

Patron: HRH the Duchess of Cornwall

# Newsletter

Issue 13 November 2011

## Members' Evening

I just wanted to thank the Trustees and volunteers who worked so hard to make the members' evening a success. It was a great pity that the weather was so bad, and the event could not, therefore be staged in the Garden. This is looking spectacular, and beautifully tended by the Volunteers. If any of our guests walked through the Garden to get to Old Hall they could not but be impressed!

Despite the weather and the inadequate size of the rooms at Old Hall, I still felt that the evening was a great success! We had a huge turnout of members, for a wet evening in June, and there was considerable bonhomie!

I was certainly impressed with the canapés and drinks, which were served with a 'blitz' humour and spirit which were truly admirable. "We are all in this together, so lets make the most of it!" I almost expected a sing-song at one point. "There'll be bluebirds over, the White Cliffs...." etc!

Well done to everyone involved! Thank you for all the effort you put in. It really bodes well for the future that our members remain both loyal and supportive. A great triumph for all involved!

*Dan Clayton Jones*

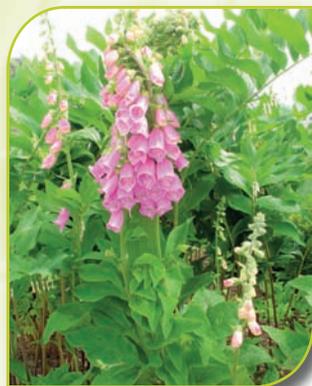


# Volunteers News

## May 2011

We have been planting Heliotrope around the urn and in the planters where we lost the Agapanthus in the cold winter. The Heliotrope plants are beautiful, bought from Strawberry Fields at a reduced rate. Thank you Strawberry Fields! Also thank you to Sue for the Heartsease, annual Flax and Parsley plants she has raised at home. The replacement almond tree has arrived and is planted in the rose beds near the entrance and seems well. It seemed very tall when it arrived wrapped in brown paper but with two of us, planting went well!

There is so much to see flowering at this time of the year. The rambling roses 'Old Blush' on the pergola are outstanding, as are the *Campanula persicifolia* with huge blue harebells in the pleached bed and the Sweet Rocket, *Hesperis matronalis*, near the urn and the yellow Iris and Phlox by the main gate in the corner must 'wow' entering visitors. Wildlife is great – the thyme is covered in bees, as are the *Digitalis purpurea*. The sparrows are flitting from bed to bed. And one more thing, if you want to see something quirky, look in the Skin, Nails and Hair bed at the *Digitalis* and find a 'fasciated' foxglove where the stem has grown in a wide flattened ribbon-like structure.



## June 2011

"Much needed verticals, lifting the spirits..." (in Beth Chatto's shade garden 'High Summer Tapestries' chapter) sums up the Physic Garden now. The yellow Elecampane and Mullein towering over the beds are looking spectacular as the huge Angelica goes over now. And the fluffy white common Valerian vies with the Meadowsweet a little lower down. Sorry, getting a little over-lyrical.

Other delights in the fragrant garden beautifully tended by Tina are the old shrub roses including *Rosa gallica versicolor* and *Rosa damascene celsiana*. And the *Rosa arvensis* 'Janet B.Wood' climbs beautifully up the pergola.

The new lavender bushes are now in, thank you to Leighton Morris for those. They look good and are beginning to grow and flower. The older box hedging has been pruned and thank you to Gareth for bringing Monica (his garden Hoover device) to suck up the fallen prunings. The fountain has been cleaned and is looking good – much sludge and many dirty coins have been removed. Thank you to Robert.

The Volunteers Leominster trip organised by Rebecca (thank you) turned out to be one of the best yet. Ivycroft Garden and Nursery and Aulden Farm were stunning. Aulden Farm holds the National Collection of Siberian Iris. And all heard the cuckoo which Mary tells us means we're all 'good for another year' (thank heavens for that). An enormous thankyou to Jo Homfray who gallantly drove the minibus. Everyone returned laden with plants. An excellent day out.



## July 2011

My much thumbed Reader's Digest Gardening Year Book tells me that July is often the warmest month of the year in the British Isles... where temperatures are most likely to reach 24 degrees! Hmm! To give it its due, it also tells me that July can be the wettest month of the summer too. Well, a month of mixed fortunes this year on the weather front!

And so to the garden. What can I say? It is looking quite spectacular with the tall plants in their element and making it difficult to see the other volunteers through the jungle of plants! The huge Lovage is going over now and as it 'dies badly' we are taking it down, but the Elecampane continues to flower profusely and at a great height as do the Cardoons and the Mullein, and the magnificent and much self seeded Hollyhocks in the Fragrance bed, battling it out with the roses. Also catching my eye are the gorgeous purple Coneflowers – *Echinacea purpurea* – and stunning clumps of low growing wild thyme full of bees.

There are still plenty of bees and butterflies visiting us and the resident toad has also been spotted.

*Many thanks to Terence Donnelly for the Bee images featured.*



## August 2011

So here we are in late summer with autumn knocking on the door. The tall plants are beginning to go over and we have spent a good amount of time cutting down the tall, but dead looking, Lovage (*Levisticum*). We've also spent some time propping up the *Elecampane* and Tansy, using some more metal guards that Jo has had made. They look really good and fitting in the beds. Thankyou Jo. We've kept some of the Lovage stems as they are good for insects to crawl into and make their homes – so if you see a bundle of such, don't move them!



Visit us at: [www.cowbridgephysicgarden.org.uk](http://www.cowbridgephysicgarden.org.uk)

# Volunteers News



The Cosmos still continue to flower, and the *Echinacea purpurea*, the purple coneflower, are looking stunning still.

The weather forecast hasn't quite got it right yet. I'm reminded of Flanders and Swann – 'August's bleak and damp and wet, brings more rain than any yet!' But we've still been able to press on with the inevitable tidying and weeding that August requires

Photos have been taken by Richard Swingler in the Physic Garden for the Fashion School which resulted in a double page spread in the Echo. Some nice publicity for the garden.

## September 2011

I quote from Beth Chatto's letters to Christopher Lloyd: "Friday 20 September: Bah! I am perished with cold, my spine chilled to the marrow, after standing out in the equinoctial gale which has been raging through the garden now for more than two days. Yet, two days ago, we were basking in low, mellow, sunshine..."

This kind of sums up September, and I understand that good weather is approaching again. Perhaps it will help to ripen our grapes – the Gros Plant vine on the South-facing wall will need some sunshine (I am informed by a visitor to the garden that the Gros Plant grapes in Clisson, France, are already harvested). The Muscadet grapes on the pergola are plentiful, but not yet ready. However, the other fruits in the garden are thriving – a bumper crop of apples is being used to prepare chutney by one of the volunteers for charity. The medlars and quince look good and the almonds are splitting and ready. The fig tree near the Old Hall entrance looks extremely well (after its various replantings) and has a lovely crop of green figs. There are plenty of ladybirds still in the garden and Gillie has seen the resident frog hopping about near the green bags.

An article on Cowbridge has appeared in the September edition of the BBC's Countryfile magazine and the Physic Garden has a mention and a photo.

About 15 people turn up for the Open Doors guided tour of the Garden on Saturday 17th September. Carys and Stan provided a tour, supported by Allyson, Val Caple and Rebecca. The new Green Pennant flag was removed from the entrance! However, this was later found and returned!

*Val Thomas, Gardening Group*

*Excerpts from the monthly Newsletter for the regular volunteers.*

# Green Pennant Award

For the third year in a row, Cowbridge Physic Garden has been awarded the prestigious Community Award for outstanding community-run green spaces.

The judges acknowledged that Cowbridge Physic Garden offers exceptional quality as a well-managed, welcoming haven of natural beauty and is an asset to the town.



Mrs Jo Homfray, one of the trustees of the garden, accepted the award at the Royal Welsh Show, Builth Wells. She commented, "We're thrilled that for the third year in a row we have won the Green Pennant. It's a tribute to all the hard work put in by the volunteers who firstly created and now keep the garden in such good condition. Much larger and better funded parks and gardens struggle to reach the required standard, yet Cowbridge Physic Garden maintains its beauty, year after year.

## Welsh Historic Gardens Trust visit

As part of their AGM weekend the South and Mid Glamorgan Branch of the WHGT invited other national members to an evening in the Physic garden. Dan, a past Branch chairman, welcomed Gwyneth Hayward, the National Chairman. The weather was glorious for this occasion. Many thanks to the Volunteers who helped with guiding.

Olive Horsfall, the Branch Secretary, wrote afterwards "The Gwynedd Branch of the WHGT very much enjoyed the recent visit to the Cowbridge Physic Garden. The garden was delightful, the hospitality great and everyone remarked on how friendly people were." *Val Caple*



## Cyril England

The Trustees and Volunteers were all sad to hear of the death of Cyril, who was one of our original—and oldest—garden volunteers. We are very grateful to his family for a donation to the Trust.



# Introducing the Trustees

## Rose Clay



I was born in the Vale where I spent the early part of the War and my parents then moved to Sussex where I lived until Glynne and I got married. We lived in St Hilary for five years before moving to Monmouthshire. I have had no formal training in horticulture (or anything else for that matter) and only scraped five O Levels but two of them were Latin and Greek, not that I knew at the time how helpful that would be in the world of horticulture.

Originally I was involved with horses and went show jumping and racing and when we were married I did not know a dandelion from a daisy.

Once I had a garden of my own my knowledge of plants improved in leaps and bounds and we made a garden at Nantyderry which became well-known and featured in books, magazines and on TV. Chrysanthemum 'Nantyderry Sunshine' and Hebe 'Nantyderry' occurred in the garden and were named and introduced by me.

I was a presenter on a gardening Programme on BBC Wales for a few years, was on the Council of the National Garden Scheme (we opened our garden for over 21 years), and on the Council of the International Dendrology Society for 13 years. I ran many tours for them and am an Honorary Life Member. I have been on the Herbaceous Plant Committee of the Royal Horticultural Society for about thirty years, judging at shows all over the country, including Chelsea.

We moved back to St Hilary in 1999 and have made a 'his' and 'hers' garden from scratch. I think the Cowbridge Physic Garden is a wonderful creation and I was proud to have been asked to become involved with it as a Trustee, volunteer and member of the Garden Group which organises the planting and plant maintenance of the Garden.

*Rose Clay*

## Explore and more

A video of Dan Clayton Jones talking about the garden can be seen at [www.exploreandmore.co.uk](http://www.exploreandmore.co.uk) on the 'Cowbridge Hub'

# Bridgend National Women's Register Group's visit

My friends and I made our visit to the Physic Garden today. It was lovely, Cerys and Sue were knowledgeable and enthusiastic, the sun shone and the garden was looking splendid.

Thank you very much for making the arrangements and please pass our sincere thanks to your volunteers for making our visit so enjoyable. *Anne, National Women's Register Group, Bridgend*



## A Beautiful Garden

We were very lucky on Sunday to be celebrating the marriage of my niece. The photo shoot was in your lovely garden at Cowbridge. My wife and I were both very impressed with your team's efforts.

We are in the process of renovating our old house in Wiltshire and have reached the point of paying more attention to the garden. We were particularly impressed with the grass in the physic garden. Is it possible you could advise us on the type of grass it is. Or is it solely down to the Welsh "green green grass of home"? *Best regards, Derek Rundell*

## Charitable Donations

Donations to the CPGT can now be made at [www.btplc.com/mydonate](http://www.btplc.com/mydonate)

## Cards and Gifts

If you would like to give a friend a year's membership as a Christmas present please contact Val Caple who will send you a gift package to them. Gillian Griffiths has kindly donated another of her superb paintings for this year's Christmas card.

A range of Notelets are always available from The Bay Tree, Cowbridge. Also the superb quality Physic Garden umbrellas, plain green with garden logo at £15 which can be ordered on 01446 774534. These items, plus a range of plants, are available for sale from volunteers in the Physic Garden on a Thursday. All proceeds are used to support the garden.

Visit us at: [www.cowbridgephysicgarden.org.uk](http://www.cowbridgephysicgarden.org.uk)

# Christmas Card 2011

Rowan (Mountain Ash) (*Sorbus aucuparia*)

Cerddinen

*Painted by Gillian Griffiths*

*for Cowbridge Physic Garden*

*Words inside: With Christmas Greetings  
and Best Wishes for the New Year*

*Cyfarchion y Nadolig*

*a Dymuniadau Gorau i'r Flwyddyn Newydd*

The 2011 Christmas Card is on sale from  
1st November, priced £5.00 for 8 cards  
at The Bay Tree, Cowbridge and  
The Physic Garden every Thursday.

This card is sold on behalf of the  
CPGT and all proceeds from sales  
will be used to maintain the garden.

£5  
pack  
of 8



## Dates for your diary!

### Christmas Tree Festival

The Volunteers plan to decorate a tree for the Christmas  
Tree Festival in Holy Cross Church, Cowbridge starting  
on 25th November 2011 at 10.30am and continuing until Christmas.



### Annual Plant Fair Saturday 28th April 2011

Please help by taking cuttings and planting seeds to sell on the Volunteers stall.

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