

COWBRIDGE
PHYSIC GARDEN
GARDD BERLYSIAU'R
BONT-FAEN

President: Dan Clayton-Jones OBE, KStJ, TD, DL

Newsletter

February 2024

50th
Issue

Garden Volunteers' Outing to Llwyngarreg, Whitland

In the first week of September a group of us visited the above four acre garden, created and managed by the inspirational Liz and Paul O'Neill who started it in 2000. We had the most wonderful day, their objective is to grow the plants they admire in an aesthetically pleasing way and there were some excellent species of rhododendron, acer, primula, bamboos, blue meconopsis, magnolia, diorama, and agapanthus to name but a few!

Many plants have been grown from seed and they continue to endeavour to do this. There were some fabulously quirky structures, some out of living willow, which children can enjoy, and the most remarkable 'bug hotel' made from pruned bamboo which was superb!



Paul, along with Liz, has agreed to be the Guest Speaker our AGM in March. You are in for an absolute treat and they may well bring a collection of super plants for you to purchase. We hope to see as many of you there as possible.



Message from the Chair, Jo Homfray



First and foremost I hope this New Year will be a healthy and happy one for all our Members.

We have had quite a battering of wind and rain so it is always good to see signs of spring bulbs appearing against all the odds! They certainly do raise the spirits and bring hope in a myriad of ways.

In a recent Newsletter I wondered who was responsible for naming these storms, and I had a most interesting note from one of our Members, Hopkin Joseph, who writes: My daughter Marg works out of the City of London office of Risk Management Solutions, forecasting future climatic risks. She tells me the names of storms in the UK have for the last two years been picked by the Met Office and apply to the UK only. Prior to that the names were pan European, and a Geneva based climate group still name them for most of Europe so a storm now will have a different name in the UK to the name given to it by many other countries in Europe. About 15 years ago Marg was invited to name a storm (she was then forecasting future climatic conditions in the Caribbean) as most begin south of the USA, and I have an isobar print of the storm as it crossed Europe, clearly names as JOSEPH!! Not many of us can claim such a thing! Thank you Hopkin!

Our AGM is coming up on March 13th Wednesday followed by our fabulous Guest Speaker, Paul O'Neill and his wife Liz, who have created the exquisite Llwyngarreg Garden, at Whitland in Pembrokeshire.

Social Media Pages



We now have over 2200 'followers' on Instagram enjoying the visual delights the Physic Garden s more photos are added. Search for Cowbridge Physic Garden on Facebook and follow for [@cowbridgephysicgarden](#) on Instagram. You can tag any images [#cowbridgephysicgarden](#) or send content to matt@cowbridgephysicgarden.org

Meet the Members

Mike and Catherine Clay

Due to the dogged persistence of my wife, Catherine, a councillor on the local authority, a scruffy tangle of young trees left to run amok became, what it is now, the Cowbridge Physic Garden.

When the previous owners, the Edmondes family, left Old Hall, it was taken over by the Council and was used as an extension to the Grammar School, known as the Kitchen Garden.

I can remember walking in the grounds of Old Hall at the beginning of the century and looking at what the Council called the tree nursery. No doubt some of the trees had been used in Council planting schemes in years gone by, but now they were fit for nothing else but firewood. To me, who had a (very) amateur interest in trees, this was a truly sad sight.

Various suggestions were put forward for its future and fortunately a group of imaginative local people, led by Dan Clayton Jones, suggested a Physic Garden. The majority of councillors supported the granting of a lease to what is now the Cowbridge Physic Garden Trust.

In 2005 work to remove the overgrown tree nursery began and the result is what you now see – a Physic Garden in Cowbridge which has gained renown throughout Wales and indeed the rest of the UK and which attracts many international visitors as well.



50th Issue of the Members' Newsletter

The first issue of the Newsletter was published in the Autumn of 2006, soon after the first 223 members were recruited. Other supporters gave generous donations or sponsored garden plants and features.

Our membership has gone up and down in the interim but a total of 678 people have been members for at least a year. We are really grateful for all this support from both the local community and visitors. In the following pages I have selected some of the highlights in the intervening years.

Visit us at: www.cowbridgephysicgarden.org

COWBRIDGE PHYSIC GARDEN

Newsletter

Issue 1

September 2006



The Garden is open from October 1st 2006

The Cowbridge Physic Garden will be open to the general public from October 1st between 10.00 am and 4.00 pm until next summer. Entry will be free.

The construction of the features and the planting of the trees, shrubs and herbs started in September and will continue through the autumn and winter ready for the official opening in spring 2007.

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.



Newsletter

Issue 6

March 2008



COWBRIDGE
PHYSIC GARDEN
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BONT-FAEN

THE HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND

May 2006 - December 2007

By May 2006 the hard landscaping of the garden was in place but there was not a desirable plant to be seen and the task that lay ahead was a very daunting one. The garden needed volunteers to dig, weed and plant the garden as well as people who could plan and organise a range of activities. Help came in the form of a grant of £43,225 from an organisation called the Heritage Lottery Fund which funded a project called 'Volunteers for Planting and Maintaining Cowbridge Physic Garden'. This Newsletter is a celebration of this project which was funded by HLF between May 2006 and December 2007.



The garden in Nov. 2007. Photo. by Mike Wilcock

Two blooming great RHS awards!

The award ceremony this year was held in the Wolfscastle Country Hotel. Two members from the CPG were invited to attend and Eifiona and I were pleased to be able to represent the garden.



We arrived in time for coffee and Welsh cakes and shortly afterwards were taken by coach either to Treffgarne Hall Garden or to visit Nant y Coy Mill.

Although the garden is probably at its peak in springtime, the autumn sunshine enhanced the variety of planting, especially in the walled garden with its exotic specimens.

Before the excellent lunch we were entertained by the children of Wolfscastle School with three songs.

Then to the real purpose of the visit – the awards. There are fifteen categories, ranging from towns to individual front gardens. The final awards were in the "It's Your Neighbourhood" section. We were delighted to receive a certificate in the highest level (5 – Outstanding) for the second year running. Just when we thought it was all over, to our surprise, the CPG was singled out to receive the RHS' "National Certificate of Distinction" award.

Our thanks go to the Wolfscastle Community Council and to the RHS. It certainly was a grand day out and we came home with a beautiful plaque too!



A Heavenly Angel, Holy Cross Church, Cowbridge

Last December, instead of a Christmas tree festival, it was decided to bring a Host of Heavenly Angels into Holy Cross church.

The volunteers were debating how to get involved when one of our members, Deborah Hill, who works with and grows willow, offered to make us an angel. Of course we were eager to accept. Melanie, Sue B. and Mary W. then installed the angel in the church and added some suitable decoration. We were all delighted with the result.

Our angel has now retired for the winter but we hope we will be able to put her on show again.

Val Caple



Woad / *Isatis tinctoria* / *Llysiâu'r Lliw*

Woad is native to the UK and has been used for centuries as a dye. It may or not have been the blue dye which Caesar said the Ancient Britons painted their skin with but it has been used to dye fabric, especially wool, for a very long time.

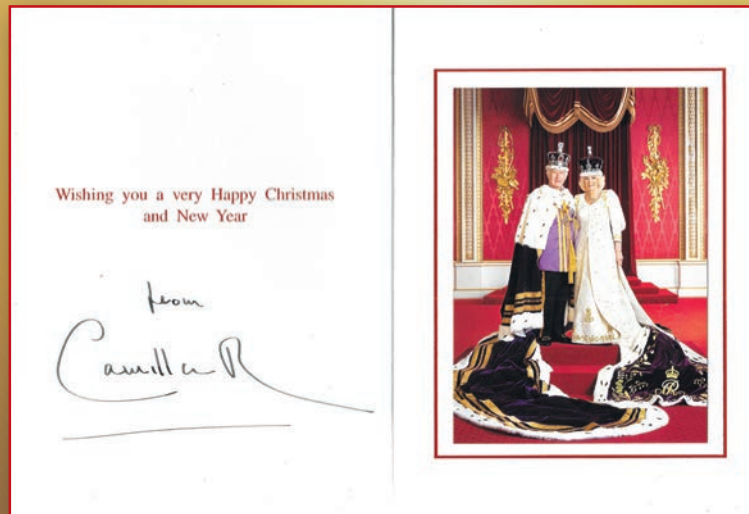
The blue indigo dye is produced by crushing the leaves in a mill, moulding into balls, drying, fermenting then pulping again. A hundredweight of leaves produced 10lb of dye, and the smell was disgusting! Queen Elizabeth I issued a proclamation that woad production must cease in any town she was passing through.

When cotton fabric became popular it was found that the concentration of indigo in the woad dye was too weak to colour it and imported indigo dye replaced it. This was mostly produced from plants from the Indigofera genus which are common in tropical countries. The dye was extracted and transported in concentrated blocks. The actual indigo chemical is found in more than 50 different plants worldwide.

Today synthetic indigo is used to colour cotton fabrics, like denim, but with the growth of natural dyes the use of woad is being revived.

Val Caple

Christmas Greetings 'to Everyone at CPGT'



We are still waiting for Buckingham Palace to inform us whether HRH The Queen will continue to be our Patron.

Welsh Leek, Bacon and Goat's Cheese Tart

- 225g (8 oz) plain shortcrust pastry
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1.5g (½ oz) butter
- 3 leeks, trimmed and thinly sliced
- 225g (8 oz) streaky bacon, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon parsley finely chopped
- salt and black pepper
- 2 eggs, plus egg yolk
- 425ml (¾ pint) single cream
- 175g (6 oz) fresh goat's cheese
- 55g (2 oz) walnuts, finely chopped
- ½ teaspoon grated nutmeg

Pre-heat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas 6. Line a deep 23cm (9 in) tart tin with the pastry and pre-bake or bake blind. Heat the oil and butter in a frying pan, add the leeks and fry gently for 5 minutes. Add the bacon and fry until the leek is soft and bacon not quite crisp. Add the parsley, salt and black pepper. Mix the eggs and cream and season. Break the cheese into pieces.

Put the walnuts in the base of the pastry case. Add the leek mixture, the goat's cheese and then pour on the cream mixture. Sprinkle with nutmeg. Bake for 30–35 minutes until the tart looks set and the cheese is nicely browned.

Garden Products!

We are about to launch our latest linen tea towel based on an original watercolour by acclaimed artist and garden volunteer Gillian Griffiths. These Limited Edition collector's items will soon be available in our usual outlets and at the AGM.

There are still some Magnolia teatowels available. Other examples of Gillian's art are still available in a range of notelets.

Our book is available at the Cowbridge Bookshop and tea towels, notelets, and umbrella in The Bay Tree, Cowbridge. You can also buy online, at www.cowbridgephysicgarden.org.

You can buy plants and the above items on a Thursday mornings. Just ask one of the volunteers!



Dates for your Diary

AGM 2024. Wednesday 13th March at 6.30pm.

Followed at 7.30pm by a talk by Paul O'Neill and his wife Liz, entitled *'The Last Cow – making Llwyngarreg – How and why we made the Garden'*.

The invitation to the talk is available on our website. Visitors are welcome. For more information on the garden please visit www.llwyngarreg.co.uk

Plant Fair. Saturday 27th April. 10am–3pm in the Physic Garden

There will be stalls from several nurseries. Donations of plants gratefully received on Thursday mornings.

Members' Garden Party. Friday 21st June. Details to follow.

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