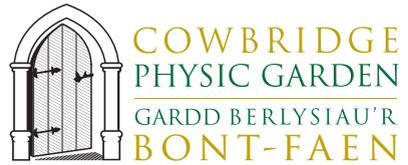


Patron: HRH the Duchess of Cornwall
President: Dan Clayton-Jones OBE, KStJ, TD, DL



Newsletter

Issue 25 November 2015

Two blooming great RHS awards!

The award ceremony this year was held in the Wolfscastle Country Hotel. Two members from the CPG were invited to attend and Eifiona and I were pleased to be able to represent the garden.

We arrived in time for coffee and Welsh cakes and shortly afterwards were taken by coach either to Treffgarne Hall Garden or to visit Nant y Coy Mill.

Although the garden is probably at its peak in springtime, the autumn sunshine enhanced the variety of planting, especially in the walled garden with its exotic specimens.

Before the excellent lunch we were entertained by the children of Wolfscastle School with three songs.

Then to the real purpose of the visit – the awards. There are fifteen categories, ranging from towns to individual front gardens. The final awards were in the “It’s Your Neighbourhood” section. We were delighted to receive a certificate in the highest level (5 – Outstanding) for the second year running. Just when we thought it was all over, to our surprise, the CPG was singled out to receive the RHS’ “National Certificate of Distinction” award.

Our thanks go to the Wolfscastle Community Council and to the RHS. It certainly was a grand day out and we came home with a beautiful plaque too!

Jill Roberts. Volunteer



Message from the Chair, Jo Homfray



We have been blessed with a truly wonderful September and October, a soft golden autumn with several days of blue skies and sunshine which, coming after a beastly wet August, has been hugely appreciated by us all. The leaf colour has been spectacular and I am sure as good as any in New England. The Americans have a great phrase for this time of year – ‘prime leaf-peeping time’!

The garden has therefore been a delight to behold even as it begins to snuggle down for the winter – wonderful buttery yellows from the ginkgo, fiery reds from the Service tree, not to mention the reds from berries, vines and cornus, and the multi-hued golden seedheads. The stalwart Volunteers have been scurrying about – pruning, lifting, dividing, planting, digging. All ready for a spectacular rebirth in the spring! I thank them all. We had a sad farewell teaparty for Jenny but now have some new Volunteers and they are a great asset in helping us to keep the Garden looking tip top.

This summer has seen many awards for the Garden – The Green Flag, the RHS Wales in Bloom Level 5 Outstanding award and an extra RHS National Certificate of Distinction. We have also been featured in a film by S4C which was very pleasing. All these successes are down to our Volunteers – Garden, Marketing and Maintenance – and our supportive Members.

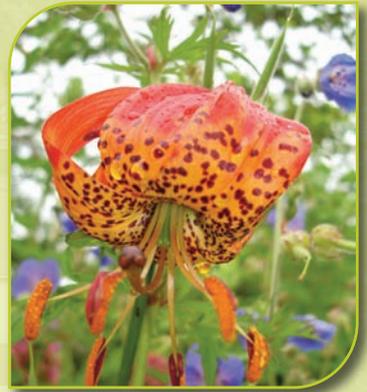
We have one very sad piece of news concerning Peter Clinton, who gallantly opens and closes the Garden every day for us – his daughter has passed away leaving a husband and three young boys. I know you will all join me in offering our thoughts and prayers to the family.

Volunteers News

May/June 2015

“Most garden lovers, asked which is their favourite month, would say June: it has all the sparkle and freshness of early summer, and is still full of hopefulness. One of the things I enjoy most about my borders in June is the masses of lush foliage of different sizes, shapes and colourings. Any coloured flower, even the brashest scarlet oriental poppy, can be safely let loose amongst that.” Well, I think Christopher Lloyd (“Cuttings – A year in the Garden with Christopher Lloyd”) sums up the Physic Garden at this time of the year!

The roses in the Fragrance Bed are at their zenith. My favourites are the old *gallica* roses, awash with petals and wonderful scents. The Pergola is covered with the rambling Rosa 'Old Blush' and *Rosa arvensis* 'Janet B Wood' with a spectacular Honeysuckle at the back. The Shrubbery also comes into its now with *Geranium pratense* going completely mad amongst the self-seeded Valerian, *Astrantia* AND popping its head through, one of our red Turkscap lilies which we thought we had lost. A real charmer.



The bees have started to hurry round the Borage, Cornflower and Vipers Bugloss and a group of bees have set up home in one of the bird boxes under the Pergola. The fruit trees are mostly doing well but the Peach and Apricot struggle each year – it's probably too damp in the garden. But for the first time there are cherries on the Morello Cherry tree. Hooray! Our resident blackbird(s?), sparrows and the jackdaws continue to enjoy the fountain.

May was slow and indeed the first half of June was quite cold. We planted three new Cistus plants, Rock roses, in the shrubbery, replaced some of the dead Lavenders and planted and tended old *Dianthus* species which are beginning to flower well. The Fountain had to be repaired when someone had knocked aside the overflow pipe and the Maintenance Group have also completed the new compost containers. We have started the laborious task of trimming the box hedging but will get some help from Gareth – wonderful!

July/August 2015

We have been continuing the summer pruning of the fruit trees – well, the growth on the tops of the pleached apples remains until we can place a ladder on the ground which has been too wet in recent weeks. Looking back to last year, I see we were a little behind as well on the summer pruning! Brenda continues to make pickles and chutneys from our produce and these are for sale on a Thursday

It is of course a glorious time to visit the garden. The light at the end of August catches the red pears, the *Eupatorium* towers above us and Evening Primrose scattered around in bright yellow. Visitors ask whether we have *Echinacea* for sale as it comes into its own and the Bistort continues to flower with its lovely deep red colour.



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September/October 2015

A glorious autumn so far with us basking in October sunshine in the Physic Garden. The Asters are startling with their bluey/purple haze and the subdued Medlar fruits are colouring up beautifully. Tree-wise, last week we noticed the Ginkgo tree by the main entrance is turning an impressive yellow and the Service Tree is glorious in its autumn coat of reds, yellows and browns. And as always every year in the autumn and winter, the *Ilex aquifolium* is covered in berries and looks beautiful next to two wonderful huge *Cornus* shrubs catching the sun the afternoon.



In tidying up the garden, the Maintenance group have done some sterling work cutting back large shrubs. They have also replaced some wiring on the Fragrance bed wall for fruit trees to climb along and have installed fire extinguishers in the tool shed and office.

A decision was taken to change the North-facing pergola bed into a grassed meadow, so has been dug up, fritillaries have been planted and it has been sown over with grass seed. We hope this will be better use of that area.

Mary and Gillian have reviewed the beds and have made lists of what the Volunteers should be doing in their allotted beds. Box blight is back, so we are trying to cut out any affected spots and remove the dead leaves and keep an eye on them.

Val Thomas for the Gardening Group

See the website for the latest Volunteers Newsletter

On the Telly!

We featured on S4C recently in a series of programmes 'Gerddi Cymru' when the Physic Garden featured in the episode 'Dyffryn a Bontfaen'.

The photography, by Tinopolis, was excellent and the programme hopefully whetted the interest of those watching who had not known about its existence, encouraged those who rather 'take it for granted' to revisit, and made all associated with the Garden's survival very proud to be associated! With luck anyone interested in gardens in Wales will come and take both these beauties in! Thank you Cerys for the enthusiastic interview you gave.



Meet the Trustee



Pamela Haines

I was born and brought up in Cardiff then, after school, I spent a year at the Sorbonne which served to reinforce my love of France and more importantly my love for languages. This resulted in a degree in modern languages at London University followed by a stint working for the French publishers, Hachette as educational book manager. After being surrounded by text books and language courses, I turned to practising what I had been preaching and spent the next nine years teaching in further education in Surrey.

Marriage brought about a happy return to Wales, a brief part time post at Atlantic College and the delight of a family of my own which was anything but part-time. When my children started school, always a glutton for punishment, I decided to return to full time study, took up law and qualified as a solicitor. This led to my joining the long established firm of Gwyn & Gwyn in Cowbridge (later Larby Williams).

The great benefit and pleasure of working in Cowbridge, besides being able to provide a taxi service for my children, has been my involvement with the local community which led to my introduction to the Cowbridge Physic Garden ten years ago.

I have clear memories as a child of helping my mother in her garden which sparked an interest in gardening. When I lived in London, keen to retain a foothold in West Wales, I bought a tiny cottage and set about creating a garden from a field. With a bit of help from the neighbouring farmer, lots of well-meaning advice from all quarters, "Gardening for Beginners" from my mother, Christopher Lloyd's "The Well-Chosen Garden" and hard work the garden slowly took form. The flagstones for the path were purloined from the cellars of Monkton House School! I learnt a great deal from my mistakes. It was a relief to take over a well established garden when I moved near Cowbridge. In retirement, I hope to hone my horticultural skills .

It is a privilege to be invited to be a Trustee, having been appreciative of all the Cowbridge Physic Garden has achieved to date and lost in admiration for the hard work of the volunteers. I hope that I will be able to contribute to the overall work of the Trust.

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Green Flag Award

In June we heard that we had received the Green Flag Community Award for 2015 – 16 again. Here is part of the judge's comments!

"May I congratulate this small team who have tirelessly devoted their time to this amazing project and given Cowbridge an exceptional garden within the town. In my opinion, this is the benchmark that any aspiring community group should look to if they are considering taking on a project such as this. It was a truly humbling to be given the opportunity to "judge" this garden and meet a group of very pleasant people who have demonstrated a wide range of skills in order to achieve this "oasis"."

The Green Flag coordinator was equally complimentary: *"Thanks again all for your ongoing support and hard work. You all work so hard volunteering to keep the community green spaces of Wales looking so wonderful, I am honoured to be able to reward you for your work."*

Two volunteers, Gillian Griffiths and I, went to a Green Flag Awards Ceremony and Symposium and received a certificate from Iolo Williams of television fame. A slight hiccup when the coordinator of the ceremony misread our title – inevitably we were named as the 'Psychic' Garden – not for the first time!

Val Thomas



Restored Summer Houses

Garden features, toy houses, shelters – visitors to the garden love the summerhouses. The new pillars for the summer houses are now in place and look splendid - thanks to the wonderful legacy received from Bill Asscher. Before the spring the pediments and houses will also be cleaned and painted. Thanks to the Maintenance Group, who planned the work and selected the restorers.



Roger Morgan has now resigned from the Maintenance group and we would like to thank him for his years of lawn cutting.

A Very Dry Members Garden Party!



We are, of course, referring to the weather, not the lack of wine! Because on Friday June 19th the rain stayed away and a wonderful summer evening was enjoyed by all. Champagne glasses were chinked, friends caught up with news, canapés were passed around (and swiftly disappeared), wine glasses refilled, raffle prize numbers called out, and the gentle notes from young loan the harpist drifted over the garden.

Well over a hundred people attended; the canapés provided by The Quarter Penny Café (sponsored by P A Black), and some generous Members, were absolutely delicious. The Champagne was kindly donated by a Trustee.

The Members remain hugely loyal to the Garden and are very grateful for all the hard work done by the Volunteers to create such a peaceful haven in the heart of Cowbridge. Quite a few Volunteers attended and to those who didn't manage to come the Trustees would like to pass on the Members' appreciation and thanks.

Everyone agreed it was a great time to be in the garden. Without an umbrella!

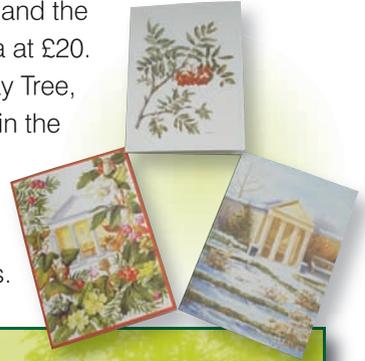


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Christmas Bargains

In the Physic Garden warehouse (!) there is plenty of stock of Christmas Cards so we are not investing in a new design this year. In fact, you can take advantage of a very special offer and get two packs of cards for just £5!

Plus, don't forget the wonderful tea towels that are available at £7 each and the very impressive golf umbrella at £20. These are available in the Bay Tree, Cowbridge High Street, and in the garden on Thursdays. Plants are for sale in the Garden on Thursday mornings – just ask any of the volunteers.



Dates for your diary!

23rd April 2016. The annual Plant Sale.

We are always very pleased to accept your rooted cuttings, divided perennials plants or seedlings to sell on our stall so please think of us as you work in your garden.

From 29th November 2015.

Holy Cross, Cowbridge, Christmas Tree Festival.

The Garden will again be donating a Christmas Tree to support this charity event.

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