



# Irish Garden Plant Society

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Newsletter  
Spring 2019

*Primula 'June Blake', photo: Paddy Tobin*

## Contents

<b>Page 3</b>	Editorial by Mary Montaut
<b>Page 5</b>	2019 AGM Announcement
<b>Page 8</b>	Chairman's Notes by Billy McCone
<b>Page 9</b>	A Membership Renaissance by Nicola Monk
<b>Page 10</b>	<i>Narcissus</i> 'Lady Moore'
<b>Page 13</b>	Spring in County Meath by Kristen Walker
<b>Page 15</b>	This year I am going to...
<b>Page 18</b>	Permaculture - the genuinely sustainable garden by Mary Montaut
<b>Page 21</b>	The Gardens and Plants of the National Trust for Scotland with Colin Wren by Mary Bradshaw
<b>Page 24</b>	Worth a Read by Paddy Tobin
<b>Page 26</b>	Around the Regions
<b>Page 30</b>	Book Review: a Field of Dreams
<b>Page 32</b>	David Gilliland 1932 - 2019 by Reg Maxwell
<b>Page 33</b>	Dates for your Diary

*Copy Date for Next Issue is June 15th 2019*

*Notes for Contributors: Articles for the journal should be about 500 words long, though this is flexible. Photos should always be sent in jpg form. Copyright remains with the author.*

## Editorial

**Mary Montaut**

I suppose it is quite rare to discover an entirely new gardening concept, and so I was recently quite taken aback to discover that there is 'Vegan' compost, called 'biocyclic humus soil'. This compost is part of a whole movement called 'Biocyclic vegan agriculture' which eschews all animal products, so it goes much further than the usual organic agriculture. No animal manure is used in this vegan compost or 'humus soil'. Instead it is made purely from plant waste such as the pressings from olives or grapes, and it is carefully turned and ripened to form the 'old compost' which is claimed to be a perfect growing medium. The Biocyclic Vegan Standard was adopted in 2017 and is accredited by the International Organic association, IFOAM. The Biocyclic Vegan website states: 'Biocyclic vegan agriculture means purely plant-based organic farming.

This form of cultivation excludes all commercial livestock farming and slaughtering of animals and does not use any inputs of animal origin. Special emphasis is placed on the promotion of biodiversity, healthy soil life, the closure of organic cycles and on systematic humus build-up.' If you would like to know more, their website is [www.biocyclic-vegan.org](http://www.biocyclic-vegan.org), and

I must admit that I found it most interesting to read. By contrast, the recent judgement against Monsanto's Roundup in California brings a sharp focus to the importance of taking care with our own personal garden patch of earth. I imagine that there are few gardeners who have never, ever used glyphosate, or allowed it to be used, in their gardens? I remember vividly one gardener who always swore that it was so harmless that he would happily drink it. The labels on the garden products which contain glyphosate were always so reassuring: 'Children and pets do not need to be excluded from the area.' There are many weedkillers in the shops at present which are based on glyphosate and which make similar statements about how safe it is. If I recall correctly, it is supposed to be made completely harmless by contact with the soil? How hollow these label reassurances sound now.

The BBC headline of 20th March said it all: 'A US jury has found that one of the world's most widely-used weedkillers was a "substantial factor" in causing a man's cancer. Pharmaceutical group Bayer had strongly rejected claims that its glyphosate-based Roundup product was carcinogenic. But the jury in San Francisco ruled unanimously

that it contributed to causing non-Hodgkin's lymphoma in California resident Edwin Hardeman.'

This trial has brought out the mendacity of the big company, which has been shown deliberately to tamper with research results indicating risks to human health. The US publication, *Environmental Health News*, reported last August that Monsanto has engaged in 'ghost-writing' (i.e. actually drafting and editing) supposedly independent research papers, sometimes even paying scientists to put their names to fake research, in order to contradict the World Health Organization's report in 2016 that glyphosate is a probable carcinogenic agent.

A Freedom of Information request in the US, connected with the trial, brought to light the extent of the 'ghost-writing' which was directly aimed at discrediting the earlier papers from the International Agency for Research on Cancer (2015). The FoI requests were quickly followed up by a non-profit research group, US Right to Know, which found that there were also serious questions about the FDA's official results of food tested for glyphosate residues. They revealed that, although the

official FDA results showed the residues to be 'within the legal limits', some of the FDA chemists had carried out further tests on food they brought from their own homes, and these showed 'glyphosate residues significantly over the legal limit set by the EPA.'

The juxtaposition of these two stories from the press seems to be characteristic of the confusion of our times. I feel it would be impossible to prefer the cynical attitude of the big agrichemical outfit, over the rather extreme purity of the Biocyclics; but somewhere between the two of them, there must surely be some good ground? It would be reassuring if the EU were truly to enforce its 'precautionary principle', as stated in many of its documents: the licensing of new products is still not cautious enough for my taste. Sulfoxaflor, for instance, was advertised by Dow as being 'bee friendly' but, as the headline in *The Telegraph* put it (August 15, 2018): '“Bee friendly” insecticide cuts colonies by half...' In fact, it is a revamped neonicotinoid, and has the same effects on insects.

As our wise children are telling us, 'There is no Planet B.'

## 2019 AGM Announcement

**Notice of the 38th Annual General Meeting of the Irish Garden Plant Society to be held at The Minella Hotel, Clonmel, County Tipperary on 18th May 2019 at 10.30am.**

### AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of AGM held on the 19th May 2018 at The Burrendale Hotel, Newcastle, County Down.
3. Matters arising (if any)
4. Chairman's Report  
To note the report.
5. Treasurers report and accounts for 2018 -2019 – To adopt the accounts
6. Election of Officers and Committee members  
Vice Chair  
Treasurer  
Membership Secretary  
Munster representative  
1 committee member
7. Election of Honorary Members (if any)
8. Any Other Business

**National Executive Committee Members who served 2018-19 and upcoming vacancies.**

**Chairman:** *Billy McCone* has served 3 years of a four year term and 4 years of a maximum of 10 years on the committee

**Vice Chair:** *Anne James* has completed her 10 year term on the Committee. Election required.

**Hon. Secretary & Northern Representative:** *Claire Peacocke* has served 1 year in office and 2 years of a maximum of 10 years on the committee.

**Acting Hon. Treasurer:** *Pascal Lynch* served 4 years in office as Honorary Treasurer and, in the absence of a successor, agreed to stay on as Acting Honorary Treasurer for a 5th year. Election required. Pascal has served 5 years of a maximum of 10 years on the committee.

**Acting Membership Secretary:** *Nichola Monk* was co-opted following last year's AGM and has served 1 year of a four year term and 1 years of a maximum of 10 years on the committee. She intends to stand for election.

**Leinster Representative:** *Stephen Butler* has served 3 years as a regional representative and 5 years of a maximum of 10 years on the committee.

**Munster Representative:**  
Position Vacant

**Committee Members :**  
*Ali Rochford* has served 3 year of a maximum of 10 years on the

committee. Ali compiles, edits and distributes the IGPS ebuletins.

*Brid Kelleher* was co-opted following last year's AGM and has served 1 year of a maximum of 10 on the committee. She intends to stand for election.

*Ricky Shannon* has completed her 10 year term and stands down. Pascal Lynch will fill this position.

### **Invitation for nominations for the posts office bearers and committee members.**

#### **Vice Chair:**

#### **Treasurer:**

Please send nominations to the Hon. Secretary, Claire Peacocke, stating the name of the candidate, the names of the proposer and seconder, and a statement that the person has agreed to stand for election.

Nominations may be sent by email to [igps.ireland@gmail.com](mailto:igps.ireland@gmail.com) or by post to IGPS Hon. Secretary c/o 28 Madison Avenue, Belfast BT15 5BX to arrive no later than **Friday 4th May 2019.**

The 2019 AGM will be held this year in County Tipperary on the weekend of 18th and 19th May. We will be based in the beautiful 4\* Minella Hotel in Clonmel, the county town of Tipperary, on the banks of the River Suir. Clonmel is an historic and attractive town.

The River Suir has played a big part in its history, especially after it was made navigable as far as Waterford in the mid 18th century allowing large vessels to reach the town.

The transport revolutionary, Charles Bianconi, was once Mayor of Clonmel and, fittingly, there is a transport museum in the town where you can explore and learn some more. At St Mary's Church, which dates back to the early 14th century, some of the original town walls can still be found while other buildings of note in the town are the Main Guard, the Town Hall, the Franciscan Friary and the old Wesleyan Chapel which now houses the White Memorial Theatre.

### **Garden Visits**

Our first visit on Saturday is to a well-established garden with fine specimens of small trees and flowering shrubs. The current owner has gardened there for some 45 years. The second garden on Saturday, Ballyhist House which has been featured in *The Irish Garden* magazine, shows how well one can manage on a windswept site.

The garden, which has stunning views features some beautiful stonework, a lily pond, pergola and courtyard garden.

Sunday is a day of contrasts. The first garden, just a 10 minute drive from our hotel, could be

described as a 'walk on the wild side' but beautiful. The final visit is to Killurney, a one acre plant-lover's garden with a natural stream, a sunken garden, meandering paths taking you throughout hidden nooks and crannies, and a wonderful array of choice plants. Tea/coffee/scones will be provided to sustain us on our journeys home.

### **Accommodation**

Please book directly with the Minella Hotel, Clonmel, telephone +353 (052) 612 2388 and mention the IGPS when booking to secure the discounted rate. A number of rooms are being held for us and will be available on a first come first served basis until the 15th April. NB: the hotel has stated that it will only take bookings by phone. Reserved bookings close on 15th April.

**Costs:** One night in a double/twin room and the Gala dinner: €100 per person sharing

Two nights B&B as above and one Gala Dinner: €150 per person sharing

One night in a single room and the Gala dinner: €135  
Two nights B&B in a single room and one Gala dinner: €220  
The cost of the AGM Gala dinner for non-residents is €35

### **Booking the weekend**

The cost of weekend including the garden visits will be €50. Members may bring one guest, guests pay €60. Bookings will open on February 1st. Please book online if at all possible as it greatly reduces the workload of the organizing committee. A full information pack with the AGM papers, itinerary, detailed instructions to the venues, and suggestions for lunch on Saturday and Sunday will be available from Friday 17th May at the hotel reception. Further information from [igps.munster@gmail.com](mailto:igps.munster@gmail.com) or **Margaret McAuliffe, +353 (0)86 816 6842 or [margaretandstephen@eircom.net](mailto:margaretandstephen@eircom.net)**

### **The Annual General Meeting**

The meeting will be held on Saturday morning; attendance at the meeting is free to all members but please let us know for catering purposes if you plan to attend. There are a number of vacancies coming up on the committee, so have a think about coming forward to join the team for what will be a busy and exciting time as we approach our 40th anniversary in 2021.

### **Get in touch through**

**[igps.ireland@gmail.com](mailto:igps.ireland@gmail.com) or phone Billy McCone +44 (0)7411 244568. TICKETS AVAILABLE NOW AT EVENTBRITE**

## Chairman's Notes

Springtime again. Don't the seasons creep up on us so stealthily – or is it just me? I'm barely coming to terms with winter and still finishing off some bare root planting; bright fresh green on buds on clumps of what were lifeless looking hedging plants tell me I'm fast running out of time.

Thankfully our event organisers are well ahead in their planning of garden visits and booking speakers, some sourced as far ahead as 2021. Do check the website and watch out for ebulletins and announcements, as we have some great visits and speakers selected, and of course the AGM weekend is always enjoyable. Incidentally, at last year's AGM the gardens selected for the visits came very close to capacity for numbers so please do not leave your AGM booking too late.

Booking via the IGPS website on Eventbrite is quick and easy.

Recently I received what I considered as some very constructive comments regarding Society communications. It's good to get suggestions and in this instance it proved really useful and helped us focus certain resources. From time to time we have had short surveys to gauge members' views on their preferences. However, surveys are time consuming to produce; so your views can provide valuable

and up to date information.

We bid farewell to IGPS member Paul Maher, Curator, from his post as Curator at the National Botanic Gardens Glasnevin. Paul retired in February following 44 years' service. He was appointed Curator of the Gardens in 2003 and in his later years had responsibility for not only the two National Botanic Gardens at Glasnevin and Kilmacurragh, but also St. Enda's Park, Rathfarnham and the John F. Kennedy Arboretum, New Ross, Co Wexford. One of the big events in Paul's IGPS/NBG life was the joint excursion to the Chelsea Flower Show in 1995. Paul led the Glasnevin side while David Jeffreys led the IGPS side. That venture resulted in a Silver-Gilt award.

In his role at Glasnevin Paul was always there for advice and facilitated Society committee meetings by allowing use of his office, frequently rearranging staff rotas to fit into our schedule. We wish to thank Paul for all the support over the years and wish him the very best on his retirement and hope to see him at many IGPS events.



*Billy  
McCone*

Chairman

## A Membership Renaissance

**Nicola Monk**

We are at an exciting point in the Society's development. Membership has been increasing very steadily this past year at a rate of 2 or sometimes 3 new members nearly every week throughout the year. At the end of March we now have 558 members.

To increase our efficiency and improve communication we are poised to launch an online Membership Management Database with Smart Club Solutions. It has taken some time and a lot of research to get to this point. I think it will hugely benefit us all.

**For those who do not use computers or smartphones everything will continue as always.**

The one change will be Standing Orders which will no longer be a method of payment. Cheques and cash will still be accepted.

**The online database will enable yourselves as members to independently: Join and renew; Pay subscriptions; Book and pay to attend events; Update your contact information; Indicate your data protection preferences.**

I shall soon be sending out an email to all those with emails on our mailing list. This will be after you have registered to let you know that you will be receiving 2 emails from smartclubsolutions.com

to supply you with your log in details. From that point you will be in control of your own account details and/or can ask me to help you. The membership section of the IGPS website will be changing a little to accommodate this. Instead of Paypal it will be Stripe, which does exactly the same job. You pay with a debit or credit card.

The most exciting change though is that we are introducing a new payment method which I would like in time to become how the majority of subscriptions are paid – Direct Debit. The benefits of Direct Debits are many. It takes away the worry of remembering to renew your subscription, the administration is greatly reduced and more efficient, members can join at any time of the year and get full benefits for the full twelve months.

Whilst this may all seem a little remote, I am on the end of a phone and cheques can still be posted and letters written and emails sent. The membership contact details are on the back of the *Newsletter* and below.

**Nichola Monk, Membership Secretary. 5 Sixth Avenue Baylands, Bangor BT20 5JU, Northern Ireland Telephone: 0044 7828434350 Email: [igps.membership@gmail.com](mailto:igps.membership@gmail.com)**

## Narcissus 'Lady Moore'

E. Charles Nelson

Three bulbs of *Narcissus* 'Lady Moore' were donated to the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, in 2015 and when they bloomed the following year the flowers were painted by Susan Sex (*Moorea* 17 (2017): cover; *Sayers et al.* 2017\*). The daffodil is a small-cupped cultivar described in one source as “beautifully scented, vigorous, late mid-season”. The cultivar came from W. Polman-Mooy of Haarlem, Netherlands, and was credited to him as early as 1914 in *The daffodil year-book 1914* (p. 43). In 1923 at Haarlem, the Dutch Bulbgrowers' Society gave an award of merit to 'Lady Moore' when it was described as having a “creamy-yellow perianth with citron yellow widely opened cup, bordered bright orange red”. In the Haarlem Central Bulb Committee's *Descriptive list of tulips and daffodils*, the description read: “Small. Perianth white, yellow cup edged orange red. Medium early. Height 14” [inches].”

The earliest report which has been traced of a daffodil named 'Lady Moore' – classified as “Division II.b, Large Chalice-cupped Daffodils with a White Perianth” – is in the issue of *The Garden* dated 24 August 1912, where the Reverend Joseph Jacob (1856–1926), one of the leading daffodil enthusiasts of the early twentieth century, listed some “moderate-priced” daffodils for showing. One decade later, 'Lady

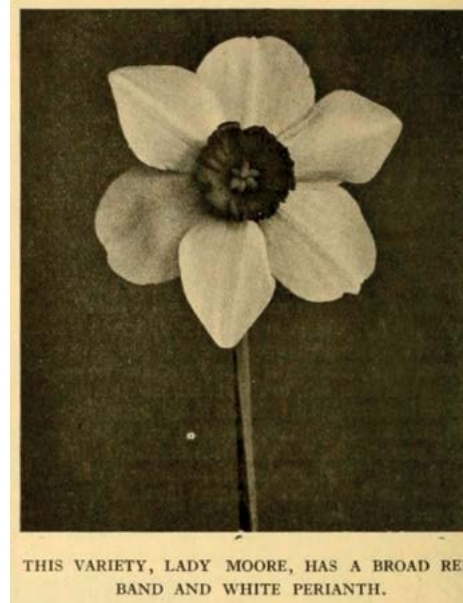
Moore' was categorized by Jacob (*The Garden* 86 (4 August 1922): 395) as one of “the more expensive” bulbs, although he did not give any indication of the cost. (Lionel Richardson of Prospect House, Waterford, offered bulbs of 'Lady Moore' for 3s 6d. each in autumn 1923 [*The Garden* 87 (18 August): i], about €8.50 or £7.50 at present.) Jacob also commented that 'Lady Moore' “is extraordinarily good in a greenhouse, but apart from a few short hours it is nothing in the open” (*The Garden* 86 (2 September 1922): 436; see also *The Garden* 87 (11 August 1923): 409). A decade earlier, linking another daffodil, named 'Charles', with 'Lady Moore', Jacob wrote: “Charles and Lady Moore are mentioned because of their very striking cup which has a fairly well-defined broad band of red round the edge. I call them both very excellent substitutes for Challenger. They are both most effective in any collection, and, what is also good, they are very different from other varieties, although of the same look themselves” (*The Garden* 76 (24 August 1912): 431). Thus, 'Lady Moore' was established as a name for a daffodil with a red-rimmed cup in 1912 (four years earlier than noted by *Sayers et al.* 2017).

It soon was a “regular” at shows in England. At the Midland Daffodil Society's show in Edgbaston at the

end of April 1913, 'Lady Moore' was the “best flower” among six varieties shown by Jacob, who came second in the class for six distinct varieties of daffodils “that have not been in commerce for more than four years”. Christopher Bourne of Bletchley staged 'Lady Moore' – “a fine red cup” – at the Royal Horticultural Society's Daffodil Show in mid-April 1914, having previously exhibited the cultivar at the RHS's Narcissus and Tulip Committee on 10 March when he was awarded a Silver Flora Medal. Again, Jacob showed 'Lady Moore' among his first-prize collection at the Midland Daffodil Show on 23 April 1914. In 1915, Bourne showed 'Lady Moore' once more, and by September that year the cultivar

was being grown and shown in New Zealand. 'Lady Moore' continued to attract attention from those growers who wanted to show daffodils competitively and in 1921, at the RHS's London Daffodil show, 'Lady Moore' was photographed (in black-and-white) (*The Garden* 85: 200). Once again, Jacob commented: “I must say a last word for two varieties which were to be seen in several places in good condition – Lady Moore, a most striking incomparabilis with a broad red band round the top of the cup and a white perianth; and Mrs. Robert Sydenham, still one of the best whites ...”.

A noticeable characteristic of the 1921 flower are the unequal perianth segments, the three outer ones being usually broader than long, whereas the inner three segments are always longer than broad: the relative proportions (length:width ratio) being 0.73, 1.1, 1.31 – v – 1.31, 1.5, 1.16. The perianth segments were relatively flat, perhaps even concave, without recurved margins. The flower's general appearance was rounded and full, rather than star-like. The cup was almost uniformly dark (? red) but this may be a “trick” of the photographic process because it does not accord with “yellow cup edged orange red”, “cup lemon yellow with narrow edge-band of red”, nor Jacob's “with a broad red band round the top of the cup” – such comments suggest a distinct difference in colouring of the cup between its base and its rim.



*Narcissus* 'Lady Moore'

It is always hazardous equating extant plants with cultivars that existed a century ago, especially when vague and partial descriptions are the best evidence available. The photograph published in 1921 provides extra information about 'Lady Moore' that might give cause to doubt the identity of bulbs presently (2018) labelled with that name or, contrariwise, help confirm the identification. (For undeniable evidence of confusion about what 'Lady Moore' looks like, see images on <https://daffseek.org/detail-page/?cultivar=Lady%2520Moore> and [https://croft16daffodils.co.uk/product/lady-moore-3w-yyob-barrii-polman-mooy-w-pre-1913/.](https://croft16daffodils.co.uk/product/lady-moore-3w-yyob-barrii-polman-mooy-w-pre-1913/))

\* SAYERS, B., NELSON, E. C., DONALD, D. and CLARKE, D., 2017. *Narcissus* 'Lady Moore' and an annotated register. *Moorea* 17: 41–46.

My thanks to Brendan Sayers for his assistance and comments.

#### Corrections to February Newsletter

Page 33: The new *Narcissus* cultivar in third paragraph and photograph is 'Elle Bell', not 'Ella'.

Seed List: The correct title for the seeds which were listed as *Furcraea parmentieri* is *F. longaeava*. *F. parmentieri* is synonymous with *F. bedinghausii*.

Volunteers in the Rectory Garden celebrating today, 28th March, after the very successful visit of HRH the Duke of Kent to the garden. Left to right: Margaret Newman, Barbara Mayne, Marion Allen, Sharon Morrow, Lorna Goldstrom and Yvonne Penpraze.



## Spring in County Meath

Kirsten Walker

There is an area across the lawn from my kitchen door that I have been developing as a spring garden, on the grounds that even on the most dull and wintry of spring days I can still look out and see drifts of spring flowers to cheer me up. I have plenty of spring bulbs: snowdrops and crocuses followed by hyacinths (specifically *H. 'Woodstock'*, a lovely soft purple, which I acquired at the IGPS plant sale at the Marino Institute), daffodils and muscari. This area is shaded in summer by large sycamore trees so it lends itself perfectly to spring-flowering plants. One of the most invaluable plants for these conditions is *Pachyphragma macrophyllum* with its delicate white flowers and heart-shaped evergreen leaves. This plant will grow in the driest and shadiest of conditions, and brighten up the darkest corners. I also have hellebores, hostas, vinca and

primulas among others.

I recently added a *Pieris japonica* 'Daisy Hill' to this area. I won this lovely shrub in a raffle at last year's AGM. I just hope it will cope with our limey soil!

Not far from this part of the garden is an even shadier area where, several years ago, I planted drifts of daffodils into the grass. I start mowing this area after the bulbs have started to die back, usually late June. After seeing Jimi Blake's 'perennial meadow' experiment, I was inspired to divide up and plant various spring-flowering perennials straight into the grass. I used *Pulmonaria* 'Blue Ensign', *Astrantia major*, *Veronica gentianoides*, aquilegias and primulas. Last spring these plants flowered, albeit somewhat sparsely, and I am hopeful that they will put on a better show this year – at least whichever of the plants that was able

Kirsten Walker's Spring Garden  
(photo Kirsten Walker)



to survive being mown every couple of weeks.

I try to get on top of the garden maintenance over the winter as, once spring gets going, the nursery requires all my attention. As I divide last year's nursery stock, I shake off all the old compost into buckets which I then spread on the flower beds. This makes a very attractive mulch, and helps keep down the weeds. It's always very satisfying to turn a 'waste' product into something useful. Another example of this is an experiment in progress; I have a small patch of couch grass at one end of a flower bed that I haven't been able to clear, despite repeated attempts over the years. My latest plan is to pile all the garden and nursery waste on top of the scutch, and then I will cover it all with newspapers, and a few layers of weedcover. I'm going to leave it for

at least a year, and I'm hoping all the garden waste will have turned into lovely compost and the scutch will be smothered.

So far this spring has been mercifully mild. We can but hope that the 'Beast from the East' isn't planning a comeback tour this year. Growing conditions have been close to perfect, at least in County Meath; I imagine other parts of the country may not have fared quite so well. I have already seen quite a few bumblebees and hoverflies about, taking advantage of all the early flowers. This time of year can be a little nerve racking. On the one hand it's lovely to see all the insect activity, birds nesting and trees and plants coming into flower earlier than usual, but there is always the danger that it will all go pear-shaped with a sudden bout of harsh weather.



Thomas Pakenham,  
Tullyally Castle Garden  
Photo Kirsten Walker

## This year I am going to...

Compiled by Maeve Bell

Most of us like to try something new in our gardens each year. Here's what some of our members are planning to do.

### Adam Whitbourn, Head Gardener at Blarney Castle Gardens, writes:



Carnivorous *Drosera capensis*.

This year... I am going to develop a new garden area adjacent to our Poison Garden. It will be called 'The Carnivorous Courtyard' and will be planted with a range of carnivorous plants from all over the world with educational signage on certain types of plants, their habitats and conservation.

At present the garden is still in the planning stage but I imagine it will be semi-formal, surrounded by a clipped yew hedge and built on two levels. It may contain a ruin

of an old lookout tower, various bog planters and outcrops of limestone surrounded by shale and gravel. We have been looking for a site to develop as a home for our carnivorous collection that is currently housed in our walled garden and looked after by Kieran O'Callaghan, who is our resident carnivorous carer! We already have quite a large range, including species of pitcher plants, sundews, butterworts and of course the Venus flytrap. I imagine it will be a very popular addition with our younger visitors.

### Anne-Marie Woods is aiming to up the drama:

I'm going to replace a wilting *Fatsia japonica* with a tree fern. I like the drama of ferns and I think one would be perfect in this shady spot of my garden. Suggestions anyone?

### Branka Gabersick, who is based in Co. Galway, has made a resolution:

It is not easy for me to write about the garden and my plans as, being a professional gardener, my own garden is of course a disaster. All I can say is "must try harder this year" to leave some sort of impression of cultivation on it. The irregular hedge, natural meadow and "wild" fuchsia look can at times get out



of control. It is always a thin line between romantic and just plain abandonment. I do have one definite resolution for this year however, for the gardens I manage and my own: avoid buying plastic products.

I am sure most of us gardeners keep and reuse pots, but garden centres are full of other tempting plastic bits and pieces such as propagating units, 'handy' spray bottles and, the most useless items ever, slug traps. All of these products are so unnecessary. There are already far too many plastic containers and bottles we need to buy, without buying supposedly purpose-made plastic gardening products.

Reuse is better than recycle, they say, so here are my ideas. Water and pop bottles make excellent propagators, mini-cloches and anti-slug collars around plants if need be. Old windows and some bricks can make a cold frame. If you buy consumable items, opt for the most sustainable option such as organic slug pellets in cardboard boxes and then transfer the pellets into a recycled plastic container. Jeyes Fluid and other liquid products are available in bulk containers and can be decanted into pre-used bottles at the dilution you need. Reuse washed domestic spray bottles for spray applications.

Hopefully we are mainly among the converted on the green and recycled front, but it is worth reconsidering our habits as, through our myriad of horticultural and gardening products, we are as guilty as the rest of the commercial world for creating the plastic crisis. This year, more than ever, I am going to avoid buying any more plastic junk.

#### **Maeve Bell is purchasing a plant:**



*Pulmonaria* 'Blake's Silver'  
photo: Cotswold Nurseries'

I have a big soft spot for pulmonarias; they are undemanding, the flowers look fabulous in spring and are loved by bees while the foliage looks handsome for almost nine months of the year. My current favourite is probably *Pulmonaria* 'Diana Clare' but just recently I realized I don't yet have *P.* 'Blake's Silver' which June Blake found around 2007-08 as a chance seedling in her mother's garden in Co. Wicklow. It has pink flowers which can also incorporate a soft baby-blue depending on growing conditions and superb silver foliage. I'm off to shop!

#### **Adrian Walsh is going to revitalise a border:**



Photo: Adrian Walsh

In December, Oliver Schurmann, owner with his wife Liat of Mount Venus Nursery, gave a talk to Northern region members entitled *From Show Gardens to Real Gardens*.

At the start of the talk Oliver succinctly outlined the natural progress of a new mixed planting scheme of perennials, grasses, shrubs and trees. At the start, while the shrubs and trees are young, the herbaceous perennials and grasses flourish in an open aspect without much competition. However, as the shrubs and trees mature and their root systems spread out, they begin to outperform the perennials; they also begin to create more shade in the border and a new dynamic takes over.

Such is the situation with the border on the right hand side of my garden. Perennials are beginning to losing out to a *Cercidiphyllum japonicum*, a *Hydrangea aspera* *Villosa* Group,

and a *Eucryphia x nymanensis* 'Nymansay'. An opportunity presents itself and action is required. The summer flowering perennials will move to other sunnier beds in the garden while spring flowering plants such as *Helleborus x hybridus* and *Geranium phaeum* will remain, together with the later flowering *Eupatorium purpureum* and *Aconitum carmichaelii*. New introductions to the border will include ferns, e.g. *Polystichum setiferum* 'Dahlem' and *Woodwardia fimbriata*, possibly a *Schefflera* or a tree fern plus a selection of woodland treasures.

#### **Paul Smyth and Brendan Ruddy are building a wall:**



Paul and Brendan's Wall

The back of our house in Mayo is surrounded by stone walls, in varying states of repair. Old walls are made of weathered stones which have been softened by lichens, mosses and ferns. They provide a tangible link to the wall-builders of the past. So many beautiful walls have been lost to 'progress' in Mayo, new housing and road widening in particular. Many more are in very

poor condition due to neglect or self-seeded intruders in the fabric of the walls, but we are determined to stabilize and maintain ours. A particular challenge is to restore them without overly disturbing the accumulated vegetation. This is impossible when invading trees have

so undermined the walls, they are falling apart. The tree roots will have to be removed, and the walls rebuilt to provide them with a secure future. Some hard decisions are required.

## Permaculture - the genuinely sustainable garden

### Mary Montaut

One of the most interesting, indeed inspiring, garden visits which I was fortunate to take in 2018 was to Richard and Margaret Webb's 'Forest Garden' in Bray, Co. Wicklow. This visit gave me my first experience of an established 'permaculture' garden, based on principles which enable the ecology to be 'in balance', as Richard Webb put it - no pesticides or chemicals are applied and there were remarkably few 'pest' species in evidence at anywhere. For example, there were fine Hostas with a few holes in the leaves, indicating that there probably were some slugs and snails about, but the wildlife attracted to the rich pickings in the 'Forest' effectively controlled their numbers and kept the balance between the beautiful - and apparently edible - Hostas and the gastropods.

The garden itself is not enormous, and is located on a steep slope down to a small river. A natural spring gives rise to a stream which the Webbs have directed in graceful

curves down the steep grassy slope full of wild flowers, and via a series of unlined ponds (which keep a vegetable patch flourishing), and finally into a reed bed. The river is more or less invisible from the upper garden because of the dense tree cover at the foot of the garden - largely native trees, like hazel and hawthorn, as well as walnuts and *Cornus kousa chinensis* and *Cornus mas* which have edible fruit, and a superb *Hoheria* for the pollinators. Trees chosen for berries and nuts predominated, as the Webbs were following the 'edible garden' plan.

Sunflower seeds for the birds.  
Photo: Mary Montaut



The Vegetable Garden

In fact, I was astonished at the immense number of edible plants they were growing, many of which were completely unlike the familiar vegetables in a vegetable plot. Richard said that they almost never need to buy vegetables. In other areas, there were apple trees with an underplanting of herbs which effectively controlled 'weed' growth, the principle of balance being exemplified again. The layered effect of the different canopies is fascinating: the trees form the upper layer, with shrubby fruits in the middle layer and herbs at the lowest storey; wineberries, currants, honeyberries - and climbers such as lathyrus (peas) growing up and among them, all edible! I loved the froth of herbs forming ground cover: white lunaria, sweet cicely (though Richard Webb said he had never really found a use for this herb - no more have I, but it is very pretty), lots of mint, lovage, rhubarb...

However, it is important to choose the varieties carefully; Richard emphasised that the comfrey must be Bocking 14 Strain - or risk becoming altogether too rampant. Another vital plant providing food for long periods was Daubenton Kale. Jerusalem and other artichokes and fennel made striking visual contrast with this understorey, and among them, kiwi fruit and persimmon. The birds do get a lot of soft fruit if it is not netted and the kiwi and persimmon have not fruited in this garden, though Richard Webb told me that they fruit elsewhere in Wicklow.

The vegetable plot was more formal, a circular bed with quadrants so that all areas of the beds were accessible. Again, the 'mutualities' of plants were beautifully maintained. For example, in the 'Aztec' bed, there were the 'Three Sisters' growing, Sweetcorn, Squash and Climbing Beans, as they are in Central America - placed

carefully in the sunniest aspect of the garden. There was a vegetable I had never even hear of: Yacon tubers (*Smallanthus sonchifolius*), from Peru - just growing without fanfare among the other vegetables. The vegetables are not planted in rows, but mixed in with each other to provide support, or shade, or other complementarities. Richard pointed out that the tomatoes were allowed to lean on other plants and sprawl somewhat, with no harm to the fruits. There was a polytunnel overflowing with various fruits. There was also a raised bed of carrots; the only care they needed was to be covered with mesh when the carrot root fly is due to arrive. Perhaps the most astonishing 'edible' to me was to be found on a careful pile of logs. These were growing edible wild fungus, including wood ear fungus, which Richard assured me are delicious.

*Cornus controversa variegata*,  
the 'Wedding Cake tree'

In fact, nothing is wasted in this garden - even the dandelions and docks are valued as compost because their deep roots bring up nutrients from deep in the soil and then release these again for the surface rooters to feed on.

But the most important and special quality of this garden to my mind was the depth of understanding and knowledge with which the Webbs had brought it into such productivity and beauty. There was careful attention to the needs of the plants, their aspect, shade requirements, water or drought tolerance, and so on, which had enabled the marvellous community of plants to flourish. I felt this garden exemplified many principles which could be practised by gardeners, in large or small plots, with great benefit to the general health of the environment and furthermore, to our own diets.



## The Gardens and Plants of the National Trust for Scotland with Colin Wren

Mary Bradshaw

Colin is currently the Gardens and Design Landscape Manager for the Trust in the Edinburgh Region which comprises fourteen gardens. He began by pointing out that the N.T.S. is a charity and receives no Government funding. There are around 70 Gardens in total and the aim is to conserve Scotland's heritage and maintain accessibility for all. The N.T.S. also deals with Castles, Houses and other buildings, wild landscapes and farmland.

Colin decided to deal with nineteen particular gardens in alphabetical order. Some would be familiar to IGPS members and indeed we visited some on trips some years ago while others were little known to me. Arduaine (Argyll) is a Campbell garden since 1898, donated to the N.T.S. by the Wright brothers in 1992. It contains lots of Rhododendrons, some very rare, many ferns, Magnolias and has a wonderful panoramic vista over local islands to Mull. The climate is mild, wet and exposed. As Phytophthora killed many *Larix* spp. in the last ten years, a new shelter belt is planned.

Balmerino Abbey is a ruin but the garden boasts a Sweet Chestnut planted c 1565. The local village is obsessed with this tree, which has been dying for around 100 years with part of the trunk actually filled with concrete. Now the N.T.S. intend to remove a rogue Sycamore living close by and to fence it off for safety, a growing concern in Trust gardens.

Colin moved on to speak of Branklyn (Perth) garden created from old orchard fields by John and Dorothy Renton with the help of wild sourced seeds coming from many plant hunters. Handed over to the Trust in 1966, it has *Meconopsis*, Peonies, National Collections of *Cassiope* and *Lilium* and some fine mature trees. It is also well-known for a rose garden and for scree beds.

Next we visited Brodick Castle, Garden and Country Park on the Isle of Arran where the climate is very mild with almost no frost. The walled garden dates from 1710. Enormous *Magnolia campbellii* and yellow *Rhododendron macabeaeanum* flower in March and April. There are no less than three National Collections of Rhododendrons here and plants

there coming from the expeditions of Kingdon Ward, Forrest, Farrer and Rock. A family alliance between Brodick and Tresco Abbey in the 1930s resulted in many plants brought here from the Scillys which thrive. The Garden relies heavily on tourism and there are several projects to make the site more “family-friendly” such as the addition of a playground.

Next on to Broughton House and Garden (near Stranraer) once home of E. A. Hornel, one of the Glasgow Boys and an artist much influenced by his visits to Japan in both painting and gardening. The garden, dating from 1901 has many sundials but is suffering from “box blight” and this is being replaced by Golden Yew. It also boasts a *Dactylhoriza* species of orchid believed unique to this garden.



Edward Atkinson Hornel, The Flower Market at Nagasaki  
Photo: Wikimedia Common

Crarae (Argyll), was also visited by an IGPS group some years ago and the 50-acre garden only came to the Trust in 2002. The sparkling waters of the Crarae Burn form the centerpiece for a woody paradise of rocky gorges, wooden bridges and thickets of maples, birches and evergreens. The Scottish Rhododendron Society hold an annual show here. The garden is noted for *R.* ‘Lady Lintithgow’ and *Fagus* ‘Crarae’, a registered Beech.

Crathes Castle (Aberdeenshire), is one of the flagship gardens. The main attraction is the series of garden rooms in the extensive walled garden at the side of the Castle descending in a series of terraces. There are colour themed gardens, including a white garden which pre-dates Sissinghurst. Also a vegetable garden, croquet, bowling and curling lawns (these flood in winter and then freeze). Something for everyone here.

Culross Palace and Garden (Fife) is a living museum of 17th century port life with steep, twisting streets and houses donated in 1932. A medieval-style garden has been installed since 1985. This features cockle-shell paths and is planted with pre-1650 medicinal plants and early vegetables which are allowed to self-seed.

Culzean Castle and grounds became Scotland’s first country park in 1969. The Castle contains much valuable work by Robert Adam. The garden is noted for annual and herbaceous borders, *Echium pininana*, *Hosta* ‘Francis Williams’ and Dutch Iris.

Falkland Palace (Fife) was originally a Stuart palace but has undergone many changes during the centuries. It came to the Trust in 1952 and has a series of long walks and borders. *Mertensia virginica*, pelargoniums, a paeony walk and great Autumn colour characterise this garden. It is earmarked for a £30,000 restoration. Not unexpectedly given the fare on offer, time began to press in, limiting the remarks. Hill of Tarvit Garden, containing the finest specimens of *Eucryphia*.

*Romneya coulteri*, Irish Heritage Plant,  
Photo Mary Montaut

The House of the Binns, famous for snowdrops, daffodils and the former home of politician Tam Dalyell. Kellie Castle (Fife) has a Rhubarb collection and Mallyen Garden near Edinburgh contains the National collection of 19th century shrub roses. Threave Garden fulfills an unusual additional role as a training garden, run by the Trust since the 1960s to train gardeners and it also has winter-flowering heathers.

I was left with the impression of lots more to see in Scotland.

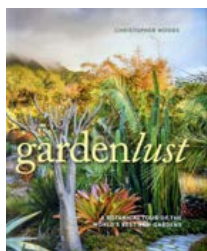
Perhaps the IGPS might organise another trip? If not members might like to take the ferry from Larne.

*Primula* ‘June Blake’, Irish Heritage Plant,  
Photo Paddy Tobin.



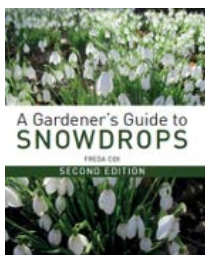
## Worth a Read

Paddy Tobin



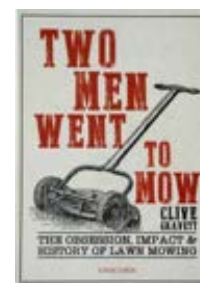
This is a book which will gladden the heart of any gardener as we read of the vibrancy, enthusiasm, creativity and beauty of gardens worldwide. Christopher Woods spent twenty years as the director and chief designer at Chanticleer Gardens in Philadelphia and in this book recounts a tour of the world and fifty of the best gardens he has visited. They are a personal selection, a selection of what he regards as beautiful gardens and all are 21st century gardens – all created within the last twenty years. An excellent book – highly recommended.

**[Gardenlust – A Botanical Tour of the World's Best New Gardens, Christopher Woods, Timber Press, Portland, Oregon, 2018, Hardback, 415 pages, US\$40, ISBN: 978-1-60469-797-1]**



The almost wildfire enthusiasm for snowdrop not only continues but is growing – a genuine galanthomania where amateur enthusiasm and commercial opportunism lead to a constant stream of newly named snowdrops – and it is a daunting challenge for any author to attempt a comprehensive listing of all cultivars.

Freda Cox, the author, must be commended for her enthusiasm and bravery in undertaking this task and presenting a snapshot of snowdrops at the time of her writing. The book is immediately attractive and appealing and the publishers, Crowood, are to be complimented for the superb quality of design and production. The main section of the book is the Snowdrop Directory where snowdrops are listed alphabetically from 'Abington Green' to 'Zwanenburg' – 2,400 snowdrops and 273 pages later, a mammoth collection, beautifully presented. Freda Cox is an established artist and most of the snowdrops are



illustrated by her paintings of the individual flowers, perhaps half-life size, and these are accompanied by brief notes, curtailed sentences, of 50 – 100 words per entry. The alphabetic listing makes for ease of access and one can quickly locate a particular entry. Not all entries have illustrations.

Despite its promise the book is spoiled by innumerable minor inaccuracies in the text which limit its reliability. This is a great pity as there is so much to recommend the book – to illustrate so many snowdrops is a fabulous achievement – but the accompanying text needed to be far better researched.

**[A Gardener's Guide to Snowdrops, Freda Cox, Crowood, Wiltshire, 2019, Hardback, 302 pages, £50, ISBN: 978 1 78500 449 0]**

Finally, a small, interesting and entertaining volume which is well worth a read.

It was Edwin Beard Budding (1796 – 1846) who invented the first lawnmower, patented in 1830, for “the purpose of cropping or shearing the vegetable surface of Lawns, Grass plots and Pleasure Grounds”.

The author, Clive Gravett, returned to his first love, horticulture, after a career in banking. He became more and more interested in the history of the lawn mower and now has one of the most extensive collections of historic lawnmowers, housed at the Museum of Gardening which he established, and is regarded as one of the leading worldwide authorities on lawnmower history.

**[Two Men Went to Mow: The Obsession, Impact & History of Lawn Mowing, Clive Gravett, Unicorn Publishing Group, London, 2018, Hardback, A5 format, 163 pages, £14.99, ISBN: 978-1-911604-47-1]**

More complete reviews can be found on The Blog at: <https://irishgardenplantsociety.com/>

## Around the Regions

### Munster Region

Reports by Janet Edwardes

We kicked off our 2019 program of lectures with an evening with Kitty Scully and her talk entitled 'Veg on the Edge' - very appropriate timing as it was ideal for us enthusiastic vegetable gardeners to get fired up to begin sowing for the forthcoming season. As the weather has been generally so mild, we can get an early start. Kitty explained how she came from a farming background in the midlands to horticultural studies to Airfield and is currently managing a productive vegetable garden with a difference at Voxpro. The philosophy of her gardening at Voxpro is all about wellness, and show elements rather than high yield vegetable growing. This is a garden that is used for meetings, social gatherings, lunch breaks and just quiet time. She pointed out that for us home growers of vegetables, the key element is taste and flavour, and that the vegetables that are nutrient rich are also the best tasting, so there is a key connection with healthy soil and flavour and taste. She recommended brown envelope seeds as these are grown and saved locally and are adapted to local conditions and thus are likely to perform better. But of course the key

element is the soil itself, and it is worth ensuring that the soil's minerals are replenished and fed annually using green manures, volcanic rock dust or seaweed feed. In our crop rotation we should consider using strips of flowers in between rows of vegetables, which will attract bees, butterflies and other insects which will help with pollination and pest control. There is such a huge range of salad crops, we should consider especially the oriental leaves and vegetables which can be used as a cut and come again crop, relatively pest free, easy to grow and highly tasty and nutritious. So I think we all left inspired to get home and get planting. Even if it is just a small window box, we can grow something which is tasty and delicious to eat. It was a wonderful start to what promises to be a great gardening year.

Not even torrential rain and high winds could deter an enthusiastic crowd from turning out for Neil Porteus' talk for the IGPS Munster March lecture. Neil is a popular speaker who has been to talk to us before, but this lecture was on the plants of Tasmania. Neil took part in a joint British/Irish expedition in January 2018 and was able to bring back lots of seed of plants never grown here before, so it will be interesting to see how these plants

fare in an Irish climate. Neil told us that one of the most significant differences is the amount of light, because overall Tasmania would be significantly more windy and have much higher light levels than here in Ireland. Similarly to Ireland, Tasmania is wetter on the west coast and drier on the eastern side. What became apparent very quickly, as Neil took us through many flowering trees and shrubs, was that a great majority of the flowers were whites and creams. And also very scented! We saw some lovely specimens of conifers, especially the pencil pines. Neil explained how the latter part of the day was spent cleaning seeds to keep their viability, and also sorting and drying the herbarium samples collected each day. This is a very important role of the gardener, as seed collected and brought back and grown in various gardens will be a means of preserving endangered plants in the wild. Some of the factors in plants becoming endangered in Tasmania are wallabies who eat a lot and can graze out whole areas of herbage; and also climate change because the numbers of bugs increase and eat all the year round. We saw where, in the case of *Eucalyptus nicholii* as an example, there are acres and acres of dead trees due to bug infestation. But to better things .... large drifts of *Blechnum nudum* which Neil thinks would be fairly hardy here, and the peppermint gum

and *Prostanthera lasianthos* which is so easy to take from cuttings, and *Dicksonia antarctica* which was photographed at Montezuma falls. So plenty of ideas to take home!

A magical talk for a wet evening!

### Leinster Region

*Grottoes and Shell Houses in 18th Century Ireland and England* Lecture by Gerald and Margaret Hull, NBG Glasnevin, January 12th 2019, 2.30pm  
Report by Stephen Butler



Shell House, Photos: Ali Rochford

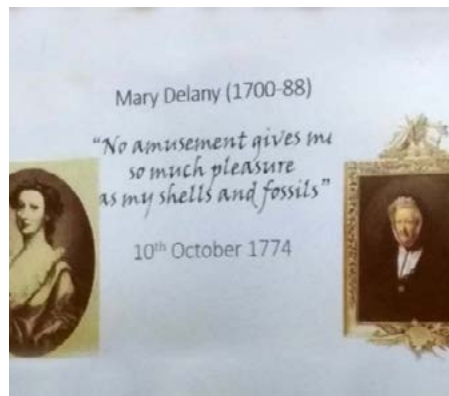
How many times when visiting a garden is it a novel aspect that stays in the memory – the odd plant, or the unusual building? Grottoes, often built around a natural spring, made to look 'natural', and well hidden among vegetation, often have an endearing charm. A shell house by comparison is more usually a small building, of distinctive shape, and decorated with sea shells, though one used thousands of

snail shells instead. The degree of decoration can vary, from simple lines or features, to a full wall and ceiling covering. Time consuming to make, expensive now to maintain and restore, they are always going to be a rarity, and with a most appealing appearance.

Gerald and Margaret, both of whom spoke – and Gerald did the poetry – have extensively travelled Ireland and Britain, researching and photographing shell houses especially. The lecture focussed mainly on the work of Mary Delaney 1700-1788, a noted English botanical artist famous for her ‘flower mosaics’ (d couverte) using coloured paper, and a remarkable woman indeed, who lived for many years at Delville House (now demolished) in Glasnevin, Dublin. Her interest in sea shells started as a daily escape at age 17, as her marriage was arranged to 60 year old Alexander Pendarves MP, and they lived at Roscrow Castle near Falmouth, Cornwall, for 4 years until he died.

With a natural artistic ability, the shells became an inspiration, and she started making ‘swales’, a gentle line of shells across a fireplace, for instance. This developed in time to fully covering walls and ceilings in complicated patterns and designs. Commitment was intense, one shell house took 7 years to finish. The pictures showed the detail, complexity,

and charm of the shell decorations, especially when the panel shown was maybe 18 inches square, with maybe 200 shells used ... but it was part of a ceiling of 100 such squares. Amazing patience and attention to detail needed. Of the examples shown, Carton House in Kildare, made with not just shells, but tufa, corals, ceramic eggs and a remarkable pine cone feature was noted as well preserved, but more needed. Curraghmore House in Waterford shell house was made in 1754 by Catherine Countess of Tyrone, by ‘her proper hand’ and it took her 261 days. The speakers’ said this is the best example in Europe of a shell house, with a unique trefoil design, with many exotic tropical shells – Catherine apparently asked Waterford’s ships’ captains to bring her back shells from their worldwide travels.



Portraits of Mary Delaney,  
Photo: Ali Rochford

The speaker’s interest was first stirred when they saw the shell house at Ballymaloe, a modern take on the idea, using left over oysters and mussel shells from the cookery school. Work continues in other gardens too, with some wonderful designs of animals or birds in flight. There are two very big differences nowadays though. Firstly, shell artists no longer need to boil animal hooves and pig’s blood to make adhesive (praise be!). Secondly, shell collection is now very strictly controlled as many of the original inhabitants are at risk, and are listed as endangered, no trade allowed.

This was a thoroughly enjoyable and informative lecture, with 75 people attending, and a keen

interest in the recently published books by the speakers.

## Northern Region

Report by Maeve Bell

There was a full house for the talk by Bob Brown in Antrim Old Courthouse on 21st March. Called My 30 Best Plants, Bob described plants from *Anisodonta* ‘El Royo’ through *Helleborus* ‘Anna’s Red’ to *Yucca rostrata* in his usual entertaining and forthright manner. Membership Secretary Nichola Monk was kept busy with two new members joining on the night and another five due via PayPal.

Bob Brown (centre) with Moyra and Bill McCandless who kindly hosted a visit by him to their garden ahead of the lecture.



## Book Review: Field of Dreams

Mary Montaut

Bob Salisbury, *Field of Dreams, How We Transformed a Rural Desert into a Thriving Wildlife Garden*, 2018, Blackstaff Press, ISBN 978 1 78073 1728

The subtitle of this book gives a good indication of its contents, but it does not really tell you what an enjoyable read it is. The author is forthright and frank in his approach, with refreshing candour about the problems and failures of the enterprise, as well as giving voice to the great satisfaction which the *Field of Dreams* brought to him and his family. *The Field* of the title is in Co. Tyrone, and the author and his wife bought the land specifically in order to fulfill their ambition of creating a wild life garden. Before moving to Ireland, they had already created a wild life garden in Nottinghamshire, in England, and so they brought with them a good deal of experience in managing the process of 'transforming' the land, from a 'rural desert' into a habitat which would actually attract back the wild life.

The book is written in an entertaining and lively style, and Bob Salisbury enjoys nothing better than telling a tale against himself. The story of his 'full sniper camouflage suit' actually made me laugh out loud: this extraordinary costume enabled him to watch the shyest creatures, and

acted as a kind of portable hide, 'with all parts covered in dozens of strips of camouflage material sewn onto the base cloth.' It is very hot inside this suit, and he nods off while waiting for an opportunity to photograph the rabbits and deer. He is rudely awakened by wet dollops of slurry, being applied to the land by a local farmer. The tale of how he got home in that state is told with wry appreciation for all the locals who, already believing him to be a bit mad, had their suspicions confirmed by the outlandish costume and appalling smell. He is every bit as critical of his new neighbours as they are of him: 'Getting used to the Northern Ireland accent had been tricky from the beginning, and I am sure local people had similar difficulty understanding everything I said. The breakthrough came when one local wag said, 'It's easy, Bob - at least in Belfast, all you have to remember is the phrase 'I box with my hand.' Substitute 'o' for the 'a' till it becomes 'I bax with my hond' and you have it. Mind you, that solution won't work in Tyrone or Fermanagh!' The cultural environment in which he finds himself is explored with as great relish and interest as the natural environment.

However, the main purpose of the book is clearly to encourage greater awareness of the wild fauna and flora and appreciation of how much they

need to be protected. 'These days, grain is usually sown in autumn and the growing crops kept weed free by applications of herbicides. The weedy margins of years ago were rich in insect life, and essential for butterflies, bees and especially birds - like the grey partridge, which was once common in Tyrone but has long since disappeared...' The difficulties of making a wild life garden are explored sympathetically, but the direction is absolutely clear - no matter how difficult it may be, this kind of 'gardening' is most important to the health of the environment. Again, he likes to tell a tale to point a moral: he recalls talking with a local farmer in Nottinghamshire who 'sprayed regularly and one day I asked him if it was wise to drench the crops a few days before they went to market. His answer changed our thinking entirely: 'Most sprays are systemic and soak into the vegetables.' 'So you can't wash them off?' 'No.' 'Do you eat the vegetables you grow?' 'Not the ones in the field. We grow our own organics in a plot behind the house.'

I very much enjoyed this book. It is really a very frank and engaging account of a long, difficult and altogether admirable process, and a type of gardening which is becoming more talked-about if not more practised. In a typically instructive chapter on 'The Wild Garden' he warns about the glib approach of many writers on the subject who say: 'Buy wild

flower seed mixes that suit your geographical location and soil type.' He comments: 'Sensible - but wild flower seed is very expensive.' That seems to me to be a really helpful observation, and he goes on to remark on the large area he was hoping to plant up which precluded buying such seed. Similarly useful, I believe, is the pragmatic approach to the land itself. It was pretty damp and waterlogged, and therefore the Salisburys created a lake and put in sufficient land drains to ensure that this would work. They visited many local gardens, prospecting not just for plants but also to see what hard landscape solutions were effective. They were also building a house for themselves, and wanted a garden around it they could sit in; 'One visiting gardener surprised me when he said, 'I've counted eighteen seats around your garden - was that deliberate?' 'Yes,' I said, 'It's what this kind of garden should be about. Taking time to look and listen and it helps if there are places to sit.' He nodded in agreement and immediately sat down on the nearest bench!

This is by no means a heavy read, but you will find yourself learning a great deal from Bob Salisbury's experience, and I think you will enjoy reading about it, even if you never leave a dandelion in your lawn at all.



## David Gilliland 1932 - 2019

Reg Maxwell

Anyone who had the privilege of knowing David would have been taken by his knowledge of trees, and of Irish and international gardens with their collections and people. His own arboretum at his historic home, Brook Hall with its associations with the 1689 Siege of Derry, had a fine collection of trees and also of rhododendrons, a group that he loved. It was a pleasure and an education not only to be taken round but to be with him when visiting other places. He travelled to see arborvitae in their native habitat and could enlighten you on how species grew and perform. It was always a pleasure to discuss specific plants; one I will always remember is *Saxegothaea conspicua*, or Prince Albert's yew, which he grew and had seen in its native habitat. For a number of years he held a collection of *Escallonia* of Irish connection. His photographic skills were to be admired; he had a superb collection of natural landscapes taken on his expeditions and could bring the picture to life when explaining what he had experienced. From the late 1980s he was a member of the NI Heritage

Gardens Committee (NIHGC) and its Chair from 1991. He was a keen supporter, guiding the committee in running its conferences for over twenty years and in the publication of the books about the Donard and Daisy Hill nurseries by Charles Nelson. As a solicitor, David had a keen eye and sharp mind, invaluable qualities for any committee and especially for me as Treasurer of the NIHGC. This quality of observation also came through when studying plants as he could see the detail for identification of species or variety; to work with him discussing a particular species was always enlightening.

He had many friends in the International Dendrology Society, in the Irish Garden Plant Society of which he was a long-standing member, and other societies. He will be missed but for those of us that knew him we are the richer for it.

[Note: Reg Maxwell is the former Assistant Director of Belfast Parks, a gardening consultant, broadcaster and International Rose Judge.]

## Dates for Your Diary

**Saturday 18th May 2019 10.30am**

Irish Garden Plant Society, Annual General Meeting  
Minella Hotel, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary

**Northern Region**

NB: All visits are restricted to Members and their Personal Guests

**Saturday 11th May 2019, 2.00pm - 4.00pm**

Lady Anthea Forde  
Seaforde Estate and Garden  
Seaforde, Co. Down  
Guided tour by the owners

NB The cafe will be open both before and after the visit

**Saturday 1st June 2019, 2.00pm - 4.00pm**

Old Balloo House and Barn  
15 - 17 Comber Road  
Killinchy, Co. Down

**Thursday 27th June 2019, 7.00pm - 9.00pm**

Belfast Botanic Gardens  
Tropical Ravine & Palm House, Belfast  
Refreshments will be provided. Pre-booking required.  
See website for details.

**Saturday 31st August 2019, 2.00pm - 4.00pm**

Terry and Jenny Irwin  
10A Cairnburn Road  
Belfast BT4 2HR

**Saturday 28th September 2019**

Autumn Plant Sale  
Rowallane (National Trust) Gardens  
Saintfield, Co. Down

**Thursday 24th October 2019, 7.30pm**

Lecture: Shirley Lanigan (Journalist & author of *The Open Gardens of Ireland* and other garden guide books)  
 Adventures on the Road - Two Decades of Encounters with Gardeners and Their Gardens' Old Courthouse, Antrim

**Wednesday 4th December 2019, 7.30pm**

Lecture: T.J. Maher (Artist and Owner of Patthana Garden, Co. Wicklow) 'How to get the most from the Smaller Garden'  
 Malone House, Barnett Demesne, Belfast

**Saturday 15th February 2020, 2.30pm**

Joint Lecture with Alpine Garden Society  
 Derry Watkins of Special Plants, Wiltshire  
 St Bride's Hall  
 Derryvolgie Avenue, Malone Road, Belfast  
 (plants for sale)

**Thursday 26th March 2020, 7.30pm**

Lecture: Carl Wright (Owner, Designer and Builder of Caher Bridge Garden, Fanore, Co. Clare)  
 'Collecting Plants for a Better Garden'  
 Old Courthouse, Antrim

**Munster Region**

May: visit to Annesgrove Gardens (Further details tba)

**Saturday June 15th 2019**

Ballycommane Gardens, Durrus, Co. Cork. Time to be confirmed.  
 The outing includes lunch and garden visit.

**Tuesday 3rd September 2019**

Lecture: Carl Wright (Caher Bridge Garden, Fanore, Co. Clare)  
 Time to be confirmed.

## Dates for Your Diary

**Leinster Region****Saturday 22nd June 2019, 12 noon - 4pm**

Summer Lunch  
 Rosy May's Garden, Slane, Co. Meath  
 Booking essential. See website for details

**Saturday 19th October 2019, 11am - 1pm**

Plant Sale  
 Guardian Angels Church Pastoral Centre  
 Newtown Park Avenue, Blacrock, Co Dublin

## IRISH GARDEN PLANT SOCIETY

C/O: National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin 9

### Contact Us:

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