



Irish Garden Plant Society

Newsletter
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Copy for the January issue as soon as possible please and no later than **15th November**.

Cover: **Mount Usher Gardens**, Co Wicklow. Photo courtesy of Paddy Tobin. Grateful thanks to our horticultural advisers: Stephen Butler and Brendan Sayers.

Welcome



At long last there has been the opportunity to meet again at the various garden visits which were organised over the summer months: a seemingly simple pleasure but, after more than a year of restrictions due to the pandemic, the large attendances were proof that it is one which is deeply appreciated.

Congratulations to the committees for their work in getting them organised as the necessary arrangements have been much more time-consuming than back in the day.

For the first time the AGM at the end of May had to be held online. Congratulations to Billy McCone on the completion of his extended term of office as Chairman, to Mary Forrest on her election to succeed him and to the other new members of Committee.

Hopefully most of us grow at least a couple of Irish plants in our gardens even if we don't give them a lot of thought. How wonderful then to see that the Society's efforts to conserve our heritage plants and document them has been deemed worthy of

Collection status by Plant Heritage; a very significant accolade and one that could not have been achieved without the dedicated efforts of Stephen Butler. Read more on page 5. And if you don't already nurture an Irish plant, turn to page 26 to find four further suggestions of lovely specimens which you could try.

During the coming year, we will be carrying a series of recollections by members of the early days and significant moments to mark the 40 years since the IGPS was founded. The best place to start seemed to be with the opening paragraphs of the very first Newsletter which appeared in August 1981, a bare month after the Society was set up.

This issue features some familiar names and some new ones. Welcome back to Paul Maher, a former editor no less, who tells us about his and Edel's latest project, and to new contributors Lorna MacMahon and Robin and Ann Kane.

I hope you enjoy this issue — why not write to me at maeve.bell@btopenworld.com and say what you like, what you skip over, and what you'd like to read in the future? I'd love to hear from you.

Maeve

Maeve Bell
Editor

A Note from the Chair



Following the successful chairmanship of Billy Mc Cone, as the incoming Chair I realise I have a task ahead of me. However, I am well supported by the National Executive Committee, the three regional committees, Leinster, Munster and Northern, and those who look after particular activities within the IGPS. Since the Annual General Meeting, the National Executive Committee has met and welcomed new members, Áine Máire Ní Mhurchú, (Hon Secretary), David Grayson (Hon Treasurer), Breda Cummins (Leinster rep) and Caroline Maher. So that I can learn more about the 'workings' of the Society, there have been communications via Zoom, email or phone with office holders and regional representatives.

The regional representatives met me via Zoom and we planned lectures for the coming months, the details are listed elsewhere in this Newsletter. Debbie Bailey, Paddy Tobin, Branka Gaberscik and Maeve Bell brought me up to date on the seed list, website, ebuletin and Newsletter respectively. Peter Milligan, editor of *Moorea*, tells

me that the next volume will be published this autumn. The concept of a branding identity for the IGPS was new to me, but one I learned more about following an online meeting with Will and She She Lewis. An email seldom does justice to a garden so, having been in touch with Lorna Goldstrom and Billy McCone, I plan to visit Lismacloskey Garden, Cultra, and Pogue's Entry, Antrim, both maintained by IGPS volunteers, this autumn.

We are the Irish Garden Plant Society. Highlighting the word 'plants' — the award of National Collection Status for the Dispersed Collection of Irish Heritage Plants by Plant Heritage is a wonderful achievement for the Society. Special thanks are due to Dr Charles Nelson, who initiated the IGPS work on Irish garden plants, and to Brendan Sayers and Stephen Butler who continue to uncover and document them. That it should be awarded as the Society celebrates its 40th anniversary is a fitting tribute to all the members who have collected, propagated and distributed these plants over the lifespan of the Society.

More about the anniversary in the next issue.

Mary Forrest
Chairman

Accolade for the IGPS A National Collection of Irish Heritage Plants

by Stephen Butler and Brendan Sayers



It could not have happened without the active support of the members of the Society. All those plant sales, the little pots, the wee divisions, the cuttings taken, the plants passed along, the various schemes, the re-discoveries have come together. There can be no better proof of the adage that the best way to conserve a plant is to give it away.

The 1065 Irish plants and plants with Irish associations listed as grown by members of the IGPS have been awarded National Collection status by Plant Heritage www.plantheritage.org.uk. What an incredible achievement!

Plant Heritage (formerly The National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens) was formed in 1978 as there was no single body coordinating cultivar or garden plant conservation. There was great concern that older varieties were disappearing, with no central record of who grew what or where.



Agapanthus campanulatus 'Mooreanus'



Olearia 'Henry Travers'

Around the UK and Ireland there are now 650 National Collections within Plant Heritage, usually genus based but other scopes are possible, for example, linked to a particular garden or person perhaps. Thousands of plants are now held safely in these collections. In Ireland there are National Collections of *Olearia* at Malahide Demesne, *Potentilla fruticosa* cultivars at Ardgillan Demesne, *Arbutus* at NBG Glasnevin, *Agapanthus* at Bali Hai Nursery, *Nothofagus* and *Eucryphia* at Mount Usher, and *Libertia* at Dublin Zoo. Concentrating on one genus is incredibly useful, often with the great benefit of verifying names. There is also much satisfaction, and some frustration, chasing down old cultivars thought lost to cultivation.

It is 40 years since the IGPS was formed with one of its main aims to conserve plants with an Irish

connection. It is 20 years since the IGPS published *A Heritage of Beauty – The Garden Plants of Ireland* by Dr Charles Nelson, horticultural taxonomist at the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin at the time. The IGPS has maintained links with Plant Heritage over the years. With 1065 Irish Heritage Plants (IHPs) listed as growing somewhere on the island, the Society applied for and was awarded National Collection status for the Irish plants that we have records for. This is held as a Dispersed Collection, held by you all – a wonderful mixture of many IGPS members and several large gardens and nurseries. The IHPs are now recorded on Persephone, the Plant Heritage database. Rest assured no member or garden details are stored there; any enquiries about IHPs must come through the Society.



Sorbus 'Autumn Spire'

Persephone is linked to the RHS database too. It is a very long list drawn up from many gardens, nurseries, and collections. Your National Collection puts many IHPs on the map; many were not listed by the RHS and not known about, so it is increasing awareness of the incredible horticultural history across the entire island. It will also assist us in chasing 'lost' cultivars.



Rosa 'Souvenir de Saint Anne's'
photo courtesy of Peter Beales Roses

More work is still needed though; this is a marathon not a sprint! Verifying names is a constant issue; we need more pictures and more herbarium specimens with good descriptions. Propagating the most at risk, maybe with only one grower, and making sure they are sufficiently spread around and being growing in safe havens is essential.

Keeping records accurate is always a task. Please, let us know if you are growing any IHPs — and if you do not know, send us a list of what you grow and we can check for you. Large tasks are easier if tackled in small pieces. If you are interested in helping, let us know. We already have members keenly chasing *Rodgersia*, *Crocasmia*, and *Agapanthus*, and there is always scope for other genera. Every plant counts!



Crocasmia 'Irish Dawn'

IGPS Heritage Plants
igps.heritageplants@gmail.com

Stars of the Damp Garden

by Lorna MacMahon

My garden, Ardcarraig in Co Galway, is fortunate to have a variety of growing conditions. It consists of an exposed rocky hillside with sparse, sandy soil, a sheltered hazel woodland and a bog garden with soil that is stagnant and permanently waterlogged. There is a small stream running through the lower area which causes frequent flash flooding.

Over the last fifty years I have been learning to select plants that will tolerate the different conditions. I discovered fairly quickly that rhododendrons, azaleas, camellias, hydrangeas and bamboos, which are usually described as 'moisture loving shrubs', do not thrive in waterlogged soil, but still need to be planted in areas that remain damp during their growing season.

There are not many trees and shrubs that tolerate permanently wet conditions but among these are *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* or swamp cypress, alder, willow, brown birch, dog wood, phormium and astelia. The last two are both indigenous to New Zealand where they are found in swamps, riverbanks and scrub areas. It was noticeable that the only phormiums which survived the harsh winter of 2010-11 here, when the temperature in Galway fell to -17°C, were those growing in the bog area. They are invaluable for providing focal points in the winter, along with the coloured stems of *Cornus alba* or dog wood and *Salix alba* 'Britzensis'.



Colourful planting with euphorbias

Caltha palustris 'Flore Pleno', the double flowered form of marsh marigold, is a very useful, clump-forming plant that flowers early in spring in the bog garden and at the edges of the pools. Some iris species enjoy permanently wet conditions and these include *Iris laevis*, *I. ensata*, and *I. sibirica*. Two members of the euphorbia family also thrive in the bog garden; they are *Euphorbia griffithii* 'Fire Glow' and *E. palustris*, the marsh euphorbia. Both are great value as their flower-like bracts remain decorative for months; however, while *E. palustris* forms a well-behaved clump, 'Fire Glow' can become invasive.

In May the Asiatic candelabra primulas come into flower and are followed by the giant Himalayan cowslips, *Primula florindae*, which flower until August. They all do particularly well in Galway because of our high rainfall and thrive in my damp woodland clearings as well as in the bog garden. The blue Himalayan poppies flower with the candelabra primulas in late May in damp shady areas, but they need shelter and dappled shade and do not tolerate waterlogged soil or flash flooding. On reading Beth Chatto's wonderful book, *The Damp Garden*, I discovered that rudbeckia, day lilies and astilbes will all perform well in saturated conditions. This was valuable information and I use them to give colour during the summer and autumn.



Rodgersia and Hosta 'Orange Marmalade'.

Rodgersias are some of the most useful plants for growing in damp or shaded areas, and seem to be able to cope with the occasional flooding of my small stream. I started collecting Irish rogersia cultivars at Stephen Butler's suggestion and became addicted to them. They have large sculptural leaves, flower heads like giant astilbes, are excellent ground-cover plants with good leaf colour, and provide interest from May until the end of autumn. Gary Dunlop from Ballyrogan Nurseries produced some fine Irish cultivars, which include 'Castlewellan' and 'Donard'. *Rodgersia pinnata* 'Superba', 'Perthshire Bronze' and *R. aesculifolia* 'Irish Bronze' are particularly beautiful. Some of the newer cultivars that have come on the market in the last few years, such as 'Fireworks', 'Chocolate Wing' and 'Herkules', are all proving to be great additions to this group.

Hostas are some of my favourite herbaceous plants and they are growing in every section of the garden. The hosta genus consists of 70 species, but there are now thousands of varieties and cultivars. They particularly enjoy my wet and shady areas and are also excellent for growing in containers. Their sculptural leaves come in an endless variety of shape and variegation and are decorative from spring until autumn. Their lily-like flowers are an added bonus. I have about ninety varieties and still cannot resist a new one.

Report of the 39th Annual General Meeting

by Agnes Peacocke

As a result of restrictions due to the Covid pandemic, the 39th Annual General meeting of the Society was held online on Wednesday 26th May 2021. It was attended by Executive Committee members Billy McCone, the outgoing Chair, Mary Forest, the Deputy Chair, Agnes Peacocke, the temporary Secretary, Nichola Monk, the Membership Secretary, Brid Kelleher, Stephen Butler, Margaret McAuliffe and a further 80 members approximately.

Billy McCone as Chairman explained that his report was in three parts: looking back, activity during lockdown, and looking ahead including building resources. Activities had continued as normal following the very successful AGM organised by the Munster region in Clonmel in 2019 until Covid and lockdown struck in March 2020. The first major casualty was the planned AGM in the west followed by most of the summer programme of garden visits. By January 2021, however, using the online platform Zoom and with the help of Joanna Loane, it was possible to host four talks, one jointly with the Alpine Garden Society, Ulster Branch. Other activities included the purchase of four unregistered daffodil seedlings from noted breeder, Brian Duncan, which were named for Charles Nelson, Kilmacurragh, Lismacloskey and Birr Castle.

Despite the difficulties, much of the ongoing work of the Society was able to proceed to some degree. Committees continued to meet, the seed exchange was hugely successful, and work on plant conservation was taken forward by the establishment of special interest groups and the re-establishment of the link with Plant Heritage. He thanked all the members who organised the delivery of the website, Facebook page, the Newsletter, the ebulletins and the forthcoming issue of our journal, *Moorea*.

At the start of the current membership year, 1st May 202, there were 549 members. Nine new members had joined during May but, while this was encouraging, over 100 members still had to renew. The membership breakdown was:-

Northern	206
Leinster	204
Munster	127
Other	12

A new membership database and Direct Debit system were implemented, both of which were running well. Members were encouraged to pay by Direct Debit and take advantage of the 10% discount available until the end of July 2021.

One of the constant challenges for the Society was the rate of turnover of committee members and support workers, for example, four key posts on the National Executive remained vacant until very recently and solutions were found only after a personal appeal across the membership. The Society needs to look at ways of sharing the load and find new ways to support existing roles. The existing *Moorea* team was strong, and it would be useful if similar additional support could be found for the website and the ebulletin.

The resources of the plant conservation programme have been increased by the link with Plant Heritage and the development of special interest groups but there is potential to do more.

To do all these things and more, we need to build our resources; working groups have proved a successful strategy. Working groups can lighten the load in committees while leaving the final decisions in the Committee's hands. With this in mind, we have recently set up a communications group to help develop opportunities to enhance the Society's image, grow the membership and strengthen the reputation of IGPS across Ireland.

Treasurer's report

Billy explained that unfortunately Pascal Lynch had not been able to fully prepare the financial reports for the years 2019/20 and 2020/21. The Committee had gone to great lengths to retrieve the various records but had not received the accounts for 2019/20 from the auditors until the previous Monday evening. There was a statement as of 1st April 2020 showing total funds of €43,164 (£36,469); however the Committee had not had enough time to examine the statement and had therefore decided to postpone approval until it has had sufficient time to do so.

Before the meeting moved on to the election of officers, Mary paid tribute to Billy saying that the Society owed him a debt of gratitude for all his work on our behalf and thanked him for his vision of the future. She also thanked Agnes Peacocke for stepping into the breach when the previous secretary had to resign and regretted that personal circumstances had prevented Pascal from fully completing the Treasurer's role.

Billy thanked all his committee colleagues for their support.

Election of Officers and Committee members

Chair: Mary Forrest; **Honorary Secretary:** Áine-Máire Ní Mhurchú; **Honorary Treasurer:** David Grayson; **Leinster sub-committee representative:** Breda Cummins; **Munster sub-committee representative:** Margaret McAuliffe; **Northern sub-committee representative:** Billy McCone. Nichola Monk continues in post as Membership Secretary; Caroline Maher was elected to the committee while Stephen Butler and Brid Kelleher continue as committee members.

This brought the official business of the AGM to a close. Members were then entertained and informed by a talk by Seamus O'Brien, head gardener at the National Botanic Gardens Kilmacurragh, on the evolution of the 18th century garden and the life and times of the Acton family. Mary thanked Seamus for a tremendously detailed and fascinating account of this valuable resource which was both a treasure trove of plants and an historic archive before bringing the meeting to a close.

Membership of our regional sub-committees and other positions

Leinster sub-committee

Theresa Crothers, Chair, Edith Brosnan, Breda Cummins, Martina Halpin, Mary Montaut, Michelle Nolan, Caroline O'Dowd

Munster sub-committee

Margaret McAuliffe, Chair, Janet & Martin Edwardes, Ted Kiely

Northern sub-committee

Maeve Bell, Chair, Heather Farmer, Julie Holmes, Joanna Loane, Robert Logan, Billy McCone, Agnes Peacocke, Maureen Reid, Robert Trotter, Adrian Walsh

Website and Facebook

Paddy Tobin

Bulletin

Branka Gaberscik

Editor of *Moorea*

Peter Milligan

Editor of the Newsletter

Maeve Bell

Heritage Plants Co-ordinator

Stephen Butler

Seed Exchange Co-ordinator

Debbie Bailey

Reviving the Garden at Ballinagam: Part One

by Paul Maher

Now retired, we occasionally look back over our careers and one thing is clear to us — we were always gardening. Both Edel and I were blessed with parents who gardened so we came from homes that were surrounded by spring and summer colour and a vegetable garden that fed us healthily. After school, we found ourselves at the College of Horticulture in the National Botanic Gardens Glasnevin studying for a career in horticulture. Gardening was going to be our way of life.

We have designed and created three different gardens for the homes we have lived in, each slightly different in content and varied in design. In the early years of raising our family, like so many others, holidays were spent in Ireland. We always came

to Ballinagam in North Wexford, the holiday home of Edel's parents, Bill and Maura McDonald. It is not a large garden, about 50 x 25 metres. It was a traditional garden, largely a mix of flowers and vegetables and was very well-tended. Our children and their cousins spent two weeks charging about in a colourful wonderland and eating vegetables from the vegetable plot. Maura's greatest fun was counting and naming the vegetables on the dinner plate that were straight out of the garden with all the children learning the names and exploring the tastes.

Maura was taken ill in 1999 and that ended their gardening life and their time at Ballinagam, a salutary lesson that life can turn on a sixpence.



The former garden at Ballinagam

After 30 years of work, the garden at Ballinagam slowly slipped into dereliction under briars and willow seedlings, hedges cascaded beyond their once well-maintained lines casting damp shade on the house with its failing roof. Sadly Maura went to her eternal rest in 2009.

During the August bank holiday weekend of 2012 we visited the garden and, although we reminisced about the holidays of the past with their joy and laughter, we were deeply saddened by the parlous state of a garden that had barely held its shape with just the outline of some of the paths and borders remaining. Bill and Maura's dream was slowly fading to a memory.

In my view gardening is about one thing and that is control. It was my mantra to students in my care for over forty years at the National Botanic Gardens at Glasnevin. When you take out the control element, things change and you are looking at something very different. We felt that we could not live with this.

Our drive back to Dublin that day was a conversation; initially we decided that at the very least we should do battle with the briar and hedges and we immediately set about doing that. In time it slowly dawned on us that this should be our next project. At that stage we were six years from our retirement date and had a considerable and growing plant collection that had already moved house with us once before. These were plants we treasured and were not going to leave behind as

we vacated the Curator's residence in the National Botanic Gardens on my retirement. We set ourselves the challenge of an extensive restoration at Ballinagam.



Derelict garden at Ballinagam

For anyone starting a restoration, it is vital to pick up a pen and paper before reaching for tools and to start documenting, firstly, the goal you want to achieve and, secondly, how you are going to achieve it. Make a list of what is going to be retained along with a note of where manual labour will suffice or where a machine is needed. We set out a clear work schedule. In the first instance we were looking for plants that had survived the years of neglect in the garden and noting them; this is important as plant treasures can succumb to the might of a strimmer or chainsaw and be gone forever. Having completed those steps, we planned our approach to clearing;

this is essential as it is ruinous to plough on, digging out, chopping down and casting aside creating a stressful tangle of plant debris. We also planned how much time we had to spend as we were still working, so weekends and annual leave would have to be used.

Starting in the autumn of 2012, we cleared all the light weedy growth, moving on to removal of briars and self-sown tree saplings, then on to medium sized plants and finally to tall, badly-shaped trees and shrubs. We worked around plants we were retaining removing briars from their branches, stacking all material into neat piles for chipping or shredding. Removing almost-dead cordylines was a huge challenge digging around the fibrous root balls and, with the aid of our jeep, toppling them to the ground. We worked in rain, hail

and snow to keep in line with our schedule. It would be very easy in this scenario to get despondent to the point of giving up; however with the careful planning and being able to see progress, we were heartened so staying the course was easy. Also, if you use the old adage of working tidily and this way avoid creating more work, progress is achieved.

As we cleared we sorted all material that would make good compost, then material for wood mulch, and material that would be suitable for firewood. Gradually we ended up with a blank canvas of bare earth. We had to install a new septic tank system and percolation area and this followed the clearance. By autumn 2018 the scene was set for the creation of our new garden and the revival at Ballinagam could commence.



Paul stacking prunings

Meet the Treasurer: David Grayson



David joined the IGPS in 1990 or 1991 at the prompting of George Sevastopulo, the highly regarded alpine gardener and long-time member of the Society who was a colleague at Trinity College, Dublin at the time. David has had a distinguished career as an academic; he retired from Trinity in 2013 having been Head of the School of Chemistry for five years. He was deeply involved with the Royal Society of Chemistry over many years serving on their Council, as Chair of the Pension Trustees, and then as Honorary Treasurer.

Originally from Limerick where he claims anything stuck into the ground would take root and grow, he has lived in County Meath since 1989 where his garden extends to about half an acre on the shallow, stony soil of an esker. David reckons that only 10% can be cultivated as the rest is tarmac, grass and rock. There was a garden of sorts on arrival but pressure of work over the following decades meant that it reverted to jungle....slash and burn is now the order of the day.

"I grow some vegetables in (small) raised beds and big tubs, also a few ornamentals in a small border which is far too narrow, and in big pots, which are far too heavy. My favourite flowers at this time of year are sweet peas, the scented varieties; there is a wonderful second flush of blooms from mid-August into September although they have with rather short stems. But my all-time favourite plant at the moment is *Paeonia veitchii*; it comes well from seed, doesn't take too long to reach flowering age, and has beautiful foliage."

In addition to gardening David greatly enjoys fishing. Both are very absorbing and time-consuming hobbies which he says he reconciles with great difficulty. "The garden usually takes priority but I do get to go fishing on the lakes during May. And I greatly enjoy spending time in the Burren."

The Rodgersias

by Nicola and Peter Milligan

I was writing notes for this article sitting at the patio outside our front door. Facing me on the patio steps were two pots containing *Rodgersia aesculifolia* var. *henrici* KW21015 (Kingdon-Ward's favourite clone) and *Rodgersia nepalensis* 'High Flier'. Looking at the beautiful form of these plants I wondered why it appears that members of the *rodgersia* genus are both underrated and undervalued. Walk around most garden centres and you will be fortunate to find any for sale. Sadly, many nurseries list only a small number of *rodgersias*, perhaps three or four at best.



Rodgersia nepalensis 'High Flier'

The late Graham Stuart Thomas felt strongly enough about the *rodgersias* to write "a race of noble plants, with grand foliage like large hands borne on stout stalks one foot or more across and with imposing flower spikes" (*Perennial Garden Plants*,

Dent, London, 1976). Given Thomas' view it is difficult to understand why these members of the saxifrage family are not found in many more herbaceous borders.

Of the five widely accepted species, there are several forms and cultivars available and, from an Irish Heritage perspective, it is pleasing to note that some twelve with Irish associations are listed in Charles Nelson's ever useful *A Heritage of Beauty* (Irish Garden Plant Society, 2000). Only one, *R. pinnata* 'Rosea', was listed as being sold by the former Daisy Hill Nursery and none was listed by the former Slieve Donard Nursery. However Charles Nelson notes that Dr Lennon of Holywood obtained a *rodgersia* as *R. aesculifolia* from the Slieve Donard Nursery. This turned out to be a form of *R. podophylla* and was introduced as *R. podophylla* 'Donard' by Gary Dunlop of Ballyroan Nursery.



R. podophylla 'Donard'

Gary Dunlop introduced four rodgersias from his own breeding programme: *R. 'Fascination'*, *R. 'Koriata'*, *R. 'Panache'*, and *R. aesculifolia 'Red Dawn'*. We have Gary Dunlop's named cultivars and all are great plants. *R. 'Fascination'* is an interesting introduction having embryonic petals which is not normal for the genus. In addition Charles Nelson lists some four forms of *R. sambucifolia* bred by Gary but not named: a dwarf form with pink flowers, dwarf form with white flowers, large form with green stem, and large form with red stem. Sadly, with the closure of Gary's nursery, Ballyrogan, his rodgersias are no longer available.

In addition to the plants mentioned above there is *R. aesculifolia 'Irish Bronze'*, introduced by Alan Bloom of Bressingham Gardens, and *R. pinnata 'Perthshire Bronze'* introduced by Helen Dillon.



R. aesculifolia 'Irish Bronze'

Another good plant listed by the author, Aileen Stocks, in *Astilbe, Bergenia & Rodgersia in the Family Saxifragaceae* published by The Hardy Plant Society is *R. pinnata 'Superba'*. Stocks reports that "this is a distinct clone raised from seed collected by Farrer in 1919 in North Burma". True plants of this form came from Rowallane Garden in Co Down. We obtained our specimen from Nigel Marshall when he was the Head Gardener at Mount Stewart and are pleased to have been given the 'genuine article' for our herbaceous borders.



R. pinnata 'Superba'

We believe that rodgersias are well worth growing not only for the various leaf forms of each species but for the variety of leaf and stem colours that can be obtained. The following descriptions and photographs highlight some of the different leaf structures for the species and some good named forms.

Infrequently grown in gardens are plants of *R. nepalensis* which has pinnate leaves with 7 – 11 leaflets and *R. sambucifolia* which is rare in gardens but has distinct foliage and, as Stocks states, "has a more delicate appearance". *R. nepalensis* produces an interesting flower spike with distinctive colouring. *R. aesculifolia* is so named as the leaves are said to be reminiscent of the leaves of the Horse Chestnut. There are some good cultivars of *R. aesculifolia* available including *R. aesculifolia 'Castlewellan'* and *R. aesculifolia 'Irish Bronze'*. *R. aesculifolia 'Castlewellan'* is described by Stocks as a very old, distinct plant from the Castlewellan Arboretum in Co Down and ends her notes for this plant by saying "this is a lovely plant with a graceful, tall inflorescence".

R. pinnata has 6 – 9 leaflets that are slightly pinnate and will age gradually to bronze tints. Again good forms of this plant can be found including *R. 'Cally Salmon'* and *R. 'Cally Coral'* both raised by the late Michael Wickenden.

R. podophylla has magnificent foliage. The photograph shows *R. podophylla*



R. podophylla ex Plas Newydd

ex Plas Newydd Gardens — this was collected from the abandoned part of the Plas Newydd Gardens on Anglesey by Bleddyn and Sue Wynn-Jones.



R. 'Fascination' in flower

In terms of growing conditions the rodgersias have no special requirements with regard to soil type provided that it is moisture retentive. Most do well in light shade, part shade or even a sunnier position provided that — and it is an important provision — they have moist soil. Until they develop into good sized clumps they can suffer from wind damage either to the leaves or to the plant as a whole due to windrock.

Sadly, many of the Irish cultivars are almost impossible to find nowadays although both *R. aesculifolia 'Castlewellan'* and *'Irish Bronze'* are available from nurseries. Very occasionally *R. pinnata 'Perthshire Bronze'* can be found at IGPS plant sales. We would encourage you to add a rodgersia, or two, to your herbaceous borders and please do your best to seek out an Irish cultivar.

Echium candicans

by Robin and Ann Kane

The story of our echiums is unusual. Some years ago on a visit to Logan Botanic Garden, beneath an echium in a raised border were a host of seedlings less than an inch in height in the gravel path. These seedlings were being walked on so just one was 'adopted' and this picture shows the result. Their prolific habit persists and every year we get a multitude of seedlings which enjoy the impoverished soil in our yard. The flowers of *Echium candicans* are a perfect blue, unlike *Echium pininana*, and are a magnet for pollinators. They are very hardy in our benign micro-climate once they become woody. Again, unlike *Echium pininana*, they have a long life so among these plants is the original thus seven or more years old.

Our garden is about six acres on a sloping site that runs down to a reed-filled tidal inlet of the River Suir. On our arrival in 1990 a decision was made to plant trees, initially native but increasingly exotic varieties; many are by now over forty feet in height. The intervening sections of the garden were broken up by hedges radiating out from our home; the shelter allows a selection of Japanese maples to thrive. In the early years we planted some headline plants such as *Magnolia* 'Betty Jessel' and trees such as *Cedrus libani* which are now significantly mature; more recently a wide variety of species

rhododendrons were planted, some of the originals coming from Chris Loder of Loder Plants in Sussex. Perennials are grown near the house with some of our seasonal favourites being *Aster x frikartii* 'Wunder von Stäfa' which even in October just won't stop flowering and, more recently, some of the *Agapanthus inapertus* group including 'Graskop', 'Black Magic' and 'Sky'.

We were greatly influenced by the wonderful garden at Inverewe on the west coast of Scotland, a dramatic example of an exposed boggy headland converted into a verdant oasis by the simple expedient of planting shelterbelts as we have done in Waterford.



Echium candicans

Hydrangeas: love or loathe

by Rae McIntyre

A man who went by the nickname of Wee Jimbo used to work in my parents' garden for three days every week. He liked to take slips or cuttings of plants in the gardens of three other people, had a talent for growing these on and then, when they were mature enough, he presented them to my mother. This is how she came to have a blue hydrangea. But she didn't want a blue one: she wanted a pink one. However Wee Jimbo, although small in stature, was exceedingly bossy, insisted on it being blue and announced that he had worked some alchemy with iron filings to make it blue.

When I got married and came to live here seven miles south of Coleraine in Co Londonderry, I soon saw that blue hydrangeas grew like weeds in the area. They were all the same but weren't a pleasant shade of blue; it was an icy, shiver-inducing shade of the colour to which I took an instant

dislike. There seemed to be a fashion for growing them in an unlovely triad with a small dark-crimson rose, erroneously called the 'monthly rose', and the common wild, orange montbretia that grows all along the north coast.



Hydrangea flowers like buff envelopes: photo courtesy of Paula McIntyre

Strangely enough, this trio of plants gave me the inspiration for another grouping many years later. The hydrangea replacement is *Hydrangea* 'Invincibelle Spirit', called 'Pink Annabelle' in many garden centres, with dark pink buds that open into bright pink flowers. The rose is *Rosa* 'Bonica', a shrub rose, one of my favourites with pink flowers that last for ages. The montbretia is a close relation of *cocosmia* formerly called *Tritonia x rosea* and now *T. disticha* subsp. *rubrolucens*; it has rose-pink bells on thin wiry stems. These three genera have flowers that blend beautifully colour-wise in warm shades of pink without a trace of blue in it.



Pink blooms on *Hydrangea aspera* Villosa Group: photo courtesy of Paula McIntyre

On my subsequent visit to the Chelsea Flower Show, I was greatly taken with lace cap hydrangeas and have acquired several of them over the years. Most of them are blue. The soil here is unequivocally acid and blue hydrangeas thrive in it and stay blue. *H. macrophylla* 'Taube' has stunning lace cap flowers in an intense shade of blue and 'Zorro', another lace cap, has flowers in a lighter shade of blue but has noticeably dark, almost black, stems. The Teller Series of lace caps was raised in Switzerland in 1952. I have 'Shower Teller' which is a very vigorous grower with medium blue flowers and doesn't resent having branches cut off for large flower arrangements. Rhododendrons make good companions for hydrangeas. In the winter months the deciduous hydrangeas, no matter how attractive they are in summer, are just a bundle of bleached stalks. They compare

unfavourably with the glossy-leaved rhododendrons with fat, rounded flower buds formed in autumn. If there are flowers left on the hydrangeas, they are the colour of buff envelopes; this is the case with the spent flowers on 'Shower Teller'.

Some hydrangeas can be in bloom for months, an advantage enjoyed by only a few rhododendrons. My favourite hydrangea is one from the *H. aspera* Villosa Group. It was bought about twenty-five years ago from Hillier Nurseries and named simply as *Hydrangea villosa*. A tall grower, it has large leaves looking and feeling like green velvet. Last autumn it bore its mauve-pink flowers until November and raised the spirits of everyone who saw it.

Do I love hydrangeas or not? It all depends on the hydrangea.



Hydrangeas: photo courtesy of Paddy Tobin

Members' Memories

Forty years have gone by since the seedling society put out its first roots at a meeting held in the National Botanic Gardens, Dublin, on 7 July 1981. Since then it has grown, flourished, been rocked in times of recession, and generally become well-rooted and established. Rather than try to capture the history in just one article, the idea is to get a flavour of the highlights of the four decades through the memories of various members over a number of issues. Where to begin? The opening paragraphs of the very first Newsletter seem like the obvious place to start.

This is the first newsletter of a new society, established through the enthusiasm of both amateurs and professionals. The society's success and survival will depend greatly on the continuing enthusiasm of all members and their willingness to participate in its activities. All those involved in the founding of the Irish Garden Plant Society welcome the interest shown by those people who have responded to the invitations to join, and are anxious that the society will flourish.

The society's main aim is to assist in the conservation of garden plants, especially those raised in Ireland, but it will also take an interest in other aspects of the preservation of Ireland's garden heritage.

Charles Nelson was elected Chairman at the inaugural meeting and served until 1985 when Verney Naylor succeeded him. Now living in West Cork and still working as a garden designer, Verney shares some memories below.

Can it really be forty years ago? But yes, I remember sitting with a group of keen gardeners and discussing the possibility of forming a new Society, which would concentrate on the particularly Irish dimension to our gardens. Our primary focus would be to increase, and spread, our knowledge in order to preserve our special Irish gardening heritage.

We produced a booklet listing Irish nurseries — this was before The Plant Finder and the internet. There was a social side too. I remember standing over the stove poaching a salmon to bring to our first mid-summer supper held at the home of Wendy Walsh.

*We travelled the length and breadth of Ireland visiting fantastic gardens absorbing all the richness and diversity of our Irish garden heritage. Two of the early 'expeditions' we made were to Donegal and County Down. I particularly remember seeing the original plant of *Sambucus nigra* 'Guincho Purple', the purple elder, in the garden at Guincho in Helen's Bay. I often use this shrub in my designs as I love the contrast of its foliage against silver and grey. Another memorable visit was to Beech Park, David Shackleton's famous walled*

garden in Clonsilla. It rained steadily as we admired the huge herbaceous borders and the many rare plants. But I remember it especially because, as we learned later, it was the day of the Chernobyl disaster, Saturday, 26 April 1986.

A few years later, issue 31 of the Newsletter carried an article by Helen Dillon, the renowned Dublin gardener, a founding member and now an Honorary Member. Helen wrote about the advantages of an autumn assessment of the garden in her usual informative and incisive style.

Each autumn I like to take a long, hard and very slow look at the garden and the plants. This can take up to two months and involves a lot of head-scratching thought! Each and every plant comes up for consideration.

Do I like it?

In some cases I realise that it has been growing here for ten years or more and taste does, perhaps should, change...

I do like it but do I really need three different groups of it?

Is it in the right place? It could be in the wrong place because it

is overgrown;

is not doing well because it is too shady/sunny/dry/wet/soil is

too rich/soil is too poor or it is squashed by its neighbours;

is clashing in colour with its neighbours.

Does it need propagating? This could be because it

is slightly tender and could be lost in a bad winter;

is no longer young and it would be better to start again with a new specimen;

it soon will be, or already is, too big to move and is in the wrong place;

if it is an herbaceous plant, much as I like it, there is too much of it and it would benefit from division, and I would benefit from the extra space;

it is so lovely, I want more of it; or

it is so un-lovely that in order to salve my conscience about getting rid of it, I shall propagate it and give it away.

It shows that good advice never goes out of fashion.

My Favourite Chrysanthemums

by Michael Kelleher

After trying them out in my garden I am overjoyed to recommend the use of hardy outdoor chrysanthemums for late autumn colour. In 2016 I started with *Chrysanthemum* 'Clara Curtis' and C. 'Mary Stoker'. This opened up a whole new world to me and I bought more. In May 2020 I was delighted when 26 arrived during the Covid lockdown as one couldn't get plants locally.

I have found they prefer a rich, well-drained soil that does not dry out in summer, doing best in full sun; I help them along with a little fertilizer and a good mulch of compost at the beginning of growth. Wind is the greatest problem, especially after mid-summer when the lower growth becomes quite woody. Winter frost can damage the roots which are very close to ground level so, after the plants have been cut back by two thirds, a mulch is necessary.

I rearranged my border so as to spread out the different colours and keep taller plants to the back; recently I planted a line of miscanthus behind the chrysanthemums to provide some shelter and a backdrop. The colours in my mini collection include white, yellow, pink, salmon, bronze, orange, gold, and green while the flower forms range from single and double to anemone and pompom. They bring colour from the last week of July to the end of December.

My six favourite chrysanthemums at the moment: 'Clara Curtis' — 90 cm tall, 6cm pale pink blooms excellent for cut flowers; 'Mary Stoker' — 100cm tall, stunning creamy yellow/apricot 8cm flowers; 'Tickled Pink' — very pretty 6cm pale pink duplex spoon flowers; 'Rosetta' — 100cm tall, 6cm double soft salmon/pink, two-tone amazing flowers; 'Mrs Jessie Cooper' — large, single, bright cerise-pink flowers, a very healthy strong-growing plant; 'Poesie' — 110 cm tall, 5cm creamy-white duplex flowers, very hardy and long flowering plant. In addition 'Wedding Day', a rare plant, 8cm large white duplex flowers, makes a great cut flower; I still had a bloom on my plant on Christmas Eve. It needs a very sheltered position and is best grown in a large pot.



A selection of Michael's chrysanthemums

Grow an Irish Plant

by Maeve Bell, Brendan Sayers & Paddy Tobin

Hypericum 'Rowallane'



As a shrub, *Hypericum* tends not to be valued highly by gardeners, perhaps because of associations with new housing developments and supermarket car parks. Possibly for this reason the beautiful *Hypericum* 'Rowallane', which holds an RHS Award of Garden Merit, seems to have fallen out of favour which is a great shame.

It is a splendid shrub, growing to about 2m tall and is very free-flowering being festooned with saucer-shaped golden blooms from early in the season until late autumn. The foliage of this upright shrub is a glaucous green and it will often hold its leaves through most of a mild winter. Its parentage suggests

that it could be slightly tender but it survived -12°C in Belfast in the winter of 2010 although it completely defoliated and was a little slow to recover the following year.

Leslie Slinger, the owner of the famous Slieve Donard Nursery in Newcastle, Co Down, spotted it in Rowallane Gardens; it was introduced by the Nursery and listed in its catalogue in 1940. The original plant still grows at Rowallane, and our volunteer-maintained garden at the Ulster Folk Museum at Cultra, Co Down also has a fine specimen. It is perfect towards the back of a mixed border where it gives height and colour for many months of the year.

MB

Mackaya bella



The first Curator of the Trinity College Botanic Garden was James Townsend Mackay and he held the position for a period of 60 years until his death in 1862. A contemporary of his in his later years was William Henry Harvey who, as Professor of Botany and one of the first to publish a flora of South Africa, named in his honour a member of the Acanthus family, *Mackaya bella*. A line drawing of its flower is used as the present day emblem of the Trinity College Botanic Garden.

Mackaya bella has a natural distribution in the provinces of eastern South Africa and Eswatini where it grows as a shrub or small tree. One of its common names indicates its habitat, the forest bell bush. As a cool conservatory plant, this evergreen has glossy, dark-green foliage that is attractive when the plant is not in flower. In late spring or early summer the flowers appear in racemes at the end of the stems. The flowers are pale lilac with purple

veins and trumpet or bell-shaped with flared, segmented edges. It is undemanding, requires the usual watering and feeding, and can be kept in shape with light pruning.

For those who might be familiar with the name but not as a plant you know, it could be the £160 million cocaine shipment intercepted off the Cork coast in 2014 on an 18 metre yacht named the *Mackayabella*! **BS**

Pittosporum 'Silver Queen'



Pittosporum is a genus of approximately 200 species mainly native to Australia and New Zealand. Less than 20 species are commonly cultivated as ornamentals. Those grown in gardens are chosen for the evergreen foliage which ranges from glossy green through variegated forms to those with deep purple foliage. An added advantage is that pruning and shaping can be done as stems are cut for flower arrangements. It is only in the colder of our gardens that *Pittosporum* will not thrive.

One of the finest cultivars is a selection of *Pittosporum tenuifolium* 'Silver Queen'. Charles Nelson has written of this plant in *A Heritage of Beauty* and, though previously thought to have occurred as a sport in the Slieve Donard Nursery, it is most probable that it had occurred in the Castlewellan Estate, Co Down and was propagated and marketed by the Nursery.

Pittosporum 'Silver Queen' makes a large shrub or small tree with undulated leaves of a pale silvery-green edged with white. The flowers are small and hidden by the foliage but they are honey scented, more so in the evening. It is probably the most common variegated ornamental shrub in Irish gardens and attained an Award of Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society in 1914. It is an excellent choice to brighten up a dull corner.

More detailed accounts can be found in *An Irish Flower Garden* (1984), *The Glory of Donard* (1993) and *An Irish Flower Garden Replanted* (1997). **BS**

***Leucanthemum* 'Hazel's Dream'**

The daisy has always been appreciated for its simple shape, colour and petal arrangement. Whether it is the modest daisy of our lawns, the wild ox-eye daisy of our roadsides or the impressive Shasta daisy of our gardens, their appeal is perennial and universal.

Leucanthemum x superbum, the Shasta daisy, surely the pinnacle of beauty and perfection in the daisy world, was bred in California by Luther Burbank over a century ago and combined the best of our own

native oxeye daisy, the English field daisy and the Portuguese field daisy to produce an easy, obliging and very popular garden plant. He named it for the snow-capped Mount Shasta of Northern California.



Over the years, plant breeders have given us new cultivars and 'Hazel's Dream' from Kilmurry Nursery in Co Wexford is especially beautiful. The bright yellow centre is surrounded by a semi-double ring of sparkling white petals that flutter beautifully in the slightest breeze. It is perfectly hardy, a little over a metre in height, attractive to butterflies and bees and easily propagated by division. It's an excellent garden plant, looking particularly well in a white garden, and is a good mixer in a border.

The eponymous Hazel is Paul and Orla Woods' daughter and now part of the team at Kilmurry Nursery. **PT**

Save your seeds!

by Debbie Bailey

It is hard to believe that it already August and time to send my annual note of gentle persuasion to you all to collect some seeds from your garden treasures and send them to me for inclusion in the seed exchange for 2022.

This year was exceptional in many ways but in terms of requests for seeds it was a record. They came in fast and furious almost as soon as the list of seeds had been posted and kept coming right up to the end of April. In 2019 we had donations of seeds from 14 members and requests for seeds from 82 members. In 2020 we had donations from 15 members but requests were down to 72. But this year we had donations from 18 members and requests from more than 220 members.

The message from these stats is that we have very few donors but huge numbers of requests. Could you be someone who donates for the first time this year? Even a few seeds from a relatively common plant would

be very welcome. Herbs, perennials, annuals, vegetables — all are welcome. The routine for collecting seeds is quite straightforward:

1. Use a paper bag or used envelope.
2. Write the name of the plant and variety on the bag/envelope.
3. Cut off fully ripe heads as found — several trips over time may be necessary.
4. Put the heads upside down in the bag.
5. Leave to dry on a windowsill or other dry warm spot.
6. Clean the seedheads and put into a clean paper envelope.
7. Ensure the envelope is labelled and send it to me at: **Clonguaire, Ballynacarrig, Brittas Bay, Co Wicklow.**

It is hugely encouraging when a member gets in touch to let us know how they have fared with the seeds. One such message reads:

"I just wanted to tell you how delighted I am with this unusual flower, *Petunia exserta*, that has germinated from IGPS seed. A big thank you to the member who sent it in."

We would love to hear of other successes and of course to receive lots of seeds.

debbiebailey797@gmail.com



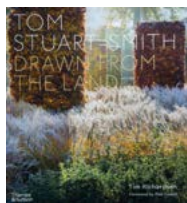
Collecting Silene seed

Worth a Read

by Paddy Tobin

Tom Stuart-Smith: Drawn From The Land

Tim Richardson, Thames & Hudson, 2021, Hardback, 320 pages, £50, ISBN: 978-0-500-02231-3



Tom Stuart-Smith, the winner of eight gold medals for his gardens at the Royal Horticultural Society's Chelsea Flower Show with three being awarded the coveted Best in Show, worked with the outstanding Tim Richardson in a review of twenty four of his major garden projects. The approach is open, insightful, informative and interesting and this book is certainly a perfect example of the success of such an approach. It is lavishly illustrated with the most excellent photography so the whole is a triumph of content, style and presentation. Yes, you may gather I really and truly enjoyed the book.

A Year Full of Flowers, Gardening for all seasons

Sarah Raven, Photography by Jonathan Buckley, Bloomsbury, 2021, Hardback, 283 pages, £25, ISBN: 978-1-5266-2611-0



A Year Full of Flowers ... with Sarah Raven is an exceptionally good book, full of relevant information, practical advice and suggestions to enliven your gardening life. Each month has a substantial description of Sarah Raven's Perch Hill Garden with comments on best plants and the work being done. This is the most practical book of sound gardening advice that I have come on in years. An especially good book.

The Kew Gardener's Guide to Growing Roses

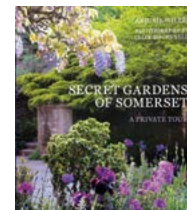
Tony Hall, Frances Lincoln, 2021, Hardback, 144 pages, £12.99, ISBN: 978-0-7112-6190-7



Tony Hall, a vastly experienced horticulturalist from Kew, has selected, organised and described a limited range of the very best roses so the beginner gardener is guaranteed to choose a rose which will provide beauty and pleasure in the garden for many years. It is short, simple, practical and indispensable, perfect for the beginner, with useful recommendations for the more experienced.

Secret Gardens of Somerset

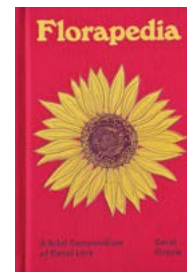
Abigail Willis, Photographs by Clive Bournnell, Frances Lincoln, Quarto Group, 2020, Hardback, 144 pages, £22, ISBN: 978 0 7112 5222 6



The gardening tourist could have no better companion if visiting Somerset than this wonderful book. It will be the perfect guidebook, providing a comprehensive listing of the most desirable locations, each temptingly described and illustrated. It will also provide hours of virtual visiting guaranteed to lead to the most irresistible case of itchy feet imaginable.

Florapedia, A Brief Compendium of Floral Lore

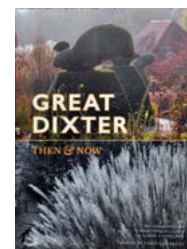
Carol Gracie, Princeton University Press, 2021, Hardback, 189 pages, \$16.95, ISBN: 978-1-691-21140-4



Carol Gracie (author of *Spring Wildflowers of the Northeast* and *Summer Wildflowers of the Northeast*) has just written the perfect book for that impossible-to-satisfy gardening nerd in your life, a compendium of botanical snippets, that will inform, amuse and entertain anybody with an interest in gardening, botany or nature in general.

Great Dixter, Then & Now

Fergus Garrett, Photographs by Christopher Lloyd and Carol Casselden, Pimpernel Press, 2021, Softback, 80 pages, £12.99, ISBN: 978-1-910258-89-7



Great Dixter, Then & Now is small volume, a pictorial tour of the garden illustrated with present-day photographs, others taken by Christopher Lloyd himself and still others from when his parents first came to Great Dixter and began the remodelling of the house and the creation of the garden. It is a very pleasant and informative guide book, an excellent introduction, garden guide and souvenir of a visit to the garden.

Society Snippets

Honour for Seamus O'Brien

Many congratulations to Seamus O'Brien, Head Gardener at the National Botanic Gardens Kilmacurragh who has been appointed a Fellow of The Explorers Club. Founded in New York City in 1904, the Explorers Club promotes the scientific exploration of land, sea, air, and space by supporting research and education in the physical, natural and biological sciences. Fellowship is reserved for those who have distinguished themselves by directly contributing to scientific knowledge in the field of geographical exploration or allied sciences. As a Fellow, Seamus enters the top tier of the Explorers Club, including Sir Edmund Hillary, Col. Buzz Aldrin and many more.

Online Plant Sale

Despite the remaining Covid restrictions, the online plant sale organized in Belfast towards the end of May was a huge success raising over £1700 after deducting a couple of very minor expenses. Hundreds of plants went off to new homes, mostly in the Northern region but two to the Dublin area and one as far away as Wexford. Many thanks to Agnes Peacocke and her team of helpers, Adrian Walsh, who spent the morning taking payments, the individuals who generously donated a wonderful selection of plants and, of course, our enthusiastic members who bought them and made the morning of the sale good fun.

Bergenia Trial

Sponsored by the IGPS in 2017, the Irish *Bergenia* trial will soon be coming to a close. However, before completing our work, the authors are keen to know if any reader might have a contact for Dr S A Surgenor who was based in Ballymena in the late 1990s. Through the discovery of a letter sent to the JFK Arboretum, it seems that Dr Surgenor grew dozens of *Bergenia* and also had contact with Dr Yeo from Cambridge who conducted invaluable research into the genus in the 60s and 70s. In addition to being a member of the IGPS, Dr Surgenor also belonged to the Royal Horticultural Society, the National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens, and the Hardy Plant Society. If you have any information, please send an email: gary.mentanko@opw.ie

Garden heroes

Well done to IGPS member, Deborah Begley, who gardens at Terra Nova in Co Limerick and took part RTE's Garden Heroes; hers was one of the 'Gardens That Surprise'. As well as a Hobbit House and Fairy Garden, the final surprise was a Bali-inspired garden pavilion shrouded in bamboo, ferns and a majestic *Tetrapanax*. Many of us enjoyed watching this and other programmes in the series.

Will be Missed

by Brendan Sayers and Carmel Duignan

Ed Bowden (1964 – 2021)

Our coming together as a Society is an amalgamation of various personalities, whether based on knowledge, experience, curiosity or simple sociability. However for the Society to be organised and successful, we need individuals who have the qualities of selflessness, dependability and talent. These qualities together with buckets loads of cheerfulness were all wrapped up in the personality of Ed Bowden. Sadly, Ed passed away suddenly and unexpectedly at the end of April having spent the day in the garden.

Ed served as Treasurer over two terms and championed Irish cultivars in his work for Dublin City Council. As District Parks Officer for the inner city area, Ed brought not only a wider palette of plants to parks, roads, bridges and intersection plantings but loved when he could add a plant that was of Irish origin. He was a great champion of *Ruscus aculeatus* 'John Redmond' which was found by a retired Dublin City Council colleague. He loved to plant trees for the coming generations and was always delighted when he found a source for an Irish one.

It was at AGM weekends and the Leinster plant sale when Ed was most evident to members. Bags and bags of bulbs were his forte accompanied by his ever present smile. Both he and his smile will be very much missed. **BS**

Angela Jupe (1944 – 2021)

Angela Jupe, a member over many years, was an established architect and antique shop owner in Dublin when, sometime in the 1990s, she decided that she preferred gardening and garden design. She purchased Fancroft Millhouse and established what became an acclaimed garden where she held the first of the plant fairs that later became more fashionable and numerous. She subsequently moved to Bellefield House in Co Offaly, an old Georgian farmhouse with a large, overgrown walled garden. With her customary zeal she made another treasure, filling the garden with interesting plants and transforming the surrounding outbuildings into charming workspaces for the display of arts and crafts. Among the many interesting plants she established here perhaps the most celebrated was a comprehensive collection of snowdrops. Angela was an accomplished lecturer, writer and promoter of gardening. Her sudden death has deprived us of a fascinating, knowledgeable gardener who has left a beautifully designed and interesting garden and a notable collection of plants. **CD**

Out and About

Kilmacrew Garden on Saturday 29th May

Approaching Kilmacrew House along the narrow laneways of the drumlins of Co Down, there are no clues as to what to expect — it is a truly secret garden. Our group gathered at the front of the grey farmhouse to hear the owner, Louise, give a brief history of how she, a New Zealander, came to inherit the garden in 2006. Most of the garden was planted in the mid 1960s and catalogues from Hillier and other major nurseries show that the creators of this garden were determined to plant the best that was available. And it has the added attraction of the association with Helen Waddell (1889 - 1965), the Ulster writer, poet and playwright, who was a frequent visitor here.

There were numerous white blossoms on the *Halesia monticola* providing a contrast to the reds and pinks of the rhododendrons. Further on we spotted several different species of magnolia, a magnificent *Wellingtonia*, a large *Hamamelis contorta* and many other shrubs which had reached a size and maturity that is rarely seen in a garden nowadays. With a special ambience, Kilmacrew is a four acre ornamental garden which delights at every turn.

Doreen Wilson

Linda Murphy's Garden, Churchtown, Dublin on Saturday, 10th July

An eager group of IGPS members gathered in the warm sunshine to visit a special garden in Dublin 14, which I can best liken to a jewel box. Why do I compare it to a jewel box? Because the plants themselves are so carefully placed and tended that each seems to be treasured.

Another outstanding quality of this garden is the careful choice of colours and forms in all the planting, including the many pots. There were a lot of pots placed so that one seemed suddenly to discover them; I am thinking in particular of pots of sempervivums, some at ground level, some on the tables which make the garden truly seem like different 'rooms' for living in.

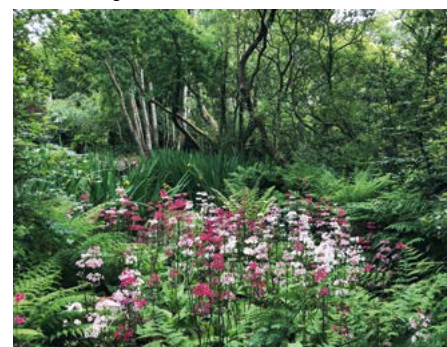


The various different spaces, like the compartments in a jewel box, contain their special treasures — here a rose, there a tall, graceful grass, and pots of pelargoniums to lighten the 'rooms' as well.

The care and attention to detail in this garden are outstanding. I expect that each of us took away a 'must have' plant or idea. In my own case, it was a somewhat tender plant under the pergola — *Jasminum officinale* 'Clotted Cream' — generous sized with deliciously scented flowers for people to sit among. However, I feel that the most enriching aspect of the visit was meeting Linda herself; she so clearly knows her plants intimately.

Mary Montaut

Greba Gardens near Carrowdore, County Down on Saturday 19th June



This three acre garden has been created within a reclaimed quarry and its owners, Richard and

Beverley Britain, garden with a light touch. It is a woodland garden with boardwalks through naturalistic planting, an inviting choice of seating areas from which to soak up the atmosphere, and a delightful pond surrounded by lawn at its centre. Rhododendrons were still in bloom, the acers were getting into their stride and irises, ferns and waterlilies were thriving in the damp, shady conditions. Members thoroughly enjoyed exploring the garden while sometimes losing their bearings along the mossy paths but, sadly, no-one managed to spot the red squirrels which sometimes visit.

Maeve Bell.

Ballywalter Park, County Down on Saturday 24th July

A hot sunny day with a cooling fresh breeze was perfect for the visit to Ballywalter Park, hosted by Lord and Lady Dunleath who shared their knowledge and anecdotes in a most engaging way.

The first Lord Dunleath planted the thirty acres of pleasure grounds in the mid-1840's. The magnificent mature trees and shrubs that remain in the parkland frame the house from all angles. There have been some losses in recent years but more recent additions such as a small stand of Swedish birch, *Betula pendula* subsp. *pendula* 'Laciniata', also known as 'Dalecarlica', complement the older plantings. The parkland also contains bridged

streams, a lake, rockery and water garden and the whole effect gives the sense of a natural landscape that was there long before the first house was built.



The walled garden is a 2.8 acre plot containing a long central pergola, under-planted with perennials, annuals and roses, which leads to a large glasshouse. Behind this are other renovated glass houses against the back wall of the garden. Areas of the walled garden have been left to develop as grass and wildflower meadow, while a selection of fruit trees (quince, medlar and apple) occupy other areas. The former rose garden will be reinstated in the walled garden, some older varieties are still growing on the pergola.

Adrian Walsh

Kilgar Garden in County Meath on Saturday 14th August

If anything, the dreary and disappointing weather increased our enjoyment of the visit because it made the colours and beautiful contrasting shapes in the garden all the more vibrant. The extraordinary copper edging of the pond is a good

example of the original and attractive use of materials by Paula Byrne in creating this comparatively new, three acre garden.

The gardens are mostly formal, with lots of well-clipped box hedging to express the design. This works very well in a young garden where the larger trees and shrubs have not yet begun to make their presence very strongly felt. It will be interesting to see how the garden develops in perhaps five or six years.

Paula has designed a series of distinct garden rooms around the house. Each has a particular character, and visitors will doubtless have their favourite. I especially liked the way in which she included tiny gardens in tubs and buckets, stuffed with sempervivums and echeveria of all sorts. I asked how she kept them so happy in our damp climate, and she pointed out the very sharp potting compost keeping their fleshy leaves above the level at which they could so easily rot; it also helps to deter the slugs.

Mary Montaut

The final visit of the season was to Fernhill Cottage, a three and a half acre garden created over the last nine years in Spa, Co Down at the end of August.

Dates for your Diary

The Committee has decided that the winter lecture programme should move online via Zoom due to uncertainties about the availability of venues and in-person meetings. Our thanks to the regional committees who have put together the following programme of events and our apologies to any member who does not have access to the internet.

Wednesday 13th October 2021 at 8.00pm **Pollinators in Your Garden** with Mary Montaut

All flowering plants have pollen for reproduction: the pollinators — a buzz word in gardening at the moment — which move about the garden enable the plants effectively to find mates which are vital to the health and survival of the plant population. Mary will talk about the 'Big Four' insect pollinators, and also about physical forces like wind and rain which can enable plants to find partners for reproduction.

Mary Montaut loves plants and bees equally. She edited the Beekeeping journal, *An Beachaire*, for nine years, and has been a member of the IGPS for much longer than that. She lives and gardens in Bray, Co Wicklow where the photographs were taken.

Friday 15 October 2021 at 8.00pm **The Artist as a Gardener** with Steven Desmond

Down the ages many artists have combined their achievements on canvas with an equal interest in making and cultivating a garden. This talk looks at a number of outstanding artist-gardeners in the 19th and 20th centuries, finishing with the incomparable Claude Monet who said himself that he was good for two things — painting and gardening.

Steven Desmond is a Professional Associate of the Royal Horticultural

Society. He is a landscape consultant specializing in the conservation and management of historic gardens, and regularly writes for journals including *Country Life Magazine*. Steven is the author of *Gardens of the Italian Lakes*, published in 2016, leads specialist tours, and is a regular lecturer with the Arts Society.

Sunday 17th October 2021 **11.00am to 1.00pm**

Plant Sale at the Church of the Guardian Angels Parish Centre, Newtownpark Avenue, Blackrock, Co Dublin

This is an unrivalled opportunity to buy a huge range of plants including many rare or uncommon plants including Irish heritage plants. Organised by the Leinster Committee, this is a major fund-raising opportunity for the Society.

Monday 15th November 2020 at 8.00pm **The Grand Tour** with Stephen Butler

An eclectic journey around Europe spotting mainly plants. Opportunities arose during many zoo conference trips to various countries to visit gardens. This is a pictorial visit to many gardens or national parks in Budapest, Berlin, Arnhem, Rome, Barcelona, Bristol, and Wroclaw picking out the interesting plant or the interesting story to go with it.

Kew-trained Stephen is well known to many IGPS members. He was Curator

of Horticulture at Dublin Zoo for 34 years until 2018 having worked in Bangladesh before settling in Dublin. He has been involved with the Irish Heritage Plants project for almost as long. Many members will have come in contact with Stephen through our Seed Scheme which he organised for many years.

Tuesday 7 December 2021 at 8.00pm
A Tour of the Garden at Hauser and Wirth Somerset through the seasons
 with Rory Duso

Hauser and Wirth is the garden created by Piet Oudolf, justly famous for his naturalistic style of planting, to surround a new art gallery in Somerset. Piet notes that '...the fact that it was to be an integral part of the gallery immediately gave it a sense of place and a strong feeling of belonging to an exciting world where beautiful things happen both inside and outside.'

Rory Duso is a plantsman and garden designer. Having grown up in Northern Ireland, he studied Horticulture at Kew, and is currently head gardener at Stud House, Kingston upon Thames. In 2016, Rory set up the successful Landscape Company, Kennedy Song Duso, with two fellow Kew graduates. He regularly writes for *The Daily Telegraph*, the *RHS Garden* magazine and *Gardens Illustrated*, as well as contributing to books. Rory is the author of the recent publication *Planting the Oudolf Gardens at Hauser and Worth Somerset*.

Tuesday 11th January 2022 at 8pm
Exploring Northern Vietnam and the Blarney Vietnamese Woodland

with Adam Whitbourn

Adam Whitbourn, head gardener at Blarney Castle Gardens, has been on expeditions to Northern Vietnam four times in the past 10 years, the last in 2019. Working with Vietnamese authorities and botanists to fully comply with Nagoya protocols, they collect seeds, preserve pressed specimens and record plants in the area. Because they collected mainly high in the mountains, the plants are generally hardy in Irish conditions.

There is a huge diversity of plants in these mountains, many of which are endangered; clear felling for agriculture, cardamom farming, is the cause of much of the plant loss in the area. *Aesculus wangii* produces impressively large 'conkers' and is now growing happily in Blarney alongside *Shefflera macrophylla*, *Shefflera frangipaniensis*, *Rubus lineatus* and many other species including acers, oak and magnolia. The Vietnamese woodland in Blarney is an ex-situ conservation project developed from the wild-collected seed.

Confirmation and reminders will be sent by email nearer the time.
 Further dates for 2022 will appear in the January issue.

Meet our Contributors

Debbie Bailey is a horticultural therapist and also teaches flower arranging. Based in County Wicklow, she has co-ordinated our seed exchange since 2017.

Stephen Butler was formerly Curator of Horticulture at Dublin Zoo. He takes the lead in all matters to do with Irish Heritage Plants.

Carmel Duignan is a plantswoman and garden writer whose Dublin garden is full of plants of all kinds from the rare and exotic to the ordinary and useful.

Mary Forrest recently retired from the Faculty of Agriculture at UCD where she was Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning; she is a founder member of the Society.

Robin & Ann Kane are long-standing and enthusiastic members of the IGPS who garden in County Waterford

Michael Kelliher lives and gardens in Macroom, County Cork and is a member of many years standing.

Lorna MacMahon who gardens in Galway writes and lectures about gardening. She is a qualified horticultural therapist, flower demonstrator and judge.

Paul Maher recently retired as Curator of the National Botanic Gardens. He is a long standing member of the IGPS, served on the committee on two occasions and also edited the Newsletter for several years.

Nicola & Peter Milligan garden at the Mount Stewart estate on the shores of Strangford Lough in County Down. Both are past members of the IGPS Northern Committee.

Rae McIntyre is a retired teacher, a keen gardener in County Londonderry and long time contributor to the Newsletter.

Agnes Peacocke was acting Honorary Secretary during 2020-2, is a member of the Northern committee and an enthusiastic gardener.

Brendan Sayers is Glasshouse Foreman at the National Botanic Gardens and has spent almost 30 years working there; he specialises in orchids, both native and tropical.

Paddy Tobin, a former Chairman of the Society and Editor of the Newsletter, lives in Waterford and is in charge of the Society's website and Facebook page.

Many thanks to members **Mary Montaut, Adrian Walsh and Doreen Wilson** for their reports.

Photos are by kind permission of the author unless otherwise attributed.

While every effort is made to ensure that content is correct at the time of printing, views expressed in the articles are those of the author(s) and may not reflect those of the Society. Any factual errors will be corrected as soon as possible.




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