

The Newsletter of the
IRISH GARDEN PLANT SOCIETY



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EDITORIAL

Dear Members,

It is especially good to have articles about Irish cultivars in the newsletter. Séamus O'Brien, Sally O'Halloran and Patrick Quigley have interesting contributions in this issue while Charles Nelson draws out attention to items of Irish interest in Graham Stuart Thomas' posthumously published book.

Three gardening events of the past while are worth mentioning as they were highly successful, featured many Irish cultivars and set a standard of excellence to be imitated: the Snowdrop Week in Altamont Gardens organised by Paul Cutler and staff, the open day as part of the RHS Bicentenary Celebration at Bob Gordon's and Margaret Glynn's gardens in Ballymena, both IGPS members and The Plantsmans' Day at Glasnevin, organised by Paul Maher, Séamus O'Brien and staff. The highest of praise is due to all involved as they were marvellous occasions. Thankfully, the attendances reflected the excellence of the events. Encore all three?

From the reports received, IGPS events throughout the country have provided a winter of excellent gardening entertainment and motivation to members. IGPS members' gardens will surely be areas of outstanding beauty this summer. Well done, organisers!

Best wishes to Dr. Donal Synnott on his retirement from the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin. His support for the IGPS has been generously given and much appreciated. May all flowers bloom profusely in his garden.

Rose Sevastopulo is retiring from her position as Executive Secretary of the Society. She has been a stalwart of the Society for many years and great praise and thanks are due to her along with our best wishes for her continued involvement in gardening.

Watch out for the Chelsea Flower Show where Diarmuid Gavin will have a show garden on display.

Paddy Tobin, April 2004

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Front Cover Illustration, by Susan Sex, shows Clematis 'Lorcan O'Brien'

Two Very Special New Clematis Cultivars

by Seamus O'Brien.

In the autumn of 1997, while managing Beech Park in Clonsilla, I joined a five week autumn expedition to south-eastern Tibet led by the well known British plant hunter, Keith Rushforth. The most knowledgeable plantsman with whom I have ever travelled, Keith brought us to areas of that fascinating country where we found several species new to science. Without a doubt, south-eastern Tibet is the most exciting place in the world to plant hunt. This unspoiled land is sometimes compared to the north and the south poles as being the last great uncharted territory on earth and hundreds of new species remain to be discovered.

One of the plants that were to become a familiar sight on our travels across the roof of the world was *Clematis tibetana* ssp. *vernayi*. This is a relatively common plant in Nepal and south-eastern Tibet where it is found scrambling its way (to about 3 to 4 metres tall) through shrubs and small trees in open thickets. Belonging to the Orientalis Group (Subsection Meclatis) this subspecies is mainly found on rocky dry slopes and as a consequence is very drought tolerant and, coming from a relatively high altitude, is extremely hardy. In the wilds of Tibet the thick, fleshy four-sepalled flowers are carried in profusion in the axils of narrow, finely divided glaucous leaves. The best known selection of *Clematis tibetana* ssp. *vernayi* is the "Orange Peel Clematis" that was collected near Lhasa, the ancient capital of Tibet and former seat of the Dalai Lama. This outstanding collection was made by Ludlow, Sherriff and Elliott under their L & S 13342. It is well known for its very thick lemon yellow "orange-peel" like sepals.

We found it to be a very variable plant both in flower colour and foliage and towards the end of the trip I succeeded in finding plants with ripe, viable seeds. Of the collections I made, (It was not collected by any of the other expedition members, as far as I am aware) one showed the typical yellow flowers, another was a good orange yet in cultivation both of these plants turned out to be extremely shy flowered and I soon sent them to the compost heap. The final collection was made from a plant laden with seed heads but which had finished flowering so I had no idea what colour it would be in cultivation. The seed heads are a distinctive and very handsome feature of this subspecies which was described in 1937 from collections made by the American botanists Vernay and Cutting near Gyantze in Tibet. It was introduced to cultivation by Ludlow, Sherriff and Elliot from the same area in 1947. This subspecies is extremely variable in flower colour and foliage. I have seen flowering plants of a Nepalese collection made by Noeleen Smyth that differ in the extreme to my own Tibetan sourced plants.

In July 2001, I returned to Nepal and Tibet with Keith Rushforth and Vinh and Peta Burton-Smyth. During our travels we frequently came across this *Clematis* in outstanding shades of purple-black, brown and fawn. We all agreed that these were beautiful plants and deserved to be introduced into cultivation. It was July however; no seed had formed but we thought it would be worthwhile to return some autumn in the future to collect seeds and so we recorded their locations with the intention of going back at a time when viable seeds would have set.

Imagine my surprise then on my return to Dublin when someone told me to “get out to Airfield, one of your *Clematis* seedlings has flowered there and it’s black!!!!” I was mesmerised to learn that having travelled thousands of miles to see it flower in Tibet that one of my own seedlings had turned out to be this fabulous form. On my return from Tibet in October 1997, I had sent out duplicate seeds from Beech Park (the former Shackleton Garden) both to Airfield and the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, where plants were raised in the spring of 1998.

Two weeks later, the Glasnevin plant bloomed for the very first time; it knocked our socks off and immediately we knew we had a new and outstanding cultivar. This purple-black seedling (jet black in bud) carried masses of nodding bell shaped flowers, with the sepals later spreading to give a star-shaped flower. These thick fleshy sepals (petal-like floral parts) are downy on the inside and are followed by handsome silky seed heads.

It needed a name we thought and after many suggestions Emer O’ Reilly, then a student at Glasnevin and now based at Airfield, thought ‘Glasnevin Dusk’ would be appropriate and we agreed! The plant at Airfield by the way is very like ‘Glasnevin Dusk’ but is not as deep a black when in bud. It has been propagated and these plants should not be labelled ‘Glasnevin Dusk’ on any account.

The second Glasnevin seedling from the same seed batch was a plant that was growing near the Camellia circle opposite the rose garden bridge where it did not thrive so I moved it to a fence dividing the Chinese slope from the rear of the Curvilinear Range of glasshouses. It obviously liked its new home and immediately made vigorous growth and flowered heavily last summer. This plant bears long fawn-coloured thick-sepalled flowers which are streaked light brown. The flowers are tubular in shape (as opposed to bell-shaped in ‘Glasnevin Dusk’ and it appears to be a more floriferous plant. The inside of these flowers is a light whitish -yellow and densely felted with masses of minute hairs. The flowers do not tend to open into a star shape as in ‘Glasnevin Dusk’ but instead tend to hold their tubular shape. Another distinguishing feature of this plant is the purple stems of the current year’s growth and the very finely divided glaucous leaves.

I could not believe my luck in having raised two outstanding plants from one single seed collection and like ‘Glasnevin Dusk’ this plant caused a great deal of excitement

when it opened its very first flowers in Dublin. I have named this new cultivar in memory of my late brother, Lorcan (1981-2002), from Baltinglass in Co Wicklow and cannot think of a better plant to carry on his name. Its bright and cheery flowers mirror his personality exactly. Like ‘Glasnevin Dusk’, ‘Lorcan O’Brien’ flowers from late June into October giving a long season of interest and then displays masses of handsome seed heads.

Kenneth Cox who has travelled extensively in south-eastern Tibet has republished a new edition of Captain Frank Kingdon Ward’s “Riddle of the Tsangpo Gorges” and on page 252 shows two illustrations of *Clematis tibetana* ssp. *Vernayi*. The first illustration is of a plant that resembles ‘Glasnevin Dusk’ and beneath which he states the following;

“This very common and variable species occurs in quantity over much of south and eastern Tibet. Yellow, orange, brown and purple/black forms often grow together but the yellow forms are the most common. Many are unfortunately rather shy flowering in cultivation, especially as young plants, but the black and blackcurrant-purple flowered forms would create a stir if they turned out to be good garden plants.”

Again, Christopher Grey-Wilson in his excellent monograph, “Clematis, The Genus” states:

“As with many members of the Meclatis Section the flowers, which are basically yellow, can become suffused with brownish-purple or blackish-purple on the exterior. This suffusion is generally in the form of specks or mottling and, in extreme forms, can be so pronounced that the buds appear to be almost black. Such forms rarely live up to their expectations in cultivation, the results (are) generally disappointing if not dowdy. The original L & S. 13342 is still the finest manifestation of var. *vernayi* in cultivation.”

Six decades after it was first raised, Ludlow, Sherriff and Elliot’s “Orange Peel Clematis” now has competition from two new Irish cultivars and it will be interesting to see how these are greeted by growers. *Clematis* ‘Glasnevin Dusk’ has been distributed to few private growers but may be seen at the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin and at Helen Dillon’s garden at 45 Sandford Road, Ranelagh. *Clematis* ‘Lorcan O’Brien’ grows only at Glasnevin but we hope to distribute both plants this year.

Both cultivars have been officially accepted and registered by Victoria Matthews, the International Clematis and Lily Registrar for the Royal Horticultural Society, UK. Type specimens (dried herbarium specimens that will act as the definitive descriptive samples) have been deposited in the cultivar herbarium at the RHS Garden, Wisley. In Victoria Matthews opinion both cultivars will be extremely popular in the American and Japanese cut flower market and another point in their favour is that the smaller flowered cultivars are very much in fashion at the moment.

The Professionals by Rae McIntyre

The first professional gardener I knew was a man called Jimmy who had been trained at Lynwood in Cookstown. For some reason, unknown to anyone, he left there and came to work in my father's mill when I was a very small child. He was a little man (something I didn't think about until I became a head taller than him at the age of fourteen) but extremely bossy. Even so I adored him. He was the original "Jim will fix it" and repaired broken wooden toys, replaced the heads on dolls who had lost theirs, patched bicycle tyres and was a dab hand with Seccotine when I broke my hated spectacles. Once during a fall of snow, he must have stayed up half the night making a sleigh for me.

In the early 1950's there was a marked decline in the linen industry so the small mill closed down and the workers, including Jimmy, were paid off one Friday evening. Ours was a silent house that weekend but that was shattered on Monday morning by the arrival of Jimmy at 8 o'clock as usual on his creaky old bicycle that no amount of lubricants could stop squeaking. His reply, when asked by my father what he was doing coming to work when he had been paid off, is still quoted in our family, "How", he asked, "would the place survive without me to look after it?" So he was kept on and stayed until he was too old to work. Occasionally he was "lent" to other people like my maternal grandparents who lived two miles away or to the B's who lived about half a mile from us. But he didn't like working for either my grandmother or Mrs B. because he said they were both very bossy women. Coming from him that was rich; what he really meant was that they reacted to his bossiness by asserting themselves. My mother didn't boss him and he thought she was wonderful. Even though he's been dead for nearly forty years she still quotes his pearls of horticultural wisdom and talks about his great skill in gardening.

He was able to make hybrid tea roses grow in the thin limy soil and flourish, something that nobody has been able to do since. The old cabbage rose *Rosa centifolia* performed reasonably well and my mother once had the temerity to plant a rugosa rose. Jimmy did not approve. We are still convinced that he somehow managed to train not just our dog Tony but Tony's visiting friends, boxer Biff Cummings and corgi Nelson Hamilton to lift their legs against this Japanese alien so that it eventually sickened and died. The hybrid tea roses were his pride and joy but my mother was strictly forbidden to cut them for flower arrangements.

My summer holidays from school were seen as a perfect opportunity for him to have an assistant albeit a very unwilling one. I spent many tedious hours peeling small onions for my mother to pickle and folding newspapers in a certain way – and it had to be done with absolute precision – for blanching celery. These jobs just had to be

completed when I was arranging to play tennis; the mere sight of a tennis racquet seemed to incense him. Result: (a) I never became any good at tennis and (b) I have never wanted to grow vegetables or pickle onions. I found it quite strange, after all this bossiness, to be addressed by him as Miss Bruce when I was about sixteen. He retired not long after that.

His replacement Tommy hadn't a tenth of Jimmy's knowledge. The roses all died within a year and the ornamental parts of the garden looked dishevelled even to my uncritical eyes. After an incident when my mother asked Tommy to prepare a piece of soil for replanting she banished him from the flower garden for good. She discovered that he hadn't removed ground elder roots but simply buried them two inches down then raked the soil carefully over the top. He was confined to the vegetable garden and frequently "lent" to my bossy granny and the neighbour Mrs B.

I've already written on these pages about my own development as an addicted gardener so won't go into all that again. In the early days of my marriage, when I thought I should have a garden without doing any actual gardening, a series of young boys came along to do the weeding for pocket money. Most of them seemed to want the money for cigarettes so smoke apparently rising from flowerbeds was a common sight.

The first proper gardener I employed (when we moved to our present house) was a chap called Artie who helped me to lay out the garden in 1978 after I had been bitten irrevocably by the gardening bug. He was an extremely hard worker and thought nothing of lifting huge stones which had been brought from a nearby basalt quarry. I looked forward to his help with all my plans but tragically he was blown to pieces one night in a booby-trapped car. For several years after that I had nobody working here but then middle age and an increasing tendency to have a sore back if I lifted anything heavier than half a stone set in simultaneously.

It was Davy who found Amazing Aaron for me. Aaron agreed to come here once a week during the fishing season when conditions were not good for his sport i.e. when the sun was shining and local rivers were low. In our microclimate the sun is normally not shining and if local rivers are not flooding they've either just been or are about to. So the number of days when he worked here was limited but he could do an amazing amount of work. Fishing so much must have trained his powers of concentration because he could ignore everything but the job on hand. This is what happened on the day Davy had his heart attack. We didn't realise it was a heart attack at the time and thought it was an old rugby injury causing acute pain in his shoulder. However he actually wanted the doctor to visit him which was so unusual a state of affairs that I almost panicked. Anyway the doctor came followed by the cardiac ambulance complete with paramedics and Davy was taken to Coleraine Hospital. After a lapse of one hour I was allowed to go to the hospital too so that by 2 pm I had been rushing

about attending to all the things that needed it. I suddenly remembered about Aaron who, by that time, had been working for five hours without even a drink of water or a bite to eat while he diligently weeded three largish beds. Unfortunately the powers-that-be disapproved of his fishing / gardening lifestyle and he was sent to work full time in an abattoir or something.

I cannot even remember the name of the Amazing Aaron's successor although Utterly Useless would have suited him admirably. He claimed he could do everything but was painfully inept. His wife was doing the housework on the same day as his so-called gardening and she was hopeless too. When he came into the house at lunchtime they embraced each other, were practically snogging in the kitchen, something that Davy and I found acutely embarrassing. Fortunately I didn't have to go through the unpleasant business of sacking them. Joe, who lives across the road, did that. Useless Wifey did his housework too and he told her to leave at once when he caught her spraying Pledge round a room to make him think she had been polishing. She said she was leaving anyway because - Surprise! Surprise! - she was pregnant. Hopeless Husband thankfully couldn't "garden" any more because he needed to look after her.

Joe (not the Joe who lives across the road) followed and thankfully he was totally different. He had been trained in horticulture in an august institution in Coleraine known as B.A.T.S. (Bann Area Training Services) – not a very auspicious acronym. However he knew what he was doing and, in the six years he was here, trained and tidied many unruly shrubs, even removed some if necessary. I learnt quite a lot from him and I always enjoyed "the crack" when we were working together. Unfortunately he would never gossip about anyone (there's nothing as enjoyable as a juicy local scandal) but he had a good line in platitudes whether they were relevant or not. "You'll never miss the water till the well runs dry" he would say if a trailing hosepipe had a kink in it. Or "it's a long lane that has no turning" after we had been digging or pulling weeds all morning and there were still millions more to remove. Or "what goes round comes round" if I was scattering slug pellets round a hosta. Joe had to stop last year just before the I.G.P.S. visitation because he was suffering from vertigo and high blood pressure.

Andy who comes here now about once a month is mind-bogglingly workaholic. He's as thin as the rake which he can wield so proficiently and is full of energy. Methinks there must be a strong connection between these two factors. My winter project was to move the mess of *Euphorbia griffithii* "Dixter" and other thugs out of one border and move the deciduous azaleas to the rich soil there because they were only performing half-heartedly where they were. Andy went through the border like an efficient tornado, removed everything he was told to, dug out the thirteen azaleas and another few shrubs and replanted them. I worked alongside him and we finished the job on one Saturday in September. Afterwards I was wrecked but he was going to cut the grass in two other gardens. He won't even stop for a cup tea for heaven's sake.

A Memorable Irish Cultivar in Kilkenny Castle Park

By Sally O' Halloran, Office of Public Works

I received an email from a friend in America recently asking me to explain what I had meant by the expression, 'putting it on the long finger'. I suddenly became aware that it was more than just an expression I use, but an actual way of life! This was further highlighted when I received an email from an editor, who shall remain unnamed, titled 'no excuses for not writing this month'!

Taking all this into consideration, I decided to look at what I, as an IGPS member had 'put on the long finger'. The list went as follows, planting Irish cultivars in the three historic gardens under my care, recording the cultivars already there and forwarding the data to the Irish Cultivars Co-ordinator, collection of seed and propagation material for distribution and, finally, writing about same for the IGPS newsletter.

To begin with, Kilkenny Castle Park already has one Irish cultivar in its plant collection, *Betula utilis* 'Trinity College'. On the 8th May 1993, Finola Reid, garden historian and esteemed member of the IGPS, was involved in the planting of the five trees of *B.* 'Trinity College', which can be seen today in the hollow, an area beyond the playground of the Castle Park. Because of the upright habit of the trees they have not grown close together and now look very formal in this area, leading into the woodland. A birch grove would be more complimentary to this 19th century landscape, originally laid out by Ninian Niven, (Curator of the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, 1834-1838). This is a difficult tree to source in Ireland but, eventually, a grower was found in Dublin resulting in the planting of eight new trees in the Castle Park. Already the increased planting has created a more naturalised effect.

So, why grow *Betula utilis* 'Trinity College'? David Jewell wrote a wonderful article in the November 2003 edition of 'The Garden', the journal of the Royal Horticultural Society, on the merits of growing birch, titled 'Dressed to Impress'. The reader is encouraged to grow birch because '*birches possess an unmistakable grace and poise that is all their own. Fast-growing yet with an open canopy that casts at most dappled shade, many species are perfectly suited to small gardens and will thrive on most soil types.*' The first reason therefore, is that it is easy to grow and no matter how small the garden it is an ideal choice.

The article goes on to say that the best range of bark colour is on *B. utilis*, the Himalayan birch, of which 'Trinity College' is a form. Its discovery is a charming story. In 1881 Sir Joseph Hooker, Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, sent some seed of *B. utilis* to Frederick Burbidge, the then Curator of the Trinity Botanic

Garden in Ballsbridge, Dublin. Once germinated these young saplings were planted in Ballsbridge and grew into well-formed trees.

In 1901, Burbridge reported to the R.H.S. Scientific Committee: *'We have three trees, the largest 20 feet high, and we value them very highly, not only for their silver-stemmed beauty, especially during winter, but especially because they were born and raised here from seed which Sir J.D. Hooker, K.C.S.I., sent to the Gardens eighteen years ago'* (taken from 'A Heritage of Beauty' by E. Charles Nelson). Unfortunately, those three trees no longer exist, the site in which they grew was sold in 1966, and two hotels have replaced them. E. Charles Nelson in 'An Irish Flower Garden Replanted', writes that *'in one sense this is another memorial tree, a remembrance of a lost garden'*. At that time, the College Botanic Garden at Ballsbridge vied with the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, as one of the great gardens of Ireland and it was, reportedly, one of the best botanical gardens in the world. Therefore growing this tree will help a part of Irish history live on.

Finally, it is an attractive tree and a wonderful addition to any garden or birch collection. In Kilkenny Castle Park, it is planted alongside a specimen of *B. utilis* var. *jacquemontii*, so it is interesting to compare and contrast two forms of the same parent *B. utilis*. In winter by simply rubbing the stems they can be told apart, as *B. 'Trinity College'* has a very rough feel to the branches especially on the newer growth. Both have spectacular white bark, which shines in the winter sun. As said earlier, it has an upright almost fastigate habit, unlike the more open spreading *B. utilis* var. *jacquemontii*. The leaves of *B. 'Trinity College'* are also distinct with toothed margins, long tapering points, and about ten pairs of veins. The upper surface of the leaf is dark green while the lower is paler, forming a subtle contrast on a windy day.

The IGPS Irish cultivar database can now be up-dated to include thirteen *B. utilis* 'Trinity College', in Kilkenny Castle Park! Any members wishing to purchase trees please contact me, although they are only sold bare rooted and so will not be available to buy again until the end of the year. Information on most Irish cultivars can be found in E. Charles Nelson's book, 'A Heritage of Beauty', which is available in the bookshop in Kilkenny Castle.

That wasn't too difficult! Now I just need to think of suitable cultivars for Emo Court and Heywood Gardens. All suggestions are welcome!

Note from Editor:

*At Sally's invitation, the Waterford Garden Plant Society visited Emo Court at the end of last summer. Let me say, quite simply, that if you haven't been there you should certainly make it your business to do so. At this time of year, Sally tells me that the underplanting of *Anemone nemerosa* in the woods is spectacular.*

And thank goodness she has reached the end of one of her long fingers!

The Lisnacloskey Rectory Garden
At
The Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, Cultra
By Pat Quigley

Long term members of the society will probably be familiar with the IGPS garden at the Lisnacloskey Rectory in the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, Cultra, Co. Down. For those of you who have not heard of this before – here is a very brief summary.

It is a period garden, c.1900, created by members of the IGPS and maintained by a small team of volunteers with additional support from museum staff. The project was started in the 1980's, fell by the wayside for a while and was revived in the mid 1990's. A leaflet providing some background to the garden's development and outlining the aims of the IGPS is now available to visitors to the museum.

Many of the plants were donated by members and will continue to be used in the garden, but as with any living plant collection, it is inevitable that some have been lost over the years. Others have lost their vigour and would be better replaced.

After several years of dedicated work by our team of volunteers, we have decided to overhaul the planting of the borders. As this was being planned, we decided that rather than just lift and divide the plant material already in the garden, we should try to incorporate more old Irish cultivars into the scheme. This would be more in keeping with the aims of the IGPS (... *to research, locate and propagate such plants* ...) and would allow us to develop a living collection of old Irish cultivars. An additional requirement is that all the plants must be true to period i.e. pre-1900. In the initial stages, we will continue to use other old varieties of plants – not just Irish ones. However, we see this as an ongoing process with plants being added as we can source them. We will be working on one area at a time, starting with the beds closest to the house.

It is often commented that members living away from the main centres of Dublin, Cork and Belfast have difficulty in getting involved with the activities of the society. We feel that the proposals for the Rectory garden will provide just such an opportunity for being involved. We need to source suitable plants and although some will be purchased, we would like members to contribute plants or cuttings from their gardens. You may recall Brendan Sayers' appeal last year for members to send in details of the Irish cultivars held in their gardens. Some members did respond, but many did not. It may have seemed like an academic exercise at the time, but now you have the opportunity not just to record what Irish cultivars you have, but also to help propagate,

distribute and promote them through our own IGPS garden. All donations will be recorded and a list of the plants and donors compiled. If you have stories on the origins of your particular plant (did you buy it, was it a gift from another garden or has it a family history in your garden...?) let us know. It introduces a personal element to the garden, and we will include the information in our records which we hope to publish in the Newsletter at a later date.

Our planting plan is flexible, taking account of what we can manage to source. At the moment we have three main borders for planting, but we have space to open up other areas if required. Our ultimate aim is quite ambitious – a garden filled with old Irish cultivars, many of which will probably be quite rare. Once established, we would like to propagate from them and promote them through our annual plant sales. We would also like to produce a full catalogue of the plants, detailing their history. An information leaflet will be made available to visitors to the garden so that they can see a collection of our living heritage.

None of this would be possible if it weren't for the dedication of the IGPS volunteers who have worked so hard over the past number of years to bring the garden to its present high standard. I don't think the team members would mind me singling out Andrena Duffin for special praise – she has been the main driving force in the garden for several years now, leaving the rest of us floundering in the wake of her energy and enthusiasm. There are others who deserve our thanks too – members of the museum staff who have been so generous with their time in boosting our efforts with the project in recent years, in particular, Andy Bingham, Paul Hackney and Catherine Tyrie.

So if you would like to get involved in the Lismaclouskey Garden, do get in touch. Even if you don't have any plants to contribute directly, you may be able to research potential plants for us to use and help us to track them down. If you have plants which would be suitable but which you need to propagate for us, let us know so we can plan ahead. We already have offers for some old snowdrop varieties, a double white-flowered lilac, a prostrate rosemary and various herbaceous plants. We would particularly like to get some old daffodil cultivars suitable for naturalising.

If you are able to provide any suitable plants or material for cuttings, please get in touch with:

Patrick Quigley [Hon. Sec. Tel: 028 90590898 (w) or 028 90225484 (h), e-mail: pmquigley@aol.com]

Or Andrena Duffin [Lismaclouskey co-ordinator Tel: 028 91852668].

Cyclamen in the Garden, Part 2 by Paul Cutler

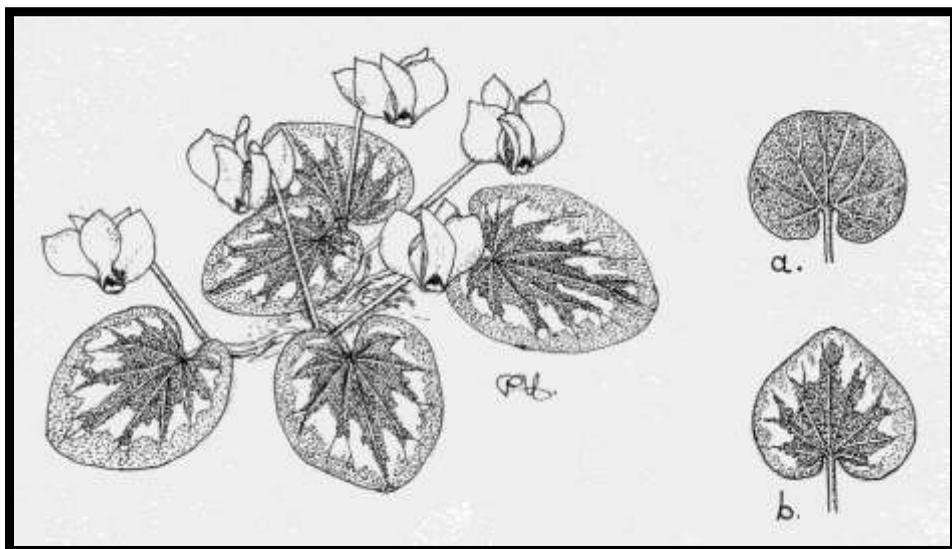
Cyclamen Coum:

This cyclamen is one of the jewels of the winter. It is very valuable for bringing colour to the garden from the beginning of January to late February or early March, and associates beautifully with other early bulbous plants, such as the smaller *Galanthus*, *Anemone blanda* and *Eranthis hyemalis*.

It grows well in sun or semi-shade, providing humus-rich soil and good drainage are provided. Like many other *Cyclamen*, its flowers and leaves are prone to attack by grey mould (botrytis) when in too damp an environment.

Cyclamen coum is native to parts of S.E. Europe and Asia Minor and is variable in the wild. The forms most commonly grown in gardens are *C. coum* subsp. *coum*, which has very round dark green leaves, often unmarked, and *C. coum* subsp. *caucasicum* which is a slightly larger plant with heart-shaped leaves. Flower colour can vary from magenta, through shades of pink, to white but always with a purple blotch at the base of each petal.

This is another easy species from seed. I find that young potted seedlings prefer cool, shady growing conditions.



Cyclamen coum a. *C. coum* subsp. *coum* b. *C. coum* subsp. *caucasicum*
Illustration by Paul Cutler.

Cyclamen pseudibericum

This species appears like an oversized *C. coum* having longer petals, always magenta in colour with a purple blotch and white patches at the base. It is a neat looking plant producing a good number of erectly-held flowers during March in the centre of a rosette of heart-shaped leaves.

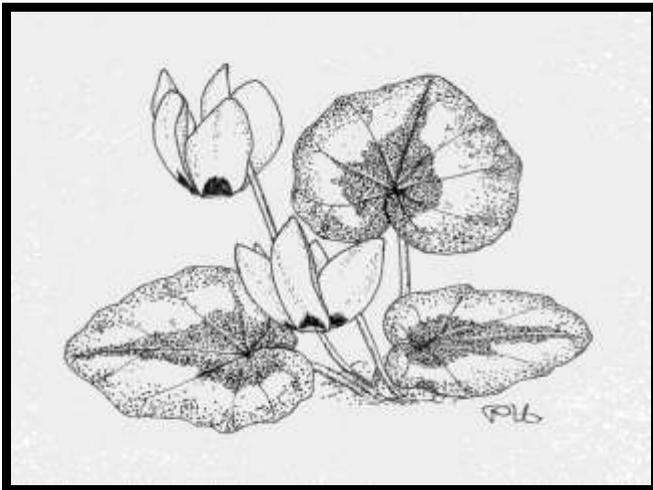
C. pseudibericum is one of the best species for pot culture in a cold glasshouse, but is well worth a try in the garden. Coming from Southern Turkey, it is a slightly tender species and needs careful placing in the garden. Choose a very sheltered spot, with good drainage in sun or semi-shade.

Cyclamen libanoticum

This is one of the most beautiful of *Cyclamen* species. It has very large flowers, for the size of the plant, in a beautiful shading of pale pink to white, produced in March and April. The fleshy leaves are interestingly shaped and marked. It makes a fine pot plant. Out in the garden it is by no means easy, but worth a try.

Once thought to be extinct in the wild, small numbers of *Cyclamen libanoticum* were re-discovered growing in an area of limestone mountains in the Lebanon.

In my experience, this species is slightly more tender than the last described but will survive in Irish gardens with careful placing in a very sheltered spot in sun or light shade. Good drainage is essential, so it is a good subject for the rock garden. A covering of fleece is advisable if very hard frost is forecast.



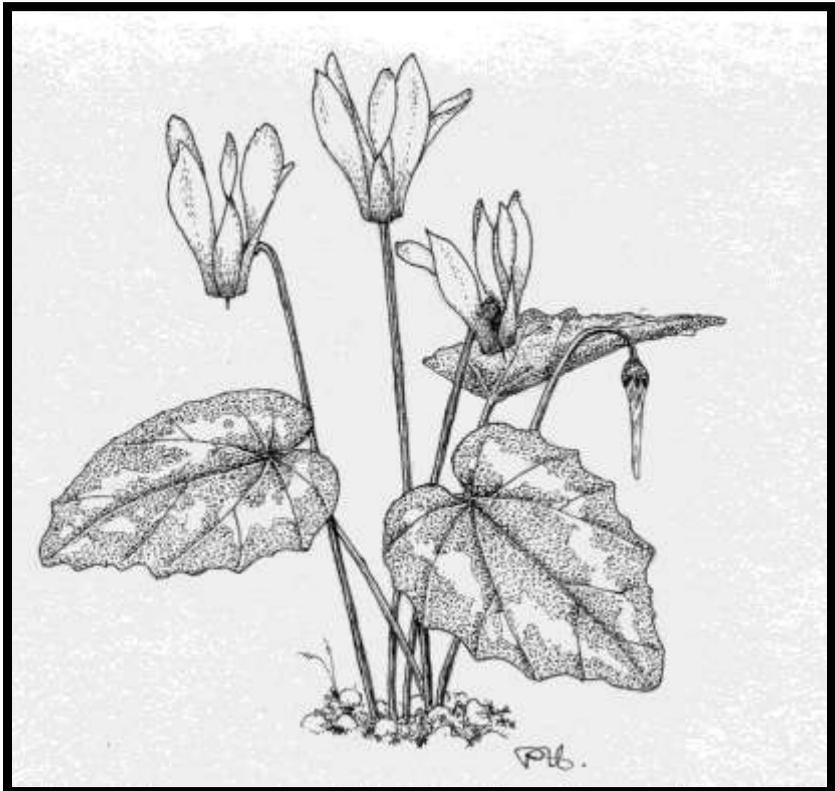
Cyclamen libanoticum. Illustration by Paul Cutler.

Cyclamen repandum

Although often described as a slightly tender species, *Cyclamen repandum* is, in fact, one of the most suited to the Irish climate, enjoying cool, moist, shady conditions. Leafy soil in deciduous woodlands is ideal, where it associates well with wood anemones, bluebells and many other woodland plants.

The last of the spring-flowering species, its flowers appear from March to May. It varies a lot in flower colour and leaf markings, due to the different wild forms across its distribution range, which is from Southern France across the Mediterranean region to Greece and its islands. *Cyclamen repandum subsp. peloponnesiacum* is particularly striking as its leaves are heavily spotted with silvery white.

Cyclamen repandum is easily raised from fresh seed, but for some reason, it doesn't take to pot culture very well so two or three year old seedlings are best planted out as soon as robust enough.



Cyclamen repandum. Illustration by Paul Cutler.

Cyclamen purpurascens

Cyclamen purpurascens, formerly known as *C. europeum*, is the only mid-summer flowering species. Its main flowering time is July, but it tends to produce flowers gradually from June through to October. They are variable in colour from pale pink to deep rose and are strongly scented. The almost round to heart-shaped leaves usually have good silver markings, sometimes almost entirely silver, but in other forms, plain green.

This is the most northerly species in the wild, with a wide distribution across Europe from France to the Caucasus. It is fully hardy in Ireland and retains its leaves throughout the year, needing a moist, leafy, shady situation where it will not dry out at any time during the year.

I find that *Cyclamen purpurascens* regularly sets seed pods, but very little viable seed develops in these.

Where to obtain plants:

Due to the serious problem of over collection of *Cyclamen* from the wild, export of plants and tubers is prohibited between countries except under special licence. Luckily for us this doesn't apply within the EU countries and there are several bulb specialist nurseries in Britain where *Cyclamen* can be bought by mail order.

A *Cyclamen* specialist nursery where all the species I have described can be purchased is Tile Barn Nursery, Standen Street, Iden Green, Benenden, Kent TN17 4LB. Tel. 0044 1580 240221. They request a s.a.e. for a catalogue. They also have a website: www.tilebarn-cyclamen.co.uk

For further information on cyclamen, the best source is the Cyclamen Society. The Society has an excellent website with lots of information on every species: www.cyclamen.org An advantage of joining is that its seed distribution has a very large selection, dispatched in late summer while the seed is fresh; the best time for germination.

For those who prefer to obtain information from a book, *Cyclamen* by Christopher Grey-Wilson (Batsford 2002) is the most comprehensive work on *Cyclamen*. A review of this book can be found in the last issue of this newsletter.

Paul, for the second year, organised a very successful Snowdrop Week in Altamont Gardens, Carlow, during the second week of April. Hoping to arrive on a quiet day, I attended mid-week to find a group of 80+ before me and a second guided tour that afternoon was almost as well attended. This has been a great success, very popular, and great praise and thanks are due to Paul and the staff at Altamont. Ed.

A Ghanaian Diary by Margaret O Brien

Monday, July 14, 2003

This morning I am tired. My cold is draining me and I hate to take antibiotics, but of course I already take some for Malaria prevention. Uniflu and a large glass of cool water make me feel a little better. My usual cold shower.....is there no hot water in Ghana? I look forward to the company of my Austrian friend from breakfast yesterday morning, but that does not materialize. I am late this morning so my choice is limited. There is no anticipation of my needs and every plate, knife and spoon had to be asked for.

I set up my office. Thank goodness for the wonderfully large desk provided. I push the telly to one side, along with the telephone directory, a BBC program schedule for October 2002 to March 2003, an appreciation form to be filled out at the end of your stay and a brochure outlining cinema, theatre and language courses for April 2003. I smile, no, giggle to myself.

They have 3 pin plugs. Hey presto.....the laptop and digital camera work like a dream. Something goes right! I work until lunch and go to the dining room for a bite to eat. I rather liked the simple mixed salad of yesterday, so decided on that again. The dressing was great too. And so back to work.

The car is to collect me at 3.00pm. The 'Design Brief' document is finished and I burn it onto a CD, belt and braces style!

Tuesday, July 15, 2003

My morning call is at it bright and early again. I saw him strutting about yesterday when I came 'home'. He takes turns with a cockerel nearby. I listened happily to the birds twittering and tried to imagine what the bird associated with each call might look like. I have seen some pretty little fellows but of course have no names. The natives start early and a car arrives for a resident, door flung open, music playing loudly. Nothing annoys me. The waiting men talk non stop, again loudly and with great feeling, it seems, even more expression than the Italians.

I'm hungry so breakfast before the shower this morning. It's warm, but not overpoweringly so. Actually it looks like rain, which I would love. I want to see what the site will be like after rain.....they tell me I can't imagine the volume which falls leaving floods everywhere. The deep gullies at the side of the roads are an indication of amounts of water falling but I want to see it for myself.

Breakfast alone. The buffet is as usual, but I am a little earlier than yesterday and there are plates and knives! I choose my usual banana, pineapple and watermelon and then toast with butter and pineapple jam. I notice the single jar of pineapple jam is nearly finished, I wonder will there be a different jam tomorrow? I never fail to enjoy the intensity of the fruit flavours, so much better than at home. And tea, at least 2 cups but no milk. I love milk with my tea but suddenly here I don't want it. Three white people sit opposite. Little snippets of their conversation suggest business or a conference. We

nod politely. A Ghanaian family with a curious lovely little boy speak gently to him and each other. The business people leave and are replaced by a large black gentleman who says ‘Good Morning’. I politely return the compliment, but avoid eye contact thereafter. After saying my goodbyes I return to the room. The sky has become quite blue with fluffy clouds.....no rain today I suspect. Pity!

The shower is cold, as usual, but once my body temperature has lowered I love it and would not have a hot shower now even if there were hot water.

And once more to work. It’s surprisingly easy to convert your hotel room to an office, provided you haven’t forgotten any vital piece of equipment. I download yesterday’s photos and rearrange the ‘Design Brief’ document, adding the information collected yesterday.

My car and driver will arrive shortly at 10.30, completely punctually. And another day’s adventure begins. How will I ever return to life at home!



The Traveller’s Joy Palm. Photo by Margaret O Brien

Wednesday 16th July

Its 10.30 and I am working in my ‘Office’. Koffi announces on the phone that he is here to collect me. Mad dash to get all my equipment together, packed with nothing I might need forgotten. I presume I am going for my Design Brief meeting. We arrive at Mrs. R’s office. I am invited to take as long as I need to do my printing. I don’t have any at the moment having too much to do with all I printed yesterday. We drive to the residence. Mr. R. is on the phone but greets me with a warm handshake. Mrs R arrives and tells me we will have our meeting when I have some drawings to show and tells me Mr. R. is off to buy some plants. We sit and chat about our families and then a decision is taken for my visit to the Botanic. A visit to the botanic gardens is high on my agenda....great.....labelled plants. The Royal Aburi Botanic Gardens is 60km away. We drive along the now familiar highway towards the outskirts of Accra. Just

before the city limits is a permanent market area. The signs amuse me. The 'God is Good Beauty Salon', a small hut with hand painted faces on the sign. The 'Lord will Provide Hair Studio, with outdoor cutting facilities in the shade of the veranda. The market is teeming with life. Graceful ladies in colourful dresses balance glazed boxes on their heads, full of plantain chips to sell. Another balances two basins with what looks like washing, skilfully on her head, without a finger to help balance the load. Rather pretty small goats with their kids saunter around. Washing machines and settees alike are displayed on the roadside without the luxury of cement forecourts. People talk animatedly to each other and life certainly does not seem dull. The same unfortunately can't be said for the weather. It becomes darker and darker. I know I wanted to experience the force of the rain before I left but Good Grief, not today! Think of the worst thunderstorm rain you have ever experienced in Ireland, now multiply that by 3.....there you have it. Red brown muddy water travelled in instant rivers to the side of the road and crossed over from time to time. Koffi assures me the view is super.....I have to take his word for it! We climb and climb. A sign announces our arrival in the Aburi region. Little shops have been set up at either side of the road and here are wonderful hand made gifts for sale, but my interest lies only in plants. There will be plenty of time for souvenir hunting on my return visit. We drive around as much as we can. School children, neatly dressed in their orange shirts and brown skirts or trousers, chat their way home.

Thursday 17th July

A slightly later than the organised 9am collection saw us whizzing off to the University of Ghana to try and find a suitable encyclopaedia on Tropical ornamental plants. The University bookshop is packed with new and second had at reasonable rates. Everybody is very helpful and I choose two. One in particular holds lots of technical information on each plant but no photos, unfortunately. The other is a general gardening techniques guide but I like it for its regional slant. It is a very visually beautifully designed campus and while I take some photos, Koffi looks at the notice board located outside, near the ornamental pond. We locate the department of Botany and by great luck a car which is pulling out stops and out pops the Professor of Botany. I ask about my book requirements and he is so helpful. He tells me of a book he has written on Useful Plants of Ghana which does include some photos and regrets that his own copy is in his house, otherwise I could see it. It's available through Kew. It's on my to-do list for when I return. I need to print out some photos and go to Mrs. Rawling's offices. Mildred has kindly provided the new ink cartridge and after 3 false starts the printer buzzes into action. Success!

I need to visit the chemist on the way back to the hotel but I am now worried that my time is going to be too little. Will I ever finish the concepts and draft plan on time?

Margaret, an IGPS member, runs her own design and landscaping service from Stradbally, Co. Waterford. Ed.

**Leaves from a sun-lounger - E. Charles Nelson writes
"Do you think that plant might have a little brother?"**

I've just been reading Graham Stuart Thomas's last book completed shortly before he died, aged 94, in Springtime 2003. *Recollections of Great Gardeners* is a charming compilation recalling 60-odd gardens and their creators mainly from the mid- to late-twentieth century. While this is not a review of the book, I thought it would be worth highlighting the Irish aspects of *Recollections* ...

The gardeners of Ireland who are recollected include Mrs Betty Farquhar of Ardsallagh, Co. Tipperary, Drs Molly and Noel Sanderson of Ishlan, Ballymoney, Co. Antrim, the Walpoles of Mount Usher, Co. Wicklow, and David Shackleton of Beech Park, Co. Dublin. Lady Moore is remembered too, in an essay which I asked Graham to write that was first published many years ago in *Moorea* - in *Recollections* ... his photographs are not included. Hugh Armytage Moore of Rowallane, Vera Mackie of Guincho, and Lady Londonderry of Mount Stewart, all of the County Down, each has a chapter.

A few other Irish connections are shared: "The Messels" manage, by virtue of marriage, to encompass Birr Castle, Co. Offaly, as well as Nymans in Sussex, while most of the encomium for Harold Ainsworth Peto concerns not Ilford Manor in Wiltshire but Inacullin at Glengarriff, Co. Cork. In "Overture", wherein Graham introduces these essays, other Irish gardens are noticed including Malahide Castle, Co. Dublin and Heywood, Co. Laois, and mention is made of such notables as Murray Hornibrook, Augustine Henry and the Marquis of Headfort. William Robinson is also included even though Graham "did not have the good fortune to meet him".

Given that this is a posthumous publication, the opportunity has been taken to pay tribute to Graham himself. John Sales's foreword is both affectionate and honest. John draws an excellent portrait of this "plantsman of astonishing knowledge", who had had tea with Gertrude Jekyll in 1931, advised King George VI and Queen Elizabeth (the late Queen Mother) on planting shrub roses at Royal Lodge, Windsor, and was part-time Gardens Advisor to The National Trust in which capacity he oversaw, among other projects, the renovation of Mount Stewart, indubitably one of the Trust's - and Ireland's - greatest gardens.

Recollections ... is lightly touched with gardening wisdom and sound advice - it is a pity there is no index to the plants named for more might have been gained by readers. As a flavour I will quote the final sentences of his essay about Molly and Noel Sanderson. "They were wise in three ways. Studying the soil and its possibilities; leaving a sloping lawn empty to help to balance the densely planted beds and borders and rock garden; and having the wit to retire from it before the upkeep got beyond

them. This is something we should all bear in mind rather than having to watch a loved garden overwhelming our capabilities." No-one could disagree.

And my title...? I won't spoil the enjoyment of this book, rightly described by the publisher as idiosyncratic, by retelling the context.

G. S. Thomas, 2003. *Recollections of Great Gardeners*. London: Frances Lincoln (ISBN 0-7112-2288-6) £14.99

Everything in the Garden is Rosy by Dermot Keogh

...but only if you wear rose-tinted spectacles. Reality creeps in with experience and the dawn of reality may not always be worthy of celebration. Every garden has its drab patches, its plants you hurry past when showing visitors around. Other problems may also lurk behind the rosy façade. I'm not referring to the fact that not all plants are equally lovely, long living and easily propagated. Think beauty and the beast combined in the same plant. Think for instance of *Epilobium angustifolium album*. On summer evenings it used stand out in my border, a great big swathe of purest white.

Questions were raised by well meaning friends who knew only of its notorious red relation. I defended it for several years against those sceptics. "It does not seed around". In this I was correct and furthermore I liked the way the swathe increased. But then two years ago the beast went into overdrive and the increase became exponential.

"Get real" said an American friend. "Get real" translated into "Get digging", and reluctantly I did. Dig. Dig. Dig. Huge roots had been surreptitiously undermining the neighbours, spreading out to smother everything this side of Dublin. I toiled long hours to eliminate this terrible beauty but found it had another nasty trick (not totally unknown) in its ruthless efforts to take over the world. From every little piece of root left behind a new *Epilobium* appeared. A year on and I'm still constantly being reminded of my folly as the sprouting continues and new offspring pop up throughout the bed.

Caveat emptor.

Seed Distribution Spring 2004 By Stephen Butler

As I write this at the end of February the cold wind is freezing the will to do much outside, even hard work doesn't seem to keep the body warm, unless, of course, you are inside sowing seeds. Hopefully by the time this gets to you it is really spring weather time.

The seed list this year was certainly longer, well done to all the contributors, especially the new ones. We felt we could offer more packets per request - the only downside is the slight extra work for yours truly. Problems with sourcing the Glassine envelopes meant we had to go for a larger size – far easier for me to fill but harder to stuff into the postage envelopes, but I felt very guilty with some of the finer seed barely occupying a corner of the packet, even if there was a hundred seed in it!

Popularity again rears its head – which seed is the most requested? As with last year I can give a run down on the first hundred requests. The top eight are *Astrantia maxima* 'Hadspen Blood', *Paeonia cambessedesii*, *Clematis viticella* 'Little Nell', *Cyclamen hederifolium*, *Aquilegia vulgaris* var. *flore-pleno* 'Tower Light Blue', *Dierama pulcherrimum*, and *Rhodochiton atrosanguineum*. Apart from the *Aquilegia* this is a totally different list to last year!

There are still 13 seeds not requested at all, but – wait for it – at last we have a member who knows their onions and has requested *Allium subvillosum* after 2 long years on the shelf (not the same seed I hasten to add). We actually had a remarkable 10 accessions of different *Allium* this year.

Full breakdown in the next newsletter.

Any good stories out there of seed from last year would be welcomed by Paddy Tobin!

The first of my IGPS seed to germinate this year was Dahlia Merchii, which I know came from Stephen himself. I have seen the big patch of this plant which he grows so well in the Zoo and which, by the way, is left out for the winter and comes through without a bother.

Many thanks to Stephen for his work on the Seed Distribution and to those who so generously gave the time to collect and send seed in to him. The arrival of seed packages in the post is always the start of an exciting gardening project. Of course, free seeds are most especially welcome! Collect some for next year's distribution this summer.

And, yes, I would indeed like to hear of your experiences with the seed received from Stephen. Ed.

Changing Seasons at Glasnevin by Mary Bradshaw

Tuesday, 3rd February, saw the opening of a Photographic Exhibition by Grace Pasley at the National Botanic Gardens. Grace has been a Botanical Assistant at the Gardens for 26 years. Her role in the Herbarium involves record keeping, working with dried plant specimens, paperwork, and computerisation of records and seeds. She deals with seed exchange for approximately 800 Botanic Gardens around the world. Glasnevin's seed list, Index Seminum, is compiled by Grace and the seed that arrives from other Botanic Gardens is first recorded by Grace on computer before it finds its way to the Nursery.

Grace has been a passionate photographer for 20 years. She began recording the Glasnevin collection in 1990. To date, she has taken about 15,000 slides, not only of the plants but also of all recent building projects at their various stages. The vast majority of the plant collections, roses, irises, narcissi, and orchids are now on photographic record.

She still uses the first camera that she bought, a manual Fujica, with a macro lens facility for all flowering material where close-ups are required. For landscapes she employs an Olympus I.S 5000 semi-automatic. Flash is rarely used as it distorts colour. Grace is, of course, a veteran of the I.G.P.S., of the Chelsea exhibition in 2002, and of the Chinese trip along the Yangtze. All of her holidays involve flower photography.

This exhibition displays a mere 180 of those 15,000 photos, arranged seasonally to show the year's progression at Glasnevin. These superb examples have aroused great public interest.

So, from a viewing of Grace's photographs, what might we expect to find at Glasnevin during the various months? Here is my selection of personal favourites from Grace's exhibition:

January: *Cedrus atlantica* "Pendula", *Hamamelis mollis*, *Picea omorika* "Nana", *Ilex aquifolium* "Handsworth New Silver".

February: *Anemone x fulgens* (Alpine House), *Fritillaria michailovskyi*, (Alpine House), *Dendrobium nobile* (Orchid House), *Garrya elliptica*.

March: *Anemone nemorosa*, *Iris danfordiae*, *Magnolia salicifolia*, *Alnus* sp.

April: *Berberis darwinii*, *Chaenomeles x superba* "Rowallane", *Narcissus* "Hawaii", *Mysotidium hortensia*, *Galanthus* "Straffan".

CHANGING SEASONS

AT GLASNEVIN

A Photographic Exhibition
By
Grace Pasley



The National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin
4th February – 22nd February, 2004



The poster advertising Grace's exhibition, showing some of her wonderful photographs.

May: *Azalea* "Cecile", Bluebells, *Daboecia cantabrica*, *Davidia involucrata*.

June: *Leontopodium alpinum* (Alpine House), *Geranium magnificum*, *Iris* "Nibelungen", *Lilium martagon*.

July: *Masdevalia coccinea* "Harryana" (Orchid House), *Philadelphus* "Belle Etoile", *Passiflora caerulea*, *Notospartium carmichaeliae*.

August: *Nymphaea* sp., *Phragmipedium grande* (Orchid House), *Rosa mollis* "Molly Mc Gredy" syn "Macmo", *Rosa* "Alpine Sunset".

September: *Clematis heracleifolia*, *Dianella tasmanica*, *Briza maxima*, *Nerine bowdenii*, *Romneya coulteri*.

October: *Euonymus europaeus*, *Cotinus coggyria* "Flame", *Arbutus unedo*, *Betula papyrifera*.

November: *Cotoneaster microphyllus*, *Dahlia* "Red & White", *Larix deciduas*, *Liquidambar orientalis*.

December: *Cymbidium vamp* "Burgundy Queen" (Orchid House), *Greyia sutherlandii* (Curvilinear Range), *Ilex x altaclarensis* "Hendersonii", *Parrotia persica*.

These are just a tiny sample of Glasnevin's jewels that Grace has brought to our attention in this exhibition. The exhibition was excellent and well worth a visit.

I have two problems, however. Firstly, as I write this column, the exhibition is closing. Surely, we could have had some advance notice of it from the Botantics? If members had known about this exhibition in advance, I'm sure that many more would have taken the opportunity to visit it. A note could easily have been placed in the January issue of the newsletter?

Secondly, there was no list, leaflet, postcard, or card that we might have bought as a souvenir?

As for Grace, she declares herself a happy person, working at a job she loves, in surroundings of great beauty just waiting to be recorded!

Some Irish Snowdrops by Paddy Tobin

The snowdrop, that most welcome herald of spring has always attracted the attention of gardeners. However over the past number of years there has been an explosive interest in these beautiful plants with every possible variation from the norm being coveted by the assiduous collector. A number of distinct snowdrops have originated in Ireland, some of the highest quality and all of interest. For this article I have compiled a list of snowdrops of Irish origin and in the descriptions of the plants listed I have quoted liberally from *A Heritage of Beauty* by Dr. E. Charles Nelson and from *Snowdrops, A Monograph of Cultivated Galanthus* by Matt Bishop, Aaron Davis and John Grimshaw.

Charles Nelson lists the following in *A Heritage of Beauty*.

- ***Galanthus ikariae* ‘Emerald Isle’**, discovered by Megan Morris at Drew’s Court, a derelict mansion in Co. Limerick, in the early 1980’s. It is a short plant with the inner segments evenly green from apex to base, except for the margins and has green shading on the outer segments. It has performed fitfully in cultivation and was nearly lost entirely but is being bulked up again.
- ***Galanthus nivalis* ‘Aestivum’** either named or selected at Daisy Hill Nursery before 1891. A very pretty late variety... a free, robust grower, distinctly later than *nivalis*, and the green markings are of a deeper colour than usual. Now considered to be extinct.
- ***Galanthus plicatus* ‘Newry Giant’** from Daisy Hill Nursery, before 1902. Quite the largest and most robust growing of all snowdrops; handsome foliage and beautiful flowers on 12-inch stems. Now considered extinct.
- ***Galanthus* ‘Brenda Troyle’**, some discussion about its origin – Kilmacurragh, Co. Wicklow, William Baylor Hartland of Ard Cairn, Cork or William Thomson in England, early 1900’s. Flowers on long pedicles, with rounded, blunt outer segments, with deep sinuses, broadly heart-shaped marks, smells of honey.
- ***Galanthus* ‘Cicely Hall’** from Primrose Hill, Lucan, Co. Dublin, 1990’s. The flowers are late in the season and quite large. The inner segment is almost all green, with a white margin just on the apex, an absolute gem.
- ***Galanthus* ‘Coolballintaggart’** (a synonym of *G. ‘Straffan’*)
- ***Galanthus* ‘David Shackleton’** from Beechpark, though David Shackleton ‘scoffed at this suggestion’. From around 1960; light green glaucous leaves, white outer segments; inner segments marked with light green triangular and pale green U-shaped marks, distinctive olive-green ovary, fragrant.
- ***Galanthus* ‘Elsae’**, collected by Dr. J. P. Mahaffy, Provost of Trinity College, on Mount Athos in Greece around 1888. An autumn-flowering snowdrop, between November and January, it is unlikely that it is still in cultivation.

- ***Galanthus* ‘Greenfields’** obtained by Liam Schofield at ‘Greenfields’, the garden of W. F. Purefoy, in Co. Tipperary around 1960. Conspicuous for the deep green colour of its relatively large, heart-shaped inner segment markings.
- ***Galanthus* ‘Hill Poë’** from James Hill Poë, Riverston, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary around 1900. A venerable double flowering late in the season.
- ***Galanthus* ‘Macedonicus’**, possibly from the Daisy Hill, before 1956. No description traced. No longer in cultivation.
- ***Galanthus* ‘Pallidus’**, possibly from Daisy Hill Nursery, late 1800’s. A very pale yellowish green-marked form of *G. nivalis*, and flowering earlier. Extinct.
- ***Galanthus* ‘Rachelae’**, from a single bulb collected by Dr. J. P. Mahaffy, Provost of Trinity College, on Mount Hymettus, Greece, in 1884. An autumn flowering snowdrop, a variant of *G. nivalis* subsp. *reginae-olgae*. The flowers are like those of *G. nivalis* but the leaves are broader. Considered lost to cultivation.
- ***Galanthus* ‘Straffan’**, from Straffan garden, Co. Kildare, mid 1800’s. “One of the loveliest”.
- ***Galanthus* ‘The O’ Mahony’**, considered a synonym of ‘Straffan’ and ‘Coolballintaggart’ from Coolballintaggart, Co. Wicklow, home of The O’ Mahony.

The following are taken from *Snowdrops, A Monograph of Cultivated Galanthus* by Matt Bishop, Aaron Davis and John Grimshaw.

- ***Galanthus* ‘Castlegar’**. The original plants came from a copse on the Mahon Estate at Castlegar, Ahascragh, Co. Galway and brought to attention by Dr. J. D. Lamb. It is a small cultivar with nice substantial flowers held on pedicles which extend beyond the top of the spathe, giving it a certain elegance; extremely early flowering, mid December.
- ***Galanthus elwesii* ‘Robin Hall’**. This seedling occurred in the late 1970s in Robin Hall’s garden, Primrose Hill, in Lucan. It flowers right at the end of the snowdrop season, has wide arching silvery grey leaves, very large, well-shaped flowers. It is an excellent garden plant building up into good tight and very floriferous clumps.
- ***Galanthus elwesii* ‘Rowallane’**. This appeared in stock of *G. elwesii* purchased by Mike Snowden, head gardener at Rowallane, from the Dutch bulb merchants Van Tubergen in the early 1990s and subsequently spotted by John Sales, then Chief Gardens’ Adviser with the National Trust. It has very bold grey foliage while the flowers have distinct puckered rounded outer segments. The inner segments have a top-heavy X mark, a fine plant.
- ***Galanthus* ‘Irish Green’**. This cultivar was found by Ruby and David Baker near Ballintaggart, Co. Wicklow in 1994. It has quite narrow upward-facing flowers with the colour on the outside segments varying from having a light green wash to being pure white. The inner segments are an irregular mass, spiralling and curling backwards. Hardly a beauty, but different.

- ***Galanthus* ‘Kildare’**. Found by Ruby and David Baker in 1995 outside a ruined gatehouse somewhere in Co. Kildare – they had become hopelessly lost in their travels. A fine tall plant, large flowered, often producing two scapes (two flowers per bulb). The outer segments are long and slim with thin green lines along the veins. The inner segments are solid green at the apex, fading to olive green to the base.
- ***Galanthus* ‘Kilkenny Giant’**. This was mentioned in correspondence from A. Bickerton to E.A. Bowles, 1st January, 1910 but no further information is available. It seems to have been a James Allen seedling. James Allen was a keen *galanthus* grower from Shepton Mallet in Somerset (1832 – 1906). Lost.
- ***Galanthus plicatus* ‘Mary Hely Hutchinson’**. This was grown by Robin Hall of Primrose Hill who received bulbs from Mary Hely Hutchinson of Newport House, Malahide, Dublin in the late 1980s. This snowdrop is particularly interesting as *G. plicatus* does not normally flower in autumn while this one flowers in October. It is a short flower with mostly green inner segments. The outer segments are thick with a hooded apex. It is described as ‘very desirable’.
- ***Galanthus* ‘Ruby Baker’**. Named by Robin Hall for Ruby Baker who admired it growing among a clump of seedlings when visiting Primrose Hill in 2000. It has broad upright glaucous foliage, large substantial flowers and a pale-yellowish olive-green ovary. The individual flowers are of a very high quality.

There are other Irish snowdrops not listed here. I have seen plants associated with Helen Dillon, Corona North and Jim Reynolds to name but a few. However, to my knowledge, these have not yet been officially named nor published. It is good to have Irish gardeners with an eye for the beautiful and a willingness to develop it.

As Irish plants all of these would be afforded a place in many of our gardens for that attribute alone. Two of the snowdrops listed above have been in cultivation for over a century which testifies to the esteem in which they are held. These are *G.* ‘Straffan’ and *G.* ‘Hill Poë’. However, it is saddening to read that some of those listed above are no longer in existence, lost to cultivation or considered extinct. Of the twenty one listed seven are lost, or perhaps lingering unknown in some garden corner or other. Without continuing vigilance others will also be lost. The National Collection Holder Scheme of the National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens in the U.K. is a model which we might well imitate to the benefit of Irish plants.

References:

- ***A Heritage of Beauty***. The Garden Plants of Ireland. An Illustrated Encyclopaedia. E. Charles Nelson. Irish Garden Plant Society. Dublin 2000.
- ***Snowdrops: A Monograph of Cultivated Galanthus***. Matt Bishop, Aaron Davis, John Grimshaw. Published by the Griffin Press, January 2002

Worth a Read by Paddy Tobin

With the Chelsea Flower Show approaching my thoughts turned to garden design and particularly to Diarmuid Gavin who will carry the Irish interest to this year's show. My local book shop fortunately had two of Diarmuid's books in stock which gave me an opportunity to look over his work.

Outer Spaces (Dorling Kindersley, 2003) is a lavishly illustrated book but low on text where Diarmuid outlines what inspired him in his various designs, the garden plan (illustrated for each garden), the plants and the details of the construction and creation of the gardens. Many of the gardens have been seen on television and readers will be familiar with them. This is a visual book (no, not just a picture book!) which expands the idea of the "room outside" in the garden. His designs are fabulously imaginative and certainly push the idea of "garden" to new frontiers.



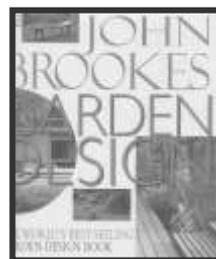
Diarmuid Gavin's Big Ideas (BBC Worldwide, 2002) was written to accompany the television series "Home Front in the Garden" and while similarly well illustrated



benefits from a greater input of text from Diarmuid. The introductory chapter is particularly good as Diarmuid outlines his approach to creating gardens – taking the "room outside" idea, popular since the 1960s and expanding it to provide garden rooms with a variety of functions we might not have considered to now – the quiet retreat, the den, the party room, the artist's retreat even an outdoor bathroom. Despite his "far-out" television persona, Diarmuid is a very successful designer, running a successful business and providing garden design solutions for his clients.

After reading these books, particularly this latter one, I have a new respect and admiration for his work which television programmes did not give. Best wishes to him in Chelsea.

Though an excellent book, **John Brookes Garden Design** (Dorling Kindersley, 2001) is, in comparison to Diarmuid Gavin's books, somewhat dull. It is more a "how to" book, leading the reader through the basics of garden design, illustrating various design styles, using plants, various design solutions for particular sites, looking in detail at smaller aspects of the garden and advising on plant selection. It is a very comprehensive book and John Brookes designs are certainly the type one could happily live with but I found the book more functional and informative than entertaining but, if that is what you want, then this is the book for you.



Small Town Gardens by Rachel de Thame (BBC Worldwide, 2001) is another book published following a television series where six gardens are described and illustrated. The gardens were each designed by a different designer among them Cleve West,

Bunny Guinness and Paul Cooper, three of my favourite designers. There is an excellent balance between text and photographs; the photographs well taken, showing the garden layouts very clearly and the text well written to accompany them. As with other design books I find the inclusion of close-up photographs of a single leaf or flower, though beautiful, superfluous and of little value to the reader. It's a nice, pleasant and interesting read with some good ideas that one would welcome into one's own garden.



Gardens Without Boundaries by Paul Cooper (Mitchell Beazley, 2003) is a book I thoroughly enjoyed. Though the title is intriguing it is really simply another way of expressing the idea of borrowing a view from outside the garden, of leading the eye so that it encompasses the area outside the confines of the garden, of blurring a garden's boundaries or designing the boundaries to reflect their surroundings and so have the garden blend in better. In extreme cases some of the houses illustrated were simply positioned in a natural setting with little or no intrusion into the landscape and no garden, as



such, created; what nature provided was the garden.

The Gardens of Roberto Burle Marx by Sima Eliovson (Timber Press, 1991, Reprinted 1995, 1999) though perhaps describing the least applicable of garden designs for us is an extraordinarily interesting book as it so clearly illustrates the idea of designing with one's locality in mind. Roberto Burle Marx is Brazilian, an artist who says he paints his gardens and whose designs, whether of private gardens or of large municipal spaces, are stunningly beautiful. This is a book to read simply for the joy of viewing genius and beauty. Sima Eliovson's text reflects her great friendship, admiration and understanding of Roberto Burle Marx's work and is well illustrated with gardens both private and public.



Finally, a quick mention to two books: **Recollections of Great Gardeners** by Graham

Stuart Thomas is a lovely read, short pieces about many of the interesting people GST met during his life. Well worth having. See Charles Nelson's article for a better flavour of this book.



The other, of which I have only seen only the introductory chapter, is an exact reproduction of the original version of

The Wild Garden by William Robinson. The introduction and annotation are by Dr. E.

Charles Nelson, wonderfully written and illustrated. It is produced (by Strawberry Tree Press) to the highest standards of beauty and quality and if anyone wants to make me really and truly happy...



This is the title page, not the cover →

Regional Reports

Reports from the North

January 14th 2004

The Rothschild Gardens by Kate Garton,

Very briefly, as I know members from our other areas will be writing fuller reports: This was an outstandingly successful talk, much enjoyed by the very large attendance which exceeded 150, all of whom were enthralled and entertained by a most interesting talk, something clearly indicated by the fact that 36 copies of Kate's book were purchased on the night. For those of you who were unfortunate enough to miss the talk, I suggest you purchase a copy of this book. You will find it fascinating.

Catherine Tyrrie

February 25th 2004

Conversazione: Members' Evening

Over 20 people gathered in the Ulster Museum to be entertained at the Northern Area Members' Evening.

Amongst the treats on offer were slides and photographs of members doing their own particular things in the gardens we had visited last summer. There was a slide show of Italian gardens with that combination of vivid plants, statues, terra cotta and steps which works so well under Mediterranean blue skies.

We tried to stretch our knowledge over a mystery yellow pea shrub in full flower, which was obviously not *Cytisus racemosus*, supplied as a comparator; sadly we couldn't stretch our memories far enough and it remains for the moment unnamed – but watch this space....

A selection of the Ulster Museum's wonderful natural history web sites, which have won plaudits and been cited as examples of excellence, had been made available to view – from the native flora, to the embryonic Garden Flora, to Butterflies and Moths, Ground Beetles, and a few even strayed beyond on to the fabulous Dragonfly Ireland site and the beauty of these insects and all the superb photography made exploration rewarding.

The skilled hands of Michael Quirke of Sligo had carved local sycamore into two statues of characters from ancient legend, Amergin and Oisín; around each figure were carved plants, animals and other symbols associated with each legend.

An early bound copy of the *Gardener's Chronicle* provided fascinating reading and a reminder that those gardeners knew the rhythm of the seasons far better than many of us today. A venerable galvanised cone-shaped metal apparatus for burning nicotine brought back memories of pre-Health & Safety days. Now banned under current legislation, it was one of those old-fashioned things you could *see* working, and the brown fumes also showed where there were gaps in the glasshouse!

Our multi-talented membership was highlighted by an author who has produced a lovely volume of short stories, which were snapped up on the evening.

Other books and pictures on display showed gardens ancient and modern which served to spur most of us on to try to achieve greater things in our own.

The evening closed with a delicious buffet supper, supplied by Karen Harvey of the Museum's Café. The supper provided a rare opportunity to just sit and talk, with time to exchange stories of successes, disasters and near-misses; to get to know new members; a time for the disparate membership to become a group ready for summer experiences; and to speculate over the identity of that yellow pea shrub.....

M D B Allen

March 18th, 2004

Good Plants Make Good Gardens by Mary Waldron

I have never been to a talk where the guest speaker started off by showing us plants from their own garden. Mary did so with 15 or more late winter early spring flowering shrubs and others for general interest. We saw Holly, Viburnum, Daphne, Cornus and hellebores to name a few. It made me yearn after a bigger garden so I can start collecting these plants. She gave great advice about position and for winter affect. 100+ slides went past in no time. I could have stayed another hour just to see more of her garden and learn about plants I can only dream of growing. The slides were delivered with much wit too. I get the impression that Mary is passionate about her garden and plants. Many tips came out along the way like prune a rose to fill the centre so it doesn't suffer broken stems from the wind. Effort was put into making a dew maze knowing it wouldn't last through to the afternoon.

Mark Smyth

Reports from Leinster

January 15th 2004

The Rothschild Gardens by Kate Garton,

The remarkable Rothschild family originated in the Jewish ghetto of Frankfurt in the 1700s, went into business in European capitals and the sons of Mayer Amschel Rothschild became the richest men in the world. Rothschild gardens spanned England, France, Germany, Austria and Switzerland during the Victorian/Edwardian era, a mixture of formal design and large-scale planting of trees and flowers. Heated glasshouses, exotic plants, tropical orchids and fruit all featured.

Perhaps the most well known Rothschild garden is the famous Waddesdon Manor, near Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire. Built between 1874 and 1889 for Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild to entertain his guests and display his vast collection of art treasures, it passed into the ownership of the National Trust in 1958 and has been fully restored as the most typical of the Rothschild garden. The garden was created on 2,700 acres of bare hilltop. Originally, the terrace was the focal point, a pool with a sculpted fountain, parterres to either side, a golden yew hedge, a stone balustrade with statues of goddesses at the corners and urns full of flowers along the parapet. Halliday's of Manchester designed and constructed 50 greenhouses. There was 53 garden staff (today 9). Nowadays, 75,000 spring bulbs, 25,000 annuals and perennials are planted. There is a daffodil valley, planted in honour of Alice de Rothschild, but owing to

destruction by daffodil nematode this has been re-sown with 60 species of wildflowers.

In the 1880's, Leopold de Rothschild remodelled the farmhouse at Ascott, near Leighton Buzzard in Buckinghamshire in Tudor style. Several fountains were installed. The vegetable garden and orchard each covered 10 acres. Leopold's Carnation House was 18 feet wide and often contained 500 Malmaison carnations in full bloom. His 1,500 "Miss Joliffe" a pink, clove-scented perpetual carnation, yielded about 50,000 flowers annually. The extensive gardens are a mixture of the formal and natural, containing specimen trees and shrubs as well as an herbaceous walk, a lily pond, a Dutch garden and a topiary sundial. This property is also in the care of the National Trust.

Other well-known Rothschild gardens are at Exbury, Ashton Wold, Halton and Cap Ferrat on the French Mediterranean coast.

Mary Bradshaw.

Thursday, 12th February.

Flora of Thailand. By John Parnell, Curator of T.C.D.

John began by pointing out to us that the Siamese kingdom has been independent and politically stable, for many hundreds of years. Through its entire 1,000-mile length, the climate is tropical, with a really rich flora of 10-12,000 native plants. However, the climate varies over that 1,000 miles, with deciduous forest in the north and evergreen forest in the south. At its hottest, temperatures can reach 40-42 degrees centigrade and its highest point is only 2,500 metres. Its total population is 58,000,000 of which 9,000,000 live in Bangkok.

Thailand's main exports are rice, rubber and palm oil. These three crops and also the need to grow more food are constricting native vegetation. At present, native vegetation is reduced to 20% and still decreasing, so there is an obvious need for conservation. 45,000,000 people live on the land and herbal remedies are hugely important to them. Bananas and mangosteens are grown; most produce is grown and bought locally.

John encountered *Rhododendron simsii* and *Habenaria* and *Dendrobium* species of orchids at the higher altitudes while in the swamp forests down on the peninsula he found gesneriads that have yet to be identified. At the moment, he is working on *Utricularia* (Bladderworts) of which there are 22 species in Thailand. 22 of the 85 species of clove grow in Thailand and are used not merely as culinary flavouring but as painkillers and smoked in cigarettes.

Chiang Mai is a very important tourist destination in the north of the country. Here, in the enormous market you will find silver, pottery, leatherwork, and a huge number of *Paphiopedilum*, the native Slipper Orchid for sale. Many of these plants are artificially propagated but you can never be sure that they have not been plucked out of the forest for a quick profit! Here too can be found the National Botanic Gardens, which has support from the Queen Mother. All native teak has been extracted by now but it is being grown in plantations. There are also about 100 big nature reserves including Phutradong National Park, which are rigorously protected.

John's lecture gave us all much food for thought. He particularly instilled in

us that plant collecting is fun! So, maybe, we might give some consideration to growing native Thai species alongside our 40 shades of green Irish cultivars?

Mary Bradshaw.

Thursday 18 March

Unfinished Business, 30 Years on Green Sand by Capt. Peter Erskine
Joint with AGS at National Botanic Gardens

The joint IGPS and AGS lecture with speaker Captain Peter Erskine at the Botanic Gardens Glasnevin was a good opportunity to add to one's plant lust list. Peter spoke at length and with great enthusiasm about the plants that grow well in his Sussex garden of green sand, where he has gardened since 1972. Green sand is low in nutrients but large quantities of humus have been added over the years.

An inveterate propagator Peter grows on average 300 pots each year. Plants easy from seed and definitely worth growing include *Ramonda nathaliae*, *Roscoea humeana* and *Pulsatilla albana* 'Lutea'. Another good plant *Corydalis solida* 'George Baker' has rich brick-red flowers and *Corydalis cava* a taller white is good with hellebores. The best *Corydalis* he grows at the moment is *Corydalis* 'Kingfisher', a bright blue flower with dark tips, it will repeat flower from March to September. *Anomone trifolia* is a good clear white and better in Peter's opinion than *Anemone nemorosa*. A plant that he recommends as 'a fantastic thing' is *Anemone rupicola*, 6"-8" tall, it likes a rich soil, as does the beautiful pink *Thalictrum orientale*.

He grows many plants in pure gravel, with a minimum depth of 4" and surprisingly up to 12" in some areas. With a good depth of gravel, moisture is retained extremely well and the plants' only other requirement is a liquid feed twice a year, high in Nitrogen in April and high in phosphate in July. Favourite plant combinations include *Iris histrioides* 'Major', *Cyclamen coum*, *Crocus flavus* subsp. *flavus* and *Corydalis malkensis*, a white *Corydalis* that is easy from seed and one he recommends to everybody to grow. These were planted with *Paeonia* sp. Plants that thrive in light sandy soil include *Arisaema candidissimum* and the spectacular *Arisaema sikokianum*. Finally for year's end, to give a blaze of colour in October, he recommended *Nerine bowdenii* 'Wellsii' with undulating petals, and flowering at the same time *Sternbergia lutea* with golden yellow goblets.

Mary Rowe

Reports from Munster

January 16th 2004

The Rothschild Gardens by Kate Garton,

On a dreary January evening, when one's garden looked damp and uninviting and the snowdrops were scarcely in evidence, Kate Garton came to lecture the Munster Group. She brought us to a fantasy land as she told us of the influence of the Rothschild family in Europe, of their houses and gardens, of their immense dedication to the projects that interested them with many of these developments surviving to this day.

Specifically she told us of Exbury, near Southampton, where the purchaser remarked “250 acres was about the right size for a garden”. To prepare the land to grow Rhododendrons at their best 150 men were employed to double dig the entire area incorporating spent hops as manure. It only took four years!

With this and similar stories Kate stimulated our imagination and sent us out into the night astonished at what can be achieved.

Elizabeth Corban – Lucas.

February 6th 2004

Growing Vegetables without Chemicals by Caroline Robinson

Caroline Robinson spoke to us on the experience she has gained from the organic growing of vegetables for the local market. She gave a brief history of her experiences in East Africa before returning to a hill farm near Macroom. Then she spoke of her dislike of the effect of chemicals, whether as spray or fertilizer, on the food we eat. She emphasized her belief that the fertility of the soil was all-important. This the Robinsons achieve with heavy dressings of farmyard manure.

Her second point was the physical condition of the soil at the time of sowing or planting the crop, working on cold, wet soil too early in the spring was counter productive. Caroline brought the hoes that they used in the tunnels and to supplement the tractor scuffing in the open fields; the shape of the heads and the extra length of the handles caused much comment.

This was an evening of practical advice developed by personal experience and it generated much interest and many questions from the audience.

Elizabeth Corban – Lucas.

March 5th 2004

Spring Awakening by Hester Forde

On a night when our own projector let us down, thankfully we were not to be denied the pleasure of a journey through spring in the company of Hester Forde. Hester has a passion for her subject, which was evident from the magnificent selection of plants she has gathered together from both private gardens and commercial nurseries throughout these islands.

We started with a lesson in the subtle colours and scents of winter that we sometimes fail to notice or maybe even consider when choosing plants for our garden. These were highlighted magnificently with a selection of trees and shrubs chosen for their ornamental bark and early winter flowering.

The next section of our talk took us through what Hester would call her past, present and maybe future addictions. In this category come the *Galanthus*, *Helleborus*, *Narcissus*, *Tulipa*, *Clematis*, *Primula*, *Pulsatilla*, *Iris*, *Hosta*, *Trilliums*, *Corydalis*, *Paeonia* and many more.

Hester’s enthusiasm infected all who attended and I’m sure that by next year many more of us will have something extra in our gardens to let us know that *Spring has arrived*.

David B. O’Regan

Looking Ahead

Munster Fixtures

Sat. 8th & Sun. 9th May

IGPS AGM, CORK. Garden visits to Chris Fehily, Anne Roper, Martin & Janet Edwards and Neil Williams.

As part of the AGM weekend, which is to take place this year in Cork, the above programme of garden visits has been arranged.

PLEASE NOTE: AGM Dinner: Due to circumstances beyond our control we have had to change from our original venue for the AGM Dinner. It will now take place in the **Rochestown Park Hotel**.

Leinster Fixtures

Saturday 17th April Time: 2 p.m.

Workshop with Paul Maher. National Botanic Gardens

Title: Seed and Vegetative Propagation Demonstration

Venue: The Auditorium, National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin.

Thursday 22 April

Ornamental Grasses, Origins and Uses by Dr David Simpson of Kew Gardens

At National Botanic Gardens at 8pm

Saturday 8th and Sunday 9th May

AGM in Cork. See note about dinner venue change in “Snippets” and above in Munster Fixtures.

Thursday 14 May

Martin Walsh. Lilies and other garden worthy plants from the East.

A selection of bulbs, alpines, shrubs and perennials from Turkey and Central Asia
At National Botanic Gardens 8pm

Saturday June 12

Visit to Rosemary Brown’s Garden. Joint with RHSI

Monday, 19th July at 2pm

Abbeyleix House is worth a visit, Mary Rowe writes “I was there a number of years ago when the house was vacant; it had just been bought by Sir David Davis. There was a parterre which I believe is now beautifully restored and a large woodland area. Sir David doesn't live in Ireland so arranging a visit is difficult. However, the IGPS have been invited (max 30 people) on Monday 19th July at 2 pm. There will be a guided tour and there is no admission charge.

Use the booking form, enclosed with your newsletter, to secure a place on this visit.

Northern Fixtures

Thursday, APRIL 29

GARDEN VISIT, Mr & Mrs Harold McBride

10 Waverley Avenue, Lisburn; 6.30pm.

A plantsman's garden, with a great collection of rare and unusual plants. Well worth a visit at any time, but especially in the spring, when the collection of trilliums and other woodland plants will be at their best. No charge, but donations for the AGS would be welcome. Non-members £1.00 extra.

Directions: From Belfast on the M1 – leave at the 2nd exit for Lisburn (Sprucefield exit) and follow the road into Lisburn across the river; pass through a line of mature beech trees which crosses the road; go on a further 40 yds, to what will be the second turning on the right, with a white wall at the corner, just before the garage; this is Waverley Ave – house is first detached house on RHS.

Saturday 8th and Sunday 9th May

AGM (Cork) See note about dinner venue change in “Snippets” and above in Munster Fixtures

Tuesday, 15th June

GARDEN VISIT, Mr Bob Gordon,

34 Kilrea Road, Portglenone, Co. Derry; 6.30pm.

Bob's garden is always a delight, with its stream and pool, tree collection, meconopsis and primulas. A welcome return to this plantsman's garden, to see new vistas and developments since our visit some years ago. No charge, but donations for Marie Curie Fund would be welcome. Non-members £1.00 extra.

Directions: From M2, leave at Randalstown exit; go through the town, leaving on the B52 for Portglenone (7 mls); go through Portglenone, cross R Bann, take next right at filling station on to the A54 for Kilrea; no 34 is 0.3 ml on, 3rd entrance on the left, on a hill overlooking the road, surrounded by trees - recessed gateway with cattle grid.

Snippets

AGM Dinner: Due to circumstances beyond our control we have had to change from our original venue for the AGM Dinner. It will now take place in the **Rochestown Park Hotel**.

The set menu, which offers a varied choice (vegetarian preference, please let us know) will cost **€30.50/person**. Please include payment for the meal with the cost of the weekend activities i.e. **€25 + €30.50 = €55.50**.

Unfortunately space is limited so we can only accommodate **40** for the dinner. Places will be allocated on receipt of money.

David B. O'Regan, Chairman, IGPS (Munster Group)

Plantsman's Day at the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin

The height of praise is due to Paul Maher, Seamus O'Brien and all the staff involved in this day at the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin on March 6th last. This was an excellent day, summed up by the enthusiasm with which Paul Maher's comment that "we must do this again", was greeted at the end of the day.

Seamus O'Brien led the day off, showing us a wide selection of plants suited to woodland cultivation. Carmel Duignan followed with some of her weird, but obviously dearly loved, plants from New Zealand. Lunch was followed by a choice of garden tours. Paul Maher showed some of his favourite and somewhat tender plants. Seamus O'Brien led the way to the woodland. Oliver Schurmann could convince even those who only see a place for grass in the lawn of the beauty they can bring to the garden. A coffee break nearly revived us as some were flagging at this end of the day and Assumpta Bloomfield had the graveyard shift. She was well chosen for the position as she spoke with an infectious enthusiasm and approached the question of planting a border from such an interesting and different philosophical slant that all were held in rapt attention. A wonderful finish to a wonderful day. Well done all!

West Cork Garden Trail 12th-27th June. Brochures available from Phemie Rose, Kilravock, Durrus, Co. Cork. e-mail kilravock1@eircom.net

Heritage Bulbs: Until Alex Chisholm e-mailed me recently, I hadn't realised that IGPS members were involved in this venture. Alex is Managing Director and Helen Dillon is The Club President. The selection of bulbs on offer is interesting. Now, if only Alex would do something similar for Irish cultivars! More information on Heritage Bulbs can be got at www.heritagebulbs.com or by writing to: Heritage, Tullynally Castle, Castlepollard, Co. Westmeath. Tel. 044 62744

Letters to the Editor

- **A Business Proposition**

Dear Editor,

I am a person with a business background who is very interested in plants/gardening and would like to form a partnership with an experienced plants-person who feels s/he lacks business experience. Any ideas looked at-small specialist nursery, organics etc. The Editor will forward correspondence in confidence.

- **Gardening Down Under**

Dear Editor,

As I have received copies of your newsletter regularly here in Australia, I thought I might drop you a line to let your members in Ireland how what gardening is going on here in the southern hemisphere.

At the moment I am preparing for winter, the time I grow my best tomatoes, spinach, broccoli, broccolini, cabbages, cauliflowers etc. This past summer, we have been picking the latest craze here in the sub-tropics, "Red Dragon Fruit", pest free and easy to grow yet selling at the beginning of summer at \$36 per kilo. It is now down to \$7.

We have also been picking a large selection of paw-paws, bananas and pineapples. Last spring I picked 30 kilos of an old variety of Roma tomato which we dried in the oven and bottled in jars of olive oil. Great for salads and sandwiches!

Our local gardening club has a bus trip on the 2nd April up to Brisbane for a garden show called Gardening Australia Life, from one of our top T.V. programmes.

Kindest regards to IGPS members in Ireland.

John & Mary O Reilly, Banora Point, Australia.

- **Northern Ireland Weather Indicators**

Dear Editor,

I am currently compiling a report 'Climate Change Indicators for Northern Ireland', and was wondering if the members of the IGPS could help.

I have already obtained data for swallow and butterfly first-sightings, but have no data pertaining to flowers/trees first blooming /coming into leaf/ leaf shed for Northern Ireland. If, by any good chance, some of your readership have been recording such dates for Northern Ireland I would be delighted and very obliged to hear from them.

Many Thanks, Dr Barry McAuley, Policy Advisor (Climate Change + Transboundary Air Pollution) Air and Environmental Quality, Environment and Heritage Service, Tel: 028 905 46434

- **Good Article!**

Dear Editor,

I loved Paul Cutler's piece on Cyclamen and his drawings were superb. Edith Brosnan

New members in 2004

A very special welcome to these new members who have joined the Society in 2004. I hope you enjoy your membership and become actively involved as soon as possible.

Rosemary Goode
Patrick Hogan
Patricia Kernohan
Elaine Hicks
Deirdre Hetherington
Mark Smyth
Emer Ni Dhuill
Robert and Sydney Boaden
Anne Martin
Patrick & Mrs Mackie
James Finn
Michael Kelleher

John Nelson
Mark Piper
Peter & Nicola Milligan
Shirley Snook
Trevor Edwards
Katherine Hall
Deborah Metrustry
Alice Kenny
Terry Reid McGuire
Kenneth Morgan
Patricia Cameron

Do you have a few hours a week to spare for your society? We are looking for an Executive Assistant to replace Rose Sevastopulo who is retiring.

The duties of the Executive Assistant are:

To deal with correspondence (which involves collecting mail from Glasnevin)

To answer E-mails

To maintain the membership database (Computer etc. supplied)

To be in attendance at Committee Meetings (approx. every 4 - 6 weeks)

An honorarium and expenses will be paid.

Please apply to the Honorary Secretary, Irish Garden Plant Society, c/o

National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin 9, or E-mail:

igps@eircom.net