

S U M M E R 2 0 2 5

The Walled Garden

Newsletter of the Friends of Llanfrechfa Grange Walled Garden



Hello Sunshine

Welcome to the Summer 2025 issue of the Llanfrechfa Grange Walled Garden newsletter.

Last summer was a challenge due to the long cold wet spring which seemed to carry on through much of the summer. What a difference this year! The sun is out, the garden is thriving and most days it's full of visitors. The heat of course brings its own challenges. In this issue you can read about some of latest projects and how we are looking to build for a sustainable future.

Our AGM is fast approaching. It's on August 12th and like last year will include a Guest Lecture on a gardening topic, free for members and regular volunteers. Non-members are also welcome for a £5 entry fee and offer of membership to the end of the calendar year. Details are on page 9.

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Around the Garden

Here's a roundup of what's going on or looking good in different parts of the garden.

The Reflective Garden



The latest additions to the Reflective Garden are a range of clematis plants purchased in May, with some of the proceeds from last year's Have a Grow Day.

The five obelisks sited in this quadrant were originally used to support sweet peas but their positioning made it difficult to tend them. So, we decided to replace the sweet peas with other climbers which would need less maintenance.

Clematis is symbolically associated with ideas of mental beauty, ingenuity and wisdom, so is an appropriate choice for a 'Reflective Garden'.

Varieties chosen were: Pink Flamingo, Bluebird and Pamela Jackson (spring flowering in pink, blue, purple and white), Nelly Moser, Omoshiro and Mrs Bateman (same colours flowering early summer), and Betty Corning, Pirouette and Huldine (late summer). In addition, we planted two Tranquilité against the north wall by the gate and at each end of the rose rope.



Clematis 'Pirouette'

The Kitchen Garden

A key change in the kitchen garden this season has been the extension of the growing space on the east side of the polytunnel. This is now growing lots of peppers, chillies and cucumbers. We have also grown an unusual variety of cucumber called a 'Dragon's egg' (see below).



Above New growing space in polytunnel
Right: Dragon's egg cucumber.



We have grown many of our usual favourites in the veg plots but this year, carrots have been taken to a whole new level! A new, very orange carrot box has been installed behind the polytunnel to enable us to grow nice long and straight carrots instead of our usual 2-pronged efforts. You can see how pleased our volunteers are with the results. Well done guys!



Around the Garden

Working our way clockwise around the garden, lots of work has been going on in the “upper terrace” behind the greenhouse and shed and in the Nursery.

The Upper Terrace



The balustrade wall has been finished, painted and topped with classical urns. It looks magnificent.

In front of it we have created a large flower bed with loads of topsoil collected by volunteers from a family who donated it via Abergavenny Freecycle.



Behind we are creating a large patio against the south wall. Its deep sub-base consists of a mix of bought in materials and 10 tonne of donated road planings! Eventually to be used as another seating area, we have yet to choose its top finish.



On the east wall of the new patio a “living wall” has been built from upcycled pallets, watered by a drip feed irrigation system.



Nursery upgrade

The plant nursery area outside the south gate is becoming an important facility for the Walled Garden. The rear section is used to hold cuttings or divided plants being grown on for different parts of the garden. The area near the gate is used for plant sales.

Up until now these plants were stood on a range of rickety salvaged tables of all shapes and sizes. Over the summer, our volunteer carpenters have been busy building us new staging from pallets and some bought timbers. These are a great improvement, as they are built to our specifications and make a better use of space.

We are also trialling some home-made shades for the plant tables as this year’s heatwaves have caused some headaches trying to keep all those pots hydrated.



Lovely Lillies

We have had some beautiful lillies flowering over the summer. The pale yellow blooms (left) are in the Rainbow bed, along the south wall. The orange day lillies (right) flowered in June along the path to the east gate.



Have a Grow Day 2025

Our annual “Have a Grow” day takes place in early June and is part of a UK wide celebration of community gardening with Social Farms and Gardens.



This year our “Have a Grow’ day took place on Saturday 7th June. It was touch and go as to whether we would go ahead though as the weather forecast was not great. It turned out a bit of a mizzly day with some sunshine poking through, but thankfully the worst of the weather stayed away but our visitors did not. Footfall may have been lower than normal but we still had a steady flow throughout the day.

Thanks to everyone who came along to support us and all the volunteers who helped out in the preparation and running of the day. This year’s event raised about £2,000, a little less than last year but still a great result. All proceeds go towards the ongoing development and maintenance of the garden.

We had our usual range of stalls positioned around the garden, with fun activities for children, tombola, raffle and lots of things to buy including crafts, books, plants and produce. We also aimed to promote horticultural activities at our “Propagation Station” where visitors could try their hand at planting seeds and potting up plants. This year we also did a display on the history of the garden and how it was used in times past. As ever, the refreshments area did good business. Who doesn’t enjoy a nice cuppa and a piece of cake.



Our 7th Green Flag Award



The Green Flag Community Award is the international standard for well managed volunteer led green spaces. It highlights the importance of quality outdoor spaces for communities, people's health, and the environment.

We apply for the award every year in January and are visited in spring by a judge from Keep Wales Tidy, who managed the awards in Wales. The judge assesses the garden based on criteria such as - being a welcoming place, healthy, safe, secure, clean, well maintained, environmentally sound, and involving the community.

We are delighted to have been awarded a flag again this year, with the credit due to the hard work and dedication of our wonderful band of volunteers.

Celebrating 10 Years of Schwartz Rounds at ABUHB

In July, the Walled Garden team was delighted to host a celebration summer garden party to mark a decade of Schwartz Rounds at ABUHB. It was a wonderful opportunity for colleagues to reconnect and reflect on the power of compassionate dialogue in healthcare.

Schwartz Rounds are one-hour group sessions, which provide a safe, structured space for staff to share the emotional impact of their work, helping to foster empathy, connection and wellbeing across teams. Each Round starts with the sharing of three staff stories, with attendees invited to listen and reflect on how these stories relate to their own experiences of work.

The event was attended by their founding members Benna Waites, Sarah Flowers and Adrian Neal. Other key players included Gareth Llewelyn, Executive Directors Peter Carr and Sarah Simmonds and members of the Schwartz Steering Group.

To learn more about Schwartz Rounds for healthcare staff please contact: jerrie.serrell2@wales.nhs.uk



Volunteering Update

The Walled Garden depends on its hard-working volunteers and unpaid charitable trustees to keep the garden looking wonderful all year round.

Summer Social

On 23rd July, around 30 volunteers joined the Trustees for a delicious buffet lunch. This is an annual event to say thank you for all the hard work that everyone puts in. It's also an opportunity for volunteers who work on different days, to meet up and chat with others from around the week and for new people to be welcomed.

The weather was a bit touch and go for al fresco dining, but eventually brightened up. We cracked open some bottles of non-alcoholic bubbly to add to the proceedings.



Welcome Newbies

We would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest volunteers; Sue and Riya (below), Megan, and Kay.



Can you spare some of your time to help us achieve our aims?

Helping in the garden varies from physical work such as digging and planting to more gentle tasks like sowing seeds or making teas and coffees.

To find out more, please contact our Volunteering Secretary, Sundari, at email: info.lgh.garden@gmail.com or pop into the garden during opening hours to speak to any of our Trustees or regular volunteers.

Signposting Project

We will be setting up a new project in the autumn, to look at improving signposting and labelling all around the garden. In the meantime we are trialling some new signs.

In the autumn we finalised our logo, which enabled us to design some bold new signs, now installed, to go at the Llanfrechfa Grange entrance.

Then in spring, we began to introduce some new display signs for a number of our main planting areas and show gardens. Each one was individually designed by one of our volunteers, to show features of the respective area and included a QR code linked to our website and a dedicated page for each sign.

The aim is to enable visitors to find out all about each garden area, and its key planting and design features as they walk around.

It's a work in progress, so more signs and info pages will come on stream as we get going but if you've tried it, please tell us what you think.



Not sure how it works?

Turn on your mobile and select camera. Focus your camera on the QR code until a web address pops up on screen and takes you to our website. That's it!

Visitor Opening Hours



Many of our visitors are members of staff, patients and their loved ones who come over from the Grange University Hospital. However, we are also pleased to welcome many regulars who live locally and like to pop in for a walkaround or to buy plants or produce.

Mr Owen Filer (left), at 105 years old, is the oldest man in Wales. He regularly drops by to purchase our freshly picked veg, so he's a great advert for eating your greens as a secret to a long life!

We are open daily. Our core hours are:
 Sun, Mon, Tues – 09:30 – 15:00 hrs
 Weds, Thurs, Fri, Sat – 10:00 – 13:30 hrs
 Groups by prior arrangement

Top Tips - Summer Propagation

Here in the Walled Garden, we propagate to make new plants as an insurance policy against losses, for planting out in the garden, and for selling on to visitors.

There are many types of plants that can be propagated in summer including hydrangea, lavender, penstemon, salvia, rosemary, verbena, hardy fuchsia, sage, mint and other aromatics.

1. Choose healthy, young stems without flowers. If the cutting is flowering, the plant will focus on the bloom instead of forming roots.
2. Cut early in the morning when it's cooler and the plant is full of water. This reduces stress and improves rooting success.
3. Use clean, sharp tools, to avoid the spread of disease.
4. Always cut just below a node (where a leaf meets the stem).
5. Remove the lower leaves, leaving 2-3 leaves at the top. Cut large leaves in half to reduce moisture loss and wilting.
5. Dip in liquid or powder rooting hormone (optional, but helpful), to encourage faster, stronger root growth.
6. Plant in light, airy soil, use a cutting mix or blend your own with coco coir, perlite, and a little peat or compost. Make a hole with a pencil first to avoid damaging the stem.
7. Keep humidity high, cover the cutting with a clear bag or place it in a mini greenhouse to retain moisture or mist the leaves frequently but ventilate now and then to prevent mould.
8. Place in bright, indirect light. Avoid direct sun, which can scorch leaves and dry out the soil. Ideal temperatures for rooting are between 18-24 °C (65-75 °F). If it's very hot, move cuttings indoors.
9. Water carefully. Keep the soil lightly moist, but not soggy. Using a spray bottle can help to maintain humidity without overwatering.
10. Be patient, don't pull on the cutting to check for roots. Wait 2-3 weeks. If you see new growth or feel resistance when gently tugged, that's a sign that roots have formed.



Happy Propagating. Good luck!

Join Us for our Guest Lecture & AGM 2025

We are continuing our offer of an annual guest lecture at our AGM this year, making it free for our members and regular volunteers. See details below. There will also be an opportunity to visit the Walled Garden at the end of the event

FRIENDS OF LLANFRECHFA GRANGE WALLED GARDEN

GUEST LECTURE 2025

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



“The Winter Garden - a journey through winter into spring” with Dean Peckett.

Free entry to members and volunteers. Non-members £5.

Dean is a horticulturist and garden designer based in South Wales. His previous experience includes senior roles at RHS Wisley and Harlow Carr and management of the 200 acre Fort Belvedere estate in Berkshire

**Tuesday August 12th
2025 - 2 PM**

**Committee Room, Grange House,
Llanfrechfa Grange, Cwmbran,
NP44 8YN**

CHARITY REG. 1176172



Gooseberry Fool

It can happen to anybody! In the spring while sorting through our seed packets we came across 2 lots of seed for Cape Gooseberries. Admittedly they were very out of date 2014 and 2017 but we thought it might be worth a try anyway.

Only one seed germinated but we nurtured it for months, potting on regularly and looking forward to some exotic fruit. And then it started to flower and one of our seasoned gardeners politely suggested it looked remarkably like a chilli plant. And indeed, that is what it is! We have a fine crop of long green chillies along with some red faces and lots of laughter!! We think the seed must have come from our home-made compost.

Better luck next time, but use fresh seed is the moral of the story.



Left - what we should have seen.

Right - what we actually grew!



Contact Us

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Or on Facebook at Llanfrechfa grange walled garden



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