

Irish Garden Plant Society



Newsletter - October 2024

Issue 162

Irish Garden Plant Society

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Copy for the January issue as soon as possible, please, and no later than **20 November**.

Cover:

Rosa 'Narrow Water' courtesy of William McKelvey.

Grateful thanks to the team, including our horticultural adviser Brendan Sayers, our copy-editor Pat Carroll, and Rob Evans.

Welcome

This issue is like Janus, the two-faced god who looks both backwards and forwards – backwards to a successful AGM and forwards to autumn and collecting seeds or reading books as the nights draw in.

Four members write about seed, collecting it, the joy of growing something unusual perhaps from our seed scheme, and how essential it is to name the resulting plants properly (see page 18). Welcome back to these pages our former Chairman, David Jeffrey, whose advice on collecting seed first appeared in October 1990. It remains spot on today.

It is not often that we have the choice of three new Irish gardening books to read. Paddy Tobin reviews them on page 22.



In keeping with our aims, Irish plants are to the fore, with both good news and bad news. On the positive side, after searching for more than a year, Tim Guilbride managed to find an Irish rosemary, *Rosmarinus* 'Fota Blue', for his antique stone trough. The bad news is that *Aubrieta* 'Shangarry' cannot be found and may even be 'presumed extinct' (see pages 4 and 32).

Further very sad news was the unexpected death in May of our founding member and first Chairman, Charles Nelson. Brendan Sayers writes on page 31.

In the April issue I mentioned that more volunteers were needed. A warm welcome to Claire McNally and Andrew Gee, who have taken over from Stephen Butler and will lead on Irish Heritage Plants (IHPs), Seána McAuley, who is helping with spreadsheets, and Rob Evans, who has joined the *Newsletter* team. Please offer to help if you possibly can, e.g. if you have administrative, financial or IT skills, legal expertise, or could propagate some of our scarce Irish plants so that no more are lost. Mary, our Chair, makes a plea over the page.

Maeve Bell, Editor
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A note from the Chair

A year starts twice over – in January and again in September when schools reopen and societies start their autumn programmes. Details of our forthcoming lectures are in Dates for your diary, page 33; there is an exciting selection of topics and I hope members, including the thirty or so new members who are receiving this Newsletter for the first time, will enjoy them.

Do you grow *Aubrieta* 'Shangarry', which has pale lavender double flowers? Earlier this summer *Aubrieta* 'Shangarry', an Irish cultivar listed by the Ballawley Alpine Nursery in Dundrum in 1935, was selected by Plant Heritage as the Judges' Choice in the 2024 Threatened Plant of the Year competition in the UK. Worryingly, it seems the plant may be lost in cultivation. We are urgently seeking propagation material, so, if you grow this plant or know someone who does, please contact us right away at igps.heritageplants@gmail.com.

The IGPS could not function without the many people who volunteer their time and knowledge. On behalf of all of us, I want to express our sincere gratitude to Billy McCone, my predecessor as Chair,



and Áine-Máire Ní Mhurchú, Secretary, who due to personal circumstances have recently stepped down from the National Executive Committee, and to Stephen Butler, who retires following ten years on the Committee and many more years working on Irish Heritage Plants. Andrew Gee and Claire McNally will continue Stephen's work and continue our liaison with Plant Heritage.

We urgently need to fill a number of vacancies, particularly on the Executive Committee, where we are seeking a Vice Chair, an Honorary Secretary, a representative from Munster, and a couple of members to bring us up to full complement. It is a great way to meet keen gardeners and make friends. If you can help in any way, please contact me as soon as possible at mary.forrest@ucd.ie or phone +353 1298 5099.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary".

Mary Forreest, Chairman

Nymans and its links with Ireland

Joe Whelan

Nymans is a National Trust garden located in West Sussex in the south of England and welcomes over 400,000 visitors a year. The passion and love of three generations of the Messel family cemented its reputation as a garden of international significance, having been developed around the expeditions of some of the great plant collectors, including Ernest Wilson, Frank Kingdon Ward, George Forrest and Harold Comber, and it features outstanding collections from China, Nepal, Chile, South Africa and the Mediterranean.

I have been head gardener since 2019, having started here as a gardener in 2015. My horticultural journey to Nymans has taken me to some of the most inspirational gardens in Ireland, including Glenveagh Castle Gardens in Co. Donegal (still my favourite garden), the National Botanic Gardens (NBG), Glasnevin, Dublin, and Rathmullan House in Co. Donegal before I hopped on the boat to the south of England, where the ground was drier and the midges a lot less of a nuisance. Nymans is a garden with many links to Ireland which I am always keen to explore.



Summer Borders at Nymans

The development of Nymans began when Ludwig Messel purchased the estate in 1890. After remodelling the house, he set his sights on the garden and appointed James Comber as Nymans' first head gardener, a role he would hold for 55 years. Ludwig was a German *émigré* who had built a successful stockbroking business and the development of a great British garden was very much about helping his family to integrate into British society. At the time, this part of England was the hub of the horticultural world; nearby gardens included Wakehurst Place, Leonardslee, Borde Hill, Sheffield Park, High Beeches and Gravetye Manor, the home of William Robinson, a regular visitor to Nymans.



The first recorded planting began in 1895 and the garden grew quickly, with the creation of a Pinetum, Arboretum, Rock Garden and Heather Garden. Experimentation with plant hardiness and hybridising were to the fore with 'garden worthy' plants taking centre stage. It wasn't long before Nymans was getting a name for itself in horticultural circles, but the outbreak of World War I and Ludwig's death in 1915 put a stop to the garden's development.

Upon his death the estate was inherited by Ludwig's son Leonard, who, together with his wife Maud, continued to expand the plant collection and add more rare and unusual species, with the garden reaching its peak in the 1920s and 1930s. By now there was a good selection of plants named for Nymans, including *Magnolia x loebneri* 'Leonard Messel', *Camellia* 'Leonard Messel', *Camellia* 'Maud Messel' and *Eucryphia x nymansensis*. The couple also continued to support plant-collecting expeditions, most notably the travels of James Comber's son Harold, who would become one of the most significant plant collectors of the early twenty-first century. He made two trips to the Andes in the mid-1920s, sending back over 1,200 seeds and herbarium specimens, including *Embothrium coccineum* (the Chilean Firebush), *Weinmannia trichosperma*, *Lomatia tinctoria* and numerous species of *Berberis* and *Eucryphia*.

Comber's legacy has been recognised by Plant Heritage, with Nymans holding the Harold Comber Collection; in addition, the garden continues to receive wild-collected seed from Chile through the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh. We have accumulated one of the most important documented collections of Andean species in the country, which may include genetic material from plants believed extinct in the wild. In 1930 Harold Comber made a trip to Tasmania. In 2018 the British and Irish Botanical Expedition to Tasmania (BIBET) [see Issue 144 of the *Newsletter* for an account of the expedition], which included the then head gardener at Nymans, Seamus O'Brien from NBG, Kilmacurragh, Neil Porteus, then from Mount Stewart, and others, travelled to Tasmania to retrace Harold Comber's footsteps.

Many of the plants collected from that trip are now growing in the garden, including *Melaleuca virens* (previously in *Callistemon*), which flowered here for the first time in 2024.

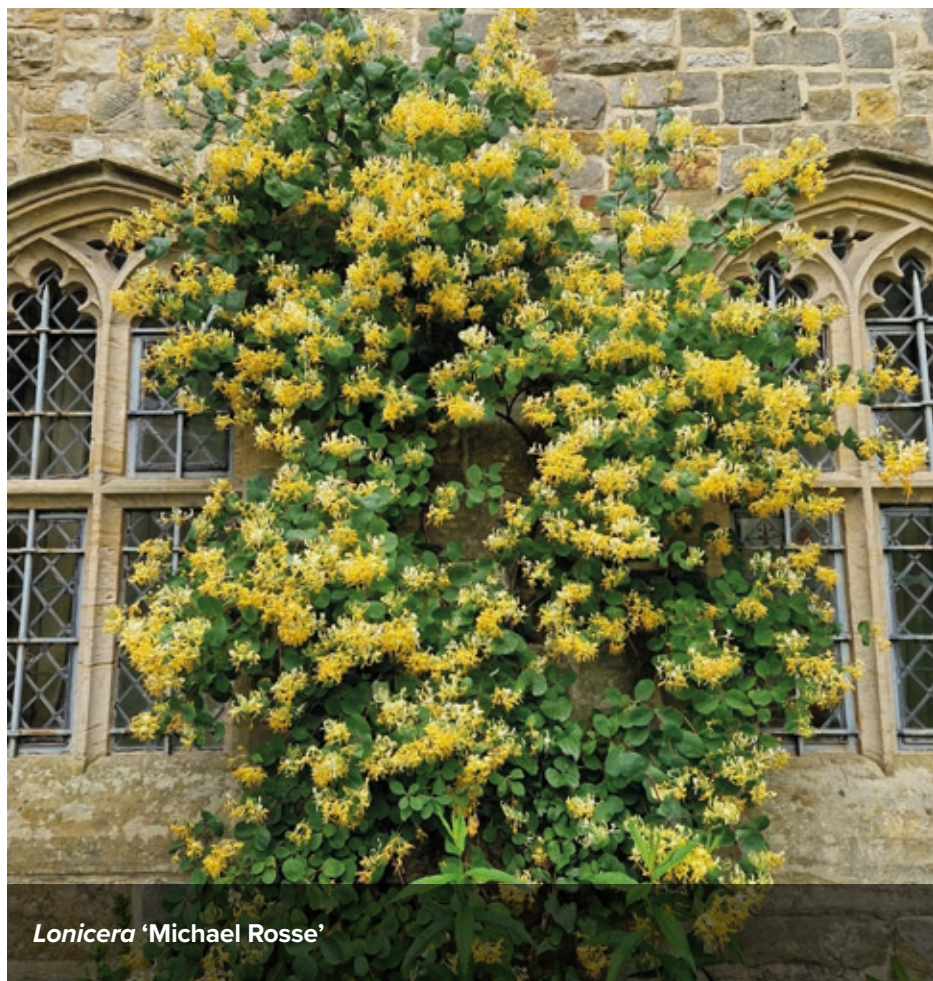
Leonard and Maud's only daughter was Anne Messel. In 1935 she married Michael Parsons, Sixth Earl of Rosse, becoming the Countess of Rosse, and lived at Birr Castle in Co. Offaly until his death in 1979. She lived at Nymans thereafter and was instrumental in redesigning the famous Summer Borders as well as continuing to conserve the plant collection and fund plant-collecting expeditions. The Nymans connection with Birr continues to this day. The present Lord and Lady Rosse have visited many times and I have been fortunate to be able to explore the gardens at Birr with them.



Melaleuca virens

At Nymans we have the British champion, *Magnolia* 'Michael Rosse', and our numerous *Lonicera* 'Michael Rosse' have had an incredible year for flowering. We also have a particularly good specimen of *Davidia involucrata* var. *vilmoriniana* 'Golden Birr'. Anne's daughter Susan was married to John Vessey, Sixth Viscount de Vesci, of Abbeyleix House, Co. Laois; this is a connection we hope to explore further.

With a changing climate that's proving challenging for living collections management in the south of England, we hope that the connections we have with Irish gardens, which have more suitable conditions for many of our plants, will be one way we can help preserve the collection for the future, even if it won't be at Nymans.



Lonicera 'Michael Rosse'

Meet the gardener – Adam Whitbourn



have developed many new areas, including the Fern Garden, Poison Garden, Vietnamese Woodland, Himalayan Valley, Carnivorous Courtyard, Winter Borders and a Pinetum. We have an extensive tree collection, including a collection of ancient yew trees that sit in our historic Rock Close garden.

Earliest memory of gardening

Helping my grandfather in his vegetable garden, but, really, I was just there for the rhubarb and blackberries!

How did you get started in your career?

A chance visit to an open day at Askham Bryan College in York, England, led me to decide to study horticulture. It was a specialist horticultural college with very interesting grounds and the Head of Horticulture there at the time, Mr Nick Bisset, made a great impression on me. During my time at college I travelled to Ireland to work at Adare Manor and then for SAP Landscapes and, on completing my training, returned to Dublin as Landscape Maintenance Foreman for SAP.

Blarney Castle Gardens

I decided to move to Ireland on a permanent basis, as I had family in West Cork, and started work in Blarney in 2005 as a Craft Gardener.

What do you do?

My current title is Gardens Manager at Blarney Castle & Gardens. I am responsible for managing the ongoing maintenance and development of the castle, historic buildings and over seventy acres of gardens and grounds, including borders, fruit and vegetable production, lawns, woodland, lake and rivers.

My duties are extremely varied and include the daily management, planning and supervision of the staff, students, volunteers and contractors, as well as dealing with 500,000 visitors every year. Over the last 15 years or so the gardens have grown significantly and we

I always saw the potential to create world-class gardens here in Blarney and, during my interview for the head gardener's position, I stated that it would be my intention to make the gardens as famous as the stone! Hopefully we are making progress on that front.

Do you have a favourite plant?

My favourite plant changes all the time and often with the seasons. It can be something I spot in flower here in the gardens, or a special find from a new nursery, or perhaps something I have grown myself from wild-collected seed. I suppose my current favourite would be the *Cardiocrinum*, one of the giant Himalayan lilies, which I came across on my last plant-hunting trip to Vietnam, and now have growing here in the gardens. I can't wait to see it flowering in the future. As *Cardiocrinum* is new to Vietnam, this is an exciting discovery, and we wait for feedback from our Vietnamese partners on an species name.



A lily at Blarney



Blarney Fern Garden

When and why did you join the IGPS?

I joined in 2013 after attending a few lectures as a guest and really enjoying the quality of speakers as well as getting to know some wonderful people who were already members.

Horticultural hero?

Quite a few names jump to mind, but I would say Roy Lancaster. His enthusiasm is infectious and inspiring and his knowledge is exceptional, yet he remains grounded and approachable.

Three tips for the home gardener

Make notes over the year, observe how plants perform and keep track of what you plant where and when.

Look around for inspiration, visit other gardens, both public and private, and see what does well and what you like, and don't be afraid to try new things.

Share your plants and encourage people to share back. It's great insurance.

Fascinating fossils

Mary Montaut

The National Botanic Gardens, Kilmacurragh, have many splendid attractions, but I had not imagined that growing fossil trees could be such an important one until a recent visit.

Our group met on the 'Fossil Lawn', where Seamus O'Brien, head gardener at Kilmacurragh, along with Darach Lupton, Curator of the National Botanic Gardens of Ireland and the John F. Kennedy Arboretum, and Hannah Wilson, Head of the International Conifer Conservation Programme at the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh (RBGE), described the vital work being carried out at Kilmacurragh and the John F. Kennedy Arboretum as part of the International Conifer Conservation Programme (ICCP). The trees on the Fossil Lawn are all threatened species and the healthy specimens at Kilmacurragh are evidence of the success of the world-wide effort to conserve them. I felt these fossils were anything but dry bones – they were vigorous plants, beautiful and promising.

Probably most of us have heard of the Wollemi pine (*Wollemia nobilis*) and know something about its comparatively recent discovery and the many botanic gardens that are taking part in the international effort to conserve this critically endangered tree. But most of the other trees in this area were completely new to me; I could

have guessed their families, but the particular species were way beyond my knowledge and I was thrilled to hear the different stories of discovery, preservation and conservation. Irish plant hunters figured, of course. Thomas Coulter of Dundalk, probably best known in association with the beautiful Californian poppy, *Romneya coulteri*, discovered a rare pine in California in 1832, *Pinus coulteri*, the big-cone pine, sometimes known as the 'Widow Maker' because its cones can weigh 2.5kg and measure 30cm – quite enough to kill someone underneath.



Wollemia nobilis male cones

The global importance of conifers was stressed by all our guides. Forty per cent of global forest cover consists of coniferous trees, yet there are only 630 known species, compared with 350,000 known species of flowering plants. Three non-cone-bearing genera, *Taxus*, *Podocarpus* and *Gingko*, have been included in the Conservation Programme even though they have fleshy fruits, not cones. Our guides explained the special qualities of each tree as well as their places of origin. The Chinese coffin tree, *Taiwania cryptomerioides*, whose scented and durable wood – once ‘the most expensive wood in the world, worth more than its weight in gold’ – was used in the manufacture of coffins for the aristocratic classes in China because it was believed to preserve the body indefinitely; as a result it has become highly endangered in its native areas through historic, and now illegal, logging.

Darach Lupton showed us a couple of conifer ‘needles’ to demonstrate that the base was actually a stem like an ordinary leaf. Propagation can be difficult. Apparently the seeds have very limited viability and cannot be successfully kept in a seed bank, unlike the seeds of many flowering plants. The conifers’ method of shedding their needles was a revelation: a succession of needle replacements occurs throughout the year. Cones are also masterly in their time management. Far from just opening up and shedding their seeds all at once, they open in a controlled and timely sequence.



***Agathis australis* cone: photo courtesy of Seamus O’Brien**

We met the loneliest tree in Ireland, *Podocarpus nubigenus*, a male tree that has been growing at Kilmacurragh for 170 years, noted in Thomas Acton’s nineteenth-century correspondence. Although this is a male tree, Seamus O’Brien indicated that there may be some cross-fertilisation one day with a younger tree recently supplied by the RBGE. This tale of survival was most touching, and it brought home to me the amazing long-term importance of these venerable trees. The important work at Kilmacurragh for the ICCP was underlined when we met the Chinese white pine, *Pinus armandii* var. *dabeishanensis*, and learned that this is the only cultivated one outside China.

It has failed on every other site it was sent to in Britain and Ireland, so the tree growing at Kilmacurragh is unique in cultivation. We admired *Athrotaxis selaginoides*; many old specimens of this rare tree were blown down in the great storm of 1998. It underlines how fortunate we are to have such a special microclimate at Kilmacurragh.

Hannah Wilson reminded us of the world-wide cooperation between botanic gardens. The Wollemi pine is a prime example; there are fewer than sixty wild trees known in the Wollemi National Park, ninety miles from Sydney, Australia. This tree is related to the araucarias (including the well-known monkey puzzle tree, *Araucaria araucana*), which date back millions of years.

In 1994, when the Wollemi pine was discovered, botanists considered that all the specimens would likely have the same genetics, but it has been found that there are in fact four different genotypes in the wild. The ICCP has carefully exploited this by propagating from all four types. Botanic gardens in the programme have been given six plants – one each of the four genotypes, plus two others. It is hoped that this rare plant will be able to survive with renewed genetic vigour, as it seems to have done in Australia, representing a treasury of knowledge about our biodiversity. Kilmacurragh is playing a key role in helping to conserve these rare and endangered but beautiful and inspiring trees.



Beautiful colours of the pollen of *Cathaya argrophylla*

A postcard garden – 3:30:300

Eileen Sung

A beautifully drawn badger emerges from low-growing woodland foliage while, in the foreground, a miniature, lichen-clad wooden bridge arches over rushes and pure white *Zantedeschia*.

This was Lennoxvale Tree Nursery's (LTN) 3:30:300 postcard garden at Bloom this year, reflecting the aspiration that everyone should see 3 trees from their home, live in an area with at least 30 per cent tree canopy cover, and be no more than 300 metres from the nearest public green space.

LTN is a community-led partnership in south Belfast, based beside Lennoxvale Glen, an unspoiled green corridor. The concept behind our garden at Bloom was to bring the spirit of Lennoxvale to Dublin – a peaceful, wooded green space in the midst of the city. During the weeks beforehand, our volunteer team had marked out the space we'd have to fill and experimented with layouts. We planted crates with trees (young oaks, willow wands and

birch seedlings), grasses and weeds from the nursery. The wild planting included flashes of the native yellow-horned poppy and purple *Papaver somniferum*, echoing the vibrant street planting that LTN's volunteer gardeners offer along the Lower Malone Road. Violets and fleabane were grown in the under-storey, along with daisies, red and white clover, buttercups and plantain punctuated with common grasses. We had just one day to plant, layering and mounding the tiny 2m x 3m plot with our well-established boxes. Young trees, *Acer*, *Liquidamber* and *Quercus robur*, framed the garden.

Schools, communities and charities are invited to display postcard gardens at Bloom, which attracted more than 100,000 visitors this year. It's hard work and requires planning and budgeting (remember to factor in transport and accommodation). The rewards, however, are well worthwhile: great camaraderie among the postcard garden teams and huge opportunities for outreach and networking.



William Robinson's legacy

Doreen Wilson

The long life and career of William Robinson (1838–1935) were discussed in the April Newsletter and, while Robinson is often referred to as Ireland's greatest horticulturalist, one may ask: what is his legacy, what is his lasting influence on gardening?

Brent Elliott, former librarian at the Royal Horticultural Society's library, gave his opinion in his book *Victorian gardens*:

Robinson was not a revolutionary figure in gardening, not an innovator, but a populariser who seldom jumped on the band wagon before it had been rolling for at least a decade. William Robinson's wild garden summed up forty years of gradual experimentation by head gardeners throughout the country.

And what did Robinson himself have to say? In his book *The wild garden* Robinson spelt out his ideas by saying the wild garden was 'the placing of perfectly hardy exotic plants under conditions where they will thrive without further care'. This maxim applied throughout the garden, including the rock garden, the woodland garden and the herbaceous border. To him, the true English countryside should surround the manor house, not the sham nature of a Capability Brown landscape. Note that Robinson talks about the 'manor house' – he himself lived in Gravetye,

a fourteen-bedroomed Elizabethan mansion surrounded by 360 acres. Further land was bought over the years until Robinson owned all within his view, a thousand acres of Sussex countryside. So one can see that Robinson was speaking to a different gardening community from that of the twenty-first century.



Exotic and native ferns at Glenveagh Castle, Co. Donegal

During Robinson's lifetime there were still many large estates in Britain and Ireland with their complement of gardeners, and it was their wastage of plants, the endless planting and tearing up,

and the flatness and uniformity of terrace beds that riled Robinson. This hankering after a ‘naturalness’ was apparent in other areas of British life at that time and was a demonstration of the push-back on the industrialisation and mechanisation of human labour, exemplified in the Arts and Crafts movement; among gardeners and horticulturalists there was already experimentation and innovation in the garden following the introduction of new plants to these islands, which concurs with Brent Elliott’s statement quoted above.

Ireland was in a unique position to inspire innovation in horticulture. James Mackay (1775–1862) of the Botanic Garden at Trinity College, Dublin, had access to new plants through donations from plant hunters and his connections with other botanic gardens. He recorded the seeds collected by John Tweedie (1775–1862) in Buenos Aires in 1825, while Thomas Coulter (1793–1843), travelling in Mexico, sent Mackay a collection of cacti that caused a sensation by being so different from other plants. There was a vigorous exchange of plants between places such as the Botanic Gardens at Glasnevin and Daisy Hill Nursery in Newry and the Tully Nursery in Kildare, both of which had lists of plants unrecorded in Britain. Private gardens in Ireland were at the forefront of new introductions, including those of W. E. Gumbleton at Belgrove, Co. Cork, and Sir John Ross at Rostrevor, Co. Down; both gardens have now completely disappeared.



***Romneya coulteri*; photo courtesy of Seamus O’Brien**

Glasnevin’s soil did not suit the ericaceous plants, such as rhododendrons, camellias and azaleas, that were arriving from Asia, so many seeds and plants were sent on to gardens with better growing conditions, such as the Kilmacurragh estate in Co. Wicklow. The owner, Thomas Acton (1826–1908), and his sister Janet were reputed to have the best-stocked privately owned garden in Ireland. They, and the Darley family at Fernhill, Co. Dublin, were the first beneficiaries of Joseph Hooker’s travels in Sikkim, on the north-eastern border of India, when they received rhododendron seedlings from Glasnevin in April 1850. Thomas Acton’s brother, Colonel Charles Ball-Acton (1830–97), serving in the army in India, sent home seeds of the Himalayan barberry, *Berberis angulosa*, and the Himalayan pine, *Abies pindrow*. Plants from the Antipodes grew particularly well in Ireland, including *Pittosporum tenuifolium*, *Griselinia littoralis* and several species of *Hebe*. Another two shrubs that suit the Irish climate are *Embothrium coccineum* and *Eucryphia cordifolia*: our mild climate with relatively frost-free winters induces these plants to change their flowering season when grown in the opposite hemisphere.

If Robinson were alive today, doubtless he would be on Instagram and have a following on Twitter. He would surely have embraced the popularity of mixed hedging, unmown areas of lawn and placing herbaceous plants in grassland. One can imagine his writings in the horticultural magazines; he would have revelled in debate with some of the current gardening personalities. We are all Robinsonian gardeners to some extent, unless we spend a fortune at the garden centre and fill our

beds with begonias, pelargoniums, and such like, neatly lined out and colours carefully chosen. Even Robinson resorted to some formality on his terrace, but he qualified this by saying that it should only ‘be planted with choicest hardy flowers’. That allows us to fill our beds and pots with some of our favourites to cheer our comings and goings. How fortunate we are to have a climate to grow such a wide variety of plants. So don’t complain about our wet summer – mixed blessings indeed!



Informal planting at Lismore Castle, Co. Waterford

Success with seeds



1. Only collect seed that is completely ripe. This means avoiding green capsules and soft, pale seeds; they probably will not ripen after gathering. Label each batch immediately after collection.

2. Allow the seed head to dry completely at the lowest possible temperature. The most convenient method is to place seed heads in a paper bag or other open container in a cool, dry place. Do not attempt to dry seed in a greenhouse or hot press.

3. Clean the seed when perfectly dry by sieving or winnowing. Try to distinguish viable seed from debris or infertile seed. The main reasons for thorough seed cleaning are to remove seed predators and to reduce the possibility of fungal spoilage.

4. Pack the cleaned seed in appropriate containers with a label.

5. Ideally, dry further by storing the packaged seed in a sealed container with a desiccant. The envelopes of silica-gel that accompany many products are ideal.

6. Store dry seed in a cool place. Seed with a low water content will survive indefinitely at the deep freeze temperature of -18 degrees Centigrade. Seed envelopes may be conveniently stored within a rigid plastic container in a fridge or freezer. The worst conditions for storage are those of a centrally heated room.

The logic behind low-temperature drying followed by low-temperature storage lies in the metabolism of most seeds. Water loss is a natural part of seed maturation. Whilst the embryo is protected from desiccation damage by special metabolites, the storage carbohydrates and proteins are conserved best when dry. Efficient drying, without undue heating, is more important for long storage life than low temperature. Low temperatures reduce still further the basal respiration rate of the living but dormant embryo. The first process of germination is absorption of water, followed by mobilisation of reserves facilitating growth of the embryo.

Obviously the process of germination may be subject to biological controls and these may require special treatment to break dormancy of the hydrated seed. These controls are only cueing devices to ensure the appearance of the seedling at the correct season of the year. But that is another story!
David Jeffrey

[This advice first appeared in Issue 38 of the *Newsletter*, 34 years ago.]

Please follow the above instructions and send your seed to **Debbie Bailey, Clonguire, Ballynacarrig, Brittas Bay, Co. Wicklow**, to arrive no later than **1 December**.

What is in a name?

Imagine asking for a BLT (bacon, lettuce and tomato) sandwich and getting a cheese one instead. Or imagine if all members of your family had the same name. Confusion would ensue until a specific name was given to each person in the family. Names for plants in botany and horticulture are also individual, reflecting their classifications and divisions. It is important to remember and use the unique name for each specific plant.

The majority of our garden plants are selected clones with a name that identifies their specific traits. These must be propagated in an asexual manner, that is by cuttings or micro-propagation. Seedlings of these selected clones do not necessarily have the specific traits that the parent plant has and therefore should not carry its name.

It is misleading to call them by the same name. As an indication of what the seedlings from a selected clone may look like, distributed seed (such as that in the Society's seed scheme) will carry the name of the plant from whence it came. However, as explained above, the resulting seedlings should not be given the name of the parent plant.



Penstemon 'Beech Park' from a cutting



A seedling from P. 'Beech Park'

One of the biggest joys in gardening is to see seedlings germinate, grow, flower and to look at the diversity within the seedling group. When there is an exceptional individual among them, there is the possibility of a new cultivar. An exciting prospect, but please make sure it is named correctly.

Brendan Sayers

From lettuce to lilies



My parents kept a tidy garden in Dublin and from an early age I 'owned' a small part of it. I sowed radishes and lettuce and transplanted self-sown marigolds from my grandmother's garden close by.

The basics for seed propagation are compost, water and warmth; I always add grit to my seed compost. It is surprisingly helpful to read the notes on the packet! Some seeds need light, some dark. Some seeds won't germinate in temperatures that are too high. Seeds will germinate on a south-facing windowsill, but they need better light once they emerge or they get 'leggy'.

I first noticed Martagon lilies, *Lilium martagon*, about ten years ago. I really wanted some, but they were not easily available; however, the IGPS seed scheme came to the rescue. I received an envelope of *Lilium martagon* 'Album', sowed them and grew about a dozen single strands of grass. I gave them my normal level of sporadic care – annual repotting in a mix of compost, garden soil and grit; mostly I remembered to water them and I put them in the shade, under an old apple tree, during high summer. They went into the ground for their fourth growing season and eventually flowered during their fifth. I remember the thrill whenever I think about it. Since then, I have managed to buy some *Lilium martagon* cultivars, in yellow and orange, which flowered from the bulb in their first season and have been reliable since. However, my heart belongs to the pure white Martagon lilies I grew from seed.

Bruce Johnson

Glamorous *Nesocodon*

I first came across *Nesocodon mauritianus* while browsing eBay and I have noticed that its seeds are sometimes available from www.rareplants.eu. *Nesocodon*, along with two other red nectar plants, comes from Mauritius; despite its home being a tropical island, with care this plant can survive in a cold greenhouse over the winter. *Nesocodon* is delightful to watch grow from almost dust-like seeds and it is well worth the wait of a year or so until it unfurls its first speckled blue flower. Just remember, in case you start growing it, whatever is nearby will have vibrant orange-red nectar dripping on it! This plant is very easy to grow. Seeds will be available through this year's seed exchange with simple instructions on sowing.



Brendan Sayers gives further information

Nesocodon mauritianus was first described for science in 1979 as *Wahlenbergia mauritiana*, but was reclassified in a new genus in Campanulaceae in 1980. Within a decade of being first described, it was in cultivation in Ireland and featured on the cover of *Moorea*, Vol. 7, as a line drawing by Maura Greene of Trinity College Botanic Gardens (TCBG); the illustrated specimen was grown from seed collected in Mauritius in 1985 by staff of TCBG as part of an initiative to propagate the most endangered native Mauritian flora. In 1986 plants were donated to the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, where it has been grown from seed since.

in the wild (it is known in only five places on the island of Mauritius), thankfully plenty of botanical gardens are now growing it. Since first growing it myself, I have been able to pass on many plants and thousands of seeds to a variety of establishments and collectors; if you're ever in New York, the ones growing in the Botanical Garden may be from seeds I gave them in 2017. The New York garden has since given plants to the University of Connecticut gardens and elsewhere.

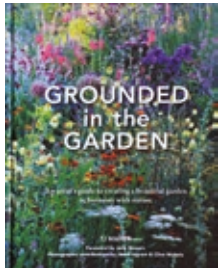
As members of the IGPS know, it is very important for those of us who grow rarities to share plant material as much as possible. The more an endangered species is grown, the further away from extinction it becomes. **Tim Stapleton**

Worth a read

Paddy Tobin

Grounded in the Garden

is a guide, a book of thoughts and considerations, a book of advice and beauty which will lead you through the many considerations one encounters in the creation of the garden. Yet it goes far beyond being a simple guide, as it embraces a life philosophy, is infused with a deep love of nature, and is guided by the artist's eye of the author. It is remarkably and wonderfully far removed from being another dry, technical 'how-to' book, something more thoughtful, maybe something more spiritual, for the heart and soul of an artist beats through it.



Throughout, the book references the author's own garden, though it is not a book about the garden; I hope that book will be written before too long. The garden provides the charming photographs which illustrate the book very generously. The author's writing style is leisurely, descriptive and personable, and the photography matches this style. Gentle colours and colour combinations present a soothing atmosphere throughout.

Grounded in the Garden: an artist's guide to creating a beautiful garden in harmony with nature, T. J. Maher, Pimpernel Press, £25

Growing Beauty

records the development of the garden at Lavistown House, near Kilkenny, and Des Doyle's own growth as a gardener. In 2009 he came to Lavistown House, the home of his wife's family since 1810, as a man with little gardening experience who gradually became engaged in the process of gardening. He added thousands of spring bulbs and developed attractive herbaceous borders, but Storm Darwin in February 2014 wreaked enormous damage, downing ten mature trees and forcing change on the garden and gardener. It was the impetus for reinvention rather than restoration and, after the storm damage had been cleared, Des set about creating a new garden. The nature of the account is reflective, the story of the development of both garden and gardener, an adventure in life as much as in horticulture.

Growing Beauty: the reinvention of an Irish country garden, Des Doyle, self-published, €30



The Open Gardens of Ireland is the indispensable companion book for the garden visitor travelling around Ireland. It is the most comprehensive listing of gardens one might visit; it covers all 32 counties and a full range of gardens – big and small, private and public, community and state-owned, town gardens and country estates, 375 in all – so you are unlikely to find yourself in a location without a garden to visit.



Shirley Lanigan published her first guide to Irish gardens almost 25 years ago and, with several volumes between then and now, I don't think there is a hedge she hasn't looked over nor a garden gate she hasn't pushed open in the entire country, so there is nobody more qualified to describe Irish gardens.

I have commented previously that, if there was a fault, it was that Shirley could be too kind in her descriptions of gardens, inclined to gloss over faults and failings. While one would not wish her to be unduly harsh, the reader of any such guide hopes for accuracy, so, when I opened the book, I went straight to those gardens with which I am most familiar, as this would give me a basis on which to judge her appraisal of the others. I found that critical comments and reservations were balanced by praise for areas of the gardens which continued in good stead. Praise was given generously while failings were, generally, noted gently. This reassured me that this was a guide we could rely on.

All in all, it is a thorough work and a valuable resource for the garden-visiting enthusiast.

The Open Gardens of Ireland, Shirley Lanigan, The Gutter Bookshop, €25



A gardener's eye

Tim Guilbride

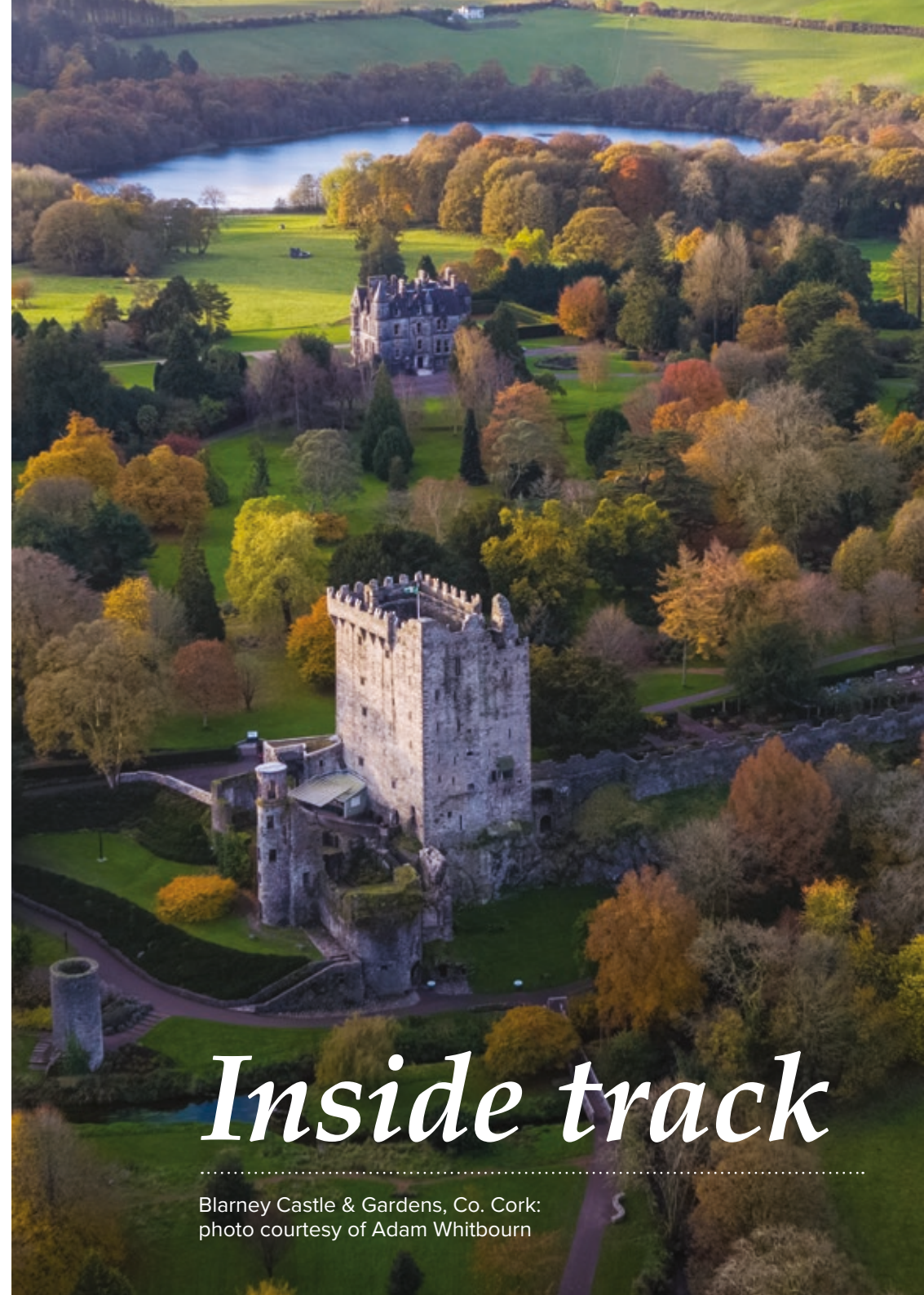
As soon as we bought Rush Hill, an eighteenth-century former vicarage in Co. Roscommon, I started hunting for urns, troughs and planters in salvage yards and at auctions, to add interest and structure to the garden I was planning.

Like many old estates, Rush Hill used to have a wealth of stone troughs and tanks of different sizes, but over the years they gradually disappeared. When we moved in, only one survived, a lovely oval-ended piece, four feet long, that had been abandoned in an outlying field, as it was badly cracked. To me, though, cracks mean drainage, so our local farmer's son gently lifted it on the forks of his tractor, brought it up to the house and laid it down outside the back door.

At first I planted the trough with wallflowers: very pretty for a few weeks, but dull for the rest of the year.



Then sempervivums: they were showy for longer, but just not us. At last, after losing two-thirds of our *Rosmarinus* 'Fota Blue' to cold winds, I replanted the trough with the remaining plants. They absolutely took off, branching out in graceful curves and flowering for nearly eleven months of the year. Gertrude Jekyll advises planting rosemary by paths, so you can rub your hand on the foliage, and the same advice should apply to doorways. Unfortunately, in December 2022 we had over a week of truly bitter weather; only three plants survived, but the memory of their incomparable colour forced me to risk planting them again. There seemed to be a national shortage, but this summer Ardcarne Garden Centre managed to track down five, one of which burst into flower on 1 September. Yes, they are a risk, but I don't care: they're worth it!



Inside track

Blarney Castle & Gardens, Co. Cork:
photo courtesy of Adam Whitbourn

Report of the 42nd Annual General Meeting

Debbie Bailey & Agnes Peacocke

Attendance

The 42nd Annual General Meeting of the Society was held at Clandeboye Estate, Co. Down, on Saturday 18 May 2024. It was attended by Executive Committee officers (Chair Mary Forrest, Honorary Treasurer David Grayson and Membership Secretary Nichola Monk), other members of the Committee and members: 93 in total.

Apologies were received from Edith Brosnan, Billy McCone and Larry Phelan.

Minutes and matters arising from 2023 AGM minutes

A summary of the 2023 AGM was given by Debbie Bailey. It was proposed by Claire McNally, seconded by Maeve Bell and passed. The Chair, Mary Forrest, then responded to queries raised in 2023, saying that two visits had been organised by Larry Phelan in the Munster region to Inchidoney, Co. Cork, and to Coolwater Gardens in Co. Limerick and that, following a request for more online meetings, five lectures via Zoom were held during the year.

Chair's report

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and thanked the sub-committee responsible for the excellent organisation of both

the meeting and the activities for the weekend. She reported that membership was the same as in 2023, 681 members in total, with 278 in Leinster, 118 in Munster and Connaught when taken together, 272 in the Northern Region and 13 in Britain and elsewhere.

Mary thanked members and fellow Committee members for their support throughout the year and then outlined activities that had taken place. Three issues of the *Newsletter* were edited by Maeve Bell with support from Stephen Butler, Pat Carroll and Brendan Sayers. The monthly e-bulletin was edited by Rosie Campbell and carried news and details of events and activities. Members' contributions to both made very interesting reading. Members had received the annual seed list and an increase to 28 contributors had ensured an interesting and varied selection of seed. Requests numbered 125 and feedback demonstrated members' appreciation for the scheme.

Zoom lectures delivered over the year included two from members Billy McCone and Dave Victory, in addition to Matthew Jebb and Shirley Lanigan from Ireland, and Catherine Ikin and Judith Nesbitt from England. In-person lectures were delivered by members Adrian

Walsh and Claire Woods, in addition to Alwyn Sinnamon in the Northern Region, and by Conall O'Caomh, Cara Daly, John Anderson and Des Daly in Dublin. There was a joint lecture with the Alpine Garden Society. Assistance by staff at each venue was gratefully acknowledged. Summer garden visits in 2023 included visits in Munster, Leinster and the Northern Region and in spring 2024 to Coolwater, Co. Limerick, and Danesmoate in Dublin. Members continued to look after the two IGPS gardens, Pogue's Entry in Antrim and the Lisnacloskey Rectory Garden in Cultra. Successful plant sales in Antrim and Blackrock provided funds for the Society.

While members joined because of their interest in plants and gardens, what made the Society work was the splendid contribution of many people behind the scenes, currently some fifty volunteers. Mary stressed that more volunteers were needed, and she encouraged members to offer to help. Stephen Butler had retired as Heritage Plants Coordinator and in his stead Claire McNally and Andrew Gee will coordinate the conservation work. Elaine Butler was now web editor. Adrian Walsh and Anne-Marie Woods run Eventbrite bookings. Unfortunately Áine-Máire Ní Mhurchú had resigned as Honorary Secretary due to personal circumstances. Debbie Bailey and Maeve Bell had indicated that they wished to hand over their positions. David Grayson and Mary Forrest will be due to retire next year, thus succession planning was an urgent issue.

The Chair's report was proposed by John Peacocke, seconded by Nichola Monk and passed.

Treasurer's report

Accounts for the year 2023/4 were presented by the Treasurer, David Grayson. The total income was €27,010 and expenditure including accruals was €29,618. The report from the external auditors was not available for the meeting, but David was confident that no issue will arise and the report will be forthcoming.

Approval of the Treasurer's report was proposed by Paul Smith, seconded by Helen Murphy and passed.

The Treasurer indicated that expenditure per member amounted to €32. As the average subscription is only €25 per member when joint memberships and honorary members are allowed for, he suggested that an increase in subscription rates was now necessary.

Amendment to the Constitution

The proposed amendment to the Constitution did not proceed due to new information received from the bank.

Election of officers and committee members

Andrew Gee, having been proposed by Billy McCone and Nichola Monk, was elected. Dave Victory had agreed to be nominated as Leinster Representative, but no proposer and seconder followed. He will be co-opted to the Committee following the meeting.

As no nominations were received for Vice Chairperson, Munster Representative or Honorary Secretary, these positions remained vacant.

Any other business

There being no other business, the meeting closed.

Mary Forrest then presented *Sorbus* 'Autumn Spire', a cultivar selected by Flannery's Nursery, Co. Kildare, to Fergus Thompson, head gardener, to mark the Society's visit to Clandeboye.

Membership of committees and positions as of September 2024

National Executive Committee

Chair: Mary Forrest
Treasurer: David Grayson
Membership Secretary:
Nichola Monk
Leinster Representative:
Dave Victory
Northern Representative:
Claire McNally
Member: Rosemary Campbell
Member: Andrew Gee

Leinster Sub-committee

Chair: Edith Brosnan
Dave Victory (Leinster Representative)
Sarah Earle

Mary Montaut
Anne-Marie Woods

Munster Sub-committee: vacant

Northern Sub-committee

Chair: Robert Logan
Claire McNally (Northern Representative)
Joanna Loane
Helen Murphy
Agnes Peacocke
Diane Sprules
Robert Trotter
Adrian Walsh
Claire Woods
Maureen Reid (Lismacloskey Lead Volunteer)

E-Bulletin

Rosemary Campbell

Heritage Plants Coordinators

Andrew Gee and Claire McNally

Newsletter Editor

Maeve Bell

Seed Exchange Coordinator

Debbie Bailey

Website and Facebook

Elaine Butler

Zoom Coordinator

Nichola Monk

Faces at the AGM



Fergus Thompson & Mary Forrest



Claire McNally & Oonah Stringer



Dominica McKeivitt, Claire Woods & Fergus Thompson



Debbie Bailey & Agnes Peacocke



Dave Victory



Barbara Kelso



Photo courtesy of Dave Victory

The AGM: a retrospective

Helen McAneney

This was my first AGM and what a weekend. It was two full days with five wonderful and very different gardens, each packing a punch way beyond my expectations.

Clandeboyne Estate turned out to be a perfect place to host the event. We started with the formalities of the AGM, which succinctly reviewed the multitude of activities and events of the last year, finishing with the presentation of an Irish tree, *Sorbus* 'Autumn Spire', to Fergus Thompson, the head gardener at Clandeboyne Estate. We all received a gift of an Irish Heritage Plant, *Crocasmia masoniorum* 'Rowallane Yellow' – such a great memento to have. [The plants were supplied courtesy of Billy McCone and Claire McNally – Ed.]

Then it was on to the visits. Clandeboyne Estate offered the elegance of a large, established and historic garden and parkland, a legacy to its past and present gardeners and owners. Our afternoon adventures took in two gardens in suburban settings, both on a more manageable scale than Clandeboyne, yet still breathtaking, filled with colour and an abundance of plants. Both were presented to a superb level and had been planned and executed with a definite love for the garden and horticulture. On Sunday we had the pleasure of two more gardens, this time in a country setting, both demonstrating the

vision and passion of the owners. The gardens had difficult aspects to contend with, such as a sloping site or outcrops of rock, but that did not deter them; instead they incorporated these elements of the natural environment as a feature. Height was established with numerous trees, there were vistas to the hills beyond and meandering pathways drawing one ever onwards.

So, what are my thoughts? The words passion, friendship, comradeship in triumphs and trials, stories, learning from each other and community all come to mind. There was something for all.



Will be missed – Charles Nelson



E. Charles Nelson (1951–2024), a pivotal member of the Irish Garden Plant Society (IGPS), passed away on 20 May 2024. Charles's contributions to Irish gardens and plants, their histories and to our Society's past are considerable. He was a writer and through this craft expressed the love he had for nature, botany and the documentation of our island's garden history. In these he favoured no political divide. He spent almost twenty years as Horticultural Taxonomist at the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, and, on moving to England in 1996, he continued as Ireland's unofficial historical horticultural ambassador. He was a gardener too and cultivated many of the plants that he named and wrote about.

His published papers, mainly academic, were succinct and scholarly. His books found fame and award, both within and beyond Ireland. No one else has contributed so profusely to the history of gardening on this island and his numerous papers and books record garden owners and staff, the plants that they grew and how the fruits of their labours found favour around the world. His words found voice on RTÉ radio in *Sunday Miscellany* and television with *A Growing Obsession*. Seldom did an opportunity pass for Charles to use botanical art in his publications. His collaboration with Wendy Walsh resulted in books of rarity and beauty and he worked with other artists too. His research culminated in the IGPS publishing his encyclopaedia *A heritage of beauty* in 2000, without which we would be severely hampered in our conservation efforts.

Charles chaired the inaugural meeting of our Society in 1981, he was the first Chairman and served again in the 1990s. Among his litany of honours is that of our Society. Over our 33 years he became our Sage. In one of his books he tells us to 'take down this book and slowly read'. We are fortunate to have so many of his written words with which to do so. **B. S.**

Save the date!

Next year's AGM will take place in the Oranmore Lodge Hotel, Co. Galway, on **Saturday 17 May**, followed by visits to gardens in the south Galway/north Clare region. Booking will open on 1 February 2025. Further details in the January *Newsletter*.

Aubrieta 'Shangarry'

Recently the Society entered several Irish Heritage Plants (IHPs) into Plant Heritage's annual Threatened Plant of the Year competition. One, *Aubrieta* 'Shangarry', was shortlisted and subsequently won Judges' Choice. While at the time of entering we had at least one grower listed in our records, the plant has unfortunately since been lost. As yet, no other plants have been traced. The potential extinction of this cultivar emphasises the need to grow our IHPs, propagate them and distribute them to other keen gardeners. The search continues. If you think you grow it, we would be absolutely delighted to hear from you; please contact igps.heritageplants@gmail.com

Snowdrops at Altamont Plants

Robert Millar of Altamont Plants at Altamont Gardens in Co. Carlow has acquired part of the snowdrop collection from the well-known nursery Avon Bulbs in Somerset, England, following the retirement of its owner. It will bolster the existing collection at Altamont Plants, which already includes a large number of Irish snowdrops.

This is a significant development for the Irish horticultural industry and an exciting prospect for our many passionate galanthophile members.

Around the regions

Unfortunately there has not been room to include full details of all the events organised by the regional committees, but it has been a busy and enjoyable summer with no fewer than three visits to Danesmoate, two plant sales in the Northern Region, a summer lunch that included visits to Loughcrew and the Poppy Garden, an open day at Lismacloskey Rectory Garden, and visits to Ballyedmond Castle, Tourin Garden, Tombrick Garden and Lavistown House. Reports of the visits were carried in our monthly e-bulletin. Our sincere thanks go to the hard-working organisers.

Will be missed

Neil Murray, a founding member and committee member of the Society, passed away on 19 July 2024. Neil was the owner of Regional Nurseries, Dundrum, a consummate plantsman, and a supporter of Irish gardening activities. He found and introduced notable Irish cultivars – *Ilex* 'Lady Valerie', *Pittosporum* 'John Flanagan' and *P.* 'Little John'. Many of the plants that comprised the prize-winning IGPS exhibits at the 1990 and 1992 Chelsea Flower Shows came from Regional Nurseries.



Dates for your diary

Sorbus 'Autumn Spire' in autumn:
photo courtesy of Maeve Bell

Dates for your diary

Compiled by Rob Evans

Zoom links will be emailed to members a day or so in advance of each lecture.

Wednesday 16 October at 19.30

The creation of the No Name Nursery

with Steve Edney
A Zoom lecture

In 2019 Steve Edney and his partner Louise Dowle bought a three-acre parcel of land and set about creating the land and nursery they always wanted. He will tell us about their journey and how they grow their plants and maintain the land. They won a Gold Medal for their exhibit at the Chelsea Flower Show 2024 and, in August they featured in the RHS magazine, *The Garden*.

Steve Edney is the former head gardener of The Salutation Garden in Kent, England, and supervised its restoration and completion over a five-year period. The gardens are now recognised as one of the finest in the country and have received multiple awards.



Sunday 20 October from 11.00 to 14.00

Plant sale

Venue: Newtownpark Parish Pastoral Centre
Newtownpark Avenue
Blackrock
Co. Dublin A94 VF74

Organised by the Leinster Committee and renowned for providing expert advice, this sale is a great opportunity to buy a huge range of plants, including bulbs, rare or uncommon plants and Irish Heritage Plants.

Free parking and coffee shop on site. Bring plants to donate on the day, but please ensure that they are labelled. Help on the day would be appreciated:
contact igps.leinster@gmail.com



Tuesday 22 October at 19.30

Grounded in the garden

with T. J. Maher
Venue: Antrim Old Courthouse
Market Square
Antrim BT41 4AW

Patthana Garden in Co. Wicklow is the residence of T. J. Maher, an accomplished artist, gardener and author, who recently published a book, *Grounded in the garden*, which explores the principles of creating a garden in harmony with nature.

T. J. Maher's lecture will provide insights into his approach, which combines his painter's appreciation with his plantsman's knowledge, examining the practical aspects of designing a beautiful garden that honours and respects the natural environment.



Wednesday 6 November at 19.30

Eco-aesthetic gardening: creating habitats with soil life and beauty

with Conall O'Caoimh
A Zoom lecture

Based on their experience of developing their acclaimed garden, Ardán, a fully organic half-acre garden on the Hill of Howth, this talk will describe how and why soil life is cultivated and its benefits to nature, the plants and the gardener.

Over the past twenty years, **Conall O'Caoimh**, together with his wife Nuala Doherty, have created Ardán, a garden comprising a series of spaces designed to generate feeling. They describe their approach as 'eco-aesthetic', working to create both habitats and beauty around their home.



Dates for your diary

**Saturday 16 November
at 14.00**

Daffodils in Ireland

with Dave and Jules Hardy
Venue: National Botanic Gardens
Glasnevin
Dublin D09 VY63

Based in Dromore, Co. Tyrone, **Dave and Jules Hardy** are the owners of Esker Farm Daffodils, a nursery originally focusing on daffodils but now selling a broader range of other specialised bulbs, including collections of snowdrops, crocuses, colchicums and fritillaries.

This lecture will take you through the wonderfully rich tapestry of the history of daffodil breeding throughout Ireland.



**Thursday 5 December
at 19.30**

Rowallane: a legacy through time

with Claire McNally
Venue: Ballygilbert Presbyterian
Church
376 Belfast Road
Bangor BT19 1UH

Please note the new venue

Claire McNally will outline the development of Rowallane. Established in the mid-nineteenth century by Reverend John Moore, Rowallane is renowned for its plant collections, particularly azaleas and rhododendrons.

Its naturalistic design is reflective of Victorian-era garden artistry and horticultural excellence.

Claire McNally is the head gardener at Rowallane, a National Trust garden in Saintfield, Co. Down, and is a member of the Northern Committee.

**Wednesday 11 December
at 19.30**

The parks and gardens of Dublin

with Dr Christy Boylan
A Zoom lecture

Dr Boylan will discuss his new book, *The parks and gardens of Dublin*, which gives an account of the history and development of over 150 Dublin parks and gardens. He will talk about their rich artistic heritage as well as the various plant collections, which come from all over the world.

A native of Co. Cavan, **Christy Boylan** is a lecturer at the Technological University Dublin, an adjudicator for the National Tidy Towns Competition and Chair of the International Jury for Entente Florale Europe. He is the first President of the Tree Council of Ireland and a Fellow and former President of the Irish Landscape Institute.



**Saturday 18 January 2025
at 14.00**

Some insights into plant trials for the trade – Teagasc trials of hydrangeas and sunflowers at Phoenix Park 2024

with Dónall Flanagan
Venue: National Botanic Gardens
Glasnevin
Dublin D09 VY63
Free booking via Eventbrite



Dates for your diary

Dónall Flanagan is the Nursery Stock/Ornamentals Specialised Advisor to Teagasc at Ashtown in the Phoenix Park. He will give us some insight into the process by which named varieties of ornamental plants are chosen and are likely to reach our garden centres. There will be surprises along the way!

Thursday 6 February at 19.30

Growing your own cut flowers: season and sustainability

with Fionnuala Fallon
A Zoom lecture

Saturday 15 February at 11.00
(note the time)

Kilmacurragh through the seasons

with Mary O'Neil Moloney
Venue: National Botanic Gardens
Glasnevin
Dublin D09 VY63



Saturday 8 March at 11.00
(note the time)

Trees in Ireland: some distinguished natives and honoured guests

with Mary Forrest
Venue: National Botanic Gardens
Glasnevin
Dublin D09 VY63

Saturday 17 May

Annual General Meeting

Venue: Oranmore Lodge Hotel,
Co. Galway and private gardens.

Booking opens on 1
February 2025.

Thanks to our contributors

Tim Guilbride, a designer and former academic, lives in Co. Roscommon, where he is involved in several heritage and restoration projects.

David Jeffrey gardens in Howth, Co. Dublin; he chaired the Society on two occasions between 1988 and 1990 and again between 1994 and 1996.

Helen McAnaney is a seasonal horticulture assistant at the main campus of the South East Regional College, Holywood, Co. Down.

Mary Montaut is a beekeeper and is passionate about wildlife in the garden. She is a member of the Leinster Committee.

Brendan Sayers is Glasshouse Foreman at the National Botanic Gardens and has spent almost thirty years working there; he specialises in orchids, both native and tropical. He is a long-standing member and former Committee member.

Eileen Sung volunteers with the National Trust in Rowallane Garden, Co. Down, and is a keen advocate for urban green space.

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

Joe Whelan trained at the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, and Waterford Institute of Technology. He moved to Nymans in 2015 and has been head gardener there since 2019.

Doreen Wilson is a garden historian with a PhD in the subject. Her current interest is nineteenth-century Irish landscapes.

My thanks to **Debbie Bailey, Rob Evans, Andrew Gee, Bruce Johnson, Seamus O'Brien, Agnes Peacocke, Mary O'Neill-Maloney** and **Tim Stapleton** for providing written contributions and photos.

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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.




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