

Spadework



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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

We belong to a thriving Society that's underpinned with an excellent committee and constant high membership numbers. However, many of the Society's members also belong to other groups and societies, sometimes with interests similar to ours, and this can present problems when organizing the CHS trips, as our travel dates and destinations can clash with or duplicate those of the other organizations. We all do some juggling to try to accommodate each other.

The trips organized by our Society play an important part in its activities, and in particular provide the opportunity to socialize – something that is not very convenient at the end of a lecture evening. The fixed cost of coach hire will be increasing due to VAT and fuel increases, so the more of you who support the five-day visit and the day trips, the more we can keep the seat prices as low as possible.

The feedback forms sent out to members with the AGM minutes will provide the committee with useful information that we can hopefully use in decision making for future outings, so please return these, anonymously if you prefer, to Secretary Dave Hughes with your comments and suggestions. Be truthful! We can take criticism!

I am personally looking forward to travelling with you on the five-day visit to the Gardens of Buckinghamshire in June (organized by Peter and Celia Gardner and Kate Beech) as well as on the day trips that have been arranged for 2011 by John and Sue Wildig.

So who's got the coach travel song book, then?

Tony White

HIGH GLANAU MANOR GARDENS

DAY TRIP THURSDAY 2 SEPTEMBER

It takes a woman of high principles to buy a house, rip out a perfectly good outdoor heated swimming pool and reinstate a lawned terrace. But this is symptomatic of the focus and determination with which Helena Gerrish has approached the restoration of High Glanau in Monmouthshire.



‘Arts and Crafts’ gardens and their associated houses are most commonly associated with Gertrude Jekyll and Edwin Lutyens, but there were other equally dedicated exponents of the style. Their houses tend to be comfortable overgrown cottages with steeply descending roofs and oak-panelled interiors with carved wood detailing and secular stained glass. The gardens are of generous size, linear rather than curvaceous, with long borders, paved terraces, pergolas and repeating architectural details like stone balls and urns. Water features are geometric and mannerly. They evoke cocktails on the terrace, croquet, lavish arrangements of fresh-cut garden flowers, neat posy vases and a carafe of fresh water daily replenished at the bedside.

Henry Avray Tipping was one such designer, and scholarly contributor and Architectural Editor to *Country Life* for 30 years, describing the glories of the English (and Welsh and Scottish) country house and garden. He attracted important commissions such as the sunken garden at Chequers and at other houses, many of them in Gwent and the border counties. For his own use he successively occupied three houses in the vicinity of Chepstow, restoring and rebuilding Mathern Palace, Mounton House, and then in 1922 buying a 1500-acre estate at Lydart in order to build High Glanau, at a virgin site of his choosing. The house is perched on a steep escarpment facing west over the lowlands towards the distant Black Mountains. It is in many ways a distillation of all the ideas he had found pleasing in his previous houses, with his signature oak-panelled drawing room, a ribbon parterre flanked by double borders, a pergola, and steep broad steps descending to an octagonal pool centred on the front of the house.



Helena and her husband came to High Glanau in 2002 and have industriously restored the house and gardens to its period style. Hence the swimming pool had to go. In its place the end of the house looks out along a broad level terrace of close-cut grass flanked on either side by generous borders. The whole concept is

informed by the *Country Life* archive of high-quality glass-plate photographs – so clear that plant identifications are no challenge. The borders are once again fronted by *Alchemilla mollis*, hostas (then known as funkias) and geraniums, rising towards the back with sculptural masses of tall daisies, dahlias, rudbeckias and achillea in yellows and whites, and contrasting blues of cardoon, salvia and agapanthus. At the end, the pergola is clothed in white rambler roses and clematis. It is ‘English Country Garden’ personified. Below, steps lead through clipped hedges of *Lonicera nitida* to a second lawned terrace, with a lavender-bordered axial path and stunning views out through the oaks and yews of the woodland garden below.

By today’s standards the house is pretty large, with three gables on the frontage and slate-hung upper walls. Notwithstanding its size and Tipping’s bachelor status, he built a second much smaller adjoining house for his guests. Henry Avray Tipping was born in 1855 and was an Oxford aesthete at the same time as Oscar Wilde. A lifelong bachelor, he was a close friend of the architect Harold Peto and it was on one of their cycling expeditions together that they found Iford Manor near Bradford on Avon, where Peto went on to create his own exquisite garden.

We cannot claim Tipping as a Welshman – he was born in France, at Ville Avray, and it is thus that he acquired his given name. His parents were Quakers of north-country origin but resided in Kent. However, he was obviously drawn to the beauty of Wales and has left here much of his best work. With a champion like Helena Gerrish, whose book on the work of Tipping will be published by Frances Lincoln in 2011, his relative obscurity of recent times will soon be a thing of the past.

Caroline Palmer

NOTE This article appeared recently in *Cambria*, Vol 12 No 3. On our visit (as one of the ‘organised groups’), Helena fitted us all into the panelled drawing room for an illustrated lecture on Tipping (on whom she had been doing a part-time Masters degree at Bristol) – excellent

preparation for a full appreciation of the site. Later we crammed ourselves around tables set up in various rooms for a delicious lunch and took coffee on the terrace, thus having the privilege of experiencing High Glanau Manor as ‘insiders’, as well as enjoying the gardens. [Ed.]



HIGH GLANAU is situated on the B4293 between Monmouth and Chepstow, approximately one mile from Trelleck. Helena Gerrish welcomes organised group visits. helenagerrish@hotmail.co.uk

THE STORY OF MORVILLE HALL

LECTURE by KATHERINE SWIFT on 14 SEPTEMBER

The first lecture of the season was well attended, and it was good to see new members amongst familiar faces. Katherine Swift travelled from her home, the Dower House at Morville Hall, Shropshire, to talk to us about her garden and about *The Morville Hours*, her highly praised book about it.

This was a purely verbal account of how she first came to the Dower House and the subsequent garden she created. The usual slides or Powerpoint presentation could well have been a distraction, I think. Most of us would agree that we were spellbound at times, listening as she talked about her life and read passages from her book.

When Katherine Swift was keeper of rare books at Trinity College, University of Dublin, she used to commute to her home in Oxford at weekends. Her husband would meet her at Heathrow Airport armed with piles of property details and photographs to entice her to come home. One property stood out from all the rest

and without actually seeing it they took out a 20-year lease on the Dower House at Morville Hall, owned by the National Trust.

Katherine described how, driving home at Christmas, she realized that she was quite close to the Hall and still hadn't actually seen it in the flesh. Deciding to take a look, she parked the car. It was a very dark night and, having no torch, she slowly walked down the drive. When suddenly she saw the house, it was an evocative moment. She hadn't realized that there was a church beside the house, and then the clock began to strike.

This was to be her home and also where she was to create her first garden. It was a blank canvas – in fact, a 1.5-acre field which the local farmer leveled for her. A year after taking out the lease she planted 1,000 feet of yew hedging. These hedges are now 2.5 metres tall, giving the garden an air of mystery and surprise.

She told us how she researched the history of the Hall. Benedictine monks lived there in 1138 and every three hours, day and night, they stopped whatever they were doing to pray. This gave Katherine the idea for the book, with each chapter named after one of the Hours of the Divine Office and recounting an hour in the life of the garden throughout the seasons. As she researched the different historical periods of the house, from the Benedictines through the reign of Elizabeth I, the Civil War, the Georgians and Victorians, then up to the period just after the First World War, she was adding new chapters to her book.

Each year new plans were made and another section of the garden created. Then she had to source the correct plants for the different historical periods. Fortunately the RHS Plant Finder had just been published, which saved an enormous amount of time.

Katherine wrote and talked about her parents. Her father was a great influence on her. He was constantly on the move in his job as a Unitarian preacher, with numerous houses and gardens, eventually moving to Shropshire. Katherine wove her parents' lives into her book.

Katherine did eventually secure another 20-year lease on the Dower House and garden, but the National Trust have said that when she departs they may have to put a bulldozer through the

garden because of maintenance issues. There were quite a few gasps from the audience on hearing this news.

I read this book and enjoyed it, and am happy to know that CHS will be visiting the garden soon on a day trip.

I also enjoyed this lecture. Katherine Swift is both a writer who gardens and a gardener who writes.

Barbara White

CHS AUTUMN TRIP TO ANGLESEY TUESDAY 5 TO THURSDAY 7 OCTOBER 2010

Plas Newydd House

We walked through the large park down to the house, which sits at the edge of the Menai Strait. The views of the mountains of North Wales and of Telford's Waterloo Bridge are stunningly beautiful. Our guide, new to his task, gave a brief history of the family and estate which can be traced back to the 15th century. The Griffiths were a very powerful family connected to the court of Henry VII. Their descendant, Ellen, married Sir Nicholas Bagenal, and a granddaughter, Anne, married into the Bailey family. A later marriage brought the Beaudesert estate in Staffordshire into the family possession, and the family then divided their time between the two estates.

Our guide took us to the foot of the stairs and threw open a door saying, 'This is the entrance to the private apartments!' A very startled Marquess looked up from his book to see 20 gardeners staring at him, and rapidly disappeared. We then ascended a very grand staircase, admiring the family pictures. As we paused at the top a concealed door in the wall opened and a lady announced: 'Please don't be alarmed by the smell of smoke – I have just set the microwave alight but the fire is now extinguished: all is well.' This, we assumed, was the Marchioness.

Our tour continued through a beautiful bedroom, downstairs to the Octagonal Sitting Room and into the Saloon with its many pictures, sculptures and photographs of the royal family. Our guide mentioned that King George and Queen Mary had been visitors,

and then a firm voice said, ‘Excuse me, Her Majesty actually came alone.’ The Marchioness smiled, nodded to us and disappeared through the doors. Our guide continued undaunted through the Breakfast Room, which contained several seascapes of quality, then we went into a room where Rex Whistler’s work was exhibited, together with sketches and studies of stage sets for the 5th Marquess. There were also loveletters to the daughters of the house, for whom he had an unrequited love.

Whistler stayed in the house sketching outlines for the great painting he planned for the Dining Room at the request of the 6th Marquess. His amazing mural dominates the long room. We spent a long time hearing the guide explain how the 58-foot canvas had to be specially woven in France, was painted in a theatre workshop in Lambeth in late 1937, transported to Plas Newydd and then fixed to the wall, with finishing touches added in the following August. His final bill was for £1000.

We were fascinated to learn about the turbulent life of the 1st Marquess of Anglesey, father of 18 children by two wives, who became the brother-in-law of the Duke of Wellington and was second in command at the Battle of Waterloo, where he lost his leg. He had a reputation as a master commander of cavalry. We also learned about the eccentric 5th Marquess whose incredible extravagance and love of jewelry bankrupted the estate, so that Beaudesert had to be sold to cover the debts.

The family have always supported the arts, While we were there we saw an exhibition of collage by Josie Russell, and discovered that Kyffin Williams had stayed in a cottage on the estate.

We all enjoyed the opportunity to view this splendid house, still lived in by the family and maintained by the National Trust.

Joan Russell

Plas Newydd Garden

The wonderful view over Snowdonia and the Menai Strait is the first impression gained when visiting the splendid family home of the 7th Marquess of Anglesey. There was criticism by Humphry Repton, the famous landscape designer, of those who transformed

the house of Plas Newydd in the last years of the 18th century. He felt they had grubbed out shrubs and trees, thereby losing many features and opening the grounds to the searing Anglesey winds. His prescription contained in a Red Book of 1798–9 was for screen plantations to provide protection and to enhance the approach to the house.

This is roughly the layout of today, though the naturalised woodlands were enhanced after the First World War with Scots fir and cypress. The 6th Marquess of Anglesey developed the gardens towards the south-west of the lawn with spring-flowering trees and shrubs and the 7th Marquess has added greatly to this area with large hydrangea beds. One had the feeling that many of the shrubs were overgrown. Efforts were being made to replant but the vistas had gone. It is a great problem in a mature shrubbery to decide what should go and what should be kept.

In 1977 an unproductive orchard was grubbed out and eucalyptus and a grove of southern beech planted in its place. There is now an area called the cathedral with huge specimens of various types of eucalyptus that is impressive.

Stretching three quarters of a mile to the north along the shoreline is Lady Uxbridge's Walk that now links the house to the Rhododendron Garden. There is a nice story concerning this garden started in 1937 with Himalayan species and occupying five acres. In 1948 Lord Aberconway sent a wedding present of rhododendrons to the Marquess. Each spring for three years thereafter, a lorry loaded with rhodos from nearby Bodnant would arrive at Plas Newydd with two men to plant them. This has resulted in a splendid spring display.

When CHS visited we were shown round by Simon, who has worked in the garden since 1992, and accompanying him was the newly appointed head gardener, Paul O'Bryan, who is a landscape specialist. We visited the Terrace Garden first and discussed how this could be given more interest. The conservatory situated at the top terrace was demolished in the 1920s and certainly it would make a focal point if it were to be rebuilt. The terraces lack impact, though a vista down to the Strait would greatly enhance the garden.

Vibrant herbaceous borders and the introduction of rare ferns in the shady area are all features that are being considered. One feels that there will be new landscaping of this area in the next few years to provide summer and autumn interest.

We encouraged the head gardener to reinstate the borders on either side of the pedestrian pathway leading to the house from the car park. It had been a rose garden some years ago but apparently this did not work, though the layout is still apparent on the ground.

There is huge opportunity to revitalise this historic garden and park which has been lovingly tended by the Anglesey family for long years past and owned in part by the National Trust now.

Joy Neal

Wednesday 6th:

Plas Cadnant

As a young agricultural undergraduate in Bangor more years ago than he cares to remember, John found that Ynys Mon had many hidden treasures, so he was eager to experience the delights of the island again. On the first day we had enjoyed the pleasures of Plas Newydd – within the constraints that any important National Trust property has to operate. But it was with a tingle of excitement that we approached Plas Cadnant, where Helena Attlee, author of *Discovering Welsh Gardens*, goes to town on what has been achieved. That tingle grew as we left the main road and headed into some beautiful countryside before arriving at Plas Cadnant, to be warmly welcomed by the owner, Anthony Tavernor, and led into one of the restored farm buildings.

Here we watched a short video which paid ample testament to his work. Plas Cadnant is essentially a Georgian house (1803) built in a Picturesque setting. When Anthony Tavernor bought the property in 1996 it was in a terribly run down and neglected state, although some repair work had been done many years before. Since then he has created a 21st-century use for the redundant farm buildings by converting them into high-quality holiday lets, and has restored and developed the gardens virtually single-handed.

After the video, we moved out to the front of the house where a superb view across the Menai Strait to Bangor and the Carneddi could be enjoyed as a starter. The party then split into three, as two of his occasional helpers were on hand. We both joined Anthony's group. Besides attractive planting near the holiday cottages, including a neat herb garden, the gardens of Plas Cadnant basically divide into distinct parts – the huge walled garden, and extensive woodland gardens deep in a steep-sided valley, which have turned out to harbour some particularly Picturesque features.



Like all walled gardens in the past, the two-acre area set into the broad curve of a valley slope was once a powerhouse of food production. Some 70 years ago the very bottom area around the pond was still being maintained, but the rest was derelict. Today it is very different, laid out purely for ornament with herbaceous borders along the south and north margins. Border planting is quite contrasting, in Gertrude Jekyll style, and matching arbours are being planned for both faces. Catenary curves are very much a feature of the Telford Bridge bringing the A5 to the island, and these shapes have been used for the planting of the north-facing border. The clipped yews flanking the central path down the now very open main central area are obelisks in the Repton tradition.

Below, where the valley steepens increasingly sharply down to the stream, there is very much a Cornish feel to the woodland

gardens – one could easily think oneself in the lost gardens of Heligan or at Trebah. Valley gardens like these usually had laurel planted round them for shelter, and when maintenance was subsequently lacking, it usually spread out of control. When Anthony Tavernor took over everything was hugely overgrown and the river at the bottom was heard but not seen. With the aid of much chainsawing and relaying of paths, the upper part of the woodland garden has been opened up just in the last few years. The results here are truly dramatic, with a great amount of planting for spring colour as well as all-year-round effects – persicarias being particularly notable to give effect en masse.



By contrast, with more shade, the lower part has not been planted for colour, but still has much of interest and is a joy to explore. John's active involvement with the Picturesque at Hafod led us to approach this area with great interest. This part of the garden was particularly exciting and restoration is ongoing, but use of the chainsaw has had dramatic effects and a wonderful Picturesque landscape hidden for generations is having new life restored to it with the river, waterfalls, rocks and viewpoints opened up. We noted that in the early 20th century there are records of a watermill with pool down there.

Most of the huge amount of work has been done by Tavernor himself. His approach is to tackle the major clearance projects

during the winter months and to concentrate on maintaining the gardens in the summer.

Our visit was over far too soon and after tea, coffee, cakes and conversations, our party proceeded, somewhat ‘gob-smacked’, to enjoy an afternoon at the far less exciting Penrhyn Castle, while hoping that Anthony Tavernor had laid the foundations for this wonderful Welsh garden to continue to thrive for many, many years and provide an insight into the glories of the Picturesque.

John and Sue Wildig

Penrhyn Castle Garden



Penrhyn Castle is a forbidding 19th-century castle set in a spectacular park overlooking the Irish Sea and the Anglesey shore. It is the perfect foil for the autumn colour of the *Parthenocissus tricuspidata* which clings to its sheer walls and gloomy towers, blood-red at the time of our visit. Its detractors might draw the analogy with the blood of the 700-odd slaves who laboured on the Pennant estates in Jamaica, or of the Welsh labourers in his vast slate quarry. The wealthy get the best deals. Even the abolition of the slave trade brought benefits to George Hay Dawkins Pennant. A government handout of £14,683 came his way in 1832 by way of compensation for his losses through their freedom – the equivalent of £11 million today.

Philip Ellis had arranged for a tour of the gardens with the head gardener, but in the event he was unavailable and the second gardener, Phil Makin, was deputed to show us round. He was a

cheerful soul, not wholly confident of his plant names, and we had some animated discussions over the affinities of some of the more unusual shrubs.

Like most visitors we first made our way to the walled garden, within which Lady Sybil had been responsible for the layout of a formal garden in the 1920s. At the top of the garden is a stone pillared arcade well wound with climbing roses, which replaces a former orangery, and there are three formal concrete-edged lily pools set in a box-edged rose garden. The pools have period gravity-fed fountains, one a diverging spray from a metal pole



standing upright in a pile of random rubble, another a mere piddle arcing up 9 inches or so before dropping back into an indented cushion of moss. The trees and shrubs along the top wall of the garden are varied and outstanding. Unusual Chilean introductions include the camphor-fragrant leaves of *Peumus boldus* and a hardy climber, *Mutisia ilicifolia*, which has daisy flowers like an osteospermum and seed heads like dandelion clocks. Among the specimen trees on the slope below the giant *Eucryphia cordifolia* was in bloom, a huge columnar tree speckled from top to bottom with white buttercup blooms. We racked our brains to name other autumn trees: a big sophora with deeply creviced bark, a catalpa, *Sciadopitys umbellata*, magnolias, pieris and clerodendron.

Beyond the garden is a swampy area, deep in the giant leaves of gunnera and presided over by fine swamp cypresses, Caucasian

wingnut and Chinese necklace poplar. I last visited in 2008, when the thatched timber belvedere which stands on stilts above the foliage had been charred to a crisp by vandals. It is now restored and weathered as if the incident had never occurred.

We then skirted within the perimeter of the present garden, across The Dell, looking out over the ancient oak remnants of a fine avenue in the farmland. Within the woodland we saw new planting of evergreen shrubs, unspotted aucuba and choisya destined to create a lush understorey to the native trees. A grass broadwalk then led us back upslope to the round and square towers of this most ostentatious of bogus castles.

Caroline Palmer

Thursday 7th:

Bodnant Garden

Few of us had seen Bodnant Garden in autumn, and all of us were eager to find out whether we felt the recent attentions to this over-mature garden had improved it. First, however, I checked the Garden Centre for items on my wish list, and was disappointed to find the plant stock already depleted in favour of Christmas decorations. This was the first of several reminders that it is only the garden that belongs to the National Trust, all other amenities remaining the property of the McLaren estate.

The garden itself did not disappoint. First it offered up a rare treat: the spectacle of two gardeners working with straps and spades, winch and guy ropes to relocate a Loderi rhododendron as part of the redesign of its bed. This was the middle phase of an operation that could not be completed until the next morning, when the ropes would have to be strung across the path we were walking.

Near the entrance I admired an everlasting pea flowing down the wall behind a Lutyens bench, then ambled in the sunshine along the border to the Top Lawn enjoying the tawny shades of rudbeckia against the plum purple of cotinus. The Round Garden was already showing seedheads, while just beyond it several tall lilies raised their white heads in startling contrast to the orange-red foliage of *Cercidiphyllum japonicum*.

Crossing the front lawn, with a glance up at the private terrace and the frontage of the Hall, I passed a bed in which an elderly *Pieris formosa forrestii* had been severely cut down and was already throwing up a wealth of new young shoots. The oval sunken garden and pool was an oasis of calm, its narrow borders displaying *Salvia greggii*, *S. microphylla* ‘Cerro Potosi’ (both deep pink) and *S.g. x serpillifolia* (rich blue) in their prime.

From here I made my way to the Lily Terrace, so named for the large lily pond at its centre, the middle of the three that form the best-known aspect of the garden. With the Croquet Terrace at my back I gazed out over the Canal Terrace and could just distinguish the blue hills beyond. From this position I had the Atlantic cedar to my right and the cedar of Lebanon to my left; I turned right to admire the waxy white blooms of *Schima argentea* (which we at first took for a eucryphia) reaching just above the high back wall of its border, and the striking effect of *Liriope muscari* edging the path. As I turned the corner it became apparent that the blue cedar had had several branches removed on this side; more light penetrated to ground level and as I walked past this aged tree (planted 1875) I could see it in relation to the suite of terraces that had been designed around it and its fellow across the pond.

Leaving the Croquet and Rose Terraces for later, I made my way down past the Canal Terrace where long borders filled with asters paralleled the stretch of water leading to the Pin Mill, then downhill past the Rock Garden to the Old Mill. Here I passed red-berried *Skimmia japonica* and paused on the stone bridge to watch Hiraethlyn river flowing in full spate. On the far side, against the end wall of an outhouse, *Cercis canadensis* ‘Forest Pansy’ showed shades from deep red through to an orangey pink. I walked upstream through the Dell on the further side of the river, where clearance of *Rhododendron ponticum* and common azaleas has opened up glades to give good views of Bodnant’s fine specimen trees, notably *Sequoia sempervirens*, the recently rediscovered *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* and the graceful *Tsuga heterophylla*.

Crossing the wooden bridge over the waterfall I could see ahead of me the tributary stream that flows down the steep and rocky

hillside into the mill pond and that I knew to have been the subject of much recent clearance. To honour this I took the path alongside it, enjoying a striking turquoise-blue hydrangea on its bank, and doubled back past The Poem (mausoleum). Now I had the river below me on my left, with vistas through the several layers of planting down the steep slope to the valley floor. The Yew Garden afforded a particularly good viewpoint. On either side of the path ran the Shrub Borders, also showing much evidence of the chainsaw and of encouraging new growth. I especially enjoyed an elegant *Aralia elata* still in flower and a tall *Cornus kousa* whose fruits showed red against a deep blue sky. Bulbs and herbaceous perennials are intended to enrich these borders in years to come.

Back at the terraces, I made my way up past the Croquet Terrace to the Upper Rose Terrace; here major construction work was in progress to extend the beds and render the terrace perfectly symmetrical. Crossing the front lawn again I made sure to revisit the borders where asters were receiving the attentions of bees and red admirals. Along with the cornus fruits and brilliant leaf colour, this image was fast fixing itself in my mind to epitomise Bodnant in autumn as the Laburnum Arch, the rhododendrons, camellias and azaleas do in spring. I was in good spirits, and as if to reinforce my mood, I learned at the Garden Centre checkout that next year they will be selling asters grown in the garden.

Georgina Winkley



Maenan Hall

It is always an anxious moment when searching for an unmarked drive somewhere in farmland off the main road. Maenan Hall's owner, Christopher McLaren, said his gardeners would be waiting for us: and they were. Well back from the main road were rather splendid gate posts with griffins perched on top, guarding the drive and giving an

element of secrecy to the property. As we walked up the long drive we admired a splendid pollarded oak with a huge girth which may have been used for construction of the hall.

We continued up past the hall and through some parkland to climb a round tower, probably a folly from the 18th century. We all seemed to fit on the roof, were we enjoyed the spectacular view across the Conwy valley.



The gardens consisted of spacious grassed areas dotted with trees and shrubs, a walled garden with extensive rose beds, and a large informal garden at the bottom of the drive. The two gardeners, Philip John and Debbie Hemmings, explained that the stressed condition of some of the trees and shrubs was due to the previous head gardener's shortcomings. Apparently he never prepared the ground before planting and they had found some stunted specimens planted on top of old paved paths with nowhere for their roots. The benefit of starving these poor trees was some lovely early autumn colour. There were fine specimens: particularly *Nyssa sinensis* turning orange and an amazing tree with leaves turned deep red and racemes of white flowers out together, obligingly boasting a label as *Oxydendrum arboreum*, a native of SE United States.

The Dell was an extensively planted area at the bottom of the

drive. Wet areas had well grown swamp cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) and hydrangeas. On drier land were rhododendrons,



camellias, acers and a cercidiphyllum that was turning pale yellow and performing its autumn trick of smelling of burnt sugar. There was a section of cliffs along one side with a path along the top looking down on the camellias. The gardeners thought we really should come back in spring to see these areas at their best. Nevertheless the clear and sunny day showed splashes of autumn colour and the garden well mown and tended for a well timed visit.

Philip Ellis.

PLANTS & OTHER CURIOSITIES IN ITALIAN RENAISSANCE & BAROQUE GARDENS

LECTURE by HELENA ATTLEE on 12 OCTOBER

Helena Attlee quoted Edith Wharton's 1904 concept (that the Renaissance garden was designed as a peaceful green haven) as a ubiquitous misconception. They were not universally green and, furthermore, her nostalgic evocation of what actually went on in them was far from peaceful. She asked us to imagine the typical Renaissance garden as a sculpture gallery, laboratory, theatre, dining-room and museum. Used for banquets, plays, concerts and games, the gardens were planted and plumbed to amaze, mystify, impress – and it has to be said, to often comprehensively drench the unsuspecting visitor.

The latter was in the pursuit of what Ms Attlee called ‘light-hearted amusement’, her descriptions of which bore distinct resemblance to Saturday night in a university town. There was the poly-priapic pool of Villa Mondragone, with prone copper-topped leathern hosepipes that unexpectedly rose, filled with water. Charles de Brosses in the mid 18th century recounted frolicking in the pool with his travelling companions, before repairing to the Villa Aldobrandini after changing their clothes. Here they again indulged in aqueous high jinks after failing to notice ‘a hundred treacherous little jets’ of water concealed in the stonework of a flight of steps that turned into a cascade – rendering themselves miserably short of dry clothes and having to eat a ‘vile supper’ in their dressing-gowns. At least they had something to eat: contemporaneous accounts of Flavo Chiggi’s mysterious nocturnal banquet at Quattro Fontane near Rome left his guests thirsty and hungry. However Ms Attlee deemed them entirely satisfied with being tantalised by a sumptuous spun-sugar banquet dissolving in front of their eyes and exquisitely laid tables that disappeared in a clap of thunder and a cloud of confetti and rosewater. I couldn’t help wondering whether Chiggi had dared to ask the A-list. Would it be foolish to treat a Medici so? In addition to the notorious side of their culinary skills, the Medicis boasted a fine ‘birding’ garden, where mist-nets caught song-birds ready for guests to skip about plucking them for the pot. Their contributions to guest-impressing also included a sea battle fought in their flooded palace courtyard.

Francesco Barberini would not only have impressed, but also inspired his contemporaries who were likewise immersed in botanic science. Among those whom he welcomed into the more sequestered parts of Orto Barberini was Giovanni Battista Ferrari, whose horticultural work *Flora de florum cultura* (1633) Barberini patronised. The seven-volume *Flora* covered every aspect of gardening: including how to manipulate colour and scent in flowers, how to make crinkly petals and even the desired characteristics for a garden guard dog: ‘viligant, sinewy, robust, a dog with no time for strangers and no ear for flattery.’ There was a

real necessity for guarding costly plants from all over the known world that included yucca, jasmines, hibiscus, acacia and papyrus.

Ferrari also delineated and described Francesco Caetani's international bulb and tuber collection at Cisterna, which amounted to thousands of species and varieties of anemones and tulips. His colour-schemed floral tapestries and carpets would have indeed enlivened the green backdrop of what remains of Renaissance gardens. Here it was easy to share Ms Attlee's nostalgia for the original Renaissance garden and its purpose – and one longed to know how two thousand anemone varieties differed. Otherwise an attractive proposition is a low-season sojourn in Italy to enjoy exactly what Edith Wharton saw in Renaissance gardens: peaceful green places with no sodden surprises.

Edwina Ellis

ISFRYN DAY LILIES

LECTURE by SYLVIA BROWN on 9 NOVEMBER

This lecture had something for everyone: cultural instructions for those passionate about growing day lilies, botanical history for the scientifically minded and a sequence of enchanting pictures for the rest of us. Isfryn Nursery is a family affair that grew from a hobby and now consumes Sylvia, her daughter and grand-daughter, each of whom had a role in the evening's presentation.

Day lilies, or *hemerocallis*, first appeared in literature in AD304 and were named for their beauty as well as the lifespan of their individual flowers. In fact they are not true lilies and their flowers can last more than a day – but the name has stuck. They originate from China, Japan, Korea and Eastern Siberia, where their habitats include mountains, forest margins, plains and river valleys.

The parents of the many hybrids we know today were *HH. fulva*, tawny orange, naturalised in the USA; and *lilioasphodelus*, the lemon or custard lily, which can be seen growing in drifts among grasses at the National Botanic Garden of Wales. The acknowledged 'father of the modern-day lily' was Dr Arlow Burdette Stout, whose work at the New York Botanic Garden from

1811 also gave us the modern avocado and the seedless grape; he began a process of hybridisation that led to 40,000 cultivars by 2009. A mere year later there are 70,000, ranging from 10in to nearly 7ft and highly diverse in flower shape and colour; not all thrive outside the USA, but even so we are spoiled for choice.

The fancier new day lilies thrive in full sun, while older varieties like a little light shade at midday; this is also advisable for red flowers, whose colour is leached by strong sunlight. They should not be planted under trees, but sit well at the edge of a shrub border. They show well planted in drifts near water, or in an herbaceous border where you can play with associations, e.g. the tall spider varieties with *Verbena bonariensis*.

Day lilies will tolerate any soil, wet or dry, needing only a little TLC in their first year. Never cover the crown with more than an inch of soil. They establish quickly, are hardy – some survived 20°C last winter – and undemanding: spent blooms do not hang on the plant, needing removing only if they happen to fall on a bud. Each plant blooms for 30 to 40 days, and the use of three or four varieties can provide flowers from June through to the end of September. Once the foliage dominates a clump, it should be divided. Sylvia likes to use a pruning saw and to do the job in autumn to settle new plants for spring.

The recent explosion in hybridisation suggests that once you begin growing day lilies, you will soon itch to pick up a paintbrush and start cross-pollinating for features you like. Sylvia emphasised that you have to take a chance on the outcome; only the species come true from seed. Support is available from the British Hosta and Hemerocallis Society, www.hostahem.org.uk, or you could consult Sylvia herself on www.isfryndaylilies.co.uk. Their stand at the Royal Welsh Show took a silver medal in 2009, silver gilt in 2010. Be there in 2011 and you might catch them gloating over a gold!

Georgina Winkley

BODNANT

LECTURE by TROY SCOTT SMITH on 14 DECEMBER

The impulse is always to say ‘yes’ at a committee meeting when the chairman asks you if you would be willing to report on a talk for *Spadework*. I agreed to do the December meeting which, when Graham Rankin cancelled, turned out to be head gardener Troy Scott Smith talking on the gardens at Bodnant. Along with many CHS members, I have visited Bodnant on a number of occasions over the years, most recently on the CHS autumn tour in 2010. [See *Georgina Winkley’s article on page 14 –Ed.*] I thus expected a ‘run of the mill’ talk about a garden that I knew quite well, but how wrong I was. It turned out to be one of the best talks I have attended in recent years.

Troy Scott Smith was a competent and capable speaker, clear and concise, and his overview of a garden which he clearly loves deeply was outstanding. He began with a brief history of the garden and pictures of its superb setting in north Wales, close to the coast and overlooking the Conwy valley. Then he elaborated on the lives of those who shaped the garden, the foremost of whom was Henry David Pochin, a successful industrial chemist who purchased the estate in 1874. We saw photographs of the early formal garden close to the house as it was before alterations began. In the early days the area around the house was altered and a company was brought in to develop a new layout, including building the famous laburnum arch in 1888. However, Henry Pochin soon began to develop the garden into the wider landscape, which extends to 80 acres. All his gardening was done with an eye to future and with great gusto. From his extensive tree planting in the dell, the estate now has 25 of the UK’s champion trees.

The garden has evolved with a clear family line from Laura, daughter of Henry Pochin and wife of the first Lord Aberconwy to Henry and Charles McLaren, both of them renowned gardeners who served as president of the Royal Horticultural Society and supported plant hunters who brought back many species new to British gardens. Thus Bodnant is a great plantsman’s garden and now houses National Collections of eucryphias, magnolias and

embothriums. Troy Scott Smith is a great admirer of Henry McLaren, describing him as a designer whose end results, though revolutionary, seem effortless – as illustrated by the planting in the valley, where tall specimen trees soar from manicured lawns. It was Henry McLaren, too, who in the early 1900s laid out the dramatic terraces for which Bodnant is famed. Michael McLaren, who now manages Bodnant for the National Trust, is continuing in this fine family tradition.

The talk was remarkable for giving an insight into the massive scale of the maintenance and development of the garden. The lawn, freely walked on by so many visitors, costs £3,000 a year to maintain – involving scarifying, hollow-tining and top-dressing with 120 tons of material. On the river, a trap designed to prevent silt from entering the ponds is dredged of 1,500 tons of silt each year. In areas around some of the large trees a compressor has been used to aerate the soil and top-dressing applied. In 2006 the plants in the rose terrace were removed, 110 tons of fresh soil brought in, and the beds replanted with David Austin roses.

Great time and care are being given to new developments, designs and planting in the garden; the parterre garden as a case in point was taken back to its basic structure and looked at for almost a year before the new design, with a fountain, was put in place, featuring tulips, replaced by arctotis for 2010. There are plans to recreate the Panjerric walk, lined by white rhododendrons much loved by Henry McLaren, and on the Lily Terrace which boasts the two large cedar trees the large pond has been relined. Volunteers are now most welcome at Bodnant and have enabled these new projects to be tackled: last autumn we saw a dedicated group repainting the lengthy and complex pergolas.

The garden was donated to the National Trust in 1949 but the family has retained a guiding hand and this is apparent in the ideas now being brought to fruition by Troy Scott Smith, Michael McLaren and Lady Aberconwy. Most assuredly a garden to visit again and again.

Sue Wildig

PLANT DNA & THE MYSTERIES OF BEE BEHAVIOUR

LECTURE by PROF. MIKE WILKINSON on 11 JANUARY

When I decided to take on the writing up of this lecture I didn't expect it to be easy, and it wasn't. I'm not a scientist but I am interested in science, and Professor Mike Wilkinson of the Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences here at Aberystwyth delivered to us a well-pitched lecture. Mike presented us with a series of maps, graphs and illustrations of the historical, current and projected effects of humans on the global environment, and suggested that a better understanding of plant resources was a key to survival, especially when faced with global warming and human population growth.

The challenges future generations will or may encounter led us into the research he and others are involved with, that of plant DNA barcoding. Animal barcoding has been in use for a decade, but plants proved far more difficult. (Unlike the animal/human population, plants sometimes pollinate themselves.) Mike informed us on the difficulties of which part of the plant material to use for DNA barcoding. Eventually it was found that by sequencing genes from two areas of plant DNA, individual species could be identified, and progress could be made. Mike showed a case study for the prediction of changes to the pollinator service of ecosystems for human benefits on selected areas of grassland here in Ceredigion. The study, 'Pollinator Service in the Wild', monitored three 'rhos' pastures to try to determine which of their wild flowers are visited by which bumble bees. The bees presented their own set of challenges for the scientists. How to identify individuals and how to observe their movements was something that you could not do visually. The use of dyes, radio microscopes or radio tagging were all either inappropriate or vastly expensive. Genetic analysis became the solution, enabling the scientists to determine which type and gender of bee harvested which plant pollen and when.

This work is a collaboration of Aberystwyth University IBERS, the National Museum of Wales and the National Botanic Garden of Wales. There were numerous questions put to Mike after his presentation. The one that I particularly remember was ‘How *do* you sex a bee?’

Tony White

NOTE Rhos pastures are flower-rich grasslands containing a mixture of heathland and purple moor grass vegetation and providing a valuable habitat for endangered species of wildlife such as the marsh fritillary butterfly. Modern farming practices – including neglect, which allows the growth of scrub – have put this habitat increasingly at risk. The term, which ecologists now apply in other parts of Britain, derives from the Welsh *rhos*, meaning ‘heath’, and this is a habitat in which Ceredigion is well represented.

Mike explained that thanks to this collaboration Wales hopes to be the first nation to complete the DNA barcoding of all of our species of flowering plants – 1.143 of them – and to use this information as a basis for further investigation into plant behaviour. It is exciting to find that Ceredigion has played a major part in this research. The three ‘rhos’ pastures monitored in the pollinator study were Glandenys, Fullbrook and Glyn yr Helyg – the latter two both classified among Ceredigion’s Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).

The colourful pie-charts from the study showed considerable seasonal variation as well as surprisingly different preferences in the tastes of male and female bees – various *Bombus* species, whose similarities can confuse even the experts. And at this point we gardeners even encountered some actual plant names, albeit Latin ones: not all of us could remember, for instance, that the bee-favoured *Rhinanthus* is yellow rattle and the *Succisa* species he mentioned is devil’s bit scabious.

[Ed.]

THE MAGIC OF ROSES

LECTURE by GARETH DAVIES on 8 FEBRUARY

All those who attended this talk must feel very much more confident about the roses in their gardens. Gareth’s obsession with roses started in the early 1960s, when he joined the Rhondda Rose Society, and the Hybrid Teas have always been his favourites.

Here in Ceredigion conditions are rather acid, so it is extremely important to form a moisture-holding soil with a pH of 6 to 7. Gareth improves his soil with good farmyard manure and raises the pH by adding calcified seaweed: 4 ounces per square metre of border raises the pH by one, and lasts for several years.

Buy bare-rooted roses in February and look for sturdy growth with 2 to 4 shoots; thereafter, buy container roses (which are slightly more expensive). Recommended firms are C. & K. Jones, Austins and Friars of Knutsford. When planting, make a generous hole, and sprinkle in blood, fish and bone – remembering that it is the fine fibrous roots that create growth and absorb water. The budding tip where the graft is should be ½ inch below the ground.

Climbers should be pruned in January or February. As new growth becomes apparent, bend over and tie in their shoots. Floribundas should be pruned at the beginning of March. Cut out dead wood and open up the centre of the bush, pruning down from about 4 feet to 18 inches. Use sharp secateurs and not a hedge trimmer. Then continue with Hybrid Teas, which can be cut right down to 4 inches without detracting from this year's flowers, but remembering that they are greedy feeders. Single-flowering ramblers should be pruned after flowering, as they bloom on the current year's growth.

To contain black spot Gareth uses a chemical spray once a month from April onwards. He recommends Dithane 945.

He showed us slides of exhibits at Chelsea and other flower shows, as well as of many different types of rose. The slides covered many well-known gardens such as Austins, Mottisfont, Sudeley Castle, Abbey Garden at Malmesbury, Wisley, RHS Rosemoor, St Alban's and Powis Castle, and also some commercial rose fields.

Assisted by his wife Eirona, Gareth gave us an absorbing talk and convinced us that the flower we love the best of all is well worth growing. The following list contains the selected varieties of roses he recommends from his long experience in this field.

Joy Neal

HYBRID TEAS

Elina — lemon
Ingrid Bergmann — deep red
Just Joey — coppery orange
Loving Memory — deep crimson
Rosemary Harkness — orange-yellow,
salmon blends
Royal William — deep crimson
Silver Anniversary — white
Silver Jubilee — salmon-pink
Troika — orange-bronze, shaded red
Warm Wishes — peach-coral

FLORIBUNDAS

Amber Queen — amber-yellow
Champagne Moment — cream, apricot
flush
Fellowship — deep orange
Iceberg — white
Keep in Touch — deep red
Matangi — vermilion & silver
Pretty Lady — peach-pink
Tango — orange-scarlet, yellow eye
The Times — blood-red
Trumpeter — bright vermilion
Valentine Heart — pink

PATIO ROSES

Anna Ford — orange-red, yellow eye
Boy's Brigade — red, cream eye
Cider Cup — deep apricot
Pink Tiara — light pink
Pretty Polly — pale pink
Queen Mother — pink
Raspberry Royale — red
Regensberg — deep pink & silver
Sweet Dreams — apricot

SHRUBS

Bonica — pink
Charles Notcutt — red
Penelope — creamy-pink
Sally Holmes — creamy-white/ pink
The Fairy — light pink

CLIMBERS

Compassion — pink, apricot shades
Dortmund — red, white eye
Dublin Bay — deep red
Handel — cream, edged rosy pink
New Dawn — pale pearl-pink
Summer Wine — coral-pink

MINIATURE CLIMBERS

Laura Ford — yellow
Nice Day — pale salmon
Open Arms — shell-pink
Warm Welcome — orange-vermilion

RAMBLERS

American Pillar — red, white eye
Rambling Rector — white
Wedding Day — white

ENGLISH ROSES

Brother Cadfael — pink
Generous Gardener — pale pink
Gertrude Jekyll — pink
Golden Celebration — golden yellow
Graham Thomas — deep yellow
L D Braithwaite — red
Teasing Georgia — rich yellow

GROUND COVER

Avon — white
Flower Carpet — pink
Hertfordshire — carmine-pink
Pheasant — rose-pink
Suffolk — deep red, white eye
Surrey — light pink

OLD GARDEN ROSES

Comte de Chambord — pink
Ferdinand Pichard — pink, crimson &
purple stripes
Madame Hardy — white
Rosa gallica officinalis — light
crimson
Tuscany Superb — deep crimson

ADDITIONS TO THE CHS LIBRARY

In December, Thomas and June Murton kindly donated to the library a number of books which had belonged to a relative, a keen gardener and student of the RHS at Kew. These books have now been listed and are available to members. There are a number of classics of gardening literature, by authors who will be well known to many CHS members, and they cover a wide range of topics.

With this wonderful addition our library now has books ranging from those on general gardening to *An Introduction to Plant Taxonomy* via *The 3,000 Mile Garden* and *By Pen and by Spade* through *Ground Force* and *Gardener's World* to *The Seeds of Wisdom*. There are books on a wide range of plants for the garden from alpines to saxifrages, on many types of garden – dry, scented, damp, English, herb, even well-tempered – what more could one ask? There are books for those wishing to grow vegetables, plan a garden, bask in the delights of gardens of the past or have a riot of containers in the height of the summer. We have long had a good range of the RHS handbooks, so I hope everyone will feel free to take advantage of our own CHS library.

With John's help at our February meeting, I moved the library table nearer to the doorway of A6 so that members coming to the meeting could have more opportunity to browse, and we intend to continue so doing so that more members will be able to take advantage of our special resource.

Sue Wildig



PREVIEW OF SUMMER OUTINGS 2011

Taking over a new job is never easy but we've had a considerable amount of feedback from members about their aspirations for summer visits and have taken these into account in planning the outings. We hope you will like the 2011 programme and, most importantly, support it. There are some changes to what has become the norm. Please bear in mind that costs – especially transport – are estimates based on the numbers taking part. If a trip does not get fully booked, the cost of the coach will increase accordingly, particularly in view of rising fuel prices. We have added extra details such as whose coach we are travelling in: members can sometimes board the coach closer to home if they live en route to Aberystwyth. And rest assured that strategically located loo stops have been worked into the schedule! Post codes provided for 'own transport' visits enable drivers with SatNav to find their way easily.



A number of people asked for gardens closer to Aberystwyth and we also felt that in the past our outings had not fully recognised the glory of gardens in early spring. So our **Outing number 1** is both early and local: you can't get closer to Aber than **Plas Crugiau**, betwixt Southgate and Rhydyfelin. Many of you will have known Arthur Newman as the owner of the Garden Centre in Capel Dewi. Last summer, members of the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust enjoyed a lovely afternoon at Plas Crugiau (where the immaculate restored walled

garden was brimming with produce) and were offered an invitation to return when the bluebells, rhododendrons and azaleas are at their best. Mr and Mrs Newman have kindly extended that offer to us and we are invited to tea in the grounds at the end of the afternoon.

In recent years our Annual Evening Garden Visit and Buffet Supper has been in July. This year for **Outing number 2** we break that tradition, enabling us to see the garden of Mr and Mrs Tony Crouch at **Gwel-y-Coed**, Gilfachreda, at its spring best.

Margaret Crouch describes its creation: ‘We came here in 1987 after building our home and commenced the creation of our garden from 2 acres of rough grazing on a steep bank. The soil is shale and clay and difficult to cultivate. However, after over twenty years we have a pleasant garden with different “scenes”. The top third is old meadow probably never ploughed and contains a wonderful variety of wild flowers not least of which are the cowslips in late spring. Below the wild flower bank, weeping silver birch give dappled shade to the rhododendron and azalea bank. Amongst the birch and on the south boundary are a number of oak trees planted about 16 years ago as germinated acorns from the Tal-y-Llyn Railway and from Sissinghurst in Kent. On the north boundary there used to be an herbaceous border but now a couple of shrubberies contain various flowering shrubs for ease of maintenance. There is a small rose garden around which runs an 0-gauge railway, adding another dimension to the garden. Adjacent to the house is a small courtyard and seating area surrounded by a rockery – now not as well maintained as previously but makes a sunny place to sit on a hot day. It is hoped that the cowslips will be at their best in early May but the rhodi bank should also be looking good. There is, of course, the unknown factor of what the sustained frosts of this winter will have succeeded in doing! So – fingers crossed!’

The Dafodiil Inn has been recommended by the Crouches. Location maps for the garden and inn, along with menus, will be sent to attendees once names have been received. Please then send food orders to us for collating and forwarding to the inn.

Many of you will recall with pleasure Katherine Swift's talk last September, and we were immediately asked by a number of members to look at the possibility of a visit to her garden – so we oblige with a summer Saturday in rural Shropshire for **Outing number 3**. In the morning we visit **Lower Hall, Worfield**. This garden is close to the Dower House and has been recommended by Katherine. Lower Hall is a listed timber-framed gabled house opposite the church. The garden extends to 4 acres on either side of the River Worfe, and has been developed by Mr and Mrs C. F. Dumbell. There is a courtyard with fountain; a walled garden with old-fashioned roses, clematis and mixed borders; a water garden with pool, Primula Island and rock garden, and a woodland garden with rare trees including magnolias, and paperbark and Japanese maples. A local caterer will serve us lunch in a garden room.



After lunch we move to the **Dower House** where we will be met and shown around by Katherine. The garden occupies a 1.5-acre site in a beautiful setting within the grounds of Morville Hall. Like her highly acclaimed book, it sets out to tell the history of English gardening in a sequence of separate gardens designed in the style of different historical periods. Particular attention is given to the use of authentic plants and construction techniques. Old roses are a

speciality and hopefully should be at their best at the time of our visit. We will take tea in the garden before returning to Aber in the late afternoon.

In July, for **Outing number 4**, we visit Herefordshire. **The Laskett** was asked for by a number of people and is the largest private formal garden to be created in England since 1945. Getting it in our programme for 2011 took a bit of arranging as admission slots are like gold, but it should be worth it. We have to arrive at the garden at 10.30 am prompt and Sir Roy Strong will meet us. Over almost four decades the historian and his late wife, the designer Dr Julia Trevelyan Oman, transformed a four-acre field into a series of stunning garden rooms, vistas, ascents and descents. These include a rose garden, pleached lime avenue, orchard, kitchen garden, knot garden, fountains and parterres as well as a spectacular array of topiary and rich herbaceous and prairie-style borders. The garden tells the story of both their marriage and their creative lives in the arts.



The Laskett Garden Bird's-eye view by Jonathan Myles-Lea

In early July we should find the rose garden at its height and the mixed borders beginning to explode into bloom, the kitchen garden becoming a cornucopia of produce and the orchard fruit swelling. Topiary cutting will be returning geometry to the compositions.

We will be going to **Kentchurch Court** for lunch and a tour of both house and garden. This stately home has been in the Scudamore family for over 1,000 years. Surrounded by a deer park that dates back to the Knights Templar, the house lies at the heart of an estate spreading over 5,000 acres. Kentchurch Court nestles under Garway Hill in the Monnow Valley, tucked away in the once turbulent border country between England and Wales. The present owners are Mr and Mrs John Lucas-Scudamore. The gardens have evolved over the last five years. There are no formal beds as such, but the walled garden and the vegetable garden contain a variety of herbaceous plants, the vegetable garden is a mixture of easy-to-maintain plots divided by a pergola supporting roses and clematis. To the north of the house, rhododendrons planted in the late 1960s continue to flourish and acers have been planted under the existing woodland canopy. The deer park contains well-established trees including yews (dating back 3,000 years) and Jack O'Kent's oak, said to have been old in the 14th century. The field maples are some of the largest in England.

A lot of members wanted a day out without going too far, and gardens in Powys were suggested. For **Outing number 5**, we are starting at **Llysdinam** (which John knew when it was also home to the University of Cardiff's Biological Field Station). Now the home of Mrs Mary Elster, Llysdinam has a lovely garden with azaleas, rhododendrons, a water garden and herbaceous borders, shrubs, woodland garden, plus a Victorian kitchen garden and greenhouses. There is a very fine view down the Wye Valley.

Leaving Llysdinam in late morning we will visit the Erwood Craft Centre, where people can get lunch. before continuing down the beautiful Wye Valley to visit **Croity Mawr**. The garden of Mr and Mrs Fairwood extends to 4.5 acres and has been created over the last 18 years. At 850 ft, it is terraced and has spectacular views

across beautiful countryside to the Black Mountains and across the Usk Valley. It has mature trees and unusual plants and shrubs. We'll enjoy tea and cake prior to departure.

On a number of occasions in recent years, the programme has concluded with an early September tour of Pembrokeshire. We are continuing in this vein in 2011, but **Outing number 6** takes us to Carmarthenshire. Our first visit is to **Ty'r Maes** with coffee and biscuits on arrival. Owned by John and Helen Brooks, this is a recently developed 3-acre garden with splendid views. Herbaceous and shrub beds – formal design, exuberantly informal planting, full of cottage-garden favourites and many unusual plants, say the descriptions. Burgeoning arboretum (with over 200 types of tree); formal and wildlife ponds, pergola, gazebos, post-and-rope arcade covered in climbers.

Next we go to Llandovery, a delightful former drovers' town where people can get lunch. Then we will head for Llangadog, but if we are in good time, we might divert via Myddfai, and pass by Prince Charles residence in the Principality as it is only a short distance from our final garden of the year, **Cilgwyn Lodge**, where Keith Brown and Moira Thomas live. It is some seven or eight years since the society last visited here this fascinating and much-admired one-acre garden with something for everyone: a wide variety of herbaceous plants displayed in extensive colour-themed borders, a large collection of hostas, a growing collection of clematis, and hardy, rare or unusual plants. The gardens have been developed from lawns, rose beds and conifers in an open setting into a wide variety of habitats and plantings to give the maximum display throughout the year. There is a stream garden, and ponds. A productive vegetable and fruit garden supplies all Keith and Moira's needs from June until April. Seats strategically placed take advantage of views of the gardens and glorious countryside.

We commend this programme of outings to you, and look forward to seeing you on the trips.

John & Sue Wildig
(For contact details, see back cover)

SUMMARY OF SUMMER OUTINGS

- 1 Sunday 1 May** Afternoon visit 2.15 to 4.15pm. Own transport
Plas Crugiau, Southgate Aberystwyth SY23 4PT
(Mr & Mrs Arthur Newman)
Donation to Wales Air Ambulance collected on day: **£5.00**
Maximum number: 35. Book by 22 April.
- 2 Wednesday 4 May** Evening visit. 6.00pm. Own transport
Gwel-y-Coed, Gilfachreda SA45 9SR
(Mr & Mrs Tony Crouch)
Buffet Supper at the **Daffodil Inn, Penrhiwllan SA44 5NG**
Price of Supper, collected on day: **£21.50**. Book by 30 April.
- 3 Saturday 4 June** 7.30am depart Park Ave. R.S. Jones coach
Lower Hall, Worfield, Bridgnorth (Mr & Mrs C F Dumbell)
Lunch in garden room
Dower House, Morville Hall (Dr Katherine Swift) with tea.
Approx final cost: **£35.00**. Maximum number: 40.
Estimated return to Aberystwyth: 8.00pm
- 4 Tuesday 5 July** 7.00am depart Park Ave. R.S. Jones coach
The Laskett, Much Birch, Hereford (Sir Roy Strong).
Lunch at **Kentchurch Court, Hereford**
(Mr & Mrs John Lucas-Scudamore)
Approx cost: **£39.00**. Maximum number: 40.
Estimated return to Aberystwyth: 7.30pm
- 5 Wednes 27 July** 9.15am depart Park Ave. James Bros coach
Llysdinam, Newbridge on Wye (Mrs Mary Elster)
Lunch at Erwood Craft Centre.
Croity Mawr, Talybont on Usk (Mr & Mrs Fairwood) & tea.
Approx cost: **£16.00**. Maximum number: 35.
- 6 Sunday 4 Sept** 9.45am depart Park Ave. James Bros coach
Ty'r Maes, Ffarmers, Llanwrda (John & Helen Brooks)
with morning coffee
Cilgwyn Lodge, Llangadog (Keith Brown & Moira Thomas)
& tea
Approx cost: **£18.00**. Maximum number: 40.

SUMMER OUTINGS 2011

*Coaches depart from Long Stay Car Park in Park Avenue,
Aberystwyth, opposite Police Station. Departure times vary.*

1	Sunday May 1 2.15 Own transport	Plas Crugiau Southgate SY23 4PT Aberystwyth. Afternoon visit
2	Wed May 4 6 pm Own transport	Evening visit: Gwel-y-Coed, Gilfachreda SA45 9SR Supper at Daffodil Inn, Penrhiwllan SA44 5NG
3	Saturday June 4 7.30 am Coach	Bridgnorth: Lower Hall, Worfield, & The Dower House, Morville
4	Tuesday July 5 7.00 am Coach	Hereford: The Laskett, Much Birch, & Kentchurch Court
5	Wed July 27 9.15 am Coach	Llysdinam, Newbridge on Wye Croity Mawr, Talybont on Usk
6	Sunday Sept 4 9.45 am Coach	Ty'r Maes, Ffarmers, Llanwrda Cilgwyn Lodge, Llangadog

TUESDAY EVENING LECTURES 2011–2012 at 7.30pm

*Lecture Theatre A6 Llandinam Buildings, Penglais Campus,
University of Aberystwyth, ABERYSTWYTH SY23 3DB*

13	September	Frank Hardy: All Our Yesterdays
11	October	Harvey Stephens: Great Gardens of Russia
8	November	David Brown: Style, Design & Inspiration from Lesser-known Gardens
13	December	'The Terry & Richard Experience'
10	January 2012	Rosetta Plummer: Vision for the Future of NBGW
14	February	Wayne Powell: Challenges facing Plant Breeding
13	March	AGM with slides from Garden Visits

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