

*The
Irish Garden Plant Society*



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Editorial



It was a delight and honour to be asked at a recent Executive Committee meeting to follow in Mary Rowe's footsteps as Editor. The high esteem in which Mary is held and the regard for her professionalism as Editor have been obvious in each and every one of my interactions to date in compiling this release. Thank you Mary for paving the way for me.

My own association with the IGPS goes back many years to the early nineties thanks to a membership Christmas gift from that well revered Dublin gardener and much admired batik artist Bernadette Madden. Since then I have enjoyed events and trips with the Society making new friends and hopefully honing my gardening skills and knowledge!

There are many interesting contributions and no shortage of events on offer in this newsletter so happy reading and book early. The planning for the AGM weekend is progressing well and promises to be an essential get away and break for us all. Full details on this in the next issue. Remember if you are of a mind to become involved in your region take that leap and you will be warmly welcomed.

Thankfully we are beginning to see a stretch in the evenings while a cold spell appears to be descending after the relentless rain of recent weeks. The snowdrops are peeping out and offering glimmers of a spring and summer to come. With an early Easter this year the copy date for material for the next Newsletter is **March 22nd** and I very much look forward to hearing from you. I can be contacted at: igpseditor@gmail.com. Meanwhile happy gardening.

Brendan

Brendan Ruddy, IGPS Committee



A Word from the Chair



I wish to express our heartfelt thanks to Mary Rowe for her excellent work as Editor on the newsletter over the last number of years. I also wish Brendan Ruddy every success as the new Editor after recently joining the Executive Committee and very generously agreeing to take on this position.

It is wonderful to be able to report significant progress in two areas of the society's work. Our work to source and conserve Irish heritage plants has taken a major step forward in the last two years with the research done by Stephen Butler to check on the availability within the trade, among members and elsewhere of the plants listed in *A Heritage of Beauty*.

Also, very significant is the level of encouragement, support, advice and practical assistance which has come from the National Botanic Gardens where Paul Maher and Brendan Sayers have been very generous with their time and, indeed, plants. The development of the Irish Plant Trail at Blarney Castle Gardens is also hugely significant. The collection of Irish heritage plants head gardener, Adam Whitbourn, has gathered promises to be one of the most significant in the country. The society has provided both financial and practical support for this project and will continue to do so.

It has also been a delight to see our joint project, *Plandai Oidhreacht*, with the Irish Society of Botanical Artists progress so well and I believe this is going to a wonderful success for both societies leading to a beautiful exhibition and a book which members will treasure.

Paddy

Paddy Tobin, Chairman IGPS



Mr. Thomas Shaw - a 20th century promoter of horticulture

The name Thomas Shaw was mentioned in the account of the Irish Gardeners' Association by Thomas Byrne which was published in Newsletter no 133, September 2015. In 1898 Shaw mooted the idea of an association for gardeners and in time he became the first secretary of the Association and read the inaugural lecture on Daffodils. He was instrumental in organising a potato show in Dublin in 1900 and after he retired from the Association was appointed a horticultural organiser in south west Ireland for the recently established Irish Agricultural Co-operative Society.

Drawing on Census records and newspaper archives this article provides further details on Shaw's contribution to horticulture and gardening. Shaw was born in Co. Offaly in 1855/6. From the Census returns of 1901 where he described himself as a journalist, he lived at 17 Harold's Cross Road with his wife Kate and their four children. Ten years later he lived at Cullenagh, no 4 Ballymun Road and stated that he was an agricultural organiser.

While an allotment movement developed in Dublin in 1910 it gained momentum in the city and country seven years later. In January 1917 the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction introduced grants to promote food production in allotments in urban areas. Later that year Shaw was one of those who founded The Irish Plottolders' Union, later the United Irish Plottolders' Union. From 1922 until 1934 he was its President. One of his roles was to advocate on the part of allotment or plot holders as they were more commonly known. From 1917 the Union, with others, had lobbied for the introduction of an act to provide land and fixity of tenure. When an Act was eventually enacted in 1926, Shaw told those assembled at the annual Congress of 1928 the Acquisition of Land (Allotments) Act was not in the interests of town workers. He reported to the annual general

meeting of 1930 that the Union had 'several heavy fights with public authorities' about the provision of plots for Dublin workers. He also attended meetings of local associations such as Waterford Plottolders' Association in 1933. Also in 1933 he was present at the turning of the sod and later at a prize giving ceremony for produce grown on allotments at Wadelei, Ballymun Road, Glasnevin.

In 1934 he reported to the AGM that as the provision of allotments by local authorities was discretionary rather than obligatory the development of the allotment movement would be limited. (The Act was amended later that year.) There was controversy at the same meeting when it was discovered that Shaw, one of three candidates for the office of President, belonged to an unaffiliated allotment association. The Secretary of the West Park allotments which may have been located in the Ballygall area of Glasnevin, had not paid the affiliation fee to the Plottolder's Union and Shaw was ineligible for re-election as President.

Ever a keen gardener he founded and became President of the North Dublin Horticultural Society in 1928. The Society held their annual shows in St. Patrick's Training College. From perhaps 1930 – 1934, he was Hon. General Organiser of the Irish National Garden Guild an organisation which despite its name promoted gardens and gardening in local districts in Dublin, the present day equivalent of Tidy District competitions.

Shaw was also a lecturer, speaking to organisations such as the Gardeners' Association, Rotary, Muintir na Tire, and the Cabra Garden Guild. The topics illustrate his range of interests, such as, 'Town Gardening and Flora Decoration', 'Benefits of plots for industrial workers' 'Allotments', 'Fruit Growing as a profitable industry', and 'Peat Bogs'. Many of these lectures were broadcast on 2RN, now RTE Radio. He represented Ireland at the International Congress of Allotment Holders, held in Brussels in 1931 and in Paris in 1936. In 1937 he was appointed to the Advisory Committee of the International Labour Office, League of Nations, Geneva.

From 1928 – 1929 he edited the Irish Gardener and Horticultural Review described in the subtitle as a magazine of Practical Horticulture and Cottage gardening. Based on the collections in the National Library it

appears that only two volumes were published. For many years Shaw wrote gardening columns in the Weekly Irish Times, in the Irish Press under the pseudonym Rusticus and in the Saturday edition of the Evening Herald as Uncle Tom.

He died while gardening and his last article for the Irish Press was published in the week of his death. His funeral which was held in Glasnevin was attended by family and several government ministers and local politicians. On his death in 1940 an obituary in the Irish Times commented that 'his great interest in life was the encouragement of horticulturists to make better use of flower gardens and plots'.

Mary Forrest, School of Agriculture and Food Science, UCD



Cordyline indivisa on the Northern Region visit to Kilmacurragh, Wicklow in September



Irish Heritage Plants update

2015 was a remarkable year for this initiative, from just having a short list of what we thought we had, we have, with much help from our members, accomplished the following:

1. Compiled a list of 450 plant species and cultivars that members, and the National Botanic Gardens at Glasnevin, Kilmacurragh and other gardens, grow at the moment. Of these at least 100 are not listed in general trade – that means if we stop growing them, they could disappear very quickly.
2. Compiled a list of over 800 IHPs in trade, but often not in many nurseries. 170 of these are only listed in 1 or 2 nurseries. A further 160 are only 'last listed in year' – often several years ago – so possibly no one is growing them anymore.
3. Assisted Blarney Castle Gardens in establishing their Irish Heritage Plant Trail, with 125 IHPs so far, more on the way.
4. Commenced propagating some IHPs, from member's gardens, and with generous help from Glasnevin and Kilmacurragh. There is also a large scale propagation of some choice IHPs at Fitzgerald Nurseries.
5. Started to compile a list of Irish Nurseries that have IHPs for sale. So far we have checked through the catalogues from Ravensberg Nursery (15), Flannerys Nursery (4), and Kilmurry Nursery (24). If you see any IHPs in a nursery please tell us, and mention that to the owners too! If you are a nursery owner please contact us and we will happily check through your catalogue (send as Excel spreadsheet please).

To keep the momentum going it was decided to form a working group of interested people with skills we need, around the country. This includes so far Maeve Bell, Carmel Duignan, Chris Heavey, Billy McCone, Gary

Murphy, Seamus O'Brien, Brendan Sayers, Paddy Tobin, and Adam Whitbourn. If you would like to be involved, and can help, please feel free to contact us, we need people to help with various tasks, obviously propagating, but also maybe helping on the database, preparing pictures and herbarium specimens, and most importantly sourcing more IHPs – this could be as simple as visiting nurseries in the UK if over there for a holiday and collecting a few plants.

2016 will see us developing further, sourcing more plants, and helping more gardens to establish IHPs within their collections. For this, as ever, we turn to our members for help! We will be targeting the least available or last listed plants, trying to source them, and then propagating too of course.

The list below (I know, more lists, but it is the only way to do this) is of plants with only one nursery source at present, as listed in the 2014 Plant Finder (this is our bench mark so already a little out of date). If you see any of them, or better still, if you have them, please let us know! Another 15 plants with only one nursery source are already grown by members, well done and many thanks for informing us.

Thanks to everyone for helping with this, you all deserve a pat on the back at the very least!!

Stephen Butler, IGPS Committee, Irish Heritage Plants Working Group

Listed for sale in only one Nursery in Plant Finder in 2014

Agapanthus campanulatus 'Spokes'
Agapanthus praecox 'Bangor Blue'
Agapanthus 'Ballyrogan'
Agapanthus 'Oxbridge'
Agapanthus 'Starburst'
Anemone nemerosa 'Green Dream'
Athyrium filix-femina 'Congestum Minus'
Berberis x stenophylla 'Autumnalis'
Berberis x stenophylla 'Compacta'

Bergenia 'Ballawley Guardsman'
 Chamaecyparis thyoides 'Variegata'
 Chionodoxa siehei
 Crocosmia crocosmioides 'Mount Stewart Late'
 Crocosmia masoniorum 'Rowallane Apricot'
 Crocosmia x crocosmiflora 'Daisy Hill'
 Crocosmia 'Carnival'
 Crocosmia 'Ruby Velvet'
 Cryptomeria japonica 'Knaptonensis'
 Cupressus macrocarpa 'Pendula'
 Cytisus 'Killiney Red'
 Cytisus 'Newry Seedling'
 Daboecia cantabrica 'Bicolor'
 Daboecia cantabrica 'Celtic Star'
 Dahlia 'Truly Scrumptious'
 Dianthus 'Duchess of Fife'
 Dianthus 'Rachel'
 Dianthus 'Spangle'
 Dierama pulcherrimum 'Falcon'
 Dierama pulcherrimum 'Flamingo'
 Dierama pulcherrimum 'Peregrine'
 Dierama pulcherrimum 'Redwing'
 Dierama 'Blush'
 Dierama 'Donard Legacy'
 Dierama 'Iris'
 Dierama 'Juno'
 Dierama 'Papagena'
 Dierama 'Papageno'
 Dierama 'Queen of the Night'
 Dierama 'Tamino'
 Dierama 'Tubular Bells'
 Dierama 'Violet Ice'
 Dierama 'Westminster Chimes'
 Diplarrhena latifolia Helen Dillon's form
 Erica carnea 'Eileen Porter'

Erica cinerea 'Glasnevin Red'
Erica cinerea 'Purple Robe'
Erica mackaiana 'Galicia'
Erica tetralix 'Silver Bells'
Erica x darleyensis 'Archie Graham'
Erica x darleyensis 'W.G.Pine'
Erythronium revolutum 'Guincho Splendour'
Erythronium 'Flash'
Escallonia 'Donard Beauty'
Exochorda 'Irish Pearl'
Fagus sylvatica 'Birr Zebra'
Francoa 'Ballyrogan'
Galega x hartlandii
Garrya x issaquahensis 'Pat Ballard'
Ilex x altaclerensis 'Hendersonii'
Juniperus communis 'Derrynane'
Leucanthemum x superbum 'Duchess of Abercorn'
Lonicera periclymenum 'Munster'
Magnolia sargentiana var. *robusta* 'Multipetal'
Meconopsis x beamishii
Nerine 'Ada Bryson'
Nerine 'Grania'
Nerine 'Lady St Aldwyn'
Nerine 'Tweedledee'
Oenothera fruticosa 'Lady Brookeborough'
Philadelphus coulteri
Pittosporum tenuifolium 'Nutt's Leprecahun'
Polypodium cambricum (syn *australe*) 'Grandiceps Foster'
Polypodium cambricum (syn *australe*) 'Semilacerum Falcatum O'Kelly'
Polystichum setiferum 'Rotundatum Phillips'
Primula 'Lissadell Hybrids'
Prunus 'Woodfield Cluster'
Rhododendron 'Summer Flame'
Rhododendron 'W. E. Gumbleton'
Rodgersia pinnata 'Rosea'

Rodgersia 'Panache'
Rubus 'Margaret Gordon'
Sanvitalia procumbens 'Irish Eyes'
Saxifraga × andrewsii
Saxifraga longifolia 'Walpole's Variety'
Sedum brevifolium var. quinquefarium
Sempervivum 'Mount Usher'
Taxus baccata 'Adpressa Variegata'
Thuja occidentalis 'Caespitosa'
X Cuprocyparis (syn X Cupressocyparis) leylandii 'Olive's Green'

Seed Distribution Scheme 2016

As I write this in early December most seeds are in, and we have just over 300, with a few more promised, and a few less when duplicates removed. This is a good deal less than last year, but there are a lot of interesting accessions there, several not listed or barely listed in the Plant Finder, and considering the rather unusual weather this spring/summer/autumn, I think it's a credit to our small band of seed donors, to whom as always we say many thanks.

If requesting seeds, please remember to use the form provided, and send in a stamped addressed envelope to post back to you. It's important to remember too to fill in the substitute boxes – many of the seeds sent in are in very small numbers, so they run out within the first few requests, and the rarer they are the quicker they go.

Amongst the seeds this year we have 8 Allium, 10 Geranium, 6 Clematis, 6 Digitalis, and for the more unusual how about Brimeura, Edraianthus, Eritrichium, Trautvetteria, and Hylomecon – my benchmark is if you need to look it up it must be worth trying!

Last year (and this) we have been lucky to receive seed of Nerine bowdenii 'Quenton Wells' (or var wellsii, the jury's out at the moment!) and there were maybe 6 seed left in the packet once the distribution was over. They

are very fleshy, and do not behave like a normal seed, being programmed to germinate immediately – often still in the seed head. I'd normally sow such a nice plant if spares left, but forgot. On tidying up the 'seed room' (he means the garage – editor) I found the packet, gently cursed about missing them, tipped them out, and found they had in fact germinated in the packet – no moisture, no soil – and I now had 6 tiny plants, each seed had grown a miniature bulb, with an even smaller root and green shoot. Needless to say they were potted immediately, well deserved after that wait.

I always check the names of seeds sent in, trying to keep up to date, and also spelling. I have given up with one this year. We have almost always had the shrubby perennial white well scented *Matthiola*, under various names, take your pick from *M. incana alba*, *M. arborescens alba*, or this years preferred *Matthiola fruticulosa* subsp. *perennis* 'Alba'. They look the same to me from pictures and descriptions, and any botanical lists I check now have all these as 'under review', so I'll wait and see.

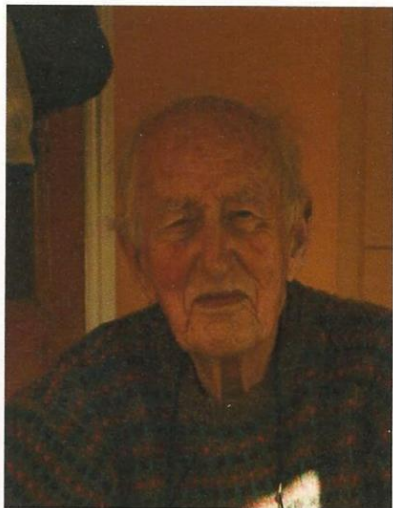
Happy sowing – and remember to maybe pen a few words for our newsletter editor, successes and failures, tips and tricks, always welcome.

You may have heard that I am considering, after about 10 years, retiring from my position as seed distribution coordinator, other duties call. I would be more than helpful to anyone wishing to take it over – or maybe a small group of friends could assist each other, and this does not need to be a Dublin based duty. The tasks are not that onerous, listing – for which Excel is grand, checking names against the current Plant Finder, some seed cleaning and sorting – great way to learn about seeds, and then the packet filling, always fun. If anyone is interested please contact either myself or Paddy Tobin.

Stephen Butler, IGPS Committee, Seed Distribution Coordinator



Fondly remembered: Amyan MacFayden (1920-2015) and Diane Tomlinson (1923-2015)



Little did I think when I moved to Sheffield in 2006 that one of my closest friends would be an IGPS member who had just moved from Coleraine. Originally born in Kent, **Amyan MacFayden** moved to Coleraine in 1967 and was one of the two founding professors of biology at the New University of Ulster. The honours programme was highly innovative and the Times Higher Education (2015) described him as 'an energetic education reformer'. During this time Amyan and his wife Ursula developed a magnificent 3 acre garden on the banks of the River

Bann outside of Coleraine. When he retired in 1987 he continued to develop the garden and I'm sure many IGPS members have visited and are familiar with his extensive plant collection.

For me, it was watching the development of his garden in Sheffield where he adapted his style of gardening to take a more sustainable approach in a much smaller setting that was so inspiring. One of our earliest conversations was about the choice of plants for his new green roof that would tolerate no watering or maintenance! He became actively involved in the local branches of the Green Party, Friends of the Earth and Sheffield Campaign for Climate Change and when interviewed for his 90th birthday he said; 'I am deeply concerned about the future of my family, the human race, and life on earth. I am concerned about the destructive effects of our present way of life on resources and on the environment. I have four children and seven grandchildren who I hope will be around long after I am

gone. I want to do all that I can to make a positive impact on their future lives' (Green Party, Sheffield 2010).

He was a kind and generous friend to everyone and his passion and commitment to making the world a better place inspired all those who met him and I have no doubt his legacy will continue.

Sally O'Halloran



Diane Tomlinson had a formidable presence and looked magnificent when all dressed up complete with pearls, when off to a concert or art exhibition or coming to Christmas dinner. But underneath, Diane was unbelievably kind and helpful to everybody around her.

Diane's face had the quality of reflecting immediate approval or disapproval - with plenty of the latter. I especially remember the sight of her standing in our hall, wearing one of

her plastic rain hats and mackintosh - looking a picture of dissatisfaction. I forget what it was - but I do remember she never forgave us for digging up the lawn and certainly never acknowledged any of our new dogs, for her heart belonged alone to Reggie, our original dachshund. Once she'd made up her mind that was it. Carmel Duignan reminded me recently that I told her ages ago that Diane was my best friend, but I was never very sure if I was her's.

She loved going on trips to visit gardens, both here and abroad, often with her great friend Winifred Bligh. A very good gardener she is remembered by anybody who ran plant stalls as always turning up with good plants, beautifully grown and presented. Until recently she grew an excellent small collection of hostas on the steps at Pembroke Road.

She was a brilliant photographer, and far too modest about it. For decades she built up an extensive library of garden pictures. Her dedication to getting a good picture was such that even though she wasn't especially agile, she managed to lie flat on her back in the tiny bathroom at home to photograph the shell-covered ceiling. My husband, Val, came back from shopping, and seeing two long legs stretching out from the bathroom door, assumed somebody had collapsed, and was in a panic until he realized it was a very professional photographer at work. She will be much missed.

Helen Dillion



John Anderson (Speaker), Barbara Kelso (Northern Regional Committee), Mike Buffin (National Trust) and Neil Porteous (Head Gardener, Mount Stewart) at the October event in Clotworthy House, Antrim.



The Hairy Bluebell

In the *Heritage of Beauty* – that lovely book of the garden plants of Ireland written by Charles Nelson – he lists a particular bluebell as *Hyacinthoides hispanica bracteata* although he expresses some doubt as to its correct species and was unsure whether or not it is a unique clone. The 2015 edition of *The Plant Finder* records a *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* 'Bracteata' and I assume it is the same plant. Its common name is the Hairy Bluebell. Dr Nelson describes it as a plant with very prolonged leaf-like bracts on the flowering stems. He writes that a plant was grown at Beech Park, Clonsilla by the late David Shackleton who told him that it had been given to him by Dr Robert Lloyd Praeger, the great Irish naturalist of the early 20th century.



I grow this plant. The late Anna Nolan, a fine gardener and loyal friend, gave it to me many years ago. She, in turn, had been given her plant by Dr Keith Lamb, an outstanding gardener, botanist and writer. So the provenance of my plant is good. It makes a small neat plant that emerges each spring, flowers and dies away again. It does not increase much and has none of the thuggish proclivities of the Spanish bluebell that grows near it and that I find very difficult to eradicate.

Carmel Duignan



Plandai Oidhreachta – Heritage Plants

The past few months have given me an insight into the work of a number of botanical artists and it has been an extraordinarily interesting and informative experience. I have been more impressed than surprised by the actual amount of time which goes into a painting. Now, I have never been under the delusion that a painting was completed in one sitting or, indeed, in a few but I truly had no idea just to what extent a subject was visited, revisited, studied and examined as the artist sought to identify the form, shape texture and colours. Again, I was quite surprised at the lengths taken to match the colour to perfection with mixing, painting, comparing with the subject and taking note of how this tint or that tone was achieved so that it could be replicated. These are only the preliminary drawings and sketches and there seems to be a multitude of them before the question of composition arises – just how best to organise the various components on the page to the most artistic effect. It is no wonder that the final product is a work of the most delicious and enthralling botanical and artistic delight.

There are over sixty artists painting for Plandai Oidhreachta, a joint project between the Irish Society of Botanical Artists and the IGPS, which will be a depiction of Irish garden plants culminating in an exhibition in November of 2016 along with the launch of an accompanying book of approximately a dozen articles illustrated with the work of the botanical artists. Some of the paintings have already been completed and scanned for reproduction as prints or as illustrations in the book. Many others are works in progress while some must wait for flowering this spring – the snowdrops and primulas, for example.

Fionnuala Broughan has kindly sent me some of her preparatory sketches for *Betula* 'White Light', a cross made by the late John Buckley of Birdhill in Co. Tipperary between *Betula utilis* 'Jacquemontii' and *Betula costata*. I have been particularly interested in this portrait as John very kindly gave me a specimen of this tree some years back and, as well as being very

beautiful, it grows very well in the garden. Fionnuala has been to Birdhill to see the original plant and to Helen Dillon's garden and elsewhere to sketch and collect little pieces to bring home for examination, sketching and painting. The finished picture is yet in the planning stages but promises to be very beautiful when complete as do the many others which will be exhibited in November next.



A preparatory sketch of Betula 'White Light' by Fionnuala Broughan

There will be an opportunity to become a pre-publication subscriber to the book and this, and details of how to do so, will be provided in a coming issue of the newsletter.

Paddy Tobin, Chairman IGPS



Reports from around the Regions

News from the North

We had two very different garden visits at the end of the summer, both super, one to the garden of Hilary and Jim Rafferty near Ballymena, Co Antrim and the other to the National Botanic Garden at Kilmacurragh, Co Wicklow.

The Rafferty's country garden has been transformed over the past 20 years and now includes woodland, a collection of over 150 rhododendrons, bog planting and two wonderful ponds fed from a weir above an old mill race. The larger pond is even big enough to accommodate a jetty with a rowing boat to paddle out its own island. When it was featured on a recent TV programme presented by Helen Dillon and Diarmuid Gavin, Helen described it as 'sublime'. Our group agreed.

In the middle of September Northern visitors to Kilmacurragh were joined by Dublin members and even one enthusiast from Donegal. We enjoyed a fabulous afternoon being shown around by Seamus O'Brien, its curator and a distinguished IGPS member; as we gathered on the wildflower meadows full of flowering scabious and knapweed in front of the gaunt skeleton of the house, he told us something of the background to the estate and the Acton family. We admired the notable collection of rare and unusual trees including *Podocarpus nubigenus*, the largest outside South America, sighed with envy over a gleaming silver *Cordyline indivisa*, learned that the Irish yellow-berried yew, *Taxus baccata* 'Fructo Lutea' (one of the plants featured on the new Leinster banner) appears to be resistant to the scourge of Phytophthora, and traced the march of Oliver Cromwell's army underneath the oaks lining the former Dublin-Wexford road.

At the start of October the committee swung into action for our plant sale as part of the Rowallane Autumn Plant Fair featuring 10 other nurseries and organisations. We were delighted with the quality of the plants on our stand and the amount raised, about £700 after expenses, but noticed that the number of members donating plants had dropped. Even one or two well-rooted plants are most welcome; we would like to encourage many more members to experience the fun of sowing, dividing and propagating followed by the satisfaction seeing your plant go to a new home while benefitting the Society.

Our winter lecture programme kicked off in Clotworthy House, Antrim when John Anderson, Head Gardener at the famous Exbury Gardens and a long-standing member of IGPS, gave a talk 'Three Gardens influenced by the Gulf Stream'. It was a very insightful and personal talk as John had been Head Gardener at all of them – Mount Usher, Inverewe in Scotland and now Exbury on the Hampshire coast. December saw a change of pace when Brendan Little, a regular broadcaster with BBC Radio Ulster and Head Gardener at Carrablagh in Co Donegal, opened our eyes to the delights of wildlife in the garden and encouraged us to tend our plots with it in mind.

For those who don't know about it, some local IGPS members together with a few other volunteers have been looking after since 1989. The charming thatched building dates from 1717 and was relocated from Toomebridge to be part of the Museum's collection of vernacular architecture. We now have a collection of about 35 Irish cultivars and plants with Irish associations, not counting some 15 varieties of primrose and almost 40 different Irish-bred daffodils. Lorna Goldstrom writes below about recent developments in the garden surrounding Lismacloskey Rectory in the Ulster Folk Museum.

Another of our hard-working volunteers at the garden is Yvonne Penpraze who has just finished a most successful four-year term as Chair of the Northern region. I am honoured to have been chosen to succeed her and will try my best to live up to her example.

Maeve Bell, Northern IGPS Committee

Progress at Lismacloskey

Some eighteen months ago I wrote an account of work at the partner garden that IGPS is tending at The Old Rectory, in Belfast's Folk and Transport Museum. After some years of the project being in the doldrums, we have reached a happy equilibrium of gardening sessions each week, an adequate number of volunteers and regular input from each side of the partnership, IGPS and Folk Museum staff. Up to six of us were turning up each Wednesday morning from spring to autumn, plus three or four of us over the colder months.

How are we doing? Some of the volunteer faces have changed, but the enthusiasm keeps up. Our IGPS committee has regular reports and is keen to see us succeed. As for the Folk Museum staff, we are fortunate that they count us as one of their attractions, and will usually come up with answers to our modest requests. Bob, our talented local basket weaver, who made us a willow support for our William Lobb climbing rose, has given us his giant hedgehog to display, and we are hoping to persuade Gerald up at the forge to make us some trendy obelisks for our sweet peas. We are only too happy to accept help with the intractable clumps of perennial that need division, pruning that is beyond our reach and the digging out and re-siting of over-large items like the myrtle 'Glanleam' and the monster hydrangea.

We have recently extended the garden area along the length of one side of the plot, giving the whole area a better balance, a good excuse for adding more material. First, we acquired a good collection of the new Irish primulas from Paddy Fitzgerald's Kilkenny nursery. These have made a wonderful splash of spring colour, enjoying a sunny aspect and good drainage. Planting scores of snowdrops under a weeping ash sounded like a good idea at the time but proved a grim task, as we chiselled away among the roots. Then came the daffodils, of which we now have upwards of thirty Irish varieties, thanks to purchases and donations from two very well-known breeders in Omagh and Ringhaddy. We set the bulbs in groups round the perimeter of the plot and the last of them went into the ground mid-October – 'Tyrone Gold', pictured on our pull-up banner. Since

commercial production of this variety has ceased, we are hoping to keep it going.

Recent acquisitions include eucryphia 'Rostrevor', buddleia 'Glasnevin', rowan 'Autumn Spire' and chaenomeles 'Rowallane Seedling'. There is a promise of viburnum plicatum tomentosum 'Rowallane'. Now we're going places.

There are regular additions to our collection of herbaceous plants, with a bias towards the Irish versions if they can be sourced. By dint of sleuthing and word of mouth we are building on our modest list; it's a lot cheaper than mail order, and arguably more fun.

If anyone feels disposed to help us out we would be delighted!

Lorna Goldstrom

Growing Lilies and Relatives in Scotland

On 15th October, our season of talks got off to a great start with a joint AGS / IGPS talk in the Botanic Gardens. Susan Band (and her husband and her dog) came all the way from Scotland to talk to us about 'Growing lilies and their relatives in Scotland' something that she and her husband do extremely well at their Pitcairn Alpines Nursery in the Tay Valley (pitcairnalpines.co.uk). The nursery started as an alpine nursery about thirty years ago, but now concentrates on propagating and selling bulbs (mostly grown from seed). Susan gave a very comprehensive and insightful talk about growing and propagating Northern Hemisphere lilies (and their relatives, including *Nomocharis*); she noted that there are roughly 110 species identified in that broad area, and she based her talk on different regions.

The **Southern Himalaya** region is home to about forty five lily species and ten *Nomocharis* species; one of the most well-known lilies from the region is *Lilium mackliniae* (from India). Most of the species are from woodland and meadows with relatively high rainfall. All are immediate

germinators. The early smaller lilies take from June to about October for the seed to ripen. Susan sows their seed in January/February in a well ventilated polytunnel. They germinate within about six weeks, when the temperature reaches about 10-15°C. Once the **second** leaf appears, it's time to prick them out (usually in late March); at this stage, it should be frost-free, but not too hot! They love leafy humus-rich soil. Some species that Susan mentioned as of particular note are *L. nanum*, *L. oxypetalum* (now *Nomocharis*) and *L. oxypetalum insigne*. She mentioned that *L. lankongense* sends runners out and will often flower up to a metre away from where you've planted your bulb! For this reason, she notes that it's great for growing with and through shrubs. Other favourites include *L. lijiangense*, *L. taliense* and *L. duchartrei* as well as *L. papilliferum* and the lovely pink *L. wardii*. Regarding *Nomocharis* (also sown in January / February), Susan mentioned that more and more of these are appearing since China opened up more to plants people from other nations over the last fifteen years or so, but there are still quite a few problems with naming some of them (*N. aperta/forrestii* for example).

The **Western North America** region includes British Columbia and Oregon as well as Washington State and California. About fourteen species occur here. The coastal species (including *L. pardalinum*, *L. columbianum* and *L. kelloggii*) should be sown in November / December and kept above 0°C but below 10°C; in these conditions they should germinate quickly. The desert species (such as *L. rubescens*) are trickier to grow in our damp climate, but Susan suggests trying them in a dry woodland setting or under cover. The seed germinates easily enough (Susan sows the seeds on top of the compost and covers them with a layer of perlite). *L. humboldtii* from this region really does need protection from too much rain, but slightly easier species include *L. kelleyanum* and *L. columbianum* and *L. parryi*. The **Eastern North America** region extends from Canada south to Florida. There are about eight species and it can be hard to get seed, especially of the Floridian species.

A note on scaling: Susan uses it where there are problems with plants coming true from seed. As an example, Susan mentioned *L. ochraceum*, one of the Chinese species: scales should be taken from a healthy bulb in

October. Place them in a ziplock bag with peat and keep in a cool area, making sure they're not too moist, but also that they don't dry out. When they start to grow, Susan places them all into one big 20cm pot, with a top dressing of leaf mould, and then grows them on that way.

Finally, Susan shared some of her growing tips for *Fritillarias* and *Erythroniums*. Generally, seed of both should be sown in September/October. *Fritillaria liliacea* (N. American) can be tricky to grow in our climate and Susan suggested making sure it's in well-drained soil in a sunny spot. *F. recurva* grows well in gritty soil. *F. camschatcensis* is good for our climate. For *F. raddeana*, which can take up to seven years to flower from seed, Susan suggested cutting it in half (*transversally* not vertically) which encourages lots of tiny bulbs to form around the edges of the cut bulb. Susan warned that *Erythronium hendersonii* (a really beautiful plant I thought!) can be variable from seed, whereas *E. elegans* comes true. Western N. American species such as *E. californicum* and *E. howellii* have very attractive mottled foliage. From Eastern N. America, both *E. americanum* and *E. albidum* are stolon-forming. Susan suggests trying *E. sibiricum* in an alpine house. Finally, keep an eye out for *E. 'Kinfauns Pink'*, *F. 'Kinfauns Sunset'* and *F. 'Kinfauns Sunrise'*, all hybrids that have been cultivated at Pitcairn Nursery.

Fionnuala Broughan for AGS

Between a Rock and a Hard Place

When Carl Wright bought his derelict cottage in 1996, it wasn't for the glacial clay, it wasn't for the young invasive hazel choking the property and it certainly wasn't for the want of a bit of Limestone, it was as they say – Location, Location, Location! This lecture about the Story of Caher Bridge Garden, Fanore, Co Clare on 24th October in the Botanic Gardens was scheduled for 1.5hrs but to be honest, there was far too much to talk about, Carl was happy to say it, we were happy to listen.

Despite the harsh landscape, over a mile of beautifully constructed wall was built to define the different open spaces on the land. The Moon Window

Walls which romantically mirror the bridge behind it, is certainly one of my favourite parts to this garden. However, despite all the limestone, lack of soil and complete exposure to the wild weather of the West, Carl has managed to achieve a garden filled with a great range of plants including many of our Irish Heritage Plants.

Spring starts off with the usual, - Candelabra Primula's, Hellebore varieties a plenty, Cyclamen, Aquilegia and Digitalis. One of Carl's passion's is Narcissi, of which many of the more unusual came from not any reputable catalogue but Lidl, while many are from specialists too, for example N. 'Fragrant Rose', N. 'Wave' and N. 'Glasnevin'. These have been naturalised throughout the garden along with another of his passions Galanthus, e.g. G. 'Warham', G. 'Angelique' and G. 'Castlegar'. The more unusual green varieties include G. 'Virescens' and 'Nivalis'.

There was an existing collection of Crataegus and a very unusually rooted Fraxinus growing over the limestone which hug and almost protect the valued potted Hosta's (another great love). Following on in season come the many native orchids that grow here, some to the point of nearly becoming a weed. They mix well with the Welsh poppies throughout and are framed well with the 120 varieties of Ferns found in this garden. A "fernery" with the specially made Fern seat brings a serene part to the many enclosures to be found here. Of course, there are many grasses, Primula veris, and Arum lilies which thrive at the sides of the naturally occurring bog garden, and clumps of Zantedeschia, Geum, Geranium and Asters to name a few.

This garden is not short of colour or interest and it is not short of visitor's either. One of the more endearing visitors is Edward, the affectionately named fox which befriended Carl throughout this transition of rock to garden. Edward is sadly not around anymore but the garden continues to mature (and expand) season after season. I have not seen this garden yet but will certainly be putting it on my list of places to see!

Michelle Nolan, Leinster IGPS Committee

Exotic Escapism

As a plantaholic myself I was looking forward to Bruno Nicolai's talk on 19th November. He began by giving us an over view of how he created his garden. Over a period of time and with some rough ideas the plans evolved and it was May 2009 when he began in earnest with his back garden, a blank canvas. Bruno explained how he wanted to achieve his own personal style to create an impression of somewhere else, colourful, tropical. He did this by walking around his garden to get a feel for the site, though his garden is a small garden he wanted to make it feel bigger by creating different rooms.

The planting schemes comprised of arid succulents evoking warmer climes with their exotic appearance, often bold foliage and sometimes dramatic flowers. Bruno highlighted a couple of his favourites in this area. Agave bracteosa an evergreen forming rosette of hardyish grey green foliage. Another was Echeveria rosea that has fluffy red bracts in autumn. The slides continued with what can only be described as a tropical wonderland with lush greenery that would not be out of place in a jungle.

Some of the dramatic foliage plants included Dicksonia antarctica Australian tree fern with its high fronds along with Eriobotrya japonica, Rhododendron macabeanun, Fatsia japonica and the unusual Fatsia japonica 'Spiders Web', this new Fatsia is primarily grown for its handsome foliage which looks as though it has been dusted with icing sugar. For even more of a dramatic effect Bruno has planted Tetrapanax rex and the hardy Banana Musa basjoo.

For colour, and I think Bruno is partial to hot colours, he has one of my favourites Embotrium coccineum or Chilean fire Tree with Canna indica, Kniphofia 'Tawny King' and added in for contrast is Astelia 'Bronze Giant'. To enhance the Tropical feel Bruno has included some Bamboos, *Fargesia robusta* and *Borinda papyrifera* unique in so much as the culms are celestial blue or steel blue grey and are an impressive feature of this bamboo. Some of the cooler coloured plants Eucalyptus perriniana or spinning gum, and Passiflora 'Purple Haze' with its light scent and with the

addition of the silver sword like leaves of *Astelia chathamica* the silver grey colours served as buffers within the garden.

Bruno's presentation was superb, his passion for plants was evident by his plant selection and with the many excellent slides the plantaholics among us had their fix. While researching for this article I came across a short video of Bruno's Garden from the Irish Examiner, check it out, it says it all: www.irishexaminer.com Bruno Nicolai's.

Gary Murphy, Leinster IGPS Committee

It's all about Plants: 'Coosheen'

Munster enjoyed an inspiring lecture by Hester Forde on December 1st. Hester's Garden, 'Coosheen', is situated on the Lee estuary in Cork harbour and houses an amazing collection of plants for its size. Described as "a woodland garden in a suburban space", the garden has become well known for being worthy of visiting at any time of year. Her lecture tracked the development of her garden and the many gardening friends she has made along the way. Her passion for Acers, bulbs and shade-loving perennials was evident in her colourful slides. Hester emphasized the importance of scent in her garden, and likened her approach to her garden to that of one's wardrobe; needing regular updating. Through her garden, her stall at ISNA plant fairs, the organisation of the annual Snowdrop Gala, her committee work for the Cork Alpine Hardy Plant Society, and her inspiring gardening lectures, Hester has built up a reputation as one of Cork's finest plants people.

Bruno Nicolai, Munster IGPS Committee

Conversazione

Despite the most appalling rain some Hardy Annuals turned up for the annual Christmas Conversazione in the National Botanic Gardens on 3rd December. A certificate of Merit is to be awarded to John and Mary O'Reilly who travelled from Enniskerry. The night started with Gary Murphy giving a demonstration of making a Christmas festive wreath. The

first and most important ingredient was greenery – lots and lots of it – of various texture and shape – ensuring you pack the oasis as tightly as you can. Gary decided to do away with the usual red colour and we had an unusual combination of blue and white provided by eryngium, the white flower heads of fatsia japonica and some springs of white Erica.

Carmel Duignan showed some of her favourites – a mallow from South Africa, Anisodonteia ‘El Rayo’. She bought it in 2012, from Bob Brown, and it has been in flower every day since. Stephen Butler followed with some slides of the hazards of working in a Zoo. The slide I particularly remember is, the keepers having discovered that one of the monkeys had vanished from the island, a quick search was organised - a head was seen in the lake - the duckweed had been mistaken for a new swath of grass.

On behalf of the Society, Stephen Butler, presented Paul Maher with a copy of Plants from the Woods and Forests of Chile, published by Edinburgh Botanic Gardens, in recognition of his work for the Society.

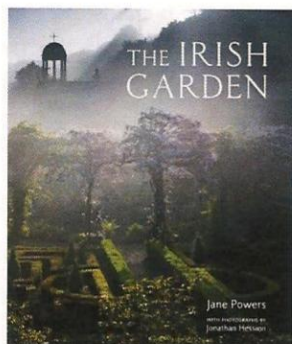
The Raffle seemed to have something for everybody in the audience. Jane Powers very kindly donated a copy of her book, Gary had presented us with the wreath he had made, some nice plants – Hebe ‘Headfortii’ (Irish Heritage Plant), Skimmia japonica, Salvia rutilans, Haemanthus albiflos, many books, scented candles and lots more.

A most enjoyable evening then concluded with some wonderful refreshments provided by Lorna Hopkins and Anne-Marie Woods.

Ricky Shannon, IGPS Committee



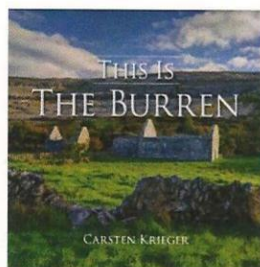
Worth a Read



Congratulations to Jane Powers and Jonathan Hession whose book received the award of "Inspirational Book of the Year" at the Garden Media Guild Awards in London in late November.

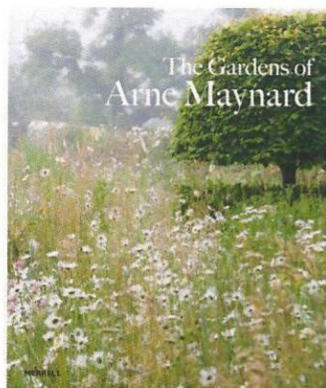
Previously, I wrote, "in a combination of lusciously delicious text and exquisite photography, Powers and Hession have produced the most wonderful and delightful book on Irish gardens" and so it is.

[The Irish Garden, Jane Powers and Jonathan Hession, Frances Lincoln, London, 2015, Hardback, 399 pages, €50, ISBN: 978-0-7112-3222-8]



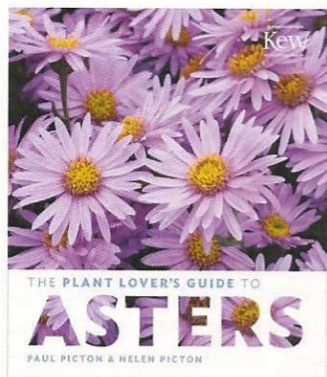
Karsten Krieger's photography has always been a pleasure for me and when his subject matter is The Burren then the results are extraordinary. The text is concise and weaves a pleasant narrative, giving a brief overview of this wonderful area. It is a quick read but a slow book as the photographs will hold your attention and demand you gaze at them with longing to be there.

[The Burren, Karsten Krieger, The Collins Press, Cork, 2015, Hardback, 175 pages, €19.99, ISBN: 978-1748892514]



A successful garden designer tells us of his inspirations, design philosophy and profiles some of his beautifully designed gardens with the most fabulous photography. This book is simply top class! [

The Gardens of Arne Maynard, Arne Maynard. Photographs: William Collinson, Merrell Publishers, London, 2015, Hardback, 304 pages, 30.5 X 25cm, 250 colour illustrations, £45, ISBN: 978-1-8589-4626-9]



Another book from a wonderful series by Timber Press publishers written by Paul Picton and Helen Picton of Old Court Nurseries with background history, a selection of 100 of the best, notes on cultivation, propagation etc. An excellent book.

[The Plant Lover's Guide to Asters, Paul Picton & Helen Picton, Timber Press, 2015, Hardback, 246 pages, £20, ISBN: 978-1-60469-518-2]

These titles and others are reviewed at greater length on the IGPS blog:
<https://igpsblogs.wordpress.com/> Click on "Book Review" to view all.

Paddy Tobin, Chairman IGPS



Details of Upcoming Events

Northern Region

Saturday 20th February 2016 at 2.30pm

“Shady Characters” by Colin Crosbie, curator of RHS Garden Wisley

Lecture by invitation of the Alpine Garden Society (Ulster Group) in St. Bride's Hall, 38 Derryvolgie Avenue, Belfast, BT9 6FP

Admission: IGPS Members Free

Refreshments provided

Colin Crosbie trained at the West of Scotland Agricultural College, Auchincruive. Once qualified, Colin relocated to the south to work in the Savill and Valley Gardens in Windsor Great Park, where he was promoted to Head Gardener at Royal Lodge, the private residence of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother.

He moved on from Savill Gardens in 1998 when he was appointed Superintendent of the Woody Ornamental Department at the Royal Horticultural Society Gardens at Wisley; a post which later included managing the Alpine Plant Department. His career moved to the next level in 2008 when he became Garden Manager for Garden Support Services and the Coordinator for the Wisley School of Practical Horticulture, a position which he thoroughly enjoyed for two years before attaining his dream job as Curator of RHS Garden Wisley in October 2010. Colin has an interest in a wide range of plant groups, but lists trees, shrubs and choice woodland plants as his particular favourites and those with which he can indulge passion in his own garden.

Wednesday 16th March 2016 at 7:30pm

“New and exciting Herbaceous Perennials from around the World” by Jimi Blake

Lecture in Association with Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council in the Old Courthouse, Market Square, Antrim, BT41 4AW

Admission: IGPS Members Free, Non-Members £5

Refreshments provided

Irish horticulturist, teacher and plantsman. Creator of the excitingly, contemporary Irish garden, Hunting Brook Gardens, Blessington, Co. Wicklow. This is a breath-taking journey through the newest and most exciting perennials in Jimi's collection in Hunting Brook and from his travels to gardens and nurseries around the world.

Be prepared for your plant wish list to explode!

Saturday 9th April 2016 at 2.00pm

Garden Visit to Mr & Mrs David Ledsham's two acre plantsman's garden situated at 11 Sallagh Road, Cairncastle, Ballygally, Larne BT40 2NE

The garden consists of a number of winding paths through maturing woodland. There are several small ponds and it holds an extensive collection of herbaceous plants, bulbs, shrubs and trees, many of which have been propagated by David. One of the main focuses of the visit will be the extensive collection of Hellebores.

Due to its location and the limited parking available you are advised to take the A2 Coast Road North from Larne to the Ballygally Hotel and park in the public car park on the opposite corner from the Hotel. David will meet us there and we will 'car share' to his garden.

Admission: IGPS Members Free, Non-Members £4

Refreshments provided (Not suitable for children)

Munster Region

Tuesday 2nd February 2016 at 8pm

“Kew Gardens and the Chelsea Physic Garden” by Stephen Redden of Hillberry Garden Centre, Limerick

Stephen takes us on a journey through two very special must-see gardens: The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, which houses the world's largest collection of living plants, and The Chelsea Physic Garden; one of Europe's oldest botanic gardens.

Venue is SMA Hall, Wilton, Cork City

Plant Raffle on evening

Admission: IGPS Members Free, Non-Members €5

Tuesday 1st March 2016 at 8pm

“Prairie Style Gardening in the Irish Climate” by Oliver Schurmann of Mount Venus Nursery

Oliver gives an illustrated lecture of his personal experience with prairie style gardening on the continent and in Ireland. He will have some plants for sale, and plants can also be pre-ordered from Mount Venus Nursery.

Venue is SMA Hall, Wilton, Cork City

Plant Raffle on evening

Admission: IGPS Members Free, Non-Members €5

Tuesday 5th April 2016 at 8pm

“Fabulous Foliage” by Jimi Blake

Jimi's talk looks at the role and worth of differing leaves and leaf effects, but not to the exclusion of flowers. (Please note the change of title from “A Plantsman's Pick”)

Venue is SMA Hall, Wilton, Cork City

Members' Plant Sale & Plant Raffle on evening

Admission: IGPS Members €5, Non-Members €10

Saturday 14th to Sunday 15th May 2016

AGM in Blarney, Co. Cork (See enclosed flier for further details)

Sunday 10th July 2016

Annual Plant Sale at Blarney in Bloom, Blarney Castle Gardens, Cork.
10am to 4pm

Leinster Region

Thursday February 25th 2016 at 8pm

**"Rowallane – Interesting Plants and Irish Heritage History" by
Averil Milligan, Head Gardener**

Venue is the Visitor Centre, National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin

Averil will share her insights after 12 years at this well-known garden, looking at the origins of some of the remarkable plants, and the links to the history of Co Down and the Irish nursery industry.

Thursday 24th March 2016 at 8.00pm

**"The Stans - Plant exploring in Afghanistan, Uzbekistan,
Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan" by John Mitchell, Edinburgh
Botanical Gardens**

Joint Lecture with the Alpine Garden Society in the Visitor Centre, National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin

John has spent much time in Afghanistan, Uzbekistan Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, training students in the Hindu Kush, and exploring the Wakhan corridor, valleys near Dushanbe, and seeking out rare plants.



The Irish Garden Plant Society

IGPS e-mail address: igps.ireland@gmail.com

Northern e-mail address: igps.northern@gmail.com

Munster e-mail address: igps.munster@gmail.com

Leinster e-mail address: igps.leinster@gmail.com

Irish Heritage Plants email: igps.heritageplants@gmail.com

Membership Correspondence/Membership Secretary:

Patrick Quigley,

24 Areema Drive, Dunmurry, Belfast BT 17 OQG

Email: igps.ireland@gmail.com

Chairman

Paddy Tobin

“Cois Abhann”, Riverside, Lower Gracedieu, Waterford

Telephone: +353 (0)51 857 955

Email: pmtobin@eircom.net

Honorary Secretary:

Billy McCone

16A Crumlin Road, Ballinderry Upper, Lisburn,

County Antrim, BT28 2JU

Telephone: 028 92 651315; Mobile: 074 112 44568

Email: william@mccone.co.uk

Website: www.irishgardenplantsociety.com

<https://www.facebook.com/IrishGardenPlantSociety>

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