



*The
Irish Garden Plant Society*



Newsletter No. 120 April 2011



Primula 'Drumcliffe'

Photo Pearse Rowe

Front Cover: *Deutzia purpurascens* 'Alpine Magician'. A seedling raised in the National Botanic Gardens Glasnevin from seed collected by Reginald Farrer in Burma in 1919. It was selected and named by Dr. Charles Nelson and flowers in May.

Photo Pearse Rowe.



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Editorial

The death of two well loved and highly respected members of the IGPS, Rosemary Brown and Dr. JGD Lamb was a poignant start to 2011. It was always a great pleasure to receive correspondence from Dr Lamb, and his last article in the Newsletter reminded us that through his intervention the American high-bush blueberry was introduced into cultivation here.

Susyn Andrews' lecture in December at the NBG Glasnevin was cancelled because of the severe weather at the time. On page 9 the article *Hollies and Lavenders - A no show due to snow* is based on this lecture.

Congratulations to Pat Fitzgerald and Fitzgerald Nurseries on their continued success, with awards conferred both at home and abroad, including Germany's IPM Essen Show 2010, one of the largest trade shows in the world. Of particular interest at the moment are the *Kennedy Irish Primroses* mentioned by Paddy Tobin on page 24. The widespread availability of these primroses is a tribute to both Pat Fitzgerald and also amateur primrose breeder Joe Kennedy in Co Antrim. Joe's work with old Irish varieties over the past thirty five years will surely now get the recognition it deserves.

The number of Newsletters will in the future be three annually as the IGPS reduces outgoings. If you are unable to attend the AGM in May any thoughts on the future development of the IGPS are as always welcome.

Mary

**Copy date for the September 2011 Newsletter is Friday 3th August.
Please send material for the Newsletter to: igpseditor@gmail.com
or Mary Rowe 29 Bantry Road, Drumcondra, Dublin 9**



Newsletter News

As we approach the forthcoming AGM in May, the committee has been examining the society's finances and we must report a fairly bleak situation. As you are all aware, we rely on our membership subscriptions and our plant sales for our funds and over the past few years, these have been declining. At the same time, we have continued to produce our regular newsletters and to have a full programme of lectures in each region as well as garden visits during the summer months.

All attempts to increase the amount of income generated have proved fruitless, so we have no option but to look at our outgoings to see if these can be reduced. Savings have been made in some areas, but we regretfully have come to the conclusion that we must reduce our newsletters from quarterly to 3 a year; this is the only way we will be able to continue with the quality of publication which we currently have. Proposed timing for future newsletters is January, May and September, and we intend not to produce a July Newsletter this year.

We have also been examining our events programmes in the regions and again have concluded that we will not be able to sustain the current number of lectures with our ever more limited resources. Lectures use up a lot of our funds, and given the low numbers of members who actually attend these events, we must question the value they provide to our membership. Despite repeated requests for feedback on how we can improve attendance, we have received little comment from our members and attendance remains very low.

If you would like to become more actively involved in your society to help provide new ideas for fundraising or for improving our events programme, your contribution would be very welcome. Nominations for committee are due in shortly prior to the AGM so if you would like to be involved, please get in touch. All assistance would be gratefully received.

Any comments on the way forward for the society can be sent to either our postal address or by email to me, patrick.quigley@live.co.uk

PLANNING A GARDEN TOUR ABROAD

One of our Northern members, Andrena Duffin, has proposed organising a garden tour next year, May 2012, and would like to sound out potential numbers who might be interested. You may recall we had a trip to Little Sparta and some Edinburgh gardens in 2010; this trip is a bit more adventurous – it is to Iran just a little bit further away. For those of you who do not know, Andrena is a fully qualified travel guide and is very experienced in organising trips so we will be in very capable hands. It is obviously very early days yet for putting everything together and we would need to get an idea of likely numbers if this trip is to go ahead. We estimate the likely cost will be around £3000 which will include all travel from London, all accommodation costs and meals, internal travel arrangements, admission to all gardens and the services of a qualified guide throughout.

If any of you would be interested, please send me your contact details (patrick.quigley@live.co.uk) and we will get in touch with more information as soon as possible.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Membership renewal forms are included in this issue of the newsletter. When you return your membership subscription, could you please provide details of email address and mobile phone numbers if you have them. Over the past year we have been using email bulletins to help keep members informed of forthcoming events, and recently the Munster group has very successfully been trialling the use of text messages to remind local members of events. With increased costs of postage, this seems like a good way forward in improving our communication with little or no cost and the more members who use the service, the better it will become. So please – send us your mobile number and email address when you renew. Confidentiality is assured and your details will not be forwarded to any other organisation.

Patrick Quigley

THE ANNUAL MUNSTER PLANT SALE

At the SMA Hall, Wilton, Cork

Saturday April 9th at 10 am



Annual General Meeting 2011

This year the AGM will be held in Leixlip House Hotel Co Kildare at 10am on Saturday May 14th. Tea and coffee will be served.

The hotel has some rooms available and has a list of alternative accommodation in the vicinity. It is also the venue for dinner at 8pm on Saturday evening.

We will be visiting six gardens on the borders of Kildare and Dublin. They include a Victorian Walled garden, mature country house gardens and more recently developed gardens. These gardens also contain interesting trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants which should be in flower for our visit. This is an opportunity to visit private gardens in rural settings not generally open to visitors.

A booking form for the weekend is enclosed with the Newsletter. A fully detailed programme will be sent at the time of booking. If you have any queries or need any further information, please contact Marcella Campbell on 01 8480625

A. G. M. Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of AGM 2010
3. Matters arising
4. Chairman's report
5. Treasurer's report
6. Election of Committee Members
7. Any other business

Nominations for election to the committee must be forwarded at least two weeks before the A.G.M. to the Honorary Secretary:

Mr. Dan Murphy, I.G.P.S. The National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin 9



Obituaries

Rosemary Brown 1918 - 2011

The gardening world has lost one of its charismatic figures with the death in January of Rosemary Brown at the age of 92. One of Ireland's best-known gardeners, she was an active member of the IGPS, particularly in the Society's early years, and the garden she and her husband John created at Graigueconna, Co. Wicklow, was a favourite destination for gardeners from Ireland and abroad.



Photo by Ralston Ryder

Born on 12 May 1918, Rosemary Sophia Riall spent most of her childhood at Ballyorney House, near Enniskerry, Co. Wicklow. The family had a strong gardening tradition. Rosemary's great-grandfather, Phineas Riall, had started the garden at Graigueconna in the 1840s, and this was also the garden of another relative, the alpine specialist Lewis Meredith. Rosemary's mother was a very keen gardener, a collector of old roses, with a wide circle of friends in the international gardening world, including the rose expert Graham Stuart Thomas who became Rosemary's close friend.

Rosemary began gardening at the age of five, with, as she ruefully remembered, a small square of clashing colours under the pink climbing rose 'Madame Caroline Testout'. Old-fashioned climbing and shrub roses were to be her passion, with over eighty kinds at Graigueconna — a June visit was always memorable. Writing in the IGPS's 100th newsletter in 2006, she recollected that many of her own roses had come as cuttings or suckers from her parents' garden, and she listed 'Isphahan', 'Charles de Mille' and 'Gertrude Jekyll' as her special favourites.

For the first part of their married life Rosemary and John Brown lived in England, but they moved to Co. Wicklow in 1970 and settled into Graigueconna, where they were to work together in the garden for nearly forty years until John's death in 2009. Rosemary joined the RHSI, and served on its Council. With her U.K. gardening connections, she was already aware of the

aims of the NCCPG even before the IGPS was set up, so that, as an enthusiastic supporter, she served as one of the IGPS's original committee members. She was made an Honorary Member in 1990.

Rosemary Brown was known for more than her garden: she was a skilful flower arranger and in the 1980s she wrote a popular gardening column for *The Irish Times*. She was much appreciated by overseas visitors to Graigueconna for her anecdotes about the origins of her various plants, and she was a generous and entertaining friend. Above all, though, she was, as Helen Dillon describes her: "A romantic gardener".

Mary Davies

John George Dalkeith Lamb 1919 - 2011

Prunus 'Woodfield Cluster', *Dryas octopetala* 'Burren Nymph', *Narcissus* 'Fairy Gold' are three Irish cultivars that are intimately associated with one of the Society's most distinguished, gentle and generous members. On St Brigid's day in the grounds of St. Brigid's Church in Clara, Co. Offaly, a day moist and mild with winter gardens beginning to reawaken, Keith Lamb was laid to rest. He was in his 92nd year, the majority of which were devoted professionally and personally to things of the earth, the food we grow and the plants that give us pleasure.



Keith, at the age of thirty defended his thesis, *The Apple in Ireland; its History and Varieties*. His name will forever be connected with this fruit for he travelled the country collecting native apple varieties, documenting their presence, names and uses. He continued throughout his career to be the expert on Irish apple varieties and is justly commemorated and acknowledged in the University College Dublin Lamb Clark Historic Apple Collection and its sibling collection at the Irish Seedsavers in Scariff, Co. Clare.

Horticultural research was an everyday part of Keith's life, during his time in An Folas Talúntais first at Johnstown Castle and later at the Kinsealy Research Centre. He was one of the co-authors of the manual that is used by propagators and was also an authority on the use of peat in horticulture. He was active in all

aspects of Irish gardening and was President of the Royal Horticultural Society of Ireland and a recipient of their Medal of Honour (1982). His interests extended into the wild and for many years he acted as the County recorder for Offaly for the BSBI.

As a plantsman, Keith was adventurous, always testing the boundaries of possibilities. He grew insectivorous plants and tried to naturalize them in the wild – an activity that perhaps he should not have undertaken. At Woodfield, he constructed raised beds to provide him with the best conditions for growing the plants he liked best – “alpiners” – but he also took great pleasure in showing visitors that he also gardened the surrounding walls. Memorable plants at Woodfield included *Philesia buxifolia* in stone troughs, *Lapageria rosea* on the shaded wall, and the Chatham Island forget-me-not (*Myosotidium hortensia*).

A founding, and later an Honorary member of the Irish Garden Plant Society, Keith supported activities, opened his garden, disseminated plants and knowledge and wrote prolifically. His first contribution was in newsletter No. 7 asking for information on award spoons that later led to his first of three papers for the Society’s journal, *Moorea*. His latest contribution was in January 2010 on the introduction of blueberries as a cultivated crop to Ireland. He shared his favourites with us all and favourites to Keith were plentiful, from an intriguing *Paeonia* given to him by Phylis Lady Moore to the Woodfield *Cyclamen* so often talked of and passed about.

Gardening at Woodfield has gone on for more than three centuries. The frontispiece in his *A history of gardening in Ireland*, written with Patrick Bowe, is a map of Woodfield dated 1765. The house, recognizable to this day, then had a formal garden with clipped hedge and a hop-yard. Keith’s gardening was much less formal, although the remarkable raised beds and the mock classical façade of the old kennel-yard had a rustic formality.

Helen and Keith Lamb were the most hospitable people, welcoming everyone interested in their garden. A floriferous camellia that Keith had raised and grew in their garden at Malahide, having been propagated by Dr Neil Murray, bears Helen’s name. Sadly, Helen has passed away too – they had been married for 59 years. She died nineteen days after Keith and was buried beside him at St Brigid’s Church, Clara.

As far as we know no plant has been named after Keith, his innate modesty made the idea unthinkable during his life. His legacy does not need names to denote it – it is simply this: Ireland’s gardens and orchards are the richer for his plantsmanship.

Born August 19th 1919; Buried St. Brigid’s Church, Feb 1st 2011

Brendan Sayers



Hollies and Lavenders – A no show due to snow!! By Susyn Andrews

Ilex is the only genus in the Aquifoliaceae, with some 500-700 species distributed throughout the tropical, subtropical and temperate regions of the world.

Hollies are evergreen, rarely deciduous trees, shrubs and climbers. The leaves are alternate, rarely opposite, while the small flowers are usually white and the male and female flowers occur on separate plants. The fruits are most often red but a minority are black. However, yellow, orange and white fruits are found in certain cultivars of some species.

Ilex aquifolium is the species that is familiar to all of us through Christmas, folklore, etc. It is, however, atypical of the genus, as most species of holly do not have such spines. Our native holly occurs in western and southern Europe, extending eastwards to southwest Bulgaria and Turkey (in Europe and Asia), and northwards to southwest Scandinavia and south to North Africa. There are many cultivars, some with variegated leaves – ‘Argentea Marginata’, ‘Golden Queen’- and others with coloured berries, e.g. orange and yellow, such as ‘Amber’ ‘Fructu Luteo’. *Ilex aquifolium* ‘Ferox’ or hedgehog holly is the earliest known illustrated cultivar, as can be seen from a French woodcut of 1635.

Ilex perado subsp. *perado* is endemic to Madeira and has been known in cultivation as a stove plant since 1760. Subsp. *platyphylla* grows in the Canary Isles, on Tenerife and Gomera. It was introduced in 1842. These two subspecies are of particular interest as they crossed with *I. aquifolium* to produce a range of hybrids called the Highclere hollies or *I. x altaclerensis*. The original was described from a plant on the Highclere Estate, near Newbury, Berks. in 1838. They form magnificent specimen plants, tall hedges or windbreaks; are more vigorous with larger leaves, flowers and fruit. They are also exposure and pollution tolerant.

The Hodgins nursery dynasty produced *I. x altaclerensis* ‘Hodginsii’ and ‘Hendersonii’ in Dunganstown, Co. Wicklow and ‘Lawsoniana’ and ‘Golden King’ (two variegated sports from ‘Hendersonii’) at Cloughjordan,

Co. Tipperary during the 1800s. *Ilex* x *altaclerensis* 'Lady Valerie' was discovered sporting off 'Golden King' by Dr Neil Murray in 1976 at Dargle Cottage in Co. Wicklow and he introduced it to the trade in 1988. Neil named his sport after Lady Valerie Goulding in whose garden it was found.

There are two National Collections of *Ilex*, one at RHS Rosemore, Great Torrington, North Devon and the other near Newport, Pembrokeshire (a couple of miles from Fishguard) in Wales. The older collection at the Valley Gardens, Windsor Great Park, Berks., which was begun in the early 1960s was withdrawn recently but is still worth a visit.

The holly collection at the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin was begun in 1911 and is thus 100 years old!! Plants came from a range of nurseries in the UK and mainland Europe. Some specimens have been removed in recent years from the front of the Palm House but the main bulk of the hollies are concentrated in the Far Grounds.

The genus *Lavandula* in the Labiatae consists of 39 species distributed from Macronesia (Cape Verde Islands, the Canary Islands and Madeira) in the west, across northern Africa, throughout the Mediterranean region, south-west Asia, Arabia, western Iran, with a disjunction to India in the east. There are also several hybrids and nearly 400 cultivars.

The most important taxa commercially are *L. angustifolia* subsp. *angustifolia* or *lavande fine*, which occurs in southern France and in northwest and southern Italy, usually between 500-1800 m and *L. x intermedia* subsp. *intermedia* (*L. angustifolia* subsp. *angustifolia* x *L. latifolia*). This hybrid known as lavandin, occurs naturally in southeast France and northern Italy, at 500-800 m, where the distribution of the parents overlap.

Lavandula angustifolia subsp. *angustifolia* produces the finest oil, which is sweet without the smell of camphor. Other uses include lotions for the cosmetic trade, colognes, toilet water and high quality perfumes. Medicinally, it is used for its antiseptic and anti-inflammatory qualities. It also has insecticidal properties and is much used in aromatherapy. 'Maillette' is a popular field variety, as its oil mixes well with alcohol and it has a strong, fragrant aroma.

Lavandula x intermedia subsp. *intermedia* or lavandin is the most widely grown lavender for oil production. It has a strong herbaceous odour and is used for soaps, talc, cheap perfumes, candles, cleaning products and polishes. Lavandin also has good insecticidal properties. 50-60% of the world's lavandin market consists of 'Grosso', which has a very pungent aroma.

The main lavender growing areas in southern France are in Provence. In 1981 the Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée (AOC) was established to protect the

essential oils of *lavande fine* against Bulgarian competition. To qualify for this label, the oil must undergo stringent tests before it can undergo the right to be called an AOC. The fields must also lie above 800 m and this covers some 284 towns, villages and hamlets within the four départements of the Drôme, Vaucluse, Alpes-de-Haute-Provence and Haute-Alpes.

The areas for lavandin crops are the Plateau de Valensole (A-de-HP), the southern Drôme and the Vaucluse, while *lavande fine* and lavandin can be seen at the base of Mt. Lure (A-de-HP), and the Plateau de Albion (Vaucluse). For information on the Provençal lavender fields, products and culture, contact www.routes-lavande.com

The oldest National Collection of *Lavandula* is at Norfolk Lavender in North Norfolk. It was started in 1983 and at its height had over 150 taxa. This was the premier lavender farm in the country but was sold a couple of years ago and is slowly building up its business again. www.norfolk-lavender.co.uk

Downderry Nursery, near Hadlow in Kent is by far the best lavender nursery in the UK. Their National Collection was begun in 1996 and has some 250 taxa. It has a retail nursery in a 1.2 acre walled garden, a field of 'Maillette', mail order and an annual, extremely informative catalogue. See www.downderry-nursery.co.uk

Commercially in the UK some c. three million lavenders are sold each year. Old favourites such as *L. angustifolia* 'Hidcote', 'Hidcote Pink', 'Nana Atropurpurea', 'Rosea' and 'Twickel Purple' are well known. 'Glasnevin' ('Glasnevin Variety') is an old plant on the Rockery at Glasnevin. It still has its old lead label and has been known since before 1899. Well known lavandins include *L. x intermedia* 'Alba', 'Dutch', 'Grey Hedge', 'Grosso', 'Hidcote Giant', 'Old English' and 'Seal'.

In recent years, demand has grown for the stoechas-type lavenders or those with "ears". New cultivars are coming on the market all the time, creating interest for flower sales from spring to the end of the summer. These are not fully hardy and are treated as annual impulse plants by the UK public.

Finally, *Chrysolina americana* or the rosemary or lavender beetle has arrived in Ireland. Scientists at RHS Wisley have records of two sightings, one in Co. Down, the other in West Cork. This 10 mm long metallic green beetle has purple stripes on its wing cases and should be killed on sight, as it loves the foliage of many of our garden genera in the Labiatae.

I hope to give this lecture to you all at some stage, weather permitting!!!



Worth a Read by Paddy Tobin

Jane Powers articles in the Weekend Magazine of the Irish Times has been the first part of that newspaper I have turned to for many years. With such an experience in gardening, from her reading, writing, visiting gardens and gardening events and talking to other gardeners, it was always to be hoped and

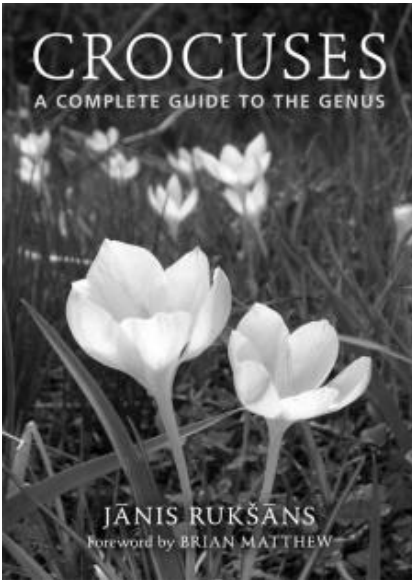


expected that Jane would put her gathered thoughts, experiences and wisdom into a book at some stage. It has eventually arrived. ***“The Living Garden – A Place that Works with Nature”*** is essentially a book of garden philosophy, an outlining of an approach to gardening while, at the same time, it passes on much practical advice. Gardening is, after all, a practical activity. Jane urges us to garden in a way which co-operates with and supports the natural systems of our gardens as, be they big or small; they effect and contribute to the general wellbeing of the planet. Her advice, of global importance, is presented with the commonsense of one who has tried it out in her own backyard and so is practical for us all.

Experienced gardeners will not find the general gardening advice new but the underlying thought of this book is a guideline to best practice and deserves thoughtful reading. Jane took all the photographs for the book, by the way, and they are excellent; indeed, the whole book is excellent. [*The Living Garden – A Place that Works with Nature, Jane Powers, Frances Lincoln, London, 2011, HB, 216pp. £25*]



Helen Dillon's Garden Book has been reissued in paperback recently, making it a great value read. As well as her thoughtful and insightful observations on plants and gardens, Helen passes on the experiences of a gardener who managed to achieve that difficult marriage of the plant lover who always wanted something new and the gardener who managed to plant them in a well-designed garden so they all looked well together. [*Helen Dillon's Garden Book, Helen Dillon, Frances Lincoln, London, 2011, SB, 224pp, £14.99*]



There are among gardeners those who take a passionate interest in a particular genus. For those with such an interest in crocuses this book is the most up to date account of the genus. The last such complete account of crocuses was by Brian Matthews in 1982 and Janis Ruksans is well qualified and experienced to update our information. He not only has grown almost all of the species and cultivars but has travelled extensively to view the species growing in the wild. It differs somewhat from Brian Matthews treatment as it is not only a botanical treatment of the genus but also an account from the perspective of a very active, enthusiastic gardener and both of these aspects are covered very well – the botanic descriptions and classifications of

the plants and the practical advice on growing them. If crocuses are your passion, you cannot be without this book. [*Crocuses, A Complete Guide to the Genus, Janis Ruksans, Timber Press, London, 2011, HB, 216pp, £30*]

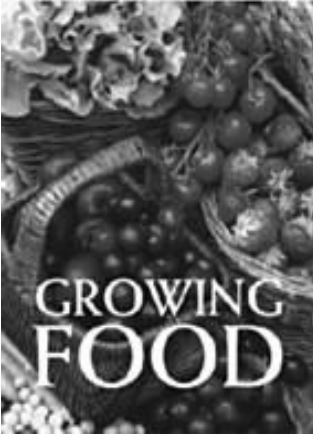
Snowdrops are a particular interest among many gardeners at present and the publication of “*Galanthomania*” by Hanneke Van Dijk was well heralded and anticipated. It promised a new classification system which would help sort out the now almost innumerable number of named cultivars. However, it did not live up to expectations in this area but other sections of the book are of interest. There are portraits of the well-known personalities in the snowdrop world; actually, this is the largest section of the book. There are several quirky chapters on other aspects of the hobby and at the rear a gallery of photographs, thumbnail size, of about 500 snowdrops. The book is bilingual, Dutch on one side and



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an exact translation in English across from this. It is nicely presented and the photography is of a high standard. [*Galanthomania, Hanneke Van Dijk, Terra Lannoo, Arnhem, 2011, HB, 160pp*]

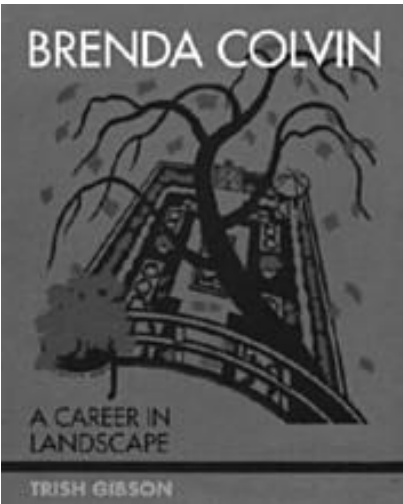
ANNA PAVORD



It is probably dreadfully unfair of me to always think of Anna Pavord as somewhat of an academic gardener. Perhaps my misconception is based on the wonderful array of scholarly books she has written but it is one I must amend as this lady has dirt under her nails. I reviewed her “The Curious Gardener” in the January newsletter, a book which gave me an insight into the very practical gardening aspects of this lady – had I been a reader of The Independent I would have known this earlier. **“Growing Food”** is a revised and updated version of her book, *“The New Kitchen Garden”*, and is full of the practical advice on growing fruit and vegetables, ranging from choosing the site, to preparation, planning and design to sowing, growing, harvesting and using the produce. In paperback it is more practical in

the hands of the active gardener and is also outstanding value for money. [*Growing Food*, Anna Pavord, Frances Lincoln, London, 2011, SB, 288pp, £7.99]

A very kind lady at Frances Lincoln occasionally sends me a book I had not



requested, usually with a comment that she thinks I might like it. To be perfectly honest, I had never heard of the subject of the book, Brenda Colvin, but am now glad that I have at last done so. This book, **“Brenda Colvin”** by Trish Gibson gives a full account of her life and work as a landscape architect. It is claimed with solid justification that Brenda Colvin ranks with Sylvia Crowe and Geoffrey Jellicoe as a pioneer of twentieth-century landscape design in Britain. Much of her work was in what would be described as civic projects – power stations, reservoirs, industrial sites, new towns and national parks, truly works of great public interest and importance. Throughout her career she

also worked on many private gardens where her planting style was simple and her ecological approach influential. A very interesting woman and a very interesting read. [*Brenda Colvin*, Trish Gibson, Frances Lincoln, 2011, HB, 256pp, £35]

Finally, a quirky book about a very quirky man, “Dear Christo” which presents a collection of comments from people, gardeners, musicians, family and friends, who stayed as guests with Christopher Lloyd in his home at Great Dixter. As might be expected, there is a certain amount of repetition and by the



Dear Christo
Memories of Christopher Lloyd at Great Dixter

Foreword by Ruth Clavin
Preface by Fergal Garrett and Rosemary Alexander



It is introduced by
Anna Pavord, Alan Titchmarsh, Dan Pearson and Helen Diller

book's end we are certainly aware that they ate well and drank well at Great Dixter and that champagne and olives were a favourite morning snack, particularly as a replacement for Sunday church-going

The book is peppered with examples of Christopher Lloyd's generosity and of his frequent directness of speech or rudeness. One may gain insights into an untypical childhood, a man who remained a child in his mother's house and seems to have had his teenage rebellions in middle age.

I wondered if his flamboyant gardening style was simply an expression of this. Read it

yourself and judge. [*Dear Christo*, Timber Press, London, 2010, HB, 207pp, £18.99]

A Message from The National Committee

If there is a specific plant you are finding difficult to locate the National Committee would like to hear from you. The collated list will then be included in the Newsletter and it is hoped other members will be able to supply the required plants which will then be made available to members at future Plant Sales.

Please contact:

The Irish Garden Plant Society,
c/o The National Botanic Gardens,
Glasnevin,
Dublin 9.

Or by E-mail: igpsireland@aol.com



Weinmannia in cultivation by Gary Dunlop

The genus *Weinmannia* was established by Linnaeus in 1759 ¹, when he named a new plant from a Caribbean island, *Weinmannia pinnata*. He named the genus after the German pharmacist and botanist, Johann Wilhelm Weinmann (1683-1741) who wrote *Phytanthoza Iconographia* which was highly regarded for the information and the quality of the 1,025 coloured illustrations. The genus was subsequently placed in a new family Cunoniaceae which was established by Robert Brown in 1805 ². Most of the new genus and indeed most of the whole family are primarily to be found in Tropical and Subtropical regions of the world, and thus not widely grown in temperate climates. Only one genus in the family, *Eucryphia*, is generally regarded as reasonably hardy and widely grown in temperate regions. The distribution of *Weinmannia* and indeed the other genera in the family is widely considered to relate to Gondwanaland, and hence the evolution of the family has its origins in the Jurassic period, almost certainly before it split from South America.³

The first reasonably hardy species in the genus to be published was *Weinmannia racemosa*, from the temperate climate in the south island of New Zealand. It was named by the son of Linnaeus in *Supplimentum Planatarum*, published in 1782, from a herbarium specimen collected on the newly promoted Commander Cook's second voyage around the world during which he revisited New Zealand, having previously circumnavigated and mapped it on his first voyage. The two botanists on this trip were the Prussian naturalists, Johann Rheinhold Forster and his son Johann Georg Forster. It must have been the son who contacted Linnaeus fil., regarding the identity of this new tree, as he subsequently published it in his *Prodomus* in 1786. Father and son had jointly published some of the collections of the trip in *Characteres Generum Plantarum* in 1775-6.

However, another species had been previously collected from the North Island of New Zealand by Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander, the assistant he employed, who acted as botanists on Lieutenant Cook's first voyage around the world. The herbarium specimen which they collected in 1769 was described in an unpublished manuscript in Bank's library, by Daniel Solander. Solander was a capable Swedish botanist and student of Linnaeus, who died at the early age of 49 of a brain hemorrhage in 1782, whilst still in the employ of Banks, as secretary and librarian. For the last 10 years of his life he was also employed as Keeper of the Natural History Department of the British Museum.

Solander's name and description of the new plant, *Weinmannia silvicola*, was eventually published by Alan Cunningham in 1839 ⁴ along with other plants which the latter collected in the North Island of New Zealand in 1926.

The first hardy species of *Weinmannia trichosperma*, was first described and published the Spanish botanist Antonio Cavanilles in 1801.⁵ Whilst he gave no indication of who collected the new plant, Luciano Barnardi indicates that the herbarium specimen was collected by Joseph Dombey, who accompanied Ruiz & Pavon on their expedition to Chile and Peru.⁶ The politics and convoluted circumstances of that expedition are briefly described by Alice Coates ⁷ and in a more understated scholarly way by F.A. Stafleu.⁸ Apparently unaware that Cavanilles had described and published the plant, based on the Dombey herbarium specimen, Ruiz & Pavon published the same plant under the name *Weinmannia dentata* a year later.⁹



Weinmannia trichosperma flowers and buds

The earliest record of any species of *Weinmannia* growing in the British Isles was *W.racemosa* in 'A list of plants hardy in the Gardens at Castlewellan in 1903' ¹⁰ in the sheltered arboretum created by the Earl of Annesley, in the south of Co Down. However, it was not included in the paper he gave to the RHS in July 1902 ¹¹ which was an over view of many of the fairly mature ornamental trees and shrubs growing there, but was by no means a

comprehensive coverage. How long it survived is not known, but it was certainly not listed in a small catalogue of plants in the garden published in the 1970s. The next published record of *Weinmannia* was the result of 'Meeting of the RHS Scientific Committee on 11th April 1917', chaired by E A Bowles, which decided to conduct a survey of how many plants in the British Isles fared after the previous very severe winter. The results were published in 1918.¹² Only two of the many gardens contacted and responded grew *Weinmannia*. *W.racemosa* was unaffected at Rostrevor House, at the south-eastern extremity of Co Down; the sheltered garden and very significant plant collection of Sir John Ross of Bladensburg, which was well known to leading botanists and plantsmen of the day. *W.silvicola* was recorded as been killed to the ground at Glasnevin Botanic Gardens in Dublin. Whether it recovered is not known. However, Glasnevin may have had the foresight to pass a duplicate of this tender plant to Tresco in 1914, where it was recorded as still growing at Monument Walk in 1985.¹³



Weinmannia racemosa juvenile new growth

It was 1921 before there was any published reference to *Weinmannia trichosperma* being in cultivation. It was contained in a substantial list of South American plants introduced into cultivation, compiled by W.B.Turrill M.Sc., at the request of Mr W.G. E. Loder MA, F.L.S. F.R.H.S, but without giving any details were the plants were being grown or by whom.¹⁴ It was probably compiled as an intended acquisition list for Mr Loder, who was an avid collector of plants. Six year later *Weinmannia trichospermum* gained an

AGM when a flowering branch was put up for award at the RHS by Mr G.W.Loder Esq., the year before he became president of the RHS.¹⁵

In 1930, Edgar Thurston recorded *W.trichosperma* as growing at Lugdvan rectory and in the temperate house at Kew, but without further details. ¹⁶ Curiously he did not mention it growing at Lanarth. The year before, Frank Kingdon Ward, writing about a visit to Canon Arthur Boscawen's garden at Lugdan rectory, in summer of 1927, extolled the virtues of late flowering trees and shrubs from Australasia, and New Zealand in particular, but almost dismissively noted *W.silvicola* and *W.trichosperma* as being other interesting plants.¹⁷

The first published record of a substantial tree of *Weinmannia trichosperma* is of one being 20ft high in 1931 at the garden of P.D.Williams at Lanarth, albeit published only a decade later.¹⁸ The origin of these early introductions does not seem to be known, but the tree at Lanarth, judging from its height, may have represented the first introduction of the plant into cultivation, prior to 1920. As Bishop Hunkin recorded in an article on Lanarth, P.D.Williams received plants from a wide circle of leading gardeners and plantsmen.

The plant could well have come from Canon Arthur Boscawen. Curiously, Arnold-Forster only mentions *W. trichosperma* in the final chapter, Uncommon, untried or tender shrubs with brief description and rather dismissively refers to the New Zealand trees as 'other species, less attractive'.¹⁹

The first record of *Weinmannia* being collected in the wild is by Harold Comber, on the second of his two Andes Expeditions in 1925-6 and 1926-7. He collected the seed on 22.2.27, under the No.1060 at 3000ft on the Argentinean side of the border beside Lago (lake) Lolog, with an XX rating, with XXX being the most garden worthy, and least garden worthy without any rating. The accompanying note reads: '*Here only a narrow belt by the water's edge, 12'-25'high, but with big trunks. Slow growing and stunted, but shows no sign of being frozen. Should be hardy. Germinated.*' ²⁰ The introductory note accompanying the collection data, written by Henry D.McLaren, notes that the seeds were identified by Kew from herbarium specimens of the plants collected, and that both RBG Edinburgh and Kew were presented with a set of seeds by the Subscribers, who were listed and comprised many leading affluent gardeners of the day.

Not many examples of *Weinmannia* seem to have survived from this introduction, and only two possible plants might be from this collection, the current Champion tree in the British Isles, ²¹ at Mount Stewart, Co Down (52ft (16m) x 12" (31cm) dia in 2003) and a potentially close rival, at Logan Botanic Garden on the Stranraer peninsula (45ft (14m) x 10" (24cm) dia. in 1979), though its tree would have been planted before RBG Edinburgh took over responsibility for it. The Mount Stewart specimen was first mentioned in print

by Graham Stewart Thomas in 1950, when he saw it there growing beside the lake in full flower, at 25ft high.²²



Weinmannia trichosperma new leaves

Perhaps, surprisingly Bean only mentions two specimens, though does include a line drawing of the attractive fern-like foliage.²³ The first, a 12ft (3.5m) high specimen, at Wakehurst Place, which must have been a replacement for the plant which Gerald Loder, later elevated to become 1st Baron Wakehurst, got the AGM for. (The current specimen growing there at 16ft(5m)²¹ must be another replacement or else the plant has been remarkably slow growing for almost 30 years.) The second specimen mentioned by Bean was the champion tree (59 x 3³/₄ ft girth in 1971) at Tregothnan in Cornwall, the estate and garden of Viscount Falmouth, which has been in the Boscawen family since 1344. That tree, now presumed lost, almost certainly came from Canon Boscawen, cousin of the then 7th Viscount, who was known to have supplied plants to the Family estate.

What is surprising is that such an attractive tree as *Weinmannia trichosperma* is not more widely grown, despite being in cultivation in the British Isles for almost a century, or at least rarely mentioned in print. The rarity of *W. silvicola* is not so difficult to explain as it comes from the North Island of New Zealand. It is probably only on Tresco that it would survive for any length of time as it requires very mild temperate conditions. *W.racemosa*, again is barely in

cultivation is certainly harder, but it is puzzling as to why no examples of it were identified in cultivation in the recent survey by Owen Johnson.²¹ It must be admitted that neither of the New Zealand species are as attractive in leaf as their South American relatives. The juvenile foliage of *W.silvicola* (locally called Tawhero) is pinnate but reduces to trifoliolate and even simple leaves in maturity. The tiny white flowers are presented in racemes, clustered at the tips of the branches and the trees can vary in height from 20ft (6m) to 70ft (22m), and develop a trunk up to 3ft (90cm) in diameter.²⁴ The juvenile foliage of *R.racemosa* (locally called Towai or Kamahi) is simple or trifoliolate, becoming simple in mature trees, which can reach a height of 90-100ft (28-30m) with a trunk up to 4ft (1.2m) in diameter. The slightly larger flowers are presented in longer racemes, but with fewer clustered at the tips of the branches.²⁴ The line illustrations provided by Kirk, are life size in the book, and are reproduced below. The flowers of both trees are illustrated in several books on native plants or flora of New Zealand,²⁵ as well as being easily found on various websites.



W. silvicola

W. racemosa

I have not been tempted to try growing *W.silvicola* for obvious reasons, but have grown *W.racemosa* for about 10 years. A small seedling about 8" (20cm) tall was planted out in rather dry, poor and fairly shallow soil over dolerite bedrock. It proved to be rather slow growing, which is perhaps not surprising given the conditions in which it was planted. However, it has survived and established itself, despite competition from several large eucalyptus species, which I learnt rather too late, tended to reduce soil fertility. That should have been obvious, as eucalyptus leaves do not rot down easily. In the last couple of years the rate of growth has increased and, aided with a top dressing of horse manure last year, growth rate improved a little and the small tree has now

reached 8ft (2.4m) high. How long it will take before starting to flower remains to be seen. In contrast to the New Zealand tree, *W.trichosperma* (locally called Tenu, Maden or Medehue) does not have a different form of juvenile foliage. The small white flowers are similarly presented in short racemes, either singly, in pairs or in groups of 3-4, though not at the tips of the branches; they normally occur either side of new leaf growth. Again it can reach 100ft (30m) tall, but so far rather less in cultivation. In Chile it occurs in two almost disjunct linear areas either side of the highest ranges of the Andes, approximately from almost 37° to 45 ° south, ²⁶ regions VII to XII. Plants from the coastal habitat including Chiloe island and further south on the mainland are likely to be less hardy as those growing at higher elevation inland along the border with Argentina.

The tree that I grow is now about 15 year or so old, and has reached about 20ft (6m) high, It is in slightly deeper and moister soil than its New Zealand cousin, though not necessarily more fertile. It is a seedling from the Mount Stewart plant, but unfortunately there is no specific reference in the sporadic garden notes to identify its provenance or date of acquisition. The Mount Stewart tree grows in a relatively open position beside the path close to the lake, and forms a neat narrow tapering spire, but unfortunately it is not possible to get a good photograph of it, without being able to walk on water. However the small pinnate leaves really need close inspection to appreciate their intricacy. When flowering well, the flowers can give the impression of the tree being well dressed with a mass of short white candles, albeit rather drunkenly arrayed. The new foliage makes a colourful contrast to the dark glossy green mature foliage and is echoed later by the seeds turning red, before ripening to brown. Its normal flowering period is in May, though this year, 2010, for the second time it has produced a second crop of a few flowers, in October and into November, though not so many as in 2008 when it previously provided an autumn flush of flowers, but without detracting from the display the following spring.

Whist *W. trichosperma* is not especially showy, it has an understated elegance which ensures that it should be more widely grown. It is not wide spreading so does not need a lot of space and could readily be planted instead of some conifers or other evergreen trees. However, it is only suitable for growing in the more westerly areas of the British Isles, where reasonable rainfall and relatively high humidity usually prevail. It is probably best planted in moisture retentive soil, and can tolerate light shade. It can be raised quite easily from the fine seed which is best almost surface sown in close conditions to maintain a high humidity. Care should be taken to prick out the seedlings when still quite small and to pot into relatively heavy potting mix to ensure the roots are not disturbed when potting on or planting out in its permanent position. Root disturbance of relatively small plants can prove fatal.

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Irish Primroses for First Lady

How wonderful to note that the Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, presented the First Lady, Mrs. Obama, with a special basket of the Irish primrose variety, 'Drumcliffe' on St. Patrick's Day while visiting the White House.

Primula 'Drumcliffe' is one of Joe Kennedy's cultivars which were taken on by Pat Fitzgerald (Fitzgerald Nurseries). It was propagated in Co. Wexford and grown on to flowering size at their facility in Co. Kilkenny before being transported to Heronswood Nurseries in Pennsylvania where they were acclimatized and prepared for their final presentation.

The Kennedy Irish Primroses were launched this January to coincide with the 50th Anniversary of the inauguration of John F. Kennedy as President of the United States of America. *Primula* 'Drumcliffe' is named after the final resting place of W.B. Yeats. The second variety released in 2011 is *P.* 'Innisfree' after the Yeats' poem.

Further selections from Joe Kennedy's range will be propagated and put on the market in the coming years, a very welcome development in the preservation and spreading of quality Irish plants.

Best wishes to this venture.

Paddy Tobin

Primula 'Drumcliffe' and *P.* 'Innisfree' are available in Garden Centres nationwide. *Primula* 'Innisfree' has bronze foliage similar to *P.* 'Drumcliffe' (see inside front cover) and is a striking dark red with yellow eye.



To BEE, or not to BEE, that is the Question by Michael Kelleher

A garden teeming with wildlife is a pleasing and relaxing place to be, good for one's well being and for the feeling it brings of continuity and interaction with the wilder world. Bees, Butterflies and Birds are as much a delight as flowers, vegetables and fruit. With the intensification of modern monoculture "pesticides" farming, the private garden has become more and more important as a safe habitat for wildlife. It has been estimated that honeybees contribute over 200 billion dollars to the global economy through production and crop pollination. Bee diseases have been a growing concern in recent years and Colony Collapse Disorder "CCD" has become prevalent. This is believed to be caused by a number of factors including environmental stress from the spread of modern monoculture farming, loss of habitat and viral infections.

While we might think global, the secret is to act local. The idea that we do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, but borrow it from our children is a compelling one. Organic methods help us to fulfil this philosophy. By taking a holistic approach to the use of finite resources and by minimising impact on the environment, organic growing makes a positive contribution towards creating a sustainable future for all life on earth. This means recycling and reusing, instead of dumping or burning or buying in new, providing habitats where wildlife can flourish and avoiding the use of non-reusable resources. If you grow plants to benefit wildlife, the wildlife will in turn help to control pests. Organic methods are not just for the fruit and vegetable patch, they can be applied to all areas of the garden, from lawns to shrubberies and windowsill.

Main Organic Principles – Manage the whole garden organically – edible crops, ornamentals, lawns and paths. Make the garden wildlife friendly, encouraging wildlife to control pests. Learn to distinguish pests from predators. Play to your garden's strengths, capitalising on its particular characteristics. Make soil care a priority. Make compost and leaf mould to feed the soil. Reuse and recycle, to cut down the use of finite resources and reduce disposal problems such as landfill. Use organically grown seeds where possible. Collect rainwater, and reuse same. Make local sources your first choice. Use traditional methods where appropriate. Stop using artificial fertilizers. Give up smoking bonfires. Control weeds without herbicides. Avoid the use of pesticides and preservative treated wood. Say no to genetically modified cultivars. Buy seed from organic heritage seed library catalogues. Recognise the value of genetic diversity and the preservation of threatened cultivars.

The fundamental principles of organic gardening are also at the heart of the growing systems used by two other “movements”, Biodynamics and Permaculture. These are based on the teachings of Rudolf Steiner, an Austrian radical philosopher working in the 1920’s. Permaculture is an interdisciplinary ecological design philosophy developed by Austrian Bill Mollison in the late 20th Century. Both these systems provide for some people a philosophy for life.

Biodynamic agriculture – Biodynamic thinking recognises a spiritual dimension to life, enlarging the basis of science to include the cosmic and what is beyond the sense – perceptible. It has a holistic world-view that, for example, sees the influence of planetary rhythms on the growth of plants and animals as of equal importance to a purely chemical analysis. It is the regeneration of the forces that work through the soil to the plants, aided by “enlivened” compost or manure, that is the central aim of Biodynamics and which makes it conspicuously different to other organic systems. When crops are harvested from the land it is not only their substance that has been removed but also the forces and vitality that make them worth eating. To give back this vitality biodynamic gardeners use special therapeutic preparations for the soil, plants, compost and manure. Permaculture – is an ecological design system which helps find solutions to the many problems facing us – both locally and globally. Permaculture tackles how to grow food, build houses, and create communities while minimising the environmental impact. It encourages us to be resourceful and self-reliant. By thinking carefully about the way we use our resources, it is possible to get much more out of life by using less. We can be more productive for less effort, reaping benefits for our environment and ourselves, for now and for generations to come. This is the essence of Permaculture – the design of an ecologically sound, sustainable way of living – in households, gardens, communities and businesses.

My main interest in the garden is in the late summer border, using mostly coneflowers e.g. Echinacea and Rudbeckia as well as Asters. It is a magnet for bees and butterflies. A few years ago I set aside a little plot at the edge of the vegetable garden to plant Borage especially for the bees and on arriving home from work each evening I would sit down, watch and listen as the bees busily buzzed all over the Borage. I would like to encourage all gardeners to take the time to plant extra plants this Spring to encourage more wildlife, bees, butterflies, birds and beneficial insects to your gardens. Some flowers for honeybees – dog roses, heather, candytuft, Russian sage, rosemary, verbena, wallflowers. Flowers for bumblebees – honeysuckle, Shasta daisy, anise hyssop, bergamot, lobelia, perennial cornflower. Plants for hoverflies and other beneficial insects, blackthorn, hawthorn, ivy, bramble, sweet alyssum, cow parsley, californian poppy. Flowers for butterflies – buddleia, candytuft, hebe, field scabious, honesty, hyssop, hemp, ice plant, lavender, marjoram, michelmas daisy, sweet William, Echinacea, rudbeckia, perennial wallflower, verbena. Throughout history the garden has held a central place in the spiritual

quest for paradise, our own gardens are sanctuaries in a similar way, bringing refreshment, a place of growth, change and peace. Looking at the great traditions of garden design can give you ideas for your own garden and the particular effect you wish to contrive, whether formal and contained, romantic and wild, eccentric or bizarre. The garden can be a place of self-expression, which can be unique to each individual, yours to labour or relax in, a private place according to your own needs. If your life is dominated by timetables and demands imposed by others, the garden is the chance to have your own space, a personal piece of paradise. Enjoy!

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The Healing Garden by Sue Minter



Regional Reports

LEINSTER

Thursday January 27th 2011 “Ireland’s vegetation on the move; from the Ice Age to now and beyond”.

Professor Fraser Mitchell, Associate Professor of Quaternary Ecology at Trinity College, Dublin spoke to the Leinster group on a “balmy” 27th January, 2011 on this fascinating topic. His main theme was that plants migrate across the landscape and have done so in the distant past, are doing so now and will do so in the future. 18,000 years ago saw the maximum extent of ice from the last Ice Age. Plants began to migrate in response to the rise in temperatures as the climate heated up. Pollen grains are our main sources of information. They identify the genera only, not the species of our ancient forests. Most flowering shrubs and perennials are not represented. At a temperature of 5C. many plants are comfortable.

Some of the first plants in Ireland, Birch, Heathers, Junipers, Dwarf Salix, were recorded in Glendalough, Co. Wicklow. Glendalough’s climate which had resembled that of the Greenland tundra later became deciduous forest after an abrupt rapid rise in temperature (over a period of a mere 10 years) around 12,000 years ago. This appears to have been caused by instability in the ice sheets which introduced some tropical waters from the Gulf Stream. The temperature remained elevated. Plants “leapfrogged across the landscape” to

Ireland from the Iberian Peninsula and even from the Balkans. Our richest soils are in the midlands so plants settled there first. Hazel arrived between 9,500 - 9,000 years ago, Elm between 9,000 - 8,500, Oak between 9,000 - 8,000 years ago. All these plants migrated upwards from the south. There are only 815 native vascular plants in Ireland, whereas Britain has 1,100, France 35,000, Belgium 1,140 respectively. The Irish Sea filled in 14,000 years ago. Also at this time all the ice was gone from "mainland" Ireland, although the Aran Islands were still attached. When "our" plants were migrating there were no land bridges. *Tilia* sp. arrived in Britain before the land bridges vanished. Records show it 7,000 years ago in Wales but not in Ireland until we brought it in many centuries later. Beech only arrived in Ireland 3,000 years ago. British Oak species came from all over the Iberian Peninsula, Irish species only from the western side of that peninsula.

The observed rate of migration of the following species is as follows:

Corylus species - 0.3 kms per annum with seed set in 15 years

Pinus .. - 0.25.. 15 years

Elm .. - 0.4 20

Oak .. - 0.15 - 0.4 30

Pine and Elm species have some adaptation for pollination by wind dispersal. Hazel needs other vectors e.g. water, animals, Oak needs birds. Vectors remove the need for land bridges. Gardeners are of course also vectors and nowadays we have 1,568 species in Ireland due to "recent" introductions. This information may be confirmed by reference to "An Irish Flora" (8th Edition) to be published in June 2011. This takes into account garden-worthy species as well as garden escapes, contaminants and stowaways.

As to the future, we may expect an increase in temperature of 3 - 5% at all times of year by the end of the 21st century. We must also expect the climate to be 5 - 10% wetter in Autumn/Winter and 5 - 10% drier in Spring/Summer. We are far less isolated in Ireland than we think we are and we must expect to see changes in the potential natural vegetation within the next 10 years. As CO₂ increases plants will become more efficient in water use. Better growth will ensue and we must ensure that our soil is sustainable. Professor Mitchell concluded this extremely interesting lecture by alerting us to the fact that Botany studies began in Trinity College, Dublin 300 years ago and to celebrate this many events, lectures, etc will take place throughout 2011 which will be open to the public. Consult the TCD Website for more information.

Mary Bradshaw

Thursday February 24th Alpine Flowers - in the shadow of the Eiger

Waterford plantsman Paddy Tobin has a keen eye for plants and photography, so his lecture to the Leinster group was always likely to be very interesting.

After a brief personal tribute to Mr. & Mrs. Keith Lamb, and to Rosemary Brown, recently deceased members and very distinguished gardeners, he launched into a carefully choreographed walk in the Swiss Alps, recalling plants of meadow, mountain and forest. An excellent series of close up images introduced plants well known and rare, with some scenes of the dramatic mountain scenery to help set the scene.

The good transport links allowed rambles in the meadows, the alpine zone and in the woodlands, giving considerable variety of plants in July. The valley of Lauterbrunnen, near Interlaken, is the starting point for reaching some of the best known ski and summer destinations in the Jungfrau region. A rack railway links Lauterbrunnen with Wengen, located on the eastern flank of the Lauterbrunnen Valley and the Kleinen Scheidegg and there are cable cars heading up to much higher ground. *Hedysarum hedysaroides* grew like clover in the meadows. *Geranium sylvaticum* flowers were once used as a dye. *Anthyllis vulneraria*, the kidney vetch with yellow flowers, was very popular with bees. The large *Gentiana lutea* was also common, with yellow flowers in place of the blue flower more usually associated with Gentians. Before the introduction of hops, Gentian, was used occasionally in brewing. It is still a principal ingredient in Angostura bitters. A small change of altitude brought a change in the flora, also giving a chance to see plants at different stages of growth too, helping Paddy to identify some species.

In the alpine zone, *Alchemilla alpina* grew in what Paddy called "Perfect drainage with running water". Closer to a third the size of the more well known *A. mollis*, *A. alpina* has delicate leaves edged in brilliant silver. *Pulsatilla alpina* ssp *apiifolia* grew within inches of a snow bank, reminding us how quickly plants have to complete their growth stages in this landscape. At Schynige Platte, an alpine botanic garden which merges directly into the natural landscape, has a huge collection of labelled plants, some from other Swiss alpine regions and would be a good starting point if you were a little unsure of your alpines. It is served by a rack railway and it offers free entry, although doubtless the free entry compensates for the rail fare costs. Of course, a walk downhill through the forest zone brings a new group of plants. *Lilium martagon*, typically in a pink-purple shade, with dark spots, was very common. *Aruncus dioicus*, very large with thin stems. *Paris quadrifolium*, with poisonous berries. The rather larger than usual *Ajuga grandiflora* might be a good plant to put over spring bulbs to provide continuity when the bulbs have finished flowering.

Sadly, all walks and holidays come to an end and so too we had to allow Paddy to drive back down to Waterford after giving us such a superb master class in Swiss beauty and plant knowledge.

Robert Bradshaw



A good hiding by Rae McIntyre

When I sent off, in January, to June Snowden (wife of Mike, he of the distinctive long white beard who was head gardener at Rowallane) for entrance tickets to the Horticultural Lecture of the year in Lisburn I mentioned in my brief letter how vicious the winter was. June wrote a short note with the tickets which said. *Mother Nature likes to remind us sometimes that she's boss by giving us a good hiding.* Well we've certainly had a good hiding for two winters in succession and most people I speak to are wondering if this is the shape of things to come.

For years we grew an increasing number of plants that are tender, half hardy or frost hardy because winters haven't been bad, something we have attributed to global warming. But just now as I write in late February there are so many dead or suffering plants everywhere – in the countryside, in gardens and even in garden centres where the plants should have survived under cover.

Until a few days ago when the weather improved I was heartily sick of winter. Believe it or not it is a season that I didn't mind up until December 2009. I suppose that was the start of the *good hidings*. I actually preferred winter to autumn (weird or what?) and had great pleasure in looking at the silhouettes of leafless trees especially when backlit by one of those frost-promising skies in which coral and silver and pale turquoise are suffused. December has always been the nadir of the year and long before Christianity and Christmas festivities our ancestors enlivened it with winter solstice celebrations. I always loved to do a flower count in the garden sometime around Christmas. Pre-December 2009 the record was 34 different blooms. There has been no flower census now for two Christmases because I hated leaving the log fires that were burning in the house and I knew there was precious little in bloom anyway.

January has always been a month that travels in the slow lane although that gave time to peer closely at the ground and see what was emerging or coming into flower. February I always associate with snowdrops. With so many different varieties of snowdrops nowadays they can be in bloom from late autumn onwards but I remember as a child never seeing snowdrops before February. They, along with hazel catkins which are quite elegant little things, provided the only joys in this bare, scraped, scoured month.

The countryside round here is exceeding dreary. Along the banks of the River Bann outside Coleraine there are long stretches of bleached grasses with not a hint of spring anywhere. The only touch of colour is in the orange-red stems of *Salix alba* var. *vitellina* 'Britzensis'. Roundabouts used to be planted with labour-intensive and costly bedding plants that were all dumped in autumn leaving the circular beds bare in winter. To obviate that they were changed to plantings of phormiums, bergenias and shrub roses. Now the phormiums appear stricken, the bergenias look as if they've been stamped on and the shrub roses are still at the bundles-of-sticks stage. There's another roundabout where two types of dogwood are being bullies and seem to have crowded out everything else. These are the reddish stemmed *Cornus alba* which is bad but *Cornus stolonifera* 'Flaviramea' is ten times worse. It has sickly yellowish-green stems that always make me think of jaundice.

I am very tired of the tree silhouettes that I admired in November and heartily detest sycamore trees that are grimly holding on to their tatty brown seedpods in spite of all the frost and rain and gales we've had. They look like so many mice hung upside down to dry. Even some oak trees are still retaining their leaves that now look like small dirty brown torn rags.

In people's gardens cordylines are drooping disconsolately, escallonia and griselinia hedges are browned and pampas grasses are seared, like bleached straw. It's easy to see why a fondness for growing conifers has become deeply embedded in the Ulster psyche. Most conifers stay fresh and green no matter how good, or bad, the hiding is or how grey and overcast the skies. But not always I'm afraid. I have a *Podocarpus salignus* (Willowleaf podocarp) which is a native of Chile. As the common name suggests it has long graceful linear leaves about 10 cm long that are usually green throughout the year. Flower arrangers love it and so do I which is why I guard it like a she-wolf with her cubs when they come into the garden with pruning shears at the ready. It's becoming dark coffee brown from the top down and I'm hoping that the damage doesn't extend the whole way.

I lost one *Luma apiculata* last year although there is still life at the base but for how long? The other one in the white garden made an attempt to survive during the summer of 2010 but it has been given such a good hiding that I fear for its life. *Hoheria sexstylosa* looks far worse than it did this time last year but that is not surprising; the temperature here one night dropped to -18.7°C nearly 5 degrees lower than it did in the 2009 – 2010 freeze-up. But here's a funny (peculiar) thing. Round the base of the tree there are dozens of tiny *Hoheria* seedlings and the same thing is happening with *Hoheria glabrata*. The latter is deciduous so is supposedly hardier but I'm beginning to think that it's going to depart this life too.

In 1981, when I hadn't been gardening for very long, there was a bad winter although temperatures only dropped to -12°C which I thought was terrible. There was a *Hebe salicifolia* in the garden which was killed but it did leave behind several little seedlings. Two descendants of them survived until recently but now the leaves are browned and wizened. Still I'm hoping that another little seedling will appear within the next few months.

Two specimens of *Astelia chathamica* have gone. They weren't looking too happy all last year although there was still some life in them but in January they both looked so much like fatally wounded animals that they were dug out and that was done without much difficulty. Their spaces have been filled with new shrub roses that came from an English nursery in early December. I was cross about the six roses I had ordered last July arriving during hard frost when, of course, they couldn't be planted or even heeled in somewhere. Andy, who does the heavy work, filled a half Bushmills Distillery barrel with compost and put the roses in this; the barrel still reeked strongly of its original contents but the roses survived. I just hope they haven't acquired a taste for it.

One plant that is ailing, much to my regret, is *Daphne bholua*. It has lived just outside the kitchen window beside a very large bay tree. This daphne was given to me by Patrick Ardif, head gardener at Lodge Park in Straffan, sometime during the mid nineties. It has grown to nearly 3 m tall and, until this year, was always well covered with blooms. Much of my time is spent in the kitchen because it's the warmest place in this cold, old house and *Daphne bholua* is a constant source of delight during the worst of the winter. There are some flowers on it and quite a lot of buds so I haven't given up hope yet.

The mature magnolias have furry flower buds that are apparently unaffected by the good hiding but I was dismayed to see what has happened to three young ones. These three, all around 2.5 m tall, were planted where the leylandii hedge used to be along the bottom of the main garden. This is a south-facing position but there isn't much shelter. I don't know whether to blame the frost or the wind or both but the flower buds just break off easily. They're firmly fixed on the two mature and two semi-mature magnolias even though none of them happens to be in a particularly sheltered position.

And now for the nice things. Unless something awful happens many rhododendrons in the garden are covered in plump flower buds. I hasten to add that not all of them will flower because a few always have a sabbatical now and then. At the moment there are six in full flower. Four of these are typical winter bloomers like *R. dauricum* and *R. 'Cilpinense'* but there are two others which in good years rarely flowered before March. One of them is a pinky-red flowered *R. neriiflorum* 'Rosevallon' which has lovely leaves – dark green on the upper side, plum-purple underneath.

The other is *Rhododendron eclecticum* 'Yellow'. Some years it has only been in flower for a couple of days and then is frosted; it's very vulnerable and it only takes a little frost to turn its lovely primrose-coloured flowers into brown mushy blobs. However we've had frost-free weather for nine days now so I can spend plenty of time admiring it.

I think snowdrops have been better than ever. Slow to start in January they've certainly made up for it and if it weren't for them the white garden would be a very dismal place. When they finish flowering there won't be much to see in it what with the sad myrtle, hoherias and a *Drimys winteri* that has completely lost its leaves and looks like a scarecrow. Clumps of just a few snowdrops have thickened up enough to have a continuous drift of them in one border. They're nearly all the ordinary *Galanthus nivalis* punctuated by a few tall groups of *G.* 'Sam Arnott'. Crocuses are appearing in places where I never planted them and we've had enough sunshine recently to open their petals fully. Even the so-called 'fat Dutch crocuses' are earlier than usual, which is strange. Just this past week I've had different reticulata irises and *Scilla mischtschenkoana* (what an unpronounceable and difficult to spell name) competing with the snowdrops for attention. The little *Narcissus* 'Cedric Morris' has been in flower since early January.

The hellebores were slow to flower throughout January and the first half of February but an improvement in the weather, which I hope lasts, has encouraged them to bloom. Last autumn I gave them all a douse of tomato fertiliser which may have helped them to flower as prolifically as they are doing. *Helleborus thibetanus* is a real beauty now with elegant foliage and clear pink nodding flowers. I've had it since March 2009 and each year I've worried that it won't appear because it's completely deciduous and will disappear off the face of the earth again in early summer. It has been bred with *H. niger* to create the hybrid 'Pink Frost': attractive enough and evergreen but, as so often happens, it lacks the charm of the species parent.

Mother Nature may have given a good hiding but all the plants described in the last three paragraphs have acted like a salve.

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An exotic poppy, Romneya coulteri by Ciara Birmingham

Looking at the upright subtle blue-grey stem of *Romneya coulteri* (the Californian Tree Poppy) at the start of last winter, I was reminded of the hardiness of this superb member of the poppy family. Known in its native California as Matilija it is a plant whose delicate flowers will effortlessly bring an exotic touch to the garden, and unlike most tender exotics does not need overwintering indoors using expensive fossil fuels, which is particularly important if sub zero temperatures become the norm for Irish winters. In colder areas for the first couple of years after planting a mulch in winter will provide adequate protection and allay any fears.

Described by William Robinson in *The English Flower Garden* as “The fairest plant that has come to our land from the country of flowers, California”, it is a joy to behold. An under planting of small spring bulbs such as *Chionodoxa* or *Crocus*, particularly *C. tommasinianus* works well, and as they fade will be overtaken by the new pink shoots of emerging stems. To enjoy the flowering of the bulbs the old stems can be cut back anytime from early winter, and severe winters will certainly make cutting them to ground level necessary. Stems can reach a height of 2.5m by midsummer with wonderful fat buds that open to enormous white delicately scented, floppy crinkled overlapping petals, with a boss of dark yellow stamens, (see photograph back cover). Flowering in most areas begins in July, and deadheading will encourage flowering to continue until the end of September. Propagation is most successful with root cuttings.

There are two well documented facts about this plant, one that cannot be denied but the second I would question. It is without doubt a root runner and stories abound of startled homeowners who find it has made its way indoors when planted near the house. It is important therefore, as with every plant, to choose a suitable site, any unwanted runners are easily removed with a gentle tug of the stem. Conversely it can be contained by sinking a barrier of strong plastic or similar material underground along the perimeter of the bed. The second point is its high mortality rate when planted. I agree its fleshy roots are extremely sensitive to damage, so care must be taken when planting. However given that it is now available as a container grown plant and consequently well rooted, incidents of it being difficult to establish must now be less common, and should not be a deterrent for any gardener. Having grown it in two very different gardens in different parts of Ireland I haven't had this experience and have found on the contrary that it will grow in a variety of situations. Despite

being a plant from arid areas of California and thus drought tolerant, it has grown well for me in heavy clay in the frequently damp midlands and also in lighter free draining soil in Dublin. It does of course like sunshine to flower well. In 1993 it was awarded an AGM. An added attraction for IGPS members is of course its Irish connection. Its name commemorates two Irishmen, Dr. Thomas Coulter, and his friend the Armagh astronomer and mathematician Dr Thomas Romney Robinson.

Thomas Coulter was born in Dundalk in September 1793, a doctor, botanist and mining engineer. He had from childhood a keen interest in the natural world, and collected local plants and insects and kept bees. He enjoyed fishing and shooting and through his travels and work as a young adult spoke French and Spanish. Coulter was in his early thirties when he travelled to Mexico as doctor to the English miners in the Real del Monte mining company. His years spent there certainly took a heavy toll on his health and no doubt contributed to his early death at the age of fifty. From there he travelled to California, and it was in Southern California, in the area south east of Los Angeles, that he collected the Matilija. The exact location is unknown, it is thought that the case that contained his note books and diaries was lost on the journey back to Dublin. The dried pressed specimen of Matilija was found after his death by William Henry Harvey in his plant collection in the Herbarium at Trinity College, of which Coulter was the first Curator. His personal collection in fact was the nucleus on which the herbarium was founded. It was named by Harvey who succeeded Coulter as Curator in 1844, and flowered for the first time 135 years ago in the Glasnevin Botanic Gardens. Thomas Coulter died in November 1843 and is buried in an unmarked grave in Mount Jerome Cemetery, Dublin.

There is a memorial garden located in the courtyard of the County Museum Dundalk dedicated to Thomas Coulter. It is planted with some of the many cacti he collected and also *Romneya coulteri*. Inside the museum are artefacts and mementoes associated with his life including his christening spoon and a life mask.

William Harvey who was an extremely hard working man and probably more methodical than Coulter described him in a letter to Sir William Hooker as “a clever fellow, but rather idle – being sadly addicted to fly fishing. Six feet high with a delightfully rich brogue”. I would prefer to think of him as the Scottish plant collector David Douglas described him, “he is zealous and very talented”. The story of Thomas Coulter is told in *A man who can speak of plants**, and is well worth searching out, copies can be bought online.

**A man who can speak of plants /Dr Thomas Coulter (1793-1843) of Dundalk in Ireland, Mexico and Alta California* by E. Charles Nelson and Alan Probert. Privately published in Dublin 1994. ISBN 0 9524874 0 6.



Some More Irish Snowdrops by Paddy Tobin

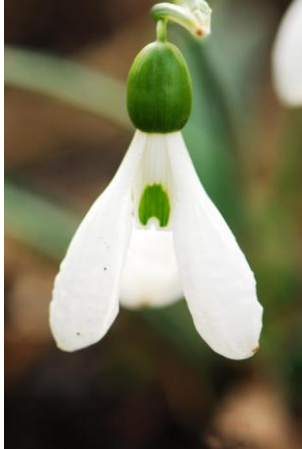
After the article in the January issue I was delighted to receive correspondence with clarification and further information on some of the snowdrops. Verney Naylor gave me further background information on the snowdrop I called ‘Jenny Scott’s Straffan’, Jenny Scott and Verney were old school friends and it was Verney who passed this snowdrop on to Jenny, and Jenny’s name became attached when she passed it to Bob Gordon. Verney recalls buying a small pot of a snowdrop labelled as ‘Straffan’ at a charity plant sale in Kilruddery. She grew it on and it thrived, usually producing two stems from each bulb as is typical of ‘Straffan’ yet she felt it came into flower too early to be the true ‘Straffan’. Verney concludes with the best recommendation of this snowdrop: *“Whatever about its background - it is certainly one of my very best performing snowdrops!”*

Paul Cutler, of Altamont Gardens, forwarded correction and clarification on the Altamont snowdrops: While I referred to *G.* ‘Skyward’, Paul told me that they *“label it *G. elwesii* ‘Skyward’, because it does appear to be just an unusually tall form of the pure species.”* Also, I omitted the final “s” in *G. elwesii* ‘Drummond’s Giant’ – of such small things are the taxonomists nightmares made but, as Paul pointed out, this snowdrop has always been known as ‘Drummond’s Giant’, after the shop of that name. *G.* ‘Green Lantern’ isn’t an *elwesii* as I had mentioned. Paul wrote, *“It could well have hybrid origin, which is why we don’t put a species name on it, but its characters are plicatus more strongly than anything else. It has plicate leaves and the double inner perianth green marks make me wonder if it could have *G. plicatus* subsp. *byzantinus* in it. One of the things that makes ‘Green Lantern’ so valuable is that green tipped *plicatus* snowdrops are rarer than green tipped *elwesii*s.”*

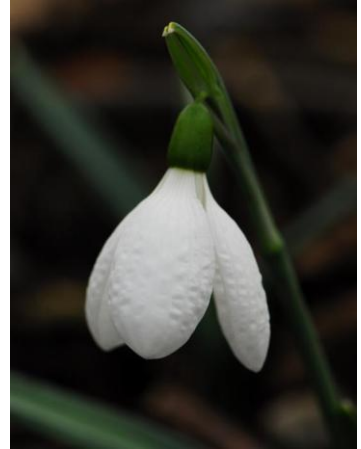
Many thanks to Verney and Paul for taking the time to contact me with this further information; it all helps to build up a fuller and more accurate record of Irish snowdrops. I should mention that Paul and staff at Altamont Gardens had yet another very successful ‘Snowdrop Week’ at the gardens this year. This event really has gone from strength to strength, reflecting the increased interest among gardeners in snowdrops and, also, the wonderful work at the gardens in Altamont.

Now, on to some more Irish snowdrops. Plants passed on from well-known and well-loved gardeners are always treasured for their association with them and it is well to record and remember these connections as they add greatly to the plants and also help ensure that they will continue to be grown and appreciated

in our gardens. Let me tell you of snowdrops associated with two well-regarded and well-loved Irish ladies. Janet Costello, of Sandymount in Dublin, was first



to alert me to a snowdrop she and others grew which they had received from Lady Anita Ainsworth who, when widowed, lived at Aubrey Park, Shankhill, Dublin and was an enthusiastic and knowledgeable gardener as well as being, I am told, an excellent cook who loved entertaining



and whose entertaining was greatly enjoyed by her circle of friends.

Robin Hall remembers her as “a great friend of my mother, an expert on roses, a good and generous gardener.” Janet Costello recalled being given “a late-flowering snowdrop” in the late ‘80s as “Anita’s Snowdrop”. She passed it to other friends. It is sometimes referred to as “*G. Lady Ainsworth*” and as you can see from the photographs it is an interesting snowdrop, a good size, nicely marked on the inner segments and has an unusual and attractive puckering on the outer segments. The bulbs I received from Janet Costello did well for two years before an attack from Narcissus fly but they are recovering well and it is a snowdrop I am very fond of, a good plant, associated with a wonderful gardener.



A number of years ago Robert Miller, at Altamont Gardens, was selling a snowdrop labelled as “ex Rita Rutherford” and mentioned that he believed it had some connection with Lady Moore. I wrote to Miss Rutherford and received the most wonderful reply. At the beginning of the war she was with her mother at the Mansion House attending a “Sale of Work” in aid of the Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen’s Families Association. They met with Lady Moore on the steps of the Mansion House and “*Lady Moore asked my mother if she had the snowdrop which was in her basket, as she (Lady Moore) thought it was worth growing and would do well in our garden. Mum was delighted and was given bulbs (which were*

paid for when we all got to our stall.) They were planted in our garden at Elmfield away from the other snowdrops and did very well.” “Elmfield” had to be sold and Miss Rutherford moved to Kiltiernan but “brought as much as I could from my old home, and all the Lady Moore snowdrops I planted under a big pear tree where they have been since 1967.”

You can imagine how delighted, grateful and privileged I felt when Miss Rutherford invited me to visit and have some of these snowdrops. I treasure them for the memory of both ladies associated in my mind with them. I am now most fortunate, through Miss Rutherford’s kindness, to be able to continue to keep this snowdrop in cultivation and to be able to distribute it to other enthusiasts.

Over the last few years, Oliver Schurmann of Mount Venus Nursery in Rathfarnham, Dublin, has listed *Galanthus* ‘Woodtown’ on his plant list. Oliver told me that he had received the bulbs from Eithne Clarke who had rescued bulbs from Woodtown Park, Rathfarham before redevelopment.



Oliver told me that, to the best of his knowledge, a gentleman named, J.B. Jackson introduced snowdrops to Woodtown Park about thirty years ago and he expects these snowdrops are from this planting. I received some bulbs from Oliver in 2008 and have found that, even in the two seasons that I have grown it, they have multiplied very satisfactorily and, also, that this is a very garden-worthy plant quickly forming a nice clump and standing over 30cm tall. In the

garden it is an obviously big plant which catches the eye, big flowers with a strong apical mark on inner segments with two long and fainter basal marks.

Helen Dillon has singled out a variation of *G. nivalis* in her own garden which has done particularly well for her, referring to it as her “good one”. It has been passed around under the name, “45 Sandford Road” but Helen would be the first to state that it is not a particularly different snowdrop and she would be loath to put a name to it but I have found it a good snowdrop in the garden, notable for its vigour and the speed with which it forms a clump.

Some snowdrops will be treasured for their associations and as a reminder of the generosity of the person who gave them to you rather than for any intrinsic beauty or individuality of their own. Such is the way in my garden with “Helen’s Good One”, as I label it.



G. 'Irish Green', on the other hand, is certainly not a run-of-the-mill *nivalis*, being one of the so called "spiky" snowdrops. It was found by Ruby and David Baker near Ballintaggart, Co. Wicklow in 1994. The inner segments twist and curl back on themselves in a very irregular arrangement. The outer segments, generally numbering three to five, are narrow and the pale green colouring can vary to extend over the

entire segments or may be completely absent. It is a very variable plant. It is a peculiarity, hardly a beauty but of some interest.

Margaret Glynn in Ballymena has been collecting snowdrops for many years and has a lovely selection in the garden.



Quite a few years back, Dr. Molly Sanderson was visiting and, as they walked the garden, she took note of one snowdrop which was quite distinct, a double snowdrop with very deep green colouration. I have found the number of inner segments can vary somewhat from year to year so that it is a far more doubled flower in some years than in others. In these years, the strong green of the inner segments is particularly

apparent and attractive. It is also one which has done quite well for me and has made a good healthy clump over a short number of years.

Another snowdrop enthusiast in Northern Ireland is Mark Smyth. Mark has



put his name to a foundling from an old garden in Co. Antrim, notable for its height, and he calls it "Mark's Tall". It does indeed live up to its name reaching to over 30cm at flowering time. Mark reckons it is a *nivalis* x *plicatus* cross and describes it as very scented. It has an olive green ovary with an inverted heart marking on the inner segment reaching to just short of mid-way to the base. I have found it a good plant in the garden and, with

its height, good to plant to the back of a bed.



Harold McBride seems to have always taken a particular interest and joy in the propagation of plants and especially in seeking out new varieties through a programme of cross-pollination of plants in his garden. Although Snowdrops have been just one area of interest for him he has produced a number of them which are very promising and which should, we hope, be further distributed in coming years as numbers bulk up. The first of his snowdrops which Harold sent on to me

was not from his seed-growing at all but one he had found in 1998 in the 400 year old graveyard at Blaris, Co. Down, where his parents are buried. It is somewhat similar to *G.* 'Straffan' in appearance though quite larger, more vigorous and earlier flowering and is an excellent snowdrop for the garden. It is not dramatically distinct in appearance but has what is lacking in many of the snowdrops being named nowadays and that is good health and vigour and an easy to please and easy to grow snowdrop.

There was an excitement in the snowdrop world when snowdrops with good strong green markings on the outer segments came into distribution. *G.* 'Southhayes' and *G.* 'Trym'; were two of the most notable of these and *G.* 'Trym' has proved to be a good seed producing snowdrop and many of its seedlings have been named. Harold has given one the very appropriate and clever name of 'Antrym'. I haven't seen this one in the flesh to date as Harold is still bulking it up but, from his comments, it promises to be worth having in due course. Harold also has one which he has named 'Heart's Desire', another of these with good outer segment markings and this also promises to be a good one. We must wait for it to build up a little. One which Harold sent me last year and which flowered this year and which has really taken my fancy is *G.* 'Waverley



Aristocrat'. I think it's a promising sign of a plant if the breeder is willing to put his name to it or a name which identifies him. In this case, Harold used his street name for the snowdrop. This is one of a number of plicatus seedlings which Harold has produced and is certainly a good one, a good big snowdrop which is something I do think contributes to a snowdrop as a garden plant. There are many little gems in the snowdrop world but snowdrops are most wonderful in large clumps or drifts and a snowdrop of substance is best for this purpose. I can see this 'Waverley *Aristocrat*' performing in this manner very effectively in coming years.

Willie Reardon, another Irish snowdrop enthusiast, has had the good fortune and the good sense to avail of the opportunity of spending time with Liam Schofield of Glassdrum, Cappawhite, Co. Tipperary and has very kindly sent me information on the wealth of snowdrops which Liam had gathered. Willie has also worked to save as many of these snowdrops as possible so that others may continue to enjoy them now that Liam has, unfortunately, departed this life. Liam's father had been Head Gardener at Greenfields, the renowned garden and estate of W.B. Purefoy. Liam's uncle, Pat, had also worked at the gardens as had Liam himself. Liam was a gardener of great ability and great generosity who took a particular interest in snowdrops which he allowed grow with gay abandon along the ditches of his garden where they self-seeded and where many



different ones arose over many years. He will be associated in most minds with *G. 'Greenfields'* which he found growing in that garden around 1950; brought some bulbs home with him and passed some on to the Botanic Gardens at Glasnevin and to Brigadier L.W.H. Matthias of the Giant Snowdrop Company and from there they came into general circulation. *G. 'Greenfields'* is a *nivalis* x *plicatus* with a deep-green, large, heart-shaped mark on the inner segments.

Liam also noted a small form of *G. nivalis* in the grounds of the local Church of



Ireland Church at Aughacrew. This has been grown under the label, "ex Aughacrew Churchyard" and, in latter years, as *G. nivalis* Serbian form, a name suggested by Richard Nutt after he had assessed the bulbs he had received from Liam. There were also extensive clumps of *G. nivalis* and *G. nivalis* 'Flore Pleno' growing at Aughacrew church but the grass cutting programme implemented by

a local maintenance crew killed them all. Such a pity! The photograph is from Altamont Gardens.

Liam was particularly proud of *G. 'Pat Schofield'* which he found growing as a seedling in the garden of his late uncle. *G. 'Liam Schofield'* and *G. 'Pat Schofield'* grow side by side at Altamont Gardens. Both are thriving – how wonderful that the memory of such men is kept alive.

Space dictates that I must stop here. Many more of Liam Schofield's snowdrops will come into circulation in time and a fuller account needs to be written on them as I certainly have not done them justice here. Perhaps, Willie Reardon might oblige?



The Irish Garden Plant Society



Romneya coulteri Photo Ciara Birmingham

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