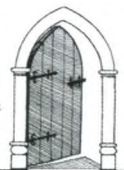


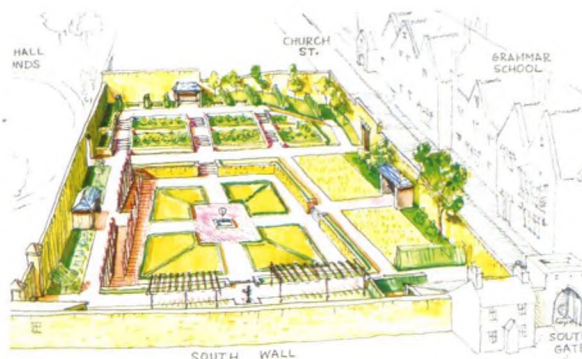
# A Physic Garden for Cowbridge

Cowbridge Physic Garden Trust  
Ymddiriedolaeth Gardd Berlysiau'r Bontfaen



On 13 March 1254 Richard de Clare, the Norman Lord of Glamorgan, granted Cowbridge its first Borough Charter, thereby giving the inhabitants of the Borough (burgesses) many rights and privileges including a monopoly of trade within the town. The town walls, built soon after the foundation of the Borough, had an economic as well as a defensive role, guarding not only the inhabitants of Cowbridge from attack but also protecting their control of markets and fairs and the collection of tolls.

Today, in the heart of Cowbridge and within an area bounded on the south and west by the medieval town walls, lie Old Hall gardens, now the site of the Health Centre and the Library. By the eighteenth century Old Hall was the home of the Edmondes family who laid out the gardens there, and members of the Edmondes family lived at Old Hall until the 1920s. From the 1930s until the 1960s Old Hall provided classrooms and other facilities, including a kitchen garden, for the Grammar School, but in 1964 the house was declared unsafe and the School departed. Part of the house was saved and refurbished by the Council and is now a venue for adult education classes and other community activities. The Old Hall garden provides a pleasant public amenity.



Artist's impression March 2005



*Verbascum thapsus*  
Mullein



*Viola tricolor*  
Wild Pansy

It is remarkable that this garden should have survived as an open space within the town. Even more remarkable is the survival of the walled garden in the south-east corner of the Old Hall site. Having been used as a tree nursery by the Council it was abandoned some fifteen years ago and was, until recently, totally overgrown. In the year when Cowbridge celebrated the 750th anniversary of its Foundation Charter, the South and Mid Glamorgan Branch of the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust proposed to restore this walled garden, create a Physic Garden within its walls, and provide a new, free public garden for the people of Cowbridge and the Vale. The Cowbridge Physic Garden Trust Ltd was registered as a company limited by guarantee in May 2004 and as a charity in February 2005. The Creative Rural Communities awarded an initial grant to the CPGT in January 2005

The design will utilise features shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1887, a formal layout which owes its origin to an earlier century. It will take the form of a parterre garden, and as the patterns of such gardens are best viewed from above, a raised walkway will be incorporated into the design. The planting plan for the Cowbridge Physic Garden will take its inspiration from the famous Chelsea Physic Garden where plants with medicinal properties have been grown and studied since the seventeenth century.

The Cowbridge Physic Garden will have an educational and scientific value, and it will provide a colourful, fragrant and tranquil oasis within the town.



*Primula veris*  
Cowslip

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Registered Charity Number 1108233

[www.cowbridgephysicgarden.org.uk](http://www.cowbridgephysicgarden.org.uk)

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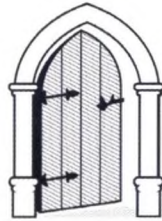
The Rural Community Action programme is facilitated by the Welsh Development Agency, which is a sponsored body of the Welsh Assembly Government  
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COWBRIDGE  
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*WELCOME TO COWBRIDGE PHYSIC GARDEN*

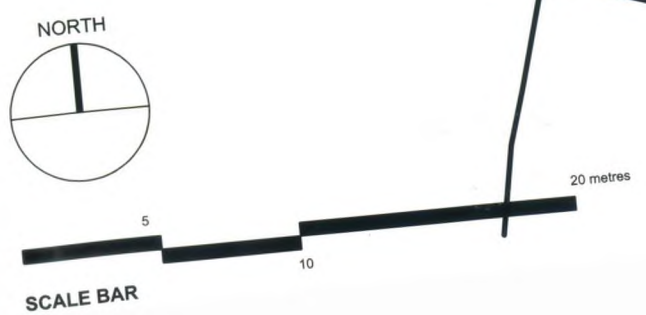
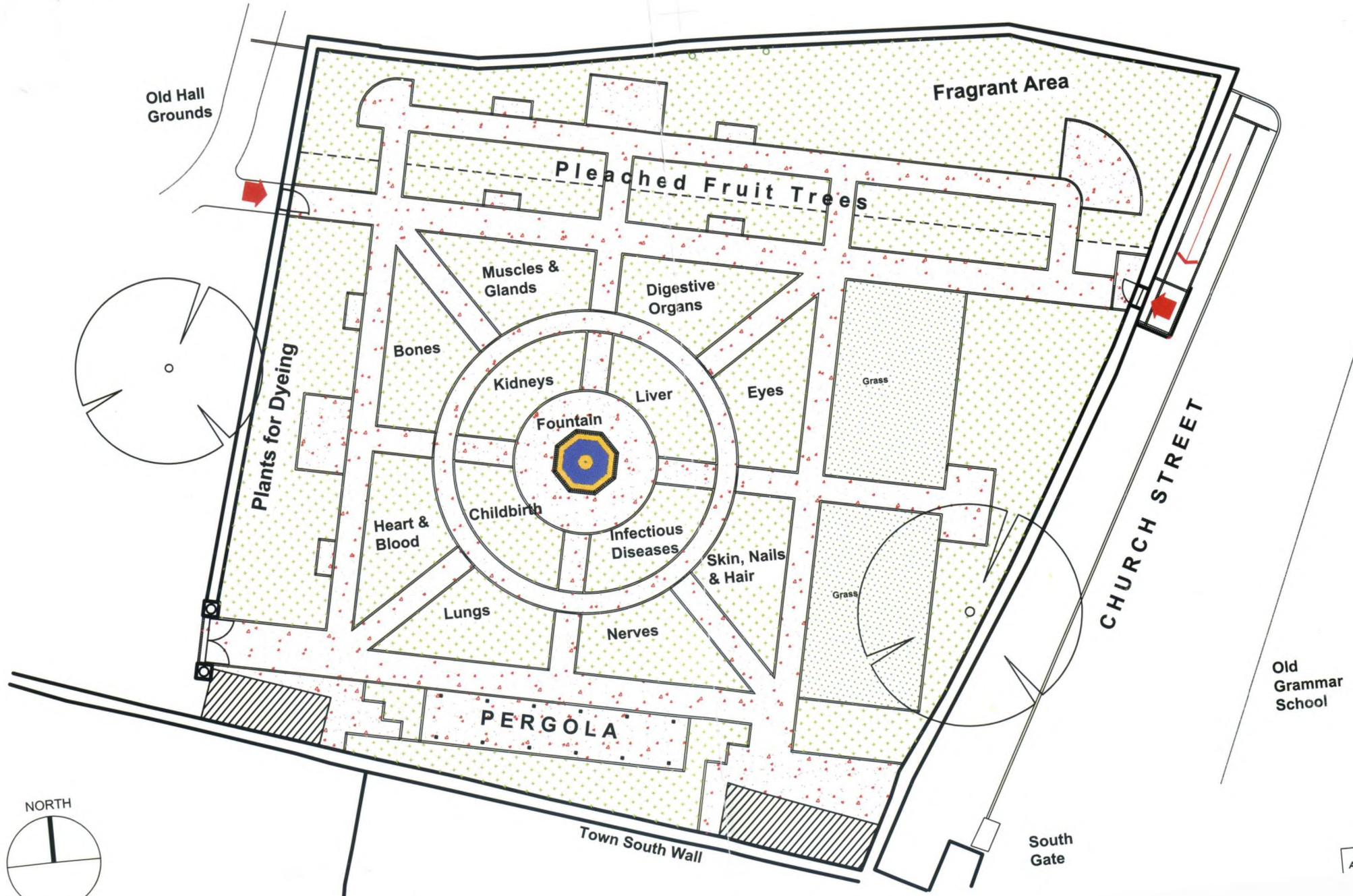
**T**he Physic Garden is located within the Old Hall grounds in the centre of Cowbridge and is bounded on its south side by the medieval town wall.

**I**n the mid eighteenth century the Edmondes family acquired Old Hall, a house fronting the High Street, improved the house and developed the gardens. Records show that in the nineteenth century the walled enclosure in the south-east corner of the gardens was formally laid out with beds and paths, a layout which suggests an earlier origin. This is where the Physic Garden has been created, its formal design echoing the pattern of earlier centuries.

**A**fter the departure of the Edmondes family from Old Hall in the 1920s the Physic Garden site became, successively, a kitchen garden for Cowbridge Grammar School and a tree nursery for the Local Authority. Neglected for many years thereafter, by the end of the twentieth century it was an overgrown wilderness. Its transformation into the Physic Garden has been the work of the Cowbridge Physic Garden Trust, a charitable body set up to carry forward a project initiated by the South & Mid Glamorgan Branch of the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust. Clearance of the site began early in 2005. Landscaping and construction work started in August 2005 and was completed in August 2006. Planting began in September 2006 and will continue for some time to come. This is a garden in progress which needs time to develop and mature.



# MAIN PLANTING AREAS AT COWBRIDGE PHYSIC GARDEN



August 2006  
Anthony Jellard Associates



The layout and content of the garden are typical of the C18th, incorporating the formal, the functional (not only medicinal, but also culinary, perfumery, cosmetics and dyestuffs) and the aesthetic. Only plants found in Britain before 1800 are included in the garden.

Twelve central beds are devoted to plants which, over many centuries, have had medicinal properties attributed to them, and some of which have a recognised medicinal value today. Each of these beds contains plants specific to a part of the body or a particular illness and each bed is appropriately labelled (Kidneys, Eyes, Nerves, Lungs etc.).

In the areas around the perimeter of the garden the emphasis is on colour and fragrance, but here again the medicinal and 'soothing' value of the plants is recognised. Fruit trees include apple, pear, walnut, quince and mulberry. The vines trained against the walls were a gift from Cowbridge's twin town of Clisson.

The tranquil atmosphere of the Physic Garden is enhanced by the central fountain. Seats in the pavilions and alongside the paths enable visitors to enjoy the Garden at leisure.

The Physic Garden opened on 1 October 2006. It is open every day except Christmas day and for special events. Admission is free.

*May 2007*

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Cowbridge Physic Garden Trust Limited

Registered Charity Number: 1110127 Company Number: 5118600

Registered Office: The Cross, Llanblethian, Cowbridge, Vale of Glamorgan, CF717JF

Website: [www.cowbridgephysicgarden.org.uk/](http://www.cowbridgephysicgarden.org.uk/)

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