



*The
Irish Garden Plant Society*



Newsletter Number 126

May 2013



The Irish Garden Plant Society

Celebrating 100 years



Anemone obtusiloba* f. *patula was collected by Charlotte Isabel Wheeler Cuffe (1867-1967) on Mount Victoria in the Arakan Yomah in Western Burma.

She lived in Burma for twenty four years.

Mount Victoria is the highest peak in Western Burma reaching over 3000 meters.

She described it as a blue flowered buttercup and presented it to the Royal Botanic Gardens at Glasnevin in 1913.

Here it proved hardy and grew well, surviving the winter in a cold frame, it flowered in the following May and June.

Sir Frederick Moore sent material to Kew to be identified. It was described as a local form of *Anemone obtusiloba*.

Front cover photograph: *Buddleja davidii* 'Glasnevin Hybrid' courtesy of Pearse Rowe



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Editorial

The present constitution of the Society has been found by the National Committee to need updating. After much consideration and debate by the committee, proposed amendments have been agreed for discussion at the AGM in May. The present constitution is printed on page 14 followed on page 18 by the proposed amendments.

If you wish to attend the A.G.M. in Kenmare the closing date for booking is April 30th. Details of the gardens to be visited are on page 12.

Aislinn Adams writes about Bernard McMahon's role in the Lewis and Clark plant collection on page 9, an addendum to an article by Ciara Bermingham on Mahonias in the January newsletter.

The Kennedy Irish primroses have a new addition this year in the award winning *Primula* 'Claddagh'. Paddy Tobin tells the story on page 6. Congratulations and continued success to Joe Kennedy and Pat Fitzgerald.

The IGPS web address is as always on the back cover. Do check out the website as it has recently been redesigned, The IGPS has a presence now on Facebook and Twitter. Ali Rochford writes about their impact since she set them up earlier this year.

Many thanks also to our regular contributors.

Mary

Copy date for the September Newsletter is August 5th.

**Please send material for the Newsletter to: igpseditor@gmail.com
or Mary Rowe 29 Bantry Road, Drumcondra, Dublin 9**



A note from the Chair

The Annual General Meeting is only a few short weeks away and I look forward to seeing a good number of you there. Reports from the Munster Group are that bookings have been good and we will have a good number of people in attendance.

While the AGM meeting itself is the business end of the weekend, and there are several important issues to be dealt with, we all look forward to the programme of garden visits and this year's promises to be an excellent one. Martin Edwardes, with great help from Seamus Galvin in Caherdaniel, has put a lot of time and effort into the planning and we are most grateful to them and the wives who stay in the background but do so much. We look forward to the weekend and enjoying your arrangements.

One major issue for consideration at this Annual General Meeting is the proposed revisions to the constitution of the society. Now, I imagine it is not a document which has drawn your attention regularly but it is, nonetheless, central to the mode of operation of the society and the Executive Committee considered it needed to be reviewed particularly in the areas dealing with the regional committees. These committees which were not even foreseen when the constitution was written are not given the presence or status they deserve there. Hopefully, these revisions will correct this situation. There is further information on these changes in the newsletter.

One of the proposals made quite strongly at the last AGM was that the society needed to upgrade its presence on the internet. Work has been progressing on the website over the past months. It has been redesigned and is ready to be relaunched shortly. A number of members have been working on material for the website and there is always a welcome for others to become involved. This is not an idle, polite invitation but a most sincere one. It really is a case of many hands making light work and there is a very open and warm welcome to anybody who would like to be involved. One thing most people could do with little bother would be to send in photographs from garden visits or other society activities. These would be especially welcome. Also, any suggestions for content or how the website might develop would be most welcome.

Ali Rochford, of the Leinster committee, has been very active and has set up the society's Twitter and Facebook accounts both of which are attracting a lot of attention to the society and have even led to a number of new members. Ali has an article about these in the newsletter and you can read more about it there. Sincerest thanks to Ali for taking the initiative. Congratulations to her on the success of both ventures.

Looking forward to the AGM weekend.

Best wishes, Paddy



Plant Search

Hesperantha coccinea 'Mrs Hegarty'

David and Penny Ross who hold the National Plant Collection of *Hesperantha coccinea* (*Schizostylis*) cultivars would like to hear from members who grow *Hesperantha coccinea* 'Mrs Hegarty' and specifically for material that can be traced to IGPS sources around or prior to 1980.

Though the plant is widely available now, the original description is not sufficiently detailed to distinguish it from other later cultivars. They would therefore like to acquire an accession of 'Mrs Hegarty' that they could be confident about.

If you have suitable plants please get in touch with David and Penny Ross at the contact details below, it will be greatly appreciated:

penny.ross2@btinternet.com

Mr. David & Dr. Penny Ross, South Yeo Nursery,
Poughill, Crediton, Devon, EX17 4LF, England



Seed Distribution 2013

As I write this the heavens are open again, yet more rain, no fear of drought this spring.....where better to be than in a greenhouse looking at seedlings popping up.....

This year the seeds have flown out quicker than usual, almost all had less seed sent in than normally, so obviously less to go around, which makes the alternative choices important too. Seed quality was also much, much lower, especially noticeable on larger seeds like *Cardiocrinum*, where there were many more duds, and even the good ones were smaller than I'd expect in a good summer.

Which brings me to the annual request to please save seeds and send them in to me as below for 2014 distribution! Keep large envelopes, or paper carrier bags, and pop any ripe seed heads in as you deadhead bulbs or herbaceous plants - and note the name on the bag/envelope as you go, none of us have perfect memories! It is not too time consuming, and in paper the seeds will dry out, shed nicely, and make less cleaning needed. For some plants you may need to collect a few times over a couple of weeks to get a good number of seeds - especially with bulbs where each bulb is a different plant with a slightly different time clock perhaps.

Last year was the worse year for seeds for many many years, let's make up for it this year.

I'm sure the Editor would appreciate any short notes about success (or maybe failure?) with seeds from the list.

Stephen Butler
Curator of Horticulture
Dublin Zoo
Phoenix Park
Dublin 8

Email: stephencbutler@gmail.com



The Kennedy Irish Primroses - A Great Success Story by Paddy Tobin

There are wonderful occasions in life when people with a shared vision come together and make a dream come true. Joe Kennedy has spent many years crossing and recrossing primulas in pursuit of perfection while Pat Fitzgerald always adored the native primroses growing near his home and the treasured varieties of the old Irish Primrose Ladies. Pat attributes the broadening of his interest to the material published by Dr. Charles Nelson in his “A Heritage of Beauty” and when he became aware of Joe’s work he recognised a man who had a connection with this wonderful historic tradition and who was continuing it into the present.

Over the years we have witnessed the breeding direction in primulas which brought them more and more towards gaudiness, winter window box plants, large, bright, loud and brash and further and further from the demure grace of our native primrose. The cultivars described by Charles Nelson and those bred by Joe Kennedy are treasured for their demure beauty, their closeness to the natural beauty of the original plants, the manner in which they still possess the toughness, hardiness and persistence of the native primrose and are therefore so perfectly suited to our gardens and our conditions.



*Carol Klein, Pat
Fitzgerald and Joe
Kennedy on BBC's
“Gardeners’ World”*

The launch of *Primulas* ‘Drumcliff’ and ‘Innisfree’ brought a resurgence of interest in these plants. They were feted on British television, on American television, in horticultural magazines here, there and everywhere – even the First Lady, Mrs. Michelle Obama, was delighted to accept a gift of these garden delights and photographs abounded of plantings of these *primulas* in various locations in the U.S.A. frequently in the company of another of Pat Fitzgerald’s introductions, *Carex* ‘Everest’, a top-selling plant in the U.S.A.



*Lloyd Traven
presenting
Kennedy
Irish
Primulas to
Martha
Stewart on
Martha
Stewart
Living TV
programme
in the USA*

Bringing a plant to the marketplace takes several years and behind the success story of ‘Drumcliff’ and ‘Innisfree’ the hard work of preparing their successors was continuing apace. This year Pat brought *Primula* ‘Claddagh’ to IPM Essen where it was assessed by the judges in the perennial plant section. By way of a little background information: IPM Essen is an international horticultural trade show. In 2013 it had 1,517 exhibitors from 44 countries with 59,600 trade visitors.

Primula ‘Claddagh’ was judged “The Best New Perennial” at this year’s show – an outstanding achievement and a wonderful recognition of the work of Joe Kennedy and Pat Fitzgerald. I was delighted to see the outpouring of goodwill on the social media following this award. There was that sense that it was so very well deserved and that it couldn’t have come to two better people.

The comments of the judges were very interesting. They commented on the wonderful combination of leaf and flower colour, on the fact that this was a fully winter-hardy plant and on its natural appearance – “The wild character of the plant with the honey yellow flowers is ideally suited for a natural garden

design.” They expressed delight that the breeding in primulas was veering away from the bedding type production which took the primrose a long way from its original appearance and that the Irish breeding programme was likely to bring the primrose back into use in the garden as a perennial plant with more frequency from now on. Along with the opinion of the judges it was very heartening and encouraging that there was also extraordinarily positive comment and feedback from those attending the show at Essen.



*Primula
'Claddagh'
awarded "Best
Perennial 2013" at
the IPM Essen
Show this January.
Bred by Joe
Kennedy,
propagated and
distributed by Pat
Fitzgerald of
Fitzgerald
Nurseries.*

We can hardly describe Joe and Pat as two of our “little old primrose ladies” but they are carrying on the tradition of the likes of Mr. Whiteside Dane of Naas, Cecil Monson of Roscommon, Mrs. Page-Croft, Mrs. Johnson of Kinlough, Miss W.F.Wynne, Avoca, and the work of nurseries such as Lissadell, Daisy Hill, Ballawley, Ballyrogan and Annesgrove and here are we, members of the I.G.P.S. and all Irish gardeners, perfectly positioned to enjoy and participate in this wonderful work. We only need to purchase the primulas and plant them in our gardens to share in a wonderful Irish horticultural heritage.

My compliments, my thanks and my best wishes to Joe Kennedy and Pat Fitzgerald. May they have every success with their wonderful primroses and I hope the plants will be enjoyed for generations to come.

Note: Other Kennedy Irish Primulas to watch out for: ‘Avoca’, ‘Avondale’, ‘Carrickdale’, ‘Dunbeg’, ‘Glengariff’ and ‘Tara’.



The Lewis and Clark Plant Collection and Bernard McMahon's role in its fate

by Aislinn Adams

“The convoluted history of the seeds and plants collected by Lewis and Clark, their passage from Washington and Oregon into the botanical record was nearly as arduous as the journey itself... Working largely behind the scenes, one obscure figure, Bernard McMahon, assumed a primary role in nurturing the seeds from field to page.” Robert S. Cox

From the Pacific Northwest to McMahon's nursery.

In order to understand how this happened let us go back a little and look at the history of this famed collection once it arrived back in the eastern U.S. The collection was shipped back east in two stages. The first shipment was sent back in 1805 and the second brought back by Lewis & Clark in 1806. There were two parts to the collection - the dried specimens and the live seeds. The dried specimens were sent to the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia where, it was understood, Dr. Benjamin Smith Barton would assist Lewis in preparing their description for publication. The seeds were divided between McMahon and William Hamilton who were to propagate and grow them in secret until such time as Lewis would bring the account of his travels and the plant collection to print. Apparently, McMahon proceeded immediately to germinate the seeds whereas Hamilton was slower to set to the task.

While Jefferson and Lewis were counselling McMahon to keep the precious *live* plant collection secret fearing some unscrupulous botanist might, on discovering its existence at McMahon's nursery, rob Lewis of his right to describing them first, in the end it was the dried specimens that were more at risk of being spirited away. Ironically, this was not done by some outside interloper but by the very person McMahon recommended to Lewis to help him bring his work to publication; and it was this assistant who ultimately published the collection first, not in the United States but in England - adding insult to injury.

McMahon helps speed up the plant collection's journey to print.

For a variety of reasons both Barton and Lewis delayed in preparing the material for publication. McMahon, wishing to be helpful and possibly anxious to shorten the "quarantine" period of the secret plants he had in his care, recommended the young German botanist Frederick Pursh for the job. Pursh was probably already familiar with some of the dried specimens, having been employed by Barton at the time that the first shipment of plants had arrived back east.

Difficult working conditions bring Pursh to McMahon's home.

By all accounts Barton was a difficult person to work for and things did not go well between him and Pursh - so much so that by early 1807 Pursh had moved into McMahon's home and begun working on Lewis' plants there. At this time Lewis was Governor of the Louisiana Territory and living in St. Louis. McMahon wrote several times to St. Louis seeking instruction on Pursh's behalf but with no success. He also took it upon himself, while waiting for the arrival of Lewis, to pay Pursh to describe the dried specimens (which had been brought from Barton's Herbarium.) Pursh had the work more or less completed by early 1809 and grew restless waiting for further instruction.

However, in 1809 Lewis died in tragic circumstances. Clark, as executor of Lewis' will, took over responsibility for the collection material but, while McMahon kept the live and dried specimens in safe keeping for Clark, Pursh left (or should I say absconded?) with the drawings and descriptions - and as it turns out some of the dried specimens as well.

Somehow, amazingly, during all this time (over a year) while Pursh was living at McMahon's and working on the collection, he never discovered the live specimens growing at the nursery (Joseph Ewan - *Frederick Pursh 1774-1820 and his Botanical Associates.*) A description of the well-travelled collection was finally published in England by Pursh in his *Flora Americae Septentrionalis* (1814.) It is not clear to me if Pursh was ever properly reimbursed for the work he did for Lewis. Nonetheless does that excuse his behaviour? Does a combination of frustrated ambition and impecuniosity justify his conduct? His mysterious disappearance from the U. S. and reappearance in London a couple of years later caused much speculation and criticism amongst American botanists at the time and maybe it is for this reason that his *Flora* never sold well.

What of the live plant specimens at McMahon's Nursery?

According to Ewan the first evidence of McMahon advertising plants for sale from the collection was 1815. Sadly he didn't live long enough to benefit from such sales, dying the following year. But, as I mentioned in my last blog, his life and work was memorialized by the botanist Thomas Nuttall who, in 1818, named the genus of shrubs *Mahonia* for him in his flora, *The Genera of North American Plants*. According to the record this flora was much more successful than Pursh's.

Aislinn Adams is a botanic illustrator and horticulturist. This article is originally from her blog. For more on Bernard McMahon visit her blog at her website www.aislinnadams.com. Adams' botanical art greeting cards are on sale at the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin.



Mahonia aquifolium
© 2008 Aislinn Adams



The Annual General Meeting 2013
Saturday 11th May at 10:30 a.m.
Kenmare Bay Hotel, Kenmare, Co Kerry
Dinner to be at 8:00pm

Dinner on Saturday evening & garden visits €70 per person

GARDEN VISITS: The first garden that we will be visiting straight after the AGM on Saturday morning is near Kenmare. The two acre garden is in a spectacular setting surrounded by mountains near Blackwater. The garden is only 8 years old, but has been planted with a wide variety of trees, shrubs and plants featuring birches, acers, magnolias, roses, peonies, spring bulbs, lilies and other delights. An adjoining 16 acres of bogland is a new project for gentle development.

After lunch we will be visiting a very private island garden, which is not usually open to the public. The garden was started by the third Earl of Dunraven in the 1870's/80's. It is a woodland garden with camellias, rhododendrons, azaleas, Japanese maples and plants from the southern hemisphere well represented. In recent years a fruit and vegetable garden have been added and quite a lot of herbaceous plants have been planted to extend the season of interest beyond spring to early summer. The island is 57 acres, going from heather and gorse on the exposed side to lush tree ferns in the sheltered valleys.

On the Sunday we will move to the Killarney area and visit a garden that has been described as "Kerry's Botanical Garden". It occupies a 2 acre site, formerly the remains of a farm holding which has been extensively landscaped to create the correct environment to grow a very extensive and varied range of plants from around the world, which would not be found at this latitude.

There is a Japanese garden which features a large Koi carp pond. One can view the fish from the adjacent teahouse, arched bridge or raised formal deck which give the visitor spectacular views of the garden.

Two large landscaped glasshouses have been constructed to cater for tender plants and one of the glasshouses is home to tropical butterflies in high summer. After lunch, we will visit a very large garden which sits on the edge of one of Killarney's three lakes with stunning views of the surrounding mountains. There are formal gardens, a rock garden, extensive parkland and an arboretum. It being early maytime, the very extensive collection of rhododendrons and azaleas should be in full bloom.

A complete itinerary will be posted to you on receipt of your booking form, or can be sent by email to help reduce paper consumption. If you are using email, please make sure that you receive a response to same, as sometimes emails can end up in cyberspace!

As regards the dinner in the evening, the hotel would prefer to take your order on the night. If you have any special dietary requirements or food allergies, please let the hotel know so that alternatives can be arranged.

The hotel is giving all IGPS members a special rate on the rooms, so if you wish to book any rooms for the weekend, please contact Hanneke Vermolen (the reservations manager) at 064 6641300 between 8.30am to 4.30 pm weekdays or email her at info@kenmarebayhotel.com. When booking, please let the hotel know that you are an IGPS member to avail of the price reduction.

Please enclose your full payment with your booking. Cheques or Bank Drafts should be made out to Irish Garden Plant Society. Do not send cash.
NB Price is in euro and not sterling to

Martin Edwardes,
The Old Deanery, Cloyne, Co Cork.

Tel: (0)21 4652204
Mobile: 087 2716249
email:edwaelec@eircom.net.

Payment should arrive no later than Tuesday 30th April.

The price of €70.00 includes the AGM, all garden visits, and an evening meal on Saturday. Lunches and dinner on Sunday are not included.



THE IRISH GARDEN PLANT SOCIETY

CONSTITUTION

1. NAME

The name of the society shall be the IRISH GARDEN PLANT SOCIETY.

2. OBJECTS

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

3. THE MANAGEMENT OF THE AFFAIRS OF THE SOCIETY

- a. The affairs of the Society shall be managed by a Committee of ten elected members.
- b. The Committee may nominate a maximum of three regional representatives, who shall be ex-officio full members of the Committee. They shall be elected each year at the annual general meeting and shall be eligible to serve as committee members subject to clause 4d.
- c. The officers shall be the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer. The duties of the Chairman shall be to preside at the meetings of the Society and of the Committee. The duties of the Vice-Chairman shall be to deputise for and assist the Chairman. The duties of the Honorary Secretary shall be to record the minutes of the Committee and general meetings, to issue notice of these meetings and to conduct correspondence on behalf of the Society. The duties of the Honorary Treasurer shall be to manage the finances of the Society and to keep the membership records.
- d. The Committee shall have the power to co-opt a maximum of two additional members who may serve until the following Annual General Meeting.

4. ELECTION OF THE COMMITTEE AND OFFICERS

- a. The election of members of the Committee shall take place only at the Annual General Meeting, as committee vacancies arise.
- b. Election shall be by secret ballot
- c. The terms of office of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall be three years.
- d. The term of office of the Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer and other committee members shall be two years and these members shall be eligible to serve for four years.
- e. All nominations shall be in writing and signed by two members of the Society and by the Nominee. Nominations for election to the Committee shall be given to the Honorary Secretary at least two weeks before the Annual General Meeting.
- f. Temporary appointments may be made by the Committee to fill vacancies arising during a term of office.
- g. No one receiving regular remuneration from the society shall be eligible to serve on the Committee.
- h. The Committee shall be empowered to appoint sub-committees from among members of the Society and to appoint non-members as observers.
- i. In any Society elections proxy votes shall not be valid.

5. MEETINGS OF THE SOCIETY

A. Committee Meetings

- a. The Honorary Secretary shall be authorised to call meetings of the Committee.
- b. A quorum at a meeting of the Committee shall consist of four elected members.
- c. Members of the Committee who fail to attend three consecutive meetings of the Committee may, at the discretion of the Committee, be requested to retire.
- d. The decisions of the Committee shall be taken by a majority vote. The Chairman shall not vote except in the event of a tie.

B. Annual General Meeting

- a. The Annual General Meeting shall be held at approximately annual intervals
- b. at such time and place as shall be directed by the Committee.
- c. The Honorary Secretary shall, at the direction of the Committee, be empowered to call a general meeting for the consideration of the business of the Society.
- d. The Honorary Secretary shall give all members of the Society not less than three weeks' notice of the date, time and place of any general meeting.
- e. Decisions shall be taken by a simple majority vote with the Chairman having a casting vote in the event of a tie.
- f. A quorum of any general meeting shall be fifteen.

6. FINANCES OF THE SOCIETY

The funds of the Society shall be in the name of the Society and shall be operated by the Honorary Treasurer who shall be accountable to the Society and shall produce accounts at the Annual General Meeting. The accounts of the Society shall be verified by an independent accountant.

7. PUBLICATIONS OF THE SOCIETY

- a. The Society shall publish a journal. As far as possible, one issue shall be published in each year.
- b. The journal shall be open to receive papers and articles on – (i) The history of Irish garden plants and gardens. (ii) The cultivation of plants in Ireland. (iii) The taxonomy of garden plants. (iv) Reports of the work carried out by the Society and its individual members.
- c. The production and editing of the journal shall be managed by an editorial sub-committee appointed by the Committee. It shall consist of an Editor who may be requested to attend Committee meetings as an observer and three other members of the Society: at least one member of the sub-committee shall be an elected member of the Committee. This sub-committee may refer papers received to referees for their opinions.
- d. Other publications may be issued as approved by the Committee.

8. MEMBERSHIP OF THE SOCIETY

The following shall be categories of membership:

- i. Ordinary – open to all persons interested in the aims of the Society
- ii. Student – all full-time students shall be entitled to student membership.
- iii. Group – this is open to other groups, institutions and societies.
- iv. Honorary – Honorary members shall be nominated and elected at AGM. Persons may be elected to honorary membership who, in the opinion of the Committee, have contributed in an outstanding way over a long period of time to the advancement of horticulture in Ireland. As honorary members they shall be entitled to the full benefits of ordinary membership for life.

Note:

- a. All members of the Society on 1 September 1981 and who pay their annual subscription for the year beginning 1 July 1981 shall be Founder Members of the Irish Garden Plant Society.
- b. Every person seeking admission into the Society shall have his/her name submitted to a meeting of the Committee which, unless an objection is raised and sustained by the majority of members present, shall declare the candidate elected.

9. ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

- a. The annual subscription shall be decided by the Committee.
- b. The annual subscription shall be payable on 1 May each year by all members.
- c. Those joining on or after 1 January of any one year shall be considered as paid-up members for the sixteen months following that date.
- d. Student members shall pay half of the annual subscription and shall enjoy full privileges of membership.
- e. Group membership shall be three times that of the annual subscription.
- f. Any member who shall be in arrears with his/her subscription for one calendar year shall be deemed to have resigned from the Society but the Committee shall, at its discretion, reinstate such members.

10. PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP

Members (who have paid their subscriptions) shall be entitled to:

- i. Attend and vote at general meetings of the Society and to attend lectures, courses and garden meetings organised by the Society. (In the case of group members, each group may appoint one representative to attend general meetings. The representative shall be entitled to one vote.)
- ii. Receive circulars and all regular publications of the Society.
- iii. Submit papers, notes and letters for consideration for publication.
- iv. Co-operate in projects organised by the Society for the conservation of garden plants.

11. AMENDMENTS AND ALTERATIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION

- a. No rule shall be made, altered or deleted from the Constitution except at a general meeting. Any member is entitled to suggest an amendment prior to a general meeting by submitting the suggested change in writing to the Honorary Secretary.
- b. The Honorary Secretary shall notify members of any suggested amendment before the general meeting at which it is to be considered. A majority of two-thirds in favour of the amendment shall authorize the amendment.
- c. Amendments proposed before a general meeting may be amended themselves during the general meeting with the consent of the proposer and a simple majority of those present at the general meeting.



**IRISH GARDEN PLANT SOCIETY
PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION FOR DECISION
ON 11 MAY 2013**

3 The management of the affairs of the Society

Amend existing clause 3.a as follows:

3.a The affairs of the Society shall be managed by a National Executive Committee [the Committee] of a minimum of four and a maximum of ten elected members.

Delete existing clause 3.b and insert:

3.b The officers shall be the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer and Membership Secretary. The duties of the Chairman shall be to preside at the meetings of the Society and the Committee and lead the Society in pursuit of its objectives. The duties of the Vice-Chairman shall be to deputise for and assist the Chairman. The duties of the Honorary Secretary shall be to record the minutes of the Committee and general meetings, to issue notices of these meetings and conduct correspondence on behalf of the Society. The duties of the Honorary Treasurer shall be to manage the finances of the Society and liaise with the Membership Secretary. The duties of the Membership Secretary shall be to keep the membership records.

Delete existing clause 3.c and insert:

3.c Regional sub-committees may be established by the National Executive Committee. Such sub-committees shall be responsible to the Committee for organising the Society's activities within the region and shall keep the Committee fully informed.

Renumber existing clause 3.d as 3.f and insert:

3.d Each regional sub-committee shall nominate a person from amongst its members as a representative to the National Executive Committee. Such representatives shall be elected at the annual general meeting to serve as committee members, subject to clause 4.e governing length of service. The representatives shall report on regional activities to the Committee and shall report back to the regional sub-committee on any directions and other matters arising at the Committee.

Insert new clause 3.e as follows:

3.e A regional sub-committee shall comprise a minimum of three officers, namely a regional chairman, a regional secretary, and a regional treasurer. They shall be responsible for carrying out the activities set out in clause 3.c.

4 Election of the National Executive Committee and Officers

Delete existing clauses 4.c and 4.d and replace with the following:

4.c The term of office for a National Executive Committee Officer shall be four years in any one office and at least four years shall elapse before he or she may be re-elected to the same office.

4.d The term of office of National Executive Committee members other than officers shall be four years. At the end of that term he or she may be re-elected for a further term of four years followed by a final term of two years. No member of the Committee may serve continuously for more than ten years.

Re-number existing clauses 4.e to 4.i as 4.g to 4.k and insert 4.e and 4.f as follows:

4.e The term of office for a regional sub-committee officer shall be four years in any one office and at least four years shall elapse before he or she may be selected again for the same office.

4.f The term of office of members of regional sub-committees other than officers shall be four years. At the end of that term he or she may be selected for a further term of four years followed by a final term of two years. No member of the sub-committee may serve continuously for more than ten years.

Amend existing 4.g (now 4.i) to read as follows:

4.i No one receiving regular remuneration from the Society shall be eligible to serve on either the National Executive Committee or a regional sub-committee. Out of pocket expenses properly incurred in connection with the Society's business may be paid.

Add the following Note at the end of clause 4:

Note: It is recommended that steps are taken to ensure that all office holders do not retire in the same year.

5 Meetings of the Society

Amend existing clause 5.A.c as follows:

5.A.c Members of the National Executive Committee or regional sub-committees who fail to attend three consecutive meetings shall be deemed to have retired unless the Committee agrees otherwise.

Amend 5.B.c to f to read 5.B.b to e

6 Finances of the Society

Re-number the present clause 6 as 6.a and add 6.b as follows:

6.b Regional treasurers shall provide quarterly reports to the Honorary Treasurer in a timely manner.

Addendum

Add at the conclusion of the Constitution

As amended at the AGM held on [insert date]



Notice of the AGM of the Irish Garden Plant Society to be held at the Kenmare Bay Hotel, Kenmare, Co Kerry on Saturday 11 May 2013 at 10.30am

Agenda

- 1 Apologies
- 2 Minutes of the previous AGM - available at the meeting
- 3 Matters arising
- 4 Chairman's report
- 5 Treasurer's report - available at the meeting
- 6 Election of Officers and Committee members
- 7 Constitutional amendments – to consider and decide on the amendments published in this newsletter
- 8 Any other business

Nominations for the national committee

The closing date for nominations is Saturday 27th April.

Please send nominations by email to the Hon Sec, Maeve Bell

maeve.bell@btopenworld.com giving the name of the candidate, the names of the proposer and seconder and a statement that the candidate has agreed to stand.

Or post to her at 1 The Drive, Richmond Park, Belfast BT9 5EG to arrive no later than the above date.



All in the mind by Rae McIntyre

Sometimes when I'm suffering from insomnia and the arthritis is being particularly bothersome my mind wanders to beautiful gardens and awe-inspiring plants that have stopped me in my tracks. I can mentally walk round favourite places like Mount Stewart, Rowallane, Mount Usher, Altamont, the Branklyn Garden in Perth and Trebah in Cornwall. This mental meandering is usually done on warm, sunny days but I also enjoy Wisley on a mild winter day.

I grow few of the plants that have me gasping in admiration because conditions just aren't right in our garden. Take *Pinus montezumae*. I admired this in Mount Usher and thought it was the most beautiful conifer I have ever seen. It is so shapely and has very long blue-grey elegant leaves. Now conifers usually do well here in the ample rainfall so I reckoned the Montezuma Pine would succeed in spite of having an arrow beside the tree's description in *Hilliers' Manual of Trees and Shrubs*. This indicates that the plant is tender in all but the mildest localities but I'd cultivated other plants with the same designation. So one was ordered from a Cornish nursery, duly arrived and was planted in what I thought was a sheltered position. It grew to about two metres tall but then there was a very hard frost in the winter of 1995 and it had a strange effect on the plant. It just went completely limp, as if the life blood had been drained out of it, and sadly never recovered. Lesson learned from this: avoid trying to grow tender plants, especially those that are wildly expensive.

I could have bought the tender *Weinmannia trichosperma* from the same Cornish nursery but didn't. It grows near the lake in Mount Stewart and is a lovely tree with fine evergreen pinnate leaves. When it bears copious racemes of white flowers in May and June it is stunning and well worth doing a round trip of 150 miles just to see it.

Years ago my cousin, who lived at that time in Coffs Harbour in New South Wales, brought me to see a friend who had an avenue of jacaranda trees. That was all there was in the garden: just thirty specimens of *Jacaranda mimosifolia*, fifteen on each side of the avenue, blooming for a short time every November, but it was utterly spectacular.

The foliage is delicate and ferny just like that on mimosa and the flowers are that magical shade of blue that is exactly the same as bluebells. I couldn't stop thinking about this avenue for days afterwards. Later on, in Sydney, I saw a solitary jacaranda in a square. It had finished flowering and the ground around it was littered with the fallen petals that were nearly as captivating as they were on the tree.

Back in Coffs Harbour there was a poinsettia *Euphorbia pulcherrima* 'Mexican Flame Tree' growing in the Botanic Gardens. Poinsettias are so closely associated with Christmas that one can immediately visualise their red bracts as they stand in gold coloured pots in serried ranks in a supermarket or garden centre. Imagine then a garden pool with a small island in the centre and in that island there's a 3.5 metre tall poinsettia, with gorgeous big red bracts, growing happily. I still can't look at the Christmas poinsettias without thinking longingly of that one.

Driving round Victoria in November I couldn't help exclaiming at high hedges of *Leptospermum scoparium* in pink, red and white growing along roadsides. My cousins became fed up with this and, every time I opened my mouth in admiration, they would say, 'Oh for heaven's sake. They're only old tea trees'. Over the years I had tried to grow 'old tea trees' myself but none of them withstood hard frosts.

The cousins took me to visit a garden outside Geelong that was open to the public one Sunday afternoon. The owners had ancestors who had emigrated from Devon in England and were very proud of their Devon heritage. The garden was advertised as a typically English country garden and pride of place was given to a very large, well grown, blooming *Crataegus monogyna* - a very rare tree there. We know it as the common hawthorn. It had been grown from haws brought from Devon and carefully nurtured over the years. Everyone oohed and aahed over it. I didn't because I dislike the scent of hawthorn as it has the oxalic acid smell of death. With great difficulty I refrained from saying, 'Oh for heaven's sake. It's only an old hawthorn'.

Edinburgh is one of my three favourite cities and the Botanic Gardens there are well kept and full of interesting plants. It was where I first saw *Magnolia campbellii*, sometimes referred to as the giant Himalayan 'Pink Tulip Tree'. In warmer parts of the UK and Ireland this can be in bloom as early as February but it was in peak form on a sunny, but bitterly cold day - typical of Edinburgh - in April. I have loved magnolias since I was a young child but was only familiar with *Magnolia x soulangeana*. The Edinburgh one had hundreds of deep pink goblet flowers. I was truly awestruck and could hardly bear to leave it because

it was so breathtakingly beautiful. And of course I wanted one for my own garden but was told that it would take twenty-five to thirty years to bloom. I regret now that I didn't acquire one because I saw the tree in 1981 and it would surely be flowering now. Too late.

Davidia involucrata is another tree that is spectacular but takes a long time to flower. It is variously called 'Pocket-handkerchief Tree', 'Ghost Tree' or 'Dove Tree' and these effects come not from the flowers but from two large white bracts of unequal size. The largest, most impressive one I've seen was in Trebah Gardens in Cornwall. We were there one May in a particularly cold, wet spring and had shivered and shaken with cold round Caerhays and were drenched to the skin going from the Eden Project to the carpark. Happily the sun came out and was warm on the day we went to Trebah. I walked through woodland carpeted with those magical bluebells and went into a kind of daze with so many beautiful rhododendrons. The *Davidia* was perfect with all its hankies / ghosts / doves in full flight. And it was huge. A man was standing beside it gazing upwards in wonderment so I photographed him. I think that the tree must have been twenty times taller than he was.

You may have gathered from all this that I only admire large magnificent trees in full bloom. That's not quite true because there are much smaller plants that I find awe inspiring. Back in Edinburgh Botanic Gardens that April I saw a very rare plant called *Stellera chamaejasme* in the extensive rock garden. The tightly-leaved stems sprayed out to form an almost perfect circle and each was topped by an orb of pale pink flowers. Grace is not something that one associates much with alpines but this was truly graceful. For years I tried to get one but no one had heard of it. Not even Dr Molly Sanderson (she of the eponymous black viola fame) knew of it and thought I must be confusing it with the wild flower *stellaria*. It's just as well I didn't find one because I would probably have killed the poor thing.

In another Scottish garden, the Branklyn Garden overlooking Perth city, I first saw *Nomocharis pardanthina* which is a lily relation.

The name *nomocharis* means grace of the pasture and *pardanthina* means spotted like the male panther. They are quite tall lilies with six white petals very liberally spotted in pink or red. These natives of the Yunnan are not easy to grow or keep although, if conditions satisfy, they can interbreed enthusiastically. Slugs adore them particularly when they're starting growth in spring. I managed to keep one, that had been wildly expensive to buy initially, for three years but the slugs won in the end. Anyway I think I'd rather go and visit them in all their glory in Branklyn.

Over the years I've visited many rhododendron gardens where I have been charmed by special plants. In this Newsletter I have often waxed lyrical about rhododendrons so I am not going to do so again ... except to mention three favourites. I have acquired a number of those that I have 'fallen for' but I have to be careful about what I choose because garden size and climate can be restrictive. For example, much as I love the magnificent *Rhododendron falconeri* which has most impressive leaves and huge trusses of creamy-yellow, bell shaped flowers blotched with purple, I know that it would grow much too big for our garden and the almost constant wind would tear the leaves to shreds. *Rhododendron crassum* belongs to the tenderish *Maddenii* series and is beautiful. I first saw it in Logan Botanic Gardens in June one year because it is late-flowering. It comes as close to perfection as any rhododendron with interesting leaves that are dark green above and rusty below. The funnel shaped white flowers are sweetly scented and I kept returning to it to sniff deeply. Even though it is tender I eventually bought one and over-winter it in the greenhouse which is well insulated with bubble-wrap plastic. I am tempted to witter on about other well-loved rhododendrons but fear not. I won't: well, just one.

Cercis siliquastrum the 'Judas Tree', reputed to be the tree on which Judas Iscariot hanged himself, is beautiful and not tender but I know it wouldn't do here. It needs full sun and that is in short supply here in the far north. I saw a lovely one in full bloom at Athelhampton Garden in Dorset one May. The rose-purple pea flowers covered the branches.

Ribes sanguineum is the 'Flowering Currant' which seems to have become deeply unfashionable in recent years. There was a time when everybody had one in their garden often growing alongside forsythia and clashing splendidly. I haven't seen one for sale in a garden centre for years and the only ones I know of are stuck in an inhospitable spot in some neglected gardens. People have, I imagine, been put off by the smell exactly like tom cat's pee. It's a pity because the shrub has the potential to be beautiful like it is in Glasnevin. I saw one there in March some years ago. It was solitary and had grown into a small, very shapely tree. The 'Flowering Currants' can become very straggly so some judicious pruning must have been done on it and the branches were swathed in deep pink flowers. I found it so attractive that I decided to have one of my own but no garden centre stocked a pink one although I did manage to get a pure white-flowered one called 'White Icicle'. It doesn't smell as pungently as the pink and red forms. That wasn't the only plant I bought as a result of my visit to Glasnevin that day. I was much taken with *Rhododendron spinuliferum* growing in a sheltered spot.

When I came home I read any information I could find about it and one book said that the shrub has small tubular red flowers with protruding stamens. The base of each flower can have gravity-defying dewdrops just like *Fritillaria imperialis*. I eventually tracked down *R. spinuliferum*, in a Co Down nursery no longer extant, and planted it in a sheltered spot near a south-facing wall because it is not fully hardy. Thankfully it survived the two awful winters we've had. As yet I haven't noticed any dewdrops at the base of the flowers.

My mind can linger in bluebell woods because, as I said earlier, there is something magical about blue flowers. Three blue-flowered plants are particularly memorable. Drifts of agapanthus grow, like dandelions do here, along roadsides in Madeira, in March. A cluster of fourteen gentians in the Burren, itself a wonderful place, had tremendous appeal. Meconopsis, the brilliant blue Himalayan poppies, growing in a large group linger on as the most memorable feature of Arduaine Gardens in south-west Scotland.

The last awesome sight I am going to write about was eight miles from here. About twenty years ago a man called Danny and I were doing a house-to-house charity collection in a hilly district to the west of where I live. Danny attended church there so knew many people - always a help when begging for money. Unfortunately he didn't know the network of little roads nearly as well so towards the end of the evening, when the sun was setting, we got lost. I drove up one very long lane and we eventually arrived at a derelict cottage. It was the most astounding sight because only small glimpses of the ruined walls could be seen through enveloping festoons of *Tropaeolum speciosum*, the Chilean flame nasturtium, in full flower. The walls and roof were covered. Even the adjoining farm buildings were draped in it. With backlighting from the setting sun there was something eldritch about the whole scene and, being a big chicken, I felt a frisson of fear. Danny did too because he wanted to be away as quickly as possible. Fortunately we found a road that brought us back to a familiar place.

Davy came with me the next day when I returned with my camera to take, what I thought would be, a unique photograph. I couldn't find it, never could, and Davy is firmly convinced it was all a figment of my imagination. Danny adamantly refused to help me look for it again - I think he had heard something about it that wasn't entirely pleasant. So it has all become one of life's unexplained mysteries.



Regional Reports

NORTHERN

December 5th 2012 A lecture by Deborah Begley

'Gardening with Sensational Plants..... A glimpse into the Weird & Wonderful World of a Plantoholic' was the title Deborah Begley gave to the talk and slide show she delivered to a full house at the Northern Branch winter get-together in Malone House, Belfast on the 5th December.

Deborah is a self-confessed 'plantoholic' which is evidenced by the extensive plant list that she fortunately provided to accompany her talk. It would otherwise have been impossible to keep up and record the magnificent array of material growing there!

The garden has been only twenty years in the making which is a great credit to both Deborah and her husband Martin. But as Deborah suggests there could well have been assistance provided by some of the 'little folk' which she insists frequent the garden.

It does look truly stunning (as one who has visited the garden a few years ago can confirm) and together with their small nursery it was awarded 'The Best Garden in Ireland 2005' which is surely quite an accolade.

If, next spring/summer, you find yourself in the Limerick area then this wonderful garden together with its charming owners must be top of your list of gardens to visit.

Check out the website www.terranoaplants.com

Victor Henry

February 23rd A visit to David and Janet Ledshaws Garden at Cairncastle County Antrim.

This is a wonderful woodland garden which has been quite recently created by David and Janet from a farm field on a County Antrim hillside.

A magnificent display of *Galanthus* in a vast range of varieties running in drifts along the edges of the paths is the first thing to catch your eye and then you notice the Hellebores. Every colour and form are grown, singles and doubles - deep purple through pinks to the fairly rare yellows and on to the whites, (and all merrily self-seeding in the ideal conditions provided).

Good access to the woodland is provided by substantially constructed pathways which David has painstakingly developed over several years. They also incorporate a drainage system which carries the water that runs down from the hillsides and forms a number of shallow ponds which encourage wildlife into the garden. There are also, I believe, two groups of *Betula albo-sinensis* which I have never encountered previously. It has a rich pinkish to coppery red peeling bark reminiscent of *Acer griseum* or *Prunus serrula*.

This is a most interesting garden which would be worth further visits at various seasons of the year to appreciate how it progresses throughout its phases. David especially recommends visiting at *Primula* time!

Oh, and just to round off he propagates Proteas from seed.

Well worth a visit.....

Victor Henry

March 21st "The Gardens and Collections at Mount Stewart"

by Neil Porteous at Clotworthy Arts Centre, Antrim, in conjunction with Antrim Borough Council.

In spite of a ferocious weather warning IGPS Members and friends filled the lecture hall at the newly refurbished Clotworthy Centre.

Neil explained that the magnificent gardens at Mount Stewart are not just a survival of a garden created when money was no object but that the gardens are full of allegories that give clues to the private life and public achievements of Lady Edith and Lord Charles Londonderry.

The famous animals on the Dodo terrace all had personal associations for Lady Edith, her family and friends are all represented, and the design for Noah's Ark is from a facsimile of Mary Tudor's psalter that Lady Edith had been given as a child. The Mairi Garden is laid out in blue and white which were Lady Edith's family colours.

The garden is Arts and Crafts and she used convalescent soldiers to lay out the garden: it is theatrical and imaginative and the exotic contrasts with the banal. Her Head Gardener, Thomas Bolas, had come from Chatsworth and ruled Mount Stewart with an iron will but he had talent beyond price. Lady Edith sponsored many plant hunters who then sent her seeds and cuttings. Thomas took these and with great skill nurtured, grew and crossed these plants to give new varieties. Thomas could also take a sketch on a scrap of paper and make it happen; he is the hidden genius of Mount Stewart.

Lady Edith left nine garden books and numerous notes and scraps of paper and it is this archival material that is revealing many of the sources of her designs. The design for the Italian Garden was inspired by a garden she visited in Italy and statues were copied from other gardens. Using this material it is hoped to restore much of Lady Edith's original plantings, though modern equivalents will be used where varieties that Lady Edith used are no longer available, but used to give the same effect.

The plan also includes restoring the topiary in the Shamrock garden and some of the long vistas, though how to disguise a main road and 13,000 cars a day is a challenge. Another challenge is that the water in Strangford Lough is rising and the low levels of the garden are becoming salty, however with 80 acres of garden the Rhododendrons have somewhere to move to.

Using archival material Neil gave us a glimpse into the vanished world of Lady Edith Londonderry and, after restoration, perhaps an orchestra will once again perform on the lawns while afternoon tea is served.

Patrick Quigley then presented Miss Aleen Herdman with a bouquet and a small token of our appreciation of her untiring and supportive work on the Northern Regional Group committee.

M.D.B.A.

LEINSTER

December 6 2012 “Sanctuary Gardens”... An Inspiring lecture given by Patrick Quigley in the National Botanic Gardens.

We live within walking distance of The National Botanic Gardens in Glasnevin and I walk there occasionally. I always look at the notice board to see if any forthcoming events would be of interest. I was taken by the title of a lecture: ‘Sanctuary Gardens’ to be given by Patrick Quigley on December 6, so I went along.

It rained incessantly all that day in Dublin and it was followed by a dark wintry night. On a quick squint around the tiered theatre I did not recognise anyone. I had a sense that it was going to be a thought provoking lecture as displayed on the screen was a collage of different gardens. Patrick began his talk by saying he would prefer to address us without the use of the microphone. He stood beside the lectern and spoke for the entire lecture without any reference to notes. Here was a man who loved his gardens and who transmitted that love to those lucky enough to be there that night. It was a widely embracing lecture covering gardens from the beginning of time to the present day. It was a PowerPoint presentation and he had wonderful photographic illustrations to accompany each garden, many of the photographs taken by himself.

He spoke about the importance of gardens in the great religions of the world, beginning with the Garden of Eden. The monastic garden was a central part of every monastery. He dealt with water features in gardens and the garden as a place of healing and renewal. It is only in recent times that architects who design hospitals are mindful of the importance of a garden for the wellbeing of its patients. He told us about two contrasting gardens quite close to one another and how in one of the gardens he found a great sense of peace. This was an older garden, whereas he did not find that same peaceful sense in the newer garden. He spoke lovingly about great Italian gardens that he had visited, one of them being in the shadow of the Vatican.

During the course of his talk he posed the question: ‘Why do we garden?’ In theory it should be a burden, spending long hours weeding, mowing, digging and planting and yet we find pleasure in it. This question set me thinking. I find the garden as a place of fulfilment and renewal, a great sense of satisfaction at seeing new plants peeking through the soil, at seeing the garden in all its glory. Truly for me it is that sanctuary that Patrick spoke about.

He went on to say that we all have that need to create, that a garden is a place of refuge, where we reconnect with the natural world.

Patrick spoke for about fifty minutes and not once in that time did my mind wander, so captivating was everything that he had to say. That night I took an application for the Irish Garden Plant Society and now my wife Anne and I are both members.

The following day I was back in the Botanic Gardens to tell staff members that I had attended an inspirational lecture there the previous night.

Pat Coffey

January 10th 2013 A Visit to Trinity College, Dublin, Herbarium

In recent years the Leinster Committee has been trying to get around our unpredictable January weather by having speakers who work and live locally and do not have to rely too much on air/sea/road transport.

Trinity College Dublin has sent many important and influential speakers to us and this year the IGPS visited the TCD Botany Department and Herbarium at 2.30 pm which, I'm glad to say welcomed members from as far afield as Donegal and Waterford.

Dr. John Parnell, Professor of Systematic Botany and Curator of the Herbarium welcomed us all to the historic Botany Theatre where we learned the history of the TCD Herbarium and its early collection of e.g. a specimen of *Rosa pimpinellifolia* submitted by **Caleb Threlkeld** in **1722** and described as growing "very plentifully upon the sandy brows below the black rock near the sea"- now known as Blackrock, Co. Dublin. Also, from the early period we were introduced to a Proclamation by Louis 16th in **1791** probably one of his last documents as King.

The 1st curator of this herbarium was **Thomas Coulter (1840-1843)**. We of course remember him from *Pinus coulteri* and *Romneya coulteri* both collected in California. 22,000 specimens had been amassed by the end of his curatorship.

The next curator, **William Henry Harvey (1844-1866)** was an exceptionally hard-working, assiduous botanist. He travelled extensively in South Africa, North America, the South Pacific and in his later years produced one lithograph per week for the herbarium.

Harvey was deeply religious and did not accept the theory of evolution, yet, ironically, it was he who recognised and named the red Algae *Amphiroa darwinii* (Specimen No. 2423) collected in Chile and donated by Charles Darwin during Harvey's period in office. It was a marvellous experience to get close to this specimen and read Darwin's writing! Harvey bought a collection of Amazonian plants collected by Richard Spruce, so, by the end of his curatorship, there were 120,000 specimens in the herbarium.

The next curator was **Edward Percival Wright (1870-1910)** who increased the collection to 130,000 specimens, most of the newer material from the Seychelles.

There followed the curatorship of **Henry Horatio Dixon (1910-1949)** a Fellow of the Royal Society, described by John Parnell as "one of the topmost Irish scientists-ever!" During his time in office the old Trinity Botanic Gardens was set up in Ballsbridge and specimens of *Eichornia crassipes* (Water Hyacinth) and *Sapria siamensis*, a parasitic plant were collected from Thailand.

Then we come to **David Allardyce Webb (1950-1983)**. His international reputation speaks for itself. He is especially remembered for introducing *Potamogeton berchtoldii* and for his "Flora Europea" in 5 volumes. Webb managed to ensure co-operation between botanists in Eastern and Western Europe in a fractious political climate. The 8th edition of **Webb's "An Irish Flora", 2012** by John Parnell and Tom Curtis was made available to IGPS members present at a special price at the end of the afternoon.

Today, the TCD Herbarium has a collection of 247,000 specimens, 19,000 of them Irish species. It is a very important international collection valued at 17,325,000 euro. Currently, the herbarium is involved in the compilation of a "**Flora of Thailand**" which will be completed soon. After we looked at all the species on display for us, it was great to have a warming cup of tea and biscuits before we headed out on a cold January afternoon.

Thanks must be expressed to Marcella Campbell, long-time employee of TCD Herbarium for arranging this event with her colleagues for the benefit of our members.

Mary Bradshaw.

February 16th SNOWDROP visit to the garden of Bernard and Ann O'Dowd, Newcastle House, Newcastle, Co Dublin.

On Saturday 16th February 2013 the sun was shining and spring had arrived at Newcastle House. The snowdrops were in full flight including *Galanthus* 'Imbolc', named by that great galanthophile Primrose Warburg who grew it at her front door at South Hayes. Imbolc is the Gaelic festival marking the beginning of spring, St Brigid's Day in Ireland. A large gathering of IGPS members and friends enjoyed the weather and the chat. Snowdrop lovers or "galanthophiles" will have spent the winter months before "snowdrop time" in a state of high excitement in anticipation of many enjoyable visits to snowdrop gardens. What a great excuse to go outdoors, meet our gardening friends and see what new snowdrop treasures have been acquired.

Ann has a growing collection of named snowdrops, all well labelled and increasing nicely. Notable among them is *G.* 'Cicely Hall', *G.* 'Spindlestone Surprise', *G.* 'South Hayes', *G.* 'Melanie Broughton', *G. elwesii* 'Jessica', to name but a few. The garden also has a large spreading collection of *G. nivalis* in the woodland area and beside the stately driveway, creating a mass of white drifts to brighten the garden as they come out of their winter slumber.

On the day we had a very successful snowdrop raffle and some very happy punters went home with such treasures as *G.* 'Greenfields', *G.* 'S Arnott', *G. plicatus* 'Augustus', *G.* 'Byfield Special', *G.* 'Lady Beatrix Stanley', *G. plicatus* 'Colossus', *G. woronowii* and many others.

Most especially we had a donation of *G. nivalis* Sandersii Group from Robin Hall of Primrose Hill. This snowdrop was given to Primrose Hill by Graham Stuart Thomas and was presented with a note of its history to the lucky winner. We also had some lovely Hellebores donated by Carbury Nursery and Altamont Plant Sales. A big thank you to all our donors.

Those who did not win a prize had the opportunity to purchase plants and lovely bulbs from a plant table stocked by Altamont Plant Sales and manned by Mary O'Brien a stalwart of the snowdrop community in Ireland.

Snowdrops, sunshine, chat and a cup of tea or coffee, a perfect way to spend a day in February. Thanks to the Leinster committee IGPS for all the hard work and looking forward to 2014!

Log on to www.facebook.com/IrishGardenPlantSociety, to see photos of the visit, click on photos, then click on albums and enjoy the browse.

Emer Gallagher



Worth a Read by Paddy Tobin



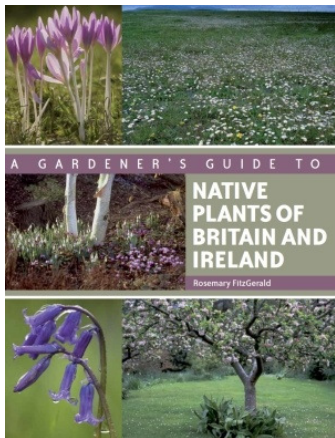
Ireland's Wild Orchids, A Field Guide by Brendan Sayers and Susan Sex was published privately in 2008 but is now being released by The Collins Press in Cork in a perfect tidily sized hardback edition. Readers here will be familiar with Brendan and Susan's work and will hardly need me to tell you that this is a wonderfully beautiful book, exquisitely illustrated by Susan's paintings and line drawings with photographs added to compliment these. Brendan's writing is clear, precise and succinct, creating a perfect partnership of illustration and text. For the amateur, the identification of orchids in the wild is, to say the least, challenging. In his introduction, Brendan comments that it is not

easy for the expert either but this book will certainly be the most useful tool and assistant to the amateur and enthusiast alike. In the first page of the introduction Brendan's bursting enthusiasm is perfectly clear as he recalls visits to various orchid sites where he was obviously enthralled by them – Clonakilty with its early purple orchids, Ballyheigue's western marsh orchids, The Burren and Mullaghmore where he encountered orchids in great variety. It is a sure guarantee of a wonderful book that those who prepared it loved what they were doing.

The introductory sections of the book are short and contain notes on conservation and hybridisation – heartbreak for those attempting identification. There are notes on how to use the book and a short section on the morphology of orchids and this last section was my only disappointment in the book. I would have liked it to be more detailed, further illustrated and with clearer labelling of the plant parts – this because of my general ignorance and it would most likely not be a problem for the more informed. A main key follows which leads the reader to more detailed descriptions, greater detail in illustration, notes on size, colour, habitat, flowering time, distribution etc. all perfectly planned and arranged to assist in identification. What I like most about the book is that it is just what I need and want.

It covers the orchids of Ireland, does this fabulously well and does not confuse me with material superfluous to my needs. It's just what I want. An excellent book! Very good value from the publisher's website:

[Collins, 2013, HB, 108pp, €15.99 – normally €19.99]



A more general view of our wild plants is presented in Rosemary Fitzgerald's "**A Gardener's Guide to Native Plants of Britain and Ireland**". The book echoes a movement, gaining momentum in North America and Australia, of gardening with our wild plants. At first thought one might balk at the idea of introducing "weeds" into our gardens but, on reading the book, I realised we have done so on many occasions previously anyway and it might well be something worth expanding. Many of us will have our native wood anemone, or variants of it, growing in our gardens. Likewise, teasel, bluebells, primroses, foxgloves, sea thrift, guelder rose, wood sorrel, bloody cranesbill and

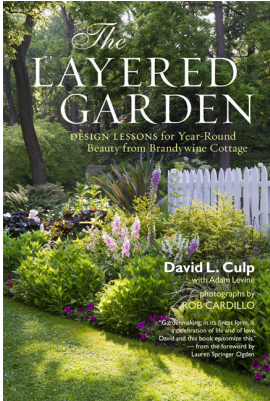
others have already earned a place in our gardens. Some British natives are well used also – verbasicum, herb paris, solomon's seal and butcher's broom for example. It was only the year before last that the common valerian was one of the highlight plants at the Chelsea Flower Show. Perhaps, when we realise that we have happily introduced some of our native plants we might be less hesitant about introducing others.

Our native plants are disease resistant and suited to our conditions and, so, ideal for our gardens. The author organises the plants by seasons of interest and gives excellent background information on each plant along with their traditional uses as well as suggestions for their use in the garden while, when required, fair warning is given that some plants might just be best admired in the wild. An interesting book, [The Crowood Press, 2013, softback, 192pp, £15.]

I have asked some American friends about David Culp's garden, "Brandywine Cottage" and all raved at what a beautiful and fantastic place it was. Likewise, his latest book, "**The Layered Garden**" was given a rapturous welcome in the States. I am not surprised. I have had it for two months now and have had difficulty prizing it out of my wife's hands so that I might read it. It truly is a beautiful book describing a beautiful garden with the theme of "the layered garden". This is what we might call a garden with year-round interest, one so planted that one set of plants succeeds the previous so that there is always a

beautiful picture to behold; “succession planting” is another phrase used to describe the practice – the planning and planting of our garden so that something new is always coming along as the earlier show fades away. The author describes how he has achieved these results in his own garden and gives the tips and techniques he uses and which we can adapt for use in our own gardens to achieve similar results – or at least we may dream.

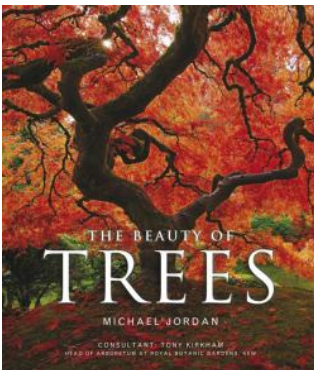
The author writes about his own work and the arrangement in the book reflects the arrangement of the garden as each chapter deals with a different area, the



peripheral screen planting, smaller areas around the house and the main borders. The final section describes what the author considers the “signature plants” of the garden – hellebores, snowdrops, paeonias, roses, hydrangeas and asters, a selection which should reassure readers that though the garden described is in Pennsylvania the information and comments are perfectly relevant to us here in Ireland also. The text is relaxed, wonderfully descriptive and a pleasure to read, while the photographs are simply stunningly beautiful. There was one aspect of the book which annoyed me – chapters were interrupted by groups of pages illustrating plants, a compliment and a sideline to the chapter in which they appeared. For

me, they broke the flow of the main text and were an annoyance, excellent though they were – a matter of layout rather than content. It was a pity as this was a most enjoyable book and despite my quibble I recommend it highly. [Timber Press, 2013, HB, 312pp, £25]

Finally, and perhaps unfairly briefly: **“The Beauty of Trees”** by Michael



Jordan is one of those books which deserve a good bottle of wine so that you can sit, relax and take time over the beauty of picture and text presented here. Worldwide, our forests are in danger and this author’s approach is to show us the fabulous beauty we are in danger of losing. Approximately 100 trees are portrayed, some Irish and many exotic, all valuable, beautiful and important, each to be admired and treasured. The photographs are extraordinary and the text superb. On second thoughts – this book deserves several good bottles of wine with book and wine to be savoured at leisure. You will enjoy this one. [Quercus Press,

2013, HB, 224pp, £25]



Details of upcoming IGPS events

NORTHERN

APRIL 20th Saturday PLANT SALE with proceeds to the I. G. P. S.

A plant sale will be held in the Market House of the Cultra Folk and Transport Museum, Belfast, on 20th April, from 12 to 4.30pm.

The Museum will be running various family activities over the afternoon, including soda bread baking at the Old Rectory, paper pottery construction, posy making, tour of the garden, a nature walk, willow weaving and metalwork demos, sketching in the garden, etc.

Any donations of plants and potting shed jumble would be very welcome. Please contact Lorna Goldstrom (lornagoldstrom@gmail.com), tel. 02890 665796 or Yvonne Penpraze (ypenpraze@gmail.com), tel. 02893 372032.

APRIL Wednesday 24th at 6.30 p.m.

A visit to the garden of Adam McMurray, The Old Mill House, 47 Craigdarragh Road, Helens Bay, Co Down. BT19 1UB

This third of an acre garden with a rich history is currently undergoing sympathetic restoration. Originally on the site of a 19th Century scutch mill it was laid out in shallow terraces in the 1930's and includes a sunken pond area. The garden is characterised by a wonderful collection of varied and interesting mature specimens that have benefitted from the sheltered aspect the site provides. Recent work has endeavoured to open areas that had become overgrown through time whilst maintaining the intimate and intriguing layout this garden has to offer any visitor.

DIRECTIONS: Coming from Belfast, follow the A2 to the turn off on the left for Helens Bay. This is Craigdarragh Road. No 47 is approximately 0.8 miles on the left.

Admission: £ 3.00

JULY Saturday 20th 12 noon for picnic, 1.30p.m. for garden tour.

Picnic and garden visit to Mrs Cherry Townsend, Kilcoan Gardens, 240 Middle Road, Islandmagee, Co. Antrim. BT40 3TX

Kilcoan Gardens specialises in growing organic cut flowers as well as herbs and perennials. In 2012, it won the Group Garden Category for Britain's Bee Friendliest garden. The cutting garden is approximately 1 acre and includes annuals, perennials, bulbs and foliage for cutting. Included in our visit will be a demonstration of making a hand tied bouquet using flowers from your garden.

DIRECTIONS From Carrickfergus – Larne Road (A2). About 1.5 miles beyond Whitehead take the B90 to Islandmagee, go over Causeway, straight through mini-roundabout and turn left at “Rinka” shops into Middle Road. Follow the road for 2 miles, round an “S” bend and the entrance to the garden on the left has 2 white pillars with black pointed tops and no. 240 on the gate.

£6.00 members; £8.00 non-members. Includes afternoon refreshments and ballot for bouquet.

AUGUST Saturday 10th at 2.00 p.m.

A visit to the garden of Mr & Mrs W McKelvey 7 Mount Charles North, Bessbrook. BT35 7DW

This connoisseur's garden in the 18th Century village of Bessbrook has a superb collection of alpines and clematis, cleverly planted with herbaceous plants and shrubs.

DIRECTONS: From Belfast take A1 for Dublin; take the A27 turn-off for Newry. At the roundabout take 3rd exit under the bridge (signed A28 Armagh), at 2nd roundabout take 2nd exit (signed A28 Markethill/Armagh), 50 metres turn left onto Kidd's Road (signed Craigmores/Bessbrooke 2). At the crossroads at Millvale Arms turn right onto Millvale Rd (B133), after 0.6 miles take 1st left past Vauxhall Garage into Main Street. After 0.3 miles, past the Gospel Hall, turn left through the iron gates at railings.

Admission: £3.00

AUGUST Saturday 24th 10.30a.m. – 4.30p.m. approx.

PLANTS FOR FREE

A practical propagation workshop with Maurice and Joy Parkinson **for IGPS members only** at Ballyrobert Cottage Garden & Nursery, 154 Ballyrobert Road, Ballyclare, BT39 9RT

Timetable:

- 10.30a.m Welcome, tea, coffee & scones
10.45a.m Introduction to propagation
11.30a.m Seed saving techniques
12.30p.m Lunch break. Tea/coffee provided
01.45p.m Raising plants from cuttings
03.15p.m Division as a means of propagation
03.45p.m An introduction to the grafting of plants.

Tea/coffee.

Departure.

Attendees will have the opportunity of bringing home their propagules.

Refreshments: Please bring a packed lunch. Tea & coffee will be provided at lunchtime, as well as on arrival and pre-departure.

Cost: £30.00 per person. Places limited.

Please send £30.00 cheque made payable to: "The Cottage Garden Nursery" along with your contact details for confirmation of booking to:

Mrs Jackie Halliwell, 27 Shandon Drive, BANGOR, Co Down, BT20 5HR



Snippets

The National Committee has received requests from members for back issues of *Moorea*. If you have any copies of issues numbers 1 to 15, which you would be happy to donate to the Society, please contact Ricky Shannon at shannon.ricky2@gmail.com; mobile phone: 086 351 1281 or 48, Sydney Avenue Blackrock Co. Dublin

During the summer the Irish Specialist Nursery Association have plant fairs throughout the country some are listed below for information see www.isna.ie

The gardens of Malahide Castle Co Dublin are now open daily from 9.30am following redevelopment over a two year period. New planting has been added to Lord Milo Talbot's renowned collection of Southern Hemisphere plants. There is a new visitor's centre in the courtyard that includes an interactive exhibition, a collection of Lord Talbot's notes, his photographs, and garden tools. There is also an Avoca café and retail area. Garden only ticket prices: Adult €7, child €3.50, Senior citizens €5.00, Family ticket from €17 See malahidecastleandgardens.ie

April 20th to 28th Tulip Fest in Co Offaly at Bellefield House, Shinrone; Townhouse Gardens, Birr and Woodland Cottage Birr. The gardens are open daily from 10.00am to 5.00pm. Plants, bulbs in flower and Artwork will be on sale. Entry fee is €5 per person per garden.

April 27th, 1.30 p.m. to 4.00 p.m.

Royal Horticultural Society Annual Plant Sale at St. Brigid's Parish Centre Church Road, Stillorgan

April 27th, Greenmount College, Antrim.

Ulster Group Alpine Garden Show

May 9th 8.00p.m. St. Brigid's Parish Centre, Stillorgan Alpine Garden Society
A lecture by George Sevastopulo 'Nei dintorni dei laght' (Around the Italian Lakes)

May 12th 10.30a.m. to 5p.m.

Rare and Special Plant Fair, Russborough House, Blessington, Co. Wickow.

May 17th – 19th Garden Show Ireland Hillsborough Castle, Co Down.

May 23rd 7.45p.m. Enable Ireland, Lavanagh House, Ballintemple, Cork.
Cork Branch Alpine Garden Society Lecture by Kevin Hughes, Nurseryman Heale House, Salisbury, *Less common and new desirable plants suitable to the Irish Garden.* (Plants for Sale)

May 30 to June 3 Bloom in the Park, Phoenix Park, Dublin.

Daily from 10.00am - 6.00pm. Tickets at a reduced rate when booked online by May 15th, there are no booking charges. See www.bloominthepark.com

July 20 and 21 Sweet Pea Display 12 noon to 5 p.m.

The Orangery, Regency Walled Garden, Marlay Park, Rathfarnham, by kind permission of Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown County Council.



IGPS Blossoms Online by Ali Rochford

IGPS members may or may not be aware that we now have a Facebook page and Twitter profile. Our foray into the world of Social Media is off to a flying start with over 300 followers of each so far.

Currently we have four administrators on the Facebook page - Paddy Tobin, Patrick Quigley, Bruno Nicolai and Ali Rochford, so all regions are well represented. We have been posting photos of Irish cultivars, Irish gardens and publicising events of interest and have had a great response. We have a regular 'Name that Irish garden' quiz which has proved popular and are working on albums of Irish cultivars, including a lovely one of Irish Snowdrops.

The accompanying photo of the Yew tunnel at Gormanstown was seen by over 7000 people on our Facebook page. This shows the potential of social media to reach a wide audience, generate interest and discussion and spread the IGPS word.

It is hoped the Facebook page will provide a lovely record of IGPS past events with albums from various outings in the last year already online thanks to Paddy Tobin and including the 2012 AGM at Hillsborough. We are already looking forward to posting photos from next month's highly anticipated AGM in Kerry.

We would like to thank those members who have supported this new departure into the world of social media by 'Liking' the Facebook page, commenting, liking and sharing posts and following us on Twitter. It is only with the involvement of our members that these tools will best be used to further the Society's reach, share our aims and attract new members.

The new IGPS website will provide a great online hub for all IGPS activity and an invaluable instant resource for members wishing to stay in touch with activities and developments. We would hope that Facebook and Twitter will further enhance the interactivity of the website with a feeling of community and connection.

For those a little daunted by using Facebook and Twitter they are remarkably easy to use and before you know it you may be hooked. If nothing else, you will have something to do in the winter time other than leaf through seed catalogues and it's just possible you will discover a whole new way of communicating, sharing information and making new greenfingereed friends.

<https://www.facebook.com/IrishGardenPlantSociety>

<https://twitter.com/igpstweets>



The yew tunnel in the grounds of Gormanstown Castle, Co. Meath and described by John Joe Costin on page 15 of the January 2013 newsletter.

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Committee Member: Anne James, Dublin annejames@eircom.net

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Munster Representative: Dan Murphy, Co Cork dan@ballinphellic.ie

Northern Representative: Patrick Quigley, Dunmurry, Belfast
patrick.quigley@live.co.uk

Membership Correspondence:

**The Irish Garden Plant Society, c/o The National Botanic Gardens,
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Please note that staff at the Botanic Gardens cannot take telephone enquiries about the IGPS.

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Twitter account: <https://twitter.com/igpstweets>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/IrishGardenPlantSociety>

Registered charity number: CHY 7893