



# **ALPINE GARDEN SOCIETY**

## **Dublin Group**



**NEWSLETTER NO. 63 – WINTER 2015**

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Front cover illustration is of *Pulsatilla ambigua* (Pink form) (p. 30). Photo: Liam McCaughey.

## EDITORIAL

As I write, there are two vacancies on the Committee that, hopefully, will be filled at the AGM. In one sense this is a good development because the membership of the current Committee hasn't changed for some years. The reason is not that the existing members have been desperate to hold on to their positions; it is that it is very difficult to find willing replacements.

There are no sinecures on the Committee: each member has a job to do and each new recruit must be willing and able, in due course, to take on one of the jobs that have to be done to keep the Group running smoothly.

The model constitution proposed by our parent body requires that non-officer members resign after three years, and office-holders after five, although exceptions are allowed. This level of turnover is quite impractical in the real world, and I would be surprised to find that any group in the Society is fully compliant. We certainly are not, but I believe we must take steps to improve matters.

I believe that change at Committee level is important in order to ensure that new viewpoints are brought to bear on our activities. It is also important for the long-term health and survival of the Group.

Committee membership may not be for everyone, but among a group of our size there should be more than enough suitable candidates prepared to offer to take on responsibility for helping to run our affairs for a few years. A society like ours can only operate effectively if there is a sufficient number of such members.

The Committee would dearly like to hear from any member who feels that they have something to offer, and would be prepared to allow their name to go forward for election at the AGM.

Being a member of the Committee is enjoyable and satisfying. While the work must be done, and the agenda must be got through, the meetings are informal and always finish with tea and cake and a chat.

## ALPINE MISCELLANY

On behalf of the Committee I wish all our members health, happiness and good fortune for 2015, in their lives generally, and in the garden.

2014 was a good year for our Group: we had a good events programme; a good Show; a great reception for our exhibit at the Bloom Festival; an excellent discussion weekend in Termonfeckin; and a net increase in membership numbers. We got only six members from Bloom, but we did better than usual at the Show; we got some through the website; and we got some through the efforts of existing members. I hope members will continue to encourage family, friends, and neighbours to join. The best way to do this is to invite someone along to one of our fixtures – there is no charge.

Harold McBride was something of a pioneer in the growth of interest in silver foliage plants for the garden and the show bench. I am grateful to Harold for agreeing to contribute an article on the subject for this issue. Ongoing thanks to Liam Byrne, who never lets me down, and writes this time on sowing seeds.

I'm finding it increasingly difficult to persuade members to do reports on our lectures. I am most grateful to the few who always say yes, but it's unfair to keep asking the same people. As a consequence you have to tolerate more reports from me than I would like. My thanks go to Val Keegan for volunteering to write up Brian Wood's talk. More volunteers would be very welcome.

### **Annual Show 2015**

From our new Show Secretary, Gavin Moore

Our main **AGS Show** will take place in Cabinteely on 11 April. When you get this newsletter it will be just three months away. I hope that the guidelines I have sent out through Jamie to encourage more of you to venture on to the show bench have been helpful. There will be more between now and the big day, and I'm hoping that there will be lots of new exhibitors this year. As well as more exhibitors, we need plants for the plant sale, but most of all we need your attendance. The Show is the face we show the public once a year and it provides a unique

opportunity to recruit new members, so please encourage your relatives, friends and neighbours to come along.

I will be in touch nearer the time looking for volunteers to help on the day, but if you already know that you would like to help please email me at [gavin.moore@gmail.com](mailto:gavin.moore@gmail.com).

## **Fixtures**

Paddy Smith, our Fixtures Secretary, has once again arranged a varied and exciting programme for 2015 and the full list is on p. 40. Paddy will always be delighted to hear from any member who would like to have a particular speaker, or a particular topic, included.

Unusually, we have two talks in January this year. We kick off with **Martin Walsh** on 15 January in Glasnevin. Martin will be talking on 'Chinese and Himalayan plants for the Irish garden'. Most members have heard Martin speak before, and will be aware of his extensive travels and his deep knowledge, in particular, of the plants of the Himalaya and of China. For this talk he has selected plants from these regions that are suitable for our gardens. This will not be a speculative selection as Martin is a successful garden designer and has already used many of these plants for his clients. He is also a very experienced speaker, having lectured widely, including at the Termonfeckin weekends; at the International Conference Nottingham, 2011; to the AGS Ulster Group and other AGS groups in the UK; at the SRGC Annual Discussion Weekends in Scotland; and in 2014 did a lecture tour in western North America at the invitation of The North American Rock Garden Society. He is also an exceptional photographer. This talk is a joint one with the **IGPS** and should not be missed.

On 22 January in Stillorgan we have our **AGM**. All members should make an effort to attend this event. It provides an opportunity for you to air your views, positive or negative, and offer suggestions on any aspect of the Group's activities. As an inducement, after the formal proceedings, **Bernard van Giessen**, who is a professional photographer specializing in plant photography, will conduct a workshop on how to take better flower pictures; photography tips and hints; how to get the most out of your camera equipment (and software); improve existing

skills; and prepare photos for exhibition.

On Saturday, 7 February, we have our **Annual Lunch** at the Royal St George Yacht Club, Dun Laoghaire, followed by a talk from **George Sevastopulo**, who was the director of the Bloom project, that he is calling: 'Blooming Postcard Garden – its conception to completion'. This is always a very nice social occasion – a pleasant lunch, good company and an informative, and, I expect, amusing talk from George.

For all snowdrop lovers there is a visit to two gardeners with large collections of these pale beauties, **Emer Gallagher** and **Eileen Collins**, on Sunday, 15 February. I have heard the most enthusiastic recommendations from people who visited in 2014. Emer gardens at Barnhill, Clonsilla, Dublin 15, and Eileen at Twin Chimneys, Parsonstown, Celbridge, Co Kildare. Full details in the mail out.

'A labour of love – 40 years at Potterton's Nursery' is the title of **Rob Potterton**'s talk in Stillorgan on 19 February. Potterton's, formerly called Potterton & Martin, is a well-known nursery in Lincolnshire. It offers an extensive range of alpines, dwarf bulbs, and woodland plants at the nursery, and by mail order. Among the nursery's many awards are seven Gold medals at the Chelsea Flower Show. Rob has appeared on BBC Gardeners World and featured in various Radio programmes. This should be a fascinating talk, **and**, he's bringing plants.

On Saturday, 14 March, our **Local Show, members plant sale and workshop** starts at 2pm in Stillorgan. This is a really worthwhile event. The show gets better and better, and provides an ideal learning opportunity for beginners and improvers. There are always lots of bargains in the plant sale, including named snowdrop varieties at knock down prices, and the workshop on showing and cultivation provides value for beginner and expert alike.

**Seamus O'Brien** will give a talk called: 'In the shadow of mighty Kangchenjunga – a botanical expedition to the Bhutan and Sikkim Himalaya', at Glasnevin on 19 March. Seamus, Head Gardener, NBG Kilmacurragh, led an expedition of Irish horticulturists and tree enthusiasts to the mountains of Bhutan and Sikkim in 2014, following the routes of early botanical explorers like William Griffith,

Joseph Hooker, Frank Ludlow and George Sherriff, from tropical valleys to icy glaciers. We had a wonderful talk from Seamus a couple of years ago on Kilmacurragh, and I am sure that this talk will be equally fascinating. It is another joint talk with **IGPS**.

Our main **AGS Show** will take place in Cabinteely on 11 April and I don't think I need to add anything to what Gavin has said above.

**Jim Almond**, who has spoken to us on several occasions, including at Termonfeckin, is one of the most popular overseas speakers we have had, so I feel sure we'll have a big attendance for his talk titled: 'Out and about – Adventures of an alpine gardener' on 16 April in Stillorgan. Jim is an expert plantsman, an engaging lecturer, and a top class photographer. His talk should not be missed.

On 25 April the **Ulster Group's AGS Show** will be held at Greenmount College, Antrim. We are dependent on getting exhibitors from the North for our Show, and it is important that we reciprocate. Those of you who have been before know what a great day out it is, and those who haven't have a treat in store. We should all make a special effort to exhibit, or at least to attend.

On Saturday 9 May we are planning a visit to the gardens of **Hilary** and **William McKelvey**, and **Harold McBride**, in Northern Ireland but at the time of writing all the arrangements have not been finalized. We will notify everyone as soon as we have the details.

**Diane Clement's** talk to us last year was very well received so we've asked her back again. 'Alpines in the wild and cultivation' is the title of the talk she will give in Glasnevin on 14 May. Diane is a prominent member of the AGS in England. She is currently in charge of the seed exchange. Diane is tremendously knowledgeable, is an experienced grower and shower of alpines, and is in constant demand as a lecturer. A must for all lovers of alpines.

I will provide more details on the autumn fixtures in the next newsletter.

**Billy Moore**

## Silver treasures for the garden or show bench

On the first occasion that I was asked to judge at an AGS show I was paired with that legendary Irish plantsman the late Dr Keith Lamb. When we came to the class for 'silver' foliage plants Dr Lamb reached into his pocket, and placed a silver coin beside the entrants, and said, "the plant which comes closest in colour to the coin wins".

While probably this was an accurate way to assess the silver hue of the plant, it failed to take account of its general condition, the degree of difficulty, or the rarity of the plant in cultivation. As a new boy, however, I was never going to argue with the much-respected Dr Lamb.

At more recent shows the class has been changed in many cases to include 'silver or grey' foliage plants which makes for wider competition, and stops arguments on whether the plant is 'silver' or 'grey' and, in theory, both compete equally, however, it has been my experience that silver foliage usually captures the judge's eye.



Exhibiting foliage plants has many advantages over plants in flower: a flowering plant is only in prime condition for at the most a few days, while a foliage plant can be in show condition for several months.

I have often benched silver foliage plants at the Irish shows in spring, and in the autumn have taken the same plants to Scotland and exhibited them with success at the show that is held in conjunction with the SRGC discussion weekend.

I will now describe some silver foliage plants that I like.





***Tanacetum densum***, syn. *Chrysanthemum densum*. (above)

This is a decorative long-lived sub-shrub; the fine, ferny leaves are carried on white, downy stems and it also produces white flowers in summer, but it holds its place in my garden as an excellent foliage plant. A native of Turkey where it inhabits limestone screes, this plant requires excellent drainage and full exposure to sun. It can become rather bedraggled in winter, but quickly recovers when the better weather arrives. I have grown it in a deep pot in the alpine house and it has proved to be a success on the show bench.

***Celmisia hectori*** (below)

This NZ native is a low-branched shrub with stiff narrow leaves of a brilliant silver-plated hue. Like many celmisias it doesn't thrive long-term in alpine house conditions, but can be grown in a pot plunged in the open garden and lifted for exhibition. It is a slow growing, challenging plant, but the extra effort you make to please it can be very well rewarded by its stunning foliage.





### ***Helichrysum* x 'County Park Silver'**

This hybrid was raised at County Park Nursery when a self-sown seedling was found in a raised bed. Thought to be a cross between *H. microphyllum* and *H. depressum*, the plant shows lots of hybrid vigour and is easy to grow either in a well-drained situation out of doors, or in a pan confined to the Alpine House. I placed this plant before the Joint Rock Garden Committee who gave it an award of merit for a foliage plant, an honour that it richly deserves.

### ***Raoulia hookeri* var. *albosericea***

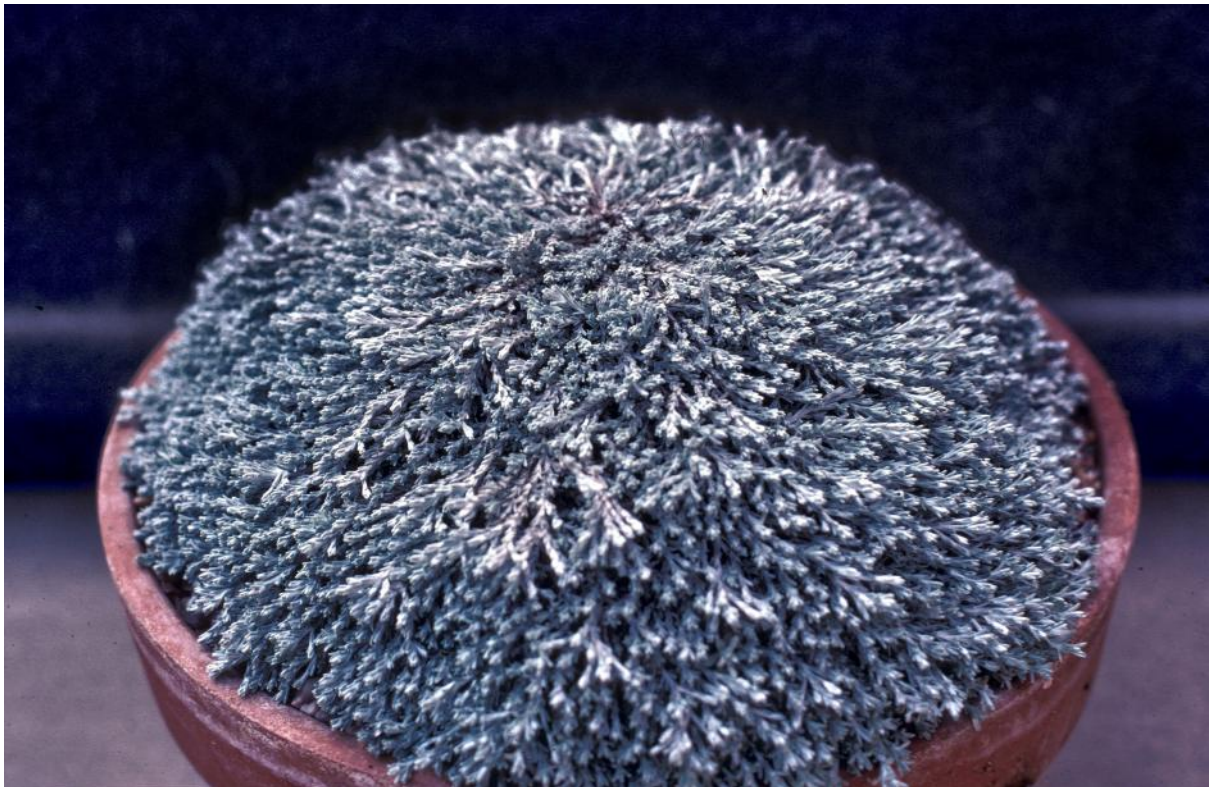
This is a native of North Island, NZ, where it is found at sub-alpine elevations. In cultivation it requires a very gritty, sparse compost but adequate moisture during the growing season. For best results it probably should be given protection from our Irish rain at all times. I find it requires excellent ventilation to prevent attacks from fungal diseases.

Easily propagated by division, this plant can be entered in the 'cushion plant' as well as the silver foliage section.

There are many more silver or grey foliage plants to choose from both for the garden and for exhibition, and, particularly in more recent years, I feel they don't have the popularity they deserve.

**Harold McBride**

Text and photos



*Helichrysum* x 'County Park Silver' (Photo: Harold McBride)



## Seed sowing

Everyone who attended the Termonfeckin weekend received seed donated by Harold McBride and Henrik Zetterlund. I thought I'd explain how I will sow my seed. The seed compost I use is equal parts of John Innes no. 1, and fine grit. This is suitable for most alpine seed. I replace the John Innes with peat moss for plants needing acid conditions, such as Ericaceous and similar plants. Another method for the latter type of plants, which I have not yet tried, is to place chopped sphagnum moss on top of the compost. The seed is then sown on to the sphagnum and firmed lightly. The sphagnum must be kept moist at all times. I am assured that this method is ideal for ericaceous plants, orchids and shortias.

The compost is placed in three-inch pots and firmed. The seed is sown on top of the compost and covered with a thin layer of grit. For their first watering, stand the pots in a tray of water until the grit is moist. Never water the pots from the top. I sow the seed thinly. Seed that needs light to germinate is sown on top of the grit. If you have a seed tray with a clear plastic



lid the pots may be placed in the tray and covered with the lid. If you have a north-facing frame you could use that, or you can place the pots under the bench in the alpine house. But most alpines will do perfectly well placed in a north-facing situation outside. Once germination takes place you should move the seedlings into the alpine house in order to prevent losses from snails and slugs. Similarly, pots in trays should be removed and exposed to full light and air once germination takes place. Germination can be spasmodic, sometimes taking up to three years. I keep pots of seeds for one year and if there is no germination at that stage I discard the pot. Once the true leaves appear in the seed pots, I prick them out into suitably sized pots filled with a compost appropriate

to the particular plant. A suitable compost for most plants would be one part John Innes no. 2, one part grit, and one part leaf mould or peat. (In the case of bulb seedlings I leave them for a year and then transfer the seedlings into a larger pot until the bulbs are large enough to pot up separately or plant out.) I use a plastic dibber when removing the young seedlings taking care to avoid any damage to the stem and roots. The pricking out stage is critical, and the tiny seedlings must be handled with the greatest care. Once again stand the potted seedlings in a tray of water until they are thoroughly soaked. Growing plants from seed is very satisfying and of course gives you access to a very wide range of plants at little cost.

I hope you have ordered seed from the seed distribution list and that these few suggestions will help you to have success.

Finally, I would like to make a plea to all our members to make a real effort to exhibit at the April Show, as if the Show, which is our main public event each year, is to continue to be successful, we need new exhibitors in the novice section.

**Liam Byrne**



*Androsace bulleyana* see p. 31. Photo: Harold McBride



## REVIEW OF RECENT GROUP EVENTS

### ‘Downsizing my garden’, Brian Wood, 6 November

Brian’s former garden was familiar to, and loved by most of us, so we were all very interested to hear about his new smaller version. Brian does not do things by halves, and we all know his expertise in layout and attention to detail. He bought a terraced cottage in Dalkey that he had his eye on for eight years!

The front garden is 26 x 9 feet. He knocked down the small wall and replaced it with railings to let in light and air to his plants. He imported fifteen tons of soil, and dug two small paths two feet deep with gravel to catch the rain and give him access. He turns the shoe of his downpipe out to the path in summer to make use of any rain in the garden, and back to the drain in winter. The garden is required to flower from March to October as Brian goes away in winter. His last garden was based on pastel shades, this one on strong colours. The front planting is mainly of perennials, including *Abutilon suntense*, *Delphinium cashmerianum*, penstemons, *Verbena bonariensis*, *Dahlia* ‘Bishop of Llandaff’, *Calceolaria integrifolia*, *Zantedeschia* ‘Flame’, *Rhodochiton* beside the door, and the lovely *Alogyne huegleii*. A tall terracotta pot planted with a trailing rosemary is a feature on one side, and connects on the other with a large terracotta cat keeping a watchful eye from over the front door. He cuts back his osteospermums in the middle of September and gets new growth that remains compact to survive the winter. *Thalictrum* ‘Hewitt’s Double’ was eye-catching.



The back garden is 26 x 26 feet. With his cottage knocked down (apart from the listed facade), Brian dug out the whole area, barrowed out the existing soil through the front door, replacing it with twenty-six tons of acid soil. He then built the pond, as his new sitting room was to overhang it.

Having spotted a number of very large rocks some years ago, he knew exactly how they would fit into his plan for the back garden. They had to be moved through the shell of the old house, quite a feat of engineering. When making the pond it was necessary to build a foundation for the rocks with concrete, and to provide reinforcing under the butyl. Now the house could be built. There is a seating area set out over the pond and, there, Brian can sit admiring his fish, frogs, and newts. Discreet lines of gut running from wall to wall deter herons.

Brian's requirements for his back garden included privacy and sun. He built walls around it, topped with Japanese tiles (used to preserve mud walls), and painted it Indian Sandstone, the equivalent of yellow ochre, a colour that changes with the sunlight. His pond was carefully planned to run under the paving in gravel to keep the garden watered. From his gutter a delightful Japanese rain chain descends, through which the water cascades into a large pot that overflows into the gravel area. He has positioned a few Japanese stone features, and made a focal point with a Shinto Shrine.

Brian's planting of the garden has been done with exquisite taste. To one side he planted a magnificent 150-year-old *Pinus parviflora*, cloud pruned, and a nice *Rhododendron racemosum* to hide a neighbour's window. Wisteria, grown as a tree, two chaenomeles, a beautiful pale peach 'Geisha Girl' and a white one. C. 'Crimson and Gold' did not succeed. Having given his neighbour advice on what to grow on her wall, he now has a trailing branch of *Solanum album* above his shrine. An outstanding plant is *Edgeworthia chrysantha* 'Red Dragon', an unusual shrub with red flowers in a white woolly surround.

The garden contains about 500 plants, many of them acid loving, such as, azaleas, kalmia, mysotidium, pieris, meconopsis etc. He grows around thirty hostas, and a number of Japanese Acers, which he keeps in shape by constant 'nibble' pruning. No alpiners, according to Brian, but we see hellebores, candelabra primulas, *P. capitata*, ramondas, rhodohypoxis, pleiones (self seeding), soldanellas, daphnes, dactylorhizas, cypripediums, and small hostas. He has pinguiculas



growing naturally, but has a fight with a blackbird for ownership! He grows zantedeschias in pots in the pond, and dries them out over winter.

Brian was famous for his collection of troughs, but he took only one to the new garden, a circular one containing a *Nymphaea rubra*. A pot holds a lovely bonsaied malus, which has pink flowers in spring, and tiny bright red apples in autumn.

Brian's taste and vision have produced a tiny gem of a garden. His talk was fascinating, educational, entertaining, and delightfully illustrated with his own photos. He is a true gardening artist.

**Val Keegan**

**‘Why not make a miniature garden?’, John Dower, 16 October**

Why not indeed? After John's clear and thorough demonstration of the technique for making one of these little alpine gardens, whether for showing or placing in the garden, patio, or balcony, no one in the audience in Glasnevin with the will to do so should have much difficulty.

John is an acknowledged expert in this field, has written and lectured on the process, and has won many prizes over the years for his own creations, so we were in the hands of a master.

As well as providing a comfortable home for its population of plants, the finished garden must be aesthetically pleasing, whether it represents a mountain scene, a scree, a woodland scene or a combination. While a miniature garden can be created in almost any type or size of container, John concentrated on building a garden that would meet the exhibition criteria set by the AGS. Essentially this means that the maximum outside diameter of the pot must not exceed 36cm.

The pot can be clay or plastic; clay looks better but plastic is lighter, and weight is a consideration especially if it is intended for showing. It should not be much deeper than around 15cm.

A layer of lightweight drainage material is placed in the bottom of the pot which is then filled with a free draining compost: two parts JI 2 or 3 with one part grit will be fine for most plants. Then the landscape is created, probably the most difficult part of the process. The landscape should be at least as high as the pot is deep, and every effort should be

made to have it look natural, and to create as many planting opportunities as possible.

The ideal material for creating the landscape is tufa, but limestone, schist and other rocks can also be used.

John gave a long list of plants, including saxifrages, primulas, sedums, and raoulia, that are suitable for a miniature garden, the main criterion being that they do not get too big. They should be planted tightly, as this will ensure that they will remain compact, and every effort should be made to ensure that the finished garden will look well from all angles.

The garden should never be fed, and watered only as necessary, and kept outside, even in winter.

John used short videos to illustrate the process, and these were excellent, especially when it came to the maintenance stage where, for example, it might be necessary to remove a plant that had become too large. This is done by cutting around the plant with an old kitchen knife and removing it as a plug, leaving a perfect hole for its successor. Most of the soil is then removed from the new plant and its roots squeezed into a tight carrot before inserting it into the hole and firming it in using some fresh compost.

John has a little toolkit that he uses for tending his garden consisting of the kitchen knife, a couple of different sized spoons, a fork, and a toothbrush for dealing with unwanted moss.

The garden should look established, and the use of small dwarf conifers or other tiny trees will enhance the landscape effect, but these should always be planted in the lower parts of the garden.

As of now accessories are not allowed by the AGS, but John thinks that some discreet items should be permitted and this is under consideration at present. I'm afraid I have to part company with John here as I think that permitting the use of any accessory would create a slippery slope. Indeed John showed some hideous examples of what might happen.

He also showed some fine examples of what can be achieved, successive shots of his main mini garden over time being the most impressive. We had a live example of a very creditable mini garden built by Frank

Lavery, which was admired and examined closely by members of the audience after the lecture.

Mini gardens don't last forever and adjustments may have to be made from time to time.

This very practical lecture, delivered with great humour by John, will, I have no doubt, inspire many of our members to try their hand at building their own miniature garden, and I expect to see more of them on the show bench in the future.

**Billy Moore**



*Primula renifolia* – p. 35. (Photo: Henrik Zetterlund)

**31st Alpine Weekend at Termonfeckin, 14 to 16 November**



Henrik Zetterlund, Harold McBride, and Colin Crosbie. Photo: Billy Moore.

Several delegates reckoned that this year's conference was the best ever. It was superb; the panel of lecturers could not have been bettered; we were well looked after by the excellent staff of An Grianán; and everything ran smoothly. It may not have been the best, but I can't think of a weekend that was better. Our thanks are due to everyone concerned with organizing and running the event, especially Mary O'Neill Byrne and Tessa Dagge for all their hard work. Thanks also to Val Keegan and her helpers for their work on the plant stall; to Brian Duncan, a very

capable stand-in for George Sevastopulo, who was gallivanting around Bhutan, for running the auction, ably assisted by Miriam Cotter; to everyone who donated plants for the sale and auction, mainly Harold McBride; thanks to Harold and Henrik Zetterlund for their very generous donation of seeds; to Gwenda Wratt for her stationery and *objets d'art* stall; to Nilla Martin, who contributed the attractive floral decorations for the dining hall; to Jamie Chambers, who set and ran another challenging but enjoyable table quiz, and was an affable and efficient chairman of the event; and to everyone else who helped to make the weekend a success.

For various reasons the number attending was down a bit, although we made a profit. Without the participation of our friends from the Ulster and Cork groups our weekends would not be viable. So a final thanks to everyone who attended, and hopefully we will see you all again next year. Please spread the word about what a unique, instructive and socially enjoyable event our weekend at Termonfeckin is.

Due to commitments at the nursery Aberconwy was not present this year, but Susan Tindall and Norrys Maxwell did their best to satisfy demand. Keith Lever will be back with his plants in 2015.

The weekend opened as usual on Friday evening with informal slide shows from members. Our presenters this year were Carl Dacus, Joan McCaughey, Liam McCaughey, and Heather Smith. A better showing will be expected from members of the Dublin Group next year.

Heather told us about her trip to London in May. She visited the Chelsea Flower Show; Chelsea Physic Garden; Pashley Manor Gardens, Kent; Merriments Gardens, with its 'Monet' bridge; and Wisley, where she liked ZZ's crevice garden, built in 2010. We saw fine photos of lovely plants and interesting sculptures, especially of horses. The rhododendrons, and lake with black swans at Pashley Manor were impressive.

Joan gave us a brief account of her time in Turkey in May/June where, most unfortunately, towards the end of the visit she suffered a serious foot fracture, which is still troubling her. The trip was to the Lake Van area in eastern Turkey. Her photos of birds, including Humming Birds,



and butterflies were excellent, as were those of beautiful meadows and flowering bulbs, including tulips, fritillarias, and irises. *I. sari* and *I. paradoxa* were outstanding, but Joan's favourite was *I. iberica elegantissima*, pictured on the back cover.

Joan and Liam visited family in Melbourne for Christmas, 2013, and from there went on an excursion to Tasmania. Melbourne Botanic Garden featured in Liam's presentation, as did a photo of Liam and Joan on the winning boat in the Sydney to Hobart race. There were interesting photos taken in Hobart Botanic Garden and some lovely Tasmanian landscapes, including the splendid Russell Falls and Mount Field National Park. Liam's photos were as usual excellent, and included *Dianella tasmanica* and the beautiful *Richea scoparia*.

Carl showed images of a number of plants that he was donating to the plant sale and auction. He has had great success with *Ixia viridiflora*, which has done well outside for years in his garden, as has the lovely pink *Watsonia pillansii*.

Carl had been on a trip to Denmark earlier in the year where he visited the photogenic Kronborg Castle (immortalized as Elsinore in Hamlet). He also visited Frederiksborg Castle where the extensive box hedges have been devastated by blight. Gartneriet PKM, a huge commercial nursery, was the next stop. He took us through an enormous glasshouse, showing how LED lighting is used to control growth, propagation is mechanized, and how biological controls have come to replace chemicals.

The Discussion Forum on Sunday morning was lively as always with our panel of Colin Crosbie, Henrik Zetterlund and Susan Tindall answering questions on such diverse topics as: aborting of trillium flowers; composts; leaf mould; definition of a rich soil; Narcissus Fly; and the use of garlic to deter molluscs.

The principal focus of the weekend was, of course, on the five talks, which I will now attempt to describe briefly.

## **Colin Crosbie**

For the past five years Colin has been curator of the RHS gardens at Wisley. Before joining the staff of Wisley in 1998 he was Head Gardener at Royal Lodge in Windsor Great Park, the home then of the late Queen Mother. He is a passionate plantsman, his interest dating back to his childhood in Kirkcudbright in Scotland. ‘Shady Characters’, the title of his first talk, focused on plants suitable for the woodland garden.

The first ten slides featured arisaemas, of which he is very fond, his favourite being *A. candidissimum*, sweetly scented and variable. His slide of the red form of this species showed just how variable it can be, and drew appreciative noises from the audience. A close up of *A. sikokianum*, looking as he put it like “a toilet with the lid up and a brush stuck down”, is an example of the sort of plant that appeals to children. A major goal of Colin’s in Wisley is to interest children, and young people generally, in plants in order to ensure that gardening will remain a significant activity for people into the future.

*A. griffithi* var. *pradhanii* is a superb plant, as is *Anenome* ‘Wild Swan’, raised by Elizabeth McGregor in her nursery in his home place in Scotland, and plant of the year at Chelsea in 2011.

Colin is always conscious of the great plant hunters, like George Forrest, who have introduced many of the species that adorn our gardens today.

Cypripediums are now more affordable than in the past. Colin finds *C. parviflorum* one of the best. *C. ‘Gisela’* is lovely and easy, but *C. kentuckiense* is more challenging.

The plain green of ferns is valuable in the woodland garden, and, if you’ve got room, *Dicksonia antarctica* can hardly be beaten. But Colin’s favourite fern (and mine) is *Dryopteris wallichiana*.

There are many forms of epimedium available today, all of them lovely. Colin grows more than a hundred named varieties in his garden with *E. acuminatum* being his favourite.

The flowers and leaf markings of erythroniums provide good value, and if there is room for only one, go for the widely obtainable and easy, *E. californicum* ‘White Beauty’. The best form of *E. revolutum* is *E. r. ‘Knightshayes’*, and is the one to grow.

Variegated plants do not appeal to Colin, but he makes an exception for hostas. *H. 'Leola Fraim'* and *H. 'Fire Island'*, like a dwarf rhubarb, are recommended. The 'Mouse Ears' series is perfect for troughs. Slugs and snails can be a problem and judicious use of slug pellets, strictly in accordance with the makers' instructions will help. Nematodes work on slugs but not on snails. Spraying the plants with a strong garlic solution



is reputed to deter these pests.

Another pest that seems to be spreading is the Lily Beetle. Colin likes lilies and grows several species in his garden. He would not wish to be without *L. lankongense* (above). A very attractive cultivar is *L. 'Vico Queen'*, bred by Sir Peter Smithers, who was the model for Ian Fleming's James Bond.

*Meconopsis* thrive in Scotland but do not like the much drier conditions in Wisley, so Colin treats them as biennials.

*Muckdenia rossii* is an excellent woodland plant and has great autumn colour. *Maianthemums* (formerly *smilacina*) deserve a place in any woodland planting, none more so than *M. racemosum* 'Wisley Spangles' with its lovely flowers, sweet scent, and great berries. The related



Solomon's Seals should not be neglected and *Polygonatum odoratum* 'Red Stem' is very worthwhile.



Roscoeas are becoming more popular and Colin collects them. *R. purpurea* f. *rubra* 'Red Ghurka' is easy, he says, and comes true from seed. *R. humeana lutea* is a lovely yellow form, and the white *R. humeana alba* (above) is stunning, but rare. There are many forms of *R. cantleoides* that flower at different times from early May to October.

The plants most often stolen in Wisley are species of trillium. Colin grows several including the diminutive *T. rivale*. For a splash of golden light in the woodland bed *Uvularia grandiflora* is hard to beat, and I prefer it to the less widely grown *U. g. var. pallida*.

Colin then moved on to some shrubs and small trees that add structure and, of course, provide shade in the woodland garden. *Rhododendron yakushimanum* (never to be referred to as a 'yak') (photo: p. 27) is a beautiful but variable species from Japan, and the AGM form, 'Koichiro Wada' is superb. Hybrids of the species are also very good: *R. 'Hydon Dawn'* has masses of pink flowers that fade to near white, and *R.*

‘Hydon Velvet’ has the most luxurious indumentum on the reverse of the foliage.

A great favourite of Colin’s is the winter flowering, marmalade scented, *Hamamelis x intermedia* ‘Pallida’.

Other desirable scented plants, which should be planted near a path, are *Daphne bholua* ‘Jacqueline Postill’, *D. b.*

‘Limpsfield’ (darker flowers), and *Sarcococca confusa*.

Hugging trees, apparently, can lower your blood pressure; Colin confessed to being a daily tree hugger. *Acer davidii* ‘George Forrest’, and *Acer* ‘White Tigress’ are grown for their attractive striped bark and should tempt anyone with Colin’s addiction.

He ended his delightful talk with some slides of magnolia species. One of my favourites is *Magnolia wilsonii* (above) with its beautifully scented, pendant, white flowers. *M. stellata* ‘Jane Platt’ is also lovely. Colin’s last slide was of *M. kobus*, included because it reminded him of walking around the garden at Royal Lodge with the late Queen Mother, when she asked him to collect and sow the seed of this magnolia as it would be “something to look forward to”.



In his second lecture, 'The changing face of Wisley', Colin talked about the garden and recent developments there.

The 200-acre Wisley, at 110 years, is the oldest RHS garden. It employs seventy-two staff, twenty-four trainees, and four apprentices. It has a diverse range of plants comprised of trees, shrubs, perennials, alpines, bedding, vegetables, etc. with a range of glass houses of various kinds. It is not a botanical garden. The aim is to inspire, involve, inform and improve. The RHS runs a campaign to get school children interested in gardening and there are now 19,000 schools involved throughout the UK. This is a project dear to Colin's heart.



Against a background of photos of the garden under snow, Colin talked about the need for gardeners to adapt to climate change.

In order to make an impact on visitors, massed planting is resorted to: 160,000 Dutch crocuses; 25,000 daffodils (Brian Duncan was involved here), followed by wallflowers and tulips; a meadow of camassias; *Gladiolus bysanthinus en masse*; swathes of rhododendrons and 'azaleas' (disdained by the late Christopher Lloyd); summer bedding (approved of by wildlife); poppy meadows, in remembrance of the dead of WW 1; wild flower meadows; 5,000 roses; and herbaceous perennials.



Visitors are of the utmost importance; children are welcome and efforts are made to provide activities for them. Sculptures are used in the garden, the most notable being Henry Moore's **Arch** and **King and Queen**. Colin is emphatic that gardening itself is an art form.

An important aspect of Wisley's work involves trialing plants of all kinds. The best are given the AGM award, which is highly regarded by the public.

Throughout his talk Colin showed us many examples of the attractions of the garden at different times of the year, including the wonderful borders, modern, inspired by American prairies; and traditional. The orchard has a huge range of fruit trees, including 700 varieties of apple that Wisley is aiming to conserve. Autumn colour in the trees, particularly a wonderful liquidamber, and autumn flowering bulbs bring the show to an end.

There are various flower shows and plant sales throughout the year, as well as shows for fruit, prize vegetables and beekeeping.

Wisley is famous for its rock garden and alpine houses and Colin's photos showed us why. Various events are run in this area throughout the year to which the different societies are invited. A photo of the rock garden in 1915 was contrasted with current views. We got impressive photos of the plants in the alpine house and raised beds, as well as the huge stock of plants behind the scene to keep the displays looking their best at all times.

We were shown ZZ's large crevice garden evolving, looking really stunning when fully planted. As Colin said, ZZ paints with plants. There were also miniature crevice beds created by staff.

To remain relevant, gardens must change and gardeners must adapt. It is clear that Colin's dedication, commitment, and passion will ensure that Wisley will go from strength to strength; it is in good hands.

(All photos in this section are by Colin.)

**Harold McBride**

Harold's talk entitled 'Four decades growing alpines' surveyed forty years of growing alpine and woodland plants. From the thousands of photos that he has taken over that period, the task of selecting the mere 140 that he showed must have been daunting. In recent years his photos have been digital, but in the earlier decades he was using slides. These had, of course, to be converted to digital, and he paid a warm tribute to Liam McCaughey who kindly agreed to do the conversion, and did such a fine job.



Harold showed us a wide selection of wonderful plants, representing the different genera that he has grown, always to perfection, over the years. Most of the pictures were taken in his garden, with a few in the wild. As well as plants and garden views there were photos of a few people with whom he had shared his passion for plants during the past four decades. His opening slide was taken on top of the Schilthorn in the early years and showed the late and much lamented John McWhirter sharing a table with some friends, including Harold's then very young son, Stuart. This was followed by a couple of shots of Gwen and Stuart on the same trip, and reminded us that Harold's family had travelled to Termonfeckin for his lecture.

Other people featured were Roy Lancaster (photo above), and Joe Cartman, in Harold's garden; Helen Mark and a BBC team making a film on the garden; and Bob Gordon admiring *Meconopsis lingholm*. A most interesting shot was one of those two great plantsmen, David Shackleton and Dr Keith Lamb, discussing a raised bed planted with alpines. Harold and Gwen have always had at least one Jack Russell terrier as a pet and sadly the last one died just recently. An old photo of one called Flurry as a pup, seeming to be lost in admiration of a bed of autumn gentians, was most appealing.

Obviously it is not possible, or desirable, in a review like this to mention all the great plants that were discussed, so what follows is a personal selection, which I hope will give a representative overview of the talk.

Mention must be made of a photo taken in the Alps of a large pink mat of *Silene acaulis* in full flower with not a leaf to be seen. Also from the wild a very well flowered *Gentiana verna* in the company of *Primula farinosa* would persuade anyone to grow alpines.

Several views of Harold's rock garden at different times served to remind us of what a superb plantsman he is, and showed the way in which his garden has evolved over the years, the planting reflecting his changing enthusiasms, but always being full of interest and colour. I have never seen a better *Daphne cneorum* than the one he had for many years and which was the better of an annual haircut with a shears. *Pulsatilla grandis* 'Budapest', or seedlings thereof, have adorned the garden for most of the four decades. It is a truly lovely plant, one of the most beautiful he has ever grown, he says, and although the original is probably no longer in cultivation, well-coloured seedlings are still most desirable. The pink form of *P. ambigua*, - see front cover - which has won a Farrer Medal for Harold, is another beautiful representative of this genus. *Campanula* 'Joe Elliot' is a super plant, as is *Viola xoyssii*, which we don't often see any more, both of which thrive at Waverley Avenue.

We saw a tufa bed in the garden, packed with saxifrages in flower, with one, *S. oppositifolia* 'Theoden', stealing the show.



The raised bed in the front garden is host to many fine plants also, including fritillarias, cypripediums and the rarely seen *Blandfordia punicea*, from Tasmania.

Harold told us the fascinating story of his successful growing of the heavily protected Silver Sword of Hawaii, *Argyroxiphium sandwicense macropetalum* (recounted in Newsletter no. 51), a feat not often achieved.

The genus *Oxalis* contains several most desirable species (and many thugs) and twenty or more years ago Harold did a lot of work with *O. enneaphyllum*, *O. adenophylla* and *O. laciniata*, creating several fine forms of the latter, one of which was given an A.M. by the Joint Rock Committee and which he named 'Gwen McBride'. It is widely in cultivation. He also worked with *Dianthus alpinus*, a plant that many of us have difficulty with, and produced a lovely cross which he named 'Gwen's Blush'.

He grows *Gentiana verna* particularly well, and has kept the rare 'Burren Blue' form going for years and has distributed it widely. He also keeps the striking but short-lived *Androsace bulleyana* going. (photo: p. 14)

He has finally managed to germinate seedlings of the very large-flowered *Ranunculus creticus*, a plant he got from the late Jim Price, and is in the process of passing seedlings around to other growers.

Some years ago Harold was a speaker at the International Rock



Garden Conference in New Zealand and he showed us some great photos (above) from that visit. Harold did sterling work in popularizing the growing of NZ plants and at one time had forty-three or forty-four varieties of celmisia in his garden, including the lovely *C. semicordata stricta* and the legendary *C. semicordata* ‘David Shackleton’.

I have seen in Harold’s garden the large flowered form of *Thalictrum tuberosum* that he got from Rod Leeds, and I can say that good as the photo Harold showed us was, it doesn’t do the plant justice.

Harold loves trilliums and grows lots of them. He has been particularly successful with the double *T. grandiflorum* ‘Snow Bunting’ and I thought that *T. ‘Cheeverstonii’* (I don’t think the name is valid), which came from Dr Molly Sanderson is a gem. He grows many other bulbs such as fritillarias, erythroniums, nomocharis, and lilies, including the giant Himalayan Lily *Cardiocrinum giganteum*, which he likes very much. I needn’t add that they are all grown to specimen standard. *Erythronium revolutum* ‘Upturn’, which he has raised, and is so-called because its flowers face upwards, has received mixed reviews but certainly has curiosity value.

Among the many primulas he grows, for me, pride of place must go to *P. aureata*, not around much any more, but Harold has promising seedlings.

Harold has also specialized in *Anemone trullifolia* and *A. obtusiloba* forms, very attractive plants, but the jewel has to be *A. t.* ‘Pradesh Form’, another Farrer winner for him. He also won Farrers with his ericaceous plants, in particular cassiopes and rhododendrons. I will always remember the pristine and perfect beauty of the specimen of *Cassiope* ‘Beatrice Lilley’ that he showed, almost twenty years ago I think. His photo of the very difficult *Rhododendron ludlowii* in full flower in the garden was most impressive.

Meconopsis were another passion and I can say that the best specimens of this genus that I have seen were in Lisburn, not the least of them being that ‘King’ of the genus, *M. sheldonii* ‘Slieve Donard’.





This fascinating and wide-ranging talk (a talk which must not go on the shelf) ended with a photo of another ‘King’, *Eritrichium nanum*, (above) ‘King of the Alps’, the alpine that we’d all love to be able to grow.

Thank you very much Harold.

(All the photos in this section are from Harold.)

### **Henrik Zetterlund**

This was Henrik’s third weekend at Termonfeckin, a record, I think, for an overseas speaker, and an indication of how much we appreciated his talks on previous occasions, nor were we disappointed this time around. The depth of his knowledge and experience, gained from his work in Gothenburg Botanic Garden, and from his many worldwide plant-hunting trips, mark him as one of the most authoritative speakers on mountain plants alive today.

‘The Caucasus – where the best plants grow’ was the title of his first talk, and the claim in the title was borne out by the wide and diverse range of plants that he showed us.

The talk was based on visits in 1982, 2007, 2010, and 2011. Much has changed in these mountains over that period as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union. They are home to various tribes who don’t always

see eye to eye, and can be wild and rough, and occasionally dangerous. Literature on the area has improved in recent years with the publication of several books covering the flora and topography.

We started in Georgia, a country much run down since the Soviet Union fell, and where Stalin is still honoured, with a visit to Tbilisi Botanic Garden, but moved quickly into the mountains where we saw many plants, ranging from small bulbs to tall trees, and lots of beautiful mountain scenery.

*Staphylea pinnata* and *S. colchica*, both with scented flowers, should be nice trees for a small garden. *Veronica kemulariae* is a very good introduction, about 15cm tall, and easy. *Erythronium caucasicum* is lovely with yellow-throated white flowers and striking red stems. *Pachyphragma macrophyllum* is a very good plant for deep shade.

Henrik showed us many images of familiar garden plants and observed how satisfying it is to see these in their natural habitats. *Anemone caucasica* is lovely as is the richly coloured *Corydalis caucasica*. *Primula veris* subsp. *macrocalyx* is a plant with a good future in Henrik's view, and he regards *P. juliae* very highly. A very nice yellow paeony is *P. daurica* subsp. *macrophylla*. The red, ferny leafed *P. tenuifolia* is worthwhile also, and Henrik showed some nice plants that were hybrids of *P. daurica* subsp. *mlokosewitschii*. *Scilla rosenii en masse* was lovely. Among the fritillarias that we saw was my favourite, *F. collina*, exhibited by Bob Gordon at the Ulster Show some years ago.

To give us a sense of location Henrik interspersed the plant pictures with beautiful landscapes, including a shot of Mount Elbrus, at 5,642m, the tallest mountain in Europe, and of villages and towns that he had passed through. Heavy fencing around dwellings is an indication of feelings of insecurity among the local populace.

Henrik has introduced many plants to cultivation: one that he is particularly proud of is *Salvia daghestanica*. *Daphne glomerata*, possibly the most difficult in the genus, is a candidate for the peat wall. *Viola caucasica* is very nice and one of Henrik's all time favourites is *Trifolium polyphyllum*.

One of the main objectives of the 2011 expedition was to reintroduce *Primula renifolia* (photo: p. 19) to cultivation. It grows in narrow crevices on cliff faces. Just one seed germinated. With its large flowers it is for Henrik “one of the most wonderful primulas”, but a challenge.

*Omphalodes lojkae*, on the other hand, is easy, less so the lovely pink *Potentilla divina*. *Erigeron venustus* is beautiful, but I was captivated by a shot of my favourite autumn crocus, *C. vallicola*.

I hope my account of this superb talk has at least given some indication of its breadth and depth. I have been able to mention only a tiny fraction of the plants discussed by Henrik in his survey of these majestic mountains ‘where the best plants grow’.



Henrik’s second talk called ‘Favourite bulbs in the wild, in Gothenburg Botanical Garden, and in my own garden’ was almost three talks in one, and as such, very difficult to summarize. In essence it was a master class on bulbs, and it left his audience intoxicated by the colour and variety of the images he showed.

Red predominated in the shot of swathes of *Ranunculus asiaticus* (above) taken in Iraqi Kurdistan, which was followed by other photos of flowering bulbs in Serbia, Georgia, Turkey and Iraq again. Henrik finds



that *Bellevalia forniculata* is a good garden bulb, and he was enthralled by the alpine meadow in which it was growing near Erzurum.

A series of pictures of the 600 square metre bulb meadow in Gothenburg, planted with 60,000 bulbs was stunning (it will be difficult to avoid superlatives in this report) showing the successive flowering of the various species throughout spring. It is especially nice when blue and white *Crocus vernus* is in flower, but they have a problem with hares eating the corms. This meadow is often under snow. *Colchicum bulbocodium* is very good outside as is *C. trigynum*, given good drainage. Among the dwarf irises, *I. histrioides* 'Lady Beatrix Stanley' is highly recommended.

There are also attractive mass plantings of *Fritillaria meleagris* (6,000 bulbs); some doubles have appeared but these are curiosities rather than beauties.



The bulb 'house' in Gothenburg is purpose built: it has a roof but no sides, so the plants are protected from precipitation but get all the fresh air they need. It is quite magnificent. I have been there in spring and found it an unforgettable experience. It is home to juno irises such as *I. stenophylla*, *galatica*, *persica*, *rosenbachiana*, and *ancheri* 'Olof', called after Henrik's son, all looking quite at home. Many fritillarias, corydalis, tulipa,

muscari, bellevalia, narcissus and other bulbs that like summer baking are also grown. *Fritillaria sororum* is lovely.

Henrik's own garden is comprised of two acres and is a two-hour drive north of Gothenburg. As we shall see, it is largely a wild garden, and many of the bulbs there are grown from seed, sown *in situ*. Henrik likes snowdrops but they flower too late in Sweden so in his own garden he grows *Leucojum vernum* in profusion instead. The garden is very fertile so all his plants thrive. Surprising to us in this country, one of his favourite plants is *Ranunculus ficaria*, but I suppose, if you've got two acres you can afford to let it romp away, and it certainly looks nice in large groups. So does the blue *Hepatica nobilis* (above). *Iris latifolia* is the last iris to flower. *Bellevalia forniculata*, mentioned above, has been growing outside for him for twenty years.

The masses of *Muscari latifolium*, interspersed with *Primula veris* make a great show. He also grows many dwarf daffodils. *Lilium martagon* forms have naturalized for him.

Henrik regularly sprinkles surplus seed from Gothenburg in his garden and year after year gets lovely surprises. He keeps the grass short when the bulbs are over.

Scilla and chionodoxa are closely related and both genera contain excellent species for the open garden. The early white *S. mischtschenkoana* is one of the best. *C. sardensis* and *C. luciliae* 'Alba' are very good as is a new form of *S. siberica* called 'Inra', smaller with darker leaves and flowers.

*Corydalis malkensis* is a delightful species, easy and a gentle seeder. Many other corydalis species are grown in Gothenburg, massed in raised beds. *C. cava* does well. The red solidas will seed around but the blue species are more of a challenge. *C. ussuriensis* is the gem of this group with rich, blue, large, scented flowers.

A great red tulip for the rock garden is *T. vvedenskyi*, and good forms of the yellow *T. tarda* and *T. batalinii* are worth seeking out. The Lady Tulip, *T. clusiana* 'Peppermintstick' is most elegant, but the most beautiful, adored by Henrik, is the new *T. humilis* 'Tete-a-Tete', looking rather like

a stemless paeonia. Other good tulips are *T. praestans*, *T. sylvestris* and *T. humilis*. *T. sprengeri* is special as it is the last to flower and does well in woodland conditions.

Among the erythroniums, Henrik really likes *E. hendersonii*. *Trillium grandiflorum* 'Gothenburg Pink Strain' is a real beauty but as Henrik says, it'll never be cheap.

As summer comes alliums, camassias, and eremurus take over both in Gothenburg and in his own garden. Two of his favourites are *A. zebdanense* and *Nectaroscordum tripedale*.

Henrik finished his talk in his garden showing us a forest of Tulip Trees under-planted with lilies, including *L. regale*, *L. r.* 'Album' and *L. kesselringii*. I don't think anyone in the audience would have objected if this talk had gone on for another hour.

(The photos in this section are Henrik's.)

So that was our 31<sup>st</sup> Alpine Weekend, definitely one of the best, and I'm sure everyone there was very glad not to have missed it. But, 2015 is another year, and we have another great line up of speakers in Carole and Ian Bainbridge from Scotland, very experienced speakers and growers; Joan and Liam McCaughey, who, as you all know, are first class speakers and photographers; and finally the almost legendary Janis Ruksans from Latvia, who impressed us so much on his last visit to An Grianán, and on our visit to his nursery in 2013. I hope to see everyone who was there in 2014 again next year, as well as many who couldn't manage it on this occasion.

**Billy Moore**

### **Christmas Miscellany**

A well-attended and convivial evening in St Brigid's brought our programme for 2015 to an end. Before we tucked into the excellent mince pies and mulled wine (non-alcoholic, unfortunately), provided by Val and Ian Keegan, we had eight interesting presentations from members choreographed by Jamie. Due to lack of space I can only comment briefly on each.

Frank Lavery opened proceedings with some impressive pictures of his garden, especially one of a well-flowered *Campanula zoysii* growing outside in tufa. He also gave us a brief preview of his upcoming talk next November on plants of the Algarve.

George Sevastopulo followed with an account of a family visit to the Greek island of Chios, which is George's ancestral home. Gum from the Mastic tree has been the island's main export. George showed us some of the landscape and flora. There are lots of orchids and some lovely euphorbias. He finished with an interior view of an ancient church decorated for Easter.

Janet Wynne showed us some of the plants in her garden, all looking splendid, including her olive tree in fruit. There was a lot of interest in her photo of *Halesia carolina rosea*, a small tree with very attractive, white flowers with a pink flush. Her opening image of a large bowl of colourful flower heads put together by Liat Schurman of Mount Venus Nursery was lovely.

Barbara O'Callaghan took us to Malaga in November where the pleasant warm weather was in stark contrast to the cold, wet, miserable evening we were experiencing. Among other plants we saw black olives, abundant pelargoniums, and plumbagos in various shades.

Carl Dacus took us to a horticultural trade show in Essen; to the alpine house and crevice garden in Wisley; and to the new alpine house in Kew. The latter is not to everyone's taste. We looked at some of the plants in Wisley's alpine house and also saw a rather fine crevice trough there.

Catherine McCarthy, a new member showed some lovely pictures of a garden on Rochestown Avenue that she had visited in the summer.

Val Keegan gave us a look at the wild life in her garden including birds, butterflies, a hedgehog, a squirrel, and a mob of frogs in her pond under attack from a visiting heron. Oh yes, and her new 'scottie'.

I showed some pictures of notable plants from our 2014 Show.

Koraley Northen closed the show with some exquisitely realized images that she had captured in Mount Venus during the year.

**Billy Moore**

## FIXTURES

**Thursday, 15 January, 8 pm. Martin Walsh**, ‘Chinese and Himalayan plants for the Irish garden’ - Joint with **IGPS**. NBG, Glasnevin.

**Thursday, 22 January, 8 pm. AGM**, followed by **Bernard van Giessen, Workshop** on plant photography.

**Saturday, 7 February, 12.30 pm. Annual Lunch**, followed by **George Sevastopulo**, ‘Blooming Postcard Garden - its conception to completion’. The Royal St George Yacht Club, Dun Laoghaire.

**Sunday, 15 February, Snowdrop Garden Visit, Emer Gallagher**, Clonsilla and **Eileen Collins**, Celbridge.

**Thursday, 19 February, 8 pm. Rob Potterton**, ‘A labour of love – Forty years at Potterton’s Nursery’ - **bringing plants**. St Brigid’s Parish Centre, Stillorgan.

**Saturday, 14 March, 2 pm. Local Show**, Members Plant Sale, and Workshop. St Brigid’s Parish Centre, Stillorgan.

**Thursday, 19 March, 8 pm. Seamus O’Brien**, ‘In the shadow of mighty Kangchenjunga – a botanical expedition to the Bhutan and Sikkim Himalaya’ - Joint with **IGPS**. NBG, Glasnevin.

**Saturday, 11 April, 1.30 to 4 pm. Dublin Group AGS Show**. Cabinteely Community School, Dublin.

**Thursday, 16 April, 8 pm. Jim Almond**, ‘Out and about – adventures of an alpine gardener’. St Brigid’s Parish Centre, Stillorgan.

**Saturday, 25 April. Ulster Group AGS Show**, Greenmount, Antrim.

**Saturday, 9 May, 2.30 pm. Garden Visits** to Hilary and William McKelvey, Newry, and Harold McBride, Lisburn.



**Thursday, 14 May, 8 pm. Diane Clement**, ‘Alpines in the wild and cultivation’. NBG, Glasnevin.

**Thursday, 15 October, 8 pm. Susan Band**, ‘Growing lilies and their relatives in Scotland’, **bringing bulbs**. Joint with **IGPS**. NBG, Glasnevin.

**Thursday, 12 November, 8 pm. Frank Lavery**, ‘Plants of the Algarve’. St Brigid’s Parish Centre, Stillorgan.

**20 to 22 November. 32nd Alpine Weekend**, An Grianán, Termonfeckin, Co. Louth. Speakers: **Carole** and **Ian Bainbridge**, **Joan** and **Liam McCaughey**, and **Janis Ruksans**.

**Thursday, 10 December, 8 pm. Christmas Miscellany**, St Brigid’s Parish Centre, Stillorgan.

**More details about the fixtures can be found on p. 5.**

## **OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE**

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*Iris iberica elegantissima* – see p. 22. Photo: Joan McCaughey.

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