

Irish Garden Plant Society

Newsletter - April 2024

Issue 161

Irish Garden Plant Society

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Copy for the September issue as soon as possible please and no later than **25 August**.

Cover:

***Dianthus* 'Chomley Farran'** courtesy of Stephen Butler.
Grateful thanks to our horticultural adviser Brendan Sayers, our copy-editor Patricia Carroll, photo editor Adrian Bell and the background team of Andrew Gee, Adrian Walsh and Sara Whelan for their assistance.

Welcome

What is heritage? UNESCO, which grants heritage status to outstanding sites and structures around the world, defines it as 'our legacy from the past, what we live with today and what we pass on to future generations'.

Here on our island we are fortunate in being able to enjoy a rich legacy of plants and gardens and it is essential we play our part in passing them on to future generations. This is precisely why the IGPS was set up over forty years ago. This issue features some of our heritage plants ranging from a stunning carnation, *Dianthus* 'Chomley Farran', to the newly named *Hydrangea robusta* 'Pakenham's Prize'.

While most of our gardens might not have room for Thomas Pakenham's towering hydrangea, all of us can grow an Irish primrose, a daffodil, a heather or a rose and, just as importantly, we can share a bulb, a division or a cutting with a friend and ensure that there is a legacy to pass on to the next generation. Even better, we can start right away.

The Society has around 600 members but does not employ any staff; everything is done by a magnificent band of volunteers. Right now we are looking for more people to come and help. Could you spare a little time to come and join us? Perhaps helping with organising garden visits, meeting and greeting

at lectures, searching for, growing and recording Irish Heritage Plants, setting up spreadsheets, e.g. for the annual seed list, providing IT expertise, joining me to help compile and edit the Newsletter – all of these will help to ensure that our Society functions smoothly, that members have an enjoyable experience and, above all, that our horticultural and gardening heritage is secured.

Wishing you a wonderful summer of gardening.

Maeve

Maeve Bell, Editor
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A Note from the Chair

The IGPS website attracts interest from far and near. Andrew Lanoe, who maintains the National Collection of Nerines held by Plant Heritage Guernsey, contacted us via the website. He had read about Miss Doris Findlater and her Nerine cultivars in *Moorea*, Vol. 7 and asked if this information could be added to their database of more than 3,000 cultivars available on the Nerine and Amaryllid Society's website. The Society was happy to oblige.

While the IGPS website may look OK and functions most of the time, those who know websites tell me that it is 'creaking' and we must invest in a new one. This will entail using some of the reserve fund held by the Society.

While proposals from several web designers are being examined, the Committee is keen to hear from members. What would you like to see on the Society's website? Suggestions welcome. If you have a particular knowledge of websites, could you become our web editor or join others working on the Society's social media?



The Society could not undertake its range of activities without the input of members on its committees and groups. Our thanks go to Julie Holmes and Heather Farmer for their work on the Northern sub-committee and to Marie Curran, the former web editor, who have recently stood down.

Dave Victory and Diane Sprules have joined the Leinster and Northern sub-committees respectively and Rob Evans is now on the Northern region's plant sale team. Please remember our plant sales when lifting or dividing plants. They are scheduled for Sunday 20 October in Dublin and in the Northern region on a date to be confirmed.

As well as the AGM weekend in Co. Down in May, visits to gardens in Dublin, Meath, Kilkenny, Waterford and Wexford are planned for the late spring and summer. I hope that you can attend at least some of them. I look forward to meeting many of you in the coming months.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary". The script is cursive and elegant.

Mary Forrest, Chairman

The controversial Mr Robinson

by Doreen Wilson



Curraghmore

These days we are exhorted to plant 'wild flowers', create 'wild flower meadows', encourage 'wildlife' and even consider 'rewilding' our garden. But there is nothing new about this, and one of the earliest gardeners to put this concept into words was William Robinson (1838–1935) in his book *The Wild Garden*, first published in 1870. Robinson was an interesting and controversial figure during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; this article will examine more closely his ideas on 'wild gardening' and will discuss whether there is any value in incorporating some of these ideas into our own garden nowadays.

Robinson, who is often referred to as 'Ireland's greatest contribution to horticulture', was born in Co. Laois

on 15 July 1838. Little is known about his early life and Robinson himself was reticent about details of his life in Ireland. However, it is known that his early gardening experience was at Curraghmore, the magnificent estate of the Marquis of Waterford. With its formal gardens and parterres, pleasure grounds, lake and walled garden, Robinson would have gained considerable insight into the range of horticultural activities required to maintain the high standards of an important estate.

When Robinson published his book, *The English Flower Garden*, in 1883, he sent a signed copy to the head gardener at Curraghmore 'for the use of the young men in the bothy', stating that he had once lived in

the bothy himself. If Robinson had been at Curraghmore in the early 1850s, he would have had first-hand knowledge of the work of the renowned Irish landscaper James Fraser (1775–1862). Lady Waterford, who had been brought up in Paris, had commissioned Fraser to lay out the gardens at Curraghmore in the French style, with a four-panel parterre around a central circular fountain. Was this the beginning of Robinson's distaste for formality?



Formality at Curraghmore

The usual career pathway for a nineteenth-century gardener would be as a garden boy, before proceeding to apprentice gardener and then a journeyman. A journeyman moved from one garden to another, hoping to better himself until eventually becoming a head gardener or at least a foreman. Where or for how long Robinson scaled these levels is unknown, until he was offered a post at the modest estate of the Revd Sir Hunt Johnston-Walsh, vicar of Stradbally, Ballykilcavan, Co. Laois. Sir Hunt was a passionate gardener: he had a tunnel constructed underneath the roadway that divided his house and pleasure garden from his walled garden and his glasshouses were filled with exotics.

Existing accounts tell of Robinson leaving Ballykilcavan in 1861 after a bitter argument with his employer and making his way to the Royal Botanic Gardens at Glasnevin in Dublin. Once there, Robinson obtained a letter of introduction from David Moore, the curator, and made his way to the Royal Botanic Society's garden at Regent's Park in London. It is difficult to reconcile these accounts of Robinson's early career with the apparent ease with which he was employed at Regent's Park and quickly promoted.

At the Royal Botanic Society's garden, Robinson's mentor was Robert Marnock (1800–89), a Scottish horticulturalist who had won the commission to design the new garden at Regent's Park. Robinson was appointed foreman of the herbaceous section, but, not being satisfied with the range of plants in the garden, he received permission and money in 1863 to undertake a month-long tour of the botanic gardens of Britain and Ireland. He managed to procure many plants for the Society's garden in London, and, importantly for him personally, to develop a network of gardeners and landscapers whom he could call on in the future. An account of his tour was published in the *Gardeners' Chronicle*: his first venture into journalism and the start of a long career of writing and publishing.

By June 1866 Robinson had resigned from the Royal Botanic Society's garden 'to devote himself to the study of our Great Gardens and to the Literature of Horticulture for a year or two'. This he undertook by learning French and going to live in France for seven months, where he studied horticultural practices, visited gardens and nurseries and attended the International Exhibition in Paris.

His accounts of these visits, published in *The Times* and the British horticultural press, were generally scathing and elicited criticism from his readers. It was the start of a belligerent and sometimes contradictory relationship with his contemporaries that lasted a lifetime. As Brent Elliott, an authority on Victorian gardens and gardening, states: 'Robinson had developed a reputation as a truculent upstart, in which role he continued until he became a truculent authority figure.' Robinson was not the only figure questioning British garden style. There were already signs of reaction against the excesses of ornamentation in Victorian gardening. John Ruskin, William Morris and others were leading a social, moral and aesthetic movement against the symbols of an industrial age that would eventually become the Arts and Crafts movement. Ruskin was the Slade Professor of Art at Oxford, but that did not hinder him from pronouncing his dislike of the geometric flower garden: 'the flower garden is an ugly thing; even when best managed it is an assembly of unfortunate beings,

pampered and bloated above their natural size, stewed and heated into unnatural growth'. Ruskin's writing had a profound influence on Robinson, confirming his views on not just the dislike of plants closely bedded together in blobs of colour, but the evil of thoughtless monotony of labour on the part of the gardener.

By April 1866 Robinson had been elected a fellow of the Linnean Society of London and the status of the signatories on his letter of recommendation illustrates how he had become involved with some of the best-known public figures in the world of science and botany. They included, amongst others, Charles Darwin, James Veitch of the renowned firm of Veitch Nurseries and Thomas Moore, the curator of the Chelsea Physic Garden.

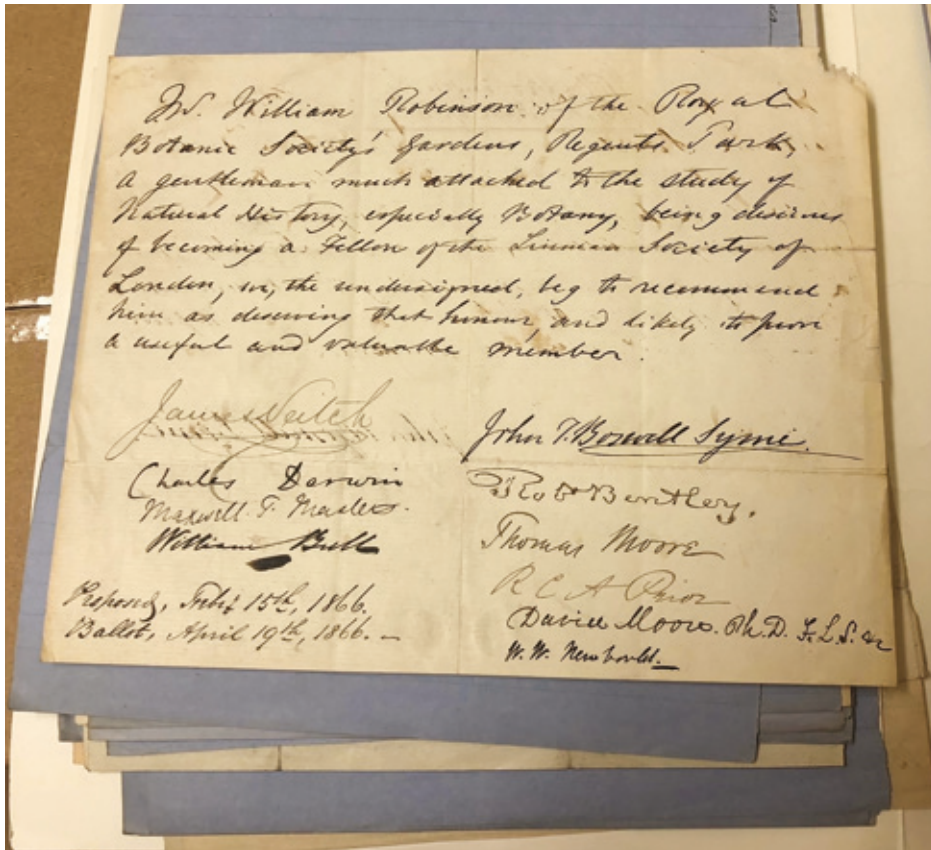
Robinson was above all else an editor and publisher. Through his publications and magazines, most notably *The Garden* (1871–1927) and *Gardening Illustrated* (1883–1954), he exerted a great influence on English gardening practice during the early part of the twentieth century. But not everyone applauded Robinson's ideas on planting style.

Robinson's concept of the wild garden was 'the placing of perfectly hardy exotic plants under conditions where they will thrive without further care'. This maxim applied to the rock garden, the woodland garden and the herbaceous border and in many respects it is how the majority of gardeners in Ireland garden today.

Ireland is ideally suited to growing hardy exotics. With its maritime climate and acidic soils it was particularly suited to the introduction of conifers, bamboos, ferns and of course rhododendrons and camellias. So many new plants flooded into Britain and Ireland during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that the line between 'native' and 'exotic' has become blurred. Many of the 'exotics' have become accepted as 'local'; think of phlox, crocosmia, dahlias and thousands of others. Mount Usher is often quoted as

one of the best examples of a Robinsonian garden in Ireland, but there are many others; perhaps we all garden in a Robinsonian manner without being aware we are following any particular style.

We have shrub borders that contain rhododendrons alongside conifers underplanted with herbaceous, bulbs and grasses. As we wander around a garden we may or may not like a particular arrangement, but, then, that is what makes garden visiting so interesting.



Meet the gardener – Ali Rochford

What do you do?

I've been a freelance garden writer for almost ten years now and during that time I have enjoyed producing copy on all sorts of garden-related topics. Writing mostly for the *Business Post* as a garden columnist, some of the highlights have been chatting with Helen Dillon about her decision to leave her world-renowned Ranelagh garden and meeting Diarmuid Gavin at his home to discuss his garden and what inspires him.

What I love most about writing is having the opportunity to tell people's stories – seeing what motivates them to create gardens and what their gardens mean to them. I admire the gardeners who take on huge spaces almost single-

handedly: people like Seamus O'Donnell in Donegal, Carl Wright in the Burren and Paul Brady, who is restoring Clondeglass. It is one thing to have a great garden in a small space, but a larger garden takes dedication and commitment that are not always recognised. I love gardens that have developed over years and have real heart and soul, and a story all of their own.

Do you have early memories of gardening?

I've had an appreciation for plants since I was a child. I developed a love of wildflowers from wandering around fields with my wildflower book at my grandmother's farm near Trim, Co. Meath, discovering self-heal, cowslips and the bright orange fruiting spadix of lords-and-ladies.



I collected acorns from a huge oak tree in a neighbouring field and was amazed when they germinated. I'm drawn to oak trees because of the huge diversity of species they support, all while being so dignified and mighty.

What are your favourite plants?

I love most plants, but my favourites are roses, ferns and shrubs, plus ornamentals that are good for wildlife and cut flowers. More recently I find I am drawn to wild flowers and herbs. I support the rewilding movement, but I think it is misguided in downplaying the role gardens can play in supporting nature. With the right attitude, our gardens have the potential to bring us closer to nature and open up a world beyond plants that is even more full of wonder and enjoyment.

How did you get started in your career?

I studied languages in college; it was a toss-up between languages and science, but languages – French and Spanish – won. I started out in the aviation business, working for American Airlines in Dublin. One advantage was the travel concessions, the highlight of which was travelling to Costa Rica and seeing the Monteverde cloud forest. While my children were small and I was at home with them I took the opportunity to get a qualification in organic horticulture from the Organic College in Limerick by distance learning. I then worked in a garden shop and florist's, and volunteered to help plant a show garden designed by Stephen Dennis

at the Tatton Park Flower Show in England in 2012. It was fascinating to see how the show garden process works and to have all of those fabulous plants to play with. The garden was awarded a Silver Gilt Medal. We possibly planted it too densely, as, at the time, having any bare soil visible in show gardens was frowned upon. Thankfully that has changed and a naturalistic planting style is now *de rigueur*.



When and why did you join the IGPS?

I joined the IGPS around 15 years ago, prompted by Paddy Tobin. I was interested in visiting private gardens and learning about Irish heritage plants. I enjoyed being involved with the committees and working on the e-bulletins. Every year I look forward to choosing seeds from the seed list; I have a large *Furcraea* grown from a seed list bulbil a few years ago and I'm hoping it will flower this year. Another prized plant is *Agapanthus* 'Patent Blue', a stunning Gary Dunlop introduction, which I won during a very enjoyable AGM weekend held in Newcastle, Co. Down.

A new hydrangea at Tullynally Castle

by Seamus O'Brien

For anyone passionate about all things dendrological, Tullynally Castle in Co. Westmeath is a marvellous place to spend a day, particularly if your guide is the current custodian, Thomas Pakenham. Thomas (who turns 91 this year) carries on a tradition of tree planting begun by his ancestors, the various Earls of Longford.

Tullynally Castle has seen many incarnations over the centuries. The estate was formed in Cromwellian times when an earlier Thomas Pakenham built a plain, square 'plantation house'. By the early eighteenth century a vast formal garden, replete with canals, basins and avenues of trees, embellished the slopes beneath the house.

In 1740 Thomas Pakenham's grandson married a local heiress and with this newly acquired fortune they embarked on a series of 'improvements'; the house was enlarged and the old formal gardens were swept away, to be replaced with a more natural romantic landscape, following the fashion of the time. Later generations turned what was a Georgian house into the sprawling Gothic castle we see today.



The present Thomas inherited Tullynally in 1961 following the death of his uncle. A prolific author, Thomas had already written books on subjects ranging from the 1798 rebellion to the Boer War before turning his attention to trees. It's no wonder he was inspired; within the demesne at Tullynally are some of the tallest oaks in Ireland and mammoth beech trees that are among the fattest-boled in Europe. His *Meeting with Remarkable Trees* became an international best-seller. Translated into several languages, it put many Irish giants into the spotlight, including 'The Squire's walking stick', the tallest oak (*Quercus robur*) in the Republic of Ireland at a remarkable 34m high.

Thomas has travelled widely to see plants in their native haunts. His tastes are eclectic and this is reflected in his garden at Tullynally. I remember travelling in south-east Tibet in the autumn of 1997 and visiting Pasam Tso, a remarkable turquoise lake with a tiny island, on which was a Buddhist monastery. I was invited to sign the visitors' book and the last names before mine were those of Thomas Pakenham and Patrick Forde of Seaforde in Co. Down. Our first meeting occurred when I was leading a group in Yunnan, western China, and got a call from the Director of Kunming Botanical Gardens to say he was meeting another botanical group that evening and would we like to come for dinner!

Many years ago, Thomas travelled on an expedition to Yunnan and Sichuan led by Martyn Rix from the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. In the mountains a few hours west of Chengdu, the provincial capital of Sichuan, Thomas collected seeds of a rather remarkable big-leaved *Hydrangea*. Seedlings were planted on the Forest Walk at Tullynally; among the many other exotics from Sichuan, Yunnan and Tibet, this *Hydrangea* is perhaps the most striking, especially when seen in flower.

Recently identified as *Hydrangea robusta*, this species was described from material collected by William Griffith in Bhutan during the 1830s and from Joseph Hooker's travels in Sikkim during the late 1840s.

Aptly named, *Hydrangea robusta* has long remained rare in gardens and the form raised at Tullynally is particularly fine, both in terms of foliage and flower. At Tullynally it forms 3–4m-tall mounds, covered with bold, ovate, densely strigose leaves; protruding through the leaves in summer are enormous lax corymbs bearing an outer layer of large, sterile flowers with showy white sepals surrounding masses of purple-blue fertile flowers.

Experts in both Britain and Ireland have recognised the Tullynally plant as an exceptionally good form of this striking species and it deserves a cultivar name to distinguish it, so this latest Irish Heritage Plant is to be called *Hydrangea robusta* 'Pakenham's Prize', thus commemorating Ireland's greatest tree champion, in whose garden it was first raised.



The arboreal delights of Abbeyleix

by Eileen Gahan



Melliodendron xylocarpum

The tree collection at Abbeyleix House and Farm brought to life species that I had previously seen only in books, and began my fascination with woody plants. Under previous ownership the collection was managed by John Anderson, Keeper of the Gardens, Windsor Great Park, who put his stamp on the garden through the planting of a unique Chinese collection. The highlight of the collection is probably the exquisite *Melliodendron xylocarpum*. Described by the notable plantsman Maurice Foster of White House Farm Arboretum as one of the 'finest of recent woody plant introductions', I wholeheartedly agree.

In late spring each blush-pink bud opens to reveal elegant star-shaped blooms, ranging from pure white to the softest hues of pale pink, suspended from bare stems like

celestial ornaments. This species was first described in 1922 by Austrian botanist Handel Mazzetti, who became stranded in China following the outbreak of World War I, leading to five years of plant collection across Yunnan, southern Sichuan, Guizhou and Hunan. Despite this, *M. xylocarpum* didn't reach the Western world until 1994; by 1996 Hillier Nurseries had begun propagation. It still stands as a rare gem in Irish botanical collections, with other specimens found at Glasnevin and Castlewellan.

As interest in this species continues to grow, I think we can look forward to seeing it planted more widely, enriching gardens with its timeless elegance.

On the other side of the wall from the *Melliodendron* and in stark contrast stands *Hemiptelea davidii*, the Thorn-elm. This small tree demands attention with its imposing 5-inch [13-cm] thorns protruding from the deeply fissured trunk and branches. These thorns serve as a defence mechanism against herbivores, enhancing the tree's striking appearance against the softer elements of the garden. It is a memorable specimen, adding character to any garden, though threatening to impale anyone who ventures too close.

Deeper into the estate, by the tranquil setting of the lake, several *Pterocarya* spp. grace the landscape. Their long, pendulous female catkins produce small, pale, winged nutlets. These nutlets emit a soft lime-green glow as sunlight filters through the canopy above, creating a mesmerising display as they skim the surface of the lake. Among them, *Pterocarya stenoptera*, the Chinese wingnut, makes a handsome tree, standing proud on the island. It features an unusual, fully winged rachis, unlike any other within its genus.

Beside it stands the polygamous form of *Populus lasiocarpa*, the Chinese necklace poplar, native to the humid forests of central China. The species boasts large, glossy heart-shaped leaves and almost pendant yellow-green catkins resembling necklaces draped gracefully from the branches. Discovered by Augustine Henry in 1888 and introduced by E. H. Wilson in 1900, this species is typically dioecious. However, one of the plants introduced by Wilson exhibited polygamous catkins, featuring both male and female flowers along the same inflorescence. This unique form was propagated and distributed by Veitch Nurseries and has since become the most widely distributed form within ornamental horticulture.

One cannot discuss the trees of Abbeyleix House and Farm without acknowledging the Great Ancient Oak.

This magnificent *Quercus robur*, believed to be the oldest oak in Ireland at between nine hundred and a thousand years old, stands as a monument to Ireland's diminishing native oak woodland. Set amongst a backdrop of bluebells, its colossal size and fully hollow trunk make it a majestic figure, evoking a deep sense of wonder in the observer.



Photo courtesy of Carlo D. J. Ribeiro

I have a great appreciation for the time I got to work amongst the remarkable collection at Abbeyleix House over the past two summers. As I eagerly anticipate my coming internship at the wonderful J. C. Raulston Arboretum in North Carolina, I look forward to encountering all my old favourites within its enormous collection of over 6,496 different taxa. It promises to be a fantastic adventure, immersing me completely in the captivating world of woody plant cultivation. I hope that I will return with a whole new array of plants to discuss and share with fellow IGPS members.

Homecoming for a Waterford daffodil

by Paddy Tobin



Narcissus 'Limerick'

Lionel and Helen (Meg) Richardson were breeders of daffodils, based at Prospect House, Kilcohan, in Waterford City. The house still stands, now surrounded by modern housing estates, which also cover what was previously the Richardsons' farmland (they kept Jersey cows for milk and grew tomatoes commercially) and the family name is given to a number of city streets: Richardson's Folly (commonly called 'The Folly'), Richardsons' Meadow and Richardson's Square.

Lionel Richardson was an enthusiastic exhibitor of daffodils and enjoyed extraordinary success. The first show at which he exhibited was the RHSI Show in Dublin in 1915,

where he won the Lord Ardilaun Cup for a display of fifty varieties. These shows are occasions when the recognised experts bestow awards, the highest being the Gold Medal, on daffodils of outstanding quality and the Richardsons were awarded 64 Gold Medals over the course of their careers. There were many other awards; First Class Certificates became almost commonplace, though, of course, they were far from being that, as they were a recognition of a daffodil breeder achieving an admirably high standard. Lionel Richardson was invited to be a Vice-President of the Royal Horticultural Society (London) and was awarded its Veitch Memorial Medal in recognition of his immense contribution to horticulture.

The Richardsons were known for the depth of orange and red in the cups of their daffodils, for their introduction of the first pink-trumpet daffodil in 1958 and also for the wonderful range of double-flowered daffodils they produced. Double daffodils have multiple trumpets within each other, giving the flower a very full appearance. Peculiarly, their first double occurred by accident. A chance seedling from a flower of *Narcissus* 'Mary Copeland' started their range of double daffodils, an example of great skill and good fortune! The Richardsons produced a Daffodil Catalogue from the 1920s through to the 1960s and sold worldwide – to North America, Great Britain, Europe and even to the home of bulb growing, Holland!

One of their most famous daffodils was *N.* 'Kingscourt', which was named for a town in Co. Cavan. To the uninitiated, it is simply a beautiful strong-growing yellow daffodil – nothing fancy, it would seem. However, 'Kingscourt' was the only daffodil ever to be voted 'Best Daffodil' and best in its class at the RHS Daffodil Show for ten consecutive years. It received the RHS Award of Garden Merit in 1963.

As in 'Kingscourt', the Richardsons often used place names to name new daffodil cultivars. There are 830 daffodil cultivars attributed to and registered by the Richardsons; it must have been a challenge to be inventive with each new selection so it is no surprise to read just how often they resorted to the use of place names. Many were of places close to home – Helvick, Ardmore, Carrickbeg; others a little further afield – Bandon, Bantry and Cashel, all Irish towns; Irish counties such as Roscommon, Sligo and Wexford; while others were quite exotic – Cape Horn, Casablanca and Congo.

Last year a friend, who knew of my interest in plants of Irish origin and knowing that one connected to such a famous daffodil breeder from my locality would be treasured, sent me bulbs of *Narcissus* 'Limerick'. It was a thrill to see it come into flower and it shows the strong colour in the cup for which the Richardson daffodils were well known. I hope 'Limerick' will live for a long time with me in Waterford; it will be treasured for its connection with the Richardsons and as a perennial reminder of the thoughtfulness of a kind gardening friend.

Do you grow either *Narcissus* 'Kingscourt' or *N.* 'Limerick'?
If so, please let Stephen Butler know by emailing him at
igps.heritageirishplants@gmail.com.

Remembering Keith Lamb at Woodfield

by Elizabeth Ross

The first time I met Keith Lamb he asked me if I had a garden; on explaining that I was making one, he got out his diary and told me to come to Woodfield for a few cuttings. I turned up at his door clutching half a dozen plastic bags in my hand. I left with the car windows open in order to fit in all the plants he gave me!



Woodfield was a magical place and visiting there was like taking a step back in time. Helen, his wife, made tea in a silver teapot as Keith made sure there was cake to eat. Weather permitting, we sat outside at the back of the house with a view of the dovecote and an unusual water pump. There was a plant container on the windowsill and I remember *Pleione* and *Iris reticulata* 'Katherine Hodgkin' growing there. Afterwards we always went on a tour of the gardens, Keith carrying his two-pronged fork in case he saw any dandelions.

The garden had a number of different areas to suit the wide variety of Keith's plants. On the side of the avenue, tall old beech trees sheltered spring bulbs: *Galanthus*, *Cyclamen*, dainty *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, hellebores and violets in blue, pink and white were just some of them. A semi-sheltered place behind the house had slipper orchids, saxifrages, *Corydalis*, *Erythronium* and *Leucojum*, while a selection of shrubs was underplanted with *Scilla allenii* (previously *x Chionoscilla allenii*) and daffodils. Going through the gate into the kennel yard, there was a wonderful specimen of *Myosotidium hortensia* in a little nook. After that came a small wood filled with ferns, blue poppies, several varieties of *Polygonatum* and *Hosta*, while a selection of low-growing flowers such as *Omphalodes cappadocica* 'Starry Eyes', *Lamium* 'Pink Nancy', *Epimedium* and *Trillium* carpeted the ground.

Underneath the back of the wall which separated the yard from the front of the house grew a double orange poppy with greyish lobed leaves. Keith said that he did not have a name for it, but I now see it advertised for sale under *Papaver rupifragum* 'Flore Pleno', Spanish poppy. On going through the gate

to the front, growing against the wall was *Prunus* 'Woodfield Cluster', which was raised by Keith himself. It flowers in early April, bearing pinkish-white flowers on bare stems followed by pale green leaves.

Keith delighted in telling the history of his plants and pointing out quirky things about them. He had a great sense of humour and, when showing non-gardening people around, loved to draw attention to plants like *Galanthus* 'Sharlockii' for its donkey ears, *Ranunculus* 'Brazen Hussy' with bright yellow flowers, the exotic, hooded purple-red flowers hiding under the leaves of *Asarum europaeum*, the mouse tails beneath *Arisarum proboscideum* and the 'lady in the bath' flowers of *Dicentra spectabilis*.

Some of his favourite plants were *Saxifraga* 'Lissadell', *Primula* 'Lady Greer', *Galanthus* 'Castlegar' and a scented *Corydalis* at the front door that he called 'Peaches and Cream'. He also liked to point out the large *Rosa multiflora* growing on the edge of the avenue. This came from Edmund Kelly's garden at Rosefield, Blackrock, Dublin, which is now the Blackrock Clinic. It flourishes here at my house, growing over a shed. The flowers have a lovely perfume and the pollen is very popular with bees, much to the delight of my

beekeeping son. I still grow some of his other plants and *Saxifraga* 'Lissadell' does well on a rockery in part sunshine. It does not flower every year, but that is mostly my fault. The flowers are white and carried on a stalk about 20 inches [50cm] tall. *Primula* 'Lady Greer' is a smallish plant and easy to grow. C. 'Peaches and Cream' is very hardy and sets seed that germinates easily. The flowers are cream and yellow and the lacy leaves don't usually die back in winter.

We went on a lot of plant-hunting trips and garden visits to the Botanic Gardens and areas where orchids or other interesting wild flowers grew. I particularly remember a visit to Mary Waldron's lovely garden and the search for a rare floating plant in a bog near her house. This was quite a distance from the car and some of the heaviest rain I have ever experienced fell on us. Mary had hot tea, towels and dry clothes waiting by the fire. Much to Keith's disappointment, we did not find the plant.

I have written the above account to the best of my recollection. Helen and Keith both had a deep faith, and the saying 'You are nearer God's heart in a garden than anywhere else on earth' comes to mind.

Keith Lamb was a founder and later an honorary member of the IGPS. He is particularly remembered for his work in collecting and saving Ireland's heritage apple varieties – see 'The Lamb Clarke Irish Historical Apple Collection', Issue 151. Does any member grow the *Saxifraga* 'Lissadell' with pure white flowers that matches Elizabeth's description? If so, please get in touch with Stephen Butler at igps.heritageplants@gmail.com.

Drop-dead gorgeous: *Dianthus* 'Chomley Farran'

by Stephen Butler



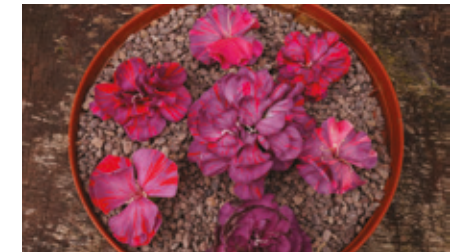
This border carnation, according to Charles Nelson's *A Heritage of Beauty*, was found as a sport on an unnamed seedling by Mr Chomley Farran in Dublin around 1975, meaning he had sown *Dianthus* seed and then noticed a 'sport', a natural spontaneous change, on the part of one seedling, which he then propagated by taking cuttings. That demonstrates three great qualities in a gardener – raising plants from seed, noticing a difference, and propagating!

I acquired *Dianthus* 'Chomley Farran' at an IGPS plant sale and planted it on a slightly raised bed where it grew well, liking the extra drainage. With a flowering height of about 350mm, the stems can flop, especially if rain makes the flowers sodden, but push in some twigs around the plant, big enough for support but light enough not to be noticed, and you will have a wonderful eye-catching display.

The flowers really are striking, a base colour of deep purple with bright red splashes of varying size and width. A stunner!

The flowers are summer only, but the blue-green leaves look good all year. Each individual plant may be short-lived, depending on whether it is happy in a well-drained fertile spot. Take cuttings in late summer, as they root easily. Keep one and pass the rest on! Keep it tidy by cutting back after flowering and surround it with other low-growing front-of-border delights, such as fashionable succulents, for more interest.

Cultivars seldom come true from seed and, to be named as the cultivar, should be propagated vegetatively. However I kept some 'Chomley Farran' seed and grew it on in the hope it might give rise to a new cultivar. Most were rubbish and quickly dumped ... but one may have possibilities!



Some plants were available at the autumn plant sale last year and it is intended to have more this October. If you already grow *Dianthus* 'Chomley Farran', please let Stephen Butler know at igps.heritageplants@gmail.com

Spending time with a pine

by Fionnuala Broughan



The author at work in Blarney Castle: photo courtesy of Bernard Van Giessen

Here's a hard question for any member of the IGPS: 'What is your one favourite plant?' No doubt that's too difficult a choice to make, so perhaps: 'What are your favourite three plants?' – the ones you couldn't do without in your garden? Now, imagine these plants portrayed in paint, graphite or coloured pencil. How would you like to see them on the page, in a frame?

This is what botanical artists do: create botanically accurate and aesthetically pleasing portraits of plants. In Ireland, we have a quietly vibrant botanical art scene and the Irish Society of Botanical Artists, with the support of the National Botanic Gardens, has nurtured this artists'

community for the last ten years, providing opportunities for both established artists and beginners to have their work exhibited and published. In one lovely collaboration, *Heritage Irish Plants, Plandaí Oidhreachta*, the IGPS was a partner in the project.

Other opportunities are also available to botanical artists, and to those who like to view botanical art, including the annual judged exhibition at Bloom in the Park, and the less-well-known 'Through the Artist's Eye' series of exhibitions that takes place every two to three years.

These originated in 2013, when Seamus O'Brien invited six artists to the National Botanic Gardens, Kilmacurragh, and asked them to generate a collection of work that could be referred to in the future, providing an artistic record of the garden at that time. The artists worked in the gardens over two years and in 2015 a very successful exhibition was held at the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin. From that positive beginning the idea developed into a moving exhibition, taking place in different notable gardens on the island of Ireland. In the succeeding years, Tourin Gardens, Burtown House Gardens and Birr Castle Demesne were all captured through the artist's eye.



This year the exhibition will be held in Blarney Castle Gardens and botanical artists, fine artists, sculptors and photographers have been working in the gardens since early 2023. The resulting exhibition will open on 28 August this year and run until the end of September.

I hope to have a plant portrait in the Blarney Castle exhibition. Trees are my first love and I was delighted to portray *Betula* 'White Light' in the Heritage Irish Plants exhibition in 2016 and the Carroll Oak in the Birr Castle Demesne exhibition in 2022.

In Blarney Castle Gardens I've chosen a much smaller, but in some ways more challenging, tree: it is *Pinus montezumae* 'Sheffield Park', a modest enough tree (it's still quite young), but a beautiful pine, its long, glaucous needles creating a silvery-green cloud that catches your eye as you walk through the pinetum. In 2023 I sat with the tree at different times: May, September and December, and at present I'm working in the studio, trying to capture some of its beauty while also grappling with its slight ungainliness!

I know other artists have been visiting the garden at Blarney over the last year, creating beautiful works of individual plants and of some of the lovely vistas throughout the gardens. IGPS members may wish to put a note in their diaries to visit the exhibition in September this year to see at first hand what artists have created in response to a beautiful setting filled with wonderful plants.

Watch out: pest about!

by Caro Skyrme

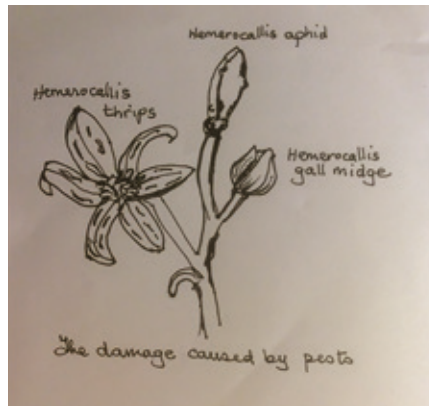
I have been growing *Hemerocallis* (more commonly known as day lilies) for over fifty years. There were a few in the herbaceous borders at my home in Co. Down when I was a child; they were considered quite exotic then and there were not nearly so many varieties on offer as there are today.



Hemerocallis 'Banbury Copper'

In 2021 I took on the National Collection of English hybridised Historic *Hemerocallis* (Brummitt, Coe and Randall cultivars: 1958–79) originally collected by Gerald and Mary Sinclair. The Sinclairs had the foresight to safeguard a fantastic selection of cultivars by these three mid-twentieth-century Englishmen by growing the plants at their Oxfordshire nursery. These lovely cultivars used to be considered mid- to late-season bloomers, but over the past two summers they have bloomed a little earlier than before

with the increased heat. I had never seen any sign of the dreaded gall midge (*Contarinia quinquenotata*) until last spring's very hot weather, which was followed by sudden heavy thundery rain and humidity. Usually by the time any of my *Hemerocallis* had formed buds the gall midge season had passed. However, one morning in late June I was stopped in my tracks as I removed the faded flowers; my heart sank on seeing a swollen, round ball of a bud. While every plant already had lovely flowers opening as normal and several healthy elongated buds, the midge had obviously arrived to infect the still-forming little buds.



The *Hemerocallis* gall midge is active between May and mid-July and as a rule lays its eggs in the tiny new buds, using its ovipositor. This results in the buds becoming compacted, bulbous and deformed.

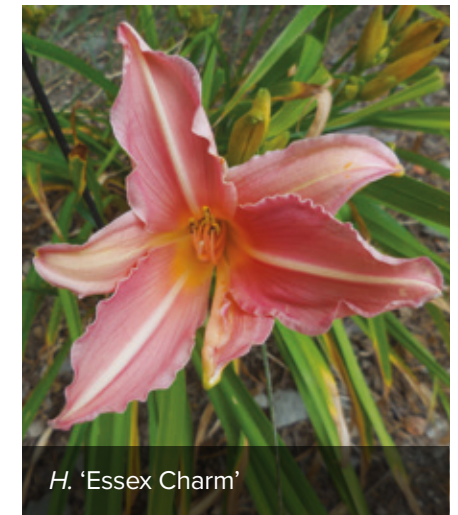
Sometimes they split at one side, as if the petals tried so hard to open that they burst. The larvae feed inside the buds and, although the infestation of gall midge doesn't kill the plant, it does deform and destroy the buds and consequently the blooms are ruined and will not open. If one carefully splits the deformed bud and looks inside, one can see tiny, white, wriggling maggots. Initially in denial and disbelief, I did this gingerly over a little pot, which I carry in the larger bucket for gathering the spent flower heads, just to check it was what I suspected. It was!

Do not allow these deformed buds to drop or lie around on the ground and do not put them into the compost heap. They will simply spread, multiply and come back in even greater numbers next year. I gather that they can form a cocoon beneath the soil, overwinter and re-emerge next spring.

The old way of dealing with them was to snap off the infected buds and put them into a plastic bag, seal it and put it into a bin. However, these days we don't want to add any plastic to our garden waste, so the latest tip is to put the buds into a suitable, loose-lidded tub and microwave it for 30–60 seconds to kill the maggots. Then bin the thoroughly 'cooked' buds. I use a recycled supermarket food container that I use again and again.

Luckily I have always deadheaded the plants every evening and usually in the morning as well. With well over one hundred plants to check and care for, the policy of daily deadheading has paid off. Being vigilant is the key to combating the gall midge (and indeed any other issues) by immediately detecting the first sign of infestation. Remove all the suspect buds and keep an eye on the others until you are sure there are no further infected buds.

My advice is to inform any local gardeners where they might also have the problem. It helps to have a concerted effort to eliminate the gall midge from the area, otherwise it will simply spread from garden to garden and reappear each spring. It takes vigilance but it is well worth the effort.



H. 'Essex Charm'

A gardener's eye

by Jane Powers

Every gardener has a plant that makes them happy.

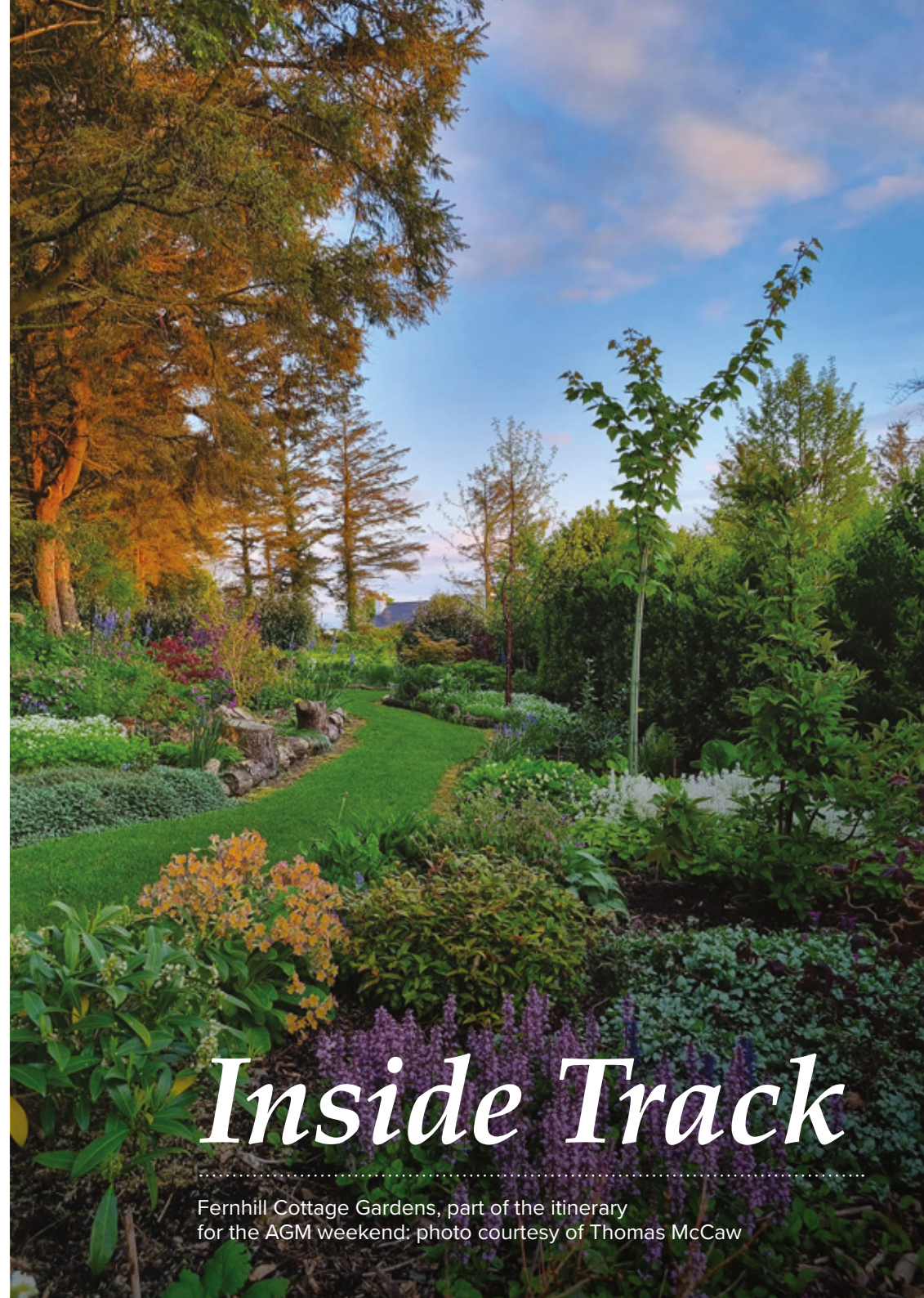
In my case, the one that makes me smile greets me each morning when I open the bedroom shutters. The clump of moss sits on the windowsill, a mini splotch of vegetation, no larger than the tip of my little finger. I first noticed it (smaller than a lentil) four years ago, and I've watched its slow expansion with something like maternal pride. It is the very common wall-screw moss, *Tortula muralis*; there's almost certainly some in your garden or on your house. In the wild, it lives on limestone outcrops, but it's also content on the cliff provided by my windowsill or your brick wall.

It is a perfect miniature landscape. Rising from the fabric of green leaves – each tipped with a near-invisible grey hair – are elegant sporophytes. A centimetre tall, they tower tenfold over the diminutive green sward, like tiny trees. In a few months they will release their spores, perhaps to colonise another

windowsill or wall. The leafy understorey, meanwhile, traps all kinds of minuscule matter blown on the breeze, and provides a diverse habitat for microscopic beings.

Robin Wall Kimmerer in *Gathering Moss: A Natural and Cultural History of Mosses* (2003) writes that a 'gram of moss from the forest floor, a piece about the size of a muffin, would harbour 150,000 protozoa, 132,000 tardigrades, 3,000 springtails, 800 rotifers, 500 nematodes, 400 mites, and 200 fly larvae'. While 'my' moss is just a crumb to her muffin and its urban habitat is harsher, I'm still confident that it supports a healthy, if unseen, population.

Mosses are everywhere, in woodlands and walls, on your greenhouse and pots. We have over 800 species, subspecies and varieties in Ireland. Recently I found a car window that yielded neat, linear plantations of *Bryum capillare* and *B. argenteum*. There is a moss for every situation.



Inside Track

Fernhill Cottage Gardens, part of the itinerary for the AGM weekend: photo courtesy of Thomas McCaw

42nd Annual General Meeting

Notice of the 42nd Annual General Meeting of the Irish Garden Plant Society to be held at Clondeboye Estate, Bangor, Co. Down, on Saturday 18 May 2024 at 10.30

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of AGM held on 20 May 2023 at Ardgillan Castle, Balbriggan
3. Matters arising (if any)
4. Chair's Report – to note the report
5. Treasurer's Report and Accounts for 2023/4 – to adopt the accounts
6. Amendment to the constitution – to add a new subsection under section 6 Finances of the Society as follows:
The IGPS Treasurer(s) are authorised to hold and use a debit card(s) for each of the IGPS current accounts. Any payments using such card(s) shall require written authorisation from the Chair.
7. Election of Officers and Committee Members: Vice Chair, Leinster representative, Munster representative, two Committee members
8. Discussion of any other business

The National Executive Committee 2023/4

Mary Forrest, Chair
Áine Máire Ní Mhurchú, Honorary Secretary
Nichola Monk, Membership Secretary
David Grayson, Honorary Treasurer
Dave Victory, co-opted Leinster representative
Billy McCone, Northern representative
Stephen Butler, Committee member and Plant Heritage representative
Rosie Campbell, Committee member
Vacant, Munster representative
Vacant, Committee member

Stephen Butler, having completed ten years on the National Executive Committee, now retires.

Nominations are sought for the following positions: Vice Chair, Leinster Committee representative, Munster Committee representative and a further two Committee members. Nominations may be sent by email to igps.ireland@gmail.com or by post to Áine Máire Ní Mhurchú, IGPS Honorary Secretary, c/o Croí Áirmid, Slanduff, Walterstown, Navan, Co. Meath C15 HKD1, to arrive no later than **3 May 2024**. Nominations must include the name of the candidate, names of the proposer and seconder, and a statement that the candidate has agreed to stand for election.



Clandeboye: photo courtesy of Barbara Kelso

All members are entitled to attend the meeting free of charge and to vote.

Áine Máire Ní Mhurchú - Hon. Sec.

Even if you are planning to attend the meeting only, please book in advance on Eventbrite so that we know the numbers for tea/coffee and scone on arrival.

For the comfort and enjoyment of all concerned, the lunch and garden visits will be limited to one hundred people. Bookings can be made through the the Latest News and Events page.

www.irishgardenplantsociety.com, assuming that the limit has not been reached by the time this Newsletter appears.

At the time of writing, members of the Northern regional committee and working group are delighted

that over eighty members have booked early. We look forward to welcoming you for registration on Saturday 18 May from 09.30 to 10.15.

Timetable for Saturday 18 May

09.30 to 10.15

Registration, tea/coffee and scone

10.30 to 11.30

Annual General Meeting

11.30 to 12.45

Tour of Clondeboye Estate gardens by head gardener Fergus Thompson

13.00 to 14.15

Buffet lunch in Banqueting Hall

14.30 to 17.30

Visits to two private gardens near Newtownards

Sunday 19 May 10.30 to 16.30

Visits to two private gardens near Ballynahinch, Co. Down

Details of garden visits

Within Clondeboye Estate a series of walled gardens adjoins the courtyard and house.

These include the delightful Bee Garden, the Chapel Walk and the intimate Conservatory Garden. In the Bee Garden there is a selection of old Irish apple trees surrounding an area of wildflower meadow on which stands a Georgian-style bee house. The walls of the Conservatory Garden help create a warmer environment for tender planting. Further afield are the woodland gardens, which include a large collection of rhododendrons and other exotic species suited to the mild climate of this part of Co. Down.

After a buffet lunch in the magnificent Banqueting Hall we will visit two private gardens near Newtownards, a short drive from Clondeboye Estate.



The first visit is to Roz and Victor Henry, where they will be on hand to tell us about the development of their 0.2-acre suburban garden, which is a past winner of the *Belfast Telegraph's* Garden of the Year. It is beautifully designed, with many

architectural plants such as tree ferns and *Cardiocrinum giganteum*, the giant Himalayan lily, giving it a taste of the exotic.

A rose-covered pergola leads to a delightful summerhouse and there is a large pond as well as borders filled with eye-catching colour combinations.



Also on Saturday afternoon is a visit to Doreen and Ivan Wilson, where we will be treated to a tour of their beautiful 0.6-acre semi-rural garden. The garden is run on organic principles and has large borders with many unusual shrubs and trees, including the rare Chinese tree *Emmenopterys henryi*. There is a lushly planted pond, a secluded summerhouse, a wisteria-covered pergola and a well-laid-out vegetable garden. Tea/coffee will be included at the garden.



Fernhill Cottage Gardens: photo courtesy of Barbara Kelso

On Sunday we visit Fernhill Cottage Gardens at Spa on the outskirts of Ballynahinch, where the owners, Thomas McCaw and Thomas Raju, will give a tour of their gorgeous 3.5-acre country garden.

Despite only being developed since 2013, it's a plant lover's garden with over 3,500 plants. It has an orchard, pond, wildflower meadow and an emphasis on succession planting with many themed borders. Tea/coffee is included at the garden. Lunch, at your own expense, is available nearby at Montalto Estate café, Millbrook Lodge Hotel or a restaurant in Ballynahinch.

Also on Sunday is a visit to Brigid and Liam McDonald's garden at Drumaness, a short drive from Spa/Ballynahinch.

There will be a tour of their impressive 3-acre country garden where rock is the dominant feature. It has scree beds, a meandering woodland walk, sculpture, a pool and many large borders of trees, shrubs and perennials. Take a seat at one of the many seating areas and enjoy a tea/coffee that will be provided.



IGPS honorary members join the 'immortals'

Two of the Society's honorary members have had the special distinction of having snowdrops named for them. At the annual Snowdrop Gala and coinciding with Brian Duncan's ninetieth birthday, regular attendees Brian and Betty Duncan were presented with *Galanthus* 'B and B Duncan'. The snowdrop is a large, late *elwesii* variety; it is long-flowering and highly scented. The snowdrop came from Helen Dillon, was given to Assumpta Broomfield and then to Altamont over 25 years ago; years of division and minding by Robert Miller at the walled garden have kept it going.



The Duncans: photo courtesy of Andrew Gee

Primrose Hill in Lucan, Co. Dublin, is well known as a superb snowdrop garden. The best-known snowdrops from the garden are G. 'Cicely Hall', named for the mother of the present owner, Robin Hall, and 'The Whopper'. Four others have been named, most recently just last year, when Robin Hall named *Galanthus* 'Patrick Tobin', a *plicatus* seedling with long outers and full-green inners.

Seed distribution

Debbie Bailey updates us.

The seemingly endless days of wet weather last summer did not make seed collecting easy. Happily, given the generosity of members, the list finished with a respectable array of some 241 different seeds. Order forms have been arriving since early January, with nearly one hundred requests by the start of March. I might still be able to fulfil requests (see the February e-bulletin for the list). As usual, the most popular seeds were the less common annuals and hard-to-find perennials; *Lunaria annua* 'Corfu Blue' was in particular demand this year.

I often wonder how members get on with their orders. Sometimes I get lovely notes telling me about successes and expressing delight when the packets of seeds come through the letter box; then I know that the scheme is appreciated and worthwhile. Do please send some photos of your results to Maeve for the Newsletter or to Rosie for the e-bulletin. We all love to hear about successes and see the results. *Huge thanks to Debbie for all she does on our behalf.*

College campus starts an Irish collection

Joanna Loanne, a member of the Northern Committee and a horticultural tutor at the South Eastern Regional College (SERC) in Holywood, Co. Down, is adding

some Irish Heritage Plants to the campus garden. Billy McCone, Nichola Monk and Helen McAneney, fellow IGPS members and botanical art students at the College, recently presented a number of plants, including *Escallonia* 'Glasnevin Hybrid', *Philadelphus* 'Rose Syringa', *Rosa* 'Rambling Rector' and *Hesperantha* 'Mrs Hegarty', with the promise of more to come, including some Brian Duncan daffodils.

Membership renewals 2024/5

It is going to be an exciting time with many garden visits to enjoy during the summer and lectures are already planned for later in the year and spring 2025. Those who pay by direct debit don't need to do anything; your membership fee will be automatically deducted in the same month each year. For those who pay by cheque, the deadline for payment for the coming year 2024/5 is 1 May. Cheques, in euros or sterling, should be made payable to the Irish Garden Plant Society and posted to Nichola Monk's address on the back cover. Alternatively you can bring a cheque to the AGM in May.

	Euros	Sterling
One adult	€30.00	£25.00
Joint for 2 members	€42.00	£36.00
Student (full-time)	€15.50	£13.00

Do you grow a Ballyrogan plant?

Andrew Gee is looking for plants from the former Ballyrogan Nursery, Co. Down, run by Gary Dunlop. He writes:

There were hundreds of plants listed, many of them were his own hybrids. It has set me wondering – are any members growing plants bred by Gary Dunlop, or did you buy plants when the nursery was operating? I am hoping to build a database of plants bred or named at Ballyrogan, with the intention of listing them on the IGPS website. I would be very grateful to hear of any you are growing, and if you have a photograph, better still. Please contact Andrew at andrewbangor12@gmail.com.



Erythronium from Ballyrogan

Instagram

You can now follow us on: Instagram: [@irishgardenplantsociety](https://www.instagram.com/irishgardenplantsociety) as well as on Facebook: www.facebook.com/irishgardenplantsociety

Meet the Committee

Agnes Peacocke

Plant sale organiser, North



John and I live in a converted barn in the grounds of Finnebrogue Estate in Co. Down. The barn, along with other buildings, sits in about an acre of undeveloped land surrounded by trees. We have spent the last 25 years turning all this space into a garden.

My interest in gardening began when I used to 'help' my father in our modest suburban garden. Later, when John and I got married, we were enthusiastic but ignorant.

We joined the IGPS more than thirty years ago. At first, we took little part. Later, faced with a large plot, we became more engaged, seeing it as a source of advice and plant knowledge. On retirement, we really became involved in IGPS and in opening our garden under the Open Gardens Scheme. I have been a member of the Northern Committee for a number of years, mainly involved with organising our plant sales.

Dave Victory

Acting Leinster representative



Originally from Dublin, I studied electronic engineering and spent most of my career in the telecommunications industry, retiring in 2017.

Since 1989 Antoinette and I have lived in a cottage in Balbriggan with half an acre. Initially we grew vegetables, but gradually became interested in ornamental plants. I studied horticulture as a mature student, being awarded the RHS Advanced Certificate in 2011. I also did the Plantsperson Course with Jimi Blake at Hunting Brook. All this led to a dream to open our garden. It took a bit longer than expected and we first opened in June 2023 – one of the most rewarding things I've ever done. A lot done but more to do; volunteer gardeners are most welcome!

Some of my other interests include photography (see @davevictorygarden) and music (I play guitar/bass). I love woodworking and am also interested in design and construction.



Dates for your Diary

Rosa 'Irish Elegance', bred in 1905 by Alex Dickson & Son, Newtownards, Co. Down: photo courtesy of Brendan Sayers

Dates for your Diary

**Saturday 18 & Sunday 19
May 2024**

Annual General Meeting

Venue: Clondeboye Estate near Bangor and private gardens in Co. Down. See page 26 for details.

**Saturday 1 June Guided tour
at 14.00, finish 16.00**

Visit to Ballyedmond Castle Garden

Venue: Rostrevor, Co. Down
BT34 3AG.

A welcome opportunity to return to Ballyedmond, where there will be late spring and early summer blossom and horticultural excellence. A mature garden, it benefits from constant development, with the added blessing of a spectacular setting and relatively benign climate. Highlights include the walled garden with terraced water feature, the woodland with its Robinsonian planting, and the choice climbers and creepers that clothe the castle.

Members only. Numbers limited, with booking via Eventbrite starting on a date to be announced in the e-bulletin. Smooth paths in most areas of the garden. Cost (to be confirmed) will include tea/coffee and scone served in the Orangery. NB Some restrictions on photography.



Ballyedmond Castle

Saturday 8 June

Visit to Tourin Garden

Venue: Tourin House and Gardens
Cappoquin, Co. Waterford P51 YY1K.

Owned by the Jameson family and beautifully situated on the banks of the river Blackwater, Tourin House and Gardens are home to a fine collection of trees, shrubs and plants giving a display of colour and interest at all times of the year. The extensive grounds include a broad walk, walled garden, a pond area and extensive woodland. Admission by donation. Tea and traybakes €5. Further information to follow in the e-bulletin.

**Saturday 15 June 11.00
to 13.30**

Garden visits and summer lunch Co. Meath

Venue: Loughcrew Gardens,
Oldcastle, Co. Meath A82 EV62.

The historic landscape garden and sculpture park have been home to the Naper family since the seventeenth century. The garden was restored under the Great Gardens of Ireland scheme. Picturesque gardens and beautiful woodland with St Oliver Plunkett's church mean plenty to see and explore.

Level paths through the garden.
Refreshments available at
own expense.



Continue to the second garden

**The Poppy Garden
at 14.00 to 16.30 with lunch
at 14.30 approximately**

Venue: Milltown, Oldcastle, Co.
Meath A82 AP58.

The garden is an acre, with a maze of paths through different beds planted with a huge array of annuals, perennials, shrubs and trees, some creatively pruned. There is beautiful scenery looking up to the Loughcrew Hills and plenty of inspiration and ideas for everyone to take home, plus lovely plants and pots available for sale too. Booking via Eventbrite from early May. Cost for both gardens and lunch: members €30, guests €32. There are grass paths and some cobbled paths that may be a little uneven in places, although it is fairly level throughout and accessible to all. Definitely wear waterproof footwear if it is wet.



Dates for your Diary

Saturday 13 July at 14.00 to 16.30

Visit to Tombrick Garden

Venue: Tombrick, Ballycarney, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford Y21 F853.



Walter Kelly is an enthusiastic plantsman with a great eye for good plants which he maintains to perfection. This is an informal garden with a wide selection of trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants. As trees have matured, a woodland area has developed, underplanted with shade-loving plants. While it's a dry, free-draining garden, there is a small stream running through and a pond. A small collection of unusual poultry adds even more interest. Booking via Eventbrite from mid-June. Members €10, guests €12. The garden is mainly level with just a few steps that could be avoided. The paths are all pebble-based.

Saturday 27 July Guided tour at 14.00, finish 16.00

Visit to a private garden on the outskirts of Dublin

Venue: details supplied at time of booking.

This large garden surrounds a lush river valley that has been planted on a heroic scale with choice trees and shrubs and dotted with follies. At the time of our visit perennials will be to the fore in the structured gardens closer to the house. Particularly pleasing is the growing collection of Irish cultivars. Work is progressing on the nineteenth-century walled garden as it is refashioned and the wild flower meadows should still be full of interest.

Members only. Numbers limited, with booking via Eventbrite starting on a date to be announced in the e-bulletin. Cost to be confirmed.

NB Some challenging terrain. Photography restricted.



Saturday 3 August Guided tour at 14.00, finish 16.00

A further visit to the garden on the outskirts of Dublin

Venue: details as above.

Saturday 10 August at 14.00 to 16.30

Visit to Lavistown House

Venue: Lavistown, Co. Kilkenny R95 E5NH.

Des Doyle is a gardener and garden designer whose work mostly focuses on sensitively restoring older and historic gardens in a contemporary style. Lavistown is a restored country garden dating from 1810; it features a reworking of classic garden elements with contemporary features, including a gravel garden, an extensive collection of grasses and a pond area.



The visit includes a garden walk, a talk and tea/coffee with scones/biscuits. Booking via Eventbrite from mid-July, members €18, guests €20. There are steps that can be avoided by taking a different route. Most of the garden is flat. Stout footwear is recommended.

Sunday 20 October 11.00 to 13.00 approximately

Plant sale

Venue: Community Centre, Guardian Angels Church, Newtownpark Avenue, Blackrock, Co. Dublin A94 WF89.

Organised by the Leinster Committee, this is a brilliant opportunity to buy a wide selection of shrubs, herbaceous plants, bulbs and Irish Heritage Plants. Ample parking.

Thanks to our contributors

Fionnuala Broughan lives in Co. Waterford. Her background in botany and her love of plants inform her art. She is a member of the Irish Society of Botanical Artists.
@fionnualabroughan

Stephen Butler was formerly Curator of Horticulture at Dublin Zoo and has written a book about his experiences there. He takes the lead in all matters to do with Irish Heritage Plants.

Eileen Gahan is in her final year studying for a BSc in Horticulture at the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin. In 2023 she was awarded the title of Irish Young Horticulturist of the Year.

Seamus O'Brien manages the National Botanic Gardens, Kilmacurragh, Co. Wicklow. He is a former Committee member, an author and serves on two committees of the Royal Horticultural Society.

Jane Powers is an author and garden writer living in Dún Laoghaire; she was an active member of the Society's Committee for many years.

Ali Rochford is a gardener and journalist living in Skerries, Co. Dublin. She writes about gardens for the *Business Post*.

Elizabeth Ross gardens in Moate, Co. Westmeath, where she says her daughter does most of the work giving her more time to enjoy growing plants to donate to charity sales.

Caro Skyrme grew up in the north of Ireland; she and her husband regularly open their garden, Broadward Hall in Shropshire, for the National Garden Scheme.
@broadwardhallgardens

Paddy Tobin, a former Chairman of the Society and Editor of the Newsletter, lives in Waterford and writes a column for *The Irish Garden* magazine.

Doreen Wilson is a garden historian and recently gained a PhD in the subject. She has now turned her attention to nineteenth-century Irish landscapes.

Many thanks to our members **Edith Brosnan, Barbara Kelso, Robert Logan, Rosie Maye, Áine-Máire Ní Mhurchú** and **Paddy Tobin** for providing information about and photos for the AGM and the various garden visits. Thanks also to Abbeyleix House and Farm, Des Doyle, Loughcrew Gardens and the Poppy Garden for kindly providing photos.

Photos are by kind permission of the authors unless otherwise attributed.

While every effort is made to ensure that content is correct at the time of printing, views expressed in the articles are those of the author(s) and may not reflect those of the Society.

Any factual errors will be corrected as soon as possible.

Aims of the Irish Garden Plant Society

The aims of the Society are:

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




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