



Conifer Identification Day at Kilmacurragh

Séamus O'Brien must have spent hours collecting the wonderful display of conifers laid out on trestle tables for the members lucky enough to be there to pick up and examine as he talked us through them all.

Far too many to list, but for those interested I'm sure copies of the summary given to us by Séamus would be available from him. He lives at Kilmacurragh.

The collection was divided into three orders in the plant kingdom:

1. The Ginkgoales with one family, one genus and one species.
2. The Taxales with one family, the Taxaceae.
3. The Coniferales with many families, the most commonly known being Pinaceae, Cupressaceae and the Araucariaceae.

A few examples from the discussion:

Taxus (yew) is not a conifer, no cone.

The fruit of *Banksia* is a cone but it is not a conifer.

Ginkgo derives from the Japanese word ginkyo meaning 'silver apricot', referring to the fruits. A sacred tree, originally 12 species, now only one.

Araucaria araucana, or Monkey Puzzle, lives from 1,000 to 1,200 years in the wild, 160 years here.

Wollemia nobilis, one of the world's oldest and rarest plants, found in a small grove of less than 100 trees near Sidney, Australia as recently as 1994, is thought to have existed 200 million years ago at the time of the dinosaurs.

Barbara FitzGerald



The Woodland Trust

Patrick Cregg of the Woodland Trust has written to tell us of their latest project, 'Millions of trees for millions of heroes'. The idea is to create a new national wood in the island of Ireland to commemorate the centenary of the First World War. A fine site has been chosen along the banks of the River Faughan in the Faughan Valley, an Area of Special Scientific Interest. In addition to the new woodland, an extensive network of new paths will connect and offer access to over ten miles of stunning woodland and riverside walks.

A donation of £20 enables the planting of a tree. To support or find out more information contact Janette Wickens by email at janettewickens@woodlandtrust.org.uk or by phone 0845 293 5631.

The address of the Woodland Trust in Northern Ireland is:

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Barbara FitzGerald

Guyana

We are grateful to Br. Anthony for allowing us include the following excerpts from his recent trip to the Amazon Rain Forest.

This unauthorised and freebooting expeditionary raid on the north-draining section of the Amazon Rain Forest, on behalf of the most honourable Society, in early December 2014 was launched from Georgetown, (British) Guyana.

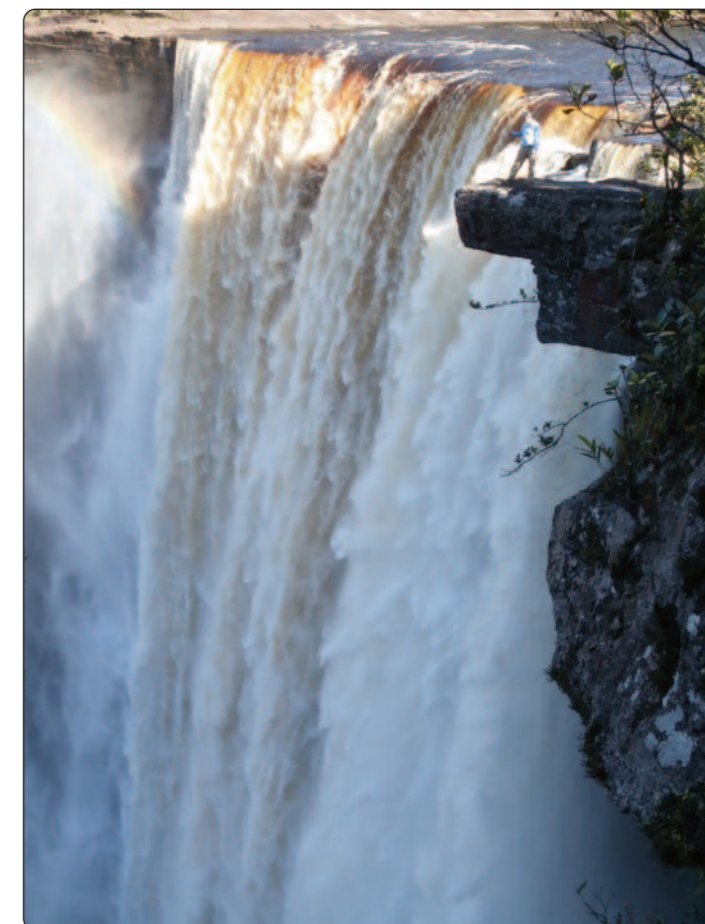
After a flight over fields of rice and cane, over the brown sugar laden rivers of Demerara and Essequibo, and over forest of ever increasing luxuriance which eventually became a rich and sharply focused mosaic of hundreds of diverse trees, clearly differentiated by colour and size and a discrete hexagon of distance from neighbours – reminiscent of the well maintained tea gardens of Kerala, something began to go wrong. The plane had not run out of fuel, but the forest began to get thin, and the bones of the Earth began to show. Exposures of clean white sand spoke of the strange Lost World up-river, and occasional mercuric wounds of lurid yellow and green declared that the zealous search for El Dorado still goes on.

As we approached Tepuis country, the soils and the forest became more nutrient free. Sheer vertical cliffs and escarpments emerged from the canopy. The rock seemed immensely strong, translucent, polished and pale pink in colour.

And then we saw it, the most magnificent waterfall in the world – like lightning shot from some high crag, the water fell with never a jag, a river steep and wide. The Kaieteur Falls on the Potaro River plunge in a single leap of over seven hundred vertical feet.

West of the falls, some sections of the plateau form Tepuis, or inland Galapagos Islands, cut off from the forest below by impossible 1,000 ft cliffs on all sides. So enduring and absolute is the isolation of their table tops that endemic plants and animals have evolved on each one. The Amerindians recognise these massive Tepui as tree stumps of a great primeval forest of the Tree of Life or the Tree of the Fruits of All the World, whose felling begat the forest we know today when its fruit laden branches crashed to Earth. It was these fabulous inland islands that inspired Arthur Conan Doyle's 'The Lost World', and in turn, 'Jurassic Park'.

Some days later at Atta Forest the remarkable trees include Greenheart (*Chlorocardium rodiei*), Purpleheart



Can you spot Br. Anthony?

(*Peltogyne spp.*), and Walking Palm (*Socratea exorrhiza* - it walks around on three or four legs looking for light).

At Kurupukari the rain forest is particularly magical and is dominated by the enormous *Mora excelsa*.

Typical of the Amazon Forest the nutrient layer of soil here is paper thin, and overlies sterile white sand or inert refractory rock. The whole forest system depends for its survival on minerals and diatoms airlifted from the dry bed of Mega Lake, Chad (50%) and the rest of the Sahara and other deserts, thousands of miles to the East, brought in by the Easterly Trades. *Br. Anthony*

(Ordained in 2013 Fr. Anthony has agreed to the use of Br. Anthony as he has been affectionately known to The Irish Tree Society for so long.)

Editorial: We hope members enjoyed the 2014 season of events; the trip to Denmark was deemed to be hugely successful by all who were there. Congratulations to the committee and especially the event organisers.

We are continually grateful to all our contributors, the scribes and also the photographers; we appreciate all your generous responses to our persuasions and cajoling. We would not have a Newsletter without your generous contributions. Unfortunately we are not able to include all the amazing photographs you sent us.

Last year there was some sad news for our members. We learned of the deaths of Caryl Lucas-Clements, Henry Armstrong, Jacinta Moore, Lord Ballyedmond and Anne Hamilton. We have happy memories of their company on many trips over the years.

We are indebted to many people for sharing their skills with us. Thanks to Philip Harvey and Jim White for sharing photographic albums with us. Jim also helped with botanical nomenclature and proof reading. Thanks to Charles Horton for coordinating the text and images for the Denmark Trip, and to Bat Masterson for IT assistance.

We hope to see you at some or all of the events organised for 2015, listed below.

Peggy Masterson

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Inaugural Annual Lecture

At our AGM on 13th September 2014 we agreed to inaugurate an **Irish Tree Society Annual Lecture**.

'Conifer in Crisis: the work of the International Conifer Conservation Programme'

Wednesday, 15th April 2015, at 3pm
National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin

Martin Gardner, MBE, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, has been invited to give the lecture.

As a result of recent conservation assessments some 200 of 615 conifer species worldwide are known to be threatened with extinction by human activities. Since 1991, the International Conifer Conservation Programme (ICCP), based at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, has developed a range of initiatives – taxonomic, genetic, horticultural – to help conserve the most threatened conifer species. This includes establishing a network of *in situ* and *ex situ* sites internationally, including Ireland.

New Members

We welcome the following new members who joined during the year from as far apart as Co. Down and Co. Kerry:

- Ann Cooke
- Bruce Johnson
- Neil Porteous
- Adam Whitbourn
- Grattan de Courcy-Wheeler

Subscriptions – Clarification

To avoid possible confusion, please note that we can only use Standing Orders to pay for subscriptions, NOT Direct Debits as cited in the recent notice about subscriptions. The wrong term was inadvertently used and I hope this has not caused confusion. Aidan Walsh Honorary Treasurer ITS – 044 966 2912.

Dates for 2015

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| 25th-26th April | Co. Down |
| 14th-19th May | Welsh Marches |
| 13th-14th June | Tipperary / Limerick |
| 18th-19th July | Wicklow |
| 12th-13th September | Co. Derry |

Castle Howard

The weather on the morning of day two of the Wicklow tour did not promise much in contrast to the beautiful Saturday. However after ascending the steep, twisting drive up the rugged valley from the Meeting of the Waters, we emerged onto the small plateau in front of Castle Howard to a much brighter sky and the day remained dry.

Our hosts were Ivor and Susan Fitzpatrick and Aubrey Fennell was our guide. The castle is dramatically situated on the edge of the deeply wooded valley at the junction of the Glenmalure Valley with the Meeting of the Waters giving it all the attributes of a fairy-tale castle. It was created in 1811 by the architect Sir Richard Morrison for Robert Howard, a kinsman of the Earl of Wicklow whose seat is close by at Shelton Abbey. The castle was of great interest to Thomas Pakenham as the same architect made extensive additions to Tullyally Castle.

The landscape created by the Howards passed through a dormant period in the ownership of the Lefroy and other families before being revived and further developed by the Fitzpatricks. The main feature is a sloping and meandering walled garden of irregular shape just below the castle. This abuts a fine wood of *Fagus sylvatica* (beech) with a shrub layer almost entirely of *Ilex aquifolium* (holly) giving an insight into our deciduous woods before the introduction of laurel and rhododendron.

The upper level is terraced and dominated by an old tower which is a relic from the time this was the abode of a mine manager. It is hard to imagine that this peaceful place was once the centre of copper mining; a spoil heap near the top of the valley, visible from the front of the castle, is evidence of mining well into the twentieth century. This is followed by a more informal middle section with shrubs and grass before the formal lower end with a box parterre. The Fitzpatricks have created a laburnum tunnel here which must be dramatic when in flower.

Fine specimens of the Chinese *Tilia henryana* (Henry's lime), named for Augustine Henry, *Carpinus betulus* (hornbeam), *Betula pendula* (silver birch), eucryphia and a probable champion mahonia were noted.



After our tour of the grounds members enjoyed their picnics either around the *Quercus cerris* (turkey oak) of majestic form which dominates the front lawn of the castle or around the small lake created by the Fitzpatricks which is already well matured.
Glascott and Adrienne Symes



Glenart





Kilmacurragh

After the Annual General Meeting, on the lovely summer Saturday, most people headed to Kilmacurragh to picnic. Only a small number had their picnic at Avondale, the home of Charles Stewart Parnell. At Kilmacurragh there was a very large group of members. We were guided by Séamus O'Brien, who has brought this amazing estate alive again. The loud speaker system was very good and we heard everything that was said.

The Acton family acquired the estate in 1697, originally 5,326 acres. The National Botanic Gardens now have the house, arboretum and woodland, comprising 58 acres. The collection of



conifers is terrific, and really has to be seen. The Actons were awarded the Royal Horticultural Society Banks Memorial Medal for the greatest collection of conifers in the British Isles in 1891. We may now enjoy these wonderful trees.

The restoration going on at present is opening up roads. For instance, the Dublin to Wexford road used by Cromwell was very interesting, and here we saw a large specimen of an old elm, *Ulmus parvifolia*. Also we saw a newly planted sessile *Quercus petraea*, mound-planted to provide moisture.

At the time when some of the avenues were planted in the 1700s, the Acton family brought over men from Worcestershire in England to the estate to work on the drainage, as parts of the land were very wet. During the famine in 1845 to 1852, families came from the west. These families were given work, and were housed and fed at Kilmacurragh.

More trees of special notice in the lower woodland area were the *Chamaecyparis x vietnamensis* found in the wild and now nearly extinct, and the Atlas cedar - probably Thomas Acton's favorite tree, planted in the 1700s.

The front avenue also has some magnificent conifers, and on the right-hand side, going up towards the house, there is a new planting of native Irish species.

Near the house we admired the giant redwood *Metasequoia*. The fossil lawn, also near the house, is planted with monkey puzzle and *Wollemia nobilis*. To the front of the lawn is a large *Liriodendron*, probably acquired by the Royal Dublin Society. Estates such as Kilmacurragh would have been in close touch with the R.D.S. and the National Botanic Gardens. I would remind members that the front lawn will be a lovely sight in February with some early blue crocus, and some members may get the chance to call to Kilmacurragh to see them.

The house is in a very derelict state after two fires, one in 1978 and another in 1982. Later the house was stripped and nothing has been done since. There was a good article in *The Irish Times* by Sylvia Thompson (on 23/10/2014) in which Thomas Pakenham was quoted as follows:

"Kilmacurragh House should be restored. The Office of Public Works must now realise that it's their obligation to restore the house. There is currently no space for exhibitions or an interpretative centre."

The house is the centrepiece of these botanical gardens — which are the most important internationally in Ireland — partly due to the close contact the Acton family had with the early plant explorers in the 19th century. The acidic soil is much more suitable at Kilmacurragh for growing trees and the climate is milder in winter so certain trees and plants grow there that can't grow in Glasnevin. It's complementary to the gardens in Glasnevin. I feel strongly that the OPW has shirked its responsibility for many years. And while spending a great deal of money restoring the glasshouses in Glasnevin, Kilmacurragh has been passed over."

The gardeners at Kilmacurragh, and particularly Séamus, have taken a strong interest in the past, present and future possibilities.

Lastly, I have to mention the herbaceous border which was in full colour. The *Cardiocrinum giganteum* were magnificent. Séamus has planted 100 lilies to mark the 100 years since the start of the Great War in 1914. Rita Craigie

Tree planting at Avondale



Derrynane

Our first visit of the 2014 season was to the Derrynane Estate.

Derrynane was the country residence of Daniel O'Connell, lawyer, politician and statesman, and it stands at the tip of the Iveragh Peninsula in Co. Kerry. We were very lucky to have as our guide for the morning, James O'Shea the head gardener.

The demesne of Derrynane, containing many plantations and garden walks, was laid out in the 18th and 19th centuries. The main gardens lie in a relatively sheltered valley approached by a tunnel under the road. Although exposed to the prevailing southwesterly winds, the winters are very mild, so that frost-sensitive trees and shrubs flourish. Unfortunately the severe storms of January and February 2014 caused severe damage to many of the rare shrubs and trees. However, James assured us that they would recover and he pointed out some examples, one being the *Rhaphithamnus spinosus* (prickly myrtle) which had suffered severe damage but was already coming back.

The gardens are part of an international conservation programme, and many rare plants from the Southern Hemisphere, in particular South America, have been established there.

As we walked, we were constantly amazed at the variety of exotic species too numerous to describe, so I will concentrate on a few that evoked comments and discussions. A fine specimen of *Sonchus canariensis* (tree dandelion), usually found only in the Canary Islands, was thriving. This wacky palm tree-shaped daisy relative can grow to eight feet, and has been compared to a plant from a Dr. Seuss Book! We came upon a fine *Phellodendron amurense*, commonly called the Amur cork tree. James told us it is a major source of one of the fundamental herbs used in Chinese medicine, and is also used as a painkiller; however no



recommendations were given. In fact, strangely, the State of Massachusetts lists it as a noxious weed.

Other trees of note were a fine *Embothrium coccineum*, and an *Ulmus chenmoui*, the disease-resistant elm, stimulated an interesting discussion. Thomas informed us that there is some evidence that the wooden crates transporting plants from China may be a source of the many diseases or viruses affecting our trees in recent times. Unusual trees noted were a *Cinnamomum camphora* and an *Acacia melanoxylon*, as well as a *Styphnolobium japonicum* which James told us does not flower in Derrynane; however, Philip told us it does flower in Dublin!!

James told us that the fine collection of rhododendrons, originated from the famous Exbury Gardens in Hampshire, and were acquired for Derrynane as a result of a shipwreck off the Kerry coast. A final mention needs to be given to an enormous specimen of *Echium pinniana*, and a stand of *Chusquea bamboo*, was it *circinata* or *andina*? A debate ensued.

Derrynane Park estate is a property managed by the OPW and is open for visits throughout the year.

Peggy Masterson

Kells Bay Garden

Those of us staying in Kenmare enjoyed a wonderful drive along the Ring of Kerry to Cahersiveen where after initial difficulty we found this hidden oasis of peace and beauty. Billy Alexander was our guide. He led us through the Ladies Garden to admire a wood of wonderful tree ferns. Some of these were 115 - 120 years old. We noticed ivy creeping up some and asked Billy how this was managed. They had tried a mild weed killer but it affected the fern so the answer was to employ lots of students to do battle with the ivy and the wild *Rhododendron ponticum* growing out of some of the trunks.

As we continued along the river walk we could see the devastation wrought by the storm of February 12th. Many fine trees had been uprooted. It was surprising to see how shallow the root system was and how much slate and stones were embedded in the roots. Our way was blocked by a large tree not yet cleared so we diverted upwards and soon came on another tree that had only been uprooted the night before.

We finished our tour of the gardens in the sales area where we were met by an amazing collection of ferns of all types, tree ferns included, and many other exciting things.



A place to remember and to mark as somewhere to go back to and maybe stay overnight to savour all its delights.

Barbara FitzGerald

The Austins' Garden at Gearagh North, Sneem

Once again Ireland seemed to be a small world when we learned we were to visit Steven and Louise Austin, who had been our former neighbours in Enniskerry. In 1999 they decided to move and, exploring Kerry on a beautiful sunny day, they decided that this was the place to buy. It reminded them of a French farmhouse. The house was a ruin with out-houses, all of which they renovated. It is on a south-facing slope down to a bog with lovely views of distant mountains.

They moved in in 2004 and started creating a charming garden with different areas using many of their shrubs and plants from Enniskerry. The side garden has a mirror mosaic feature designed by their son Tim, a landscape gardener, who exhibited at Bloom last year. Here there were small *Erythronium* clumps of White Beauty and pink *E. dens-canis* and a budding *Chatham Island* forget-me-knot, *Myosotidium hortensia*. There was an *Acer griseum* with beautiful peeling chestnut-coloured bark with some lovely bird feeders on the tree, and the heavenly smell of *Viburnum carlesii* wafted over all.

Going up the hill in front of the house was a discrete working potting shed and a happy hen run. The hilltop is crowned by a standing stone. The main garden goes off down the south slope with a great collection of acers including a beautiful golden *Acer x conspicuum* 'Phoenix' with a fine young *Prunus serrula* with lovely shiny horizontally striped bark. Further on was a collection of bright azaleas and rhododendrons including the wonderfully scented *R. 'Lady Alice Fitzwilliam'*, our favourite. Then we had a surprise, an incredibly early rose, but no, on closer inspection it was a crimson double *Rubus* 'Olympic Torch'. A perfectly shaped little fir *Abies koreana* with a profusion of upright purple cones was nearby.



Clumps of different bamboos are a feature of the garden, Louise and Steven have successfully divided and moved many of their plants to suit the garden as it develops.

At the bottom of the slope a gate leads out onto the bog along a scarlet boardwalk – more of Tim's Bloom exhibit. The bog area is for further planting. We thought how about a grove of *Taxodium distichum*, the swamp cypress.

It is all a great labour of love and an incredible achievement in such a short time which we all appreciated. The I.T.S made a donation to support the Austins' choice of charity Kenya Build to sponsor the education of a boy called Dominic.

Coreen Marten & Maureen Goodbody

Derreen

A very enjoyable visit took place to Derreen on Sunday afternoon. Jim White very kindly shared some pictures with us.



Storm damage February 2014



Dicksonia antarctica

Sinocalycanthus chinensis, *Meliiodendron xylocarpum*, *Pseudocycdonia sinensis* and *Decaisnea fargesii*.

To the south of the house we saw two *Ginkgo biloba*; strangely, the seeds of which had been collected by Thomas Pakenham in Mount Albany Cemetery in Boston, USA. Does history relate what he was doing there, or what else he might have collected?

An impressive avenue of common limes, *Tilia x europaea*, runs parallel to the garden wall. Within this area we saw a Sitka spruce, *Picea sitchensis* (introduced by David Douglas in 1831), which was coning heavily. A fine specimen of *Magnolia obovata* (syn. *hypoleuca*) Japanese bigleaf magnolia, which has enormous leaves, as the name suggests.

We walked down to the river, admiring the bridge built in 1371, thus the 3rd oldest masonry bridge in Ireland, which originally carried the main road to Cork. Park Hill is the area of the estate in which is to be found the most important pedunculate oakwood in Ireland. We saw some ancient trees, one estimated to be the oldest standing in this country. The photograph gives some idea of its girth. In spring the floor of the woodland is carpeted with native bluebells, *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, creating a memorable sight.

On the Island Arboretum trees have been selected in the main as coming from east of the Caucasus. One rare



specimen, for example, was the *Hovenia dulcis*, or Japanese raisin tree. I understand that it has traditionally been used as an anti-alcohol herb and hangover cure. At least one human study has noted that, when taken before drinking, it can reduce circulating levels of alcohol.

And on that happy discovery we returned to the terrace of the house, past the lovely lake with its string of bridges, to share a celebratory glass of champagne with our host, with toasts to Abbey Leix and The Irish Tree Society!

Robert S. Myerscough

Castle Durrow Hotel Gardens

Are we running out of properties in Ireland with remarkable trees as their chief attraction?

The first day of our visit to County Laois was to notable gardens including fine trees but it was the gardens that were the chief feature, rather than the trees. That being said, and there being no rumour that we are changing our mnemonic to TIGS rather than TITS, our first port of call was to a truly remarkable garden restoration at Castle Durrow.

The manor house's construction began under the property's owner Colonel William Flower in 1712. By 1928, the old hardwood trees of Durrow were scarce. The Stokes family are now owners, and it is heart-warming to see the results of ten years' dedicated work in restoration of the three-and-a-half acre walled garden, in particular. Our host for the morning was head gardener Bart Howard, and we were impressed to learn that the work of restoring, re-planting, developing and maintaining the garden is carried out by a team of three, including Bart.

Moving out of the walled garden, we were confronted by a monkey puzzle (or Chile pine) *Auracaria auracana*, looking as though it had not much longer to live. Next on show was an elderly purple beech *Fagus sylvatica* 'Purpurea', again looking as though it was nearing its



demise, and we were reminded that even the best of beeches seldom last much beyond 200 years.

A small but healthy Korean oak (*Quercus dentata*) was visited next, and commented upon by Bart as being particularly slow in growth. Liam O'Flanagan cited his experience of the same variety, including radical surgery that he had performed (of the sort painfully familiar to members with knee problems). Thomas Pakenham comforted us with the knowledge that Korean oaks failed dismally to flourish even in Kew Gardens, for all the resources and expertise available there.

Next subject in the sick bay was an unhappy-looking holm or evergreen oak *Quercus ilex*, with yellowing foliage and

hollow trunk. Given that holm's natural range is from mid-France to Greece and the toe of Italy, it was questioned whether evergreen oak could expect to flourish in our climate. Aubrey Fennell cited a specimen at Courtown, County Wicklow, measuring 8.5 metres in girth, which may well be a European champion; he had brought dendrologists from France and Switzerland to see it. Will Warham mentioned that he had successfully grown holm oak saplings from acorns. Bart told us that Lord Ardilaun had had success in growing plants in pots up to 6 feet before planting out.

Two notable successes, among many delightful features of this property, were a 'Wild Edric' rose, a *rugosa* cross from David Austin with prolific flowering; and youthful field maples *Acer campestre*, the only maple native to Britain, which Bart particularly favours for their fresh colour throughout the growing season and tolerance to shaping for a formal garden setting.

At the conclusion of our visit, Thomas presented Bart Howard with Samuel Hayes' *Practical Treatise on Trees*, the text of 1794 which has recently been re-published by The Society. In this work is to be found a reference to a large ash *Fraxinus excelsior* at Castledurrow, measured in 1793 at eighteen feet circumference from the base to fourteen feet above the ground, "which I think on the whole is the most ornamental tree of its species that has fallen within my observation".

Richard Scott

Heywood Gardens

Heywood Gardens overlook the village of Ballinakill, County Laois. Our visit was led by John McCullen. The garden was designed by Edwin Lutyens for Colonel Hutcheson Poë and completed over six years in 1912. In 1941 the Salesian Order acquired the property as a seminary, the house burned accidentally in 1950 and in 1993, ownership passed to the State with management by OPW.

The garden style is 18th century, romantic with three lakes, an obelisk, sham castle and bathhouse. The grounds have several old trees of oak and beech. The ornamental gardens consist of an alley of pleached lime and several 'rooms'. The masterpiece is an oval sunken garden whose entrance is screened by yew hedges leading to a curving set of steps which descends to three levels of flower borders. The yew hedges are notable because they



appear fresh and vital, even though they are over 100 years old and have been split in half recently to a manageable width of 2.5 metres. A central pool has a huge fountain and eight tortoises which spout water. The original planting schemes were by Gertrude Jekyll and restoration designs were by Graham Stuart Thomas. The borders were in their prime with flowering phlox, iberis, anaphalis, anemone, yucca and blocks of the charming soft pink rose 'Mevrouw Nathalie Nypels'.
Gerry Douglas

Fruitlawn Garden

Fruitlawn is a relatively new garden and the largest tree is an Italian poplar – it provided shelter for many of us as a heavy shower broke soon after our arrival. After that it was a lovely afternoon with wonderful sunlight through leaves, especially dramatic as it shone through the brilliant red leaves of the *Cercis canadensis*.

Our host, Arthur Shackleton, said his interest is in the structure of a garden, whereas his father was more of a plantsman. And so the garden is a series of interlocking spaces – the courtyards, the lawns and borders in front of the house, the long path shimmering with evening primrose and teasle, which the goldfinches love, and masses of white willow herb which draws so much admiration but which Arthur said is a monster. A *Hydrangea villosa* is he said one of the best of the hydrangeas. And finally, the great hornbeam tunnel. This is like the one at Charleville which was inspired by Russell Page and his Belgian protégée who worked there.

Within these spaces is an interesting planting of trees including a mulberry *Morus nigra* - (fruiting but rather sour – we tried it!), a medlar (*Mespilus germanica*), a *Ginkgo biloba*, a hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus 'fastigiata'*) which was spreading energetically but



unexpectedly. There was a *Pyrus 'Chanticleer'* and a *Paulownia tomentosa*. A *Quercus cerris* was very large for its 14 years – it's a good choice for exposed sites – and there was a planting of *Quercus robur*, close enough to draw each other upwards and make a fine group at the end of the garden.

But the highlight was a *Tilia henriana* in flower for the first time. It was the first time Aubrey had seen one in flower, so it generated general interest and excitement and was much photographed.

A productive and ornamental vegetable garden had rows of contrasting colour and texture, such as artichokes – globe and root – exotic kales, frilly or long smooth, and framing them, many soft fruit bushes. As a young garden it was an inspiration, and our most enjoyable visit ended with a delicious tea in the house.

Liz Tottenham

Abbeyleix

Abbeyleix is surely one of the most beautiful estates in Ireland, famous for its primeval oak forest, with its beautifully restored mansion built by the de Vesci family in 1774, now maintained and lovingly cared for by its current owner, our host Sir David Davies.

We were led by John Anderson who has been responsible for selecting and planting all the collection since the estate was acquired by David about eighteen years ago, and the benefits of his vast experience and knowledge are clear to see. We could not have been in better hands than these.

The party set out from the forecourt of the house. First stop was at the stump of what had been a massive *Cupressus macrocarpa*, the Monterey cypress, before it was felled by storm damage. We then progressed to the adjacent paddock, where some of the new owner's plantings are to be found. We saw the oak, *Quercus pyrenaica 'Pendula'* presented by the Irish Tree Society in 1996, although there was some doubt cast on whether it is in fact the weeping form.

Near these are *Q. castaneifolia 'Green Spire'* planted in the period of 1996 to 2000, which, as its epithet suggests, has leaves which are reminiscent of the sweet chestnut and an Armenian oak *Q. pontica*, which was planted in 2003. Another fine specimen was *Picea orientalis*, commonly known as Caucasian spruce, or Oriental spruce. The pink male cones are an attractive feature of this species.

Next, we moved to the older plantings, to stand in awe under the giant *Abies grandis*, the well-named Grand fir, which stands at 45 m as not only the tallest in the gardens, but the tallest in Ireland.

Placed along an internal garden wall is a range of interesting and more tender tree species, such as *Maclura pomifera*, or osage orange, bearing large orange-like fruits which are used for decorative purposes. It is a member of the mulberry family Moraceae, but not edible. Another rarity is *Meliosma veitchiorum*, a very rare but startling small tree. Huge pinnate red-stalked leaves and huge panicles of creamy-white flowers are followed by pinkish-violet fruits. Also noted were *Heptacodium jasminoides*, *Tetracentron sinensis*, *Emmenopterys henryi*,

Moyola Park

Fifty-five members visited Moyola Park on 17th May 2014. We were welcomed by Lady Moyola herself, and provided with refreshments. Then, riding on her modified electric golf-cart, she led us along the Moyola River, flanked by large banks of rhododendrons and azaleas, bright with blossom and laden with scent.

We passed a range of very tall slender trees, notably a *Quercus petraea*, with a straight bole to 21m, described by Aubrey Fennell in *Heritage Trees of Ireland* as 'the leggy oak of Moyola'. Several nearby yews had blown down the previous winter. Their rotting centres confirmed the difficulty of telling their age. We admired an impressive stand of *Fagus sylvatica*, thought to have been planted in 1843, shortly after the 'great wind' of 1839. Our chairman wondered if they had been planted before that hurricane and survived in the sheltered river valley.

The largest *Juglans regia* in Northern Ireland, and the Irish height and girth champion of *Abies forrestii*, var 'georgii' were noted, as well as many fine viburnums and camellias. Lady Moyola's favourite was *Camellia 'Susan'* because it flowers over a period of many weeks.

Lack of time prevented a close inspection of the rare cultivar of *Quercus petraea 'Cochleata'*, seen on a previous visit in 1995, but we were assured that it remains in rude good health.

Before we dragged ourselves away from this beautiful estate, our chairman, Thomas, thanked Lady Moyola for making our visit so interesting, and presented her with a fine *Magnolia*.

Michael Scott



Shane's Castle, Co. Antrim

Having enjoyed a picnic lunch by the estate railway station overlooking Lough Neagh, we gathered by the original ruins of the early Shane's Castle set above the lough shore. The building, designed by John Nash, had sadly been destroyed by fire while reconstruction work was being completed in 1818. Lord O'Neill, our host, gave us a brief history and explained that no tall trees would be found as they experienced force 8-10 gales coming from the lough.

He then led us to the recently restored camellia house, where the warm scent of *Jasminum officinale* enticed us inside to view the wonderfully mature camellia trees which are over 100 years old.

Driving towards the house, we passed through an avenue of *Aesculus x carnea*, red flowering, which have survived whilst seven large members of the horse chestnut have succumbed to disease and been felled.

Walking through the wild-flower meadow, our host explained that his uncle, Terence O'Neill (the former Northern Ireland Prime Minister), had given the trees in this area which led us gently to the wondrous *Cedrus libani* which has the second largest girth size in Ireland.

The trees have been planted and gardens reclaimed and planted in the past fifty years since Raymond and Gina married. The orchard of medlars, apples, cherries and quinces was in spring blossom with pretty understory of wild flowers and led us through a gate to another garden room where magnolias were centre stage - of particular note was the scented *wieseneri*.



Image of a painting of Shane's Castle, by Felix Kelly 1988, is a speculation on the appearance of the castle if the designs by John Nash had been completed after the fire in 1816. A yacht of the style illustrated existed at the time.

Moving forward through well-planted woodland (where some of the broadleaf rhododendrons had come from Ambrose Congreve) with towering *Sequoiadendron* overhead and a good *Chamaecyparis nootkatensis 'Pendula'*.

The next area was re-planted only ten years ago, after old Christmas trees had been removed and it was most encouraging to see the growth and range of planting which included the Wollemi Pine.

Time had sadly run out: so Thomas thanked the O'Neills on our behalf and said how much we had enjoyed seeing such a "fantastic selection of well grown and boisterous trees" and presented them with a *Magnolia dawsoniana* as a mark of our gratitude for a thoroughly enjoyable visit.

Anne Mackie

Visit to Mount Stewart

The last day of our visit to Northern Ireland was spent at Mount Stewart. The Head Gardener, Neil Porteous, not only showed us what amazing planting had been done in the past, but gave an insight of his plans for future planting. We were told of the background to the layout of the garden which included Greek mythology and Tír na nÓg.

I was thrilled by the *Davidia involucrata* which this year seems wonderful everywhere, more bracts than leaves on such young trees, also the candelabra primulas which had spread out under the trees on the Lady's Walk by the lake.

Many, many thanks to Neil, Paddy, Julie and Tracy who went to so much trouble to give us such a perfect weekend.
Julia Goff



Propagation Day

About fifteen members were fortunate to be in Jan Ravensberg's nurseries for the Propagation Day. We were welcomed with coffee by Jan and Siena and then Jan took us to see the first stage of development, rows and rows of seedlings under plastic. From there we went to the propagation house where Jan showed us how to take cuttings and prepare them. He told us how cuttings were taken from different species at different times of the year. Also cuttings from young plants in the glasshouses do better than old ones. Some plants, like gorse for instance, will root in two weeks. Jan then demonstrated how to graft which he made look simple but was difficult for those who attempted to try.

After lunch we went on a tour of the many trees planted by Jan. It was amazing to see how much some trees had grown in just twenty years. Paddy Mackie remembered one large border which had been recently planted when he last visited some years ago and was now unrecognisable.

We admired a *Crataegus harbisonii* which is now extinct in the wild. Also a *Clethra fargesii* with its sweet smell. A *Sinocalycanthus chinensis* looked good but Jan told us *Sinocalycanthus* 'Hartlage Wine' was even better. A cork oak planted in 1995 already had a splendid bark. An *Idesia polycarpa* growing strongly from an old root attracted some of us. Among the many different specimens, *Eucryphia glutinosa* was also admired. I don't do credit to the many different trees and would recommend a visit.

Jan gave a wonderful tour and never failed to answer questions and point things out making it a memorable day much enjoyed by all. We are very grateful to Jan and Siena for their hospitality and generosity with their time, and for presenting each participant with a fine specimen (about 1.2m tall) of *Camellia* 'Galaxie' as a parting gift.

Barbara FitzGerald



Swinging at Glenart, Co. Wicklow



The trees were very impressive and included a *Pterocarya fraxinifolia*, a *Juglans laciniata*, a Ginkgo with large leaves (8 cm radius) and a 25 m *Picea likiangensis*. The hospitality we received was very charming and included delicious loquats in the luxuriant glass houses and the delicious Danish pastries laced with generous quantities of gold leaf. Feeling that the world was really a remarkably good place, we proceeded to lunch at the lake-side Paradise Garden Arboretum. (Anthony Keane OSB)



We then left the Copenhagen area for the island of Funen (Fyn in Danish), and on to our next stop, the **Glorup** manor house and historic park. The park has two sections, a formal French Baroque garden and an Anglo-Chinese landscape garden. The Baroque garden boasted the longest allée of limes in Denmark and it was certainly over an old mile in length, but the star exhibit at Glorup was one of the most beautiful tulip trees that anyone could remember with its flowering branches in convenient reach. (Charles Horton)

The gardens are extraordinarily well documented and we were all excited to see some of the great 18th century paintings of the garden in the manor house at the end of our tour. These paintings and 29 diaries written by the creator of the gardens have been invaluable in helping to restore all the features.

Our last full-day tree hunting included visits to two remarkable estates, made all the more enjoyable by the personal introductions arranged by our guide, Bolette. **Sanderumgaard Romantic Garden** was introduced to us by its owners Susanne and Erik Vind whose family have owned this 12,000-ha estate since 1828.

Sanderumgaard was a tonic to the soul and it was with heavy hearts that we made our farewells as we were individually thanked by our hosts. (Charles Horton)

The gardens, originally laid out in the 18th century, had fallen into decline and our hosts have made it a life-time project to restore the 15-ha garden to its former glory and return it to one of the most beautiful, romantic gardens in Denmark. Set among canals, ponds, and streams, the gardens feature over 13 historic pavilions and other architectural features which catch the eye at critical points. Our journey through the dappled glades stopped at one of the restored pavilions where we were treated to strawberries and refreshments by our hosts. All our questions about the gardens, the plants and the inspiration behind this €30 million project were answered with such infectious enthusiasm that we nearly all volunteered to help on the spot.

Our next visit was to **Egeskov Castle and Park**, which is one of the biggest tourist attractions in Denmark. After a generous lunch we were introduced to gardener Michael Holm who very kindly showed us around the 20-ha garden. This was very much a Baroque style of garden and there were some wonderful old hedges and mazes, the oldest dating back to 1730. We were shown a White Garden, Fuschia Garden, exceptional Rose Garden and some wonderful 250 year old pleached limes and also a huge collection of vintage cars and motorcycles.

In 1981 the IDS toured this garden, and it featured in their Year Book. It was good to see that a few of their noted trees were still standing. We saw a *Populus tremula* 'Erecta' and *Cephalotaxus harringtonii* and a few other notable specimens included a wonderful weeping beech, *Fagus sylvatica* 'Pendula', *Taxus baccata*, *Acer saccharinum*, *Platanus x acerifolia* and a very attractive cut leaved beech, *Fagus sylvatica* 'Laciniata'. Like so many other gardens there was evidence of the 2013 storm damage, and we were told that a lot of notable trees had been lost.

The elevated tree-top walk was an added attraction for many of our members who ventured into the canopy to get a bird's eye view of the estate. (Adam Whitbourn)

Sadly we made our farewells to our wonderful local guide, Bolette and all agreed that the trip was one of the most enjoyable undertaken by the Society in recent years. Fulsome praise was heaped upon our Hon. Treasurer, Aidan Walsh, for his exceptional organisational skills and many requested a return visit to Denmark.

Compiled by Charles Horton with additional contributions from Fr. Anthony Keane OSB, Julie Mackie, Anne Martin, Joc Sanders and Adam Whitbourn



Denmark 5th-10th June 2014

Our little party of 34 met up at Dublin Airport in high anticipation. On arrival, our Danish guide, Bolette Bramsen, proved to be the best introduction to Denmark that anyone might wish for, attending to all our demands with a beaming smile and consummate courtesies.



Our first visit was to the **Botanic Garden in Copenhagen**, which was the perfect start to our Danish odyssey. The garden now contains more than 13,000 species almost all of which have been wild collected: 'no cultivars' our guide informed us, 'and all records since 1795 are intact and on a database'.

There were many handsome specimen trees to study, the oldest being a *Taxodium distichum* of 1806 that survived being moved from its old location when it was 60 years old. Other remarkable veterans were the *Zelkova serrata* and *Sorbus domestica* of 1864. There are 100 specimens of conifers in the original nursery, and the entire oak collection came from Kew. *Quercus dentata* with its foot-long leaves caught the attention of the group, as did the *Gleditsia caspica* planted in 1932 whose long thorns even have thorns. (Julie Mackie)

The garden has 600 species of trees and shrubs which are acclimatised to the extremes of the Danish climate, and are therefore valuable for basic research.

The second visit of our first day was to an entirely different collection. **The Forest Botanic Garden at Charlottenlund**, a few miles from the centre of Copenhagen, was the old arboretum of the university established in the 1830s but which is now in the care of the State Forest Agency.

At the entrance to the forest were two stately *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* (Dawn Redwood) standing like sentries either side of the path. We came upon many magnolias which the Danes call 'temple trees' and a *Magnolia accuminata*, which is known as the 'cucumber tree', so called for the shape and colour of its young fruit clusters, which had a *Hydrangea petiolaris* twining around it with its delicate large white green flower heads of the lace cap variety, a memorable thing to see.





Our second day began with a visit to the **Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University in Frederiksborg**. The collections of trees and other ornamental plants have been grown since 1856 in the grounds of the original university building, now also a public park, with the lovely objective of studying plants 'for the benefit of mankind'. They include notable collections of ash (*Fraxinus*), oak (*Quercus*) and maple (*Acer*), but also many other interesting species.

Among the many other specimens worth mentioning were: a wonderful, stately *Ginkgo biloba* planted in 1878, before which our Chairman was seen in reverent worship; a magnificent multi-stemmed *Zelkova serrate*, which we decided must be four individuals bundle-planted; a Shipova (*x Sorbopyrus auricularis*), a peculiar inter-generic

One of the most interesting sights were the migrant lime trees which were there before the garden was founded and have formed their own small forest of prostrate branches which have spread along the ground and taken root. Other trees that have re-sprung from fallen parents included a *Laburnum alpinum*, originally planted in 1845 but felled by storms in the past decade; it continues to live through its off-shoots.

The oldest tree in the garden was a common lime tree (*Tilia x europaea*) from 1760. (Anne Martin)

After our picnic lunch, we motored to the Hørsholm Arboretum, the largest of its kind in Denmark with around 2000 species. Established in 1936 as an extension to the Forest Botanic Garden in Charlottenlund, Hørsholm has a similar purpose of supporting education in forestry and botanic gardening. Administered as part of the University of Copenhagen, our guide was the irrepressible Erik Dahl Kjær, Professor of Forest Genetics and Diversity. The wet weather did not dampen our spirits as he drew us further into the woods to see its botanical treasures, one of which, the *Ulmus minor suberosa* (shaggy elm) became a "must-have" on everyone's wish list. (Charles Horton)



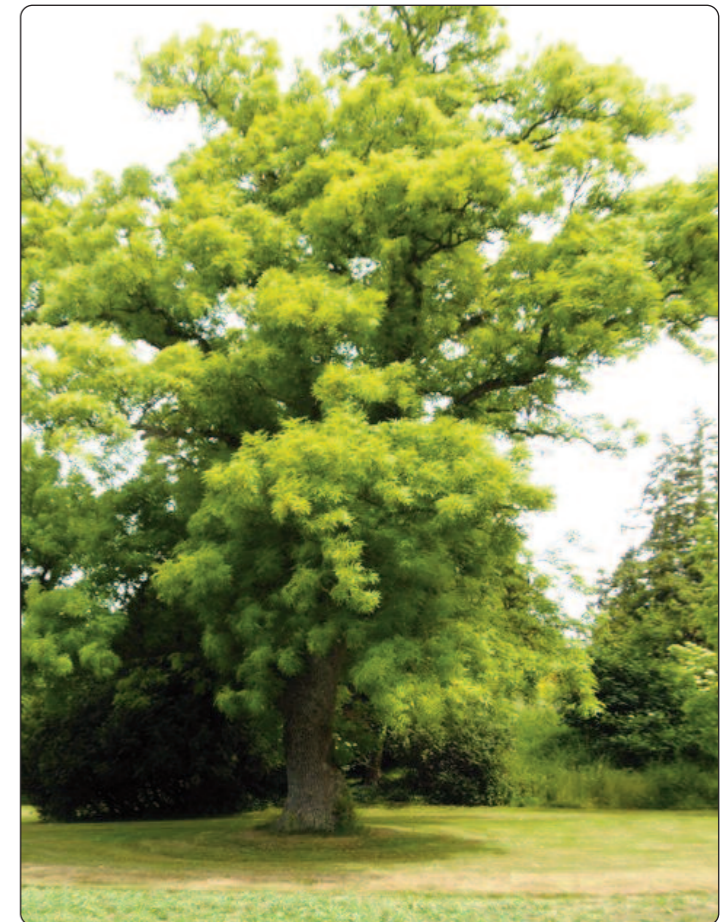
hybrid between the pear (*Pyrus communis*) and the whitebeam (*Sorbus aria*); Kentucky yellowwood (*Cladrastis lutea*) with gnarly elephant bark; Kentucky coffee tree (*Gymnocladus dioica*); a hybrid hazel (*Corylus colurna x C. avellana*), a cross between our native and Turkish hazel; and a Chinese lacquer Tree (*Rhus verniciflua*), which with other *Rhus* species appeared to be peculiarly attractive to bees. My own prize tree of the day however, an exception to the rule that pines have two or more needles, was a rather shrubby single-needle pinyon pine (*Pinus monophylla v. monophylla*) - close inspection showed that each single needle was in fact two needles fused, no doubt an adaptation to its arid South-West American homeland. (Joc Sanders)

Our next tour was to the famous **Frederiksborg Castle**, the largest Renaissance castle in Scandinavia with its sweeping gables, high roof-line and towering spires. Located just north of Copenhagen, this romantic castle was built in the middle of three islands, and was the royal residence for King Christian IV, but sadly we only viewed it from the outside as our interest lay in the formal baroque landscaped gardens (c.1620s) which were laid out in a series of three descending parterres. These immense gardens represented the gardeners' different perceptions of nature and were in complete contrast to our previous visits of collections, primarily assembled for their scientific value. The gardens at Frederiksborg were a royal parade ground for the court with the earlier part of the garden characterised by the efforts to control nature within very formal lines of 'tortured' limes, box-topiary and hedges of hornbeam. Our Chairman wept for the trees that had been contorted to suit the *fashionistas* of a previous age and longed to see at least one *tilia* as nature had intended it but alas he searched in vain! The later, more romantic or naturalistic style of gardening was also evident, reflecting 18th century tastes in horticulture.



Overall, the effect was very impressive and given the lack of such gardens in Ireland, it was interesting to see how every kind of control was employed to shape and bend trees to a particular form. (Charles Horton)

The **Nivågård or Rhododendron Park** in Nivå was shown to us by our hugely enjoyable guide Svend Hansen, who has his own method of planting which he duly demonstrated to those who could keep up with his



flying tour. Using specially imported peat from Sweden and a non-organic feed, the plants were simply placed on the ground and mounted up, thus preventing any disturbance to the root ball. Regrettably, the plants were not labelled as it was explained to us that this only encouraged trophy-hunters! We were shown many examples of Svend's successful collecting expeditions to China and shown two of his discoveries that are now commercially available from specialist nurseryman Kenneth Cox of Glendoick Gardens, near Perth. (Charles Horton)

The first visit on our third day was to **Gisselfeld**, one of Denmark's largest and most famous estates, with its 16th-century manor and Denmark's largest organic farm. Embroiled in legal controversy in recent years, all was peace and kindness for our visit, perhaps good forces have won, and the great vats of carp from the moat and lake and barrels of apples from the extensive orchards will once more flow to the markets of Copenhagen.

