



The Irish Garden Plant Society



Bloom 2009

Newsletter No. 113

July 2009



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Aconitum 'Newry Blue'

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Editorial

Congratulations and thanks to the Northern Region Group for organising a very enjoyable weekend for the Annual General Meeting with excellent gardens to visit and interesting plants to buy. Details of the weekend can be found on page 7 of the Newsletter. On page 6 is a photograph of our newly elected Chairman Patrick Quigley, 'to put a face on the name' for those who have yet to meet him.

Congratulations also on their Silver Gilt Award at Bloom 2009 to Marco Fussy, garden designer, Petronilla Martin and their team for the IGPS stand. It was very successful in showcasing our heritage of garden plants, with many visitors asking for plant names. There will be a full report by Petronilla in the October issue.

Best wishes for the future and many thanks to Petronilla for all her work during her three years as Chairman.

The courtyard displayed a wide range of Irish cultivars including *Aconitum* 'Newry Blue' (on the inside front cover) and (on the back cover) *Osteospermum* 'Lady Leitrim' both supplied by Mount Venus Nursery Rathfarnham, Dublin, www.mountvenusnursery.com.

Opposite the IGPS stand Leamore Nursery, Ashford Co Wicklow had *Rodgersia pinnata* 'Irish Bronze' for sale. If members selling plants of Irish interest in their nursery/garden centre send details we will compile a mini plant directory for members.

Mary

Please send material for Newsletter to: maryarowe@yahoo.com
or Mary Rowe 29 Bantry Road, Drumcondra, Dublin 9

Copy date for the October Newsletter 18th September 2009



Irish Garden Plant Society

Irish Cultivar Conservation Day

A day dedicated to profiling Irish Cultivars is scheduled to take place at the National Botanic Gardens on Saturday 5th September 2009. The day will consist of talks and addresses from some of the most knowledgeable people in Irish horticulture who will highlight different plant groups and the issues around Cultivar conservation. There will also be a sales area where plants of Irish origin will be sold.

The day is planned to be as sustainable as possible and eating arrangements are not catered for. So please come with a good breakfast under your belt and besides the catering facilities at the Gardens there are also several public houses that offer eating facilities.

The cost of the day is €15.00 the proceeds of which will go to cover costs for overseas travellers and the Irish Cultivar programme of the Irish Garden Plant Society.

To book please send your name, contact details and €15 fee to The Executive Secretary, c/o National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin 9, or phone Brendan Sayers on 01- 8367427 & leave a message.

September 5 2009

Irish Cultivar Conservation Day

National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin 9

Proposed schedule

10.00 – 10.15	-	Introduction and Greenhouse
10.00 – 11.00	-	General and Heathers
11.00 – 11.30	-	IC conservation and the CBD
11.30 – 12.00	-	Natives
12.00 – 12.30	-	Herbaceous
Lunch time	-	View of sales table and auction
2.00 – 2.20	-	Alpines
2.20 – 2.40	-	Trees
2.40 – 3.00	-	Fruit
3.00 – 3.20	-	Roses
3.20 – 4.00	-	Wind-up and resolutions
4.00	-	Plant sales



Some Trilliums Grown by Keith Lamb

The Trillium season has become a highlight in our garden, following the snowdrops and daffodils. Trilliums are a fascinating genus of bulbous plants with many species native to North America and a few in Asia. They are sometimes called trinity flowers as the parts of the plant are in threes – three leaves, three sepals, three petals and six stamens.

Our introduction to trilliums came a good number of years ago when we were given a few bulbs of *Trillium chloropetalum* from an old garden in County Kildare now gone. These bulbs settled down well on the edge of our woodland garden and seeded themselves freely, some seedlings even appearing in the limestone gravel of the avenue.

Trillium chloropetalum is an example of the sessile group of trilliums. In these the flowers sit on the leaves without the intervention of a stalk. The other group is called pedicellate there being a stalk between the flower and the leaves.

Of the other sessile flowered species we grow *T. luteum* is like a yellow flowered chloropetalum and is a contrast to the wide range of colours in that species white, creamy white and even purple to ruby red. *T. albidum* is like a large leaved chloropetalum with white flowers which is said to be rose scented but so far the scent is faint in our specimen

T. grandiflorum with large white flowers is considered to be one of the finest species but only does moderately well with us. Perhaps it does not favour our alkaline soil. We enjoy the lovely double form but mourn the loss of the even more desirable pink flowered variety of this pedicellate trillium.

T. flexipes is a comparatively slender species with sharply reflected white petals. As the flower fades the stalk bends over so that the ripening seed pod lies below the leaves. Though a modest plant it grows in such sheets in some American woods that it makes quite a show. American growers regard it as a good subject for hybridising with other trilliums.

T. simile is another species that has not increased much with us. This is regrettable as the large white each with a dark eye is attractive.

Two little miniature trilliums that have given us great pleasure are *T. nivale* and *T. rivale*. They grow only a couple of inches high, spreading quickly into tufts which are covered with small white flowers. They also seed themselves freely, the flower stems bending over as if to self sow the seeds. Our plant of *T. rivale* has only slight pinkish coloured petals but very desirable forms are available having deeper colouring. Despite the name the flowers of *T. erectum* are carried horizontally. They are red in colour, with a white variety. Both increase slowly but steadily by offsets.

T. cernuum bends its flowers over so much that they are hidden below the leaves. As they are small and white this species cannot rival the other more garden worthy kinds. There are several other good garden trilliums to be sought after by growers of this lovely genus.

Congratulations to Thérèse Duffy Nightpark Nursery in Co. Kildare



Thérèse Duffy receiving a Special Bórd Bia Award for Best New Entry in the Nursery category at The National Amenity Horticulture Awards earlier this year.



Mary Forrest recommends *The Temple Gardens London*

It could be a quiz question. What links the Chelsea Flower Show and the Great Spring Show? There are two answers firstly, they are shows of the Royal Horticultural Society and secondly, the river Thames. Since 1913 the Chelsea Flower shows has taken place at the Royal Hospital by the Chelsea Embankment. From 1888 to 1911 the Great Spring Show as it was known was held at the Temple Gardens between Fleet Street and Victoria Embankment. Associated with the Knights Templar in the 14th century, this region of London has been associated with the Inns of Court and the garden is surrounded by offices of the legal profession.

The three acre garden was closed to the public at the time of my visit but it was possible to see through the railings to the garden within. The railings themselves were threaded through with interesting climbers, a pink flowered Passion Flower, and an orange flowered *Abutilon*. While in this country we see these indoors they grow outside in the warmer conditions in London. Climbing Roses were mixed with *Clematis viticella*, a July flowering Clematis with 4cm broad deep blue flowers and *Clematis orientalis* with cup shaped orange flowers nodding through the railings.

Two other climbers planted were *Clematis armandii* an evergreen climber with small white flowers in late winter and *Wisteria sinensis* the early summer flowering shrub with pendulous racemes of mauve flowers. While this shrub gives one flush of flower in Irish gardens it can flower once if not twice later in the season in the London area. *Hydrangea petiolaris* formed a barrier shrub. More commonly seen as a shrub on a north wall, the books say that it makes an attractive shrub. Seeing it used so for the first time, I certainly agree.

Inside the railings herbaceous borders ran the width of the Garden. They contained an interesting mix of statuesque species, with bold foliage such as *Eupatorium*, *Echinops*, *Cynara scolymus*, Globe Artichoke, *Echium*, *Verbena bonariensis* and *Melianthus major*. A broad gravel path separated the herbaceous border from a display of summer bedding plants. *Ricinus communis* Castor Oil plant, with reddish stems was planted in association with red flowered *Dahlia* 'Bishop of Llandaff'. Beyond, several large specimen trees were grown on a lawn. Though a small area they conveyed a parkland-like setting. There were large specimens of *Liriodendron tulipifera*, Tulip tree; *Cedrus atlantica*, Atlantic cedar, a large *Cercis siliquastrum* Judas tree and

domed shaped *Catalpa bignonioides*, Indian Bean tree. Two deciduous conifers, one long in cultivation *Ginkgo biloba*. Maidenhair tree and one of more recent introduction *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* Dawn Cypress were also in the Temple Garden. The garden is bounded by London Plane which line the River Thames.

The Temple gardens are worth a return visit, next time it will be through the gates. The gardens are open between 12.30 pm and 3pm each day.

New Chairman elected



Patrick Quigley elected Chairman at the A.G.M. in May is a familiar face to many I.G.P.S members. Living in Belfast he has been a member of the Northern Region Group for many years. He was a Regional representative for eight years from 1996 and National Secretary from 2002 until 2006.



28th Annual General Meeting

The A.G.M. of the Irish Garden Plant Society was held at The Richardson Walled Garden, Greenmount College Co. Antrim on Saturday 23rd May 2009.

The Chairman Petronilla Martin welcomed members to the AGM and mentioned that in the absence of Ed Bowden the National Treasurer she would also present the Treasurer's report. She began by thanking all who had helped the Society during her three years as Chairman. The National Committee and Regional Committees; Stephen Butler Seed Distribution Manager, Ricky Shannon for organising the Annual Summer lunch which this year will be held at Rathmichael Lodge Shankill Co Dublin on Saturday 13th June. Petronilla thanked Paddy Tobin for his work as Editor of the Newsletter and she regretted that he was not present to thank him personally. She also thanked Mary Rowe the Newsletter Editor since January 2009 and said that both Mary and herself had received a very positive response to the Newsletter in 2009.

The subcommittee on Irish Plants continues its work with coordinator Brendan Sayers planning a Seminar for the Autumn. Two members of the National Committee Marco Fussy and Carsten Asherfeld had resigned as they moved home to Germany in February, they will be missed, as they were greatly involved with the work of the Society. Marco has designed the IGPS stand for Bloom 2009, it will be a courtyard planted with Irish cultivars donated by members and he will return to Ireland at the end of the month to install it. Bloom 2008 was a success with 12 new members signed up, it also highlighted the fact that many people did not know what the IGPS was about, they did not realise it was a plant society not just another garden club.

Treasurer's Report

There were now 590 paid up members of the Society and the proceeds of Plant Sales were up on 2008 with three plant sales taking place, one in each region. There was also a very successful raffle thanks to the work of Marcella Campbell with over €1,000 raised, it is hoped that there will be a raffle this year also. Monies from the Heritage of Beauty Fund was used for the printing of the January Newsletter and the Quiz night raised €1,400 which will go towards the publication of the next edition of Moorea.

**IGPS INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR
THE TWELVE MONTHS TO 31st MARCH 2009**

INCOME	2009	2008
	€	€
Subscriptions	10,891	12,914
Plant Sales	5,274	3,591
Quiz	1,497	
Raffle	814	465
Book Sales 'A Heritage of Beauty'	1,585	
Donation	250	
AGM	415	
Summer Lunch	77	
Garden Visit	3	
Deposit Interest	72	19
	20,878	16,989
 LESS EXPENDITURE		
Newsletter	6,338	7,479
Lectures	4,598	4,338
Executive Secretary	3,000	2,750
Bank Fees	229	184
Postage and Telephone	206	324
Printing and Stationery	1,711	936
Travel	606	34
Garden Visits		44
Audit Fees	365	363
Insurance	1,252	1,230
Subscriptions	207	206
Seed offer	347	
Bloom	760	263
Irish Cultivar Project		210
Sundry Expenses		501
	19,619	18,862
 Excess Income over Expenditure	1,259	-1,873
Accumulated surplus brought forward	15,763	17,636
Accumulated surplus carried forward	17,022	15,763

**IRISH GARDEN PLANT SOCIETY
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST March 2009**

	2009		2008	
	€	€	€	€
CURRENT ASSETS				
Debtors & Prepayments	1,995		1,245	
Cash at Bank and in Hand	16,502		15,567	
	18,497		16,812	
CURRENT LIABILITIES				
Creditors falling due within one year	1,475		1,049	
NET CURRENT ASSETS		17,022		15,763
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		17,022		15,763
ACCUMULATED RESERVES				
Income and Expenditure Account		17,022		15,763
		17,022		15,763

Patrick Quigley asked if membership is down 16% what members are not renewing their membership? Petronilla said there was always a number of people who joined but did not renew their membership also said a number of members had died during the year.

Berkeley Farr asked if there was any money coming from gifts? Petronilla said there was none at present. Ricky Shannon said it would be necessary to check the tax situation, the Society is registered as a charity in the South but it would be necessary to check the situation in the North. Carmel Duignan said it might be worth investigating.

Petronilla said Marcella Campbell has done Trojan work contacting members both by phone and letter to remind them to renew their membership. Ricky Shannon said email would be cheaper.

The Treasurer's Report was endorsed by the meeting. Patrick Quigley proposed and Carmel Duignan seconded.

Patrick Quigley was elected Chairman, Ricky Shannon Treasurer, and Dr. Noeleen Smyth was also elected to the National Committee.

Patrick Quigley took the Chair and the meeting continued. He thanked Petronilla Martin on behalf of all present and on his own behalf for the wonderful work done by her as Chairman. He also thanked Mary Rowe for her work as Secretary and also for taking on the job of Editor of the Newsletter. Paddy Tobin's praises have always justifiably been highly sung and it was a daunting challenge for Mary to slip into his shoes Patrick said.

Under "Any Other Business" Paul Boyce asked if the Society would be advertising at the Hillsborough Garden Show? Patrick said there were no plans to do so as it was always difficult to get volunteers. Perhaps it was the same for manning the stand at Bloom but a more positive response by members is needed and will have to be addressed in the coming year. The only response to the Lismacloskey Rectory Garden Appeal in the April Newsletter was from Pat Fitzgerald who offered plants. Paul said he would bring leaflets to the Show and Hilary Glenn will also be there.

Petronilla Martin said the cost of taking a stand at Bloom increased from €100 in 2007 to €475 plus vat. this year. Carmel Duignan asked if it is worth continuing to be involved? and perhaps the money would be better spent improving the website. Patrick Quigley said that Niki Milligan was updating the website but would like regional groups to update their own fixture lists.

Margaret Power said she thought membership should run from January to December, as she found it difficult to remember to pay her renewal fee. Ricky Shannon said January is a difficult time of the year financially for people but it would be easier to remember the renewal date. A vote was taken and a majority favoured a January renewal date.

Rita Craigie suggested there should be an open day where interested people could attend, it should be a different area each year. Patrick Quigley said he would definitely consider this suggestion.

Berkley Farr asked if payment by Direct Debit should be introduced. Ricky Shannon said payment by Standing Order is available but payment by Direct Debit would be costly for the Society. Patrick Quigley suggested members could also take out a five-year membership.

Ros Boyce asked how many Horticulture Lecturers support the Society? Petronilla said she has sent membership forms to Ciaran Burke and Carl Dacus. Patrick said there wasn't contact with anyone in Greenmount College.

Paul Boyce asked if there could be an 'Irish Cultivar Bed' in the The Richardson Walled Garden at Greenmount College? Patrick said this definitely was an option worth exploring. Likewise tentative talks had taken place with Antrim Borough Council but the problem was getting volunteers to maintain the area after planting. Mary Rowe said the Teagasc College in Glasnevin was a member of the Society and in the past Mary Bradshaw has spoken to students there about the IGPS.

Paul Boyce asked if the Society could get more publicity? Carmel Duignan said Jane Powers mentions the Society once a year in the Irish Times. Patrick Quigley said we could look for publicity when events such as plant sales are taking place and mention membership.

Sarah Angel said there were lots of Garden Clubs and they should be encouraged to have a Group Membership. Patrick Quigley said this would be worth pursuing, but it was difficult to get the contact details of club secretaries as they constantly changed, but a large number of members of garden clubs were also members of the IGPS. Perhaps members who are members of garden clubs could bring leaflets to their club to encourage others to join the IGPS and also if a member was giving a talk to a garden club they could also bring membership applications.

Finally Patrick thanked all those involved in organising the weekend in particular Jackie Halliwell, Marion Allen, Aleen Herdman, and Yvonne Penpraze and wished all present an enjoyable weekend.

Following the A.G.M. below are the members of the National Committee

Chairman: Patrick Quigley

Vice Chairman: Hilary Glenn

Treasurer: Ricky Shannon

Secretary: Mary Rowe

Northern Committee Representative: Hilary Glenn

Munster Committee Representative: Thérèse Murphy

Leinster Committee Representative: Marcella Campbell

Public Relations Officer: Thérèse Murphy

Committee Members: Ed Bowden, Anne James, Janet Butcher, Dr. Noleen Smyth

AGM GARDEN VISITS

Benvardeen Gardens, Dervock, Co Antrim

As we headed north to Benvardeen the rain poured down even though the weatherman had promised sunshine. We entered through a long winding drive past ancient trees and the first thing I spotted was a small sales area.

The sunshine came out immediately for me when I spotted a Wollemi Pine *Wollemia nobilis* at an incredibly low price – I spread the word and within five minutes all six pines were spoken for!

Now it was time to see the garden, described by Terence Reeves-Smyth as “undoubtedly the best in private hands” in Northern Ireland. I would totally agree with that description.

The walled garden was impeccable, laid out in sections with miles of clipped box, a rose garden, herbaceous borders, a small green house with nectarines and grapevines and the piece de resistance was a ruined glasshouse where the old supports now play host to climbing roses, golden hop and the tricolour *Actinidia kolomikta*.

A gravel path led us to the woodland pond. This was created in the 1850's but was only reclaimed from dereliction in the last ten years. It is fed by a small burn and empties into the Bush river. Today it looked superb, very dark and still and reflected the numerous azaleas, iris and marginal plants that clothed the edges.

We rounded the pond to view a magnificent *Magnolia wilsonii* with white scented downward facing flowers. This was inspired planting as it contrasted so well with the dark broody pond.

Then it was back to the walled garden via the woodland and through to a vegetable garden which was laid out with military precision.

There are one and a half! gardeners working here and they perform miracles keeping the walled garden, the vegetables, the woodland and the pond area in tip top condition.

I will definitely come back to visit this historic garden. Meanwhile I also bought a ‘pup’ from the *Magnolia wilsonii* to keep my Wollemi Pine company, two great plants to remind me of a great afternoon.

Margaret Power

2 Old Galgorm Road Ballymena

On Sunday morning we were in Margaret Glynn's garden on the outskirts of Ballymena. Margaret is one of the best gardeners in Ireland and a visit to the garden she and her husband Louis have created is always a special treat. She is a collector with exquisite taste in the plants she acquires and in the way she grows them. Among many fine trees to admire was the magnificent *Picea breweriana* with wondrous new shoots growing close to a fine *Prunus serrula*, both of them providing shade and context to an exciting woodland garden. The island beds and borders are set off by a shining green lawn that enhances and cools down the vibrant colours of many of the plants. Shrubs are plentiful with colourful rhododendrons and azaleas sharing their space with bright blue poppies and large-leaved, healthy hostas.

Margaret is also a specialist alpinist and her rock garden has more treasures than most of us can dream of. A *Castilleja* (the Indian Paint Brush) blooms in a raised bed that has many other rare gems – dwarf irises, celmisias, tiny hostas and an especially good form of *Rhododendron campylogynum* Myrtilloides Group with its deep plum coloured bells. In a damp spot the very rare *Meconopsis×cookei* displays its pink/red, tissue-papery petals while close by a big *Cercidiphyllum japonicum* shelters a delicate *Enkianthus campanulatus* that in turn overlooks one of the beautiful blue buttercups (and rare as hen's teeth) *Anemone obtusiloba* 'Pradesh Form'.

Everywhere in this garden there is something to enthuse over, some treasure to savour, some new plant to admire. Even the compost heaps are works of art. And still Margaret Glynn finds time to dish out some welcome coffee and refreshments, to introduce us to her charity plant table and to go off into the garden with spade and trowel to dig up a special treat for those of her guests who feel they can't live without this or that particular beauty. It was a lovely visit.

Carmel Duignan

Ballyrobert Cottage Garden

When we arrived at Ballyrobert Cottage, our fellow visitors were already laying siege to the well stocked plant centre. "Cottage" is a modest title for this impressive building and six acre garden. Mr Maurice Parkinson showed us to the garden room. Here, he thoughtfully delivered an illustrated talk on the development of the property. He explained that this Robinsonian garden was originally a small traditional two-cottage

farm occupied by Scottish settlers 200 years ago. The exposed site had been acquired sixteen years previously. Following the principle of matching a garden to the landscape, it was transformed by the 8,000 trees planted as mixed shelter, into the oasis of calm it was today. He described the original layout of the cottage and farm buildings, how the cottage had been extended and other unstable buildings, removed. The extension of the cottage was to the rear, so as not to destroy its original façade. The barn had been built close to the cottage to stop cattle raids and was parallel to the present extension. The ground floor had originally been used as a byre and farm workers had lived in the loft. The surrounds were of rough cobbles, now carefully reinstated.

Two basalt pillars were constructed at the entrance. These were similar to traditional pillars in the area with one difference – traditional pillars are rounded on top to discourage the fairies from dancing there. One pillar here had a flat surface to accommodate them. The fairy theme was reinforced by a “fairy tree” (hawthorn) on the far side of the avenue.

Inspired by the talk, we hurried outside to absorb the freshness of the front garden. The cottage faced north and the lawn here swept between island beds and borders lined with *Hosta* in abundance, *Geranium*, *Bergenia*, variegated Solomon’s Seal, *Paeonia*, blue *Meconopsis*, the thistle-like *Berkheya purpurea* and the Globe-flower, *Trollius europaeus*. Additional height was provided by *Abelia*, *Hebe*, *Elaeagnus*, golden *Philadelphus*, Purple-leaved Plum and the weeping willow leaved pear *Pyrus salicifolia* ‘Pendula’. A picket fence, part way towards the entrance, formed a boundary. Two apple trees planted in a “V” formed, an inverted frame from which to view this scene. A special feature was the rose R. ‘*Sommermorgen*’ on the fence but we were too early for its flowers. However, the Flowering Cherry P. ‘Taihaku’, on the right, was a good substitute. On the left was a Paperbark Maple, *Acer griseum*. A circular seat around an ash tree made an appropriate focal point.

Continuing to the south west of the cottage, we followed a broad expanse of lawn downwards with borders of Day Lillies, *Hemerocallis*, *Geranium* ‘Johnston’s Blue’, a striking purple *Primula* and the ever-present *Hosta*. Small trees, such as *Sambucus nigra* ‘Black Beauty’ and Irish Juniper provided a vertical element. Ahead was a large man-made pond with its own heavily wooded crannóg, a unique feature and a haven for wildlife. To the right, a blaze of *Rhododendron* caught the attention of all. In particular, *Rhododendron yakushimanum* ‘Golden Torch’ and Exbury Azalea ‘Golden Horn’ stood out. Behind the pond was a young Japanese maple, *Acer palmatum* ‘Orange Dream’ reflected in the water.

Back at the south side of the cottage was the formal garden. Paths laid out to form a Celtic Cross had been edged with cobblestones and box hedging. The paths were surfaced with local grey stone gravel. This led to a peaceful lawn with borders of shrubs and herbaceous plants. A “Chilean Fire Bush”, *Embothrium coccineum* and the rowan *Sorbus aucuparia* ‘Golden Wonder’ were particularly eye-catching.

The nursery was to the east of this area and contained a wide selection of cottage garden plants. The pristine standard of maintenance in this garden would deter any weed from showing a leaf, not to mention its head!

Eva and Chris Kelly

Drumadarragh Lodge, Brookfield Road Ballyclare

Sunday afternoon brought us to this garden full of delightful surprises developed by Fiona and Roy Simpson over the last eighteen years. We started at the front of the house walking through two wide borders planted with many herbaceous perennials cleverly given the “Chelsea chop”. This brought us on to one enclosed area after another. These different gardens surrounded by various hedges of beech, holly, yew or hornbeam each had it’s own individual character.

A summerhouse in one was beside an *Abies koreana*, quiet peaceful areas graced with specimen trees and shrubs and beds full of white camassias, phlomis and salvias. A natural pond with bog bean surrounded by ferns and euphorbia with a background of *Prunus padua* and *Sorbus* trees was a haven for wild life.

An alpine garden with raised beds led us back to the house through a well-tended vegetable and fruit garden that had once been a helicopter pad!

This was a most interesting garden visit made memorable by our charming and informative hosts.

Sarah Angel

11 Sallagh Road, Ballygally, Larne, Co Antrim

Of all the gardens we visited during this year’s AGM in the North, David and Janet’s garden was certainly my favourite one.

True, Benvardeen was grand, beautiful and very impressive, but for me David's garden was the most interesting one because of the overwhelming amount of different plants and the way they were mixed and combined in their various habitats. As we were unable to stay until Monday to visit David's garden together with the group, Patrick had kindly arranged a visit for my husbands and myself on Sunday evening and, lucky us, we had Janet and David the whole time for ourselves.

After a warm welcome we dived into their planters' paradise. Up the slope behind the house through the lush woodland we went. Sorry I don't remember what kind of tree mix had been planted there for shelter because my eyes were glued to the ground all the time, trying to take in everything about the way they had combined these very healthy looking woodland perennials like Helleborus species, wild Lillies , Hepaticas, Alliums, Polygonatums and so on. One part was filled with wild plants only from the Glen, we were told, and another special area with bulbs and perennials from the Himalayas like *Cardiocrinum*, *Meconopsis*, *Hosta nigrensis*, *Astilbe*.

Further down alongside a little stream we came to a bed full of flowering Azaleas in colours that complemented those of *Primula alpicola* and *Primula lutica*. *Iris ensata* was showing many healthy looking flower buds. The next area was more open due to new small ponds with water running from one into the other. The banks around the ponds were newly planted with among other things a beautiful low growing Hebe. Then, right behind the new ponds we saw a mix of birches, snowgum , japanese acer and a Stewartia with fat flower buds. A kind of wilderness that won't stay like this, because David has new plans for even more beds with new shrubs, paths and plants. I suppose when you are so keen on growing new things and when your soil is this fertile, it is impossible to stop building new homes for even more plants.

When asked how they manage to keep the beds weed free, David told me, he just planted very special plants so that he had to look after them. Basically, the whole garden was filled with " favourites ". Not to forget the troughs beside and behind the house filled with precious little alpines. My favourites were a small yellow Primula and a pale blue *Androsace sempervivoides* .

I would really love to visit this planters' heaven every couple of weeks to enjoy and find out more about the various combinations of plants that grow in succession during the seasons and to talk to David and Janet about their work. A pity they live so far away from Kerry.

Christel Rosenfeld



Wordsworth's Cloud

Peter Milligan and Nicola Milligan

There will always be arguments as to which bulb marks the start of the gardening year, for example many refer to the snowdrop as the 'harbinger of Spring'. However, considering that *Galanthus regina-olgea* subsp. *regina-olgea* flowers before Christmas (along with an increasing number of cultivars) do we really want to say that the flowering of this beautiful snowdrop marks the start of Spring ?

As we started to prepare this article (January) we had *Iris ungarlis* 'Mary Barnard' flowering outside the front door – again does this mark the start of Spring ?

Rather than argue over such matters surely we should just enjoy the different bulbs as they come into flower. We grow and enjoy a number of bulbous plants, *Galanthus*, *Crocus*, *Tulipa*, and *Iris* all add pleasure to our gardening year.

In this article we want to focus attention on another well-known bulbous genus – the *Narcissus* – rich with Irish connections.

Most of us will be aware of Wordsworth's famous poem [1] with the memorable closing lines:

"For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon the inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude,
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils"

We hope that most gardeners would agree that there is considerable pleasure to be obtained from the sight and memory of glorious drifts of daffodils. But, where did the flower originate and how long have we grown or written about this very popular flower.

It would appear that the daffodil has its origins in and around the Mediterranean with Turkey, Spain and Portugal being mentioned as sources. Daffodils have a long history in cultivation with first references occurring in the writings of Pliny (AD 23 – AD 79) and in

the sixth century writings of the Prophet Mohamed. If you want to delve into the writings of the Greeks (and others) on this subject I recommend you start by following up the references given in the opening chapter of E. A. Bowles excellent book [2].

The gardeners' love affair with daffodils grew in strength until the nineteenth century when the number of varieties available prompted one avid grower to express concern.

In his preface to Reverend Jacob's book [3] Reverend Wilks, then secretary to the Royal Horticultural Society, noted that

“.... In 1879 I set myself to collect all the varieties of Daffodils I could get through the ordinary trade sources, and I have been a consistent, but by no means fanatical, grower of them ever since; and it is highly interesting to look at my old lists, containing little more than, if as many as, fifty really distinct varieties and to compare them with the list put forth recently by the Daffodil Committee of the R.H.S. with its nearly 2500 names.”

Reverend Wilks goes on to observe that

“.... The truly ridiculous prices of £30, £40, and £50 a bulb cannot in the nature of things continue to prevail”

Given that the reverend gentleman was writing in and around 1909 (as best as we can determine the book in which he wrote was published in 1909-1910) the prices quoted are astronomical and would have been well beyond the reach of the vast majority of gardeners.

An examination of a current RHS Plantfinder provides a list of around 2900-3000 varieties. A further examination of the lists provided by modern growers and breeders shows prices in the range £20 - £30 for new introductions. So there has not been too great a proliferation of varieties and in relative terms the prices have dropped considerably. I hope that the Reverend Wilks would approve.

It is pleasing to observe that this interest in daffodils continues to grow and has a strong representation in Ireland. There is an active, not to say flourishing, daffodil society here in the north (the Northern Ireland Daffodil Group) and the number of past and present growers and breeders is wonderful.

An examination of that ever useful reference text, *A Heritage of Beauty* [4], reveals the past glories of Irish growers and breeders. Some examples include Ballydorn Bulb Farm (Killinchy, Co. Down) with 188 cultivars registered, the aptly named T. Bloomer (Omagh, Co. Tyrone) with 171 cultivars registered, Brian Duncan (Omagh, Co. Tyrone) with an amazing 402 cultivars registered, Sir Josslyn Gore-Booth (Lissadell, Co. Sligo) with 70 cultivars registered, and Mrs H. K. Richardson and Mr J Lionel Richardson (Waterford) with a truly astonishing 830 cultivars registered. For a full list please take the time to read the daffodil annex (annex five) of this book.

More recent examples of this group include Carncairn Daffodils (Broughshane, Ballymena, Co. Antrim), Tyrone Daffodils (Omagh, Co. Tyrone) and Ringhaddy Daffodils (Killinchy, Co. Down). Ringhaddy took over Ballydorn Bulb farm and Brian Duncan Daffodils.

And, of course, who could forget the work of the late Guy Wilson. Guy Wilson (1886 to 1962) was born in Broughshane, started his working life in the woollen mills and achieved his first success with a variety named 'White Dame' (1921). He went on to produce over eighty cultivars with a reputation for white varieties although he did produce some coloured plants (e.g. 'Irish Rose').

Mr Wilson was a truly gifted breeder and we are fortunate that a great deal of his work is preserved, and available for viewing, in the Guy L. Wilson Daffodil Garden (Coleraine, Co. Londonderry).

While it may be interesting to review the work of the many Northern Irish growers and breeders we would prefer to talk (briefly) about the plants we grow.

We hope that most gardeners would agree that the daffodil is a relatively easy plant to grow. Plant in reasonable soil, do not cut the leaves back immediately after the flowers have faded, remember to give a good, balanced feed every so often, and lift and divide clumps if and when they become congested, and we will be rewarded with year after year of flowers.

There are groups and divisions containing just about every size, shape and colour that a gardener could want.

My own interest tends to lie with the large trumpet varieties and, of course, with the older varieties. Nicola loves the smaller, daintier varieties. We have been growing the beautiful 'Colleen Bawn' (introduced by William Baylor Hartland of Ard Cairn, Cork) for a

number of years and we wanted to increase our selection of Irish plants.

Last year a little searching led us to an excellent English nursery (or should I say bulb farm) which was able to supply some old Irish varieties (R.A. Scamp, Quality Daffodils, Falmouth, Cornwall). Ron Scamp's list of daffodils is worth a look – from the 'historical' section of his list we selected 'Slieveboy' (pre-1953) introduced by Guy Wilson, 'Blarney' (pre-1935) introduced by the Richardsons of Waterford, 'Portrush' (pre-1947) another Guy Wilson introduction, 'Lucifer' (pre-1900) introduced by Alice Lawrenson of Howth, Co. Dublin and the non-Irish 'Binkie' (pre-1938).

We planted these on arrival and then endured an almost unbearable wait for the first sign of leaves, the emergence of flowering stems and then – finally – the flowers. All flowered with the exception of 'Lucifer' which produced a healthy crop of leaves only.

You can judge the quality of the flowers for yourselves by examining Nicola's photographs. We were very pleased and plan to extend the collection of Irish cultivars this year.



Narcissus 'Portrush'



Narcissus 'Blarney'

So, it may seem odd to provide an article on Spring flowering bulbs for the July issue of the newsletter. But, what better time to draw your attention to these beauties, just in time for you to reach for the catalogues and order some for August/September planting.

So let us close with a quote from one of our favourite authors, the late Beverley Nichols, who devoted a chapter in one of his books [5] to the daffodil:

“So I think that these are flowers that you must have, whether your garden is great or small and whether you are a ‘shrinker’ or not. They may even teach you to become one by their annual reminder that beauty is not a question of size. And if you have no garden at all, you can still grow them very successfully in an earthenware pan in the back yard.”

So go on, indulge yourselves and preserve some more of our fine heritage by seeking out and growing some of our wonderful Irish daffodils.

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Patricia Jorgensen explains An Artist's Approach To Botanical Painting

I often feel there is an idea that 'being an artist' is a state of being that somehow just happens – drifting about waiting for inspiration, and which differentiates artists from other 'more ordinary mortals'! The reality, of course, is somewhat different. Being a professional painter is a day-to-day job like any other – that for a botanical painter the hours may not be so regular. Plants and flowers have their own timetable and indeed conditions which we must follow in order to capture them.

The origin of my work derives from two things: a home background of gardens and plants and, later, from an art and design training, finally specialising in textiles. My passion for plants therefore was a childhood legacy. Expression of that came through working in both fashion and textile design. However, a need to go back to my fine art roots led me, 25 years ago, to my present career as a botanical painter.

There are two types of botanical art: illustration and portraiture. The reality, of course, is somewhat different. Being a professional painter is a day-to-day job like any other – except Botanical illustration is essentially an objective visual record of plants. It is diagrammatic, a learning tool serving the science of botany, which is why depictions often include root systems and cross sections of plants. Also, it is primarily made to be reproduced on the printed page. Both of these factors dictate and affect the artist's approach to their subject matter.

Botanical portraiture on the other hand is more subjective – as with portraits of people, they should convey much more than, for instance, physical likeness. A good portrait painter will let their subject assume a pose that comes naturally. The botanical painter uses the plant's natural manner of growth as the key to its 'pose' or position on the page. In both cases physical characteristics are revealed, on which the rest of the picture builds. It is in this second field of botanical art, botanical portraiture, that I work. For me, portraying plants is about creating a pleasing pictorial design that captures the spirit, character and personality of the subject while maintaining botanical accuracy.



I start by selecting and positioning the plant, after which I make a detailed pencil drawing. This necessary observation is necessary to let me really understand what it is I am seeing in terms of form, structure and tone. Colour trials are the next step and only when these are completed to my satisfaction do I begin work on what is to be the finished picture.

The final stage is painting the re-drawn plant using the chosen colour mixes and working it up gradually from the initial colour applications, or 'washes', to a detailed finish. As a painting builds up, tension mounts for the artist because, unlike oil painting, it is virtually impossible to disguise mistakes in watercolour. Therefore, if something goes wrong in the latter stages of a painting, the whole work is lost.

Once the process involved in my approach is understood it becomes evident that the end result does not come from waiting about for inspiration and then tossing off a painting. Rather, it results from hard graft that is a combination of observation, craftsmanship and passion to create a harmonious whole. It is the potential of achieving this mysterious totality that is the motivating force behind my work in botanical portraiture.





John Anderson describes Exbury Gardens – The Lionel Years

Lionel de Rothschild was born on the 25th January 1882 at Ascot a country mansion at Wing, Leighton Buzzard, Buckinghamshire. The family home was Gunnersbury House, London. Lionel's childhood days were spent holidaying by the Solent in Hampshire at Inchmerry House close to the village of Exbury.

In 1907 Lionel and Lord Montagu of Beaulieu won the prestigious Perla del Mediterraneo, when they broke the world water speed record of 28 mph. In 1912 at the age of thirty he married Marie Louise Beer who was a descendant of Meyerbeer. Shortly afterwards he bought the small estate at Inchmerry, by the Solent in Hampshire where he enjoyed sailing and motor-yachting.

In 1918 at the age of thirty-six he had inherited Halton Hall in Buckinghamshire from his uncle Albert which he sold to the newly formed RAF. With the monies from Halton Hall he bought the 2,500 acre Exbury Estate from Lord Forster in 1919, who later became Governor General of Australia.

At that time Exbury House and grounds were in a pretty dilapidated condition and over the next twenty years Lionel would undertake one of the largest landscape projects ever seen in that period during the twentieth century. In those twenty years Lionel created 250 acres of gardens on a grand scale, laying out some 20 miles of paths and irrigation systems. Lionel employed up to 150 men to clear brambles and bracken, double digging in preparation for his new garden in this corner of the New Forest. He built teak glasshouses by the acre to house his new plant collections, a walled garden to grow fruit and vegetables incorporating a fig house along with a peach and nectarine house. It took three years to reconstruct the house to show off newly formed vistas and across the ha-ha to the Isle of Wight.

He improved and built several houses in the small hamlet of Exbury to accommodate staff, adding a bakery, grocery shop and Post Office. He built a 25m high water tower which fed the houses and irrigation system throughout the gardens to overcome the dry summers, the average rainfall being only 50mm (22 inches). He built Gilbury Bridge known as 'Lionel's folly' connecting both sides of the garden along with building two acres of Rock Garden and planting a wide selection of alpiners. At the time it was the largest in Europe. The rocks were imported from

Wales and transported by ship via the Beaulieu river. He even got permission to move a section of the main road to accommodate his new entrance to the main house. One of his greatest gardening achievements was the building of a series of ponds and cascades, which would become one of the centrepieces of the garden, and still remain so today.

Lionel was a man of great determination, vision and means, he placed Exbury Gardens amongst one of the finest gardens in the world.

Lionel was so engrossed in plants and gardening, spending every available moment away from the family bank, at his country home of Exbury. He coined the phrase 'he was a banker by hobby and a gardener by profession'.

He sponsored several of the great plant hunters including George Forrest, Frank Kingdom Ward and Harold Comber. The seed from their plant hunting trips would have been very carefully documented and young seedlings prized before been planted out in the garden.

The Garden

Lionel's garden enthusiasm was not restricted to Rhododendrons, his interests were far and wide. One of his garden mentors was W. J. Bean curator of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. It was Bean who would have recommended trees such as *Magnolia campbellii*, *Cercidiphyllum japonicum*, *Nothofagus* and oaks like *Quercus glauca*, *Q. phillyreoides*, *Q. myrsinifolia* and *Q. hemispherica*.

Lionel personally marked the site of all the important plants. On large native oak trees he planted *Wisteria sinensis*, *Hydrangea anomala* ssp. *petiolaris*, *Vitis coignetiae*, *Schizophragma hydrangeoides*, *Clematis montana* and Roses.

He developed a Winter Garden at the lower end of the garden which has spectacular views along the Beaulieu River. It was planted with early flowering *Rhododendrons*, *Camellia's* and *Hamamelis* including some Ernest Wilson introductions.

In the centre of Home Wood he created a series of Ponds and Cascades which were to form the central piece of the gardens. Here he planted *Taxodium distichum* (Swamp Cypress) which today stands as a towering tree on an island in the Top Pond.

He surrounded the ponds with interesting plants from the *Liriodendron tulipifera* large tulip trees to dogwoods of *Cornus florida* and *Cornus florida* 'Rubra' to a wide variety of Japanese Maples, *Gleditsia triacanthos*, Bamboos and *Nyssa sylvatica*. Rarities such as *Lithocarpus edulis* (Japanese Stone Oak) and *Quercus phillyreoides*

from China and Japan. *Emmenopterys henryi* which was planted close to the middle pond along-side *Hoheria angustifolia* possibly an original Harold Comber introduction.

Edging the cascades were drifts of Asiatic Primulas, Meconopsis, Rodgersias and Hostas. On the island in the middle pond are *Eucryphia Xnymanensis* 'Nymansay', *Ligustrum lucidum* and *Sequoia sempervirens* under planted with *Gunnera manicata*. By the lower pond and the smallest of the ponds he added repeat plantings of Asiatic primulas with *Lyschiton americanum*, *Rodgersia podophylla* and more Hostas. From the Lower Pond to the Winter Garden he planted several interesting plants including *Picconia excelsa* an unusual evergreen large shrub or small tree which produces small olive like fruits in autumn, endemic to Macaronesia, occurring on the Canary Islands (Spain) and Maderia (Portugal).

In an open sunny position, with its roots shaded by *Rhododendron maddenii* ssp. *crassum* and *Rhododendron spinuliferum* is a good 15m high Red Lotus Tree, *Magnolia insignis* (formerly *Manglietia insignis*) an evergreen tree with beautiful pink tulip like flowers in June. Within the same area are some very good examples of *Rhododendron calophytum* a large very hardy specimen from Sichuan and NE Yunnan where it grows at 1,800ft (4,000m).

Other plants of interest are *Vaccinium sprengeli* from W. Hupeh and the rare and seldom encountered Fujian Cypress, *Fokienia hodginsii* a national champion tree which was introduced by Captain Hodgins in 1908.

In deeper woodland areas Lionel planted *Eurya japonica*, *Trochodendron aralioides* and a Camellia Walk full of interesting varieties. Close to this area is one of Lionel's most impressive and outstanding large leaved hybrids Rhododendrons 'Fortune', this is regarded as one of Lionel's greatest achievements; he selected the pollen of *Rhododendron sinogrande* a species introduced by George Forrest in 1913, from Trewithen in Cornwall and crossed it with *Rhododendron falconeri*. The result was a stunning primrose yellow truss with silver coloured abaxial foliage.

By the old Pinetum a several acre open field was transformed into a huge Daffodil meadow which sweeps down to the Beaulieu river. The daffodils would arrive in large wooden crates weighing up to one ton. The garden staff would spend weeks planting vast quantities of daffodils. The result is a stunning display in early spring.

Today, the bottom half of the meadow leading to the river walks is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (S.S.S.I.) and is managed for the native plants that grow in the grassland and by the salt marshes.

In Witcher's Wood Lionel planted large quantities of his newly raised hybrids and included some of the best plants we grow in our gardens. For example *Rhododendron* 'Avalanche' (*Rh. calophytum* x *Rh. Loderi* Group) a hybrid raised in 1933, which received the FCC in 1938. Also the *Rh. Naomi* Group a beautiful range of superb flowering plants were raised in 1926 by crossing *Rh* 'Aurora' x *Rh fortunei*.

It is estimated that during Lionel's time at Exbury he planted nearly 1 million plants in his 250 acres gardens. He planted a sixty acre arboretum adjacent to his woodland garden, incorporating at the time every available hardy tree in commerce, sadly most of this was cut down by the late 1960's. Lionel sponsored George Forest twice, with the McLaren Syndicate in 1929 and then the 7th Expedition (1930-32) with an estimate cost today of approximately £23,000. He was responsible for introducing *Rhododendron yakushimanum* to cultivation in 1934 from M. N. Wada of Hakoneya Nursery, Numazushi, Japan. It was Francis Hanger who was Head Gardener at Exbury at the time who was responsible for nurturing the new arrivals and growing them on. Hanger moved to Wisley as Keeper of the Gardens in 1946 and brought with him a wealth of knowledge obtained while working at Exbury. He also brought several plants with him including the best form of *Rhododendron yakushimanum* 'Koichiro Wada'.

Lionel de Rothschild died on the 20th January 1942 at the age of 60; he had achieved many accolades including the Victoria Medal of Honour. He was a founder member of the Rhododendron Association (now the RHS Rhododendron Society) he presented two cups to the Royal Horticultural Society - The Lionel de Rothschild Cup for The Main Rhododendron Show and The Rothschild Challenge Cup. His tremendous vision and foresight is evident today and his work continues through the various family members.

The Garden is presently under the stewardship of Leopold de Rothschild the youngest son of Lionel who has great energy and enthusiasm for steering the gardens in new and challenging times.

To visit:

Exbury Garden opens daily 10am – 5 pm until Sunday 8th November.
Exbury, Southampton, Hampshire SO45 1AZ

www.exbury.co.uk



Anna Nolan - An Appreciation

I first met Anna a little more than a decade ago. I was still a student and it was for me, a very fortunate introduction. Her meticulous methods, her high standards, her hunger for new plants, her willingness to try something new, her generosity, all inspired me. She was always happy to pass on any information, for this I am extremely grateful. When there is a lot to learn, her patience was much appreciated. I know I am only one of many who has benefited from her in this way.

In her wonderful jewel of a garden, Anna fulfilled the ethos of the IGPS. She collected, nourished and cherished a fabulous collection of plants. More importantly she propagated them and shared them with fellow custodians. With voluminous generosity she helped distribute and increase quantities of rare plants that would have had otherwise been dwindling in numbers. With ease and flair she managed to propagate the impossible and patiently waited many years for these progenies to flower.

Anna had such wonderful style. As well as in her home and self, her garden was manicured and managed in such a way that most of us could only dream about. She had a great eye for colour and fantastic vision for perfect plant combinations. Each plant was so perfectly preened and presented, she gave an impression that her garden was easy, but most of us know differently, such perfection takes dedication and many long hours. She really did create a wonderful oasis, a showcase of her diligence, determination and passion for gardening.

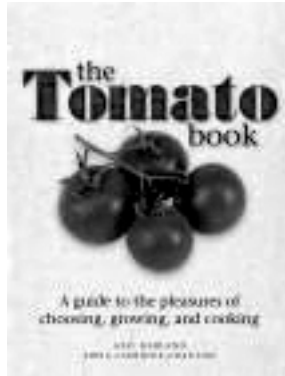
During her two-year fight with leukaemia she took every day with wonderful optimism and her practicality enabled her to even joke about her illness. Many of us would do well to remember her cheer in hard times.

Regrettably her immense zest for life was cut terribly short, a sad loss for her husband Sean, son Fergus and daughter Orla, but also to the entire Irish gardening community. With wonderful charm, wit and a mischievous twinkle in her eye she welcomed hundreds of visitors through her garden. We will all miss her greatly.

Cathy Burke



Worth A Read *Paddy Tobin's Choice*



The Tomato Book: A guide to the pleasures of choosing, growing and cooking by Gail Hartland and Sofia Larrinua-Claxton

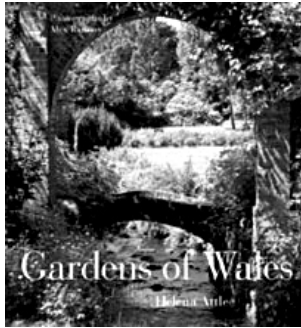
This book is written by two enthusiasts, two lovers of tomatoes, of growing them and of eating them. They hold no claim to being experts other than having grown tomatoes for many years and having tried many, many different varieties. Over these years they have kept accurate notes on how each variety performed in cultivation, their taste and their suitability for culinary uses. It is simply an excellent book, a simple book indeed presenting its information in a user friendly way with no unnecessary frills or padding. After a short introduction the main part of the book describes a wide range of tomatoes gathered together in groups according to type: cherry, plum, standard globe, beefsteak etc. Cultivars are recommended for sauces and salsas, soups and salads. There is a section on cultivation in the garden or under protection, notes on possible pests and diseases and the book concludes with a selection of tasty recipes. After reading the book I have already identified a number of cultivars which I will try next year. The regulars, Alicante, Moneymaker, Gardener's Delight and the like are all very fine but Black Krim, Cherokee Purple or Extra Sweetie might be next year's crop. [*The Tomato Book, Gail Hartland & Sofia Larrinua-Craxton, Dorling Kindersley, London, 2009, HB, 192pp, ISBN: 978-1-4053-41189, £12.99*]



The Gardens of Frank Lloyd-Wright by Derek Fell

Inevitably, the front cover of this book has a photograph of Fallingwater, Frank Lloyd-Wright's most famous architectural project and, it has to be said, that he is certainly better known as an architect rather than as a landscape architect. However, on reading this book I am certainly enlightened and impressed by this aspect of his work and now realise that Frank Lloyd-Wright made a significant contribution to this area. As an aside, when asked by the owners to complete the work at Fallingwater and landscape the area around the house, he suggested that what was already provided by nature was sufficient and only added some native plantings to bulk up what was already there. This approach typifies his landscape work as he was ever conscious of the nature of the site and worked with it rather than attempt to change it while using native plants in his planting schemes. The book describes his work at his two homes, Taliesin, his summer home on a prairie hillside in Wisconsin and Taliesin West, his winter home in the Sonora Desert in Arizona. By way of information, Taliesin was an estate of some 3,000 acres and his landscape plans involved the purchase of houses and businesses within view of the house and removing them, the planting of thousands of trees – entire woods, in fact, the damming of streams to create lakes and even adopting methods of farming which best suited the design. A retelling of a conversation he had with his neighbour is both amusing and illustrative: Wright complained to him that his Guernsey cows were not producing enough cream and so his neighbour suggested he switch to Holsteins. Wright thought over the proposal for a moment and replied, “Jack, Holsteins are black and white. Black and white on green? No; black and white do not look good on green. Never bring anything black and white or red and white in the way of an animal in sight of my eyes – coffee and cream, which are the colour of my Guernseys, on green, are the three most restful colours you can find. That is why I have Guernseys, and why I want nothing but Guernseys.”

Given that his two homes are situated in very different areas and conditions the accounts of his work on both are contrasting and interesting. There are also reports on his work on other projects which widens the range and interest of the book. In all this is a most interesting book, well written and excellently illustrated by the author's photographs. Personally, while I enjoyed the book immensely, I could not imagine myself enjoying Frank Lloyd-Wright's company – just an impression I took from the book. [*The Gardens of Frank Lloyd-Wright, Derek Fell, Frances Lincoln, London, 2009, HB, 160pp, ISBN: 978 0 7112 2967 9, £30*]

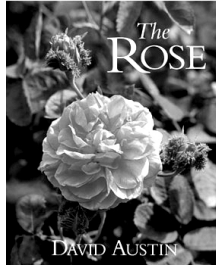


“The Gardens of Wales” by Helena Atlee

“The Gardens of Wales” is a book I should have had several years ago when we took regular trips across the Irish Sea to visit Crug Farm and Aberconwy Nursery as well as Bodnant Gardens, Powis Castle and Plas Brondanw. The book should have been dropped into my lap with the Americanism, “You ain’t seen nothing yet”. Really, despite our regular visits, we had missed many of the great treasures of Wales – something which we shall have to set to rights before too long especially as Wales is so easily accessible to any of us living on the east coast with ferries from Dun Laoghaire, Dublin and Rosslare.

Helena Atlee has already written well on “The Gardens of Portugal” and “Italian Gardens: A Cultural History” and her writing is both informative and pleasant to read. In this book she presents a most interesting range of gardens both large and small spread around Wales though there are two main collections, one in the north and another in the south, making them even more suitable for the ferry traveller from Ireland. While she has covered the better known gardens perfectly well, it was reading of the other gardens which I most enjoyed and, certainly, her writing would encourage me to

seek them out in future visits to Wales. The photographs are an excellent accompaniment to the text and bring it to life. This is an excellent garden guide and one which will make a garden outing to Wales all the more certain of enjoyment. [*The Gardens of Wales, Helena Atlee, Frances Lincoln, London, 2009, HB, 128pp, ISBN 978-0-7112-2882-5, £16.99*]



The Rose by David Austin

Have these two words, Rose and Austin, become synonymous in the past ten years or so? Certainly, David Austin has been the most prominent breeder of roses of late and his introductions have added greatly to our enjoyment of roses in the garden and has also made that enjoyment much more easy as he bred plants which were more resistant to pests and diseases while holding the beauty and scent of what we might call “old-fashioned” roses. It is to be expected then that when such a man writes on his specialist subject he would produce a book of the highest standard, well informed and well presented, and there is no disappointment in this regard. This is certainly an outstanding book and one which any rose enthusiast will enjoy greatly.

This is a substantial book which brings us through the history of the rose in the garden, the various classifications of the rose, to a treatment of roses in the garden and house with guidelines on their care and cultivation. It is an important point to make regarding this book that the book deals widely and in a fair representative manner with the rose. There is a danger that the author might give an unbalanced amount of attention to roses of his own breeding but this is not the case at all. No, this is an excellent and balanced general treatment of this most favourite and persistently loved garden plant. If you enjoy roses you will delight in this book. It is an outstanding treatment of the subject by an author who is not only an expert but also loves his subject. [*The Rose, David Austin, Garden Art Press, Suffolk, 2009, HB, 352pp, ISBN: 978-1-870673-53-2, £39.50*]



Regional Reports

LEINSTER

March 9th 'A Year of Gardening at Glen Chantry'

Wol Staines a very skilled and passionate gardener spoke to us about his 3-acre garden in East Anglia. This was a joint IGPS RHSI lecture. Since 1976 Wol and his wife Sue have developed a delightful space full of healthy and well-grown plants with an artists eye on positioning and special emphasis on form, shape and texture. His garden soil is gravel and so is improved with an annual mulch of green waste compost, up to 70 cubic metres! He strives to have a 12-month garden and delights in the Cedric Morris daffodil which flowers for him from November to March. He credits Sue with the artistic touch, using plants like a painter uses paint and placed great emphasis on architectural informality in their garden design. This was especially obvious in the DRY STREAM BED, a beautiful example of good planting positioned between two ponds. This bed is 60metres long and under laid with polythene and is occasionally flooded from the upper pond if needed. The planting is very natural, starting in spring with snowdrops and followed by trilliums, fritillaria, primulas, erythroniums, anemones and blood root to name but a few. May brings orchids, rodgersia and hostas followed by liliums. All of this was accompanied by beautiful slides of the above. It was definitely my favourite part of the garden.

However he does have other delightful areas, a large number of rockeries, a beautiful white garden, a Washfield corner, a gold border with mirror image planting, a lovely vegetable potager and a huge collection of perennial plants and grasses. All this takes 8 weeks to cut down and tidy up before Christmas! Wol has a great interest in snowdrops which he propagates by twin scaling and showed us some beautiful slides of *Galanthus* 'Three Ships' which flowers for him at Christmas, *Gal.* 'Walrus' and *Gal.* 'Rosemary Burnham'. The main snowdrop in his garden is *Gal.* 'Atkensisii', an absolute beauty. He thinks we should plant our precious winter plants away from the house so we have to visit them on a fine day, an excellent idea.

Emer Gallagher

May 7th ‘On top but never in control – Tales from a small garden’

Dr. Timothy Walker, Director of Oxford University Botanic Garden, spoke to a combined I.G.P.S. and Alpine Society audience on Thursday 7th May 2009. He described the garden as “The Present Mrs. Walker’s Garden”, one fifth of an acre, triangular, with no space wasted and facing due south.

Timothy acknowledged the influences and inspirations of Mirabel Osler, Penelope Hobhouse, Andrew Lawson, Dan Hinkley et al. He believes that there is no plagiarism in gardening, just inspired re-working. A garden must accommodate not only plants, but also children and dogs. He began the garden in 1993 with a simple plan, no curves, as the garden is not big enough. Paths were too narrow and had to be altered. Sixty feet of Lavender hedging (*Lavandula angustifolia* ‘Hidcote’) was planted. This was replaced with annuals that were then considered too laborious. So the lavender hedging is back, but must be pruned annually. Selective herbicide use from a nearby cricket pitch damaged his *Macleaya cordata* and his non-fruiting apple trees had to be cleared and burned. One must be ruthless in a small garden.

Timothy decided to finish off his Gravel Garden with a hedge of *Stipa gigantea*. Unfortunately, he purchased his plants from two different nurseries and got two different clones that grew to different heights! His advice in this case is not to grow *Stipa sp.* but *Miscanthus sp.* instead. Another “blunder” was the decision to coppice a small birch woodland. He left it seven years too late and the trees died. All the above was to illustrate that mistakes occur even with wonderful inspiration, knowledge and hard work.

Here follows a list of some of Timothy’s observations and recommendations:

Papaver ‘Patty’s Plum’ is very garden-worthy.

Echinacea and *Deschampsia* combine well to allow light in.

Eremurus are tricky – probably a waste of money.

Lupins do not live long, but don’t take it personally!

When planting, puddling in is vital.

In Mrs. Walker’s garden plants are not watered after the first planting.

The only exception is *Gunnera manicata*.

Feed at the right time, feed *Alliums* in February.

Don’t bother with pesticides, they don’t work. Use metal hoops for staking, not bamboos.

Summer pruning takes place in late June.

Shred everything except pernicious weeds.
If you have a lawn, use a scarifier.
Allow *Hesperis matronalis alba* to seed around.
Do not believe any of the hardiness ratings, *Zantedeschia* are “bomb-proof”.
Prune Wisteria just when flower buds are visible.
Ferns combine well with fritillaries in dry shade.
Meconopsis cambrica will grow in almost complete shade.
Rosa spinosissima ‘Dunwich Rose’ is the best rose in the world!
Sophora ‘Sun King’ is a great plant with wonderful seed pods.
Fascicularia pitcairniifolia will grow in chalky soil.
Euphorbia obligata will grow well throughout the year.
Dactylorhiza foliosa likes wet conditions and is easy to grow.
Tulipa batalinii will flower year after year.
Rosa ‘Kiftsgate’ and Golden Hop are hooligans, don’t grow them.
Never plant the London Plane tree. It’s a “dirty” tree which drops debris all year. The only answer to Ground Elder is “Round Up”.
All of the above were presented with beautiful slides of excellent borders and a light-hearted tone, which made for a very enjoyable lecture. But the overall message is that **“A Garden is a process, not a product.”**
Plants grow and die. Tastes change. Perhaps “control” does not matter as much as we think.

Mary Bradshaw.

May 16th A Visit to Hamwood House and Gardens, Dunboyne, County Meath.

In my lifetime Dunboyne has been transformed from a rural crossroads to a commuter community, with more change in the last twenty years than in the previous two hundred. This makes the survival of Hamwood House and Garden there an even more amazing testament to the loving care of Mrs Ann Hamilton and her late husband. Never a large estate, Hamwood has remained in the hands of the Hamiltons since the house was constructed in the late eighteenth century. The IGPS visit there on a wet and windy day in a wet and windy month was choreographed by Mrs Hamilton to see the grounds before the black clouds rolled in. In the event we got around before the rain.

We started in the Pine Walk, a very early feature of an ornamental tree walk with some fine specimen trees, including *Sequoia gigantea*. Our eyes looked up to the canopy to see the damage from recent summer storms which had ripped large limbs from some of the unfortunate trees, and down to avoid the soggy patches from the recent heavy rains.

Neither the great trees nor the bluebells, which still looked fresh here, had managed to drink up all the water. The wisest among us had boots.

The going was much easier in the large walled garden. Just inside the gate, a splendid, but sadly anonymous *Paeony* with rich deep flowers larger than dinner plates was resident in what had once been an apple shed. Outside the gate a tall *Davidia* seems to have been a victim of honey fungus. The scale of the walled garden, sheltered by belts of trees and a brick wall, is a shock as it is well hidden from view from the house and drive. It includes a pond and a small rock garden dating from 1802. It probably once also had a large fern collection, as there were unusual ones still hiding there. At the turn of the last century, Hamwood had five garden staff, aided by the enthusiastic efforts of the five Misses Hamilton. These included the very capable artists Miss Eva, and Miss Leticia Mary Hamilton. Sketches by Eva show the gardens of Hamwood at their Edwardian peak and it would probably be possible to use those watercolours to reconstruct the planting and colour schemes of that time, if you had a couple of spare million to pay for it.

On the front lawn a selection of trees and shrubs competed for attention, the old *Yew* and younger *Azaleas* being overshadowed by the really splendid *Embothrium*, which was much admired by the ladies of the party. So much admired in fact that I doubted we would ever get to see the interior of the house, I was however diverted by the selection of old trees that marked the estate boundaries. How rarely we appreciate the trees in the background. A large patch of *Rhododendrons* had been successfully “controlled” some years ago by running a digger through them, a garden tip you are unlikely to find in the books.

The Buildings of Ireland describe Hamwood as “*a mid Georgian House of considerable charm, built for Charles Hamilton*”. More than considerable charm I would say. It was my first time in the house but others had attended the garden quiz here and now were very happy to return. The two octagonal pavilions that are connected to the original main house by curved passages are splendid features and may date from 1783. It was unexpected to find them lined in pine. Tea was taken under the gaze of ancestral portraits and Mrs Hamilton was severely quizzed as to the various ladies depicted therein. My interest was held more by the landscapes by the Misses Hamilton and their talented friends than by the portraits.

The front rooms of the house were very well lit even on a dull day, not always the case in a house of this period, and generations of Hamiltons must have gazed out on the trees of the park. Whatever they would make of Dunboyne today, they would surely be proud that Hamwood has continued to survive on the edge of the city.



Hamwood House and Gardens are open by arrangement if you want to see what almost three hundred years of effort has created.

Robert Bradshaw

NORTHERN

May 9th Annual Picnic and Garden Visit

Mary and Peter Brown's garden on Mahee Island in Strangford Lough was the venue for the Northern Region's annual picnic in May. True to form, the event was blessed with torrential rain, thankfully while we were still eating indoors. The clouds cleared and we emerged from Mary's garden room to a sparkling day and the initial 30 well fed souls swelled to 50 keen gardeners.

The garden is in a spectacular setting with Strangford Lough and its islands forming one boundary and Nendrum Monastic site on another. It is packed with plants whose origins are in the Southern Hemisphere and survive quite happily in the temperate micro-climates of the Lough.

In a small courtyard at the rear of the house is a group of towering Echiums in pinks and blues, all grown from seed by Mary and silhouetted against the blue waters of Strangford. In this area too, a very healthy Chatham Island forget-me-not (*Myosotidium hortensia*) was in full flower at the base of the house wall on which grew the pretty

speckled *Clematis montana* 'Marjorie'. A steep, south facing bank close by, sported a colourful display of *Cistus* and *Osteospermum* and next to this the vegetable plot and greenhouse ready for planting.

From the terrace beside the house, we looked down towards the main planted area and beyond to the backdrop of Strangford Lough. In this area spring colour predominated with rhododendrons, *Acer palmatum* 'Atropurpureum', *Magnolia* 'Susan', *Fothergilla gardenii*, *Grevillea cambridgensis* with its neat red plumes and *Acacia baileyana* with feathery yellow flowers and arching foliage. Beside the driveway was a shaded area with clumps of meconopsis, trilliums and hellebores and a splendid specimen of *Smilacina racemosa* showing lovely greenish yellow buds opening to a fragrant creamy white froth.

There was much discussion and wondering about the identity of a "pretty little climber" which covered a large part of one wall and we eventually settled on *Cissus striata*. Mary declared it to be a "rampant thug" certainly not the delicate tender plant written about in books. Those who arrived at Mahee Island booted and suited for a wet and cold visit left in humid sunshine; it's no wonder the Australian and New Zealand plants do so well in her wonderful garden!

Yvonne Penpraze

MUNSTER

Saturday April 18th Munster Group Plant Sale

We had our second plant sale in the SMA Hall, Wilton. The response was good though less than last year. Preparations for the plant sale really needs to be year long, in order to have properly rooted material available in sufficient quantities. The work needs to be done in the previous calendar year.

We find that people come along in the hopes of buying what is not available in the garden centre. This need not be exotic or rare. Just the kind of plant that gardeners share. We found gazanias, hostas, astilbes, dahlias, herbs, kniphofias, tulbaghias and grasses all moved well.

To all our members we appeal for more involvement next year. Please earmark a few pots 'IGPS' early on in the year.

Thérèse Murphy

May 16th

The Munster Group Annual Summer Outing

A small group of enthusiasts set out very early (by our standards!) on the morning of May 16th for Swiss Cottage in Clonmel. So enthusiastic were we that we arrived there before the staff, and had time to savour

the delights of the location on the flowing river Suir.

The morning was promising, hazy and balmy and we enjoyed the prospects of a lovely day ahead. Swiss Cottage was a delightful “cottage orne” built in the early 1800s by Richard Butler, 1st Earl of Glengall, to a design by the famous Regency architect John Nash. It’s interior contains a graceful spiral staircase and some elegantly decorated rooms. It is situated on an elevated site with access by stone steps. The materials used were of the highest quality and so despite centuries of neglect, it was still possible to restore the cottage in 1985. It opened to the public in 1989.

It is a delightful place to visit, especially when the wisteria is in flower and the roses bursting with buds are framing the leaded windows. The Butlers liked to dress down and live like commoners occasionally, to picnic in the woods and leave the pressures of life behind, just like the rest of us!

After morning coffee in Cahir House Hotel, we had arranged a very informative guided tour of Cahir Castle. Our guide was oozing with enthusiasm for her subject and spoke in first person singular regarding ownership and defence of this remarkably well preserved structure. It commands a very strategic position on the river Suir. Originally on an island it now forms the centre of the town.

Sometimes the most remarkable experiences and sights are hidden from our day-to-day existence. Before Cahir was bypassed by the Dublin road, thousands of us would have driven by these hallowed walls without any thought for the amazing events that took place here.

Cahir Castle is one of the largest and best preserved castles and one of our best known tourist attractions. It was built originally in the 13th century on a site of an earlier native fortification called a cathair (stone fort), which gave its name to the place. Granted to the powerful Butler family in the 14th century, the castle was enlarged and remodelled between the 15th and 17th centuries. It fell into ruin in the late 18th century and was partially restored in the 1840s. In 1961 the last Lord Cahir died and the castle reverted to the State. Now a national monument it is managed by the OPW.

After lunch, which was accompanied by very threatening showers we headed for our real destination...the garden of Mildred Stokes at the foot of Slievenamon. It won the last All Ireland Viking competition. It has been developed over many years and is surrounded by the most wonderful rural landscape.

On arrival we had up to thirty minutes to assemble and chat before the actual tour of the garden. Then the heavens literally opened and for the next hour a phenomenal amount of water deluged us! After about twenty minutes we had to call it a day and retreat to the house. We had a very cosy session indoors with wonderful home bakes etc. Although the rain lightened and we had time to buy some plants, in effect the visit was aborted by the weather.

This garden would be a real treat to visit again. There are several very interesting aspects to it. By the house there is a well established collection of Alpines nestling in crevices and rocks and allowed plenty of scope.

Mildred is very partial to ferns and has a great collection scattered about under the trees. She has raised the canopy of several of these trees and reorganised her planting spaces. I loved the way she has collections of dainty alpines in raised pots about the garden. They are at perfect height for viewing and no detail is lost to view.

Another thing that struck me is that there is no overcrowding. There is a restraint exercised in the planting and the garden is crisscrossed with paths that give an airy feel where everything is accessible in its own space.

Great use is made of *Thuja repandens* in beds along the drive...

Ribes speciosum in flower on the north-facing wall...

Groups of *Hosta sieboldiana* like small tables scattered about...

Poeries with a very healthy glow about them about to burst into flower...

Abies with spectacular cones like bird's nests...

Clumps of red tulips guarding a gate into a field beyond...

A very old Cedar was renovated as it had been taking up too much space. It was imaginatively chiselled and pruned to create a woodland area. A great favourite for the grandchildren to play and for the adults to cool down on a warm day. Or to shelter on those very rare days when it rains!

Here's to next year and better weather!

Thérèse Murphy



Looking Ahead

LEINSTER

Thursday 17th September at 8 p.m. at N.B.G. Glasnevin

'Gardening with Mr Darwin'

How growing plants helped Darwin perfect his ideas on evolution.

Dr. Matthew Jebb, Taxonomist, The National Botanic Gardens.

Sunday 11th October

The Annual Leinster Plant Sale

Will be held in the Community Hall below

Our Lady of Dolour's Church (Pyramid Church) Glasnevin.

Doors open at 11.00 a.m.

All plants and volunteers welcome!

Thursday 19th November at 8 p.m. in N.B.G.

"Gardening in The Golden Vale - A tale of Muck and Magic"

Deborah Begley, Proprietor of Terra Nova Gardens and Nursery, on the Limerick / Cork border, will give her own personal and witty 'take' on gardening.

MUNSTER

All meetings to be held at the SMA Hall, Wilton starting at 8.00pm

Tuesday 6th October

"Organic Gardening" by Darina Allen

Tuesday 3rd November

"Plants of New Zealand" by Julia Kennedy

Tuesday 1st December

"Winter Interest in the garden" by Peter Dowdall

NORTHERN

Thursday August 6th from 7pm -8.30 pm

Lisburn Castle Gardens, Castle Street, Lisburn, BT27 4XD

Following the lecture in 2007 on the restoration of Lisburn Castle Gardens we have planned a guided tour of the gardens to see the results of the restoration. In 1903 the gardens were gifted to Lisburn for use as a public park. Free admission.

Saturday September 5th at 2pm. Garden Visits:

Valerie and Jim Robinson and Dr Church, 55 & 53 Syerla Road,

Dungannon Co. Tyrone, BT71 7EP

No 55: A country garden of approx one acre, enjoyed by the family and wildlife too. Developed from a field over the past 14 years, the garden is mainly planted in trees, shrubs and perennials. There are many sitting areas, a woodland, small pond, organic vegetable plot and a handsome slate sculpture made by Valerie.

No 53: A country garden blending with the landscape and containing a wide variety of trees, shrubs and perennials. The garden is broken up into numerous 'rooms' with their own unique features. It has a woodland section, a formal section and a water feature with naturalistic plantings and borders.

Donations to charity.

Saturday October 3rd: 12-2pm

Northern Group Plant Sale

St Bride's Hall, Derryvolgie Avenue, Belfast. Deliveries from 9.00am.

Plants & volunteers wanted. Contact Peter Milligan, 028 4278 8739.

NB This is an indoor venue. Limited catering facilities



In response to John Joe Costin *Rae McIntyre writes*

I enjoyed John Joe's article on broad leaved evergreen trees in the April issue and found it very interesting and informative. For some time I have been puzzled about the feeding of embothriums. I can remember reading somewhere that they should be well nourished, even cosseted, but the Burncoose Nurseries catalogue www.burncoose.co.uk states in the listing that they dislike fertiliser. Now I understand from John Joe's article that *embothriums belong to the Protaceae a family noted for its sensitivity to phosphorous and to normal level of soil nutrients*. He says that they need poor soil. Actually I'm not sure if this generally holds true because the embothrium I have been growing since 1981 is where the soil is richest in our garden. I had ordered it from Hilliers in Hampshire who, at that time, did mail order and asked them to send the hardiest form. Because I had been gardening for only three years I wasn't too sure of the microclimate. They sent me *Embothrium lanceolatum* 'Norquinco Valley' and it was planted where I knew the soil was a good fertile loam. I don't think I put in any fertiliser but probably sloshed *Sequestrene* over it once it was planted. There was a lot of that going on in the Eighties – often totally unnecessarily because it is, in our garden, unequivocally acid soil.

That was spring 1981. There were no flowers that year because it was still only a youngster and in the long drawn-out mild autumn of that year it still had leaves on it at the beginning of December. There were so many perennials in bloom in the garden that I was able to pick enough to fill three vases in the house. Then the temperature plummeted one night and there followed a spell of hard frost. One man who lived less than a mile away, albeit in a frost pocket, said his thermometer registered -14 degrees celsius one night during that spell. The embothrium became as bald as a coot and I steeled myself to removing it in the spring. However it produced leaves and happily a few flowers and has done so, in varying degrees of profusion every year since. It's not just as floriferous as *Embothrium coccineum*. My friend Brian has one, growing against a wall, that has such an abundance of flowers on it that the leaves can hardly be seen. His late wife Bertha got it from Miss Jan Eccles who was the gardener at Downhill, a National Trust property outside Coleraine. Jan's *Embothrium coccineum* obligingly produced

suckers and Bertha was one of the chosen few to whom one was given. The 'Norquingo Valley' form in our garden produces numerous seed pods which remain on the branches throughout winter like so many miniature mice hung out to dry. These are usually split open so the seeds must fall on the ground. I have never had any embotrium babies and skilled seed growers, who have managed to salvage a few pods with seeds intact, have never had any luck with them either. I presume the reason why John Joe has failed to establish any embotriums in his garden is because, as he says later in his article, he has heavy, sticky limestone clay. The accepted wisdom is that embotriums need acid soil and would no more thrive on limestone than many rhododendrons would.

The broadleaved evergreens in our garden started life as seedlings that were given to me. *Luma apiculata* came from Mount Stewart when Nigel Marshall was head gardener. He plucked a 6 inch (15 cm) seedling from a mini forest of them growing beneath the parent plant. Conditions here near the top of Blackhill and about ten miles from the north coast are very different from those in sub-tropical Co Down so I put the precious seedling beside a *Mahonia lomariifolia* (another tender species) against a south-facing wall in the yard. It has regular little seedlings growing in the gravel in front of it and about ten years ago I transplanted one to the white garden where it has possibly become taller than its parent; that's without wall protection. I enjoy the abundant scented flowers on both and the cinnamon coloured bark is a particularly cheering sight in winter. Beside the *Luma apiculata* in the white garden there is a tall specimen of *Hoheria sexstylosa*. This came from the garden at Ballywalter Park, another Co Down garden, when I visited it some time in the mid 1990s with a group from the then N.C.C.P.G. conference when it was held in Belfast. The ground round a tall *Hoheria sexstylosa* in the garden had dozens of little seedlings growing there. Lady Dunleath told us to take any we wanted so I did, potted them up and later sold them at National Trust, Ulster Gardens Scheme plant stalls. In its youth the seedlings of this evergreen are not unlike those of *Betula albo-sinensis septentrionalis* and it too produces seedlings, not immediately round the base but several metres away. A friend of mine bought one of the potted-up seedlings labelled *Betula etc* at a plant stall and then informed me three years later that the "birch" had pretty white flowers on it. I told him not to be silly but actually I was the silly one because it was one of the Ballywalter Park hoheria seedlings. The one *Hoheria sexstylosa* seedling which I kept and planted in the white garden is not in an ideal situation. Although this part faces due south there is no wall at the upper north side only a trellis in front of an unlovely straggly thorn hedge and a large specimen of *Sambucus nigra* 'Laciniata' (Fern Leaved Elder). The hoheria has

grown higher than either which means it is regularly blasted by north-west winds; in our dismal climate they seem to have replaced west winds as the prevailing winds. Yet the *Hoheria sexstylosa* survives albeit not as floriferous as *Hoheria glabrata* which is semi-deciduous in mild winters but completely so in the last one. According to *Hilliers' Manual of Trees and Shrubs* the eucryphias thrive best in sheltered positions and in moist loam, preferably non-calcareous. The two eucryphias I have are *Eucryphia x intermedia* 'Rostrevor' and *Eucryphia milliganii* both of which grow near walls and are as sheltered as I can manage. I used to have *Eucryphia x nymansensis* 'Nymansay' that was protected from the north and west by a cohort of various shrubs and rhododendrons and from the east by a high hedge. Then there came a ferocious wind from the south in January a few years ago. The same southerly wind was the one that overnight stripped every leaf from a *Drimys winteri* in Inverewe when John Anderson was head gardener there. The wind blew 'Nymansay' almost out of the ground, next morning it was listing northwards at a 45 degree angle. It never recovered. When it was finally removed it had a disproportionately small root ball. I have spoken to two people who found the same thing when their eucryphias were blasted out of the ground.

The broadleaved evergreen trees and shrubs growing in our garden all survived the 2008 – 2009 winter, not just Chilean genera but Antipodean ones as well. As I write in late May *Corokia x virgata*, a New Zealander, is densely covered in little yellow flowers and is better than it has ever been. However I have lost a number of *deciduous* shrubs. Three of them were members of the *Prunus* family. I am particularly saddened by the death of *Prunus x subhirtella* 'Autumnalis' – the fourth I have grown. No 4 was only here for three years and I've always enjoyed its little white blossoms off and on through winter with a final flourish in April. This April it didn't do that but instead lost all its new foliage over a couple of weeks. I am not going to try again because the whole *Prunus* genus seems to dislike me. *Prunus kurilensis* 'Ruby' also gave up the ghost with its bare stems and crispy brown leaves. Now *Prunus incisa* 'Kojo No Mai' also looks very sickly. It looked particularly well in March with its little very pale pink flowers on zig-zag branches. It's only a dwarf cherry but it will still be missed. Two viburnums have had half their branches lopped off because of dieback. *Viburnum opulus* 'Sterile', the Snowball tree has been cut down to half its size. *Viburnum carlesii* has been thinned drastically and there have been no scented flowers this past spring. On a more cheerful note I have become infected with John Joe's enthusiasm for *Eupatorium ligustrinum* and have ordered one from Burncoose Nurseries. Any plant, immune to frost, that flowers profusely from October to January, is beautifully scented and attracts late season butterflies gets my vote.



The Earl of Rosse discusses some favourite plants growing at Birr Caste

In response to a few points in John Joe Costin's most interesting article on Broadleaved Evergreen Trees, I commence by endorsing the opening remark that "Irish Gardens are like the United Nations", since I devoted eighteen years of my life to service in the said United Nations, this in six different countries, in almost as many different climatic zones. This gave me such a deep interest in where plants originally come from that we have continued, not just travelling and collecting, but planting out, as geographically as possible, the fruits of what we collect, inside the Birr Castle Demesne.

With regard to the evergreen broadleaves which John Joe Costin describes from his encounters with them in Chile (and Argentina) it may be of interest to point out that the Demesne in Birr has now recently introduced a greater range of these plants from Chile than from anywhere else except China, whence all the rarest plants of all, and over a full third of the entire collection, actually comes.

Despite Birr's soil being far from lime-free, this has been achieved with all the Chilean plants described in the article, with the single exception of *Embothrium*, which like one of our few failures, *Gevuina*, would appear to need considerably more acid soil than most of its compatriots. My own top favourite among these Chilean plants are the creeper *Berberidopsis coralina*, which has helped us to re-christen an exit from the Demesne's Millennium Gardens, as a "Chilean Gate", and *Weinmannia trichosperma*, whose lovely fern like foliage and scented flowers can be admired in the same corner of a little Chile, around, inevitably an *Araucaria*, with the *Aristotelia*, *Azara*, *Luma* and *Maytenus* mentioned in the article, as well *Aetoxicon*, *Baccharis*, *Blepharocalyx*, *Caldcluvia*, *Drimys*, *Fitzroya*, *Pilgerodendron*, *Quillaja* placed naturally around as a geographical experiment. I should perhaps stress this last word 'experiment' for such it is, since it looks as though we are failing with *Cryptocarya*, and only succeeding in peat with *Laurelia*. *Drimys* however, like the *Hoheria*, from New Zealand also mentioned is now spreading out and almost taking over even our iconic Great Telescope in the park, so determined is it to prove that large Chilean shrubs and trees can prove as naturally at home in Ireland as the *Fuchsia* has certainly shown itself to be.



Sinocalycalycanthus is the latest Chinese rarity to come into flower in Birr Castle Demesne's river garden

May I end by endorsing John Joe Costin's admiration of both the Myrtle, *Luma apiculata* and the snowdrop tree, *Halesia monticola*. The first has special significance for our family, which "blew in" to Birr in the seventeenth century from the Myrtle Grove in Youghal and only recently found it perfectly possible to establish a new little myrtle grove in Birr's non acid soil. The best example of the Halesia, is to be admired right now next to our Chinese Moongate, where it flowered particularly well this year. Finally how lovely to have this affirmation of the holly as our most popular native evergreen! At Birr this last really is as native as our ash and oak, hazel, spindle and thorn, as may be seen in riverine parts of the Demesne and across the surrounding native woodlands of the wider estate.



The Irish Garden Plant Society



Osteospermum 'Lady Leitrim' at Bloom 2009

Membership Correspondence:
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c/o The National Botanic Gardens,
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Dublin 9.

Please note that staff at the Botanic Gardens cannot take telephone enquiries about the IGPS.