

Irish Garden Plant Society



Newsletter
Summer 2018
AGM Edition

Irish Garden Plant Society : 37th
Annual General Meeting

Memories of 2018



CONTENTS

Page 2	Editorial
Page 6	A Note from the Chair by Billy McCone
Page 7	Report on the 2018 Annual General Meeting of the Irish Garden Plant Society
Page 10	Irish Garden Plant Society Income & Expenditure Account
Page 11	Irish Garden Plant Society Balance Sheet
Page 13	Castlewellan at the AGM by Ali Rochford
Page 14	IGPS Visit to McKelvey Garden, Bessbrook
Page 16	Beech Grove by Mary Bradshaw
Page 18	IGPS Visit to Ballyedmond by Robert Logan
Page 20	Worth a Read by Paddy Tobin
Page 24	Around the Regions: Munster
Page 27	Around the Regions: Leinster
Page 29	Don't Mention the Parrots by Billy McCone
Page 31	Book Review: Paddy Tobin
Page 34	Dates for your Diary
Page 36	Book Launch

Editorial

This June, I was fortunate enough to attend Dublin's 'Bloom in the Park' festival, which is sometimes known as 'The Irish Chelsea'. It was certainly an amazing event, with well over 100,000 people attending this year as the weather was exceptionally fine and warm. Obviously, although I was 'minding' the bee tent for the day, I absolutely had to visit the competition gardens and see all the latest garden 'concepts' blossoming forth. I confess that, after viewing them, I was altogether confused about what a 'garden' can be at all. The Gold Medal winner did not even conform to the most simplified definition, from William Harrison in 1587: 'I comprehend, therefore, under the word *'garden'* all such grounds as are wrought with the spade by man's hand.' The winner was in fact a stretch of water complete with a boat, and the concept was the 'Sustainable Seafood Garden', telling 'the story of the journey from tide to table of the fish and seafood that surround and inhabit this island... starting in the water and ending on a plate.'

Sustainability was a major theme, with an award going to Dun Laoghaire County Council for their exhibit of 'an interpretation of the sustainability aims for Fernhill. A reclaimed birch-clad wall creates a divide between protected and active parts of the garden. Breaks in the wall encourage glimpses into the protected landscape. The wall breaks down to reveal a woodland playground, half in, half out of the protected environment and a community garden, complete with wheelchair accessible raised bed.' The difficulty of compromising between 'sustainability' for a public park-cum-garden and Fernhill's treasury of rare and well established shrubs and trees may be inferred from the phrase about the wall 'breaking down' - this has been rather a literal description of Fernhill during the years of neglect before Dun Laoghaire Co. Co. purchased it. I fear that it will be difficult for the Council to act as real 'protection' for this heritage garden in Co. Dublin. Sustainability is a complex idea. But I strongly applaud their aims and intentions.

I noticed that many, if not most, of the exhibition gardens were proposing to tell the visitor something. The feminist garden for GOAL was 'a concept garden to celebrate the role of women globally, and shine a light on the inequality they continue to endure, particularly in

the developing world'. Then there was 'Resistance, a garden for Trócaire' which 'brings to life the stories of human rights defenders in Palestine, Guatemala and Zimbabwe. Scorched earth at Trócaire's Bloom garden represents the policy of burning and destroying crops grown by indigenous communities.' These were superb didactic 'gardens' and I can appreciate why the judges gave them medals, but I felt perplexed as a gardener. The gardens were somehow turned into symbols of ideas, and quite seemed to lose their botanical integrity in the process.



Photo: Barry Kavanagh, Bailieboro, Co. Cavan, designer of the Trócaire garden.

Of course, it is nothing new for gardens to represent a kind of story telling. The famous garden at Stowe is full of 'Hidden meanings'. As the National Trust blurb says: 'Stowe was never just a garden. Its creator, Lord Cobham, set the gardens out to reveal his beliefs about the politics and morality of the day. Which path will you choose - Vice, Virtue or Liberty?' The visitor walking around these paths is being morally addressed with weighty philosophical considerations, perhaps comparable in their day to the moral dilemmas which now inspire some of the gardens at Bloom.

Luckily for me, there were also plenty of more frivolous contributions. I couldn't help being amused by the bizarre 'Sanctuary Upside Down Garden', telling me to 'look at your lawn a different way.' The lawn was above your head, like a grassy ceiling. This display included an upside

down model gardener, and hidden features, including a cat and two resting crows. It was a little reminiscent of that extraordinary garden which won gold at Chelsea in 2011, Diarmud Gavin's 'Irish Sky Garden'. I take the liberty of reminding you of this 'concept' before it was planted up with greenery:



Photo: *The Telegraph* (telegraph.co.uk)

This remarkable garden construction drew predictable comments: 'Critics are calling for a return to spade and wheelbarrow gardening,' according to the paper.

It seems as though there are at least two different streams of

thought required to compose a garden: the plants themselves must surely be carefully considered, selected, and placed, for the spade work; and the theme or 'concept' must also satisfy the gardener and visitors.

Perhaps both of these aspects might be linked in the idea of 'Sustainability'? In this idea, one could argue, there is both a moral purpose and a delight in the suitable planting. As the Roman poet, Horace, suggests, the combination of pleasure and instruction is always a winner. Certainly this combination was a stated aim of the Horticultural Societies of the early nineteenth century. The Royal Horticultural Society of Ireland (RHSI), founded in 1816, is 'dedicated to promoting and improving the knowledge, skill and practice of horticulture, arboriculture and floral art while encouraging respect for the environment and creating a sense of community amongst our members.' I was interested to see that 'floral art' has always been included in Flower Shows, perhaps representing another way in which the didactic and the pleasurable can be combined in our relationship with plants.

There seems to be some dispute about which is the oldest Flower Show in the world, with the Agri-Horticultural Society of India claiming precedence for its show in Calcutta in 1828. However, the Guinness Book of Records awards the title of 'Longest Running Horticultural Show' to the Philadelphia Flower Show, which began in June 1829. Their first show was called: 'Exhibition of Fruits, Flowers & Plants', reflecting the different but complementary interests of utility and beauty, I presume. The Pennsylvanian Horticultural Society, which runs this Show, is still flourishing today and, like other Horticultural Societies, intends to please and instruct at the same time: 'The PHS connects people with horticulture, and together we create beautiful, healthy and sustainable communities.'

I cannot doubt that the crowds of people at Bloom imbibed some of these worthy ideas, along with their obvious delight in the beauty and diversity of the plants and gardens on display.

Perhaps for next year's Bloom festival, IGPS could find a corner in a marquee for a display of our particular botanical aims? It would be wonderful to see our own plant heritage being shown there.

IGPS Seed Distribution 2018

Reminder:

You should be saving your seeds for the Annual IGPS Seed Distribution, which is such an important part of the work of the Society.

An easy way to collect the seeds is by placing the dry seed head into a paper bag or large paper envelope. You can then turn the whole thing over so that the seeds will tip into the bag, or at any rate you will not lose the seeds.

It is also very important to label the bag, so that you can identify the seeds you have saved for the Seed Distribution.



Billy McCone, Chairman IGPS

A Note from the Chair

Well, what a great AGM we had this year. So many people to thank, the Northern Region working group for the organisation, garden hosts, Alwyn Sinnamon of Castlewellan Arboretum, Sam Harrison, Lady Ballyedmond and her staff and William and Hilary McKelvey. Thanks also to Seamus O'Brien for his role as guide at the arboretum. Neil Porteus for the gift of several dozen *Fuchsia* 'Mount Stewart'. Newry, Down and Mourne Council donated a welcome £250. Well done to Branka Gaberschik, whose video diary of last year's AGM garden visits provided pre-dinner entertainment. Sustaining us on our homeward journey, the Bessbrook ladies who supplied us with copious quantities of refreshments. And for all the delegates and committee members, what a great turn out - thanks everyone.

Now, if you have been reading my previous *Newsletter* notes it will not escaped you that I have been continually asking for more help ... well, I got it ! ... And my final thanks have to go to the 20 plus members who have volunteered for a variety of tasks and roles. We welcome Brid Kelleher to the national committee, Robert Logan to the Northern sub-committee, Nicola Monk as our new membership secretary and Dennis Constable has agreed to help develop the grants and bursaries process. Two much-needed volunteers for the Pogue's Entry garden, Roz Henry and Robert Logan (again). Several members have promised articles and garden reviews for the *Newsletter*, others have volunteered to help with lecture events and looking forward, some have volunteered to help with planning our 40th anniversary. For something completely different, we have five volunteer photographers to help start a photo library – Ali Rochford, Barbara Kelso, Margaret McAuliffe, Sara Whelan and Martin Edwardes have submitted our initial batch of photos. Leinster member and web expert Philip Quinlan has volunteered to be our new technical adviser to create the library.

Finally, you may recall I spoke of tangible benefits from partnerships. I am delighted to announce that Antrim and Newtownabbey Council have provided us with a £1,000 budget to plant the garden at Pogue's Entry.

It's been a busy time recently – but a very productive one.

Regards,

Billy McCone.



IGPS members at Castlewellan

Report on the 2018 Annual General Meeting of the Irish Garden Plant Society

The 37th AGM was held in the Burrendale Hotel Co. Down, on the 19th of May. Approximately ninety IGPS members attended. The Chair Billy McCone opened the meeting, welcomed members and thanked the Northern Committee members who had organised the event. Apologies from ten members were noted. A copy of the 2017 Minutes had been circulated to delegates in the AGM packs; no issues or questions were raised and the Minutes were adopted. The Chair's Report covered highlights of the previous year, key challenges, and future plans. The review of highlights of 2017 included successful plant

sales; the breadth and quality of lectures and speakers; and the programme of garden visits that demonstrated the variety and character of quality Irish gardens. Thanks were extended to all members and supporters involved in the programming and organising of these worthwhile events throughout the year.

Billy highlighted the exceptional work undertaken to deliver the Society's publications including Mary Montaut's editing of the *Newsletter*, Anne James' production of *Moorea* and Ali Rochford's eBulletin publications. Social media profile is also increasing and a new website was delivered, made possible through the work of Paddy Tobin. The delivery of the seed exchange programme by Debbie Bailey, developments at the two IGPS gardens at Lismacloskey and Pogue's Entry were highlighted, and thanks given to all the members and volunteers involved. Successes in the development of Irish Heritage plants were noted.

Attendees were advised that grants had been made available to Seamus O'Brien, for the publication of a book on Joseph Dalton Hooker; and Brendan Sayers for a *Bergenia* trial at Glasnevin. The grants process was reviewed and the new documentation will soon be finalised to deliver a fair and consistent process. Billy commended the Treasurers and Committees on their prudence and financial controls that allow the Society to maintain a robust financial position.

There followed a summary of the challenges faced by the Society: several key people have now resigned or reached the end of the term of their office. Billy noted the following changes and thanked those leaving committees for their significant contributions, and that they will be greatly missed:

Paddy Tobin has resigned from the national committee leaving a vacancy but will continue to manage the website. Patrick Quigley has stepped down after 4 years as Membership Secretary, but still remains a Committee Member. With no replacement for Honorary Treasurer, Pascal Lynch has agreed to continue serving as temporary Honorary Treasurer. There is no candidate for Vice-Chair, Anne James is filling the role but has only one year left to complete the term on the Committee. Ricky Shannon is recovering from an illness and has not returned to the Committee. There are also vacancies on the Leinster

sub-committee following Sandra Austin's retirement, and for a Munster Committee representative.

Additionally Billy advised that more help is required for Irish Heritage Plants with Stephen Butler; a regular supply of articles for the *Newsletter* is needed, and Pogue's entry garden is in urgent need of volunteers.

The Chair proceeded to outline the future direction of the Society including further developments in partnerships such as those with the Irish Society of Botanical Artists, Alpine Garden Society, National Trust, and Local Councils among others. Developments underway to reduce the workload on the Membership Secretary and benefit members are the introduction of Direct Debits and the initiation of a membership database.

Billy concluded with an appeal to members to join committees or help out in smaller projects, in order to further IGPS programmes, ideas and ambitions.

Honorary Treasurer Pascal Lynch highlighted the significant items in the financial report for the last year, and summarised the financial position as a small deficit explained by the large one-off items. The financial statements for 2017-2018 were adopted.

Claire Peacocke was nominated to the role of Honorary Secretary by Billy McCone and seconded by Pascal Lynch. There were no nominations for the posts of Vice Chair, Treasurer, Membership Secretary or Munster Representative. However, a number of delegates came forward after the meeting with enquiries and offers of support for a number of the vacant roles.

Billy thanked again the many named and unnamed members and partners who have contributed to the success of the society. Thanking everyone for their attendance the meeting was closed.

Irish Garden Plant Society**Income and Expenditure Account**

Income	2018 €	2017 €
Subscriptions	13,592	13,695
Plant Sales	5,000	5,720
Raffles	1,254	1,343
Garden Tours & Visits	1,451	5,775
AGM	6,370	5,817
Heritage of Beauty	70	169
Irish Heritage Plants	4,000	-
Council Subsidy	340	357
Lectures	887	528
Bank deposit interest	11	11
	32,975	33,415
Administrative expenses		
Newsletter	3,869	3,137
Insurance	309	272
Moorea Journal	3,861	-
Lectures	5,551	4,841
Equipment	-	515
Garden Visits	1,440	6,045
Raffles	188	329
Plant Sales	1,389	772
AGM	5,612	5,503
Meeting Expenses	157	193
Eventbrite fees	296	642
PayPal fees	143	156

Printing, postage & stationery	2,554	2,934
Website	1,637	283
Travel	573	551
Accountancy	800	800
Bank Charges	497	417
Profit / loss on exchange	331	640
General expenses	29	-
Heritage Projects	4,977	532
Donations	50	60
	(34,264)	(28,622)
Net surplus / (deficit)	(1,289)	4,791

Irish Garden Plant Society

Extract from Certified Public Accountants' Report,
prepared by Walsh Gibbons, Belfryee House, Dublin

Balance Sheet As at 31st March 2018

	2018 €	2017 €
Current Assets		
Prepayments	413	377
Cash at bank & in hand	51,977	52,327
	52,390	52,704

Creditors			
Amounts falling due within one year			
Creditors		2,997	2,025
Net Current Assets		49,393	50,679
Total Assets Less Current Liabilities		49,393	50,679
Capital Account		49,393	

N.B. I must commend Honorary Treasurer, Pascal Lynch, for his work in managing and compiling the reports. Also for producing reports for the Charity Regulator.

Chairman

Castlewellan at the AGM

Ali Rochford

Our tour of the 12 acre Annesley Garden and Aboretum in the grounds of Castlewellan Castle got the weekend of garden visits off to the best possible start. We were divided into two groups - the reds and the blues. On arrival at the forest park, one group was lead to the upper part of the garden by head gardener Alwyn Sinnamon. The other explored the groves of the lower reaches with Seamus O'Brien of Kilmacurragh. We then rendezvoused on the terrace for a group photo and swapped over.



Castlewellan has one of the best collections of trees on the island and recently received an award from the International Dendrology Society in recognition of the significance of the diverse collection. Both of our guides proved it is an honour that is well deserved as they gave us a whistle stop tour of the trees of the world, some of which are now champions. *Sequoiadendron giganteum* from California; the multi stemmed *Thujaopsis* from Japan; *Cunninghamia lanceolata* might be unfamiliar to us but it is referred to as the 'Sitka Spruce of China'; Winter's bark *Drimys winteri* from Chile and Argentina, named for Captain John Winter, the bark was chewed by sailors to prevent scurvy; the Southern beech, *Nothofagus fusca* from New Zealand; *Athrotaxis* from Australia; the weeping *Juniperus recurva* var. *Coxii* from Burma, the Dove Tree from China in 'flower', collections of *Eucryphia*, *Acer*, *Magnolia* and *Rhododendron*; Western Himalayan Spruce, *Picea smithiana* and Brewer's spruce from North America - this is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the variety of trees here.

But it's not all about trees. In the middle of the upper garden are long double borders that flow downhill with a backdrop of the Mourne mountains on one side and towering Rhododendrons on the other. Half way along, the borders are punctuated with a fountain that depicts a merboy holding a large shell. One of the plants in abundance

here is a *Rodgersia* with deep bronze foliage that has been here for over 100 years but has yet to be identified.

We were all astounded to hear that Alwyn is not only the head gardener here, but he is the only gardener at present and as such has achieved an incredible amount to date. Still, with such an important collection, investment and rejuvenation are key and it is hoped that the gardens will be given the resources that are needed to continue to develop and evolve and provide enjoyment and education for visitors well in to the future.



Rhododendron loderi at
Castlewellan

IGPS Visit to McKelvey Garden, Bessbrook

The expression 'last but not least' certainly applied to Hilary and William McKelvey's delightful garden in the village of Bessbrook, Co. Armagh. The north-facing front garden is home to shrubs noted for their alluring scent, including *Daphne tangutica*, *Fothergilla*, *Calycanthus* and *Pieris* 'Daisy Hill', a peachy-pink *Rhododendron* contributed wonderful colour to the collection. The front garden gave some clue as to the riches awaiting to be explored to the back of the house. This long area is laid out in a series of garden rooms demarcated by arches, each creating changing moods and interests.

The owners are keen alpinists and many treasures are to be found in a number of troughs and beautifully laid scree beds. The proximity of the garden to notable nurseries from the past gave us the opportunity to see some worthy plants such as the aforementioned *Pieris* 'Daisy Hill'

and *Phlox* 'Daisy Hill' to name but two. Hilary delighted us by recounting the story of her purchase of the *Phlox* in Prague for the meagre sum of 20p and the vendor informing her that the plant had its origins in Northern Ireland, indeed!

Each 'room' contained a large collection of clematis, roses, flowering shrubs, perennials and bulbs for all seasons. Progressing through the garden we delighted in the early summer highlights, *Rhododendron yunnanense*, *Magnolia*, *Clematis* 'Broughton Star', *Rosa* 'Canary Bird', *trilliums*, *epimediums* and tulips. A number of troughs contained charming alpines and miniature *hostas*.

There were show-stopping plants throughout and at the very end of the garden our eyes feasted on the scented, buttery-yellow *Magnolia* 'Yellow River', *Viburnum plicatum* 'Watanabe', *Rhododendron* 'Hotei', *Clematis koreana* 'Amber' underplanted with the very lovely *Paeonia mlokesevitschii*, *camassias* and a host of perennials and bulbs selected for colour and form. There was so much to see and enjoy in this garden that we lingered as we made our way back through the various 'rooms'. Our hosts were very knowledgeable and helpful as, notebooks in hand, we enquired about various plants and their provenance. In appreciation of their kindness, the organising



committee presented Hilary and William with some Irish cultivars. To end our visit and the weekend events, we were invited to a very welcome cup of tea and an impressive array of cakes in the nearby Christ Church Church of Ireland hall. Over refreshments all were agreed that the IGPS Northern Group had excelled themselves in

organizing a really exciting AGM weekend with many highlights. Inspired by the gardeners and gardens visited we returned home with new ideas and the lovely *Fuchsia* "Mount Stewart" which had been presented to all participants as a reminder of our visit to Co. Down.

Beech Grove

Mary Bradshaw

It was a privilege to visit the garden of Sam Harrison and Ester Walsh on a wonderful sunny Saturday. Sam is the former Head Forester at Castlewellan Arboretum. Their house dates from 1970 and the garden, begun in 1983, is 'ongoing'. It's a 2 acre plantsman's garden, immaculately maintained with no straight lines and a series of rooms. Sam and Ester were most welcoming hosts and very willing to share their knowledge with visitors.

Sam's trail around the garden runs anti-clockwise but there are no set rules. When one leaves the lawn area there is a large woodland on both sides and to the rear of the house. Sam's 'secret' in amassing his trees, shrubs and perennials is to buy them young and small and bring them on in his own nursery before planting out. Many of his trees and shrubs have been grown from seed. Sam aims to label every tree, eventually.

On walking through the woodland one notes a *Nothofagus obliqua* already grown to 100 feet. Bluebells carpet the ground and five red squirrels, pheasants, a pinemarten and woodpeckers call this place home. Also to be seen are *Lomatias*, *Pinus wallichiana*, *Liquidambar*, *Crinodendron 'Ada Hoffman'*, a newly planted *Ginkgo* and *Parrotia* - both upright forms, and *Neolitsea sericea* very recently identified by Seamus O'Brien.

Bamboo is used as a sort of doorway to the shrubbery and Golden Hop is trained as a "Moongate" - a very good idea for such a rampant grower. A new *Amelanchier* graces the scene near an *Embothrium* dating from 1983 in wonderful flower. Also of note is a young *Metasequoia glyptostroboides 'Gold Rush'* happy in moisture and shade but its young leafbuds are being eaten by bullfinches. Maybe growing a few teasels nearby might distract the bullfinches?

Sam has, of course, a *Juniperus recurva Castlewellan form* grown from seed. Nearby are some yellow-berried hollies, an 8 year old *Acacia pravissima* planted underneath with *Rheum*. Also in evidence was

Pseudowintera colorata with *Iris confusa 'Martyn Rix'* in a sheltered border. Grown in this area as well is a very rare dwarf form of *Tilia rubra 'Diamond'*.

Rhododendrons 'Vanguard', 'Winsome' and 'May Day' were flowering beautifully and as we returned to the front of the house we knew there was promise in the *Dieramas* from the old 'Slieve Donard' nursery. *Echium fastuosum* and *E. candicans* were growing in pots because of our recent severe winter. Best of all in this small bed is *Rhododendron (x Ledodendron?) 'Arctic Tern'*, a tiny white beauty.

Make no mistake, a lot of work is required to maintain this garden. But humour is important too! Who could forget 'Mr. Richard' and his long red tie and the very well cultivated 'Harvey's Bristol Cream' tree? I left reluctantly having learned a lot.



Barbara Kelso presents *Berberis darwinii nana* to Sam and Ester



IGPS visit to Ballyedmond Castle

Robert Logan

“Last night I dreamt I went to Manderley.” It was certainly another world experience, visiting these dramatic and stunning gardens. Situated on the shores of Carlingford Lough near Rostrevor with extensive views to the Mourne and Cooley mountains, you enter via the deer park. The group began its visit at the Orangery; commanding the northern aspect of the walled garden, it is approached through water gardens where jets, cascades and sweeping staircases are redolent of the Villa d’Este and an F. Scott Fitzgerald film set. Citrus plants in their vast pots rested on the terrace having vacated their home for our visit. Inside, South American plants endangered in the wild, including *Araucaria* species, stretched up to the barrel vaulted roof. These plants came as the result of a partnership with the Edinburgh Botanic Garden and others are planted within the demesne, such as *Prumnopitys andina* and *Xanthogyparis vietnamensis*.

Lady Ballyedmond and her late husband commenced work here in the 1980s. Little had been planted since the 1870s and the task was tackled with gusto. Early inspiration came from Mount Congreve and testament to that is a startling array of *Rhododendron* species and Hybrids, *Camellias* and many *Magnolias*, of which our hostess’s favourite is *M. Campbellii*. A reflection of the favourable growing conditions is the fact that these fine specimens are now 35 feet tall. Despite the challenging winter there was a superb floral display.



The garden was extended – *Acers*, *Metasequoia*, Holm Oak, rare *Salix* and *Lomatia* intersperse the many *Pinus* varieties. A gentle *Laburnum* walk was underplanted with Cowslips. Experimental planting by Carlingford Lough, overlooked by a temple and classical terracing, initially struggled with the wind and salt but *Pinus sylvestris*

is now establishing well and trusty *Hydrangeas* and *Veronicas* are thriving.

Over the past three years a woodland garden has been the focus of attention. Under fine specimens of *Pinus wallichiana*, tree ferns, *Aralia* and *Pseudopanax* flourish and at ground level *Celmisia*, *Galium*, *Podophyllum*, Gentians, *Cardiocrinum*, a host of fern varieties and much else is flourishing. A stumpery nestles comfortably in this area amidst the bluebells and the play of light on the pine bank, the birdsong and the chance to spot a red squirrel make this a very special section.



Around the castle, eclectic planting and a more formal structure host a white garden with cascade and immaculate Rose garden.

Ballyedmond is a 21st century reincarnation of the great 18th and 19th century pleasure grounds. There is much else in this seventy acre paradise, all maintained to the highest of standards by the youthful and enthusiastic team of gardeners under the watchful and knowledgeable eye of the chatelaine. They are creating a garden of national importance in this arcadian setting of mountain and lough.

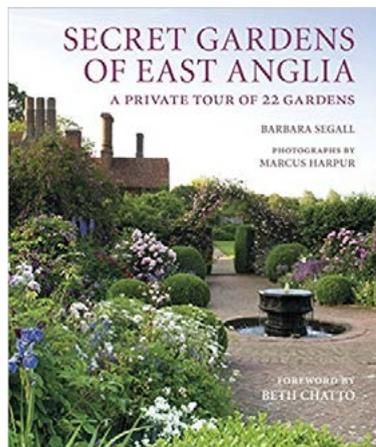


Worth a Read

Paddy Tobin

Secret Gardens of East Anglia – a Private Tour of 22 Gardens, Barbara Segall with photographs from Marcus Harpur, Frances Lincoln, London, 2017, Hardback, 144 pages, £20, ISBN: 978-0-7112-3859-6

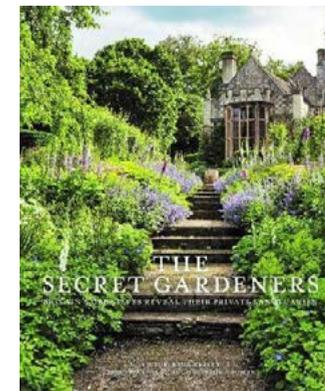
England is a great destination for garden lovers with a richness of gardens which guarantees enjoyment for the visitor. It is a very convenient destination for gardening enthusiasts in Ireland – a short ferry journey and the comfort of your own car to travel from garden to garden.



Were I to suggest an outing to eastern England I'm sure gardens such as Hyde Hall, The Beth Chatto Gardens and the East Ruston Old Vicarage Gardens would spring immediately to mind and, while they would be excellent places to visit, there is so much more to be discovered and enjoyed. I suppose that sense of discovery adds greatly to visiting the smaller gems of gardens in an area, though I should emphasise that 'smaller' is a relative term and only means they are smaller than the grander gardens we visit more often. This the perfect guidebook and opens the gates to a selection of beautiful gardens which might otherwise be overlooked. It is a book that the garden tourist will adore!

The Secret Gardeners – Britain's Creatives Reveal Their Private Sanctuaries, Victoria Summerley, Photographs by Hugo Rittson Thomas, Frances Lincoln, London, 2017, Hardback, 271 pages, £30, ISBN: 978-0-7112-3763-6

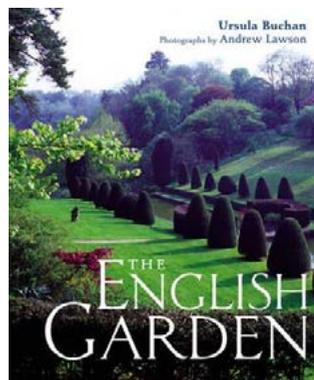
The gardens of the rich and famous are always an attraction to us; there is a curiosity value to them – we are curious! We want to see what money can do and, perhaps, imagine what we would do if we had the money. The Irish temperament would, of course, sprinkle a visit to such a garden with “Oh, ‘tis easy for them!” or “A money garden!” We often view the gardens of the rich with a certain resentment (envy, jealousy?) and fail to acknowledge that without people of wealth the very gardens we are visiting would most likely not exist at all but would be lost to us. Were it not for such people, our gardening heritage would be so very much the poorer and our gardening experiences so much less enjoyable. It is time to grumble less, to enjoy more and to be grateful and thankful to those who have created and maintained such treasures.



The English Garden, Ursula Buchan, photographs by Andrew Lawson, Frances Lincoln, London, 2017, Hardback, 320 pages, £25, ISBN: 978-0-7112-3916-6

The English garden is admired around the world and anybody who wishes to gain an insight and understanding of these gardens will be well served by reading this updated edition of Ursula Buchan's, *The English Garden*. It is possibly the most comprehensive, yet concise, treatment of the topic that I have read.

Perhaps the defining characteristic of the English garden is the urge to grow flowers but there are many other aspects and these are explored here in a thematic approach. There are chapters on The Landscape Tradition, The Country Garden, Gardening with Nature, Influences from Abroad with further chapters dealing with ornament, water, roses, the kitchen garden and the contemporary garden.



An excellent book.

New Trees: Recent Introductions to Cultivation, John Grimshaw and Ross Bayton with line drawings by Hazel Wilks, published by the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew in association with the International Dendrology Society, 2009, reprinted 2018, Hardback, 976 pages, £120, ISBN: 978 1 84246 173 0

This is a hugely impressive volume of work, truly an outstanding resource and an immense contribution to horticulture. J. Bean (1863 – 1947) who had a career at Kew Gardens and ended up as curator there witnessed the vast introductions of the early 20th century and had the research resources of Kew as well as the plantings there when preparing his work, *Trees and Shrubs Hardy in the British Isles*. The first edition was in 1914 and he published seven updated editions with the last in 1950. An 8th edition was published in 1970s with a supplement in 1988.



The International Dendrology Society wanted *New Trees* to be in the style of Bean – “accurate, substantial but descriptions with readable commentary on the horticultural values of the species covered and details of their introduction.” The result is a volume which complements Dirr perfectly. It is comprehensive and authoritative yet comfortably readable and accessible. John Grimshaw was the leader of the project and responsible for the narrative text; Ross Bayton provided the botanical descriptions and Hazel Wilks, botanical artist, the line drawings. Between them they have created the most significant reference book for hardy trees and shrubs and the perfect companion to Bean.

Orchid Summer – In Search of the Wildest Flowers of the British Isles, Jon Dunn, Bloomsbury, 2018, Hardback, 357 pages, £18.99, ISBN: 978-1-4088-80883

This book was fabulously and fantastically far, far more than its title blurb lead one to expect. It splendidly recalls the author’s grand summer adventure to see all the orchids of Great Britain and Ireland within a single season, the dashing here and there, the tension of searching out a rarity in the short window of flowering, the chases across country from Kent to Shetlands and from Lindisfarne to The Burren, the arranged meetings with friends who would guide him on pathways less trodden and, throughout that thread of suspense, uncertainty, anticipation and apprehension as to whether he would locate the mystical Ghost Orchid – and I will leave you to read the book to know the answer to that question.



Around the Regions

Munster Region

Cork April Lecture given by Assumpta Broomfield

Report compiled by Janet Edwardes

What a wonderful evening we had in the company of Assumpta Broomfield! We had a good turn out for our April talk following the story of the rose; and how opportune, since we had a few weeks left in which to get out and plant some bare rooted roses to make us feel like our gardening year was starting to roll out. Assumpta began by clarifying that her talk was going to be about the journey of rose breeding and crossing which led to the wonderful selection of roses now available to us gardeners. She started with the first references to roses back in the 1300s which is a remarkable length of time in the history and story of this most romantic plant. We saw a range of paintings where the rose was first mentioned and began to appear in literature and art. *Rosa x alba Semi-plena* appeared about that time. We were then taken by Assumpta on a journey outlining the progression of rose breeding by crossing Gallicas, Damask, Alba, Moss, Centifloia, Portland and China, Tea and Bourbon and Hybrid Perpetual, to bring us into the mid nineteenth century and the arrival of the hybrid Tea roses which are probably the most commonly known roses of the twentieth century.

Along the way we heard tales of the Duchess of Portland and the naming of the lovely rich red roses after her. Assumpta ended her talk by giving us a selection of roses which have been grown by herself which have shown themselves to be good performers. I looked forward to sitting down one evening by the fire and retracing Assumpta's story in greater detail to fully understand the provenance of one of the most loved and iconic flowers we grow.

Summer at the Old Deanery Gardens, Cloyne, Co.Cork

Martin Edwardes

When Maeve Bell asked me to write about our garden in summer, I have to admit to a certain "Why me Lord!", but I couldn't resist that soft Northern Irish accent, so hence this article. It made me take out my camera and look at what is in flower at this time.

Summer brings a bit of a respite for Janet and myself in the Deanery Gardens, as growth has a tendency to slow down. As a dedicated 'Grass Man,' I have to spend about 4 hours cutting grass every five days, as I mulch instead of collecting the grass. This dedication to the lawn mystifies my good wife Janet. Why do I feed the grass and then spend hours cutting it? Why not turn the mini parkland into a wild flower meadow? So far, I have resisted all attempts to curb my desire to cut and maintain good lawn and grassland. I do think that well kept parkland does improve the look of all the specimen trees that we have planted. Maybe I am in a minority, but men love to be operating some form of machinery. Removing this simple pleasure from a man is tantamount to removing his masculinity.

As I walked through the area behind the lake, I saw that *Magnolia hypoleuca* was now in flower, so I took a close-up of the amazing flower. We have planted about 27 magnolias throughout the garden and they all flower at different times. Underneath this *Magnolia* the shrub rose Sarah Van Fleet was in bloom with a beautiful scent. I went down to the walled garden and wondered at the beautiful display of bearded Irises, a lot of which came from Tourin House gardens near Cappoquin, Co.Waterford. Although the flower of the bearded Iris is short-lived, the spectacle of their intricate petal formation and colour is well worth it. I also came across an *Abutilon*, which Janet thinks might be 'Victoria Tennant', with a bumble bee asleep on the flower petal. Rose 'Geoff Hamilton' was out in full bloom as were some pink and red Papaver poppies. We have a group of five old English roses including 'Margaret Merril', which Janet planted for their scent as well as colour.

However, Janet has won the battle to surround the various vegetable plots with flowers, including Lupins, Irises, Foxgloves and Thalictrums. I was a man who liked his vegetables planted in neat rows with no encumbrances, such as frilly flowers hindering the progress of the Mantis Tiller or hoe. In a day that I was absent from the walled garden, Janet took the opportunity to edge the vegetable borders with flowers. Reluctantly, I have to admit it is an improvement.

I will end this article with a cautionary tale. When we bought the Deanery about 23 years ago, there was a small clump of seemingly innocuous common bamboo planted next to a small oak tree, in front of a lake looking across to the summer house. I argued that the oak tree would grow to be too large and subsequently a few years later, I reluctantly removed it and planted another oak in another part of the garden to make amends. I forgot about the bamboo, which appeared to be behaving itself. With the tree now removed and a close supply of water, the bamboo suddenly took off as if it was on 'speed'. It started to spoil and obliterate the view across the lake to the weeping willow and summer house. I decided to take action and cut the bamboo right down, thus restoring the view. The bamboo however came back with a vengeance and tripled its growth. This June, with the aid of a mini digger I removed the bamboo. You would not believe the rooting system that was unearthed. The mini digger had great difficulty in removing this thug! And I am not finished yet, as I will have to carefully sift through the earth to remove any traces of root. The moral of the story is that there is no such plant as a well behaved common bamboo!



Leinster Region

Lecture by Frances McDonald, April 19th, 2018

'Plants and Gardens at Home and Abroad'

Report by Stephen Butler

Frances McDonald is well known as the Garden Tour Manager for the Travel Department, and over the years has visited many countries, and very many outstanding gardens. The Bay Garden in Wexford is her creation, with her husband, Iain, doing most of the work we were told, and apparently it would be perfect if he only did what she said... The lecture set off at a gallop, but with the comment that gardens have highs and lows, are dependent on Head Gardeners, and what is good for many years can go downhill.

Favourite individual plants mentioned included *Gillenia trifoliata* with such a long flowering period in semi shade, *Pelargonium* 'Lord Bute' selling young plants of which Frances said kept her in cigarettes or chocolate, and *Prunus rufa* the Himalayan Cherry with wonderful striated bark which is not that often seen for sale.

Frances was very keen on different aspects in each of the many slides of gardens. The incredible collection of 400 cultivars of *Hosta* planted in large drifts at Wyn Eden Gardens in Philadelphia USA, massed *Dahlias* at the National Trust's Biddulph Grange, or the tremendous structure of topiary at Woolerton Old Hall, both near Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire UK. Herbaceous borders in several gardens, especially the double border of Newby Hall near Ripon, Yorkshire UK, and the very typically English border at Arley Hall, Cheshire UK.

Gardens are never static, and new gardens do appear, such as the East Ruston Old Vicarage, Norfolk UK, which Frances reckoned to be one of the best, though I did not fancy the 6 weeks hedge cutting every year. A visit to Wisley, the RHS flagship garden, is always worthwhile, and you see great techniques: for instance novel staking of herbaceous plants, weaving birch twigs into a strong, obviously made structure, but that fits in with the style of garden. A long way from the old time birch twigs stuck in vertically to allow growth to fill the support, and hide it completely.

Frances obviously loved Japan, having just returned from cherry blossom time there, and had nothing but praise for their plant use and knowledge, and excellent gardens. China, however, had been so disappointing she was not keen to return, and thought it a terrible shame that the gardens there were often too sterile, especially when you think of the wonderful wealth of Chinese plants we grow that they could have used, though she did like the skilful use of pebbles to make mosaics! ... and for retirement? A Japanese gravel garden, a simple, artfully placed, mossy rock or three, needing only a light rake each morning before relaxing and looking at it!

An excellent talk, enjoyed by the 35 people attending, that whet our appetites for visiting gardens and enjoying plants in the coming months.



*A mountain, waterfall, and gravel "river" at Daisen-in (1509–1513)
(image from Wikipedia)*

Don't Mention the Parrots

After thirty seven years, Stephen Butler says goodbye to Dublin Zoo.

by Billy McCone



Arriving early for Stephen's retirement lunch allowed me time to stroll around Dublin Zoo. While I had been there to meet with Stephen before, it was the impending loss of this horticultural master that prompted me, this time, to ponder on how much he had achieved in the thirty seven years he had been with the zoo. Rather modestly Stephen dismisses the many accolades bestowed on him while giving credit to 'the team', but however it was achieved I doubt it could have been done without him. Hardly a bar or fence could be seen and where they existed they had disappeared under a subtle planting of vegetation in keeping with the animals' natural environment. I was completely enthralled with the representations of jungles, forest glades and savannas. A talent in itself to create this mini Eden, but to find suitable plants that will grow in our climate and withstand munching, stripping or being stomped upon by the occupants, all without causing them harm, has been a real challenge.



Fences and bars disappear behind lush jungle style planting



Talking to Stephen, it is obvious that he has a true empathy with the animals he works with and tells interesting stories of the successes and failures of some of his planting ideas. I would go so far to say that he speaks of them with some affection... that is, except parrots; don't mention the parrots.

I made that mistake. Once asking Stephen's advice for choosing plants for a customer's parrot enclosure gave me an insight into Stephen's world. The actual email reply was much more colourful, I had to edit it, but you'll get the idea.

*"... don't talk to me about *** parrots!! They are the most destructive critters. If they can land on it they will eat it, or deleaf it, or strip the bark for entertainment. Wouldn't worry about poisoning, many parrots eat really toxic seeds - and then go and eat clay soil as an antidote, don't know who told 'em!!"*

Thankfully no parrots at the retirement lunch but many friends and colleagues who came to celebrate a remarkable career of a very talented and inspired horticulturalist.

What an accomplishment to leave such an environment as a legacy of dedicated work.



Stephen with some of his friends and colleagues joining him for his retirement day.

Book Review

Éireannach – Celebrating Native Plants of Ireland

Review: Paddy Tobin

The short history of the Irish Society of Botanical Artists (established in 2014) is one of boundless ambition and super achievement and their latest project has topped everything to date.

Their first undertaking was *Aibítir – The Irish Alphabet in Botanical Art*, an exhibition portraying a selection of Irish wildflowers which, after an initial stay at the National Botanic Gardens, toured several venues around the country. They also produced a very attractive exhibition catalogue on that occasion which was very warmly and enthusiastically received and encouraged an ambitious expansion along these lines in the next project. This was *Heritage Irish Plants – Plandaí Oidhreachta*, in co-operation with the Irish Garden Plant Society, which featured garden plants of Irish origin and breeding and again lead to a very successful exhibition, an even more extensive and attractive exhibition catalogue and a substantial publication, a book featuring the artists' work accompanied by a range of articles on Irish garden plants.

Given this record, I had every faith and expectation that *Éireannach – Celebrating Native Plants of Ireland* would be an excellent publication and I most certainly was not disappointed. It is a work which reflects great credit on all involved – artists, editors, book designer and printers. It is, very appropriately given its material, a very beautiful book.

We have approximately 980 vascular plants native to Ireland. This book presents a selection of sixty of our wildflowers and, interestingly, the selection of plants was made by the artists themselves, something which will make them all the more appealing to the reader as, I feel, they have been chosen for their intrinsic beauty and special interest and, certainly, I found that most of the plants were ones I would find particularly attractive also. Everybody would warm to Elaine Moore Mackey's *Foxglove*, Anne Burn's *Wood Anemone* or Jane Stark's *Lords and Ladies* – these are familiar, common and loved plants. Susan Sex's *Marsh Helleborine*, Holly Somervilles's *Large-flowered Butterwort*

or Noeleen Frain's *Pyramidal Orchid* are less common and open the eye of the reader to what treasures grow in our countryside if we but looked more closely. There are knapweed and clover and wild carrot; elder, crabapple and hawthorn and many, many more – a wonderful representation of our native flora.

For this publication it is the artists who wrote the text to accompany each illustration, a change from normal arrangements, and it makes for interesting reading for it gives an insight into the thoughts, interests and approaches of the various artists. It might seem odd but some are not particularly knowledgeable botanists and their interest in plants are purely for their intrinsic beauty. This shone through not only in their art but in their words, which were often personal and homely. Others gave more detailed botanical descriptions which added to the illustrations in a different way, for I found they directed my attention to look more closely at the paintings and appreciate the finer details. There were notes of plants used in folk medicine and in folklore, some astonishing facts, recollections of older names for plants and mention of forensic botany. There were personal notes and experiences and I loved that one contributor listed "My Granny" as her reference. Each plant had a full page in the book – illustration and text and, occasionally, with an accompanying photograph though I felt these photographs did not contribute significantly to the entries. Some plants had a two-page spread, to better display the work of the artist, and this brought variety and interest to the experience of reading the book.

The opening of the exhibition at the National Botanic Gardens and the launch of this book was timed to coincide with International Botanical Art Day and this book gives a page to each of the twenty four participating countries where a plant representing that country is illustrated and accompanied by an explanatory text about botanical art there. Many of the plants will be familiar to us – Japan's Camellia, Italy's Milk Thistle, Mexico's Poinsettia, Rowan from Ukraine, Gorse from Scotland, but I would dearly love to see the Indonesian illustration of *Amorphophallus titanum*, the Titan Arum, which was painted life-size and so stands at over two metres tall.

There are contributions to the rear of the book from the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland, the National Biodiversity Data Centre,

the Irish Peatland Conservation Council and the Irish Wildlife Trust along with a piece from Wild Irish Foragers. The purpose of these was, no doubt, to raise awareness of the critical importance of the conservation of our native flora and to direct the reader to where s/he might further their interest or become involved in a practical (or financial) manner. I hope their inclusion in the book helps promote their purpose but feel the preceding entries from the artists achieve the same result in a far more subtle and effective manner. When we see the beauty which is ours, which is of our countryside, displayed to us here in such a wonderful manner how can we not but appreciate it and make every effort to preserve it for coming generations.

I offer my admiration and congratulations to the Irish Society of Botanical Artists and all who contributed to this project and I recommend the book highly to those with an interest in beauty, nature, our wildflowers and the work of our wonderful Irish botanical artists.

Now, what will they do next?

[You can purchase a copy of the book, *Éireannach*, on the ISBA website: <http://www.irishbotanicalartists.ie/shop/>]



Anacamptis pyramidalis Photo: Wikipedia

Dates for Your Diary:

Saturday 4 August: Garden Visit to ASHFIELD HOUSE
12:00 - 3:00 pm. Painstown, Beauparc, Navan, Co. Meath, C15 RV10

A traditional Irish house and estate with stables, extensive planting and a functioning walled garden. Remodelling of the garden has been undertaken by renowned gardener, Mike Snowden, and accomplished garden designer, Angela Jupe. We are very fortunate to have both as our guides for the visit.



Directions - From the North through Slane over the River Boyne on the N2 continue past the turn off to Newgrange approx. 2 miles on to L1013 just before Brink Service Station. From the South N2 to Brink Service Station turn immediately on to L1013. After approx. half a mile Ashfield is on the left with a gated entrance midway along an estate wall.

NOTE - The event is free but limited to 60 (members only) and must be booked through EVENTBRITE.

Wednesday 8 August: 1:30 pm – 4:00 pm
Lismacloskey Rectory at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum.

A garden-themed afternoon. Variety of activities including a plant and book sale. Free refreshments plus soda bread from the Rectory griddle will be on offer with Irish musicians playing in the background. Visitors will be able to explore the many historic rural and town buildings dotted about in the Folk Museum's 170 acres.

Offers of plant material very welcome – please contact one of the Northern committee members.

Admission is free for IGPS members (please show your IGPS membership card) and members of the public over the age of 50, after 12 noon.

Tuesday 4 September: 8:00 pm – 9:30 pm
The Delicious Edibles of our Gardens with Orlaith Murphy at Northridge House, St. Luke's Home, Mahon, Cork.

Orlaith is currently teaching organic gardening with the VEC in North Dublin and Tallaght and has a passion for cooking sumptuous meals with her home-grown produce. She will take us on a botanical gastro journey to discover the bounty that hides in our gardens.

Orlaith was one of the first participants in Carraig Dulra's organic garden complete course in 2006. A keen allotment grower, she has a level 3 diploma in Horticulture from the RHS. She also has completed courses in Forest Gardening and most recently Geoff Lawton's Permaculture Design Course.



Saturday 29 September: 11am - 4 pm
IGPS Autumn Plant Sale at Rowallane.

Visit the IGPS stand with a wide selection of plants including Irish Heritage cultivars. An opportunity to browse other stands, buy some of Rowallane's own herbaceous plants and wander through the extensive gardens and grounds.



Refreshments are available in the estate cafe but plant sale day can be busy so you may want to bring a picnic.

Donations are most welcome - please contact any of the Northern committee members.

Admission - National Trust prices apply (National Trust members free)

Coming in October - watch out for more details

Tuesday, 2 October: Autumn at Ballymaloe with Susan Turner at Northridge House, 8:00 pm – 9:30 pm.

Saturday 20 October: 11am - 13.00 PLANT SALE, Rare & Unusual Plants, Irish Heritage Plants, Bulbs Botanical Art and lots more Marino College of Education, Griffith Avenue, Marino, Dublin 3

Thursday 25 October: 8pm Lecture Colin Wren, Plants & Gardens of the National Trust of Scotland National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin

Saturday 27 October: 12.00 15.00 Visit to Tullynally led by Thomas Pakenham. Booking essential.

Book Launch

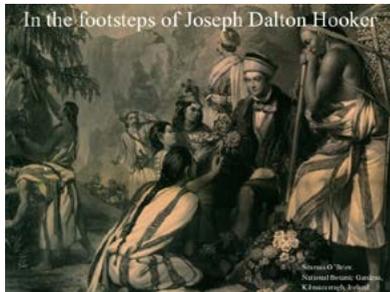
In the footsteps of Joseph Dalton Hooker - A Sikkim Adventure.

Book launch and talk by Seamus O'Brien. (Books will be available to pre-order at member's discount.)

Dublin 12th October at Glasnevin

Cork 20th October at Fota

Antrim 25th October at Old Court House, Antrim



Please check website for further information.



Primula Rowallane Rose



Beech Grove Alpines

IRISH GARDEN PLANT SOCIETY

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