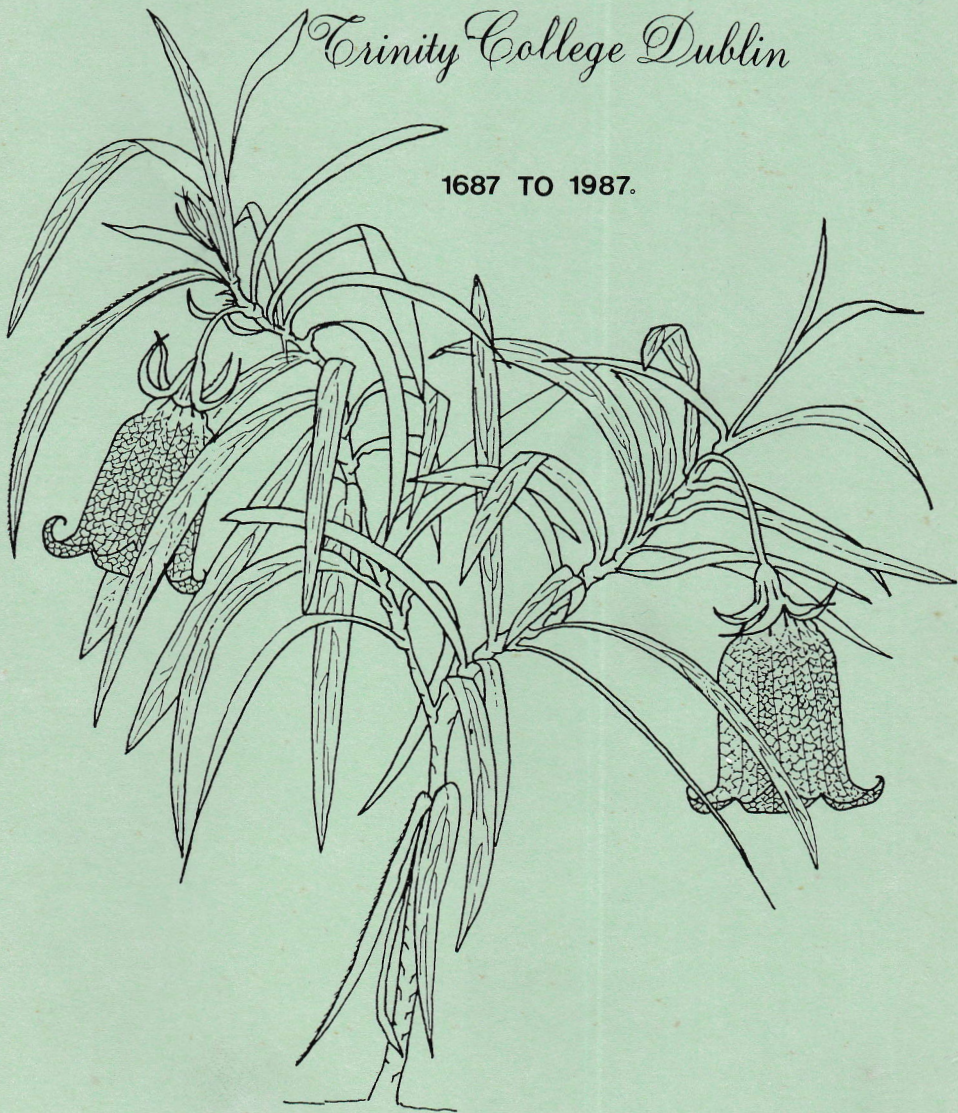


The Story of the Botanic Gardens
of
Trinity College Dublin

1687 TO 1987.



by

Peter Wyse Jackson

The cover illustration is:

Nesocodon mauritianus (I.B.K. Richardson) Thulin

The plant is an endemic monotypic genus from the Indian Ocean island of Mauritius where it occurs at a single locality on a high vertical cliff in the south-west of the island. There the population is small and vulnerable.

The plant is now grown in cultivation for the first time in the College Botanic Garden having been introduced from seed during a conservation expedition to Mauritius in 1985. The species has pale blue corolla. A striking feature of the flowers is the abundant orange-red nectar produced in five nectaries situated at the base of the corolla.

This drawing was made by Maura Greene of a specimen in flower during October 1986.

The scale is $\frac{1}{2}$ life-size.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am very grateful to the help given to me in the preparation of this brief account of the garden's history by Dr. E.C. Nelson, particularly with regard to the early history of the College Physic Gardens, on which he has carried out so much valuable research. My thanks are also due to Professor D.A. Webb for his useful comments on the manuscript. The cover illustration of Nesocodon mauritianus was drawn by Maura Greene and the maps of Trinity Hall and the present botanic garden by Trevor Holloway. I am grateful also to Mr. Denis McKennedy who first introduced me to the garden and told me much about the move from Ballsbridge to the present site.

INTRODUCTION

This outline of the development of the College Botanic Garden is not intended to be a definitive history but more an account of the major changes that took place during the three hundred years since its foundation, together with stories about some of the leading people, plants and places associated with the garden. I will leave it to others in the future to complete the gaps in our knowledge which could doubtless be filled by more exhaustive research than I have attempted.

THE STORY OF THE BOTANIC GARDENS
OF
TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN,
1687 - 1987.

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THE STORY OF THE TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN
BOTANIC GARDENS.

The Early College Physic Gardens

Since early times in Man's history there has been a close link between plants and medicine. Indeed until relatively recently botany was not regarded in the universities as a science in its own right but little more than a branch of medicine. It is therefore not surprising that the College botanic garden began life as a Physic Garden. Most of the old European botanic gardens began in the same way including the gardens of Pisa (1543), Padua (1545), Florence (1545) and Bologna (1547) in Italy and Zurich (1560), Leipzig (1579) and Leiden (1587) in northern Europe. These early botanic or physic gardens were essentially places where the teaching of the medical uses of plants was carried out. In the British Isles the first botanic gardens were at Oxford (1621), Edinburgh (1670) and the famous Chelsea Physic Garden in London (1673). Both the Chelsea and Oxford gardens still survive on their original sites.

In 1591 the Corporation of Dublin set aside as the site for

a college the lands and dilapidated buildings of the Augustinian priory of All Hallows which had been granted to the city after the dissolution of the monasteries. A Royal charter was obtained in 1592 and so the university came into being as 'the College of the Holy and Undivided Trinity near Dublin'. Almost one hundred years later on the 25th June, 1687 the Board of the College made a decision to found a physic garden on the site of the College kitchen garden. Although the College archives record that a 'weeding-woman' was employed for this garden there is no record of what plants were grown or indeed where the garden was situated within the College campus. In 1711 Thomas Molyneux became Professor of Physic in the College. He was a graduate of Leiden, where one of the earliest physic gardens had been established. He arranged for an anatomy theatre and laboratory to be built and he employed a lecturer to teach botany. The lecturer thus engaged was Dr Henry Nicholson, a native of Co. Roscommon and also a graduate of Leiden. He undertook the replanting of the Physic Garden and expanded its plant collections. His work is recorded in a booklet about the arrangement of the plants in the garden, published in 1712 - Methodus plantarum in horto medico Collegii Dublinensis jamjam dispondendarum. Nicholson did not remain for long in the

College and left Dublin in 1715. It appears that no successor was appointed until 1724 when another graduate of Leiden, Dr. William Stephens, took over. In the meantime the first Physic Garden had been abandoned in 1723 and a new one had been created behind the library at the border of College Park and between the Anatomy House and the Nassau Street wall; an area which is now largely covered by the Berkeley Library. No plants that were grown in this garden have survived and there is no trace of any trees that may have been planted in that time in the area now. Many people imagine that the College's physic garden was situated in Botany Bay, to the rear of the present Graduates' Memorial Building. However this is not so and the origin of the name 'Botany Bay' is obscure. By 1725 all the plants had been transferred and the Garden was opened to the public for the day on the 1st June of that year.

THE HAROLD'S CROSS GARDEN

In 1773 Dr Edward Hill was appointed Professor of Botany, and from his own writings we learn that the Physic Garden had become very run-down. According to Hill it contained a single barren fig tree tended by an ancient gardener with the whole garden overshadowed by tall elms. As well as

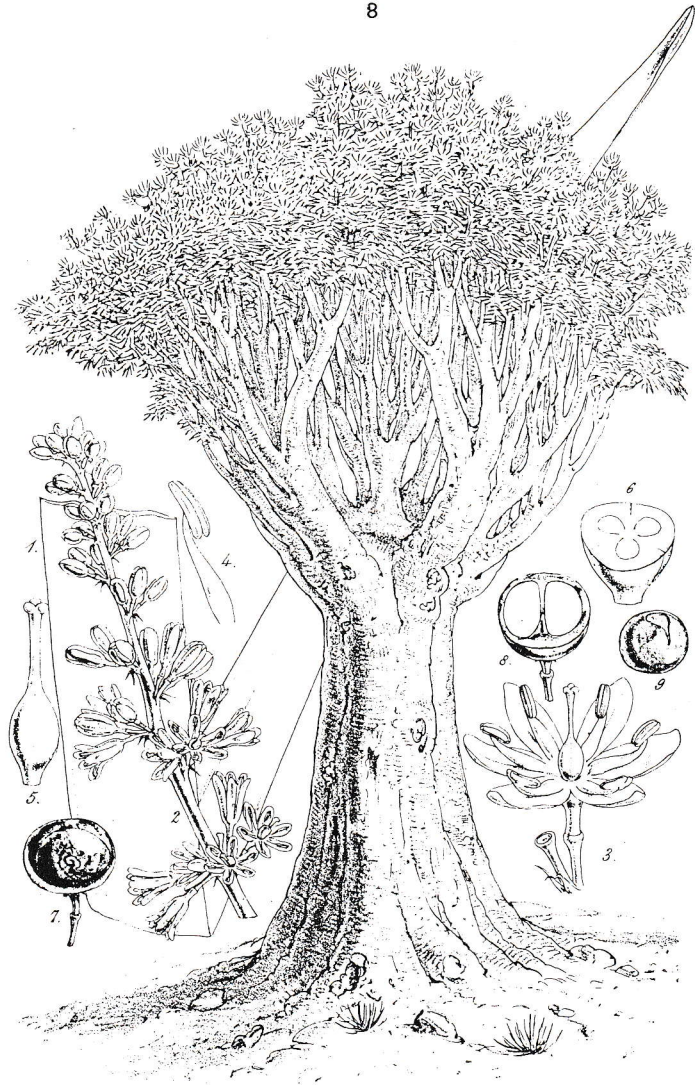
that, the offal from the Anatomy Laboratory nearby was thrown out into the Garden where it was devoured by ten thousand rats! Hill decided to abandon the Physic Garden and began to campaign for the establishment of a new garden. Eventually, after he had been given verbal consent by the Provost of the time he leased land at Harold's Cross and began to create the new garden. Funds were very low and much of the development had to be carried out at his own expense. This led to a dispute between Hill and the College which was eventually settled by the High Court. The settlement granted compensation to Hill for the expense he had incurred in founding the garden and in 1803 the College accounts show an entry: "Dr. Hill, allowed him by the award of the arbitrators to whom the cause between the College and him concerning the Botanic Gardens was referred £618-19-8". After this dispute had been fully settled the garden at Harold's Cross ceased to exist.

THE MOVE TO BALLSBRIDGE

Although the College had relinquished the new garden at Harold's Cross the old derelict Physic Garden still remained on the campus . In an effort to revive it the new Professor of Botany, Dr. Robert Scott, employed a gardener

and botanical assistant (who would supply specimens for lectures). James Townsend Mackay was appointed, a Scotsman born in Kirkcaldy, Fife in about 1775 . The arrival of Mackay marks a change-over in the university to pure botany for the first time. He began his employment with the College as assistant botanist in 1804, teaching medical and other students Irish botany. He travelled widely in Ireland to explore the botany of the countryside. The results of these researches were later published by the Royal Dublin Society in its Transactions and by the Royal Irish Academy. In 1836 a full compilation of this work was published under the title 'Flora Hibernica', a book which is of great importance as the first comprehensive Irish Flora. His name is commemorated by several plants including Mackaya bella, a beautiful greenhouse shrub from South Africa, a member of the Acanthaceae, named by W.H. Harvey (1811 - 1865), joint author of 'Flora Capensis' and Professor of Botany in the College. Erica mackaiana, a heath native to the West of Ireland and Spain, was also named in his honour by C.C. Babington, Professor of Botany at Cambridge. Both of these species are currently grown in the botanic garden. It is interesting to note that Mackay's elder brother John (born in 1772) was also a botanist and collected plants in Scotland in 1792 with George Don. He also worked as a gardener in the Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh.

The old Physic Garden proved to be most unsuitable for a botanic garden and so in July 1806 the College leased an area of land in Ballsbridge from the Pembroke Estate amounting to a total of eight acres. This was leased for 175 years at an annual rent of 15 guineas per acre. According to a paper compiled by Mackay in 1851 (published in 1853) for the Royal Commission on Dublin University, in the autumn of 1807 about three acres of ground were taken from this plot for the botanic garden and enclosed within a high ten-foot wall. Then in the spring of 1808 the planting of trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants began. Shortly afterwards a portion of this area was laid out with a collection of medicinal plants under the direction of Professor W. Allman, then Professor of Botany in the University. In 1832 an additional 2 acres were added to the garden at its south-west side and enclosed by an iron railing, some of which still survives today. This area was laid out with a collection of trees. In 1848 the final addition to the garden was made with a further one and a half acres at the north-west corner, around which the iron railings were continued. This area was enclosed to act as a screen for the main part of the garden from the surrounding buildings and smoke pollution. A screen of evergreen or holm oaks (Quercus ilex) was later planted along this



Dracaena draco, the Dragon's-blood Tree

This illustration was published in Curtis's Botanical Magazine in 1851. Although the species was widely grown in European botanic gardens at that time few specimens ever flowered. The flowers shown were drawn from specimens sent to Kew by J.T. Mackay from the College Botanic Garden. The plant had been raised from seed collected in Madeira in 1810. It is also native to the Canary Islands and is a threatened species in the wild.

boundary, most of which still survive as a fine row of mature trees.

At this time Mackay had sole charge of the botanic garden and was not under the direction of the Professor of botany. Indeed there appears to have been little love lost between the two. A letter from Professor Allman to the College Board in 1825 notes that "Mackay the Gardener has interferred with my taking flowers out of the College Garden in so insolent a manner, that, under pretence (?) of examining what flowers I had cut, he, even in my presence, laid hold of them in the hands of a Gentleman, to whose care I had committed them...". Things change little. While today relations are better between the current Professor of Botany and the botanic gardens staff, the staff are still often unwilling to cut blooms of a treasured plant for use in a botany practical class. At this time a further cause of dispute between Mackay and the Professor of Botany was because Mackay had been holding botany classes in the garden for the public, and advertised in the public press, of which both the professor and the College Board disapproved. Mackay seems to have been a man of character and wide influence and is said (by F.W. Burbidge) to have attracted around him men who afterwards became celebrated

horticulturists both at home and abroad. He was awarded the degree of LL.D. by the College in 1850.

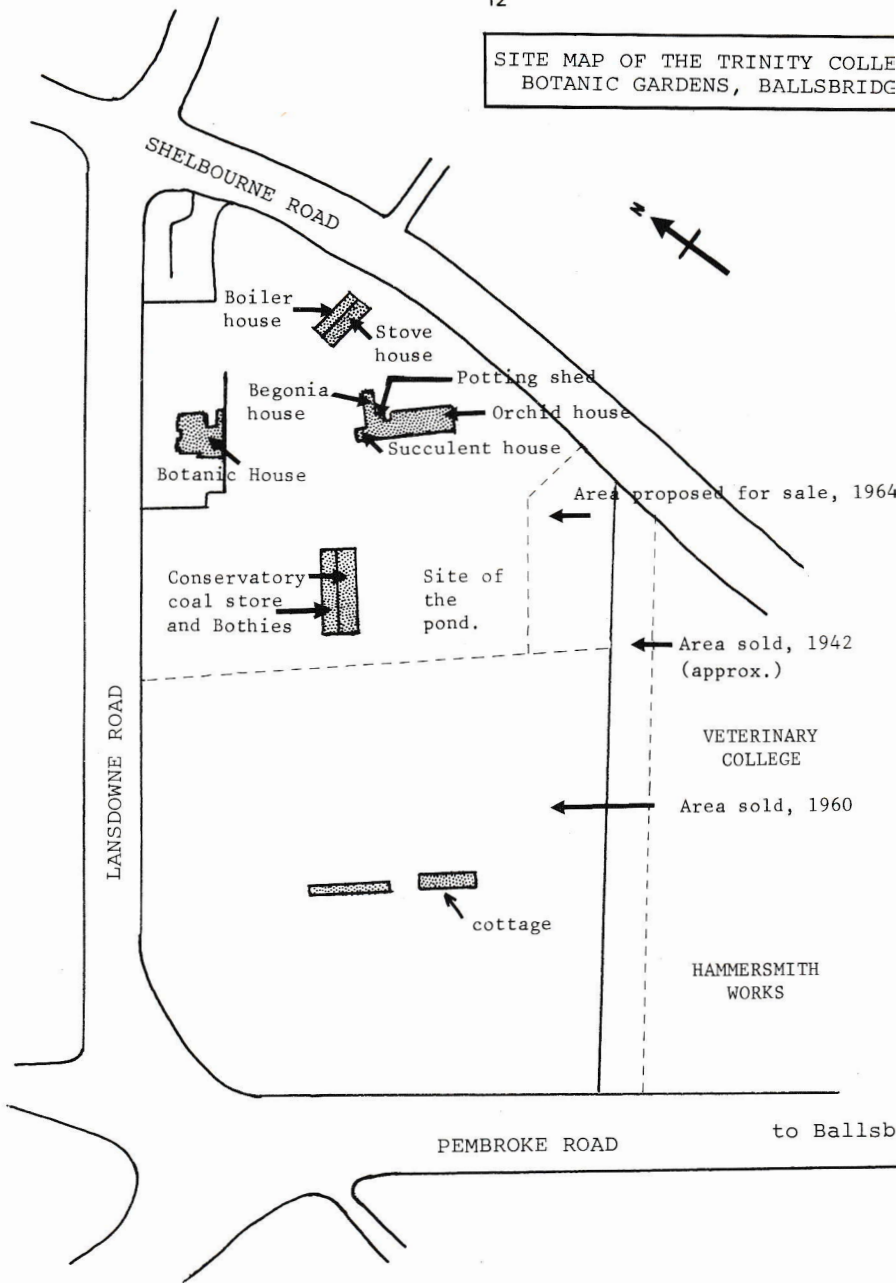
In earlier times one side of the garden was flanked by a road known as Watery Lane (now Lansdowne Road). It was described as little better than a wet ditch with water constantly oozing out of its mud banks, and was passable only by means of a line of stepping stones laid along it. Immediately adjacent to the garden was a district known then as Beggarsbush. This area got its name from a large hawthorn tree (Crataegus monogyna) under which beggars would shelter before descending on the city along "the rocky road to Dublin" which had passed over Ball's Bridge and by the garden. W. St. J. Joyce in 'The Neighbourhood of Dublin' (1912) suggests that "many of these worthies who used to avail themselves of this friendly shelter were doubtless highwaymen, as the neighbourhood had acquired an evil reputation in this respect". Duncan's map of Dublin made in 1821 shows the location of the original beggarsbush village as the intersection of what are now Shelbourne and Lansdowne Roads, ie. where the botanic garden stood. Some people have suggested that the hawthorn tree survived in the botanic garden until recent times; there is however no evidence to prove this.

In 1828 David Moore was appointed as an assistant to Mackay in the botanic garden where he remained for six years until he became botanist to the Ordnance Survey in Ireland in 1834 and later Curator of the Glasnevin Botanic Gardens in 1838. David Moore was co-author (with A.G. More) of 'Contributions towards a Cybele Hibernica', the first major work on the distribution of the native Irish flora.

It is of interest to note that in Mackay's 1851 report he remarks that 'although all members of the university are freely admitted to the garden, the public are not admitted promiscuously, as it would interfere with the proper care of the plants; but all respectable persons are admitted by Orders from the Provost, Vice-Provost, Senior and Junior Fellows; and no respectable parties coming from abroad or from the country are refused admittance on giving their names'. Today no visitors need to gain permission from the Provost or Fellows to see the garden and while the garden is not open to the public all respectable persons are admitted by request.

Several large greenhouses were erected in the garden in the early years including a large wooden stove house This greenhouse was demolished during the 1960s. A list of

SITE MAP OF THE TRINITY COLLEGE
BOTANIC GARDENS, BALLSBRIDGE



plants in the garden produced in 1825 shows that a wide range and variety of species was grown and in 1851 Mackay notes that the garden had extensive collections of orchids, ferns, palms, cacti (including a collection sent by Thomas Coulter from Mexico), Proteaceae and others. Several cycads survive from those times in the present garden but it seems that most other greenhouse specimens are younger and have been introduced on a more recent occasion. Outdoor trees and shrubs were probably mainly purchased from British and Irish nurseries. The College archives contain invoices for several large deliveries of trees and shrubs to the garden, including many of the species that are commonly grown in the present garden and other good Irish garden collections. Mackay mentions that a guide to the garden was, in 1851, then in preparation and shortly to be published, "wherein the names of the more remarkable and useful plants in the different departments will be given". Over one hundred years later we still await the publication of the first guide to the garden.

In 1850 Mr John Bain was appointed as Mackay's assistant and succeeded him as Curator on his death in 1862. He was born in Ireland of Scottish parents in 1815 and remained as Curator until 1875 (apart from a short period in the years

following 1868 when he apparently retired due to ill health but later returned to his Curator's post). He died in Holyhead, Anglesea in 1903 at the age of 88 and is buried in Mount Jerome Cemetery next to J.T. Mackay. Influenced by Mackay he had a keen interest in the Irish native flora and it is recorded that he was the first discoverer of Hordeum sylvaticum (now Hordelymus europaeus) in Ireland which he discovered in a wood in Mount Merrion, Dublin. The plant is now regarded as being an introduction at that station. In Colgan's 'Flora of Co. Dublin' he is also recorded as having discovered Malaxis paludosa, a rare, inconspicuous and minute orchid, in the Dublin mountains near Ticknock. An obituary written by F.W. Burbidge, published in the 'Irish Naturalist' in 1903, described him as being very sensitive and retiring in manner but genial and generous to those who really knew him and respected him. He wrote little but was a most expert horticulturist with a skill that was the envy of many of his contemporaries and he did a great deal to improve the College's botanic garden and its reputation.

Bain was followed for a short time by a little-known Curator, Michael Dowd who found the task too onerous and resigned after a very short time. In 1877 Frederick Moore (1857-1950) was appointed to the Curatorship of the garden

where he stayed for a few years until 1879 until he succeeded his father David Moore as Curator of Glasnevin Botanic Gardens. Frederick Moore had, like several previous College botanists, been trained at Leiden in its botanic garden. He remained as Curator of the Glasnevin Botanic Garden until 1922. He was knighted in 1911.

In June, 1879 Frederick W. Burbidge was appointed as Curator of the garden, a post which he held until his death on 24th December, 1905. He was born in Leicestershire on 24th March, 1847 where as a young boy he was apprenticed as a gardener. Having finished his apprenticeship he entered the Royal Horticultural Society Gardens at Chiswick as a pupil, and from there to the staff of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew in 1868. In 1870 he joined the staff of 'The Garden' newspaper; he was a very accomplished botanical artist as well having an easy journalistic style for horticultural writing. During his time on the staff of that newspaper he published several major works including the 'Art of Botanical Drawing', 'Cool Orchids', and the classic 'The Narcissus: its History and Culture'. This was followed by another book 'Propagation and Improvement of Cultivated Plants' which became a standard work for many years. In 1878 Burbidge was employed by the famous nurserymen Messrs.

J. Veitch and Sons, of London to travel to Borneo and the Sulu Islands to collect plants. This expedition was highly successful and several good greenhouse plants were discovered and introduced, including species of Nepenthes, the pitcher plants; he first successfully introduced Nepenthes rajah to cultivation, and many orchids. During the expedition he became very ill with malaria and eventually reached home in a weak condition. During the expedition he also contracted some disease which resulted in the loss of all his hair; he wore a wig for the rest of his life. On his return from Borneo he was briefly re-employed on the staff of 'The Garden' before taking up his employment with Trinity College.

At Trinity College Burbidge carried out many improvements and developments in the garden and expanded the plant collections. The pages of 'Curtis's Botanical Magazine' contain plates of several unusual and exotic plant species figured from plants in cultivation at Trinity including Trochetia blackburniana from the island of Mauritius, Helleborus lividus from Majorca and Narcissus cyclamineus. He maintained his interest in the genus Narcissus and built up a good collection in the garden, which sadly no longer exists. He is commemorated by a plant which is still a



Helleborus lividus

This illustration is taken from Curtis's Botanical Magazine where it was published in 1903. The specimen figured is one grown in the College Botanic Garden, having been brought to Dublin from Majorca by Miss Fanny Geoghegan.

valued part of the College's collection: Calceolaria x burbridgei, a robust hybrid greenhouse herbaceous plant raised by him from seeds which were the result of a cross-fertilization in the autumn of 1879. Its parents are two South American Calceolarias and it is now known as the College Garden Slipper-wort. It has large vivid yellow flowers and it blooms in a bright heated greenhouse for much of the year, especially during the autumn and winter months. It was named in his honour by W.E. Gumbleton in 'The Garden' in 1881. The genus Burbridgea Hook. fil., a group of species of the Zingiberaceae (the ginger family) was also named after him.

In 1892 the College celebrated its tercentenary. As part of the celebrations it received a gift from Baron Ferdinand von Mueller, curator of the Royal Botanic Garden, Melbourne, Australia. The present was a large tree fern, Todea barbara, which had been collected in the wild 'in a narrow ravine in one of the ranges between Port Phillip and Gipps-Land, Victoria Australia'. The plant was very large when collected and was 3,000 pounds in weight. It was shipped to Dublin in a large case made of eucalyptus timber. Mueller believed that this fern had probably 'begun its career from a spore about the time when the University

of Dublin was founded' in 1692. When the botanic garden later moved from Ballsbridge to its present site (described on later pages) this fern was presented by the College to Glasnevin Botanic Gardens in 1969. Before it was handed over a piece was removed and today still grows in the garden's fern house. The original plant, then a massive specimen, survived well until recently in Glasnevin when it began to die. It appears that the growing crowns had become too far removed from the soil. Another piece was removed and propagated and so now both Dublin botanic gardens have similarly sized specimens of what are probably the oldest greenhouse plants in Ireland.

Although Burbidge was primarily a horticulturist he did maintain an interest in native plants and was for one year President of the Dublin Naturalists' Field Club until his death in 1905. He also published a paper on one wild Irish plant, a hybrid Senecio (S. x albescens), that he discovered with Nathaniel Colgan (author of 'The Flora of Co. Dublin', 1904) growing at Dalkey in Co. Dublin. Colgan also records in 'The Flora of Co. Dublin' that he helped with many notes and suggestions chiefly relating to the alien element in the Dublin flora. In Praeger's book 'Some Irish Naturalists' (1949) he notes, slightly disapprovingly

one suspects, that Burbidge "endeavoured to add variety to the flora of Ireland by scattering seeds of exotic plants around Dublin; this well-meant indiscretion brought him into opposition with local students of natural plant-distribution". Outside his horticultural work it is also of interest that he was a member of the committee of an unusual society, the Dublin Kyrle Society, the aims of which were "for bringing beauty home to the people". The society was founded to encourage the provision of gardens and open-air spaces for the poor of Dublin. It proposed to "organise a voluntary choir of singers to give Oratorios and Concerts of good music to the Poor", and to "decorate by Mural Paintings, Pictures, Flowers, and other means, Workmen's Clubs, Schools, and other Rooms used for the gathering together of the Working Classes, without distinction of creed". The committee also had amongst its members Nathaniel Hone, the painter. I can find no records of this society, however, except its founding prospectus so cannot do more than speculate on its success. In 1897 Burbidge was awarded the Victoria Medal of Honour for Distinguished Service to Horticulture, one of sixty awarded; one for each year of the reign of Queen Victoria. He was also conferred with the Veitch Memorial Medal for the same reason and with an M.A. from the College in 1889.

SOME NOTABLES OF THE TRINITY COLLEGE BOTANIC GARDENS.



James Townsend Mackay



David Moore



Frederick William Burbidge

THE BOTANIC GARDEN IN THIS CENTURY

F.W. Burbidge died on the 24th December, 1905 at the age of 58. He is buried with his wife Mary, who died the same year aged 56, at Mount Jerome cemetery. After Burbidge's death the post of Curator was abolished and the running of the botanic garden was placed in the hands of a Head Gardener, under the Directorship of the Professor of Botany, then H.H. Dixon. He remained Director until the end of 1949, shortly before he died. During this time he received a small additional salary for the post of Director of the garden. This salary was abolished in 1949. In 1907 the head gardener was S.G. Wild. He is commemorated by one plant known as "Gladiolus wildii," a hybrid raised by him in the garden but the name was never validly published. The plant had pink-purple flowers with a white throat. One of its parents was G. tristis and the other may have been G. cardinalis, (in which case it is close to G. x colvillei, a cross between these two species) or possibly a back-cross from this hybrid with one of the parents. It became extinct in the garden in about 1975. As head gardener his wages

were £1-10-0 per week at the beginning of 1907. A letter from the Board's secretary to Professor H. H. Dixon notes that it was to be raised from March 1907 to £1-12-6. A house in the botanic gardens, called Botanic House, had been lived in by successive Curators and in 1907 it was agreed by the Board that Wild be allowed to move into it. Under Wild's direction several labourers worked (together with several men who lived in rough accomodation on the site, called the Bothies, who tended the gardens at night acting as watchmen and stoking the heating boilers.) Some time later the house was no longer used for botanic garden staff and was leased other members of the College staff. Its final occupant was R.M. Gwynn, then Senior Fellow of the College, who lived there for many years. Mr Wild was succeeded by Mr. Robert Byrne who remained as head gardener until his death on the 10th July 1960. In October 1959 there were four gardeners employed at the botanic gardens, including the head gardener, Bob Byrne, and one vacancy. They were paid £7-1-0 wages per week, and the head gardener, £7-14-0. This was a reduction in the number of gardeners from Wild's time when seven men were employed. The head gardener who followed him was Mr. Denis McKennedy who supervised much of the practical side of the botanic garden's move to Dartry, as described in later paragraphs.

McKennedy had formerly been head gardener of an estate owned by Major R. Lomer in Castletownsend, Co. Cork and following that for 12 years with Mr. T.V. Murphy of Carrickmines, Co. Dublin.

With the abolition of Burbidge's post the botanic garden was without a full-time Curator for the first time. The garden suffered from this lack of scientific curation and ceased to develop. As a result, when David A. Webb became Professor of Botany in 1950, he sought and achieved the creation of a post of Assistant-Curator. This part-time post was filled by Miss May Crosbie from about 1951 until 1963. Miss Crosbie had been gardener at Headford in Co. Meath and was a most able gardener, if an eccentric and unusual woman. After her departure in 1963 the post was filled by Miss Joan O'Mara, who continued to carry out curatorial work during the final days of the old garden and in the new botanical garden at Dartry until April 1979. At that time the garden began exhibiting at the shows of the Royal Horticultural Society of Ireland. These exhibits were soon being awarded medals and the Garden has continued to exhibit with that society up to the present day. At that time some 600 to 700 packets of seeds were sent out annually from the garden worldwide as part of the



A display of wild collected native Irish plants from the College Botanic Garden was shown at the Royal Horticultural Society of Ireland's show during August, 1982 at the Royal Dublin Society. The theme of the stand was the cultivation of native plants to help with their conservation. The stand was awarded a Gold Medal.

international seed exchange scheme between botanic gardens. A collection of plants of known origin was begun in about 1951. For example, by 1956 a total of 277 different Saxifrages of wild origin were grown, many of which still survive today. At the same time stocks of over 300 other plants of known wild origin were maintained, including plants from many parts of Europe as well as Ireland. The collection continued to grow and, in 1952, 187 plants were added; in 1953, 125; in 1954, 194, many of them from Tasmania and Australia and in 1955 a further 73. Most of these new plants were collected by D.A. Webb.

As well as losing its full-time curator the garden at Ballsbridge also suffered on two occasions from the loss of land. The first occurred in 1942 when the interest on the lease of a small strip at the south-eastern end of the garden was sold to the Board of Works to become part of the Veterinary College, then run by the Department of Agriculture. Although this loss was opposed vigorously by Professor Dixon on account of the number of rare botanical specimens of tree and shrub it contained nevertheless the sale took place. The second loss which happened in 1960 was more serious as it reduced the garden to 40% of its former size. The residue of the lease on about three acres of the

north-west portion of the garden, surrounded by railings and a row of holm oaks, was sold and shortly afterwards a luxury modern hotel was built. This reduction was vigorously opposed by the then Director, Professor D.A. Webb, who outlined the valuable role of the Gardens in teaching, botany research, amenity (through the supply of flowers and potted plants for College buildings) and prestige. He argued that the gardens "are in part a necessity. They are, of course, in part a luxury. But so are the Provost's House, College dinners, external examiners, a curator of manuscripts, a new lunch-room and lavatory; we could get on without any of them, but we would get on badly". He pointed out that the cost of running the botanic garden at that time was about £1750, approximately 0.7% of the College income. This crisis seems to have been precipitated by the cost of a wage increase for College employees due to a Labour Court award. Dr. Webb even, very gallantly, offered to make a regular donation of £75 a year to the gardens, to be increased annually by £25 until 1957 to try to prevent the sale. However this offer was not taken up and the land was subsequently sold to Lansdowne Holdings, a company who subsequently erected the Intercontinental Hotel (later re-named to become New Jury's Hotel).

In 1964 a proposal was made to the Board by the College's Finance Committee that a further portion of the the botanic garden be sold to the Commissioners of Public Works for an addition to the Veterinary College, with a 20 foot frontage on Shelbourne Road, its bounday running parallel to the portion previously ceded to the Veterinary College, ending about 45 feet from Shelbourne Road. Although this appeared to be a relatively small amount of loss to the garden it was vigourously opposed again by Professor Webb, partly because he had not been consulted before the proposal had reached a very advanced stage of planning; partly because it would further diminish the land available for plants in the garden and finally because it was proposed to build a high-rise building on this newly ceded plot. This would have the effect of shading much of the remaining garden from the southerly sun. This sale took place on the 10th May, 1965. At this time some indications were appearing that thought in the College was being given to the abolition of the botanic gardens entirely. As Professor Webb described it, in a memorandum to the Board concerning the second ceding of land to the Veterinary College, "Meanwhile a vague sword of Damocles hangs over my head; despite assurances which I receive each time, some people in

College seem to regard the Garden as an expendable luxury which can be raided whenever times are hard. Dr. Ryan, for example, was going around when Bursar, saying 'It mustn't be assumed that the College is committed to the maintenance of a Botanic Garden'. It isn't committed to the maintenance of a department of economics either, but it would be most eccentric to abolish it. It would be equally eccentric to dispose of the Botanic Garden when nearly all the younger universities in England are in the process of acquiring one..... Of all departments in College a botanic garden is, by its nature, most in need of long-term security; of all departments it seems to get least. The plants which I must now move from the strip to be ceded are in some cases already twice-shifted refugees. How can one plan in these conditions?". Professor Webb was right to suspect that the end of the then botanic garden was not far off and in the following year in 1965 a new proposal was put before the College Board that the botanic gardens be transferred from the Shelbourne Road site to a new situation at the rear of Trinity Hall in Dartry, a complex of student residences then used mainly to house girls. The site there had been added to recently through the purchase of an adjoining property, "the Orchards". The site where the new botanic gardens now stands has interesting historical connections.

Rathmines Castle stood on the site of what is not the office, laboratory and walled-in garden. In 1649 part of the Royalist forces, under the command of Lord Inchiquin, took refuge in this castle after their defeat by the Cromwellian forces in the battle of Rathmines. It is recorded that the castle had walls sixteen feet high, enclosing about ten acres. The castle had been erected by Sir George Radcliffe during that century. No trace of it remains today. An early map, made in 1776 shows the site occupied by "the Orchards" which was then the country residence of Lord Chief Justice Yorke. In 1821 on Duncan's map of Co. Dublin it appears as "Rathmines School", and in 'The Dublin Penny Journal' of 1833 it is described as "an irregular, uninteresting building, so far modernised as to have the appearance of an old whitewashed farmhouse. It is now occupied as a boarding-house for invalids, and unfortunately is seldom empty". This house was demolished in recent times. It stood on what is now the south arboretum.

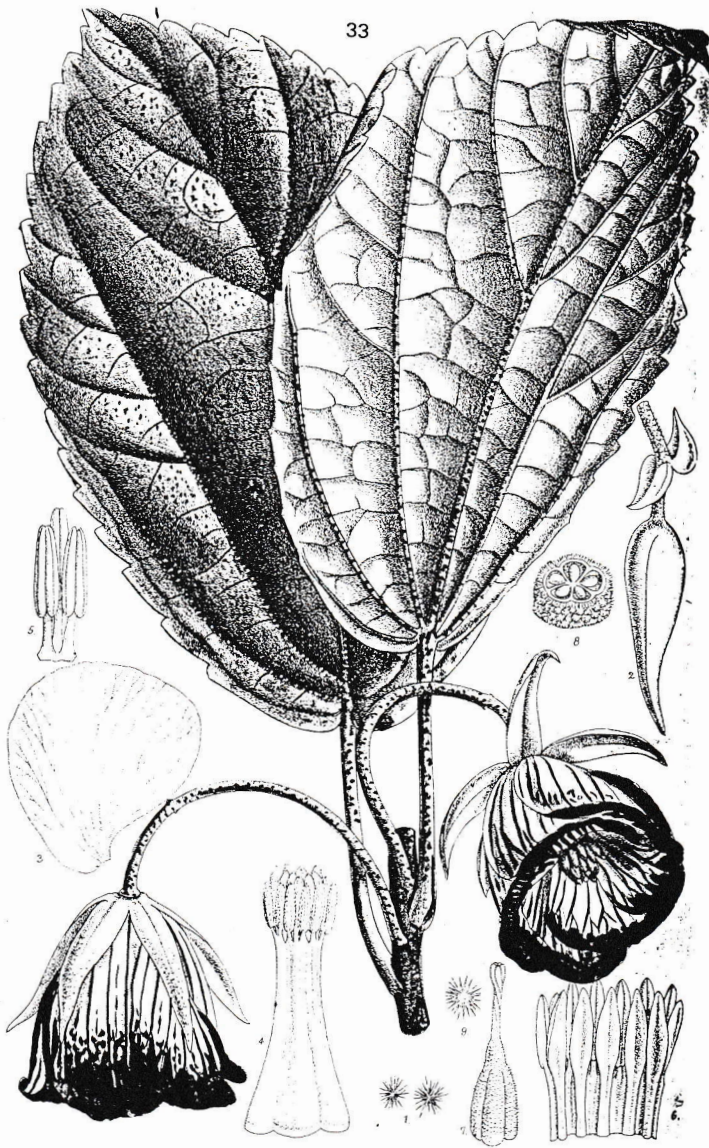
The main reason that the move was contemplated was that the lease-hold property in Ballsbridge was nearing the end of the period of its lease (175 years from 1806). Furthermore the fact that the Ballsbridge property was an

extremely valuable one, situated in an area of Dublin where land prices were amongst the highest in Ireland at the time and a substantial sum was to be made for the College from the sale. In a paper to the Board before the proposal to move the gardens was carried Professor D. A. Webb and Professor W. A. Watts wrote: "There will be an undoubted long-term gain in security in transferring from lease-hold to free-hold property. Against this must be set the consideration that most of the charm and a good deal of the scientific value of the present Garden is dependent on it being long established on its present site. The loss of this asset would be obvious for some twenty years". The move took place during 1966 and 1967 under the direction of Professor W.A. Watts, then Professor of Botany, who was to a large measure responsible for the plan and design of the new garden. Mr Denis McKennedy, the Head Gardener, was responsible for supervising the move of all botanical specimens. A range of new greenhouses were constructed in what had been the walled-in kitchen garden of Trinity Hall. Most of the plants in the old greenhouses were transferred except for a few plants that were large to be accommodated in the new range of greenhouses. Over the two years many trees and shrubs were prepared for transfer from the old garden through extensive root pruning. During their dormant

periods of autumn and spring they were moved one by one to the new garden. Some relatively large specimens were shifted, including several 15 foot high Trachycarpus fortunei and a 25 foot high Ginkgo biloba. McKennedy is justifiably proud of the fact that the only plants that had to be abandoned in the old garden were large trees too tall to dig up and transport to the new site. Collections of bulbs and herbaceous plants were moved to a newly constructed bulb border and systematic beds laid out in rows, surrounded by slate and box hedge margins and gravel paths. Some further plants were removed in 1968 and the beginning of 1969, after which time the old site was finally abandoned. The closing date of the sale to Mr. P.V. Doyle was the 12th May, 1969. It is now home to another large modern hotel and only a handful of original botanic garden trees remain as evidence of its illustrious past.

THE PRESENT BOTANIC GARDEN.

Meanwhile the new botanic garden, situated at the rear of Trinity Hall and approached from Palmerston Park has been become well established and developed, benefitting greatly from its modern buildings, greenhouses and laboratory facilities. The total cost of the re-development of the new botanic garden's site was relatively small. A letter from



Trochetia blackburniana

This is a rare endemic plant from the island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean that was in cultivation in the College Botanic Garden at the end of the last century. This illustration was published in Curtis's Botanical Magazine in 1891 and was drawn from specimens sent to Kew from the College by F.W. Burbidge. A related species, T. boutoniana, was collected in Mauritius in 1985 and is now grown in the garden. The latter species is threatened in the wild and close to extinction.

the Agent, Col. J.M. Walsh, to the College Treasurer on the 17th February, 1969 gave the final sum as £31,518-16-3, just about one hundred pounds less than the figure authorised by the Board for the project in October 1967 (as well as a small grant from the equipment fund in April, 1968). Many young trees were planted in areas now known as the West and South Arboreta, some of them having been transferred from the old garden or from a short-lived arboretum at Townley Hall near Drogheda, formerly owned by the College. At the time of writing the total number of taxa in the Garden stands at around the 5,000 mark, probably considerably more than were contained in the Ballsbridge garden in its latter days. The greenhouse collections have been expanded in recent years to include many more species of use for research and teaching, including a new collection of tropical economic food and crop plants, a large collection of native Irish plants of wild origin, many more European alpine species, especially saxifrages, now growing in new alpine raised beds and rockeries near the gardens' entrance, and a substantial collection of rare species grown for conservation purposes. As part of the latter collection a small deep-freeze seed bank was established in 1980 for the storage of seeds of these endangered plants. In 1985 a plant conservation

expedition was organised from the garden to Mauritius. Many threatened plants from that island are now grown in the Stove house. Several areas of Trinity Hall are also being planted with species of botanical interest so that they can fulfill the dual role of scientific and amenity value. In addition, the West Arboretum has, since 1983, been expanded to include much of an adjoining games pitch. In 1981, after a long gap since the death of F.W. Burbidge in 1905, a former full-time curator's post was re-created to which the author of this account was appointed. The post was created from an amalgamation of the two posts of Assistant Curator and Head Gardener both of whom had recently retired. The Directorship of the garden remains with the current Professor of Botany. In 1987 the garden celebrates three hundred years since the founding of the first College botanic garden, one of the earliest in the British Isles.

APPENDIX.

1. List of Directors,
Curators and Head
Gardeners.

2. Maps of the present
Botanic Garden at
Palmerston Park.

Directors

1905	Henry H. Dixon
1950	David A. Webb
1966	William A. Watts *
1980	David H.S. Richardson

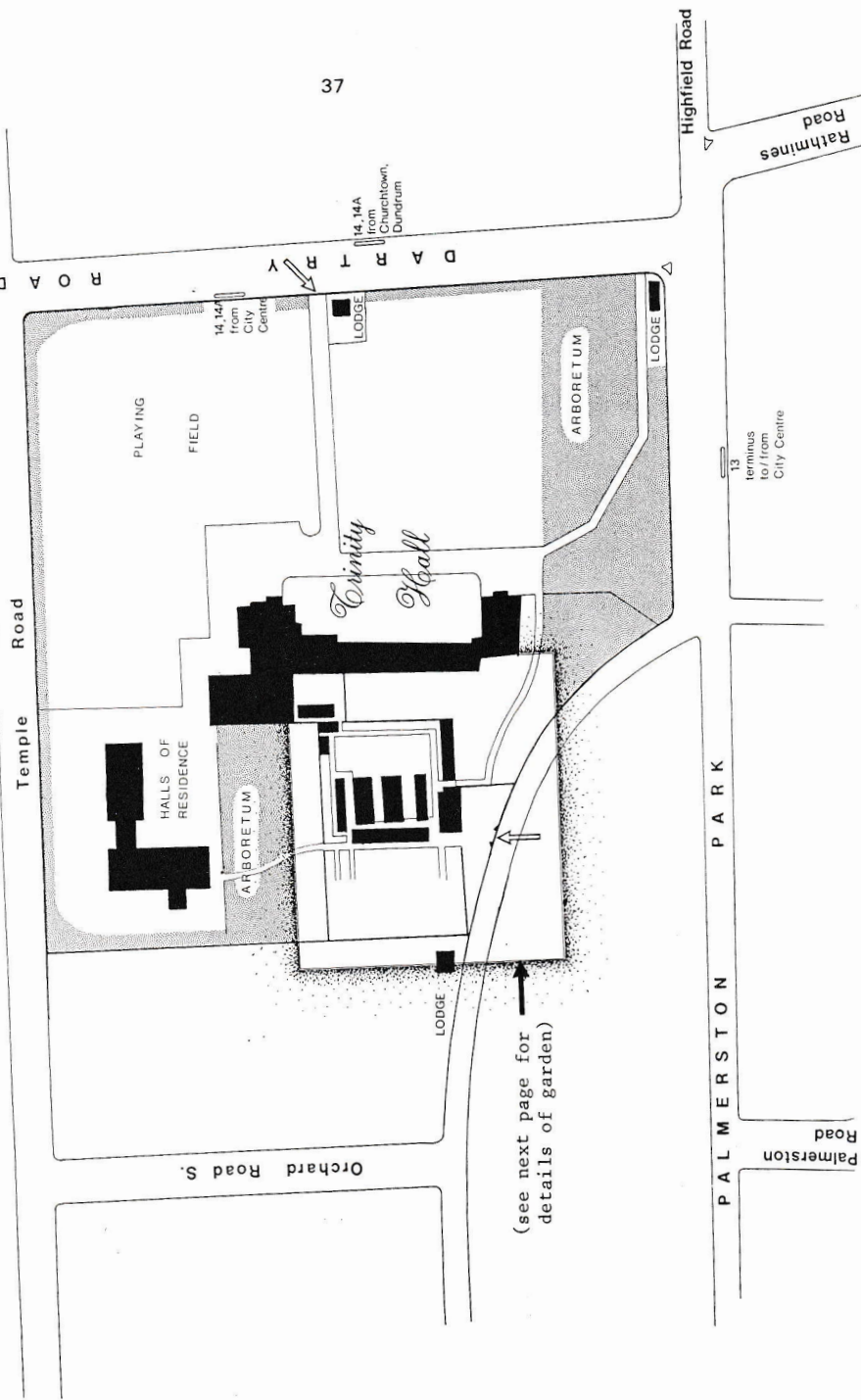
* During some of the period up to 1980 David W. Jeffrey was appointed as acting-Director of the garden by Professor Watts.

Curators and Head Gardeners

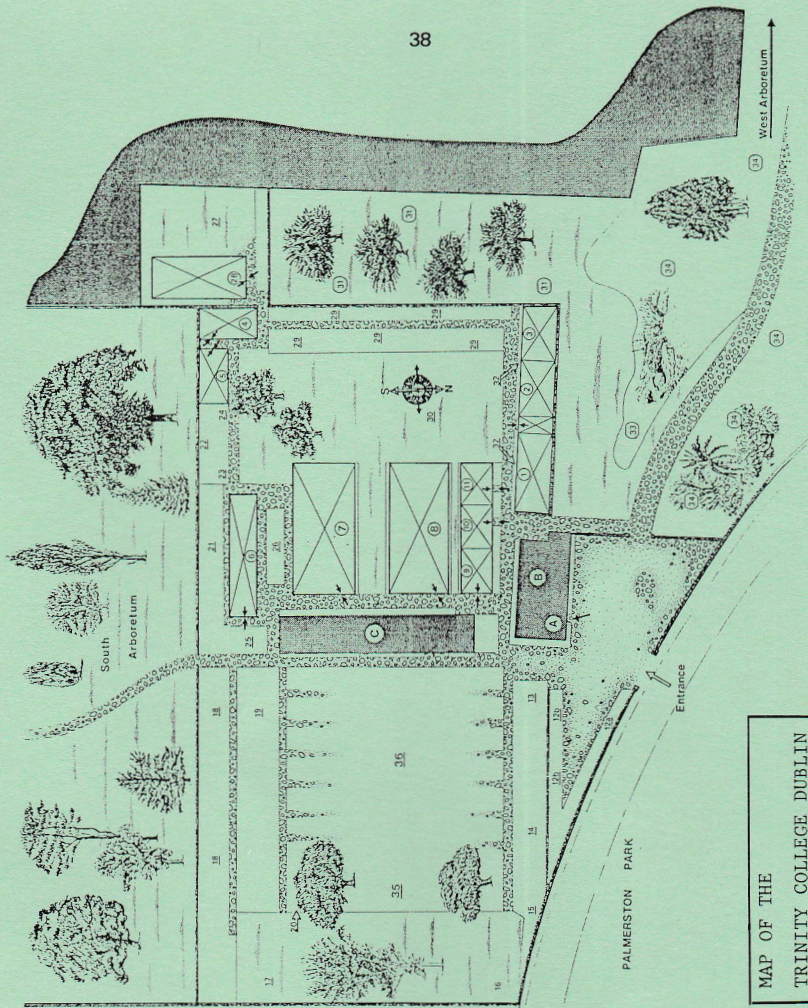
	<u>Curators</u>	<u>Head gardeners</u>
1802	James Townsend Mackay	
1862	John Bain	
1875	Michael Dowd	
1877	Frederick Moore	
1879	Frederick W. Burbidge	
1905		S.G. Wild
1949		R. Byrne
1960		D. McKennedy
1981	Peter S. Wyse Jackson **	

** This post is now called the Botanic Garden's Administrator.

SITE MAP OF PRESENT TRINITY COLLEGE
BOTANIC GARDENS AT DARTRY



1. Orchid and Economic Plant House
 2. Succulent House
 3. Fern House
 4. Australian House
 5. Alpine House
 6. Irish and Saxifrage House
 7. Stove or Tropical House
 8. Cycad and Palm House
 - 9.
 10. Experimental Houses
 - 11.
 - 12a. Limestone Rockery
 - 12b. Granite Rockery
 13. Endangered Irish Plants
 14. Herbaceous Plants
 15. Tree Paeonies
 16. Callistemons
 17. Native Irish trees
 18. Herbaceous plants
 19. Herbaceous plants
 20. *Betula utilis* 'Trinity College'
 21. Heathers and Heaths
 22. Peat bed of calcifuge plants
 23. Plants of the Burren Co. Clare
 24. Saxifrages
 25. Native Irish plants
 26. Ponds with native Irish aquatics
 27. Experimental plot
 28. Nursery plastic greenhouse
 29. Herbaceous borders
 30. Weather station
 31. Orchard and Irish willows
 32. Bulb border
 33. Rockery
 34. Shrubberies
 35. Experimental plots
 36. Order beds or Systematic garden
- A. Office, library and gardeners' room
 B. Laboratory and growth rooms
 C. Potting shed, machine store and boiler house



MAP OF THE
 TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN
 BOTANIC GARDENS.