches, but the derivation of that remains obscure!

## October 2013

I start the newsletter with some musings from Esther: "What I really like about this time of year is that some of the birds start to sing again as well. You could really hear the robin singing his territorial song over and over." I certainly echo her feelings – the garden provides a delightful green space for all of us, man and beast.

The *Cyclamen hederifolium* have now been planted and will hopefully make a lovely impact next year. *Cyclamen coum* and the Martagon lilies have been planted in the shrubbery to try and achieve extra interest in this quite difficult area.

The garden still provides us with autumn fruits. Esther et al found 6 massive pears on the old pear tree along the Church Road wall – Mary, I am told, was going to attempt to taste one to see if they were any good! Esther and Val Caple picked lots of grapes which will be used to make some delicious juice.

There is still a fair amount of colour, particularly in the 'Eyes' bed. Some of the roses are showing late flowers and the Fig Tree is looking beautiful.

Rebecca tells me that she and Carys showed round 28 pupils and two of their teachers from the local Welsh Primary School, who were very impressed with the signs on the beds and the grapes!

## November 2013

I make no apology to returning to Monty Don's 'Ivington Diaries' to celebrate November. "When I was a young boy there was an old man who worked as a gardener in our village. He seemed impossibly ancient to me then, but I suppose that he must have been only twenty years older than I am now. He always worked



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in a suit and had a watch on a chain he kept in his waistcoat pocket. He always wore a tie and collar to work, even if it was to shovel muck all day. He had fought in the First World War. He was a quiet gentle man who lived in the same village all his life. His passive, distant presence influenced me and influences me still. I believe in the healing power of tending the earth, of growing things and of learning about a place intimately, over decades if necessary.”

November can be a sad month with Poppy Day, the light lost early in the afternoon and the seedheads going over and no longer offering food to the birds, but it is a good time to look around the garden at the changing colours.

All the apples have now been picked – I understand the ‘Ashmead Colonel’ are very nice and the huge pears from the pear tree – the variety Tina tells me is ‘Catillac’ – are picked and waiting to be cooked for two or three hours!!!

The foliage of the evergreen *Magnolia grandiflora* by the Church Street entrance has clearly been polished and the wind reveals the bronze undersides of the leaves and our little Holly in the Dye Bed looks stunning. The Bistort dotted in places round the garden provides a lovely red ground cover. In the Eyes bed, *Salvia hormium* continues to flower impressively you turn back towards the shrubbery near the office the Honesty catches your eye.

## December 2013

Val Caple and I were wandering around the garden and were very struck by the stunning tree shapes in the garden. When the trees have shed their leaves we can really appreciate their lovely structures. The Walnut is standing stark and beautiful and the Gingko by the main entrance has shed a carpet of leaves and is showing off its beautiful shape. We were also struck by the bark of the Crab Apple, once again only really appreciated at this time of the year.

Setting off these structures are the red stems of the *Cornus alba* and the green heads of the *Helleborus foetidus*. On the ground in places are spread out the marvellous cyclamen leaves with their spider’s web patterns. And all around in different beds already we can see the promise of spring, with the snowdrops beginning to emerge in the Shrubby and under the magnificent *Magnolia grandiflora* and *Narcissus odorus* beginning to poke through in the Dye Bed.

Gillian and I were tickled pink by our garden robin drinking out of the dog bowl as there was no water in the fountain! It has been switched off for maintenance. Gillian did pour some water in the fountain bowl so our little resident could drink in more comfort!

*Val Thomas, Gardening Group. See the website for the latest Newsletter*



# Meet the Trustees

## Rob Moore

Rob Moore has been involved in Cowbridge Physic Garden since late in 2004 and is a Trustee.

He was inspired by his Grandfather to respect and admire all our natural history and still loves the subject. His Great Grandfather was also a gardener at Powys Castle, which might be where his rather under-used practical gardening genes come from! He studied Botany and Zoology at University later specializing in fungi, followed by research into tropical soil fertility at Queen Mary College, the University of London. He later worked on a project at the National Museum of Wales involving the storage, recovery and use of biological records from Wales in ecology and conservation.

Following a period of teaching Biology and Chemistry he joined the then Ministry of Agriculture. Later in his somewhat diverse career, (he was once described in an interview as being something of a rolling stone... and he does play the guitar!) he joined the Marketing Department of the Royal Mint and was responsible for developing a new section which created collectable, coin-design related, products in silver, gold and ceramics.

Normally a fine weather cyclist, he nevertheless accompanied the Reverend Boulton when they cycled across Spain on a Pilgrimage to Santiago, and later when they cycled from Cowbridge to St Davids.

He is a member of the Marketing Committee of the CPGT and has recorded the development of the Physic Garden photographically, many used to illustrate the garden on the website. He has also given many talks on the garden to interested groups.

## Talks and Tours

During 2013 volunteers continued their work in raising funds and promoting the garden. In total they took part in 3 garden talks and 13 garden visits. In addition the garden was used for photographs for 11 weddings and was booked for 1 party, other than our own. Many thanks to all of the volunteers for your efforts, including tidying up when necessary. *Rebecca Exley*





# Food and Drink Festival 26th and 27th October 2013

This year Cowbridge Food and Drink Festival included over 30 locally made scarecrows dotted around the whole town. Children were asked to vote for their favourite scarecrow as well as answer a few questions on well known books and characters.

The Physic Garden Volunteers took up the challenge, and our young lady enjoyed the festival lounging in one of the summer houses.

## Clisson Town Twinning

As a member of the Physic Garden and a friend of the president of the Clisson end of the Cowbridge/Clisson Town Twinning, I occasionally send him photographs of the progress of the Muscadet vines. I did so on Wednesday when the sun shone and here is my picture. Gilles, who has an exploitation of 11 hectares at Gorges near Clisson, was instrumental in bringing over the vines a few years ago. His message indicates how delighted he is at the way they have been nurtured. He is also a bit of a joker, as his reference to Camilla shows!

***(Your French test for today):***

*Merçi pour les photos de la vigne du Jardin des plantes.*

*Elle est superbe cette vigne qui pousse en treille et en pergola, c'est superbe..*

*Cela doit étonner un peu les gens, ces si belles grappes,...*

*J'ai vue que la princesse Camilla était la Marraine du jardin, elle doit se demander qui sont ces Huluberlus de Franchouillards qui sont venu planter de la vigne dans un jardin aussi sérieux...*

*Bonne fin de semaineæ*

*Edgar Lloyd*

## Legacy

Have you ever thought of leaving a legacy to the Physic Garden? Such generosity helps to safeguard the future of this wonderful garden in our community for future generations. Please consider doing this when you are next considering such matters!

# Christmas Tree

Seedheads, cuttings, leaves and berries from the garden were used to lovely effect by Lin, Esther, Tina and Jo Homfray to decorate our Christmas Tree as our part of the contribution to the Christmas Tree Festival in the Holy Cross Church. The 'star' on the top of the tree is one of our Cartoon heads.



# Helicopter Photographer

We successfully took photos of the garden in ideal conditions, sun and little or no wind. The helicopter is a model, a quad-copter cost over £500 and a camera mounted on gimbals to steady the camera another £500. Rather than a video I had time lapse photos, over 700! Due to the wide angle lens there is a fish bowl affect to the photos



Here is one on our photographs. Other aerial photographs can be found at [www.cctrust.co.uk](http://www.cctrust.co.uk)

Jon, the 'pilot', has offered to have another go in May or June when there less shadows and brighter colours. *Harry Hailes, Cowbridge Charter Trust*

# Walking Nativity 13th & 14th December 2013

Please can you pass on our thanks to all at the Physic Garden Trust for letting us use the Physic Garden as part of the Cowbridge Nativity.

The Garden was a perfect setting for Herod's Palace, it was very special using it in the dark, with the 'temple' illuminated, and it added much to the whole Walking Nativity. We had over 80 on Friday and over 60 on Saturday, as the forecast had been dire for the Saturday, that is pretty good. As you know the event was free of charge, but the Lions who were stewarding took £72 in donations which they were very pleased with.

'Refresh' is a group of local Christians, see [www.be-refreshed.com](http://www.be-refreshed.com). *Sue Freeland*



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# Cards and gifts

There is a range of cards and notelets as well as umbrellas and teatowels for sale at The Bay tree, Cowbridge. They are also available, together with a range of plants in the Physic garden on Thursday mornings.

## Dates for your diary!

### CPGT AGM, Wednesday 19th March 2014

The AGM will take place in the Bear from 6.30 to 7pm. Tea and coffee will be available from 7 to 7.30 pm and there will be a raffle. Justin Albert will talk from 7.30pm

### Plant Sale, Saturday 26th April 2014

Please support us by taking cuttings or dividing your plants to sell, and by coming to support us on the day.

### Summer Garden Party, Friday 27th June 2014

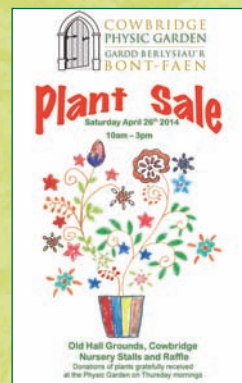
Details will be given in the next issue of the Newsletter.

### WHGT AGM, Sunday 6th April 2014, 2.30pm

The South & Mid Glamorgan Branch of the Welsh Historic Garden Trust are holding their AGM in the Duke of Wellington, Cowbridge, followed by a talk by Dan Clayton-Jones, the President of the CPGT, entitled 'The Development of the Walled Garden through the Ages'.

Members of the CPGT are invited, but places will be limited. Please let me know if you wish to join the WHGT members.

*Val Caple, Milestone, Penllyn, Cowbridge, CF71 7RQ, [val.t.caple@care4free.net](mailto:val.t.caple@care4free.net)*



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