

*The Newsletter of the
IRISH GARDEN PLANT SOCIETY*



ISSUE NO. 97 JULY 2005

EDITORIAL

Those who pass leave their legacies and memories behind. In this issue we remember two men held in the highest respect in Irish horticultural circles, Paddy Woods and David Robinson. Donal Synott has left his position in the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin and Dr. Peter Wyse-Jackson has assumed the mantle. We wish Donal the best, thank him for his help and support over the years and welcome Peter to the position and look forward to having his input over the coming years.

The Irish exhibitors did excellently at the Chelsea Flower Show while the Garden Heaven Show is going from strength to strength.

We have a short report on the AGM along with a summary of the accounts and look forward to a full account of the garden visits in the next issue.

A very special 'Get Well Soon' wish to Mary Bradshaw who is recovering well from surgery at the moment. Mary has been an indefatigable worker for the IGPS and has been especially helpful with the newsletter, ever dependable for a contribution.

Material for the newsletter is best sent directly to Paddy Tobin, "Cois Abhann", Riverside, Lower Gracedieu, Waterford. Telephone: 051-857955. E-mail: pmtobin@eircom.net

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Front Cover: *Romneya coulteri*, The Matilija, the Californian tree poppy, named by William Harvey of Trinity College, Dublin, in honour of two friends. The second (specific) name, *coulteri*, commemorates his predecessor as curator of the College's herbarium, the botanical explorer Dr. Thomas Coulter. The first (generic) name, *Romneya*, was a tribute to an eminent astronomer, the Reverend Dr. Thomas Romney Robinson. Thomas Coulter discovered the matilija while he was in California in 1832. Notes taken from '*An Irish Flower Garden Replanted*' by E. Charles Nelson & Wendy F. Walsh.

A Lebanese Project in Ireland by Guy Jones

“And the righteous shall flourish like a palm tree and grow like a cedar of Lebanon” Psalm 92:12

Under this theme the Irish Lebanese Cultural Foundation has initiated a planting campaign of these magnificent trees in Ireland as a gesture of appreciation from the Lebanese People to Irish United Nations Peace-Keeping Mission and their outstanding assistance to the welfare of local communities during their 23 years presence in the South of Lebanon.

The cedar trees of Lebanon were much heralded in the times of antiquity for their beauty, fragrance, commercial value, and utility in building.

The scriptures tell us in Psalms 104:15 that God planted them in the Garden of Eden. The Bible book of Ezekiel indicates how beautiful the cedars are. King Solomon spent 14 years building a colossal palace of Lebanese cedar that exposed its beautiful wood and seven years to build the Lord's temple in Israel from cedar wood that was plated with gold. King Solomon built himself a palace and called it 'Forest of Lebanon'.

But the writers of the Old Testament knew that the cedar forest was not merely admired for its beauty; it provided the most sought-after wood in the Near East. The kings of Egypt, Mesopotamia, Phoenicia, Assyria, Babylon, Persia and Greece, until the region was ruled by Rome, proudly reported providing cedar timber for building temples and palaces, obtained either through commercial transactions or through military expeditions.

The ancient Egyptians not only used cedar wood extensively, but also used a preservative from cedar resin, called “life of the dead”, in their embalming process.

Through this long history, a strong cultural link evolved between this tree and the people living in and near to the cedar forests. Because of its majesty and long life span, the cedar became a symbol of eternity. Tales and legends referring to the cedar are numerous in Lebanon and constitute one of the cultural links shared by the many ethnic, linguistic and religious groups living there.

This is a large stately evergreen, with a massive trunk when mature, and wide-sweeping, sometimes upright branches (more often horizontal) which originate on the

lower trunk. Dark green needles and cones, which are held upright above the foliage, add to the impressive appearance. Young specimens retain a pyramidal shape but the tree takes on a more open form with age. Like most true cedars, it does not like to be transplanted, and prefers a pollution-free, sunny environment.



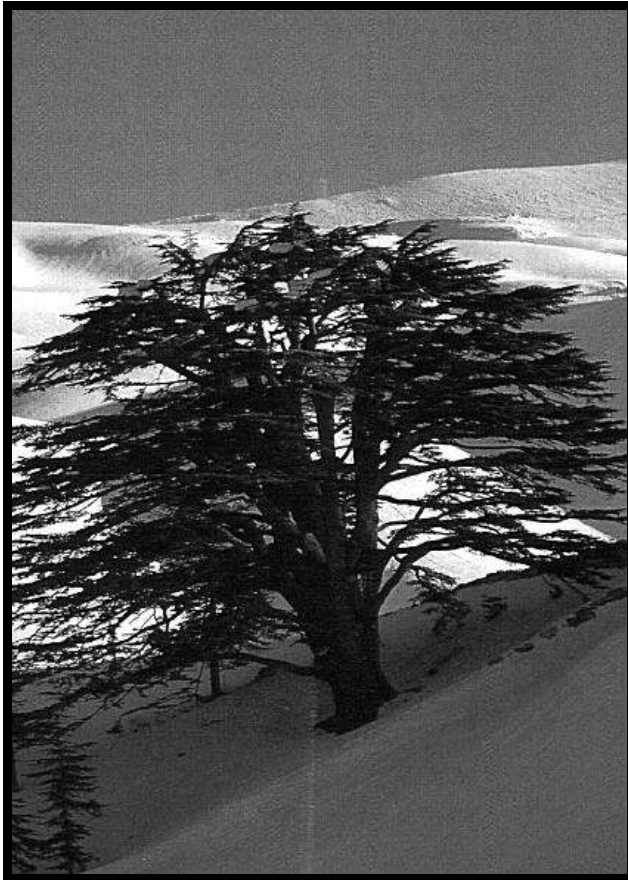
A Cedar of Lebanon in its native environment. Photograph courtesy of Guy Jones

The Cedar of Lebanon is originally from the Middle East and grows to be a 40 - 50 feet tall tree in nature. The needles are short (1/2 to 1 inch) and grow in tufts along the branches. Cedars of Lebanon are widely used as an ornamental and are often found growing near the foundations of old homesteads.

The Cedar of Lebanon is one of only four species (not including cultivars) of true cedars. The others are Atlas cedar *C. atlantica*, Deodar cedar *C. deodara* and Cyprus cedar, *C. brevifolia*. Most other "cedars" are of the *Juniperus*, *Chamaecyparis*, or *Thuja* genera.

The extensive trade and ship, temple and palace building from ancient times have all contributed to the depletion of the Cedar forests in Lebanon. In 118 AD the Roman Emperor Hadrian established rules to protect the cedars of Lebanon to prevent deforestation. Only a few plantations now remain, carefully preserved.

The existing forests, scattered about at higher elevations, are a consequence of inaccessibility and modern forms of protection. Indeed, several of the remaining stands of cedar can be described as sacred groves. Chapels have been built in the stands and the forests are under the protection of the Maronite Patriarch. The quasi-sacredness of the trees in these stands is indicated by the modern Lebanese reference to them as "Cedars of the Lord."



A Cedar in winter snow in Lebanon. Photograph courtesy of Guy Jones

When the country obtained independence, it adopted the cedar as its national emblem and put this emblem on its flag. The Lebanese Flag lays the Cedar on a white background depicting the snow of its mountains (thus the Canaanite/Aramaic name

‘Lebanon’ meaning white) and the two red colour bands on top and bottom of the flag in reference to those who fought for its independence.

Thus, the planting of 47 Cedar trees in Ireland is to commemorate the 47 Irish soldiers who died in the service of peace. With the intention of keeping their memory alive the plantings that took place in Kilkenny, Askeaton and Limerick City will be followed by plantings in other cities and localities in the coming planting season which extends from October till March.

It has been established that the oldest *Cedrus libani* in Ireland is 300 years old, planted in Swords, Co Dublin and the oldest in Europe was planted in Grenoble, France by a crusader around 1200 AD.

This project is a token of appreciation from the Lebanese people to this nation and for our descendants and future generations to enjoy the celestial beauty of a Cedar of Lebanon.

“A civilization flourishes when people plant trees under whose shade they will never sit” (Greek Saying).

For more information please contact www.irishlebanese.com or irishlebanese@hotmail.com



Emblem of the Irish Lebanese Cultural Association. Image courtesy of Guy Jones.

Conserving Veteran Trees by Gerry Douglas

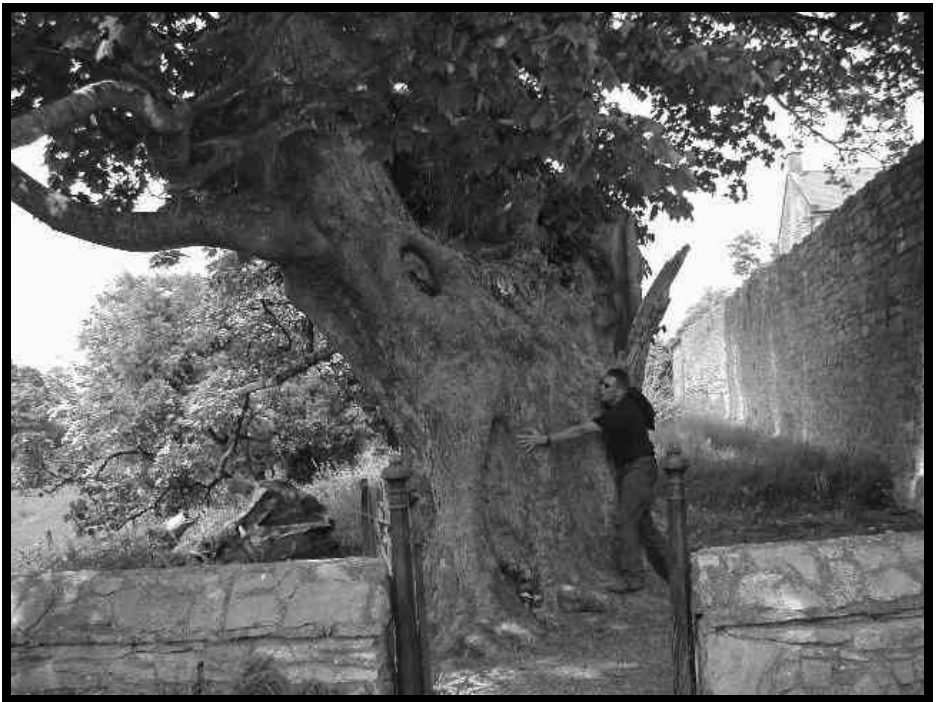
Trees go through the same stages as all living things, birth, juvenility, adolescence, maturity and old age. Depending on the tree species and the conditions of growth the length of time from germination to production of the first seeds ranges from 5- 25 or more years. Poor growing conditions can bring on early seed production while the mature stage lasts for as long as the tree can produce seeds. In this respect it seems that trees differ from humans because even very old trees are capable of producing seeds regularly.

Old age in trees is most apparent from their belly size. They continue to grow in circumference even though their tops may have been knocked off by storms and their insides hollowed out by fungi. The great King Oak at Tullamore is over 9 meters in circumference and probably resisted being blown over because it has a very flat top and branches which spread at wide angles.



The great King Oak at Tullamore. Photograph by Gerry Douglas

Old age begins when a tree is no longer able to withstand the invasion of fungi. Fungi usually enter the tree through a wound. They digest the wood very slowly, usually from the centre of the tree in an outward direction. Every year the tree grows in circumference with the fungus advancing behind. If the tree grows as fast or faster than the fungus it can stay alive by growing in girth annually and this battle can continue for many decades, even centuries. The wood in the centre of veteran trees is often completely digested leaving a hollow, a welcome habitat for plants, mammals, fungi and many different types of invertebrate insects. The great sycamore at Kilmore Cathedral, Co, Cavan is 7 meters in circumference and although hollow it has many plants growing throughout its boughs. It is named after Bishop Bedell who was the first to publish the bible in Irish.



Bedell's Sycamore, Kilmore Cathedral, Co. Cavan. Photograph by Gerry Douglas

Our veteran trees are scarce and are a rare genetic resource which is a living link to past generations of trees. Each veteran tree has a unique combination of genes which may be a significant factor in its longevity. The Tree Register of Ireland records the locations and dimensions of the veteran trees throughout Ireland. The Register is at the National Botanic Gardens and there are plans to have it available on line. As a general guideline, the larger the tree girth the older the tree. However there are many

exceptions to this because some trees grow more slowly than others and may be very old even though they do not have a great girth. Similarly trees which have been pollarded over the decades may be smaller in girth because of the repeated cutting back and removal of crown material. Trees grown in open fields will grow more in girth than those which are shaded by surrounding trees. We would consider a tree as a veteran if its circumference is greater than 5m (oak), 4m (ash), 3.5 m (sycamore) and over 2.5m for elm. There are only about 150 oaks, 60 sycamores, 50 ash and a few elm in the veteran class in Ireland according to the Register, though “new” veterans are being located annually.

It is highly desirable to conserve the original veteran trees and this can be done by grafting shoots from them. In February and March of this year we are grafting 10 plants each of ash, oak and sycamore using shoots from veteran trees which were sent to us at Teagasc, Kinsealy by the tree owners. We have developed a method to also graft in summer for ash and oak though it has the drawback of making the graft rather high on the stem.

We are concentrating on conserving veterans of ash, oak and sycamore for grafting and we will attempt to root cuttings of the handful of known elms in the summer. We will return the successful grafts to the tree owners at the end of the summer so they can plant them out and so continue the life of the veteran tree in a rejuvenated form. We also plan to establish a living collection of veteran trees at John F. Kennedy Arboretum in Wexford using one or two grafted plants of each veteran from across the country. Many tree owners have enthusiastically cooperated in our efforts by collecting scion shoots and sending them to us this year. We will be in contact with the remaining sources of the veteran trees for the grafting season of 2006 when we would hope to complete the project. In addition we plan to extract DNA from the veteran trees and examine their sets of genes and compare them to the genes present in populations of younger trees.

Dr. Gerry Douglas is the Veteran Trees Project Co-ordinator at Teagasc, Kinsealy Research Centre, Malahide Rd. Dublin 17.

Hopefully, we will hear from Gerry again to keep us updated on this interesting project. Gerry is an IGPS member with a general interest in gardening as well as his professional interest.

If any IGPS members have been involved in the project, it would be interesting to hear from them with an account of the interesting veterans in their care. Ed

A Report on the AGM by Patrick Quigley

This short report is not meant to be a substitute for the minutes of the AGM – rather an update on current issues & concerns of the society for members unable to attend the meeting.

The recent publication of *Moorea*, the society's journal was the subject of a long discussion. There was unanimous approval of the standard of article and production, but there was cause for concern over the costs involved. The committee had been aware that there would be a substantial burden placed on our finances to publish *Moorea*, but with the journal being an important aspect of the society's work, they had taken the decision to go ahead with it. It was with this in mind that the fund-raising raffle was organised. Along with an increase in revenue from the Belfast & Dublin Plant sales last October, we managed to cover the full production costs.

However, we are faced with a decrease in revenue from subscriptions and if members wish to have a more regular production of *Moorea*, we will need to find more ways of augmenting our income.

Speaking of the raffle, the draw was held at the end of the meeting with First Prize going to Margaret O'Brien of Stradbally and Second Prize to Joe & Maureen Mooney of Raheny.

One measure for increasing revenue which has been accepted at the AGM is an increase in the sterling rate of subscriptions, bringing the sterling rate more closely into line with the Euro. The new rates for 2006 – 2007 are:

| | | |
|----------------|-------|---------|
| Single: | £ 18 | € 25 |
| Student: | £ 10 | € 12.50 |
| Family: | £ 28 | € 35 |
| 5 Year Single: | £ 83 | € 120 |
| 5 Year Family: | £ 114 | € 165 |

As always, the AGM is the occasion when new members are elected to committee. This year there was one new member elected, Mary Rowe who has been an active member of the Leinster sub-committee for some time now. It was also announced that we have a new Executive Assistant in Aisling Kilcullen.

With these main items of interest covered, the meeting ended and the round of garden visits started.

Congratulations to all those involved in organising such a successful weekend – a lot of hard work and planning ensured a very enjoyable time for us all. Thank you.

IGPS Accounts presented by Treasurer, Ed Bowden

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE TWELVE MONTHS TO

31ST MARCH 2005

| | 2005 | 2004 |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| INCOME | € | € |
| Subscriptions | 15747 | 15232 |
| Plant Sales | 5964 | 4140 |
| Raffle | 1293 | 0 |
| AGM(Less Expenses) | 184 | 3 |
| Summer Lunch(Less Expenses) | -26 | 72 |
| Deposit Interest | 1 | 0 |
| Advertising | 0 | 265 |
| | 23163 | 19712 |
| LESS | | |
| EXPENDITURE | | |
| Newsletter | 6212 | 5982 |
| Moorea Publication | 3384 | 0 |
| Lectures | 3606 | 3568 |
| Executive Secretary | 3905 | 3809 |
| Bank Fees | 324 | 336 |
| Postage and Telephone | 217 | 483 |
| Printing and Stationery | 1293 | 2347 |
| Travel | 931 | 1493 |
| Garden Visits | 0 | 25 |
| Garden Heaven Show | 0 | 466 |
| Audit Fees | 157 | 154 |
| Insurance | 1838 | 2008 |
| Subscriptions | 254 | 167 |
| Seed Offer | 399 | 161 |
| Sundry Expenses | 549 | 360 |
| Depreciation | 556 | 556 |
| | 23625 | 21915 |
| Excess Income over Expenditure | -462 | -2203 |
| Accumulated surplus brought forward | 9060 | 11263 |
| Accumulated surplus carried forward | 8598 | 9060 |

**BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31
MARCH 2005**

| | 2005 | | 2004 | |
|--|-------|------|-------|------|
| | € | € | € | € |
| FIXED ASSETS | | | | |
| Tangible Assets | | 96 | | 652 |
| CURRENT ASSETS | | | | |
| Debtors & Prepayments | 1233 | | 471 | |
| Cash at Bank and in Hand | 12435 | | 9813 | |
| | 13668 | | 10284 | |
| CURRENT LIABILITIES | | | | |
| Creditors falling due within one year | 5166 | | 1876 | |
| NET CURRENT ASSETS | | 8502 | | 8408 |
| TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES | | 8598 | | 9060 |
| ACCUMULATED RESERVES | | | | |
| <i>Income and Expenditure Account</i> | | 8598 | | 9060 |

IRISH GARDEN PLANT SOCIETY

ACCOUNTANTS REPORT ON THE UNAUDITED ACCOUNTS OF THE IRISH GARDEN PLANT SOCIETY - YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2005

In accordance with instructions we have compiled these unaudited accounts from the accounting records and information and explanations supplied to us.

**JOHN O' CONNELL & CO.
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS AND REGISTERED AUDITORS,
CASTLETOWN,
RATHMOLYON,
CO MEATH.**

14 MAY 2005

Paddy Woods (1932–2004): An Appreciation

by Dr. E. Charles Nelson

Paddy Woods was a scion of the House of Thomas Smith, founder of the Daisy Hill Nursery, Newry, and very proud of that fact. He was a foundation member of the Irish Garden Plant Society, and gave several lectures for the Society in Dublin, Cork and Belfast. Plants and gardening were evidently “bred in the bone” for after attending Belfast High School, he went as a horticultural apprentice to Mount Stewart, Newtownards, in the days before it was a National Trust property. In 1953 Paddy enrolled as a student in the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, and remained there in various capacities until his retirement in 1992. While the majority of his life was lived in Scotland, he never gave up his interest in his native land and her native and cultivated plants.

When he changed from being a mere student to being a staff member in the Edinburgh Botanic Garden, Paddy developed interests that he retained throughout his life. He joined the staff of the Herbarium as an Assistant – while this position entailed working with dried, pressed specimens, Paddy never forsook living plants. He was given charge of the conifers in the Herbarium, in succession to David Wilkie (a Scot well-known for his book about gentians who has spent time at the Slieve Donard Nursery, Newcastle), and he lectured about conifers to the horticultural students. Thus while he is perhaps better known today as a gesneriad and orchid specialist, conifers were also among Paddy’s original botanical responsibilities. His long association with Bill Burt, an authority on the Gesneriaceae (which includes *Saintpaulia*, the African violets), began at this time. In 1962 Paddy went on his first major field-trip to the Far East, working in Malaysia (especially Sarawak) with Bill Burt – there are a number of living plants from this joint expedition still growing in the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh – and by himself in Papua New Guinea. Paddy returned to Papua New Guinea in 1968. He became an acknowledged expert on *Dendrobium* (section *Oxyglossum*, Orchidaceae) from New Guinea – again orchids collected during his 1968 expedition are cultivated in Edinburgh, including many that were in 2001 still unnamed (see *Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh catalogue of plants 2001*).

It should also be noted that Paddy had a great affection for members of the heath family, Ericaceae, and in the Peat House at the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, there are numerous living plants that have been grown from material he originally collected in Papua New Guinea and other parts of the region. Some of these are also in the Curvilinear Range at the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin. The Edinburgh collection contains species of *Agapetes*, *Dimorphanthera* and *Rhododendron* (section

Vireya) under “Woods, P. J. B.” collection numbers. Paddy is credited as the first to introduce the spectacular white-flowered *Rhododendron himantodes* from Sarawak.

Paddy’s research led to numerous publications, not just in *Notes from the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh*, but also in *Curtis’s Botanical Magazine (The Kew Magazine)* and *The Plantsman*, and he contributed treatments of hardy and tropical orchids to the *European Garden Flora*. He named, as sole or joint author, twelve species in the genus *Aeschynanthus* (Gesneriaceae) and two in *Dendrobium*, as well as one rhododendron. Paddy was co-author of the excellent *Wild Orchids of Scotland* published in 1993, and of the handy companion, *Field Key to the Wild Orchids of Scotland* (1993). The last time I saw Paddy was on 21 February 2003 when he and Jennifer came to the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, so that Paddy could officiate at the “launch” of *Orchids of Glasnevin* for which he had graciously written the foreword.



*On the occasion of the launch of ‘Orchids of Glasnevin’
Paddy Woods is seated to the front. At the rear, left to right are: Charles Nelson, Brendan Sayers, Tony
Moreau and Donal Synnott*

I first met Paddy in the late 1970s when, as horticultural taxonomist in the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, I paid one of my occasional visits to the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh. Over the years we kept in close touch because of our mutual

interests in Ericaceae and especially in the history of botany and horticulture in Northern Ireland and Scotland. When a history of the Daisy Hill Nursery was

suggested, Paddy was unstinting with his help. Of course, being one of Thomas Smith's great-grandsons, he had a great personal interest in ensuring that the record should be as complete as possible.

In 1969 Paddy was diagnosed as having multiple sclerosis; around the same time his wife Pauline found out that she had cancer. Pauline died in 1975, leaving Paddy to care for their two children. In 1977 he married Jennifer Lamond, one of his colleagues in the Royal Botanic Garden's Herbarium. In the many projects which occupied them, Jennifer and Paddy were an indomitable and devoted couple, and they never allowed Paddy's MS to deter them. While the debilitating effects of MS slowed Paddy down and made him less and less mobile, they maintained their botanical research interests, and were especially involved in some of the organizing for the 14th World Orchid Conference in Glasgow. In recent years, even while he had to rely more and more on Jennifer, Paddy campaigned tirelessly for greatly improved respite facilities for MS sufferers in Scotland.

Appropriately, in 2001, the Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society gave Paddy Woods its Dr Patrick Neill Medal, awarded to distinguished botanists and cultivators. Several of his colleagues have named species after him: *Cyrtandra woodsii* B. L. Burt (Gesneriaceae); *Dendrobium woodsii* P. J. Cribb (Orchidaceae); and, most recently, *Paphia woodsii* P. F. Stevens (Ericaceae).

Patrick James Blythe Woods was born on 3 July 1932 at Ballinderry, County Antrim, and died in Edinburgh on 28 May 2004. He is survived by Jennifer, and by his daughter Debbie and two grandsons, and son Michael.

Dr Peter Stevens had described Paddy to me as "one of the 'nicest' people I have known – there is no single adjective that describes him accurately". I agree wholeheartedly. He was a rare man, erudite, generous, with a fine Ulster wit, and remarkably courageous in the face of those cruel tribulations life apportioned to him. Yet first and foremost Paddy Woods was a plantsman, in the best tradition of his family, and all the rarer for being the only Ulsterman (as far as I know) commemorated, deservedly and in perpetuity, in the extraordinary floras of Borneo and New Guinea.

Dr David Robinson (1928 – 2004)

An Appreciation by Keith Lamb & Brendan Sayers

Ireland has lost a horticultural scientist of international repute in the untimely death of David Robinson.

David was born in Belfast and educated at Reading University, England and Cornell University in the United States. He obtained his doctorate from Queen's University, Belfast. Following his time as deputy Director of the Horticultural Research Centre, Loughgall, Co. Armagh, David came to head the Kinsealy Research Centre, Co. Dublin. It was at Loughgall that he had initiated the work on herbicides that was to establish him as a leader in this field. At Kinsealy he found time to deepen his expertise on weed control despite the onerous load of administrative work that was his. He was an able leader of the team of researchers covering diverse subjects. He was a markedly good communicator, both at a personal level and when delivering a lecture at conferences, often lightening his delivery with inimitable wit. After his retirement from Kinsealy he was in worldwide demand as a consultant.

David was a gardener too. In 1969 he began gardening at Earlscliffe where he exploited the mild climate of Howth Head to plant his garden with many tender plants such as species of *Musa*, *Erica* and *Agave*. He favoured plants from the southern hemisphere and especially the genus *Eucalyptus*. When he initially planted Earlscliffe seventy species of this genus were trialled and only the survivors of an Irish winter remained. This was indicative of David's gardening style. Many a plant was planted and if it died, then another little piece of knowledge of its culture was gained. He seldom mourned the death of a plant. In his garden he practised his skills in chemical weed control and showed that their value is not confined to the commercial grower but could be put to good use by the amateur gardener also. This was often a bone of contention with visitors but David never failed to argue his case in a most convincing manner.

Viewers and listeners of television and radio gardening programs were familiar with his distinctive voice. He was a regular contributor to Gerry Daly's radio program and a presenter on Green Fingers which aired on RTE and BBC television.

David's garden was a treasure trove of unusual specimens. Their performance at '53.3° degrees North latitude' he tirelessly documented and shared the information with anyone interested. Among his numerous publications are titles that help describe David – Selection of *Eucalyptus* species for garden use in cool temperate climates; Increase in cold hardiness of *Echium pininnana* through natural selection and Cape heaths in

eastern Ireland. He corresponded with plant specialists worldwide and assisted them in their efforts to learn more.

His hospitality to garden visitors was well known and a visit to Earlscliffe was often the last on the days schedule to avail of the banter over drinks at the end of a day. He will be sadly missed.



David Robinson's garden, Earlscliffe, at 53.3° degrees North latitude, showing Trachycarpus fortunei and Echium pininana, both of which thrived in the mild microclimate afforded by its seaside location.

The photograph is reproduced here by kind permission of Muriel Robinson.

Muriel has a website, featuring David's garden at Earlscliffe, which is dedicated to his memory. You can visit the site at: <http://homepage.eircom.net/~earlscliffe/index.htm>

Growing up (and outwards) by Rae McIntyre

Between the ages of 13 and 14 I suddenly shot up from being an extremely skinny undersized brat to being 5 feet 11 inches tall with buxom propensities. Something similar is happening in my garden - has been happening over the past year - and many plants have grown both upwards and outwards.

Our kitchen window is 6 feet by 4 feet (albeit with glazing bars) and that should let in enough light but on our frequent dull days the lights have to be kept on; not an ideal state of affairs, especially in summer. This is because of the proximity of sycamore trees which have increased perceptibly in size over the last couple of years. These two sycamore trees are not along the boundary fence between us and the field but are actually inside the garden. That they are there at all is entirely my own fault because we had a digger in the wilderness of a garden to clear it when we moved into the house in 1976. "Fell the damned things," commanded my father, who happened to be here that day. I disregarded his advice because I was misguidedly (very) sentimental about all trees and anyway I knew practically nothing about gardening. So, the trees stayed and I even had circular dry stone walls built round them and filled in with soil. One has *Lamium galeobdolon* growing in it and, this past year, it too has been encroaching far beyond where it is meant to be. The other was planted with bluebells and variegated honesty both of which have seeded themselves well outside the confines of their circular bed. The honesty placed itself beside the almost black tulip "Queen of Night" and the two harmonised beautifully when they were in flower.

I digress. For years I accepted the two sycamores as a feature of the garden. Perhaps they do give a modicum of shelter from the prevailing west wind but during the wet summer of 2004 my tolerance suddenly evaporated. There were hundreds, I swear, of sycamore seedlings everywhere and I could fill a large plastic bucket with them in no time. In one square yard of soil among hellebores and dormant *Cyclamen coum* I found no less than 112 seedlings. They flourish in gravel paths; remove the tiny two-leaved seedlings on a Monday and by Saturday there'll be a replacement crop. Quite often plants self-seed themselves when they know they're going to expire. *Daphne mezereum* is one such and it occurred to me that the sycamores were perhaps going to do so. I actually found myself pleased at the prospect. Last year two of my fellow writers in *The Irish Garden* (Mary Waldron and Dermot Kehoe) were also bothered by sycamores and were threatening to have them chopped down so I too began to imagine life without them. Two men were booked to do the deed during the winter but, alas, in the way of so many workmen they didn't specify which winter and before I knew it the sap had started to rise in the sycamores in early spring so they are still here. In the meantime there is much opposition to the proposed execution from my son David who insists that all during his childhood I was totally against trees being cut down. That's

perfectly true. Presenting him with a bucketful of sycamore seedlings doesn't impress him one whit.

Many rhododendrons have increased in size during this last year. Like conifers, rhododendrons can be categorised as dwarf but turn out to be no more dwarf than I am. The dwarf "Bow Bells" (a *williamsianum* hybrid) is about a foot taller than I am and is elbowing out others beside her who, in turn, are elbowing out their neighbours. There's going to be quite a bit of moving around to be done. I have pleasant daydreams, when I'm down among the ground elder and scutch grass, of rhododendrons growing happily with plenty of elbow room when the two big lummoxes of sycamores are removed. And, of course, I will not buy any more rhododendrons. Every September the most tempting catalogue comes from a Scottish nursery specialising in the *Ericaceae* and I used the very last ounce of will power to put it in the blue recycling bin last year without ordering anything. About ten miles from us is John Gault's nursery and you've no idea what a struggle it was in May to stay away from his gorgeous rhododendrons and azaleas. I feel about them as Imelda Marcos did about shoes or Coleen McLoughlin about handbags.

I've made the terrible mistake of planting things much too closely together. Gardening books and magazines continually advise against this and there have been times when I have sneered at other people for making this mistake. In one garden close to us the owners had dozens of small conifers planted in it about ten years ago but they had the sense to remove some every year so that it looks all right (just) now. Owners of another garden had a garden centre to "design" it and the garden centre people, who should have known better, have offloaded hundreds of very ordinary trees and shrubs in it. I shouldn't criticise. In my own patch I have a *Halesia carolina* crammed beside a *Podocarpus salignus*. This, in turn, is snuggling up close to a very large *Hydrangea villosa* almost overlapped by *Cornus controversa* "Variegata". This last suckers madly with plain green suckers that are the very devil to remove and its large branches sweep over the path now so that people have to duck down going past it. The *cornus* is no distance from an *embothrium*. It's the "Norquinco" form that is deciduous and very hardy but fortunately doesn't have blooms as large as those on evergreen *Embothrium lanceolatum*; that would be too much of a good thing. Beside the *embothrium* there's a *Stewartia pseudocamellia*. All these bloom in succession which is good in theory but they'd be much more satisfactory if they had space around them. I must confess that in front of this series of larger shrubs there's a collection of low-growing rhododendrons – low-growing now but threatening to become bigger.

In the little winter garden behind the house some drastic pruning needs to be done. Like many women I am not a pruner / cutter-back. I am convinced there is a difference between the sexes about this and I know only a few women who enjoy giving shrubs a short back and sides whereas the eyes of many men light up when they hold loppers or pruning shears. Joe, who used to work here sometimes before his blood pressure

soared, loved shaping shrubs geometrically. My mother has a gardener who aims to have everything in her garden in rectangular box shapes so she now has a perfectly cuboid camellia, forsythia, deutzia and hydrangea and is not best pleased. She's on a walking-aid all the time now so cannot be in control the way she used to be. I digress again. In the winter garden *Cornus mas* on one side of the path and *Stachyurus chinensis* on the other are trying to embrace each other. These used to be slow-growing shrubs sitting tidily in their allotted spaces for years and making no territorial demands. Not any more.

Up in the poor soil of the stackyard there's a giant hebe that was stuck in unceremoniously as a cutting about seven years ago. It has very narrow willow-like leaves so is presumably *Hebe salicifolia*. I hoped then that it would fill the gap between the rugosa rose "Blanc Double de Coubert" and the rather coarse *Olearia macrodonta*. It and the rose have grown hugely but the hebe has, at about 10 feet tall and 6 feet wide, outstripped them both. It must have been the mild winters and the damp summers that account for this almost phenomenal growth.

Lest you get the impression that everything is thriving, I must tell you that some are definitely not. There are three different shrub roses that are doing very little indeed in spite of being planted with far more loving care and attention than my precious rhododendrons ever get. One David Austin rose, bought in Sainsbury's last autumn, has only put forth a few leaves with not a bloom to be seen.

There's a *Daphne tangutica* that was given to me as a small plant three years ago and it's still the same size as it was then. Another daphne relation, *Edgeworthia chrysantha*, grows extremely slowly. It holds on to its leaves until Christmas and is supposed to have yellow scented daphne-like flowers in February. So far it hasn't. Then it doesn't produce new leaves until late May or early June which irritates me because everything around it is burgeoning forth.

Romneya coulteri is a glorious thug in some gardens. For three years mine did well but it has now decided that it likes neither me nor the local weather and, instead of spreading as it's supposed to do, it shrinks a bit every year. This year (as I write in mid-June) there are only two stems on it.

Honestly I don't care. The older I become the less I can be bothered to fuss over plants that are not 100 per cent happy in the conditions I have to offer.

The Munster group summer lunch is on July 16th when they visit Tourin House. Please see the enclosed information page and booking form. David O Regan and Kitty Hennessy tell me this is going to be a wonderful day, weather guaranteed, sunny south-east and all that, lovely lunch etc. Get out there and enjoy yourself.

Erythroniums at Woodfield by Keith Lamb

The erythroniums, popularly called Dog's Tooth Violets, are among the most delightful of dwarf spring bulbs. They get their misleading common name from the pointed shape of the corm. They are actually part of the lily family (liliaceae). The American name, trout lily, referring to the marbled leaves of some kinds is more appropriate.

There is only one old world species, *Erythronium dens-canis*, with spotted leaves and rose-coloured flowers. We have grown this for many years and would not be without it. With us it tends to multiply so quickly by offsets that it forms clumps of foliage rather in excess for the number of flowers. There are several varieties and forms that we have not tried that might be more floriferous.

The other species are American. One of these (*E. americanum*) is a small plant with yellow flowers and would be delightful if only it flowered freely instead of multiplying excessively by stolons. We had a large and ever spreading patch in a raised bed until we decided it was not giving sufficient return for the space occupied.

The other erythroniums we grow are all outstanding for show of flowers. Erythronium 'White Beauty' is considered to be a hybrid. It increases well without reducing the number of creamy flowers with a little red ring at the centre. Rather similar is *Erythronium oreganum* in which the creamy flowers are yellowish at the centre. It does not clump up so quickly but perhaps its less crowded flowers are all the more graceful.

We greatly treasure *Erythronium hendersonii*, so different in colour from the other species we grow. The flowers are a deep violet, darker at the centre. This erythronium has grown for years close under a hebe (veronica) bush, a rather drier spot than we might have chosen. However, it has slowly multiplied there from just one or two corms that were a generous gift some years ago.

Another delight is *Erythronium multiscapodium*, well named for the branching habit of the flower stems, which bear up to five large white flowers with pointed petals and yellow centres. The numerous blossoms make this species one of the best.

Very beautiful is *Erythronium revolutum* var. *Johnsonii* with its deep pink flowers. After a slow start this has self sown more freely when the removal of a nearby tree allowed in more light.

There are several erythroniums with yellow flowers and plain green leaves. *Erythronium tuolumnense* has increased quickly to make a large patch, attractive in a woodland setting. It is a parent of several yellow-flowered hybrids such as 'Citronella',

'Kondo' and 'Pagoda'. These show hybrid vigour, with rather lush foliage. Two hybrids that have retained their graceful habit are 'Sundisc', bright yellow and 'Joanna', creamy yellow. The latter fades to an attractive pinkish shade.



Erythronium tuolumnense in flower at Woodfield when the IGPS visited in April of this year.

Photo: P. Tobin

A single plant of *Erythronium grandiflorum* appeared unexpectedly in our garden this year. We suspect it was lurking unflowered in previous seasons. A stem bearing two golden flowers arose from the plain green leaves. A statement in an American book that the flowers are fragrant had us rushing outside to see if this was so. The flowers were fading but a slight scent could be detected, to be confirmed or otherwise on fresher flowers next year. Unlike most erythroniums, this species is said to be tricky to grow, so perhaps that is why it did not flower in previous years.

Our latest acquisition is *Erythronium elegans*, a recently named species from Oregon. It is such a small plant, only four inches high, that we put it in a raised bed, where it looks very pretty with white flowers fading to pink. We have only one plant, but it shows signs of increasing by stolons.

Erythroniums are among our favourite flowers. There are a number of other kinds, some not easy to come by, but to be put on our 'wanted' list.

Never too Old by Bob Bradshaw

JERUSALEM - Israeli researchers have germinated a sapling date palm from 2,000-year-old seeds. One of the scientists leading the project said their research could lead to the discovery of new medicines that would benefit future generations.

Sarah Sallon, of the Louis Borick Natural Medicine Research Centre in Jerusalem, said she and her colleagues used seeds found in archaeological excavations at Masada. She said they were the oldest seeds ever brought back to life.

"A lotus seed was germinated (in China) after 1,200 years, but nothing has been germinated coming from this far back, not to 2,000 years," she said. Carbon dating of a fragment from the Masada seeds put their age at between 1,940 and 2,040 years.

The palm plant, nicknamed Methusaleh after the biblical figure said to have lived for 969 years, is now about 12 inches (30 centimetres) tall. Sallon and her colleagues have sent one of its leaves for DNA analysis in the hope it may reveal medicinal qualities that have disappeared from modern varieties.

Sallon said the project is more than a curiosity. She and her colleagues hope it may hold promise for the future, like the anti-malarial treatment artemisinin, developed out of traditional Chinese plant treatment, and a cancer drug made from the bark of the Pacific Yew tree.

Michael Kruse, a seed historian at the University of Hohenheim in Germany, said he was not familiar with the research, but said if the claim is true, the date palm seed would be the oldest germinated in the world.

"This new dimension in seed storage is rare and special. It's very exciting. Maybe now scientists will begin looking for seeds under these special conditions, where it is very dry," he said.

Reminders:

Summer lunch with the Munster group on July 16th at Tourin House. Booking form and information page enclosed.

Plant Sales coming up in Belfast and Dublin in the autumn – time to propagate something interesting for the sale.

Watch your seeds ripen, collect and send on to Stephen Butler, address at bottom of next article.

Seed Distribution Resume 2005 by Stephen Butler

The last packets were sent out a good while ago now; I've enjoyed a recuperative drink or three, and then set to with the number crunching to see how we did – and I'm afraid, at the end of the day, I'm not best pleased.

We had 339 accessions in total, which went down to 297 for distribution after knocking off the 29 duplicates, and 10 with just genus or no seed. A very big thank you to our 16 (down from 36 last year) seed contributors – 4 of whom sent in over 40 packets each; one sent 55 – a remarkable commitment when you add up the actual collecting, cleaning, packaging and posting. A new trend this year was sending seed in even in summer as it was collected. Several contributors sent in 5 or 6 packets rather than just one in autumn. Unfortunately a few seeds arrived too late to be added in – it takes me some time to check the names, collate the list and, although we traditionally have the final panic near the newsletter posting date, sometimes we just have to go ahead.

I ran out of 167 seeds during the distribution; some had very few seeds, of course, and as few as 2 or 3 requests would exhaust the supply. As with previous years the favourites changed over time. Among the first 50 *Myrrhis odorata* and *Helenium* 'Moerheim Beauty' led the field. The next 50 saw *Antirrhinum pendula* 'Chinese Lantern' and *Nigella damascena* ahead; while in the last 42 *Passiflora caerulea* left 7 others in second place.

So what were the top twelve?

1. *Antirrhinum pendula* 'Chinese Lantern' (26)
2. *Helenium* 'Moerheim Beauty' (23)
3. *Myrrhis odorata* (21)
4. *Pulsatilla vulgaris* (21)
5. *Aconitum ex* 'Stainless Steel' (20)
6. *Codonopsis clematidea* (19)
7. *Passiflora caerulea* (19)
8. *Anomatheca laxa* (18)
9. *Campanula rotundifolia* 'Cova Donga' (18)
10. *Cerintho major* 'Purpurascens' (18)
11. *Clematis rehderiana* (18)
12. *Dianthus* 'Fenbow Nutmeg Clove' (18)

None of the above appeared in the top 10 last year

As usual there were a few, a very few, with no supporters, *Anacampereros pubescens*, *Hieracium lanatum*, and *Linum monogynum* – 3 very nice plants indeed.

So why am I not best pleased?

Our final tally for requests was 142. This is to me very disappointing when I think of all the work our contributors have put in and it continues the trend downwards – against an average increase in seeds on offer:-

| | | |
|------|--------------|--------------|
| 2003 | seeds in 232 | requests 196 |
| 2004 | seeds in 321 | requests 170 |
| 2005 | seeds in 297 | requests 142 |

I do not know why the requests are going down. Are less people sowing seeds now? Do impatient gardeners want instant gardens? Is there a more diverse range of plants available? Perhaps we need decking seed and blue painted envelopes? Or, perhaps, we need a mix of the above and a few other factors? I don't know.

If anyone can enlighten me, or suggest realistic ways to increase the uptake, I'd be very glad to hear it.

Some of my own delights this year were a large pot of *Narcissus bulbocodium* that flowered on the windowsill for at least 6 weeks in spring – from IGPS seed sown in 2002, and *Erodium manescaui* from 2004 seed which I loved as a seed with its twisted awn and am now enjoying flowering in a large crevice in a wall just outside the back door. The leaves alone flattened against the wall are wonderful; the deep magenta flowers are a bonus. From this year's sowing I have flowering plants of *Erodium pelargoniiiflorum* looking very good too.

Keep sending the seed in! – address as below, please.

**Stephen Butler, IGPS Seed Distribution,
Curator of Horticulture, Dublin Zoo,
Phoenix Park, Dublin 8**

New Director at Glasnevin Botanic Gardens

PRESS RELEASE: Appointment of new director of the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin

Dr. Peter Wyse Jackson MA, PhD has been appointed, by the Office of Public Works, as the new Director of the National Botanic Gardens in Glasnevin, Dublin.

Dr. Wyse Jackson took up the appointment on Monday, March 7th. He previously held the position of Secretary General of Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI), which is the worldwide network organisation promoting plant conservation, environmental education and sustainable development through botanic gardens and was based at Kew in the U.K.

Dr. Wyse Jackson is the author of many scientific papers on plant conservation, gardening and horticulture, Irish floristics and plant systematics, and the management and conservation of endangered island floras. He has authored, co-authored and edited nine books. His recent work includes development of a global strategy for plant conservation adopted by 188 countries in 2002 through the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity.

Dr. Wyse Jackson was born in Kilkenny, educated in Dublin and is a graduate of Trinity College, where he has been associated with its botanic gardens. He brings back to Ireland extensive knowledge and experience, both theoretical and practical, of botanical institutions and has a renowned international profile. He wishes to give expression to a life-long vision he holds for the National Botanic Gardens to bring them to a position of prominence both nationally and internationally.

From: The Office of Public Works Press Office.

Sincerest congratulations and best wishes to Dr. Wyse Jackson in his new position. His particular interest in the conservation of plants augers well for continued close co-operation between the Botanic Gardens and the IGPS. Staff at Glasnevin have been the backbone of the IGPS for many years and continue to support the society on all occasions. Support from Dr. Wyse Jackson for the IGPS would be of tremendous benefit and no doubt will be generously given.

Ed.

The Fascination Continues... by Tim Cramer

This year, at the end of a very indifferent May, we have moved into the early days of flaming June and this smallish urban garden has astounded me by its apparently sudden maturity. Cultivated assiduously for some years since my retirement, its mixed borders have actually begun to look just like those in my numerous glossy books and my beloved roses especially are putting on a dazzling display as I write, with a supporting cast of hardy geraniums, peonies, clematis, pinks, campanula and heaven knows what else. Meanwhile, the “hot” border of dahlias and cannas waits in the wings...

Fortunate I am to have two bushes (one a “pup” of the other) of *Rosa* ‘Old Blush China’. Normally first and last in bloom, it has astonished me by flowering continuously for over a year, totally unbowed by winter, when it continued to throw out a small but welcome succession of blooms. I know about global warming, but this is ridiculous – I live in Cork, not Canberra!

However, it does mean that I do not have to lift dahlias in the autumn, which saves quite a bit of work. Last year, as an experiment, I left four cannas in the ground; three are flourishing, the fourth I forgot to cover with a layer of compost and it has vanished without trace.

The cutting of Old Blush, now thriving, was taken last June in stem tip form. For some reason, success with hardwood cuttings in autumn has eluded me. I have followed all the advice, but whether placed in the ground or in pots, the things have just sat there, glowered at me and rotted. With the softwood cuttings in June I have had a success rate of over 50 per cent.

Overwintering, however, I have found to be a bit difficult and I now theorise, rightly or wrongly, that rooted cuttings are best hardened off outdoors before winter when possible and merely kept frost-free during the hard months. Perhaps I still have a lot to learn, but mine seem to resent even a mildly heated greenhouse, needing perhaps their full period of dormancy. More experiments are indicated...

Either way, beware of over-watering during this period. It may seem so obvious, but it is a trap I have fallen into and it has resulted in some of my losses.

Propagation of any sort is, of course, endlessly absorbing and I am now looking speculatively at the seed pods of a tree peony which I bought last year as a small plant. Potted into a 15-litre tub, it rewarded me with one huge and lovely bloom. The Chinese name is to me quite unpronounceable, but it appears to be a “Rockii” hybrid and I am hoping to make more of it.

Despite their exotic appearance, peonies from seed are actually not all that difficult (I have had a success rate of 90 per cent with *Paeonia x delavayi* var *lutea*) but patience is essential. Most readers will know that the seeds need to be stratified outdoors. In the first spring they just send down roots and you have to wait until the second year before they begin to shoot.



Tim's Tree Paeony with Rosa 'Old Blush China'

Photograph: Tim Cremin

Of course, there are times when propagation does not need any help from us mortals at all. Aquilegias, for instance, are notoriously promiscuous, but I think I was pushing it a bit when I put 'William Guinness' and 'Nora Barlow' in the same border! Inevitably, there were offspring all over the place, most of them being that dull, washy, off-white colour so common to aquilegia seedlings, but the happy couple did provide me with two beautiful plants in both deep and pale blue.

And so it goes on. I am not getting any younger but I recently read about an 85-year-old who is happily continuing to breed orchids in the hope of finding his own brand of perfection, so maybe there is hope for me yet.

Meanwhile, the fascination continues.

The Big Dig II by Catherine Tyrie

Well, Spring had come again, and again northern members boldly went out into a cool misty morning, to have another go at the beds at Lismaecoskey Rectory, at the Ulster Folk & Transport Museum outside Belfast.

There are two large beds facing the back of the house, and last year the right-hand one was tackled (and on a horribly wet day); this year, on 19 March, almost the same group tackled the left-hand bed, but without the seriously inclement weather.



Getting stuck in to the work on the left bed at Lismaecoskey. Photo: Catherine Tyrie

Lunch was again provided, and also some extras – lovely soda bannock and a cake baked over the fire in the Rectory by the Museum staff member on duty.

Some preliminary work had been done thinning out shrubs at the outer, left-hand edge, but apart from that it was the usual work – digging out plants, cleaning them up and dividing them if necessary, and digging over the whole area and removing weed roots;

compost was then incorporated into the beds and the plants were replaced and a final top dressing of compost was added.

It's always a pleasant surprise when what looked so appallingly messy and unappealing at 11.30, suddenly looks really not bad at all at 4.30. Your back/feet/hands might be sore, you've lost that old kitchen knife you keep for dividing plants, someone else has mislaid a pair of secateurs and you're sure you'll never get your nails clean again, but suddenly it has all been worth it. And so it was on Saturday 19th – the team went home with the virtuous feeling of a job well done and everything sorted.

Except - there was one problem - we hadn't enough plants to fill the bed. Although it looked neat and tidy in time for the Easter crowds that always flock to the Folk Museum, the plants were, literally, a bit thin on the ground. We'd done *our* bit, but perhaps our colleagues in the IGPS at large hadn't – we need pre-1900 plants, especially of Irish origin, to put in the bed. The good name of the IGPS may well stand or fall in Museum circles in the North on whether we can come up with the goods, as we undertook to do so many years ago - that is, a garden planted with period plants to make a setting for a lovely Irish house.



The left hand border at Lismacliskey, much improved but a little bare – see Catherine's note later on in the article. Photo: Catherine Tyrrie.

So, to coin a phrase, 'all youse out there, get dividing!' *Please* think of us this year when you're out in the garden – divide your perennials, split your snowdrops in the green, or earmark a spare shrub for us - *please!*

All you need to do would be to let Patrick Quigley, Andrena Duffin or me know that you have a couple of plants to offer us, and we can make arrangements to take possession of them.

After all, we've already done the hard bit.....

Here are our contact details and we look forward to hearing from you.

Lismacloskey Co-ordinator:

Andrea Duffin - 11 Grey Point, Helen's Bay, Co Down BT19 ILE. Tel: 028-91852668.

Patrick Quigley (*Northern Rep*) - 24 Areema Drive, Dunmurry, Belfast BT17 0QG. Tel: 028-90225484 M: 07801-299263.

Catherine Tyrie (*Northern Events Co-ordinator*) - Dept of Botany, Ulster Museum, Botanic Gardens, Belfast BT9 5AB.

Tel: 028-90383152, fax: 028-90383103. Home: 146 Gobbins Road, Islandmagee, Larne, BT40 3TX. Tel: 028 93-382239. E-mail: catherine.tyrie.um@nics.gov.uk

We would also like to have your help with the Annual Plant Sale, Saturday 1st October. If you are dividing perennials from now on, do pot up a few for the plant sale. Again, you can contact one of the Plant Sale Coordinators below who will advise re getting the plants to the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum for the day.

Plant Sales Co-ordinators:

Mary Browne - Dalim Lodge, Mahee Island, Killinchy, Co Down BT23 6EP.
Tel:028 97-541405

Carol Cunningham - Carmie, Crookedstone, 1a Ballyarnott Road, Crumlin, Co Antrim BT29 4DT. Tel: 028 94-462217.

Regional Reports

Reports from Munster

May 21st 2005

Garden visit to Christel Rosenfeld, Killorglin, Co. Kerry.

Christel Rosenfeld was our host to what was billed as a unique garden in a spectacular setting, and so it was!

Their driveway was promising with many purple spotted orchids jostling with red clover in the wayside.

Ten years ago when they settled in, the first and biggest project was to get the shelterbelt started. Two and a half thousand trees went in over two years and included lots of oak, birch, hornbeam, whitebeam and manna ash, many of which were home grown.

Dry stonewalls are widely used to both mark the boundaries and as features within the garden. Christel has built these over time and it is an ongoing development. Obviously the raw material is not in short supply!

Here and there curious ceramic faces, also made by Christel, add another touch to the garden. One of these faces guarded the entrance to the wild bees nest and they accessed it through the eyes and nose!

Several of the walls were host to climbing roses and clematis, of which *Clematis montana* 'Marjorie' invoked a lot of admiration.

The garden is managed organically and Christel finds that just a small protective amount of Ferracul is enough to keep the slugs at bay.

The second urgent project was to get the vegetable garden into production and it was doing so well they extended it by dismantling the dry stonewall and rebuilding it to incorporate a larger area. This relatively frost-free garden was thriving on the benefits of their 3x20ft compost ridges and local seaweed. Asparagus, Potatoes, Beans, Peas, Spinach, Salsify - coming into curious flower - and lots of herbs were well advanced and so healthy looking. The four handcrafted scare "crows" looked as though they would tuck in when we left.

The large lean-to glasshouse is home to the more exotic vegetables and they too were well on their way to a productive summer. The cottage style garden is wrapped around

there home, full of lovely herbaceous treasures including Iris, Columbines, Crambe and Camassias. At the rear of the house a formal pool is edged with dainty alpines- an ideal spot for sun and shelter but also a place to absorb the stunning lake in the hollow and the spread of mountains beyond. The calming sound of birds completed the setting. Afterwards we were treated to the most wonderful array of home baking and equally enthralled by the long kitchen window, which apparently frames the setting sun over the mountains.

Who wasn't tempted to dawdle for another few hours on that glorious summer evening?

Sheila Miller

Reports from Leinster

April 16th, 2005

IGPS Visit to Dr. Keith Lamb's garden, 'Woodfield', Clara, Co. Offaly

It was on a pleasant April day that a small group of IGPS members descended on the Offaly home of Dr and Mrs Keith Lamb. We were greeted by Dr Lamb and led around the wonderful woodland garden where *Myosotidium hortensia* was displaying her beautiful blue and white flowers while nearly *Saruma henryi* was colonising a large patch of ground. I'm sure Dr Lamb had known this plant for many years although most of the rest of us only came aware of it when the Augustine Henry exhibition was shown at the Chelsea Flower Show courtesy of the Irish Garden Plant Society and the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin. It is now de rigeur in all the best woodland gardens but it will take quite a while before my own small plant matches the size and the beauty of the one at Woodfield! *Sanguinaria canadensis* (single and double forms) were threaded through white and yellow erythroniums, dactyloporrhizas, fritillarias, trilliums of all kinds, *Anemone nemerosa* and maidenhair ferns, making a beautiful tapestry under the tall trees.

We saw much more than wonderful woodland plants. *Berberis* 'Goldilocks' is an exciting barberry with great foliage and flowers; *Skimmia* 'Nymans' carries bright, bright red berries on a compact plant; *Magnolia salicifolia*, raised from seed, is, as its name suggests, a slender-leaved, upright small tree; the supposedly tender *Paeonia cambessedessii* was in full flower and *Philesia magellanica*, growing profusely out of an old stone trough, must surely be breathtaking later on in the season when the beautiful, lapageria-like flowers emerge.

Dr Lamb talked to us of his plans for the future – in particular he has a five-year plant to bulk up a tiny and exciting orchid – *Cypripedium plectrochilum* and he is still planting walnut trees and magnolias in the outer garden. We were all very grateful to Mrs Lamb for the very welcome tea and cakes before we headed back home replete with all the treasures we had seen.

Carmel Duignan

Reports from Northern Ireland

April 14th: The Clotsworthy Lecture Making Gardens – with an Artist’s Eye by Daphne Levinge Shackleton

The Clotsworthy lectures have become an increasingly more popular event in our Northern calendar and this evening, with more than a hint of spring in the air, gave us a full house which such an important speaker deserves.

Daphne spoke with such enthusiasm of garden making, and her superb knowledge of plants, together with an artist’s eye, held her audience throughout.

When attempting to describe Daphne’s garden one has to draw on all the superlatives to conjure up a true picture of her use of plants and her magical understanding of colour. It is easy to see why her work is always alluded to with such tones of near reverence – there is genius there!

The lecture was accompanied by fascinating slides of Daphne’s own Lake View Garden in County Cavan and other Irish gardens where she has created areas of inspiration and style which fit seamlessly into the landscape. There were also views of Helen Dillon’s garden and that of the late Alan Bloom, which were used to illustrate particular points.

Those of us who attended this wonderful event had a further bonus, as we gathered for coffee and a chat with friends at the end of the evening, because the Clotsworthy Centre had an exhibition of Daphne’s very fine botanical paintings to coincide with her lecture. This was truly an evening to remember and to spur us on the greater endeavours.

Maura Shah

Looking Ahead

Munster Fixtures

*******For your immediate attention*******

*****Saturday, 16th July: Summer Lunch at Tourin House and Gardens*****
Cappoquin, Co. Waterford. See enclosed information page and booking form. Book immediately! Don't delay! An event not to be missed.

Friday, 16th September, 07.45pm: Lecture
'Late Summer Stars' with Rosamund Henley, Anne's Grove Gardens

NB. As usual, all the Cork lectures will be held at the SMA Hall, Wilton.

Leinster Fixtures

Sunday, 10th July, Garden Visit:

Dr. Dermot Kehoe, Mir, 8 New Russian Village, Kilquade, Co. Wicklow, 2 - 4pm.

This is an opportunity to visit the garden of our chairman Dr. Dermot Kehoe. Dermot's garden and the plants he grows will be familiar to members who read *The Irish Garden* magazine. There is a wide range of plants from alpines to shrubs but of special interest will be the long herbaceous borders.

Directions: Travelling south on N11 pass through Glen of the Downs and under green pedestrian bridge. Turn immediately left. Take 1st turn left. Mir is 4th house on left. Travelling north on N11 take 2nd exit for Newtownmountkennedy/Glendalough and follow signs for NGEC from first roundabout. Passing Centre on right take 2nd turn on right. Mir is 4th house on left.

Admission: Free to members. Non members: €6. Good parking immediately outside but car sharing encouraged. There will be plants for sale in aid of Concern.

Thursday, 22 September, 8.00pm: Lecture:

'The family Jewels-the Lindley Library of the RHS' with Brent Elliott (Librarian,RHS) at the National Botanic Gardens. This is a joint lecture with the RHSI

Sunday, 16 October, 12 Noon: Plant Sale

At Our Lady of Dolours Church ,Glasnevin

Time now to organise some plants for the Plant Sale. Your support is essential. This is one of our biggest fund-raising events of the year and good quality plants in good supply ensure success.

Thursday, 8 December, 8.00pm: Lecture

'*A World of Botanic Gardens, Conserving our Diverse Plant Heritage*' with Dr. Peter Wyse Jackson, Director National Botanic Gardens.

At the National Botanic Gardens

Friday, 14 October, 8.00pm: Lecture

'*Plant Hunting in Central Asia*' with Christopher Grey Wilson at the National Botanic Gardens. This is a joint lecture with Alpine Society

Northern Fixtures

Thursday, 28 July, 7.00pm: Garden Visit

Mrs. Liz Andrews, 38 Ballgowan Road, Comber, Co. Down. Donations for Marie Curie and £1 for non-members.

Sunday, 21 August, 1.00pm: Annual Picnic and Garden Visit

Mr. Patrick Forde, Seaforde House, Seaforde, Co. Down. No admission charge. Members and guests only. Parking facilities available.

Wednesday, 21 September, 7.30pm: Lecture

The Ulster Museum in conjunction with the Royal Horticultural Society presents the Royal Horticultural Society Regional Lecture: '*The Family Jewels – The Lindley Library of the RHS*' with Brent Elliott, Librarian, Royal Horticultural Society. Venue: Lecture Theatre, Ulster Museum, Belfast. Tickets: Members £3, Non-members £4 at Museum Reception. For more information on this lecture and on the speaker, see: www.ulstermuseum.org.uk

Saturday, 1 October, 12.00 – 3.00: Annual Plant Sale and Information Day

At the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, Cultra, Co. Down. ***Please note this change of address*** Deliveries of plants for the plant sale received from 9.00am. Parking facilities are available. VOLUNTEERS NEEDED. PLANTS NEEDED.

Thursday, 18 October, 7.30pm The Clotworthy Lecture

'*The Legacy of David Douglas, Explorer and Botanist*' with Syd House. Venue: Clotworthy Arts Centre, Antrim. This is a joint lecture with Antrim Borough Council. Free for members. £1 for non-members. Parking facilities are available. Refreshments provided (free).

SNIPPETS

The Garden Heaven Show was on last weekend in the RDS and the show gardens were certainly of the highest standard seen to date. The Slieve Russell Hotel Garden designed by Paul Martin would certainly grace any garden show. Anybody who wished to hear an interesting talk could drop in to the seminar area at any time of the day as the talks followed one on another. I caught Helen Dillon's talk on Saturday morning, *'60 Years of Gardening – My Inspiration'* and only wish she would go and write a book of the same title, excellent material. An early arrival ensured a free run around the various plant sales and there were many excellent plants brought home. Assumpta Broomfield, among others, had her usual excellent garden display and sales area. It looks like Garden Heaven is developing into a very high standard garden show.

The Irish at Chelsea: Diarmuid Gavin earned a Silver Gilt medal with his 'Hanover Quay Garden' which had his by now trademark pods, surrounded by mass planting of lavender and clipped box. The garden featured regularly on the television coverage, raising the profile of Irish gardening in general. Well done, Diarmuid!



*Alan Titchmarsh interviewing Diarmuid in the 'Hanover Quay Garden' at the Chelsea Flower Show.
Photograph: Paddy Tobin*

Congratulations also to Elma Fenton and Neil Malachy Black who designed the Moat & Castle Eco-Garden for the Chelsea Flower Show on their Silver medal award. This was a great achievement for them at their first Chelsea and hopefully we will see them again.



The Moat & Castle Eco-Garden designed by Elma Fenton and Neil Malachy Black at the Chelsea Flower Show. Photograph: Paddy Tobin.

‘Champion Trees: a county by county selection of Ireland’s Great Trees’

is an information booklet published by the Tree Council of Ireland and contains 1,200 of the 7,500 trees which have been recorded and measured to date. The publication of the booklet was overseen by Dr. Matthew Jebb, taxonomist at the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin. The full register can be viewed there. Tree Council of Ireland: 01-2849211 www.treecouncil.ie

Airfield Gardens has a full calendar of events for the summer – see www.airfield.ie

Early Formal Gardens & Gardening is the title of a conference being organised by the Northern Ireland Heritage Gardens Committee and the Office of Public Works at Dublin Castle on Friday, 30th September (pm), Saturday 1st and Sunday 2nd October. Contact Belinda Jupp, 45 Osborne Park, Belfast BT9 6JN. belindajupp@lineone.net

Back issues of the Newsletter, No's 64, 66 & 68 are available from Mary Forrest, Dept Crop Science, Horticulture & Forestry, University College Dublin 4.

Unsung Heroes: The IGPS Committees

How often are the members of the various committees left work away in anonymity! Without such dedicated and hard-working volunteers the Society would very quickly grind to a halt. I am taking this opportunity to mention their names so that members will be aware of who is doing the work in their area and will be in a position to contact their committee members but, most of all, to take a moment to thank all of these committee members most sincerely for the continuous and dedicated work they are doing to further the aims of the Society.

On behalf of the membership I wish to express a most sincere 'Thank You'.

IGPS Northern Steering Group

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Aleen Herdman, 33 Lisburn Road, Hillsborough, Co Down BT26 6HW. Tel : 028 92-682369.

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Maura Shah, (*Treasurer*), 10 Castle Drive, Richhill, Co Armagh, BT61 9QH. Tel: 028-38871326

Catherine Tyrie (*Northern Events Co-ordinator*), Dept of Botany, Ulster Museum, Botanic Gardens, Belfast BT9 5AB. Tel: 028-90383152, fax: 028-90383103. Home: 146 Gobbins Road, Islandmagee, Larne, BT40 3TX. Tel: 028 93-382239. E-mail: catherine.tyrie.um@nics.gov.uk

Lismacloskey Co-ordinator:

Andrena Duffin, 11 Grey Point, Helen's Bay, Co Down BT19 ILE. Tel: 028-91852668.

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Mary Browne, Dalim Lodge, Mahee Island, Killinchy, Co Down BT23 6EP. Tel:028 97-541405

Carol Cunningham, Carmie, Crookedstone, 1a Ballyarnott Road, Crumlin, Co Antrim BT29 4DT. Tel: 028 94-462217.

IGPS Munster Branch Committee

David B. O'Regan - **Chairman & Hon. Fixtures Sec.**

Rosemary Hickey - **Hon. Secretary**

Elizabeth Corban-Lucas – **Hon. Treasurer**

Kitty Hennessy

Sheila Miller

Leinster Committee

Marcella Campbell, Chairperson

Mary Bradshaw, Barbara Cunningham, Mary Rowe, Marie Cunningham,

Nilla Martin

The National Committee

Chairman: Dermot Kehoe

Vice Chair: Mary Bradshaw

Secretary: Patrick Quigley

Treasurer: Ed Bowden

Committee Members: Sarah Ball, Brid Kelleher, Paul Maher

Executive Assistant: Aisling Kilcullen – recently appointed, Congratulations Aisling!

Collection Coordinator and Seed Exchange Manager: Stephen Butler

Munster Representative: Kitty Hennessy.

Northern Representative: Patrick Quigley

Editor “Moorea“: Mary Forrest

Editor Newsletter: Paddy Tobin

Correspondence should be sent to “Irish Garden Plant Society, c/o National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin 9.” However, please note that staff at the Botanic Gardens cannot deal with telephone queries regarding the IGPS.

The National Committee needs a few new members. Anybody who is willing to help please contact Ed Bowden at (01) 8436297. Committee meetings are held about 8 times per year at the Botanic Gardens Glasnevin. Somebody interested in P.R. would be particularly welcome.

Indeed, all the committees would welcome people who are willing to give a little, and it really is just a little, of their time to help with planning and organisation of events around the country.