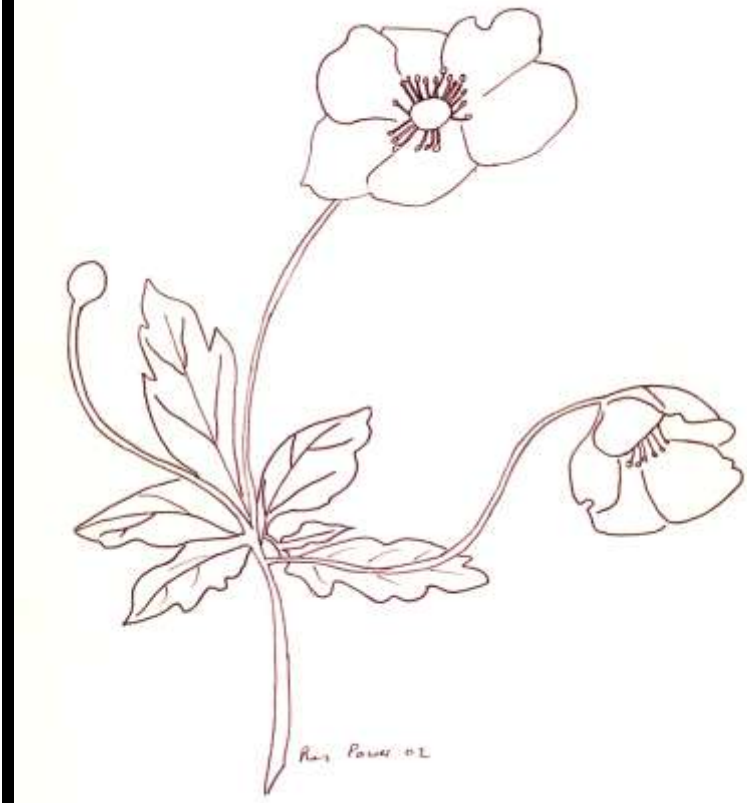
The Newsletter of the Irish Garden Plant Society



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Front Cover Illustration: *Ros Power gave me this line drawing some years ago and it has, so to speak, sat on the back shelf since then. It is of an Anemone x hybrida, one of those flowers which bring brightness and colour to the autumn border.*

A quick look at A Heritage of Beauty to see if there were any Anemone x hybrida of Irish interest brought me to Anemone x hybrida 'Lady Ardilaun' and A. x hybrida 'Lord Ardilaun.'

'Lady Ardilaun' is described, 'The plants are 5 feet tall, well furnished with grand foliage and a profusion of large blooms. Each bloom is replaced by a head of seed quite as large as a hazel nut. It is strong and robust, with large glossy green foliage, and a very free bloomer.' This originated from Ashford Castle.

'Lord Ardilaun' was from St. Anne's, Clontarf and was described thus: 'Quite the best of the recent crowd of the new forms of this fine hardy plant; the leaves are massive and handsome, the flower milk white, very large and semi-double, much like a water lily.'

Unfortunately, both plants are no longer available to us but serve to illustrate the importance of preserving our present plants for future generations. I'm sure that, like me, you would welcome either of these plants into your garden. Unfortunately, we can't.

Editorial

Heartfelt congratulations to the members of the Leinster committee for the wonderful seminar they organised to mark the 25th anniversary of the founding of the society. There were several elements about the day which struck me as particularly appropriate. There has been a long and very beneficial association between the society and the Botanic Gardens over the years and it was fitting that this was the location chosen to mark the anniversary. Then there were the speakers; it would be difficult, if not impossible, to select a better group of people to represent and express the aims and aspirations of the society. Then, of course, there were those attending, many long-time members and many who have given generously of their time and efforts to promote the society over the years. All in all it was a most enjoyable day with wonderful talks in excellent company in a fitting setting. Congratulations!

Helen Dillon's recollections of plants, gardens and people struck at the essence of what the society is and should be. She recalled wonderful memories and presented, as usual, a highly entertaining and instructive talk. Dr. Peter Wyse-Jackson's comment was so appropriate: "What a national treasure she is."

Charles Nelson has been a backbone of the society from its foundation. He mentioned some of our plant treasures and successes and stressed the importance of holding onto older varieties, potatoes and apples for example, so that we can go back to strong breeding material if needed. He also expressed some concerns – that we have no collection of the many rose cultivars raised in Ireland, that many good daffodil cultivars may be lost to cultivation and that while most of the original committee members are still around and active there are not that many younger people active in the society.

Harold McBride outlined, with excellent photographs, many of the treasures we can grow here in Ireland but also outlined the difficulty of keeping good plant introductions going over the years. Stock may weaken from repeated division or from virus infection while changing weather conditions seems to be making the cultivation of certain plants more difficult. Keeping good Irish plants going in the face of these difficulties will be a challenge.

Mary Forrest brought us to an area of horticulture with which most of us were not familiar, the planting of public spaces and general amenity planting. It is perhaps, an area still in its infancy here in Ireland but is one which could provide opportunities for interesting planting schemes in the future and, perhaps, a setting for plants of Irish interest.

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Graigueconna – Roses and History

By Mrs. Rosemary Browne

When I was very young my parents gave me a small garden about four feet square. In it grew the climbing rose 'Caroline Testout'. My brother and I added nasturtium, which was bright orange, and we thought it was beautiful winding its way through the pale pink rose! My mother collected old shrub roses so we grew up with 'Cardinal de Richelieu', 'Fantin-Latour', and 'Celeste'.

Many years later they were still growing in the garden, and on our return to Ireland I was able to collect cuttings and suckers from the original plants, including my fathers favourite *Rosa chinensis* ' Mutablis', which grows well at Graigueconna. The apricot single flowers turn a rich ruby red in autumn. It also blooms occasionally during the wintertime when the flowers are a darker colour, but the two main flushes are in May and August. I was given a shrub of one of its close relatives, *Rosa chinensis* 'Sanguinea' or 'Bengal Crimson', as named by Nancy Lindsay. It is called that name because it came to Europe from China via India and Madagascar. Both these roses can be grown either as a shrub or a climber. I am told that 'Bengal Crimson' is tender, but it has not been touched by frost in this garden. I was asked for seed, but so far the hips have always remained green in colour.

It is difficult to select a favourite rose, so I am naming the ones that do best in this garden. The albas, 'Celeste', and 'Maidens Blush' or if you prefer 'Cuisse de Nymphe' or 'Maidens Thigh', and 'Queen of Denmark' all do well here with their pale pink flowers and blue-grey leaves. The gallica 'Charles de Mille' is lovely with rich crimson blooms which open flat as though cut across with a knife. Sadly both this and 'Fantin-Latour' are martyrs to black spot. I try to get rid of roses that are susceptible, but I love theses two too much to part with them. 'Fantin-Latour' has glorious pink flowers for a long period.

The moss rose 'William Lobb' also attracts attention with its bluish pink coloured blossoms, which bloom in June and early July. It sends up very long stems which when young and soft can be gently tied down to a stake or low branch. This causes the buds along the stem to break out into bloom all along the stem. I also use this method with the English roses, which also have long flowering stems. Several of the latter grow successfully here in the garden, including my favourites 'Graham Stuart Thomas' with its apricot yellow flowers, and 'Heritage' and 'Gertrude Jekyll' with their deep pink flowers.

Good climbing roses and ramblers, which grow into the apple trees, are *Rosa* 'Coopers Burmese', with large white single flowers, and *Rosa* multiflora simplex which has bunches of tiny white flowers and used to be used as root stock for modern climbers. 'Seagull', which I think is also a multiflora, grows on a wall in a vigorous fashion as does 'Belvedere', a rambler with double pink flowers. This should have been planted into a forest tree, and I have seen the original growing in the garden in Belvedere. The last rose I love is called 'Isphahan' and it presumably came originally from Persia. It is a large bush rose covered in bunches of pink double flowers, and is in bloom during June and July. It never gets black spot although it grows next to 'Madame Hardy', which is always covered in spots. It is also scented and is loved by everyone here, so I would perhaps name it as my favourite, followed by 'Charles de Mille', and 'Gertrude Jekyll'.

A Note on the History of Graigueconna:

Phineas Riall of Old Conna Hill, now Aravon School, inherited the property from his Aunt Jane Roberts and, whilst waiting, he bought Graigueconna in 183**4**, I think, the house being built in the late 1700s. Phineas added on to the house and made a garden. He was a plantsman with a special interest in ferns and shrubs and was a friend of Burbidge, then Curator at Glasnevin, and they exchanged plants – I have seen his diaries.

Phineas had four sons and two daughters who lived here. The eldest son, Lewis Riall, inherited Old Conna Hill. His second son was my father, Claud Riall who inherited Old Conna Hill. Phineas' daughter, Elizabeth (Lizzie), married the Rev. Ralph Meredith and lived here when her father went to Old Conna Hill.

They had two sons, one being Lewis Meridith. He married and had one daughter and designed the garden in its present shape and made the Rock Garden. He was, I am told, well known as an Alpine Gardener. His book was first published in 1908. I had a copy but gave it to Graham Stuart Thomas – I still have the 1910 edition. The first book had a different picture on the front.

He left here in the late 1930s – early 1940s and the place was let to two Mess Johnsons and Mr. & Mrs Conan. All were keen gardeners but I understand did not alter the garden.

When the lease fell in I inherited Graigueconna and my husband and I came to live here in 1970. We have not altered the garden much apart from turning a small paddock into a shrubbery and the kitchen garden and orchard into a shrubbery with a long border, leaving the apple and pear trees – some now very old! Apart from a good Bramley Seedling, the apples were poor and we have grown roses into some of them.

The problem is I am not sure which of the old shrubs were planted by Phineas Riall, who left here in the 1860-1870s or his grandson, Lewis Meridith. There is an ancient *Abelia trifoliata*, which Charles Nelson says is the same age as the one at Glasnevin and so possibly was given to Phineas by Burbidge. There was a huge *Eucalyptus gunnii*, which I am told was planted to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. There is also a very large *Drimys winterii* and an old specimen of *Crinodendron hookeriana*. Sadly, a splendid specimen of Arbutus andrachnoides died. Its crimson trunks were always very attractive in the garden. It came down in Hurricane Charlie and was, I'm afraid, infected with honey fungus, which also killed an old cherry tree and an Halesia nearby. There were also several berberis which died of old age. Still living is an old *Cydonia* which has double crimson flowers.

An illustration from Lewis Meredith's book showing the rock garden

The Rock Garden was very overgrown with mare's tail and brambles when we came in 1970 due to the fact that there was a year gap between the Conan's departure and our arrival. There was a lot to do organising the house and nearby borders so the Rock Garden was neglected by us for nearly a year. We have not altered any of the rocks – some are very large anyway and the paths are also the same but we have altered the planting using more sub-shrub and ferns. There are several large trees which I would think were only very small or non existent in 1910. The iris bed in the picture was a

mare's tail bed when we arrived. Strangely enough most of it has died away. Some of the old ferns are still growing as are two *Cornus capitata*, an *Olearia paniculata* and a large *Drimys winteri*. An Umbrella Pine which was there is now dead and buried. There is also a large *Luecombe* oaktree and a *Pittosporum undulatum* growing on the bank, both old trees.

An illustration of the Rock Garden from Lewis Meredith's book.

In a copy of the book which I came on recently in a second hand bookshop there was a note under this photograph which read: ***'Georgie… Edith…Gordon…Aideen (or Ardeen ?)'*** *I wrote to Mrs. Browne and asked her about this. Her reply is below: Ed.*

Regarding the photographs from Lewis Meridith's book: Lewis had an aunt by marriage, named Georgina, who lived near here at Beachamp House. I knew her as 'Auntie G'. A cousin, Edith Riall also lived near here and although I have no proof that it is this 'Georgie' and 'Edith' who are in the photograph of the Rock Garden, it seems very possible the picture is of them. I have no idea who the 'Gordon' was and do not know of a place called 'Aideen' or 'Ardeen'. I always understood most of the pictures were of this garden under construction and some of the rock formations look familiar.

An Old Garden

By Mrs. L. Casement

The house, Magherintemple (Churchfield), was a small 18th century country house but in 1874 my husband's great-grandfather added a large Victorian extension, in the Scottish style, with high windows and ceilings (a nightmare for present day living). It is thought that the walled garden must have been built at about the same time, since the walks are built of the same grey stone as the house, some faced with brick for ripening fruit.

Since the house faces north and is only two miles from the sea, nothing much will grow near the front. The walled garden was therefore sited at some distance from the house, on its south side. Though we have never measured it, we have always understood it to be 'nearly an acre' in extent. Leading into it and nearer the house is a smaller garden, known as the Box Garden.

The walled garden slopes quite steeply towards the south-west, with irregular lengths of 10ft wall, five in all. Near the bottom a burn runs into it through the wall and a pond was established in this corner. A great number of trees, ash, beech, sycamore and Wych elm were planted outside the southern and eastern wall. The soil is a sandy loam, very fertile when well fed with farmyard manure. Luckily, this is readily available as the property is also a farm. The farmyard is situated to the north-east of the garden and bounded on one side by one of the garden walls.

When first established the garden must have been well looked after by gardeners and there would have been fruit trees trained on the walls. Thirty years ago there were still quite a number of these and even now two remain. Also there were still several ancient apple trees, Bramley, Lane's Prince Albert and Newton Wonder dotted about the garden and still bearing quite good fruit. Between the wars some cordon-trained apples were planted against the south-facing wall and these are still productive. During the Second World War when the children of an orphanage were evacuated to the house from Belfast, a lot of vegetables were still grown, but owing to lack of staff the flower borders were totally neglected and had not recovered much by the 1970s when I began gardening here.

Gradually, I have been able to bring the whole garden into cultivation, growing fruit and vegetables on quite a big scale and reclaiming the flower borders and planting interesting shrubs and herbaceous plants. The pond was derelict, as a lot of the concrete base and plastered walls were cracked and the stream just ran straight through the

ground. A lot of soil had built up so I was able to plant irises, candelabra primulas and other damp-loving plants and over the years this has become quite a successful feature. During the summer a branch from the stream can be let into the garden at the top of the east wall. It runs around the garden before flowing into the bog garden and provides space for more primulas, irises, snakehead fritillaries and meconopsis.

A view of the walled garden at Magherintemple. Photograph: Mrs. L. Casement

There are now quite a lot of interesting shrubs, all becoming too big. A few had been planted before, probably post-war: *Myrtus communis*, *Wisteria chinensis*, *Cestrum newellii*, a very handsome *Chaenomeles* (probably 'Rowallane'), growing free-standing against a wall, *Crinodendron hoorerianum*, *Magnolia soulangeana*, *Corylopsis spicata*, *Ozothamnus* (or is it *Helichrysum*?) *rosmarinifolius* and *Eupatorium ligustrum*.

Since I began cultivating the garden I have introduced a great many trees and shrubs and, of course, over thirty years they too have grown too big. Among many others these include: *Amelancier canadensis*, *Aronia melanocarpa*, *Arbutus unedo*, *Azara microphylla* 'Variegata', *Azara lanceolata*, *Buddleia colvilei*, *Coriaria terminalis*, *Xanthocarpa*, *Callistemon citrinus*, *Callistemon salignus*, *Cornus mas*, *Euryops*

pectinatus, Enkianthus campanulatus, Fothergilla major, Hypericum 'Rowallane', *Magnolia wilsonii, Osmanthus delavayii* and *Osmarea burkwoodii*.

The Box Garden is bounded on one side by the high wall of the farmyard. There is an open part, with two patches of lawn, on either side of the central path. The rest of this garden is really a jungle of shrubs and shade-tolerant plants. In the early 1900s the open part contained rose beds surrounded by dwarf box hedges and double primroses were grown beneath the roses.

The centre path ran between lavender hedges. In the south-east corner were three gigantic Wych elms which cast their shade over the whole area. They must originally have seeded themselves there and just been left to grow close together to a height of about 40 feet. We were able to get them cut down in the 1980s which let in a lot of light. Four flowering cherries were planted in the grass in the 1920s and probably just pre-war two flowering crabs, *Eucryphia* (said to be 'Mount Usher'), two *Hamamaelis mollis, Azalea lutea* and *Viburnum fragrans*.

The north side of the garden is bounded by an escallonia hedge, now about 8ft high, which apparently replaced a fuchsia hedge. It provides very necessary shelter from north winds. By the time I took over the garden the rose beds and lavender had been removed and two of the cherries cut down as they were too close together. Since the removal of the elms climbers have done well on the wall – roses and *Hydrangea petiolaris, Clematis viticella* and 'Lazurstern', and *Berberidopsis corallina*, as well as some shrubs: *Pieris forestii, Itea illicifolia* and *Garrya elliptica*.

At the edge of the jungle is a huge *Rhododendron* 'Christmas Cheer', a marvellous sight in the winter. Within were *Rhododendron ponticum,* a weigela and another cherry. When these had been reduced I was able to introduce *Osmanthus delavayii, Drimys lanceolata, Drimys colorata, Hoheria lyallii* and shade plants.

The garden as a whole has given pleasure to many friends. The mild climate makes it possible to grow tender plants. Perhaps the most notable features are the bog garden, the blue poppies, the primulas and the fritillaries and in autumn a big bed of *Nerine bowdenii*.

Now that I am in my eighties and very arthritic I have to face giving it up. I know that very shortly it will be a forest of ash and sycamore trees, but this is the lot of any abandoned garden.

Winners and Losers

By Rae McIntyre

One of the reasons why gardening never becomes boring is that every year is different. To an outsider my garden this year may not differ substantially from last year but, to me living with it, caring for it, being maddened and frustrated at times and overjoyed at others for about 345 days of the year there have been perceptible changes.

One thing that some people who do know the garden quite well say is that *Magnolia stellata* 'Royal Star' must have doubled in size. I'm not so sure about doubling but it has become very large. *Magnolia stellata*, according to a back issue of *Gardening Which*, is an ideal tree for small gardens because it only grows 1.5 metres tall. The one I have is about 5 metres tall and 5 metres across and is actually bigger than *Magnolia soulangeana* which is older and grows in the white garden. I was given it nineteen years ago and it was originally one of the denizens of a border. As it grew and grew the border had to be rerouted (and many plants in it rerooted) so that it became a specimen tree on what was, until this summer, a lawn. It was surrounded by a brick circle of about 2 metres in diameter to protect the vulnerable roots from the mower. Last week I had to crawl in to remove these because the area around the base now has a covering of forest bark.

This tree, not shrub – emphatically not shrub – now dominates the main garden. I am not complaining because I love the whole genus and this one is especially valuable during winter and spring. In August it had already formed its furry flower buds for next spring. It usually holds onto its leaves until late November then drops them all at once making them easy to clear. The flower buds, on bare branches, are nearly as good as the flowers in April and May. Unfortunately these can be destroyed by frost overnight although that hasn't happened in recent years.

If this tree has been a winner I've had two losers both of which died mysteriously. Both are fully hardy only needing protection from cold winds which I provided as best I could. One was *Halesia carolina* which had grown to about 2 metres tall and bore its little pendent white flowers every year in late spring before the leaves. It was, I thought, late in coming into flower but then we had a cold late spring. When it did flower it was very sparse and only on a few branches and the leaves never appeared, so it was obviously dead. The exhumed roots showed no sign of honey fungus or vine weevils.

The other tree that I think I have lost was *Disanthus cercidifolius*. It too had grown 2 metres tall sheltered by a hedge. In July's heat I watered it regularly along with the rhododendrons (more about these later) but its leaves did their colour-change thing in early August and had fallen by the end of the month. It's still there because I'm hoping it will revive next spring. I thought it might be lime in the water from the hosepipe but the rhododendrons didn't suffer from it as far as I can see.

There had been some serious overcrowding among the rhododendrons most of which lived at the bottom of the main garden. They flowered well in spring but, because they were all jostling together, the blooms were all at the top. I had already planned to move them to the area that had previously been dominated by the unloved sycamores. The soil here was starved but when I did away with the lawn and made a path round a new bed the surplus sods were all moved to it. I planned to move the rhododendrons in September or October as a sensible person would have done but impulse frequently wins over sense. Those squashed rhododendrons, I decided, were going to suffer even more in the heat of July so on the hottest day, St Swithin's Day, Saturday July 15th, Andy was working here and between us we transplanted fourteen rhododendrons in various sizes. You may well say that this demonstrated not just lack of sense but sheer madness. However they were all cared for and watered well during the rest of July. I thought I would have to continue the irrigation throughout August as well but there was plentiful overhead water. August was a dismal month here with not a single 24 hour period when it didn't rain. I hope I am not tempting fate when I say the rhododendrons look perfectly happy in their new home and all have formed flower buds for next spring.

In the meantime I was busy planting up the new ex-lawn bed. I must say that I enjoy very much having no grass in the garden. Unless it was mowed regularly and the edgings round beds kept tidy the whole place looked unkempt; it was a bit like a woman having a bad hair day. Davy did the mowing but I did the edgings, the scarifying, the aerating and the feeding. These were emphatically not labours of love as far as I was concerned and I found going over it all with a digging fork and brushing sand into the holes extremely tedious. It's blissful not having all that to do now in the autumn.

The new bed was not easy to plant. Even though it was made from inverted sods, on which the grass had been killed with glyphosate, digging through these to make planting holes was extremely hard work. It was the thought of the end to lawn care that kept me going and I enjoy working in the heat. The bed has a blue and white colour scheme, an idea I have toyed with for a long time, one that has been strongly influenced by (all right then, copied from) the Mairi Garden at Mount Stewart. I have fierce arguments with one gardening friend about colour scheming because he thinks that there should be no such nonsense in a garden and that I am being downright twee. Anyway there is a shrubby framework of white-flowered Japanese azaleas which were

moved when in bloom; I seem to have acquired rather a lot of them. There is a *Cephalanthus occiclentalis* (also called Buttonbush, Button-willow or Honey-balls). I had often read about this and, while I had never actually seen one in the flesh, thought it sounded intriguing. It's expensive to buy from the more up-market nurseries but was available cheaply from one of those bulb catalogues that proliferate in spring and autumn. I'm still undecided whether it's a winner or loser. It settled in happily and produced good glossy leaves. According to encyclopaedias it should have flower-heads 2.5 cm (1 inch) across of small very fragrant white flowers in late summer and autumn. Yes it has flowers, little buttons, but they are only about a centimetre across and, either my sense of smell is in decline or the scent is very elusive, for I can smell nothing.

Most of the herbaceous stuff in the bed came from a Scottish nursery. This nursery is high up in the hills behind Kirkcudbright and is an inhospitable place. I know that anything I buy from there will succeed in our marginally milder climate. The bed is now covered in a tapestry of blue and white flowers and I am especially pleased with *Aster frikartii* 'Monch' which is in full bloom now in mid-September. This aster has never done well for me before for some reason and I just hope the present one continues to succeed.

The one tree in the bed is *Prunus subhirtella* 'Autumnalis', a new one bought and planted in May when it still had a few straggling flowers. An accident befell the last one which I'd only had for three years but which flowered every winter. When Andy was felling the sycamores a branch fell on the cherry in a nearby border and broke off the top, from where it was grafted, leaving only a stump. I had planted it in memory of Jean, my oldest friend, when she died so I was upset. Andy offered to buy another but I wouldn't let him. The stump stayed and has produced new branches and lusty green leaves quite different from those on the new cherry. Andy says that it's the best thing that ever happened. Of course it isn't because the new growth is probably from a gean or some other coarse rootstock. He refuses to remove it but during the winter I shall insist that he digs it out and plants it in his own garden. That'll larn him!

Plants from Irish gardens have done well too in case you think everything has come from Scotland. *Chionochloa conspicua*, given to me some years ago by Helen Dillon, has more plumes on it than I can count. It's closely related to the pampas grass but smaller and more delicate in all its parts. Helen said these would remain until Christmas and she has been right.

The crocosmias all seem to have had a ball this past summer but I have been specially pleased with one called (I think) 'Severn Sunrise' which came from Anna Nolan's Dublin garden about five years ago. It's now a large clump with flowers that are more coral than usual on a crocosmia and I haven't seen one anywhere else.

About three years ago I wrote in this newsletter that my *Paeonia delavayi* had died as had *Iris foetidissima* 'Variegata'. Shortly afterwards Deborah Begley sent me seeds of the paeony and a chunk of the iris all the way from Limeerick. I am pleased to report that one seedling survived (I'm not good with seeds) and is now about 50 cm tall. It didn't flower this year but I am expecting big things next year. *Iris foetidissima* 'Variegata' has been planted in the new bed and combines very pleasingly with *Brunnera macrophylla* 'Jack Frost' which has leaves in the same colour scheme.

P.S. I should know by now that it is very unwise to tempt fate by boasting about things. In the southerly gale in the early hours of September 22nd a 2.5 metre branch of *Magnolia stellata* 'Royal Star' was blown to the ground.

Recent Additions to my Irish Collection

By Dermot Kehoe

Every year I buy more and more daffodils, usually nothing very special, just a little more gold to brighten up the spring. At last year's plant sale in October however I got a narcissus of note. It is "Fermoy" and this spring it made a particularly good splash. It was bred by the famous Waterford breeder Lionel Richardson in the 1930s and won several international awards including an Award of Merit at Haarlem in 1949.

In my garden it proved to be a good stocky weather resistant plant and remained in flower for what seemed a long spell. The perianth was pure white while the corona was an attractive orange paling to golden yellow at the base. I hope to get more bulbs at this year's plant sale.

Two late summer Irish cultivars I recently acquired were *Aster cordifolius* "Little Carlow" and *Crocosmia masoniorum* "Rowallane Orange". The aster came originally from the Ballawley Nursery in Dundrum, Co. Dublin and was introduced in 1952. It grows to somewhat less than a metre tall, is light and airy in effect and has clear blue flowers. It is mildew resistant, a most valuable quality within the aster family.

Crocosmia cultivars are legion and they give a welcome boost late in the season when the main flush of summer flowers is going over and the garden is beginning to look tired. Gary Dunlop, who cultivates the ultimate plantsman's garden in Co. Down, has introduced a number of new variants and I was glad to find "Rowallane Orange" at Assumpta Broomfield's Irish plant sale in Helen Dillon's garden in June. It's a really good orange form without being blowsy and cheers me up every time I pass.

All three of these plants are well worth growing. Look out for them!

When is a cultivar entitled to the tag "Irish"?

By Charles Nelson

In the last issue of the *Newsletter* (**101**: 51) there is a short list of cultivars that are claimed to have Irish connections. Two in particular surprised me, *Kniphofia* and *Stokesia*! Did any of the five deserve the tag "Irish"?

✓ *Aster* 'Little Carlow' has impeccable credentials having been introduced by Ballawley Park Nursery in the early 1950s; listed in *A Heritage of Beauty*: 17.

✓ *Geranium himalayense* 'Irish Blue' came from Cooldrinagh House at Leixlip, via Graham Stuart Thomas. Its origins otherwise are unknown and it may not differ from other cultivars of this species. However, at least the plants now grown almost certainly derive from that Kildare source. It's also in *A Heritage of Beauty*: 99.

✓? *Heuchera* 'Helen Dillon' came from North America, brought to Ireland by Helen and subsequently named after her by Bob Brown of Cotswold Garden Flowers. The story again is in *A Heritage of Beauty*: 113. I included it because it was named after Helen but it is not of Irish origin! Is it impeccably Irish – granted it has excellent Irish connections?

× *Kniphofia* 'John Benary' surprised me greatly, but I find that someone has carelessly claimed this as Irish and the tag, like a nasty disease, is everywhere on the internet. True it was first recorded by William Gumbleton in 1889 (*The Gardeners' Chronicle* 16 November: 562): "K. hybrida John Benary.— A fine hybrid with deep sealing-wax-red flowers, and open spike raised, I believe, in Germany." Almost certainly this came from the nursery established in 1843 of Ernst Benary in Erfurt, Thuringia. John (1853–1926) and his older brother Friedrich (1850–1917) became partners in the business in 1879. The company still flourishes (www.benary.de). I can detect no Irish connection whatever in this cultivar, apart from its *mention* (and cultivation) by Gumbleton.

× *Stokesia* 'Mary Gregory' has no right to be claimed as Irish. According to nursery which introduced it, Niche Gardens in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA, this cultivar "has been shared among South Carolina gardeners for some time. Named after Mary Gregory of Columbia, SC, our plant was a gift from our friend Mike Creel of Lexington, SC." According to an article by Lyn A. Gettys and Dennis J. Werner in *Friends of the J. C. Raulston Arboretum newsletter* 5 (2) (June 2001), the cultivar "was discovered as a chance

seedling in a garden population in Columbia, SC, by Mike Creel of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources ..." [http://www.ncsu.edu/jcraulstonarboretum/publications/newsletters/13-2001spring/newsletter.html, accessed 11 July 2006]. South Carolina hasn't been annexed by Ireland, as far as I know.

So what are the criteria for claiming a plant as "Irish"? Nativity – that it arose or was bred on the island of Ireland – is the prime criterion, and cannot lead to dispute. In *A Heritage of Beauty* I also used the phrase "that are clearly associated with Ireland", adding "through a botanist, collector, nursery, nurseryman, or locality."

A Heritage of Beauty doesn't include plants that were merely written about by someone like Gumbleton, and certainly not when they were stated to have had origins outside Ireland. Nor does it include plants that have a long record of cultivation in Ireland – that would make everything Irish!

The use of "Irish" in a name also does not necessarily indicate a plant of Irish origin. The recently introduced winter-flowering heather *Erica* × *darleyensis* 'Irish Treasure' is a good example. It was raised in Canada by deliberately crossing *E. erigena* 'Irish Dusk' and *E. carnea* 'Treasure Trove'. In one sense, arguably, the name is misleading, and the *International code of nomenclature of cultivated plants* (*ICNCP*) recommends that "A cultivar name should not be published if its epithet may give a false impression concerning the identity of its raiser, breeder, introducer, or origins." *Hedera helix* 'Shamrock' and 'Shannon' are two more with somewhat "misleading" names; they are American clones.

The *ICNCP* also recommended that when a new name is published, the "parentage and history of the cultivar, the derivation or meaning of the cultivar epithet, and the names of the raiser or breeder, nominant, and introducer should be stated when known." This information is invaluable – but how rarely does one find it.

Claiming a plant for Ireland requires care and precision – and, in many cases, extensive research is also essential before the claim can be verified. Guessing isn't acceptable scholarly practice.

In a follow-up note to me Charles wrote:
"Regarding Irish cultivars, there are things that may not be in *A Heritage of Beauty* and which deserve to be included in the "cadastre", and there are certainly new names that need to be added. It would be a great service to the IGPS if the newsletter would make a point of including new cultivars of Irish origin with descriptions and histories".

I would certainly be delighted to include information on new cultivars of Irish origins in the newsletter and hope members will keep me informed. Responsibility for allowing misleading information into the newsletter and for continuing the 'Irish' myth of 'John Benary' et alia is all mine. My thanks to Charles for his vigilance, greatly appreciated. Ed.

"From Lady Jane to Lady Alice Fitzwilliam" The Birth of The Old Deanery Garden Railway.

by Martin Edwardes

Apart from being a gardener, I have also a very keen interest in railways, especially those powered by steam engines, and have been a railway modeller for many years. I always had an ambition to build a railway in the garden and own a real steam engine. Over two years ago my wife, Janet, bought me a steam engine called the Lady Anne, a scaled down version of a typical narrow gauge engine, which would have been seen in many parts of Ireland in the past. The actual scale of the locomotive is 16 mm to the foot and it runs on a track which has a gauge of 45 mm between the rails. The engine is about a foot in length and powered the same way as a real steam engine, although the fuel to heat the boiler is butane gas. I had an engine but no track to run it on and thus started a journey which led me to the creation of garden railway, exploration of small suitable plants and trees for same and a corresponding reduction in my bank balance, for track and rolling stock at this scale is not cheap.

Most people integrate a railway into their existing garden, but I started with a virgin grass patch out the back and built the garden and the railway from scratch. Due to the fact we are gardening quite a large area, the building of a rockery and the ubiquitous planting of alpine plants was never contemplated. We also have an active rabbit population which is never satisfied with vast amounts of grassland available but go to great lengths to find tasty plants to consume, so a rockery would be akin to putting Ballymaloe's restaurant on their doorstep.

The garden railway changed all that, and after laying over a hundred metres of track which involved a considerable amount of miniature civil engineering, I had a place to run trains and create my miniature world. I had a vision of trains pulled by a real steam engine winding its way through miniature trees, small shrubs and rocks covered by trailing plants.

The layout ended up shaped as a large dog bone with two branch lines each leading to a terminal station. At the centre of the layout is the rockery, which provides a focal point as a miniature mountainous region covered in alpine plants and dwarf trees. When building the rockery I was careful to position the limestone rocks in such a way that they looked as if they had always been there. I took inspiration from the mountainous regions of West Cork and Kerry. I have seen too many rockeries in which the rocks look as if they have just fallen out of the sky. Rockeries also provide a suitable place for railway tunnels and cuttings just as in the case of a real railway.

Due to my concern that my chosen plants and trees remain reasonably in scale with the railway, I had to research the suitability of various plants. There is quite a wide range of small conifers that are very suitable for garden railways such as the dwarf Irish juniper, *Juniperous communis* 'Compressa'. This is a very slow growing conifer that has a columnar habit, which looks very realistic when planted in a line resembling miniature Italian cypresses. The white Pygmy cypress, *Chamaecyparis pisifera* 'White Pygmy', is another useful tree and is one of the smallest dwarf conifers available, growing to a height of one foot at full maturity. The beauty of this miniature conifer really lies in the creamy-white tips that practically glow in shady garden spots. The dwarf Canadian hemlock, *Tsuga canadensis* 'Jervis', only grows from one to two inches a year and is a good choice for a garden railway. The tiny, evergreen needles provide rich colour all year long and the congested upright growth habit can add a nice accent to a winter or summer railroad. Older examples of 'Jervis' can be selectively pruned to create a weathered, natural look. Some forms of Box, such as *Buxus microphylla*, can be used for hedging and can be pruned to resemble small trees.

I now turned my attention to alpine plants which could provide small interesting flower and leaf colour throughout the year. One can have the grey-leaved *Alyssum montanum* with its yellow spring flowers growing down an embankment. This is smaller and neater than the more familiar *Allysum saxitale*. This can be contrasted with varieties of white and purple *Arabis* or *Aubretia*, which can also be found with variegated leaves. Even when not in flower these plants provide an attractive mound of foliage throughout the year. Some low-growing varieties of *Campanula* also provide this foliage interest and have small bell-like flowers in summer. They have the added advantage of seeding and spreading themselves into the smallest cracks and crevices of paving and walls. Other plants suitable for growing down banks or for creating a spreading mound are *Dianthus*, alpine variety phlox, saxifrages, *Sedums* and *Sempervivums*.

Small-leaved and compact shrubs, like some hebes, azaleas and dwarf rhododendrons can be used to great effect in the garden railway environment, so I have decided to plant a number of these in various places around the railway garden.

Due to the necessity to keep everything in reasonable scale, I had to research the height, spread and habit of every plant used in this mini garden. It has been a great learning curve for me and also hugely beneficial in managing the rest of the Old Deanery garden.

The whole area of course had to be fenced off to prevent rabbits intruding and devouring my precious plants. There have been a few incursions into the area by some very athletic bunnies resulting in some plants being nobbled and an amount of out of scale rabbit droppings left on my track. Thoughts of electrifying the fence from mains voltage to fry the bunnies quickly gave way to the more practical remedy of

making the fence higher.

Before I conclude this article, I would suggest to any ladies who have difficulties in getting their reluctant husbands to help out and become interested in gardening, that they should try introducing them to the joys of building a garden railway. All men love playing with trains for they never really grow up. I can guarantee that, once out there with a garden railway, they will become eternally interested in gardening.

One day, Janet suggested a mini rhododendron with an Irish interest called "Lady Alice Fitzwilliam". My reply was non committal as I wished to research the plant in the RHS Encyclopaedia of Gardening. It was described as an *'open evergreen shrub with medium sized leaves and trusses of two to three funnel-shaped nutmeg scented pink flowers four inches long'.* The height and spread of the shrub is six feet. "Not really to scale" I thought. "Oh what does it matter, I will put in on the perimeter - it will look all right at a distance!"

Special Bulbs for Autumn-Planting

Heritage Bulbs, based in Co. Westmeath, has published a new and much extended list of rare, historic and classic bulbs (www.heritagebulbs.com).

Of special Irish interest are Guy Wilson's *Narcissus* 'Empress of Ireland' and Augustine Henry's *Lilium henryi*. Other historic bulbs in the list are a number of very choice tulips from the 17th Century, including 'Lac van Rijn' (1620) and 'Duc van Thol' (1700), and half a dozen old narcissus varieties from the 19th Century.

In the rare and exotic line, they offer the superb winter-flowering *Veltheimia bracteata*, impressive *Iris magnifica*, and *Tulipa tschimganica*.

As a special offer for IGPS members, quote reference 'IGPS' when you order this Autumn, and receive any one of the five fritillaries listed for free (please specify your choice).

The company also has a separate list of inexpensive bulbs for naturalising in quantity (see www.wildaboutbulbs.com). Tel: 044 96 62744, email info@heritagebulbs.com .

The Flemings of Timoleague

By Charles Nelson

In *Moorea* **15** I provided a catalogue of Irish contributions to *My garden*. One contributor was Canon Fleming of Timoleague. I am grateful to his successor as Rector of Timoleague, the Revd. Ian Jonas, for further information about Canon Lionel Rothwell Fleming (1872–1943), who was born at Ballymoney Rectory, Ballineen, Co. Cork on 10 August 1872. His father, the Revd Horace Townshend Fleming, had become Rector of Ballymoney in 1871. Lionel was educated at Denstone College, in Staffordshire, and at Trinity College, Dublin. In 1903 he married Mary Bodley Reeves (who died in 1944). The couple had three sons and two daughters. Canon Fleming was Rector of Timoleague from 1908 until his death in 1943.

The following reminiscences of the Timoleague Rectory garden were provided by Violet Howe (née Lovell).

During his incumbency the garden became well known and was one of the 'musts' for visitors to the area. A fee of one penny was charged for admission! Mrs Fleming was the expert in matters related to gardening and employed a full-time worker with additional help from a local lad when fruit-picking-time came.

Each summer children from the local Church of Ireland school were invited to a party in the grounds. Certain areas were 'out of bounds' but I still have very happy memories of afternoons spent in those idyllic surroundings.

The garden, which faced south, was on an incline and beautifully laid-out with lawn, herbaceous borders, a pond, terraces, a rockery and a shrubbery. Apples, pears, plums and a wide variety of fruit and vegetables were grown in another area at the rear of the house. If my memory serves me correctly the produce was on sale to the public when household requirements had been met.

Mature trees provide a shelter-belt on the north and east sides of the garden.

The Rectory 'children' were adults when I lived in the Timoleague area. One son, Lionel, became well known as a journalist [for *The Irish times* and BBC TV] and was author of a book *Head or Harp* (1965).

The little school, mentioned earlier, is now used as a church hall and is named after the Fleming family.

Corrigendum: in *Moorea* **15**: 42, the third Fleming reference should read **2** (6): 283 (*not* 191–192).

Excellent Herbs

By the Rev. Canon Fleming

THE garden-lover's hobby is a present possession, and also a link with the past.

Kipling, in his lines which begin : "Excellent herbs had our fathers of old", gives a list of some plants which our ancestors prized, not only for their beauty and perfume, but also because they could be used beneficially for suffering humanity.

Some of the names mentioned sound strange to us, but others need little elucidation. Eyebright, for instance : it is of the genus *Euphrasia*, and was used for diseases of the eye.

Elecampane, a plant allied to the Aster family, was cultivated for the medicinal properties of its root.

Basil, whatever its medical use may have been, carries our thoughts back to Keats' pathetic poem of Isabella and her pot of Basil, wherein she had buried her murdered lover's head.

Rue reminds us of another lovelorn maiden, ill-fated Ophelia : rue, with its Sunday name (for thus she styles it) "herb of grace", owing to the connection of idea between rue and repent.

Vervain is not unconnected with such damsels also, as it was used in compounding love-philtres, and was also employed as a sovereign specific against witches !

Rocket, of the genus *Hesperis*, belongs to the mustard family.

Orris, with its delicious smell of violets.

Marigold, associated, as its name is, with the Virgin Mary, and with "what many men desire".

These were all prized by our ancestors for qualities, real or supposed, in the compounding of medicines.

Some of the names run like the music of a brook. Dittany, for instance : an aromatic perennial, used as a tonic. Melilot is another : a word combining mel, honey, and lotus, that word which conjures up two thoughts : Egypt's sacred plant, and the Afric tree whose fruit made travellers forget their homes.

Excellent herbs they doubtless were : but our fathers, perhaps, had more faith, and less criticism, about the things which were meant to do them good.

The Garden as a Breakfast Adjunct

By the Rev. Canon Fleming

LET me say at once that this has no vegetarian import. Perish the thought! I could not start the day on watercress, for instance: as the man said, who was urged to take salad: "I'm not a blooming rabbit." I refer to its topographical position. So many gardens lie at a distance from the house that you have to go there in order to see them; ours, fortunately, does not. I can look out on it from the dining-room windows. I come down to breakfast, and find, among other things, the usual morning correspondence—bills, circulars, business letters, etc: that is where my garden comes in. "Dear sir, your account . . ." Bother the fellow. I look up, and out of the window; my eye catches sight of a clump of gorgeous King Alfred daffodils, or the bright crimson of Sax. Bathoniensis, and I am at peace with the world again. I open a business letter; it means concentrated thought, and a good deal of worry. But, once more, a glimpse of the golden alyssum, or the mounds of aubrietia, with their shades of regal purple, brings balm to my troubled soul. Fate cannot touch me (or spoil my breakfast) as I thus view, from where I sit, the beauty of the double white arabis, the candytuft, the rock phlox, and other denizens of the garden: so, with a care-freed mind, I take another piece of toast, and reach out for the pot of marmalade.

To Eastern Australia

With Bobby Buckley

Maria and I arrived in Melbourne on October 12th after a fascinating flower adventure in Western Australia (see July's article). Western Australia is one of the most remote biospheres on the planet and its plants have largely remained in a kind of time warp. Eastern Australia with its two competing urban centres, Sydney and Melbourne, is much closer in feel to Europe than W.A. Our base was in the suburbs of Clifton Hill, a northern suburb close to the city centre, an area of early 20th century houses and gardens crisscrossed by motorways and railways. Within this once industrialised region parks and walking paths have been carved out often following the routes of rivers such as the Merri, a tributary of the Yarrow, Melbourne's' main River

From this very contained and urbanised vantage point we made our observations of the garden plants around us. The areas of observations were what people grow in their in suburban gardens, what was growing in the wild places adjacent to those gardens, what was being promoted in the public spaces such as new gardens in botanic gardens and

who are the movers and shakers in the Australian gardening world. Beside these observations we managed to visit some famous private gardens.
The ordinary private gardens of Melbourne come straight out of European tradition. Gardens in the style of the formal chic garden in the picture are common in the wealthy suburbs of Toorak. The only native thing here is the bluestone rock of Melbourne. The box hedges, tumbling iceberg roses, privet balls, spiralling conifers are all part of the international formal garden palate. I have no criticism of this style. Here it is beautifully executed but it is not an Australian garden. It is a French garden. Over a period of three weeks I saw no unique Australian suburban garden. They are there but largely to be found within the pages of Australian garden design magazines.

Melbourne chic front garden.

While the suburban gardens of Melbourne cling to their European parents the surrounding wastelands amongst these suburbs are welcoming with open arms any plant that wishes to escape from the confines of the picket fence or railing. A cycle up the narrow gorge of the River Merri and one finds oneself in familiar company. This cycle could be like a trip down the Dodder in Rathgar or Terenure on a spring morning. Both rivers flow through an urban landscape, are somewhat polluted and are dominated by willow. Willows proliferate along the banks of both rivers but in Ireland they are loved *"Down by the Sally Gardens "*and all that Yeatsian romanticism. In Melbourne

they are an intruder, a destroyer of native habitats. On weekends,"barbies" are organized for the many volunteer groups that try to eliminate this weed. To my mind it is all a little late. It is good to save native habitats but where they are gone it is futile to try and re-establish them. Nature is far too powerful. The Merri creek has changed utterly from the time that it was the meeting place of the Aborigine people.

Fennel and friends

Crisscrossed by roads and bridges, the resultant concrete debris now cascades down its steeps embankments and nature, in a sense of decorum, has rushed to cover the littering offence. It is ironical that it is the alien species from Europe that are to the forefront in doing such a wonderful cover-up: vincas, vetch, the perennial pea, ivies and fennel in great swathes sprout in massive bunches sufficient for thousands of fish restaurants. These plants are there to stay and the native species will be pushed further and further into the bush where many Australians in their gardening minds think they truly belong. This is maybe an extreme view but one founded on conversations with many Australians.

It is in the garden centres and nurseries that the public show their gardening tastes. Many garden centres carry a small section of native plants but they would not be

amongst the best sellers. I asked in one garden centre about this. The expert in the garden centre felt that native species were “too bushy”. Also, he felt that Australians were a little unsure about how to garden properly with them. They are plants that need to be contained by cutting them back, but most people don’t and they become far too dominant in the garden, like setting a wild thing free amongst the better garden-worthy plants. One could appreciate this when one experienced the spread of tea trees in the National Park in Wilson’s promontory.

Teatrees - prime material for bush fire.

There are native nurseries in the Melbourne region. There were two last October but now there is only one. We visited the Kuranga Native Nursery just prior to its closing down. The nursery was choc a bloc with native species and here with a few photographs, and since this is a plant magazine, let me show a few of the botanical jewels that make up the Australian flora.

The owner, a friendly talkative woman in her thirties, looked sadly out at the passing traffic and reflected that the Australia public was committed to consumerism and was not interested in buying and celebrating native species in their gardens even though they were much more suited to the soil and the environment. They preferred the high

consumption of scarce water resources in maintaining the traditional garden. That was why she was forced to sell up and embrace the hippy dream in the outback.
Further out from Melbourne was another more commercially successful native plant nursery, complete with coffee shop and all the ethnic paraphernalia. It was well supported and had only native plants so there is, seemingly, a future for the native species as garden plants.

Kurranga Native Nursery: a very small selection of native plants, callistemon on the left amidst the blues of lechenaultia and the pale blues of the trigger plants, three very popular plants in Australia.

I'll end with a brief comparison of two contrasting gardens. One is the Robinsonian garden of Nooroo, high in the Blue Mountains west of Sydney. Even though it is hidden away amongst the eucalyptus forests it is a garden that could be an Australian Fernhill or Mount Usher. The roads and Gardens are filled with exotics from all parts of the world, all possible because of the cool climate and the high rainfall. Here glades and pathways are ablaze with the garlands of wisteria, the cherry pinks, the delicate leaves of acers and the voluptuous blooms of rhododendrons and azaleas. The woodland floors are carpeted with bluebells, bugle and spring irises. For us it was like home, an Irish garden but reproduced in an Australian way. Then we were biased

Nooroo Gardens, "a shady place".
This woodland gazebo view was made into an Australian stamp.

The second garden is the Karawarra Australian Plant Garden found in the Mount Dandenong Range north of Melbourne. It is a woodland garden. The soil is clay, an exception in this largely ericaceous area. To contrast with the rather smoky impression of the shrubs, much use is made of the white bark of eucalyptus while rocks, seats, sheds and cut logs are used to create focus and context. The only disappointment was the lack of plant identification labels as the tags were not replaced when the shrubs had outgrown them.

Australian gardens have yet to achieve their own unique identity but there is a sign that Australian art is pointing the way to a new Australian garden consciousness. In my next article I will explore the influence of Australian art on the new exciting project in the Cranbourne Botanic Gardens.

Bobby seems to be one of those people who become busier in retirement – he has travelled extensively in Australia and is presently researching the idea of a bul- planting landscaping business. His website is www.bbgardens.ie Best wishes to Bobby in this new venture. Ed.
All photographs above are by Bobby

Seed Distribution Scheme 2006

By Stephen Butler

Well, this year has certainly been a challenge. Horrible wet spring months, chronic dry summer months, and now wet late summer again. I've certainly found far less seed to be collected, and much searching has often only found a few viable seed. Some of the seed sent in, which I check on arrival, has also been non viable. This is particularly easy to happen with some of the *Compositae*, where the seed head looks normal, but the actual seed has failed to develop. The weather may not be the only problem of course – there are far fewer honey bees around since they were affected by a parasitic mite called *Varroa*. For different reasons, there has also been a decrease in Bumble Bees numbers too, and with them some of our native plants are getting scarcer, according to data from Holland and the UK.

Jeffersonia diphylla, photograph by Stephen Butler

Of various plant delights this year, some from our seed lists, one great pleasure was watching *Jeffersonia diphylla* slowly developing seed pods. It looked very different, and as it ripened I wondered how it would open. Surprise, surprise, it ended just like a small bowl, with lid attached, and the seeds sitting loose inside just like eggs in a nest! I hope the pictures do it credit. Reading it up, one of its common names is helmet pod, very apt, and the seeds are collected and distributed by ants, like *Cyclamen*, often sprouting from within ant nests in its native US woodlands. *Leonotis ocymifolia* with very strong upright growths to more than 2m, and lovely orange 'lion's foot' flowers in circles like *Phlomis* has also been really good.

Continuing my mini collection of 'scented plants' (and I use that word in the fullest sense) joining various

Leonotis ocymifolia, photograph by Stephen Butler

shrubby *Cestrum*, and the singular 'gorillas used sock bin' of *Salvia sclarea var. turkestanica*, I've now got a few *Callomeria amaranthoides* which I met first a 'couple' of years ago while an apprentice at Hampton Court, and it was grown (as *Humea elegans* – Incense Plant) for the tropical bedding scheme. Usually biennial, it can be raised as an annual if sown early in heat. When tying it to canes in the nursery I thought at first that it smelt a bit strong, but going home on the bus I couldn't help noticing that people who sat next to me got up quickly again and sat elsewhere. It really is bad – yet apparently it used to be grown as an aromatic plant in conservatories, times change!

A new plant to me has been *Asphodelus fistulosus*, sown in 2005, planted out this spring with a few flowers even then – 15mm, white with a dark line in the centre, on a half metre plant. It has been in flower ever since, getting bigger and bolder, with now 20 or 30 flowers on each plant each day, though hard to get a picture that does it justice. Imagine my surprise though, while checking on the plant to write this, to find that this native of Malta, commonly called apparently onion weed, is listed as a noxious weed, especially in drier parts of the US. Perhaps we need a further disclaimer on the seed list – 'caveat emptor!

Asphodelus fistulosus, photograph by Stephen Butler

Thanks in advance to all our seed collectors; some excellent seed already received; more always welcome: ***Stephen Butler, Curator of Horticulture, Dublin Zoo, Phoenix Park, Dublin 8***

How Blueberries Came to Ireland

By Keith Lamb

Probably the first blueberries grown in Ireland arrived in the late 1940s. They were three or four bushes presented to Professor G. O. Sherrard by an American friend. Professor Sherrard's office was at the then Albert College, Glasnevin, where the soil was alkaline in reaction and so unsuitable for growing blueberries, which need a lime-free soil.

I volunteered to grow them at Woodfield, Clara, Co. Offaly where a large peat-filled frame was available. Though the bushes grew well we soon learned one of the two hazards of blueberry growing. Just as with strawberries, unless the scale of culture was extensive the fruits are quickly taken by birds. The other hazard is that while the bushes are small they can be destroyed by rabbits.

The first experimental plot on blueberry culture in Ireland was planted about 1960, at Johnstown Castle, Co. Wexford, after I had visited the U.S.A. and saw how valuable a crop it was there. This plantation was established on a heavy loam soil (ph 4.5), not of a texture that might be thought suitable. However, some peat was incorporated at planting time and an annual mulch of sawdust (a common practice in the U.S.A.) helped to ameliorate the soil by building up organic matter. Twelve to fifteen bushes of each of nine cultivars were planted inside a fruit cage. Over a period of nine years the yields were recorded. The most productive cultivars were 'Bluecrop' and 'Berkely', of which the yields rose from about half a pound per bush in 1963 to eighteen and a half pounds in 1972. Thereafter yields were not recorded as I transferred to Kinsealy, Malahide.

These results encouraged the late J. Wilson, from England, to establish the first commercial venture with blueberries on peatland near Portarlington. Mr. Wilson died before the bushes came into production. I and my colleagues John Seager and B. Crombie could not watch the only large plantation of blueberries revert to a wilderness, so we took it over.

Today this plantation is still in production under the management of John Seager and associates. Its success has encouraged others to plant blueberries elsewhere in Ireland.

Regional Reports

Leinster Reports

July 15th Visit to Abingdon, Shanganagh Road Shankill.

First impressions of the garden of Philip and Brigid Jacob are of light and space. As you round the bend on the driveway a generous expanse of neatly manicured lawn stretches ahead, while on the left a fine *Azara microphylla* 'Variegata' with its cream variegated shiny leaves rises skyward. Larger trees include *Liquidambar styraciflua*, *Pinus patula*, *Pinus montezumae* and two *Populus nigra* 'Italica', the Lombardy Poplar that are identical in height despite one of them losing its top in 1986 when Hurricane Charlie struck.

Philip and Brigid Jacob in their garden. Photograph by Diane Tomlinson

Colour beckons on both sides; on the right is a mature shrubbery with *Choisya* 'Aztec Pearl', *Cortaderia fulvida*, the mauve flowered *Olearia chathamica*, *Romneya coulteri* and the wonderful *Buddleja agathosma* with large silver leaves. Closer to the house, shrubs are replaced by the stronger colour of Eupatorium and Helenium while in the opposite border Macleaya, Ligularia, *Veratrum album*, *Galega officinalis*, *Aconitum* 'Newry Blue', and *Crocosmia* 'Lucifer' grow behind a low privet hedge cleverly cut to a height that allows only a glimpse of the herbaceous planting beyond while an arch invites you to investigate.

Though changing weather patterns have played havoc with the seasons the kitchen garden left one in no doubt that it was summer. The beds were luxuriant with redcurrants, raspberries, white currants, wineberries, potatoes and figs. Two apple trees that come highly recommended are *Malus domestica* 'Greensleeves', the best eater in Philip's opinion, and *Malus domestica* 'Discovery' with decorative bright red apples.

In the glass house there was a cosmopolitan collection of plants, the white-flowered *Entelea arborescens* from New Zealand, *Incarvillea arguta* from Pakistan, *Plectranthus argentatus* from Australia climbing to a height of at least six foot, from the Peruvian Andes *Salvia discolor* and from California *Salvia* 'Indigo Spires'. There are many small gardens within the garden and everywhere plants are healthy, well tended and showing their true potential. There are, for example, a secluded green garden with at least a dozen large Hostas and, amazingly, no slug damage, a formal rose garden and so much more besides that you leave with a list of plants that you really must grow.

Many thanks Brigid and Philip for sharing your garden with us, and for being such warm and welcoming hosts.

Mary Rowe

IGPS 25th Anniversary Seminar, Saturday, September 2nd, 2006

"Congratulations and Celebrations" – an introduction by Peter Wyse-Jackson

The IGPS 25th Anniversary Seminar on Saturday, September 2nd, 2006 was opened by Peter Wyse-Jackson, member of the original founding committee and currently Director of the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin. He began by mentioning the Inaugural Meeting on the 7th of July 1981 and how the organisation has been and still is inextricably linked with the NBG. He spoke of the great optimism at that time and was very pleased at how the organisation has gone from strength to strength. Even in 1981, the IGPS was ahead of its time with a strategy for plant conservation. Comparable organisations have only recently adopted one.

Peter spoke of our wide range of lectures and other activities, of our 101 newsletters to date, our 15 editions of "Moorea", a journal with an important corpus of work, and *"A Heritage of Beauty"*, written by E.Charles Nelson, an important encyclopaedia of Irish cultivars and plants of Irish interest. Peter invited all members present to sign the official National Botanic Gardens' Visitors' Book, signed in the past by the great and the good, to mark this occasion.

"Twenty Five Years in an Irish Garden." – Helen Dillon

Our first speaker of the day was Helen Dillon, also an Inaugural Member of the society. Her topic, "Twenty- Five Years in an Irish Garden", was a series of reminiscences and slides of that period commenting on how the world of plants has changed, pointing out particularly the easy availability of plants nowadays - just "2-3 clicks of a mouse". Helen praised Charles Nelson for his work in spreading knowledge and information about plant availability.

Helen spoke of one Mid-Summer's Day when she, Jim Reynolds and Mary Davies "broke in" to Kilmacurragh Arboretum, then going into dereliction. One wonders what they were after. She remembered David Shackleton's words describing a gardener as someone who looks at every single plant every single day. She described his raised beds at Beech Park, 75% Peat, 25% light soil which had to be changed a lot, but which had a great collection of Celmisias. He also battled with the swift moth which eats Paeony roots.

Graham Stuart Thomas, who worked for 32 years for the National Trust and was the main adviser for the restoration and maintenance of the garden at Mount Stewart, always wore his favourite rose, "Pearl Dawn" in a buttonhole and commented on Helen's garden, "What very good maintenance you have"! Still, he was full of ideas and advice.

Helen also referred to Betty Farquhar and her garden at Ardsallagh, Co. Tipperary. This was a garden of excellent taste, visited by IGPS members in the 1970's. There was a Gothic gateway and a raised double herbaceous border with a pathway of Liscannor stone. Betty was one of the first people to grow *Mysotidium hortensia* in an Irish garden, doing constant battle with baby slugs!

Helen described Molly Sanderson as a very generous plants person who, on one occasion, donated 33 plants to her garden. These included *Kniphophia* 'Little Elf ', *Delphiniun cashmerianum* and *Senecio candicans* from South America.

Helen also spoke of Rosemary Browne's garden “Graigueconna" as highly romantic and imaginative and of her Hellebore cultivar of the same name which, although

variegated, retains its vigour. She recalled Cicely Hall at "Primrose Hill" who retained many plants, especially snowdrops, which were lost in England as they "Dug for Victory" during WW2. References were made to Miss Wilmott and Christopher Lloyd who were not always very complimentary about the gardens they visited. Philip Shuttleworth taught Helen how to grow *Gentiana verna* - seedlings must not be thinned out and it takes 5 years from seed to flower! Helen also covered other interesting cultivars, among them *Viola* "Irish Molly", *Primula*" Lady Greer", *Geranium argenteum* "Lissadell", *Potentilla nitida* "Lissadell" and came right up to the present with Seamus O'Brien's *Clematis* "Glasnevin Dusk".

We saw how the Garden at 45, Sandford Road has changed and developed over the last 25 years and Helen was most complimentary about the help she gets from her husband, Val, "a wizard at staking," and from her present gardener, our own Mary Rowe.

This was a very entertaining lecture, a wistful reminder of gardeners past, of treasured plant and it opened the seminar on a high note.

Mary Bradshaw.

Plants for Cherishing: the Cultivated Origins of the I.G.P.S. and its Future by Dr. E. Charles Nelson.

The second lecture was delivered by Dr. Charles Nelson. In his introduction, Dr. Peter Wyse-Jackson outlined the illustrious career of Dr. Nelson, with special reference to his years as taxonomist in Glasnevin from 1976 to '95, his work as a consultant lecturer, and his phenomenal in-depth knowledge of "wild plants."

As one of those deeply involved from the start of the IGPS, Dr. Nelson was in a unique position to outline its gestation, and early days, for us. Initially, the impetus came from the NCCGP who planned to start a group here. Those in the National Botanic Gardens here, at that time, were more anxious to establish an independent group, and not merely become a subsidiary of a group in England.

A great deal of work had already been done here in Ireland. An Taisce had completed a study on all the Heritage Gardens of Ireland. Mary Forrest had compiled an invaluable work on the trees and shrubs cultivated in Ireland, and Dr. David Willis from the University of Coleraine along with Guy Wilson of Co. Antrim had also done some fantastic work which lead to the daffodil becoming one of the major contributions of the Irish to the whole field of horticulture. Jim Kelly had published some excellent work also on Irish Plants and Cultivars and there were several other undertakings in train. So the time was right, the need was evident, the enthusiasts were ready and willing, and so the IGPS materialised. In celebrating its 25th birthday, there was considerable joy and satisfaction. One and all were looking forward and committed to continued growth and expansion of its undertakings.

Of course, as the name implies, it is all about PLANTS, and this is where Dr. Nelson now took us in his talk. He stressed that horticulture is about much more than "pretty plants". Our wild heritage is also extremely important, and many of our cultivars are in this category. He referred to a question asked by the countess of Rosse, "Is there any Irish cultivar other than Calluna Vulgaris?" He reiterated that there are many; that much work has been done, but also that we must continually educate ourselves. We must work to have stocks of native Irish Plants that we can resource when viruses build up and/or plants weaken due to age, disease, or repeated division.

Dr. Nelson then went into specifics regarding important Irish cultivars. He also outlined the work of several nurseries. I will just mention a few, to whet the appetite! The oldest known Irish cultivar is an Irish Yew, *Taxus baccata* 'Fastigiata' from Florencecourt. It was found in 1740 in the Cuilceagh Mountains, recognised as different and transplanted to Florencecourt in the hope that it would survive there. Two hundred and forty years later, in 1981, the IGPS was founded. The hope is that the Society will still be here in another 25 years and celebrate 300 years of this historic tree!

Another of our treasures is *Rosa Hibernica*. It was first discovered in Holywood, Co. Down, in1795 by a John Templeton. There is now one in the NBG, and one in Belfast Botanic Garden. Several other clones arose over the years, but it is the original that is of interest here. Next we heard of a plant that is in Glasnevin since 1866, and still propagated vegetatively there. David Moore found it on Muckish Mountain in Donegal. It is a creeping prostrate plant called *Salix* x *grahamii* nothovar moorei. It has never been found in the wild again since then, and is considered a triple hybrid, a combination which may never occur again.

In 1995, 150 years after the Irish Famine, the Irish Lumper potato was celebrated. It is a cultivar that is very susceptible to late blight and therefore very seldom grown now. However, is was great for heavy yields, even on poor ground, and contributed immensely to the national diet at the time. What a wonderful gem - both the spud and the story!

Dr. Nelson encouraged us to seek out all plants of Irish origin - to use the Plant Finder to source them, go to Irish Seedsavers, try nurseries in Armagh for apples etc.

Singled out for special mention were wood anemones, *ericas, daboecia, Iris lazica, Crinum moorei, deutia, sambucus '*Guincho Purple', lots and lots of daffodils and their breeders e.g. William Baylor Hartland of Cork, who first marketed *Narcissus* 'Rip van Winkle' amongst others.

Roses also got special mention - Souvenir de St. Anne, Irish Elegance and Rambling

Rector. Although Daisy Hill Nursery no longer exists many introductions from there are still treasured, e.g. *Aconitum* 'Newry Blue', *Laburnum alpinum* 'Newryensis', and several *Berberis stenophylla* hybrids. Slieve Donard nursery, Newcastle, was also extolled for its trojan work - *Pentstemon* 'Evelyn', *Deutzia* 'Rosalind', *Meconopsis* x *sheldonii* 'Slieve Donard' and cultivars of *aubretia*, *agapanthus*, *escallonia* and *erigeron*. Then we had hypericums and quince, *Viburnum plicatum* and primulas from Rowallane. The list goes on and on.

In conclusion, Dr. Nelson mentioned dierama, which is the Icon of the IGPS since its inception. His parting remarks were to the effect that cultivars need to be propagated vegetatively to ensure the survival of the true plant and that plants resulting from seed sown from these cultivars should not and cannot be given the cultivar name. Unless a cultivar is correctly propagated and kept true, it becomes something else.

As to the future for the IGPS - there is a need to enlist new members and to revitalise the original mission of the Society.

Therese Murphy

The Cultivation of Plants in a Moist Climate by Harold McBride

This lecture was given by Harold McBride, who gardens in the middle of Co. Armagh where the annual rainfall is 36 inches. Further south in Ards peninsula it is half of that and in north Co. Armagh it is 70 inches. Incidentally, Co. Fermanagh has three times the rainfall of mid Armagh. Some members of his family garden in Suffolk, where the rainfall is a mere 15 inches and the temperature is fairly high. These factors are of major importance when selecting plants.

Mr. McBride gardens quite extensively on raised beds. The combination of the moisture from the high rainfall, and the good drainage from the raised beds, enables him to grow a great variety of southern hemisphere plants.

The first group of plants he dealt with were Celmisias. There are 46 known varieties and, at one time, he actually had 42 of them. When conditions are right they grow and flower quite well. In New Zealand they survive snow and prove themselves to be as tough as boots! He went through a series of slides highlighting the beauty and qualities of each type. He dealt at length with *Celmisia* 'David Shackleton', a plant which is justifiably highly prized. The rosettes are big and dramatic, even when not in flower. Unfortunately, the plant weakens in time as the constant division for propagation takes its toll and, at last count, it seemed to be found in only twelve gardens countrywide. However, Mr. McBride considers that, in general, celmisias are flowering better than ever before.

Amongst his other treasures were *Gentian saxosa* (which is excellent in troughs), *Clematis Petriei* (well worth having) and New Zealand Forget-me-nots *Myosotis albosericea* (which thrive in crevice gardens). *Clematis* x *cartmanii* 'Joe' has an interesting story attached to it. Originally a cutting was sent from New Zealand to Scotland. It was crossed in the glasshouse while being cultivated and the resultant plant proved to be a real winner. It is super plant for raised beds. Unfortunately, the propagator never registered the cultivar and never benefited from it. *Leptospermum* also featured in all shapes and sizes. One in particular, *L. Scoparium* (Nanum group) 'Kea' is so called after the Kea bird in Australia, which sports a brilliant red underside to its wings. The plant got its name because of its outstanding colour. Helichrysums absolutely love being planted in tufa or very narrow crevices. Again, they need moisture and dryness in equal measure. *Myosotidium hortensia*, from the Chatham Islands, is another favourite plant of his. It produces a huge amount of seed, is easy to propagate and is available in white forms also.

Primulas love a humusy bed and Mr. McBride tries to use leaf mould rather than peat and ensures a plentiful supply of moisture. He recommended Abbeymore nursery which carries a huge stock. Cassiope is another plant that does well in his raised beds. He recommended in particular *Cassiope lycopodioides* 'Beatrice Lilley' while giving the secret to its survival, which is to brush peat and leaf mould into the cushion every year. Dwarf Rhododendrons are ideal candidates also. 'Curlew' is a yellow hybrid and a very strong grower. 'Sugarplum' is also very easy to grow.

Fritillarias love moisture but also demand well-drained soil which dries in summer when they are dormant. *Fritillaria raddeana* is a robust Himalayan plant with pale green flowers which Mr. McBride recommends. Lilies also love moisture too. *Lilium mackliniae* is very easy from seed, but needs shade. The forest floor in Castlewellan is strewn with *Lilium pyrenaicum* - it is a sight to behold. *Lilium nepalense* also is enough to take one's breath away.

Meconopsis are also a great collector's item though gardeners are sometimes afraid of these plants. They have difficulty holding on to them, and consider them not worth the trouble. However, if you provide the right conditions from day one they can be very successful. Bob Gordon manages to breed and grow Meconopsis in Co. Antrim and that has to be some achievement! They need shade and a cool position. They do well from seed. Pot on several times and liquid feed, until they are really sturdy.

This lecture was very encouraging and inspiring. With many plants, there is no point in planting them unless some planning goes into the conditions provided. With the availability of plant material today, it is not beyond any gardener to collect some of these beautiful plants, to create the right conditions for them, to propagate them, and to spread them around.

T.F.Murphy.

Leaping the Fence – From Garden Plants to Landscape Plants By Mary Forrest.

The fourth speaker on this well filled day was Mary Forrest, another founder committee member, who has taken on various positions on the committee including Chair, and is still very active for the society, especially with Moorea.

The three previous speakers had largely looked at the plants we might expect to find within a garden. Mary however, reflected on Horace Walpole's comment about William Kent, that 'he leaped the fence and saw that all nature was a garden', and proceeded to show how garden plants, once found to be tough and resilient, perhaps, or suited to certain environments could be used for large landscaping projects to enhance our towns, our shopping areas, and our industrial centres. Specialised planting techniques, manufactured topsoil, and automatic irrigation are often essential to get good results but Mary's slides showed how successful the planting can be.

Her first examples were from Eastpoint, at Clontarf, where 20% of the industrial estate area was planted (compare that to 35% roads). Initially, Planes were used as street trees but were later replaced with Limes that do much better and have a long history of urban use. Planting semi-mature trees such as Turner's Oak (*Quercus x turneri*), *Ginkgo* or multi stemmed *Betula utilis*, was very expensive, but gave instant effect. Underplanting with large blocks of , for example, *Lonicera pileata* (a Henry plant!) or *Olearia* gave a uniform appearance to the roadsides.

The CityWest industrial area which is over 300 acres in extent was very interesting as all road and most structural planting was completed before the buildings. A feature of the landscaping of this area was the Celtic landscape and art form of many contours, curvy pathways and standing stones. As many as 70,000 native tree whips were used on the site, with many on the boundary, and further planting was put in as each building was completed.

The well-known shopping area of The Square was a challenging site, with cold winds in winter causing plant losses of less tough selections such as *Choisya*. Large blocks of *Viburnum davidii, Genista hispanica, Berberis stenophylla, Alnus cordata*, and *Berberis candidula* kept straying feet at bay while plantings of *Fraxinus excelsior* 'Jaspidea' provided the occasional bright spot. Small groups of *Robinia pseudoacacia*, a seldom used tree in Ireland, gave a shady but not too dark appearance. These contrasted well with 'garden-style' plantings at other sites where a larger range of more colourful plants was used.

Other examples of this type of horticulture included roundabouts, with combinations of weeping Ash or Cedars, shrubs and bedding, and roads with one specie of tree, often replacing Cherries as their roots caused so many problems. Further examples of luxuriant planting were shown from the Dundrum shopping centre, with *Rhus typhina*,

dense *Rubus tricolor* and *Prunus laurocerasus* 'Otto Luyken', fastigiate oaks, Dawyck Beech, *Prunus maackii*, and even *Metasequoia glypstroboides*.

Mary finished the session by bringing us bang up to date, advising us to botanise from the comfort of the Luas line, where we can meet *Mahonia x media* 'Charity', *Spiraea* and Dogwoods, and lots of ground cover Roses from the County Series.

Many thanks for a great talk Mary. Floreat Dublin!

Stephen Butler

Enjoying the exhibition of I.G.P.S. memorabilia in the Herbarium foyer.
Photograph by Mario Fussy

Northern Reports

August 6th Visit Mrs Daphne Shackleton, Lakeview, Mullagh, Co Cavan

As the inclement weather on the day didn't deter the large group from travelling the considerable distance to visit Daphne's garden it is safe to assume that it is one held in high regard and thought well worth the trouble to visit. Those who travelled were not disappointed and were not deterred by the rain. The weather however, was not suitable for a picnic outdoors and we quickly took ourselves to one of the refurbished outhouses

at the corner of the garden for our lunch. The lunch venue was in fact an excellent choice as it was cosy, intimate and sociable.

At the rear of the house. Photograph: Paddy Tobin

When the rain eased Daphne led the group, umbrellas at the ready, on a tour of the garden starting at the small lawn immediately to the rear of the house which has that much-admired *Acer japonica* to one side. The back of the house had obviously been awash in blue some time earlier when the fabulous *Wisteria sinensis* had been in bloom. This lawn and the patio area, which is immediately beside it and again to the rear of the house, are the areas of the garden which have always most appealed to me. They are a wonderful combination of garden and house and a perfect example of house functions being extended into the garden. While we were here Daphne pointed out that the roof space of this part of the house is home also to several hundred bats which provide a wonderful sight as they leave at twilight.

We continued our tour, taking in the woodland area of the walled garden, before moving to the more decorative planting around the larger lawn. The double herbaceous borders looked very well, despite the torrents which had fallen on them, and provided an abundance of late summer colour. I always find a vegetable patch very interesting, good to compare with my own efforts at home and I also am always on the lookout for something new to grow. I was really envious of the peas. Mine never really grow that very well; my 'mange-tout' varieties are always great but the ordinary garden pea has never done well for me. I should have asked for some advice. Currant bushes and autumn raspberries were growing well as was a good selection of vegetables. The old apple trees are a feature of this garden. They are perhaps not as productive as they once

were but they have been retained as they give this garden so much of its character, its sense of age and continuity through the generations.

At the other side of the house the plantings of apple, pear and plum trees has developed very well since I last saw them some years ago. This year was a particularly good year for fruit and the plum and greengage trees, in particular, had a tremendous crop. Older apple trees in this area acted as hosts for climbing roses. Were they human, I imagine this would be a great indignity for them to end their days as a prop for some now preferred plant. However, in the garden the gardener rules and plants grow to the gardener's plan and though it was a downscaling of the apple trees' importance the overall effect was wonderful.

You will have heard the advice that the best time to assess a house which you intend buying is in mid-winter when the weather is miserable; if you find it to your liking in those conditions you can be sure you have found a good house. Daphne's garden passed this test. It was a miserable day which was brightened by the garden, the gardeners and the company which was visiting.

The group with Daphne. Photograph: Paddy Tobin

Looking Ahead

Munster Fixtures

All meetings will be held at 7.45pm in the SMA Hall, Wilton Cork. All are asked to make a special effort to attend the new season of lectures. Members are encouraged to bring along friends and also actively try to get new members to join the society. Please note that the first meeting of the New Year is on the second Friday as opposed to the usual first Friday of the month.

Friday 6th October 2006
"Gardening in a Changing World" with Margaret Griffin
Margaret looks at changes in gardening practice especially those due to lifestyle and climate changes.
She is the owner of the award winning Griffins Garden Centre in Dripsey, Co. Cork. The garden centre is the first to win the Bord Glas National Award three times.

Friday 3rd November 2006
"Soil, Health and Society" with Sean O'Halloran
Sean's talk concerns the way we treat the soil and the corresponding effects on our health in society.
He is the owner of Ballygarvan Stonecraft and Paving Company.

Friday 8th December 2006
"New places, New ideas and New Magic" with Stephen Lacey
A talk given by the well known TV presenter Stephen Lacey.
Stephen Lacey has been seriously addicted to gardening since his late teens. Even on the London Underground, he catches himself thinking about mulberries. He is gardening columnist for the *Daily Telegraph*, a presenter on BBC's *Gardener's World* and a lecturer for The Royal Horticultural Society. He is the author of *The Startling Jungle*, *Scent in Your Garden*, *Gardens of the National Trust* and *Real Gardening*. He divides his time between London and his garden in North Wales.

Friday 12th January 2007
"Plants from the Iveragh" with Nigel Everett.
Nigel looks at the various plants found in the Iveragh Peninsula which is located in Co. Kerry and contains towns such as Kenmare, Caherdaniel, Sneem and Waterville.
Nigel Everett is the author of *"Wild Gardens", "The Lost Demesnes of Bantry Bay"* and *The "Historic Gardens of Bantry House".*

Friday 2nd February
"Rare and unusual Plants for your Garden" with Paul Maher
Paul gives an in depth talk about unusual plants that can make a difference to any garden.
He is the Curator of the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin.

Friday 2nd March 2007
"Spring Planting inspired by Graham Stuart Thomas" with Stephen Redden
Stephen is a true nurseryman and is passionate about the plants that he grows and has a particular interest in Magnolias. He is owner of the Hillberry Nurseries at Crecora near Patrickswell, Limerick.

Friday 6th April 2007
"The Role of Horticulture in Plant Conservation" with Noleen Smyth
The talk deals with how we can use gardening skills and horticulture to conserve rare plants, threatened ecosystems and cull invasive species.
Noleen is working as a consultant for Botanical and Environmental Conservation Consultants based in Dublin and is currently finishing a PhD. thesis.

Leinster Fixtures

Sunday 15th October 11am
ANNUAL PLANT SALE in Our Lady of Dolours Church Glasnevin (opposite NBG)**.**
Members with plant donations will be very welcome from 9.30am on the day or contact a Leinster Committee member to arrange collection.
Please note earlier time of 11 am

Thursday 9th November 8pm
Alpines Through an Artist's Eye with Rosemary Cox
A joint lecture with the Alpine Society at the National Botanic Gardens

Thursday 7th December 2006 at 8 pm
New Places, New Ideas & New Magic – a lecture by Stephen Lacey,

writer and broadcaster, presented by the Irish Garden Plant Society & The National Botanic Gardens at the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin
Admission (Includes wine) by Ticket only, €10.00
For details please contact: Marcella Campbell 01 8480625
Or Petronilla Martin 01 8380067

Thursday 18th January 2007 8pm at the National Botanic Gardens
Plants and Gardening Styles with Karen Foley

Northern Fixtures

October 7th 2006
ANNUAL PLANT SALE at the Ulster Folk & Transport Museum,
Cultra, Co Down; 12.00-3.00pm - deliveries from 9.00am.
Plants & volunteers wanted. Contact Hilary Glenn on 028 92 699859.
GOOD-QUALITY PLANTS ONLY PLEASE.

October 19th 2006
THE CLOTWORTHY LECTURE, Clotworthy Arts Centre, Antrim, 7.30pm.
'Excavation and Restoration of the 17th Century Terraced Gardens at Lisburn Castle' with Ruarí O'Baoill and Jackie Harte.
The team leading this project tells of the work to uncover the remains of a large formal garden attached to a manor house or 'castle', and of the unusual structures revealed.
Refreshments provided. Members free, non-members £2.00. Joint with Antrim Borough Council.

November 15th 2006
LECTURE: 'Tales of Extreme Gardening – Native Plants in Native Places' - Noeleen Smyth
Lagan Valley Island Arts Centre, Lisburn; 7.30pm
Noeleen will be exploring the new age of plant conservation, using long-standing gardening techniques to protect rare plants. Her examples will be drawn from her work in Belize, China, Africa, South America, the Pacific Islands and Ireland.
Members free, non-members £2.00.

December 6th 2006
THE MALONE HOUSE LECTURE, Malone House, Barnett's Park, Belfast; 7.30pm. 'Gardens of Italy – their design and development' with Patrick Quigley.
One man's obsession with the gardens of Italy from the Renaissance to the present day.
Free. Refreshments provided. Joint with Belfast Parks.

Letters to the Editor

Paddy,

I note, from the recent newsletter, that the issue of membership numbers was raised at the AGM. I hope it is in order for me to offer a suggestion to the committee.

While the lectures are very interesting and the Botanic Gardens is a great venue I feel new members would like an opportunity to interact with existing members in order to learn from them and indeed for the social contact. At present the majority seem to attend the lectures and leave immediately without the chance to talk/interact with anyone. Could I suggest that tea and coffee be made available for a half an hour before the lecture or better still after the lecture? This would give members an opportunity to meet each other and it would make new members feel welcome. Once people know each other they are more enthusiastic and more inclined to continue membership and be involved. A nominal charge could be made to cover the tea/coffee outlay and one or two members could volunteer to organise this on a rota basis.

Name with Editor.

Mr. Tobin,

You don't know me from Adam, but I am a member of IGPS- for a while the only Longford member. I was sorry to see that the time of the Plant Sale was brought forward to 11.00am. I normally travel by train and with luck am on site for noon. However that is no longer an option for me.

You probably have no input into the matter but I thought I would air my views. Over the years I bought some lovely plants.
Enjoy the newsletter never -the -less.

Regards,
Joan Kiernan

Worth a Read

By Paddy Tobin

Following the last issue of the newsletter I exchanged a number of e-mails with one of our regular contributors who also reviews gardening books for other groups. This led me to believe it important that I should write a little about my approach to these reviews so that readers might read them in a more fully informed manner.

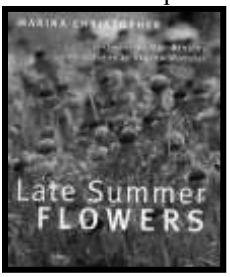
It is important to the reader to realise, that is those who have not realised so already, that I have no qualifications whatsoever in the areas of horticulture, botany or other related fields. I am a keen gardener and enjoy reading gardening books. My reviews therefore should not be read as if written by one with authority in any of these fields. If I enjoyed reading a book and found it interesting or useful I would recommend it to you but not inclined to condemn or be over critical. As a member of a society with an aim of promoting horticulture I feel that there will be some good to be found in most books and what might be dross to the more experienced might be enthusing to the beginner. When reading any review it is well to keep in mind who it is who has written it and to judge the worth of the opinions expressed in light of that information and so it is with my reviews. These are my opinions, simply opinions and so do not nor could not purport to carry any more weight than that. Read on.

Summer holidays have that great benefit of allowing more leisure time and reading is surely an excellent way to pass this time very pleasantly. In true summer mood I picked up a copy of ***Treehouses*** by Paula Henderson and Adam Mornement. What young boy did not dream of a house in the sky at some time and I'm sure many of you spent many a happy day constructing your dream house from the odds and ends found around the yard. Paula Henderson looks back to many fabulous treehouses in history, that of the Emperor Caligula in a plane tree to the oldest surviving treehouse, 17th century, at Pitchford Hall in Shropshire. Adam Mornement presents an account of present day treehouses from around the world – prepare to gasp in admiration, awe and envy at the fabulous constructions illustrated with excellent photographs before falling into feelings of inadequacy when you recall your own attempts. If you are planning for the future then the final section will both inspire and instruct you on the best design and approach to construction – though beware, this will not be without some consultation with your bank manager if you wish to follow this advice. This is a fun, light, extensively illustrated

book which fuelled my childhood dreams again. Had I read this book some years earlier perhaps I would not have to confess that when my youngest son requested his own private space I resorted to the credit card and the yellow pages. [*Treehouses, Paula Henderson & Adam Mornement, Frances Lincoln, London, 2005, HB, 175pp, ISBN: 1 7112 2437 4, £25*]

Another summer read was ***The Essence of the Garden*** by Hannah Willetts. The author presents a series of essays on various gardening topics, inspired by her work and time in her own garden enlivened by reference to famous gardeners and by well chosen words and phrases. Deadheading daffodils was, in Victorian times, done by walking the beds swishing a hazel cane from side to side, decapitating as one walked. Margery Fish preferred a cavalry sabre. Another gem has Sir Cedric Morris claiming the smell of Salvia sclarea was redolent of 'a whore sucking a bullseye.' Such gems are all too rare however and the book reads as an enthusiastic gardener's journal of thought and reflection – and one must remember that, despite enthusiasm, much of gardening is routine, repetitive and plain dull. [*The Essence of the Garden, Hannah Willetts, Frances Lincoln, London, 2006, HB, 288pp, ISBN: 10:0-7122-2587-7, £14.99*]

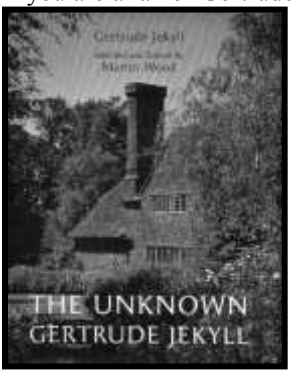
Marina Christopher's ***Late Summer Flowers*** with its bright cover of heleniums caught my eye also during the summer. It's well written and very well illustrated, authoritative and comprehensive and from an author who not only knows her stuff but has obviously had plenty of hands on experience. The earlier part of the book which introduces those plants which will best serve the late summer/autumnal garden, how to put them together while working with nature's way and how to get the best out of your work is followed in the second half of the book by a comprehensive plant directory with succinct and accurate accounts of each species and its cultivars. Even for those who already possess a wide knowledge of plants there is great deal here to interest and inform. For those whose spade still had a straight edge this is a book I heartily recommend. [*Last Summer Flowers, Marina Christopher, Frances Lincoln, London, 2006, HB, 208pp, ISBN: 0-7112-2481-1, £25*]



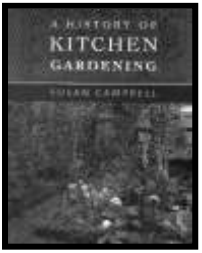
A book which gave a more detailed historical account than I expected was ***Healing Threads –Traditional Medicines of the Highlands and Islands*** by Mary Beith. Previous books dealing with traditional medicines which I had read were sometimes little more than a catalogue of plants used as cures with vague accounts of the manner in which they were used. Mary Beith, on the other hand, gives a comprehensive and insightful account of the development of medicine in the Scottish Highlands and

Islands which explains why such a wealth of knowledge of these plant uses remained in such locations up to quite recently and so continued to be accessible to the researcher. This section of the book is followed by a Materia Medica which covers not only cures from plants but also cures sought at special places, from stones and metals, from insects, animals and birds as well as through various rituals, charms and incantations. Research brought the author through the oral tradition of folklore to medieval Gaelic medical manuscripts and to the papers of medical societies to present a comprehensive treatment of her subject. [*Healing Threads – Traditional Medicines of the Highlands and Islands, Mary Beith, Birlinn Ltd, Edinburgh, 1994 & 2004, SB, 294pp, ISBN:1 84158 277 8, £9.99*]

If you are a fan of Gertrude Jekyll's writings, ***The Unknown Gertrude Jekyll,*** selected and edited by Martin Wood, will certainly appeal to you. If you are not already a fan this book will provide a comprehensive introduction for you. Her influence on gardening would be difficult to exaggerate; her output in both garden design work (400 gardens) and in writing (15 books) is truly outstanding. However, a great deal of her writings is not now available to us. As well as her books, she also wrote thousands of articles on gardening and it is a selection of these that are presented in this book. Of course, much of the material mirrors that of her books but it is interesting to read it in this freshly presented manner. If you have read her books, this will present her ideas to you again in an encapsulated format while if you are new to her material you will find it presented here to you in a most convenient and more cryptic fashion. The book is well illustrated but picture is certainly subordinated to text. Excellent! [*The Unknown Gertrude Jekyll, Martin Wood, Frances Lincoln, London, 2006, HB, 208pp, ISBN: 0-7112-2611-3, £20*]

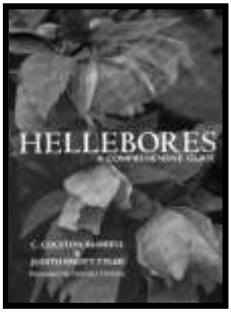


Susan Campbell wrote *Charleston Kedding: A History of Kitchen Gardening* in 1996 and has now presented a new edition entitled more simply ***A History of Kitchen Gardening***. The original was based around fictional kitchen garden but the author is now able to reveal the source of her material, the old walled garden at Pyewell Park in Hampshire. The history revolves around a tour of this garden, much of it now disused and in ruins. However, within living memory this was a most productive garden such that the cooks never had to buy anything except pineapples and citrus fruits. The gardens at Pyewell Park are taken as an exemplar and a starting point so that the history is not simply confined to this garden. As a result the text presents both very clear and immediate examples of the practices of days gone by as well as drawing on these to give a more general and rounded account of kitchen gardening. The present



garden dates from 1814 though the property is recorded as far back as 1595. Drawing on the particulars of Pyewell Park and moving to kitchen gardening in general the author treats of the construction of walls, provision of heating, general layout, fruit growing, glasshouses, compost treatment, vegetable growing techniques and the people working in and connected with the gardens. It is an informative and well written book, illustrated with line drawings and contains much information which is still of relevance to today's gardeners. [*A History of Kitchen Gardening, Susan Campbell, Frances Lincoln, London, 2005, SB, 304pp, ISBN:0 7112 2565 6, £14.99*]

Finally two books of a more specific nature. ***Rhododendrons & Azaleas, A Colour Guide*** by Kenneth Cox is aimed obviously at those enthusiastic for these plants. The earlier part of the book covers the history and collection of rhododendrons and how best to grow them. There are sections dealing with landscaping, maintenance, problems encountered with these plants, their propagation and recommendations on purchasing and collecting them. The main section of the book is an encyclopaedia covering over 4,000 varieties which includes all the hardy species in cultivation, the most important commercial hybrids and the tropical Vireya rhododendrons. This is truly a complete treatment, both well written and well illustrated, with over 1,200 photographs. This is an excellent book, obviously written by an enthusiast and aimed at the enthusiast. Well worth having if this is your interest. [Rhododendrons *& Azaleas – A Colour Guide, Kenneth Cox, Crowood Press, Marlborough, 2005, HB, 240pp, ISBN: 1 86126 784 3, £29.95*]



With the ongoing and unflapping interest and enthusiasm for hellebores, ***Hellebores, A Comprehensive Guide*** by C. Colston Burrell & Judith Knott Tyler is sure to have an appreciative readership. Following a thorough history of hellebores in cultivation there is an extensive chapter on hellebores in the wild, with further chapters on hybridisation – with particular attention to those of the popular Lenten Roses – growing, propagating and breeding. Although quite an amount of technical information is given this is very pleasantly enlivened by the numerous profiles of hybridisers and nursery owners who have contributed to the development of today's selection. This is a wonderful book. [*Hellebores, A Comprehensive Guide, C. Colston Burrell & Judith Knott Tyler, Timber Press, Oregon, 2006, HB, 296pp, ISBN:0-88192-765-1, £25*]

Snippets

WANTED:
Does anyone have an unwanted copy of *The Irish Gardeners' Three Year Diary* which was published by the IGPS & Boethius Press in 1985.
The condition is not important, but mostly unused would be preferred.
I am willing to pay at least the postage costs for a copy, and would be happy to "swap" this for a copy of *Shamrock. Botany and History of an Irish Myth*.
Dr Charles Nelson (tippitiwitchet@zetnet.co.uk).
Tippitiwitchet Cottage, Hall Road, Outwell, Wisbech PE14 8PE UK.

Rathmines Initiative:
The Rathmines Initiative is a local group involved in a wide range of pursuits covering the Rathmines\Rathgar areas -from landscaping to planning, from shopfronts to social activities. In the Spring of 2007 they wish to have an "open garden day." The aim is to have at least four gardens open on a particular Sunday afternoon to increase the local interest in gardens as well as furthering a feeling of local pride in the area.
Would any member having an interest in this very worthwhile idea contact David Willis on 086 2573845.

Rhododendrons & Azaleas @ Discount
John Gault is retiring and is selling his large stock of rhododendrons and azaleas at 40% discount. The nursery is situated at Cahery House, 84 Broad Road, Limavady, BT49 0QH. The number is 048 7772 2610 (from R.O.I.) and 028 7772 2610 (from N.I.). JLandMaureen@aol.com

NI Heritage Gardens Committee Conference
13th (pm), 14th & 15th Oct at Narrowater Castle, Warrenpoint Co.Down on Shrubs & Shrubberies:Past to Present
10 speakers & 2 garden visits apply *belindajupp@lineone.net*

Taking a Break:
Best wishes to Sally O Halloran who is heading over to England, to the University of Sheffield to study a Masters in Landscape Management.

The Newsletter of the Irish Garden Plant Society

The Irish Garden Plant Society

The Aims of the Society are:

- **The study of plants cultivated in Ireland, and their history.**
- **The development of horticulture in Ireland**
- **The education of members on the cultivation and conservation of garden plants.**
- **To research and locate garden plants considered rare or in need of conservation, especially those raised in Ireland by Irish gardeners and nurserymen.**
- **To co-operate with horticulturalists, botanists, botanical and other gardens, individuals and organisations in Ireland and elsewhere in these matters.**
- **To issue and publish information on the garden plants of Ireland and to facilitate the exchange of information with those interested individuals and groups.**

Correspondence: The Irish Garden Plant Society, c/o The National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin 9. (Please note that staff at the Botanic Gardens cannot take telephone enquiries about the IGPS. They simply facilitate by providing a postal address for the convenience of committee members.)

Do you have a few hours a week to spare for your society?

We are looking for an Executive Assistant to replace Aising Kilcullen who is retiring.

The duties of the Executive Assistant are:

To deal with correspondence (which involves collecting mail from NBG)
To answer emails
To maintain the membership database (computer etc. supplied)
To be in attendance at Committee Meetings (approx. every 4-6 weeks)

An honorarium and expenses will be paid.

Please apply to the Honorary Secretary, Irish Garden Plant Society, c/o National Botanic Gardens, Dublin 9 or email igps@eircom.net

Issue 102, October 2006