

Annual General Meeting – Garden Visit in Howth.

The first garden visit of our AGM weekend was to a large private garden on the southern side of Howth Head, a wonderful location obviously favoured by mild weather as echiums and fascicularias were thriving outdoors.

The first view on entering the garden was a wonderful bank of rhododendrons in full bloom and this was simply spectacular.



On the left hand side of this group of rhododendrons there is a pathway which takes the visitor up onto the promontory behind the pine trees shown here where one has wonderful views of across Dublin Bay to Dun Laoghaoire, the Sugar Loaf Mountains and Bray Head and to Ringsend, with its twin chimneys, further in towards the city.



A view across the bay to Dun Laoghaire, the Sugar Loaf Mountains and Bray Head





The Baily Lighthouse



Looking towards Sutton – a Martello tower on the coast.



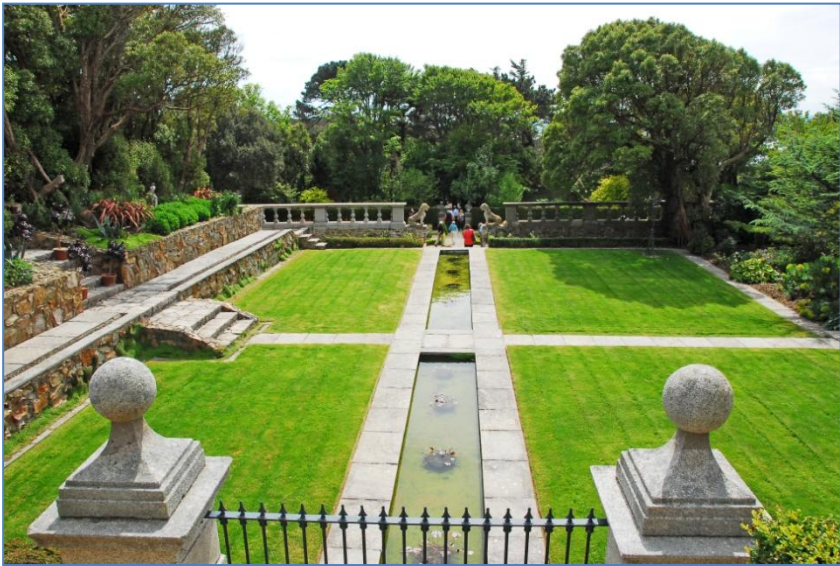
The twin chimneys of Ringsend, an iconic view in Dublin Bay

In contrast to the very natural planting and setting at the further reaches of the garden, those areas closer to the house are more formal in layout.



Close to the house and sunk into the slope is the swimming pool.

Just beyond the pillars shown above containing the pool area and framing the view over Dublin Bay is a formal area with a central rill.



Passing through this area and dropping down significantly in level one comes to the formal rose garden.



Beyond the rose garden is an area which is left more to nature, where wild garlic has been allowed have its way, and where the garden at its edges is allowed to blend into its environment, the beautiful Howth Head.



This delightful arch/bridge obviously carried a pathway at one time but it seems to have become redundant at the moment. However, it added wonderfully to the garden.



Returning through the rose garden and the formal rill garden there is a view to a flight of steps and one wonders what is beyond.

Climbing these steps brings one to what is almost a secret garden, a delightful place, quieter and more private than the lower areas, perhaps more family orientated than those areas used for entertaining.

I imagined that it may at one time have been used as a vegetable garden but was now an ornamental garden planted mainly with shrubs. There were climbing plants on the walls and some perennial herbaceous plants for seasonal interest.

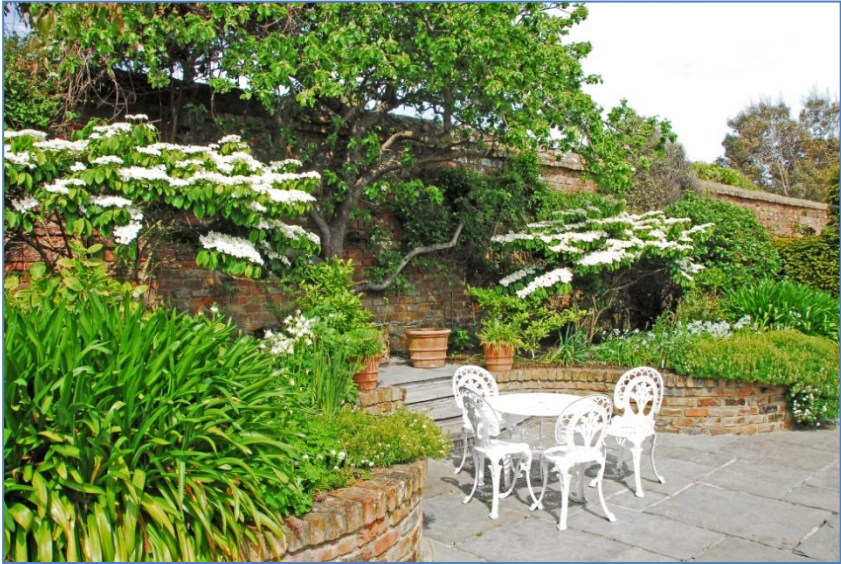
It had a very pleasant atmosphere, removed from the busier part of the garden nearer the house.



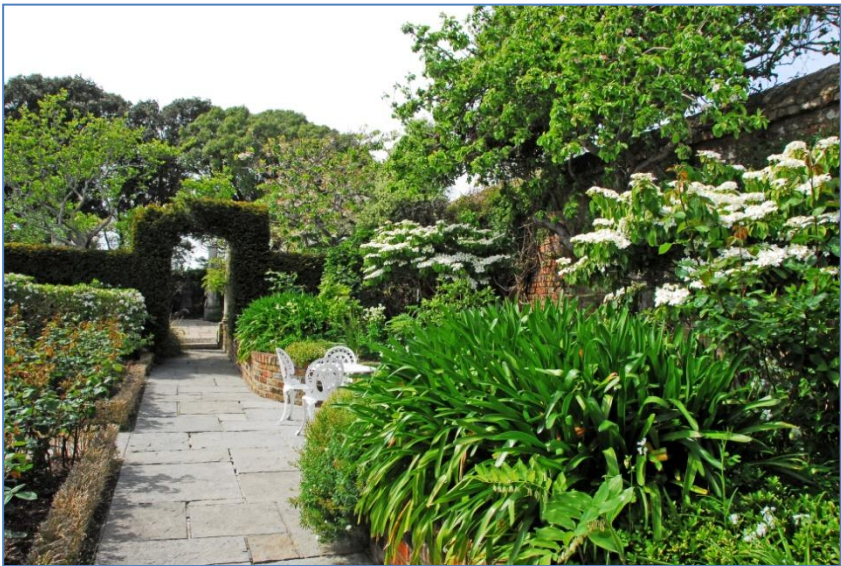
This quiet and calm walled garden was at the highest level in the garden and was planted with a mixture of shrubs and herbaceous plants with walls covered in climbers.



Immediately below this level was this intriguing view which made me wonder what I might see if I ventured further. I explored and was delighted:



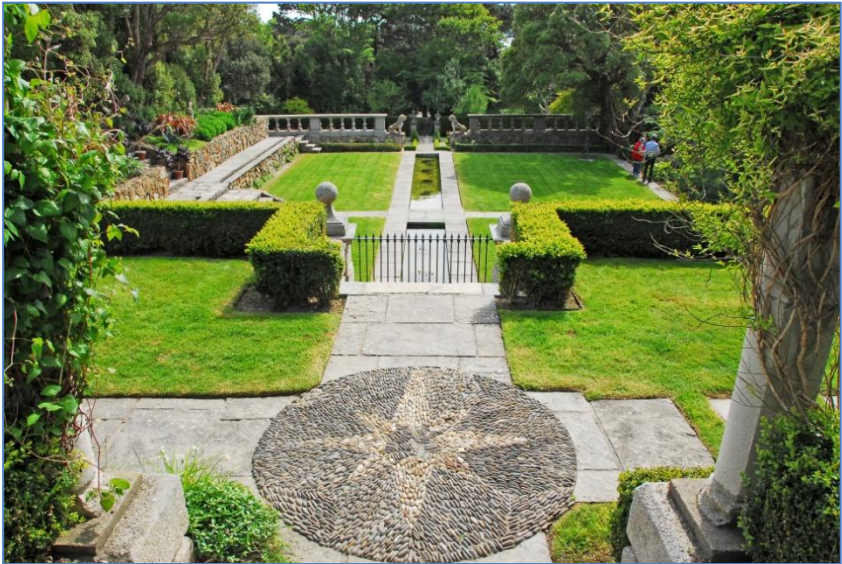
A quiet and private seating area set cosily close to the warm red brick wall.



The viburnums to either side of this seating area were in full bloom and looked wonderful.



I didn't enquire but there did seem to be a white theme to the planting on this terrace.



On the way from here back towards the house there is a wonderful view over the formal gardens:

And, so I returned to the pool area where our group was enjoying the generous hospitality. It was a wonderful garden with gracious hosts and it was certainly the highlight of our weekend activities.

