

Spadework



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**Cardiganshire Horticultural Society
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FROM THE CHAIR

Hearty congratulations must go to all who contributed plants, cakes and labour to our last Plant Sale at Llanfarian on 25 April. We raised £955! Particular credit goes to Peter Gardner, who once again nurtured choice sweet-pea seedlings of named varieties and sold them, individually potted, at a table in the middle of the hall. I only secured one, a dark blue, but it's now six feet tall and flowering profusely in a pot by my front door. We catch the scent as we go in and out. Joy Neal provided some extremely choice houseplants, most of which were snapped up in minutes. Divided chunks of good garden perennials and new seedling veg and flowers also sold very well. Jan Eldridge provided us with a really professional banner: attached to the railings at the Penparcau roundabout for two weeks prior to the sale, this increased our visibility to the public, who queued eagerly till the doors opened.



Before the doors opened

The summer excursions run by John and Sue Wildig have also been well subscribed and offered a varied and fascinating range of experiences. You can read about them in the following pages. Sincere thanks to the authors of these accounts, without whom SPADEWORK would be dull indeed. Please don't wait to be co-opted to write up a garden or a winter lecture – new and additional authors are extremely welcome. Let John know on the bus if you are prepared to do an account, or tell me if you would like to write up a lecture. Both day trips and longer excursions have been a mainstay of our CHS activities for some years. Organizing them

takes a fair amount of planning and we must be sure of Members' support. See our discussion on page 20.



Sadly we have again to record the loss of a very valued CHS committee member. Ella Talco died in May. Only two weeks previously she was one of the band of friends following in John Corfield's footsteps around his old haunts in Crete (see page 17). Pictured here in Crete with Mared Breese, we can remember her, chic as always, enjoying freshly squeezed orange juice at a roadside restaurant. Ella served on the Committee from 2006 to 2008 and again from 2010 to 2012. She worked hard for the Society and was an expert cake-maker and a very persuasive vendor of our raffle tickets.

Many thanks to those who have already revised their standing orders for the new subscription rate. Please act promptly if you have not yet done so: this will make the Treasurer's life much easier. The CHS should have the funds to continue providing a good programme in future years. I look forward to seeing you all at the winter lectures.

Caroline Palmer

SUMMER VISITS 2015

AFTERNOON VISIT SUNDAY 10 MAY

YSGOLDY'R CWRT

This was built as the Sunday School house for the children of farm workers and servants of the mansion known as Cwrt Mawr near Llangeitho. The commodious Georgian-style house nestling among sheltering trees was barely visible from the field where we parked. The estate had, for two generations, been the home of Robert J. Davies of Aberystwyth, who bought it in 1850, and of his son John H. Davies, Principal of University College Aberystwyth 1919–26.

Brenda Woodley moved to the area about six years ago and bought the much-dilapidated schoolroom and a long strip of land behind it – sheep-grazed pasture with tufts of rush and thistle, sloping sideways down to a narrow stream margined with native ash and oak. She refitted the school for residential use and installed a large timber bay and balcony overlooking the garden, which gives the building something of a Swiss-chalet look today.

And on the bare hilltop field she set out to create a garden from scratch. Much earth was moved to reshape the contours of the land, steps and paths installed, and a multiplicity of island beds created to showcase different herbaceous plants, shrubs and ornamental trees. It is a young garden, and will change dramatically as the



choice acers, magnolias and specimen conifers gain in height and bulk. At present, the meticulously edged beds and

A vista over the garden towards the hills around Llangeitho

borders brim with herbaceous plants and lead the visitor from formal allée and pergola, past wildflower meadow and pool, to amble down-slope on meandering close-mown lawns.

The lie of the land drew all of us gradually to the streamside on the right margin of the garden, which remains natural and overhung by big trees. The chuckle of a cascading stream is music to the ears. This steep, almost ungarden-able slope provided a challenge, as do all transitions from the manicured to the wilderness. Brenda had planted these stony slopes with many young *Hydrangea petiolaris*, which already were meeting to form a ground-covering mat. And thrusting up in the gaps were the rosettes of many foxgloves poised to flower later in the year. It would be particularly choice if these were to all be white-flowering – but in any case the shapes and textures of contrasting foliage made a most effective carpet on difficult and not very fertile land.

The visit concluded with tea and cake on the terrace below the balcony, which afforded some shelter from a chilly spring wind.

Caroline Palmer

DAY TRIP TO POWYS TUESDAY 19 MAY

BRYNGWYN HALL & VAYNOR PARK

Bryngwyn Hall, Llanfyllin, is the historic home of Auriol, Lady Linlithgow. The log fire in the hall and the coffee and biscuits were much appreciated as the day was very cool and damp. We heard that the house was extensively remodelled in the neo-classical style in the 18th century by Robert Mylne and was bought by an antecedent of Lady Linlithgow early in the 19th. The house had



mixed fortunes over many years, being shut up for two very long periods with the entire contents mothballed. Finally in 1986 the house was given to Lady

Linlithgow, whose ambition was to restore it to its former glory. It has taken much time, hard work and

marshalling of resources to bring it to its current state. We then had a very interesting tour of the house and due to its delightful setting in 9 acres enjoyed stunning views of the garden from each room.

Head Gardener Andrea joined us in the garden where we were delighted by the superb trees and shrubs planted by past generations along with the many interesting recent plantings of unusual specimens such as the foxglove tree (*Paulownia tomentosa*) pictured here, as well as the more well-known acers, betulas, prunus and many others.

The herbaceous borders are being redesigned and enhanced whilst the azaleas and rhododendrons made for some instant colour. The most recent project is the establishment of an attractive wheel-shaped poison garden, unique in Wales and including many of the most poisonous species including hemlock, aconitum, deadly nightshade – and rhubarb!

On one side of the house the ground slopes down to a large lake attractively set around with water loving plants. In 1998 the garden and parkland were designated Grade II* status. After an enjoyable though rather wet discovery of the gardens we returned to the house for a delicious cold buffet and wine before saying goodbye and thanks to our charming host.

We were most fortunate that Lady Linlithgow was able to arrange for us to visit Vaynor Park along the valley at Berriew, which is not actually open to the public. This house is in a magnificent setting on high ground, commanding extensive views towards distant hills with the ground falling away on three sides to the surrounding parkland. Owned by the Corbett-Winder family, the house is a 17th-century mansion heavily altered in the 19th century in the Jacobean style. There are many fine, mature trees



with the wooded area originally being established in the 17th century.

We were met by Mrs Corbett-Winder at the gatehouse leading through to the entrance court with its oval lawn, planted borders and interesting trees, some older some newer, like the ginkgo tree and on again to the large wide terrace which ran the length of the side of the house. Here we enjoyed the several herbaceous borders with their early colour plantings and the climbing roses against attractive stone walls. By this time it was extremely wet and windy so we moved amongst the trees at the end of the terrace before dropping down into the wooded area with yet more mature trees and natural underplanting. As we came back towards the terrace we passed the rosebed parterre which we had seen from above and which is currently awaiting some redevelopment.



At the back of the house was an attractive sheltered lawned area with more mature trees. We were pleased to return to the house out of the elements to enjoy a welcome cup of tea and cake in the dining room where Mrs Corbett-Winder cheerfully answered any queries and observations we had. It is her enthusiasm and knowledge which carries on the development of the gardens, with some help to achieve it! Altogether, a most enjoyable day.

Lindsey Hobson/Photos Jane Morgan

DAY TRIP TO HEREFORDSHIRE WEDNESDAY 10 JUNE
COURT OF NOKE & SHIPLEY GARDENS

After a warm welcome, as we were sitting in the walled garden sipping coffee and enjoying a slice of Emma's delicious lemon drizzle cake, the wind dropped and the sun shone forth providing a perfect setting for what turned out to be a truly fascinating visit.



The proceedings began with a talk by the multi-talented and extremely modest owner, Edward Bulmer – scion of the cider family, well-known architectural historian, specialist in the restoration and redecoration of historic buildings and colour expert of ‘Pots of Paint’ fame, whose talents (and paints) have been

employed at, among other places, Castle Howard, Goodwood, Kenwood House, Chequers, Hampton Court and Althorp, where he designed the memorial to Princess Diana. Edward began by explaining that Noke is almost certainly derived from the Old English ‘*atten oke*’ (at the oak) and that the history of the sub-manorial court (part of the larger manor of Pembridge) can be traced down to 1692 in the rolls of the Petty Sessions now housed, through marriage, at Longleat.

The present Queen Anne Grade II*-listed house dates from about 1700. The formal garden with its ponds, canal and flood-control system, being aligned with the new building, clearly dates from the same time, the water features surrounding two sides of the house (an unusual feature for Herefordshire but paralleled by the garden of the same period at



Westbury Court, Gloucs). By the end of the 18th century, however, the Court had degenerated into a tenanted farm and the formal garden fallen into disrepair. When Edward purchased the property in 1994, he immediately set about restoring the garden before turning his attention to the house (Emma was not exaggerating when she claimed she had running water in the garden before she had it in the house). Edward then showed us ‘before’ and ‘after’ photos of the house with its blocked windows on the northern facade and the overgrown garden. With the help of Chris Currie, an archaeologist and former editor of the Victoria County History, he had been able to trace and excavate the canal ponds and begin a meticulous programme of restoration.



After we had marvelled at the transformation over the last 21 years, we were taken on a tour of the garden. First, we passed a newly planted rose garden in the shape of two Es (for Emma and Edward), a charming touch completely lacking in the glaring self-publicity we experienced at The Laskett. We then paused at a water mill (in the process of restoration) with its undershot wheel, originally used to process wheat for animal feed. Next, we saw the Dark Pond (dug c.1700 and re-flooded in 1997), the 18th-century

‘great watercourse’ (probably used for draining the canal ponds and flooding Bridge Meadow), and a modern iron screen (a *clairvoyée* based on an early 18th-century example at Westbury-on-Severn). The front and side of the house were dominated by Mill Pond, where two plinths for statues aligned with the house pediment had been found – a future restoration project. Beyond the house stretched Middle Pond and Long Pond – an impressive canal which extended the whole length of the garden. At the end of this was the Holding Pond where Edward demonstrated a traditional sluice allowing water to be diverted from the River Arrow.

Edward confessed that, apart from the walled garden, there was no colour in the rest of the garden – although he refused to believe green was not a colour. Indeed, we were confronted with a beautiful green tapestry of maturing yews and a magnificent hornbeam arcade either side of the long canal. We then returned to the walled garden via the Home Orchard gradually being replanted with fabled cider apple varieties once thought lost. Our tour ended in a productive vegetable garden.

By now, it was time to offer thanks to our hosts and declare our admiration for all that they had achieved. As we left belatedly for lunch in Pembridge, Our Leader warned us to expect something entirely different in the afternoon – a house and garden whose condition, in part, reminded me of my own home (on a much smaller scale). But even I do not have rats underfoot (or, on this occasion, over my foot) and I was greatly relieved to have been asked to review the absolutely splendid Court of Noke instead!

Colin Eldridge/Photos Caroline Palmer

Shipleigh Gardens at Holme Lacy were indeed a contrast to our morning visit. The 1545 house in the Wye valley is on a site which has had dwellings since Roman times. Apparently, some of the early occupants administered the ford and former ferry.

Mr Bob Macadie welcomed us and gave us a short talk on his interests and input into the place. The author and former landscape architect created this 30-acre garden of mixed and environmental habitats over the last 40 years or so with both native wild plants and rare ornamental trees and shrubs. The amount and diversity of family treasures in the house and outbuildings were staggering.

Too much to absorb in one visit, and I guess I empathize with Mr Macadie's inability to throw any of his eccentric memorabilia away. The garden is now very informal, with 'loose' garden rooms, dedicated to wildlife, and is alive with insects, butterflies and birds, including many peacocks strutting about, the males obligingly displaying their fabulous tails. The old swimming pool in the conservatory is the haunt of frogs, toads, newts and, sometimes, mink!



How best to describe this garden? I'd call it surprising, whimsical and tranquil, all at the same time. It's a pity that some of the information boards are almost illegible, as the better ones were informative, quirky and interesting – e.g. the mad hatter's tea-party

area, and the once-beautiful rose walk with some lovely old scented roses still struggling to survive. I'm sure that 20 years ago the gardens must have been magnificent, but now the air of faded grandeur was both touching and exasperating, but very peaceful (except for the peacocks).



The place is so unconventional that it sort of redeems itself by displaying all the old notice boards, structures and swimming pool. Mr Macadie is so passionate about it: his tenacity is amazing, and with imagination one can visualize its former glory. I must say, I quite liked it and can see aspects of my



own garden tottering in the same direction!

Just go there – relax, wander and enjoy it, along with the tea and delicious cakes. Maybe if Mr Macadie were to drop the entry price somewhat, folks would have more sympathy.

Mared Breese

EVENING VISIT TO ABERDOVEY THURSDAY 9 JULY

What a splendid evening for our journey to Pennal! The sun was still high when we arrived at Forest Lodge. Barbara Friar greeted us and enthusiastically explained how she had battled for three years in the '90s to transform a wilderness of allotments and brambles into its present charming and unexpected form. Her dedicated gardener Ian was on hand to answer our questions.

The front porch-way, embraced by Virginia creeper, lavender and verbena glowing in the evening sun, beckoned us in for a cream tea before we embarked on the delight of Barbara's rear garden. She had certainly achieved her aim to maintain colour throughout the seasons. Many interesting nooks and turns wound hidden paths between ferns and a colourful variety of geraniums and digitalis. The pitcher-bearing water feature was well suited to the gradient of Barbara's garden and a peep over the top boundary fence revealed its source in a nearby spring. Strategic resting places included benches unexpectedly chanced upon beyond low bracken hedges and a summer-house from which to shelter from the elements yet gaze over the full extent of this lovely place.



An immaculately fashioned yew hedge spanned the upper garden boundary and gave shelter to the interesting bed-mates of flowers and vegetables. Healthy runner beans rubbed shoulders with arum and Kaffir lilies and onions and fuchsia rested alongside saxifrage and mop-head hydrangea. Courgettes went hand in hand with cosmos and thyme and this intertwining palate bathed under a clematis-laden pergola standing proudly at centre-stage. We were too early to see the central crown of heathers and hydrangeas in its glory, but one could imagine the drama when it erupted at the very heart of the garden. As we took our leave it was a pleasure to contribute to Barbara's fundraising for Wales Air Ambulance.

On to Tywyn to a contrasting garden in the town grounds of the old vicarage of 1640, now listed. Katie Pearce has lived at Ty Cadfan Sant for 12 years and is obviously devoted to her charming garden. The heady perfume of rosemary greeted us as we strode through the entrance under a pergola of apricot climbing roses. Katie had fashioned climbers of roses and clematis through elder and twisted beech, and an army of digitalis and blaze of acacia, lavender and feverfew roamed the borders. Pittosporum and holly were in abundance and provided shade for this west-facing garden. An amazing spectacle was an enormous copper beech, deservedly subject to a preservation order, standing proudly in the foreground.

At the next level formal borders to the family barbecue space contained cosmos, purple iris, toadflax, fennel and pansies, interspersed with geum and early Kaffir lilies. Here photos of the garden's progress were displayed. A family of earthenware pots against the kitchen wall, housed a variety of popular herbs and fruit and within the kitchen courtyard Katie also fundraises for the Air Ambulance with sales of handmade articles and jewellery.

The next phase of Katie's garden led us to a productive fruit



area where we noted the ingenious use of a suspended drainpipe through which to cultivate strawberries. Tomatoes and other salad plants were thriving and gerberas rested on their swings from the tunnel frames. This could all be surveyed from an arbour tucked away amidst honeysuckle, buddleia and weigela. We shouldn't have been surprised to cast our eyes finally on four handsome Maran hens and a clutch of bantams strolling in the fading sunlight.

Time to depart. Our final port of call – a fine supper at the Penhelig Arms in Aberdovey – was not disappointing. Another very successful outing!

Anne Ellin

DAY TRIP TO GWENT THURSDAY 16 JULY
LLANOVER GARDEN & GLEBE HOUSE

We were met at Llanover by the present owner, Elizabeth Murray, who looks after the vast estate and Garden School with just one gardener. Her ancestor Benjamin Waddington (after whom, we were told, Big Ben was named) bought the small estate known as Ty Uchaf in 1792. The gardens and parkland were laid out at the time Capability Brown's ideas were dominating garden design, utilizing the natural features of the land. The Rhyd-y-Meirch stream that flows through the landscape was used to create cascades and ponds through gardens and lawns which still show the old formal pattern of paths under the grass. The ha-ha is one of the most splendid I have ever seen.

We are not certain that Waddington himself designed the Llanover gardens, but we do know he planted larches, beeches and huge plane trees, and in 1800 *Rhododendron ponticum* grown from a seedling. There are still three large old beautiful mulberry trees on the lawn, kept standing with major metal structural supports.

The Mansion was built in the 1830s by Benjamin Hall (Lord Llanover), who married Waddington's daughter. The garden went through various stages of growth with the addition in 1931 of two *Acer griseum*, now regarded as 'champion trees'. The Mansion, however, fell into disrepair after WWI and was demolished.

During WWII Ty Uchaf was used by a family from London to escape the war. The American army took over the parkland to



prepare for the D-day landings, and then it became a prisoner of war camp for Italians and Germans. In 1960 Ty Uchaf became a family home again.

Cornus stems and hellebores in the Round Garden

After his return from America Elizabeth's father planted numerous acers, nyssas hickories, euonymus and liquidambar which we all enjoy today. He brought back many new plants on his travels with the RHS and IDS – Mexican oaks, embotriums, pieris and camellias from Waterford, Ireland to add to his collection of rarities. There are over 25 different magnolias, some of which have leaves that are of tropical size!



Allium 'Purple Sensation' along the edge of the Pond

The large walled garden is only partially used today for a few vegetables and house flowers. A beautifully planted informal round garden is hidden through brick arches with cascades of water and planted with 'minimum-effort maximum-effect' designs. A small but productive vegetable plot and orchard was in full growth near the house. We were served with a delicious lunch under the huge grape arbours backing on to the house, where we were joined by Peter Hall, formerly head gardener at Powis Castle. The scale and immaculate presentation of this estate and garden were a credit to Elizabeth, her husband and her sole gardener.

*Alison Swanson
(Photos from Llanover Gardens website)*

From Llanover it was a short drive to Llanfair Cilgedin where we walked down a lane to Glebe House, the home of Joanna Kerr, NGS Organizer for Gwent. Joanna explained that the house was originally the vicarage and that it and the 1.5-acre garden were in a poor state when her family arrived in the early 1980s.

The present garden surrounded the house on three sides with a gravelled area in front, and beyond the kitchen garden were two small areas of woodland, planted by Joanna.

Behind and to one side of the house were separate lawns, the first bounded on one side by a green oak pergola supporting a white wisteria beneath which was a myrtle hedge. A feature across the lawn was another early-flowering tree, a *Ceris siliquastrum* (Judas tree). The evergreen structural elements of Joanna's garden were provided by yew, box, bay, as hedges or as topiary, and particularly striking was the pyracantha trained as an espalier



against a wall of the house with the base of its stem hidden in a 'container' of clipped box.

A number of containers with pelargoniums and other colourful tender plants added colour in gravelled or

paved areas and in the latter and between some stone steps a froth of pink and white *Erigeron karvinskianus* softened the scene.

As we walked further from the first lawn others were revealed, separated by the outstanding features of the garden during our July visit – the exuberant herbaceous borders, ablaze with colour.

Clipped box cones marked the corners of borders and among the herbaceous perennials some shrubs could be seen with flowers of phlox and roses adding their colour to the variety. I stopped counting the different species in the borders as it would have taken

too long, but the brilliant colour of some flowers stood out; red and blue salvias, red dahlias and alliums, yellow euphorbia and verbascum. However, *Eryngium giganteum* (Miss Willmott's ghost) with its steel-blue flowers surrounded by silvery blue bracts,



was for me one of the most memorable plants in the garden and nearby an eryngium with particularly vivid blue flowers (*left*) made another bold statement. The clusters of star-shaped blue flowers of *Brodiaea elegans* also caught the attention of members.

It was good to see that home-made birch hoops and obelisks were used for unobtrusive support in the borders.

I should very much like to see how this garden works in the winter months, but behind an attractive pond located in a corner of the garden I

noticed two trees – cornus and parrotia – which would give good autumn colour.

While at Llanfair there was time for some of us to walk to the simple church of St Mary the Virgin, to see the extraordinary sgraffito murals dating from the re-building of the church in 1875 by J.D. Sedding, a member of the Arts and Crafts Movement. Created by carving into layers of differently coloured plaster and occupying most of the wall space, the murals by Heywood Sumner illustrate texts from the Benedicite, many depicting local landscapes.

Judith Bray

CRETE REVISITED

Members with long memories & back-numbers will recall John Corfield's 'Springtime in Crete' in SPADEWORK 11:ii (1998). [Ed.]

This April a group of 13 nature-lovers flew to western Crete to view the spring flowers. Having visited annually between 1980 and 1985, I was able to suggest several good botanizing areas. High on the list were the White Mountains, but as we flew into Charnia I was concerned to see the mountains still covered in snow. We got off to a good start just driving from the airport – lots of flowers about and lots of ‘oohs!’ at the huge bright yellow heads of *Ferula communis* (fennel) dotted along the roadside.

The air was filled with orange-blossom scent during next day's trip up a valley of orange groves and nothing seemed to have changed in 30 years. We stopped by a lake – squacco heron here – and on up to Meskla village. We saw *Lavandula stoechas*, *Cistus*, *Calycotome*, *Tuberaria*, *Hypericum*, thymes, *Petromerula pinnata* (a Cretan endemic related to *Campanula*), *Sarcopoterium*, *Smilax* (the Cretan answer to bramble) and more familiar weeds. Higher still in the foothills we saw *Ranunculus asiaticus* (turban buttercup, both white and pink), helichrysum and sarcopoterium again.

Next we walked the wide Theriso Gorge and found rosettes of *Dracunculus* (dragon arum), *Cyclamen creticum* and more turban buttercups, plus saxifrages and other chasmophytes on the rock faces where goats could not graze.

Each day we added a few more new plants, birds and butterflies to our list. But the best was yet to come. My enduring memory is





of the masses of crocus, chionodoxa, tulips and anemones on the Omalos Plain and adjoining mountain slopes. The weather, already warm, was getting hotter. We delayed going higher so more snow cover could melt, but also because it would be cooler up there.

We spent the next day on the Akrotiri Peninsula, classic *phrygana* country (the eastern Mediterranean version of *garrigue*),



and we saw all the plants associated with this type of vegetation. All heavily ‘goated’, but tucked away amongst low spiny shrubs we found *Gynandriris* (a tiny iris) and *Gagea*. Fossicking in an abandoned field we found lots of *Gladiolus*, *Chrysanthemum coronarius*, *Serapias* (tongue orchid), *Ophrys lutea* (a yellow orchid), *Centaurea*, *Orobanche* (broomrape) and *Dracunculus* in flower (left) – really smelling of dead meat.

Then it was up to Omalos and its high-mountain treasures. The first surprise was a splendid new wide road – hollows filled in, humps sliced off and hairpins

straightened. On to the Plain, to find the road hemmed in by stout fences; *Anemone coronaria* aplenty in colours from white through purples to deep red, and *Tulipa bakeri*, only found on Omalos in the bordering grid of fenced-in fields, inaccessible – though we managed to squeeze through a gap to take a closer look and photographs. Open areas were grazed to the bone. We drove on to the end of the road, to the start of the Samaria Gorge (still closed because of snow) to find a splendid new restaurant. Through a gate in the fence we headed up the hillside to look for *Crocus sieberi* (*below*). We saw none here but two days later we found some on the edges of snow patches. There were chionodoxa (glory of the snow) and *Romulea bulbocodium* (a crocus relative) in abundance,



the romulea a little star-shaped white flower dotting the plain and hillside like daisies. Other plants seen in the mountains were fields of *Daphne collina*, the widow iris (*Hermodactylus*) and *Aubrieta* growing on the rock faces.

We visited two other habitats: the Rhodopos Peninsula (a lot of seaside) and the Topolia Gorge (olive groves and chestnut forest).

Perhaps the most obvious change in 30 years was the staggering amount of coastal development: what were isolated fishing villages have disappeared into uninterrupted development of hotels and apartment blocks. And up-country there was the fencing. Thirty years ago one could roam freely; now we are restricted to the roadsides. At first I raged against the fencing, but after the second visit I realized it preserved the habitat from goats, so that the spring flowers are still abundant and a visit between mid March and the end of April can be just as rewarding as ever. Botanists, birders, geologists and all had a highly enjoyable visit in spite of the fencing. Our lists grew each day. One day perhaps we'll compile a comprehensive, accessible report rather than this brief note.

John Corfield
Photos Caroline Palmer

AWAY TRIPS

Who's prepared to board the bus?

Among the many issues your Committee has been discussing is the Society's well-established programme of excursions to visit interesting gardens near and far. All away trips involve a good deal of planning, and with coach travel getting ever more expensive, we have to make sure they are cost-effective as well as enjoyable. Ideally this means a full bus. However, commencing next season the Committee has agreed to subsidise coach hire for the day trips in order to keep prices reasonable.



For a number of years Joy Neal and then Peter and Celia Gardner and Kate Beech organized more substantial coach trips, usually in early summer, where we might spend four or more nights away in a hotel. We visited parts of the British Isles and the near Continent, sometimes using ferry routes, and occasionally flying (to Italy and Madeira). That era ended a few years ago, but meanwhile Philip Ellis had set up a series of shorter autumn trips of a night or two away which proved very popular. Last year's longer visit to Guernsey and this year's to Kronberg represent a break from that pattern.

Parallel to the more strenuous (and expensive) excursions has been the custom of day trips, currently organized by the tireless team of John and Sue Wildig. (Previous coordinators have

included Gillian Morgan and Peter Charnock.) The price will include garden entrance fees and perhaps a prepaid lunch. However, journeys radiating from Aberystwyth can only go so far to allow time to get back by nightfall! John and Sue have suggested the possibility of an overnight stay in the west Midlands or Border counties so that we can fit in a couple more gardens ... but then this would entail a whole new tranche of organizing. And anyway, is it something Members would sign up to?

A few Members enjoy both day trips and longer ones, but many for one reason or another have to get back home after a day out. What do *YOU* feel? Where would *YOU* like to go, and are you prepared to stay overnight? Please respond with feedback to SPADEWORK or to a Committee Member.

HOW DID *YOU* JOIN THE CHS?

When asked how they joined the CHS, a surprising number of original members at our 40th birthday celebration in 2008 said that as our founder Basil Fox taught them, they didn't dare not to. My own introduction was a little clutch of SPADEWORKS, most emphatically *lent* to Philip by the County Council receptionist in 1993. Ethel was a London wartime evacuee who returned on her husband's retirement to be near what she regarded as her second family in Pontrhydfendigaid. I suspect she was prompted by the four-foot-high custard-apple plant grown from seed that Philip moved into his new office before anything else. The SPADEWORKS (as ever) gave us a good idea of CHS activities and its tradition of reportage and I was particularly taken by the 'CHS' lettering drawn by Halcyon Hinde on the covers. The CHS seemed an interesting bunch and as our first meeting was an RHS lecture, where members were milling about afterwards with cups of coffee, we found that they were.



The influence of the CHS is everywhere in our garden, from plant-sale finds to paths and walls over-ambitiously modelled on features found on our many garden tours. I am probably the only person who catches the reference to the false perspective at Sutton Court, my favourite of all our many visited gardens: everyone else sees a wonky crazy-paving path generally in need of a weed. We still have one of Ethel's auriculas, bought from our first plant sale along with a seedling crinodendron grown by Halcyon. I have enjoyed helping Penny with SPADEWORK for years now and it's good to see members milling about with cups of coffee again at our new venue.

Philip did return Ethel's SPADEWORKS, and we now walk under the crinodendron.

Edwina Ellis

Gardening as a volunteer at Llanerchaeron offers opportunities for 'networking' during our chatty coffee break, though it seems to onlookers more like general gossip. One day – in 1995! – I mentioned the book on Monet's garden that I had just finished editing and Pat Griffiths piped up to tell me that a trip there was about to take place. She gave me the phone number of someone called Joy Neal. It turned out that there had been a cancellation. I joined the bus early one morning knowing absolutely no one ... to return a few days later with a whole new lot of firm friends, kindred spirits with whom I've since spent an enormous amount of enormously enjoyable time.

I also joined something called the CHS, which I've been devoted to ever since!

Penny David

Cue for more Members' anecdotes about how they first came upon the Society? [Ed.]

PREVIEW OF WINTER LECTURES 2015–2016

Lectures take place on the second Tuesday of the month from September to March in Waunfawr Hall, Brynceinion, Aberystwyth SY23 3PN at 7.30pm

Tuesday 8 September 2015

Ingrid Millington: *Perennials Throughout the Year*

Ingrid runs Hillview Hardy Plants nursery near Bridgnorth, which claims to sell ‘Shropshire’s finest quality garden plants’. They specialize in rare and unusual herbaceous plants, hold the National Collection of *Acanthus* and *Albuca*, and offer a mouthwatering selection of auriculas. They also have a list of rabbit-proof plants, which will be of particular interest to some Members.

NOTE: A brief Extraordinary AGM will be held before this talk. This is constitutionally necessary to approve the Society’s accounts for 2014.

Tuesday 13 October

Joseph Atkin: *Gardening for Cut Flowers*

Celebrated as the Head Gardener who since 2010 has taken Aberglasney into a new era, Joseph draws on his wide experience and his passion for plants to make a compelling speaker on wider gardening issues, as Members who heard his talk on ‘Plants for a West Wales Garden’ in September 2013 will recall. His awareness of local growing conditions provides his audience with much practical advice. He’ll also be bringing plants for sale.

Tuesday 10 November

Steve Hipkin: *Apples Past & Present*

The riches of Gwynfor Growers nursery are well known to many CHS members. Steve is a specialist in Welsh fruit trees and supplier of full orchardist services (orchard design, pollination planning and aftercare). He will talk about the origins of the modern apple, apple mythology and symbolism, as well as growing apple trees. He will bring a selection of Welsh Heritage fruit trees for sale.

Tuesday 8 December

Jade Mellor: *Foraging*

Wild Pickings is a small wild food business run by professional forager Jade. She gathers ingredients from woodlands, hedgerows and coast to use in a wide range of delicious pickles, preserves, dried foods and chocolates. She is part of an artisan woodland collective making handmade crafts using green wood and traditional techniques. Jade will be bringing some of her products for sale – last-minute Christmas presents?

This is our Christmas talk when we shall be holding a raffle and serving drinks and mince pies.

Tuesday 12 January 2016

John Warren: *Why We Grow the Plants We Do*

A professor at Aber, John Warren thinks we are all born botanists but that some folks ‘need to explain how they lost the love of life’. He has worked mostly in agriculture and conservation but is interested in the origins of botanical diversity and how this works. He professes ‘an academic interest in the sex-life of plants and a recreational interest in all things edible’. Who doesn’t agree?

Tuesday 9 February

Sheena Crossley: *Monet’s Garden & Paris Châteaux*

Sheena Crossley was born in Cornwall but currently lives in Cardiff, where she is a regular broadcaster and columnist. It’s now 20 years since CHS made the second of the celebrated overseas trips organized by Joy Neal, this time to Normandy, including Monet’s garden at Giverny. Sheena’s talk will revive some memories and shed new light on the gardens surrounding the châteaux of Paris.

Tuesday 10 March

AGM followed by slideshow from 2015 CHS trips.

Saturday 23 April 2pm

PLANT SALE

Please bring labelled plants and cakes by 1pm.

DIARY 2015–2016

TUESDAY EVENING LECTURES

Waunfawr Hall, Brynceinion, Aberystwyth SY23 3PN

The venue is signposted on the night

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------|--|
| 8 | September | Ingrid Millington
Perennials Throughout the Year |
| 13 | October | Joseph Atkin
Gardening for Cut Flowers |
| 10 | November | Steve Hipkin
Apples Past & Present |
| 8 | December | Jade Mellor
Foraging
<i>with Christmas drink & mince pies</i> |
| 2016 | | |
| 12 | January | John Warren
Why We Grow the Plants We Do |
| 9 | February | Sheena Crossley
Monet's Garden & Paris Châteaux |
| 8 | March | AGM
Caroline Palmer
Slideshow of 2015 Summer trips
& Kronberg tour |
| 23 | April 2pm | PLANT SALE at Llanfarian Hall
<i>Please bring plants & cakes by 1.00pm</i>
Plants at bargain prices grown by
members |

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