

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



COWBRIDGE
PHYSIC GARDEN
GARDD BERLYSIAU'R
BONT-FAEN

Newsletter

Issue 19 October 2013

Her Royal Highness meets the Volunteers

On Wednesday 3rd July our Patron, HRH the Duchess of Cornwall revisited the garden, five years after she had officially opened it. Her team had suggested that the visit was kept relatively low key with just a few of the Volunteers guiding her through the garden to discuss the plants, how the garden has developed and to share in the beauty and tranquillity of the beds and borders. A keen gardener herself, the Duchess had many questions which were very ably answered by Rose Clay, Mary Wallis, Val Thomas and Robert Moore.

Moving through to Old Hall Gardens, Jo Homfray, chair of the Trustees, introduced Her Royal Highness to other Volunteers. She had a kind word or a question for everyone she met and appeared to enjoy the display of botanical paintings and photographs by Gillian Griffiths and Esther Boots respectively. She even found time to say hello to some of the toddlers in the neighbouring Nursery.

During the very busy week in summer their Royal Highnesses devote to visiting places in Wales, our garden gave a restful hour or so to enjoy nature and nurture at its best. We hope she will return soon.

*Martyn Hurst. Photos by Mike Wilcock and volunteers.
More photos on the website.*



Message from the Chair, Jo Homfray



The summer took its time to arrive, but once having decided to do so, it has not disappointed and the sun has been generous with its rays for much of June, July, August and certainly the start of September. This has been so uplifting, for all of us involved in the upkeep of the Garden, and for visitors who have been able to come and enjoy the wonderful atmosphere of peace and beauty which it bestows on all who enter through the doorways from Church Street or Old Hall Gardens.

The visit from HRH The Duchess of Cornwall was extremely exciting and she seemed utterly delighted with the Garden's progress, and much enjoyed her time talking to the Volunteers. The Summer Garden Party for all our Members was extremely well attended and very jolly despite the nippy temperature! I really do want to reiterate how much your loyalty means to us as an organisation, and your generosity in supporting us on such occasions does not go unnoticed.

Whenever I am passing through the Physic Garden, I never cease to be amazed at the number of people who are walking around, or sitting on the benches, enjoying it. Particularly touching are the swathes of young people from the Comprehensive School who come to sprawl there either in the run up to big exams, or to celebrate with happy and relieved chat afterwards. It means a lot to us that they feel so comfortable in it, even if we are gardening all around them!

Now the shadows are lengthening and the sun more golden as we tip into autumn. There is still much to come and see in all the beds and it is a good year for berries. Christmas will soon be upon us, but I hope before then we can enjoy 'the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness' of the next two months.

Volunteers News

May 2013

May in the Physic Garden has brought us mixed weather – cold, rain, wind and at last some pleasant sunshine. The giants of the garden – Tansy, Lovage, Elecampane, Cardoon and Angelica are filling out ready for their huge growth spurts. As Christopher Lloyd tells us (Cuttings – a Year in the Garden with Christopher Lloyd), “**Anticipation is the watchword**, where it is known that plants will require support.” So indeed we have started to stake up and support our lovely tall plants.

Walking round the garden, I started outside the office which has a stunning collection of Columbine (*Aquilegia*) of all colours, wonderful clumps of hardy geraniums and dotted with self-seeded yellow poppies around the Quince and the pretty flowering Judas Tree. This is one of the pleasures of the Physic Garden – how so many plants are allowed to self-seed! The Sweet Rocket and Foxgloves in the Shrubbery area, Forget-me-Nots everywhere – I could go on.



In the beds we are more controlled to allow our plants with specific medicinal properties to thrive. In the Fragrance Bed there are some lovely Stocks by the wall, in the Dye Bed the Woad is spectacular with its wands of yellow almost obscuring the Mike Meredith memorial crown. In the Pergola Bed there is plenty of bee activity here amongst the *Geranium phaeum* – there are so many different types of bee.

June 2013

The first paragraph written in June 1998 in Monty Don's book: "The Ivington Diaries" talks of "Profligacy...There is a point in the year when the walled garden is as perfect as any garden could be... The rose bushes rise up to ten feet above Sweet Rocket, Fennel, Lovage, Sage flowering lawlessly... the ruffled bouffanted complexity of albas, gallicas, damasks... holds sway. This is their time, and they are masters of all who survey them." He could be describing our lovely garden and particularly the Fragrance Bed where the old shrub roses are at their best.



Which can I pick out? – *Rosa gallica*

'Versicolor officinalis' I see from my encyclopaedia that *Rosa gallica* is also named 'The Apothecary's Rose'. *Rosa x alba* '*Semiplena*' particularly caught my eye as did *Rosa* '*Ispahan*' (also nicely known as 'Pompon des Princes'!)

If you stand by the little temple and look towards the garden entrance you see a stunning assemblage of colour, the pinky-red rock roses standing against the pinks, whites and reds of the self-seeded foxgloves, and the pink and white *Astrantia*. June is the month to look and enjoy!

Visit us at: www.cowbridgephysicgarden.org.uk

July 2013

Hilary has sent me a glorious photo of a ginger cat lying happily amongst the Catmint/Catnip/Catnep – *Nepeta catariaa*. Catmint is a good garden plant loved by bees and the purple *Nepeta x faassenii* is often grown by gardeners as a companion plant to deter insects and beetles... but (as Hilary tells us) “not cats”!



Well, the garden is at its best and looking wonderful. We have attracted huge numbers of bees and quite a few butterflies this year. And the jackdaws enjoy bathing in the fountain!

There is a video of bees on the lavender on our website, thanks to Peter Clinton.

August 2013

Well August has brought us plenty of warm sunshine this year. This has hugely benefited the butterfly and bee population in the garden. A couple of weeks ago two of the volunteers counted five different kinds of bumblebee on the borage alone! And digger bees (?) have started to burrow into the main stump of a pear tree.



Also benefiting from the sun is the fig tree which is covered in fruit. Having been revived from nearly falling over in the spring and being judiciously pruned it now looks stunning. Our damson is covered in fruit which has been picked so Brendagh can make some delicious concoctions to sell. The pear and apple trees are thriving and full of fruit as are the vines. It is not an ideal environment for the apricot, but we are trying our best, and the peach is struggling. Even this lovely weather may not be continuously hot enough for these plants.

Now the pergola's roses are over the unusual trumpet-like flowers of the *Campsis* 'Madame Galen' and a lovely Honeysuckle with its red fruits are revealed. The giants of the garden have reached their full height and the Fennel caught my eye with its lovely umbels of yellow flowers. I also caught sight of Eifiona wrestling with the Tansy which refused to stand up straight – a constant problem with our huge plants. We are loath to cut down many of these, as the heads provide seeds for the birds and later the huge empty stems can provide hides for insects.

The resident frogs are still to be seen hopping around and one was transported via carrier bag containing some raspberry plants which were for sale and has ended up in pastures new.

Val Thomas for the Gardening Group

Meet the Trustees

Graham Duffield



I was born near Newport and then moved further east to Devauden. My secondary schooling was at Larkfield Grammar School, Chepstow where I managed to obtain 5 GCE O' Levels before commencing a five year apprenticeship as a Fitter and Turner (you don't hear that trade mentioned much these days!!).

I undertook further education in Engineering and secured a Higher National Diploma in Mechanical Engineering. My Career then veered off into the Gas Industry where I became a Chartered Engineer and remained in that discipline for the rest of my career.

It was my wife Sue's gardening interest that got us involved in the initial digging of the Physic Garden in 2006. When the digging was over and my contribution was declining the garden was offered the loan of a Gravograph engraving machine from Dyffryn Gardens. Sue then kindly volunteered me for the engraving task and engraving the labels then became my all-consuming pastime and contribution to the garden.

The garden always required a maintenance input and this has been achieved through a collection of volunteers that could be relied upon to undertake small tasks and gazebo erection etc. as required. The role of the maintenance volunteers has steadily grown and I was asked to be a focal point for the group and, subsequently, to become a CPGT Trustee representing the maintenance team.

As the garden matures so the maintenance requirements will grow and having such a keen and willing group of maintenance volunteers is a very valuable asset and I am very happy to be part of that team.

Waitrose Community Projects

Waitrose have donated **£490** to the garden as our share of the £1,000 which they donate each month to three local projects. That means that customers gave the garden twice as many of the voting tokens as each of the other 2 charities

Many thanks to Waitrose and to all of you who filled in the form suggesting that the CPGT should be included as a community project and who then placed your tokens in the CPGT box.

Waitrose

Visit us at: www.cowbridgephysicgarden.org.uk

Green Flag Community Award



The garden has again been awarded the Green Flag Community Award. For the fifth year running with a score of 80+.

The judge's general comment was: "Wow !!What a wonderful tranquil space, jam packed full of interesting plants to view, with delightful aromas and history – amazing! It was an absolute pleasure watching many different community members enjoying this beautiful space: people who want to sit in quiet reflection, parents and toddlers, and young people enjoying social time together, local business people eating their lunch, as well as tourists/visitors soaking up the ambience of this delightful facility."

"It was lovely to see a wide selection of volunteers, who have a wide skill set, who take the garden forward on so many different levels: marketing, fund raising, design, knowledge and the all-important weeding. Inspirational!"

"I found the garden a pleasure to walk around, but struggled to give a constructive feedback on how to improve. Keep up your wonderful work!"

For more information about the Green Flag Award in Wales and Keep Wales Tidy visit www.keepwalestidy.org or www.greenflagaward.org

Cubs search for Time Capsule

A contingent of 20 cubs and 6 leaders visited the Physic Garden. Iris, Hugh and I told them about the garden and the Cubs involvement in planting one of the first beds with vegetables, and also the burial of the time capsule on 7th June 2008 to celebrate the Scout's Centenary. Some of the cubs were born in 2008!

With my records of the burial site, and a feature from The Gem, Hugh Exley tried to locate the capsule with a cane. Unfortunately we had no luck, so not sure how it will be located in a 100 years time. Maybe one of Tuesday Cubs can be there at the age of 104 to help!

Rebecca Exley





Hurrah! We got the date right for the Garden Party!

Planning in advance for the Physic Garden Member's Summer Party is always a risky business. In the past we have suffered rain, chilly winds, occasional sunshine, but this year, Friday 21st June was glorious! We even had a wonderful sunset to round off the night. Music was provided by a Welsh duo, "Deuair"; Ceri Owen-Jones and Elsa Davies playing Welsh folk music on harp and fiddle.

Guests were tempted and treated with champagne (thank you John Foster-Thomas!) delicious canapés – some kindly made by volunteers, some from the Quarter Penny Café and our new member, Waitrose, very generously donated canapés from the store.

This was also the occasion we were able to announce the news of the visit of HRH The Duchess of Cornwall, to take place just two weeks after the party. Great excitement to add to a glorious evening. Let's all do it again next year! *Martyn Hurst*



Cowbridge Food and Drink Festival Recipe Book

This year is the 10th anniversary of the festival so they are marking the occasion with a special project. The Physic Garden has contributed and the book is on sale throughout the shops and bars in Cowbridge.

Visit us at: www.cowbridgephysicgarden.org.uk



Christmas Cards and Gifts

The Physic Garden Tea Towel is proving to be a great success. If you want to indulge in one-upmanship, two were presented to HRH The Duchess of Cornwall and are now in use at Highgrove!

There is a range of Christmas cards and notelets and a new supply of CPGT golf umbrellas has been delivered, a snip at £20.

All items are available in the garden on Thursdays, or at The Bay Tree, and proceeds are used to support the garden.



Dates for your diary!

Food and Drink Festival, 26th and 27th October 2013

There will be a scarecrow in the Physic Garden as part of a family competition.

**Christmas Tree Festival, Holy Cross Church, Cowbridge
Preview 21st, opening on 22nd November 2013**

The Cowbridge Physic Garden is again donating a decorated tree. All donations go to the church's charity.

Walking Nativity, 13th & 14th December 2013 from 6pm

For more information contact Sue Freeland on 775947 or Kandsfreeland@aol.com.

Plant Fair, 26th April 2014

Please support us by taking cuttings or dividing your plants ready for the fair next year.

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