

# GLYNNEATH & DISTRICT GARDENING CLUB

[www.glynneathgardeningclub.com](http://www.glynneathgardeningclub.com)



Members' newsletter

July 2015

## *Hello everyone*

The Club has received a grant of £1662.33 from the Maesgwyn Wind Farm Community Fund for the purchase of a new laptop computer, software, digital projector, a projector screen and a portable advertising stand. This will mean that we have the latest IT equipment, which we will put to maximum use for the benefit of members, for the presentation of slides, or in the production of the newsletter and Show programmes, and publicity material for the Club.

We have 70 members at present, but new members are always very welcome, so feel free to bring a friend along with you to the meetings or on the two remaining trips.

*Margaret & Sue*

## ***Be prepared!***

**This year's Horticultural Show is on  
Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> September  
at 2 pm in Glynneath Town Hall**

This is our 31<sup>st</sup> Show - let's make it the best yet.

Do try and enter something, whether it's from your garden, or you bake a cake, or put in your favourite photograph. The schedule of classes is enclosed with this newsletter, and is also on the website.

For a chance to win £100, could you please sell the raffle tickets enclosed, (or buy some yourself) and return the stubs and money by the day of the Show.

## ***Still to come .....***

### **Saturday 11 July**

Trip to Hidcote Manor Gardens, leaving Glynneath at 9 am.  
£19 for coach & entry fee.

### **Friday 24<sup>th</sup> July**

1 pm at Glynneath Training Centre.  
TOM JOHN, Penllergaer on "Beekeeping"

Graham will bring a selection of plants for sale.



### **Saturday 15 Aug.**

Trip to the Painswick Rococo Gardens, Glos.

Leaving Glynneath at 9 am.  
£16 includes coach & entry.

### **Friday 28<sup>th</sup> August**

1 pm in the Training Centre

A talk and slideshow by **Elizabeth Belcham** on her visit to **VERSAILLES** in May 2014.

***New members are always welcome - so make a note in your diary and come and give us a try.***



**Saturday  
5 September  
Town Hall -  
The Show,  
2pm**



### **Friday 25 September**

1 pm in the Training Centre.  
**Middleton - Paradise regained**

A talk and slideshow on the work at the Botanic Gardens since receiving their grant to restore the grounds to their former glory.

We had our first trip of 2015 on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> April when we visited St Fagans. It was a little early for the bedding plants around the castle but the surrounding grounds were glorious with the bluebells and a fantastic magnolia tree covered in blossom.

Our second trip was on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> June to the Hall at Abbey Cwm Hir near Llandrindod Wells. The house, furnishings and collections were unbelievable, and will be even more so at Christmas time when they have a different themed tree in every room (all 52 of them) - all this surrounded by a beautiful garden nestled in the valley.

## HIDCOTE MANOR GARDEN

Experience one of the country's great gardens. Hidcote is an Arts and Crafts garden in the North Cotswolds, a stone's throw from Stratford on Avon. Created by the talented horticulturist, Major Lawrence Johnston, its colourful and intricately designed outdoor 'rooms' are always full of surprises.

Explore the maze of narrow pathways and discover secret gardens, magnificent vistas and plants that burst with colour. Many of the plants found growing in the garden were collected from Major Johnston's many plant hunting trips to far away places. It's the perfect place if you're in need of inspiration.

Find a quiet spot and sit on one of the ornate benches and watch green woodpeckers search for their lunch, or listen to the calls of the buzzards circling overhead. Time it right and you might catch a glimpse of a Humming Bird Hawk Moth.

Meander through the intricate gardens and into the wilderness. This secluded stretch of tall trees is just right for a picnic. Take a glimpse beyond the boundary and see the garden blend effortlessly into the countryside beyond.



**We will be visiting Hidcote on  
Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2015  
leaving Glynneath at 9 am**

**£19 to include coach and  
entry to the gardens.**

**Food available on site at Winthrop's Cafe**

## ROCOCO GARDEN

A whimsical pleasure garden, The Painswick Rococo Garden, is set on the edge of the Cotswolds. It was originally designed from 1720-1760 and has been relatively newly restored. Restoration began in 1984 and continued to 1988.

Come and join us for a coffee and a bun in the Exedra (an Exedra is a rarely seen seating area or place to pass the time of day). Then we will head for the Red House, another focal point still in its original colour - just two of the features in these gardens.



Rococo gardens are usually quite intimate using visual deceits (another Victorianism), to make the gardens appear bigger than they actually are.

There are 6 acres of gardens, with a fish pond, a pigeon house, and a large central vegetable garden. The gardens are renowned for their display of snowdrops in the springtime. There have been substantial re-plantings of early 18<sup>th</sup> century flowers and climbers, tulips, foxgloves, honeysuckle, clematis, and jasmine, mostly found in the Kitchen Garden.

There is a Cafe and Gift Shop open to visitors on site - well worth a visit.



**Our trip to the Rococo Gardens  
is on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> August  
leaving Glynneath at 9 am.**

**£16 includes entry and coach fare.**

**If you would like to come on these trips then get in touch with John Laker  
as soon as possible. His telephone number is 01639 721234.**

## PARKS & GARDENS IN CARDIFF

### Isobel Carter

Cardiff was recently described as the newest and fastest growing capital city in Europe. (Swansea would ruefully agree). Yet, despite the proliferation of thriving building and development plans, Cardiff has so far managed to retain and expand its areas of green space. This contrasts with the featureless centres of some other cities such as Manchester. Every piece of wild woodland has a friends' group which maintains, develops and advocates their own local area. The friends of Howardian Local Nature Reserve for instance, support a scruffy bit of land of a few acres, squeezed between the motorway and the David Lloyd centre on the Newport Road industrial estate. Members of the group put up bird and bat boxes, clear and develop the ponds and keep the grass short for picnickers and wildlife.

At the other extreme is the 60 hectares of Bute Park which runs into Sophia Gardens and on to Llandaff fields. Bute park is a combination of recreation and activity area with rare and significant trees and spectacular herbaceous borders. The arboretum has rare firs, maples, acers, chestnut and thorns besides camellias, azaleas and rhododendrons.

Heath Park, Cathays Cemetery and Roath Park, Forest farm and the Glamorgan Canal are all areas easily accessible to housing developments. They are supported by local people with the help of the Cardiff City park rangers who offer guided walks for newcomers and tourists.



Friends of Parc Cefn Onn was formed in 2010 to support a park created about 100 years ago by a wealthy railway magnate. The main road through the park is lined with mature azaleas, camellias and rhododendrons. The streams and springs that run through it are planted with candelabra primulas and there are occasional clumps of gunnera. Much of the park is left to the wildlife and appears to be a haven for thrushes.

The various paths eventually lead to a ridge and footpath leading to Taff's Well.

On a sunny weekend the car park is full but the space is so large that one only meets the occasional dog walker or runner. The final virtue of this park which makes it a favourite for us is that it sits next door to The Cottage which is open all day for drinks and meals!



### ***Oh, the joy of raised beds***

A vegetable patch that seemed to specialise in growing weeds and became harder to dig year after year, led me to thinking of alternatives. Shrubs? No, the garden has more than its quota. Flowers? No - much as I like them, I enjoy seeing them in more or less wild abandon, not in a rectangular plot. Vegetables? Yes! I can't live without fresh beans and peas, so what to do?

Then, out of the blue, eight redundant scaffolding planks were mine, for two teas and a coffee, three slices of Bara Brith, buttered of course, and three Kit Kats for good measure. I was left speechless and delighted.

Next step - my daughters got to work and created three raised beds with pathways between, to be laid shortly with turf. I haven't stopped hoeing, raking and planting since, and so easy!

I am now waiting for the first shoots to make their appearance. A few showers would help and I think they are promised for the weekend - I can't wait.

PS: I have to justify the goodwill and hard work from everyone, don't I?

***Margaret Walters,  
April 2015***

Since writing this in April, we have had plenty of showers over the past couple of months, and things are beginning to grow well (as you can see in these "before and after" pictures)



***June 2015***

***“Will this come back again next year?”  
Part 2, by Graham Morris***

In the last newsletter I covered the very early days in running my plants business and mentioned that something happened in 2001 that would significantly impact on the business and change the way it operated for good. Whilst on holiday in Gran Canaria in late February 2001 news came through of an outbreak of foot and mouth disease back home. I knew immediately this would have a negative impact on my business as the many agricultural shows we had been selling plants at would be closed down to prevent the spread of the disease. I had to rethink the way forward and find a way out of the doom and gloom.

When I got home I thought I would contact local indoor markets to try to secure pitches to sell from. I had to do something. In the past I had tried some local places for a few months such as Rheola Market and the outdoor markets at Port Talbot and Tonypany but sales were not huge given the effort put in, so I still had misgivings as to whether or not this new approach would be the right one.

As things turned out I must have been one of the few people in the UK who actually got something positive out of the foot and mouth outbreak. A phone call to Brecon indoor market in late April 2001 immediately led to my securing a pitch. Apparently the person who had been selling plants there had pulled out the year before. I was welcomed with open arms, the rental terms were good and I had a large area in which to display my plants and, more importantly, no immediate competition.

Within a few weeks of setting up stall at Brecon market I had queues of people developing. I counted 12 people waiting one Tuesday morning and I had to do something or I would lose custom. Shortly afterwards I was employing someone for four hours each week to help me out. Business really took off and fortunately grew and grew (excuse the pun). To this day I am ever so grateful to the people of Brecon, some who became loyal customers for years afterwards, many of whom I got to know really well and with whom I enjoyed good banter and rapport.

There were many lighter moments over the years the business operated. One I remember only too well. At the South Wales Classic Car Show held at Pencoed my wife Jackie and I were visited on our plants stall by none other than the Mayor and Mayoress of Bridgend, proudly displaying their mayoral chains. The Mayoress had a good look at our plants and selected some to buy and brought these to the paying table. She explained that she had no money with her to pay for the plants but would like us to keep them until later that afternoon when she would call to collect them and pay for them at that time. I agreed to this, noting the amount to pay. I understood that the Royal family didn't carry cash with them but neither, it seemed, did the Mayor and Mayoress of Bridgend!

Well Madam Mayoress duly called back to the stall later that afternoon. I was manning the stall on my own, Jackie had gone for a walk around the showground. We often took turns away from the stall to have a look around shows at quieter times. The Mayoress, still resplendent in her regalia, went to the spot where her plants had been placed for safekeeping. She picked up the carrier bags containing the plants, said goodbye to me and walked off! I couldn't believe what I had just seen - here was the Mayoress walking off with plants she had not paid for! My immediate reaction was to go after her. "Excuse me Madam" I said in a loud voice "you have not paid for the plants you have taken". Back in a surly, stern voice came the reply "I have not taken plants without paying for them, I paid your wife for the plants about an hour ago when you were elsewhere".

I felt as if I wanted the earth to swallow me up there and then. The Mayoress had, of course, called to settle her debt whilst I had been away from the stall and Jackie had forgotten to tell me about this. Of all the people on the showground that day to accuse of theft, I had to pick on the Mayoress of Bridgend. What a plonker! Things are not always what they seem! We always remember the South Wales Classic Car Show but for all the wrong reasons

If you are fancying a drive and a look round some fabulous gardens on **Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> July**, then you could head down the M4 to Penllergaer, and combine a visit to the Penllergaer Open Gardens with a walk in Penllergaer Valley Woods.

Two gardens in the village will be open to support the work of the Forget Me Not Clubs for Dementia Sufferers, their families and carers in the Swansea area. £3 covers entry to the two gardens.

Be sure to also visit Penllergaer Valley Woods to see the work being undertaken at this historic site. This year they have received a second Heritage Lottery Fund grant to carry on the restoration work, this time to the walled garden and the orchid house. Entry is free but parking charges apply.



For information on the Open Gardens you can ring 01792 895330.

Further information on Penllergaer Valley Woods can be found on the website: [www.penllergaer.org](http://www.penllergaer.org)

## Times, they are a changing

The Glynneath Horticultural Show, in its present form, began in 1984 at the instigation of Harry Hemlock, who was Treasurer of the Allotment Society. Following an initial meeting at the Oddfellows Arms, the Horticultural Society was formed, but more recently the Show has been run by the Gardening Club. It has been held on the first Saturday in September, in Glynneath Town Hall, ever year since 1984, making this year's show the 31<sup>st</sup>.

However, it appears that the very first Glynneath & District Flower Show was held over 100 years ago. Mr Glyn Davies, who is Programme Secretary of the Glynneath & Cwmgwrach Historical Society, has kindly found me some cuttings from the Aberdare Leader dated August and September 1914.

### **Extract from the Aberdare Leader, 8 August 1914.**

#### **Glynneath Flower Show**

The first Glyn Neath and District Flower Show was held on the Morfa Glas Field, on Thursday last. There was a large attendance of the public, while the exhibits were of excellent quality. The President of the Show was Mr Godfrey H Williams, JP, while the Committee consisted of Messrs M Ogilvy Spence, PNF Sheppard, Dr McClure, T Williams, EJ Hopkins, Jack Ham, C Jolly, J Evans, F Stoden, R Phillips, FH Beauman, Sidney Stroud and Benj. Harries. The Hon. Secretary was Mr JH Francis, to whose energetic efforts the great success of the show was largely due.

A feature of the show, and one greatly appreciated, was the distribution of the prize money during the afternoon. The handsome silver cup, given by Mr Godfrey Williams to the most successful exhibitor, was won by Mr Jenkin Howells, Cwmgwrach, while the beautiful rose bowl for twelve roses of not less than 5 varieties, was won by Mr Handel Morris, Glyn Neath.

After the judging had taken place, a number of musical selections were given by the Aberpergwm Silver Band, and there were also competitive sports. Great interest was taken in the Tug-of-War, the winning team being Aberpergwm 3 Feet Team.

In the same edition of the Aberdare Leader, dated 8th August 1914 there was also a reference to the Show in the Resolven column.

### **RESOLVEN**

**FLOWER SHOW SUCCESSES** - Resolven florists and gardeners made a good hand of prizes at the Glyn Neath Flower Show. Mr J Rogers carried away six firsts, four seconds, and one third. Mr Dan Morgan took the special and first prize for vegetable collection and 12 other prizes. Mr William Howell took eight prizes, Mr George Buchan four prizes, and Mr Ivor Croft three. Colonel Vaughan took first prize for grapes.

The classes were divided in to two sections, Open Classes and Cottagers' Classes, but each section consisted of a large range of vegetables, fruit and flowers.

It is noticeable that some of the Open classes were won by people as far afield as Skewen, Resolven, Pontneathvaughan, Cwmgwrach, and Troedyrhiw, and this was before many people had a motor car. It would be fascinating to know how they brought their exhibits to the Show, by wheel-barrow, bicycle or horse

On the 12<sup>th</sup> September 1914 the Aberdare Leader reported the following:

For many years a successful flower show has been held at Resolven, but this year the show has been abandoned. This is particularly to be regretted in view of the fact that many local men have been very successful as exhibitors at Aberdare, Glynneath and Merthyr shows. Among these were Messrs. Dan Morgan (Pentwyn), Wm. Howells (Brynhyfryd) and John Rogers (New Inn Place).

It would be very gratifying to hear that steps were being taken to restart the flower show on the lines of the Glynneath Show, whose rules demand that no member of the committee shall be allowed to exhibit, and that all schedule rules shall be strictly enforced.

When the present Show started in 1984, entry to the classes was restricted to residents of Glynneath and District. We are anxious to attract more entries to the Show and so for the past two years it has been open to all, regardless of where you live.

If you would like to exhibit this year, on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> September, you can find the schedule of all the classes on our website:

[www.glynneathgardeningclub.com](http://www.glynneathgardeningclub.com)

## SOUND AS A POUND

DISCOUNT STORE,  
PET & GARDEN  
SUPPLIES,  
BEDDING PLANTS  
Excellent selection of  
greetings cards.

Stephanie Williams  
38 High Street,  
Glynneath

Tel: 01639 722444

## ROY'S FRUIT AND VEG.

We have moved to new  
premises round the corner  
from Jann's Diner  
56, High St, Glynneath

Tel: 07502 542835

As well as fruit and veg  
(for your 5 a day)  
we now stock wet fish.

Compost & manure available.

## I.T. SOCIAL CLUB

Glynneath Training Centre  
with Richard Angove,  
Tuesdays 1-2.30 pm.

Just a nominal charge of £2 per  
session to keep running as a  
Club.

Helping you email and stay safely  
connected online.

No set syllabus, but questions  
welcomed.

Bring your own device or use the  
Centre's computers.

For more information ring the  
Training Centre: 01639 721772

Or email Richard on  
[richlinux@gmail.com](mailto:richlinux@gmail.com)

## GLYNNEATH & CWMGWACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Club meets in Glynneath Training Centre  
at 7 pm on the first Wednesday of each month  
beginning in September.

As soon as the new programme is available  
you will be able to find details on the website and in the  
Glynneath column of Neath & Port Talbot Courier on a Thursday.

They have very interesting speakers and slideshows -  
New members are most welcome.

If you decide to join, membership is just £7 per year.

For more information you can ring Graham Morris on 01639 722105  
or email him on [grahamghs@aol.com](mailto:grahamghs@aol.com)

The website address is: [www.glynneathhistory.co.uk](http://www.glynneathhistory.co.uk)

## Ystradfellte Show & Gymkhana

Saturday 12 September  
At Heol Fawr Farm

Midway between Ystradfellte  
and Pontneddfechan

A traditional agricultural show  
including horticultural section,  
sheep, domestic, ponies, farm  
produce, children's classes  
and novelty dog show.

Refreshments, licensed bar.

For more details see:  
[www.ystradfellte.net](http://www.ystradfellte.net)

As this is the July newsletter, I thought I would see what I could find on **Miners' Fortnight**.  
I am sure you have your own favourite memories of that time, when everyone trooped off to Porthcawl.



Porthcawl  
August 1966



Donkey rides on Coney Beach

*There was a young man of Porthcawl  
Who thought he was Samson or Saul  
These thoughts so obscure  
Were due to the brewer  
And not to his ego at all.*