

# FRIENDSNEWSLETTER



## Friends of Dyffryn Gardens Newsletter

### Chairman's Message

#### Happy Thirtieth Birthday

By Stephen Parker

What a superb summer it has been so far. I hope you have all been enjoying the glorious weather both in your own gardens and the gardens of others. I know I have visited Dyffryn many times so far this summer and the gardens and indeed the house are looking fantastic.

The Friends thirtieth birthday celebrations were very successful and the exhibition that was revealed at the lunch will soon be on full display at the gardens, in the marquee, such was the success of it. We have a full report in this newsletter.

In what has been an eventful year, the work of the Friends continues with a particularly lively events schedule

and next on the agenda is the Vale of Glamorgan Show at Fonmon Castle, on the 21st of August. As usual we will be manning our stand, promoting the Friends and Dyffryn Gardens and House. I look forward to seeing you all there.

I would also particularly like to draw your attention to a trip we are running on the 11th September to Wisley. This is a magnificent garden as so many of you already know, and it will be looking extraordinary at this time of the year. I know I am looking forward to seeing the Piet Oudolf Borders and the new Tom Stuart-Smith planting around the greenhouses. I hope as many of you as possible will be able to come as it is a great opportunity to see one of England's finest gardens and horticultural display gardens without the stress of the long drive!

Application forms for this, and information on further trips are included with this newsletter.

Finally, and yes I know it seems early, but we are planning an exciting new event for our Christmas Friends Event this year, and if all goes to plan the dates and the event will be announced in our next newsletter, I look forward to seeing you all there once again.

## Friends Membership Subscriptions

**By Joan Andrews, Treasurer**

Finally our subscription turmoil has resolved with the successful take over of Dyffryn by the National Trust in January 2013.

Most of you will have paid your subscription (April 1st 2013 for 1 year) but if not please do so – the rate is £7 per individual or £12 for two people at the same address. A form

Thank you as always for your unstinting support as the Friends of Dyffryn move forward, in partnership with the National Trust. A partnership I know you will all agree is working well both for the Friends and the progression and development of Dyffryn Estate and I know how much that means to all of you. Enjoy the rest of the summer and see you all at Fonmon.

is enclosed and also available on our website.

There is still a visit to Wisley to enjoy and an excellent program already planned for the Winter indoor meetings. We look forward to your continued support.

If you have not yet joined the National Trust – it is worth knowing that members of the RHS have free entry to many NT properties, including Dyffryn Gardens.

## No Tea at the Tea House.

**By Barbara Hodges**

On Monday 15th April several 'Friends' gathered at Dyffryn Gardens to board the coach to Malmesbury. The temperature seemed a little warmer than of late and the sun was slowly appearing from behind the clouds as we set off. Mary had prepared another entertaining quiz which kept us busy. Thank you to the winners for sharing the chocolates.

We were offered tea or coffee on arrival which was very welcome and approximately 30 minutes later we



gathered in front of Abbey House for a tour of the garden with the owner. Whilst we were waiting, some of us fed the fish in the Stew pond (a reminder that the monks would keep fish in a holding tank near the kitchens to await their fate in Friday's stew!)

Barbara & Ian Pollard moved into Abbey House in 1994 and after adapting it to the needs of the family set about transforming the five acre garden. Influenced by the site's history and the fact that Benedictine monks had gardened there, Ian has brought ideas from its past, into the present and onto the future. After walking through the Saxon Arch we came upon the Celtic Cross Garden. The design for this garden was taken from a Celtic Cross which still stands on Iona. The vast amount of Yew hedging which needs trimming 4- 6 times per year mimics the walls of the former Lady Chapel - a mediaeval stone coffin was uncovered here in 1997 complete with its skeletal occupant giving the gardener a big surprise which left him looking rather pale.

The serpentine bed of roses was originally planted as a rainbow spectrum of colours but some specimens did their own thing and refused to follow the label's description. They have been left in place as an acceptance of fate. These rose bushes have been under planted with many varieties of tulips but due to the extremely cold winter are approximately 4 weeks behind in their development and are only just beginning to bloom. I made a mental note that I should visit again in about



Views of the house and garden



three weeks time.

The herb garden was designed and built with raised beds as described in a ninth century poem written by Walfred Strabo. It is surrounded by arcading, reminiscent of 'cloisters' supporting more than 180 fruit cordons on the outside with roses and clematis on the inside - another mental note to revisit later. Ian explained how over 4,000 knots were hand tied and waxed to secure the arcading - this took several months. The fruit arcade leads into the laburnum tunnel which is under planted with a succession of flowering bulbs, many of these were in bloom and provided welcome colour to the garden. Hornbeam has



been planted at the ends and along one side of the tunnel to form another arcade.

Sloping paths lead through mature trees down to the river Avon, the monastic fish ponds and waterfall. There were collections of woodland plants in bloom including

hellebores, pulmonaria, primroses, dicentra, scillas and saxifrage. I loved the clumps of deep pink saxifrage growing on the outcrops of rock.

The Japanese Tea House looked inviting but unfortunately there was no tea to be had there as at present the

Tea House consists of just an entrance door with flowers growing behind it so we retraced our steps to the café and enjoyed a cup of tea before boarding the coach for our homeward journey.

Thank you Mary for organising another very enjoyable outing.

## Bryan's Ground

By Lisa Coles

The Friends of Dyffryn visit to Bryan's Ground, Presteigne, took place on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2013

We were greeted at a canal with swathes of blue iris on either side by one of the owners of this Arts and Crafts House for an introduction to the garden. We were free to wander through the shaded arbours of the three acres of garden and mown paths of five acres of arboretum on the banks of a river bordering Wales.

The garden was a delightful mix of interrelated rooms with informal cottage garden plants and formal areas including topiary and box parterres. There were surprises



### Garden features

everywhere with lily pools and touches of humour with rustic articles displayed with effect. The owners publish the quarterly journal Hortus and were available to answer our



questions. Plant sales and tea on the terrace were an added pleasure.

One overheard comment was: 'this is the best garden visit I have been on'.

## Monkland Cheese Dairy

By Ted Coles

After the visit to Bryan's Ground we continued to the Monkland Cheese Dairy which is three miles west of Leominster. They had received a delivery of several thousand litres of unpasteurised milk before we arrived. We were shown into an ultra clean room containing the large water-jacketed temperature-controlled vat where the milk had been warmed, and rennet added to make curds and whey. The whey was being drained off for sale to a local piggery. Acidity control is important and was being measured by titration with phenolphthalein – shades of school chemistry practicals. Squeezing the whey out of the curds is a multi-stage process. Our charming and enthusiastic cheese-maker guide explained that cutting the consolidated curds into blocks is known as 'cheddaring'. This is done so that the blocks can be stacked on each other to squeeze out more of the whey, prior to the final application



**Making the Cheese**

of the cheese presses. The dairy produces four different cheeses, Monkland, Blue Monk, Little Hereford, some of which is oak-smoked in Crickhowell, and Monkland Sage. The softer cheeses are removed from the process earlier, but all have salt added to remove whey by osmosis, act as a preservative and enhance taste. Maturing is in temperature-controlled rooms where the cheeses are turned frequently.

Our visit finished with an excellent Ploughman's Lunch and a chance to buy in their shop.

## The Heritage Horticultural Skills Scheme (HHSS)

By Val Caple

This Heritage Lottery Fund project was started in 2011 with the aim of to developing trainees with high quality practical skills using the expertise on hand in

Welsh historic gardens.

The HHSS is run by a group of associated gardens at Aberglasney, Bodnant, Cardiff City Council, Dyffryn Gardens, Newport City Council, Picton Gardens, Portmeirion and St Fagans.

The 2 students currently based in Dyffryn Gardens are

now close to finishing their training and have started being assessed in the RHS level 2 practical Skills module.

Recently 2 more students have accepted places on the scheme and will be starting at Dyffryn in the autumn. We look forward to seeing them at some of our events.

## The 'Friends' celebrate 30 years.

By Barbara Hodges

Over forty members of The Friends of Dyffryn Gardens Society gathered at the Dyffryn Gardens marquee on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> June to celebrate their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a buffet lunch.

Tours of the house and gardens were organised and guided by Geraldine Donovan - Property Manger. Unfortunately the weather was not kind for the second group!

There was a chance to see documents from the archives with information about the setting up of the Society and the petition that the 'Friends' launched in 1995 to help save the gardens. There was also a display of old copies of the

Newsletters and information on the education and support roles which the Society has undertaken which had been assembled by a group of committee members.

An extremely interesting plasma screen display of the wide variety of visits and events which the Friends have taken part in over the years was enjoyed by everyone present.

Many thanks to all the members who contributed to the exhibitions and to the lunch, especially to the maker of the fantastic cupcakes.

I hope the Society will continue to support Dyffryn Gardens for another 30 years



**Celebration Cupcakes**



**Displays of Historic Documents**



**Slide Show of our visits**

## Newsletter Archives.

By Val Caple

The following are some of the documents from the archives. If you

have any really old newsletters, photographs or Documents we would love to hear from you.

Some of these documents will be on display in Dyffryn Gardens.



## FRIENDS OF DYFFRYN GARDENS SOCIETY



## Bulletin 3

24 April, 1988

## NEWS:

\*\*\*\*\* SUBSCRIPTIONS 1988/89 ARE NOW DUE \*\*\*\*\*

Those of you who have not yet paid your 1988/89 which became due on 1 April will find with this *Bulletin* a pink slip requesting you to pay now. You will notice that subscriptions remain unchanged from last year. I hope you will find that you are again able to continue your support for the FRIENDS and if so I look forward to receiving your subscriptions soon. Several of you have asked over the last two weeks when you should pay and I apologize to you all for not until now sending you a request for payment. I was abroad for three weeks in March (collecting plants in Portugal) and was not able to send out requests then. Since then, owing to the imminence of the Annual Report and the notice of the AGM (both accompanying this *Bulletin*), I thought it expedient to save on postage and send out a bumper bundle! Some FRIENDS have paid in advance for the 1988/89 season (your membership cards will state the dates they are valid) so you will not receive pink slips asking for payment. If you are in doubt or have any queries, however, a quick telephone call will, I hope, give you the information you require.

## PAST EVENTS:

The Gardeners' Question Time, unqualified success, as expected, evening a memorable one, ply Savage and Mr Stephen Torode, to be halted by the lateness.

The cultivation of ferns is have no doubt contemplated by Mr John Woodhams' talk on this some of the nearly 30-stro imported specially for this where he is employed in the first-hand insight into the species with which to illustrate.

It would be of great interest FRIENDS' in the field of fern now intending having a go at rhizomes. Any experiences are on to the FRIENDS through this.

A departure from the usual run on the one hand the National visit the gardens of two of our Mrs John Lloyd in the Pendro took part in the event - many weather but also wonderful exquisitely different gardens.

## FRIENDS OF DYFFRYN GARDENS SOCIETY

Hon. Secretary: Roy Perry, 35 Cardiff Road, Dinas Powys, S. Glamorgan, CF64 4DH



## Bulletin 22

10 November 1993

## FUTURE MEETINGS, 1993

**THURSDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 1993, 2.30 p.m. in Dyffryn House, 'Gardens in North America', a talk by Denis Lannon, of Sully.** Denis and his wife Pat have travelled widely to further their main hobby-Plants of the World. Besides travelling through Europe and North America they have visited New Zealand and South Africa, seeking out botanical and private gardens wherever they go. This meeting has been arranged especially for those of you who find travelling in the dark difficult or impossible. Do come and give Pat and Denis your full support!

**THURSDAY 16 DECEMBER 1993. Christmas Event in Dyffryn House, 7.00 p.m.** This function will follow the pattern which has proved so popular over the past few years. A sherry reception at 7.00 pm will be followed by an entertainment at 7.30 in the Great Hall by Oriana, the ladies' musical group who have entertained us so grandly in the past. Then at 8.45 the evening will conclude with Dyffryn's Gala Buffet Supper. There will be a raffle.

The GALA BUFFET will include the following:

Roast Rib of Beef    Honey Roast Lamb    Roasted Chicken    Dressed Crab  
Smoked Rainbow Trout  
Selection of Salads    Baked Jacket Potatoes

Chilled Lemon and Lime Souffle    Choux Pastry Swans    Tropical Fresh Fruit Salad  
Selection of Cheese and Biscuits

Coffee and Petits Fours

Wine will be available for purchase.

Tickets are **£13.00 each**. Please complete the slip attached and send it with the correct payment and a stamped, addressed envelope, to Roy Perry, 35 Cardiff Road, Dinas Powys, S. Glamorgan, CF64 4DH, **to arrive by 6 December**. Seating for the supper will be at tables for eight; so if required please indicate on the slip with whom you wish to share a table-a table plan will then be drawn up. It should be noted that parking of cars will only be allowed in the official public carpark: on no account must cars be parked on the lawns or any attempt be made to park next to Dyffryn House. This is a police requirement and anyone parking illegally will be asked to move their vehicle. Tickets will be sent out in early December.

# FRIENDS OF DYFFRYN GARDENS SOCIETY

Hon. Sec. Dr. M.R. Porter, 112 South Rd., Sully, S. Glamorgan CF64 5SN



## Bulletin 32

16 February 1996

### Future of Dyffryn Gardens

The new Vale of Glamorgan Borough Council have made an application to the Heritage Lottery Memorial Fund for £2.3 million in order to restore the Gardens but an answer was not expected until June/July 1996. The indications so far were favourable. A number of problems remained on this application, principally on the partnership funding required but also on the detailed costing of the restoration work. They will run the gardens but only if they can obtain the grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to restore the gardens to something like their past condition. There is no application for funds for the House or Conference Centre.

The Chairman and Secretary had a meeting with the new Vale Chief Executive last year and promised the Friends support to their application. To that purpose we organised a petition which proved more successful than we ever hoped and eventually 8,500 signatures were obtained. The petition was sent to Lord Rothschild, Chairman of the Heritage Lottery Fund, on the 23rd January and we received a short but very encouraging reply very quickly. Over 8,500 signatures were collected of which approx. 2,300 were collected by the staff at Dyffryn.

A press release has just been issued by Welsh Office to the effect that Dyffryn House and Gardens will be under the control of the Residuary Body for Wales as from the 1 April 1996. They will retain control of the House and Gardens up to one year. During this year the Vale Council will act as agents and run and maintain the Gardens. They will only restore the Gardens if the Heritage Fund application is successful. During this time the cost of the Gardens will be carried by the 22 Unitary Authorities for Wales. The House will be closed as from the 1 April 1996 until alternative uses can be found. One possible use is a joint venture between the Vale and a private company in order to develop the House as a hotel. Another possible use may be by the South Glamorgan Training and Enterprise Council."

## GARDENS SOCIETY

Sully, S. Glamorgan CF64 5SN

## Bulletin 36

24 October 1996

### Future of Dyffryn Gardens

Since our last Bulletin the situation has changed very significantly towards a much more certain future. There has been an announcement that agreement has been reached for the Vale of Glamorgan Council to purchase the lease of Dyffryn House and Gardens from the Traherne estate.

Progress on application to the Heritage Lottery Fund  
The Vale have engaged consultants who are familiar with the requirements of the Heritage Fund. The application was rewritten and submitted 1 October 1996 with a much larger request for money. A definite decision is expected March 1997.

Situation with respect to Dyffryn House and No-Ordinary Hotels  
Until the purchase of the lease is complete No-Ordinary Hotels cannot formalise any agreement. However, they are very active in their detailed planning for changes to Dyffryn House.

#### Advertising Dyffryn Gardens

The Vale are active in advertising Dyffryn but limited due to not having a budget this year. The Friends will pay for an advertisement in "A View of Wales" (Wales Tourist Board publication for 1997). The Vale Council have paid for an advert. in Historic House, Gardens and Castles.



## Dyffryn House re-emerges from the past.

By C.M.M.

On March 28th I joined two other committee members of the 'Friends' who had been invited to a preview of the opening of Dyffryn House to the public. Although the lottery grant has not enabled a complete restoration of the rooms, those that had been worked on were a joy to behold. We assembled in the front hall where we mingled with all those people who had contributed in one way or another to preserving Dyffryn as an area to be proud of and to share with others the history of the house and its inhabitants.

Representatives from the Vale Assembly, The Vale of Glamorgan; The Astronomical Society; The Croquet Club; National Trust Staff and others assembled in the beautiful hall where we enjoyed afternoon tea before a brief speech of welcome by the The National Trust Director for Wales – Justin Albert. After tea Geraldine Donovan - Property Manager greeted us and we were free to wander at will in the rooms now open and to fill in the various questionnaires regarding our thoughts and suggestions on the work carried out. In one room students from Swansea Art College were painting the walls with floral murals from a pre-planned design whilst another room contained bean bags encouraging one to lie down on ones back to examine the beautiful ceiling art. Unfortunately there were no helpers to aid one back upright again!



The Reception



One of the Interactive Displays



Students from Swansea Art College

In all a very pleasant visit and I left with a feeling that The Dyffryn Estate was now in safe hands after being cared for sufficiently with the monies available and those who put so much time into its protection, to hand over to the care of the National Trust, who will, no doubt, encourage a wider band of visitors to arrive in this part of the Vale of Glamorgan.

## Dewstow

By Barbara Hodges

The head gardener commented "Imagine discovering a lost garden with tunnels and underground grottoes buried under thousands of tonnes of soil for over 50 years. This is what happened at Dewstow Gardens."

Built around 1895 the gardens were buried just after World War 2 and rediscovered in 2000. The gardens contain many ponds and rills but also a labyrinth of underground grottoes, tunnels and sunken ferneries. The rock gardens are made up of Pulhamite, a patented anthropic rock 'material' invented by James Pulham (1820-98) of the firm James Pulham and Son.

Twenty members visited this garden at the



### Features made of Pulhamite

end of July and really enjoyed the experience. The head gardener led our group and enthusiastically showed us the garden that he obviously loves and tends with passion.

We enjoyed a buffet lunch at the adjacent Golf Club and followed the visit with tea and cake in the garden cafe.

The morning was spent at Taurus Crafts who have a wide



selection of locally made craft items on sale and produce a very good cup of coffee with home baked tea cakes.

## Friends News

By Val Caple

### Newsletter

Please send me articles, photographs etc. at any time. These could be about Dyffryn or about other gardens or horticultural interests which you would like to

share with fellow members.

### E-Newsletter

If you would like to receive the occasional E-Newsletter, send your e-mail address to Mr Stephen Parker

### Website

The website is regularly updated and is designed to keep members up-to-date and to attract new members. Please send me any comments about the content.

For the latest information about membership, events, etc. visit [www.dyffryngardens.org.uk](http://www.dyffryngardens.org.uk)

## Programme of Events in 2013/2014.

**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 Abbey House Gardens**



Wednesday 21 <sup>st</sup> August 2013	Vale of Glamorgan Show, Fonmon Castle. Volunteers required for the Friends of Dyffryn stand. <b>Please contact the Secretary</b>
Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup> September 2013	Coach trip to RHS Garden Wisley, Woking, Surrey <b>See enclosed application form for more details</b>
Monday 14 <sup>th</sup> October 2013	Mary Evans will give a talk in the Cory Education Centre at 2.00pm. The title is 'A year in the life of a volunteer at Tredegar House'.
Wednesday 6 <sup>th</sup> November 2013	David Clements will give a presentation on Bats at a coffee morning in the Cory Education Centre at 10.30am
TDB December 2013	Christmas Event
Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup> January 2014	Linda Nottage will give an illustrated talk at a coffee morning in the Cory Education Centre at 10.30am. The title is 'Flowers and Wildlife of the Western Cape'
Wednesday 12 <sup>th</sup> February 2014	A member of the Cardiff Astronomy Society will give a talk at a coffee morning in the Cory Education Centre at 10.30am.
Wednesday 19 <sup>th</sup> February 2014	An evening of Star Gazing in Dyffryn Gardens by the Cardiff Astronomy Society. 7.30 for an 8.00 pm start.

### For more Information, please contact

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or Mrs Barbara Hodges, Greenfields, Eagleswell Road, Boverton, Llantwit Major, CF61 1UF.  
fodyffryn.sec@virgin.net