

Moorea

Vol 10

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MOOREA

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Front and Back Covers: The RHS Flora Medal, won by the IGPS at Chelsea, 1992. (Reproduced by courtesy of the Director-General, Royal Horticultural Society) (Photography by Davison Associates)

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Fig. 1 Thomas Smith



Fig. 2 G.N. Smith

ALAN GRILLS

A FAMOUS IRISH NURSERY DAISY HILL NURSERIES, NEWRY

In 1870 a gardener working for the nursery firm of John Smith of Dulwich answered an advertisement and secured a job as manager with a small Newry nursery owned by a Mr J.A. Daly. This action led to the establishment of what was to become one of Ireland's most famous nurseries.

Tom Smith was that gardener and he stayed on at Newry when the Daly nursery was succeeded by the firm of Rodger, McClelland & Co. Tom Smith was the son of a Birmingham gardener and, as a little child, used to imitate his father's work by laying out and planning tiny gardens. So his interest in plants and trees and nature generally developed into an intense love. At thirteen years he began his working life as a garden boy for a Mr Gladstone at Edgebaston, Birmingham. At fifteen years he moved to Witley Court in Worcestershire, the seat of the Earl of Dudley, to begin an apprenticeship, where he stayed for two years. He then moved to London and for a couple of years was in the service of Hugh Low & Co., Nurseryman, Clapton. His next appointment was that of foreman in the celebrated nursery of Veitch & Son Ltd, Chelsea, where he stayed for three years before moving to employment with his name-sake, John Smith of Dulwich.

While working for Veitch, he attended an International Exhibition in Paris with an exhibit of specimen azaleas. These created such interest that the entire display was purchased and shipped to Italy. In 1869 he took a display of bicolour geraniums to an International Exhibition in Hamburg for John Smith of Dulwich and scored a great success against fierce competition.

Tom Smith worked until 1887 with Rodger, McClelland & Co. in Newry and developed a strong attachment to the wonderful scenery in South Down and South Armagh. He decided to make Newry his final home and, with a perspicacity that stood him in good stead over the years, decided there was a splendid opening in Ireland for a nursery conducted on different lines from those already in existence — one that would specialise in the many rare trees and shrubs starting to reach the British Isles from Asia, and supply them to the many large estates building up gardens and parklands. Tom Smith was not well-off at that time but with encouragement and help from a local J.P. he purchased two daisy-covered fields on the west side of Newry overlooking the town and started Daisy Hill Nurseries. This six acres of north-east sloping land had a deep rich loam, slightly acid and ideal for growing a wide range of plants. He started work with a spade in the corner of one of the fields and with skill, hard work and perseverance soon made a name for himself in the horticultural world.

As business increased Tom Smith began to expand, taking in extra land until his nursery covered sixty acres and his staff comprised some seventy or eighty men and women. The nursery at that time held the most comprehensive stock of rare trees, shrubs and plants in Europe and Newry-grown stock was being exported all over the world. It appears that in the early part of the twentieth century some five thousand species of plants were in stock and up to one hundred cultivars of some of these species. Tom Smith knew these plants, their habits and peculiarities, their likes and dislikes. He loved them as friends and delighted in relating to customers little scraps of their histories.

These were exciting times in the nursery trade. New plants were flooding in from overseas and plant collectors were going out to collect for many of the large seed houses and institutions such as botanic gardens. Nurseries were hybridising and producing new plants and Tom Smith was among the leaders in the field at that time. Daisy Hill has been responsible for the introduction of almost 200 new plants and probably the most notable of these is the winter flowering cherry *Prunus subhirtella* 'Autumnalis' introduced from Japan about 1900. Many tens of thousands have been propagated from this first introduction. Another of Tom Smith's introductions was the coral bark maple, *Acer palmatum* 'Sango-kaku' with its beautiful coloured bark, delicately shaped foliage and wonderful autumn colour. *Laburnum alpinum* 'Newryensis' with long racemes of flowers produced two or three weeks after all other laburnums was another Daisy Hill introduction and the original plant is still growing in the nursery. Work was going on with the crossing and selections of seedlings of many genera. Eighteen cultivars of *Berberis x stenophylla* were named between 1903 and 1930 with 'Autumnalis' and 'Corallina Compacta' probably the most outstanding. Twenty *Bergenia* cultivars were selected and named, with 'Croesus', 'Distinction' and 'Progress' widely distributed. Seedling brooms from *Cytisus albus* x 'Andreas' were being selected and vegetatively propagated. These were mostly bicolour forms with attractive names like

'Firefly', 'Dragonfly', 'Mayfly', 'Moonlight' and 'Daisy Hill'. Some fifty years later seedlings from these original crosses are still appearing in a small portion of land that was once the Broom Field.

In 1906 Tom Smith was awarded the Victoria Medal of Honour by the Royal Horticultural Society for eminence in horticulture, the first Irish nurseryman to receive that honour. The only other holder of the Award in Ireland was Sir Frederick Moore of the Botanic Gardens at Glasnevin, Dublin, who was a close friend. The V.M.H. was established to honour Queen Victoria in her diamond jubilee year as it was long felt that a suitable reward should be available for those who excelled in horticultural arts. The number of possible holders was limited to sixty one, one for each year of Queen Victoria's reign. The medal is confined to British horticulturists and a new award was only made on the death of a previous recipient.

By 1915 Daisy Hill was said to be well known as far away as America and Japan. The nursery was turning out catalogues with a plant content which cannot be matched today. Separate catalogues were produced for Bulbs, Newry Roses (some six hundred varieties), Trees and Shrubs, Alpine and Herbaceous Plants, Peat Loving Plants, Bamboos, Ferns and Grasses, and Plants for Seaside Planting. All the large gardens, estates and institutions were on the mailing list as were the royal houses of Britain and Europe.

Old-fashioned and species roses were a speciality and the largest collection in the British Isles was at Newry. It is amazing that Tom Smith was without equal in so many aspects of the nursery trade. An American visitor to the nursery at that time had visited many nurseries in Britain spending a short afternoon in most. He came to Daisy Hill and spent two days there filling two notebooks with lists of plants that included everything he had seen elsewhere and twice as many that he had not encountered on his travels. He expressed amazement that such a nursery should exist at a small place like Newry.

The great Irish gardens were being established or enlarged during Tom Smith's working life — Mount Usher (1870), Rowallane (1903), Illnacullin (1910), followed by Castlewellan, Kilmacurragh, Headford, Annesgrove, Rossdohan and Mount Stewart. He travelled to all these gardens where he was highly respected for the advice he was able to give on suitable plants and their correct treatment. He was wholly responsible for the establishment of a sub-tropical garden on a bare rocky island in the Kenmare River. At Garinish Island he first had to establish wind breaks to protect the new plants from the harsh Atlantic gales and the first line of defence was a wattle type hurdle. Inside this a mixture of *Cupressus macrocarpa*, *Pinus insignis* and *P. austriaca*, birch, sycamore, Norway maple and willow was planted. For this major job a train was backed into a siding at Newry Station and the plants were wheeled down on barrows until it was full. Today this island garden is a paradise boasting plants like tree ferns, lomarias, magnolias, camellias and many difficult rhododendrons.

Tom Smith had a friendly relationship with Sir John Ross-of-Bladensburg at Rostrevor. Sir John had travelled widely while serving in the army and had acquired a great love and knowledge of foreign trees. On his retirement he started an exotic garden with seeds and plants collected during his travels. He sought Tom Smith's help and advice and together they built up a superb plant collection in this mild corner on Carlingford Lough. They even produced a catalogue of all the plants grown on the estate. *Eucryphia x intermedia* 'Rostrevor' was raised by Sir John and introduced to the trade by Tom Smith. The double form of *Eucryphia glutinosa* named 'Daisy Hill' was also selected and distributed at this time.

Even though he was involved in the organisation and day-to-day running of a thriving nursery Tom Smith still found time to practice his skills as a landscape gardener and his services were in great demand in Ireland, in Britain and even on the continent. He did all the ornamental planting in the Phoenix Park from 1903 onwards and was responsible for laying out the Irish section of the Great Glasgow Exhibition. Many of the streets of Newry were furnished with ornamental trees given as a gift by him to his adopted town. The municipal gardens at Warrenpoint are still a memorial to his artistic skill. He was a member of St Mary's Parish Church in Newry and when they built a new vicarage he laid out the grounds without charge. It was recorded in the Vestry minutes the desire of the Select Vestry 'to place on record our sense of obligation and feeling of appreciation for what Mr Smith has given with unsparing hand, out of his far famed nursery innumerable and valuable trees, shrubs, plants and flowers but also the benefit of his great skill as a landscape gardener'. The Board of Guardians at the Newry Union (now Daisy Hill Hospital) also recorded their thanks to him for the constant supply of flowers and plants he sent up without charge to beautify the wards. Although perhaps stern in appearance with his bushy white beard, Tom Smith loved and was loved by little children. Every Saturday morning a large number of children used to meet him at his office door when he gave them a little talk on the beauties of nature. If they promised not to do any damage to trees and shrubs he would reward them with a weekly supply of pocket money.

Tom Smith died in 1919 at the age of 79 years, active almost to the end of a very full life. Many tributes were paid to him from horticultural societies and bodies all over the world but perhaps this extract from the *Gardeners' Chronicle* of 7 June 1919 encapsulates all the sentiments expressed. 'Daisy Hill Nurseries are

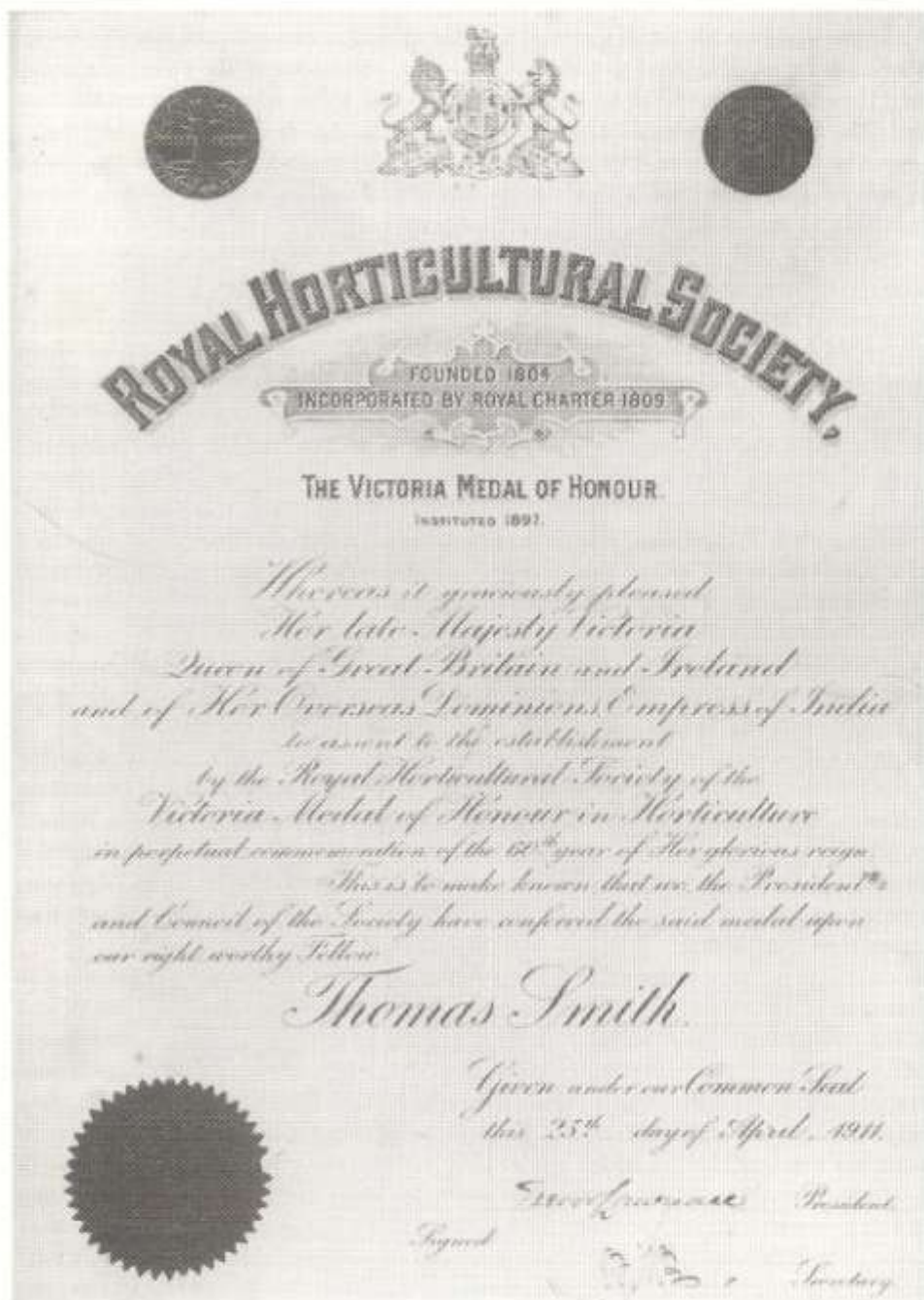


Fig. 3 V.M.H. certificate

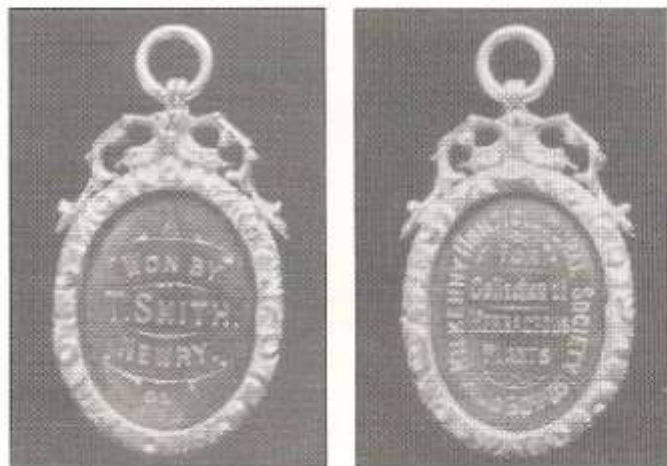


Fig. 4 One of many medals won by Thomas Smith: Kilkenny Horticultural Society, August 1905.

known to plant lovers all over the world for Mr Smith gathered together an almost unique collection of rare and beautiful plants. It was Mr Smith's custom to send us, from time to time, specimens of the more uncommon plants in his collection and they always proved to be of great interest and frequently formed material for illustrations in this journal. The catalogues which he issued were quite distinct from those of the general nurseryman's lists as the pages were filled with descriptions of rarities and novelties which he seemed to have a genius for discovering. He was essentially a plantsman and had the rare gift of knowing the possibilities, from a garden point of view, of new species or varieties that came to his notice. He has, moreover, left behind him the priceless heritage of a good name and his memory will always be cherished by those who had the pleasure and privilege of his acquaintance'.

Tom Smith had two sons and six daughters. Both sons, George Norman and Thomas, assisted their father in the management of the nursery but it was the former who was to assume the mantle of his father. G.N. (or 'Great Northern') Smith was already a horticulturist of considerable distinction having worked with his father during the last twenty years of his life on many of his major projects. He carried on the proud heritage of the firm exhibiting at all the large horticultural shows; Chelsea, Southport, Edinburgh, Harrogate, Glasgow, Dublin and Belfast. He continued to build up an export trade to New York, Tokyo, Moscow, Delhi, Rome and Paris. He sent plants to New Zealand and Australia and it is interesting to note that at that time it took thirteen weeks for a consignment to arrive at its destination. For health reasons the plant roots had to be washed free of soil and it was a problem keeping the plants alive. He solved this by using sphagnum moss which he gathered from Camlough Mountain, adjacent to the nursery, and which held ten times its own weight of water. The orders invariably arrived without the loss of a single plant. This was, incidentally, the hey-day of the nursery packer in the horticultural trade. All plants had to be despatched to customers during the dormant season from October to March and the men responsible for packing the orders took an immense pride in their work. Indeed, many of the straw-baled orders leaving the nursery were 'Works of Art' in their own right.

G.N. Smith had a character which was the opposite of that of his father. He was a bit of a reprobate, enjoying a good yarn and a drink and not averse to putting a few quid on a horse. One of his regular customers was Lady Barnet, the owner of the mansion and estate at Barnet Park (now Belfast Parks Department's Malone House). She was a keen race-goer and owned a horse called Trigo. One day she visited the nursery and ordered a considerable number of plants. On leaving she said "I can't pay you today Mr Smith, but I will when Trigo wins the Derby". With an instinct for a good tip, G.N. placed a bet with a local bookie on Trigo to win and was paid for the plants by the bookie and later by Lady Barnet.

From being a bare hillside in 1890, Daisy Hill was now a wooded slope criss-crossed with paths leading to the different fields and bed areas. There were numerous nooks and bowers in which seats had been placed giving wonderful views across Newry, Carlingford Lough and the Mourne Mountains. Visitors were welcome at all times and freely used these areas for alfresco teas and luncheons. At that time there was an army garrison in Newry and G.N. Smith arranged for the military band to play in the Pond Field on Sunday afternoons. The folk from the town would come to listen to the music and enjoy a picnic in lovely surroundings. The advantages of this wonderful situation were not lost on G.N. and he hit on what must have been the first customer courtesy lounge. As he was guiding a party of visitors around the nurseries he would lead them to a sheltered seat with a panoramic view. When they were seated a clap of the hands brought a nursery lad, with a trug basket containing a selection of wines and spirits, out of the shrubbery to dispense drinks all round. The lad would then retire only to appear again at the next 'watering place'. In the general euphoria tongues and wallets would be loosened and G.N.'s order book filled. It is not really surprising that it took some visitors two days to complete a tour of the nursery.

G.N. Smith, like his father, was always involved in the quest for new plants. He introduced *Rosa* 'Macrantha Daisy Hill' and also *Rosa* 'Narrow Water' named after a local estate. He also selected and propagated *Pieris japonica* 'Daisy Hill', a wonderful form with neat habit exhibiting coloured young growth, chocolate-stemmed white flowers and maturing seed heads all at the same time. He records a specimen plant some 7ft high in the nursery in 1935.

He was also giving attention to herbaceous plants and raised *Sidalcea* 'Rose Queen' and *Sidalcea* 'Rose Beauty', and *Trollius* 'Newry Giant', 'T. Smith' and 'Yellow Globe'. Another of his introductions was the lovely *Mimulus* 'Sunset', a tomato-red sport of *Mimulus x bartonianus* which was lost to cultivation in the 1950s but re-discovered by Dr Charles Nelson in 1989. Thirty four different Michaelmas daisies were raised and named as were the lovely double primroses 'Crimson King', 'Prince Silverwings' and 'Our Pat'. 'Our Pat' is a double form originating in a bed of *Primula* 'Juliae' and it was named after G.N. Smith's youngest daughter. The name has a typically Irish ring to it and it came about in an unusual way. The plant was originally named 'Pat' and it was first displayed to the public at a Glasgow Flower Show. When G.N. had finished staging his

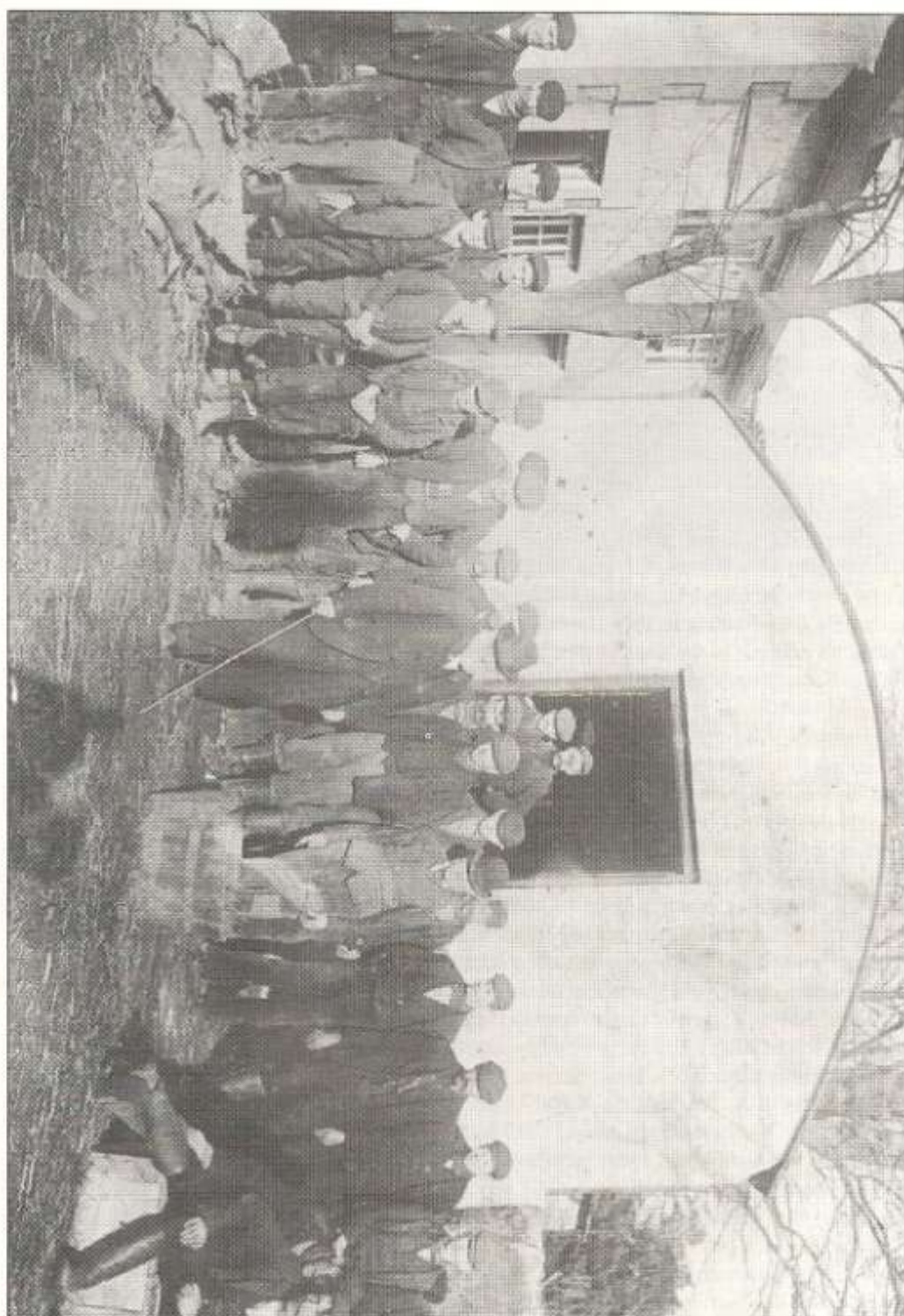


Fig. 5 Thomas Smith and staff

exhibit he walked round the stands before opening time. To his amazement another nursery was showing a somewhat similar primula named 'Pat'. He strode back to his stand, took out a pen and wrote 'Our' in front of 'Pat'. The name 'Our Pat' and the plant became a hit and the other 'Pat' has fallen into oblivion. *Hebe* 'Autumn Glory' was one of five hebes raised and *Hedera* 'Buttercup', *Escallonia* 'Newryensis' and *Erica cinerea* 'Rose Queen' were also introduced to the trade from Daisy Hill.

But things were not going all that well in the nursery trade. After the First World War there was an economic recession which hit most nurseries very hard. In the thirties this spread to Ireland and at the same time Dutch nurserymen, with the wholehearted backing of their government, were building up a formidable export trade in good quality plants, with the British Isles as their main target. Plants were being sold from market stalls, garage forecourts and greengrocers, many of them grown by amateurs. The cost of wages and carriage were also rising and the production of nursery stock, once a low cost operation, was becoming more expensive. Daisy Hill began to run into problems and when G.N. Smith died in 1939, he left a nursery which was in debt to the bank. His house was sold to help meet the overdraft but this was not enough to make the firm solvent. The nursery lay more or less derelict for three years with weeds smothering the paths and the plants in the greenhouses growing up to push off the glass. Thomas Grills, a son-in-law of G.N. Smith, decided to try and keep the nursery going and, in the face of moves by the bank to sell off the lands, formed a limited company in 1942 to carry on the name. He was not a horticulturist, although being manager of a local Newry timber firm it was not altogether alien to him. He needed someone with knowledge of the nursery industry and approached the man who had been keeping the place ticking over during the three years of relative inactivity.

So the third great plantsman associated with Daisy Hill came to the fore. Patrick J. Hanratty, affectionately known to all as 'Paddy of Daisy Hill' had obtained employment from G.N. Smith in 1922 at the age of fourteen years. He agreed to take on the unenviable task of trying to restore Daisy Hill to something resembling a nursery. With a handful of workers, sheds and greenhouses were repaired and a comprehensive programme of propagation carried out. It was in this aspect of propagation that the stock plants already growing in the nursery proved so valuable for the main obstacle facing any new nursery is lack of propagating material. The task of clearing and cleaning ground was started and horse-drawn implements were found to be the most satisfactory. It is ironic that the free-draining steeply sloping land so appealing to Tom Smith in the days of cheap labour was now so difficult to work in the days of mechanisation. Still work progressed and on his first return visit to the Royal Dublin Society Ballsbridge Show in 1948, Paddy Hanratty staged a four hundred square foot exhibit to be awarded a gold medal.

Paddy Hanratty was to become one of Ireland's greatest practical gardeners; few would dispute that he was the best. Having left school at an early age he did not have a substantial education but his whole life was with plants and he was a plantsman without equal, then or today. He was a link with the last century personally known by the owners and head gardeners of all the great Irish estates to whom he supplied stock on a regular basis. A short time spent in Paddy's company was a rich experience and something to remember. He was full of stories and anecdotes about his early times in those 'salad days' of the nursery trade. In his long working life he acquired a knowledge of plants second to none. His great love was the old fashioned double primrose, so difficult to grow, but a challenge to his expertise. In the *Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society*, 77 (1952), Paddy Hanratty published 'Some notes on double primroses'. He takes us through the cultivation and propagation of these lovely old plants and advises on the remedies for problems that arise in growing them. In his notes he mentions no fewer than twenty-two cultivars that he has grown, but even in 1952 these were becoming very scarce. Daisy Hill grew as many as fifteen in the early 1920s. In 1962 Paddy Hanratty received the Royal Horticultural Society's Long Service Medal for forty years with one firm, the first one awarded in Ireland. Then in 1973 he received the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society's Long Service Medal for fifty-one years with one firm. Paddy Hanratty died in 1989 at the age of 82 years having lived thirteen years in retirement forced on him by illness. He had spent his whole working life with Daisy Hill, a period of fifty-six years since he started as a message boy. He had worked his way up through foreman and manager and was eventually made a director of the firm. Paddy Hanratty is buried in St Mary's Cemetery in Newry in the ground that was once Rodger, McClelland & Co.'s nursery.

The next great plantsman to appear on the Daisy Hill scene was Peter McCann who was appointed manager on Paddy Hanratty's retirement. Peter McCann, too, joined the nursery as a lad of fourteen years in 1944 and he showed a natural aptitude for gardening and a deep feeling for the plants at this early age. He spent all his early years in the propagating department and he was to become one of Ireland's most expert propagators. Paddy, who was not one to bestow praise readily, said Peter could put roots on a walking stick. Peter's special love is for alpine plants mainly because Daisy Hill carried a wide selection of choice alpines in the 1950s and 1960s and because they were difficult to propagate and grow. Peter has also been awarded the R.U.A.S. Long Service



Fig. 6 Alpine Garden Society members at Daisy Hill c. 1956

THE IRISH TIMES, THURSDAY, AUGUST 6, 1959

PAST PRESIDENTS INSPECT DISPLAY



Lady Moore and Mr. R. G. Moore, Carrington, Co. Wick, both past presidents of the Royal Horticultural Society of Ireland, discussing the display by Daisy Hill Nurseries, Newry, which was awarded the society's Gold Medal, and the Sir Frederick Moore Perpetual Challenge Cup, at the society's flower show at Ballsbridge yesterday. (A report appears in page 4.)

Fig. 7 Irish Times 6 August 1956



Fig. 8 Thomas Grills



Fig. 9 Paddy Hanratty

Medal for thirty years service in one firm and the R.H.S. Long Service Medal for forty years. Something in the nursery environment must contribute to a long working life!

Alan Grills, a son of Thomas Grills, joined the nursery in 1944 and in the following year left to gain experience at the wholesale firm of Thos Hilling & Co., Chobham, Surrey. The manager there was that great expert, Graham Stuart Thomas, who later became author of many outstanding gardening books and gardens adviser to the National Trust. Graham Stuart Thomas was a hard man to please and could be caustic in his remarks if dissatisfied with the work but there was no better mentor. Surrey was then the centre of the British nursery trade with famous nurseries like Fromows, Slococks, Jackmans and L.R. Russell all reorganising after the war. The proprietors and staff of all these firms were members of the Bagshot and District Horticultural Society and regular meetings were held when lectures were given and nursery problems and new plants were discussed. Work in a large wholesale nursery was absorbing with very large orders being accumulated for days before despatch. German and Italian prisoners-of-war were farmed out to the different nurseries, ostensibly to assist in food production, but they also did the bulk of the labouring work in the production of ornamental stock.

After another short spell at Daisy Hill, Alan Grills went to the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, to do a three-year diploma course. There is no doubt that a period of instruction at one of these institutions lays a firm foundation for a life in commercial or amenity horticulture. There you come in contact with the widest possible range of plants. In 1952 he returned to Daisy Hill to take over the running of the nursery with Paddy Hanratty. Exhibits were taken to flower shows in England and in Ireland and a landscaping service was started to augment sales and utilise the considerable stocks of plants being built up. Many contracts were undertaken, large and small, but the emphasis has always been on private garden layout as this gives scope for a wider use and variety of plant material.

What about the present day? Things have changed drastically in the nursery trade in Ireland in the last 25 years. All the famous old Irish nurseries, McGredy's, Slieve Donard, Walshes, Watsons, and Dicksons have gone for one reason or another. Garden centres are the order of the day and abound throughout the land. Daisy Hill has managed to survive so far in a leaner guise through economies and rationalisation. In many ways we are prisoners of the past, still receiving many enquiries for the old plants for which the nursery was once famous, old roses and montbretias, double primroses, *Helleborus* and *Dierama*. But propagation material of these old plants is difficult, if not impossible, to obtain. Perhaps, if the aims of the Irish Garden Plant Society are realised we will have many of these old plants back with us again; they had a very special charm.

Tom Smith would have been gratified to know that his nursery survived through one hundred years of ups and downs. He was not an Irishman but he came over here and loved what he saw. He raised a nursery and reared a family and passed on having left his mark on the horticultural history of the land, and having made the town of Newry and his beloved Daisy Hill known across the continents.

Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my thanks and gratitude to Jennifer and Patrick Woods of the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, and Dr Charles Nelson of the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, for their help in the preparation of this history.

Daisy Hill Nurseries, Hospital Road, Newry, Co. Down.

GRAHAM STUART THOMAS

TOM BLYTHE OF DAISY HILL



It was during 1927, I think, that Tom Blythe came to work at the University Botanic Garden, Cambridge, where I was a student, unpaid. He came as a worker and at first worked in the Temperate House and other cool greenhouses. He had previously been employed at the nursery of V.N. Gauntlett & Co., Chiddingfold, Surrey. At that time the nursery was in a flourishing condition and was supplying many of the big estates, royalty and titled people in the British Isles and abroad. Their catalogue, fully illustrated and of over 400 pages is now a collector's item and is full of inspiration and information. Tom was therefore 'one-up' on all the young staff and students. I am not sure whether he had previously worked at Daisy Hill.

After a year or so, Tom became a student, with the privilege of attending botanical courses in the University. He worked mainly in the open garden. From time to time he went to Newry and used to send me little boxes of rare flowers, rhododendrons, etc. from the lime-free soil (and softer conditions than at Cambridge). He was always egging me on to take a greater interest in shrubs and trees, which were his chief delight, whereas at the time I was deeply immersed in alpine plants. The students and journeymen formed — mainly under Tom's and my encouragement — a Botanic Garden Association (Mutual Improvement Society), with the idea of giving talks and inviting others to do so. Owing to the influence of Daisy Hill and Gauntlett's, Tom was very interested in bamboos, and lectured to us on this subject. Many years later he gave me his notes which were used as a basis for my article on bamboos in the *Royal Horticultural Society Journal* for June 1957, after his death.

It was while he was at Cambridge that he contracted, or had a recurrence of the disease of the lungs which eventually killed him and he was for a while in Papworth Hospital. He became good friends and continued to correspond after I left the garden [G.S. Thomas, 1983. *Three Gardens*. London]. After about four years at Cambridge, he returned to Newry, being employed by his uncle G.N. Smith 'to keep an eye on nomenclature'. The nursery was, I feel, already on the way down, from what was a wonderful eminence earlier in the century. The old catalogues, of which I have many, are most impressive. They specialised in many of the rather grand herbaceous plants, as did Gauntlett's, and which were so popular with William Robinson. After the war (but it may have been 1938 or '39) I met G.N. Smith at the Chelsea Show. He came to the nursery of T. Hilling & Co., Chobham, Woking, where I worked, at the invitation of T. Hilling. I think they enjoyed some drinks together at Chelsea and Chobham, and I believe this was the cause of Daisy Hill's gradual deterioration.

After a few years of being employed by Daisy Hill, Tom retired to a cottage at Magheragall, near Lisburn, and I went to stay with him for a week or more, ostensibly to make a rock garden for him. He already had a fine collection of choice shrubs, *Eucryphia*, *Magnolia*, *Rhododendron*, also a lot of candelabra primulas, etc. I went over in 1937, and still have photographs of primulas and of the rock garden. He took me to Rowallane,

Rostrevor and the Donard Nursery which were eye-opening. Daisy Hill Nursery was also deeply interesting. It was not markedly commercial; it was on hilly ground. G.N. Smith's idea was that seedlings and cuttings were put in the ground at the top of the hill and moved down towards the packing shed as they got bigger and ready for despatch! I met Jim Locke and we stayed a night or two at Newry with two maiden aunts. At Daisy Hill I was much taken with *Sorbus folgneri*, *Styrax obassia*, *Abies concolor* 'Wattsii' and *Leucothoe davisii*, of which there were fine specimens.

Tom was devoted to his garden. He also took a deep interest in English literature — and Irish — and sent me a number of books. His letters were essays on thoughts which struck him at the time. The letters came some six times a year, but never really answered mine. It seemed as though he would suddenly have an urge to write to me and the result was several pages of well-written script, well-thought and with, of course, comments on his garden and plants.

I went over again in 1949 and visited many gardens in and around Dublin and visited Tom for a day, and he and (I think) Jim Locke or Jim Woods motored down to Dublin. On this occasion I met his relative Alfred Crooke, who is now a doctor in Canada. He was over here, I think, at Reading University and came to see me several times.

When G.N. Smith died, Alan Grills's father became the owner of the nursery. Owing to my friendship with Tom, Alan was sent to work at Hilling & Co's nursery (340 acres) where I was manager. He was an excellent, intelligent worker and went on to Edinburgh. Tom was a wonderful and enthusiastic friend and it was with great sadness that I recognised the advance of the disease. Alfred told me he collapsed over his frames.

Honorary member: Briar Cottage, 21 Kettlewell Close, Horsell, Surrey.

RUTH BRENNAN

DAISY HILL NURSERY CATALOGUES

The following is a tentative list in numerical order of catalogues published by Daisy Hill Nursery compiled from the holdings in the National Botanic Gardens library. Titles of issues held are exactly as they appear on the covers; other titles are derived from within the various catalogues and have been observed sometimes not to correspond exactly with the title appearing on the cover. From No. 145 onwards (post 1945) the nursery is referred to as Daisy Hill Nurseries Ltd.

- Symbols**
- * Original held in National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin
 - P Photocopy held in National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin
 - RHS Original held in the Lindley Library, Royal Horticultural Society, London

Location	No.	Date	Title
	16	—	Aquatic, waterside and bog loving plants
RHS	23	1897	Hardy plants
RHS	27	—	—
*P	31	1898/99	Carnations, pinks, pansies, etc.
	32	—	Newry roses
	33	—	Hardy trees and shrubs, climbers, fruit trees, etc.
	34	—	Hardy perennial seeds
*	37	1899	ABC list of bulbous and tuberous-rooted plants
RHS	39	—	—
	42	—	Aquatic, waterside and bog loving plants
	51	—	Newry roses
*	53	1902	ABC list of bulbous and tuberous-rooted plants, etc.
*	54	1902	Trees and shrubs, climbing plants, etc.
*	56	—	Alpine plants, herbaceous plants, hardy grasses
	58	—	ABC bulb list
*	59	1903/04	Newry roses ... carnations, pinks, primroses, pansies, violets
	60	—	Hardy alpine and herbaceous plants, hardy aquatics, ferns and grasses
*	61	1904	Trees and shrubs, climbing plants, etc.
*	62	1904	ABC list of bulbous and tuberous-rooted plants, etc.
*	63	1904/05	Newry roses
	65	—	Bulb list
	66	—	Newry roses
*	67	—	Alpine plants, herbaceous plants, hardy grasses, hardy ferns, aquatics
*	68	1906	Hardy bulbs, etc.
*	69	—	Newry roses
*	71	1906?	Alpine plants, herbaceous plants, hardy grasses, hardy ferns, aquatics
*	74	—	Alpine plants, herbaceous plants, hardy grasses, hardy ferns, aquatics
*	75	1908?	Newry roses
*P	76	1909	Hardy bulbs
RHS	77	—	—

Location	No.	Date	Title
*	81	1911	Hardy bulbs, etc.
*	83	1912?	Hardy alpine plants, hardy herbaceous plants
*	84	1912	Hardy bulbs, etc.
RHS	85	—	—
	88	—	Newry roses
RHS	90	—	—
*	93	1916/17	Hardy bulbs, etc.
RHS	96	—	—
*	98	1921?	Hardy alpine plants, hardy herbaceous plants
*	99	1921/22	Hardy bulbs, etc.
*	101	1923?	Trees & shrubs, climbing plants
*	103	1923?	Newry roses
RHS	105	—	Hardy alpine and herbaceous plants
*	106	1924	Seeds of hardy plants
RHS	109	—	—
RHS	110	—	Trees and shrubs and climbing plants
RHS	111	—	—
RHS	112	—	—
RHS	113	—	—
RHS	114	—	Hardy bulbs
*	115	1927/28	Newry roses
*	116	1928	Seeds of hardy plants
*	118	1928/29	Hardy bulbs, etc.
*	120	1929/30	Hardy bulbs, etc.
*	121	1929/30	Newry roses
RHS	122	—	Trees and shrubs
*	124	1930/31	Hardy bulbs, etc.
*P	125	—	Hardy alpine and herbaceous plants, hardy aquatics, ferns and grasses
*	127	1931/32	Hardy bulbs, etc.
	129	—	Newry roses
RHS	134	—	Forest and covert plants, hardy bulbs, lilies, etc.
RHS	135	—	Hardy alpine and herbaceous plants, hardy aquatics, ferns and grasses
*	136	1935	Seeds of hardy plants
	137	—	Hardy bulbs
*	138	—	Newry roses
*P	142	—	Trees & shrubs, climbing plants, etc. (library also has additional photocopy of G.N. Smith's own annotated interleaved copy)
RHS	144	—	—
*	145	—	General catalogue of trees, shrubs, hardy alpine & herbaceous plants
*	146	—	General catalogue of trees, shrubs, hardy alpine & herbaceous plants, bamboos, ferns and grasses
*	147	—	General catalogue of trees, shrubs, hardy alpine & herbaceous plants, bamboos, ferns and grasses
*	149	—	General catalogue of trees, shrubs, climbers, roses, hardy alpine and herbaceous plants, bamboos, ferns and grasses, hedging and screening plants
*	152	1960/61	General catalogue of trees, shrubs, climbers, roses, hardy alpine and herbaceous plants, bamboos, ferns and grasses, hedging and screening plants
*	153	—	General catalogue of trees, shrubs, climbers, roses, hardy alpine and herbaceous plants, hedging and screening plants

Location	No.	Date	Title
	154	—	General catalogue of trees, shrubs, climbers, roses, hardy alpine and herbaceous plants, hedging and screening plants
*	158	—	
*	159	—	
*	160	—	General catalogue of trees, shrubs, climbers, roses, hardy alpine and herbaceous plants, hedging and screening plants
*	161	—	

The following unnumbered catalogues are also held at Glasnevin:

Hardy alpine and herbaceous plants, ferns and grasses (20 pages, undated).

Hardy alpine and herbaceous plants, hardy aquatics, ferns and grasses (probably 1934, possibly No. 135, 108 pages).

Home saved seeds of hardy perennials, brooms, whins, etc. (Spring, 1905).

Seed catalogue (1959?).

Supplemental list of trees and shrubs, alpine, rock and herbaceous plants (Spring, 1917).

Wholesale catalogue (1912/13).

Trees, shrubs and climbers. New and rare. Addenda (1928) (photocopy of original roneoed typescript.)

List of double and single primroses (photocopy of original roneoed typescript).

The following unnumbered catalogues are held in the Lindley Library, RHS, London:

Seed catalogues 1912 and 1919.

Newry roses 1952/53.

Wholesale catalogues 1933/34, 1934/35.

National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin 9.

A FRAGMENT FROM THE PAST

Many households have their trifles of sentimental value, survivors from a previous generation, their *raison d'être* now forgotten. One such item which turned up here is a little plated metal scroll inscribed 'Presented to C.A. Mills, Esqre by the Committee of the Enniskillen Horticultural Society Novr 1866'. Charles Auchmuty Mills was, we knew, a friend of the family, but it is not known why his presentation came to us, nor what it was — perhaps a clock to which the plaque was attached, by the screw still surviving at the back.

These musings stimulated enquiries to Joan Trimble, owner of *The Impartial Reporter*, the Enniskillen newspaper. She kindly furnished us with a copy from that paper of the report of the Enniskillen Horticultural Society's show of 1866. This gives a glimpse of a provincial show of the period in which 'the admirable arrangements carried out under the superintendence of the efficient Honorary Secretary C.A. Mills Esq. enabled the visitors to make the most minute examination of every plant and flower. A happy expression of good taste was evinced, and the sight was both graceful and pleasing.'

The list of awards gives us an impression of the kind of gardening that prevailed at the time. Many of the exhibits came from the local great estates such as Crom Castle and Castlecoole. In those days conservatories were an essential in any garden of consequence, so the first section of the report lists specimen plants in pots — stove plants, pelargoniums, geraniums, fuchsias, petunias, verbenas, calceolarias, balsams, cockscombs (i.e. *Celosia*), as well as annuals and bedding plants. The section on cut flowers lists dahlias, pansies, carnations and picotees, asters, stocks, marigolds and hollyhocks. The latter were shown in a class for six spikes as well as one for a single bloom, presumably mounted on a board, as was done for carnations, etc. in those days.

The soft fruits — gooseberries, red and white currants — were not exhibited by number as in other shows, but by the quart. The apples were shown merely as dessert or baking, the cultivars not specified. 'The vegetables were spread on the green sward, and the specimens shown were pretty good' comprising cucumber, celery, cauliflowers, potatoes, cabbage, lettuce, parsnips, carrots, beet, peas and marrows. Truly, in those days, private gardens had to be well-stocked.

The festive air of the occasion was increased by 'horticultural devices deserving of much praise; that exhibited by the Right Hon. the Earl of Enniskillen was very well executed, the words *Success to the Enniskillen Horticultural Society* being neatly worked in flowers... [and] the splendid band of the 83rd County of Dublin Regiment played a very fine selection of music during the day...'

As inferred by the presentation plaque, this was Charles Mills's last season as Honorary Secretary, for the next year Charles F. Jeffers had succeeded him.

Woodfield, Clara, County Offaly.

IRISH DAFFODILS — A TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE

I would love to have met William Baylor Hartland; he was an 'Irish Giant' with a large beard, eager, excitable and with tremendous enthusiasm. In 1886 he brought out his pompously titled catalogue *Ye Original Little Book of Daffodils* ornately decorated with butterflies, fairies and flowers. Revd G.H. Engleheart, who was then the 'Great Man' in daffodils, wrote ridiculing this in *The Garden*. Hartland replied sarcastically: "The fangs of a bear and the tusks of a wild boar do not bite worse or make deeper gashes than his goosequill!!" In his booklet Hartland described an Irish variant of *Narcissus pseudonarcissus* which he named 'Ard Righ' ('Irish King'). No one knows its origin but when he sent it to a celebrated grower of Edge Hall, Cheshire, he said it was the finest daffodil in cultivation. It was planted, en masse, at Rowallane at the beginning of this century.

In the seventeenth century when the herbalist John Parkinson wrote about daffodils, perhaps forms of *Narcissus pseudonarcissus* grew in the north of Ireland, but there is little about Irish daffodils in the books I have studied until the late nineteenth century. Frederick Burbidge, once an apprentice in the Royal Horticultural Society's Garden at Chiswick and later a student at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, was from 1870 until 1878 on the staff of *The Garden* and while working for that journal he published, in collaboration with J.G. Baker, *The Narcissus: its History and Culture*. In 1879, Burbidge was appointed Curator of the Trinity College Botanic Gardens in Dublin, and he worked there for the rest of his life — he died in 1905 having collected many daffodils for the Trinity Garden. He met William Baylor Hartland, who had nurseries in Cork at Temple Hill and Ard Cairn stocked mostly with daffodils that he had discovered in old and interesting gardens in the south of Ireland and which he used for hybridising.

In *The Daffodil Year Book* (1937) Lady Moore wrote about 'Daffodils in old Irish Gardens', mentioning The O'Mahony who grew a large stock of 'Maximus', the real old wild yellow trumpet discovered before 1576 and also known as 'Pseudonarcissus Maximus', 'Trinity College Maximus', etcetera. This was one of Burbidge's favourite plants. Poor Sally Kington, the Daffodil registrar, who completed the international check-list in 1989, has unearthed no fewer than ten different names for 'Maximus'. As I have found from exporting bulbs to all parts of the United States, and seeing them growing so differently in varying soils and climates, I wonder if 'Ard Righ' from Baylor Hartland, and 'Maximus' could have come from the same original bulb?

In 1910 Baylor Hartland died, but he had already sown 'yellow fever' in the mind of a young man living in Broughshane — Guy Livingstone Wilson. Born in 1886, the youngest child of the Wilsons of Raceview Woollen Mills, Guy, fostered by his mother, developed a great interest in flowers and plants. He pored over the Hartland catalogues which his mother received annually. In 1907 Guy sowed his first *Narcissus* seeds — he was only twenty-one. It was sad that he could not show Hartland his first results, but The Brodie of Brodie invited Guy to come to Scotland and they talked daffodils well into the night.

There was also a 'rising star' in Waterford about this time — Lionel Richardson, four years younger than Guy Wilson. Whereas Guy was fascinated by the white daffodils, Lionel was intrigued by coloured ones. Both Guy and Lionel travelled to London to put up trade stands and compete for The Engleheart Cup (originally awarded for 12 varieties raised by the exhibitor, now for 12 bred and raised by the exhibitor) at the shows of the Royal Horticultural Society. This cup is still competed for fiercely and has returned to Ulster this year (1990), won by Brian Duncan from Omagh.

The search for pure white trumpet daffodils was more difficult than for the yellows. Most wild species have yellow trumpets but *Narcissus pseudonarcissus* var. *moschatus* (also known as *N. cernuus*), the Drooping White Daffodil, or Swan Neck Daffodil or Silver Trumpet, has a pure white trumpet. It was grown by Hartland and probably inspired Guy Wilson in his search for a perfect white trumpet.

Guy Wilson had another friend and guide in James Coey, a nurseryman in Larne and (later) Newcastle who owned the Slieve Donard Nursery. After Coey's death that famous nursery was run by William Slinger who was also a daffodil man; his name is on the Peter Barr Memorial Cup for his work in daffodils.

As Guy Wilson became famous and started making his presence felt at the London shows — he was many times Engleheart Cup winner — his visitors from all over the world increased. He had friends in the United States, Holland, New Zealand and Australia. People often ask me "What was Guy Wilson really like?" I remember him as a small figure, usually dressed in his own Raceview tweed made into a plus-four suit, with a round face and round glasses and a black labrador at his heels. I used to be a little afraid of him as I sensed he did not suffer fools gladly. But he was always kind and extremely generous, and when I asked him for one

Carncairn Daffodils Ltd.



SEASON 1980



CARNCAIRN LODGE, BROUGHSHANE, BALLYMENA,
CO. ANTRIM, N. IRELAND.
Telephone: Ballymena 861 216

Gold Medal Daffodils

pound's worth of show bulbs to compete with in the Ballymena Show, he gave me 'Chinese White', 'Chungking' and several others which must have been worth a lot more than £1. I also remember seeing the old Rolls-Royce that Lionel Richardson always drove arriving at 'The Knockan'. John Shaw from Broughshane, the 'man behind the scenes' at 'The Knockan', went to Guy once he left school and stayed with him until Guy's bulbs were sold to Dick de Jaeger, a Dutch nurseryman who had a daffodil farm at Marden in Kent. Lionel Richardson's right-hand man was Jack Goldsmith — like John Shaw he did most of the basic work in the bulb fields.

Many people ask me what started my interest in daffodils. My first memory of them was long ago in

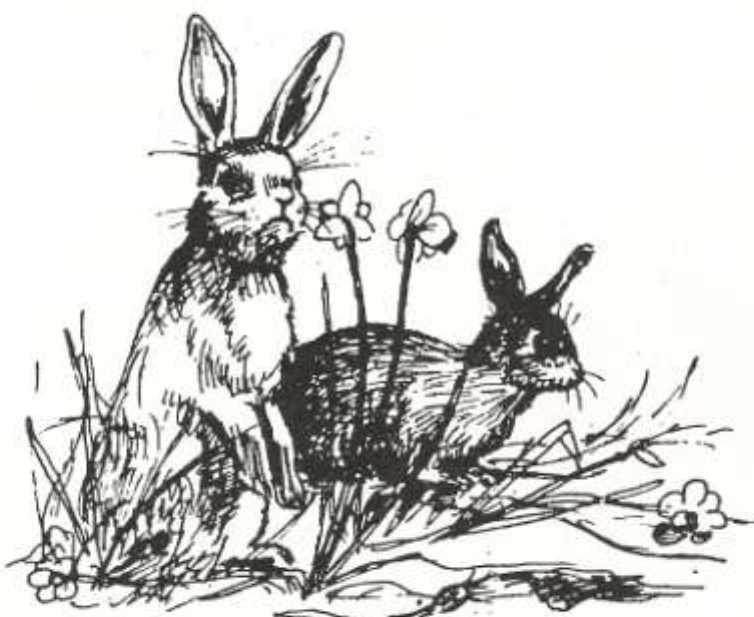


Cushendall. My grandfather, Colonel W.H. Savage, had retired from the Gurkhas and settled at 'Rarkmoyle', a house just opposite the old Layde Churchyard above Cushendall looking over the sea. The front drive was lined with daffodils — I imagine they were *N. pseudonarcissus* — and these were picked, packed in boxes and sent off in a horse-drawn Victoria carriage to Parkmore Railway Station (on the old railway which stopped at Cargan and went on to Ballymena), thence by boat train and by some magic they arrived at Covent Garden the next day and were sold in the market. I must have been about six years old at the time. I remember vividly the pain of cold hands after picking them, but also the beauty of the flowers, and, of course, old Rufus, the chestnut horse that pulled the carriage.

I lived with my grandparents because my parents were in India. Later, when my father retired we went to live at 'Coolgreany' in Ballycastle. My mother had a beautiful garden and looked after the flowers; my father kept us in vegetables. My mother grew some modern hybrid daffodils and used to take a weekly cargo of cut-flowers to sell in Belfast. It was not until Robin and I were married in 1948 (after we had both been demobbed — he from the Army and I from the Navy) that, when spending the weekend at 'Carncairn', his parents organised a trip to see Guy Wilson's daffodil fields at 'The Knockan'. I was completely dazzled by a collection of such beauty, all shapes and colours, stretching down the field.

In 1951 Robin and I moved to 'Carncairn' — he commuted to Belfast daily. His grandmother, who had been living with his parents, stayed on with us. She was a wonderful old lady, and a fund of gardening knowledge, and showed me with pride the Guy Wilson bulbs growing at Carncairn. Guy had given them to my mother-in-law who had been a great supporter of his. Also at Carncairn we found John Maybin who had, as a boy, worked for Guy Wilson, and had many amusing stories to tell about him. Guy was a perfectionist and when the beds were made up for the bulbs they had to be measured *and correct* to a fraction of an inch. It was lucky for us that John Maybin applied for the job of gardener to my father-in-law in 1947. He had acquired a great knowledge of bulbs when working for Guy. Apart from a few years in Ballymena he has lived in the gardener's cottage at Carncairn and without him we would not have been able to produce the good healthy bulbs that customers expect from us. John is a tremendously hard worker, and though retired now he comes and goes as he feels able and puts in a lot of hours at flowering time, digging and planting. John's main hobby is his collection of racing pigeons and in 1990 he had his most successful year ever with them.

When we found that the daffodils were taking over the walled garden, we decided to plant them in the field in the same manner that John had learnt from Guy. One day my husband looked at a glistening bed of



Still further hazards of a daffodil breeder



*1918
Further
hazards
of a
Daffodil
Breeder*

'Kanchenjunga' (one of Guy's early white trumpets) and said (looking at Guy's catalogue), "Do you realise you have over £100 worth of bulbs in that bed. What are you going to do with them?" That was when we decided to go commercial. When I talked to Guy Wilson about it he looked doubtful. He warned me of all the hard work; with the farm and the children I was very busy, but when he realised we had thought hard about the commercial possibilities, he looked at me, shook his head and started to give me advice on breeding.

Thus, in the 1950s we set up Carncairn Daffodils Ltd., produced a small catalogue, and were joined by John Pearson, a young Englishman who had been working for Guy and was smitten with the 'daffodil bug'. We had great hopes that he could run a market garden at Carncairn while the daffodil business was growing, but unfortunately we did not have enough capital to get that off the ground too. John decided to go back into the army — he ended up a colonel — and now has his own business, Hofflands Daffodils, in Essex. He is producing excellent show flowers. From him I learnt more tips about hybridising.

Another man living in Broughshane at this time was Willy Dunlop — the raiser of the famous white and yellow trumpet 'Newcastle', and many others. He encouraged us from the beginning and invited John Maybin and me to see the pots which he was taking to London to the Royal Horticultural Society's show. Willy's first success had been at Spring shows in Ballymena and Coleraine, and in 1942 and 1943 he won gold medals in Dublin. There he met Lionel Richardson and they struck up an immediate friendship as they had the same aim, breeding red-cupped flowers. From 1946 onwards, Willy Dunlop put up large trade stands at the London shows and we still use the enormous wooden box he bequeathed to us when he stopped going to London in 1972. It is full of old aprons, watering cans and other paraphernalia, and 'lives' in the basement; it appears, by magic and the kindness of the staging staff, beside our stand when we arrive in London with our flowers. Willy was awarded gold medals in 1949 and 1950 and was second in the Engelheart Cup in 1963. He also won the Peter Barr Memorial Cup in 1961. When Willy decided to retire due to ill health he sold us a lot of his bulb trays — we still use the trays and the racks he had made so that the trays could be pulled in and out like a chest of drawers. It was wonderful to have Willy so close when we first started as we could supply bulbs when he had oversold on orders and vice versa. I have warm memories of Willy and his wife welcoming visitors with cups of tea and home-made biscuits. Tragically Willy broke his hip badly, and never really recovered; he died at Christmas 1990. We still grow a lot of Willy's flowers.

In 1972 a group of daffodil growers started talking about a means of promoting and encouraging the cultivation and breeding of daffodils in Ireland. Mrs Richardson was asked to present a cup, from the many she

had at Prospect House, Waterford, to be competed for in 'The Championship of Ireland' (twelve cultivars staged singly). She readily agreed to this project. Willy Toal, who had helped the Richardsons at their shows and had done a lot for the Dublin Show, was also keen on the idea. He had moved to Belfast and frequently judged at local shows with Tom Bloomer. Brian Duncan, a keen competitor, was also pressing for the formation of a daffodil group. A steering committee with Willy Dunlop as chairman had been formed in 1971, and prominent at committee meetings were Sir Frank and Lady Harrison from Killinchy, Co. Down. The Harrisons had been growing daffodils since the end of the war; starting with cut-flowers they soon began serious hybridising and produced a catalogue in 1948. They have built up a wonderful collection, specialising in green-eyed 'Poeticus' cultivars with small cups, delicate rim, and mostly scented. Their firm is Ballydorn Bulbs. Their daffodil fields slope down to Strangford Lough; whatever is in the soil, or Frank's hands, their bulbs are enormous, and their flowers tall and with tremendous substance. One Ballydorn white that we grow is 'Churchman', consistent prize winner and popular in the United States.

A great influence on all the daffodil growers in Northern Ireland was Tom Bloomer from Ballymena. I understand he had become keen in the 1940s, and in 1954 and 1955 he went to London and won the Bowles Cup in the amateur classes — quite a marathon as then it required three stems each of twenty-four cultivars (a total of 72 flowers; it has been reduced to fifteen cultivars (45 flowers)). In 1956 and 1957 he repeated this success, adding in 1956 the Barr Vase for most points in the single bloom classes. Tom Bloomer was lucky to have Willy Dunlop and Guy Wilson to discuss his hybridising aims with, and from 'Camelot' x 'Arctic Gold' (both Richardson flowers) raised 'Golden Joy' and 'Golden Jewel', two of the best large-cupped yellows on the show bench today. Probably Tom's most famous daffodil is 'White Star'.

When you watch an expert at work there is always a special feeling and it was like that with Tom Bloomer — he knew how to make his flowers look their very best. I remember him, white-haired and elegant, with his wife, Flo, putting up his small beautiful stand in London.

In Ballymena the invasion of the men from Omagh was soon being felt and we found that Brian Duncan was as hard to beat as Tom Bloomer had been. It was good for competition and the standard of the flowers improved, both in colour and form. Tom Bloomer soon realised that he was taking on too much and in 1973 he decided he must 'pack it in', and so it was that Brian Duncan formed a partnership with Clarke Campbell, who farmed not far away, and they took over Tom's stock, setting up Rathowen Daffodils — 'Rathowen' was the name of Tom's house. A gang of amateurs always went over to London to help with Rathowen's stands, but taking their own flowers to compete in the amateur classes. Sandy McCabe, who as a boy had worked with Guy Wilson, stages very well. So did Bob Sterling from Bangor who sadly has since died. Rathowen Daffodils consistently won gold medals for its stands, and the whole thing was like a good party. I well remember Dr Hugh Watson from Beragh, having won some good prizes, sitting on a ledge in the Royal Horticultural Society's Hall with a bottle of champagne on one side and a bottle of Guinness on the other (he was also the most entertaining after-dinner speaker).

We — Carncairn Daffodils — were usually helped to stage flowers at the Royal Horticultural Society's shows by our own children when they were living in London, and they brought friends with them who had never staged flowers before. We were not very professional; the staging was not uniform but we had a lot of fun and achieved two gold medals during the 1970s.

I would like to pay tribute to the Horticultural Division of the Department of Agriculture for the tremendous help and encouragement they have given us through the years, inspecting bulbs in the field, inspecting bulbs before dispatch, answering questions, wielding forks when roguing in the field, and producing phytosanitary (plant health) certificates (each one has to be signed!) for some very unusual countries. I am sure Tom Conway will forgive me if I relate the story of his first visit to inspect our bulbs. He produced a clean, shiny knife from his pocket, and with great enthusiasm sliced in two a bulb of 'Silken Sails' then selling at £5 each. "I am very glad to tell you", he said, looking at the clean white scales, "that that bulb was very healthy". We have had many laughs about that together.

Rathowen Daffodils continued with its formidable successes at shows and with new introductions, but it became increasingly obvious that such a big enterprise was becoming too difficult with Brian Duncan in a full-time demanding job and Clarke a dedicated farmer. The result was a dividing of the ways. Brian Duncan had taken a field beside his house and as Brian Duncan Daffodils has set up his own specialist business, growing bulbs (mostly of his own raising) and specialising particularly in his famous pink and white doubles. Clarke Campbell continues to produce excellent bulbs, trading under the name Tyrone Daffodils, ably assisted by his son, Desmond, who is already doing some hybridising.

In 1990, Northern Ireland's daffodil growers achieved a great many awards and honours in London: Brian Duncan once again won the Engleheart Cup and received a gold medal for his trade display. I was presented



with the Peter Barr Memorial Cup for work in daffodils and we — Carncairn Daffodils — also received a gold medal for our trade stand. The medal was in a very large part due to Sam Bankhead's unstinting help in staging — each of the three years he has helped us we have received gold medals and we can never thank him enough. When putting the final touches to a stand, he will step back and with his sense of design and colour suggest some little change that brings the whole display together. Sam is a long-time member of the Northern Ireland Daffodil Group and worked as its secretary for many years; he has now retired and we hope he will be able to spend more time on his own seedlings. Sam's interest in daffodils was fostered by his uncle, Jim Bankhead, who was a fine grower and knew Guy Wilson and Willy Dunlop in the old days.

Still with the 1990 show scene, Sandy McCabe, tireless secretary of the Northern Ireland Daffodil Group who also produces the excellent newsletter, delighted us by winning the Richardson Trophy (for twelve cultivars representing each of Divisions 1 to 4 in the amateur section). John O'Reilly, editor of the newsletter, inherited 'green fingers' from his father, and won the Blanchard Prize for the greatest number of points in the novice section. Chairman (1991) of the Northern Ireland Daffodil Group is Maurice Kerr, a keen exhibitor who does very well in shows especially the Belfast one. We do not see so much of Jack Carlisle, a past chairman of the Group, but now he has returned to Bangor from Letterkenny we hope to see more of him.

On Wednesdays the Royal Horticultural Society's shows close at 5.00 p.m. — depending on one's success, one is feeling exhausted but elated, or exhausted and disappointed. After putting up the stand on Sunday and Monday, finishing it early on Tuesday morning, judging classes, and then taking orders for the rest of Tuesday and all of Wednesday, legs ache, backs ache, and heads ache. Suddenly it's 5 o'clock! There is a rush of people, who have been waiting outside, wanting to buy the poor, tired flowers. We hurry to get the stand down, clean up and go to the boat train. People rush at you with coins in their hands wanting one special colour or one special vase. I take off my shoes and climb to the top of stand (I am the lightest), and begin handing down the bunches which are grabbed by eager hands. I will never forget one little old lady with an old brown coat, knitted hat and with grey hair straggling round her face, clasping a bunch much bigger than herself and saying "Bless you, dearie, I take them to the hospital." In about thirty minutes the stands that took so long to erect are reduced to empty vases and green hessian.

Then one remembers that a few minutes earlier there had been three stands taking up most of one side of that big hall, and every daffodil on them — hundreds of flowers — had come from Northern Ireland. We feel we are ambassadors. So many people come up and say "They are so beautiful — and all from Northern Ireland."

Another comments "So they *do* do something over there besides bomb and shoot."

For some time the Northern Ireland Daffodil Group had discussed having a garden to grow and evaluate new bulbs, as well as the better old cultivars. After visiting many suggested sites including Mount Stewart, it was decided to plant bulbs at the University at Coleraine and to name the garden The Guy Wilson Daffodil Garden. The first bulbs were planted in 1971 in the beautiful quarry site overlooking the marina. Robin Currie, from the Department of Agriculture who was interested, organised the design, obtained shrubs, and a beautiful garden was created. David Willis, who gained a doctorate for his thesis on Irish daffodils, ran the garden with zest and enthusiasm. The Guy Wilson Memorial Garden was officially opened on 24 April 1974 by Professor Fergus Wilson, a relative of Guy's. It was a beautifully spring day and the bulbs which had been donated by all the growers must have felt that they had to do their best. There was a riot of glorious bloom. Robin Currie's design is excellent, including an ecological garden in the quarry. The garden has had many overseas visitors and is now a designated national collection.

One of the major problems with any planting of daffodils is to keep it free of weeds and the bulbs healthy. To me this was always a worry with bulbs planted in beds. Regular lifting, hot-water treatment and re-planting, preferably *not* in the same place, is essential to keep such a collection in prime condition. Brett Campbell, in charge of the grounds at the University, is determined to ensure that the national collection of *Narcissus* at Coleraine is healthy.

In Broughshane a collection of Guy Wilson cultivars is being planted opposite the gate of 'The Knockan', his old home, where there is a wide patch of grass beside the road. It is hoped that, properly naturalised, they will increase and need not be disturbed for many years. The grass will be regularly cut after the bulbs have died down and this should avoid any weeding. We believe this will be a worthy memorial for the man who did so much for Ulster daffodils. This project will have the 'blessing' and help of the Ballymena Borough Council, and Broughshane Improvements Committee who have succeeded in a few years in making Broughshane runner-up in the 'Best Kept Small Town' competition, beaten, I understand, by Moira by only one point this year (1990).

In 1979 the World Daffodil Convention was convened in Northern Ireland. Many keen growers came from all over the world — it was a tremendous success. Now we must endeavour to preserve and maintain the skill to grow these beautiful plants in Northern Ireland, and I do beg that interest can be fostered in our young people. John McAusland from Hillsborough is trying to stimulate awareness in local schools. The youngest member of our committee, Richard McCaw, is also from Hillsborough. And we ask anyone who is interested to join the Northern Ireland Daffodil Group.

Cairncairn Lodge, Broughshane, Co. Antrim.



EXOTICS IN IRELAND: THE IRISH GARDEN PLANT SOCIETY EXHIBIT AT THE CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW 1990

In December 1989 the Society received an invitation to exhibit at the Chelsea Flower Show in the Scientific and Educational Section. The Royal Horticultural Society's schedule stated that an exhibit in this section should be informative, educational and/or scientific. With five months' notice, this was an ambitious project but an opportunity that the Society could not miss. An organising committee was established and the project got underway.

The title selected for the exhibit was 'Exotics in Ireland'. The purpose was firstly to demonstrate that Ireland has a rich garden flora, with strong representation from the warm temperate regions of the world. A second aim was to show some of the plants and cultivars raised in this country. A third objective was to explain, in environmental terms, how the exotic flora survives.

The medium for these messages was a stand with an abstract, blue-shaded background, suggesting tones of sky and sea, in which a plant collection was assembled in a 'Robinsonian' manner. A Robinsonian style, with lush, informal plantings of native and exotic plants is characteristic of many Irish gardens, Annes Grove (Co. Cork) and Mount Usher (Co. Wicklow) being prime examples. The plants on exhibition at Chelsea, which were provided by members of the society, Irish nurserymen and others, were gathered from gardens as far apart as the south coast of Kerry and the north coast of Antrim. This involved visits to various gardens and discussions with garden owners and nurseries. While many rare and tender specimens are in cultivation in Ireland, gardeners do not often keep back-up specimens in pots. It was difficult to obtain good quality specimens that were transportable in pots. Some members transplanted plants and grew them on in containers, a risk for them, but much appreciated by the Chelsea team.

Meanwhile, plans were underway for the design of the stand. Display panels designed by Dr David Jeffrey were assembled by Modern Display Artists. The display boards which are described later were set in a woodland scene — an unusual one, however, with a tree-fern canopy and a floor of ferns, ivies and mosses. Traditional wicker creels full of plants from many countries, together with cultivars raised in Ireland, were half-hidden in this setting. Plants were displayed as single specimens and in groups. A modern piece of sculpture in concrete, 'Goose', by the Dublin sculptress Katy Goodhue, enhanced the woodland scene.

The woodland area was planted with native and exotic ferns. The most spectacular of these, *Dicksonia antarctica* (Dicksoniaceae), a native of Australia, has become naturalized at Kells Bay (Co. Kerry), Rossdohan (Co. Kerry) and several other gardens in south-western Ireland. A magnificent tree fern was selected from the garden at Kells Bay, transported to Dublin and then to London. Though 3 m tall with a broader spread of fronds, it was a mere baby in comparison to the single, double and triple headed specimens in that marvellous garden. Smaller tree ferns were used as an understory. Three maidenhair ferns, *Adiantum capillus-veneris* (Adiantaceae) which occurs in The Burren and Connemara, *A. pedatum* and *A. pedatum* ssp. *aleuticum*, were sprayed regularly. The glistening fronds typified an Irish woodland. Joe Kennedy, a well-known breeder of *Primula* from Ballycastle (Co. Antrim), provided a wonderful selection of Asiatic species (*P. involucrata*, *P. jesoana*, *P. polyneura*, *P. alpicola*, *P. secundiflora* and *P. sieboldii*). A 'river' of *Viola* 'Molly Sanderson' connected the primroses and ferns to a group of *Diascia* and creeping *Fuchsia*. The South African species, *Diascia rigescens*, *D. fetucanensis*, *D. vigilis*, *D. barbarae* and the cultivar 'Ruby Field', provided by Carl Dacus, were exhibited. *Fuchsia procumbens* which is native to New Zealand bears tiny pale yellow tubular flowers and prominent red fruits. Members of the Fuchsia Society took a particular interest in this unusual species.

Plants native to many regions of the world were placed in this woodland scene. *Beschorneria yuccoides* (Amaryllidaceae), a yucca-like Mexican plant, thrives in many Irish gardens including that of Niall O'Neill, who loaned the specimen on exhibit. *Restio subverticillata* (Restionaceae), a South African grass-like plant, is cultivated at Lakemount, Cork. Brian Cross's garden. *Dactylorhiza foliosa* (Orchidaceae), an elegant purple orchid which is a native of Madeira, succeeds in several gardens. While some plants wilted under the strain of Chelsea, this orchid improved as the week progressed. *Acradenia frankliniae*, a Tasmanian species which is

cultivated in many Irish gardens, appears to be uncommon in Britain. It has a neat habit, dark green trifoliolate leaves and white flowers which are similar to those of *Choisya ternata*. Native to New Zealand, *Olearia lacunosa* is a rare daisy-bush that is difficult to propagate and highly prized; the plants on display were propagated by Anne James and Finola Reid from the notable specimen in the late Sidney Maskell's garden at Kilbogget (Co. Dublin). A purple-leaved cultivar of *Brachyglottis repanda* (Asteraceae) forms an attractive foliage plant, native to New Zealand, with dark green leaves, tinged purple; there are notable specimens at Inacullin (Co. Cork) and Rossdohan (Co. Kerry). Another purple-foliaged Australian shrub, *Dodonaea viscosa* 'Purpurea' (Sapindaceae), formed part of a backdrop display of specimen shrubs and conifers, which had been loaned by Dr Neil Murray. *Carpenteria californica* (Philadelphaceae), an evergreen Californian shrub requiring acid soil, was in full flower. Two pendulous conifers, the South American *Fitzroya cupressoides* (Cupressaceae) and the Chinese coffin juniper, *Juniperus recurva* var. *coxii*, were shown to advantage against the pale blue backdrop of the stand. Notable specimens of the former are established at Dunloe Castle Hotel (Co. Kerry) and Mount Usher (Co. Wicklow) and the latter is frequent in tree collections (Forrest 1985). *Sciadopitys verticillata* (Taxodiaceae), a distinctive Japanese conifer with leaves in whorl-like clusters, occurs in many Irish plant collections, and specimens of note are at Headfort (Co. Meath), Fota (Co. Cork) and Fernhill (Co. Dublin). The specimen on display was on loan from Trinity College Dublin Botanic Garden.

Discerning gardeners and nurserymen in Ireland have hybridised and selected many new cultivars. This process continues and some new Irish cultivars were exhibited. *Celmisia* 'David Shackleton' (Asteraceae), a spectacular herbaceous perennial with silver foliage, was described by Dr Charles Nelson in *Moorea* 8 (1990); it was named in honour of the late David Shackleton whose garden at Beech Park (Co. Dublin) holds many plant treasures. *Calluna vulgaris* 'Celtic Gold', a recently registered cultivar (Nelson 1990), was exhibited for the first time; in the mid-1980s. John Morris (a member of the Society) found a chance seedling in his nursery at Scarva (Co. Armagh). *Griselinia littoralis* 'Bantry Bay' was found by Murdo Mackenzie, the Scottish head-gardener at Inacullin, Glengarriff, Co. Cork; it is slow-growing and more tender than the common variegated or green-leaved forms. *Hedera hibernica* 'Strand' was found by Alison Rutherford near Newcastle West in Co. Limerick (Nelson 1984); it has large, glossy green leaves with a sprawling growth habit and does not attach itself to trees or walls. *Ilex x altaclerensis* 'Lady Valerie', which is named for Lady Valerie Goulding, was introduced into the trade by Dr Neil Murray of Regional Nurseries, who in 1976 had noticed a sport on a specimen of *Ilex x altaclerensis* 'Golden King' at Dargle Cottage (Co. Wicklow) (Andrews 1988). *Osteospermum* 'Irish Lavender' was raised by Finola Reid (chairman of the IGPS, 1990-2); a seedling with deep lavender flowers, it arose by the chance hybridisation of *Osteospermum* 'Tresco Purple' and *O. ecklonis*. *Viola* 'Molly Sanderson', a black-flowered viola, was named in honour of Dr Molly Sanderson, an honorary member of the Irish Garden Plant Society. Dr Sanderson spent some time on the stand and many people were delighted to meet the lady and her plant. A member of the Royal Horticultural Society for 35 years, this was her first visit to the Chelsea Flower Show. *Primula* 'Rowallane Rose', a candelabra primrose, arose as a chance seedling at Rowallane (Co. Down).

The environmental and garden information was shown as five panels placed amongst the plants. Two faces of the Irish climate were presented, using data from the *Atlas of Ireland* (1979). A 'length of growing season' map was compiled from the two atlas maps depicting the beginning and the end of the grass growing season. The yardstick for this is a soil temperature higher than 6°C. Rooting activity, soil processes and growth of evergreens can occur when temperatures exceed this threshold. The majority of heritage gardens have a growing season longer than thirty eight weeks, which means growth from mid-March to the beginning of December. Coastal Cork and Kerry experience a growing season that can be virtually continuous. This map was complemented by a display card depicting 'Days per year with more than 1 mm of rainfall'. The favourable thermal environment is seen to be accompanied by freedom from drought. There are, however, a number of notable gardens in the 'less than 150 rain days' category, including Malahide Castle (Co. Dublin). It is difficult to encapsulate an optimal soil condition for warm temperate flora. Logic and experience suggest a base-poor and humus-rich soil, with even base-rich rocks being subject to decalcification. Soils with a pH of less than 6 are a relatively safe substrate for most exotic subjects and this was the criterion selected. The map presented was generated by inspection of the soil map in the *Atlas*, including all soil groups which are known with some confidence to have this degree of acidity. It included a wide range of parent material, from siliceous bedrocks and glacial drifts derived from them, to the various peatland soils.

This three part environmental analysis of garden sites must be considered very much as a first approximation, serving to encourage speculation on what makes a good garden site. Clearly the scale of resolution of the maps used was limited and exceptions linked to microclimate and local soil conditions are to be expected. However, the explanation as stated led to substantial interest by visitors to the exhibit. Two other maps gave the location of the major heritage gardens and a world distribution of the plants exhibited.



The Royal Horticultural Society medal, with bust of John Lindley

The Irish Garden Plant Society was awarded a silver medal for the exhibit. The Royal Horticultural Society medal, with a bust of John Lindley on the reverse has 'To the Irish Garden Plant Society for Exotics in Ireland Chelsea Show 1990' inscribed on the rim (see above).

Note: In 1992 the IGPS exhibited at Chelsea for the second time, and gained a silver-gilt for "Distinguished natives and honoured guests' (front and back covers).

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Acknowledgements

Without the hard work and dedication of many people in the Society and elsewhere the Irish Garden Plant Society would never have exhibited at Chelsea. The exhibit would not have been possible but for the assistance of Bord Fáilte, in particular Mary Nash; John Hosford, who at an early stage contributed financially to the project; Irish Fertilizer Industries; Aer Lingus and Avondale Bark Products. Special mention must be given to members, nurseries, Trinity College Botanic Garden and the National Botanic Gardens who loaned or donated plants or provided useful advice and criticism. The Chelsea subcommittee was Judy Cassells, Carl Dacus, Mary Davies, Carmel Duignan, Mary Forrest, David Jeffrey, Reg Maxwell, Finola Reid and Ricky Shannon. Those who volunteered for stand duty were John Anderson, Susyn Andrews, Audrey Bisgood, Andrew and Susan Craigie, Helen Dillon, Margaret Morrissey, Neil Murray, Mary Nash, Thomasina Harmon O'Brien, Kitty Reardon, Molly Sanderson, Robert Travers and Janet Wynne. Thanks are also due to Aidan Brady, Bernard Brennan, Stephen Coone, Chris Fehily, Anne James, Maigread Henley, Dermot Kehoe, Elizabeth Kavanagh, John and Elinor Medlycott, Nancy Minchin, Charles Nelson, Fred Nutty, Jim Reynolds and Stephen Waldron.

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QUEEN VICTORIA'S MYRTLE

Almost every part of Britain boasts of a myrtle 'grown from a sprig in Queen Victoria's wedding bouquet', yet it appears that she did not carry a bouquet at all (*vide* The Royal Archives *in litt.* May 1991)!

My interest in the matter came about because, as a child, I lived in an old, now-demolished house ('Glendivis', off the Ballygomartin Road, Belfast) and outside my nursery window there grew against a south-facing wall, a fine big myrtle bush. Local tradition had it that the bush 'grew from a sprig in Queen Victoria's wedding bouquet' — but no more information. I have been unable to ascertain who lived in 'Glendivis', at the time of the Royal wedding (10 February 1840), despite the efforts of the Belfast Public Libraries. Though old, the house was certainly not of 'stately home' status, and it seems unlikely that it had any connection with any of the Queen's twelve bridesmaids, then termed trainbearers.

A letter to the *B.S.B.I. Newsletter* (50: 30-31, 1990) produced a crop of replies, all more or less to the same effect, although a Newcastle-upon-Tyne correspondent stated that their myrtle 'was grown from a sprig in Queen Victoria's funeral wreath'. Another correspondent informed me that, fifty years ago, the late C.P. Raffill, then Assistant Curator of the Temperate Department at Kew, had told him that the then Marquis of Carisbrook had a myrtle plant (*Myrtus communis*) which had been rooted from a sprig in the wedding bouquet of Queen Victoria. Even at Kew, then, the tradition was accepted.

Many years ago, a bouquet of some sort was exhibited at Frogmore Mausoleum, where Queen Victoria and Prince Albert are buried. This was seen by Miss G. Elwell who has given me permission to quote her recollection (*in litt.* January 1991). 'I remember visiting Frogmore Mausoleum many years ago where I saw on a wall near Victoria and Albert's memorial, a piece of her wedding bouquet which contained sprigs of myrtle (so the caption stated).'

In Germany myrtle was a usual component of wedding bouquets, and when the Queen's eldest daughter married in 1858, she was presented with a bouquet of orange blossom and myrtle by the Veitch nursery. Apparently it was from this time that the fashion of having myrtle in wedding bouquets arose and persisted, though dwindling, until about twenty years ago. It is suggested that someone just assumed that Queen Victoria carried a wedding bouquet, and everyone subsequently — and carelessly — copied the erroneous statement. It is curious that the myth of Queen Victoria and the myrtle sprig is so widespread and so enduring, as it seems to have no basis in fact.

I am grateful to all those who took the trouble to write to me with information on their myrtles, especially Miss Elwell and to Jill Kelsey, Assistant Registrar of The Royal Archives, Windsor Castle, who provided the information which effectively cancelled their claims.

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ANTRIM CASTLE GARDENS

'Antrim Borough Council is seeking funds from the European Community for appropriate development and interpretation of the unique Gardens which were established by the Clotworthy Family in association with their castle in Antrim ...'.¹ So states a commissioned report (1990) on a development strategy which may result in sensitive restoration of the gardens or may place intolerable burdens upon them. If the strategy is not adopted the site will remain as it is — a public park with excellent features. It is therefore an opportune time to assess the past, present and possible future of the site.

The gardens are part of the demesne of the Clotworthy family, later Viscounts Massereene and Ferrard. The demesne lies adjacent to the town of Antrim and included, on the south side of the Six Mile Water, grazing, clumps of trees and shelter belt planting leading down to the deer park on the shores of Lough Neagh. At present this area contains sports facilities which fortunately accommodate the shelter belt trees.

The late seventeenth-century or early eighteenth-century formal gardens on the north side of the river are of considerable historic interest. Though the castle has gone, the site has relevance as an example of a certain kind of demesne garden which developed on a moderately grand scale as family fortunes allowed. It is now owned by Antrim Borough Council, which is not only considering the upgrading of the garden but also planning to build new council offices on the site.

The outstanding features can be listed, the foremost being the canals (Figure 1). The upper canal is joined to the lower by a small cascade, the lower having a short T-junction canal to the east. They are edged with grass paths and bordered with clipped 7 m high lime (*Tilia x europea*), changing to hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) at the north end. There is a wilderness wooded and cut through with paths (Figure 2). An oval pond in a glade in the wilderness has very satisfying grass edging (Figure 3). Two hedged and grassed enclosures once displayed parterres. A mount with a spiral path interspersed with yew (*Taxus baccata*) is a rare survivor of this type of use of an ancient motte adapted to become a garden feature (Figure 4). The remaining tower of the castle adds meaning to the landscape.

A background to the development of the site can be assembled from documentary sources. The prolific letter-writer Mrs Mary Delany visited the gardens in 1758 and wrote that '... the garden was reckoned a fine one forty years ago — high hedges and long narrow walks'.² This suggests that there would have been an established ornamental garden by c. 1718. Such gardens were known to contemporaries through published engravings. A great many were swept away when the 'landscape' style of the Georgian period came into fashion. This garden was not radically altered (as was Castlecoole, County Fermanagh) and is a unique survival in Northern Ireland.

The first Ordnance Survey map of 1833 (Figure 5) gives a clear indication of the layout. The memoir by James Boyle of 1835, which accompanies the map, is very detailed and informative and provides an excellent reference as to the appearance of the site at that time. Part of the memoir from the parish of Antrim is quoted here:³

The grounds on this side of the river, known as 'The Wilderness', are in this parish and including the gardens extend over about 37 acres. Those in the opposite side of the river are in the Grange of Muckamore and stretching along the shore of the lake for about two miles, extend over about 1,090 acres laid down in pasture as a deer park and sheep walks and beautifully ornamented with some old wood and numerous tastefully disposed slumps and belts of young planting.

The Wilderness is at once unique and curious in its arrangement, being a perfect specimen of the French style of gardening in the seventeenth century. And though almost flat and extending over no greater extent than 37 acres, it is so laid out as to seem more than double its real size. It consists of a grove thickly wooded with very tall and tapering elms, interspersed with a few other trees and shrubs, traversed by numerous perfectly straight alleys and walks, these again intersected by several curiously contrived vistas cut through the planting, bearing on some interesting object such as the round tower, the church spire, the chapel etc. and at the termination of two of them are handsome bases [vases] supported by pedestals.

The grounds are also ornamented by some beautiful ponds, one of these is 220 yards long and 10 yards broad, a walk and a splendid lime hedge 18 feet high extends along each side of it. There are two other ponds which are circular, the largest of these is 186 yards in



Fig. 1 The lower canal, August 1990. Belinda Jupp. Copyright N.I.H.G.C.



Fig. 2 The Wilderness, August 1990. Belinda Jupp. Copyright N.I.H.G.C.

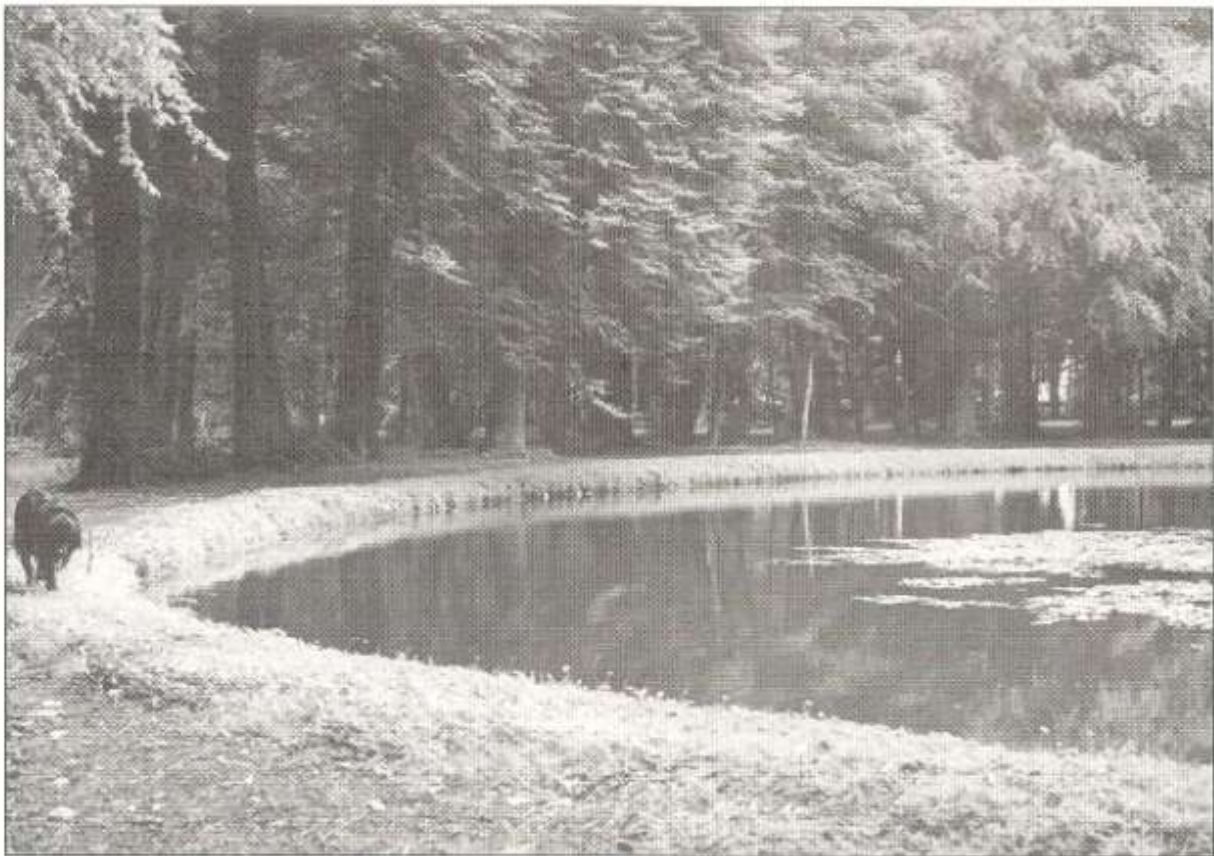


Fig. 3 The pond, August 1990. Belinda Jupp. Copyright N.I.H.G.C.

circumference.

Towards the western side of the Wilderness is a curious little parterre ... yards square surrounded by a beautiful lime hedge 20 feet high and laid out in the most fantastic manner. Some of the beds contain flowers but numberless little ones laid out in every variety of shape, enclosed by boxwood edging contain only gravel, each containing a different colour. In the centre of the parterre is a yew tree 14 feet high in the form of an obelisk.

A little to the north and nearly opposite the castle are the terrace gardens which consist of a beautiful range of flower beds extending along three sides of a square 110 x 108 yards. They are 16 feet wide and raised 9 feet above the adjacent ground, a high wall encloses them from a kitchen garden in the centre and a lower one from the grounds on the outside. They contain a choice selection of flowers and shrubs, among which are some fine myrtles.

The kitchen garden contains 3 acres. It is situated on the west side of the Wilderness and contains a small hot house. It is not walled nor is it very well stocked.

Close to the north side of the castle is a mount 37 feet high and 51 yards in diameter at the base and 12 at the summit. It seems to be one of the old Danish mounds commonly met with in the country.

It is planted with a variety of trees and shrubs and a well-constructed spiral walk leads to its summit.

There are several very fine old yews in the grounds. The elms grow to a great height and are immensely straight and taper. There are some fine beech and cypress and rhododendrons are particularly luxuriant. A plain bridge 8 feet long and consisting of 6 semi-circular arches spans the river a little below the castle and leads to a drive and numerous delightful walks along the lake on its opposite site.

The grounds are kept in the nicest order. The public are admitted to them and the castle at all times and it is much visited by strangers. The people of Antrim enjoy a most agreeable privilege in having at all times access to the delightful walks about the castle and they are much frequented by them.



Fig. 4 'The Old Fort; motte beside castle'. R.J. Welch (date unknown). Photograph reproduced with kind permission of the Trustees of the Ulster Museum.



Fig. 5 OS map, scale 6" to 1 mile, 1833 and 1857. Co. Antrim, sheet 50. Enlarged.

There is still permanent access today.

Several alterations are shown on the OS map of 1857 (Figure 5), notably the removal of the larger parterre and the old stables; the building of the new stables (now known as Clotworthy House); tree planting and new walks cut in the wilderness. Some time before the map of 1921 (Figure 6) glasshouses were added to the walled garden. In the map more woodland can be seen on the west side, yet the unwalled kitchen garden mentioned in the memoir and the smaller round pond have both gone. The castle burned down in 1922 and the family took up residence in the stables. The final map, revised in 1984, shows the site as it is at present. In the 1970s, a road cut through the walled garden at the east end where the glasshouses were, resulting in the loss of a *Camellia* house and the severing of the 'Tudor' gateway entrance to the town. In spite of these losses, many interesting features remain in a good state of preservation. The general quality of this small site is high.

To measure the cultural value of Antrim Castle Gardens, it must be acknowledged that the canals, as the major feature, are not rare in a European context. The formal garden style is French and was widely adopted. There are some extant in Great Britain but a great many were adapted or not kept up. These gardens are the only ones of this type in Northern Ireland, which is not especially rich in historic garden sites. In Ireland as a whole, parts of a formal garden which was built on a grander scale remain at Killruddery, Co. Wicklow.

Restoring the garden to its former glory, so that it can be conserved would not be a complex matter but any undertaking should be sensitively dealt with. The site as a whole and its future role must be planned with due regard for the features, and each feature must be restored with careful attention to historic detail. A decision will have to be made on whether to restore to the 1833 map or to extract parts from the other maps in order to conserve the style of a formal garden that has inevitably altered since its creation. Curiously the Victorian elements have suffered more in the passage of time.

The condition today can be reviewed and suggestions for improvements can be made.

The wooden piling and grass edges of the canals are in excellent condition at present but if the walks are to be more widely used these might suffer. The water supply is being fouled and the source of this should be traced and stopped. Antrim Borough Council is to be congratulated on the way that the lime and hornbeam hedges are kept, for they are hand-clipped each winter. Parts of the hedges at the north end of the top canal, are very thin.

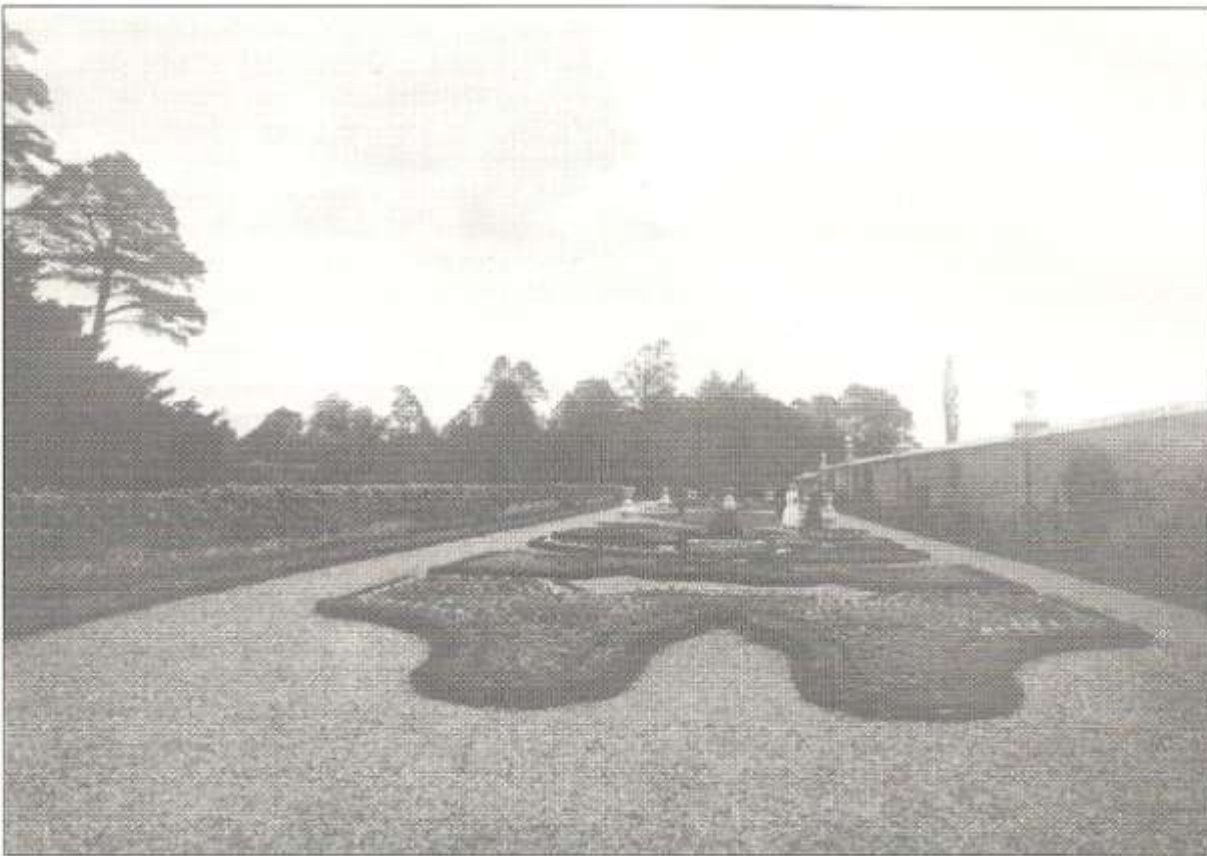


Fig. 6 'The Terrace Gardens as French Garden'. Kilpatrick, Belfast (date unknown). Photograph reproduced by kind permission of Canon Jack Hawkins.

The wilderness area is more or less intact but the walks need to be realigned. Some trees in the wilderness need attention, though dead elms (*Ulmus glabra*) have recently been felled. A detailed tree survey should be made. The 'perfectly straight alleys and walks' would look well with gravel surfaces. Lough Neagh gravel was much prized for garden walks in the early nineteenth century. Views-out and end-stop features that are mentioned in the Memoir have disappeared, as has the small round pond, yet this is quite discernable on site. It is full of rubbish and encircled by shaggy *Taxus baccata*, which would respond to clipping, so a yew-hedged pond could easily be restored. The large pond is an excellent feature; the proportions are satisfying and it is most important that the grass edge should be conserved. Early maps show no island but it is inoffensive and could remain, provided it is left informal.

If the 'curious little parterre' could be restored it would be an attraction. The owners are fortunate in having James Boyle's description of 1835. A 100 mm dig should reveal where the parterres were and a study of recent work in garden restoration of this type (Het Loo — on a very grand scale) might be helpful⁴. Money is forthcoming for conservation of the canals and for a reconstruction of the parterre in the larger hedged enclosure. The planting should be from the correct era. Greenmount College of Agriculture and Horticulture have expressed an interest in assisting with any restoration work. Some kind of security must be provided in this area which will require substantial funding yet will be prestigious when restored. Maintenance costs here and in the 'terrace garden' should be given careful consideration. It would be impractical to replant this part as shown in Figure 6. Carpet bedding is labour-intensive and the area is only separated from the road by a low wall. However, the outline of the beds could be reconstructed and grassed, with gravel paths laid as they were. Only a small part of the wall that divided the flower garden from the fruit and vegetable garden remains. A weather and vandal-proof illustrated explanation plaque might be helpful in this much altered area.

The spiral walk on the mount has not been kept up. If this important feature is to be restored and enjoyed as a walk and a view point, it would have to be fenced off while the paths are remade, the yew clipped and replenished. Possibly the path alignment should be discretely fenced.

Remains of a rockery and the meagre arboretum near to the Castle may be affected if building takes place there. If there is a chance to replant, rhododendrons (of the correct species), as quoted in the memoir, could be

used as they have gone from the gardens today. Clotworthy (stables) House is handsome. An old stone wall projecting from it to the east is all that remains of the original farm building, and could be labelled as such.

Some general observations need to be made about the future. The Borough Council is intent on having a building on the site. This will involve temporary upheavals, the possible loss of both the derelict rockery and some trees but hopefully will not encumber the important parts of the garden. Motor access should be limited to the existing entrance from the north on the Randalstown Road. Vehicles should not be allowed to penetrate the garden further than Clotworthy House or the delicate ambience of the formal gardens will be lost. The metalled areas should be changed to gravel or hoggin' surfaces. If the new civic building is put on a site to the west of the castle remains, it is to be hoped that an existing car park on the south side of the river could be used. The Deer Park Bridge has a weight limit.

If the garden is to become an acknowledged historic site instead of the park used by private individuals and public bodies that it is today, the latter would have to find alternative accommodation and the former may not appreciate restoration (i.e. of the parterre) to which they would no longer have permanent access. An example of this kind of opposition was felt at Chiswick in west London, where the local authority intended to restore Lord Burlington's historic garden. The public user (and funder) wished to continue to wander freely on the whole site. On the other hand local support might be forthcoming if well-designed seats and more attractive lamp posts were to be incorporated into the overall plans.

Reports with suggestions for maintenance have been produced in the past but never taken up. These make little reference to the historical background and though they do acknowledge that the garden needs attention, unsuitable 'modern' plant material is often recommended. It is vital that all known sources are consulted before restoration is contemplated, as there is a golden opportunity to re-establish the main features in a historically correct manner. Many interesting features remain in a good state of preservation. Every effort should be made to conserve this important site.

Donald Girvan ended his article 'The Forgotten Garden' thus:

No attempt to advertise the park as of historic interest has been made, few seem to know about it ... such a problem as the park in its present state presents an overwhelming challenge.⁵

Antrim Borough Council has taken up the challenge. It is to be hoped that they are successful in their application for European funds. The gardens should prove a memorable attraction and assist tourist development in Antrim.

References

- 1 Touchstone/Ernst & Young (1990). *Antrim Castle Grounds and Lough Shore Development Strategy*, p. 5.
- 2 Lady Llanover (1861). *Mrs Delany*, Vol. iii, p. 571.
- 3 Index to the *Ordnance Survey Memoirs*: Ordnance Survey Memoirs Project, Institute of Irish Studies, The Queen's University, Belfast. Acknowledgement to the Royal Irish Academy, Dawson Street, Dublin. Co. Antrim Parish, Antrim. Document 364. Memoir by James Boyle (1835).
- 4 An archaeological dig of 26 and 27 September 1991 revealed that the larger grassed area has been well ploughed over and drained, thus obliterating any evidence of the planting scheme shown on the map of 1833, and only exposing the path alignment at the eastern side. Evidence of the 'curious little parterre' (3) was found in an exploratory dig in the smaller hedged enclosure, site at present of family memorials. This dig is the first step towards restoration in the garden. Antrim Borough Council have been partially successful in their application to the EC. Money is forthcoming for conservation of the canals and for a reconstruction of the parterre in the larger hedged enclosure.
- 5 Donald Girvan (1974). *The Forgotten Garden; Ulster Garden Handbook*, p. 80.

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'IT DIED ON ME' — THE PERILOUS LIVES OF IRELAND'S GARDEN PLANTS

'It died on me' is an ineluctable phrase, an epitaph to be mulled over, an excuse so useful when a treasured plant, long-cosseted, wilts expressively, dies and slowly rots back into the earth. E.A. Bowles was diverted by the threnody and, chiding Irish gardeners for uttering it, opined that therein lay a suggestion of wilful suicide; that by intoning it over vegetable corpses, we neatly laid the blame on the plants for their own demise. 'It died on me' is counterpoised by our frequent and fervent prayer 'I hope it will grow for me'. These two phrases encapsulate the anxieties and the aims of anyone who seeks to conserve garden plants — as sure as sunset each day, garden plants die although we hope they will thrive.

The history of gardening in any land may be chronicled in part by reciting a long litany of bright new plants tried prayerfully, and a contrary litany, shorter, to be sure, of wilful suicides: fashions aided and abetted by climate, soil and pestilences dictate the rise and decline of species and cultivars. What makes this present era so remarkable is not merely the catholic richness of our garden flora, but our own awakened historical perspective, our looking back to apparently fairer times when gardens seemed more lustrous and replete with more brilliant, more perfumed flowers.

Harmless I roam amongst the dreams that bloom
In the lost garden, passing them thus by,
Loath to pluck flowers too fair to deck a tomb
Too bright to thrive under a cloudy sky.

That vision of the bygone days may be false, a romantic's dream, yet the historical overview and its concomitant quest for the surviving traces of our horticultural heritage have invigorated gardening in Ireland and Britain, and the fashion — for assuredly it is a fashion — of growing 'old-fashioned' garden flowers is now infiltrating other countries.

Ireland has contributed generously over many centuries to the garden flora of most temperate lands, and there will be few gardens in Britain and in Ireland that do not contain at least one cultivar of Irish origin! Yet our horticultural exports began not with man-made creations such as daffodils and roses, but with the evergreen native strawberry tree (*Arbutus unedo*) which was sent from Killarney to Queen Elizabeth's secretary of state, Sir Francis Walsingham, and to the Earl of Leicester in 1586; the plants were accompanied by careful notes 'directing that they may be planted near some ponds, or with a great deal of black moory earth...'. Since that time, other native species have been plundered for the delectation of foreign gardeners, and none is more celebrated than that other denizen of County Kerry, the Killarney fern (*Trichomanes speciosum*) which was too frequently ripped from its dark, spray-washed rocky crevices for Victorian drawing rooms, and so almost exterminated. Now this delicate fern with translucent fronds is a protected species, a status achieved entirely through our antecedents' heedless pteridomania.

The strawberry trees and Killarney ferns which gratified gardeners in past centuries were not selected forms — they would not nowadays be classified as cultivars. However, wild populations occasionally contain mutants with remarkably different habits, distinctive flower shapes and colours, or other peculiar deformations; sometimes individual plants with such traits are collected and propagated to perpetuate their unusual characteristics, and if these changlings persist in gardens, they become the prototypes of cultivars. One of the strangest examples of a wild plant yielding a mutant which is now a treasured cultivar — although it is not a fashionable one! — is the common rush (*Juncus effusus*); the cultivated variant of this cursed weed has cork-screwing leaves (*Juncus effusus* 'Spiralis') and was first found by David Bishop in the west of Ireland in the 1830s.

The oldest extant cultivar of Irish nativity is the stiffly erect variant of yew which is called the Irish yew or Florencecourt yew (*Taxus baccata* 'Fastigiata'). 'Old Hugh Willis of Ahatourke under Ben Achlin, found two upright yews in the mountain between the Cove and the Ben near Lughurra Hollow...'. Philip de Malpas Grey-Egerton informed Charles Darwin, and '... he brought one to his Landlord.' That was about 1750 on a peat-blanketed mountain slope in County Fermanagh; the tree in 'his Landlord's' demesne at Florencecourt survives to this day, matronly and lichen-sheathed. Her sombre daughters — all plants of true *T. baccata* 'Fastigiata' are

female — fitted the mood of the nineteenth century, so funereal avenues, groups and singletons were planted throughout these islands, often in graveyards, and too often they have been butchered by topiarists.

Since the time of 'Old Hugh' Willis many other cultivars have arisen in the fragrant air of Ireland, both in wildernesses and in gardens. The suite of wildings propagated, like the Florencecourt yew, from peculiar variants of Ireland's native flora, includes a gorse (*Ulex europaeus* 'Strictus') also upright and formal, which survives as a curiosity yet makes an excellent hedge — it is approaching its bicentenary. There is a trailing willow (*Salix x grahamii* 'Moorei') gathered once by David Moore from the table-flat summit of Muckish Mountain in County Donegal; as it has not been seen in the wild again, its garden haunts are its only refuge nowadays. Heathers of Irish birth are most numerous in this category — a double, pink-bloomed ling (*Calluna vulgaris* 'County Wicklow') came from Lough Dan in County Wicklow, a ruby-belled variant of St Dabeoc's Heath (*Daboecia cantabrica* 'Praegerae') was garnered by Hedi, wife of Robert Lloyd Praeger, somewhere in western Connemara about 1936, while the stony shore of peat-encircled Lough Carrowmore in County Mayo was the original home of 'Irish Dusk' and 'Irish Salmon', the fine pink-flowered cultivars of *Erica erigena*.

Another wilding, now also a venerable two hundred years agrowing, is a simple pale pink rose with a butter-yellow centre that bears a profusion of cherry-red hips in autumn. Believed to have arisen following the pollination of a common dog rose (*Rosa canina*) by a burnet rose (*Rosa pimpinellifolia*), *Rosa x hibernica* was discovered in countryside east of Belfast about 1795 by John Templeton, an energetic botanist and innovative gardener. The burgeoning of the dormitory town of Holywood eventually swamped the Irish rose's only habitat, and the wild population dwindled to a single shrub. This was rescued in the 1960s, and still thrives having again been transplanted to the Belfast Botanic Gardens Park. The Irish rose was brought into cultivation by John Templeton, who watched its cycle of flowering and noted its tendency to bloom twice a year: I too have grown it, loved it and sing its praises. It is an unassuming shrub with a 'flush on its petal tips'. And I have also tried, like John Templeton before me, to spread it around, praying it will 'grow for them', for giving away a plant is the very best way to keep a plant. No-one can have given away *Rosa x praegeri* — another wild Irish hybrid — for it has vanished as have other wildings from other genera.

While the wild places of Ireland have given up riches to beautify gardens here and far afield, other lands have been generous to us. Indeed, the garden flora of Ireland and Britain is renowned for its all-embracing scope, with cultivars, native species and species culled from the flora of other regions. Plant collectors have provided us with numerous superb plants, and a number of Irish gardens contain collections of the so-called 'original introductions'. As time passes, fewer and fewer of these numbered, provenanced plants survive; those which are extant are of historical and biological significance.

In Ireland, gardeners at Glasnevin, Birr, Headfort and Rowallane, for example, raised seedlings from the gatherings of Ernest Wilson, Frank Kingdon Ward, Yu Tse-Tsun and George Forrest; some of these seedlings are still alive, venerable mature trees and shrubs. The Botanic Gardens at Glasnevin acted as a distribution centre for many packets of seed and for seedlings, the successive directors being most attentive to the need to test new introductions in several gardens and to enrich all gardens with plants gathered in faraway places. It is still possible to visit Glasnevin and marvel at an original seedling of *Abelia triflora* raised in 1849 from seed sent from the Himalaya by Edward Madden. There are quite a number of Wilson, Purdom, Forrest and Yu plants alive in Glasnevin, urgently in need of propagation and distribution anew to national collections and other gardens. The same must be said of Birr Castle which is home for a suite of seedlings raised by the sixth Earl of Rosse in the 1930s and 1940s following the often harrowing expeditions of Yu Tse-Tsun to previously inaccessible areas of western China. Junipers and pines bear Yu's numbers, and there are also species of *Pyrus*, *Malus* and *Berberis* which he gathered.

The arboretum at Headfort is considered to contain some of the finest specimen trees in western Europe; again there are plants of wild origin growing in it for Lord Headfort eagerly supported the expeditions of Kingdon Ward and Forrest. Undoubtedly many of the unlabelled, and therefore 'homeless' rhododendrons at Headfort are from remote regions of China and Burma traversed by those intrepid hunters. Rowallane and Annes Grove harbour plants of similar origin. None of these gardens is propagating provenanced plants because few have the facilities to undertake the task which is, I suggest, a necessary conservation project most urgently in need of initiation.

The suites of wild species or cultivars garnered from wild places are paltry when counted beside the collections of cultivars that arose as chance finds in gardens and the artificial ones produced from Irish nurseries. Keen-eyed gardeners frequently notice changlings among their plants, and if such mutants or hybrids persist, and have attractive qualities, they may be propagated and become cultivars of renown. Some gardeners may even indulge desultorily in the art of plant breeding, encouraging hybrids or selecting better forms of some cherished plant from its seedlings. Mrs Alicia Lawrenson practised the craft late last century and gave us the

colourful, multi-petalled *Anemone* 'Saint Brigid' which she continually sought to improve by further selection; she also introduced *Helleborus* 'Saint Brigid' and bred the red-cupped *Narcissus* 'Lucifer'.

Alicia Lawrenson was only one of a coterie of keen gardeners similarly imbued with curiosity and skill. Even today the stories about Irish ladies with gardens bordered by long-lost plants, especially double-flowered primroses, persist, and frequently requests arrive for lists of nurseries stocking old cultivars or for the addresses of gardeners who collect these fabulous treasures. The myth is ingrained, indelible it seems, no matter how often one intones this litany: no nursery stocks them, and no collectors harbour secret troves. Of the primrose cultivars — 'springtime's merry harbingers' — only the archive remains for the majority, although a few persist everywhere — 'Kinlough Beauty' and 'Our Pat', 'Guinevere' and 'Lady Greer'.

Ladies did indeed dominate Irish gardening this century, and many of today's consummate gardeners are also women: in the cause of equal opportunity employment I must not omit mention of the gentlemen, both lords and commoners. Their stories are many and varied just as their introductions and discoveries were. Miss Blanche Poë gave us that sparkling *Anthemis* 'Grallagh Gold', as her father had earlier nurtured and distributed the double snowdrop *Galanthus* 'Hill Poë'. Blanche Hegarty lived at Clonbur in County Galway, and she passed her lovely pink-blossomed kaffir lily to other keen gardeners — but who today grows the proper *Schizostylis coccinea* 'Mrs Hegarty' with yellow stamens and broad petals? William Edward Gumbleton called all plants he disliked 'tush plants', and flailed them to death with his umbrella. Plants he admired suffered no ignominy but were pampered and he left us *Azara microphylla* 'Variegata'. Dr Molly Sanderson's name is well known worldwide; her generosity is unstinted and from her we have received *Viola* 'Molly Sanderson', a beautiful black pansy which originated not in her Antrim garden but in Kent, and *Sorbus* 'Molly Sanderson', a dwarf mountain ash of uncertain provenance. Dr Sanderson is today the bearer of a horticultural torch that was once the property of Phylis, Lady Moore, widow of Sir Frederick Moore who was Keeper of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Glasnevin from 1879 to 1922. Lady Moore was feared and revered by gardeners in Ireland and Britain, and she was tutor to many also; nurseries often honoured her with cultivars — *Papaver orientale* 'Lady Moore', *Cytisus scoparius* 'Lady Moore', *Chaenomeles* 'Phylis Moore'. In retrospect her greatest contribution to gardening was the rescuing of good plants from oblivion — as just one example, to Graham Stuart Thomas she gave roses, including the unequalled 'Souvenir de St Anne's' upon which Lady Ardilaun had placed an embargo, forbidding the very few who had been favoured with a plant to propagate it and pass it on. From Lady Moore also it seems came the fine dark-leaved form of Californian fuchsia, *Epilobium canum* 'Dublin' (*Zauschneria californica* 'Dublin') and the cream-marbled *Acanthus spinosus* 'Lady Moore', both maybe old variants, long-treasured. There are still many gardens in Ireland which retain memories of her in the form of plants she had given years ago — truly her shadow roves the garden gravel still — and often one imagines a ghostly whisper intoning her favourite phrase, used when she wished for a good plant seen in someone else's garden: "Do you think it might have a little brother?" Her philosophy was simple: the best way to keep a plant was to give it away. No gardener should ever disagree with that profound motto; alas, too many have ignored it too often! Lady Moore received as graciously as she gave:

You have a very charming way of making your garden guests feel that they share your garden's treasures — indeed we came to feel we almost had a partnership in the place — and certainly were given more than a memory to carry home with us. The well-packed mossed-up plants took me a day to plant — & for them as well as all you gave us of time, conversation & friendship we do indeed thank you.

While many a gardener can go home with a day's worth of plants from their friends' gardens, nurseries are never ignored by good gardeners. My personal opinion is that few of today's nurseries stock as rich a collection of plants as any of their precursors, and few contemporary nurserymen have the perspicacity of their forerunners. Ireland's nurseries were at their brightest in the first half of this century, and then excellent new cultivars were introduced to gardeners annually. Nowadays the flow of good, novel and exciting plants springing from Irish nursery grounds is a dim shadow of the past, although I must make exceptions for the rose and daffodil fraternities.

The breeding of roses and daffodils are antique Irish industries, and the care taken in selecting new cultivars for introduction mean that ours' are, beyond contradiction, the best, winning prizes at home and abroad with pleasing regularity. I could be critical about the vulgarly-coloured, over-perfect modern roses which are fashionable for a few years and then sink into obscurity if not extinction, and of the plastic appearance of some new daffodils — not all new cultivars are beautiful to every beholder! Yet even the most fastidious gardeners will recognise the qualities of such plants as *Narcissus* 'Foundling' and *Rosa* 'Handel'. They are not the most

recent daffodil or rose, just two random examples from the hundreds of named cultivars produced by Irish plantsmen within the last one hundred years. Thankfully they can be cultivated, if a gardener so desires, alongside older Irish varieties: *Narcissus* 'Rip van Winkle' and 'Lucifer' grow yet in gardens although they are siblings of the nineteenth century, and roses such as 'Irish Elegance' and 'Macrantha Daisy Hill' have been admired for most of the present century. Of course, hundreds of cultivars of daffodils and roses have become extinct; they just 'died on us', and for many of the departed we will not weep because wilful suicide was proper, thoroughly noble and absolutely necessary.

In Ireland, the breeding of roses and daffodils has been dominated by individuals for more than ten decades, and their surnames are familiar — McGredy, Hartland, Wilson and the Richardsons in the past decades, Dickson, Reade, Bloomer, Duncan and Harrison in the present time. These single-purposed men and women did not stray beyond their chosen genus, whereas other plantsmen ventured into divers families and from their nurseries came a most varied host of cultivars.

The roll-call of now defunct Irish nurseries is sad, yet fragrant — Hodgins, Ballawley, Lissadell, Rodger McClelland, Watson, Slieve Donard. Still extant is Daisy Hill — what more appropriate name could have been devised? — which once boasted it was the best nursery 'possibly in the world', and its catalogues proved the hyperbole was only slightly exaggerated. One gardening writer stated that it issued 'the most comprehensive trade catalogue of hardy plants, trees and shrubs in Europe or anywhere else'. Thomas Smith founded Daisy Hill Nursery in 1887 and began introducing gardeners to a host of fine plants; he raised Michaelmas daisies (*Aster*), lupins and a clutch of globe flowers protestant in hue if not in name (*Trollius* 'Prince of Orange' to note just one), all, I fear, vanished flowers. But we can still cultivate some of Tom Smith's *Bergenia* cultivars and we have learned again to admire *Laburnum alpinum* 'Newryensis', the last to rain golden flowers on summer lawns. More recently a tree of Daisy Hill's variegated sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus* 'Newryensis') has come to light. Grafting is the only way to perpetuate them, and division — vegetative propagation — is the only way to increase Daisy Hill's royal-blue monkshood (*Aconitum* 'Newryensis') although some will try sowing seed.

Smith lost no opportunities to trumpet his nursery's excellence. Henri Correvon travelled all the way from Geneva and pronounced that even Royal Kew could not match the steep Newry hillside for horticultural gems. Many others trod the same path, imbibed Smith's *uisce bagh*, and left elated, trugs full of plants, and '...with the knowledge that another day or two would scarcely exhaust the treasures of Daisy Hill.' Daisy Hill's paths are still 'lit with the laburnum's gold', reminding us that plants can long outlive their originators.

To the east of Newry lie the Mourne Mountains which sweep to the sea at Newcastle, twenty miles away as the raven flies. There Slieve Donard lends its granite bulk, a squat pyramid, to the poetic, unforgettable skyline, and for seven decades lent its name to a nursery which nestled in its shade. Sadly 'The Donard' closed in 1975. The housing estate that sprawls over ground once the home of exotica from all continents is a sorry monument to this nursery whose plants are familiar to so many gardeners who have never seen the mountain's distinctive silhouette.

The one word — Donard — when tagged to a plant is enough to indicate its association with a nursery which made several genera its own. *Escallonia* thrives in Ireland especially near the coast, and while such beautiful cultivars as 'C. F. Ball' and 'Glasnevin Hybrid' were raised at the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, near Dublin, the Donard's series is more numerous — 'Apple Blossom' and 'Peach Blossom' do not have mountainy sobriquets but 'Pride of Donard', 'Donard Star' and 'Slieve Donard' do. All of the Newcastle *Escallonia* cultivars survive, as far as I know, although perhaps a bit confused in the trade. Their nominal cousins are plants such as a dainty lilac-blossomed broom (*Cytisus* 'Donard Gem'), the striking steel-blue *Eryngium x zabelii* 'Donard Variety', and that sumptuous poppy, *Meconopsis x sheldonii* 'Slieve Donard'. There is a complicated tale about the poppy; it exemplifies that motto about giving away plants, for it was raised in Scotland by Dr Alex Curle and came to Ireland by way of the gardeners' exchange network.

Thus Slieve Donard's inestimable service to Irish gardeners extended to introducing plants — often happenstances — that arose in other places, but most especially in the garden of Hugh Armitage Moore just 'up the road' at Saintfield. Moore's Rowallane is renowned for its rhododendrons and other fine shrubs — today it is owned and cared for by the National Trust and contains the national collection of herbaceous *Penstemon* cultivars. In time its name became synonymous with Slieve Donard as an epithet for excellence — *Hypericum* 'Rowallane Hybrid' has brilliant golden-cupped flowers; *Chaenomeles x superba* 'Rowallane Seedling' is a quince with scarlet blossoms early in spring; tiers of rose-red primroses make *Primula* 'Rowallane Rose' one of the finest candelabras. From another nearer garden, the Slieve Donard nursery obtained a golden cypress which certainly will never 'die on me' — *X Cupressocyparis leylandii* 'Castlewellan' may be the only plant for which we could possibly curse this otherwise careful nursery. Would that wilful herbicide had been committed, for who will now deliver us from its tasteless, bilious hedges?

In the nursery ground under cairn-crowned Donard danced fairies and birds — 'Peaseblossom', 'Puck' and 'Oberon', with 'Plover', 'Blackbird' and 'Nightingale', 'Noctule', 'Falcon', 'Peregrine' and 'Windhover' were not ferocious predators but flitted as benign as 'Snowgoose' and 'The Dove', and cavorted above the dainty 'Titania' with her attendant 'Ariel' and 'Miranda', their petal wings all shades from pure white to lustrous blackcurrant-purple. Even in their native land, South Africa, the Donard hybrids were considered astonishing: 'I wager you will find none finer than the ones now rejoicing in the names of birds and Shakespeare's fairies where the Mountains of Mourne sweep down to the sea'. The birds and fairies were chosen from waving beds of wand flowers; the tall *Dierama pulcherrimum* cultivars became the birds, and the fairies were the shorter hybrids between it and *Dierama dracomontanum* (wrongly named *D. pumilum*). I have searched long and hard for the genuine named cultivars and I wager you will not find those 'rejoicing in the names of birds and Shakespeare's fairies' growing by the Mournes or anywhere else. Very few plants that are indubitably clonal successors of the nursery's flocks of hybrids have survived — most of the things reported are intrusive seedlings, imposters, because the originals had not been very deliberately maintained and propagated by division. In many gardens swarms of *Dierama* do thrive, both the tall and the diminutive angel's fishing-rods, and for these we may bless Slieve Donard Nursery; the fairies and the birds have flown and are mourned.

I could continue reciting lists of plants and telling stories about gardens and gardeners. I must desist. My purpose in setting down these brief accounts is to underline the inheritance of which Ireland's gardeners are merely temporary custodians. Many other species and cultivars can be added to the litany.

Dierama has been adopted as a banner by the Irish Garden Plant Society, which is affiliated to the National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens, serving as Ireland's one local group. This vigorous society strives to fulfil the aims of the NCCPG and to recover from obscurity those older garden plants that yet survive. Members are also engaged in garden restoration projects as at Sir Edwin Lutyens incomparable garden in County Laois, and they support national collections — *Eucryphia*, shrubby cinquefoils (*Potentilla fruticosa*), *Garrya*, *Olearia*, herbaceous *Penstemon* are allocated to Irish gardens, and a special Slieve Donard Nursery national collection is being formed, thus recognizing the unique contribution that nursery made to gardening in these islands. The Guy L. Wilson Daffodil Garden at the University of Ulster in Coleraine, Northern Ireland, was established before the NCCPG, as a project to conserve Irish-raised daffodils; its collection composed mainly of Irish cultivars was the first in Ireland designated as a national collection, again recognizing Ireland's premier role in *Narcissus* breeding. Work is beginning to establish a collection of Irish apples, but there is no collection of historic Irish roses — few rose enthusiasts seem anyway inclined to preserve the older cultivars even as a record of past achievements, their only concern being to trial new cultivars.

Irish gardens do contain 'lost' and forgotten plants. An early delight to IGPS members was the discovery by Graham Stuart Thomas of *Rosa* 'Fortune's Double Yellow' thriving near Dublin in a glasshouse. It has been propagated and distributed to gardens in Ireland and Britain. The Newry laburnum, likewise, has been passed to the national collection. Seeds of *Leycesteria crocothyrsos*, *Paeonia cambessedesii* and even *Dierama dracomontanum* have been contributed to NCCPG distribution schemes. The National Botanic Gardens at Glasnevin has released propagation material of its new cultivar *Garrya x issaquahensis* 'Glasnevin Wine' to the NCCPG plant scheme.

Conservation of gardens and garden plants is not achieved by chance, nor by fossilizing gardens and their contents into places wherein no plant is replaced or removed and imagination is suspended. Gardens run by committees or gardens regarded as untouchable shrines to deceased gardeners quickly become sterile and unworthy memorials — our predecessors enlarged and replanted, discarded and imported, and their legacies have to be maintained in that manner, albeit sympathetically, too. Just as the best gardens are those of innovative, knowledgeable gardeners — frequently these good people are very opinionated! — so the best way to ensure garden plants survive is to instil concern and interest in new generations of gardeners. Once this is achieved, plants must regularly have 'little brothers' — those that don't are prone to extinction.

But before conservation can even begin, accurate information about gardens, their histories and contents — both architectural and botanical — must be accumulated. To this end, the two heritage gardens committees, one working in Northern Ireland and the other in the Republic of Ireland, have instituted research projects of fundamental value. Gardens of international significance were notified to ICOMOS, and, as I write, inventories of the gardens of importance in national and county context are being drafted. An archive of gardens in the six counties of Northern Ireland has been assembled under the auspices of the Northern Ireland Heritage Gardens Committee and the Institute of Irish Studies at Queen's University in Belfast. At the instigation of the An Taisce Heritage Gardens Committee, and with substantial grants from the Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust, the International Dendrology Society and other bodies, Mary Forrest listed and tagged thousands of trees and shrubs growing in two dozen Irish gardens — her catalogue of these woody plants was published in 1985 and its first

printing quickly sold out. *Trees and shrubs cultivated in Ireland* quantifies most succinctly the riches growing in Irish gardens and is of inestimable value to all gardeners seeking unusual plants, to historians wishing to chronicle our gardens, and to biologists seeking research materials and loath to tamper with wild populations of perhaps endangered species.

We have been careless about too much that past generations bequeathed us — great glasshouses have been dynamited or left to rust; houses have been tumbled and their demesnes of trees felled; nurseries have closed because business was poor; as for plants, many have this epitaph — 'It died on me'. Many too have been the poets who keened for the innocence and glory of bygone Ireland:

My grief and my affliction
Your gates are taken away
Your avenue needs attention
Goats in the garden stray.

Yet gardens and garden plants do survive, and in Ireland you can see ancient cedars planted before 1685, avenues of rhododendrons one and a half centuries old, glasshouses the equal of the Palm House at Kew, daffodils and roses, primroses and snowdrops, angel's fishing rods swaying in the breeze, and secret, rainbow gardens.

We have worked for more than a decade in Ireland and Britain fashioning what we cherish as a new crusade for the perpetuity of the fine plants of olden days. Our garden heritage, which needs to be actively protected, has gained new meaning. But is this all so new? Has not this all happened before?

How happy, thought I to myself, as I wandered through the pleasure of St Anne's, ought all the old garden flowers to be now that they are welcomed back in the choicest spots, the sunniest corners, the most-sheltered nooks, around our fine old country houses. What a happy renaissance is this to them to be brought back along with the Chippendale furniture and the quaint old pots and plate, and the literature which is welcome, let us hope, not because it is old, not merely because a fleeting wave of fashion wills it so, but because these things like the flowers are true and homely in the best sense of the phrase.

That passage was penned over one hundred years ago on 20 December 1884!

We cannot rest on our laurels. Our challenge is to ensure that a century hence, no-one needs to write again about fleeting waves of fashion, and plants whose perilous existence ended in wilful suicides. Our responsibility is to cherish all that we have, even the plants that are not fashionable and the ones which we personally despise. Like Charlotte Grace O'Brien, our memorial must be living plants.

When my bones are dust and my good spade rust, when my house is pulled down and my garden asphalt and bricks, my extra special wild briars and my daffodils will still linger on the hillside and scent the bloomy air for generations that knew me not, nor mine.

National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin 9.

LEO DOYLE

FAITHLEGG

Faithlegg near Waterford is currently the base of the Waterford Garden Plant Society and home to a magnificent Cork Oak Tree (*Quercus suber*) and a fine Chusan Palm (*Trachycarpus fortunei*). Faithlegg is a rural community rather than a village, located east of Waterford on the south bank of the River Suir some five miles from the city and two miles from Cheekpoint — an old port of call. There is a church and a school but no shop or commercial business.

The remains exist of a castle and moate constructed in 1171 and occupied by the Alyward family for five centuries. In 1649 the capture of Waterford resulted in the settlement of the Bolton family at Faithlegg. Faithlegg Hill — *Meannan Fheilinn* — the crown-topped hill of Faithlegg, commands from its summit a view of historic interest and great natural beauty. In 1775 the Boltons enclosed forty acres of the hill by stone-walling from the top of the steep slope to the river bank below and planted it. This plantation is still known locally as the Glazing Wood. The Bolton family introduced a cotton industry to nearby Cheekpoint (then called Bolton), exporting with regular sailings to the Welsh port of Milford Haven. In 1783 Faithlegg House was built and the estate developed by Cornelius Bolton. In 1819 it was purchased by Nicholas Power, at that time reputed to be one of the richest commoners in Ireland.

The elaborate entrance to the estate has cast iron gates with piers bearing the Power family crest — the crest of St Hubert — a stag's head surmounted with a cross. Legend has it that Hubert was a wayward youth and a keen hunter. While hunting one day, he encountered a stag which turned to face him, bearing a shining silver cross on its head. Hubert changed his way of life, became a priest, later Bishop of Liege and was finally canonised. The crest is seen at many locations in Faithlegg. Nearby is a twelfth-century church ruin and adjacent to it, Faithlegg church, built by the Power family who added a graceful spire bearing the crest in 1872.

Patrick Mahon Power was born in 1826 and married Olivia Jane Power, a daughter of the Earl of Westmeath. They lived in the nearby Woodlands estate, moving to Faithlegg House on the death of Patrick's father. Lady Olivia took a special interest in the gardens and grounds, laying out the terraces behind the house and planting the various pleasure-gardens. There was at this time an excellent library in the house. In 1875 was added a portico of square pillars to the front of the house and on it, an elegant head of St Hubert's stag. To the southern end of the house was added an orangery. The coach houses and yard were also built and it would appear that *Quercus suber* was growing then. Eight gardeners were employed to tend the gardens. Patrick's son Hubert occupied the house in 1913. He constructed a hydraulic ram on the bank of the nearby tributary or pill above tidal reach, to pump water to the gardens and house. In 1936 the house again changed hands, passing to the De La Salle brothers to use as a novitiate and it remained so until 1985. The 1939-45 war had taken its toll on the Glazing Wood which was later planted with conifers by the government, as was, sadly, the lovely old oak woods and rhododendron woods by the river below the house. The estate was sold and resold for development, but the excavation work was never completed, leaving the house and grounds unattended.

In the churchyard at Faithlegg, a stone marks the memory of William Dinn, alias Doyle, 'who sailed around the globe with Captain Cook and was present at the death of that great circumnavigator'. James Cook, explorer, was killed at Kealakekna Bay, Hawaii, on 4 February 1799. In the lowest and oldest part of the churchyard is the Meagher family tomb. Catherine Meagher, first wife of Thomas Francis Meagher, known as Meagher of the Sword, was buried at Faithlegg following her death in Waterford, aged twenty-two, on 9 May 1854. Thomas Francis Meagher died on 1 July 1867 near Fort Benton, Montana, on the Missouri River. Near the ruined church is a cross made and erected by members of the crew of the Hungarian steamship *Honved*. It is a sad and gentle reminder of their master, Captain Udvardy, who died on board the *S.S. Honved* as the ship lay at anchor off Cheekpoint awaiting outward-bound cargo from Waterford. A large palm, *Trachycarpus fortunei* at the foot of this grave, now measures nineteen feet in height and was planted there on the day of the funeral — 2 September 1932 — by the Austrian cook of the *Honved*, Ludwig von Varellay. It was then a tiny pot plant.

It was amid these settings that, in 1982, Ann, Victoria and Samantha, and I set about creating a woodland garden which today hosts more than 1200 different trees and shrubs, many rare, all listed and labelled. Set on a hillside in a valley, May and October frosts are the only unwelcome guests in this garden. *Eucalyptus* and *Acacia* have been grown from seed to twenty feet in five years. *Rhaphiolepis x delacourii*, *Arbutus menziesii*,

Juniperus recurva 'Coxii', *Prunus laurocerasus* 'Camelliifolia', *Carmichaelia australis* and *Phyllocladus trichomanoides* are among the favourites. Beneath a young *Liriodendron tulipifera* rests a stone font from the nearby ancient parish of Kill St Nicholas.

A conservation order has now been secured for the Cork Oak.

Gant's Hill House, Faithlegg Bridge, Cheekpoint, County Waterford.

ALISON RUTHERFORD

A GLORIOUS *ASPIDISTRA* FROM GLASNEVIN

When an American correspondent sent me a photocopy of a local firm's plants because she knew I liked *Aspidistra*, I was astonished to see several forms with spotted variegation listed, as well as the familiar striped *Aspidistra elatior* 'Variegata', and I was keen to acquire them. However, all attempts failed, as did those to import the three endemics from Taiwan. I heard of one plant with little white spots reaching Belgium, and the manager of a Scottish firm, with a huge area of indoor plants, being unable to get even an inch of rhizome! I am told it is now possible to import plants from Japan, but it costs about one thousand pounds and I don't relish the thought of organising a consortium of variegated plant fanciers and all the bookwork that would entail.

However, my luck turned, for in the September 1990 issue of *The Garden* (114: 460,462) was a letter from someone with a spotted form; I contacted Gary Dunlop, who said he had mislaid the photo he took, which probably saved him from being inundated by lovers of the slightly 'horrible' plant! We exchanged this-and-that, including the superbly-marked *Aspidistra lurida*, which was circulating under 'Punctata' — an invalid name. Charles Nelson suggested 'Irish Mist', a good label as the spots are really blurred-edged marks with deeper yellow in the centres, giving an almost 3-D effect, while the more immature markings are so soft-bordered they indeed appear to be emerging from the mist. Unlike the Japanese forms in the American catalogue, 'Irish Mist' is hardy, good-tempered and fast; some of these are described as almost ungrowable and were correspondingly expensive. It is pleasing to find a showy form of something that is as easy to grow as the green cultivar. I grow the all-green *A. lurida* in John Innes No. 3 with some peat, and it is near a south-facing window but slightly to the side so that the curtains shield it from the full summer sun. It has put out enough buds to replace the good hunk that was sent to Gary Dunlop, and is accompanied by half of the spotted one, whose other half is in a Wardian case in another south-facing room.

It can be said without exaggeration that 'Irish Mist' is as well-spotted as a good *Aucuba*. The markings seem to start as lighter clusters of lime green which enlarge to merge in some cases and with age, become yellow in the centres. As the dots' coloration decreases towards the edges, they look like frog's spawn or beads, depending on your views. As the leaves age, the effect is like a blurred photograph of distant galaxies. The variegation covers the blades pretty evenly and extends down to the base of the stems. The sheaths of *A. lurida* are rich purple-red which contrasts nicely, as it is a heavy flowerer if you are kind to it. I look forward to seeing the curious leathery bells which are very different to those of *A. elatior*, starring the soil below the spotted blades. Between the generosity of the National Botanic Gardens and Gary Dunlop, I have been able to give enough to my sister and Stephen Taffler who has been promoting variegated plants, for indoors and out, for many years, and they in turn will soon be able to give some to two nurseries in the south of England who both encourage the spread of variegation. I look forward to knowing it is in catalogues, and who knows, being put forward for an award by the Royal Horticultural Society? It would be a neat ending to the story if the origin could be found. Did it sport from an all-green plant in Ireland, or did it come already spangled to Glasnevin? Anyway, wherever it came from, it's a fine plant.

Moniaive, 19 South King Street, Helensburgh, Dunbartonshire, G84 PJ7.

PRUNUS LAUROCERASUS cv. CASTLEWELLAN (NOT cv. MARBLED WHITE)

Castlewellan National Arboretum, County Down, during its formative years under the Annesley family and more recently under the Northern Ireland Forest Service, has always generously passed on good plants for propagation, and almost invariably the names given to these Irish cultivars have acknowledged the plants' original source — good examples are the ubiquitous *x Cupressocyparis leylandii* 'Castlewellan' and a graceful weeping juniper, *Juniperus recurva* 'Castlewellan'.

It was, therefore, disappointing to read, for example, in *The Garden* (112: 561) and *The Plant Finder* (ed. 3, but see also ed. 4 (1990/1991)) that a cultivar which originated in Castlewellan Arboretum should have been named without following this unwritten practice. But the particular problem is more complicated as it appears that there are two names being used for the same cultivar, a variegated cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus* 'Castlewellan' and *P. laurocerasus* 'Marbled White'); under the latter epithet it was granted an Award of Merit when shown by Hillier's Nurseries at the Royal Horticultural Society's Show on 25 November 1987.

Roy Lancaster noted the award plant (*The Garden* 112: 561) and stated that it had been named and 'introduced' by Hillier's in the 1970s; he also noted that the original cuttings had been obtained during a visit to Ireland by the late Sir Harold Hillier, probably from Castlewellan.

There is indeed a long-established plant of a variegated cherry laurel at Castlewellan, in the National Arboretum's Annesley Garden (as noted in *The Garden* 113: 343), and a vigorous hedge of younger shrubs beside the castle. Propagation material has been made freely available to local nurseries for many decades, and this bird cherry has been distributed and sold in Northern Ireland as *P. laurocerasus* 'Castlewellan'. Alas, like many a cultivar name, it does not appear to have been validated by being published in a dated catalogue with a proper description (at least, our extensive searches have failed to unearth such a published description). On this count only, 'Marbled White', published in Hillier's catalogues since the late 1970s, appears to have legitimacy; but the cultivar was certainly not originally introduced by Hillier's Nurseries.

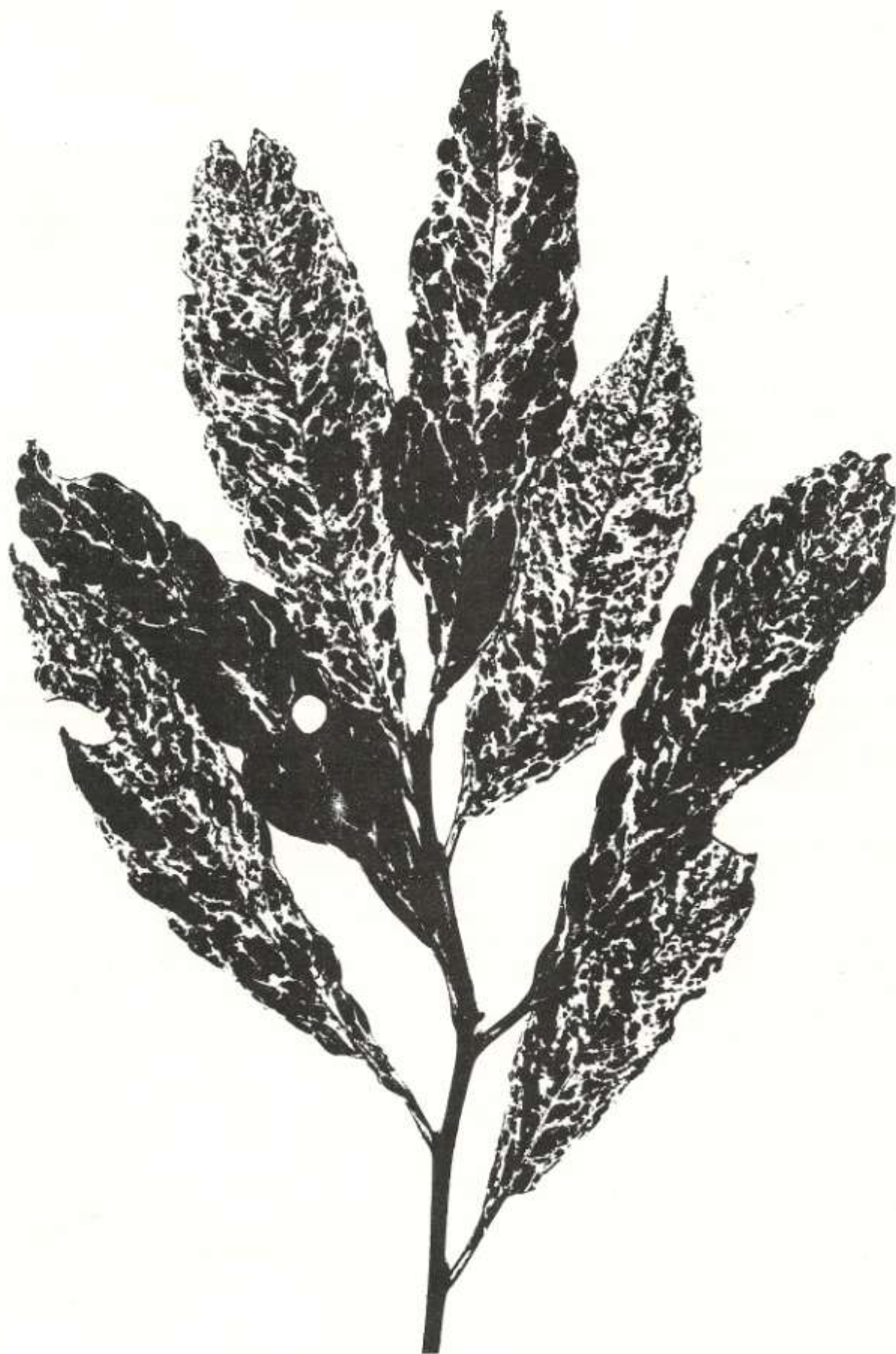
According to the *International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants* (1980), Article 41, 'publication of a cultivar name is not valid if against the expressed wish of its originator'. This article is pertinent to the naming of the variegated bird cherry. Hillier's did not obtain the permission of the National Arboretum to name this plant, and as the established practice has been to use 'Castlewellan' within a cultivar name, such a descriptive but unattributed epithet would not have been received enthusiastically. Moreover, as the cultivar was being sold locally as *P. laurocerasus* 'Castlewellan', gardeners and nurseries elsewhere would have been asked to use that name.

As 'Marbled White' was not expressly approved by the originator it does not accord with Article 41 of *ICNCP* and thus is not validly published, and as *P. laurocerasus* 'Castlewellan', a long-established name, is now validly published, it is our contention that the latter name should replace that suggested by Hillier's Nurseries; the statement in *The Plant Finder* (ed. 3) that the older name has to be rejected is not acceptable.

Our only caveat is this: should it be possible to prove beyond doubt that the original propagation material of 'Marbled White' did not come from Castlewellan, that name may be retained for the plants distributed by Hillier's Nurseries as the two cultivars must have had distinct origins.

¹ National Arboretum, Castlewellan, Co. Down.

² National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin 9.



BOOK REVIEWS

W.T. STEARN. *Flower artists of Kew. Botanical paintings by contemporary artists*. The Herbert Press in association with The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. 1990. Pp. 160. UK£18.95. ISBN 1-871569-16-8.

Professor Stearn introduces the works of nineteen contemporary botanical artists with a précis of the history of Kew and its patronage of artists. There are fifty-six full colour plates, each accompanied by text describing the plant depicted.

The quality of reproduction is only adequate, little or no attempt being made to ensure accuracy of colour — far too many of the plates have grey-blue backgrounds, and these often shade from light to dark across the plate. This is especially noticeable in the three examples of Wendy Walsh's work. No reproduction sizes are given — many plates have been considerably reduced, while others are enlarged!

This can really only be recommended as a literal coffee-table book. It does no service to the artists, apart perhaps as an expensive advertisement for their works.

E.C. Nelson

P. GOLDBLATT. *The genus Watsonia*. (*Annals of Kirstenbosch Botanic Gardens*, vol. 19). National Botanic Gardens, Kirstenbosch. 1989. Pp. x, 148. R50. ISBN 0-620-12517-9.

Watsonia is a familiar genus in Irish gardens; at least a handful of cultivars is fairly widespread. In days gone by, there was a fine and famous collection, assembled with the help of Kirstenbosch Botanic Gardens, in the borders at Fota House. Most familiar is the white trumpeted 'Ardernei', and the coral-pink but wrongly-named *W. beatricis*. All of the species are native in southern Africa.

Dr Peter Goldblatt's book is a monograph illustrated with distribution maps of each species, black and white line drawings, and a series of colour plates reproducing watercolours by several South African botanical artists. Each species is described precisely, its natural distribution pattern is detailed, and the history of discovery and cultivation is recorded. Indeed, this monograph follows a well-established pattern for botanical texts.

For gardeners keen to gain insight into the history, ecology and biology of the plants that they grow, books of this kind are to be highly recommended. Goldblatt's one is not an exception, and the colour plates, although the original watercolours were not

always of the highest quality, add greatly to the book's appeal. It does show haste in production, with too many lapses in proof-reading, an occasional one in the orthography of cultivar names, and even the omission of a Latin diagnosis for one new species. The portrait purporting to be of Philip Miller (p. ix), author of *Watsonia*, is of John Miller (*olim* Johann Sebastian Mueller — cf. *Archives of Natural History* 14(2): 221-222 (1987)). Given that this is the first revision for many years, it was instructive to compare Goldblatt's authoritative text with current lists of *Watsonia* in *European Garden Flora*, *Index Hortensis*, *The Plant Finder*, and G.S. Thomas's *Perennial Garden Plants*. Once again, familiar names will vanish, a consequence that will not be welcomed by gardeners and nurserymen, but their disappearance will aid stability.

Watsonia beatricis is a synonym to be replaced by *W. pillansii*. *W. bulbilifera* (EGF) is merely a cultivar of *W. meriana*. *W. fulgens* is listed by Goldblatt as a taxon of uncertain identity. *W. pyramidata*, *W. rosea* (when regarded as a species (IH)) and *W. wordsworthiana* (EGF) are placed within *W. borbonica*. The white *W. ardernei* is regarded by Goldblatt as a subspecies, *W. borbonica* subsp. *ardernei*. In some sources *W. angusta* is regarded as a synonym of *W. fulgens* — it is a good species in the wild although of course the garden plants may not belong to that taxon.

E.C. Nelson

J. COLLETT. *Bermuda — her plants and gardens 1609-1850*. 1987. Pp. vii, 104. Macmillan & Bermuda National Trust, London. ISBN 0-333-43784-5. UK£8.95.

Jill Collett has recently moved to Ireland and is a member of the Irish Garden Plant Society. She lived in Bermuda for about fifteen years where she was active in the Bermuda National Trust as a conservationist and gardener.

Bermuda is an archipelago situated in the North Atlantic about one thousand miles east of Florida. Its climate is sub-tropical and its soil is rich in lime. The native flora includes *Juniperus bermudiana* and the blue-eyed grass, *Sisyrinchium bermudiana* (a name once applied to the Irish species). It is a pity that Mrs Collett does not provide some basic facts about Bermuda as a preface to this book; this would have made it easier for non-Bermudians to understand — however, the book was intended primarily for local use, so this omission is understandable. 1609 to 1850

is the allotted time-span of the book, yet only by dint of back-tracking does one realize that Bermuda was only 'colonized' in 1609; was it uninhabited then?

Early horticulture was entirely devoted to food production, and a precarious existence was eked out for many decades. Surprising facts encountered are that the three different varieties of potato were cultivated in Bermuda as early as 1623, that they were a staple and even used to pay rents. Purely ornamental plants did not reach Bermuda until the latter half of the eighteenth century.

This book has chapters on farming, gardens (history and design are treated), herbs (culinary and medicinal, reflecting Mrs Collett's interest in them), with a 'catalogue' of the early introductions and important ornamentals. However, it is not acceptable to use dubious and confusing common names, e.g. cedar [*Juniperus*], geranium [*Pelargonium*], fuschia [sic.] and redundant Latin names as the basis for such an alphabetic plant catalogue. There is an adequate list of sources, but quotations are not referenced. In general, this is an informative work, clearly the product of much earnest endeavour, but it should have been edited much more carefully, particularly by a botanical historian.

E.C. Nelson

utensils. I suspect most of us would have given it a more elevated status and would sooner drench ourselves! In a reference to the coral cactus 'pompously called *Hatiara salicornioides*' we glimpse, perhaps, a lack of understanding about the naming of plants. Originally *Hariota* after the cartographer Thomas Hariot, it was altered when that generic name was found to be already in use — a neat, no-nonsense compromise, with not a hint of the pompous. On the other hand, the book achieves a high degree of taxonomic correctness; only a few typographical errors have slipped through.

Here are ideas one can adapt and apply, despite the lack of a Continental climate or of garden rooms like Aladdin's cave. Authentic and much-loved pot plants are featured, some with the gnarled stems and yellowing leaves of the truly long-stay occupant. Elisabeth de Lestrieux propounds gently and convincingly the theory that the pot deserves equal consideration with the plant. If this deeply-satisfying book prompts readers to rush out and experiment with the ever-widening range of terracotta or glazed garden ware now available in Ireland, not to mention demand the odd iron plant stand, then so much the better!

Judy Cassells

The art of gardening in pots. Elisabeth de Lestrieux [translated by Hazel Evans]. 1990. Pp 207; illustrated. Antique Collectors' Club. ISBN 1 85149 131 7. UK£29.95.

Do not imagine this is just another book on container gardening — nothing so prosaic! It is a collection of enticing photographic studies of garden nooks and garden rooms in which the plants spend all of their lives in pots. A handful of locations in the Netherlands and Belgium, including the author's own garden in Antwerp, provides the exotic touch, helped by full-page illustrations and a large format (250 x 340 mm).

The 38 short chapters cover such topics as clipped and climbing shapes, succulents and citrus fruits, water gardens, pots and potteries. The interest lies in the grouping of different pots, each with a single species or cultivar, rather than a container shared by several different plants. There are few hints, however, on how to keep them thriving *in situ*; this knowledge you must acquire elsewhere.

The text refers to all the plants depicted and marries well with the illustrations. The writing is practical, innovative, with a touch of the imperious. "Don't worry at all if you inadvertently drench furniture like this when watering plants", says the author, of an imposing cupboard used to house garden

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

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

The editorial committee invites contributions from members of the society and others. Please submit manuscripts typed on A4 sheets, double-spaced and typed on only one side of each sheet to the Editors, c/o National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin 9.

Moorea 10 was edited by E. Charles Nelson, National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin 9, and the Assistant Editor was Judy Cassells, Department of Plant Science, University College, Cork.

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