

Summer 2018

FRIENDS NEWSLETTER



Friends of Dyffryn Gardens Newsletter

Dyffryn News

Extracts from the Dyffryn Newsletters July/August 2018

Exciting Art Discovery

We have recently made it onto various News Channels with our latest Margaret Lindsay Williams painting restoration campaign.

The National Trust has said that a collection of four paintings by Lindsay Williams found at Dyffryn House is “an exciting discovery”. The trust has launched an appeal to help with the restoration of the paintings.

A spokesman for the trust said “the unexpected nature of this discovery is an exciting development but unfortunately we do not have the funds to restore the work, so we need to fundraise to restore all four paintings.

“The most notable is The Imprisoned Soul. It was found tucked away and leaning against a wall in the

White Library. It is oil on canvas, signed and dated Margaret Lindsay Williams 1920 and measures five by six feet, but no longer has its frame. It is a striking painting that depicts woman tempted by material things. The subject holds a dagger to her throat at the same point where the painting has a large tear

“It is part of a body of Williams’ work that reflected dark and religious themes and caused political controversy, following her focus on death in The Great War”.

The other three paintings were discovered in a back room behind the kitchen.

“They are also oil on canvas but it is thought they were designed as of an interior decoration scheme rather than as individual paintings”.

Margaret Lindsay Williams (1888-1960) was a successful and well regarded artist. She was commissioned to paint members of

the Royal Family and became the first female artist represented in Washington DC's National Portrait Gallery of Presidents.

Among other notable sitters was British Prime Minister David Lloyd George.

The trust says the paintings are in dire condition with holes, tears and punctures to

every piece.

For information visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk/appeal/save-dyffryn-gardens-fragile-paintings..

There will be a talk to the Friends by Christine Hanley on the painting on October 5th.

See Page 12 for details.



The Imprisoned Soul

New planting for 2018

The new look Mediterranean Garden is now open. There is still more to come as we start to change over some annual elements for more permanent planting. We will also be leaving the raised border at the back empty to allow us to deal with a perennial weed problem and begin to change over the soil in parts of the bed to make it more free draining and suitable for the range of plants that will begin to appear throughout the next season.

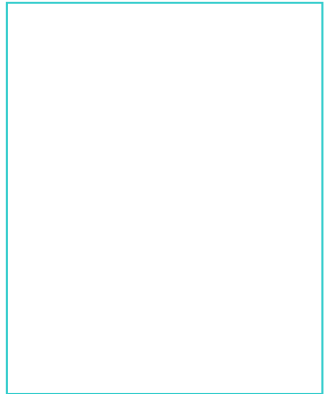
Next door the Exotics Garden is beginning to take shape. We have begun the first stages of planting and mapping the new path layout according to a photograph of the garden from 1937. The new path network will be constructed through the

winter once we have managed to source the large quantity of edging stones required to complete the job.

All of the bedding is now in. The Paved Court, Lavender Court and Pompeian Garden are all growing well. Unfortunately the hot weather has checked the growth of the plants on the South Front, resulting in many not starting to grow away. To entice them back into growth we have been regularly irrigating and following up with a heavy mulch to help lock the moisture into the soil. Because of the dry weather it was impossible to turf the Heart garden as planned, so it contains left-overs!

The Reflecting Pool Garden room is looking the best I've ever seen it, with waterlilies flowering in water the clearest it's

ever been, dragonflies are buzzing around and Lythrum, Cannas, Butomus (flowering rush) Agapanthus, in bloom.



Mediterranean Garden



Lavender Court



Front border



Exotics' Garden



Pool garden



Heart Garden



Paved Court



Pompeian Garden

Friends of Dyffryn AGM

By Val Caple

Mr. Paul Knoyle thanked Mr. John Kirk for acting as Vice Chair beyond his elected term and said that his first year as Chair has been a pleasure.

Dr Joan Andrews, the Treasurer, reported that the balance at the end of the year was healthy. We have claimed £184 in Gift Aid as we are a charity with all subscriptions coming to the Society. She appealed to all members who are eligible to the sign the Gift Aid declaration on the annual subscription form. She noted that we continue to send



newsletters and details of events to all members but we save a considerable amount by using email rather than the postal service for additional information.

The friends and family of the late John Tovey (Mary Ponting's father) donated £475 in his memory towards a second buggy at Dyffryn The Principality Building Society also donated £200.

After the AGM those present were given a tour of the Walled garden with Ceridwen



Davies. In the Walled Garden the 1918 Allotment is looking fantastic. The plot is full of produce that is being regularly harvested for the shop and café.

Visit to Dyrham Park and Iford Manor

By Rev. Margaret Stark

On a grey and showery morning, 26 of us set off by coach for Dyrham Park near Bath. After leaving the motorway, we meandered through lanes shaded by the fresh green leaves of late spring. On arrival, we were bussed through the ancient parkland to the magnificent 17th century house built by William Blathwayt. Walking around we took in fine tapestries, classical ceilings, four-poster beds, oil paintings of family, friends and royalty, tulip vases from Holland, willow pattern china and vases, a harpsichord and an engraving of the original gardens made by Johannes Kip in the 17th century. Then we divided into small groups and were given a tour of the gardens by very knowledgeable guides. The Avenue was impressive, stretching away from the house with colourful borders; the gardeners are planning to reorganize this area so that it will be more like the original garden. Later we saw two Judas trees and a Tulip tree, a lake and waterfall.

St Peter's Church nestles into the woodland at the side of the house; inside we spotted a wooden pulpit with a fine cover/sounding board above it, a bier for the poor to carry their dead to the church and two well preserved brasses commemorating Sir Morys and Isabel Russell who died in 1401 and 1415 respectively. Back to our coach we glimpsed some of the herd of 180 fallow deer for which the 270 acre park is famous. In spite of the intermittent rain we had a very enjoyable time at Dyrham Park.

Passing in our coach through beautiful Bradford-on-Avon, we arrived at Iford Manor, a lovely medieval house with an 18th century façade, set in the steeply wooded valley of the Frome. The Italianate gardens were designed by Harold Ainsworth Peto, an architect and landscape gardener, who lived there from 1899 to 1933.

We were taken round the Walled Garden by Elizabeth Cartwright-Hignett, the joint owner of the property with her son, William. Elizabeth



Harpsichord



Sideboard with Porcelain



Deer



Church and House



Waterfall and Lake

is responsible for the delightful topiary work; hens, squirrels, rabbits, a tortoise, sheep and rams, a teapot, a television and a sofa and chair are some of her amazing pieces of work. May bugs delighted us by seeming to dance up and down around us.

The gardens as a whole are terraced and there were classical columns, statues and pools to be relished, with many racemes of wisteria hanging from the stonework. One small building held several works of art created from shells – for example, a Green Man and other fanciful creatures. Outside was a serpent made of shells; all the shell work was done by Elizabeth.

Left to our own devices we found a pond with a shoal (?) of tadpoles at the edge, a magnificent peony, and the Cloisters where recitals and operas are performed in the summer and autumn; a performance of Bernstein's 'Candide' was taking place the following evening.

Outside the Cloisters we were greeted by Oscar, a white long-haired cat, who then climbed a tree and

turned his attention to the birds.

In the Housekeeper's Tea Room, we sampled her delicious cakes and William's personally blended tea (he set up Lford Manor Teas Ltd in 2005). The House Tea was much appreciated as well as the Earl Grey with lavender.

We very much enjoyed the gardens at Lford Manor; thank you, Mary, for organising



Shell serpent



Shell creature



Bridge



Topiary Suite



Cloister



Pond



Wisteria



Terrace

Visit to Oxford Botanical Garden.

By Barbara Hodges

On Wednesday 17th July members gathered at Dyffryn Garden for a trip to The University of Oxford Botanic Garden; the oldest Botanic garden in Great Britain and one of the oldest scientific gardens in the world.

The roads were busy and we were kept waiting along the way but eventually arrived and after entering through the gateway known as the Danby Gateway built in 1633 we were introduced to our guide called Sue.

We were informed that the site of the garden was originally used as a Jewish grave yard also as a graveyard for the local hospital and prison. It was then left for several years ending up as a smelly muddy dump. The land was eventually bought and gradually improved and in 1621 Henry Danvers 1st Earl of Danby contributed £5,000 to set up a physic garden 'for the glorification of the works of God and for the furtherance of learning'. Today there are over 8,000 different plant species on a 4 ½ acre site which consists of three areas known as:-

- The walled garden surrounded by 17th Century stonework and contains the garden's oldest tree – an English Yew (*Taxus baccata*)
- The Glasshouses which allow the cultivation of plants needing protection from the extremes of British weather.
- The area between the walled garden and river Cherwell.

We were first introduced to the various Glasshouses – Conservatory, Alpine, Fernery, Tropical Lily, Insectivorous, Palm and Arid. A very



Victoria Cruziana



Herbaceous border



Merton Border

interesting one was the tropical lily house which contains the very large plate like lily known as *Victoria Cruziana*. We were informed that it would bear the weight of a five year old child. There was rice, sugar cane and a very pretty blue lily known as *Nymphaeae daubenyana* as well as many other plants growing there.

The Herbaceous border was

glowing with colour and populated by bees and other insects.

We were informed that sadly due to the need for constant watering and attention, herbaceous borders may become a thing of the past. The Merton Border was interesting in that it is drought tolerant requiring no artificial irrigation, staking or fertilization. It is allowed to die back during the autumn providing a rich habitat for small birds and mammals but it does need attention.

The medicinal borders were also full of colour, bees and interesting information regarding the use of the various plants.

Following all this education my friends and I thought that a little light refreshment was in order so left the garden and found The Grand Café which was the first Coffee House in Britain. There we had a very enjoyable lunch including a glass of wine.

The rest of the afternoon was spent wandering in the grounds of Magdalen College across the road from the Botanic Garden viewing the beautiful hydrangea borders, watching the deer and finally watching visitors cruising on the river Cherwell.

Thank you Mary for another very interesting day out.

Members' Musical Evening

By Barbara Hodges

A very enjoyable evening was held in the Gallery, Dyffryn Garden on 19th June, it was a fundraising event for a new buggy and raised approximately £500 – a big thank you to all who made this possible.

A very tasty buffet supper was provided by Hannah and her team. I was impressed by the detail paid for those of us who have food allergies and intolerances.

The Supper was followed by a musical entertainment provided by the excellent St. Hilary Church Choir led by their choir master Chris. Mowat. They performed an entertaining mix of songs in English and Welsh

The weather was excellent and as twilight approached Gerry led us on a guided walk to various parts of the garden which looked beautiful.

Many thanks to Mary for arranging



News from the Dyffryn Apiary

By Harold Williams.

June 2018

The warm settled weather is being appreciated by the bees. Colony expansion is going on apace.. One swarming trigger is the lack of room within the hive so being able to provide valuable additional equipment will not only help the beekeeper but also the bees.

Swarming is a natural part of the honeybee's life cycle. It is after all how they ensure the survival of the species; it is only the beekeeper who finds it an irritant.

What is the sequence of events within the hive before a swarm emerges? Well the bees (the ladies who are the workers) commence the building of Queen Cells; these are totally different to any other cell that the bees produce. Into these cells an egg that is destined to become a worker (female) is either laid in there by the Queen or the ladies will select an egg and put it in there themselves. Because a Queen Bee is so much bigger than the other occupants of a colony she has to have a cell made to order. It is the old Queen that will depart the hive with a swarm so it is imperative that provision is made for a new Queen to eventually take her place. A fair number of Queen Cells will be in situ and although only one Queen is required having a few spares on hand is always very wise.

The Queen will now cease laying eggs, the ladies will reduce the amount of food she receives to reduce her weight and to aid her flying ability. A Queen bee is not a flying bee she is an egg layer. She only takes to the

wing as a Virgin to get mated and then returns to the hive or as an old Queen who departs with a swarm. When conditions are right the bees will manoeuvre the Queen out of the hive and swarming will get under way and boy have conditions been right! Calls to deal with swarms are coming in thick and fast.

What of our bees left behind? Well a new Queen will emerge from one of the several Queen cells provided and any others will be destroyed. She must be mated before she can be a fully functional Queen, unmated she will only produce male eggs and these are not foragers! Weather and time will be the dominant factors leading to the success or failure of our new colony to be.

August 2018

Is the hoped for honey harvest going to be realised? Well we will definitely be able to remove some of the sealed frames, but as ever the needs of the colonies for in house food stores will always come first.

The fine settled conditions are suiting the bees and much Pollen and Nectar is coming in. Storage space is at a premium and providing that the beekeeper can supply the super boxes to accommodate this influx the bees that are tasked with the internals of a hive will cope effortlessly.

Just what is a Super Box? The colonies here at Dyffryn are housed in boxes that make up into what is known as the National Hive. When these boxes are set up to form a hive this is the format, we start with a base (mesh floor) onto this base will go a deep box known as a Brood box (where the Queen will lay her eggs) on top of this brood box there will be added the

Super boxes as the need for space is met. A super box is only half the depth of a Brood box because its main function will be to provide storage of Pollen and nectar and not normally as an area where the Queen bee can lay. If the beekeeper does not intervene the Queen bee would quite happily avail herself of the space in a super and lay her eggs there. To exact a measure of control the insertion of a slotted steel/plastic sheet is introduced between

brood box and super box, the dimensions of the slots are such that only the worker bees can pass through. The Queen being much larger is therefore confined to the lower area. This arrangement gives the Queen bee more room to lay and as she is capable of laying some 2000! Eggs per day this expansion of the brood area is oft times a must. Each super contains 11 wooden frames and when they are filled with nectar (the bees convert

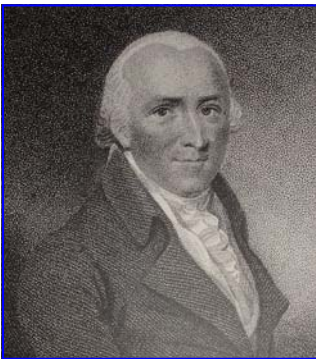


nectar into honey) the weight is in the region of some 40lb.

How do we get the honey out? Watch this space!

Humphry Repton

By Marion Davies



To celebrate the bi-centenary of Humphry Repton's death we were very fortunate to have a joint event with the Mid and South Glamorgan Branch of the Welsh Historic Garden Trust on the work of Humphry

Repton. Our speaker was Richard Wheeler the National Trust's National Specialist in Garden History. Richard's job involves giving curatorial and historical advice on the Trust's gardens.

The changes that were made to the landscapes of the great estates and parks in C18th and C19th centuries are a fascinating part of garden history, as are the men responsible for creating the changes. Lancelot 'Capability' Brown (1716-1783) created pastoral idylls that are regarded as quintessentially English yet by the end of his career advocates of

the Picturesque criticised what they regarded as his creation of artificial, lifeless and bland parks. One critic Richard Owen Cambridge said 'I very earnestly wish that I might die before you, because I should like to see heaven before you can improve it'.

Humphry Repton (1752-1818) created the term 'landscape gardener' when aged 36 he promoted himself in his new profession. Aged 16 he embarked on an apprenticeship in the textile trade. His business ventures were never successful, neither were his efforts as a country squire, essayist

or political secretary. As the self-styled successor to Brown he became Britain's leading landscape gardener for 30 years working on over 400 projects.

A major factor in the development and success of his career was his ability as a water colourist as displayed in his Red Books. These books, bound in scarlet, contained his 'before and after' watercolours superbly illustrating how landowners could improve their estates. With a hinged overlay in place the prospective client saw an illustration of his property and grounds; once this was lifted he was able to picture immediately the effects a new design could achieve.

Richard's talk included wonderfully illustrated descriptions of many of Repton's landscapes and gardens and their Red Books.

Attingham, Shropshire was commissioned in

1797. Repton's aim was to create a natural landscape with views of the Shropshire Hills and Wrekin. The family went bankrupt after Repton's work was finished.

Today it is one of the most historically important Repton landscape as it has not been altered.

The work on Sheringham Park, Norfolk and the entrance drive is considered to be one of Repton's finest. He created what he termed 'The Turn', a point where the house bursts into sight 'like some enchanted Palace of a Fairy Tale'.

In his Red Book for Ashridge Estate, Herefordshire, Repton proposed 15 different types of gardens including a Monk's Garden, a Magnolia and American Garden, a Grotto and Garden for rock plants and an Italian Garden. Many of these features became classic elements of Victorian

Garden design.

But Repton was not without his critics. In the novel 'Headlong Hall' by Thomas Love Peacock, he is caricatured as the garden designer Marmaduke Milestone.

In Jane Austen's Mansfield Park he is referred to by name with his terms of 5 guineas a day. Jane Austen, an admirer of Gilpin and the Picturesque, was no fan of Repton, and his proposed improvements for Sotherton, the estate of the hapless and hopeless Mr Rushworth, come to nothing. Jane Austen had first hand knowledge of Repton's work from his designs for estates at Adelstrop and Stoneleigh, Warwickshire, owned by members of her family.

But Repton of course has the last laugh and his enduring legacy is in his Red Books and in his work which can still be seen and enjoyed at many locations in Britain.

Insole Court

By Val Caple

The winter series concluded with a talk by Dr Elaine Davey on Insole Court, Cardiff. Saved by the community,

the 160-year-old house has undergone essential refurbishments.

We are planning a visit to Insole Court for a tour of the house and garden.

See page 12 for details.



Programme of Events 2018/2019.

Talks are open to members only, unless otherwise stated.

Where numbers are limited pre-booking is required using the application forms included with this issue.

Right: Friends at the Musical Evening.



Thursday 13th September 2018	Visit to Insole Court, Cardiff. See Application Form for Details
Tuesday 16th October 2018	Coach Trip to Llanover Garden and Birtsmorton Manor. See Application Form for Details
Friday 5th October 2018	Coffee Afternoon. Christina Hanley will be giving a talk entitled 'The Imprisoned Soul' about the Margaret Lyndsey painting in Dyffryn House. 2 pm to 4 pm at the Cory Education Centre
Wednesday 14th November 2018	Coffee Morning. Linda & Edgar will be giving a Digital Magic Lantern show. 10.30 am to 12 M.D at Cory Education Centre
Tuesday 11th December 2018	Christmas Lunch at the Blue Anchor, Aberthaw. Details to follow
Wednesday 27th February 2019	Coffee Morning. Dr. Paul Knoyle will give a presentation entitled 'The Flora of New Zealand'. 10.30 am to 12. M. D. at the Cory Education Centre
Wednesday 20th March 2019	Coffee Afternoon. Sue Duffield will be giving a presentation entitled 'Tresco and The isles of Scilly'. 2 pm to 4 pm at the Cory Education Centre

For more Information about above events, please contact

Mrs Mary Ponting or Mrs Barbara Hodges (addresses on page 11) or visit www.dyffryngardens.org.uk

For National Trust events contact Dyffryn Gardens