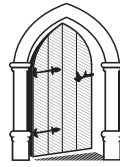


President: Dan Clayton-Jones OBE, KStJ, TD, DL



COWBRIDGE
PHYSIC GARDEN
GARDD BERLYSIAU'R
BONT-FAEN

Newsletter

Issue 52 October 2024

Service of Blessing in the Cowbridge Physic Garden

On 1st September we had a very special Service conducted by the Rev. Duncan Ballard In the Physic Garden. Duncan had suggested the idea, asking me if we had ever had the Garden blessed, as it is such a special place and much loved in the community. I thought this was a super idea, especially as we had just been granted Fields in Trust status which means that the Garden will remain a green space in Cowbridge in perpetuity. This is something to truly celebrate!

Garden Volunteers, Members of the Physic Garden and others from the community came in to support this event – we had violinist Clarke Alonzi playing Rachmaninov and Puccini, a selection of hymns and readings, and then Duncan blessed various different parts of the Garden. It was a delight – and a huge thankyou to Duncan for such thoughtful words in the Service. God even reminded us how important water is for nurturing the plants so we had a brief shower added to the mix as well!

Jo Homfray



Message from the Chair, Jo Homfray



The summer has fled by, hardly deigning to stop and warm us for any length of time! Now we are into my favourite season, autumn. How lucky some of us are to live in the country; to see the golden light, the leaves turn, the scarlet berries in the hedgerows, the smell of woodsmoke. Nature is preparing itself for dormancy.

Birds are already lining the telegraph poles to fly to distant lands, and occasionally I can hear the joyful chatter of young children looking for conkers. How special it is, to open up a ripe chestnut and to see the golden shiny nut nestling in its snowy case. Pumpkin season is upon us, log fires will soon be lit.

Thank you to all those who attended the Summer Garden Party and the special Service of Blessing conducted by our super Rector of the Benefice Duncan Ballard. It is always hugely appreciated to have your support.

Last week I visited the garden of Dyffryn Fernant near Fishguard, created by the talented Christina Shand. She arrived at her overgrown little farmhouse in 1994 and has created an absolute idyll. I have seldom been so blown away by such beauty – not just in its setting but also by the planting – a huge selection of exquisite varieties using up every conceivable space. We are very lucky to be having Christina as our Guest Speaker next March at our AGM and I am sure you will find her equally inspiring.

Lastly I will finish with a few lines from Robert Frost's poem on October:

**O hushed October morning mild, Thy leaves have ripened to the fall;
Tomorrow's wind, if it be wild, Should waste them all.
The crows above the forest call; Tomorrow they may form and go,
O hushed October morning mild, Begin the hours of this day slow,
Make the day seem to us less brief.**

The warmest wishes to all our Members – may you stay in good health, and warm in the next few months!



Meet our new Gatekeeper!

Martin Williams

After the tragic death of Peter Clinton we were very anxious as to who we could find to lock and unlock the Physic Garden doors every day. As it happened, fortune has smiled upon us with the appearance of Martin who has kindly agreed to take on the role.

Martin was born and bred in Cowbridge. He has worked for the Council all his life, but having been plagued with a bad back was forced to take on a job which was a little less strenuous – so now you will see him going up and down Cowbridge keeping our streets tidy for us – no mean task, and I am sure the community is very grateful to him for doing this. We are delighted to welcome him to the 'Physic Garden Family'!

SHOULD anyone discover they are locked in (Martin assures me he shouts loudly in the Garden before locking up!) there are telephone numbers on the noticeboard the Church Road end and someone will speedily come to the rescue!

Meet the Member

John Roberts

I was both flattered and surprised to be asked to contribute to the Newsletter for, whilst I love gardens, I hate gardening. It has been my privilege to have owned some lovely gardens as we moved home – ranging from an acre of superb garden in Leicestershire, planned and laid out more than 70 years ago, to a quiet little back garden in Eastgate.

However, I am now in the very fortunate position of being able to enjoy two lovely gardens without ever having to get my hands or boots dirty! I now live in an apartment in the finely restored old Grammar School in Cowbridge – my back door opens onto a quiet secluded garden with a fine lawn surrounded by flowering shrubs, backed by mature trees.

Equally, my front door is but ten paces from The Vale's secret jewel – Trysor cudd y fro – the Cowbridge Physic Garden. Here I often sit on a seat dedicated to my late wife Jan, listening to bird song and enjoying the wonderful work of the dedicated volunteer army who all work so hard to keep the Garden in such beautiful condition.



Members' Garden Party

It was disappointing that, after a few sunny days, the threatened rain arrived as the party was about to start on June 21st, midsummer's day. However, the committee were prepared and the party was moved to Old Hall.

We were surprised and delighted that around 100 people joined us, enjoying a glass of champagne, some excellent canapés, and partaking in a superb raffle. There was also a silent auction for 3 watercolours of the garden by member Brenda Dwek.

As we were running out of food, drink and chat the rain stopped. At least that meant the watering rota was no longer required!

In total, just over £1,000 was raised for the Physic Garden – which is excellent.

Many thanks to everyone who supported us.



Blue Pimpernel, *anagallis tenella, ssp caerulea*



Scarlet Pimpernel is a common weed in my own garden, but in the Physic Garden it is encouraged to grow in 3 of the medical beds.

It is found in the Nerve, Eye, and Liver beds. Its generic name *Anagallis* is derived from the Greek *Anagelao*, signifying 'to laugh,' because it removes the depression that follows liver troubles. *Culpeper* wrote 'It purges the head.' It was taken to treat depression and epilepsy and to cure madness. Gerard and *Culpeper* affirm that 'it helpeth them that are dim-sighted.'

Anyone holding a Pimpernel was said to be invested with second sight! In fact, the plant is mildly toxic to humans and animals. However, the plant material has

been applied externally to slow-healing ulcers and wounds.

I was very surprised to find a blue flower among the scarlet pimpernel in the Nerve bed. My first thought was that it was a very unusual 'sport', but further investigation showed that it is a subspecies which occasionally crops up in the wild in southern England. While most of the plants in the bed are self-seeded we do sometimes buy in wildflower seeds. I do not know whether the blue version was thought to be as effective a treatment as the red.

Baked Blackberries and raspberries with mascarpone

This is deeply colourful and tastes glorious.

For 6

- 500g blackberries
- 500g raspberries
- 2 vanilla pods
- 500g mascarpone cheese
- 3 egg yolks
- 30g icing sugar

Preheat the oven to 200 degs C/gas mark 6.

Wash the blackberries and raspberries and pick them over. Scrape the seeds

from the vanilla pods.

Combine the mascarpone, egg yolks, vanilla seeds and icing sugar in a bowl.

Put the blackberries and raspberries in a small baking dish. Spoon the mascarpone mixture.

Over them and bake for 5-10 minutes, until the mascarpone begins to brown.



ABF Fundraiser

Army
Benevolent
Fund



The beauty of Autumn

The Army Benevolent Fund, or ABF, was founded in 1944, during WWII, as the Army's National Charity. Celebrating its 80th anniversary this year its promise and purpose has remained unchanged during its existence: to ensure every soldier, past, present and future, can avoid hardship and live with independence and dignity.

As one of the largest funders in the military charity sector, the ABF stands at the forefront of support for the Army family through all of life's challenges, including bereavement, injury, getting back to work, elderly care and much more.

Currently, grants to individuals in need have increased markedly; both in number, and in overall cost. Request from other charities, especially those like SSAFA which deliver much of our aid, are also increasing, due in part to funding reductions elsewhere. Many of those

requiring help tend to be younger, more diverse, will live longer, and will experience more complex health and social care needs. Thus the need to continue to raise substantial funds each year is growing and not diminishing.

The ABF in the UK is structured on county lines. Much of South Wales is covered by the "Glamorgan Committee of the ABF" which organises events within their area, each year, to raise funds. For the last five years, one of the most successful events has taken place each year at the Physic Garden in late July. It is during this period that the Band of the 3rd Bat. Royal Welsh are attending their annual camp, and available to entertain those ticket holders who attend. This year, on Friday, July 26th we were also fortunate to have the very successful and talented "Army Wives Choir" from Monmouthshire who sang for the guests.

The sale of wine again helped swell the coffers and to wash down the delicious canapés provided by the Wellington, across the road from the garden. This year the event again raised over £3,000 for the ABF! Virtually everyone who attended commented on how stunning the garden looked and how much work had been involved to achieve this level of beauty and professionalism! The Committee of the ABF certainly agree with that sentiment! Huge thanks go from the ABF to the Trustees and Volunteers of the Physic Garden for giving us a venue for which we can all be proud!

*Dan Clayton Jones,
ABF Glamorgan
Committee*



Social Media Pages



We now have over 2200 'followers' on Instagram enjoying the visual delights of the Physic Garden. Photographs recently posted to the Facebook page includes a wedding and a visit by members of Cowbridge and Barry VI Sight Cymru Clubs. Search for Cowbridge Physic Garden on Facebook and follow @cowbridgephysicgarden on Instagram. You can tag any images **#cowbridgephysicgarden** or send content to **matt@cowbridgephysicgarden.org**

Garden Products!



Christmas is coming and I am sure everyone would appreciate a present of the latest tea towel based on an original watercolour by acclaimed artist and garden volunteer Gillian Griffiths. Perhaps it will add to their collection of tea towels! Other handy stocking filers are other examples of Gillian's art available in a range of notelets.

Our book, 'Cowbridge Physic Garden: Celebrating Ten Years of Spadework', tea towels, notelets, and umbrellas are available at The Bay Tree, Cowbridge, and online at **cowbridgephysicgarden.org**. The book is also available at the Cowbridge Bookshop.

You can buy plants and the above items on Thursday mornings in the garden—just ask one of the volunteers.

Dates for your Diary

AGM 2024. 12th March 2025. The Business meeting will be followed by a talk on Dyffryn Fernant near Fishguard by the creator Christina Shand. Details will be sent out in 2025.

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