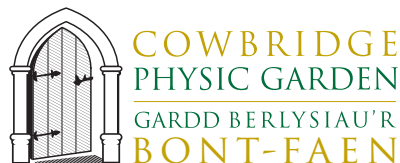


Patron: HRH the Duchess of Cornwall  
President: Dan Clayton-Jones OBE, KStJ, TD, DL



# Newsletter

Issue 23 February 2015



## Book for Bob Brown, our great guest speaker following the AGM

Make a date and get your tickets: Wednesday 18th March 2015, 6.30pm for the Annual General Meeting and 7.30pm for a presentation by Bob Brown, founder and proprietor of Cotswold Garden Flowers, in Evesham, Worcestershire.

Bob is a superb plantsman, a stalwart of the RHS and displays an enthusiastic and encyclopaedic knowledge of plants, flowers and their care and attention. He is also a highly entertaining speaker and is full of such wisdoms as, "Perennials are the ones that grow like weeds, biennials are the ones that die this year instead of next and hardy annuals are the ones that never come up at all." (To be fair, that comment originated with Katherine Whitethorn, but as Bob says, "The best time to take cuttings is when no one is looking.")

A booking form for tickets is included with this newsletter, so reserve your seats now.

The talk is open to everyone so please invite your friends as well.

For more information on Bob please visit the Cotswold Garden Flowers website at [www.cgf.net](http://www.cgf.net) especially his encyclopaedia which includes his score out of 10 for each plant plus Bob's personal comments.

# Message from the Chair, Jo Homfray



We are already nearly at the end of January as I write this, but nevertheless a Very Happy 2015 to all our friends and Members. We hope it will be a happy and healthy one for everyone.

The year has started with its fair share of rain and frosty mornings, but there has been some sunshine too to gladden the heart – and one or two days of alpine blue skies. Brave little aconites are adding to the cheer in the Physic Garden, along with some cyclamen and snowdrops, reminding us that spring is very much on the way. The volunteers have been working hard on the less glamorous jobs which have to be done in these months – one of which is cleaning and sorting out the potting shed, and emptying the compost bins ready to build some new ones for the coming season. They do this with a wonderful cheerfulness, fuelled by cups of tea and coffee and the odd biscuit!

We continue to attract visitors from far and wide, and it is lovely to hear that the Cowbridge Physic Garden inspires other places to think of doing similar plantings. As always, we remain deeply grateful to all those who give of their time in maintaining this very special place.

Very shortly the Physic Garden will start to wake from its winter slumber, make sure you are there to witness it!

## Volunteers News

### September 2014

One of the driest Septembers since records began I am told! The weather has been excellent, warm and with much sunshine prompting some plants to think that winter must be over and it is time to start flowering again. The lavenders along the pathways are reflowering, a Pasque flower has appeared and some violets.

The medicinal beds are still displaying lovely colours – Evening Primrose, *Calendula*, Mullein, *Echinacea* and Wild Carrot. Along the Fragrance Bed the nodding purple heads of the *Verbena bonariensis* are spectacular and Sue's pelargoniums in the faux lead containers flower on regardless. In the Shrubbery and on the Pleached Bed the purple



asters are making their statements alongside the *Cosmos*! The white Asters by the Office are stunning, covered in tiny daisy-like flowers. Tiny, but beautiful, the *Cyclamen hederifolium* in the Shrubbery are flowering beautifully but shrub of the month has got to be our lovely Spindle Tree by the plant sales covered in bright pink fruit with the clashing orange seed coverings. The foliage is a glorious muted pink, red and orange

We have at last completed pruning of the fruit trees and harvesting the fruit. The Fig has lots of fruit, and the Medlar is, as usual, covered. The Muscadet grapes draped over the Pergola could produce a bumper year – could 2014 go down as a Grand Vin du Jardin ....? Talking of fruit trees, we have now labelled some of our old pear trees including the glorious names of 'William Bon Chretien', 'Doyenne Boussoch' and 'Gloucs Morceau'.

A splendid month in the garden and once again I leave you with one of the smallest inhabitants of the garden – a little vole scurrying along the compost heaps and hurrying into its home at the end.

## October 2014

I am writing this on the 31st October 2014 which the warmest Octoberday since records began!! The garden is glowing as summer hangs on. The *Ginkgo biloba* tree by the Church Road entrance looks spectacular in its yellow autumn coat and now we can see it properly since the *Viburnum opulus* next to it has been taken out. Less spectacular, but lovely, are the *Cornus* shrubs, particularly in the Dye bed, with their autumn hues of green, yellow, orange and pink and lower down the Bistort shines bright red in the beds and the blue Chicory flowers stand out. Along the Fragrance Bed wall the Worcester Black Pear is covered in fruits and the foliage of the Doyenne Boussoch Pear is turning a lovely red.

In preparation for next year we have put in dozens of wall flowers in the Pleached Bed and daffodils in the Shrubbery and Jan Thomas has womanfully wheeled barrowload after barrowload of our compost to mulch the Pleached Bed.

Brendagh has made pots of chutney, jam and pickle with our produce and Val Caple has picked 32 lbs of grapes to be made into some delicious concoctions.

And finally, a note of congratulation to Eifiona who has completed and passed her City and Guilds Level 3 Diploma in Horticulture (with distinction) at Pencoed College!

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



## November 2014



"Gardening when the days close in almost as soon as they have started, when your tools are permanently slimy and rain arrives just as you have settled into a job, is not the greatest fun. But it isn't winter yet, and there is a lot more useful work to do..." Christopher Lloyd's words sum up many of our experiences in the garden and we all share the same difficulties!

November saw the Maintenance Group emptying and cleaning the fountain. The offerings collected from the bottom covered in mud and slime included Waitrose tokens and foreign currency! Some waterboatmen hung on for grim death and hopefully they will be able to migrate to the pond by the Old Hall.

The compost containers, now emptied of their glorious rich produce so that the Maintenance Group can rebuild those, have revealed 3 pairs of secateurs and one trowel.

The garden is quiet now – a carpet of yellow leaves have fallen from the *Ginkgo biloba*, the Dogwoods' stems continue to glow in the sun and the teasel heads always look great. Still spectacular and architectural are the leaf rosettes of the perennial Phlox, a lovely bluish/green shade.

The local robin follows us round as we clip and prune and the wren has been seen again, so small, he is hard to pick out. We also had a visit from a toad who appeared to be keen on helping with the cleaning

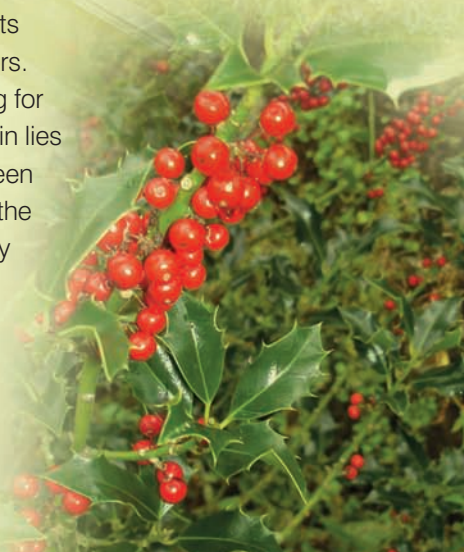
## December 2014

A quiet month in the Physic Garden – some dreary weather as one might expect but we celebrated Christmas with mince pies and chocolate cake in the office.

The garden looks neat and quiet and restful as it awaits spring and has a rest from its summer wealth of flowers. The robin, still hopeful, hops round the ground looking for titbits and the jackdaws perch in the trees. The fountain lies quiet. The Spindle Tree in the Plant Sale corner has been totally stripped of its fruits! Only a few berries cling to the holly, *Ilex aquifolium*, which looks good in almost every season, but comes into its own now.

That's all for 2014. We look forward to 2015 and another prosperous year in the Physic Garden.

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



# A Cracker of a Party Kicked off Christmas!

Many thanks to our President, Dan Clayton-Jones and his wife Carolyn for hosting the Volunteer's Christmas Party at their home, Mwyndy House, Pontyclun. The majority of us went via bus from Cowbridge Town Hall and were greeted with champagne, wine, magic, music and great company.

Quarter Penny Café provided a main course and trustees and volunteers contributed delicious salads and puddings.

Derek Osborn led the carol singing, (playing a keyboard that had been invaded by aliens), we were mesmerized by Taffy Magic's illusions and tricks, and baffled (some more than others) by dingbats and quiz questions.

A great night indeed – let's do it again next Christmas!



## Christmas Tree

Lin and Tina decked the festive Christmas tree as part of the Holy Cross Church Tree Festival. It was decked with produce, leaves, seed heads etc. from the Physic Garden.

## Great Gardens to Visit

The Cowbridge Physic Garden is now one of the over 100 gardens which appear on this website and in the publication 'Great Gardens to visit 2015' edited by Tony Russell. The list of gardens includes the best examples from all over the UK, and we are in very good company. At the moment the book is available from Publicity Works Ltd, for £8.00 (includes postage & packing) to *Gardens to Visit, Dan y Ser, Rhyd, Penrhyndeudraeth, Gwynedd, LL48 6ST*.

The information about all the gardens is also available at [www.gardenstovisit.net](http://www.gardenstovisit.net)

## Waitrose, Cowbridge

Waitrose have told us that the Physic Garden will be included in their green token local charity scheme for the month of April. Please remember to save your tokens until then and vote for us!

# Meet the Volunteer



## Rebecca Exley

I grew up in Tenby and developed an interest in flowers from an early age. Dare I say I picked some Cowslips and pressed them before the age of ten. Mum even told me they were rare then! I studied Geology and Water Resources at university and learned from one of my lecturers that when undertaking geological mapping, specific plants can help identify the underlying rock type i.e. acid or alkaline.

My husband Nick moved to Llanblethian 19 years ago just before Hugh was born. I left the groundwater studies for the Cardiff Bay Barrage and started working from home. News of the proposed Physic Garden intrigued me so I attended an open day to view the site, a very overgrown piece of land I never knew existed! The most alarming sight was some Japanese Knotweed which I quickly reported. Thank goodness, never to be seen again!

I soon became involved in the digging and delving phase and eventually the planting. It still thrills me to see the Hellebores which I planted as these were the first plants to flower in the garden.

Subsequently I have been involved in many roles but recently mostly booking the talks, tours, and wedding photos. It is amazing where people come from to visit the garden and some of the requests are also surprising. I am deeply indebted to our team of speakers and garden guides who do a fantastic job to promote the garden. As ever the whole project continues to be a huge team

## Cards and Gifts

Cards, notelets, tea towels and umbrellas are on sale at The Bay Tree, Cowbridge. Merchandise and plants are for sale in the Garden on Thursday mornings – just ask any of the volunteers.



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





# Padua Botanic Garden

The garden is famous for being the oldest existing botanic garden in the world. It was created in 1545 by the University's medical faculty as a collection of medicinal herbs for the students to study. The gardens are still laid out as they were originally and the palm tree which was planted in 1585 was visited by Goethe in 1786 still exists in its own glass house.

Many of the original stone-edged beds are in need of repair and, in September, many were empty. Some have been damaged by the roots of trees which have overtaken their original plot—a warning for us! Each species are neatly tagged and arranged systematically so the students, even if illiterate, could easily find what they were looking for.

There are a variety of features within the walled enclosure – the finials on the gate posts are particularly eye-catching – and the old water features are enlivened with water lilies and other aquatic plants,

However, the gardens do change. One bed contains rare or endangered plants from this area of Italy. The new Biodiversity Garden exhibition building will contain 1300 species living in environments sharing the same humidity and temperature characteristics, from tropical to sub-humid, temperate and arid zones. The building is solar active, designed to keep the environmental impact to a minimum – I wonder if they have visited our National Botanic Garden!.

For more information see [www.ortobotanicopd.it/en](http://www.ortobotanicopd.it/en)

*Val Caple*

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

# Visit to Cowbridge Physic Garden

I recently had the pleasure of visiting Garden one late November afternoon in the pouring rain. My mission was to discuss its planning and design with Jo and to use this as an example of good practice for the development of our physic garden at the Dr. Jenner House, Museum and Garden in Berkeley, Gloucestershire.



Dr Edward Jenner pioneered vaccination (against smallpox) at this house during the 1790s and it is said his work has saved more lives than any other man. Jenner's development of the first-ever Vaccine eventually led to the worldwide eradication of smallpox in 1980 and the development of the Science of Immunology.

As a major new initiative, the Board of Trustees has decided to develop almost one acre into a physic garden, contemporary with the mid-eighteenth century house and in keeping with its history and the work of Jenner. During his time as a country doctor, Jenner would have used medicinal herbs and plants so the restoration and reconstruction of the garden would be an important step along with the restoration of the house. If you would like to visit us see [www.jennermuseum.com](http://www.jennermuseum.com).



*Derek Lawther, Trustee of the Dr Jenner House, Museum and Garden*

## Dates for your diary!

**Plant Sale Saturday 25th April 2015** Please support us by taking cuttings or dividing your plants to sell, and by coming to support us on the day.

**Members Garden Party 19th June 2015** Celtic harp music will again be provided by Ioan Wardlaugh and food and wine will be available.

Newsletter design by

**treganna.**  
design

[mail@tregannadesign.co.uk](mailto:mail@tregannadesign.co.uk)

**creative**   
RURAL COMMUNITIES



Supported by  
**The National Lottery**  
through the Heritage Lottery Fund



EUROPEAN AGRICULTURAL  
GUIDANCE AND GUARANTEE  
FUND

Cathodgwyd gan  
**Y Lloeri Genedlaethol**  
llyw Gorfia Dreftodoeth y Lloeri

Ariennir a hwylysur Erthygl 33 gan  
Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru dan  
Gynllun Datblygu Gwledig Cymru  
Article 33 is funded and facilitated by  
the Welsh Assembly Government under  
the Rural Development Plan for Wales



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Registered Charity Number: 1110127 Company Number: 5118600

Registered Office: The Cross, Llanblethian, Cowbridge CF71 7JF

Website: [www.cowbridgephysicgarden.org.uk](http://www.cowbridgephysicgarden.org.uk)

Editor: Val Caple, Milestone, Penllyn, Cowbridge CF7 7RQ email: [val.t.caple@care4free.net](mailto:val.t.caple@care4free.net)