

Spring 2016

FRIENDS NEWSLETTER



Friends of Dyffryn Gardens Newsletter

Dyffryn breaks another record!
By Geraldine Donovan,
General Manager Dyffryn House
and Gardens

From 1st March 2015 – 29th February 2016 we welcomed an amazing 90,711 visitors. This is new territory for Dyffryn but is on our journey to becoming the grandest garden in Wales. Winning Special Places Gardens' category and then the overall final against significant properties around Wales really helped put Dyffryn on the map in 2015. Accompanied by the further restoration of the Pompeian Garden, Paved Court and Reflecting Pool the calibre of

Dyffryn as a horticultural gem is starting to be recognised. All the efforts of staff, volunteers, Friends and supporters throughout the year cannot be underestimated and my heartfelt thanks go out to everyone. We are all very proud of Dyffryn and rightly so.

So what's happening in 2016? We are celebrating the 110th year of the gardens and Mawson's design and we want to welcome even more visitors. Our research into the local area indicates that of the 46,000 National Trust members who live within a 30 minutes' drive time to us, 61% didn't visit us in 2015! We are endeavouring to

rectify this quickly with a *'we're on your doorstep come and visit campaign'* and this is where the Friends of Dyffryn could have a great impact for us. We know in particular those living in the postcodes CF14, CF23 and CF64 have a high concentration of non visiting members and are areas that are 'warm' to heritage so there's the potential for new members, too. As a Friend of Dyffryn, spreading the word about the gardens to family and friends as a place to visit could be a significant contribution to growing our visitor numbers. Personal recommendation has power, please do get behind raising Dyffryn's profile. Our feature in Saturday, 5th March's Daily Telegraph's garden section is a great start to the 2016 season and combined with word of mouth we could see a fantastic March and Easter attendance, building throughout the year.

March is an exciting month with the first year's 10,000 snowdrops being planted in the arboretum. Another 20,000 snowdrops will be planted over the next two years, making a visit at the start of the year irresistible. The arboretum management plan is being implemented with noticeable



Visitors enjoying a lift on the buggy which was partly sponsored by Friends of Dyffryn Society



improvements happened over the past 6 months – there's a way to go but the enthusiasm from staff and volunteers to celebrate the magnificent collection we have and to introduce new specimens in the spirit of Cory's love for trees is going to transform our hidden gem in to a destination.

Our conservation project to get us off oil is now operating with a biomass system serving the mansion, Cory Education Centre and the glasshouses and an air source heat pump supplying heating to the café,

visitor centre and east lodge. These are all part of a number of green initiatives which have been happening at Dyffryn for over 10 years and we will be celebrating this during the year with opportunities to see behind the scenes and learn about what else we are developing. And I should mention we're bringing some traditional techniques back to the site in the form of a couple of rare breed pigs which will be turning over part of the kitchen garden in readiness for planting. They are Oxford Sandy & Blacks and visitors will be able to participate at feeding time. We think they'll be very popular with our

younger visitors.

We have a number of events throughout the year including an Orchid show 7th May and a Bonsai Show Whitsun Bank holiday weekend as well as being at the Cardiff RHS Show in April where we hope to recruit lots of keen gardeners as members. Please do keep an eye on our website for more information or join us on Facebook or twitter for regular updates.

Thank you again for your fantastic support. Looking forward to seeing you at Dyffryn at your AGM on 27th April, if not before.

Best wishes, Geraldine

Volunteers required

Kate Simons

Visitor Experience Manager

Many Friends are already among the Volunteers helping in the success of Dyffryn Gardens. However we are still recruiting for more volunteers. The roles we're looking to recruit for are;

- Garden Tour Guides
- Room Guides in Dyffryn House
- Buggy Drivers (need to have a full, valid UK driving license)
- Visitor Reception Volunteers
- Archive Volunteer

- Event/Busy Day Volunteers (manning car park, clearing trays, wayfinding etc)
- DIY Volunteer

If anyone is interested, or has a friend who might like to get involved, they can email yourdyffryn@nationaltrust.org.uk.

More information on volunteering is available at: <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/dyffryn-gardens/features/volunteer-with-us>

Or contact:

Kate.Simons@nationaltrust.org.uk

Telephone: 02920590804

Mobile: 07483425826

Souvenirs de Paris

By Rita White

On the 12 November 2015 one of our Friends gave us a fascinating talk about some of her lasting memories of a period that she spent living and working in Paris.

We were introduced to the first Gothic Cathedral in Europe: the famous 'Basilique de Saint Denis' where all the kings and queens of France are buried. We visited the beautiful chateaux of Chantilly, Vincennes, Vaux-le-Vicomte and Maisons Laffitte, learning about their place in history.

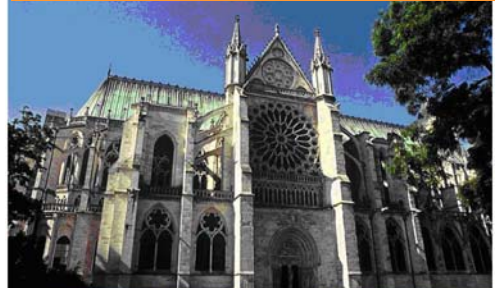
'Les Invalides', the famous military Hospice and Hospital built by Louis XIV, which now incorporates an army Museum, revealed its lasting link with the present. Yves Duteil sang about 'Le Parc Monceau' as we strolled around this little park beloved of Monet and which the Parisians call the English Park.

We marvelled at the majestic beauty of 'La Sainte Chapelle' and its incredible medieval stained glass windows, accompanied by the strains of the 'Sixteen' and Palestrina.

All in all an interesting and informative programme of anecdotes and photographs. An insight into Rita White's 'Souvenirs de Paris'.



La Sainte Chapelle



La Basilique de Saint Denis



Le Château de Chantilly



Le Parc Monceau

Cowbridge Physic Garden By Val Caple

As a fellow volunteer I was looking forward to this talk by Val Thomas, seeing it from her viewpoint.

Val described the planning and development from the first gleam in the eye of Dan Clayton Jones, the then chairman of the South and Mid Glamorgan Branch of the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust. It was officially opened in 2008 by HRH The Duchess of Cornwall, who is now Patron

This year is the 10th anniversary of the Cowbridge Physic Garden Trust. Last year it received the coveted Green Flag award for the 6th year, and was awarded the 'RHS in Bloom' highest commendation and a National Certificate of Distinction

The garden is laid out in beds according to the parts of the body the plants were used to treat, or their use in dyeing, perfumery etc. All the plants were in the UK before 1800, and research by the volunteers ensures the correct varieties are sourced. We do not recommend that you try the treatments! While some drugs have been developed from



Before and After



these plants, most are not effective, and could be dangerous.

The garden changes dramatically over the year, from the first small aconites and snowdrops, through daffodils and tulips, to the blousy summer display of roses and perennials. Autumn has its own beauty as trees like the Ginka change colour and the fruit ripens on the trees. Even in winter has it beauty with seedheads and evergreens

What has been built is a quiet corner in Cowbridge close to the shops and enjoyed by locals and visitors alike.

The Vale of Glamorgan Festival By Barbara Hodges

On Wednesday 17th February a small group of members were helped to forget the gloomy wet weather outside whilst Stephanie Power - Opera & classical music critic - gave an insight into the composers who give their time and share their musical skills during the Festival.

The Festival is dedicated to presenting the music of living composers and we were introduced to them via a presentation, which included short excerpts of their music.

This year's programme includes the world premieres

of 4 new works in addition to 8 UK premieres. There will be an international line up of artists including - The Latvian Radio Choir, viola player Maxim Rysanov, the young dynamic string quartet Quatouor Tana who perform exclusively from ipads instead of music scores.

Performers include: Madeleine Mitchell with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales; a colourful Danish group Ensemble MidtVest are making a return visit; accordion player, Andeeas Borregaard; Canadian duo, Parmela Attariwala



(violin) and Shawn Mativetsky (tabla) who combine contemporary classical composition with traditional Indian rhythms. Alice Neary (cello) and Matthew Jones (viola) will be exploring the relationship between music and silence.

The concerts will take place in various venues around the Vale. For details contact www.valeofglamorganfestival.org.uk/ or The Festival office at 204 Cyncoed Road, Cardiff, CF23 6BQ

The Xmas Lunch was held at the beautifully decorated Blue Anchor. Many thanks to all the organisers for a very enjoyable occasion, we appreciate how hard you worked



The flowers of Svalbard

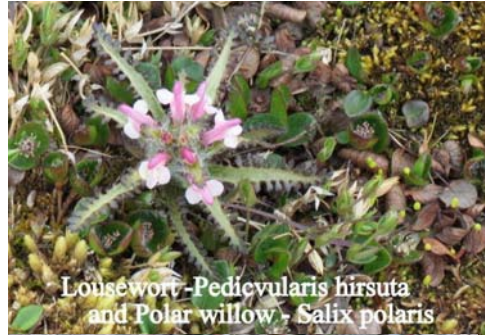
By Joan Andrews

In June 2014 I was fortunate to be able to visit the Arctic. While this gave the opportunity to sight polar bears, their cubs, walrus, various seals and numerous arctic birds, I hoped to see something of the unique flora of the region.

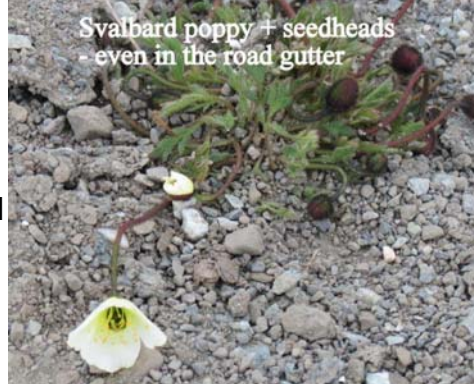
Svalbard (previously Spitzbergen) is a group of islands lying between 71 and 81°N. All are permafrosted and 60% covered by glaciers. There is no sun from 28th October to 14th February and midnight sun 19th April to 23rd August. Temperature in winter is often -30° and up to +6° in summer.

As we flew in the aeroplane landed on the edge of the fiord - all colours grey and white and a few flecks of snow. Everywhere was soggy from the recent snow with not a leaf or flower in sight. We spent the next 10 days sailing as far north as the pack ice allowed with many wonderful sunny days and birds and beasts in abundance - but no flowers.

On the next to last day we moored just off the southern end of Prins Karl Forland and then were ferried ashore.



Lousewort - *Pedicularis hirsuta*
and Polar willow - *Salix polaris*



Svalbard poppy + seedheads
- even in the road gutter



Salix and cotton grass



Potentilla hyparctica
- Arctic cinquefoil

After the first steep icy bit the rest was wet but navigable with pools of ice melt and we climbed to a splendid view point with arctic skua, arctic tern and purple sandpiper to entertain. At last we came across a few patches of purple saxifrage and other floral delights just bursting through the snow:

On our last day we disembarked in Longyearbyen, the capital, very much a frontier town with all houses in wood, all utilities running above ground because of the permafrost, skidoos everywhere, and the odd reindeer – like a tame dog rootling in back yards.

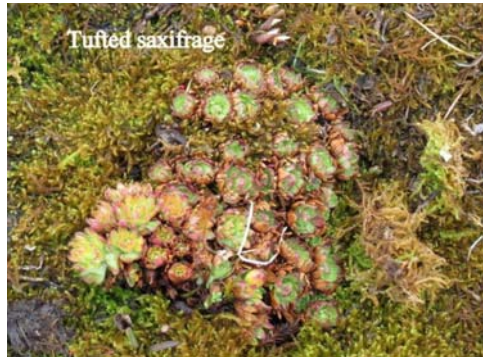
It was a pleasantly warm if slightly gloomy day as we headed off down to the road heading to the ‘dog kennels’ where all the huskies who pull the sledges live. They deter the local Arctic foxes so that the ground nesting birds do well.

Completely by chance we came across two flower filled meadows right in the town where the snow had just melted – what a delight as we knelt to enjoy these tiny gems.

Walking back the arctic terns were dive bombing and red sticks were provided to ward off direct hits. The eiders had hatched their first four ducklings and aunties were guarding



Ranunculus nivalis
- snow buttercup



Tufted saxifrage



Draba lactea
- Lapland whitflow grass



Mountain avens - seedheads

them from hopeful gulls. The barnacle geese were also sitting on eggs among the eiders. These delights were being enjoyed by a coach load of local nursery school children – very picturesque in their Fair Isle patterned woollies.

What a last day, even if the flight was late delaying our return to London and hence



missing the last bus home!!

[Clivedon to Dyffryn—A Head Gardener's Journey'](#)

By Val Caple

Chris Flynn started by admitting that photos of his journey down the M4 from Clivedon would be boring! As he had only been a head gardener since October he instead described his 'gardener's journey' from the discovery of Horticulture while working in a garden centre as a holiday job. Instead of studying zoology at university, as planned, he went to horticultural college before continuing his studies at Kew.

At Clivedon, a NT garden near Maidenhead, his interest in historic gardens, and Latin plant names, developed under the tutelage of Andrew Mudge. Clivedon is famous for its parterres, originally designed in the 1850s, its rose garden and its spring bulbs - recently they



Clivedon parterre and rose garden

have planted 64,000.

Management of the pond within the last few years produced many original plants such as pyramidal orchids, which will be encouraged to attract wild life.

Chris plans to bring the skills he has learnt to Dyffryn and I look forward to seeing his plans develop in the next few years.

Dyffryn Events 2016

Botanical art course

Join Debbie Devauden and learn how to draw a botanical subject from the beautiful gardens.

Starting Sat 12 Mar, 10:00-16:00.

Booking essential

National Gardens Open Day

We're throwing our doors open for free as part of the National Gardens Open Day.

Fri 15 Apr, 10:00-18:00

Dawn chorus

Join Alan Rosney of the Glamorgan Bird Club listening for and learning how to recognise different bird songs.

Sun 1 May, 05:30—07:30.

Booking essential

Orchid Day

Join us in May to find out about all things orchid.

Sat 7 May, 10:00-18:00

Second hand book fair

Our second hand book shops have brought in much needed donations from generous visitors. This year we are using the money raised to support our fountain restoration.

Sat 11 & Sun 12 Jun, 10:30-16:00

Plant fayre

Take a piece of Dyffryn home with you as we sell plants from our gardens.

Wed 10 Aug 2016 11:00-17:00

**For more information contact
Dyffryn staff or see:
[http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/
dyffryn-gardens](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/dyffryn-gardens)**

Subscriptions & Gift Aid

From Clare Williamson (Membership Secretary) **and Joan Andrews** (Honorary Treasurer)

Those few members who have not paid their Subscription for the year ending 31st March 2016 will find a form enclosed.

For most members we have enclosed a form of renewal for the coming financial year starting 1st April 2016. You can either post this or bring to the AGM.

Please remember that Gift Aid is an important source of income for the Friends.

With thanks

Friends News

From Val Caple

Website and Newsletter

These are YOUR Website and Newsletter, and I am always happy to receive items from you for the next issue. Please send me articles, photographs etc. at any time, especially those on events and trips

which we have organised.

I am also happy to include articles about Dyffryn or about other gardens or horticultural interests which you would like to share with fellow members.

I am always looking for photos of Dyffryn gGardens, especially old ones

Please post items to me or email them using addresses opposite.

Programme of Events 2016.

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 their Xmas Lunch at the Blue Anchor,



Monday 25th April	Coach trip to Blaencwm Cottage and Aberglasny See Application form for details.
Wednesday 27th April 2016	Friends of Dyffryn Gardens Society AGM. 2.00 pm in the Cory Education Centre Followed by walk round the garden lead by Chris Flynn, the Head gardener
Wednesday 25th May	Coach Trip Broadfield Court and Stockton Bury, Herefordshire See Application form for details.
Wednesday 15th June	Buffet Lunch to celebrate Dyffryn Garden's 110 year anniversary See Application form for details. Members only
Sunday 26th June	Fern Afternoon, 19 Westfield Rd. Pontypridd CF37 3AG Private cars See Application form for details.

For more Information, please contact

Mrs Mary Ponting, 4 Church Terrace, St Mary Church, Cowbridge, Vale of Glamorgan, C71 7LU, maryponting@talk21.com
or Mrs Barbara Hodges, Greenfields, Eagleswell Road, Boverton, Llantwit Major, CF61 1UF. fodyffryn.sec@virgin.net