

The Newsletter of the
IRISH GARDEN PLANT SOCIETY



ISSUE NO. 89 *JULY 2003*

Editorial

Dear Members,

The Annual General Meeting weekend was a most successful event. Those of you who have not attended one of these weekends should keep the first weekend in June of next year free for this event. The background work and excellent organisation of the committee members of the Northern Area group ensured we all enjoyed ourselves. I'm sure the other members will not resent my giving particular praise to Patrick Quigley for his work over this weekend. He was the one to ask for information and advice and he gave of his time both generously and good humouredly. I haven't heard a lot from him since and wonder if he has recovered yet. A special thanks also to the members who welcomed us into their gardens. This was much appreciated. A full account follows in the newsletter.

It is sad to report the loss of a gardening great and Graham Stuart Thomas was certainly one of those. His death in April of this year was indeed a loss to the gardeners of these islands but his thoughts live on in his many excellent books. Charles Nelson, friend of GST over many years has penned a fitting tribute to him for the newsletter.

Paddy Tobin, Editor. July 2003

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING WEEKEND, **2003, LONDONDERRY.**

The Annual General Meeting

The AGM 2003 was held in the Beech Hill Country House Hotel, Derry on Saturday 31st May.

In his report to the meeting, Malcolm Rose, Chairman, highlighted the recent work by Brendan Sayers on preparing a strategy for the preservation of Irish cultivars. Brendan has now finished his term on the committee but has agreed to continue working in this area in the future.

The report from John O'Connell, Treasurer showed that our finances are stable. Some of our costs have risen substantially in recent years – notably insurance cover, but membership subscriptions and money raised from plant sales have allowed us to remain on a steady financial footing.

The AGM is the occasion when new members are elected to committee. Newly appointed this year are Sarah Ball and Paul Maher - familiar to many through their work in the National Botanic Gardens.

There were no unusual items listed on the agenda for the meeting, but one noteworthy point came from a question raised at the meeting – what is happening to *Moorea*, the society's journal? As Malcolm explained in his response, *Moorea* has not been published for several years now due to the difficulties in obtaining articles of a suitable calibre. Several people have promised to submit papers, but have never followed through, despite gentle reminders. Perhaps this should be a wake up call for all our members. If you are willing and able to write a suitable piece for *Moorea*, please get in touch. Without contributions from members, this important aspect of the society will fade away completely.

And finally, there was a word of praise for Paddy Tobin, the editor of the Newsletter. Since taking on the role, his work has been outstanding and is greatly appreciated by all the members. The AGM gave us the opportunity to thank him for his dedication and hard work.

Patrick Quigley, Secretary

The complimentary comments made at the AGM were very flattering and much appreciated but, while Moorea is struggling to exist, the newsletter is doing well simply because there are so many people willing to contribute. The praise is due to the contributors. Ed.

AGM WEEKEND GARDEN VISITS

Brook Hall

Brook Hall is situated on the shores of Lough Foyle close to the city of Derry. The 30 acre arboretum was first planted in the 1880's and tall *Sequoia* and *Sequoiadendron* (redwoods) date from this period. From 1937 Commander Gilliland

planted a wide range of conifers and deciduous trees. The present owner David Gilliland guided us along the main avenue and down through the arboretum. The Birch, *Betula albosinensis* var *septentrionalis* is one of my favourite trees. The specimen in Brook Hall was planted by the main avenue in 1937. Today it is stunning large specimen with bark peeling from the trunk to reveal a pale salmon coloured bark.

Other trees included tall Eucalypts with greyish foliage and peeling bark, *Davidia involucrata*, Handkerchief Tree, in flower with the white 'flowers' fluttering in the wind. *Embothrium coccineum*, Chilean Fire Bush, was beginning to show its characteristic tubular fiery red flowers. There are many conifers in the collection, *Podocarpus salignus*, from South America, *Tsuga heterophylla*, (Hemlock) and various *Abies* (Fir) and *Picea* (Spruce).

There are debunking plants in every garden and some of us were 'foxed' by a small purple leaved plant, not unlike *Cotinus coggyria* 'Purpurea', Smoke Bush, in colour but the foliage was like that of a *Cercidiphyllum japonicum*, the Kadsura tree. It was a young specimen of a purple *Cercidiphyllum*, *C. japonicum* 'Red Fox' - no pun intended.

Nor is the collection limited to trees, there were many deciduous Azaleas in flower and their scent permeated the air. Their more sombre relatives, the big leaved rhododendrons, had produced little flower this year but the emerging young growth demonstrated what truly wonderful foliage plants they are. An attractive white flowering shrub by the walled garden caught the attention of many of us. Was it a *Deutzia* or *Philadelphus*? The latter we were told. Both shrubs flower in early summer and can be confused. As an aide memoire, *Deutzia* has 5 petals and *Philadelphus*, 4 petals.

Avenues can be a challenge to develop, what trees to use and at what spacing should they be planted. A few of years ago an avenue of spring flowering cherries, *Prunus*, and winter flowering Witch Hazel (*Hamamelis*) was planted. The Witch Hazel colours wonderfully in the autumn. The collection continues to develop. In the walled garden David Gilliland has planted a collection of Camellias and Magnolias. A return visit to see their progress and that of the arboretum is a must.

Mary Forrest

Gordon Toner's Garden, Limavady

Leaving Derry and the grandeur of Brook Hall behind we travelled to Limavady to visit Gordon Toner's alpine and woodland garden. This garden was in stark contrast to Brook Hall's 30 acres, being just 1/3 of an acre in size. Here was something we could better relate to for scale. Despite its size, however, this garden was packed with a massive array of plants.

The area inside the entrance has a lovely woodland feel to it, with trees underplanted with (perfect) hostas, *Corydalis* spp, *Helleborus* hybrids and *Aquilegia* cultivars.

To the right of the driveway is a raised area cleverly divided by winding gravel paths. Dwarf conifers gave just enough height as a back-drop to the many alpines. To the left the driveway is lined by an alpine bed containing among other things the beautiful blue *Corydalis flexuosa*, a lovely little geranium called *G.* 'Gravetye' and the Spring vetchling, *Lathyrus vernus*.

However the plant that caught everyone's attention here was the stunning, *Dactylorhiza foliosa*. How lucky we were to have Brendan Sayers on the visit, to 'educate' us on this spectacular orchid! Also known as *Dactylorhiza maderensis* and *Orchis maderensis*, as the name indicates it is native to Maderia. A terrestrial orchid, it was thriving in number in Gordon's garden. The vivid cerise/purple flowers glowed in the sunlight and caught the eye immediately. My eye was also drawn to the combination of a bright red *Papaver orientalis* growing beside a purple Japanese maple, not for the pastel lover's garden!

The garden to the rear of the house slopes upwards. Again, strategically positioned trees and shrubs screened the different areas beautifully, without giving one a feeling of being enclosed in any way. Here too were more lovely planting combinations, ranging in scale from a beautiful *Corylus avellana* 'Purpurea' beside a *Weigela florida* with soft pink/white flowers, down to a delicate white *Aquilegia* cultivar with a grey leaved dianthus and a pink/purple flowering linaria.

On my second...third...maybe fourth trip around the garden I was still discovering new delights, such as a magnificent dark blue *Meconopsis* beside an apricot coloured welsh poppy with double flowers. I almost missed the dark bronze foliage of the *Primula* 'Dark Rosaleen', named after Gordon's wife. The flowers had gone over but their description in '*A Heritage of Beauty*' sounds spectacular (look it up for yourself !!) and would be beautifully complimented by the foliage. In the alpine beds close to the house was the pretty *Primula capitata* subsp. *mooreana*, named for Sir Fredrick Moore by Isaac Bayley Balfour and W.W. Smith. Also mentioned in '*A Heritage of Beauty*'!

Although this garden has a dizzying array of plants for its size, it still has a lovely natural, uncontrived feeling, especially around the edges where the mature trees and soft woodland plantings of *Thalictrum*, lilies and *Aquilegia* blend with the rolling fields beyond.

Máire Ní Chléirigh

Noreen Brown's Garden, Walworth Garden, Ballykelly

On Sunday morning we set off on our excursions once more! Noreen Brown's garden was first on the agenda and as I had never visited before, I was full of anticipation

Noreen's garden fulfilled my anticipation wonderfully! The ancient manor house was a delight in itself and the gardens looked fresh having been blessed with lots of rainfall this year. (Indeed we were blessed on the day too!). The simplicity of the front garden did not prepare me for what lay behind. The gardens are to the rear of the house.

A sitting corner is playfully named 'Fort Apache' not that Noreen has had much chance to sit this year as the weather has been wet. An original brick wall protects the plants here and *Solanum Crispum* 'Glasnevin', the Potato Vine and *Humulus lupulus* 'Aurea', the Golden Hop enjoys the comforts of the well sheltered Pergola. Along with the Acers, Candelabra primulas, Astilbes and Hostas enjoy a semi shady niche. While a huge Philadelphus, Osothamnus, *Rosa moysii* 'Geranium', the

climbing rose ‘Woburn Abbey’ and *Cornus controversa* ‘Variegata’ enjoy a sunnier area.

I could not however have anticipated what lay behind the old wall. The garden within the walls is divided into two sections, the larger of which contains a central pool and the smaller is home to an orchard. On entering the walled garden you find yourself in the larger section, which is divided by a cruciform herringbone brick path. At the junction of these paths a rectangular pool is enclosed by a large pergola of the same shape. There is a central fountain and two series of stepping stones at opposite ends of the pool. Four splendid terracotta jars mark its corners while Koi enjoy the dark depths.

The main axis herring bone brick path is lined with a *Heuchera* in flower, a brighter tone of the brick colour.....it worked surprisingly well! An arch of roses framed the vista to a charming old wooden seat beside which two stone lions stood sentinel. To either side of the seat an herbaceous border stretches the length of the wall. This yellow and purple border had been carefully chosen by Noreen as indeed has all the planting. The colours pale to pastel hues as you approach the ends. At the four corners of this area, raised beds about a meter square are made of brick, surrounded by *Alchemilla mollis* and planted with old fashioned roses supported by a pyramid of trellis. It is this design detail that makes the garden stand out from the ordinary.



Pool and pergolas in Noreen Brown's garden. Photo: P. Tobin

A superb pleached lime hedge hides the orchard from immediate view. Semi circular brick steps lead to this sunken orchard of immense charm. A circular pool and rill are recent additions. The path along the canal is edged with an iris, (purple if my memory serves me correctly) and a dark leaved *Heuchera*. Noreen tells us she is bulking up the Iris at the moment to make a bolder statement. Apple trees radiate from the steps and the far wall is shelter for a box edged border, containing plant combinations such as Purple Hazel, grey leaved *Hosta*, *Rosa glauca* and a pale pink tissue paper rose.....unforgettable. Noreen is a true master of colour combinations.

We were all naturally reluctant to leave this paradise of plants.

Margaret O'Brien

Blackhill House

It's always nice to be able to put a face on a name one knows so well. So, on the Sunday afternoon of the AGM weekend when the smiling face of Rae McIntyre, whose articles I had read many times in the newsletters, greeted us at the gate of her country garden I was especially pleased.

Rae's garden is divided into sections which lead naturally one to another. The star attraction in the first garden we entered was a very dark crimson tree paeony, which everyone loved but which Rae confessed she doesn't like at all! There were lots of candelabra primulas which seem to grow so well in Northern Ireland gardens.

The path led us gently to a raised area with a formal pond, surrounded by a white garden which was understated and elegant. We continued to a gravelled area with rock-bordered beds. At the furthest end we spotted an unusual orange-flowered plant. Under cover of umbrellas, a forum of 'botanical experts' discussed the said plant and a consensus was reached that it was an 'orange pea'! Later Rae confirmed that it was indeed *Lathyrus aureus*, so we had made a good educated guess.



A lush planting of rogersia at the poolside in Rae McIntyre's garden. Photo: P. Tobin

The rain soon cleared off, the company was good and the garden interesting. Can one find a better way to spend a Sunday afternoon?

Margaret Power

Fox Lodge, Brian Mooney's Garden, Strabane

Monday morning dawned bright and sunny and augured well for a pleasant garden visit to Fox Lodge, Strabane, the home of Brian Mooney. The brief introduction in our notes stated it was a garden that cried out to be visited time and time again and this is certainly true. Fox Lodge is a two-acre garden of two distinct levels. The upper level adjacent to the house affords the visitor a very fine view over the garden with its meandering paths enticing the visitor to venture forth. This natural landscape lends itself to providing for a variety of habitats, including a scree bed, peat beds, vegetable and fruit area, a wonderful bog garden and a most naturalistic stream linking three small pools. On arriving Mr Mooney gave us a brief description of its evolution, the soil and the problems encountered over the years. Standing on the top

terrace looking down over the garden, I was being drawn first to the little pools linked by a slow running stream, and then on to the Primulas at the lower end. These were a riot of colour. The species that stood out were *P. sikkimensis* and *P. denticulata* and nearby a group of *Ourisia coccinea* a plant that I will try again at Malahide. They were thriving in this marshy area surrounded by enormous Hostas without a sign of slug damage. From this section of the bog garden, the path meandered among a large group of Rhododendrons, interplanted with lilies particularly the martagon group, herbaceous plants and the lovely ground cover plant of *Maianthemum bifolium* which is seldom seen in such profusion. Mr. Mooney while acknowledging its worth in suppressing weeds was beginning to find it too invasive. Further on is a very fine specimen of *Abutilon* 'Jerymns', completely hardy in this garden. Lurking in quiet corners were several sculptures, which Mr. Mooney had sculpted himself.

Leaving this lower section the path led on to the newest area where there were some fine trees including Sorbus spp. to the delight of our chairman and a more uncommon Cornus which could not be named. Soon I noted a small group of people drooling over some plant and of course curiosity dragged me over. What a stunner! Never have I seen such a specimen, this was surely the plant of the weekend; it was in fact *Trillium recurvatum*. The plant in general was much larger than any Trillium I have ever come across; the flowers were so dark it was magnificent. Every camera was clicking. I am certain it will be shown at the next member's slide evening in the autumn.



A beautiful water feature, lushly planted in Brian Mooney's garden. Photo: P.Tobin

Among all the fine plantings, tucked away, but close to the house is an excellent productive fruit and vegetable garden. Being a very keen vegetable gardener myself, I love to see how others manage to produce good crops.

The brief introduction to the garden in our notes certainly lived up to its recommendation. No one was disappointed and I certainly am looking forward to a return visit and highly recommend everyone to visit Fox Hollow.

Ann James

“Surely One of Nature’s Gentlemen” by E. Charles Nelson

Graham Stuart Thomas, who died on 17 April 2003, following a short illness, was one of the Irish Garden Plant Society’s most distinguished honorary members. That was an honour – he was elected an honorary member on 20 May 1983 – that none of the many obituaries yet published has mentioned, but it was one which he himself cherished. He had received many other accolades: OBE (1975), Victoria Medal of Honour (1968, widely regarded as the highest horticultural honour in the UK), and the Dean Hole Medal of the Royal National Rose Society (1976) are just three.

Graham worked for several decades as Gardens Advisor to The National Trust, and so was closely associated with its properties in Northern Ireland, especially Mount Stewart. Annually into the 1980s, he visited Mount Stewart and we would often meet there before embarking for other gardens, north, south, east and west. I brought him to see the now well-known (but then almost unknown) garden, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, at Heywood in County Laois. He was impressed by the site, and kindly agreed to devise a planting scheme, in the style of Gertrude Jekyll, so that the plantings could be “restored”. That was 20 years ago ... Graham is well-remembered by the Revd Seamus Cummins, on whose initiative the conservation and restoration of the garden of Heywood were commenced, and the tribute that heads this encomium is from Father Cummins.

A native of Cambridge, Graham Stuart Thomas was trained in the University Botanic Garden, a place that has produced many fine plantsman. There, in the mid-1930s, he met Tom Blythe (nephew of G. N. Smith of the Daisy Hill Nursery, Newry), and so began Graham’s association with Ireland and Irish gardens. Tom invited Graham to come to Northern Ireland, to help build a rock garden. The rest is, as we may say, history.

Anyone who lived more than 94 years – Graham Thomas was born on 3 April 1909 – must have accumulated an immeasurable store of knowledge. To have the determination to share as much as possible of that hard-won knowledge with one’s fellows is singularly magnanimous. Graham achieved this in a perhaps unequalled way. Is there any member of the IGPS who does not own at least one of his books? He has written invaluable works about old roses, climbing roses, trees, colour in the winter garden, rock gardens, plants for ground cover, and, of paramount significance, herbaceous perennials. He chronicled the gardens of The National Trust, and even mused on garden seats. His latest – and assuredly not his *last* – book, *The garden through the Year*, was published in North America late in 2002 and has just been issued in the UK. It is not a valediction, only a continuation, yet his opening sentences sum up his remarkable life.

It has always been my desire to have a garden where on any day of the year I can go and pick a flower, or just admire it. Now, after trial and error over some seventy years, I have come to the conclusion that my findings may interest other plant and garden lovers, so here they are.

It is not his last book because I know there is another in press. On New Year’s Eve 2001 he wrote to me –

Finding I had nothing much to do in September of an evening I suddenly decided to write another book: Some great gardeners of the twentieth century in the British Isles. It is almost complete.

Invariably his letters, hand-written to the last and always legible, concluded with a commentary on the plants that surrounded him in his house and garden. That one concluded:

My room is well scented with Winter Sweet and November was a miraculous month with lots of flowers from Mahonia x media cvs & Viburnums & Rhodo x nobleanum 'Venustum' which has now been stopped by frosts, to resume when mild weather returns. Ham. 'Pallida' will soon be opening.

Hamamelis mollis 'Pallida' and countless other exemplary plants will go on blooming year after year but no longer under the watchful, deeply appreciative eye of the man who has been called "the greatest gardener of all time". Perhaps – but who are we to judge? Graham Stuart Thomas was certainly one of the most accomplished and knowledgeable gardeners of recent generations and he will be sorely missed. We may reflect with pride that he was influenced by, and, in turn, profoundly influenced Ireland's gardens and gardeners, and that his books will endure as incontestable classics. That is no mean legacy.

Graham Stuart Thomas was a gentleman, and it was a great honour to have been able to count him as a friend and an invaluable correspondent for more almost a quarter of a century.

E. Charles Nelson

Well Worth a Read by Mary Kate Power

Graham Stuart Thomas' Three Gardens

Graham Stuart Thomas takes us on a personal journey of three gardens which have meant so much to him in his own life. The first garden he describes is that of his father in Cambridge where he grew up in the early 1900s. He continues to Oak Cottage, which he acquired in 1947 and then to the final garden in the book, Briar Cottage.

His love of flowers and his unrivalled knowledge of plants are evident from his writing. He shared the friendship of nurserymen and gardeners over the years, many of them Irish, and maintains this added greatly to his joy of gardening.

The book is complimented by wonderful plant portraits, painted by the author, along with both colour and black and white photographs which he had taken himself over the years. He was obviously a man of many talents.

This book gives an insight into gardening over the last seventy years or more and is a delight to read both for the beginner and for the experienced gardener as it is full of ideas on how to garden better along with the memories of probably the most distinguished gardener of our times. A most enjoyable read.

Graham Stuart Thomas' Three Gardens is published by Sagapress Inc. and distributed by Timberpress, timberpressuk@btinternet.com ISBN 0-89831-078-4

Lissadell by Dr. Keith Lamb

Gardeners will have extra reasons for being sad at the passing of Lissadell House and estate from the Gore-Booth family. As well as the fine garden, there was once an important plant nursery there which played a major part in furnishing gardens in Ireland and abroad during the early years of the last century. Henri Correvon, a well-known Swiss lover of plants, was not impressed on the whole by the Irish landscape. He considered it tame compared to that of the Alps. He was, however, pleased with the scenery of the west coast and was ecstatic when he came to Lissadell, where he was impressed by the skill shown in the cultivation of plants. He mentioned especially very good plants of *Eritrichium nanum* and androcaces:

“Ireland is not a country I could live in. I have travelled from the west coast to the east, and I have found the landscape on the whole dull and flat, no sharp outlines, no peaks or crags to relieve the monotony of green plain. I must, of course, make an exception in favour of the western coast scenery, which is certainly more picturesque; and there are even some little hills which might, by a stretch of imagination be called mountains.

...the garden at Lissadell presents an extremely beautiful and picturesque appearance, comprising as it does all the choicest of the alpine plants. I, for one, shall never forget so brilliant a picture. Here one may find the best of the rock plants, grouped together in colonies of ten, twenty, or even in some cases a hundred plants, looking as healthy and happy as in their own natural homes.

There are some very good Eritrichium nanum and androcaces – strange to say the high alpine species do better here than the Himalayan, which latter grow at Floraire like weeds. Here may also be seen the best primulas, geraniums, campanulas and saxifrages, together with plants from the far north and Antarctic regions, all growing and flourishing in the mild, damp Sligo air. The rock garden is one of the largest I have seen, and is very well kept”. (From The Gardeners’Chronicle, 1911)

We value greatly a copy of the Lissadell catalogue for 1931/’32. The nursery was especially noted for alpine plants. The lists include impressive numbers of campanulas, pinks, primulas, saxifrages and violas. Herbaceous plants, too, are well represented, with large numbers of different asters, astilbes, hardy geraniums, sunflowers, lupins, oriental poppies, phlox and potentillas. These are just a few of the extensive range grown there. Photographs show how well plants flourished in the gardens, with the exception of lime-haters, as noted in the introduction to the catalogue.

ALPINE PLANTS—continued.		Per doz.	Each
		s. d.	s. d.
PRIMULA intermedia	—Alpine Auricula leaves, purple flowers	—	1 6
" integrifolia	—Alpine Auricula leaves, purple flowers ; requires more moisture than most of this type	—	1 6
" involucrata	—Like P. chrysopa, with whiter flowers	7 6	0 9
" japonica	—Fresh green large leaves, sturdy candelabra stems, carrying rich magenta flowers in tiers	5 0	0 6
" "	Fiery Red —Flowers a rich velvet-crimson	7 6	0 9
" "	Mixed	5 0	0 6
" Julia	—Heart-shaped leaves, rose-purple flowers	5 0	0 6
" "	No. 2 —Smaller all over than above, with deeper purple flowers	5 0	0 6
" "	var. Jewel —One of the now numerous Juliae seedlings ; all bright purple shades	—	1 6
" "	Juliana Ditto ditto	—	1 6
" "	Mrs. King Ditto ditto	—	1 6
" "	Purple Splendour Ditto ditto	—	1 6
" lactea capitata	—Another of the capitata tribe	7 6	0 9
" Lissadell Hybrid Ailin Aroon	—Dull green leaves, light scarlet flowers on candelabra stems	15 0	1 6
" "	Mæve —Raspberry-pink flowers	15 0	1 6
" "	Molly Malone —A very rich deep crimson flower, almost black in centre ; no farina ; the most striking yet raised	—	10 0
" "	Pink —An old friend	15 0	1 6
" "	Red Hugh —Intense fiery-orange flowers	15 0	1 6
" Pallinurii	—Like a giant Auricula, with yellow flowers, which do not open flat on mealy stems	—	3 6
" Poissonii	—Dull green fleshy leaves, bright rose-mauve flowers in tiers, with yellow eye ; tall and very late	7 6	0 9
" polyantha mixed		2 6	—
" "	Munstead —Yellow and white	2 6	—
" "	Art Shades	2 6	—
" prionotes	—New to us	15 0	1 6
" pulverulenta	—Huge dull green leaves with purple flowers in tiers on mealy stems ; tall and early	5 0	6 0

Just a selection of the large list of primula in the Lissadell catalogue. Note the Lissadell hybrids. Have you one?

**CERTIFIED
SEED
POTATOES**

In small bags, sealed by
the Irish Free State
Department of Agriculture

In the following varieties:

EPICURE
BRITISH QUEEN
GOLDEN WONDER
GREAT SCOT
KERR'S PINK
KING EDWARD
SHARPE'S EXPRESS

SEEDS
OF
**ALPINE AND
HERBACEOUS
PLANTS**
IN GREAT
VARIETY

Two advertisements from the Lissadell Nursery catalogue of 1931

Roses were offered, with some one hundred and fifty kinds at one shilling each. Indeed, every aspect of hardy plant gardening was covered. Ornamental trees and shrubs were listed in great variety. Nor were fruit trees and bushes neglected. Over forty different kinds of apple were to be had, some hard to find today. They could be bought singly or by the dozen, as bushes, half-standards or cordons. Some were offered as trained espalier trees, a form once popular in our gardens. They could be bought with one, two, three or four tiers of branches, the last at the then high price of ten shillings and six pence. Cherries, peaches, pears and plums were listed, along with black and red currants, gooseberries, strawberries and even rhubarb at nine pence for a single crown.

Indeed, on looking through this catalogue one realises that it would have been possible to furnish one's garden completely without going further than Lissadell. Forest trees could be bought to plant the landscape beyond the garden walls.

Plants new to gardens were raised at Lissadell. Especially popular were new kinds of primulas, such as 'Asthore' and 'Red Hugh'. This catalogue contains cultivars of anemone, campanula and geranium named 'Lissadell', an indication of active plant breeding and selection there. Indeed, it is known that Sir Josslyn Gore-Booth himself took part in cross pollinating daffodils to raise new kinds. Lissadell daffodils won many awards here and abroad.

As well as these horticultural activities, market gardening was carried on, potatoes were grown for seed, poultry was kept, cattle were reared and a dairy advertised butter by post. Lady Gore-Booth ran a school of needlework.

Here we have a picture of a bygone age. It is sad that it is no longer possible for one family to maintain such diversity of activity and employment.



*An illustration of **Globularia incanescens** from the Lissadell catalogue*

Woodstock Gardens and Arboretum, Inistioge

by Claire Murphy

Woodstock Gardens and Arboretum, Inistioge, were once regarded as one of the great gardens of Ireland and with this in mind, Kilkenny County Council has embarked on an ambitious scheme of restoration. The gardens constitute a splendid period piece, representing the High Victorian garden style. The main framework still remains intact and much of the original exotic tree planting still survives. Most importantly its landscape setting has survived.

Although the buildings, park and gardens at Woodstock are the result of a long period of development, the design and concept of what exists today belongs to a great extent to the early and mid Victorian period from c.1840 –c.1900 and represents the garden created by Colonel William Tighe and his wife Lady Louisa.

Woodstock house and parkland are much older. The house, which was designed by Francis Bindon, was constructed for Sir William Fownes in 1745-1747. Bindon was also responsible for laying out a formal landscape, some elements of which survive.

By the end of the eighteenth century Woodstock had passed to the Tighes and the formal landscape was transformed into a landscape park. In 1825, Colonel William Tighe married Lady Louisa Lennox, daughter of the Duke of Richmond. Lady Louisa was to become the most influential figure in the creation of the gardens.

It is possible to trace from documentary sources, the developing elaboration and sophistication of the gardens from c.1840 to 1870. In c. 1840 the grotto and its gardens were created, followed in c.1845 by the Monkey Puzzle Walk. In 1854-56 the Terraced Flower Garden was laid out with a splendid conservatory and seat by the famous ironmaster Richard Turner. New hot houses were also added to the Kitchen Garden. At the same time a large collection of exotic trees were being planted in the Arboretum and elsewhere in the park.

In 1860, a new gardener, Charles McDonald was employed and between 1860 and 1865 he and Lady Louis executed one of the most ambitious schemes in the garden. This was the landscaping of the area in front of the south side of the house to create a sunken parterre of four panels to form the Winter Garden. The rockery was completed in 1862 and in 1870 the Noble Fir Walk was planted. This was the last major feature to be added.

The Winter Garden

The garden is made up of four sunken panels that once contained elaborately planted parterres. These were sited within a massive embanked terrace, held in place by ashlar granite stone walling. Each sunken panel of the Winter Garden was planted with evergreen trees and shrubs set out in regular patterns. The beds were surrounded by coloured gravel, which gave a certain amount of colour throughout the year. The highly contrived patterns of this ornamental area could be admired from the elevated position of the house.

The two panels nearest the house had an embroidered design in box with a red gravel background – in the style of what was sometimes known as a *parterre des*

pièces coupées. The two panels furthest from the house were designed as a St. Andrew's Cross, with one pair of the resultant triangles filled with scroll work in a Grecian honeysuckle design and the other pair filled with flowers.



The Winter Garden. Photograph from the Lawrence Collection in the National Museum.

The Arboretum

Also known as the Pleasure Grounds, the Arboretum at Woodstock was the focus of a considerable amount of exotic tree planting during the 19th Century. The area, which is located on gently rising ground, was chosen to display the choice trees to their best advantage. An important component of the Pleasure Grounds was the Rhododendrons, which formed the background of the arboretum.

Today the arboretum is dominated by conifers, notably *Pinus montezumae var hartwegi*, (Hartweg's pine), *Sequoia sempervirens* (Coast Redwood), *Cryptomeria japonica* (Japanese Cedar), *Sequoiadendron giganteum* (Giant Redwood), *Chamaecyparis pisifera* (Sawara cypress), *Thuja standishii* (Japanese Arbor-vitae) and *Thuja plicata 'Zebrina'* (Golden Variegated Western Red Cedar) to name a few.

In addition to the conifers are several other notable trees including *Fagus sylvatica 'Pendula'* (Weeping beech - Irish Clone)

The Grotto and Tiled House

The grotto and tiled house are located in the north western part of the garden, adjacent to the Walled Garden. The tiled house is a T-shaped, rubble stone building with a slate roof. The tiled house was built between 1780 and 1800 and it is likely that the grotto was added later c.1850. The tiled house was used as an ornamental dairy as was fashionable in the early 19th Century.

The Walled Garden

The Walled Garden is situated on rising ground in the Pleasure Grounds. The garden is 1.9 acres in extent, delimited by walls of stone and brick. The garden was built in the mid 18th Century and partly re-modelled in the mid 19th century with the

addition of circular brick turrets at each of the corners. The gardens were entered from the Pleasure Grounds by gates on the west, south and east sides.

Internally, the garden was sub-divided by paths at right angles and by paths running around the perimeter in classic kitchen garden fashion. At the centre where the diagonal paths met, there was a rose trellis. The main path down the centre was lined by a dramatic herbaceous border. Vegetables grown in the garden included broccoli, turnips, savoys, and carrots.

Inside the walled garden the north east and north-west walls are lined with brick. This allowed tender plants such as figs to be grown. Other plants included Jasmines, Magnolias, Wisterias, Solanums, Smilaxes, Passifloras, Myrtles, Ceanothus, Spiraeas and Escallonias. The north-west wall was the main fruit growing wall as it faced south east. Most of its length was lined with glasshouses, the bases of some of which survive still.

The Flower Terraces

The terraced flower garden lies to the western side of the walled garden and was completed in the early 1850's by Lady Louisa Tighe. It comprises three long terraces, formerly devoted to annual bedding schemes. The central path was aligned upon a very fine circular conservatory designed and built in 1853-56 by the famous Dublin iron master, Richard Turner and has been described as one of his finest works. Flanking the other end of the terrace was a semi-circular wrought iron seat, also by Turner.



*The Flower Garden, looking from the Turner seat toward the Turner conservatory
Photograph from the Lawrence Collection, courtesy of the National Museum*

The Upper Garden

The Upper Garden is located to the western edge of Woodstock Gardens. This area, which has been partially restored, comprises a rose pergola, a yew walk, a bulb garden and several mature specimen trees dotted through open lawn area

The Fountain

The fountain, now removed, was located in the Pleasure Grounds, adjacent to the Walled garden and was clearly intended as a focal point as it is visible from many view points. The fountain was composed of two tiers of stone basins rising out of a circular stone lined pond. Nothing now remains of the fountain save for a circular depression.

The Rockery

The Rockery is an enchanting and atmospheric feature and is a by-product of the excavations carried out to provide material for the Winter Garden. The rockery was completed in 1862, the date being supplied by a convenient date stone. Over 50,000 loads of earth were taken to create the terraces of the Winter Garden. The resulting cutting was faced with masses of granite rock and white quartz boulders.



The rockery and sunken garden. Photo courtesy of Lady Denham

Plants would have included *Osmunda regalis* (Royal Fern) and many other native ferns, Stonecrops, Saxifrages, *Linaria cymbalaria* (Toadflax) and *Spiraea filipedula*. The small islands were planted with bamboo and New Zealand flax

The Monkey Puzzle Walk (*Araucaria araucana*)

The Monkey Puzzle walk is probably the one feature at Woodstock that most visitors are familiar with. It is an outstanding surviving feature of the grounds at Woodstock. Set out as an avenue, the Monkey Puzzle walk runs along an almost direct north/south axis to the south of the house and was a main thoroughfare.

There were originally 31 pairs of *Araucaria araucana*, first planted in 1845. It is not clear whether these trees were planted from seed of trees already growing at Woodstock or whether they were purchased from stock brought to Britain by Lobb for Vietch of Chelsea.

The Noble Fir Walk (*Abies nobilis*)

This walk was the last great work to the ornamental planting in the grounds made by William F.F. Tighe, planted during the year of his death in 1878. It runs north west/south east on the south-eastern side of the house for some considerable length (approximately ¼ of a mile). The trees were set out in a very regular order, both in rows and in the pairing across the walk.

Claire Murphy

Claire works with Kilkenny County Council and has responsibility for the amenity areas of the county. Ed

“It died on me...” by Tim Cramer

Gardens, as we all know, are ever changing. As the gardener grows with the garden, such change is inevitable. Knowledge is accumulated, taste alters and even advancing years dictate what is physically possible and what is not. Above all, a garden is a vibrant place and plants do not stand frozen in time. They grow, sometimes too large for a given site and have to be removed. They thrive – or sometimes they don’t. Even the most renowned gardeners have been known to comment: “It doesn’t do well for me”. (Translation: “I can’t grow the darn thing and I don’t know why”). Even if “well suited” (cosseted up to their eyeballs) some plants just don’t want to get on with it.

At worst, they die, precipitating the ultimate change. It must be quite clear, however, that this demise has absolutely nothing to do with the gardener. “Yes, I used to have a *Viola stradivarii*, but it died on me”, comes the embittered wail. Obviously this was a sullen, un-cooperative plant, ungrateful unto death.

“Blame the plant”, a little horned and tailed imp hisses in our ears, and so we do, but only rarely with any justification and even less conviction. Of course, there are times when a plant dies for no apparent reason. Perfectly healthy yesterday, it suddenly decides to go belly up today, leaving us chagrined, even outraged, after all the care and attention we had lavished on it. But for this one genuine case of “It died on me”, there must be dozens which are, to say the least, dodgy. It all depends on factors which we all know but do not always heed. For instance, we know that some plants can be moved with impunity, even while in bloom; others you dare not touch, at any time.

Last year, in one of those moments of madness, precipitated as usual by an attempt to get a horticultural quart into a pint watering can, I decided to move a large and lovely evergreen *Ceanothus*. Big strong son and I watered it, prepared a new planting hole with all sorts of goodies, carefully took it out with a huge root ball and whizzed it to its new and luxurious quarters.

Weeks later, negotiating a new - and of course much smaller – plant with my local friendly nurseryman, he remarked that he remembered selling me one some years ago. There was nothing for it but to brazen it out. “Yes”, I said, “but it died on me”.

His good humoured but scatological reply is, I fear, quite unprintable.

The Quest for the Pocket Handkerchief Tree

by Barbara Phillips

The search for the elusive *Davidia involucrata* involved an Irishman, an Englishman and two Frenchmen.

The Irishman was my great-uncle, Dr. Augustine Henry. In 1881 he joined the Chinese Maritime Customs as a medical officer and was posted to Ichang on the border of the Yangtze River, an area at that time hardly known to Western civilisation. Although it was a thousand miles upriver from the coast, a customs post was needed because Ichang was the final navigable port of call for steamships. Dr. Henry had no botanical training, but the local customs officials had to make returns of the export and import of plants, particularly those of medicinal use. This sparked his interest and he started plant collecting in his spare time. In 1886 he sent a thousand dried specimens to Kew, asking for help with identification. Staff at Kew described these as one of the most important collections they had ever received from inland China. They were the first of 158,000 specimens he supplied over the next 18 years.

In the course of his first long plant hunting expedition sponsored by Kew he found a specimen of *Davidia involucrata*. His wife wrote subsequently, "I remember Augustine saying that one of the strangest sights he saw in China was *Davidia* in full bloom waving its innumerable ghost handkerchiefs." In the wild state it seems that the flowers and bracts come before the leaves, so their appearance must have been dramatic. This *Davidia* was an isolated specimen, strangely growing far from any others and was the only one ever seen by Dr. Henry in China.

Seventeen years previously the *Davidia* had been described by Pere Armand Davis, a French Jesuit missionary. The missionaries had been sending botanical specimens home since the treaty of 1860 allowed foreigners to travel into the interior of China. However, the French authorities seemed unaware of the importance of these specimens and the Jardin des Plantes germinated few of the seeds they were sent and it was not until 1897 that the common variety of *Davidia* now in cultivation, *D. involucrata* var. *vilmoriniana* was introduced by another French missionary, Pere Farges.

In 1899 Sir Harry Veitch, who ran a commercial venture introducing previously unknown plants to British gardens, saw the flowers and bracts Dr. Henry had sent to Kew. He thought it would be a commercial success and, presumably not knowing of the French introduction two years earlier, commissioned a young botanist, Ernest Wilson, who had never been out of England, to proceed to China. He was to call on Dr. Henry, then stationed at Szemau in Yunnan province, and learn from him where to find the tree, so that he could collect seed. Harry Veitch insisted that he should find the *Davidia* and that alone. He was not to waste time collecting anything else.

Ernest Wilson's journey took him through French Indo-China and was fraught with problems and dangers from warring tribes and appalling weather, compounded by his inability to speak either French or Chinese. No Chinese servant or guide dared to accompany him until finally an opium addict agreed to join him. After many adventures he reached Szemau and found Dr. Henry, who told him where the tree he had seen at Ichang many years earlier was growing. He marked the position of the

solitary tree on a map covering an area as big as New York State, which he drew on a torn out page from a notebook!

Eventually Ernest Wilson arrived at the village where Dr. Henry had stayed twelve years earlier and had seen the *Davidia*. The villagers told him it was still there, but when they took him to see it all that remained was a stump. The tree had been felled to provide timber for building a new house. One can imagine his feelings after he had endured so many hardships and dangers. Bitterly disappointed he decided to ignore Harry Veitch's instructions and stayed on to collect more plants from the district. To his delight, when exploring further up the gorges, he came upon no fewer than eleven *Davidia* trees with, as he wrote, "huge white butterflies hovering among the branches". From them he collected the seed, which Harry Veitch so much desired.

This was the largest collection of seed to reach Europe – also *var. vilmoriniana* – so many of the older trees in cultivation today date from this introduction.

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Invasive but... by Rae McIntyre

I know gardeners who declare that they would never grow a second-rate plant and absolutely insist on top quality plants all the time. My garden reflects society as a whole. There are a few aristocratic rhododendrons and magnolias, a range of middle class plants like hybrid musk roses, hellebores and daphnes and then the common ones, the toughies, the prolific seeders and spreaders that sophisticated gardeners would dismiss as weeds. These last ones are valued in places where soil conditions are inhospitable and where bred cultivars would perish.

On the west side of the garden there are two very large, very greedy sycamores. The border that runs parallel with these needs feeding in a way that no other place does and, apart from the hellebores and hybrid musk roses, the vast majority of plants here are as tough as old boots. In early summer aquilegias romp through this border. Many of them are *Aquilegia vulgaris* and are bluish purple but they can also come in pale pink, dusky pink, creamy yellow and mauve with white. I never know from one year to the next what colours are going to appear and this element of surprise makes life interesting.

Astrantia major can be found throughout the garden growing in places where I certainly never planted it but with its indeterminate colour scheme of green, pink and

white all suffused together it blends in happily with most plants. *Astrantias* are good-natured plants and don't mind being moved around in full flower.

I love *Alchemilla mollis* and have done so since I was a child and saw it in my grandmother's garden. She called it by its common name, 'Lady's Mantle'. There was only one large clump in her garden because she was diligent about never allowing it to flower and just kept it for the foliage which is especially beautiful when spangled with dewdrops and raindrops.

Doronicum pardalianches (Great Leopard's Bane) is a plant that has become naturalised over much of Western Europe. It was growing in the garden when I came here and survived the onslaught of a J.C.B. digger which we used to clear the place. If allowed it will colonise a large area in a few years, spreading by little white tubers and stolons. It has soft, slightly furry leaves with foot-tall typical doronicum daisies in early summer. I value it because it is the only one of its clan not devoured by slugs.

In the large garden at The Garden House, Buckland Monachorum in Devon, last May I was greatly taken with the tapestry style of planting. One long border had dominant strands of *Tellima grandiflora*, *Euphorbia griffithii* and bluebells running through it making a picture which was quite enchanting. All three can be very invasive. *Tellima grandiflora* seeds itself everywhere in my mother's garden and she hates it with a passion. She is terrified of encouraging it by composting it when she pulls it out – a continuous process – so instead chucks it in the river which runs right alongside her garden. My mother couldn't believe her eyes when she saw "that damned thug" featuring in a prize-winning garden at Chelsea.

Euphorbia griffithii is quite a pest in one border in my garden but... I enjoy its burnt orange flowers which match the tulip 'Dillenburg' to perfection and it enlivens the border through June when it can be a bit colourless. However, this border has a serious flaw in that it allows the roots of ground elder and scutch grass to lurk within its stems so that I cannot zap them with glyphosate. The whole border seethes with these hateful weeds giving me more work than anywhere else in the garden. I hope to make sweeping changes this autumn to cut down the workload. Watch this space!

Bluebells are invasive and seed themselves, or else birds do it for them, far from where they were planted. However they're quite magical with their colour which intensifies after rain. After seeing them in the Devon garden I let them grow wherever they want – except in the white garden where they irritate me. I have the white form planted there but it's not nearly as prolific.

Gunnera tinctoria is one of those plants that I've known all my life because it grew on the banks of the pond at my childhood home and is the kind of dangerous plant that children love to play round. Its offspring grow in a swampy border and it's not a problem hereabouts presumably because of our predominantly cold, wet and windy weather. This has happened in New Zealand as I read in a recent issue of a New Zealand gardening magazine (Weekend Gardener, Issue 115, 2003), "The massive seed heads (spikes) that add to its tropical-meets-Jurassic Park looks are a big part of the problem. These spikes produce oodles of fruit (up to 250,000 per plant) which are transported by birds and water to establish around coastal cliffs, wetlands and along the banks of streams and rivers. "

Hopefully, in Connemara, its spread can be stopped before it joins the ranks of the monstrous Giant Hogweed and Japanese Knotweed both of which have proved to be so damaging to the environment in other places in Britain and Ireland.

An Exceptional Lady Gardener by Noelle Anne Curran

When Major General Kenneth Van der Spuy and his wife, Una, bought a dilapidated Cape homestead in South Africa in 1941 it had no garden. They, however, saw the potential in the two hectares of land and after many years of hard work, their perseverance and determination made it one of the most beautiful and famous gardens in the Cape. The garden is situated close to Stellenbosch and not too far from Cape Town and the house name is, very suitably, “Old Nectar”.

I first saw this house about two years ago and was enchanted. There are formal and informal elements in the garden. As well as perennials there are flowering crab apples, cherries, liquidambers, camellias, magnolias and azaleas. A stream which tumbles over rocks into a small pool runs to a river at the bottom of the garden. All in all it is a beautiful place.

It was Mrs. Van der Spuy herself who truly fascinated me. Here is a lady, now in her nineties, who gardens every day and has the physical and mental attitude of someone a generation younger. Imagine my delight then, when on returning to South Africa this year, I wandered into an antiquarian bookshop and spotted a very old and much-used book called “Gardening in South Africa” by Una Van der Spuy. On examining it I found it was first published in 1953. It is a treasure, full of information and basic facts about gardening. There are almost no colour photographs but marvellous line drawings done by her son.

Having acquired the book I got in touch with Mrs. Van der Spuy once more to ask her if I could show her the book and speak to her further. This was arranged and, on a very hot January afternoon this year, my husband and I revisited Old Nectar. Tea was taken in the shady terrace behind the house and this great lady of gardening talked to us at length about her family, her house and her love of gardening. It appears she has written seven gardening books, has taken gardening tours all over Europe, has travelled the world, still travels and tells the most wonderful stories of her experiences.

Her husband, who died some years ago, was a pilot in the 1st World War. He became co-founder of the South African Air Force and was heavily involved in the 2nd World War, as he was a minister in the South African Government. With communications being so limited at that time, Una felt that he might not return from one of his overseas trips and so planted a tree in the garden in his honour. Happily he did return and together they created a now famous rose garden.

The tree that Una planted to her husband now towers over the garden and the roses in the rose garden, though now forty five years old are as healthy and as beautiful as they day they were planted. As we said goodbye to this great lady of gardening, she athletically vaulted over the half door back into her magnificent Cape Dutch house, no doubt to tidy away the tea things and retrieve her secateurs.

The National Botanic Gardens hosts Special Olympics Event

by Mary Bradshaw

The Special Olympic Fundraising Event - "My Favourite Plants" at the National Botanic Gardens on April 9th was a sell - out. Excellent publicity at the Gardens and elsewhere, eminent speakers, - all prominent I.G.P.S. members, and wonderful, generously donated raffle prizes pulled in the crowds. This article is for those members who could not be present, and might like to know the plants favoured by Brendan Sayers, Paul Maher and Seamus O' Brien. Each gardener was asked to choose ten "favourites". It did not quite work out that way, but there was adequate time at the end for an "Ask the Experts" session. Let me recall a few plants favoured by each speaker, some familiar, some not so familiar.

Brendan Sayers chose *Sarracenia leucophylla* among his favourites. This insectivorous pitcher plant has a white trumpet. It grows in Florida, Mississippi, and Georgia. Each pitcher has four zones, the lip which is the landing platform for insects, the nectar roll, the upper pitcher and the lower pitcher. Pitchers can be up to 1` metre tall. In Spring, purple flowers are borne, to 90 cms tall. Insects and very small mammals are enticed into the pitcher, drowned and later digested.

Brendan also loves *Cannamois virgata*, a member of the Restionaceae family prominent in the Fynbos region of South Africa. *C. virgata* is distinguished by bi-coloured bracts on the culm. Also from the Fynbos region is *Erica cerinthoides*, the Fire heath. This heather is an erect shrub with tubular, bright red flowers. The plant can reach 1.5ms in height and 1m. in width.

We would have been disappointed if Brendan had not mentioned orchids. *Angraecum sesquipedale*, the Comet Orchid from Madagascar is always a show stopper. This evergreen, epiphytic orchid has strap - shaped dark green leaves to 30cms. It flowers in Winter with racemes of 25 - 30 cm long of 2-4 night-scented, waxy, ivory-white flowers 17-22cms across and long spurs, of 20-30 cms.

Another, even more spectacular orchid introduced by Brendan was *Coryanthes macrantha*. There are 15 species of Coryanthes, commonly known as "Bucket Orchids", in Central America, growing epiphytically on the nests of tree-dwelling ants. Their flowers are among the most complex in the orchid family. Their powerful scent attracts bees and, sooner or later, one is sucked into the bucket of the orchid's lip. The bee has only one escape route. As it squeezes through a narrow gap, the pollen becomes attached to its back and pollination is carried out when it visits another flower.

Paul Maher decided to concentrate on plants that have something to show all year round. *Acer griseum* was high on his list. This tree was introduced from China by Augustine Henry. Known as the "Paper-bark Maple", because of its peeling orange/brown bark, it is slow-growing with dark green, 3-palmate leaves which turn orange to red and scarlet in Autumn. Its eventual height and spread can be 10m. Paul describes it as "easy but expensive" and ideal for small gardens. Another one of Paul's

favourites is *Vallea stipularis*. This is a genus of one species of evergreen shrub / tree from the Andes. It needs ericaceous compost and full or bright filtered light. It has leathery deep-green leaves from 3-12 cm and produces cup-shaped crimson to dark rose-red flowers in Spring and Summer. It can be grown independently or trained on a wall.

Cardiocrinum giganteum has to be a favourite.

This giant lily can be found in the Himalayas, China and Japan. Seed was first sent to Glasnevin by Major Madden. It can grow to 4m. in height and in Summer can carry up to 20 large, nodding, trumpet-shaped, strongly scented white flowers. It should be grown in woodland or in a shaded, sheltered border. *C. giganteum* var. *yunnanense* is also a Henry introduction.

Paul was also much taken with *Coronilla valentina* subsp. *glauca*. This is a dense, bushy, evergreen shrub with bright green leaves and fragrant, bright yellow flowers in late Winter, early Spring and again in late Summer. It grows to 80cm in height and width and features on Paul's list because of its excellent value for money. He says it has flowers or pods every day of the year! *Heliophila longifolia* is a South African annual, a member of the brassica family. It has many branches with mid-green leaves. From Spring to Summer, it produces really strong blue coloured flowers. Its height is 10 cm, width 30cm. Paul describes it as a "quick return plant" with really great results.

Seamus O' Brien described *Puya alpestris* as his absolute favourite plant.

This is one of 170 species of terrestrial, evergreen bromeliads from Central and South America. They have rosettes of linear leaves with coarse and painful barbs. The flowers are trumpet or bell-shaped on 1m. spikes. Each flower spike can produce 2,000 flowers! These flowers are followed by green fruit capsules containing winged seeds. Hummingbirds are the pollinators. Puyas tolerate cold more than most bromeliads. Glasnevin was the first garden in Ireland to breed escallonias. *Escallonia* "C. F. Ball" was also high on Seamus' list. "C. F. Ball" is an evergreen shrub with small, oval leaves and masses of blood red flowers. The Irish hybrid was created by Charles Frederick Ball at Glasnevin, before World War 1, but not named until after his death from shrapnel wounds at Gallipoli in 1915.

Staying with the Glasnevin connection, Seamus also introduced us to "*Clematis Glasnevin Dusk*", a black-flowered plant that flowers from the end of June until October. Any plant with such a long flowering season well deserves a place on the list. *Rheum nobile* also featured. Tibetan rhubarb has rounded, dark green leaves to 30cm long. In midsummer it bears panicles 60cm long, inside of which are short clusters of tiny, star-shaped green flowers. The plant can grow to 2m tall. Seamus showed a great photograph of *R. nobile* with himself standing alongside. In Tibet the bracts are cooked and eaten as we do cabbage. From the monstrous to the petite, let me conclude with another of Seamus' favourites, *Galanthus nivalis Sandersii Group*, one of the countless snowdrops to be found growing at Primrose Hill in Lucan. He describes it as difficult to grow in (preferably) peaty soil. However, its golden markings and honey scent brighten any Winter's day. This event raised approximately €3,500 for the Special Olympics. All participants deserve nothing less than gold!

Mary Bradshaw

Hands across the Border – or should it have been Greenfingers across the Border? By Pamela Ball

How come? Well, in 2000 County Wexford Garden and Flower Club decided to mark the millennium by contacting similar clubs in the North, with a view to offering hospitality in the South. We approached several northern clubs and, finally, Comber and District Horticultural Society accepted our invite. We were delighted to welcome them to Wexford in June 2000. Their members spent 3 days and 2 nights with various members of our club acting as hosts. We visited other members' gardens, had a picnic at the John F. Kennedy Park and finished with a luncheon at the Riverside Park Hotel, Enniscorthy before waving a fond farewell.

We were to visit them in Comber in 2001 but 'Foot and Mouth' prevented that and we finally went north on 6th June 2002. Their hospitality was overwhelming. On arrival we took tea at the Castle Espie Wetlands Trust, we were entertained to supper at the local yacht club, visited several members' gardens and spent a day at Mount Stewart. They hosted a dinner on our final evening and the feeling of friendship and camaraderie was mutual. Both visits were considered a great success and everyone agreed that they should be repeated.

The purpose of recounting the above is because one of the leading members of Comber Society has suggested the possibility of extending this venture. If there are clubs in the south who would be interested in pursuing this idea please contact Pamela Ball, Banogue, Gorey, Co. Wexford. Telephone: 055-21065.

Your efforts will be well worthwhile and hopefully foster 'entente cordial' across the border!

Seed Distribution List 2003

Yet again I wasn't too sorry when the closing date for seed requests arrived, especially as we had increased the allocation to 14 packets, and I could wrap up for the year, apart from a couple of members who did not receive their request and asked again, or who received them damaged and mixed – hopefully I still had enough stock to make the request good.

This year we had 232 seeds listed. This was a very good total against 218 for 2002, as we had decided not to list any seed that arrived without a full name, i.e. with genera only. It had not been a very good year for seed anyway as often too wet, and this also reduced the total as some seed arrived in wet envelopes (from the postal service not the sender!) and had to be discarded.

Total requests this year were a little down at 169 (against 195 for 2002). I ran out of 124 during distribution – a higher ratio than last year as I had gained experience of our total requests last year, and could apportion seed quantities with a better eye. As with last year there was a definite change over the 169 requests as to the most popular plant.

Requests 1-50, most popular were: *Lathyrus odoratus* ‘Painted Lady’, *Echium wildpretii*, *Primula candelabra* hybrids (purple), and *Meconopsis grandis*.

Requests 51 – 100 most popular were: *Aquilegia vulgaris* (semi double black maroon), *Lathyrus odoratus* ‘Painted Lady’, *Eryngium giganteum* ‘Silver Ghost’, *Lilium mackliniae*, *Papaver somniferum* (double white).

Requests 101 – 169 most popular were: *Eryngium giganteum* ‘Silver Ghost’, *Helleborus hybridus* (dark plum), *Cosmos bipinnatus*, *Primula candelabra* hybrids (purple), *Fritillaria meleagris*, *Papaver somniferum* (dark shades).

An interesting mix of the very easy and very quick, to the slower, harder, and more demanding plants. So, overall, which were most requested this year, and, as interesting in a different way, which had no requests at all and have sat in their packets forlornly waiting for someone to champion them?

Most popular:

Eryngium giganteum ‘Silver Ghost’ (32) – most popular last year too at no.1.

Lathyrus odoratus ‘Painted Lady’ (31)

Papaver somniferum (double white) (29)

Dierama pulcherrimum (dark purple) (28)

Papaver somniferum (dark shades) (28)

Helleborus hybridus (dark plum) (27) most popular last year at no. 3.

Lilium mackliniae (27)

Primula candelabra hybrids (purple) (27)

.....and no requests for:

Alcea ficifolia

Allium subvillosum – sorry about this, but also no requests last year.....

Bromus ramosus

Hieracium waldsteinii

Muscari armeniacum

Not sure what conclusions I can draw from the above!

Hopefully many of you have already started collecting seed for the next winters’ distribution. My own favourite this year (so far) is *Tragapogon crocifolius*, gorgeous purple daisy flowers, with a dandelion clock like seed head of supreme architectural standards 4 or 5 inches across. I’m told I carry each seed head up the garden path like a trophy. I’m also told the jury is still out as to what the trophy is for.....

Remember that cultivar seed will often not come true to type from seed – the cultivar name only indicates seed source. This is especially important if passing any of your plants on – and I’m certain there are plenty of spares for plant sales ahead, especially when you multiply 169 x 14 seed packets! Don’t forget some seed will need 2 years to germinate.

Good luck to all of you.

Stephen Butler, Seed Distribution Scheme

Regional Reports

Reports from Leinster

Saturday 12th April Visit to Knockree

Shirley and John Beatty have created a most wonderful garden on two acres in the foothills of the Dublin mountains. On a delightful April day the members of the IGPS took time to enjoy the many treasures of this naturalistic garden.

The unmistakable perfume of *Osmanthus delavayi* drew us into the garden and onto a sweep of lawn surrounded by mature trees. Inspired planting of spring subjects, such as *Trillium chloropetalum*, *Erythronium revolutum* 'Knighthayes Pink' and *Anemone nemerosa* 'Robinsoniana' demanded attention. Large groupings of tulips, narcissus and hellebores painted bands of colour in the wide borders. We paused to enjoy *Sanguinaria canadensis*, and *Anemone nemerosa* 'Westwood Pink'. Close to the house an unnamed pale pink camellia charmed as only camellia can.

The walls of the house are clad in a variety of climbers which promised pleasures yet to come. From the rear of the house, meandering paths drew the eye and encouraged exploration. Lest we rushed and missed the many charms this garden offers, seats had been placed at strategic points throughout. Along the path *Clematis paniculata* draped gracefully from *Drimys winteri* and everywhere subjects such as *Viburnum carlesii*, daphne and *Ionicera* enticed with their perfumed flowers.

Amid the lichened rocks and fern-filled crevices, the tinkling sound of falling water created a feeling of calm contemplation. A gradual incline led us to an area of immense granite boulders. So as not to detract from the natural scene, the planting here was restricted to groups of birch and a larch in its bright green spring livery. Returning by a wooded path, we admired rhododendrons, anemones and trilliums which thrive in the shaded conditions.

Knockree offers many delights in spring but one can imagine that it is beautiful in all seasons.

Brid Kelleher

Saturday, 28th June Visit to Kestrel Lodge

Vera Huet's garden has the delightful advantage of location, location, location and although situated only a mile or so from the bustling N11 and the village of Kilmacanogue it is an oasis of peace looking over the Wicklow hills. Although the garden is well screened at either side, the elevated site demands such measures for

protection from the winds, the view from the house over the garden and onto the hills is left open.

On the other hand, Vera's garden also had the disadvantage of location as the photographs she had displayed at the entrance to the garden showed. When she arrived here in 1978 her site was wide open to the elements and one can only imagine the rage of winds which swept from the hills down onto the garden. There must have been several years of disappointment or frustration while she waited for her shelter planting to develop. However she obviously persevered and in the meantime developed a reasonably sheltered garden of borders and beds with a maze of pathways, some broad, others allowing very intimate contact with the beds on either side which brings one around while concealing what lies ahead.

Vera's garden is familiar to many as it has been featured on several television programmes and indeed one of these airings was repeated on RTE on Monday evening, 30th June which from my point of view was most opportune as it allowed me to see the garden in a different season. Vera is obviously a very keen plant collector. On our visit on Saturday last we were all most impressed with the wide selection of roses in the garden, all looking so well, while the television programme showed that Vera has also enthusiastically amassed an interesting collection of *Papaver orientale* and *Iris germanica* cultivars. Perhaps there are other collections of which I am unaware but this repetition of plants from a single genus strikes me as an interesting way to bring a certain unity to a garden at various times of the year.

Few of us could claim to grow delphiniums as successfully as Vera. Not only has she a wide selection of cultivars but they are all grown so very well and amazingly, for such a windy side, all standing erect and unbowed. A sprinkling of foxgloves ran through the garden, only white foxgloves of course, which provided another unifying theme to the beds and borders.

Several of the good attendance of members present commented on the wonderful colours of the garden, others delighted in the Elderflower cordial while all agreed that this was indeed a lovely place to be on that particular Saturday afternoon.

Paddy Tobin

Reports from Munster

Friday 4th April

A Year in My Garden by Deborah Begley

In these days of "Supermarket Plant Outlets" it was a great treat to hear from Deborah Begley, a nursery specialist who propagates plants that are out of the ordinary, to put it mildly. The large attendance was given descriptions and wonderful photographs, taken by her husband Martin, of a huge variety of exotic plants, many of which were quite unfamiliar to most of us. Of course she had a story for each plant and her enthusiasm for the really ugly and malodorous specimens had us all chuckling. She admits to being obsessed with the unusual and, to the great advantage of her customers, the difficult to propagate. There was such an array of photographs that it is hard to make a selection but the hellebores, arisaemas and pleiones created much interest. There were some excellent slides of more conventional material such as *Azalea* 'Homebush', *Malus*

‘Golden Hornet’ and *Clematis* ‘Madame Le Coultre’, ‘Prince Charles’ and ‘Gypsy Queen’. There were views of the stunning garden and it was astonishing that so much was fitted into a half acre.

Terra Nova Nursery, Kilmallock, Co. Limerick, not easy to find, (phone 063 90744) is worth a special trip. Allow several hours!!!

Nicholas Hughes

Saturday, 17th May

Glandore

After awakening to a very wet morning, about twenty of us travelled west to Glandore and enjoyed the best two hours of the day in the walled garden of Shirley Bendon. What a treasure trove we found, with tender plants from South Africa and South America mixed with fruit trees, herbs and vegetables. We were greeted at the gate with the wonderful fragrance of Lily of the Valley– a remnant of the old cottage industry, which supplied London up to the 1950’s.

The salty wind left us in no doubt that we were beside the sea but the very early flowering spoke of rare frosts. The evidence of this was to be seen in the full blooms on *Cestrum*, *Agapanthus*, *Geranium palmatum* and *Echium pininana*. The tall prayer flags near the incense burner from Bhutan appeared like tall sails over the sparkling sea.

Shirley spoke of her hard working frogs that keep her Hostas, Myosotidiums and such like sturdy and unblemished. Her obvious love of exotic plants and the greenhouse just bursting with propagating trays in amongst fruiting apricots, peaches, nectarines, grapes, lemons and grapefruit just made us drool! Thank goodness she was so generous with her “extra” plants on the sales table. It was more my style of a rare and special plant sale.

Several seating areas helped to settle the eye and absorb something missed before. Personally, I loved the big spread of Rose ‘Emily Gray’ just laden with its peachy buds. Thanks for making us so welcome Shirley.

Sheila Miller.

Reports from the Northern Area

Wednesday, 9th April

The Cottage Garden Revisited

The Spring lecture this year at Clotsworthy was given by Maurice Parkinson. Maurice and Joy bought Ballyrobert Cottage in 1993. Maurice began his talk with some slides of the Cottage and "Garden" as it was before they started work. Much work was required on both the Cottage and the Garden. They started by making a plan of what they would like to do. After a lot of clearing they left a couple of crooked

apple trees, a fairy thorn and some plum trees and from this they made a wonderful garden. Maurice says it is a very ordinary garden and he doesn't get too excited about colour coordination. That certainly wasn't evident. I think Joy may have had some influence. He thinks it is much more important to grow plants which suit your soil and climate.

There were slides of each stage of the new construction. Paths and beds were pegged and mapped out. Then the grass and weeds were killed. I imagine there was a lot of back ache from the digging and with the addition of compost the garden at last began to take shape. The heavy clay soil has produced some surprises. Wonderful displays of Monarda, Phlox, Rudbeckia, Hostas and two lovely roses, Dorothy Perkins and Saunders White. These were growing against a stone wall which really showed them off, their fantastic flowers and glossy green foliage.

The formal garden followed on from the cottage garden at the side of the house, with its box hedging and lots of plants for a hot border. There potentilla, a very striking yellow iris with a brown splodge, lupins and poppies were planted. These are just the beginnings and when it is finished there will be a dramatic display.

The new woodland and wildlife area with a lake is producing a natural environment for mallard, reed bunting, meadow pipits and bats. Foxes are a mixed blessing; one managed to abscond with a vicious cockerel. However the cockerel was back on the scene the next day! Too much even for the fox!

The lecture was informative and very enjoyable. The added thrill was being able to buy some of Joy's plants afterwards.

Mary Browne

Tuesday, 6th May

Visit to Mr & Mrs Andrews, Maxwell Court

In May this year, the Northern Region group visited the gardens at Maxwell Court, which has been in the Andrews family for several generations. It is now in the care of Johnny and Iona Andrews who are currently restoring both the house and garden. Here, the past, present and future come together as Iona tells of her plans for the future development of the garden, and Jill Andrews Marten recalls her childhood memories of the garden created by her grandmother.

Memories of Maxwell Court, Comber, Co. Down.

My grandparents went to live at Maxwell Court after their wedding in 1902 – My mother was born there in 1909 and had her wedding there in 1932 when the garden was at its best, before the war. I was born there in 1936 and spent many holidays there and every Christmas. During the war, my parents and I came up from Dublin and lived at Maxwell Court so, more than any of my cousins, I knew every inch of the garden which my grandmother shared with me, even giving me my own wee plot. She and my

mother taught me so much about plants, gardening and flower arranging – all of which I love.

During my childhood, there were three gardeners at Maxwell Court and it was their job to see that the garden was not just for pleasure, but that it produced all the cut flowers and plants to decorate the house each week and all the fruit and vegetables for the house. All the surplus was sold – there was no waste – a real working garden. Compost was made, manure was available from the farm, seed was saved, apples carrots etc were all stored, fruit was bottled or made into jams and tomatoes into chutney. The green house has been restored which is wonderful; but the apple store, the peach house and the many cold frames used for cucumbers, marrows and Christmas roses are gone.

Going up the front avenue there are shrubs on either side, an old stone seat to your right to rest as you walked up the hill, and behind it there was a wild grass meadow which Iona hopes to restore and re-seed.

The walled garden was amazing, not a weed, gravel paths, box hedges, each plot surrounded with gooseberry bushes. There were vegetables of every kind, flowers for cutting for the house, apple trees (which, though old, are still there), pears and plums trained onto the walls; a tennis court at the far end of the walled garden and a wonderful violet bed and a plot of lily of the valley.

Beyond the revolving summer house which was used daily and turned to face the sun, are more shrubs in a very sheltered area; then a rose garden with a sundial in memory of Granny's wee dog, 'Tim'. Then a second tennis court, now used for football, which was damp due to a spring and beyond this a sunken rose garden which has been cleared and re-found after I told Johnny and Iona to look for it. Built with lovely old stone it has a pond in the centre and paths in a cross, surrounded by a low wall – this was designed by Hugh Armytage Moore from Rowallane. He also designed a cherry walk along the top of the field, although this is almost lost with only one or two cherries remaining and not in very good shape. There used to be a path right round the outside of the field with many flowering shrubs.

My grandmother was most particular about colour and liked plants to blend and compliment each other. Opposite the dining room and drawing room windows of the house there were two holly trees in the grass and round the base of the drawing room window there was a wonderful circle of spring bulbs – crocus and snowdrops. Granny called it the 'Fairy Ring'

It is changed times and I am so glad that Iona is so enthusiastic about remaking what she can cope with in the present day at Maxwell Court, while at the same time adding her own ideas. I am very glad that I was blessed with such a wonderful family and life. I get so much pleasure from all that I grew up with and that includes all of Co. Down, Comber, Strangford Lough and of course Maxwell Court.

Jill Andrews Marten

MAXWELL COURT – A GARDEN IN THE PROCESS OF RESTORATION

Johnny and I moved into Maxwell Court in 1995 along with our two year old daughter, Morna. Whilst having much potential the property had gone into gentle decline since the 1950's. We set about restoring both house and garden.

HISTORY OF THE GARDEN

The walled garden dates from the 18th century as does the centre of the house. A pine pit for growing pineapples must predate 1880 as pineapples were imported into Ireland after that date. A three quarter span glasshouse was also constructed in Victorian times. An old family photograph album dated 1907 shows an actively managed kitchen garden with gravel paths, box edged beds and espaliered fruit trees against the walls.

The formal gardens were laid out by Johnny's great grandmother, Jessie Andrews, in the 1920's. She created a 220ft long mixed border against a south facing wall and a box edged parterre garden. Her neighbour, Hugh Armytage Moore of Rowallane, designed the sunken rose garden and cherry walk and was influential in the planting of the many rhododendrons. The gardens matured and reached their heyday in the 1930's. In addition to the pine pit and glasshouse there was a peach house, two tennis courts, a (surviving) revolving summerhouse and a landscaped paddock.

My father-in-law's cousin, Jill Marten, lived at Maxwell Court as a child during World War II. Her memories of the garden at this time have been of enormous help to me. After the war the garden fell into decline, becoming overgrown, particularly around the periphery. The walled garden was impenetrable by 1995; the sunken rose garden completely buried and forgotten.

THE RESTORATION SO FAR

During our first full year, 1996, we did a lot of clearing. We strimmed the walled garden and began to remove ivy from the infested walls. The lawns around the house had been kept well cut but had a huge amount of moss – “indicative of a mild Atlantic climate”. Johnny's aunt and IGPS member, Liz Andrews, was called in to tell me what was a weed and what was a garden plant! We severely cut back overgrown shrubs in the long boarder and weed killed the ground elder beneath. I cut a 200ft long hawthorn hedge with hand shears. It took me two months in between looking after new baby, Tommie, born in June.

By 1997 I realised that I knew nothing about gardening. Out of a sense of duty, I signed up for Rhoda Robb's “Leisure Gardening” class in Newtonards. To my surprise and to Rhoda's great credit, I soon found that not only was I learning but also that I was enjoying it.

The second thing that I realised was that I needed help. For this we called in gardening contractor, Nick Burrowes and his team. Nick pointed out that the old apple trees in the east side of the walled garden were nearing the end of their lives. He planted 50 new fruit trees in the western section, all raised from seed by him ten years prior to that. We fenced off the eastern part and it became the home of three delightful Vietnamese pot bellied pigs.

By 1999 Nick had cleared the cherry walk along the edge of the paddock and made an amazing discovery. Underneath 50 years of ivy, brambles and self seeded saplings was the structure of a sunken garden. Their removal revealed a perimeter wall, paths and a central pond. Jill, of course, remembered it well as the sunken rose garden and pointed out its position in the layout of the garden. Upon reaching the end

of the long border one could walk through the sunken garden and return to the house via the cherry walk. Previously, although it had never felt quite right, one had no choice but to back track along the long border.

Our eastern boundary borders Ardara House, the childhood home of Johnny's great great uncle, Thomas Andrews (designer of the Titanic). When the walk along it was cleared in 2001, it became jokingly known as the "Titanic Walk". The meadow beside it was replanted and I would like to fill it with wild flowers.

Whilst Nick carried out specific projects we were lucky enough to acquire Clive Gilmour as our regular one morning a week gardener. First he rejuvenated the parterre garden. Box hedging that had been choked was replanted and the beds cleared and planted with peonies, penstemons and geraniums. Next he planted softfruit- raspberries, gooseberries and blackcurrants- in the walled garden. Clive is an extremely knowledgeable plantsman and his skills compliment my own developing interest in garden design.

The Victorian glasshouse was looking more and more dilapidated. A series of "advisors" recommended knocking it down and rebuilding a modern conservatory at vast expense. I ignored them all knowing that the main structural beams were sound and that I loved the building. Eventually, in 2000, we found a good carpenter. All the glass was removed, rotten glazing bars replaced, the whole structure painted and the glass put back. A second door was created linking the glasshouse with a terrace outside the kitchen. It took two years of stop-start work to complete but I believe it was worth it.

Last year we scooped out a clay bank and an imposing retaining wall outside the rear of the house. Along with the removal of an old shed, this has allowed more light into the house and given us a view of the restored glasshouse from our kitchen window. The excess stonework was reused in the building of Johnny's folly, a small tower.

Early on Liz Andrews had advised me to start a gardening diary to note what was in the garden and when it flowered. This was extremely helpful and opened my eyes to the joys of *Hamamelis Mollis* at the beginning of January, the sequence of the many rhododendrons from "Christmas Cheer" in December/January through magenta coloured *Rhododendron arboreum* in March to a delicate pinky white one in June and to the rich colours of *Eunonymus* in November. It also drew my attention to the fact that Maxwell Court is primarily a spring garden. I have tried to extend the season by planting more autumn colour.

FUTURE PROJECTS

Where do I start? I would like to plant herbs on the bank outside the kitchen, the new gravel needs laying and we plan to make steps on the bank in front of the house. My main project will be the planting of the sunken garden.

Perhaps restoration is not quite the right word for what I am doing. I am not trying to recreate the garden of Jill's memories but I appreciate its history. I aim to make the most of what we have been fortunate enough to inherit and to make it an enjoyable garden for the children. They have football goal posts, a tree house, a trampoline and a run full of pet baby rabbits.

When I got married I was told that the advice given to all new Andrews wives was not to have too many children and not to have too many flowerbeds. I followed the first piece of advice and stuck to two children. I ignore the second piece at my peril.

Iona Andrews

Wednesday, 18th June

Visit to the garden of Janie & Brian Metcalfe.

On 18th June a visit was paid to the garden of Janie & Brian Metcalfe near Killyleagh. Although some members contrived to get slightly lost en route, the destination proved well worth a little delay in arriving, and the garden looked its best on a sunny evening in the setting of Co. Down's drumlins, with the Mourne a distant backdrop.

There was a wealth of interesting plants and imaginative design features for members to admire, surrounding and incorporating both house and outbuildings. We wondered at the variety and vitality of plants thriving in ground where Janie assured us there had been little original soil covering, but where her five horses had, over the years, made generous contribution. To support his wife's creative work, Brian had made the various parts of the garden attractively accessible with a network of paths, tracks and lawns.

Members admired the varieties of plants in the borders including bearded iris, astrantia, bright oriental poppies – vivid against a backdrop of dark purple cotinus, the tall inflorescence of the oat grass, *Stipa gigantea*, glowing gold in the evening sun, and the striking deep wine red flowers of *Cirsium rivulare* 'Atropurpureum' Others were content to enjoy a range of shrub and climbing roses with Summer Wine, Buff Beauty, *R. complicata* and many others in full bloom and mingling with summer flowering clematis.

A sloping paddock was planted with a collection of eucalypts and ornamental shrubs and trees approaching maturity. Viburnums and selected elders were represented, with *Sambucus nigra* 'Guincho Purple' in full bloom and, in a pot waiting planting, the beautiful dark cut-leaf form – *Sambucus nigra* 'Black Lace'

In contrast to the more 'organised' places in the garden, gravelled and paved areas had been given over to a random exuberance of foxgloves, poppies, verbasicum, campanula and geraniums. Gardeners recognised that the 'random' effect had been achieved – as in the garden overall – by planning and hard work. The IGPS is indebted to Janie and Brian for a delightful evening. Twenty six members attended.

John Dudgeon

The IGPS at the Garden Heaven Show

The IGPS will have a stand at the Garden Heaven Show in the RDS, Thursday 10th to Sunday 13th. Ed Bowden and Mary Bradshaw are organising a rota to man the stall and spread the good word about the IGPS and possibly attract new members. If you would like to help, I'm sure you would be most welcome. Ed and Mary can be contacted through the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin: 01-8570909. If you are at the Garden Heaven Show stop off at the stand and say hello.

Looking Ahead

Munster Fixtures

Friday 3rd October @ 07.45pm

In the footsteps of Augustine Henry

Mathew Jebb, Taxonomist, National Botanic Gardens.

Friday 31st October @ 07.45pm

Gardening the Past, Preserving our Future

Alan Power, Head Gardener Cliveden & Regional H.G. for Thames And Solent

Friday 7th November @ 07.45pm

Tender Trees and Shrubs for Coastal Regions

Bernard O'Leary, Head Gardener, Innacullin (Garnish Is.)

Friday 5th December @ 07.45pm

California Carnivores & other dramatic Americans

Patrick O' Hara, Botanical Artist and Sculpture

NB. As usual, all the Cork lectures will be held at the **SMA Hall, Wilton.**

Leinster Fixtures

- **Saturday 26th July 2pm**

Garden visit to **Lodge Park Straffan Co Kildare**, a wonderful 2.5 acre (1 ha) 18th century walled garden.

Straffan is signposted from Kill on the N7 and from Maynooth on the N4. It lies approximately 8 km. from both places.

Admission €4. Tea and scones are available on request for an additional €4. **To book for tea and scones** please phone Rose at 01 - 8324598 or email her at igps@eircom.net

- **Friday 25th September 8 pm**

'A Year in the Life of Oxford Botanic Garden' with Timothy Walker.

An opportunity to see how the garden changes throughout the year and what goes on behind the scenes. Also Alpine and herbaceous plants people might like to grow in their own garden to increase interest at otherwise quiet times of the year. This is a joint lecture with the Alpine Society and will be held at **The National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin.**

- **Sunday 12 October 12 noon:**

The Annual Plant Sale of the Society

Venue: The Parish Hall, Church of Our Lady of Dolores Glasnevin (opposite the National Botanic Gardens) Start propagating now!

- **Thursday 6th November 8 p.m:**

'Experimenting with Uncommon Plants' a lecture by fellow member **Carmel Duignan** - a self confessed plantaholic. Carmel grows a wide range of plants in her garden in Co Dublin and has a particular interest in tender plants.

The Institution of Engineers 22 Clyde Road, Ballsbridge Dublin 4.

- **Wednesday 26 November 8 pm:**

A joint lecture with RHSI to be held at **Wesley House, Leeson Park, Dublin 6**

'Antipodean Plants that Lived with the Dinosaurs' an illustrated talk by **Dr. David Robinson**.

Dr Robinson is a well know plantsman who grows a large range of subtropical plants at his exceptionally mild Earlscliffe Garden in Bailey Co Dublin

- **Thursday 4 December 8 pm:**

A lecture on The Flora of Thailand by Prof John Parnell from TCD.

The Institution of Engineers, 22 Clyde Road Ballsbridge Dublin 4.

Northern Ireland

- **Sunday 20th July. 12:00 noon.**

ANNUAL PICNIC & GARDEN VISIT. Mrs Lesley Casement, Magherintemple, 51 Churchfield Road, Ballycastle. A return visit to Magherintemple for our picnic, with another chance to see the old walled garden which has a wide range of well-established trees, shrubs & roses, perennial borders and an impressive bog garden. Bring your own picnic. Members & guests only.

- **Thursday, 14th August. 6:30 for 7:00pm**

GARDEN VISIT, Mr Gary Dunlop, The Grange, Ballyrogan, nr. Newtownards, Co. Down. On top of a hill with spectacular views, this 3-acre informal garden is packed with rare and interesting herbaceous and woody plants, with collections of *Celmisia*, *Crocsmia* and *Euphorbia*. Plants available. No charge, but donations requested for Multiple Sclerosis. £1.00 extra for non-members.

- **Saturday 6th September. 2:00 for 2:30 pm**

GARDEN VISIT, Mrs O'Grady, Coolfore, Monasterboice, nr. Drogheda, Co.

Louth. This 20 year old, 6 acre garden features a well established range of specimen trees & shrubs, scree alpines, rose beds, a pond and bog garden, woodland area underplanted with hostas and ligularias, vegetable garden with kiwis and vines. Members €4.00, Non-members €5.00 (includes refreshments).

- **Saturday 11th October. 12:00 – 3:00pm**

AUTUMN PLANT SALE, Stranmillis College, Belfast.

Donations of good quality plants only please; deliveries from 9:00am.

Plants and volunteers wanted. Contact Mary Browne on 028 9754 1405

- **Wednesday 22nd October. 7:30 pm**

THE CLOTWORTHY LECTURE, Clotworthy Arts Centre, Antrim.

***'At The Water's Edge – Fota Arboretum And Gardens'* with David O'Regan, Head Gardener at Fota.**

Situated in Cork Harbour and now under state control, this former island has an enviable climate and a superb collection of plants built up over many years by the Smith-Barry family. Members free, others £1.00. Refreshments free. Plant Sales. Joint lecture with Antrim Borough Council.

- **Thursday 13th November. 7:30 pm**

LECTURE, Lagan Valley Island Arts Centre, Lisburn.

***'The Park With The Ark'* with Stephen Butler, Curator of Horticulture, Dublin Zoo.**

Dublin Zoo in Phoenix Park is one of the oldest in these islands and always needs first class gardens for its animal guests. If you thought mice were a problem in the garden, think again – this is definitely gardening on the edge! Members free, others £1.00

- **Wednesday, 3rd December. 7:30pm**

THE MALONE HOUSE LECTURE, Malone House, Barnett's Park, Belfast.

***'Gone West – America's Western Seaboard, From The Mountains To The Sea'* with Liam & Joan McCaughey.** Guided by Liam's superb photography, we should meet in their native habitats, a good few plants which we are familiar with in our gardens here. Free. Refreshments free. Joint lecture with Belfast Parks.

Non-IGPS Event

- **Thursday, 25th September. 7:30 pm**

RHS REGIONAL LECTURE at the Ulster Museum, Belfast.

***'The Healing Power of Plants'* with Timothy Walker, Horti Praefectus of Oxford Botanic Gardens.**

Timothy is a very popular lecturer in Ulster, and his witty erudition should make this a truly memorable evening. Members £3.00, non-members £4.00. Tickets available from Museum Reception. Joint RHS / Ulster Museum.

For further details contact the Northern Region Events Co-ordinator:

Catherine Tyrie, Dept. of Botany, Ulster Museum, Botanic Gardens, Belfast.

Tel: 028 90383152; Fax: 028 90383103, E-mail: catherine.tyrie.um@nicos.gov.uk

SNIPPETS

- **Annette Dalton**, previous editor of the newsletter, may be considering going on to better and bigger things. She made a very successful television appearance, in her capacity of Director of Amenity Planting at Kew Gardens, on the Gardener's World programme at end of April. Is there a new career move looming?
- **Corona North Memorial Lecture.** Don't forget this upcoming lecture by Thomas Pakenham on "Remarkable Trees of the World" on Thursday, 30th October, 7.30p.m. in the Church of the Annunciation, Clonard, Wexford. Tickets €15. Enquiries 053 58836, 054 83349, 051 396291. E-mail: cowexfordgardenclub@eircom.net This lecture is being organised by the Co. Wexford Garden Club as a commemoration of Mrs. Corona North of Altamont Gardens, Co. Carlow.
- **Graham Stuart Thomas:** The July issue of The Irish Garden will carry an article on GST's connections with Irish gardens.
- NI Heritage Gardens Committee Conference Oct 3rd, 4th & 5th **TREE HERITAGE OF IRELAND** at Loughcrew, Co.Meath. 6 speakers & 2 visits. stg£120 €180 (not including Sat. dinner). Enquiries PO BOX 252, Belfast BT9 6GY – note from Belinda Jupp
- **The Glasnevin Central China Expedition.** Watch out for a television programme about this expedition on RTE 1 on Wednesday 9th July at 8.30 pm. This is in the "Townlands" series.
- **The Irish Peat Conservancy Council** would like to alert you to the availability of peat free compost in many gardening retail outlets. They give a list of these outlets on their website: www.ipcc.ie or e-mail them at: bogs@ipcc.ie Irish Peatland Conservation Council, 119 Capel Street, Dublin 1. Tel & Fax 353-1-8722397
- The Irish Peat Conservancy Council also has two interesting CDs of offer. One is a recording of the **Dawn Chorus**, 60 minutes, €16.99 and the other is "Teach Yourself Irish Garden Bird Songs", 50 minutes, €13.99
- **Brendan Sayers and Assumpta Bloomfield** had an interesting item on Irish cultivars and plants with an Irish connection in the "Garden Heaven" programme of Monday, 23rd June.
- **"A Heritage of Beauty"** This valuable and excellent IGPS publication is now available in Kilkenny Castle.

Letters to the Editor

- **Rhododendron ponticum**

Dear Editor,

I am a postdoctoral fellow at the Environment Department, University of York. My research interest at the moment is in *Rhododendron ponticum* and its historic spread. More generally I am interested in the linkage of plant invasions with human behaviour using *R. ponticum* and some other ornamental shrub species (*Prunus laurocerasus*, *Rhododendron luteum*, *Symphoricarpos albus*, *Buddleja davidii*) as examples.

Currently I am carrying out a survey on the first records of these species in the Vice Counties (BSBI recorders) of Britain and Ireland. To reconstruct the invasion process of these species I would like to know more about the extent of plantings. If any of your members have any early records on plantings of these species in their gardens or estates I would be delighted to hear from them.

Thanks very much.

Dr Katharina Dehnen-Schmutz, Environment Department, University of York,
York, YO10 5DD, UK email: kds2@york.ac.uk

- **Poppy Seed Capsule**

Dear Paddy

Hope the Drugs Squad doesn't see the last newsletter with its article on Seed Distribution. The poppy capsule had been scored for opium extraction!

Catherine R Tyrie, Curator of Botany, Botany Department

I hasten to point out that that particular capsule was not photographed in my own garden but commend your observant eye – how well you noticed! Ed.

- **Calocedrus decurrens 'Berrima Gold'**

Dear Editor,

I was pleased to see the letter on 'Berrima Gold' from Jane Hayter of Yackandandah. She is living in a beautiful part of Australia. There is a connection to Waterford in the article as Berrima and the surrounding area was first founded by my first ancestor in Australia a Jack Tarlinton who was followed a few years later by Hugh Vesty Burns, one of the 1793 Rebels from the Waterford area. Hugh, my great, great great grandfather was exiled to Australia with his cousins, Micahael Dwyer and John Devlin, all from Waterford.

John O Reilly, Banora Point, Australia

IRISH GARDEN PLANT SOCIETY ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES FOR THE YEAR 2002-2003

	<u>£ Sterling</u>	<u>Euro</u>
Single membership	£15.00	€25.00
Family membership	£22.00	€35.00
Student membership	£7.50	€10.00
5 year single membership	£70.00	€120.00
5 year family membership	£100.00	€165.00

IGPS COMMITTEE:

Malcolm Rose (Chairman); Dermot Kehoe (Vice-chairman); Patrick Quigley (Hon. Secretary); John O'Connell (Hon. Treasurer); Sarah Ball; Ed Bowden Mary Bradshaw; Maire Ni Chleirigh; Anne McCarthy; Edward Bowden.

Regional representatives (ex officio members): Patrick Quigley - Northern group: Kitty Hennessy – Munster group.

NCCPG representative: Mary Forrest.

Correspondence and enquiries should be addressed to the Hon. Sec., IGPS, c/o National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin 9. **N.B.** Letters only please.

No phone enquiries. E-mail: igps@eircom.net

Please send copy for the next issue of the Newsletter to: Paddy Tobin, “Cois Abhann”, Riverside, Lower Gracedieu, Waterford: pmtobin@eircom.net by **early September 2003.**

