



*The Newsletter of the
Irish Garden Plant Society*



Issue 105, June 2007



In this Issue

3	Editorial
4	Annual General Meeting – a report on proceedings, a financial report, new committee, comment from the organiser, reports on the garden visits.
21	Mount Congreve Gardens – A Treasure beyond Compare. Michael White, Curator at Mount Congreve Gardens and the recent recipient of the A. J. Whaley Award from the Royal Horticultural Society in conversation with Paddy Tobin and his account of the gardens.
27	Big Roses: Nicola and Peter Milligan love these beautiful monsters and when you read their article you will understand why.
33	A Slate Missing: Rae McIntyre in her usual humorous style but, a slate missing? Only Rae could explain that one!
37	Wendy Walsh – A Lifetime of Painting: A note from Paddy Tobin following a conversation with Tony Moreau on a forthcoming book you will certainly want.
39	Seed Distribution Resume 2007 Stephen Butler tells us what was hot and what was not in this year's distribution
40	A Little Reminder: Did you forget the quiz in the last issue. Not too late yet!
41	Regional Reports: Members from around the country report on events in their areas, including an account of the I.G.P.S. stand at "Bloom"
47	The I.G.P.S. at Bloom 2007 Therese Murphy reports
48	Looking Ahead: Dates to mark in your diary for the coming few months.
50	Worth a Read: Notes on some recent publications from Paddy Tobin

Front Cover Illustration:

I dropped a note to Wendy Walsh to ask her if she had any sketch which would be suitable for the cover of this issue, not realising she had just come out of hospital. The reply was immediate and told me it would be with me in a few days and indeed it was. Wendy has been like this on several occasions – so quick to respond and so generous with her time.

Her comment on the rose was that she didn't have a name for it; that it had simply always been in the garden and it was beautiful on that day when she went to the garden to seek out something suitable for the newsletter.

Many thanks, Wendy.



Editorial

Unfortunately, I was unable to travel to Limerick for the Annual General Meeting on the May Holiday weekend. This was especially unfortunate as, from the accounts which you can read later in this issue, the gardens were excellent and certainly enjoyed by the visitors. There have been many comments also complimenting the way in which the events were organised with particular praise going to Martin Edwardes who, along with the Munster members, put in so much work to ensure the visitors had an enjoyable weekend.

Personally, I would like to praise and thank those who either continue to serve on the various committees or have just decided to give their time to help in the running of society. Without generous voluntary work this society could not possible function. Members should not be shy about joining one of the regional committees; you would always be most welcome and your contribution would certainly be appreciated.

As editor of the newsletter, I am particularly grateful to those who contribute to the newsletter. There are the likes of Rae McIntyre who has sent an article for every newsletter I have edited – an article sent in plenty of time and without fail. She is an editor's treasure and her articles have always brought great interest and praise from readers. Many thanks, Rae. There are also those who take on what I consider a nuisance of a job: that of reporting on an event one is attending. It does take from one's personal enjoyment to take the time to make notes while visiting a garden or listening to a talk. Those who do so are the lifeblood of the newsletter and have my deepest gratitude. Mary Bradshaw is one of the most regular "reporters" though there are many others. I do wish some of these "reporters" would write the occasional article as the standard of writing in the reports is generally excellent. Doing a report is a good way to get started on writing for the newsletter and if you haven't tried your hand at it to date, do give it a go. Just volunteer yourself at your next garden visit. Don't wait to be asked; those doing the asking will invariably ask someone they know will not refuse. It's not that you are being ignored, just that you are hiding your light under a bushel at the moment. Lift the bushel and let others see this light.

If you haven't sent in your answers to the Quiz which was in the last issue there is still time. Mary Bradshaw has asked me to give you a reminder. Now, you are reminded! Have a go! It's just a bit of fun and a way of raising some money for the society. What a hypocrite I am! I haven't entered the quiz myself either, so I had better get to it.

Finally, Books: There is a book to be published shortly which I expect to be wonderful. Why? Well, simply because it is about a wonderful person. See the note on "Wendy Walsh – A Lifetime of Painting" on page 37.

Also, I notice from the latest catalogue from publishers Frances Lincoln that "Helen Dillon's Garden Book" is to be published in August. This is certainly on my shopping list. Helen has enthused me over the years with her garden, her books and articles, her lectures and her television appearances. Of course, being able to meet her in person in her garden is the greatest treat of all and her kindness and generosity seem to know no bounds. Watch out for the book. It's sure to be wonderful.

Paddy Tobin



The Annual General Meeting

Notes from Mary Bradshaw

Chairman's Report

This is a summary of the report delivered by the Chairman of the Irish Garden Plant Society, Petronilla Martin, at the Annual General Meeting in Limerick this year:

The Chairman reported that the 25th Anniversary Seminar was very successful, that the meeting had already been reported in the April newsletter, that the plan to "Adopt a Plant" was a good practical one with an obvious role for all members and that a sub-committee would be needed to put this into action.

Petronilla reported that Plant Sales in Dublin and Belfast brought in some revenue but that Irish Cultivars were not much in evidence and attendances were down on previous years. She expressed the hope that the Munster Group will have a Plant Sale in the year ahead.

She commented that the lecture programme in all 3 regions was interesting, variable and of a high quality and that one of the highlights of the year was the renewed vibrant Munster Committee led by Martin Edwards.

Membership numbers, she stated, had remained static with a few new members around the country. The National Committee had met every 6 weeks and Petronilla regretfully noted that Mary Bradshaw was resigning from the National Committee after 7 years but will remain on the Leinster Committee. Also noted was the resignation of Aisling Kilcullen from the position of Executive Secretary in November a position which had not been filled at the time of the A.G.M.

The Chairman requested members to put themselves forward as members of the regional or national committees so that there could be continuity and vibrancy in our future activities. She stated that our Society (and every society) owes a huge debt to the many members who work quietly in the background and said that their work was gratefully appreciated.

A special word of thanks was given to Paddy Tobin for his sterling work on the Newsletter and to Martin Edwards and the Munster Committee for organising the 2007 AGM.

Summary of the Treasurer's Report

Ed Bowden explained that our finances are healthy. However, Newsletter expenditure has risen a lot. Insurance premiums have fallen slightly but should not be expected to fall any more. Our aim is to keep subscriptions down. We must therefore raise funds and he appealed for the regions and all members to come up with some projects for fund-raising. Sales of "A Heritage of Beauty" have improved lately. Kitty Hennessy inquired if it might be worthwhile to increase the annual subscription and Ed. said that might have to happen next year anyway.

IRISH GARDEN PLANT SOCIETY		
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE TWELVE MONTHS TO 31ST MARCH 2007		
INCOME	2007	2006
	€	€
Subscriptions	11,551	11,840
Plant Sales	4,511	4,762
Seminar	822	-
Donation re Moorea	-	4,075
Raffle	210	938
AGM(Less Expenses)	- 128	185
Summer Lunch(Less Expenses)	162	-
Annual Dinner	-	76
Art Workshop	50	150
Deposit Interest	8	1
	17,186	22,027
LESS EXPENDITURE		
Newsletter	7,395	4,958
Moorea Publication	4,467	-
Lectures	2,616	4,287
Executive Secretary	3,000	4,667
Bank Fees	224	205
Postage and Telephone	672	567
Printing and Stationery	613	1,156
Travel	223	984
Garden Visits	72	126
Audit Fees	363	303
Insurance	1,285	1,620
Subscriptions	263	205
Seed Offer	195	306
Sundry Expenses	174	487
Depreciation	-	96
	21,562	19,977
Excess Income over Expenditure	- 4,376	2,050
Accumulated surplus brought forward	10,648	8,598
Accumulated surplus carried forward	6,272	10,648

IRISH GARDEN PLANT SOCIETY				
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2007				
	2007		2006	
	€	€	€	€
CURRENT ASSETS				
Debtors & Prepayments	1,021		1,021	
Cash at Bank and in Hand	6,300		10,945	
	7,321		11,966	
CURRENT LIABILITIES				
Creditors falling due within one year		1,049		1,318
NET CURRENT ASSETS		6,272		10,648
TOTAL ASSETS LESS				
CURRENT LIABILITIES		6,272		10,648
ACCUMULATED RESERVES				
Income and Expenditure Account		6,272		10,648
Treasurer:				

Ed Bowden

Election of Officers

- **Chairman:** Petronilla Martin.
- **Vice-Chairman:** Hilary Glenn.
- **Treasurer:** Ed. Bowden.
- **Secretary:** Mary Rowe.
- **Leinster Committee Representative:** Mary Rowe.
- **Northern Committee Representative:** Hilary Glenn.
- **Munster Committee Representative:** Therese Murphy.
- **Public Relations Officer:** Therese Murphy.
- **Committee Members:** Carsten Ascherfeld, Marco Fussy, Janet Butcher.

Further Notes:

- Petronilla thanked John O'Connell, our auditor, for his work on behalf of the society.
- Information regarding the Summer Lunch is expected to be in the July newsletter.

- An Information Stand is to be set up at "Bloom 2007". Some members volunteered for the "Bloom" stand.
- Under AOB, Mary Bradshaw put forward a request from Paddy Tobin for a "stand-in editor" for the July newsletter as it is a very busy time for him.

Editor's Note: Nobody at the A.G.M. volunteered for this position. Taking a longer term view, I think it is healthier for any society if one person does not dominate a position. This is my twentieth issue as editor of the newsletter and I believe someone new in the position would bring a new perspective and freshness to it. If anyone would like to take over the position, I would most willingly pass it on. Contact Petronilla or myself.

Note: Since the A.G.M. Marcella Campbell has agreed to take up the position of Executive Secretary from June 2007.

"After the AGM." by Martin Edwardes

I hope that everybody enjoyed the IGPS Annual General Meeting that was held in Limerick on the 5th May. One point that was made clear to me by various people was that all the gardens visited were to a very high standard.

Unfortunately, due to the death of my wife's grandmother at the great age of hundred and two on the previous Friday, Janet and myself were unable to go and see the gardens on the Sunday. We had to rise up very early in the morning to drive to Cavan town to attend the funeral mass. I am very grateful to Therese Murphy, the secretary of the Munster group, for taking over the running of the Sunday itinerary at such short notice.

One is conscious in organizing a selection of garden visits, that they should be varied enough to be interesting to everybody. I hope that we succeeded in this regard. The Woodlands Hotel provided the perfect setting and venue for the weekend and I am grateful to the management and staff for the efficient organization of the room on the morning of the event and for providing such a delicious dinner in the evening.

As there is a report on each garden by individual members of the Munster committee, I am not going to go into any detail as regards any particular garden. I was particularly taken with the energy and enthusiasm of Mary Tarry who, together with her husband, manages the large country estate of Islanmore at Croom. I was reading in the weekend supplement of the Examiner, that Mary raised a few eyebrows by wearing a miniskirt to the hunt ball back in the sixties and was by all accounts, a bit of a fashion icon. She is still turning heads at the sprightly age of seventy eight but maybe in a different way with her lovely garden at Islanmore.

Equally enthusiastic gardeners were Deborah and Martin Begley who, in contrast to the magnificence of Islanmore estate, manage a half-acre garden near Bruff. This garden shows you what can be achieved in a small space, not that half an acre is small in comparison to the postage stamp gardens that are provided with new housing estates these days. One thing that each garden has in common is that all the gardeners concerned are not afraid to get their hands dirty and are very passionate about their hobby. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Deborah Begley for inviting us all to her garden and for her help in organizing the list of gardens for weekend. Martin and herself both went to the trouble of providing tea and refreshments to the group and were most hospitable and entertaining.

I would also like to thank the Knight of Glin and Madame Fitzgerald for inviting the society to their gardens at Glin castle on the Sunday. Unfortunately I was not there, but I gather that the group were treated royally! One lady rang me to tell me all about it, and in the course of the telephone conversation was “lost for words” in her praise of the visit. My thanks also to Bob Duff, the manager of Glin estate for his help in making the visit so memorable.

Finally, and this really is the final “thank you”, many thanks to all the members of the Munster committee for their hard work in organizing the AGM weekend which, judging by the comments of the few people who took the trouble to write to me, was very successful.

For Munster members I would like to point out that we did not organize any summer outing this year, as we seem to have exhausted ourselves in the preparations for the AGM weekend. Our next fixture will be the visit to Mount Congreve, Waterford on the 8th of September and I hope to see a good turn out on that day.

Garden Visits on the A.G.M. Weekend

Islanmore – Mary Tarry’s Garden

As we turned into the wrought iron gate of Islanmore, just off the busy dual carriageway with noisy traffic hurtling by, the contrasts could not have been greater. A winding avenue led past paddocks where newly born foals grazed with their mothers until we finally reached the beautiful Georgian house of Islanmore. We were warmly greeted by Mary Tarry who led us around to the more sheltered side of the house and invited us to sign the visitors’ book.

As Mary led us down an allee, flanked by some enormous and very ancient Cedars of Lebanon, she told us that the grounds at Islanmore are home to many of the champion

trees of Ireland. We diverted away from the path to stand beneath a huge specimen of beech whose enormous height and spread were awe inspiring.

At the bottom of the walk, we passed a beautiful *Cercis siliquastrum*, which unusually had paler pink flowers. The path then led around to the left and led up to the entrance to the walled garden through a view flanked by some very beautiful specimens of Japanese maples clothed in their lovely fresh spring foliage. En route, we passed a rockery, the stone for which had been fetched by horse and cart. The path was lined with clumps of very blue *Scilla Peruviana*.



The house at Islanmore *Photograph by Martin/Janet Edwardes*

The walled garden was laid out in a symmetrical design with neatly maintained beds of roses, paeonies, irises, edged with rock roses in rich colours of yellow, orange, russets and reds. We continued through another gate which led to the glasshouses which had been manufactured by Messenger of Loughborough. They were full of pelargoniums of every imaginable colour and with tomatoes, all meticulously maintained. Not every gardener is happy to have his or her tool and potting shed inspected but Mary's just confirmed the sense of order and neatness which pervades her garden throughout.

Passing by double borders of old roses laden with healthy buds, Mary told us of her philosophy of keeping her plants healthy by dead-heading and feeding, thus reducing the need to spray against disease. At the top of the walled garden were beds of blue and white Agapanthus and the scent of a Wisteria perfumed the whole area. Having left the

walled garden we headed back in the direction of the house passing a mixed border which was unbelievably mature, considering it had only been planted up 3 years ago. There were some lovely specimens of *Viburnum*, *Paeonies* and a *Syringia velutina* which had a beautiful scent. We finished our tour at a small enclosed paved garden which had a sense of enclosure and intimacy.



Mary Tarry with I.G.P.S. guests.

Photograph by Martin/Janet Edwardes

One gets a great sense of dimension on the one hand, from the trees of Islanmore – great size, great age and great history – but on the other hand, one is struck by the great love of gardening and hands on approach of the gardener herself, and in this respect Mary Tarry is a true gardener.

Janet Edwards

Deborah and Martin Begley’s Garden at Dromin

The Terra nova garden was the last garden that we visited on the Saturday of the AGM and proved to be a perfect end to a great day of garden visits. It was the smallest of the three gardens that we visited, but was crammed full of beautiful plants and interesting features which made it look much larger than it actually was. I had seen a picture of the half acre site that Deborah and Martin had started with in a talk given by Deborah and could not believe it was the same place.



A pleasant arbour in 'Terra Nova' with Acer brilliantissimum and Paeonia rockii
Photograph by Martin/Janet Edwardes

They started the garden in 1992 after they had built their family bungalow. Initially the area was a football pitch for their children, but then Deborah started to plant flowers and that all changed. The transformation of a bare site to a beautiful garden has not, I am sure, been without a few mistakes, but the final outcome has been magical. As you enter the garden from the front gate the first thing that strikes you is that the whole house is surrounded by plants. There is no trace of the customary area of lawn at the front of the house for the male of the species to mow and give reason for his existence. Instead the front area is divided into two areas extensively planted with trees and shrubs divided by a path which leads the eye to a sitting area which consists of a garden arbour with trellised sides painted a light shade of blue. To the left of the arbour is a very bright *Acer brilliantissimum* and very close by was a beautiful white *Paeonia rockii*. The path leading up to the arbour has little coloured glass butterflies pressed into the ground. The butterflies are an example of the quirky little effects that are used quite extensively throughout the whole garden giving a touch of humour and magic which is the hall mark of this garden. Near the front door, there are steps framed by

two columnar conifers leading down to a small circular grass area with various paths leading in and out of the area.

On the right hand side of the house leading to the back there is small self-service tea house with an honesty box and a scrap book with pictures showing the development of the garden. You pass by a full length flexible mirror fixed to the wall which has been bent to distort the reflection of unfortunate humans who find themselves staring at it! Passing into the back garden, you are confronted by a large beautifully built Japanese teahouse with a dark coloured decked floor and uprights and tastefully furnished with wicker chairs. I subsequently learnt that the teahouse had been constructed by Martin only few weeks prior to our visit. He told me that he had to get up very early in the morning to get the project finished as well as having time to run his coloured glass business during the day.



Martin Edwardes thanking Deborah Begley at the end of the visit to 'Terra Nova'
Photograph by Janet Edwardes

Quite close to the teahouse there is a large natural looking circular pond surrounded by tree ferns, Gunnera and a variety of brightly coloured variegated Phormiums. A grass path then leaves the teahouse flanked by large number and variety of bamboos.

Another path leads away to a slightly raised stone slabbed patio and sitting area. I deduced from the evidence of a sunshade and nameplate, marked “Baker Place”, affixed to the back fence that this area was a hotspot! At the edge of the patio there was a fascinating little water feature consisting of a stone orb with water gently pouring out of top and cascading down the complete surface. Very clever!

The path passes by a low stone wall and then forked, with one path passing yet another water feature. This was a large copper coloured platter sitting on a black metal plinth. Bright coloured flower petals were floating in the platter. Behind the water feature, Martin had constructed a dark timber pergola which covered another paved path leading to a statue of a girl which can be just seen rising out of a circular group of ferns bordered by a box hedge. Deborah told me that this statue was of a naked girl in some form of erotic pose, which had in the past caused a little embarrassment to their children and possibly others, so Martin came up with idea of surrounding the lady with ferns.

Just beyond there was a circular bed consisting of a large white-barked *Betula utilis* ‘Jackmontii’ in the centre surrounded by circle of six younger and slimmer birch as if paying homage to it.

Passing the gravelled area in front of Martins workshop and Deborah’s potting up area, your eye is led to a large blue urn framed by two circular stone built pillars beckoning you into yet another section of the garden. We are now on the other side of the house in which a stone-built bridge passes over a pool filled with dark coloured lilies and surrounded by hostas and various variegated grasses. The path leading over the bridge has been inlaid with coins, symbolic of a path paved with gold!

Continuing down the left hand side of the garden, you come across a wishing well which cleverly disguises a pump house. I could not help noticing some small forms of a white *Aquilegia* which beckoned the onlooker to have a closer inspection. In fact, *Aquilegia* has been used quite extensively to give colour and a cottage garden feel to the whole of this area.

The garden has a lot of statuary some classical and some quirky. I noticed a small scene consisting of two children looking very intently at an even smaller group of fairies carrying toadstools in a glade surrounded by hellebores. How magical! To sum up, this is a truly magical and beautiful garden which uses a lot of plant variegation, statuary and quirky artistic touches. There is great attention to detail and the garden has been very cleverly designed to beckon the visitor from one area to another. Deborah and Martin have indeed created a “paradise garden” in which both their personalities and qualities have been more than adequately reflected.

Martin Edwardes

Bernie & Jimmy McEnery's Garden, Moanwing, Rathkeale.

This garden consists of two acres of mature trees and shrubs in a farm setting, a beautiful rural prize-winning garden. On entering the garden one immediately meets a California lilac tree. The front garden features a *Cornus controversa* 'Variegata' (wedding cake tree). Also, Bernie planted a border of two hundred tulips here. A raised stone bed, in a figure of eight design, is planted with many unusual perennials. Walking through the garden led us to a rose-covered arch, where two old trees are silhouetted against the skyline, with an old wooden chair beneath. Walking from this area along the paved paths, leads you to a sea of wallflowers and tulips of various colours, which are surrounded by informally planted trees, among them a *Pinus* and a *Paeonia delavayi* var. *lutea*. There is also a topiary section called 'Animal Farm', at the rear of the house.

One's eye is drawn through a clematis-arch to a lilac tree, overlooking the pond while nearby a Japanese maple and a smoke bush grow together. There are also two additional *Cornus controversa* 'Variegata' in this area. Another hidden gem is the vegetable plot and orchard, with an abundance of various vegetables and fruit. Bernie and Jimmy McEnery's garden was a pleasure to visit, and they were most welcoming to our group. A delightful time was had by all.

Kay Twomey

Glin Castle, Co. Limerick



“Viewed from a boat on the water, the castle presents a fairytale façade as it nestles among high trees between blue bands of water and sky”, an extract from Olda Fitzgerald's excellent book on Irish Gardens and a dream come true for our I.G.P.S. group, to be invited by a Knight and his wife Olda to a tour of their castle gardens and later an invitation to afternoon tea.

In 1780, John Fitzgerald, the twenty-fourth Knight built the main part of the castle, a plain bow-windowed Georgian house. John's son Fraunceis Fitzgerald castellated the house and stable yard with pastrycook battlements, built gimrack Gothic lodges at each gate, a small white castellated bathing lodge on the edge of the river, the high stone-walled Kitchen

Garden, and a Hermitage on the hill behind the Pleasure Grounds. In 1822 he brought

over a gardener, William Bicknell from Somerset, to lay out the plantations, and the bones of the garden were put in place.

Instead of the old road that cut through the estate, he arranged for the engineer, Alexander Nimmo, to build a new road and sea wall. This imposing road was cleverly hidden from view by a splendid new ha-ha constructed to hold back the front field.

Desmond began the tour at the front of the castle assisted by his head gardener of thirty years, Tom Wall. He proudly pointed out the most recent planting in the garden, a line of pink-flowered hawthorn trees which he said would be trimmed into shape later on. These trees were planted by his eldest daughter, Catherine, who studied garden history and worked in the field of horticulture in Kew and Wisley. Then we moved to the left side of the castle where there was a formal garden with classical busts perched in niches cut into the hedges. This led us behind the castle into a formal pleasure garden. A Limerick made sundial takes pride of place in the middle of the lawn and it is centred behind with a graceful Persian ironwood.



*The Knight of Glin speaking to IGPS members on their visit to Glin Castle.
Photograph: Therese Murphy*

We moved up the hill towards the wild garden that is planted with spring daffodils, bluebells and wild garlic. Lady Rachael Wyndham Quin planted this hill with thousands of daffodil bulbs given to her by her friends, the Dorrien-Smiths of Tresco on the Isles of Scilly. She also planted the specimen conifers, the Chilean lantern bush,

the monumental red cedars, the *Drimys winteri* and the now massive *Pinus Radiata* beside the castle. This led to a woodland walk with many mature trees, a large *Ginkgo biloba*, a *Sophora tetreptera* and a most notable Killarney Oak tree, which was planted by Lord Dunraven in November 1931. This was grown from an acorn from his own Killarney Oak at Adare Manor. We reached the high bank with a ring of mock standing stones; the stone in the middle gives the game away. From here there was a heady view to the River Shannon below.



A stroll in the wood at Glin Castle Photograph: Therese Murphy

Then on to an early 19th Century Hermitage with a pebble floor and a brick vaulted covered ceiling. We returned through the walled gardens and were shown a fine semi-circular Edwardian garden seat given by the nuns when they left their convent near Mount Trenchard. We next came to a rustic temple that protects a marble statue of a headless Andromeda chained to a rock. This was Desmond's first art/antique purchase.

He found it abandoned in a field in east Limerick and bought it from the farmer for one pound. It was made from 17th Century marble from the school of Versailles. We returned behind the castle which was lightly covered with Wisteria while a most impressive *Rosa banksiae lutea* surrounds the doorway.

We finished by having afternoon tea with the Knight in the front room of the castle. Everybody had an enjoyable, entertaining and relaxed afternoon. This is a garden visit I will never forget, one of the very best.

Further Reading: -

- Irish Gardens by Olda Fitzgerald, published by Conran Octopus (1999)
- In Veronica's Garden by Margaret Cadwaladr, published by Madrona Book. (2002). A truly amazing read tracing the life of Desmond's mother Veronica. A detailed account of how her energy, determination and enterprise saved the ancestral home at Glin in very difficult times.
- Irish Furniture by Desmond Fitzgerald and James Peill, published by Yale University Press (2007). A book that has been in the works for forty years. A must have for anybody interested in Irish Antiques and Furniture.

Michael Kelleher

Phoenix Garden, Kildimo, Co. Limerick

For someone who has lived in Africa for many years it was a pleasure to visit this garden on Sunday morning. I am not an 'expert' so these thoughts come simply from the viewpoint of a gardening plantaholic.

The tropical Mediterranean feel is enhanced by the sheltering yellow painted walls which help to check the salt winds from the Shannon Estuary. The garden covers two and a half acres, half an acre being trees. It is divided into many different types of garden, adding to the surprise element and work is on-going with new paved areas.

The grasses in the monocot area are flourishing – *Miscanthus floridulus* and *M. strictus* being two of the several others. They are backed by many different types of yucca – *Yucca gloriosa*, *Y. variegata*, *Y. vittoria* 'Emmanuel' and *Y. aloifolia* 'Tricolour'. There is also a *Cordyline australis* 'Pink Edge' in this area.

The oval lawn is surrounded by an herbaceous border with several types of kniphofia – *K.* 'Prince Igor', *K.* 'Shining Sceptre' and *K. rooperi* among them. There is a beautiful *Phormium* 'Sea Jade' in this area also. The Chatham Island Forget-me-nots were in splendid blue bloom. *Rosa mutabilis* showed us what she can do with her range of deep red to pink-orange scented flowers. The dark fluffy-headed tulips nodded in groups in

their border and elsewhere in the garden. *Cordyline* ‘Torbay Dazzler’, *Buddleja fallowiana* and *Ceanothus* ‘Concha’ backed this border.



A view of Phoenix Garden, Kildimo. Photograph by Therese Murphy

The Mediterranean-style garden had many plants one's attention with *Acadia dealbata*, *Pseudopanax ferox*, echiums in white and blue just some of the many beauties.

Plants at various stages of growth surrounded a pond in the tropical-style garden. The green and white *Zantedecia aethiopica* ‘Green Goddess’ was in flower. I struggle to encourage mine to flower but now realise it must be near water.

In the fern garden there are many Irish cultivars. The lower growing ferns were backed by tree ferns, among them *Dicksonia antarctica*, *Cyathea australis*, *Blechnum tabulare* and *Todea Barbara*. Near the trees at the furthest point in the garden there is a *Perius petula* which Anne from Donegal told me are loved by children to make dolls' skirts!

I hope the owners of the garden, Val & Jim Dennison, will forgive my poor attempt at describing their modern beautiful creation. It is full of fun and exciting surprises, with vistas to make one stop and pause as you look at God's creation in the hands of experts.

Rosemary L. Hickey

Knockpatrick Gardens

It was love at first sight, a kaleidoscope of colour welcomed me in. the warmth of the colour was only surpassed by the warmth with which we were received by our hosts, Helen and Tim O'Brien. Our first stop was to the warmth of their kitchen for light refreshments. Replenished, we meandered through their very substantial garden. A visit to their arboretum is a must.

In my next life I want to be hosta in Knockpatrick garden, where I will be fed with the best of manure, stand blemish-free and be the epitome of perfection; or should I be a slug?

Thank you most sincerely for allowing us in and sharing your haven.

Kitty Hennessy.

The Boyce Garden

The Boyce Garden was our last port of call on the AGM weekend. It is situated on the banks of the Shannon, well signposted from the N 69, and well worth a leisurely visit. When Dick and Phyl Boyce bought an acre site here in 1981, it was strewn with the remains of several cottages. Initially the work consisted of clearing debris and dreaming dreams. Now the dreams have become reality, and the garden is an oasis. Phyl writes a garden column for local publications and is very active as a speaker and promoter of the West Limerick Garden Trail.

After our visit to Glin Castle, and its rolling acres and walled gardens, one might expect that this garden would be an anti-climax. However, it was a very exciting and rewarding visit which brought our weekend travels to an end. The hospitality and graciousness of Dick and Phyl really heightened our enjoyment of their wonderful garden.

On entering through a rather quaint wooden door, which adds to the atmosphere and sense of expectation, one is immediately confronted with a choice - to take the long or the short route. In a garden it is always wise to take the former. You can always exit the short way when the senses are jaded! With our host leading the way, we were introduced to the many treasured plants they care for. The soil is neutral to acidic and their winters relatively mild. In the twenty years they have gardened here, the lowest temperature was a very brief minus four Celsius. Most winters rarely dip below zero. However, they are subject to Atlantic gales, and must plan assiduously to protect their treasures. They have great success with tender plants from South Africa, New Zealand and Australia.

The garden is laid out in a series of long parallel beds with areas of lawn separating them. This gives a very airy feel. The borders can be viewed from both sides and the planting areas maximised. The high planting is kept to the perimeter, and gives a sense of containment. I had never seen a seven foot Irene Patterson before! Some outstanding specimens are *Sophora microphyla* 'Goldilocks' *Stranvaesia davidiana*, Spiral topiared *Laurus nobilis* 'Aurea', *echiums*, *Cimicifuga*, a 20 yr. old *Liriodendron tulipifera* and *Smilacina racemosa*. There is such profusion in this garden that I would really recommend that you visit it.

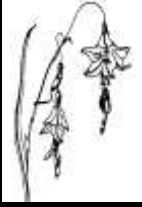


Previous and present gardeners in the Boyce Garden? Photograph: Therese Murphy

Stephen Reddin, of Hilberry Nurseries in Crecora, Co. Limerick kindly agreed to open his business on Bank Holiday Monday to facilitate some members who wished to round off the weekend with a few purchases. Again we can highly recommend this nursery. Stephen specializes in Magnolias, Wisterias, the Cornus family, Aesculus cultivars and woodlanders. He is a devotee of Graham Thomas and Roy Lancaster, and will gladly source plants for customers.

Our weekend in Limerick was very enjoyable. Thanks to one and all in the Munster branch who helped to put it together. A very special thanks to Deborah Begley for the spadework at the start. Absolutely no pun intended!!!

Therese Murphy



Mount Congreve Gardens

– A Treasure beyond compare

Michael White with Paddy Tobin

On the 4th of April last Mr. Ambrose Congreve, the creator of Mount Congreve Gardens, celebrated his 100th birthday and recently Mr. Michael White, Garden Curator at Mount Congreve was presented with the A. J. Whaley Award by the Royal Horticultural Society. The A. J. Whaley Award was awarded in recognition of Michael's work in the breeding and propagation of rhododendrons. The gardens are recognised as the best spring gardens in Europe and, especially for lovers of magnolias, rhododendrons, azaleas and camellias, Mount Congreve is the location which one simply must visit in the early months of the year to see these plants both in great number and grown at their best.

Please allow me, on behalf of the I.G.P.S., to offer Mr. Congreve and Mr. White sincerest congratulations on their recent significant events and also my sincerest thanks for creating such a wonderful garden for us to visit and enjoy.



Michael White

These recent events prompted me to talk to Michael White about the gardens, about present projects and future plans. Following are some of the interesting matters which arose in my conversation with Michael and later there is an account from Michael on the gardens. I am most grateful to Michael for his generosity with his time.

Despite his enormous contribution to the gardens over the years, Michael is very modest about claiming credit for this work referring instead to the leadership and enthusiasm of Mr. Ambrose Congreve and the trojan work of Mr. Herman Dool in the development of the gardens. He described with great admiration how Mr. Congreve still comes down every day to the walled garden to

discuss the progress of the various projects which are in hand at present and also how he continues to plan new projects. He described how, on his return from this year's Chelsea Flower Show, Mr. Congreve was so enthusiastic to continue with the

rhododendron hybridising programme in the gardens. They aim to develop a range of hybrids exclusive to Mount Congreve, taking the best attributes from those plants they most like and they particularly aim to extend the flowering season of their rhododendrons. Those rhododendrons which continue the flowering into July are mostly white. They hope to develop hybrids in other colours which will flower at this time of year. The programme also aims to develop hybrids with greater scent and hardiness. *Rhododendron cinnabarinum* features strongly in their hybridisation programme as it is valued for its resistance to powdery mildew.



During a recent visit I had noticed that a fine magnolia, which I had admired over many years growing on the edge of one of the lawns, had a name attached. Let me inform you that this is a tree of substantial proportions, of similar size as a mature beech tree, for example. Although it had reached this stature and was obviously a most beautiful tree in flower it was only recently that the decision was taken to name it and to propagate and distribute it under this name. The tree has been named *Magnolia* 'John Congreve' after Mr. Congreve's father. Michael says that this was a chance seedling in the garden which they propagated and planted in various situations within the garden in order to assess its value as a garden plant. Though I could see no reason why they would not



Magnolia 'John Congreve' at Mount Congreve.
Photograph by Paddy Tobin

be immediately delighted with this tree I understand the time and patience which goes into closely watching a plant perform before deciding to attach a name to it and distributing it. *Magnolia* 'John Congreve' is a magnificent tree; one which I hope to see growing in my own garden at some stage in the future as its connection with Mount Congreve gardens would make

it one to especially treasure in my mind.

Another very interesting magnolia which Michael told me about was a yellow-flowered *Magnolia campbellii*, first seen in flower in the garden in the first week of February, 2000. This had been thought to have been one of a group of *Magnolia campbellii* 'Alba' which had been planted in this area but flowering time brought this delightful surprise. Given its time of flowering, it has been named *Magnolia* 'Valentine's Torch'. Michael told me that Maurice Foster reported seeing such a magnolia in the Himalaya in 1982.

These magnolias have always been propagated by air layering, a traditional though slow and labour intense method which has not worked with all species. At present if one wanders about the gardens one will see that many branches of magnolias are sporting brightly coloured light plastic balls with which children play, those balls one sees in children's play areas into which the children can jump and dive without danger of injury. These are the latest revolution in the air layering of plants in the garden. The ball is simply cut along half its diameter, suitable compost inserted and attached to the wounded section of branch on the tree to be propagated. The whole procedure takes about 20 seconds, Michael says and allows one person to apply this method up to 200 times per day giving a great increase in productivity. This method also gives a great increase in the rate of success in rooting plants. Michael gave as an example *Magnolia x wiesneri* which has always been a difficult subject to root and now, using this method, he has successfully taken rooted cuttings from five year old wood.

The nursery at Mount Congreve specialises, as one might expect, in rhododendrons, azaleas, camellias, magnolias and produces, for example, 250,000 camellias each year. It also produces up to 10,000 Japanese maples in a very wide range of cultivars. The general range of garden plants is also propagated with a strong emphasis on southern hemisphere shrubs and trees.

Michael takes up the story of Mount Congreve:

The gardens at Mount Congreve consist of around seventy acres of intensively planted woodland garden along with a four acre walled garden. The present owner, Mr. Ambrose Congreve, was inspired by Mr. Lionel de Rothschild's exceptional garden at Exbury in Hampshire, England. It was here that his interest in gardening was nurtured and he became infected with Lionel de Rothschild's passion and enthusiasm for rhododendrons, magnolias and flora from every continent in the world.

With his father, he began planting in his late teens. Lorry loads of plants, including *Rhododendron sinogrande*, arrived, carriage paid, from Mr. Lionel de Rothschild. It was not until 1955 that he began to make large clearings in the woodlands to create the necessary conditions where the plants would thrive. Mr. Herman Dool arrived in the early sixties and was Garden Director for thirty nine years. The two men set about

creating what is said by the Horticultural Society of Massachusetts to be one of the great gardens of the world.

One of Mr. Congreve's garden philosophies is that one should always plant in groups whether it is five or fifty rather than planting single specimens here and there. The fruition of this practice can be seen to spectacular effect in the spring and early summer when the gardens are awash with magnificent sweeps of flowering azaleas, camellias, magnolias and rhododendrons.

Mr. Congreve also believes that every garden should have surprises and good vantage points where the gardens and surrounding landscape can be viewed. With this in mind the garden is laid out so that there are wonderful vistas overlooking the neighbouring River Suir and these are particularly beautiful in March when hundreds of Asiatic magnolias are at their glorious best. Among the surprise elements one meets in the garden are the Chinese Pagoda in the centre of an old quarry which is quite spectacular viewed from above, a classical temple overlooking the River Suir and an artificial waterfall cascading over a natural rock face into three small pools beneath.

There is a walk of over eighty *Magnolia campbellii* seedlings cleverly planted on lower slopes in 1969 which can be viewed to great effect from an elevated walkway above them. These magnolias are underplanted with deciduous azaleas. This magnolia walk which flowers on leafless stems in late March into April, surely gives a glimpse of the Himalaya as they would have been seen by Frank Kingdom Ward when he first encountered these trees in 1930. As the native habitats of these magnolias come under threat plantings such as that undertaken at Mount Congreve will become increasingly more important to the horticultural world.

Another wonderful vista of planting is provided in the Bluebell Walk where the bluebells provide a carpet under a planting of many forms of tree ferns such as *Dicksonia antarctica*, *Dicksonia smithii* and *Cyathea dealbata*.

Several sweeping lawns are used to highlight tree and shrub plantings. One such area, the Rose Lawn, gently slopes and meanders through two red flowering chestnuts and is bordered with various astilbes, roses and styrax flowering in June, all leading to a fine specimen of *Cupressus cashmeriana*. A grass path that stretches for hundreds of metres is bordered by seventy Wisterias trained to grow as columns. These were planted in 1986 and are spectacular in flower in May/June with companion plantings of Cistus, Cytisus, Hebe, Genista, Carpentaria and many other summer flowering plants.

Four Magnolia seedlings stand on the Bell Gate Lawn. Three of these are *Magnolia sargentiana* var. *robusta*; the other is distinctly different. Its seed parent must have had a liaison with another species, aided by a winged accomplice no doubt. This plant, with

its cyclamen purple buds which open dark rose pink, we have named after Mr. John Congreve.

Climbers are a feature in the mature oak trees of the woodland where they host among others, *Clematis montana*, *Clematis armandii*, *Actinidia chinensis*, *Celastrus orbiculatus*, *Hydrangea siemenii* and *Paederia scandens*. In late summer the Hydrangea Walk, three quarters of a mile long with over ninety different varieties, is a wonderful sight in flower. Similarly, on entering the garden, there is a walk with over fifty varieties of *Pieris* whose growth habits range from twenty inches high to twenty feet with new foliage emerging in many shades from salmon pink to fiery red. The winter months are cheered up by the Mahonia Walk with over thirty cultivars. A recent addition is the red-flowering *Mahonia gracilipes*.

The collection in the garden consists of over three thousand different trees and shrubs; more than two thousand different rhododendrons, six hundred camellias, three hundred Acer cultivars, six hundred conifers, two hundred and fifty climbers and fifteen hundred herbaceous plants with many more tender plants within the Georgian glasshouse in the walled garden.

The woodland garden is at its best between February and May though we do have rhododendrons which start flowering in September, 'Jacksonii', 'Nobleanum' and 'Jenny Lind' for example. *Hamamelis* start flowering in December and continue through Christmas and beyond. Camellias, such as 'Gloire de Nantes' and 'George Blandford' begin flowering in the first week of December and last for about ten weeks. As the rhododendron season ends we have seventy five varieties of *Astilbes* coming into flower. These range in size from six inches to six feet and have a broad range of colours. In July an assortment of roses are on show in several areas of the garden along with many types of *Eucryphia*. With the arrival of August the late flowering rhododendrons, such as *Rhododendron auriculatum*, *R. diaprepes*, *R. hemsleyanum* and *R. 'Polar Bear'* reveal their large trusses of white flowers. The many wonderful shades expected in autumn are provided by shrubs such as *Euonymus*, *Enkianthus*, *Acer*, *Azaleas*, *Cercidiphyllum* and many more. One particular favourite of mine is *Disanthus cercidifolius*, a member of the Witch Hazel family, which turns the most brilliant claret red and almost translucent as the sun shines on it. This is just a small synopsis of what is on offer to visitors as there are many other wonderful trees and shrubs to see also.

The walled garden is divided into two sections; one consists of a fruit and vegetable garden with May/June/July borders, a border of Michelmas Daisies and Chrysanthemum, a Paeonia border, climbing roses backed with delphiniums and underplanted with helianthemums, a Water Lily pond surrounded by Japanese Irises, candelabra primulas, Gunnera, Agapanthus and Crocosmias. The other section of the walled garden is planted to give interest in August into September with many forms of *Magnolia grandifolia*, large plantings of *Hydrangea sargentiana*, *Hydrangea villosa*

and many Buddleja varieties all underplanted with herbaceous plants. The majestic walls of this section of the garden are adorned with climbers such as *Wisteria*, *Pileostegia*, *Schiphragma*, *Trachelosperum*, *Lonicera* and *Hydrangea petiolaris*. Herbaceous plants, such as *Lobelia tupa*, *Eucomis bicolour* and *Coreopsis verticillata* fill a border in front of the Georgian glasshouse. There is also a fine display of *Romneya trichocalyx*, *Sedum spectabile*, a wide range of Dahlia cultivars as well as many more interesting plants. The central feature of this area is the manicured lawn in which is planted a specimen of *Aesculus parvifolia* and one *Juniperus squamata* 'Chinese Silver'. A sloping box hedge frames the steps up to the Bell Gate and has *Tropaeolum speciosum* growing through it which is very effective when in flower.

Words can only convey an impression of what Mount Congreve has to offer and to get a full appreciation of what has been achieved here in such a short time by Mr. Ambrose



Congreve and Mr. Herman Dool one has to, I feel, visit the gardens as the seasons unfold. Visiting a garden like Mount Congreve gives people the opportunity to view plants from around the world as we have a policy of always seeking out the latest introductions and new hybrids.

*Plantings of Magnolia X soulangeana cultivars to left and right frame a view of the River Suir and Co. Kilkenny in the background.
Photograph: Paddy Tobin.*

The gardens are at present under the ownership of Mr. Ambrose Congreve who has made arrangements for the garden to be administered by a trust for some years before it is handed over to the State and the Irish people will inherit a garden that is renowned the world over.

Presently the gardens are open to the public on Thursdays from March to September inclusive between 9.00a.m. and 4.30p.m. Admission is free of charge and is restricted to adults only. No dogs are permitted. Guided tours for groups, 10 – 30 people, can be arranged by writing to me c/o The Estate Office, Mount Congreve Estate, Kilmeadan, Co. Waterford.



Big Roses

By Nicola & Peter Milligan

I am accused, frequently, of liking and growing big roses but before I answer this accusation let me digress back in time - back to when roses, or more accurately rose-related activities, entered my life.

I started gardening, as far as I can remember, about forty-five years ago. At that time we lived in Belfast but had a cottage near Loughries in Co. Down. This was my father's retreat where he could hide from the cares of the world and indulge in his interest in growing vegetables, soft fruits and certain flowers, namely dahlias, sweet peas and roses. Most of my family's weekends, and the summer months, were spent at the cottage.

At this stage, as 'gardening apprentice', my job was to fetch and carry for the head gardener - my father. Part of the fetching involved roaming the fields surrounding the cottage with an old enamel bucket and a small coal shovel. Now those of you who grew up in the country will know what was going on - I was collecting one of the outputs of the local cattle. As the bucket was filled it was carried back to the garden and emptied, to form neat rows, along the edge of the vegetable garden. The goal was to have a double, or triple row, of manure 'sand pies' that could be dug in once the various crops were lifted in the autumn.

Once this essential task was complete further expeditions were required to ensure a supply of manure for the rose beds - my father believed that nothing could surpass the benefit of an annual 'mulch' of manure for the roses - and they seemed to thrive on the treatment.

Surprisingly, notwithstanding what could so easily have been a form of aversion therapy, I developed an interest in roses and vegetable growing that continues to this day. I can remember the excitement that came with the arrival of the annual catalogue from Dicksons. For some reason most of the roses we grew were obtained from Dicksons and only a few came from their arch rivals McGredy's. At one stage Dicksons grew a considerable number of roses in fields at the bottom of Bradshaws Brae - on the then main route from Newtownards to Belfast. So as we travelled from Belfast to Loughries via Newtownards we would have been exposed to the sight of thousands of Dicksons roses in flower - perhaps the visible impact of this display predisposed my family to Dicksons products.

Initially, rose growing was confined to hybrid teas and some floribundas but one fine Rambler from those early days sticks in my mind - vigorous, beautiful pink flowers, and sweetly scented *Albertine* was a firm favourite with my family. My maternal grandmother grew it, my grandfather grew it, my father grew it, and I grow it now. One of the first plants introduced when we moved to Ros Cuan was an *Albertine* - planted for my wife. This rose was bred by Barbier (France) in 1921 and was a firm favourite with Dicksons' customers - during my childhood it seemed that every garden in Co. Down had one of these fine ramblers growing where it could be both seen and, more importantly, have its perfume enjoyed by all visitors.



Rosa 'Albertine' in bud and in full blossom. Photograph: Nicola Milligan

This was my first experience of roses that could 'spread out a bit'. While no one complained about the numerous flowers, or the wonderful scent of an *Albertine* in full flush, some complaints were inevitable when visitors were seemingly attacked by the thorny giant (15' x 10').

My interest in ramblers never went away and as time and space increased so a few more purchases were made. The real damage was done when I bought and planted a *Paul's Himalayan Musk*. Bred by William Paul (UK) late in the nineteenth century, and deriving from *Rosa moschata*, this wonderful old musk rose is another terrific doer. Once settled it can 'get away' in a spectacular manner. I planted my specimen against a south facing wall - the end wall of an old one roomed cottage that we use as a potting

shed and garden store. Within a couple of years the rose had grown sufficiently to stretch along the end wall and along the front of the cottage - a distance of some twenty feet.



*Rosa 'Paul's Himalayan Musk' in its first year planted on the south-facing end wall of the old cottage.
Photograph: Nicola Milligan*

Notwithstanding the adverse comments this brought about (from my head gardener) I continued - adding *Paul's Scarlet* (10' x 8'), *R. longicuspis* (30' x 15'), *R. banksia lutea* - beautiful double pale yellow flowers early in the season (20' x 10'), and *R. banksia lutescens* - rather larger flowers than '*lutea*' but single (20' x 10').

At this point, and in answer to the charge that I only grow 'big roses', I will flag up that I do have some smaller representatives of wonderful old roses - *R. gallica officinalis* (3' x 3'), the Apothecary's Rose, and *R. pimpinellifolia* (3' x 3').

I must draw attention to one of the roses listed above, *R. longicuspis*. According to Beales [1], this was one of Kingdom Ward's acquisitions from China in and around 1915. It is noted as being '... very floriferous with huge cascading panicles of bunched

single white flowers ... ' It is quite difficult to obtain a true specimen as many plants offered as *R. longicuspis* are *R. mulliganii*. We were lucky in acquiring a true plant from Patrick Ford's nursery at Seaforde in Co Down.



R. gallica officinalis (3' x 3'), the Apothecary's Rose, in full splendour.
Photograph by Nicola Milligan

I find these 'old' roses wonderful - they may not have flowers as big as more modern plants, they may be beset with susceptibilities to mildew, rust, etc. but in my opinion nothing can surpass them in terms of the beauty of form they show in their flowers and the sheer 'headiness' of their scent.

I could ramble on for ages but to draw this article to a close I will mention our most recent purchases. The first is well known, *R. Felicite Perpetue* (15' x 10') - raised by Jacques (France) in and around 1827 - this remains a firm favourite bearing clusters of creamy-white, fully double, sweetly scented flowers. The second, obtained last year, has for us that vital Irish connection. ***R. Rambling Rector*** (20' x 15') is listed as ' a very old cultivar with large clusters of fragrant semi-double flowers, creamy to begin with then opening white '. According to Nelson [2] this rose was introduced by

Thomas Smith of Daisy Hill Nursery fame, appearing in his 1912 catalogue. It is possible that he named the rose but there is no indication that he discovered or bred the rose.

We are growing **R. *Rambling Rector*** on a shady fence that separates the lane, which leads to the back of the greenhouse, from the kitchen garden. It was planted late in the season, having been purchased as a pot grown specimen, but has started to display indications of its potential final size having thrown out several long branches in quick time.

If you would like to know more about these, and other, wonderful old roses there are a number of good books available. I am an avid reader - one of the things I can thank my mother for was the introduction, at a very early age, to the public library system. From that early beginning I have continued to read widely and subsequently to collect and enjoy gardening books. So I will not let the opportunity pass to mention a few of my favourite gardening texts that deal with roses.

A classic, in every sense, is '*Roses for English Gardens*' by Gertrude Jekyll [3]. This is a great read showing all of Jekyll's flair for writing and the exceptional knowledge and grasp she had for her subject.

Peter Beales' '*Classic Roses*' [1] is a wonderful encyclopaedia and grower's manual of old roses, shrub roses and climbers.

Charles Nelson's text '*Daisy Hill Nursery Newry*' [2] is a mine of information on the plants raised, named and/or introduced by that grand old plantsman Thomas Smith and contains a reference to **R. '*Rambling Rector*'**.

Everyone should find time for books by Graham Stuart Thomas. Two of his texts on roses are more than worthy of a mention, '*The Old Shrub Roses*' [4] and '*Climbing Roses Old and New*' [5].

Finally, although we were predisposed towards Dickson's roses I must mention '*A Family of Roses*' [6] by Sam McGredy or, more accurately, Sam McGredy IV. This book reviews the McGredy dynasty and their involvement in rose breeding.

These books will enable you to pass away those dreary, dull, wet days of winter when the garden is inaccessible with some pleasure and a sense of knowledge gained.

Most of our old roses are young plants but a few have reached full height. As mentioned above, *R. Albertine* and *R. Paul's Himalayan Musk* are impressive specimens with a spread of around twenty feet. The smaller roses, *R. gallica officinalis* and *R. pimpinellifolia* are full sized at this time but occupy only three or so feet.



Albertine and the Apothecary's at their best in July. Photograph: Nicola Milligan

To conclude, find at least one space in your garden where you can grow an old rose - preferably one of Irish production or introduction such as **R. 'Rambling Rector'** - ignore critics who carp or cavil about the space - tell them you are doing your bit to protect our plant heritage - never admit, that deep down you know you are doing it because you like growing 'big roses'.

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| [1] | Classic Roses
Peter Beales
Harvill Press, London 1997
ISBN 1-86046-303-7 | [4] | The Old Shrub Roses
Graham Stuart Thomas
Phoenix House Ltd, London 1955 |
| [2] | Daisy Hill Nursery Newry
E Charles Nelson and Alan Grills
Northern Ireland Heritage Gardens
Committee 1998
ISBN 0-9522855-6-8 | [5] | Climbing Roses Old and New
Graham Stuart Thomas
J M Dent and Sons (Phoenix House),
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| [3] | Roses for English gardens
Gertrude Jekyll and Edward Mawley
George Newnes, Ltd, Covent Garden 1902 | [6] | A Family of Roses
Sam McGredy and Sean Jennett
The Garden Book Club, London 1972 |



A Slate Missing

by *Rae McIntyre*

During this past year I have been called mad so often that it's beginning to be boring. It all began when I did away with the bit of lawn that was left; it had been decreasing in size over the years anyway because I extended the borders every autumn when I was planting tulips. There is now no grass at all in the garden. The seeds of lawn destruction were sewn when I visited Mrs Phyllis Winslow's garden in Enniskillen in May 2005. Her garden is beautiful, very lush, very verdant, and it was only when I walked round it slowly that I realised there was no grass. "Damned nuisance," declared Phyllis. "When the garden was made twenty years ago I stipulated that there was to be no grass." I thought how wise she was and believed that my garden could do verdant lushness too without any grass.

It took a year to get round to it and to decide what to put in its place. When Andy, who works in the garden about once a month, was here one Saturday I got him to spray it with glyphosate. Three weeks later I managed to have him repeat the process. After another interval he marked out a vaguely oval-shaped bed, dug out a path round it and moved all the sods over to the side of the garden between where the twin towering thugs of sycamores had been felled. He had dug down deeply because the soil of the lawn was good and this left a fairly raised bed in the centre. It was surrounded by stones from the local basalt quarry and I had great pleasure planting it up last May (2006). "You're mad, spending all that money on stupid old plants," said one non-gardening friend. What I had spent on 'stupid old plants' was less than half of what she had spent on an extortionately priced Peruvian alpaca cardigan. My plants will grow as her cardigan shrinks.

I considered using membrane and finely-ground bark on this bed because it's supposed to reduce drastically the need to weed. However there is something about this system that just doesn't appeal (more about it later) so I just used fine bark without the membrane. Over this past year it has needed about one tenth the maintenance of the lawn; I pull out weeds that appear every time I walk past and that's it. Since it was made there has never been a time when something hasn't been in bloom. The dominant tree in it is a young *Prunus subhirtella* 'Autumnalis' and it bore blossoms from October to April. Without the restriction of the membrane I was able to plant bulbs so from January onwards there was *Ipheion* 'Rolf Fiedler' and *Galanthus woronowii* followed by the lovely powder blue *Muscari* 'Valerie Finnis'. The colour scheme of the bed is blue and white, copied from the Mairi Garden at Mount Stewart.

In spite of this the disparaging comments came, some even from people who only knew I had replaced the lawn with a flowerbed. ‘Another flowerbed? You’re mad!’ Or even, ‘You’re not wise.’ Northern Ireland people don’t say this like the English do; whatever way the emphasis is placed on the syllables it comes out heavily laden with scorn. I was also told frequently that, at my age, I should be downsizing not increasing my workload.

This is why, when I was making a new border between the felled sycamores, I didn’t tell anyone but just quietly got on with it. During June and the first half of July, when the weather was fine, I kept digging and chopping at the ex-lawn sods and had the soil in reasonably good heart by St. Swithin’s Day, July 15, when it didn’t rain like it usually does. Instead the temperature was 26 C at mid-day.



Rae’s rhododendron border looking beautiful.

Photographed by Rae.

It was a Saturday and Andy was here to work. He didn’t bat an eyelid when I said that we would move rhododendrons from overcrowded parts of the garden to this new border. Fortunately there were no water restrictions in NI so we kept the hose running all day and the fourteen rhododendrons that were dug out went for a ride in the wheelbarrow, were replanted and copiously watered in. One of the great things about rhododendrons is that they don’t seem to resent this treatment but even I will admit that

moving them, on what turned out to be our hottest summer day, was an act of madness and could have gone seriously wrong.

They were all shapes and sizes. *Rhododendron diaprepes* (I think it's this as does the nurseryman who sold it to me but he wasn't sure either) had never done much where it was so it was one of the first to travel. It was almost 2 metres tall. One of the smallest was *Rhododendron lapponicum parvifolium* which flowers in January. It was placed at the front, quite close to the house, so that it would be seen plainly from the windows on cold winter mornings. *R. 'Christmas Cheer'* was moved to this border for the same reason.

All the rhododendrons are in shades of pink, pinkish-white or cream and all had been labelled carefully, when in flower, so that there would be no colour clashes. You may consider this twee but that bothers me not in the slightest. I can still remember vividly my bitter disappointment with the garden at Exbury in Hampshire where they had aimed for a kaleidoscopic effect with great wedges of rhododendrons blooming in hideously clashing colours.

August was wet so happily the rhododendrons were naturally irrigated. I still felt anxious though in September when I wondered and worried if they would form flowerbuds for this season. They did. Abundantly. Even *R. diaprepes*, or whatever it is, was well covered.

Because of all the changes being made last year I didn't have any booked visits by people but I had plenty of casual visitors nearly all of whom exclaimed about the new ex-lawn bed and the new rhododendron border. And, of course, there were more amateur psychiatrists pronouncing me mad / daft / not wise / a right eejit and a glutton for punishment.

One female kept on and on and on about THE WEED PROBLEM. I pointed out that I didn't have any weeds in either of the new places thanks to good old glyphosate. "But you will," she trilled merrily. "That is unless you have membrane down. The reason why my garden NEVER has any weeds is because I use membrane under the bark." I pointed out that rhododendrons like leaves falling on the ground round them and also an annual top-dressing of leaf mould but she wasn't convinced. Her way was right: everybody else was wrong. I asked her how she planted bulbs through membrane or did she just avoid using them.

"Of course I have bulbs," she said (quite crossly, I was pleased to hear). "I have lots and lots of 'Cheerfulness' narcissi because I love their scent."

When asked how these were planted she admitted that she had to cut nicks in the membrane. I could almost feel my back aching when I thought of bending down to cut nicks in membrane to plant, say, 100 crocuses. She had to have the last word. "You're

absolutely mad if you don't put down membrane and bark. Why give yourself so much hard work?" All right then. I'm mad. Absolutely.

The new rhododendron border has given me immense pleasure. Critics of the genus say that they're only in flower for a fortnight at the most and do nothing for the rest of the year. Wrong. The parts of the garden where rhododendrons dominate fairly pulsate with life during winter because they have good evergreen, and very varied, foliage and their flowerbuds are full of promise.

The new border is raised and edged with large basalt stones as is the border running parallel with it. They are separated by a new gravel path. The original border used to need a lot of feeding because of the big sycamores leaching moisture and nutrients from it. It has had a new lease of life and, in February, was carpeted in snowdrops, scillas, crocuses and hellebores. These two borders are heartlifting when viewed from the south-facing windows of the house.

During the glorious spring I have spent many early mornings just standing and staring outside. I often waken at 4.30 or 5 am and sometimes wander round outside in my dressing-gown. The main garden fortunately is fairly secluded otherwise my dawn ramblings, if spotted, would be regarded as yet another manifestation of my madness.



Luxurious planting – Rae's secret of success. Photograph by Rae



Wendy Walsh - A Lifetime of Painting

A note for your attention from Paddy Tobin

Given Wendy Walsh's outstanding contribution to Irish horticultural publications, her long-time membership of the I.G.P.S. and her generosity in providing illustrations for the newsletter I am delighted to bring this forthcoming publication to your attention.

In early September 2007 Strawberry Tree intends to issue a very special book about Wendy Walsh which will include a memoir of her painting life, illustrated with samples of her work over the years, and also forty four botanical plates, some of which have not been published before, matching in format and style her finest achievement – the two-volume *An Irish florilegium: wild and garden plants of Ireland* (1983 & 1987). The title for this work is *Wendy Walsh – A lifetime of painting*. The overall size of the book will be 365 x 280mm.

Wendy Walsh is one of Ireland's most distinguished artists. She was born in 1915 in Westmoreland, England, but has lived for many years in Ireland. A self-taught artist, her work covers a wide variety of subjects. Since the mid-1970s she has specialised in botanical work and has an unequalled record of published botanical portraits ranging from decorated porcelain to stamps for An Post, a set of stamps for Kiribati (formerly the Gilbert Islands) and including plates for *Curtis's botanical magazine*.

The commentaries to accompany the botanical illustrations in this work are written by Dr. E. Charles Nelson. Mrs. Walsh's collaboration with Dr Nelson flourished for more than two decades and she has illustrated, among other works, *A Prospect of Irish Flowers* (1990), *The Burren: A Companion to the Wildflowers of an Irish Limestone Wilderness* (1991), *Trees of Ireland Native and Naturalized* (1993), and *Flowers of Mayo* (1995). The first volume of *An Irish Florilegium: Wild and Garden Plants of Ireland* won a competition at the Leipzig International Book Fair in 1984 for 'the most beautiful book in the World'.

A limited print run of only 150 special copies, beautifully quarter bound in real leather and slip-cased, @ €850.00 each will be offered for sale. These special copies will be numbered and signed. There will also be 750 copies, with dust jacket, @ €100.00 each. Post and packaging for books delivered outside the Dublin area will be €20.00.

For further information about this publication please contact Tony Moreau, Strawberry Tree, 18 Woodbine Drive, Dublin 5. Tel: 01 8472448 or Mobile 086 1097126
Email: tonymoreau@eircom.net



Magnolia wilsonii, one of the illustrations from the forthcoming book,
Wendy Walsh – A Lifetime of Painting.



Seed Distribution Resume 2007

By Stephen Butler

Another year of seed distribution done and dusted, and yet again loads of really good seed sent out.

Initially we had 409 seeds sent in, which after sorting duplicates (not many!) and any unsuitable for distribution, again not too many, came down to a very respectable 314, lower than last year but that was an exceptionally high total. These came from a slightly larger number of collectors at 25, nice to see a few new people sending seed in – many, many thanks again to you all.

Yet again I've done the number crunching to provide the league table of requests. Don't forget some seed was in very short supply – of the 27 people looking for the *Cyclamen* perhaps only 8 received it! Most requested in first preference this year were:-

Baptisia australis (32)
Cyclamen mirabile 'Tilebarn Nicholas' (27)
Dierama pulcherrimum (ex Blackbird) (25)
Lilium mackliniae (24)
Tropaeolum speciosum (21)
Stipa gigantea (21)
Paeonia cambessedesii (19)
Uvularia perfoliata (19)

The only one in last year's top ten was the *Tropaeolum*.

In contrast the rogues' gallery was a tad longer than usual!

No requests received for:-

Anthriscus cerefolium – Chervil - not much interest in herbs obviously!
Allium subvillosum – poor old subvillosum, relegated to the no request list again.....
Nectaroscordum siculum – lovely plant, but an empire builder
Heracleum lehmannianum – OK, it's a Hogweed, but no bad press, a massive plant
Hieracium lanatum – one of my favourite silver leaf plants, with yellow daisy flowers
Hieracium waldsteinii – very similar
Rumex sanguineus – the Bloody Dock, really! Great leaf

Silene asterias – a red flowered Catchfly or Campion, and not too common either
Sium sisarum – a decorative umbellifer, and an old root vegetable
Sparganium erectum – a native water-side plant, nice to spread it around
Trifolium ochroleucon – a rather nice clover, native to N. Europe (not Ireland)
Abies religiosa – a most unusual seed for our list, ‘religiosa’ as the foliage is used at Christmas in its native Mexico – this is the tree that millions of Monarch butterflies use for winter hibernation.

Now you know what you missed, make up for it next year!

This year our request numbers were down again, as the table below shows.

2003	seeds listed 232	requests 196
2004	seeds listed 321	requests 170
2005	seeds listed 297	requests 142
2006	seeds listed 395	requests 147
2007	seeds listed 314	requests 121

I’m still at a loss as to how to increase our seed requests! Since I started the lists we have had a reduction of 75 over 5 years, a 38% reduction; a worrying trend indeed.

Seeds for distribution in 2008 (I’m already collecting spring bulb seed) can be sent to me at: Curator of Horticulture, Dublin Zoo, Phoenix Park, Dublin 8 any time.

The more unusual the plant, the better for the list.

Stephen Butler, IGPS Seed Exchange Coordinator: scbutler@indigo.ie
086 388 4584

That Quiz!

Had you forgotten about it or was it just too challenging for you?

Mary Bradshaw has asked me to throw down the gauntlet once again to prompt you into action. Look back at your April issue of the newsletter, fire up the little grey cells and tackle this one. Don’t be put off by the questions; there haven’t been all that many correct answers received to date and Mary reckons there are more masterminds who are just a bit nervous about raising their heads above the parapet but who might give it a go now with this reminder.



Regional Reports

Northern Reports

Spring Clotsworthy Lecture March 21st 2007

Tom Gilbert – Battling with Nature

Growing our own food is back in fashion but for some gardeners it is a way of life. Tom Gilbert farms organically at Ballylagan near Straid in Co. Antrim. He has an integrated approach to vegetable and livestock farming and for those who have a holistic view of growing plants his talk was timely and inspiring.

Starting life in the motor trade, with a limited farming background but with an interest in vegetable growing from childhood, Tom initially saw an economic opportunity in organic farming. He is now wholly converted to the organic ethos and is a leading exponent in Northern Ireland.

The business at Ballylagan started slowly. Organic standards in the UK are set by the Soil Association and there was a necessary lead-in time of 4 years until the production of his first approved organic livestock.

There was, at the time, a very limited market in Northern Ireland for organic meat and indifference from the Authorities. As a result, Tom was forced to sell his produce from his own premises. He continues to do so and now has a thriving business, selling a range of environmentally friendly produce.

Two acres are set aside for vegetable growing, with a 4 year crop rotation. Tom grows a wide variety of fruit and vegetables and recent soil tests have shown his vegetable field to have a high level of fertility. Manure for the vegetables comes in the main from his own straw-bedded cattle and some from shavings bedded horses at livery on the farm.

While the farm currently buys in animal bedding and certified organic poultry feed, most of the feed for the livestock emanates from its organically grown cereal and grass crops.

During his lecture Tom outlined his strategies for weed and disease management in his vegetable field. Blight resistant potatoes, like Orla and Cara, are planted and approved copper based fungicides used if necessary. Fleece cover is used to combat carrot fly.

Weeds are controlled by rotivating, hoeing or with the use of a flame gun. To shorten the “Mealy Months”, poly tunnels are used and root vegetables are left in the ground until needed.

The Ballylagan farm is a model organic system, which is striving for total integration and self-containment. By now, most of us believe in the environmental benefits of organic gardening but organic exponents like Tom Gilbert believe that those who consume organic produce have strengthened immune systems. The author wholeheartedly agrees.

Fiona Simpson

'Larchfield', Pests in the Garden

A visit to the home of Anne and Leslie Mackie on April 21st

It was a grey start to this April Saturday, threatening rain and I hadn't quite decided whether to go on this garden visit. It's a long drive to Lisburn and friends were otherwise engaged. On the other hand, I had met Anne and Leslie before and really wanted to see their garden and I could always combine it with a trip to Sprucefield. That clinched it and off I went. Directions were spot on. I followed the stone wall round to the entrance that led up a very long drive – no sign of a house but beautiful mature rhododendrons in varying shades of pink inviting you to carry on through park land, past the lake, up to a beautiful 18th century country house. What a lovely setting!

No sign of a garden. A ha-ha at the front of the house separates the house from the fields beyond where you could catch a glimpse of small herds of alpacas grazing amongst the mature trees. I was welcomed by two friendly Labrador dogs and Leslie who invited me to join some other members in a very large and beautiful hall and here we got a taste of things to come – the air was filled with the scent of *Rhododendron Fragrantissimum*. Now who would have thought of bringing such a large shrub into the house? One reason for visiting other gardens, apart from enjoying a nice day out, is to get new ideas and this was the first one. Incidentally, Helen Dillon suggests pruning half the stems immediately after flowering if you want to keep the bush shapely but still leave enough branches to form flower buds.

After a brief history of the estate (Leslie and Anne are the third owners) and a handout that Leslie had produced from an aerial photograph, Anne said she was giving us a guided tour. I always welcome this when visiting a new garden because you learn how the garden has evolved, the reasons for this, that and the other and amusing, anecdotal stories. This was no exception. Anne told us she looked forward to our visit with some trepidation – hence the title 'Pests in the Garden' (more about that later).

We followed her round the side of the house to view the original entrance and drive and then through the rockery where Johnny (a beautiful bronze statue named by the children) sat contemplating under a huge tree, surrounded by swaths of daffodils, bluebells and bright pink erythroniums (possibly *Erythronium revolutum*). We

continued down the path to an area of woodland, planted 200 – 300 years ago. Sadly some of the mature trees now have to be felled and some areas completely cleared. I love the seat Leslie made in situ from the old wood. New young specimens of *Amelanchier* have been planted and Anne is particularly fond of *Acer*s which abound round the man-made lake. This is a beautiful natural area, with an amazing variety of named and un-named rhododendrons, magnolias, and azaleas. We ambled round the lake to the bridge where we stopped to take in the view back to the house and the lone swan (not a pest, but a pet) that has sadly lost her mate.

Anne's commentary was both informative and amusing (I couldn't possibly relate all her stories in this review) but this was really a lesson on the evolution of a garden. We ambled back towards the house and passed through an iron gate to behold one of the largest walled gardens I have ever seen and now the formal part of the garden.



When the young Mackies' elderly gardener retired they grassed over the entire area and only 7 years ago decided to establish it again as a vegetable and fruit area with a formal flower garden. Unfortunately all records of its previous layout had been destroyed so they had to start from scratch. It's amazing what can be achieved in just 7 years.

When you're the owner of a large house and garden like Larchfield, you have to think big and that's exactly what Leslie was doing when he

*The entrance to the walled garden.
Photograph by Patrick Quigley*

presented Anne with not one but two urns for her garden. Her enthusiasm was rather dashed however when a large truck drew up containing the biggest urns you have ever seen – I mean gigantic proportions. Undaunted however they are now cleverly

positioned as the central feature in the walled garden, surrounded by a circle of hornbeam interspersed with Lime trees. The bases are set into the soil to reduce the height. In most walled gardens they would look totally out of proportion but the scale of this garden needs a statement like these. Well done Leslie!



A view over the pond at Larchfield.

Photograph by Patrick Quigley

The formal garden is laid out in a rectangle with *Cornus kousa*. The path leads round to an original greenhouse containing many prize specimens including a huge kiwi fruit. The peach house beside it unfortunately had to be removed. An avenue of arches covered in the rambler, *Rosa ‘Lyontine Gervais’*, the sight of which can only be imagined at this time of year, lead us back to the vegetable and fruit area, surrounded by box hedges and lines of espalier apples. The high walls are also planted with trained fruit trees. Round the back of this area are two beehives. One original feature that has survived is the impressive clipped yew archway. As we head towards the house through a small sheltered garden with borders filled with purple honesty and lime green euphorbia there was a fracas taking place under a shrub and the labrador emerged with a young rabbit in her mouth – which brings me to the pests.

We all have some cross to bear re our gardens. Mine is wind and a heavy clay soil. I now consider myself lucky. Anne has a constant battle with rabbits, pheasants and

grey squirrels, not to mention slugs, snails and the occasional visit from the Irish Garden P___ Society.

We ended our visit with a delicious afternoon tea in the dining room. Thank you, Anne and Leslie, for a very pleasant Saturday afternoon. I'm so glad I went. When I returned home I invited 'Lady Alice Fitzwilliam' (in pot) inside and the scent cheers me as I walk past. From now on she will be invited in each spring until she outgrows her welcome in my modest sized hall.

Shirley Snook

Leinster Reports

Visit to Kilmacurragh Arboretum, May 12th

Saturday, May 12th, found the Leinster group at Kilmacurragh, - "Glasnevin in the Country" - on a guided tour given by Phillip Quedsted of the O.P.W. We learned a lot about the history of this estate going back to medieval times, to the granting of land by Cromwell to the Acton family, the building of the Queen Anne style house in the 1690s with its accompanying parkland and deer park. Wings were added to the house in the 1840s and the estate extended to about 5,300 acres by the mid 19th century. A specimen of *Quercus petraea*, the Sessile Oak, dates from this period.

Thomas Acton and his sister Janet were responsible for the creation of the arboretum and garden we now cherish. From 1850 onwards, at a time of great botanical and geographical exploration worldwide, they collected and planted flowering shrubs and conifers in the "Robinsonian" style. Many plants which could not tolerate the alkaline soil at Glasnevin were exchanged by David and Sir Frederick Moore with Kilmacurragh plants and found happier homes in the acid conditions of Co. Wicklow. Many species of *Rhododendron* including *R. falconeri*, *R. griffithianum*, *R. grande*, *R. fortunei*, *R. arboretum roseum*, and *R. luteum* were in full flower and thriving in these naturalistic growing conditions.

Phillip guided us around past a *Drimys winteri* in full flower to the "best oak avenue in Ireland" along what was originally the public road on the edge of the estate. We walked reverently along the "Monks' Walk", a yew walk probably dating back to the monastery of pre-Cromwellian times. Lime trees were planted outside the yews to force the yews to grow into an arch. This led us to the artificially created pond, reputedly the Monks' fish-pond. The excavated soil from the pond was used to build a ha-ha between the garden and the deer park. Also on view here were some "champion" trees, *Fitzroya cupressoides*, the Patagonian cypress, and *Abies spectabilis*, just two of the eight champion trees of Ireland as regards height and girth to be found growing at Kilmacurragh. We passed *Laurelia serrata* with its wonderfully scented leaves. We admired *Cryptomeria japonica*, *Sequoiadendron giganteum*, (150 years old), *Araucaria*

araucana and also *Embotrium coccineum* in full flower. These are only a few of many specimens to be noted in the month of May. Phillip's advice is to visit every 2 weeks between April and June to get a full flavour of seasonal changes and emergence of leaves and flowers, unfurling fern fronds, carpets of bluebells etc.

So what of the future of Kilmacurragh? Currently the house is in ruins with no money or plans for its restoration. The walled garden is used by Coillte for its Tree Improvement Centre. A new programme is being carried out, overseen by Seamus O'Brien, which will maintain the historic collection, linked to plant collectors such as Lobb, Hooker, Wilson and Henry. Areas of the garden are being dedicated to Chinese, Himalayan, South American and Irish native plants of wild-collected origin. A newly planted border along the south-facing old greenhouse wall boasts bananas, echiums, eupatorium, acanthus and nigella. A programme of events, including plant identification, gardening workshops and guided walks, is being organised and delivered by the National Botanic Gardens and the O.P.W. So, if you missed this IGPS visit, perhaps you can participate in another Kilmacurragh event this summer.

Mary Bradshaw.

Munster Reports

Noleen Smyth, Friday April 13th, **"The Role of Horticulture in Plant Conservation"**

Noleen is a consultant for Botanical and Environmental Conservation Consultants based in Dublin, and is currently finishing a PhD. thesis. She also spent three months on Pitcairn Island., which is 2500 miles from New Zealand, in the South Pacific. She began her talk with a rare plant 'Rose Apple' which had been observed by one of the inhabitants on Pitcairn Island, of which there are forty-eight. Noleen talked about climate change and patches of forest. Forty-three per cent of the world's surface needs some form of cultivation. Noleen's talk demonstrated how gardening and horticulture can be used to conserve rare plants and threatened ecosystems. *Abutilus Pitcairnia*, which was once grown in Trinity College, can be found on the Island. There are also many rare ferns endemic to the Island, of which only a few remain.

The inhabitants of Pitcairn started up a nursery to conserve their native plant species. Two thousand native plants grow in the Island nursery, and fourteen hundred are planted out on the hills; planting is achieved using seed traps and ropes.

It was a most interesting and enlightening night, and everyone's attention was held in the knowledgeable awareness of what is happening on Pitcairn Island. Noleen Smyth was very much appreciated.

Kay Twomey



I.G.P.S. at Bloom 2007

By Therese Murphy

When the IGPS was approached and offered a stand at Bloom'07, there was much hesitancy in arriving at a decision. Several factors had to be considered. Because of the plethora of shows now running each has to be evaluated carefully. Luckily the right decision was made and the stand was booked. It proved an exceptional opportunity to showcase the Society, to explain its aims and *raison d'etre*, to sign up new members, and to promote and distribute (i.e. sell!) '*A Heritage of Beauty*'

Bloom '07 ran for four days during which we went from dry to wet, from summer to winter, from one extreme of the Irish weather to the other. On day three our stand had to be relocated because our perch was under water. The move proved fortuitous. On Sunday and Monday we were just inside the main entrance to the Floral Pavilion, and people passed, in great numbers, early in their visit to the show. We signed up several new members.

Despite the horrendous weather, as many as sixteen thousand people turned up on Saturday alone. There were thirty show-gardens on display and the competition was keen. Marco Fussy who sits on the National committee of the IGPS was part of the team responsible for the Kellogg's sponsored garden, which won a Gold Medal. Congratulations Marco.

Who is to know where Bloom '07 will lead. By all accounts it was a great success. When the dust settles and the money is counted it will be interesting to hear the final outcome of the weekend, and if it is to be repeated next year.

To one and all, who helped in any way, and especially to Nilla who did the good Samaritan on several occasions (or was that matron!), a very big thank you.

Go mbeirimid beo ar an am seo aris.



Looking Ahead

Northern Fixtures

July 21st: Annual Picnic and Garden Visit at Daphne & Bill Montgomery's garden

Rosemount, Greyabbey, Co Down; 1.00pm, guided tour commences at 2pm. A wide variety of plants flourish in the benign climate of Strangford Lough. There are two orchards with unusual varieties of apples, a working walled vegetable garden, herbaceous and shrub rose gardens and a southern hemisphere garden. Donations for local charity. Members and guests only - bring your own picnic.

August 15th: Garden visit to Fiona and Roy Simpson at Drumadarragh Lodge,

Brookfield Road, Doagh, Co Antrim; 6.30 for 7.00pm. A country garden with formal, informal and wild elements, including mixed and themed herbaceous borders, a gravel garden, a wildlife garden, and an organically managed vegetable and fruit garden. Members £2.50, Non-members £3.50

September 2nd: Garden Visit to Liam Green, Hampstead Hall,

40 Culmore Road, Londonderry ; 1.30 for 2.00pm. A city garden with mostly formal plantings round the house – including Italian and Japanese gardens, a courtyard with plants trained against the walls, including a flourishing *Magnolia grandiflora*. Donations to local charity.

October 6th: Annual Plant Sale at The Ulster Folk & Transport Museum,

Cultra, Co Down; 12.00-3.00pm - deliveries from 9.00am.

Plants & volunteers wanted. Contact Peter Milligan on 028 4278 8739.

We are settling in at our new location and hope to continue with our successes of the past two years. Again we are likely to attract larger numbers than usual because of the location - please start propagating early !!! Get seed from the IGPS Seed List and start sowing! GOOD-QUALITY PLANTS ONLY PLEASE.

OCTOBER 18 - THE CLOTWORTHY LECTURE

Clotworthy Arts Centre, Antrim; 7.30pm. '*Emblems in Arcadia – the Meanings behind 18th century Gardens*', Richard Wheeler, Curator, Gardens and Parks, National Trust.

Representations of the great gardens of the Whig ruling class are often vibrant animated landscapes. Characters cross the stage as both actors and audience; gardeners are a quasi Greek Chorus. Richard explains the personal and political morality in the statues, inscriptions and buildings of these magnificent gardens. Refreshments provided. Members free, non-members £2.00. Joint with Antrim Borough Council.

Munster Fixtures

Saturday Sept 8th. An afternoon visit to Mount Congreve gardens.

Meeting at 2.00pm at Mount Congreve, Waterford.

Mount Congreve boasts one of the biggest collections of rhododendrons in the world, certainly the biggest in Europe, with 3,500 cultivars, 650 named camellias and 350 named cultivars of Japanese maple. This is the world's largest plant collection and started by a man who decided at the age of eleven to start planting and has never stopped. In his one hundredth year Ambrose Congreve is still developing the place and his most recent projects have been the bog garden and pinetum. All are welcome! Directions: On the main Cork to Waterford road, there is a small turning to the left just after Kilmeaden village. Continue to a T-junction, turn right and the gates are immediately on your left.

If you wish to contact Therese Murphy for any further information, her number is 021 7331451

Friday, 5th Oct: "Gardens of Italy, Design and Development" Patrick Quigley.

It goes without saying that Patrick is well known to all members. He is very passionate about Italian gardens especially those from the Renaissance to the present day. We anticipate a really good turnout for the first evening meeting of the season.

All Evening meetings will be held in The SMA Hall at Wilton, Cork starting at 7.45 pm.

Leinster Fixtures

Saturday 14th July 2pm. Garden Visit to Anne Condell,

Warbel Bank, Newtownmountkennedy, Co. Wicklow.

Situated on the south side of Newtownmountkennedy, approx.300 metres from the village. 2nd entrance on left (green gate)

A large charming old fashioned hillside garden under continuous cultivation for over 100 years .

Thursday 27th September ' Plants and Flowers at Home and Abroad'

By Philip Jacob. The Jacob family have been gardening in Shankill for many years.

Thursday 4th October Panayoti Kelaidis

From Denver, Colorado. Joint with The Alpine Society of Ireland.

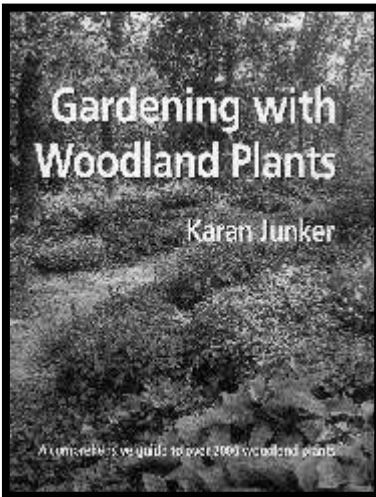
Panayoti Kelaidis is a plant explorer, gardener and public garden administrator associated with Denver Botanic Gardens where he is now Director of Outreach



Worth a Read

In latter years there has been a burgeoning interest in growing woodland plants. This interest has been fed by the regular introduction of ever more interesting species whether from North America or from Asia. Karan Junker has had more than a passing interest in these plants and has run a very successful nursery for many years where the emphasis has been on woodland plants. She has also developed a very interesting woodland garden herself over the past twenty years, so when we read her book on woodland plants we realise that it has been written from hard-won experience.

“Gardening with Woodland Plants” is above all a comprehensive guide to a long list of woodland plants, over 2000 in fact, and it describes not alone those regularly grown over the years but also gives a welcome account of many relatively new species to our gardens.

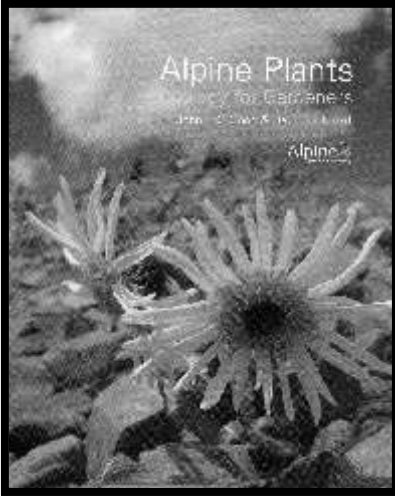


The book begins with guidelines on how to develop a woodland garden, a description of the layers within woodland, the assessment of growing conditions, preparation of growing situations and the selection of plants. Quite honestly, I believe she devoted a little too much time to this section of the book as I imagine those with an interest in such a specialised book would have a reasonably good grasp of the arrangement of plants which occurs naturally in a woodland and would be more interested in finding out more about the plants and in being introduced to new species and cultivars suitable for their garden. In this aspect this book is certainly not wanting in the least. The selection of species described is indeed comprehensive, covering over two thousand plants as I mentioned previously. The

descriptions are concise yet thorough and give clear information regarding the growing conditions required for each. The selection contains trees, shrubs, herbaceous and bulbous plants, sufficient to provide interest within the garden right through the year. Cultivars of note are also described. The book is well illustrated with excellent photographs, a total of 352 chosen to show those less well known, those which are of particular interest and those which are simply beautiful.

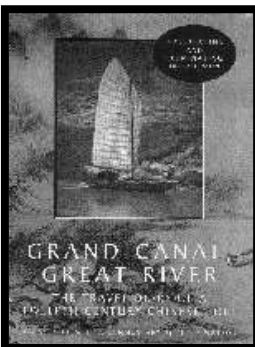
This is an excellent book, very readable and very usable as a reference book. I recommend it to you without hesitation. [*Gardening with Woodland Plants*, Karan Junker, Timber Press, London, 2006, HB, 400pp, £30, ISBN13: 978-0-88192-821-1]

For those of you, and I believe there are quite a few, with an interest in growing alpine plants "*Alpine Plants – Ecology for Gardeners*" by John E.G. Good and David Millward will prove an interesting and informative read. The approach in this book is somewhat different to what we normally experience. Here is not a list of plant descriptions with comments etc. but rather a comprehensive and very thorough description of the habitats and ecology of alpine plants. Chapters cover the Arctic and Alpine ecosystems, geology and soil, the impact of snow cover, nutrition of alpine plants, their reproduction, origins and distribution. This is the information one needs to have to grow these sometimes quite challenging plants well in the garden.



This approach of describing the ecosystems and all that effects the growth of alpine plants is perhaps a very good way to approach gardening. It puts the needs of the plant first and, by explaining these to us, certainly may

help us to grow them better. Excellent photographs and diagrams illustrate the book and add to what is a high quality production. The book is co-published by the Alpine Garden Society and both authors are experienced alpine plant growers. For the enthusiast this will certainly be worth a read. [*Alpine Plants – Ecology for Gardeners*, John E.G. Good and David Millward, Batsford, London, 2007, HB, 178pp, £25, ISBN 10:0713490179]



Finally, something quite different: "*Grand Canal, Great River*" is a translation of a daily diary kept by Lu You, a twelfth century Chinese poet, politician and historian, as he travelled from east to west China to take up an administrative post, a remarkable journey of 1,800 miles from Shanghai to Sichuan along the Grand Canal and onto the Yangzi River. Along the way he described the ever-changing landscape, historical sites, shrines, monasteries etc. It gives a remarkable insight into twelfth century China. The translator, Philip Watson, adds copious notes to flesh out many of Lu You's diary entries. A very interesting book. [*Grand Canal, Great River*, Philip Watson, Frances Lincoln, London, 2007, HB, 255pp, £20, ISBN 978-0-7112-2719-4]



The Newsletter of the Irish Garden Plant Society

The Irish Garden Plant Society

The Aims of the Society are:

- **The study of plants cultivated in Ireland, and their history.**
- **The development of horticulture in Ireland**
- **The education of members on the cultivation and conservation of garden plants.**
- **To research and locate garden plants considered rare or in need of conservation, especially those raised in Ireland by Irish gardeners and nurserymen.**
- **To co-operate with horticulturalists, botanists, botanical and other gardens, individuals and organisations in Ireland and elsewhere in these matters.**
- **To issue and publish information on the garden plants of Ireland and to facilitate the exchange of information with those interested individuals and groups.**

Correspondence:

*For membership information, general correspondence, enquiries etc:
The Irish Garden Plant Society, c/o The National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin,
Dublin 9.*

(Please note that staff at the Botanic Gardens cannot take telephone enquiries about the IGPS. They simply facilitate by providing a postal address for the convenience of committee members.)

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