



COWBRIDGE  
PHYSIC GARDEN  
GARD D BERLYSIAU'R  
BONT-FAEN

Patron: HRH the Duchess of Cornwall

# Newsletter

Issue 15 May 2012

## A Stormy Plant Fair

The annual Plant Sale held on Saturday 28th April 2012 was again a great success. The Maintenance Group did a grand job of erecting the gazebo which withstood the wind and provided an excellent shelter from the cold. They also helped put up the table and ferry the plants to and fro.

It was an extremely cold day which tested the endurance of the Garden Volunteers, nursery stall holders, plants and buyers. The casual footfall was limited by the weather but we had tremendous support from members, friends and acquaintances and local groups. The stall holders were pleased with the day and were kept well supplied with copious cups of tea and homemade cakes. No wonder one said ours was his favourite venue!

There was a large selection of plants of excellent quality for sale and, although the takings of £730, including profits from the raffle and rental from the stalls, were down over last year, our Guardian Angel was definitely looking after us. The tree which fell beside and on the library that night in the terrible storm had been immediately behind our stall, as shown in the photographs!



Grateful thanks to all who donated plants for the Sale. We still have a stock of these good quality plants for sale in the garden from the Volunteers on a Thursday mornings.

*Gillian Griffiths and Tina Edmunds, Garden Group*

# Volunteers News

## February 2012

I was reading Monty Don's Ivington Diaries again last night following our three weeks of wrestling with the rambling roses on the pergola (with, I have to say, the largest prickles I have ever seen) forcing them to circumnavigate the uprights and encouraging them along the top. Monty Don talks of the "magical moment when gardens seem to teeter on the edge of... anarchy" and "the rose neatly trained against the brickwork will emerge from that straitjacket to become a window lashing, untrammelled monster"! Tina, Val B. And I certainly echo this feeling!

Spring is definitely in the wings. The snowdrops and stinking Hellebores in the Shrubbery provide a carpet to the lovely *Cornus mas*, now flowering with its tiny yellow flowers, and the stunning red stems of the dogwood. Along the Pergola wall, the primroses are flowering well, as are the tiny cyclamen by the Old Hall entrance.

Mary and Gillie have completed a review of the beds, so we all know what to do! The fountain has now been cleaned and we have cleared out the toolshed which is now looking immaculate and we can find things again!



## March 2012

"An early spring is always tremendously encouraging, and never mind what follows in the way of April frosts, or what have you. The great thing in life is to fling yourself into wholehearted enjoyment of the present, whenever there is something to be enjoyed." (Christopher Lloyd 'Cuttings'). Well, we have





most certainly enjoyed the last week or so of glorious sunshine in the Physic Garden. The almond and plum trees are in blossom and the Pasque Flower – *Pulsatilla vulgaris* – is looking stunning. We have a lovely crop of primroses especially in the Pergola Bed and the *Leucojum* continues to flower.

The fountain is up and running again having been painted by the Maintenance group. When we arrived last week we could see 'three men in a tub' (thank you Mary!) working away. It looks really good.

Gareth has kindly pruned the White Mulberry and the *Ginkgo* – the Maidenhair tree – and the Dye Bed is having a big makeover. We've been moving plants, digging out vast quantities of Soapwort, Jack by the Hedge, Teasels and so on. It is already looking better with clearer clumps of the plants related to dyeing.

David has nobly cleared the compost bins and has discovered an interesting variety of rusting secateurs and such like! Anyway we can now use the compost bin which is excellent as we have recently had to send much material off in the green bags.

## April 2012

Well, despite torrential rains and April showers to keep us on our toes, the Physic Garden is looking really good with everything waiting to burst out with new growth. By the office, the newly planted Judas Tree (*Cercis siliquastrum*) is covered with tiny buds, the Quince (*Cydonia oblonga*) is covered in beautiful new lime green growth with its stunning pink and white buds already blooming, and my favourite is the old pear tree along the Church Road wall, covered in blossom against the old battered tree trunk – as indeed is the other old pear along the Fragrance bed wall. What a time of year!

In the other beds, I see the Peonies in the Infection Bed are about to burst into lovely red flowers and the Solomon's Seal in various beds are already in flower with their lovely arching stems. The *Angelica* is shooting up already; the one in the Dye Bed is already a good five to six feet high!

Plants for the Sale have been potted up, cuttings have been taken, perennials have been divided, labels have been completed and prices have been added

*Val Thomas, Gardening Group. Excerpts from the monthly Newsletter for the regular volunteers.*



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



# Mike Meredith

It is hard to grasp that Mike Meredith is no longer with us! All his fun and laughter we will enjoy no more! I met Mike only in the later years of his life through the Cowbridge Physic Garden, which he joined as a Trustee in the early stages of the Garden's creation. I only wish I had known him for a far longer time! People like Mike Meredith are rare indeed!

Full of fun and laughter, always looking for the irony and pomposity in life and exposing it through humour. The ability to turn gravity into laughter and to change pessimism into optimism is a rare gift! As Hamlet says of Yorick, he was "a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy". Yet, one should not get the impression that Mike was just a mere 'jester'. For two decades he held the hugely responsible and pressurised post of Director of Public Relations for the National Coal Board in Wales, during the most difficult period in industrial relations in our history!

From the Miners' strike to pit closures, Mike was at the centre of events, explaining NCB policy to the nation.

It was these skills, in retirement, which he brought to the newly created Physic Garden. As a founder Trustee and our first Chairman of the Marketing and Publicity Committee, he ensured that the fledgling project was constantly in the public eye. Not a week passed without articles appearing in the local and national press. It is largely thanks to Mike and his work, especially during its early development that the Cowbridge Physic Garden is known far beyond the Vale of Glamorgan !



All of us who knew or worked with Mike Meredith cannot but feel a sense of great loss. We shall all miss him and his almost daily humorous emails which always put life into perspective.

*Dan Clayton-Jones, Chairman*



# Crowning glory to a Jubilee year



To celebrate and underline the garden's royal connections, we have commissioned and installed a sensational giant replica of a coronation crown, crafted from willow by a local willow sculptor, Melanie Bastier of "Out to Learn Willow".

The initiative was the brainchild of that wonderfully fertile mind, the late Mike Meredith. Sadly, Mike is no longer with us and passed away before he could see his idea brought to life. In memory of Mike, the crown has become fondly known as: "The Mike Meredith Memorial Crown".

Hopefully, it will be a special focal point in the garden this summer, in this the Jubilee and Eisteddfod year.

Do come and admire it, and smile in memory of Mike.

*Martyn Hurst,*

*Marketing and Publicity Committee Chairman*



## CPGT Website and Newsletter



You will notice that all the articles in this issue are by Volunteers and Trustees. I would love to be able to include pieces by Members—after all, it is YOUR Newsletter. Please let me have any items or photographs for inclusion in future issues of the Newsletter, or on the Website. Also if you have suggestions for improving the website or Newsletter, please contact me, a volunteer or a trustee.

*Val Caple*

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

# Gardeners' Question Time

On Wednesday 14th March we had The Physic Garden AGM in the St Quentin's Room at The Bear Hotel, followed by a light hearted Gardener's Question Time most ably compiled by the Marketing/PR Chairman Martyn Hurst. The evening was a great success and huge fun was had by all. Those present divided into teams of four and competed vigorously for first place! Martyn's questions were entertaining and original, and his clever use of IT made the evening even more memorable. Amongst the many questions were the following:

- 1. According to the folk tale, what root did the Pied Piper use to lure the rats away from Hamelin?**
- 2. What herb is a key ingredient in Listerine mouthwash?**
- 3. The lack of what food almost brought the American Civil War to an early end? (General Ulysses S. Grant declared, 'I will not move my army without.....' Was it Potatoes? Onions? Tomatoes? Oranges?**

**Answers are on page 8**

Our heartfelt thanks to everyone who came to support the evening; all monies raised (£145) will go towards the important upkeep of the Garden. Enormous gratitude also to Martyn for his hard work which is much appreciated, and to those who generously gave raffle prizes, especially Bryan Bird of The Bay Tree who donated three exquisite flower arrangements.

*Jo Homfray, Trustee*

Congratulations to the winning team, Rose Clay, Fiona Martyn, Pam Haynes and John Homfray and the runners up, Robert Moore, Jo Homfray, Linda Osborn and Robert Cope.



## Cards and Gifts

A range of Notelets and cards, including images of the garden, are , are always available from The Bay Tree, Cowbridge. Also the superb quality Physic Garden umbrellas, 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.



# S4C film in the Garden

During a week of heavy April showers only Tuesday 24th April dawned bright and sunny which was a delight for an S4C team who had asked if they could film an interview with Lucy Owen in the garden for the programme *Cariad@laith: Love4Language*.

Lucy is due to take part in the series where celebrities spend an intense week learning Welsh. She was filmed in the garden talking about why she chooses to live in Cowbridge. S4C spokesman Owen Williams thanked us for the use of a really lovely, delightful spot, and also for the weather! We understand the programme will be shown on either 23rd or 24th May at about 7:30pm.

We hope he will pass his enthusiasm on to others in television. Meanwhile the Marketing and Publications Committee continue to remind those in film and production about the availability of the garden for filming. We have recently included details of the garden to the Wales Screen Commission. You can search for the entry at [www.walescreencommission.com](http://www.walescreencommission.com).

So keep your eyes peeled!

*Rebecca Exley, Marketing and Publicity Committee*

## Announcing a new arrival

The Physic Garden Tea Towel inspired by a vibrant watercolour of a nasturtium by our own illustrious artist (and volunteer) Gillian Griffiths goes on sale in June.



A snip at £6.50, the Physic Garden Tea Towel will be printed on linen union by Countryside Art, a company supplying the V&A among other prestigious outlets.

Perfect for the kitchen wall, perfect as a gift – even perfect for drying the dishes.

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

# Answers to Gardeners' Question Time

1. VALERIAN
2. THYME – on the list of ingredients, close to the top, is THYMOL
3. ONIONS – on getting his very strong demand, the war office despatched three truckloads!

## Dates for your diary!

### CPGT Members Garden Party Friday 22nd June 2012

The invitation to members for this enjoyable annual event is included with this issue of the Newsletter. The format will be as last year, but, hopefully, without the rain! Please book as soon as possible as places are limited.

## Cowbridge Jubilee Street Party

A group of Cowbridge organisations is planning a Jubilee Street Party on Tuesday June 5th in Church Street and Old Hall Grounds. Obviously the Physic Garden will be a focal point sited between the 2 venues. Plans are not yet finalised, but watch the local press.



## Eisteddfod

The 2012 Eisteddfod will take place on the site of the Old Airfield in Llandow from August 4th to 11th. The CPGT is planning to have Welsh and English speaking guides at certain times and our bilingual leaflets will be available at the official Eisteddfod caravan park.

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**treganna.**  
design

mail@tregannadesign.co.uk



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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)