

# Moorea

The Journal of The Irish Garden Plant Society

Vol 2



The Irish Garden Plant Society was formed in 1981 to assist in the conservation of garden plants, especially those raised in Ireland. It also takes an interest in other aspects of the preservation of Ireland's garden heritage.

This journal will be devoted to papers on the history of Irish garden plants and gardens, the cultivation of plants in Ireland, the taxonomy of garden plants and reports of work carried out by the society and its individual members.

The editorial committee would welcome manuscripts from members of the society and others. Typescripts should be on A4 paper, double-spaced and typed only on one side of each sheet.

Correspondence concerning the Irish Garden Plant Society, including applications for membership, may be addressed c/o National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin 9, Republic of Ireland, or to Dr. D. Willis, c/o New University of Ulster, Coleraine, Northern Ireland.

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Front Cover - *Cortaderia selloana* by Wendy Walsh from a specimen at Bellewstown House, Drogheda, Co. Louth.

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TILIA HENRYANA AND TILIA CHINGIANA

By MARY FORREST

An Taisce, c/o National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin 9.

The tree collection at Birr Castle, Co. Offaly, contains a wide selection of deciduous, evergreen and coniferous species, including several rare limes or lindens (*Tilia* spp.). Many fine specimens of the hybrid limes, *T. x euchlora* and *T. x europaea*, were planted in the nineteenth century while in the 1930s the sixth Earl of Rosse improved the collection by planting several exotic limes. Most of the planting material was supplied by Hilliers of Winchester, England, but some plants were raised from seed received from China. In 1938, Lord Rosse obtained seed selected from a *Descriptive catalogue of Chinese tree seeds*, issued by the Lushan Arboretum and Botanical Garden, Jiangxi, a province of eastern China. Trees still in cultivation at Birr from this source include *Cunninghamia lanceolata* (BR1664)<sup>1</sup>, *Meliosma pendens* (BR3952), *Juglans cathayensis* (BR3637), and two limes, *Tilia chingiana* (BR2015, BR3542) and *T. henryana* (BR3523, BR3545).

TILIA HENRYANA

Augustine Henry, while collecting plants in central China between 1885 and 1889, discovered three new species of *Tilia*, namely *T. oliveri*, *T. tuan* and *T. henryana*. The latter was found in the Xingshan district of western Hubei, central China, and was described by Bretschneider (1890). Ernest Wilson (1913) saw a wild specimen of *T. henryana* and described it as 'a gigantic tree 80 ft. tall and 27 ft. in girth with silvery new growth'. The species is represented both at Birr Castle, and at Headfort, County Meath, though the trees have not attained the remarkable height noted by Wilson. The two specimens at Birr were planted in 1946, side by side in an area known as Mount Palmer. They are now about 12 m. tall.

Most limes flower in early summer, but *T. henryana* does not bloom until late summer. Thus, when *T. mongolica* is in full flower at Birr, *T. henryana* has not yet broken bud. The illustration (Fig. 1) was prepared from the tree numbered BR3523, which flowered profusely in September 1981 and 1982. The second specimen (BR3545) did not flower in either year.

*T. henryana* is a deciduous tree with alternate leaves, 5 - 12 x 5 - 11 cm., truncate at the base and sharply acuminate at the tip. The margins have attractive bristle-like teeth, 2 - 5 mm. long. The midrib and undersurface of the leaf are covered with stellate down, with tufts of hairs in the vein axils. The scented, yellow flowers are grouped in many-flowered cymes, which droop below the branchlets. The illustrations of *T. henryana* (*Icones plantarum* t.1927, *Botanical Magazine* n.s., t.846) indicate over 25 flowers per cyme, but the Birr plant has at most 15 flowers per cyme. The petals fall from the flower to reveal a distinctly downy ovary. At Birr fruit began to develop, but it was soon killed by frost.

The Headfort specimen of *T. henryana* is located to the left of the avenue leading from the house to the American Garden. It is planted in light woodland, behind *Keteleeria davidiana* and *Cupressus macrocarpa* 'Lutea'. The tree was given to Lord Headfort by Lord Rosse, and was probably raised from Lushan seed. The leaves on this tree are larger than those on the Birr specimens, and some are almost orbicular. The Headfort tree, which is 10m, did not flower in 1982.

Specimens labelled *T. henryana*, which were supplied by Hilliers and are now

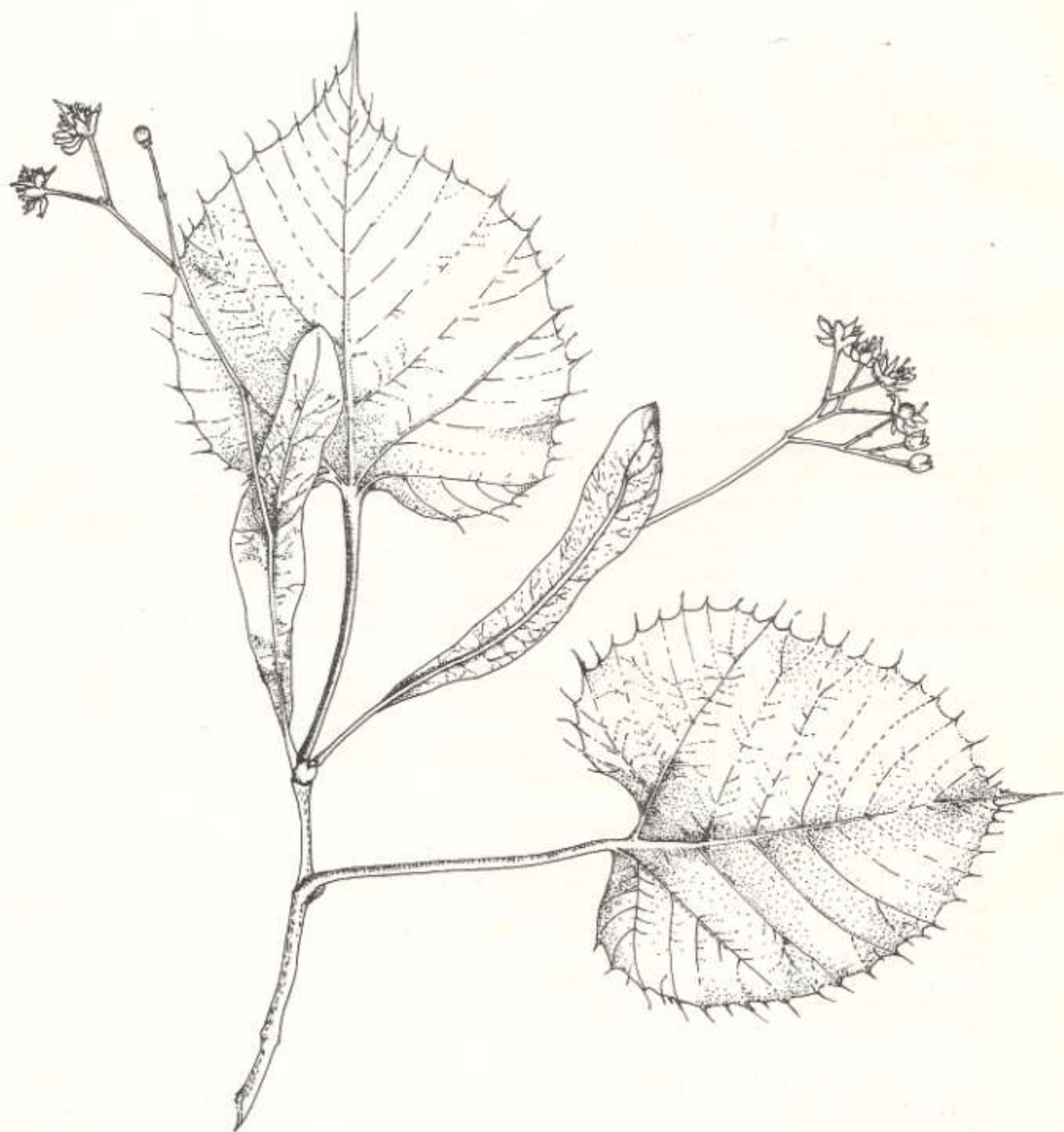


FIG 1

M.O.S. 1982.

*Tilia henryana*



FIG. 2

MOS. 24. 482.

*Tilia chingiana*

in the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, and the Augustine Henry Collection, Portglenone, County Antrim, have been examined by the author; they do not have the distinctive bristle-tipped leaf margins and are probably not plants of this lime.

### TILIA CHINGIANA

The second rare lime at Birr, *T. chingiana*, is not represented in any other Irish collection. It was first described by Hu and Cheng (1938) having been discovered in 1937 in the region around Lushan. Two specimens were planted at Birr in 1946, one (BR2015) in the centre of the Park Arboretum, and the second (BR3542) at Mount Palmer close by the specimens of *T. henryana*. These trees, which have a neat conical habit, have attained the height of 11m. The glabrous, ovate leaves, 8 - 10 x 6 - 8cm, are oblique or truncate at the base, long-acuminate at the apex with curved teeth on the margins (Fig. 2). From late July to early August, sweetly-scented flowers are borne in cymes, with up to 8 flowers per cyme. The flowers, 11 - 12mm across, are exquisitely formed. There is an outer whorl of 5 clawlike; white sepals, 6mm long, covered on the outer surface with a stellate down. The petals are 8mm long, yellow and tinged red on the outer surface. There is an inner whorl of strap-shaped staminodes (Fig. 3).

Both trees set seed in 1981 and 1982. The fruit is globose on one tree, and ellipsoidal (9 x 6mm) on the other. The style remains attached to the fruit.

*T. chingiana* is closely related to *T. oliveri*, from which it differs in the sparse development of indumentum on the undersurface of the leaf. Following further study, botanists may include *T. chingiana* within *T. oliveri*.

The trees of *T. henryana* at Birr and Headfort, and of *T. chingiana* at Birr are in healthy condition. In common with other Asiatic species they do not succumb to aphid attack. They form medium-sized specimen trees, and being of considerable beauty deserved to be more widely planted. Propagation of *T. chingiana* (by seed and cuttings) and of *T. henryana* (by cuttings) is in progress, but it will be some years before young trees will be available in commerce.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to thank the Earl of Rosse and Mr. B. J. Kruger for permission to visit their gardens and examine garden records. She also expresses her thanks to Merrie O'Sullivan, National College of Art and Design, Dublin, for her excellent illustrations.

### NOTES

1. Numbers in brackets are those applied to trees during work on the national inventory of trees and shrubs currently being prepared by An Taisce under a grant from the Heritage Trust.
2. A specimen of *T. tuan* at Birr (BR3653), planted in 1951, was raised from seed supplied by the Mexican Forestry Society.

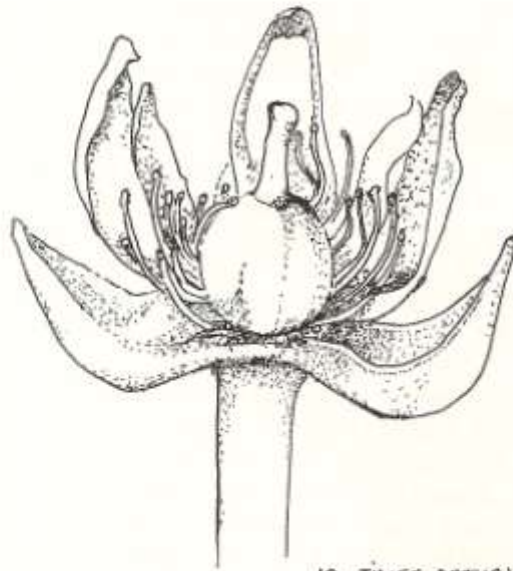
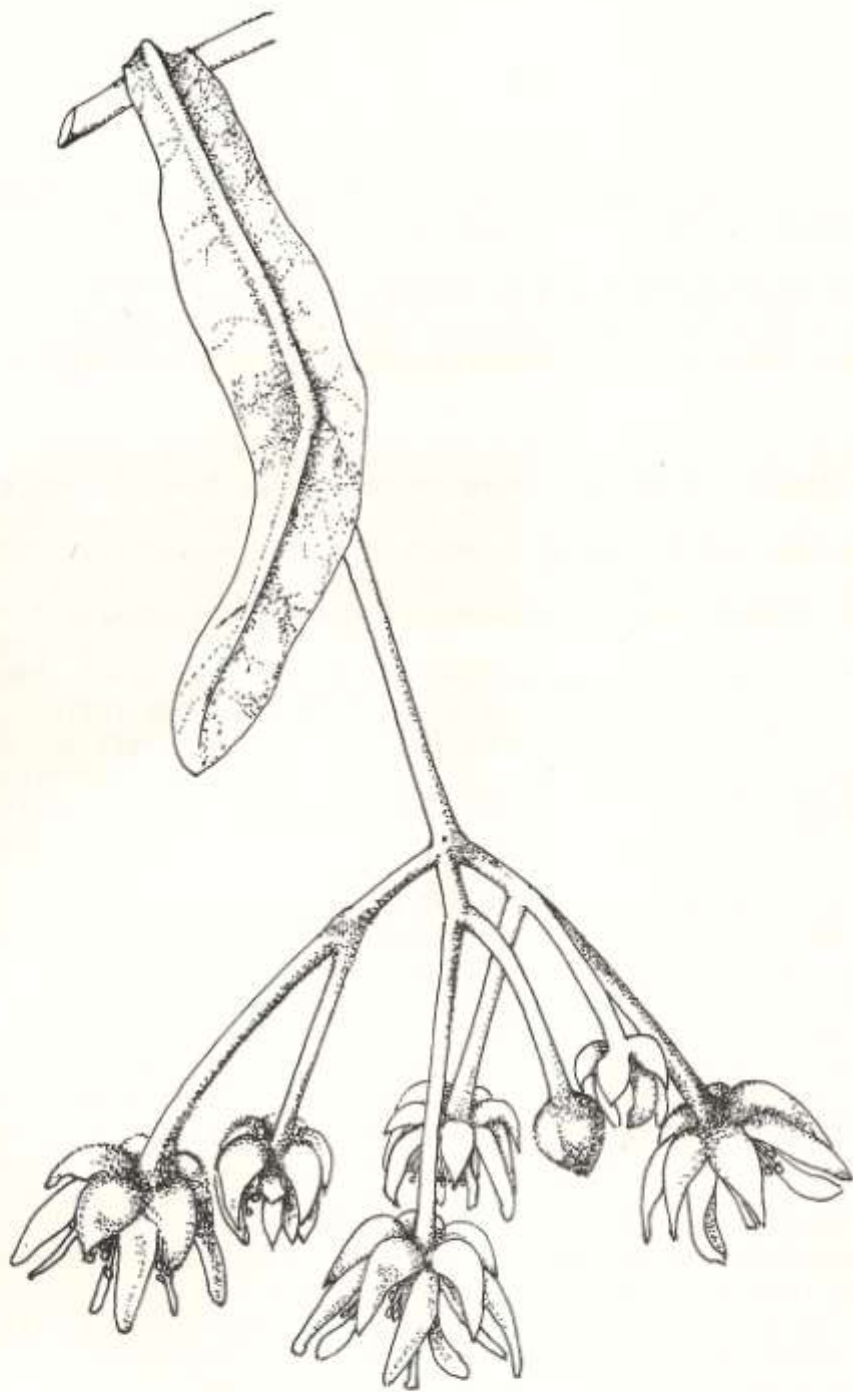
### SPECIMENS

All these herbarium specimens are deposited in the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin (DBN).

*Tilia henryana*

*Wild material:* Xingshan District, western Hubei Province, China, A. Henry 7452A, 1882. Hsing Shan Hsein, China, E. Wilson 1329, 1902.vii.-.

*Cultivated material:* Birr Castle, County Offaly, no coll., 1973. xi.-.;



10 TIMES ACTUAL SIZE

Earl of Rosse, 1969.--.; M. Forrest (BR3523), 1981.vii.07.; M. Forrest (BR3545), 1981.vii.07.; Headfort, Co. Meath, M. Forrest (HT75), 1982.vii.15.

*Tilia chingiana*

Cultivated material: Birr Castle, County Offaly, no coll., 1973.xi.--.;

M. Forrest (BR2015), 1981.ix.25.; M. Forrest (BR2015), 1982.vii.22.;

M. Forrest (BR3524), 1981.ix.25.; M. Forrest (BR3524), 1982.vii.22.

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## GLANLEAM, COUNTY KERRY

By SEAMUS GALVIN,  
The Cottage, Glanleam, Valentia Island.

Glanleam is situated on the north-eastern side of Valentia Island, County Kerry. Thus positioned it avails of the temperate climate of the south-west, mild and moist, with little dramatic change in temperature between summer and winter. Snow is rare and does not remain on the ground. The wind is the biggest problem and may from time to time wreak havoc in the garden even though it is situated on the more sheltered side of the island along the shore of Valentia Harbour.

Glanleam was once the home of the Knights of Kerry. It was the seventeenth Knight who first settled at Glanleam in 1780 when he moved from Dingle where he was disinherited of his lands. His son, the eighteenth Knight, represented Kerry in Parliament for 37 years, first in the Irish Parliament and later at Westminster. He died in 1849.

The Fitzgeralds can be traced back to the very first Anglo-Norman invaders. Maurice Fitzgerald was among those who landed in 1170. But the Fitzgeralds had Celtic as well as Norman ancestry as Gerald Fitzgerald, Constable of Pembroke (Maurice's father) married Nesta, a Welsh princess. John Fitzthomas Fitzgerald who died in 1251 had four sons, of whom John was the ancestor of the Knight of Glin, and Maurice of the Knight of Kerry. Both of these families still survive through the main branch of the family. In 1849 after the death of his father, Peter Fitzgerald, the nineteenth Knight of Kerry, inherited Glanleam. He developed the garden there.

In the beginning there was the fundamental task of providing shelter. This was provided by *Rhododendron ponticum*, which has become naturalized and is now quite a weed in the area. Due to neglect, in recent years, it has smothered out quite a number of plants, but it has certainly stood up well against the elements. Fuchsia 'Riccartonii' was also used for shelter and Peter Fitzgerald was possibly one of the first gardeners to introduce this plant to these shores. It is now a familiar sight in the hedgerows of the south-west. The Knight was obviously proud of his fuchsias as he wrote to *The Garden* saying:

"I beg to corroborate all that your correspondent 'Z' says in your paper of the 15th ultimo, in favour of Fuchsia riccartonii. Here with us it is valued even more for its substantial uses than for its beauty. I live in a stormy climate on the edge of the ocean (which, however, I do not find to be melancholy), and although my kitchen garden is surrounded by a semicircular wall of some eleven feet high, I need interior shelter, and this is altogether provided by hedges of Fuchsia riccartonii, which are made by branches cut or broken in bits any size you please, and stuck into the ground close together, in a line. This affords very fair shelter the second year, and from that time forward, the only difficulty is to keep your hedge within bounds. The beauty of these hedges, at this time of year, is extraordinary, and they are so self-sheltering, and our climate is so mild in winter, that they hold the leaf for a very great portion of the year. As to the size, we quite surpass anything mentioned by your correspondent. I have one tree of Fuchsia riccartonii planted in my flower garden in the autumn of 1854, on which no care has been bestowed. It would have been much larger than it is now, if it had not for some years been cut back at one side from a gravel walk. For the past five years I have

let it have its own way, and allowed it to over-run gravel walks and ribbon borders, and each year I have had it measured carefully and recorded by witnesses. In 1870 its circumference, measured with a line around the extreme tips of the branches, was 107 feet 7 inches; last year it reached 115 feet: and I will venture to say that it will considerably exceed 120 feet. I do not think that it is more than thirteen or fourteen feet high. We have many much taller growing among trees in sheltered situations. In a year or two it will reach the main walk of my garden, which cannot be allowed to be closed; so I propose to arch over the walk with a trellis, over which I expect the Fuchsia will gradually grow, leaving a passage clear underneath. After that it will meet nothing to check it 'till some few yards further on it will reach a low cliff which forms the shore of the harbour, and I then must leave it to settle its "Alabama question" with the ocean aforesaid."

Further shelter was provided by *Cupressus macrocarpa*, *C. lusitanica*, *Pinus radiata*, *Escallonia*, *Ilex*, and *Arundinaria* (bamboo).

Once shelter was provided the planting of the more tender introductions got under way.

At that time many new plants were being introduced to Britain by various plant hunters. Francis Masson, the first-even King's Botanist to collect seeds and living plants, brought back *Clethra arborea* from Madeira. William Lobb introduced several plants from South America including *Embothrium coccineum*. Both of these plants were subsequently planted at Glanleam by Peter Fitzgerald and today make superb specimens.

There are several specimens of *Clethra arborea*, many of which have suckered at the base to form huge thickets. They also reproduce by self-sown seedlings. The largest trees of *Embothrium coccineum* (Chilean fire-tree) in these islands are to be found at Glanleam. There is a note in the *Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society* on these which says:

"The best of them has a straight unbranched bole for ten feet. The most spectacular leans very badly and has three great stems which gives a branch spread of many yards. Two of the stems have a girth of over six feet and the third of about five feet. It is difficult to estimate their height, but they must be close on sixty feet."

In the past two years the most spectacular of these has deteriorated and died of old age but there still remains a couple of equally tall specimens.

Another South American introduction which is one of the most striking features of the garden is *Myrtus apiculata*. These are particularly so because of their sheer numbers, and their handsome cinnamon-coloured bark, peeling in places to reveal the creamy-coloured inner surface. There are thousands of self-sown plants throughout the woodland garden and there are always some in flower from June right up to December. The flowers are followed by glossy black fruits which bedeck the branches over the winter, if allowed to remain by the birds and winds!

It was a chance, variegated seedling of *Myrtus apiculata* which gave us 'Glanleam Gold', which has dark green centred and golden-cream edged leaves. It arose in the early 1950s when Colonel R. J. Uniacke owned the garden. It was first propagated by the Glen O' the Downs Nursery of County Wicklow and Treseders

Nursery in Cornwall. It is now widely distributed throughout this country and also in Britain. The original plant survives in Glanleam. Other myrtles in the garden are *M. bullata*, *M. lechlerana*, *M. chequen* and *M. ugni* (Chilean guava) which has brownish red berries that are edible and sweet. In fact, Queen Victoria's favourite jam was supposed to have been made from these berries. Other South American introductions are *Drimys winteri* of which there are several superb specimens, *D. winteri* var. *latifolia* and *D. andina*.

William Lobb's introduction, *Crinodendron hookerana* makes fine trees of over thirty feet tall; some specimens have aerial roots. *Desfontainea spinosa* is a nice surprise with its tubular, scarlet and yellow flowers at eye level, and not away over one's head like so many of the plants in Glanleam. The elegant *Podocarpus salignus* makes a fine tree as does the New Zealand species *P. totara* which has a *Fuchsia* 'Corallian' growing happily through it. The hardy *Araucaria araucana* (monkey puzzle) is not quite as elegant as the latter two. The May-flowering *Buddleia globosa* looks quite splendid as does the more tender *B. auriculata* when it flowers in winter. This is one of the few South African shrubs in the garden.

The family Proteaceae is represented by *Lomatia ferruginea* and *Gevuina avelana*; both are handsome foliage plants.

South American climbing plants represented in the garden include the Chilean *Berberidopsis corallina* with its crimson flowers, *Abutilon megapotanicum* from Brazil and *A. megapotanicum* 'Variegatum' with its yellow-mottled leaves. *Mandevilla suaveolens* is a beautiful climber of the family Apocynaceae, and bears very fragrant white flowers. It is given a choice position on a south-facing wall.

The Australasian plants at Glanleam include the very floriferous *Hoheria populnea*. One of the few remaining wattles is *Acacia melanoxylon*, the blackwood acacia, which flowers in January. *Brachyglottis repanda* makes a large spreading shrub adding to the subtropical effect with its very large green leaves, white beneath. *Pittosporum tenuifolium* seeds itself freely in the moist woodland and there is a fine example of *P. eugenioides* 'Variegatum' which must be close on fifty feet tall. Naturally there are several eucalypts which are superb with their grey, peeling bark, but some tend to lose branches in this rather windy climate. *Griselinia littoralis*, normally seen as a hedging plant, attains a height of at least thirty feet here in the woodland and produces aerial root. Not unlike *Griselinia* is *Coprosma ludida* which is also present and forming large shrubs.

Inevitably in a garden such as this there are several *Olearia* species valuable for their protective as well as their ornamental value. They include *Olearia arborescens*, *O. macrodonta*, *O. nummularifolia*, *O. semidentata*, *O. paniculata* with its pleasantly fragrant flowers in the late autumn, and *O. argophylla*. They all form very large specimens. There are some superb specimens of *Euphorbia mellifera* here, the tallest reaching some fifteen feet. These giant spurges are clothed in sweet honey-scented flowers in spring.

The unusual and rare *Restio subverticillatus*, a rushlike plant of suckering habit, can also be seen in the garden. The two plants in the garden were presents from Fota in the late 1950s.

The plants which probably add most to the subtropical appearance and atmosphere of the garden are the Australian tree ferns, *Diaksonia antarctica*. These reproduce readily and there are many fine specimens. In fact, they have spread quite a distance from the areas where they were originally planted through the natural woodland which adjoins the garden. Another beautiful fern,

the chain fern, *Woodwardia radicans* makes a splendid ground cover plant. This is native to the Orient and southern Europe.



Although the garden is probably more noted for its southern hemisphere plants, it also has quite a number from Asia. There are many rhododendrons, both species and hybrids. Even though there have been numerous losses through neglect and old age there are still many beautiful rhododendrons surviving. Another spring flowering genus is *Camellia* of which there are several species and hybrids. *Corylopsis spicata* is also grown at Glanleam. Glanleam has a few species of *Magnolia*.

Many people think of *Hydrangea* as just being a group of large flowered 'mop heads' of which the garden has its share, but there also more interesting species. *H. strigosa* is rare in cultivation and it flowers at Glanleam which is unusual. *H. heteromalla* is a white flowered Himalayan species. *H. quercifolia*, the oak-leaved hydrangea is also at Glanleam. *H. sargentiana* has shoots covered with curious moss-like hairs and bristles and has very large and velvety leaves. Some species were killed by a falling *Cupressus macrocarpa*, including *H. serrata*, *H. villosa*, *H. bretschneideri* and *H. aspera*. *Cinnamomum camphora*, the camphor tree, attains a height of about fifty feet at Glanleam. This tender species is native to tropical Asia.

*Cleyera fortunei*, which is related to *Camellia*, forms an attractive variegated evergreen shrub in the garden. *Fatsia japonica*, often grown as a houseplant, forms a shrub of some twenty feet in the shady woodland and its

panicles of white globular flower-heads are welcome in December when little else is flowering. *Mahonia*, one of the winter-flowering shrubs, is delightful in the woodland. *M. lomariifolia*, from Chile, flowers in November followed by *M. japonica* and *M. bealei* which is often confused with the *M. japonica* but has broad-based, often overlapping leaflets and has shorter, more erect flower spikes and is now much rarer in cultivation.

The true *M. bealei* can be seen flourishing at Glanleam and also the low growing *M. aquifolium* 'Moseri', which is from North America. Two rampant climbers from the Orient at Glanleam are *Jasminum polyanthum* which grows happily through a large *Eucallonia*, and *Akebia trifoliata* which twines vigorously through some ash trees to a height of about thirty feet. These are but some of the plants at Glanleam to give one an idea of what is cultivated in the garden. There were many other beautiful plants in the past but many are now dead for one reason or another. These included *Agapetes buxifolia*, *Bignonia capreolata*, *Beschorneria yuccoides*, *Bilbergia nutans*, *Datura suaveolens*, *Pentapterigium serpens*, *Schizandra grandiflora* var. *rubiflora*, *Puya alpestris* and *Tibouchina semidecandra* to mention but a few.

Almost two years ago the garden was taken in hand again to halt the decline and since then much clearing of undergrowth and reopening of paths has been carried out. Some replanting has also been done. The latest additions to the collection include *Aralia scheffleri*, *Aristotelia serrata*, *Clanthus puniceus*, *Clematis armandii*, *Cordyline indivisa*, *Dodonea viscosa*, *Erica pageana*, *E. hyemalis*, *Eucalyptus* ssp. (many), *Fremontodendron californicum*, *Grindelia chilense*, *Jasminum floridum*, *Lomatia myricoides*, *Mutisia ilicifolia*, *Passiflora caerulea* and *Trachycarpus wagnerianus*. These and many more plants have come from various sources and it is hoped to continue to replant the garden with unusual, tender plants as more and more clearing is done.

The garden is now well over one hundred years old, begun when Peter Fitzgerald took charge of the estate in 1849. The Knight promoted Valentia's interests as a railway terminal and seaport and as the European end of the trans-Atlantic cable. He managed the slate quarry on the island for a period and was a good salesman for its produce abroad.

Sir Peter Fitzgerald died in 1880 and today there stands a Celtic cross on the estate to commemorate him. The inscription on the cross reads:

This monument is raised  
to the loved and honoured memory of  
Sir Peter Fitzgerald Bart.  
Nineteenth Knight of Kerry. Born 15th Sept. 1808. Died  
6th August 1880  
by  
the tenantry of his Kerry and Carlow estates  
to mark their gratitude for his lifelong devotion  
to their welfare and their deep sorrow  
for his loss.

His obituary also appeared in *The Garden* to which he was a regular contributor. It read:

"The announcement of the death of the Knight of Kerry which occurred on his island of Valentia, on the west coast of Ireland on the 6th inst., will be received with regret by all readers of 'The Garden' to which he was a frequent contributor. He was the fifth son of the Right Hon. Maurice FitzGerald, eighteenth Knight of Kerry and was born in 1808. He succeeded

his father in 1849, and has ever since resided, almost constantly, on his island of Valentia, devoting himself indefatigably to the improvement of his estates and the welfare of his attached tenantry, more particularly carrying out what has been too rare in Ireland - the building of substantial homesteads in place of wretched cabins with which the pernicious middleman system had covered the west of Ireland. His lively sense of what a man owes to a man, his fervent hatred of abuses, and, above all, his fascinating manners, commanded the admiration of all who knew him, and have left an indelible impression especially on those (and there were many and of all ranks) who had the good fortune to be his guests in his unique island home."

As stated in the obituary, Sir Peter Fitzgerald was succeeded by his son Maurice who continued to own the estate until 1936 when it was sold to relations through marriage, Lord Monteagle, Charles Spring Rice. The property was in the hands of the Spring Rices until 1951 when it was purchased by a retired colonel from the British army, R. J. Uniacke. Much of the planting done during the Colonel's time still remains. Obviously he was a keen gardener. He imported many plants from Hilliers Nurseries and also bought in quantity from Daisy Hill and Slieve Donard nurseries in Northern Ireland. The Uniackes lived at Glanleam until 1975 when the property was bought by Mrs. Meta Kreissig. She and her husband, both business people, spend some time at Glanleam with their family. The house has been competely renovated, the farm modernised and much reclamation work done. The garden is now being restored and it is hoped that many interesting plants will soon thrive in this sheltered haven in south-western Ireland.

Editorial note: Glanleam is a private garden. It is NOT open to the public. Members of the Irish Garden Plant Society are asked to respect this privacy.

The paper is based on a project carried out by the author when he was a student at the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin. It was submitted as part of work done for the certificate in Amenity Horticulture.

## GARDENING IN THE MIDLANDS FIFTY YEARS AGO

by KEITH LAMB,  
Woodfield, Clara, Co. Offaly.

Changes in garden style reflect social changes and when the war years ended in 1945 the gardening and social scenes were very different from those of the first decades of the century. In those days even modest households could afford some help in house and garden, an important consideration when all maintenance had to be done by hand. Now, however, paid help in the garden had become scarce and expensive, and some gardens proved too burdensome for their owners and good plants were lost. The writer spent boyhood holidays in the midlands, and was fortunate in that his father was a good plantsman. This meant that many friends of the family shared this interest, and it might be of some value to set down a few memories of some of the plants grown in these gardens of moderate size, none of them of more than local importance, in a district of limestone soils and without the climatic advantages of the milder coastal areas of Ireland.

The introduction to general cultivation of the blue poppy (*Meconopsis betonicifolia*) by Frank Kingdon-Ward was one of the gardening sensations of the period. Here at Woodfield my father was one of the earliest cultivators of this plant, which was raised from seed and grown in heavy soil lightened with peat in the north-east angle of the house. The plants received only the morning sun, and over the years formed large clumps flowering annually, accompanied by *Primula bulleyana* and *P. pulverulenta*. Other *Meconopsis* species were tried, the most successful being *M. napaulensis*, *M. integrifolia* and *M. paniculata*. The wonderful nursery of Smith of Newry was flourishing in those days, whence were obtained two plants each of the hardy ladies' slipper orchids, *Cypripedium calceolus* and *C. pubescens*. Grown in a semi-shady part of the rock garden, they did not increase much. Later they were transferred to my gardens in County Wexford and County Dublin, and thence back to Woodfield. In the course of their travels these plants have multiplied more quickly, and experience indicates that they are not too difficult to grow even in the comparatively dry Malahide area.

Many country houses in Ireland still retain their groves of beech trees, and these offer opportunities for a semi-wild, labour saving type of gardening, well illustrated by my mother's success in establishing drifts of autumn cyclamen (*C. hederacifolium*) under such conditions. In spring, before the leaves come on the trees, snowdrops flower in abundance, followed by a splendid patch of *Cyclamen repandum*, seeding itself freely. In so many publications we read of this being a tender species, even to be planted under a stone, though the Alpine Garden Society's booklet on the genus refers to it as spreading freely in woodland gardens in the warmer parts of Great Britain. One would hardly consider central Ireland to be a warm district, and over the years we have had some severe winters, but even the first leaves emerging in January have not been injured. I believe this species requires to be planted deeply, a point brought home to me when many years ago the late Miss C. Shackleton dug up seedlings to start our colony. Even those little plants had inserted themselves deeply, with long white petioles reaching to the surface. Miss Shackleton's garden at Lucan was not in a particularly favoured spot either, in a low lying site by the River Liffey. The cyclamen grew

under a conifer, and so got some overhead protection, but this was not sufficient to ensure indefinite survival of the more tender *C. balearicum*.

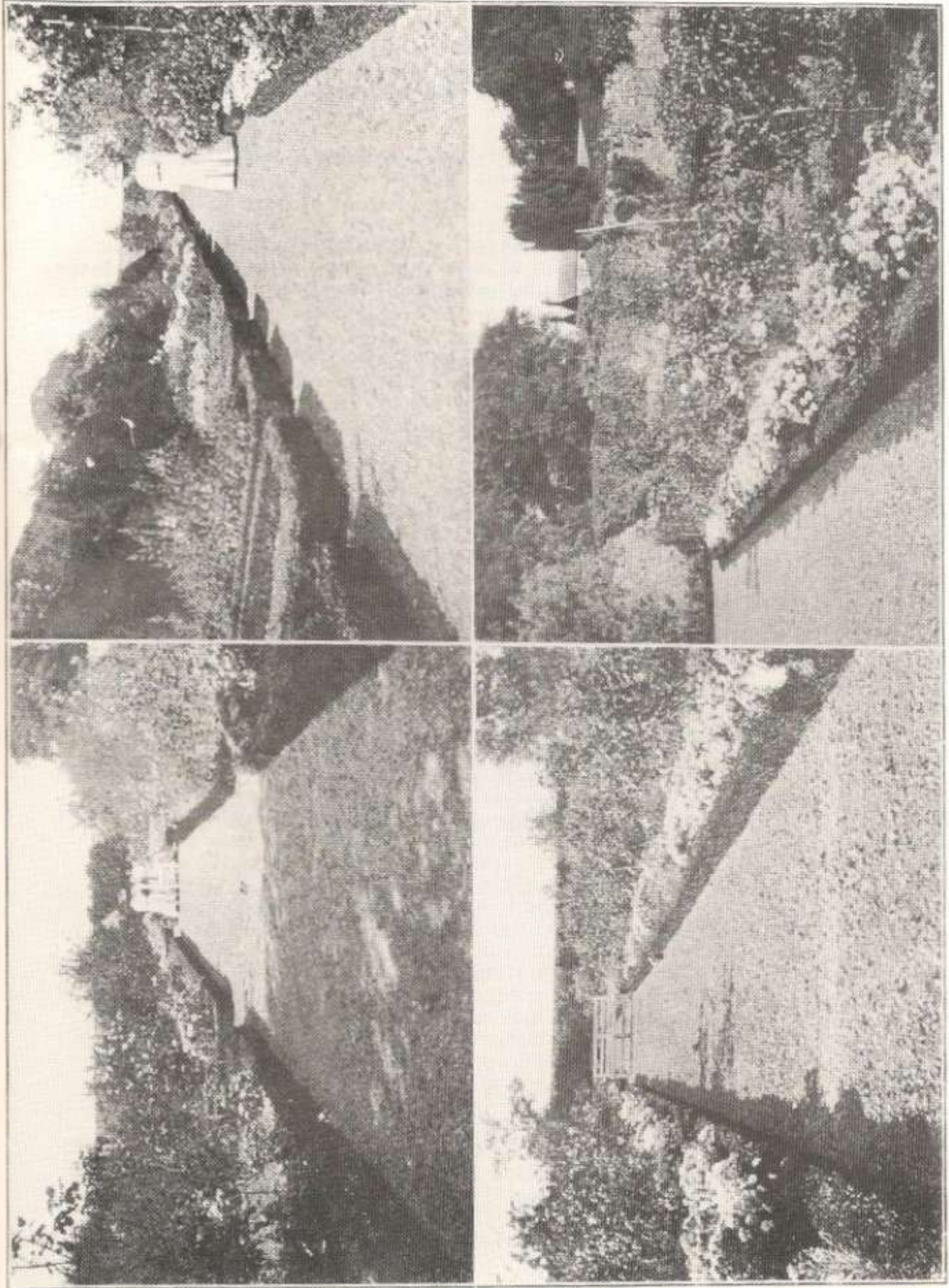
Since our return to Woodfield we have introduced *Cyclamen coum* under the beeches, so far with success. *C. purpurascens*, however, flourishes only in a more open spot. Under the trees there follow long established colonies of *Anemone appenina* and *A. ranunculoides*, the latter in a large form with two flowers to a stem, a plant we had long regarded as that listed as *A. ranunculoides* var. *major* in the Daisy Hill catalogue (1936-37), but now we see a similar plant called *A. ranunculoides* ssp. *ranunculoides* by Rix and Phillips (*The Bulb Book*, 1981), as compared with the smaller *A. ranunculoides* ssp. *wookeana*. Also flourish two forms of the native wood anemone (*A. nemorosa*), a single white with flowers considerably larger than those of the wild type, and the familiar neat double cultivar 'Vestal'. *Scilla sibirica* and bluebells grow well at the margin of the beech wood and Solomon's seal looks graceful in the woodland setting. By summer time only the latter, with male ferns and hartstongues, tolerate the overhead shade until as early as August the first autumn cyclamen mark the beginning of another year's cycle.

In the years between the wars rock gardens were fashionable in our district. The most imposing example was that constructed at The Doon, Athlone, by the late George Enraght-Moony. Though this rock garden was sited within a walled garden it was so constructed as to give the impression of a distinct unit, screened from the vegetable and fruit garden by bamboos and clumps of Solomon's seal on rising ground. The rock garden was on a large scale, with winding paved paths and big limestone boulders. Even a *Cordyline* did not seem out of place, especially as in summer time this sheltered garden was a warm place to enjoy an outdoor tea. After such an interval of time memories of the plants that grew there are few, but include *Gentiana verna*, fine specimens of *G. septemfida*, a striking late flowering *Ornithogalum* with long spikes of white flowers, and an intensely red *Chaenomeles* on the outskirts, probably 'Simonii'. From this garden came our original plants of *Anemone ranunculoides* and the large white wood anemone. Outside the garden wall martagon lilies were naturalised in the adjacent wood. Mr. Moony was a connoisseur of fruit too, and from his wall trained trees we gathered the plum 'Kirke's Blue'.

In the Doon garden grew a small white trumpet daffodil called 'Colleen Bawn', an old cultivar we have not seen since. Another friend, the late Miss Hodson of Twyford grew a daffodil of this type under the name *Narcissus cernuus*. At Twyford was an old-world garden once typical of country houses, walled-in, entered by a small iron gate leading to box edged paths round the periphery and down the centre. Within these edgings were herbaceous borders backed by old-fashioned roses and espalier trained apple trees, behind which were plots of vegetables. Spring and summer saw a succession of flowers. First came many kinds of daffodil, with clumps of crown imperial fritillaries at the corners where paths met. Summer flowers included phloxes of many kinds, with the old roses, followed by Michaelmas daisies. In one corner was a fernery, where grew a crested *Osmunda* among crested male ferns. Of the apples one recalls the red and sweet 'Mr. Gladstone' followed by the red cheeked and red striped 'Lady Sudeley', ripe at the right season for the school holidays.

We have one large garden in our neighbourhood, at Coolatore, Moate, where the late Mrs. Upton created a landscape recalling the English style, with grassy terraces, steps, flower beds set in the lawns, a conservatory and three tennis courts. The herbaceous borders at Coolatore were good, but of the individual plants memory recalls only the curious arching spikes of *Lysimachia clethroides*. There was a splendid *Magnolia soulangeana* and adjacent to it a group of *Lilium auratum*. Shrub borders round the house are remembered as the place where, as a tyro in gardening, I first became familiar with such choice shrubs as *Daphne retusa*, *Osmanthus delavayi*, and the seedless, free-fruited form of *Berberis vulgaris*. The great speciality, however, of Coolatore was the double primroses,





Twyford garden, Co. Westmeath (from *Irish Life*, 13 December 1912).

which were grown in quantity as edgings in the walled vegetable garden, at a distance from the house. Miss Adamson grew good double primroses, too, at Auburn, in the Goldsmith country, and had the double form of the flowering currant.

These gardens were an education to the student gardener, but many others remain in memory as locations for special plants. Never since have I seen the scarlet turk's cap lily *Lilium chalcedonicum* grow as it used to do at Southside, Moate, the home of the late Miss Clibborn, reputed to be the oldest Quaker lady then living in Ireland. Across the road at Moate Castle there was a border edged with the miniature daffodil *Narcissus nanus*, in later years pointed out to me by Sir Frederick Moore as one of the favourite flowers in his garden at Rathfarnham. In the porch at Moate View House, another Clibborn residence, grew a pot of the delicate pink *Zephyranthes carinata*, and outside in the garden were several old apple trees, such as 'Margil', 'Mr. Gladstone', and the 'Clibborn Apple', the latter a venerable specimen of the American cultivar 'Newtown Pippin', brought back long ago by one of the family. At Streamstown House were box edged beds with *Fritillaria pyrenaica* and several colour forms of *Camassia leitchlinii*.

Other horticultural memories include a large *Sophora* overtopping a wall on the outskirts of Clara, and on the same road *Crinodendron hookerianum* surviving many hard winters by the door of Beechmount House, where clumps of *Lilium candidum* and *L. henryi* flourished in the herbaceous borders. *L. pyrenaicum* was a cottage garden plant, as were pansies and snowdrops. A few bulbs of the Crimean snowdrop survived near the ruins of Geashill Castle. Even unexpected vegetables turned up, as did the potato 'Mackey's Lightning', an old kind grown at Portlick Castle long after it had disappeared from general cultivation.

Many gardeners, especially those who have attained the euphemistic status of senior citizen, will have memories of good gardens and plants of yesterday. At all times an interest in plants can give rise to sudden surprises and unexpected pleasures, and is a gift that is never lost. These few personal notes will show that even an area that has few notable gardens until one reaches the treasures at Birr Castle can be a stimulating one to those who live in it long enough to know it well. It is in such areas that plants sought for by the Irish Garden Plant Society may yet be found.

## THE LIVING GARDEN

By VERNEY NAYLOR

55 Claremont Road, Sandymount, Dublin 4.

On a wild, stormy night in May 1982 a huge, old pear tree, with three widely-spreading branches, blew down in my garden. I had only recently planted the ground underneath and around it, but unbelievably the tree fell without damaging a single plant. To take advantage of what I thought was a lightly shaded and sheltered spot I had planted *Cupressus cashmeriana*, *Paeonia suffruticosa*, *Melianthus major*, three different species of *Correa*, *Trillium grandiflorum*, *Bergenia purpurascens*, *Helleborus orientalis*, *Pulmonaria rubra* and even a *Berberidopsis* to grow up the trunk of the pear. Having cut up the fallen tree and stood back to look at the scene, I realised that in one fell swoop the whole aspect of that part of my garden had changed; what was to have been a secret shady spot had become, literally overnight, an exposed sunny border. How the plants will adapt, I am not sure, though ten months later they are still there and the *Trillium* is going to flower. But it set me thinking about how our gardens change from day to day (sometimes dramatically as in the case of my pear tree), from season to season and from year to year. One thing is certain, they will change - grow and develop - with or without our help, for a garden can never stand still - it must be on the move all the time. We all know this, but how do we cope with the problems it raises?

Take a garden that is being planted from scratch; how do you decide which and how many plants to put in? Trees, for instance, must be carefully chosen and spaced, we are told, so that they do not outgrow their positions. But does this mean that the owners of small gardens should be restricted to *Prunus* 'Amanogawa', *Betula pendula* 'Youngii' and *Salix caprea* 'Kilmarnock'. I am sure it does not! I, for one, have planted many trees in my comparatively small garden that I know will eventually be too big. But when is "eventually"? Do we plan for their height in five years, ten years, twenty years, fifty years or a hundred years time? How can we be sure they will grow at a given rate anyway? I have a *Ginkgo biloba* that is at least fifteen years old and it is still only ten feet tall, but it will grow to sixty feet in time. I have also a *Pinus montezumae*, at present two feet high - at Woodstock (County Kilkenny) there is one that measures about eighty feet but it was planted last century. My *Abies koreana* will grow to forty-five feet in forty years but may be only six feet high in ten years time and in the meantime I shall have those incredible blue cones. The *Cupressus cashmeriana* is planted far too close to a *Cercidiphyllum japonicum* but I suspect I shall not have to choose between them as the *Cupressus* is rather tender and I may lose its drooping curtains of lace sooner rather than later. However, I may have to choose between a Brewer's spruce and a *Cornus controversa* 'Variegata' in thirty years time - or some one will.

I could quote other examples, for my garden is full of trees that in the future would fill a small estate but will probably have to be thinned out in my small garden. But by then disease, pests, decay, and accident will have taken their toll and anyway it may have all been bulldozed for a new office block by then. Whilst it is true that I will not be able to stand and look at the imposing outline of a single specimen tree on a wide expanse of lawn, I am planting for my

own pleasure and I will have been enriched in the intervening years by endless variety of leaf shape, and colour and texture of bark and twig.

The slower growing plants form the backbone that is almost permanent and yet growing all the time - my several *Hamamelis* were worth the high price because of the increasing pleasure I will get each succeeding winter. *Magnolia grandiflora* is slowly, ever so slowly, increasing in size with as yet no flowers, but those huge rusty backed leaves keep me going. The varieties of *Acer palmatum* will be with me for many years before they outgrow their space.

But there are groups of plants that change quite quickly as the years go by. Six years ago I planted three rooted cuttings of golden rosemary at a corner of a path, intending to remove two plants at a later stage. I now have a beautiful clump and I haven't the heart to divide it up. It is sprawling out over the path but I have decided that it is the path that will have to change its course because nothing looks as forlorn as a cut-back rosemary.

*Euphorbia wulfenii* can be fickle - one year providing the focus of attention in a border, the next looking bedraggled, split and blown about and having to be removed. Suddenly the look is different; something else will have taken over the interest.

Mounds of pale and dark green *Helleborus foetidus* delight each winter but their positions change slightly each year as the older plants die away and the newer seedlings take over.

When you plant a mixed border from scratch what do you do about the herbaceous constituents? Do you plant everything all at once even though the herbaceous plants will be their full height almost from the word go? Perhaps one should wait until the trees and shrubs are mature before filling in between? But, I don't. I have an *Itea ilicifolia* that is three feet high at present and almost gets choked each year by the white Japanese anemones that surround it. But when the *Itea* is ten feet high I think the white will look good against the green flowers in early autumn. In the meantime, I try to keep them apart.

So one of my problems is the relevant rates of growth of the many different plants. Another is the disposition and development of different areas of light and shade. Now a border to the north of one's house will always be shady from the word go. But other areas may originally be shady but then lose a large tree (such as my pear) and suddenly be sunny. More likely is the border that is open and sunny to begin with but then gradually becomes shadier as the trees and shrubs develop. Do you start by planting the shade-lovers hoping they will get happier as time passes? Or, do you start with sun-worshippers and replace them as time goes by? I do the former as I find I must have the completed concept in mind before I plant. I have one border which is already planted with bergenia, hellebores, *Euphorbia amygdaloides* and even a few bulbs of *Cardiocrinum giganteum* (though these have not shown themselves this spring yet). All the trees and shrubs that are supposed to provide the shade for these plants are themselves only a few feet high.

Seven years ago I planted a herb garden in a series of concrete square beds I had inherited with the garden. The site seemed sunny enough at the time but now that the two *Magnolia x soulangiana* to the south of these have spread outwards and upwards I realise the herbs are in shade for most of the day. This suits the mints, lovage, and angelica but the thymes and marjorams have gone into a decline and will have to be moved to a sunnier spot.

Is a garden ever perfect? Is it ever actually all completed? I have in my

mind's eye a sunlit morning in maybe ten years time when for a split second it will be as I wanted it to be; the trees beginning to be proper trees, the shrubs filled out and growing together, the shade-lovers revelling in their rightful places and sun-lovers twinkling in the sun. I do not suppose this moment will ever come. If one ever actually achieved exactly the effect one wanted what else would one strive for?

Because gardens are living things, never static, always changing, how can we talk about preserving them as if we could pop them in alcohol and bring them out to look at every now and then like a museum piece? But, like a museum piece, a garden that was precisely as it was a hundred year's ago would be dead. When we talk about conserving a garden what do we mean? Conserving the plants, or the layout, or simply conserving the original concept? But how do we know exactly what the creator had in mind when he or she first laid out the garden? Do we want something stultified or something that is still living and developing? If we want the latter, then the owners of large important gardens should be encouraged to make changes in keeping with the mood of the garden but with a view to keeping down labour costs. At the same time they are maintaining a thing of priceless beauty, for a garden is more fragile than a painting, more delicate than porcelain - it can be lost and gone forever within a few short years of neglect. But if a garden, any garden, is built gradually, using the best features of the previous garden, into a continuously evolving organism, organised by someone with their heart and soul involved, then the garden, of what ever size, will be living and vibrant and a joy for as long as that personal involvement continues.

### MURDO MACKENZIE (1896 - 1983)

One of Ireland's premier gardens, Ilnacullin, on Garinish Island at Glengarriff in County Cork, flourishes today as a living memorial to a great gardener, Murdo Mackenzie, who died after a short illness in January 1983. He devoted the greater part of his life to the care of this unique garden.

Murdo Mackenzie was born in Forres, near the Moray Firth on Scotland's north-eastern coast on 13 February 1896, the eldest son of an accomplished Scottish gardener. Raised in the methodical tradition of sound gardening principles, this dedicated Scotsman took up duty at Garinish Island in answer to Mrs. Annan Bryce's request for a suitable head gardener, on a bleak and rainy October day in 1928. The task facing him was formidable. The design of Harold Peto, commissioned a decade previously by Annan Bryce, was partly completed, but many rare plants had succumbed to the inhospitable environment of the island. Shelter was quite inadequate. The acquisition and establishment of countless fine trees and shrubs continued under the ownership of Annan Bryce's son Roland, with particular emphasis on plants from the southern hemisphere and the Orient. Under Murdo Mackenzie's care and attention, this fine collection responded to produce the many fine specimens seen today.

In 1966 Murdo Mackenzie was elected an Associate of Honour by the Royal Horticultural Society and was awarded the gold medal of honour by the Royal Horticultural Society of Ireland. In 1982, he received awards of merit from Bord Failte Eireann and United Dominion Trust, for his outstanding work and achievements.

During the winter months of 1972-1973 he visited Australia and New Zealand and was able to compare the plants of his beloved Garinish, with the same species in their native habitats - *Leptosperman*, *Pittosporum*, *Acacia* and a host of others. Murdo Mackenzie became an expert on *Rhododendron* species and cultivars, his great favourite being the fragrant 'Princess Alice'. What more fitting tribute to this great plantsman could there be than to name a new rhododendron in his memory?

CORMAC FOLEY,  
Bourn Vincent Memorial Park, Killarney.



Photograph courtesy of Commissioners of Public Works (National Parks & Monuments Service).

## SOME RECORDS (c.1690 - 1830) OF GREENHOUSES IN IRISH GARDENS

By E. CHARLES NELSON,  
National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin 9.

In the seventeenth century, exploration of areas such as the East and West Indies and southern Africa, combined with a passion among the European aristocracy for assembling collections of exotic plants, resulted in an influx of tropical plant species into western Europe, especially to Holland and England. Most of the new plants could not be grown out-of-doors; they had growth requirements that could only be met by providing artificially controlled environments. Thus, buildings had to be erected to house these tender plants, protecting them from the rigors of north European winters - the conservatories, orangeries and early greenhouses.

The Dutch pioneered the construction of these houses. In 1599 the "Ambulacrum" in the University Botanic Garden at Leyden was built.<sup>1</sup> The buildings were generally made of brick and wood, with the gable walls and the north-facing wall blank and high double-casement windows filling the south-facing wall. The earliest houses had slate roofs and were heated by an iron stove within which burned either coal, wood or charcoal. This original basic type was modified later. Under-floor heating using clay pipes was introduced in the late-seventeenth century, thereby eliminating the harmful fumes from the stove which was placed in a small separate annex against one of the gable walls.<sup>2</sup> Glass roofs were introduced about this time too.<sup>3</sup>

There is no certainty about the date of construction of the first greenhouse in the British Isles. Orangeries were built in English gardens perhaps as early as 1600. At Wimbledon in 1649 there was 'one large Garden House' containing 'forty-two orange trees bearing fair and large oranges'.<sup>4</sup> In 1662, John Evelyn<sup>5</sup> noted orangeries at Ham House in Middlesex, and at Sir Henry Capel's house at Kew. The Oxford Botanic Garden had a 'conservatory' for tender plants in 1678<sup>6</sup> and there was a 'greenhouse' in Chelsea Physic Garden in 1690.<sup>7</sup> An orangery with a glass roof was standing at Wollaton Hall in 1696, which according to Loudon<sup>3</sup> 'must have been one of the first . . . erected in England'.

Irish records are no more precise. About 1690, Sir Arthur Rawdon sent James Harlow to Jamaica, in the footsteps of Sir Hans Sloane, the Irish-born scientist and antiquarian whose collections founded the British Museum. Sloane had visited Jamaica in 1687-89 and later published accounts of the island's flora based on his own observations and the plants obtained by Harlow.<sup>8</sup> Rawdon wanted Harlow to obtain living plants for his garden at Moira, County Down. Harlow succeeded, returning to Ireland with 'a Ship almost laden with Cases of Trees, and Herbs, planted and growing in Earth . . .'<sup>9</sup> In all about one thousand plants were successfully transported. At Moira the plants 'grew and came many of them to great perfection . . . ' so that Sloane and Jacob Bobart (junior), Professor of Botany at Oxford University were able to utilise material in their books.<sup>10</sup> These Jamaican plants could not have survived out-of-doors in County Down, so Rawdon had a 'large stove' (greenhouse) built for them, which was demolished by his grandson, Sir John Rawdon, before about 1744.<sup>11</sup> This was probably one of the earliest greenhouses erected in Ireland,<sup>12</sup> and its success may be judged by the fact that

propagules from Harlow's collection were sent to 'the garden of the Bishop of London, at Fulham; Dr. Uvedale's at Enfield; the Chelsea Garden; and especially into that of her Grace the Duchess of Beaufort at Badminton, in Gloucestershire' as well as to the botanic gardens of Amsterdam, Leyden, Leipzig and Uppsala. In September 1703 Brilliana Rawdon, Sir Arthur's sister, told Sir Hans Sloane that her sister 'has gott a little green house this winter. she lost severall plants last year w<sup>ch</sup> she rais'd of seed for want of it'.<sup>13</sup> Where this greenhouse was is not known.

A few years later in 1709 Samuel Molyneux noted that at Blessington, County Wicklow, there was 'a very handsome noble garden wilderness, green house, fish ponds, a noble large park and Paddocks'<sup>14</sup>; Blessington, according to tradition, was laid out sometime after the Cromwellian period by an English gardener Austin Cooper.<sup>15</sup> The date of this greenhouse is not known, but it might predate that built by Rawdon.

Following the fashion on the continent and in England for the cultivation of citrus fruits for decoration and the table, orangeries seem to have been built on many Irish demesnes in the early eighteenth century. Citrus trees demanded protection from the northern climate, especially if they were to set fruit, though they could be grown out-of-doors. Oranges were probably introduced into England about 1562,<sup>16</sup> and trees from the first introduction by Carew survived outside on his Beddington estate, near Croydon, until 1739-40 when they were killed by frost. These trees were protected in winter by a portable 'tabernacle of boards and stoves'<sup>17</sup>. prior to the widespread construction of orangeries, such temporary frost-protection was given, or the plants were brought in-doors for the winter and replaced outside in summer.

In 1730, Dr. Patrick Delany, a friend of Jonathan Swift, had orange trees growing outside in his garden at Delville, in the village of Glasnevin, north of Dublin. In 1743, he married Mary Pendarves (nee Granville) and in the spring of 1750 she wrote to Bernard Granville saying that she planned to build a greenhouse: ' . . . my orange trees thrive so well they deserve one'. She planned one '26ft by 13 and 13 high' and enquired 'if the chimney will be any disadvantage to my orange trees,' However she abandoned the scheme in favour of a menagerie!<sup>18</sup>

In 1735 John Keogh, who was chaplain to Lord Kingston, published a herbal, *Botanologia Universalis Hibernica*, in which is found the first published reference to greenhouses in Irish gardens. Keogh reported that Lord Kingston's garden at Mitchelstown, County Cork, 'contained near two hundred different species of Herbs and Trees' and remarked that he 'was not acquainted with any garden which could shew so many' species in Ireland at that time.<sup>19</sup> He noted 'Herb Aloe or Sea Houseleak (*Sempervivum* sp.) . . . grows in My Lord Kingston's Green house at Mitchelstown'<sup>20</sup>.

In common with other landowners, Lord Kingston seems to have been a keen and competitive grower of citrus fruits. Keogh reported that 'Lemon-Trees are preserved in this country be several curious Gentlemen, in Green houses, from the Inclemency of the Air, there are some of them to be seen in the Garden of Mitchelstown . . . '<sup>21</sup> and that 'Orange Trees . . . of late years . . . have been transplanted here, which now by the Industry, and cultivation of curious Gentlemen, are in some Gardens brought to perfection. I have seen about seventy, or eighty, taken off of one Tree, in the . . . Gardens at Mitchelstown as good as any I have seen brought hither from Spain or the West Indies . . . '<sup>22</sup>. The Huguenots, who brought new horticultural expertise to Ireland in the early eighteenth century, may have introduced the citrus trees. In 1722, one refugee



residing at Portarlinton, County Laois, imported many plants from Holland, including 'leamon or citron trees . . . orange trees . . . (and) tomatas'. Most significantly, perhaps, the list also included 'sencitive plants' (*Mimosa pudica*) which would have been grown in a stove house.<sup>23</sup>

Another plant requiring greenhouse conditions for cultivation was the pineapple, which was introduced to England in the late seventeenth century.<sup>16</sup> It was first brought to Ireland in the reign of Queen Anne (1702-1714) by Bullen, who lived in New Street, Dublin and had a four-acre garden and nursery there.<sup>24</sup> Pineapples were grown extensively in Ireland by the middle of the eighteenth century.<sup>25</sup> John Phelan, who traded at 'The sign of the Pineapple', Christchurch Lane, Dublin, had a nursery with stove and hot houses at Harold's Cross in which he grew pineapples about 1750.<sup>26</sup> John Robertson noted about a dozen "pine-stoves" near Kilkenny about 1785 and his father brought pineapples from Bullen in 1756.<sup>25</sup> Lord Charlemont grew pineapples in his garden at Marino (see below). Edward Bray, who had a nursery at Islandbridge, Dublin, served time with Bullen, and in 1780 helped to dispose of Lord Trimlestown's collection of exotic plants, including bananas and pineapples, which had been started forty years previously<sup>27</sup>; this collection had been assembled in a greenhouse. According to Dr. Pococke, the twelfth Baron Trimlestown brought from France about 1746 'a great collection of Exotic plants, among 'em the Cinamon-tree and the Hermaphrodite, the latter has on it the leaves of Orange, Lemon Citron and Cedra, and each fruit contains in it, the Fruits of these four kinds, which caused great speculation at Paris'.<sup>28</sup> John O'Keefe recalled seeing at Trimlestown Castle 'a complete green-house of the rarest exotics, all under his (i.e. Lord Trimlestown) own management. I remember seeing there, the aloe (which only blossoms once in a hundred years) in full bloom and a noble banana, the leaf five feet long and very wide'<sup>29</sup>. Less botanically adventurous were Lord Bective, who "built six or seven large pineries 90 feet long each" at Headfort, County Meath, which were seen by Arthur Young in July 1776, and Lord Charlemont who had glasshouses at Marino in the mid-eighteenth century. About 1758, it is said that the Marino "stove" was mismanaged, but things were properly organized by the autumn of 1760. In 1763, the Duchess of Northumberland, the Vicereine, visited Marino and "walk'd thro the Kitchen Garden . . . to his Hot House it is 170 Feet long; in the Anti Room of which we breakfasted. The Walls were all Tapstried with Myrtle and an innumerable quantity of flowering Plants perfumed it on every side by their Fragrance."<sup>30</sup>

Dr. Patrick Delany's Delville occupied land at Glasnevin adjacent to Tickell's estate which was purchased by the Dublin Society for the establishment of what is now the National Botanic Gardens. One of the most active members of the committee which brought about the establishment of the Botanic Gardens was John Foster, later Lord Oriel, whose father, Anthony Foster built two stoves - one for pineapples and one for grapes about 1764<sup>31</sup> in their garden at Collon, County Louth. Indeed the first prospectus of the National Botanic Gardens, published in July 1800 indicated that greenhouses were in use within five years of its foundation; published plans<sup>32</sup> show an elegant series of five houses built of wood and glass, linked by a corridor but their positioning within the Gardens was poor and they were removed about 1815.

Few of the early greenhouses or orangeries survive; Rawdon's was demolished and those at Mitchelstown and Trimlestown are no longer standing. Only the foundations remain at Marino. However, a few eighteenth century orangeries do survive, albeit not in perfect condition. At Belgrove, near Cobh, County Cork, which last century was the garden of William Gumbleton,<sup>33</sup> the remains of an eighteenth century orangery stand; the ruin consists of the facade with arches which would have contained the high double-casement windows. The date of building is not known, but it was probably constructed after 1759. At that time the gardens belonged to John Harper, and were described by Charles Smith: 'From a fine terras

over the gardens is an agreeable prospect . . . This terras is near  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an English mile long, broad and high adorned with vases, urns, &c and is the finest of its kind in this county. Beneath the terras is a pretty bowling-green, with gardens and pleasant walks. . . Near the house, among other improvements, is an hop-yard . . . as also a considerable plantation of hemp.<sup>34</sup> The gardens are depicted on a nautical chart of Cork Harbour dated 1759<sup>35</sup> - what appears to be a formal walled garden and a set of formal hedges (probably of beech) are shown but there is no house or greenhouse mapped. A few miles to the west another eighteenth century orangery has survived, in a garden at Marino Point, which belonged to Philip Ronayne in the mid 1750s. This orangery has recently been restored, and consists of a central pavilion constructed of red brick with a bowed front containing four high double-casement windows and a doorway.<sup>36</sup> Its date is not known but it was probably built after 1780.

In County Galway the remains of hot-houses are found in the remnants of Tyrone estate. These hot-houses are shown on a survey of Tyrone done in 1780 by John Berne.<sup>37</sup> The ruin consists of a rear wall, against which a structure of wood and glass would have leant. Flues lined with bricks are obvious as are the rooms at the rear which would have housed the stoves. A late eighteenth century glasshouse, recently restored, stands in the walled garden at Mount Congreve, County Waterford, and some early nineteenth century greenhouses exist at Tullynally Castle, County Westmeath.<sup>38</sup>

The best surviving early nineteenth century glasshouse in Ireland is the Camellia House at Shane's Castle, County Antrim. This was designed by John Nash and constructed in 1819<sup>39</sup>; its design follows the standard pattern for eighteenth century orangeries. The Nash building replaced an earlier conservatory built before 1783, when Thomas Milton saw it and wrote that an 'Embankment was made, on which is built a Green House, the Castle Wall forming one side, and the Glass projecting into the lake on the other.'<sup>40</sup> In the same year the conservatory was seen by the actress Sarah Siddons who recalled that 'we plucked our dessert from numerous trees'<sup>41</sup> growing in it.

The late 1700s, glasshouses were common features in Irish country and town houses. Around Dublin many were constructed, including a famous corridor of glasshouses built at the cost of £3,000 in 1785 at Bellevue; it was erected for Peter La Touche by 'a Mr. Shanley, a native of Ireland, and an ingenious honest man, deservedly esteemed for his good natural talents.'<sup>41</sup> The whole structure was 650 feet in length, and comprised a conservatory (264 feet in length), an orangery, a peachhouse, a vinery (42 ft long, 24 ft in breadth and 20 ft tall) another oval conservatory (40 ft long, 24 ft broad and 20 ft tall), a pinery, another peach house and finally a cherry house. Although extraordinary in its size, it was not the only glasshouse in Dublin in 1802; the *Statistical Survey of the County Dublin*<sup>42</sup> mentions others at Abbeville ('a vast range of glass for pines, grapes and peaches'), Belcamp, Killester ('a large extent of glass well furnished with pines, grapes, &c. of the first flavour'), Bushy Park, Marley, Rathfarnham Castle ('a magnificent greenhouse, on the same plan as those at Hampton Court and Kew'), Cork Abbey, Willow Park, Temple Hill, Merville ('a beautiful green-house') and at another Merville (the seat of Sir Thomas Lighton - 'the gardens are remarkable for glass, being more extensive than most in the country'), Lucan, Palmerstown, Broomfield, Woodfield, and Drumcondra. The writer continued 'it would be endless to enumerate the vast number and variety of beautiful seats . . . There are thousands of small neat houses, elegant demesnes with good gardens, hot houses, and green-houses to most of them . . .'<sup>42</sup>

All these early houses were constructed of brick and stone, with slated or glass roofs and with wooden beams. But wood decayed and metal soon began to replace it. At Merville, Lord Downes' villa, there were 'two remarkably neat houses, with

copper sashes and metallic rafters'<sup>43</sup> as early as 1825; one house served as a greenhouse, the other as a stove house. In 1829, a hothouse with 'curvilinear Iron Sash-bars' was 'lately erected in the neighbourhood of Dublin' for a Counsellor West.<sup>44</sup>

Commencing in 1825 on the state of Irish greenhouses, James Frazer made these highly critical remarks:

'In the formation and internal arrangement of the houses for ornamental plants, little improvement has been made on their original simplicity; and, except the conservatory in the Dublin Society's Botanical Gardens (Glasnevin), there are none to vie with the late Mr. Angerstein's at Blackheath, or Sir Robert Liston's at Milburn Tower, in Mid-Lothian, nearer than that at Shane's Castle, in the county of Antrim. The application of steam has been confined to one or two places, and the metallic sash to a like number. We have no want of horticultural erections of this sort, attached to dwelling Houses . . . but they are, with very few exceptions, the mere gewgaws of some city architect, in which, perhaps, a myrtle or orange-tree might struggle out a wretched existence.'<sup>43</sup>

By the mid-1830s iron glazing bars and heating by means of pipes were being used with great effect by the young Dublin iron-master Richard Turner, who designed and built some of Ireland's and Britain's finest greenhouses in the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>45</sup>

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On 14 October another advertisement appeared which read  
300 Pineapple plants. The curious set of irons for covering plants which belonged to Lord Trimlestown to be sold.  
  
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## GARDENING AT MARINO

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The improvements at Marino, County Dublin, were described by numerous visitors and English tourists of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries when the landscaped gardens laid out by James Caulfield, fourth Viscount and first Earl of Charlemont, were open to the public. Generally speaking the descriptions are vague, disappointingly sparse in detail and often quaintly inaccurate. For instance, the temple known as the Casino (Fig. 1) built by Charlemont to the designs of Sir William Chambers and a Neo-Classical masterpiece, was summarily dismissed by Dr. Twiss in 1775 as 'an elegant Casino of which it is sufficient to say Messrs. Adams were the architects . . . '1 However, nearly all lauded Charlemont's refined taste, and the lawns, plantations and the lake with Charlemont's other temple, the Gothic Room, were much admired.

It is not proposed to elaborate here upon the theme of Marino's "romantic-poetic" landscaping, a subject already ably dealt with by Edward Malins and the Knight of Glin in *Lost Demesnes*,<sup>2</sup> but rather to discuss some practical aspects of the improvements and the management of the gardens and the estate.

The small estate from which Marino began was a gift to Charlemont from his stepfather, Thomas Adderley, when, in 1754, Charlemont turned his face towards home from a grand tour which lasted nine years and included a Levantine voyage and a prolonged stay in Rome. Charlemont had not yet left Italy when Adderley wrote from Dublin offering him the little estate at Donnycarney with its panoramic view of Dublin Bay, the city and the Wicklow Mountains beyond. There was a modern house and fifty acres of land. The land was not rent free, but in good heart and could be expected to provide butter for the house and '350 loads of hay off 17 acres', sufficient, Adderley believed, for Charlemont's horses.<sup>3</sup>

Having accepted his stepfather's offer, Charlemont immediately began to think about building at Donnycarney, which he renamed Marino. In October 1754 he ordered, through his agent in Rome, designs for a habitable temple from Luigi Vanvitelli, who was then employed upon building Caserta.<sup>4</sup> He also commissioned in Rome models of the Falconeiri gates.

No agreement was reached with Vanvitelli, but Charlemont, evidently burning to put into practice ideas evolving from what he had seen upon his travels in the Levant and the long years in Italy, Holland and France, continued to plan for Marino.

On his return to Ireland, by the purchase of outlying farms held under a head rent to the City of Dublin, at the cost of £3,400, he trebled Marino's acreage. Upon a parcel of thirty acres, land held uniquely from the city under terms of perpetuity, he selected a site for his temple and concentrated his scheme for the gardens (Fig. 2).

He began, not with the temple, for which no architect had yet been appointed, but more practicably with the kitchen garden. His early interest in fruit growing and various methods of cultivation is known from observations made upon his Levantine voyage and recorded in his *Traveller's Essays*<sup>5</sup>. For example, he made notes on a





'Singular' way of propagating vines on the island of Lesbos; the best slips were bound together like a bunch of faggots, buried 'in a Dunghill' until they had pushed out roots and leaves and then carefully separated before planting out, when the forced leaves would fall off and be replaced by new growth<sup>5</sup>.

As one would expect, Charlemont's plan for his kitchen garden was no commonplace one, a polygon of five sides, which was no doubt dictated first by the disposition of the boundary line at the north end of the thirty acres (Fig. 2) where the stables were situated. Dung could be carted from them with no waste of time or labour. But in following through the plan, with a lay-out of paths radiating outwards from an off-centre hub, Charlemont was perhaps recalling Renaissance gardens he had seen in Italy. At the centre of the hub was a copy of the *Fighting Gladiator* by Simon Vierpyl, the young sculptor Charlemont had patronised in Rome and brought to Ireland in 1756; it was a curious feature of an Irish kitchen garden<sup>6</sup>.

In the building of the walls and the great stove in 1756 Charlemont's consultant gardener was Matthew Peters. No other work has been attributed to Peters, although he was advertising from 1746 onwards in *Faulkner's Journal* as a gardener and seedsman, who 'Designs, draws and executes improvements for gentlemen in the most natural and rural taste in which business he was bred up by his uncle, who was chief gardener to Lord Cobham at Stowe'.<sup>7</sup>

Peters's name first occurs in the Charlemont correspondence in a letter, dated 11 June 1757, from Adderley to Charlemont who was then in London, reporting 'Edgar the gardener has gone from Marino and by Peters's account left all things in great disorder'<sup>8</sup>. While we learn from this that gardening operations had begun, Peters's place is not explained.

However, a letter from Peters to Adderley dated 10 June 1758 establishes his position and involvement from 1756 in work

'formed from by own Judgement and variety of enquiries when in England (for his Ldship's Acct, two season's past) to form Walls agreeable to his Lordship's sentiments made known to me, and the manner most proper for the Training & advantage of the Wall Trees, not known here, and but by very few in England, must be Distressful to me to think such Trees should be abandoned to Distruction & such Walls after the great expense his Ldship has been at, furnished with ignorant management . . . and the best stove ever constructed should also be put into hands of ignorance.'<sup>9</sup>

A part of these walls remains today, built of brick and standing twelve feet high. The wall at the north end of the garden, angled to gain the full advantage of the sun, is of double thickness, enclosing a system of in-built flues running horizontally the entire length. The partial collapse and stripping of the brick reveals them to be graduated in size, widest at the base, narrowest at the top, and neatly finished and lined with stucco throughout.

The stove, of which only the bare foundations remain, was referred to by Lady Northumberland, the Vicereine, on a visit to Marino in October 1763 when she was invited to breakfast in the ante-room of the stove<sup>10</sup>. Charlemont must have been proud of his kitchen garden to think of entertaining her there, considering the grandiosity of the improvements currently in progress at Alnwick and at Sion. Nevertheless, Lady Northumberland was sufficiently impressed, at least by the size of the kitchen garden and hot-house, to record their dimensions in her journal, measurements which agree with what we find today, the garden nine acres and the stove one hundred and seventy feet<sup>10</sup>.



Fig. 2 Map of part of the land at Donnycarney (courtesy City Hall).

Her mention of myrtle and other scented, flowering plants in the ante-room suggests this was a dry stove, that is, with flues under pavements and along the back wall conducting heated air from a furnace. It was common practice to bring in flowering shrubs, myrtle included, laurustinus and bay for winter housing and arrangement on shelves and in tubs.

Lady Northumberland gave no hint as to the use of the main stove. But from Charlemont having sent ten pineapples to Mrs. Delaney in August 1758 - 'as fine ones as ever I tasted,' she commented - and from the use of 'tan for the hot house' as specified in some notes of Charlemont's, we must conclude this was a bark stove for the cultivation of pineapples and melons.

Bark stoves were usually straight-fronted, with a roof sloping to the back wall, thus ensuring the maximum amount of space and air around the plants. They were divided into sections at about forty feet intervals to allow for cultivation at different temperatures. The pinery was the hottest section, so that stove thermometers, Mr. Fowler's for example, were marked at the top *Ananas* (i.e. pines or pineapples). Pineapples, likewise melons, were grown in central pits, usually three feet deep and six feet wide, running the length of the house. The pits were filled with tanner's bark, the bark of the oak tree which produced the tannin for processing leather, and which acted as a fermenting agent to raise the temperature of the beds to the required level, which it was expected to maintain up to six months. The sections of the stove were divided by glass partitions, each section having its own furnace for which the fuel in general use in Ireland was turf (peat) (Fig. 3).

For some reason, not fully explained, the bark stove was not very successful or at least at a later date Charlemont became discouraged with it. As for pineapples, he wrote as he determined upon a 'Regulation of future Expenses at Marino',

"I will believe they can never be had in Quantity or Perfection 'till a proper stove is built for them; but with regard to Melons there can, I am sure, be no excuse, as no Convenience or expense has been wanting. I shall therefore for the future expect a Quantity of this fruit far greater than I have yet had; care must be taken to have them early, which has never yet been the case, and to have only the best kinds, as the Cultivation of the inferior kinds is no sort of use, and is in fact so much Room, Culture & Expense totally thrown away."

Lord Charlemont added a stern momento for Adams, his steward. "This Adams must attend to or expect the consequences. Early Garden stuff will also be expected: Fruit and Flowers."<sup>13</sup>

Charlemont's interest in exotic trees and shrubs was expressed in his *Traveller's Essays*, where he recorded the plants indigenous to each port-of-call and recalled their mentions by the ancient poets, naturalists and historians. At Cos he was particularly struck by a giant plane tree (*Platanus*) which 'notwithstanding the lateness of the season', when in northern regions it was the first to lose its leaves, here in the second week of November 'in its native clime, the foliage was only tinged with an autumnal hue'. The measuring rods were brought out and this 'beautiful tree', planted in the middle of the market square, was found to be twenty seven and a half feet in girth (above nine feet in diameter) and its branches spread about fifty yards, 'being supported at the extremities by stone pillars to prevent them breaking by their own weight'.<sup>14</sup>

From this and similar observations, one would anticipate selective planting at Marino. Arthur Young in 1776 mentioned 'a well-planted thriving shrubbery'. 'The lawn, which is extensive, is new grass and appears to be excellently laid down'.

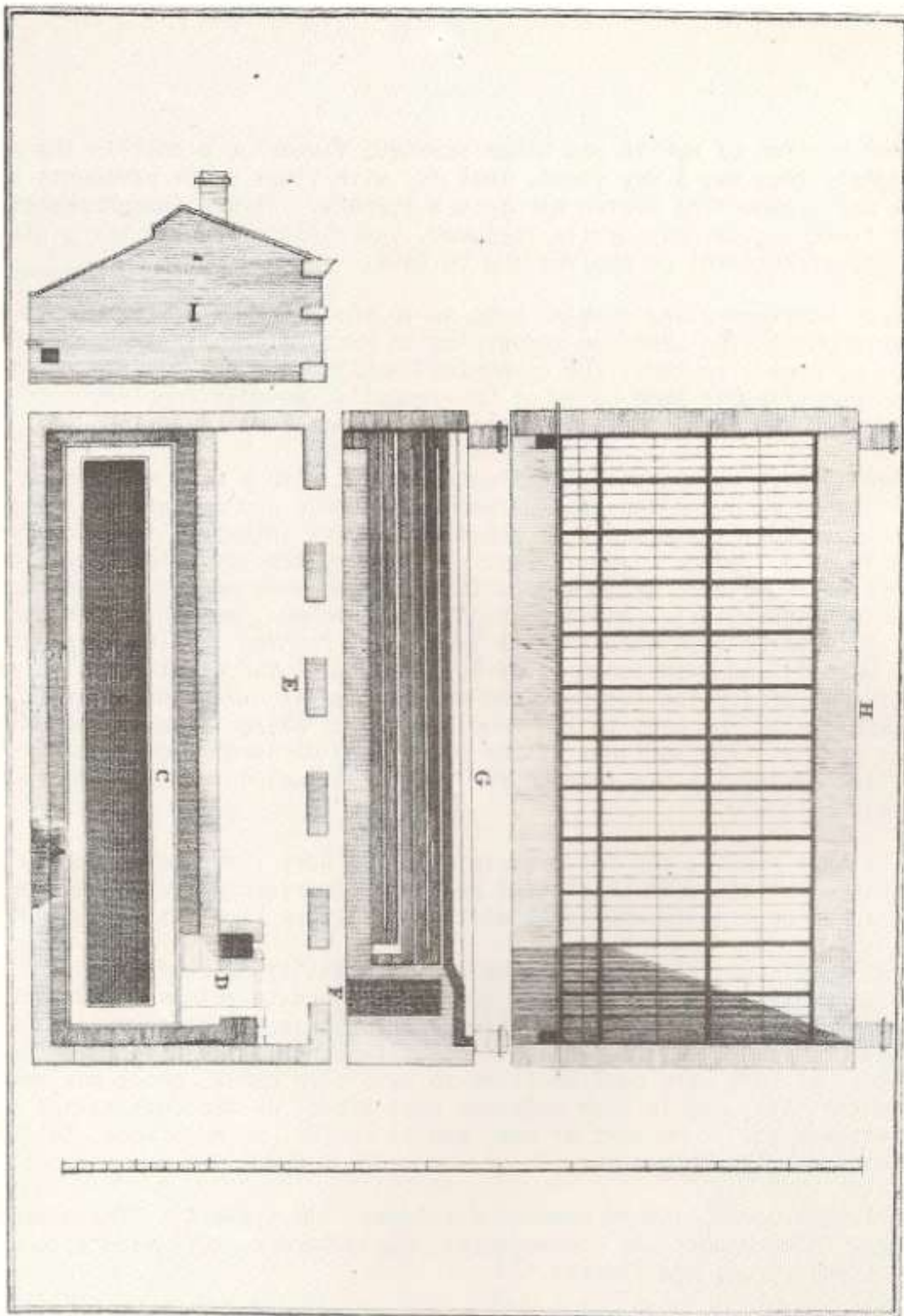


Fig. 3 Engraving from the *Gardener's New Kalender* (London 1758)

- A. The flue that runs round the front.
- B. The Bark Bed.
- C. The walk that runs round the bark bed.
- D. The two ovens.
- E. The piazza or shed behind the stove.
- F. The door in the back wall.
- G. The flues in the back wall.
- H. The glass part of the stove.
- I. The end of the stove and shed.

Young specified that 'the herbage (is) a fine crop of white clover (*Trifolium repens*), trefoile, rib-grass (*Plantago lanceolata*) and other good plants<sup>15</sup>. But unfortunately other visitors confined themselves to commenting on the general effect of dense wood, open park and shrubbery without specification. Only Caesar Otway, reporting in 1835, noted that there was 'a profusion of exotics and forest trees' clothing the banks of the lake<sup>16</sup>.

However from Charlemont's correspondence we learn of gifts of seeds and plants from near and far; seeds of the 'East India red-flower tree' coming from Colonel Bagshawe in 1757<sup>17</sup>; 'forty shining leav'd Laurustinuses' (i.e. *Viburnum tinus*) sent by Lord Arran in 1762 and with an offer of Balm of Gilead (*Abies balsamea*), liquidambers, *Cephalanthus* and cockspur hawthorn (*Crataegus crus-galli*)<sup>18</sup>. In 1786 Sir Edward Newenham recalled having sent to Adams for Marino some years before 'a real curiosity', some seeds of rhubarb from Tartary. None had come up save one in Newenham's own garden where 'Dr. (James) Span, the Botanist (Professor of Botany, Trinity College, Dublin), took a drawing of it; the main plant met with an accident by an awkward gardener, but has this year produced two or three suckers, one of which I beg your acceptance'. Newenham also offered the half of any that might survive of some 'Black Hicory'\* and 'Butter Nutts trees' (*Juglans cinerea*) he had just received from Colonel Wordsworth of Connecticut<sup>19</sup>.

In 1767 Chambers sent the designs for the entrance gates of Marino, designs which superceded the Falconeiri models. Opening the gates to the public, thus recalling the *Lex Hortorum* of the Renaissance gardens of Rome<sup>20</sup>, was unprecedented in Ireland. 'What obligation,' remarked Charles Topham Bowden in 1791 when he was shown over the gardens by Adams, 'are not the citizens of Dublin under to his Lordship for having the gates of this terrestrial paradise opened to them whenever they chuse to walk through it'<sup>21</sup>. Needless to say the privilege was abused, Charlemont thrice was held up by footpads and robbed in his own grounds and the lead was stolen from the roof of the Casino. A watchman on Charlemont's payroll appears to have been his only concession towards security<sup>22</sup>. After Charlemont's death, his son, the second Earl, continued for a time to keep up the practice but the liberty being abused, the gates before 'freely thrown open' were by 1835 finally closed.<sup>23</sup>

The upkeep of a demesne, which was virtually on public show, necessitated, as we learn from Charlemont's notes, the employment of twenty four labourers at ten pence a man per day throughout the year 'for digging etc. the garden, cleaning and digging the plantations and shrubberys; weeding the Meadows and Pastures, planting and for all constant work'. Beyond that, when extraordinary work had to be done, 'such as inclosing by a Ditch or the like' it was executed by job work 'in the cheapest and most expeditious manner, an estimate being all way previously and given in'<sup>24</sup>.

In 1791, according to Bowden, the estate comprised 238 acres,<sup>25</sup> but the acreage varied according to the lands Charlemont chose at different times either to rent or let, and it is likely that farming, though in no serious sense of the word, was confined to a hundred acres or less.

Farming at Marino has to be considered here, because of its ornamental character, as an extension of the gardens, and also because there was scarcely a dividing line between the two in their management and the deployment of labour. The work-force that tended the garden, the shrubberies and the plantation also weeded the meadows, and Adams was as much responsible for one as he was for the other.

\* Black hickory is *Carya texana* which does not appear to be in cultivation. It is more likely to have been black walnut (*Juglans nigra*).

The 'foreign sheep' which grazed the lawns around the Casino were not, at least in the eyes of visitors, livestock in the agricultural sense of the word. John Wesley mentioned them in the same breath as 'a great plenty of peacocks'<sup>26</sup> and Bowden wrote of plantations, sheep-walks, lawns and a delightful park. 'Here', he noted, 'are sheep with four, six and eight horns'.<sup>27</sup> In an amusing aside, Sir Edward Newenham referred to a lamb given him by Charlemont: 'Your lamb has been all the Evening in the library and made the Lap dogs give way by butting them'<sup>28</sup>.

Where sheep might be pets as well as an embellishment to the landscape, it followed that all agricultural activities adopted, at least in the eyes of others, an idyllic guise. Dr. Halliday was wont to imagine, seasonably, Charlemont sitting among his haymakers at Marino,<sup>29</sup> a picture suggesting one of the picturesque pastimes of a *ferme ornée*.

But after 1775, a year of financial crisis in Charlemont's affairs, such pleasures had to be curtailed. It became necessary for Charlemont to take stock of a worrying situation and become, what he and his kind most despised, an economist.

Striving to meet his commitments and regulate his expenses, Charlemont determined upon measures at Marino which could only have been abhorrent to him. Against 'Sheep bought in to stock the farm', he wrote 'Sheep sold with their price and mutton consumed in the Family at the Current market price'.<sup>30</sup> As for haymaking, he noted: 'this article has hitherto been extravagantly done, but for the future I shall expect to make Hay nearly as cheap as my neighbours'.<sup>30</sup> The produce of the garden was to be estimated as to what it might be worth and put against 'Repairs of Carts etc. Paling, Including of Trees, Implements of Husbandry, Garden Tools etc., Tan for the Hot House, Cost of Trees and Seedsmens' Bills'.<sup>30</sup> The Master of Marino, who had spent £30,000 on building the Casino alone<sup>31</sup> and had not hesitated to mortgage a large proportion of his northern estates to do so<sup>32</sup>, had now to count the most trivial cost.

On 18 January 1777, when all building at Marino had necessarily ceased, Sir William Chambers presented his final bill for a comparatively modest sum of thirty seven pounds.<sup>33</sup> The bill had not been paid by 20 May 1779 when Chambers wrote again and added: 'Some time ago I sent over a bill for some designs done for your Lordship for Jan. '73 to August '75 amounting to £37.5.6 which I apprehend has been forgot. If your Lordship desires a fresh copy, I will send it over or may I take the liberty of drawing upon you for the Amount'.<sup>34</sup>

Charlemont's neglect of this debt has never been understood; it has been assumed that as he found it inconvenient to pay, he chose simply to ignore it. But this was not the case. In fact he queried the bill, in two items, which curiously enough are rare, though oblique references to some form of floriculture at Marino.

"1773		£. s. d.
Jan.30th	Various designs for flower stands with a pavilion in the center	8--8....
May 14th	A new design for a flower stand	3--3.... "

A fragmentary letter<sup>35</sup> of Chambers's relates to the new design.

"My lord,

I have sent another d  
pavilion which I th  
first I have drawn the f  
if it were made Octago  
in the side views and a  
flowers would be l

Honour to be  
My Lord

Your ..."

Had the letter been complete, it would still be brief, even abrupt, indicating Chambers did not take kindly to the rejection of the designs of 30 January, any more than Charlemont liked being charged for designs he could not use.

On the reverse of Chambers's bill, is Charlemont's comment<sup>36</sup>:

There is, I believe, a Mistake in the charge of £8.8.-. for *Various Designs for Flower Stands*. There are but two such Designs exclusive of that which is afterward charged £3.3.-. and which alone answered my Purpose, the others being only unsuccessful attempts, which if it were intended that they should be charged, as I rather suppose it was not, ought not most certainly to be set at a higher Price than that Design which alone was of any sort of use to me."

Charlemont, as economist, had taken to scrutinizing the accounts.

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36. I am indebted to John Redmill for drawing my attention to the note in Charlemont's hand on the reverse of the page.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank the Council, Librarian and staff of the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, Patrick Bowe and the Knight of Glin for much kind and helpful advice. I am also grateful to the Royal Irish Academy for permission to publish material from the Charlemont manuscripts.



## FERNS AT ROSSDOHAN, COUNTY KERRY

By SIMON WALKER  
Balgara, Sandvford, County Dublin.

Interest in ferns reached its peak during the Victorian and Edwardian periods in Britain and Ireland. A "winter garden" with ferns and other exotics provided the ornamentation in the conservatories of the wealthy. Most of the fern collections assembled during this time were lost through neglect after the First World War, partly as a direct consequence of the war itself and partly because changing horticultural fashions focussed attention on other areas of interest. Numerous fern cultivars have disappeared, possibly irretrievably.

In the mid-1870s when Samuel Thomas Heard bought Rossdohan Island in County Kerry, pteridology was approaching its zenith. Born in Ballintober, County Cork, in 1835, he joined the Indian Army and reached the rank of surgeon-major. He married Kate Bradley, a daughter of the very wealthy Governor of New South Wales. How and where he met her is not clear, and it would seem that although Miss Bradley's parents initially did not approve of the match, they later acquiesced. Heard then returned to Ireland, and settled down to an early retirement<sup>1</sup>.

He must have been a fern enthusiast because Rossdohan is in many respects an out-of-doors version of what so many were seeking to achieve in their conservatories. Unfortunately there are no written garden records for Rossdohan, so it is impossible to know the full extent of Heard's fern plantings. The smaller species are often so short-lived that they could disappear without trace in the space of a few years. Added to this was a period of about fifteen years, after the burning of Rossdohan House in 1922, when the garden fell into total neglect, with cattle grazing the grounds freely.

Heard did plant the tree ferns *Dicksonia antarctica* and *Cyathea dealbata* (see Fig. 1), which have reached heights of up to five metres. It is unlikely that the oldest specimens were introduced as sporelings, as it is possible to transport ferns over long distances by removing the fronds and covering the trunks in moist protective material. Provided the roots are also kept moist the plants will survive an arduous journey. Alternatively small plants could have been imported in Wardian cases. Whichever method Heard used to acquire his ferns, it is almost certain that he did not raise his own plants from spores.

Apart from the two species of tree fern already mentioned, he introduced the epiphytic fern *Microsorium diversifolium* (syn. *Polypodium diversifolium*, *Phymatodes diversifolium*) which has been referred to in previous articles as *Polypodium scolopendria*<sup>2</sup>. This very appealing fern grows on the ground and creeps up tree trunks by means of its fleshy rhizomes to a height of at least 10 metres.

Heard must also have been responsible for the fine colonies of *Woodwardia radicans* and *Blechnum magellanicum*, the former propagating itself by means of a distal bud on the end of each frond as well as by spores, and the latter by means of widespread underground runners.

These are the five exotic species of fern at Rossdohan which were probably



opposite - Mrs. K. Lohan supplied this photograph which was taken c. 1918. She informs us that Heard's eldest son, Lt.Col. E.S. Heard (her uncle) brought back tree-ferns from New Zealand. A diary discovered recently confirms that Heard did travel to New Zealand on SS OTWAY in 1910.

below - Rossdohan 1976 (photo by J. M. Gibson).



planted around the turn of the century and which have survived mainly because they have all succeeded in regenerating themselves naturally in the garden.

We are now endeavouring to increase the collection of ferns rapidly, with the long-term plan on acquiring and growing a wide selection of hardy, semi-hardy, and even tender species. *Cyathea mexicana*, which is noted as a stove species in the *Dictionary of Gardening* (Royal Horticultural Society, London), grows at Rossdohan, but without great luxuriance.

A number of factors make Rossdohan an ideal location for ferns. The south-westerly, maritime climate is mild in winter and the rainfall is high. The garden is situated on sandstone rock, which probably retains warmth in winter and moisture in summer. As ferns, both large and small, grow quite happily on almost bare rock, this seems a reasonable assumption. Finally, while the severe storms of 1957 toppled hundreds of trees, the result was to let light into previously shaded areas, with the consequent germination of seedlings and sporelings. While most ferns will tolerate much overhead shading, it is our experience that they will only germinate and become established in bright areas, and they thrive best in a woodland clearing which is bright but sheltered and not large enough to allow long periods of direct sunshine. The storms opened up plenty of such areas and demonstrated to us the staggering fecundity of the garden - we have learned the rewarding lesson that your best plants will often reproduce themselves if the garden is not kept too tidy! This is one of the reasons why chemical usage is kept to an absolute minimum at Rossdohan.

The open drains throughout the garden provide the most suitable environment for the complex and fascinating reproductive cycle of ferns. When spores germinate they produce a small scale-like plant, the prothallus. The male and female organs are formed on the underside of the prothallus and when these are ripe, the female egg cells are fertilized by free-swimming male cells. Provided there is a film of water present the fertilization process can succeed and a tiny frond will appear on the now redundant prothallus.

For some reason unknown to us, *Dicksonia antarctica* sporelings appear by the thousand, but young plants of *Cyathea dealbata* are rather rare. It requires some experience to identify the latter as the distinctive blue underside of the fronds does not appear for some years. It becomes evident when blotches of blue form on the tops and margins of the fronds and gradually cover the full extent of the undersides. Some large plants are slow to develop their colour, whereas other two or three year-old sporelings show the early stages of their characteristic metamorphosis. What the determining factor is in the timing of the colouring is a complete mystery to me.

The success of these exotic species of fern at Rossdohan is Heard's achievement. What of the present and what of the future?

We have introduced a considerable number of species to the garden in the past three years and there are approximately one hundred additional species at various stages of germination which will hopefully be planted out in 1983 and 1984. Those that succeed could be the only plants of these species growing out-of-doors in Europe. The results of these experiments, both positive and negative, will be reported from time to time.

NOTE Heard's granddaughter has set down her childhood reminiscences in an autobiography. Katherine Lohan 1982. *Bang goes the green baize door*. United Writers Publ. Ltd.

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#### APPENDIX

The following ferns have been introduced over the past two to three years.

- Alsophila australis* (syn. *A. cooperi*) - an Australian tree fern  
*Blechnum penna-marina* - a small hardy fern for rapid ground cover  
*Blechnum penna-marina* var. *alpica* - similar to the species but with large fronds.  
*Cyathea medullaris* (syn. *Sphaeropteris medullaris*) - a large and fast growing tree fern. It is probably more tender than *Cyathea dealbata* but over one hundred plants have made impressive growth since 1981.  
*Cyathea mexicana* - a small 'stove' species  
*Dicksonia fibrosa* - forty plants of this tree fern are doing very well  
*Dicksonia squarrosa* - a plant of this tree fern given by the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, is progressing  
*Doodia media* - a small New Zealand fern  
*Hymenophyllum demissum* 'Nitens' - a New Zealand filmy fern which is tender and reputedly difficult to grow  
*Onoclea sensibilis* - the "sensitive fern" from North America - it is hardy and deciduous  
*Polystichum setiferum* 'Divisilobum' - a cultivar of a native species, easy to grow  
*Todea hymenophylloides* - a moisture and shade-loving fern from New Zealand  
*Woodwardia orientalis* - similar to *W. radicans* and quite hardy.

PHILIP WALKER (1915-1982) - an appreciation

Through the courtesy of Ruth and the late Philip Walker, together with his brother the late Ralph Walker, we made several visits to Rossdohan between the years 1969 and 1980. It was our privilege to gain the acquaintance of the Walker brothers as keen gardeners and plantsmen. Ralph we knew during his last Presidency of the Royal Horticultural Society of Ireland when evening meetings were still held in the evocative surroundings of the old premises on St. Stephen's Green. But Philip was known as our hospitable host at Rossdohan, the Samuel Heard garden which the brothers retrieved from oblivion in the 1950s.



One of the memorable contributions which we believe the Walkers made to Irish horticulture was a refusal to accept the demise of one of the nation's great gardens, through economic and social pressures acting to deprive the community of the large gardens once owned by private individuals. There are all too few philanthropically-minded people who are also willing to do the hard work and make certain sacrifices of time to restore heritage gardens. However, the Walkers were such people. They were well read, practical

gardeners with a flair for making plantings in memorable associations. They had a vision of a restored Rossdohan, despite setbacks such as a fierce gale which swept the garden soon after they acquired it. The garden became their pride and joy.

Philip was a quietly spoken man, unassuming, full of humour, whom one could only admire. He solicited assistance from others just as easily as he gave help in return. We corresponded and donated seed of Australian native plants from Adelaide Botanic Garden to Rossdohan prior to 1974. He generously arranged a tour of Irish gardens for us when we visited Ireland in 1974 and 1980. Progress was made with new plantings at Rossdohan. However, the estuary setting of the garden with, in summer, its subtropical atmosphere, and the tree ferns *Cyathea dealbata* and *Dicksonia antarctica*, with epiphytic *Mittraria coccinea* and memorable specimens of *Clethra arborea*, *Olearia argophylla*, *Acacia melanoxylon* and *Brachyglottis repanda*, is the picture which remains in our minds. At their new home at Sandyford, Ruth and Philip developed another garden full of treasures including *Eucalyptus*, *Melaleuca* and *Callistemon*.

That Philip was in 1974 my introduction to Noel Lothian, then Director of the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide on a world tour of botanic gardens, and that I subsequently joined Lothian's staff is incidental, but nonetheless of personal significance at a time when I worked at Glasnevin.

We are sad to learn of Philip's untimely death, as will be all who knew him, or knew the garden he recreated with his brother. For Ruth and her sons is the lasting knowledge that Philip was one of the most significant Irish plantsmen of the latter part of the twentieth century.

Noel Lothian  
Director, Adelaide Botanic Gardens  
(1948-1980)

Brian Morley  
Director, Adelaide Botanic Gardens

## CORRESPONDENCE TO FREDERICK BURBIDGE (TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN) ON DAFFODILS

By DAVID WILLIS

New University of Ulster, Coleraine, Co. Londonderry.

### INTRODUCTION

During 1977 while researching the history of the daffodil in Ireland I wrote to Trinity College, Dublin, seeking papers relating to F. W. Burbidge, which may have been in the Library or Botany School there. Unfortunately at that time the only known items referring to Burbidge were obituary notices which appeared in the *Notes from the Botanical School of Trinity College*<sup>1</sup> and in the *Kew Bulletin*<sup>2</sup>. This seemed rather strange for one who had played such a major role in the horticulture and botany of Ireland, and who had been one of the founding fathers of the Irish daffodil revival during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

Recently, however, this situation has changed with the discovery in Dublin of approximately four hundred letters together with watercolours and drawings of daffodils. While the majority of the letters are addressed to Burbidge, rather than written by him, they nevertheless give a clear picture of the daffodils of that time, the people involved, many of whom we remember only as names or because of the odd cultivar raised by them which has survived the ravages of time. The letters also highlight some of the arguments concerning daffodils then current.

What has hitherto been known of Frederick William Burbidge and his work has been covered elsewhere<sup>3</sup>, but it may be worthwhile to give a brief resume at this point. He was born at Wymeswold, Leicestershire, England in 1847, his father being a farmer and fruit grower, so that his introduction to gardening occurred at an early age. From the outset his approach to his chosen profession was both thorough and diligent for on leaving school he became apprenticed to a private estate garden and although the hours of work were long he made every effort to improve his education by attending evening classes and by studying on his own. At the conclusion of his apprenticeship he moved to the garden of the Royal Horticultural Society at Chiswick and while there also took a course in art, in which he received first prize of four pounds with which he promptly purchased a microscope. The value of this training in art was to be realised later with the fine plates produced for his own book on daffodils<sup>4</sup> and his illustrations in the works of others<sup>5</sup>. On leaving Chiswick he progressed to the Royal Botanic Garden at Kew and on completion of his course there in 1870, joined the staff of *The Garden* magazine, where he remained for the next eight years. During his years in garden journalism he found time for a considerable volume of private work, publishing four books, two of which were to become of major importance to the literature of horticulture, namely *The Narcissus: Its History and Culture*, the major treatise on this group of plants for many years, and *Cultivated Plants, Their Propagation and Improvement*, thought by Sir Joseph Hooker to be a book of great merit. He also published *The Art of Botanical Drawing* (1873) and *Cool Orchids* (1874).

In 1878 Burbidge was commissioned by the well known London nursery firm of J. Veitch & Son to accompany Peter Veitch to Borneo and the Sulu Islands to collect plants then not known in cultivation. The expedition was successful, Burbidge discovering several new species of orchids and *Nepenthes*. Although the journey proved most fruitful the toll on Burbidge's health was considerable for he contracted malaria and was ill for a considerable period.

Burbidge came to Ireland in 1879 to take up the curatorship of the Trinity College Botanic Garden in succession to Frederick Moore who had been appointed Curator of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Glasnevin. One year later Burbidge published an interesting account of the expedition to Borneo titled *The Gardens of the Sun*. Being already an authority on daffodils on arrival in Dublin he was quick to notice an outstanding form of *Narcissus pseudo-narcissus* which subsequently became known as "The Trinity College *Maximus*" and was widely used in early hybridisation. He also noted the profusion of different types of daffodils, especially white sorts, for which Ireland was later to become famous. These grew in estate and monastery gardens and Burbidge was instrumental in encouraging the Cork nurseryman, W. Baylor Hartland, in their collection. During his time at Trinity (1879 - 1905) he was concerned with the classification of *Narcissus*, and made many seemingly outlandish predictions about future trends in breeding, including the possibility of pink colouring and where it was likely to come from. He also built-up one of the world's major collections of bulbous plants, now unfortunately lost. For his outstanding work he received many honours including the degree of Master of Arts (*honoris causa*) from Dublin University (1889) and he was among the first sixty recipients of the Victoria Medal of Honour for distinguished service to horticulture, instituted to mark the sixtieth year of Queen Victoria's reign. He was elected the first president of the Irish Gardeners Association and on his death it was that Association which raised funds in order to found a Burbidge Memorial Library (the project never came to fruition). He is commemorated by the plant *Burbidgea nitida*, named by Sir Joseph Hooker who wrote at the time - "in recognition of Mr. Burbidge's eminent services to horticulture, whether as collector in Borneo, or as author of *Cultivated Plants, Their Propagation and Improvement*, a work which should be in every gardener's library".

#### THE LETTERS

Included among these are some from such legendary daffodil personalities as Peter Barr, the Rev. G.H. Engleheart, J. G. Baker, Alfred Tait, and the Rev. C. Wolley-Dod, while others less intimately connected with daffodils, such as the garden designer, Gertrude Jekyll\*, also corresponded with Burbidge.

On reading through the letters for the first time I was particularly struck by two items. The first indicated that Burbidge had a wide knowledge of plants other than daffodils, for a letter dated 10 September 1903 from Alexander Campbell, the head gardener at St. Anne's, Clontarf, Co. Dublin, referred to a bloom of *Catasetum* sent for identification. He went on to say that Mr. Moore (later Sir Frederick), curator of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin, had visited on the previous Saturday and had commented that he had never seen the form before. Burbidge, however, knew and identified the species, from his note appended to the letter, as the female form of *C. bungerothii* (syn. *pileatum*). The second indicated the importance of the Trinity College Garden and of Burbidge in the daffodil scene of the late nineteenth century for the Rev. G. H. Engleheart wrote on 30 April 1890 "I look upon you as a kind of Daffodil Headquarters which should be informed of anything in the way of news or progress". Engleheart went on to describe a unique newly flowered seedling from 'Emperor' x *N. triandrus albus* saying that he had sent a flower to Miss Jekyll to be photographed. "Truly there is no end to the beautiful and wonderful things which the interminglings of the *Narcissus* may give us".

The letters also indicate the turmoil which existed regarding nomenclature,

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\*One letter from Miss Jekyll is in the correspondence.



for this period at the end of the 19th century probably represented the peak of organised daffodil collecting in Southern Europe. New variants were being discovered regularly, leading to the creation of new species names or the revival of old ones, following comparisons between flowers collected in the field with those to be found in the works of Clusius, Parkinson, Salisbury, Haworth, Redoute, Herbert, Pritzel and others.

Particular forms of daffodils were also the source of much interest and speculation, for example, the double-flowered forms, debate no doubt being stimulated by Hibberd's article in 1874<sup>6</sup>. One of the most prolific of Burbidge's correspondents was the Rev. C. Wolley-Dod, only one of many men of the cloth who became associated with botany and horticulture during the Victorian period, a remnant possibly from earlier times when both plant introduction and utilisation was strongly associated with the established monastic orders and also with religious refugees. Wolley-Dod's favourite subject was the origin of double daffodils and his ideas of a century ago make strange reading indeed. His belief in his ideas on the subject was almost total and furthermore he gave names and addresses to Burbidge of his correspondents from all over England who were prepared to vouch for the veracity of his statements. The main theme of Dod's argument was that double daffodils arose from single types largely as the result of the soil in which they grew. Before going on to discuss the question of "doubling", however, I return briefly to the prolific nature of Dod's letter writing for among the collection of letters are four attached together apparently all written on the same day, 19 March 1884, two of which begin "do not answer this" and "I do not expect you to answer all my letters". Did he realise that he was perhaps becoming something of a nuisance? In the same group of letters Dod had been most patronising towards Burbidge when he wrote "I am all Daffodils at the present time and here have little to distract me from them but . . . how you find time to write me all the letters you do in the midst of all your other business is a lesson to me of what busy men can do". Dod continued, "I repeat I have the greatest respect for and belief in your infinite knowledge and power of recognition of all the cultivated forms of Daffodils and I carefully attend to what you say". This nevertheless did not prevent him from then immediately attacking Burbidge's ideas on "the doubling question" for being different from his own<sup>7</sup>.

Dod's views on doubling are perhaps best outlined in a letter sent from his home, Edge Hall, Malpas, Cheshire, England, on 2 February (year not given) in which he wrote "I take special interest in all forms of trumpet daffodils. The various ways in which *N. pseudo-narcissus* doubles began to be an object of my special enquiry last year and a very interesting and wide subject it is. I am now nearly convinced that the commonest form of doubling (results from) the dying down one year of plain and single *pseudo-narcissus* to come up another as *Telamonius Flore Pleno*". Dod also mentions the fact that he had distributed 2000 single bulbs to between 200 and 300 places in an attempt to prove the point and gave locations of where doubling had occurred. He referred, for example, in his letter of 19 March 1884 to an orchard at Farnham Royal in Buckinghamshire where the common single daffodil grew in the surrounding fields but those growing in the richer conditions of the orchard had all turned to doubles. He concluded, "You may disbelieve me if you like but as Haworth said posterity will do me justice". In a further letter, dated 15 May 1884, he first accused Burbidge of confusing the Alps with the Pyrenees as he had on three occasions referred to *N. muticus* as an "Alpine plant", and went on to say that "we all confuse localities until we visit them". In the same letter the inevitable "doubling question" was duly raised when he named a Mr. Brierley of The Post Office, Knowle, Warwickshire and a Mr. Silver of The Gardens, Chirk, Ruabon, N. Wales as "two of the most intelligent amongst my many 'Doubling' correspondents". No doubt about their views!

Dod obviously realised that his opinions on double daffodils were generally regarded as being somewhat odd for he wrote in a letter dated 27 February 1884 that "if ever I express any peculiar opinions about Daffodils it is either founded on experience or for the sake of exciting inquiry as Haworth said when he described five species . . . none of which he had ever seen". He was under no illusions that he was anything other than in a minority of one among the daffodil experts of his day with regard to doubling. He even went so far, in a letter dated 18 May 1884, as to compare his ideas on "doubling" with the discovery of the circulation of the blood by Dr. Harvey, which also was apparently scoffed at initially, only to be recognised as fact by later generations. He went on to say that Burbidge, Masters, Baker and others in high authority had said that doubling was a proposterous suggestion but that in due course "the rising generation (Engleheart and Scott Wilson) will find out that it is a fact".

Dod nevertheless craved support for his ideas from his contemporaries and apparently became most annoyed when this did not materialise for in a letter dated 22 May (year not given) he wrote to Burbidge as follows "I respect and admire the great extent of your daffodil knowledge but I am vexed with your incredulity on the doubling question, which amounts in plain English to this, that all men who say they have produced double daffodils . . . from single flowered bulbs are either fools or liars. I reply F.W.B. according to my feelings on the subject . . .". In another letter dated 27 May 1884, Dod again refers to doubling, writing of experiments and labelled plants of single flowered varieties. Burbidge had evidently asked a Dutchman for his opinion on Dod's ideas and Dod had obviously found out for he wrote "Your cross examination of the Dutchman does not weigh much in my mind".

Peter Barr joined in the discussion and in a letter to Burbidge dated 7 May 1884 wrote "I do not know what your ideas may be on the doubling theory, but Wolley-Dod is so earnest he has confided in me some of the evidence . . . as he feels sure, though I may not believe, my son will be compelled by the force of evidence that will come before him. The only thing I cannot get over is that a single *pseudo-narcissus* should turn to a double . . .".

Perhaps the last laugh was with Burbidge and Barr for in a letter dated 24 March (year not given) Dod wrote that his own garden worked in reverse to the theory he had so vigorously propounded in that it turned everything single "Daffodils . . . even Primroses". He went on to say that he had received a dozen double *N. pseudo-narcissus* from a man named Hind, which by the following year had turned to singles: "I sent him half a dozen for change of air to double again, and this year he sent them doubled". Act of God or biology gone haywire? Who can tell? Perhaps Dod summed it up best himself in a letter dated 24 March (year not given) when he wrote of "the three stages of Narcissomania - positive Daffodil, comparative Daffodilly and superlative Daffodowndilly and I have certainly reached the Daffodowndilly stage and hope that old Mr. Sweet's fate does not await me".

Woolley-Dod was not only at odds with several of his contemporaries but did not exactly see eye to eye with some of the earlier botanists who had been involved in the naming and classification of daffodils and in a letter dated 16 March 1886 he referred to Salisbury as having a "self confident style . . . which prevents me trusting him implicitly", to Herbert as "very opinionated" and to Haworth as "far too credulous and not a good arranger". Dod himself was decidedly anti-Haworth in that he was a "lumper" rather than a "splitter" for in a letter to Burbidge, dated 20 March 1886, he complained of Hartland sending him seedlings "which vary only slightly from *spurius*. If one is to give a separate name to all slight varieties our seed catalogues would become Octavo Volumes".

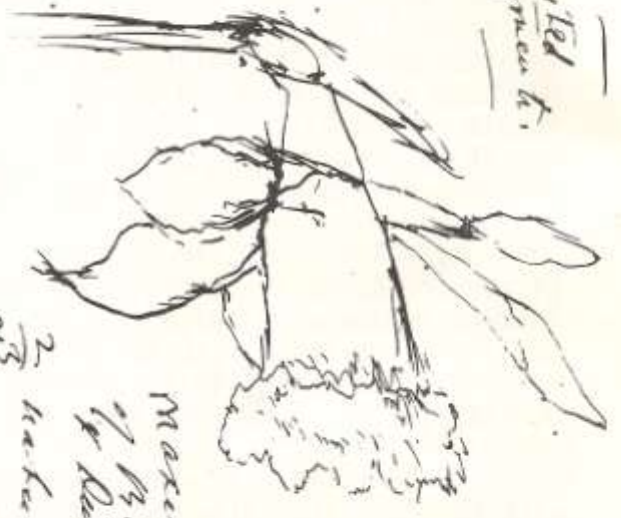
The year of 1884 saw the First Daffodil Conference organised by the Royal Horticultural Society and true to character Dod had strong views on that event. In a letter dated 12 May 1884 he told Burbidge that "I have written a rather severe answer to P.B.'s letters in the *Gardener's Chronicle*, which I do not treat with the respect I always pay to the name of Peter Barr. I do not believe much in 'Councils' and 'Conferences' - their chief use in past history has been to sanction and perpetuate error and I think as far as I have seen the result of the Daffodil Conference, it was no exception. Any gleam of new light was at once suppressed by the prejudice of the majority". A marginal comment by an unknown author had been added: "What was the new light - Double Daffodils".

The Rev. C. Wolley Dod was undoubtedly one of the characters of the Victorian daffodil fraternity, a keen observer of daffodils as many of his letters indicate but with an apparent blind spot where doubles were concerned. Usually at variance with his fellows, he nevertheless was highly thought of and was one of the original sixty recipients of the Victoria Medal, along with Burbidge, J. G. Baker and Peter Barr.

One person with whom Dod seemed to have had little disagreement was the wine merchant and collector Alfred Tait (Baron de Southellinho) who lived in Portugal, and who was himself a friend of the daffodil authority Professor Henriques of Coimbra. In a letter dated 6 March 1886 Dod wrote to Burbidge of two bulbs received from Tait which the latter hoped that Dod would be able to get named as *N. henriquesii* at the next Daffodil Committee Meeting. Dod referred to the apparent similarity of the flower to figures in Parkinson's *Paradisi* and the anonymous *Theatrum Florae* and which he thought was called *N. cyclamineus* by Haworth. In a further letter dated 10 March Dod again referred to "two specimens of a most interesting daffodil sent to me by Mr. Tait. They were found in Portugal, a large number growing together and in a spot near which neither *N. triandrus* nor *N. pseudo-narcissus* grew. Mr. Tait wishes me to communicate with you at once as he is very anxious to have it named, after his friend Don Henriques of Coimbra, *Narcissus henriquesii*. It seems to be identical with the figure in *Theatrum Florae* recently featured in *Gardener's Chronicle*, 19 December 1885, p. 789, which was thought to be a hybrid between *N. pseudo-narcissus* and *N. triandrus* and which was adopted by Haworth as his *N. cyclamineus*". The same bulbs are mentioned again on 19 March when Dod wrote to Burbidge "what if the plant should be the same as *N. cyclamineus* of Haworth . . . if this is the case Don Henriques will have to give way" which he thought would be regrettable as "both he(Henriques) and Mr. Tait are doing such excellent work in the field of Daffodils".

Among the most interesting features in the letters are the references to the species, being found in Spain and Portugal and to the hybrids being raised in England in the late nineteenth century, especially those which are thought to have featured in the ancestry of the modern garden hybrids. Several of these have been of special interest to me in recent years, including *N. triandrus* var. *pulchellus* which possibly played an important role in the reverse bicolor hybrids, *N. muticus*, and the white species which are now thought to have featured in the ancestry of the pinks. During the past four years I have tried unsuccessfully to acquire *N. pulchellus* as described in the late nineteenth century catalogues, and a type which was a common garden plant at that time. Although the specimens which I have received have come from a variety of sources, including botanic gardens as *N. triandrus* var. *pulchellus*, the cup and perianth colours have invariably been an identical pale primrose. It is therefore interesting to read Tait's reference to the collection of *N. triandrus* in Portugal. In a letter dated 25 August 1886 and sent to Burbidge from 115 Entre Quintas, Oporto, Tait wrote "The variety which goes under this name (*pulchellus*) was I think sent by my friend, the late Mr. W. S. Crawford to Mr. Barr I often accompanied him on his botanical excursions and I can assure you that all

Handwritten  
signature



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the other are more erect than  
this. (See other) no leaves  
with greenish. Maxima  
as I had plenty of Maxima  
or Maxima. Maxima and other  
Maxima Maxima. Maxima  
from the Maxima of the Maxima  
Maxima. (See other) Maxima  
and other Maxima Maxima  
Maxima, and Maxima

his *N. triandrus* were collected near Oporto in the same localities where I have obtained plants; you say cup white with yellow segments, my recollection is that the segments were a dull primrose colour . . . but *triandrus* varies so much in shape, colour, size and style of growth that 20 varieties might be found in a square yard of ground - if you could see them growing wild here you would give up all idea of establishing varieties. I have found forms larger than your *calathinus* and other forms smaller than your *calathinus* thus I feel convinced that *N. triandrus* is the most variable of all *Narcissi*".

Tait also refers to a uniformly bright yellow type which was very scarce and local, found in the mountains near Souza and named *N. triandrus* var. *concolor* by Professor Henriques. Eight years later Engleheart also referred to *N. triandrus* var. *pulchellus* saying that he had no doubt that it was a hybrid of *N. triandrus* and *N. juncifolius* or some jonquil form. "The foliage is intermediate, the flower jonquil-scented and I could show you here several instances of the tendency of *triandrus* to give a pale cup to its hybrids, e.g. in *Corbularia citrina* x *triandrus* the corona is often paler than the perianth". While the above information may not establish a link between the daffodil known as *N. pulchellus* in the nineteenth century and the modern reverse bicolour hybrids it does reinforce the view that it was a well known plant at that time and being of possible hybrid origin its apparent extra vigour over other *N. triandrus* common at that time was likely enough.

*N. muticus* was being collected in quantity in the late nineteenth century and is referred to in catalogues of the period as being extremely variable, although later the specific name *N. pseudo-narcissus* ssp. *abscissus* was applied to it. If *N. muticus* was the same as this subspecies then the first registered pink-cupped cultivar 'Apricot' could not have arisen from it as stated in the American Daffodil Society's Computer Print-out. For this to happen it was essential that the *N. muticus* being collected at that time was largely of hybrid origin, i.e. *N. x abscissus* (*N. poeticus* x *N. pseudo-narcissus*) and contemporary descriptions tend to bear this out. It is likely that the majority of *N. muticus* were *N. x abscissus* with the *N. poeticus* parent being responsible for the white perianth segments and late flowering characteristics of the *N. muticus* with which Tait was familiar and to which he referred in his letter of 3 May 188(?). Also of importance in the raising of pink-cupped hybrids were various white Leedsii raised by Engleheart. Correspondence between Engleheart and The Brodie of Brodie has been quoted elsewhere as clearly indicating the suitable background of these early hybrids to later give rise to pink-cupped offspring<sup>8</sup>. In his list of seedling narcissi dated 3 April 1894 Engleheart gives the parentage of his *N. leedsii* as being *N. ajax* 'F. W. Burbidge', *N. cernuus* var. *pulcher* etc. x *N. poeticus* and as *N. ajax* var. *moschatus* of the Pyrenees x *N. poeticus* var. *ornatus* for the "dainty and shapely white-cupped forms" of *N. leedsii*.

Another daffodil which played an important role in the early breeding of yellow trumpets was "The Trinity College *Maximus*". Dod wrote to Burbidge on 12 March (year not given) requesting "bulbs of your Dublin *N. maximus*" which he said differed "from the Dutch *maximus* especially in their broad stiff perianth segments". He appended two sketches, reproduced below showing a typical flower of what he referred to as *N. maximus* of Barr and Dutch dealers and of *N. obvallaris* var. *maximus* of Dublin. Dod's drawing appears to correspond closely with Hartland's description of the Irish form of *N. maximus* the trumpet of which was "most gracefully flanged"<sup>9</sup> (see Fig. 1).

Among the letters were found two lots of pencil notes which contained some interesting information on the economics of commercial bulb and flower production in the late nineteenth century. Daffodils were said to be the best value per acre of any crop; London was the centre of the daffodil trade but the trade was in a

state of rapid change. "What to grow to profit is the question of the day". It was said that the number of bulbs grown in 1884 was ten million but had increased to two hundred million by 1890 and this had led to a reduction in the price of bulbs by five shillings per hundredweight, while the price of cut flowers had fallen as low as nine pence for 150 flowers whereas twelve shillings had been obtained for the same quantity in the past. The increase in bulb numbers is interesting and cannot be accounted for on the basis of natural increase of the original stock, but must have included either considerable imports from Holland or excessive collection from the wild in Spain and Portugal.

In 1894 Engleheart wrote to Burbidge saying that he had lost many of his new seedling flowers both in that year and in 1893 due to remarkably hot weather in March. "They are often tied up by their sun-dried spathes and cannot emerge or where they do emerge they think it is July and so wither in surprise". One of his cultivars which had managed to emerge was 'Golden Bell' which he described as "my chief delight of all my daffodil children". He recorded its parentage as being 'Emperor' x 'Egypt' which grew in Dod's garden among 'Countess of Annesley' which it resembled strongly. In the same letter Engleheart commented on the great patience required by daffodil breeders. "One of the bothers of this work of raising seedling *Narcissi* is that every flower with anything of promise must be kept; they take years to develop. I nearly threw away last year a seedling which now bids fair to be a counterpart of 'Glory of Leiden', only a bicolor. In early days I gave away, or sold-off, or exchanged little battalions of seedlings many of which might have developed into fine things. But my garden is not large, nor my leisure - what am I to do?"

In a letter dated 4 June 1897 Engleheart looked back over his achievements when he wrote "The thing I take most pleasure, perhaps in having done, is in retracing deliberately all the supposed steps of Leeds and Backhouse and remaking all their flowers. This took a big slice of my time from about 1882 to the present date, and I think I may fairly say I have reproduced the type of every single hybrid *Narcissus* raised by my predecessors and verified their origin."

Unfortunately for the breeders and garden historians who followed, Engleheart appears to have left little documentary evidence of this work for the parentage of most of his hybrids is unknown.

#### CONCLUSION

The discovery of these letters in Dublin has proved to be a most interesting find, in that they confirm or tend to confirm the sources of many of the characteristics to be found in the modern hybrids. Of even more interest, however, is the intimate, possibly unique picture which the letters provide of some of the "larger than life" characters who dominated this particular facet of Victorian horticultural life. They obviously gave a considerable proportion of their lives in the pursuit of daffodils and daffodil knowledge, and it is true to say that the gardens of today could not have been the same without their devotion. While their work, which has been handed down to us in the modern hybrids, was undoubtedly successful, the greatest of them also suffered failures. One such failure is recorded in this final quotation from a letter by Engleheart dated 10 October 1891. He wrote "*N. cyclamineus* I cannot manage at all - it is like the showman's hippopotamus an antibilious animal what won't live on land and dies in the water".

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank Peter Wyse Jackson of Trinity College, Dublin who drew my attention to the existence of these documents and gave me the opportunity to work on them.

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AN IRISH BACHELOR AS FATHER OF THE ENGLISH FLOWER GARDEN - a review of  
*William Robinson 1838-1935* by Mea Allen (Faber & Faber, London, 1982. U.K.£10.50).

By E. CHARLES NELSON  
 National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin 9.

William Robinson has been lauded as the 'greatest of English gardeners', and the subtitle of this biography - 'Father of the English flower garden' - repeats the description he was accorded in his ninety-fifth year.

Robinson's great contribution to horticulture arose from his writings. He was a prolific author, producing twenty books and pamphlets, as well as nine forewords for books by other authors, and innumerable articles in horticultural and other journals. He founded seven periodicals, the most famous being *The Garden* (which was eventually incorporated with *Homes and Gardens*). *Gardening* (later called *Gardening Illustrated*), *Cottage Gardening* and *Flora and Sylva* were also his foundations. Through these periodicals and his books, he conducted a series of campaigns, a few of which had profound effects on gardening in these islands in the closing decades of nineteenth century. His influence is, of course, still apparent today.

His most celebrated battle was against bedding-out. David Moore complained in 1870 that 'the bedding-out affair has destroyed very much the interest young gardeners formerly took in the management and culture of exotic plants'. Robinson's first shots against this mania were fired in 1870 in *Alpine flowers* and in *The Wild Garden*.

The antithesis of the formal, carpet-bedded parterre in front of the Victorian mansion was a wild garden. Robinson promoted this form of horticulture, even trying it out in the garden plan he produced for his publisher, John Murray. Robinson called it his 'naturalisation scheme' and told Murray that 'it may not be amiss to remark that the scheme we are preparing is utterly unknown to gardeners and therefore you must not be surprised if your man does not at first enter into the spirit of it'. A year or so later, Robinson was to discover that a wild garden was not altogether a new invention. On his return from a trip to the United States he visited Fota, in County Cork, where he saw bamboos thriving on an island, creating a scene like 'the vegetation of the uplands of Java or that of the bamboo country in China'. Today, wild or 'Robinsonian' gardens are among Ireland's horticultural treasures; Annesgrove, Rossdohan and others owe their origins and their ethos to William Robinson, who was not only the 'greatest of English gardeners' but also a great Irish gardener.

Mea Allen's biography tells the life story of William Robinson. His father, also named William, was one of three brothers who came from County Down. William junior received his earliest training as a garden boy at Curraghmore, seat of the Marquis of Waterford. When his apprenticeship was completed he moved to Ballykilcavan near Stradbally in County Laois. He rose to become foreman in that garden, but Robinson left Ballykilcavan in 1861. According to one account, he left on the advice of his Aunt Sarah, who encouraged him to seek work elsewhere and thereby better himself. The story, which may be apocryphal, about Robinson deliberately putting out the furnace fires and opening the glasshouse ventilators on a frosty night, thus causing the death of the Rev. Sir Hunt Johnsson-Walsh's plants, is well-known and is included by Miss Allen. Robinson went to the Royal Botanic Society's garden in Regent's Park, London; David Moore is said to have given him



a testimonial. He remained there until June 1866 when he resigned to become, in effect, a free-lance journalist, writer and garden consultant.

By 1885 he was a wealthy man. His books and periodicals were successful, and he decided to buy his own house and land. He acquired Gravetye, an Elizabethan manor in Sussex, and lived there for the remaining fifty years of his life. At Gravetye he practised to the full his own ideas about gardening; there were mixed borders, 'daffodils countless as the sands of the sea', and woodlands of pine and cedar.

William Robinson never married. He did become engaged shortly after arriving in London, but his fiancée broke off the engagement - this incident is not mentioned by Miss Allen but is included in Geoffrey Taylor's earlier publications. On one occasion, Robinson's housekeeper remarked that if he had married 'the lady would have to be as lovely as a flower'.

For many years Robinson was friendly with Sir Frederick and Lady Moore. He was prepared to defer to Moore in matters horticultural, and Moore was one of the people who advised him to buy Gravetye. The Moores often visited Gravetye and a photograph taken during one of their visits is included in this biography (p. 213). Following the announcement of Robinson's death on 6 May 1935, Lady Moore wrote in sympathy to Mary Gilpin who had been Robinson's nurse for many years. She replied:

"The Hill of May" was too steep for our Mr. Robinson. He was too tired & worn out to climb it & I rejoice to know the climbing is over & I am sure you are too - also Sir Fred. His death was most peaceful, quite unconscious & and at 4.30 Sunday morning just as the birds sang he left us. An awful blank but that has to be endured."

Obituaries appeared in *Gardening Illustrated* and *The Times*, but not in other gardening periodicals like the *Gardener's Chronicle* or the *Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society*. This is one of the Robinson enigmas. Despite his fame throughout the horticultural world, no full-length biography has been written hitherto, and there is no entry for William Robinson in the *Dictionary of National Biography* supplement.

The late Miss Mea Allen has condensed this remarkable man into a volume which will provide many people with their first glimpses into a life story that is unusual and full of mysteries. I would like to have welcomed the biography without reservation, but regrettably it leaves much to be desired. Certainly it is a valuable summary of Robinson's life and work, but it does not begin to analyse his complex and contradictory character, or to assess the reasons for and the results of his championship of causes like wild gardens. Miss Allen has placed Robinson on a pedestal and presented him as a hero - the warts are largely ignored. He was not an angel, but a crank, an opinionated, contradictory, quarrelsome and controversial man. He remains an enigma.

My most serious criticism of this book is that it contains misleading statements, some of which may seriously hinder future biographers, who will, I hope, not regard William Robinson as a closed subject. It should be noted that Miss Allen has criticised Geoffrey Taylor for 'writing inaccurately about Robinson's character and family background'. This is rather incautious. Taylor was the first to write about Robinson, gaining some of his material from Sir Frederick and Lady Moore. His work did contain errors, which were later corrected, but other information which he included in his articles and books still stands having never been repudiated.

This biography begins - 'It was in County Down in Northern Ireland that William Robinson was born, on the 15th of July 1838'. This cannot be substantiated

and appears to be a misinterpretation by Miss Allen of a statement made by Robinson's great-niece, Miss Sara Handfield Robinson. In a letter to Geoffrey Taylor, attacking him for inaccuracies in *Some nineteenth century gardeners*, Miss Handfield Robinson wrote:

'He was not of French ancestry [sic]. He was no peasant boy. Born of good old yeoman stock. Good Home. William Robinson's father was born in Co. Down Northern Ireland.'

Geoffrey Taylor had stated, in a talk on BBC radio which was published in *The Listener* on 16 December 1948, that Robinson was born 'of Protestant peasant stock in the Queen's County' (i.e. Laois). The source of his information is not recorded and later he modified his account, saying that Robinson was born either in Laois or in County Dublin. It is significant that none of Robinson's relatives, who challenged Taylor about other material, commented on his birthplace. Nowhere is there evidence that the great gardener was born in County Down. No-one, not even Miss Sara Handfield Robinson, stated that he was born there. Taylor's statements have not been repudiated or disproved by any scholar. If Miss Allen had information substantiating her opening sentence, it should have been published. We simply do not know where he was born.

On the same page, it is said that Robinson became a student gardener at the Glasnevin Botanic Gardens after his apprenticeship at Curraghmore, and before he went to Ballykilcavan. Miss Allen based her statement on an entry in the diary of Lady Wolesley, under the date 10 March 1898, but at the best this is a secondary source. Miss Allen asked me personally to check if there was a record of Robinson at Glasnevin, and this I did. Had he been a student gardener, he would have entered the Botanic Gardens about 1855, at the age of 17 (this was the standard entry time). He would have remained for four years, until 1859. The records of wages paid to staff, including apprentices and garden boys, for the period 27 December 1856 to 11 June 1863 survive, and cover most of the likely time. There is no record of any person named William Robinson. Indeed there is no tradition of Robinson having served time at Glasnevin. As a close friend of the Moores such a tradition would surely have survived, had Robinson been apprenticed to David Moore.

There are several other curious errors in this book. On p. 202 reference is made to a letter written by John Bennett-Poe to Frederick Moore; the original does not survive but a transcript is among Geoffrey Taylor's papers. The letter is dated 1897 by Miss Allen, but internal evidence - the award of the Victoria Medal of Honour to Bennett-Poe - indicates that it was written in 1902. On p.198 the authorship of a flora of the garden at Nymans is attributed to the Dowager Countess of Rosse, but it was written by Ludwig Messel's daughter, Muriel, an aunt of Lady Rosse.

There is a list of the published sources utilized, including the publications of Geoffrey Taylor, Ruth Duthie and Betty Massingham, but there is no list of manuscript sources.

This book provides a useful introduction to the man, but one which has to be used with great caution. It is, alas, not the scholarly biography that William Robinson deserves. Geoffrey Taylor's less detailed writings should be read in conjunction with this work, for he provides a perspective on Robinson that is not as one-sided. It is most unfortunate that Miss Allen dismissed Taylor's pioneering work so abruptly.

The Irish Garden Plant Society was formed in 1981 to assist in the conservation of garden plants, especially those raised in Ireland. It also takes an interest in other aspects of the preservation of Ireland's garden heritage.

This journal will be devoted to papers on the history of Irish garden plants and gardens, the cultivation of plants in Ireland, the taxonomy of garden plants and reports of work carried out by the society and its individual members.

The editorial committee would welcome manuscripts from members of the society and others. Typescripts should be on A4 paper, double-spaced and typed only on one side of each sheet.

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Front Cover - *Cortaderia selloana* by Wendy Walsh from a specimen at Bellewstown House, Drogheda, Co. Louth.

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