

Patron: HRH the Duchess of Cornwall
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COWBRIDGE
PHYSIC GARDEN
GARD D BERLYSIAU'R
BONT-FAEN

Newsletter

Issue 22 October 2014



RHS Wales in Bloom 'It's Your Neighbourhood'

We have achieved a Level 5 Outstanding assessment for the above award the first time we entered. Our assessment visit took place in June on a lovely summer morning when the Physic Garden looked beautiful (see photo). The Judge was able to meet most of our gardening volunteers to hear how we organise the planting of the beds, growing from seeds etc, and how we welcome the community and visitors to the garden.

Sue, Mary and Tina represented the Garden and went to Usk for the award ceremony on Sept. 16th. The invitation to the finals gave us no hint of possible success. Usk looked splendid, a great credit to the planters who keep their wonderful displays all over the town such a pleasure for residents and visitors alike. We opted to have a guided tour with a member of Usk Civic Society which gave us the opportunity to explore some hidden corners and admire several lovely front gardens.

On to the Awards. First, the big players who were all from North Wales with Llandudno coming out on top, followed by Rhyl and Prestatyn. Small towns and villages followed them in the next category, after these Hotels, Pubs and caravan. Next, the RHS 'It's Your Neighbourhood' Awards. The first group to be announced at Level 5 were Friends of Chirk Station who we were sitting close by, so we thought that was that not realising there were some other awards to be announced. We were very chuffed, even extremely happy, to receive our certificate on behalf of all the volunteers who contribute to making the Physic Garden worthy of this important recognition. Cheers everyone! *Gardening Volunteers*



Message from the Chair, Jo Homfray



As we dip into autumn the land is clothed in a soft golden light on sunny days, and this year it is exceptionally lovely. Blackberries are abundant, as are many other berries, and the leaves are beginning to turn and some even to fall. The Physic Garden always looks gorgeous at this time of year, there are so many exquisite seed heads and autumnal colours, and the apples and pears — not to mention grapes, are, I think, the best they have ever been.

The Volunteers as always have beavered away, not just maintaining the garden to the very highest degree, but also selling plants to swell the Garden's coffers! We have won the Green Flag Community Award yet again for being 'a community green space of excellence in Wales' and the garden continues to attract visitors from far and wide as well as the local stalwarts. We have also been awarded the RHS award

Do come and stroll around when you are in Cowbridge, and enjoy this wonderful place before it gets tucked up for the winter!

Volunteers News

May 2014

Bumble bees are flying in and out of the bird box on the pergola, the fledgling blackbirds are hopping to and fro, helping us to plant the Cosmos in the Pleached Bed and collecting several worms at a time, and Esther was sure that she had seen a Goldcrest a couple of weeks ago. Graham has hammered in stakes this year in order to be able to hold back the Elecampane in various beds as it will reach at least 6 feet

The Shrubbery area is still looking lovely full of self-seeded *Aguilegia* and Welsh poppies. The *Viburnum opulus* is in flower as is the pink Cistus. The Elderflower in the Dye Bed is covered in flowers which we hope will be turned into a delicious drink by Val C. In the medicinal beds, the *Paeonia officinalis* is showing off as is the Sweet Cicely. I also love the seed heads of the *Pulsatilla* or Pasque Flower.



The volunteers have been hard at work planting annuals which they have raised from seed at home. Many thanks to all those involved — we have planted out tray after tray of Cosmos, Parsley, annual Flax, Nasturtium and so and so on.

June 2012

The 21st of June was, of course, the summer solstice. "For a few weeks the days stretch out for ever and the amount of daylight available is almost – almost – enough to satisfy the need to garden". (Thus speaks Monty Don in his Ivington Diaries 21st June 2003). For me as well, the light in June speaks volumes

The Roses are weighed down by the blossoms and the scent is outstanding. The bushes are set off by the huge red Hollyhocks behind stretching up against the wall.

Perhaps less spectacular, but nevertheless, cutting a dash, the Feverfew dotted round the garden stands out as does the Wild Carrot with its lovely Cow Parsley-type heads. The orange lilies make a statement but perhaps top of the list at the moment for me are the bright blue heads of the *Echium vulgare* or Vipers Bugloss.

The last word to a little wren seen a couple of weeks ago having a dust bath on the pathways enjoying the lovely June sunshine.



July 2012

Well, blazing July has passed – and it was indeed blazing. A glorious month for the garden attracting many visitors and groups. Overheard from a visitor was overheard commenting: "This is the best place on the planet!" Well, there's a compliment! And another visitor felt that we provided a much nicer experience than the Chelsea Physic Garden

Our giants are reaching their zenith – the *Eupatorium purpureum* (or Joe Pye Weed – what a nice name) and Cardoons vie for height, whilst the Lovage, Tansy, Elecampane and Verbascum spires are not far behind. The gorgeous pink Echinacea, purple *Verbena bonariensis* and Monarda, Chicory and Fennel have caught many people's eyes. But star of the show has to be the Purple Loosestrife, to judge by the requests for it by potential customers in the Plant Sale corner.

We have pruned the fanned apricot tree (which had some fruit) and the peach which has some better growth than last year, but not yet fruiting. We have prevented one of the pear trees from growing over the wall and will continue the summer pruning.

Fauna-wise a fledgling robin has tracked our every move this month, the frog has been seen under the staging by the tool shed and various birds continue to enjoy the fountain as a bath. We have had a good showing of butterflies as well.



Visit us at: www.cowbridgephysicgarden.org.uk

August 2013

The nights are drawing in and we have some good crops of pears including the lovely red pears which catch the light, the medlar fruits are looking good, the vines on the Fragrance Bed wall and over the Pergola are covered in clusters of fruit. The pleached apple trees vary in their production, some with few fruits, others better. I missed the small greengage crop which have been picked and consumed



As autumn approaches and plants die back, we try to leave the seedheads for the birds to enjoy whilst we continue to enjoy the massive *Eupatorium* that now resembles a glorious tree with overhanging branches, and on a smaller scale, the ground cover Bistort shines with deep pink flowers and the little Pleurisy Root's golden heads are lovely. The resident toad has been seen and the jackdaws as always, enjoy the fountain.

Val Thomas for the Gardening Group

See the website for the latest Newsletter



Volunteers Annual Trip

Undeterred by the grey and overcast skies in the morning, the Volunteers' outing went ahead. It was a wonderful day for it the Volunteers' outing – heavy grey skies, spitting rain and cold! But a warm welcome from Keith Brown and Moira Thomas at Cilgwyn Lodge Gardens, Llangadog with its long sweep of lawns and deep herbaceous borders. After having slices of home-made cake and tea/coffee, we wended our way to Esther's

(our lovely Dutch volunteer) new house. Set in the heavily wooded valley there was a fantastic view from the kitchen sink across fields of trees and sheep! After a brisk, muddy walk around the boundaries of the 'estate' we sat down to Esther's cakes."

Gardening Volunteers

Sir William Asscher

It is with enormous sadness that we have to record the death of one of our most loyal and enthusiastic supporters this summer. He was an exceptionally engaging man with a degree of Dutch directness and warmth! He was greatly loved in Cowbridge and Cardiff and will be hugely missed. Our thoughts are with his family at this time.

Meet the Volunteer, Carys Whelan

I was born and brought up in the Rhondda in a Welsh speaking family. I met Patrick at university in Aberystwyth where I studied Music and Welsh. For the first few years of our married life, we lived near Pontypool. But the urge to work on the land brought us to a field in St Hilary to run a market garden, some years before The Good Life appeared on television!



The business soon developed into a plant nursery while my work varied from teaching and running Welsh classes for adults to contributing items on gardening for programmes on Radio Cymru and S4C. We have five children and five grandchildren, and half of our seven acre field is now a twenty-three year old woodland of native trees.

As 'talks and tours' volunteers, co-ordinated by Rebecca Exley, we take the story of the Physic Garden to many clubs and societies, far and wide. The groups I visit, many of which are Welsh language societies or branches of Merched y Wawr, are delighted to learn more about the garden and its history. Visitors always comment on how beautiful the garden looks, whatever season they arrange to come.

Mae llawer o ymwelwyr wedi dod i'r Ardd Berlysiau ers iddi agor ac mae'n braf cael eu tywys o gwmpas. Ryn ni wedi croesawu siaradwyr Cymraeg o mor bell ag Aberaeron a Llandeilo ac rwy hefyd wedi ymweld a llawer o gymdeithasau Cymraeg o gwmpas y De. Mae'n hyfryd hefyd cael cyflwyno'r ardd i ddysgwyr Cymraeg sy'n gwerthfawrogi'r cyfle i ymarfer yr iaith mewn awyrgylch mor braf a hamddenol.

Ryn ni'n falch iawn o'n polisi dwyieithog yn yr Ardd ac mae'r ymwelwyr wrth eu bodd yn darllen yr enwau Cymraeg ar y planhigion. Mae gan ambell un hanes ddiddorol o famgu neu hen berthynas yn defnyddio perlysiau at ryw anwylder neu'i gilydd.

Edrychwn ymlaen at groesawu rhagor o ymwelwyr y flwyddyn nesaf – we look forward to welcoming many more visitors next year.

Help the Garden while you Help Yourself

If you ever shop online, you can raise funds for the garden, at NO EXTRA COST to yourself. Thousands of online retailers will give a small percentage of their takings to nominated charities – you simply have to register with www.giveasyoulive.com selecting the Cowbridge Physic Garden as your charity. You only have to do it once and every time you shop, click on the "give as you live" bar at the top of the website. You will be supporting the garden with every purchase.

Members Garden Party.

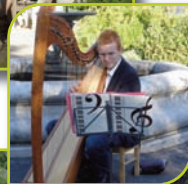
“Will it rain? Won’t it rain?”

When the date of 27th June was fixed for the Members' Garden Party, the organizing committee had great confidence that as Wimbledon would have started, Britain's weather would be kind and we could all enjoy a balmy and warm evening in the Garden.

When the day arrived, grey clouds loomed; multiple forecasts were consulted, seaweed was inspected with more than usual interest, Derek the Weatherman was quizzed at great depth, and the collective opinion was: “It’s going to rain!” So Plan B was rushed into action and all preparations for the party were moved to the Annexe of Old Hall.

As it transpired, of course, it didn’t rain! So while the party was based at Old Hall, there was also an opportunity for everyone to stroll across to the Garden to enjoy it in its blooming glory.

Guests were entertained by a local young harpist, Ioan Wardlaugh, and as the wine flowed and the canapés disappeared, the feeling was that yet again, the Garden Party was a great success. Now, all we need to do is get the forecast right for 2015!



Beautiful Benches That Last!

You will have noticed there are eight new benches placed around the garden. The original oak benches, installed nine years ago and all kindly donated in memory of loved ones, had not stood the test of time and some were in a decidedly unsafe condition.



After much research, Britannic Garden Furniture Limited of Bristol was commissioned to All the memorial plaques have been transferred to the new benches and as Linda Osborn who willingly tested the prototype of the new design can testify, (they passed the balancing-a-wine-glass-on-the-arm test!). They are handsome, comfortable and an asset to the garden.

Long to RAIN over us



This was the headline on the 4th June 2014 concerning the Buckingham Palace garden party held the day before – and I was there!

I was grateful to have been invited by my fellow Trustees as a representative of the CPGT.

After queuing at a side gate my step daughter Clare and I strolled through the rose beds and past the lake to the great lawn, watching the grey clouds gathering. We sat and enjoyed the bands and indulged in some people watching. Lovely hat, but it did not match the outfit. Why was she wearing 4-inch heels on a wet lawn? Why was the party which included 2 white-haired bishops in purple cassocks in such high spirits? The Ghurkhas and their ladies in uniform and saris, and the Arabs in their black and gold robes and caps looked elegant. However they were outshone by the smart uniforms and marching of the Yeomen of the Guard.

As the royal party left Buck Palace to welcome their guests the heavens opened! Luckily we were prepared for 'Welsh weather' but took shelter in the lemonade tent with John Major and Michel Roux Jnr.! We watched the other guests – more used to Home Counties weather - trying to decide whether to take shelter or stay close to the royal party's route.

The deluge stopped and we were able to take afternoon tea in the appropriate tent. As we did not have a pass for either the royal tent or diplomatic tent we queued in the ordinary tent for our cup of tea and choice of smoked salmon and cream cheese tart, a selection of sandwiches, and a variety of cakes. When the royals had finished their tea we joined the much reduced lines waiting to see them. As they made their way through their guests, chatting to some in a very relaxed manner, the music changed – a selection of pieces from the James Bond films! The guests were delighted with the choice as we remembered the 2012 London Olympics. Among the royal family present was the Queen, who wore her outfit for THE Royal Wedding, the Duke of Edinburgh, looking surprisingly erect for a man of nearly 93, the Prince of Wales and our patron the Duchess of Cornwall.

As we were making our way out, taking a few surreptitious photos, Clare's phone rang. It was her normally uncommunicative son. 'Hi mum, where are you?' 'Buckingham Palace!' Priceless!

What do you do after such a unique occasion? Put hats into plastic bags, hop onto the underground and enjoy a mesmerising performance of Les Miserables.

Val Caple, Photo by Daily Mail

Visit us at: www.cowbridgephysicgarden.org.uk

Green Flag Community Award

The garden has been awarded the Green Flag Community Award for sixth year running.

The judge's general comment was: A wonderful example of creating a peaceful, tranquil space from what was an overgrown, neglected space in the centre of a busy town.

See www.keepwalestidy.org or www.greenflagaward.org

Cards and Gifts

A brilliant new Christmas Card from the Garden for you to send to friends and relations.

For 2014, we are delighted to reveal our latest Christmas Card – thanks to our artist genius in residence, Gillian Griffiths, for creating the illustration.

Cards will be available by early November from The Bay Tree, Cowbridge, and the Garden Thursday mornings. Umbrellas and tea towels and a range of cards and notelets are also available plus a range of plants in the Garden Thursday mornings.



Dates for your diary!

Plant Sale Saturday 25th April 2015

Please take cuttings or divide plants to sell.

AGM 18th March 2015

Talk by Bob Brown is founder of Cotswold Garden Flowers.

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