

A scenic garden landscape featuring a pond in the foreground, a lush green lawn, and several tall, mature trees. A large, vibrant pink flowering bush is prominent on the left side. The sky is clear and blue.

Irish Garden Plant Society

Newsletter
April 2020

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Copy for the next issue as early as possible please and by **20th July** at the latest.

Cover photograph: Kilmacurragh, Co Wicklow. Photo: Seamus O'Brien

Welcome

As I write, we have already had some difficult and unsettling weeks due to the problems posed by the Covid 19 virus and clearly there are more to come, but hopefully this Newsletter will arrive with you around Easter time and lift your spirits. The days are finally longer than the nights and our gardens are bursting with new growth.

May is the time of year when the Society normally holds its AGM; because of the exceptional situation, it has been postponed and at the time of writing it is not clear when it can take place. We will do all we can to keep you informed. The quickest way to circulate information is by email – and, unlike traditional letters, it can be done at no cost. So if you have an email address but have not yet shared it with the Society, we would appeal to you to do so right away by notifying Nichola Monk, the Membership Secretary. See the outside back cover for details.

Subscriptions fall due on 1st May. Nichola has worked hard to set up a Direct Debit option and she encourages all of us to sign up.

What could be more spring-like than the daffodil? The island of Ireland has long been noted for daffodil breeding and our Rectory Garden at the Folk

Museum in County Down has a growing collection of Irish cultivars, more than 40 at the last count. Carrie Mercer has selected nine stunning examples to feature here.

If you live in the west, why not get in touch with Rory Newell who is keen to set up an informal IGPS group there, page 22 has the details.

About three years ago I enjoyed putting together an issue of the Newsletter; it has been equally fascinating this time. My thanks to Brendan Sayers for running his eagle eye over the contents for technical and general accuracy and to Seamus O'Brien and Paddy Tobin for kindly making available a number of their images. There have been so many interesting developments to report such as the breakthrough in raising two beautiful new *Crinodendron*, an eclectic array of Irish plants to consider for my shopping list, and of course the challenge to be a 'garden angel'. I'd like to think there is something for everyone to read and enjoy.



Maeve Bell

Acting Editor

Meet our contributors

Stephen Butler retired recently as Curator of Horticulture at Dublin Zoo.

Rosemary Maye gardens near Slane and is also known as The Insomniac Gardener.

Carrie Mercer, a keen photographer, is one of the volunteers in the Rectory Garden.

Peter and Nicola Milligan garden on the Ards Peninsula and grow many Irish cultivars.

Nichola Monk lives in Bangor and is the Membership Secretary.

Mary Montaut, a member of the Leinster Committee, is interested in pollinators especially bees.

Paddy Tobin gardens near Waterford and is in charge of the Society's website and Facebook page.

Rory Newell was the Propagator at Blarney Castle Gardens and has recently set up a nursery.

Janet Edwardes, Barbara Kelso and **Anne-Marie Woods** are all members of the Society.

Corrections

The article, Blarney's Irish Trail, in Issue 147 mentioned a number of people at the National Botanic Gardens (NBG) who helped with the establishment of the Trail. Olive Ryan and her colleagues at Blarney wish us to make it clear that Brendan Sayers has been involved for many years and that Paul Maher gave exceptional support while Curator at NBG.

In the same issue it was reported that the content of *A Heritage of Beauty* was available on the website. Unfortunately this has not proved possible.

In Issue 146, the article 'Drummond and Nelson' stated that the Society had commissioned *A Heritage of Beauty*. This is incorrect; it should have read that the Society published the book.

While every effort is made to ensure content is correct at the time of printing, views expressed in Newsletter articles are those of the author(s) and may not reflect those of the Society. Factual errors will be corrected as soon as possible.

A Note from the Chair

A few weeks ago the Society was desperately clinging to the hope that we could somehow still run our events this spring. It was difficult to abandon hope when so much work had been put into their organisation. Particularly disheartening was the postponement of the AGM which had taken a significant amount of research, site visits and planning by the Leinster Committee. However I am encouraged by the enthusiasm of regional committee members in their eagerness to begin preparing for new events as soon as the current emergency is behind us. When we get to that point, I would like to think that we can mark the occasion with some special events. Let's hope for better days ahead.

This was not the news I thought my last note as Chair would communicate. I have now completed my four years in office and didn't the time go in fast? Well, for me it did. I believe time was the biggest challenge. But, if time seemed a scarce commodity, I had no shortage of support. I would like thank all those committee members who helped me over the past four years, some who have now already retired. It may surprise you, as it did me when I counted them, that there are as many again working quietly behind the scenes. So, to our volunteer groups, media editors, horticultural advisors, Newsletter contributors and various working groups, I send you

my sincere thanks.

It's great to have people to share the workload but resources are still stretched and, as committee members retire, we always need members to step forward to take their places. In an effort to reduce workload, we have changed some of our practices in a variety of ways such as outsourcing tasks. As an example, where once several committee members spent an evening filling and addressing hundreds of envelopes, we now use a mailing house.

In this issue the Membership Secretary explains the introduction of a new Direct Debit system for payment of annual subscriptions. This initiative has the potential to offer benefits to you, the members, and to simplify the working of the Society; I would ask that you please take advantage of it.

And finally, before I retire as Chair, I would ask something of you all. One Saturday morning a couple of summers past, I called at a nursery where I knew I would be sure to buy at least one or two unusual plants. With no other customers there, I had the place to myself. As expected, I succeeded in getting something interesting. On the way home, I called at one of the multi-national garden centres and did well to get a car parking space. I pondered how that small nursery could stay in

business with such competition. Well, it didn't, and its premises have now given way to a housing development.

I have no problem with the large garden centres even though the 'free' coffee usually ends up costing the price of several scented candles and an unwanted, unneeded houseplant. But throughout the island we have dozens of good nurseries who could use your support. Supplying them are likely to be several, local wholesale nurseries. Some of these wholesale nurseries are already willing to propagate Irish cultivars. We need their help to maintain a good selection of Irish plants. They, in turn, need our help.

So what I am asking? When this miserable situation is over, do please try and support the local growers, they will need your support more than ever. They may not offer free coffee but they have a wealth of experience. Let's do our very best to keep our Irish nurseries; we have lost enough.

To all of those who emailed messages of support and thanks recently, it was very much appreciated. We may not have our talks, garden visits and plant sales for a while, but planning has already started for when they resume.

Some creative suggestions are already coming my way as to how we may re-route our resources and I would be glad of more. We may have to think and do things differently for a while but your Executive and regional committees are, and will continue to be, very active.

Best wishes and stay safe.



*Billy
McCone*

Chairman

Subscriptions: Moving to Online Direct Debit

Save 10%* on your membership subscription

After much preparation we have now integrated a Direct Debit system operated by GoCardless to our membership database. If you have an Email address, and your membership is due this May, you should have already received an email from **igps.membership@gmail.com** inviting you to sign up for a Direct Debit mandate.

The Covid 19 pandemic has created a truly exceptional situation with many restrictions in place throughout Ireland, south and north; to reduce risk and simplify administration you are asked, if at all possible, to please change to Direct Debit for the renewal of your subscription.

Online Direct Debits can be started at any time of the year and will recur in the same month each year. Other forms of payment will continue as previously and are due by May 1st each year.

The Direct Debit Guarantee is the Direct Debit scheme's customer protection. The guarantee is offered by all building societies and banks who accept direct debits. As a customer, the Direct Debit Guarantee protects you against payments made in error or fraudulently. This means Direct Debit is the safest payment method in ROI and the UK.

- Subscriptions are due on **1st May**.
- The subscription rates – see below – remain unchanged for another year.
- **For those signing up to Direct Debit there will be a 10%* discount until 1st July this year.**
- Direct Debit mandates will be possible in Euros and Sterling.
- For added data protection, Direct Debits can only be registered online by the member.
- For members who are unable to manage to pay by Direct Debit, renewal of your subscription will still be possible by cheque or Postal Order in Euro or Sterling. Download a membership form from the website, complete it and **post it to IGPS, c/o 59 Richmond Park, Belfast, BT9 5EF**. If you do not have a printer, be sure to include your full name, full address including the post code, telephone numbers, an email address wherever possible, and, if it is a joint membership, the name of the second member with your cheque.

All renewals should be received by 1st July at latest.



Subscription Rates for 2020		
Euro	Payment other than Direct Debit or DD after 1st July 2020	Direct Debit Payments Before 1st July 2020*
One Adult	€30	€27
Joint for 2 members	€42	€38
Student (Full Time)	€15.50	€14
Sterling		
One Adult	£25	£23
Joint for 2 members	£36	£32
Student (Full Time)	£13	£12

*Until 1st July 2020. Nominal figure as amounts have been rounded.

Please get in touch with Nichola by email or telephone if you want any help or have any queries. See the outside back cover for her contact details.



Nichola
Monk

Membership
Secretary

Not yet a member?

Membership of the Irish Garden Plant Society is open to anyone interested in its work, living in Ireland or abroad. Members are enthusiastic gardeners, many of whom have a special interest in Ireland's great horticultural heritage.

Please join via our website:
<https://irishgardenplantsociety.com/>

Be Someone's 'Garden Angel'

by Rosemary Maye

I met a fellow gardener recently and, as we chatted, she referred to someone who'd helped her out as her 'guardian angel'. I was immediately struck by the thought that I'm lucky enough to have one of those too. Then I thought to myself she should be known as my 'garden angel' for, throughout my life, she has guided, encouraged, supported me and been generous to a fault with all the plants she has given me. When you're starting out on your gardening journey, it can be a little overwhelming. Sometimes people are put off by failures and they give up feeling inadequate and useless. I've met so many people who say, "Oh I'm not really a gardener". This I think is a shame as, with a little encouragement and guidance, we

can all be better gardeners. I think I'm somewhere in the middle now between beginner and expert and I'm eager to continue learning, indeed, I'm now trying to get to grips with Latin names.

For someone starting out on their gardening journey there's a long and daunting list of things to be aware of. You have to pick your site, plan your beds, get rid of weeds, improve the soil and choose your plants. Do you want trees, shrubs, perennials, a veg patch or the lot? Then there's whether you have acid or alkaline soil, damp or dry conditions, a sheltered or exposed site, is it shady or baking in full sun. The list is endless and can be intimidating for a new gardener who, while enthusiastic, might throw in the trowel (if you pardon the pun) without a little guidance.

Nowadays we're lucky to have lots of information at our fingertips and can google to our heart's content. I however remember the days when my greatest gift was a copy of the *RHS Encyclopedia of Garden Plants and Flowers* and its sister, the *RHS Encyclopedia of Gardening*. I would pore over these at night time and it was an enjoyable if rather laborious process as I preferred to be out in the actual garden digging and planting. I often tell the story of being handed



Spring at Mullaghadillon
Photo : Rosie Maye

graph paper to plan my dream garden. Ideally I should have taken all the pointers I've mentioned into consideration carefully planning it all in advance. Instead the graph paper went into a drawer and I started planting at random. Enter my 'garden angel', Margaret, a dear friend of my mother's, and a gardener who has probably forgotten more than I'll ever learn.

When we moved to our dream house complete with a large garden, she would arrive with a veritable treasure trove of slips, divisions and plants grown from seed. To me it was a bewildering collection of small, sometimes dejected-looking plants, all with labels though and a passionate description about eventual size and the relevant information to help it settle in. She was hands-on and would roll up her sleeves and wander about with me looking for a suitable location in our absolute wilderness of three acres. She planted slips of snake-bark maples about a foot high assuring me they would be magnificent in time, a division of Solomon's seal, huge dinner-plate corms of *Cyclamen hederifolium*, and countless perennials all from her garden. She waded into our newly discovered natural pond to thrust a few divisions of water lilies into its muddy bottom and arrived with flag iris and marsh marigolds to colonise a rather ugly ditch. Another visit and dogwoods and pheasant berry, *Leycesteria*

formosa, were planted on the bank behind my pond.

Rose cuttings, some of which she had taken from my mother's garden, were extra special and one year she accompanied me to my uncle's home before it was sold to dig up a very precious red rose. On that particular occasion the rose's root snapped in half leaving a very dejected looking specimen; I wanted to burst into tears and stamp my foot. Undeterred by both my tantrum and the broken root, she inspected it and airily declared, "Don't worry, it'll still grow". She then uttered what has become my mantra which I now quote to others, "Just remember, dear, everything **wants** to live". We lovingly planted that rose with all the right conditions; it has totally rewarded her belief in it and blooms with its heady scent and velvety-red perfection every year.

Over the past 17 years we've planted hedges, trees, shrubs, put in paths, new borders, patios and a veg patch. I've learned as I've gardened encouraged by those earlier successes. I've talked to experienced gardeners, visited open gardens, joined gardening clubs, searched the internet for plants and how-to videos, and read as much as I can. Nothing however really compares to that early instruction, generously given, and her belief in me as a novice gardener.



Margaret Casey and Rosie Maye

My garden is now maturing nicely and I'm finally in a position to do what Margaret has done for me which is to divide plants, take cuttings, save seed and pass them on to encourage and nurture other budding gardeners. I've a few friends and neighbours in whom I recognize the gardening bug. Now, in my turn, I am giving them some of my occasionally sad-looking pots assuring them that in two years they won't recognize it if they do x, y and z. I know the slips and cuttings don't have the instant impact of buying a big plant from a garden centre, but I like to think that in the long run they will have the edge when they remind people where they came from.

An experienced gardener I met recently told me she also had a mentor; to quote her, "a rather irascible man who decided I had to be educated and encouraged". I simply loved to hear that and to hear about her gardening journey. We all learn about gardening in different ways but to have a mentor, someone who believes in you and encourages you and, in my case, watches with a keen interest and pride is a priceless gift. So take a budding gardener under your wing. Encourage them in any way you can and you'll enjoy the giving as much as they will enjoy receiving. So go on, encourage and inspire them and be someone's 'Garden Angel'.

Grow an Irish Plant

by Stephen Butler, Peter & Nicola Milligan and Paddy Tobin

Escallonia 'Alice'

Botanic gardens, beacons of conservation now, at one time were also very keen to hybridise various plants in their care, aiming for better qualities. NBG Glasnevin was the first garden in Ireland to breed new *Escallonia* hybrids. This work, encouraged by Frederick Moore, was carried out by Charles Frederick Ball, who trained at Kew and was for a time assistant manager at the famous Bees Nursery in Cheshire, from where he was head-hunted to Glasnevin.

Among the *Escallonia* seedlings he raised was a good deep red, which he named for his bride, Alice. They married in December 1914 shortly after the outbreak of WW1 and, having enlisted, Charles was sent to Gallipoli in 1915, where he was killed in September.



Escallonia 'Alice'
Photo : Seamus O'Brien

Charles is remembered for *Escallonia rubra* 'C F Ball', which was named for him by his colleagues after his tragic death. The IGPS planted a young plant at the Irish National War Memorial Gardens, at Islandbridge, in 2016. Normally this cultivar is readily available, currently 11 nurseries are listed as selling it in the *RHS Plant Finder*.

Escallonia 'Alice' has been in trade off and on over the years, but is currently not easily found, last listed in the *Plant Finder* in 2018, though occasionally it is at our plant sales. A few of our members and gardens grow it. It's a good plant with vigorous growth to about 2m, with deep red flowers fading to a delicate pink. A young plant will join *Escallonia* 'C F Ball' at Islandbridge in the near future.

Most of the details for these notes are taken from *An Irish Flower Garden Replanted* by E Charles Nelson and illustrated by Wendy Walsh. **SB**

Primula 'Dark Rosaleen'

Those who grow and those who see *Primula* 'Dark Rosaleen' are unfailingly cheered by the sight. The dark purple flowers with their yellow stripes match beautifully with the bronze foliage making it a delightful plant.

It was raised by Joe Kennedy, the famed primula breeder in Ballycastle, Co Antrim, though he unfailingly points out that he is a native of Co Carlow. Joe is now more widely known since the release of The Kennedy Irish Primulas from Fitzgerald Nurseries, a wonderful series mainly featuring bright flowers against dark foliage — an aim of Joe's breeding for many years.



Primula 'Dark Rosaleen'
Photo : Paddy Tobin

However, this primula was not what Joe was aiming for at the time and he passed to a lady in Limavady; she in turn, as is so often the way with good garden plants, passed a piece to Gordon Toner who showed it at the Belfast Spring Show on a number of occasions under the name *P.* 'Joe Kennedy Hybrid', winning first in its class.

When Joe visited Gordon's garden he was delighted to see how well it was growing and agreed that it deserved to be named; this he did calling it 'Dark Rosaleen' for Gordon's wife,

Rosaleen. Of course, the name will also always recall James Clarence Mangan's poem, Dark Rosaleen, A Róisín Dubh.

In the garden it is the most obliging and easy of plants to grow and the only care it requires is a moist position and regular dividing. A plant to give to friends! PT

Rosa 'Rambling Rector'

In his book *Climbing Roses Old and New*, the late Graham Stuart Thomas described this rose as 'quite overpowering in flower both from the quantity of blossom and the delicious multiflora fragrance'. Other growers describe *Rosa* 'Rambling Rector' as 'a very old cultivar with large clusters of fragrant semi-double flowers, creamy to begin with, then opening white with yellow centres'. The flowers, produced during the summer, are followed by small red hips in the autumn and winter. According to sources, this rose was introduced by Thomas Smith of Daisy Hill Nursery fame, appearing in his 1912 catalogue, and is rumoured to be a



Rosa 'Rambling Rector'
Photo : Nicola Milligan

'foundling' from a vicarage garden. We think it is a beautiful rose and grow it on a shady fence that separates the lane that leads to the back of the greenhouse from our small potager. From a humble beginning as a small pot-grown specimen, it developed quite quickly into a good size – it can reach 20 feet by 15 feet as it approaches maturity. Graham Stuart Thomas stated that the rose is 'thorny, impenetrable, and impossible to prune' but we have managed to keep it in check by giving it a trim when it starts to become too invasive.

R. 'Rambling Rector' can be obtained from a good number of nurseries that provide a mail order service including well-known suppliers such as David Austin (www.davidaustinroses.co.uk) or Peter Beales Roses (www.classicroses.co.uk) but a good place to start is your local garden centre or nursery as this is a popular rose.

P&NM

Geranium pratense 'Mount Stewart'

This beautiful member of the cranesbill family was named by Nigel Marshall when he was Head Gardener at Mount Stewart in Co Down. Mr Marshall found the plant in a group of *G. pratense* 'Mrs Kendal Clark'. At this time there was a considerable collection of the cranesbills, both cultivars and species, at Mount Stewart but he recognised that this plant was different from any others growing in the garden or that he knew from his wider experience in other

National Trust and private gardens. Following tradition (it was common practice to name a new plant either for the owner of a private demesne or for the garden in which the plant was found), the plant was named 'Mount Stewart'. The flower is a wonderful pale pink overlaid with rich, dark pink-purple veining.

We grow a reasonable selection of hardy geraniums including *G. 'Mount Stewart'* and have found that it does well in several positions. It is a compact plant which is slow to spread and, as it is not as vigorous as many other plants, make sure to allow it a little space to ensure it gets enough light and air and is not crowded out.

At time of writing 'Mount Stewart' is listed by The Place for Plants in East Bergholt, Suffolk who offer a mail order service. Finally, be aware that some nurseries list this as *G. clarkei* 'Mount Stewart' due to its similarity to this species. **P&NM**



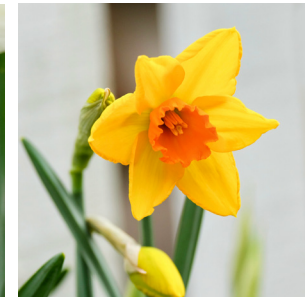
Geranium pratense 'Mount Stewart'
Photo : Nicola Milligan

Irish Daffodils at the Rectory Garden

Photos by Carrie Mercer



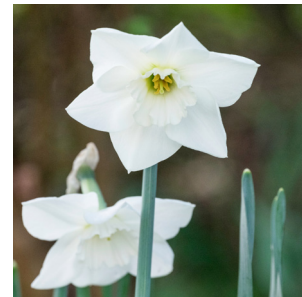
N. 'Silent Valley'



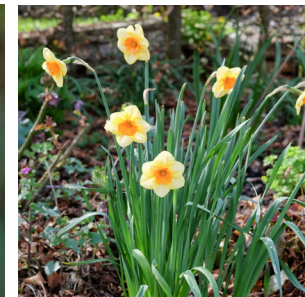
N. 'Warm Day'



N. 'Ice Emerald'



N. 'Glasnevin'



N. 'Rio Rondo'



N. 'Urchin'



N. 'Trielfin'



N. 'Rimski'



N. 'Road Runner'

Narcissus 'Silent Valley' was bred by Tom Bloomer, 'Rio Rondo' by Ballydorn Bulbs, 'Ice Emerald' by Niall Watson, 'Glasnevin' and 'Warm Day' by the late Kate Reade (Kate was elected an Honorary Member of the Society in 2004), 'Urchin', 'Rimski', 'Trielfin' and 'Road Runner' by Brian S. Duncan (Brian was elected an Honorary Member in 2017).

The Burren

by Paddy Tobin

The Burren is a plant lover's paradise, an area of outstanding scenic beauty and a joy to all who visit. We have made an annual visit each year for over ten years, most often in May/June and occasionally in September. There has also been the occasional, impromptu summer dash if an especially interesting and unusual plant has been spotted in flower and word sent out on the grapevine – these can be exciting days!

There are two aspects to our visits to the Burren: we go to walk and also to seek out wildflowers. It might be more honest to say that Mary goes for the walking and I go for the flowers but our outings accommodate both leanings: we toddle along; I stop to photograph the flowers; Mary continues at her pace; I then dash to catch up.

Although we like to visit new areas, we find we return to some places again and again. Our regular drive from Waterford takes us via Limerick, Ennis and Ennistimon to swing west immediately before reaching Lisdoonvarna onto the R477 which brings us to the Atlantic coast at Poulsallagh and on to Bothar na hAillte which runs along the coast through Fanore, around Black Head on the north-western corner of Co Clare, and on to Ballyvaughan.

After the journey, a stop at Poulsallagh is always welcome and a place for a gentle stroll to stretch the legs and enjoy the beautiful selection of wildflowers growing on the shallow soil on the limestone pavement between road and sea. Sea thrift, sea campion, thyme, rock samphire, kidney vetch, bird's foot trefoil, hemp agrimony, lousewort, common dog-violet, bloody cranesbill, mountain everlasting, common milkwort, heath spotted orchid, early purple orchid and many others are literally at one's feet within a few steps of parking the car. It is quite astonishing and a perfect treat.

Generally, we park the car at Fanore Strand and head off on the Fanore Loop Walk which quickly takes one away from the coast and uphill on a minor road for about three kilometres where it meets one of the Burren's 'green roads'. This leads north across the limestone hillside before descending to the Caher River valley and the road which leads back to Fanore. The walk is estimated to take two and a half to three hours but generally takes us longer as there are so many flowers to admire and photograph. This is understandable when one comes across delicious groups of the gorgeously blue spring gentian, mountain avens, water avens and an abundance of the early purple orchid.



Dryas octopetala Mountain avens
Photo : Paddy Tobin



Parnassia palustris Grass of Parnassu
Photo : Paddy Tobin

The walk along the Caher valley road passes Carl Wright's Caher Bridge Garden, and we usually drop in for a visit; it is always a delight with many interesting plants and the whole garden a fabulous creation on the Burren's limestone pavement.

We regularly use the car park at Fanore Strand as a base for some other walks in this area. About a kilometre along the road north, there is easy access to another of the



Silene uniflora Sea campion
Photo : Paddy Tobin



Gentiana verna
Photo : Paddy Tobin

Burren's 'green roads', a beautiful short walk with excellent views to the Arran Islands and north to Connemara. It is a good site for autumn lady's tresses and grass of Parnassus. On the occasions that we have felt the urge for a long walk (15km), we have continued on from the end of the green road – there is a short section of rough track – up and over Black Head with its fabulous views and wildflower selection; then there is a choice to loop back to Fanore via the Caher valley or to

continue to Ballyvaughan. This latter has a few unpleasant kilometres on a narrow but very busy road so the loop to Fanore is preferred.

The pathway running from the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre north to Doolin is, as you can imagine, wonderfully scenic but also worthwhile for the wildflower enthusiast with good patches of western marsh and heath-spotted orchids along the way as well as sheep's bit scabious, sea mayweed, common scurvy grass, tormentil and the ever-attractive ragged robin. It is a linear walk and a good arrangement is to park the car in Doolin – very convenient to the Cliffs of Moher walkway – and take the bus, the Paddy Wagon, to the Visitors' Centre at the Cliffs of Moher a twenty minute or so journey, and walk back to the car.

We always make a call to Gortlecka Crossroads for it is an area with an outstanding density of wildflowers and a wonderful range of orchids. Gortlecka is a place for quiet and slow wandering so one can spot the many orchids and take time to enjoy and photograph them. The rare, small and difficult to spot fly orchid is here, always a thrill to find it, and nearby meadows have fragrant and lesser butterfly orchids among others. Lough Gealáin is only up the road from Gortlecka Crossroad, with more orchids and wildflowers – shrubby cinquefoil on the shore of the turlough is a specialty – and also a

good place to park the car and have a good walk around Mullaghmore.

Our planned outing to the Burren this year may well have to be cancelled in light of the coronavirus which is sweeping across the country but, hopefully, by the time you read these lines, we may be over the worst and can look ahead to more pleasant days in our gardens and days out enjoying wildflowers.



Clockwise from the top left : *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* var *okellyi* O'Kelly's spotted orchid, *Orchis mascula* Early purple orchid, *Dactylorhiza maculata* subsp *ericetorum* Heath Spotted orchid, *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* Common spotted orchid
Photo : Paddy Tobin

New Irish Crinodendron Cultivars

by Stephen Butler



Crinodendron hookerianum. Photo : Stephen Butler

In the RHS magazine *The Garden* (February 2020) there is an interesting article on *Crinodendron*, well worth reading and commenting on here too. Regularly seen in Irish gardens, *Crinodendron hookerianum* makes a large shrub to, eventually, a small tree, often multi-stemmed. The name literally means tree lily, from the Greek *krinon* (think *Crinum*), but it is also named for W J Hooker, who was Director, RBG Kew from 1841 to 1865. Introduced from Chile in 1848 by William Lobb who was working for the Veitch Nursery at the time, it is known better as the Chilean Lantern Tree, a good choice of name as the pendulous red flowers do look more lantern than lily-like, a very decorative show indeed.

Coming from a moist temperate climate and part of the under-storey

of the forest, it is just perfect for milder coastal parts of Ireland, in light woodland. A 4m specimen I had in Dublin, against a south wall, was killed to the ground by the winter of 2009/10 when we had minus 15oC, to regrow again from the roots. One other species, *C. patagua*, with beautiful white flowers is occasionally seen but is much rarer.

In the wild *C. hookerianum* is not very variable. Of course it is always the 'different' forms of plants that people seek out: double flowers, larger flowers, variegated leaves, whatever. The cultivar *C. h.* 'Ada Hoffmann' has been around for about 20 years with flowers of a more delicate pink and, though the origin is not certain, it is believed to be wild-collected.

New seedlings

Serendipity then kicked in as seed which had set on 'Ada Hoffmann' was sent to Jan Ravensberg of Ravensberg Nursery, a remarkable wholesale nursery at Ashmount House, in Clara, Co Offaly. Over many years it has been one of the best nurseries for propagating many Irish Heritage Plants and keeping them in trade; as it is a wholesale nursery, its plants are found in many garden centres around Ireland.

Jan enjoys an enviable reputation for germinating seeds and striking cuttings very, very, well, and these seeds grew well for him. With a discerning eye, he then selected those with slightly differing leaves – if the leaves differ, what else may differ? – and grew them on. One, when it flowered, was a slightly deeper rose than the parent, and Jan named it *C. h.* 'Ashmount'. The second seedling was the real surprise as it flowered pure white, and Jan named it for the friend who had sent the seed, so it became *C. h.* 'Alf Robbins'.

The value of seeds

Pollination must have occurred for seed to be set. *Crinodendron* is pollinated in the wild by humming birds, although not exclusively by them as here in Dublin I get seed regularly. How many gardeners deliberately pollinate nowadays – just for the fun to see what they get? How many gardeners save seed today? Certainly, the number of donors to the Society's Seed Exchange is a



Crinodendron h. 'Alf Robbins'
Photo : Seamus O'Brien

small hardcore. Equally, how many nurseries use seed as a means of propagation, apart from the hard-to-root cuttings genera. Many would have stock beds to ensure good quality and for ease of producing cutting material. Seed will often have the potential to be something a little different, especially if several species of the same genus are grown near each other and cross pollination occurs. Then it is not just the seed collecting, it is the selection of seedlings to grow on – and there may be only one 'good' one, one different, among thousands. How many people grow on and select like Jan did to get two new cultivars? The opportunities are there!

Check with your local garden centre or nursery as both of these new Irish plants should be available near you. Please note that the Ravensberg Nursery is wholesale only.

Into the West

by Rory Newell

Ever since I started off in horticulture, the passion to grow plants has been deep rooted in my psyche. I figured out that growing plants was the way I was going to learn about them in the way I wanted to: it turns out for once in my life I was actually right. The more I grew, the more I learned and the more the idea developed in my head that my own nursery was what I wanted. I love the challenge of growing plants which are difficult, rare or unusual. During my time as chief propagator at Blarney Castle and Gardens, I was in my absolute element; it was a fantastic time in my horticultural career and a great opportunity to do what I love. It was also my first time to experience plant hunting and all of the wonder that comes with it, an absolute dream job. But all good things come to an end and the West was calling me home.

Before moving to Blarney, I had intended to set up a business which in time I had hoped would become nursery. I gave it a name, 'Forest Moon'. I maintained it as a Facebook presence with the intention to develop it in the future. Well, that future is now and I'm up to my neck in it at the moment.

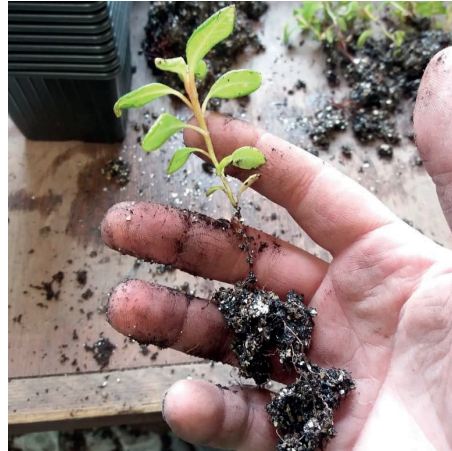
The west of Ireland is somewhat remote and its plant nurseries tend to be less well known for obvious reasons I suppose, but in my

opinion it only takes one nut to do it and the rest will follow. Enter one nut! My main reason for the West is because it is home and I love it. At this moment we are in the very early stages of setting up and things only happen as the funds become available. It's a slow burner but we will get there.

One of the first things we had to do was get a new polytunnel to ensure the safety of the mother stock plants during this interim period. These are the stock plants from which we get all the propagation material, e.g. seed, cuttings and divisions. We had to do this before even beginning to work on a shelter belt to give protection to the plants. This was because of a false start on another plot which delayed us for six months, but 'no point in crying over spilt milk' as they say. We have been busy buying seed and sowing many rare and unusual trees, shrubs, and perennial plants. The perennials will get us off the line in the early days of the nursery as the time lines for propagation on them is, for the most part, quicker than for woody plants. We have many conifer species on the go at the moment and they are all tipping away beautifully. These are plants which will not be ready for a couple of seasons.

Since the word has gone out that

we have started up a nursery, many people have asked what we will specialise in. The short answer is, honestly, we don't know. For the moment what we are saying is we specialise in plants! I have a leaning towards the unusual and rare, which I know is a little vague and a bit of a cop-out. There are definitely groups of plants that are in the works and we are currently working on but will not be available for a while yet. In the meantime we look forward to seeing you at one of the many plant fairs nationwide.



Rooted rhododendron cutting
Photo : Rory Newell

Rory is an enthusiastic member of the IGPS and would like to invite fellow Connaught members to get in touch with him and maybe organise a meeting, possibly taking in a garden or two, as a way of getting together and perhaps setting up an informal group of like-minded people.

He can be contacted via email at rorynewell@gmail.com

Plants in Space

by Mary Montaut

My attention was caught recently by a programme on BBC radio about plants being grown in space, specifically on the International Space Station. The extraordinary conditions under which plants are being cultivated include being grown under LED lights which provide red or blue light, but not the full spectrum. The plants apparently look black, but this is because they are so efficient at using 'every photon' of light which is available for their photosynthesis. I think this means that the green light is not reflected back to our eyes, as the plant absorbs every photon – but I am no scientist and stand to be corrected. The research teams from NASA have developed 'light recipes' to test the plants' ability to perform this extreme economy. The astronauts have already eaten some 'space' lettuce, and I imagine it was its normal, green shade once removed from the growing conditions in the Space Veggie Box.

The NASA website says that, in the absence of gravity, plants use other environmental factors, such as light, to orientate and guide their growth. This is the aspect of the project most interesting for us terrestrials: the effects of gravity (or, in the case of space, lack of gravity) on plants. A French wine-grower commented in the programme that everything on earth is completely adapted to

gravity; it has not changed since the beginning of life on earth. He has contributed vines to the project, in the hope that they will adapt to a gravity-less existence by evolving helpful characteristics for use on earth emphasizing that this would not be a form of 'engineering' or genetic modification. After the programme, I felt that the most interesting aspects of this space experiment would probably concern our understanding of the ability of plants to adapt to earthly conditions: the ability, for instance, of roots to make their way to water and of leaves and stems to find light and direction.

I was reminded of a reference to the final book which Charles Darwin wrote, with his son, Francis, *The Power of Movement in Plants* (1880). The reference came from a recent book by Daniel Chamovitz and it is striking, because Chamovitz implies that Darwin had considered that plants 'know' things, almost as an animal with a brain might 'know'. I will quote Darwin's text to bring this extraordinary idea into focus: 'A radicle may be compared with a burrowing animal such as a mole, which wishes to penetrate perpendicularly down into the ground. By continually moving his head from side to side, or circumnutating, he will feel any stone ... if the earth is damper on

one than on the other side he will turn thitherward as a better hunting-ground. Nevertheless, after each interruption, guided by the sense of gravity, he will be able to recover his downward course and to burrow to a greater depth.' [Ch II, General Considerations on the Movements and Growth of Seedling Plants.]

Chamovitz' chapter titles will give you a clear view of his argument – 'What a Plant Sees', 'What a Plant Smells', 'What a Plant Remembers'. However, he is emphatic that he does not intend to anthropomorphize plants. His research is directed towards understanding the needs and abilities of plants. He dismisses any suggestion that a plant might feel pain, as such. We know that they suffer stress, but he refuses to humanize them.

My own fascination with our relationship with the plant world came about through my involvement with pollinators. The more I looked into the relationship of the pollinating insects with the plants they serve, the more 'intelligent' the entire operation seemed to be. The recent concern over the loss of pollinating insects admonishes us to take a broad view of the intricate systems of plants in their environments. I thought I would be able to find out something about the hoverflies we see in our gardens. It turns out that there are so many different species that some are not even named yet; however, all these

different insects have particular strategies to suit the flowers they pollinate. I was delighted to find that our native orchid, *Epipactis helleborine* (known as broad-leaved helleborine), has a subtle and devious means of getting itself pollinated by a wasp. It has developed a perfume which is not attractive to other pollinators, smelling like damaged leaves, specifically leaves which have been gnawed by caterpillars. Wasps want to prey on the caterpillars, so enter the helleborine flowers in search of them and pollinate the plants.

But I don't have to rely on this illustration of the incredible intelligence of plants. Maurice Maeterlinck wrote a book in 1907 called *The Intelligence of the Flowers*. All the flowers whose strategies for pollination he describes are familiar garden plants, and this makes it all the more fascinating as you can actually try some of the tricks which the pollinators use to make the flower release its pollen.

A favourite is sage. 'The Sage is entomophilous, that is to say, it loves insects and relies upon their collaboration alone... Observe the wonderful love-trap contrived by the Sage: right at the back of its tent of violet silk, it distils a few drops of nectar; this is the bait... When the bee enters the flower to reach the nectar, she has to push the (anthers) with her head. The upper

anthers come down and touch the sides of the insect, whom they cover with fertilizing dust. However, this is only the first half of the play... In a neighbouring flower, whose stamens have just withered, is the pistil that awaits the pollen... which grazes her back and sides exactly at the spots touched by the stamens. It is easy to show this with a straw.'



Honey Bee on Sage *Salvia officinale*.
Photo : Mary Montaut

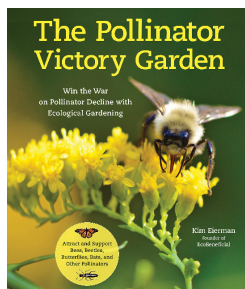
There is no end to the ingenuity of flowers and their pollinators, but I am still asking myself about using words like intelligence, or knowledge, to describe plants. I feel like Alice in Wonderland: "O Tiger-lily!" said Alice,

addressing herself to one that was waving gracefully in the wind. "I wish you could talk!"

"We can talk," said the Tiger-lily, "when there's anybody worth talking to".

Worth a Read

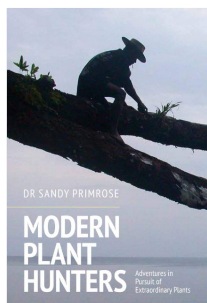
by Paddy Tobin



***The Pollinator Victory Garden* by Kim Eierman:** Kim Eierman is an American environmental horticulturalist and landscape designer specialising in ecological landscapes and native plants and, though written for an American gardening audience, the book has widespread application for gardeners at this side of the Atlantic.

In an era of social concern for our environment, of worries about climate change and the unprecedented loss of our wildlife, particularly pollinators, the author realises that change will, and will have to, come from ground-roots people and that governments and international bodies will follow social change. We can achieve these seismic changes through the actions we take in our own gardens, and she compares the movement to that of Second World War when, to alleviate food shortages, people used their gardens to grow vegetables and raise food rather than have them simply as ornamental spaces. These were the original Victory Gardens and today we have a great need for Victory Gardens for our food production is again under threat as our pollinators go further into decline.

[*The Pollinator Victory Garden*, Kim Eierman, Quarry Books – Quarto Publishing Group, Massachusetts, 2020, Softback, 160 pages, £16.99, ISBN: 978-1-63159-750-3. Visit QuartoKnows.com]



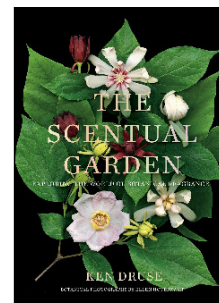
***Modern Plant Hunters* by Dr Sandy Primrose:**

Plant hunters have given our gardens the most wonderful range of plants; we are greatly indebted to these brave and daring people and Dr. Sandy Primrose's account of our modern plant hunters is gripping and informative reading for all gardeners and plant lovers. There have been more plant introductions in the last thirty years than ever before yet, to date, books on plant hunting have focused on the so-called golden age which ended with the death of F Kingdon Ward in 1958. This book, from Dr Sandy Primrose, redresses this imbalance

with stories of the modern plant hunters who have done so much to enrich our gardens and conserve endangered species.

This book goes far beyond simple narratives of adventures in plant hunting to discuss the framework in which collecting takes place nowadays, the central role of conservation, the place of the private collector, of botanical gardens and of international agreements to present us with a most comprehensive overview of modern plant hunting, yet it never loses that sense of excitement, of awe at beauty, of searching for and finding wonderful plants, of effort and reward, and of what a debt of gratitude we owe these people.

[*Modern Plant Hunters – Adventures in Pursuit of Extraordinary Plants*, Dr Sandy Primrose, Pimpernel Press, 2019, Hardback, 272 pages, £30, ISBN: 978-1-910258-78-1]



***The Scentual Garden* by Ken Druse**

Fragrance lost its importance in our gardens. We have drifted away from an appreciation of scent, became more visual in our judgement and selection, and nowadays rarely include scent in a description of a plant. We have fallen out of the practice of appreciating one of the central and important aspects of our gardens, the fragrance of our garden plants. It is time to regain that pleasure again and Ken Druse's *The Scentual Garden* will be our most marvellous guide on that journey.

He reminds us of its significance and of the joys and pleasures we are missing when we fail to pay attention to the scents of our plants. This book is a journey of rediscovery, of having memories refreshed, of having pleasures reawakened, and of breathing new and fresh life into the joys of gardening.

The main part of the book is the 'Encyclopaedia of Fragrant Plants' though it might have better been entitled 'A Categorisation of Plant Fragrances' for it is arranged by the author into the twelve scent categories he uses: Animalic, Balsamic/Resinous, Floral/Sweet, Forest, Fruity, Heavy, Herbal/Green, Honey, Indolic, Medicinal, Rose and Spice. Each category has its introductory explanatory notes followed by a number of plants which serve to exemplify the particular fragrance. It makes for a most interesting read, a looking afresh at plants already familiar from a different perspective, a new insight, a refreshing of interest, something which opens your eyes to an aspect of an old interest which would otherwise have passed you by.

[*The Scentual Garden, Exploring the World of Botanical Fragrance*, Ken Druse, Abrams, New York, 2019, Hardback, 255 pages, £40, ISBN: 978-1-4197-3816-6]

Society Snippets

Do you grow an Irish plant?

A reminder that Stephen Butler, who leads for the Society on the conservation of Irish cultivars and other plants with Irish associations, maintains a register of who is growing what. Currently only 13 members have notified him about Irish plants in their gardens. With a membership of over 500, surely this is not correct? The record being kept by Stephen is a huge help in identifying which plants are in danger of being lost. For example, it is no longer possible to go out and buy *Escallonia* 'Alice' (see page 12) so it is critical to know which members are growing it in order that action can be taken to propagate it and make it available again. And to reassure you, Stephen may publicise that, say, three members grow a particular plant but only Stephen knows who grows what.

Contact Stephen at igps.heritageplants@gmail.com

Rescue plans.

Recent issues of the Newsletter have featured the striking iris, *Iris* 'Kilbroney Marble' which had long disappeared from commercial cultivation. The Conservation Working Group has identified it as one of two plants to be 'rescued' in 2020. Through the generosity of two of our members, some young plants have been propagated; some of these will go to new homes in selected 'safe havens' and a few more will be spread round private gardens. The second plant to be rescued will be the delectable pink-cupped daffodil, *Narcissus* 'Foundling'. It has been absent from commercial lists in Britain and Ireland for some time. More news about it in the autumn issue.

Crocasmia.

Also in the autumn issue will be information about Irish crocasmias. A special interest group has come together to identify the full range of these colourful – and now fashionable – late-summer plants raised on the island of Ireland. Read more about them next time. If you think you are growing an old or very scarce variety, please get in touch with Stephen at the email address above.

Bergenia Trial.

The trial of bergenias with Irish origins, which started in 2017, continues and is due for completion in late summer. Plants were obtained from Irish, Scottish and English gardens and nurseries, and at least one cultivar has been repatriated as no nursery had been listing the plant for many years. Depending on space and timing, we should see an update in the autumn issue. Otherwise expect to read it in Issue 150.

Around the Regions

Leinster

The Gardens of Leinster

Report by Mary Montaut.

In the middle of a chilly January, it was delightful to hear Shirley Lanigan describing many gardens in Leinster which are open to the public and to see her photographs of them. Her first picture was surprising, though: it was of Wittgenstein's plaque in the Palm House at Glasnevin, commemorating the philosopher's stay in Ireland. She told us how he used to sit and write in the Palm House during the cold winter of 1948-49. She praised the excellence of our National Botanic Gardens, both at Glasnevin and Kilmacurragh. This set a high standard for the sequence of gardens which followed.

It quickly became apparent that she is a fan of topiary; an unusual taste, perhaps, but many of the gardens in her lecture had some topiary features which were extremely photogenic. Summer landscapes, beautiful spring views, public parks — all these different aspects of Leinster Open Gardens were displayed, as well as the more predictable features which characterise some of these gardens. It was especially pleasing to see some small public spaces, such as the Victorian People's Park in Dun Laoghaire and the tiny garden at

Drimnagh Castle*, as well as some of the grander ones. I felt that she was drawing our attention to places which we might take for granted or walk past without noticing. Often her comments gave us insight into the development of a garden, so we could understand the significance of the photograph more deeply, for example, the small Festina Lente gardens in Bray, which have been wonderfully transformed over recent times.



Rhododendron 'Altaclarensis'
at Kilmacurragh
Photo: Seamus O'Brien.

Of course, Shirley also talked about the grander scale, including the Phoenix Park and Dublin Zoo. More surprisingly, she took time to tell us of the improvements she has seen in the management of roundabouts; superb winter planting is evident on some with grasses or winter-flowering heathers to lift the spirits of passers-by.

*Drimnagh Castle. In the 1980s the IGPS took the initiative in several garden projects one of which was the formal garden at medieval Drimnagh Castle in south-west Dublin. Mary Davies, one of our Honorary Members and a former Chair, writes that, during the castle's restoration, the Society offered to prepare a suitable design for part of the area inside the moat; Drimnagh is the last moated castle in Ireland. Jim Reynolds of Butterstream designed a seventeenth-century-style garden, with diagonal gravel paths, triangular box-edged beds and a pleached hornbeam hedge. After the layout was marked out, the garden was handed over to the restoration body for planting and maintenance. Nearly forty years later the garden complements the castle perfectly. Normally it is open to the public.

Mount Congreve - a National Treasure

Report by Anne-Marie Woods

Who better to give us a talk on Mount Congreve than Waterford native and near neighbour, Paddy Tobin? A former editor of this Newsletter, his eloquent talk began by giving us a tour of this vast estate and ended with a journey through the seasons. Paddy told us about Ambrose Congreve, the creator of the gardens at Mount Congreve, who arranged for the transfer of the ownership of the house and grounds to the state following his death. Mr Congreve was a life-long member of the Royal Horticultural Society, a recipient of the Society's Veitch Memorial Medal and an enthusiastic

annual attendee at the Society's Chelsea Flower Show; he passed away while attending the Show in 2011 at the age of 104. A garden of this size needs investment and Waterford County Council has plans to improve the 'facilities'.

But back to the garden: a vast network of paths leads one around this estate of 70 acres; it is easy to lose your way so keeping the River Suir to one side was advised. Although noted for its vast rhododendron collection, at least 2,000 in number, it was the magnolias which stole the show. Paddy showed us some stunning photographs including one memorable one of *M. campbellii* transforming the skyline into a profusion of pink, and another one of a row of *M. x soulangeana* that appeared to go on for miles. But this is a garden for all seasons from daffodils, camellias, roses and herbaceous plants through to daphnes, mahonias and plantations of conifers.



Magnolia sargentiana var. *robusta*
Photo : Paddy Tobin

I confess never to have visited Mount Congreve but have resolved to make 2020 the year.

The Greedy Gardener

Report by Janet Edwardes

Rosie Maye, otherwise known as the Insomniac Gardener, introduced us to what she referred to as her 'forever garden' which she and her husband discovered 17 years ago, a three acre plot surrounding an elegant Georgian farmhouse. She started with a backdrop of very mature trees but, as she explained a bit later, because of their age some were diseased or in a dangerous state so much work had to be done. Her philosophy is to under-plant everything so she has been lifting the



Tulips at front door.
Photo : Rosemary Maye

skirts of trees and shrubs and filling the spaces with tolerant woodland plants to extend the season of interest throughout the year. An example is a grove of birches which is planted with snowdrops followed by hellebores and tulips. Rosie has found that the Darwin and Apeldoorn tulips are reliable and come back year after year. She also advised on using pots to drop in spectacular displays of colour when there is a gap and suggested agapanthus as performing and looking well in pots. Plants which behave well and seed themselves about are *Dicentra*, *Pulmonaria*, *Silene*, hardy geraniums and candelabra primulas. The latter she finds are easy from seed, sown when green, while the slugs are kept in check by large numbers of frogs, newts and hedgehogs.

Acers are a favourite plant with interest in spring through the new foliage and then an amazing display in autumn. Rosie recommended catmint as one of the best blues for summer, along with a wide range of salvias that are generally hardy, trouble-free and flower for an extended period over summer and well into autumn. The trees she would recommend for autumn colour were *Liquidamber*, *Callicarpa*, *Prunus*, *Coprosma*, dogwoods and larch. Rosie delivered her talk with great enthusiasm; we had a wonderful evening in her company and we all look forward to visiting her beautiful garden.

Vegetables, Gardens and the Soul

Report by Janet Edwardes

Our March talk was by the renowned Klaus Laitenberger from Leitrim, the author of several books on vegetable growing. He has travelled extensively in pursuit of his craft, introducing many vegetables hitherto unknown to Irish gardeners but which have proven to be quite successful in our climate, many coming from South America. Klaus promoted the idea of gardening being good for the soul as well as giving joy and a sense of satisfaction in producing wholesome food to eat. He cited the Japanese habit of 'forest bathing' and absorbing the good serotonin from the pure atmosphere created by tree growth.

One of the strongest arguments for growing our own food is the amount of chemical residue on nearly all bought vegetables. Klaus commented on the fact that Ireland has one of the lowest spends per head on food so maybe we should rethink when we complain that organic is expensive. One comforting fact Klaus was able to confirm is that the word organic is protected by law when it comes to describing both human and animal foodstuffs.

Klaus gave us many practical tips on actually growing our own crops. He advised us to sow a bit later and thus avoid the cold weather. Spacing plants too close is another common

error. Don't water in the evening ... it promotes mildew, botrytis and grey mould. Caring for the soil is one of the most important things to consider so good composting techniques, crop rotation, prevention of soil compaction, hand weeding – but it has to be carried out regularly – and avoidance of chemicals for weed control. Klaus believes that the Jerusalem artichoke is one of the vegetables that is going to save the world and that the yacon will be the new superfood.

So we ended up encouraged to get out there, get growing, and try some of these new vegetables in our gardens. And we had some retail therapy as well as Klaus had brought along some more unusual varieties of potatoes and seeds to try out so no excuse for any of us!

Botanising in Kyrgyzstan

Report by Barbara Kelso

Despite the stormy, wet weather of Storm Dennis, there was a fantastic turnout of well over 110 people in Belfast to hear Derry Watkins at our joint lecture with the Alpine Garden Society. Derry, who is owner of Special Plants Nursery near Bath, delighted us with a wonderful talk split into two parts.

The first part was 'Derelict Hill Farm to Garden', where she showed us the creation of her own beautiful garden. In 1996, Derry and her



Victor and Roz Henry with Derry Watkins.
Photo : Barbara Kelso.

architect husband, Peter, had bought a derelict barn on top of a steep hill. After converting the barn into an attractive house, Peter then designed the sloping garden, creating several levels with smooth flowing lines. It was fascinating to learn of their Mediterranean plants thriving in eight inches of gravel on top of heavy clay soil. At her nursery, Derry grows and sells unusual plants from all over the world, including an amazing range of hardy herbaceous and rockery plants.

'Botanizing in Kyrgyzstan, the Switzerland of Asia' formed the second part of Derry's talk, taking us

on her recent exploration in the high mountains of central Asia. She has a passion for travel and over the years has been seeking out new plants and collecting seed from many countries. She showed us some beautiful photos of alpine plants from the tiny, perfectly formed globeflowers of *Trollius lilacina*, only a few inches high, to majestically-tall foxtail lilies, *Eremerus tianschanicus*.

Our meeting ended with Mark Smyth auctioning several of his unusual plants, followed by a delicious afternoon tea.

Dates for your Diary

Annual General Meeting Postponed

Annual General Meeting on 16th and 17th May, organised by the Leinster Committee, which was to have been based in Westport Co Mayo has been postponed and will be re-arranged at a later date. Any garden visits scheduled for the month of May have been cancelled.



Photo: Westport House by kind permission of Westport House.

The following events have been planned but at the time of going to print it is not known whether they can go ahead or not. Members will be notified once decisions in line with government and health advice can be taken.

Let's hope for better days ahead.

Saturday 6th June Summer Lunch and garden visit to Barmeath Castle, 12 pm - 4 pm Barmeath, Togher, Co Louth A92 P973

The site at Barmeath has been settled for at least 600 years and the extensive parkland and gardens of 10 acres make it an exceptional survivor of the earlier style of Irish landscape gardening. The mid-eighteenth century saw the input of Thomas Wright of Durham. An amateur architect and landscape gardener, he came to Ireland for a year at the behest of James Hamilton, Viscount Limerick. At Barmeath, the rustic rock bridge is typical of his work. Other delights include a lake with an island, an archery ground, the increasingly rare sight of a laurel lawn, and a handsome, four acre walled garden which ticks all the boxes with its summerhouse, arbours, borders, allées, soft fruit cages, vegetables and espaliered fruit trees. These features have been invigorated, renewed, enhanced and created over the past 40 years by our hosts, Lord and Lady Bellew, Barmeath is a very special garden imbued with the atmosphere that antiquity, continuity, enthusiasm and love engenders.

Lunch will be hosted in the Barn at Barmeath with plenty of time afterwards to enjoy the gardens. This event is organized jointly by the Leinster and Northern Committees.

Regretfully, numbers are limited. Prior booking through Eventbrite is essential and will open on the **20th of May**. Cost €45 for members, €50 non-members



Thursday 2nd July
Visit to Pogue's Entry, 7.00pm – 9.00pm
 Main Street, Antrim BT41 4BA

Peep through the gate guarding a small alley off the main street in Antrim and discover a quaint, historic cottage and its secret garden. Now in the hands of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, the cottage was the childhood home of Alexander Irvine, author of *My Lady of the Chimney Corner*, while the garden, created and looked after by the Society's volunteers, is filled with an eclectic mix of flowers, vegetables, herbs and a growing number of Irish cultivars.

Refreshments, storytelling, soda bread straight from the griddle.

Members free, personal guests £5 but booking ahead via Eventbrite is essential in order to organise the catering.



Saturday 4th July
Visit to Ballywalter House and Gardens 2.00pm
 Ballywalter Park, Ballywalter, Newtownards BT22 2PP

Ballywalter Park is the home of Lord and Lady Dunleath. The mansion, built in the Italian palazzo style, is of exceptional architectural importance; it overlooks the lake and is surrounded by 30 acres of pleasure grounds which include some notable plants including the crimson-flowered *Rhododendron* 'Lady Dunleath' and some champion trees. We will also visit the historic walled garden. After the tours of the house and garden which will be conducted personally by Lord and Lady Dunleath, we will conclude with refreshments in the fabulous conservatory.

Members £12 (after IGPS subsidy), guests £22. Numbers are limited and prior booking through Eventbrite is essential

Saturday 22nd August
Visit to the Gardens at the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham at 2.30pm followed by the War Memorial Gardens, Islandbridge at 4.00pm

The formal gardens were first laid out in 1695 by decree from the governors of the Royal Hospital that 'a garden should be lie all open to the North side of the Hospital for the greater grace of the house and for the recreation of the retired soldiers'. The Gardens now contain fine formal beds and statuary, including some modern sculptures. The magnificent group of chestnut trees and a wildflower meadow outside the walls of the Master's Garden make splendid contrast with the general formality. Our tour will be led by the Head Gardener, Mary Condon.

Following this visit, we will continue to the Irish War Memorial Gardens, the work of the great designer and architect, Edwin Lutyens, commemorating the 49,400 soldiers from the island of Ireland who died in the 1914 – 1918 war. We will be given a tour by a member of staff, which will include the book rooms where the names of all the soldiers are contained in the beautifully illustrated Harry Clarke manuscripts.

Saturday 5th September

Richmond Park Ramble, 2.00pm

59 Richmond Park, Stranmillis, Belfast BT9 5EF

A rare opportunity to visit three very different town gardens in close proximity, all owned by members of the IGPS. The first combines an imaginative and colourful planting of perennials, grasses, shrubs and trees set within a formal layout and designed to crescendo in late summer. A new shade border is under development. Planting areas in the second garden are maximised by the clever use of levels and contours, it has an eclectic mix of shrubs, herbaceous plants and climbers with a semi-circular pergola extending outwards in two directions giving structure to the garden and enhancing the space. The third, the largest, features varied and colour-themed planting schemes and a growing collection of Irish plants which, together with the mature trees and formal and informal features, bring a country house garden vibe to the city. Check in at No 59 Richmond Park between 2.00pm and 3.00pm to get your badge and directions.

Members free, personal guests £5



Advice for contributors

Length

If writing a report of a regional event such as a visit or lecture, please keep it short and sweet: 250 to 300 words is very suitable.

Articles are always welcome; 600 to 700 words works well especially when accompanied by two or three good quality, high resolution photos. Do not embed them in the text as the printer has to take them out again, send them as a separate jpeg. It's very helpful if you can alert the editor ahead of time about what you plan to write.

Newsletter conventions

Book and magazine names should be in italics with a capital letter for all the principal words e.g. *A Heritage of Beauty* and *The Irish Garden*. Do not use either single or double quotation marks around the title.

Scientific names of plants. The scientific or Latin name of the plant must be in italics. The initial letter of the species name has a capital letter, e.g. *Nerine*, while the second does not: therefore *Nerine bowdenii*.

The cultivar name, which is often but not exclusively English, is printed in regular or Roman type and enclosed within **single quotation marks** e.g. *Nerine bowdenii* 'Alba'. If more than one is referred to, the second and subsequent ones can be shown with just a capital letter in italics for the genus, e.g. *N. undulata*.

Common plant names. When plants are referred to by their common names, they are in standard/Roman rather than italic type and the initial letter is **lower case** e.g. nerines, roses, hellebores and peonies. Likewise for the names of wild flowers.

Capital letters. Use an initial capital letter for proper nouns, i.e. the names of people, countries, gardens, and institutions. Thus the National Botanic Gardens, Rowallane, or Kilmacurragh; the Society when referring to the IGPS but gardening societies in general; the Chairman when referring to the person who has been elected to this post in the IGPS. Seasons of the year are in lower case e.g. spring, autumn.

Abbreviations. Write IGPS rather than I.G.P.S., Co Kildare rather than Co. Kildare, etc rather than etc., and Dr rather than Dr. But include a stop or point for the following two abbreviations, e.g., and i.e..

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