
**COWBRIDGE
PHYSIC GARDEN**



Church Street
Cowbridge
Vale of Glamorgan



**THE HISTORY OF
THE PHYSIC GARDEN**



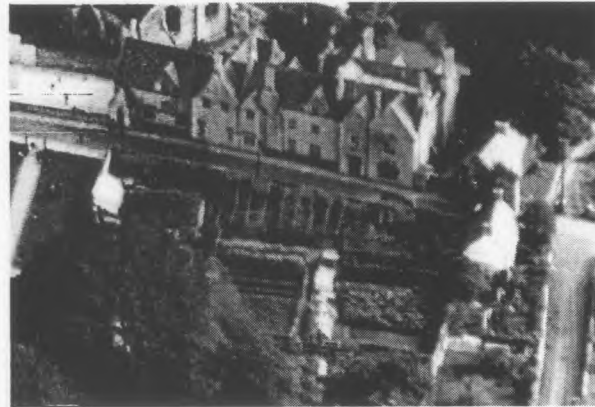
COWBRIDGE PHYSIC GARDEN: A BRIEF HISTORY

This plot of land has had a variety of land uses over the past two hundred years.

Most recently, up to 2003, this was an abandoned tree nursery, with tall trees and saplings competing with each other in their search for light, and growing very close together. This impenetrable woodland had to be cleared: the trees had to be felled and roots grubbed up, before the development of the Physic Garden could begin. South Glamorgan Council had developed the tree nursery soon after 1975, but soon afterwards abandoned the idea, leaving the trees growing but untended, a situation which continued after the change-over to the Vale of Glamorgan Council.



From 1932 until 1975 the garden had been the kitchen garden of the boarding house of Cowbridge School, but as boarding ceased in 1975, the need for a vegetable garden also ended.



There were greenhouses on the south-facing wall, fruit trees, and especially vegetables in abundance. Especially during the 'Dig for Victory' campaign of wartime, the schoolboys were often enlisted to help in the cultivation of vegetables. *The Bovian*, the school magazine, records . . . "Teams of boys engaged quite capably in digging, weeding, planting and watering . . . while Mr Penny (the school gardener) detailed squads of boys for this job or that". By the summer of 1941, the garden not only supplied the boarders' kitchen, but also managed to yield nearly all the vegetables for the day boys' dining hall, which provided 400 meals a week.

Our garden, before 1932, had been part of the garden of Old Hall, owned by the Edmondson family for nearly two centuries. The greenhouses on the north wall had been built by that family, as had the two sheds on the southern boundary of the garden. The greenhouses, tall and south-facing, had been heated by furnaces, the remains of one of which having recently been excavated in the north-west corner of the plot.

A watercolour of 1926, painted by Eleanor Edmondson, shows a feast of colour and a wealth of flowers in this area, but no doubt there were vegetables set back a distance from the main pathway leading to Church Street which appears in the middle of the painting.

