



ALPINE GARDEN SOCIETY Dublin Group



NEWSLETTER NO. 61 – WINTER 2014

NOTES

The love of gardening is a seed once sown that never dies.

Gertrude Jekyll

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Front cover illustration is of '*Hepatica nobilis* – old leaves remaining, new leaves emerging'. Watercolour by Clare Beumer. Back cover, top, *Eryngium glaciale*, and, bottom, *Linaria alpina* (p. 19). Photos: Brian Burrow.

EDITORIAL

In my first newsletter as editor (summer 2006, No. 46) I wrote about the worrying decline in membership that had been taking place over the previous few years. I suggested that each member of the Group should do his or her best to encourage friends and relatives to look at what membership has to offer. I stressed the informal and friendly aspect of our meetings, and the warm welcome that we provide to new members. I pointed out that “the Group is not just another garden club. We are interested in the growing, propagation and conservation of alpine, rock garden and woodland plants, small hardy herbaceous plants, hardy and half-hardy bulbs, hardy ferns and small shrubs. Anyone can grow these diminutive beauties, and with the trend towards smaller plots they are ideal for the modern garden - they can even be grown in a window box. There is a myth about that alpines are very difficult to grow. Some are, but the majority, provided their simple requirements are met, are quite easy. What we offer members is the opportunity to acquire a hobby that will give them joy and satisfaction for the rest of their lives, as many of us have discovered”.

It was satisfying to note that numbers picked up a little in 2007 and remained fairly stable at around 125, until recently. At the end of 2013 we were down to 108. There is every reason to think that unless we do something this trend will continue, and if it does the very existence of the Group will be under threat. Fortunately, we may have a wonderful opportunity to promote membership next June if the organizers of Bloom accept our application to stage a Postcard Garden at the 2014 festival. In 2013 Bloom had more than 110,000 visitors and the Postcard Gardens were a popular attraction. We must, therefore, produce a stunning display that will show how alpines can be used in even the smallest garden to create a visual feast that will provide interest and enjoyment throughout the year.

Meanwhile, it is no harm to repeat the suggestion made in 2006 that each of us should promote the society to our friends, neighbours and relatives. The best way to do this is to invite them to a talk or other event, especially the annual Show, so that they can see at first hand what membership has to offer.

ALPINE MISCELLANY

In This Issue

I hope you have had a wonderful Christmas and I wish all readers the very best for 2014 in your lives generally, and specifically in your gardens.

Hepaticas have become more popular in gardens in recent years, and Clare Beumer's fine article will tell you all you need to know about them. Clare is an experienced plantswoman, a member of the Group, and was a professional botanical book illustrator. She has an alpine nursery and has sold her excellent plants at Termonfeckin and at our main Show. When I asked Clare to write an article, she offered to provide an illustration also. When I received her lovely watercolour I liked it so much that I decided to put it on the front cover. I am most grateful to Clare for the article and the painting, and I hope to see her back with her plants at the Show in April.

My regular contributor, Liam Byrne, has written about violas for this issue. Some years ago violas were popular show plants, but we have seen less of them lately. I hope Liam's article will spark a revival.

Erich Pasche, my German botanist friend and crocus expert, occasionally sends me photos of plants in his garden. The most recent one of a lovely new crocus prompted me to ask him to write a short paragraph about it. The result is on p. 17.

A significant portion of this newsletter is taken up by my account of the proceedings at last year's Termonfeckin weekend. I hope that members who were there, and those who were not, will find it of interest.

I am most grateful to Fionnuala Broughan and Willie Reardon for their excellent reports on the Brian Burrow and David Rankin talks. If any members would like to report on future talks I would love to hear from them.

Postcard Gardens at Bloom

George Sevastopulo has kindly agreed to act as director of the Postcard Garden project. This is a great opportunity for us to publicize the Group and, hopefully, to recruit some new members. George has sent me the following: -

Last year Billy and Gavin Moore and I visited Bloom in the Phoenix Park to view the Postcard Gardens with a view to suggesting to the Committee of our Group that we should enter a garden in 2014. The

Committee has agreed to our proposal and so I have put together a small task force (Fionnuala Broughan, Jamie Chambers, Val Keegan, Billy Moore, Paddy Smith, Martin Walsh and myself) to carry the proposal forward. Our first job is to apply by 31 March 2014, with a plan of the proposed garden, which has to be 3 x 2 metres in plan view. If our application is successful, we will be calling on all our members to support us in this endeavour. I will keep you informed of progress through the Group website.

Fixtures

Our Fixtures Secretary, Paddy Smith, has assembled a varied and interesting programme of events for the year ahead, which is listed on p. 39. We open on 16 January in Stillorgan with the **AGM** followed by a talk from **Paddy Tobin** on ‘Snowdrops – the delight of an Irish garden’. Paddy is an avid plantsman, galanthophile and is currently Chairman of the IGPS. I expect to learn a lot from this talk, especially about snowdrops of Irish origin. Paddy is passionate about the conservation of all plants with an Irish connection. As well as enjoying Paddy’s talk, members will have an opportunity to ask questions of the Committee on any aspect of the Group’s activities. So, please come along.

Our **Annual Lunch** will be held as usual in The Royal St George Yacht Club in Dun Laoghaire on 8 February. Lunch will be followed by a talk from that great plantswoman, **June Blake**, which she is calling ‘All gardening is landscape painting’. Members who are familiar with the artistry of June’s wonderful garden near Blessington will appreciate the aptness of her title. What a marvellous way to spend a Saturday afternoon in February! And you can bring a friend. A booking form with full details is included in the mail out.

On 20 February we are holding a **Show Workshop** in Stillorgan. Liam Byrne, Val Keegan, George Sevastopulo and myself will be the presenters. The workshop will cover all aspects of showing, and there will be a handout on each topic and lots of time for questions. This event will be of benefit to all members interested in showing.

The **Local Show, Workshop and Members’ Plant Sale** is on 8 March in Stillorgan. As well seeing plants that never appear at the main show, members will get tips on cultivation from experts and can buy good plants at reasonable prices at the plant sale. Members are encouraged to bring friends along.

Diane Clement 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. She will talk on 'A year in the life of an alpine gardener'. A must for all lovers of alpines. Unfortunately our usual venues were booked out for 20 March, so please note that the talk will be held in **St Patrick's Parish Centre, Monkstown**.

On 5 April the Ulster Group's Show will be held at Greenmount College, Antrim. This is very special as it is their **75th Anniversary Show** and we should all make a special effort to exhibit, or at least to attend.

Hester Forde will talk to us on 'Creative gardening with containers' on 10 April at NBG, Glasnevin. This will be a joint lecture with the IGPS. Hester gardens in Glounthane, Co. Cork and we have had several trips to her very fine garden. Hester lectures widely and also grows plants for sale. I am looking forward to this talk.

Our own main **AGS Show** will take place in Cabinteely on 26 April. As a result of the various initiatives taken to encourage more of you to venture on to the show bench, we are expecting lots of new exhibitors this year. As well as exhibitors we need plants for the plant sale, but most of all we need your attendance. The Show provides a unique opportunity to recruit new members, so please encourage your relatives, friends and neighbours to come along. Michael Higgins, our Show Secretary, will be in touch nearer the time looking for volunteers to help on the day.

Cliff Booker's lecture on 15 May, at NBG Glasnevin, is entitled 'Cream of alpines'. Cliff describes himself as a horticultural lecturer, photographer and writer, but he's also an experienced grower and plant explorer. He specializes in members of the Ranunculaceae. I have heard high praise of Cliff's talks so this is a lecture not to be missed.

BLOOM 2014 runs from 29 May to 2 June and, as explained above, we hope to have an entry in the Postcard Garden category. You will be hearing from George.

There is a special treat on 7 June when we visit **The Dillon Garden**, in Ranelagh. The visit will include a short introductory talk, a guided tour of the garden, both from Helen, and refreshments in the house. This is one of the best gardens in Ireland, is internationally famous and the visit will be well worth the entry fee of €8.

I will provide more detail about the autumn fixtures in the next newsletter.

Trip away

We are hoping to do another trip away this year, around mid May, and have been considering North Wales mainly. We ran into a number of logistical problems, not the least of which was affordability. The possibility of sharing a trip with the Ulster Group is also under consideration. We are continuing to look at the options and will advise members individually when we have a firm proposal.

Conchita Nolan

Our longstanding and very active member, Conchita and her husband, Kevin, are off to Penang for two years. We wish them well and look forward to their return.

Billy Moore



Azorella compacta in the Andes. (Photo: Ger van den Beuken.)

This amazing multi-domed cushion, growing in Chile, is about 4m square. Would you like to guess its age? Answer on p. 31.

VIOLAS

Viola is the largest genus of flowering plants in the Violaceae family, containing almost 600 species, both annual and perennial. I am concerned here only with those species and hybrids that are perennial. Most of the violas are easy enough to cultivate, but a few can be a challenge. I will ignore the beautiful South American rosulate violas: I know nothing about them, and have never tried to grow them.

Violas do best in the open garden and are my favourite front-of-border flowers. You will be advised to place them in semi shade, but I find they do very well in full sun. The smaller hardy species are perfect for the standard rock garden, but some will need scree conditions. Most species and hybrids do well in ordinary garden soil provided that it is well drained and doesn't dry out. It's a good idea to try them in different parts of the garden to find an area that suits them best.



A few species that will not tolerate winter wet will need the protection of an alpine house or frame. Give plenty of water when growing and flowering and keep just moist at other times. The compost I use for pot growing is equal parts of John Innes no. 2, leaf mould, peat and grit. If you have no leaf mould just replace with peat. This compost is moisture retentive and drains well. Seed should be sown as soon as it's ripe: I find that old seed gives poor germination. Violas can also be propagated by division in spring and autumn, and by cuttings taken in summer.

I will now briefly describe some of the species I have grown. *V. cenisia* from the Alps has blue flowers with a yellow eye carried on 5cm stems. *V. cucullata alba* from Newfoundland and Georgia has white flowers on

7.5cm stems. *V. dubyana* from the Italian Alps is a lovely plant (as can be seen from George Sevastopulo's fine photo. Ed.), and grew well for me both in the garden and in a pot. It has large violet flowers on 5cm stems and will seed mildly around the garden. *V. odorata*, which has violet fragrant flowers on 12cm stems, is probably best in the wild garden as it is a prolific seeder. The yellow flowered, short stemmed, *V. stojanowii* from Bulgaria and Greece, is a good viola for the show bench and is best in the alpine house. *V. delphinantha* is one of the most beautiful, and unfortunately one of the most difficult species (apart from those rosulate violas from the Andes). I have tried it from seed without success. At one of our shows a few years ago our Editor showed a magnificent specimen of this plant which was much admired (alas it is no more. Ed.).



There are a number of hybrids that are excellent garden plants. ✓. 'Jackanapes' with its striking brown and yellow flowers should be in every garden. ✓. 'Irish Molly' sounds as if it should be of Irish origin, but no, it appeared first in the early years of the last century near Birmingham. Its colour is difficult to describe: I would call it bronze. ✓. 'Molly Sanderson', named after that wonderful Northern Ireland gardener, the late Dr Molly Sanderson, originated in Kent and has black flowers with a small yellow eye.

Grow and enjoy these violas as I do.

Liam Byrne



Benthamiella patagonica, occasionally seen on the show bench, but here growing in the wild. (See p. 31) Photo: Ger van den Beuken.

HEPATICAS

While winter still grips the garden any plant lover will be out, scanning the ground for a green shoot or swelling bud, any encouragement that spring is not far off.

So it is no wonder that a plant, not merely pushing up a tentative nose into the cold air, but in full flower despite frost and snow, will hold a special place in our affections.

Hepaticas are increasingly being valued as choice plants for early spring, companions for hellebores, snowdrops and other dwarf bulbs. The

flowers have great charm, opening wide in sunshine before the new leaves emerge. Once classified as *Anemone hepatica*, the similarity to anemones is striking, a central boss of stamens contrasting with six or more radiating petals. A distinguishing feature, absent in anemones, is the involucre of three bracts behind the petals.

The two European species, *H. nobilis* and *H. transsilvanica*, and the hybrid between them, *H. x media*, offer the best choice for the open garden. Blue is always the favourite colour on the nursery, but there are white, pink, occasionally red, and rare double forms too.

H. nobilis has the wider distribution: as far south as Spain, northwards into Scandinavia and east into Russia. The flowers are exquisite. In the best forms pure white stamens stand out superbly against richly coloured petals. The three-lobed leaves, forming a low tuft 8-15cm high, are glossy on first opening and often tinted purplish underneath.

I grow a form from the Pyrenees, *H. nobilis* var. *pyrenaica*, with beautifully marbled leaves, rather like an *Asarum*, while those of *H. nobilis* 'Cremar' are ruffled and scalloped, softly patterned with silver. A perfectly formed double, *H. nobilis* 'Rubra Plena', is available from a few sources, but double blues are much rarer. Most elusive of all is the double white, the despair of many a good gardener to keep in cultivation.

H. transsilvanica is found only in Romania, growing in small colonies in the Carpathian Mountains and Transylvania. In every respect a larger and more robust species with more intricately lobed leaves, it is easier to please in the garden, tolerating drier conditions and forming substantial clumps from longer rhizomes. Flowers are mostly blue, with some very lovely selections available, notably *H. t.* 'Ada Scott' from Valerie Finnis, a clear deep blue, *H. t.* 'Loddon Blue', and a good pink, confusingly named *H. t.* 'Lilacina'.

But the most desirable in Ireland surely must be *H. t.* 'Elison Spence'. Opening a good blue, the double central rosette is backed by a wider collar of petals, the flower lightening and becoming attractively blousy as it expands. The very first double find in this species, it was discovered in a patch of single-flowered plants at Stewartstown, Co. Tyrone in about 1950. Mrs Spence soaked the entire colony in her bath, painstakingly

teasing it apart until the double-flowered fragment could be disentangled. It was twenty years before the plant had grown large enough to distribute.

Where *H. nobilis* and *H. transsilvanica* grow together in the wild they hybridize to form *H. × media*, a cross deliberately made in Germany as long ago as 1890. *H. × media* ‘Ballardii’ is exceptionally vigorous, its glorious, large, light blue flowers will last for several weeks once the plant is established. *H. × media* ‘Harvington Beauty’ makes effective groundcover, clumping up quickly and retaining its leaves through winter, but one of the most prized is *H. × media* ‘Millstream Merlin’, richest dark blue, which can flower from January to April in a mild winter.

Hepaticas are extremely hardy, long-lived, and surprisingly tough, not at all difficult to grow once their few requirements are met. The dappled shade of deciduous trees or shrubs provides an ideal position, especially on a slope to improve drainage. Cool, shady corners of a rock garden, raised bed or trough will suit too, given a deep root run.

Choose a position, sunny in spring, to flush the plants into flower with well-drained, humus-rich soil. Although frequently found on limestone, they will thrive in neutral or acid conditions in the garden. Take care not to bury the growing points or the crown can easily rot, especially in wet winters. Over-deep planting adversely affects flowering too, as do fast-growing neighbours that can overwhelm the plants. Once settled, hepaticas should not be disturbed as they take time to establish and flower well. Apart from a sprinkling of bonemeal in spring and an annual mulch of leafmould in autumn, they need little attention in the garden.

It is best to remove the tattered, slug-harboured, old leaves early in the year, taking care not to damage the emerging buds in the process. I take the precaution of sterilizing scissors between plants to avoid the risk of spreading viral infection. The dying foliage not only carries fungal disease, a threat to hepaticas, but also forces the flower shoots to grow up through it, becoming uncharacteristically drawn. As well as slugs,

mice and rabbits seem irresistibly drawn to young growth, as I learnt to my cost in a farm garden.

The forms of *H. nobilis* native to Japan are more delicate and exhibit an extraordinary potential for genetic variability: singles in a kaleidoscope of colour combinations; stripes; speckles; picotees; anemone-centres and ‘thousand-layered doubles’ as exquisite – and expensive – as rare jewels. Collected in Japan since the Edo period, most were discovered in the wild, to me the most fascinating aspect of the hepatica cult. It is only in the last twenty years that breeders have been seriously at work.

These special plants are best grown in pots under cover in a cold frame, alpine house or even polytunnel, as are the other Asian and N. American species. From China I would single out *H. henryi*, named for the Irish plant collector Augustine Henry and *H. yamatutai*, larger with elegant leaves and white flowers. The distinctive leaves of *H. acutiloba* from N. America have three sharply pointed lobes, sometimes lightly marbled. Flowers are mostly white but there are pink and blue selections and a beautiful double, *H. acutiloba* ‘Louise Koehler’.

H. maxima, endemic to Ullung-Do in the Sea of Japan has striking three lobed leaves up to 15cm across, glossy green with a delicate fringe of hair. The white flowers, backed by larger green bracts do not quite live up to the extravagance of the foliage. I have had limited success growing it outside, planted in a sheltered, deeply shady corner by a north wall, due more to the depredations of mice than any inherent tenderness.

Some exciting hybrids between *H. maxima* and *H. nobilis* have become available recently, combining the dramatic foliage of the former with larger, showier flowers in pink, purple-blue and white. Named *H. × schlyteri* after the Swedish grower who first made the cross, they are proving hardy in the garden, inheriting the constitution of their European parent.

Hepaticas grow well in pots. Clay pots can be plunged to their rims in damp sand to protect against extremes of cold and heat, but plastic pots work well on the nursery. I use a free-draining, humus-rich compost of equal parts John Innes Compost No.2, leafmould and perlite. I made the mistake of incorporating large quantities of grit, but it weighed down on

the roots, which prefer the light, open texture of a woodland soil. Plant with the crown at compost level, no deeper, and do not firm in when potting. A sharp tap on the bench and a thorough watering will provide all the settling necessary. Long toms work well but overpotting reduces flowering.

Plants need repotting annually after flowering, thinning out old roots by a third and dividing if required. Larger divisions establish better than small fragments. A liquid feed in spring, after flowering and again in autumn is beneficial. Ventilate well at all times and give a 'deciduous woodland regime' of full light with plenty of water until flowering, then shade with less water until autumn, removing the shade but watering sparsely over winter. All dying leaves, stems and fallen petals must be scrupulously removed to prevent the spread of fungal disease.

After flowering, stems of the fertilized flowers lengthen and bend downwards towards the soil, so daily vigilance is needed to collect seed before it drops. In the wild, hepatica seed is carried off by ants, attracted by the sticky surface, and they can be a nuisance in frames too. Although it will still be green, any seed that comes away with light pressure from a finger is ready to sow. *H. maxima* is the exception with fascinating seed the size of a grain of rice, half black and half white, hence its name of 'panda seed'. Self-sown seedlings often appear in the garden around established clumps and over time a fine colony can be established, as I was beginning to see under a stand of *Cornus mas*, an association found on lower slopes in the Maritime Alps.

Viability is short and seed must be sown fresh with a 1cm covering of fine grit. I use a two-litre pot of equal parts John Innes seed compost, leafmould and perlite, spacing out well, as germinated seedlings, which should appear the following spring, are vulnerable to damping off and should not be moved for a further year. Accidentally dropped seed frequently germinates among potted plants: these seedlings do need moving earlier and watering with fungicide reduces the risk of loss. Seed pots are kept in a shady open frame covered with fine wire mesh to keep mice out. Young plants are then potted up individually in 9cm pots and should flower a year later.

Searching out the rarer named forms and the slow process of building up stocks is enjoyable, but the greatest thrill comes from raising large numbers from seed. Hepaticas' capacity for variation, interestingly shared with their relation in the Ranunculaceae, hellebores, makes for the possibility of unexpected results. Perhaps, just once, there will be a jewel among the rows of seedlings: a beautifully patterned leaf, unusual colour or even a double?

Clare Beumer

If you have a garden and a library, you have everything you need.

Marcus Tullius Cicero

A Crocus conundrum

I got this lovely crocus from Antoine Hoog in Plemy, France, under the name *C. niveus* 'Purple Centre'. *C. niveus* from southern Greece is one of the most beautiful of the autumn flowering crocuses. The type plant is pure white as you would expect from the name, but there is also a pale lilac form that is equally good. Antoine found this seedling among a collection of *C. niveus* from Mali in Greece in 2006. He no longer thinks it is *C. niveus* but possibly a cross between *C. hadriaticus* and *C.*



cartwrightianus. This plant may be offered for sale as 'Purple Centre' under *C. niveus*. Which species it is I cannot say for certain: it would require DNA analysis to make a definitive determination. Whatever its correct name, it is a beautiful crocus as you can see from the photograph I took in my garden last autumn.

Erich Pasche

REVIEW OF RECENT GROUP EVENTS

‘European alpine in the wild and their cultivation’, Brian Burrow,
17 October

The winter season of the AGS got off to a flying start when Brian Burrow travelled from Lancashire to talk to us about European Alpines. The talk could have been entitled *Encyclopedia Burrowii* such was the breadth and depth of Brian’s coverage of the subject matter. If I mention that Brian talked us through over 100 slides in an hour, you’ll understand why Harold McBride, in his thank you to Brian at the end, mentioned that Brian just might hold the record for the fastest delivery ever of any AGS talk.

But of course it wasn’t speed of delivery that drew the large crowd (including members of the Ulster Group) to the talk; it was the expectation of an enlightening talk from a knowledgeable and hugely experienced propagator and grower of thousands of alpines. And that expectation was more than fulfilled.

Brian’s talk was so comprehensive that I couldn’t hope to do it justice here, so I thought I’d simply try to give you a flavour of the talk by highlighting just



some of the key points. But I won’t be able to reproduce the beautiful slides of alpine habitats, Brian’s own garden and exquisite alpine plants, so if you missed the talk you’ll just have to be sure not to make the same mistake next time you have the opportunity.

Some numbers

Brian has three alpine houses in his garden, in which he grows over 8,000 plants. Outside he has roughly another 1,000 plants potted up and many more in his garden. The soil in his garden is a heavy clayey loam over which he has spread 4-6mm grit to a depth of about 2.5cm. He mentioned that this allows many plants to seed in the grit, and to help this process along he’ll often scatter spare seed in different places

throughout the garden – he has found this to be a great guide to working out how well plants do in different settings. A memorable demonstration of this on the night was the picture of *Saxifraga grisebachii* happily growing (for the last eight years!) in the mortar between the bricks of Brian's house.

Brian's compost is 60:20:20 grit/composted bark/John Innes No. 1. He prefers 2-4mm grit, but finds it hard to get now and so uses 4-6mm instead. His Murphy's Composted Bark (a nice dark friable mix, he said) is also becoming more difficult to source. For seed sowing, he spreads a 2.5cm layer of 2:1 coarse/silver sand over the compost.

All Brian's pots in the alpine houses stand on 2.5cm of 4-6mm grit. In the summer he'll water the grit once a week, in the winter once a month. One last number: Brian loves the Primulaceae family and reckons he has grown 15,000 of them from seed since 1975.

Alpines that are good/easy in the garden

Brian's talk was illustrated with many beautiful alpines and as he went along, he mentioned those that he feels are well suited to growing in the garden; I hope I got all that he referred to; here's the list:

Trifolium alpinum (easy from seed)

Geum reptans (does fine in the garden, doesn't develop long runners)

Saxifraga oppositifolia (easy, but keep well watered)

S. grisebachii (grows in house walls!)

Sempervivum arachnoideum (restrict the roots)

Eryngium glaciale (easy from seed) – Photo on back cover, Ed.

Linum campanulatum (yellow flower; good one to start with)

Edraianthus serpyllifolius (great for the garden)

Antirrhinum molle (great for the garden, very hardy, survived the 2010 winter, when it was frozen solid for eight weeks)

Linaria alpina (easy, but short-lived) – Photo on back cover, Ed.

Plantago nivalis (lovely foliage, very easy in the garden)

Papaver spp. (great seeders!)

Androsace chamaejasme (easy in the garden)

Some Tricky Ones

Brian loves the Primulaceae family and has propagated ten new forms of *Primula allionii*; this plant needs to be grown in the alpine house and *P. allionii* \times *carniolica* \times *albenensis* needs shade, and Brian ensures it stays out of direct sunlight under the bench. *Androsace vandellii* also needs to stay under glass, and Brian grows it slowly in a lean mix of 50:50 grit/leafmould. *A. helvetica* needs full shade all summer but can be moved up into the light in winter (Brian mentioned that it's not great for getting a full covering of flowers). *Ranunculus glaciale* is difficult in cultivation, and is one of the plants that Brian has been working with for some time. *Gentiana alpina* is very hard to grow in cultivation and Brian reckons that about 90% of the cultivars offered as *G. alpina* aren't it at all.

General Tips

Brian offered lots of insights into how he grows his alpines. Here are just a few of the tips that he gave on the night.

Ranunculaceae are greedy -- feed them! Brian feeds some of his as often as once a month. Repot them often.

Sow seeds. And remember, if you sow lots of seeds, you'll increase your chances of getting variation in the plants you're propagating. Brian demonstrated this nicely on the night with slides of *Ranunculus glaciale*.

Sow seed of the following in the green:

- Ranunculaceae (Brian remarked that, sown fresh, they'll "sprout like mustard", but if the seed is too old, germination will be as low as 1/300!)
- the daphnes
- *Pulsatilla* spp.
- willows (sow within 48 hours, otherwise don't bother)
- violas (use under-ripe seed)

Be ruthless. Don't keep seedlings or plants that you don't need, can't look after or for which you don't have the space.

Be generous. Give away your plants; you'll get them back. Brian gives away 2-3,000 plants each year. On a more serious note, he's been involved in a regeneration project of *Cypripedium calceolus* with Kew Garden, which supplies him with seed, which he propagates and grows on, and the plants are then returned to the wild. Don't mollycoddle plants too much. Many will do fine outside. Though Brian was careful to point out that among his exceptions to this are *Primula allionii*, *Androsace vandellii*, and any of the dionysias.

The final tip is from me: come to great talks like this one and be inspired.

Fionnuala Broughan

'A short history of alpinism from the Big Bang to last week', David Rankin, 7 November

Chemistry Professor, Chelsea Gold Medallist (jointly with his wife, Stella, who also visited), plant hunter, botanist, gardener and avid plantsman, David Rankin, was the guest lecturer to a well attended meeting of the Dublin group in Stillorgan on 7 November. Many of us know of David and Stella's fine website (www.kevockgarden.co.uk) and some may have visited their garden. This reporter has not had that privilege, but the many photographs on the various websites devoted to garden visiting in Scotland prominently cite the hillside garden at Kevock as a destination worthy of all plant enthusiasts.

I was intrigued on reading the lecture title and my curiosity was piqued. What could he mean to talk about? Surely this man should tell us of his plant hunting expeditions to Nepal; of the humanitarian work he has combined with his horticultural interests there; or of the history and difficulties surmounted in creating their lovely garden at Kevock? Not a bit of it! David has given much time to keen



observations that combine his horticultural knowledge and interests with his rigorous scientific training and deep professional insights deriving therefrom. Using a logarithmic temporal scale, he demonstrated evolution in progress over the course of the history of the Universe. He achieved this by discussing his observations of plants, their diversity, their natural habitat and their adaptability to the different environments in which they are found.

We gardeners (I hope it does not offend the true species of Alpinists if hybrids such as myself use the term loosely) are all familiar with plant descriptions, which advise us of the name, genus, species, subspecies and form of a plant; of its colour, height and soil preference; and of its natural environment and whence it derives geographically. David's lecture was an excellent example of how we can take horticultural facts such as these for granted, without asking the sensible questions as to why a plant was found in a particular part of the world, and only in that location, or perhaps in another location thousands of miles away, and without obvious relationship. Why, for instance, *Nothofagus* is seen in the wild in Australia and Argentina, but does not enjoy a wider distribution? With reference to the different elements of evolutionary force, biological, geological, physical, meteorological – especially the recurrent ice ages – and adaptation, David showed several examples of the manner in which the plant life with which we are blessed has evolved to meet a changing environmental milieu. He was particularly fascinating in respect of the diversity of flora in Yunnan and the reasons for the richness there compared to the relative aridity in Britain, where very few alpine flora have naturalized. The Alps, running across the continent in an East-West axis (broadly speaking), govern the advance and retreat of plants to lower or upper ground in response to the ice ages. However, the English Channel restricted the re-colonization of Britain by “retreating” plant life, seeking lower ground. In contrast, as David's aerial photographs of the Yunnan river courses confirmed, the alpenes there can move south and revert north, unhindered by mountain terrain, lending to the richness of plant life for which this region of the world has been famed since the earliest of plant hunters reported back to these distant shores.

This was an exhibition of scientific lecturing at its best, - multi-dimensional and resounding with wisdom, knowledge, reading, original thought and personal observation. Teachers who tell us that it is difficult to interest audiences in science nowadays would do well to invite David and to copy his style. He has the happy ability to give a practical 'science as fun' lecture, which answers many questions and provokes curiosity and enquiry in his audience. That he does so with such humour and enthusiasm, as we were fortunate to witness, is a bonus. We dispersed from his lecture, a happier and wiser group than had convened an hour earlier. That we had the opportunity to take home some of the lovely and well grown plants that Stella and he had brought, was a bonus.

Willie Reardon

I think the true gardener is a lover of his flowers, not a critic of them. I think the true gardener is the reverent servant of Nature, not her truculent, wife-beating master. I think the true gardener, the older he grows, should more and more develop a humble, grateful and uncertain spirit.

Reginald Farrer

30th Alpine Weekend at Termonfeckin 15 to 17 November

The very high standard that we have come to expect from our annual conference in Termonfeckin was well maintained this year. One comment I heard was that “it was up there with the best of them”, and I would concur. Congratulations to all concerned with organizing and running the event and special thanks to Mary O’Neill Byrne and Tessa Dagge for all their hard work. Thanks also to Carmel Duignan and her team for their work on the plant stall; to George Sevastopulo for running an entertaining (and profitable) auction; to everyone who donated plants for the sale and auction; to Gwenda Wratt for her stationery and *objets d’art* stall; to Nilla Martin, who, despite not being present, contributed the attractive floral decorations for the dining hall; and to everyone else who helped to make the weekend a success. Jamie Chambers chaired the proceedings with great aplomb and good humour, and also set and ran another challenging but enjoyable table quiz. Thank you Jamie.

The weekend was well attended with, once again, a large contingent of our friends from the Ulster Group – without them it would not be viable – and good support from Cork. As usual, the management and staff of An Grianán looked after us all extremely well.

Proceedings opened on Friday evening as usual with an informal slide show, which took us from Southern Spain, via Co. Donegal, Lisburn, and the Russian Caucasus to Shannon.

In April Rose and George Sevastopulo visited Spain, starting out in Antequera. We saw some lovely plants – I was particularly impressed by *Cynoglossum cheirifolium* subsp. *heterocarpum* with its lovely grey foliage. There was a brief visit to the great gardens of the Alhambra but late snow in the Sierra Nevada made higher altitudes inaccessible.

Heather Smith brought us closer to home with her account of a very successful tour some Ulster Group members undertook during the summer, of a number of houses and gardens in Co. Donegal.

Glenveagh National Park was of course included, but for me Oakfield House stood out with its plants, including an impressive stand of lilies,

and sculptures. Heather's fine photographs left many of us thinking of heading northwest ourselves.



Ger van den Beuken, Brian Duncan and Ron McBeath. (Photo: Billy Moore)

Liam and Joan McCaughey visited the Russian Caucasus earlier in the year and each made a presentation showing different aspects of the trip. Taken together these were the equivalent of a mini lecture and via beautiful photographs, provided an excellent introduction to the flora, fauna and landscapes of these mountains. Liam, using maps, showed the route taken, some great plants and some shots of St. Petersburg, where they spent a couple of days. Joan showed some of the best alpine

meadow photographs that I have seen. There were lots of lovely orchids but her picture of a fine group of *Gentiana oschtenica* was, I thought, outstanding. They saw sixty-eight varieties of butterfly on the trip, but she didn't show us them all!

Harold McBride showed a mouthwatering selection of plants from his garden, some of his own raising, and threw in some cultivation tips as well. They were all such great plants that it is difficult to choose just one or two, but I would single out the beautiful form of *Thalictrum tuberosum* that he grew from seed given to him by Rod Leeds. We all admired his own seedling of a lovely form of *Oxalis adenophylla* with large, pink-veined, white flowers.

Michael Campbell closed the informal slide show with a few sumptuous shots of some lovely forms of *Hepatica japonica*. He is currently running a breeding programme of these plants, and knowing something of what Michael has achieved with other genera in the past I look forward to the results. These plants are shockingly expensive and Michael kindly donated a fine specimen for the auction.

Ger van den Beuken

Ger is an experienced lecturer and writer, and specializes in growing choice plants in his garden and alpine house in Holland. With his wife Mariet, who was with him in Termonfeekin, he also operates a small mail-order business offering many of these desirable species for sale. Ger has led several groups on trips to Patagonia in search of rare alpines from this region. All the photos in this section are his.

His first lecture was entitled 'Growing tricky alpines in the Netherlands'. He opened his talk on the subject of climate change, and told us that at one stage last summer the temperature in his garden reached 37.9°C in the shade. His back garden is built of tufa with hyper tufa troughs. The front garden is built up with limestone and peat blocks. He has a large alpine house that was once devoted to dionysias, but about three years ago he reduced the number of these to make room for South American plants. He grows the dionysias in a mixture of seramis, perlite, sand and a little peat. He showed us twenty pictures of gorgeous dionysias of

which I thought *D. afghanica* ‘ZZ’, below, was the most impressive. He considers the easiest to grow are the cultivars, ‘Monika’ and ‘Annielle’.



He moved on to androsaces, which he grows from seed, many from Vojtech Holubec’s list for which he had high praise. Himalayan species are, in general, quite difficult, *A. bryomorpha*, from the Pamir Mountains in Central Asia, topping the list. Species from other regions are easier, some making good garden plants, although the smaller ones are best in a trough or raised bed. *A. jacquemontii* is good for beginners and *A. carnea* x *pyrenaica*, *A. sarmentosa*, *A. hirtella* and *A. mucronifolia* x *sempervivoides* are fine in the garden.

We then had a look at twenty-seven saxifrages, some for the garden, others for the alpine house. (Ger showed 158 slides in total for this talk, and a whopping 210 for his second one, but finished both on time and didn’t seem hurried.) *Saxifraga paniculata* var. *minutifolia* is “a must for the garden, in full sun”. *S. sempervivum* ‘Aphrodite’ is very good. A great plant is *S. oppositifolia* ‘Le Bourg d’Oisans’, found at 1,200m. Ger was critical of the ever-growing number of cultivars and confusion of names, but for him, *S.* ‘Coolock Kate’, *S.* ‘Verona’ and *S.* ‘Marco Polo’ are special.

Moving on to drabas, which make good cushions, he recommended *D. dedeana* as a lovely, easy plant.

Provided it's given good drainage, *Campanula dasyantha* var. *superba* is also easy and beautiful. Staying with Campanulaceae, *Edraianthus pumilio* is indispensable.

Ger recommends sticking to plants that do well in your garden. *Veronica oltensis* and *V. caespitosa* are excellent garden plants. *Aquilegia grahamii* at 10cm is lovely.

We all love daphnes. *D. cneorum* 'Kripicka' is slow growing and perfect for a trough or raised bed. *D. calcicola* 'Napa Hai', a lovely yellow species is easy from cuttings. I have bought some daphnes from Ger and found them very good, and not expensive. *D. mauerbachii* 'Perfume of Spring', one of the larger species, flowers well and is an excellent plant.

Ramonda myconi 'Grandiflora' can be propagated from leaf cuttings and Ger hopes to have some for sale next year. Ger grows *Jenkaea heldreichii* on north facing tufa.



Most South American plants are notoriously difficult to grow, but Ger has had success with some. For all calceolarias aphids are deadly. Plants

must be inspected regularly because once the pests gain a foothold it is too late. There are many forms of the beautiful and relatively easy *Oxalis laciniata*. Ger stressed that they must be grown in acid compost. *O. laciniata* (ex Finn Haugli), pictured above, is particularly attractive.

Nototriche mackleanii is beautiful, growable but tricky.

Ger finished a fascinating talk with one of the rosulate violas, *V. volcanica* (below) which one would grow for the foliage alone.



Ger's second talk was entitled 'Highlights of Patagonia', and I think I can say that each one of the 210 images that he showed was a highlight. The photos were excellent, and as well as showing the extraordinary, almost alien-looking, flora of the Andes, also included magnificent landscapes, often featuring some of the local wildlife, such as the elegant vicuna. The trip went from Tierra del Fuego, through southern Patagonia in Argentina, and up to northern Chile. The group was accompanied by a local botanist who knew the plants and where to find them, saving a lot of time on a trip that involved a lot of travelling.

Andean plants are a puzzle: some such as oxalis, tropaeolums and alstroemerias we can grow, but many others are at best a challenge and

often simply ungrowable. As so many of them are stunningly beautiful this is a great pity. A prime example of this is *Ranunculus semiverticillatus*, below, with flowers up to 8cm across. There are many wonderful plants in the Ranunculaceae, but this one must surely qualify as one of the very best.



We saw plants from many different genera, oxalis, junellia, ourisia, tristagma, calandrinia, nassauvia, calceolaria, anarthophyllum, oreopolus, nototriche, perezia, and rhodophiala, to name just some, but as one might expect, the violas made the greatest impact. Ger however plumped for *Chaetanthera spathulifolia* as the most beautiful. Judge for yourselves from the photo on the next page.

But when any of us think of the flora of the Andes what immediately come to mind are the rosulate violas. They are beautiful in form, foliage and flower, and while some growers have succeeded with some of them, for example, Ger's *V. volcanica* (which we also saw in the wild), they are exceedingly difficult to grow, flower and maintain in cultivation.



An Andean plant that we see occasionally on the show bench is *Benthamiella patagonica* and it was nice to see it in the wild (Photo p. 11)

This must have been an exciting and fulfilling trip for the participants, and I think most of us envied them, despite the constant fierce winds that they had to contend with. Ger's final image was of *Azorella compacta* (see p. 8), an amazing cushion about 4m square and estimated by Ger to be at least 2,000 years old. We were shocked to learn that the locals break them up to use as fuel.

Ger and Mariet were leading another trip to roughly the same area, leaving the following Sunday, so were facing a busy week when they got home. I think we all enjoyed Ger's two talks, and I have a feeling that he'll be back.

Brian Duncan

Brian needs little introduction. Based in Omagh he is a regular delegate at Termonfeckin. None other than John Blanchard the world acknowledged expert on narcissus species, once described him to me as "the best daffodil breeder in the world". His current interest is in breeding miniatures and he has introduced several good cultivars. The

title of his talk was 'Iberian Travels 2000 - 2013'. He has made twenty-three visits to the peninsula in January, February, March, May, October and November, thirteen including John Blanchard, in the course of which he has recorded some ninety species, sub-species and varieties. Brian took us all over Spain and Portugal, and as well as showing us many of the ninety daffodils he encountered, he included many other plants, some great landscapes, wildlife and places of interest such as the *Sanctuario de Covadonga* in Asturias. Brian felt he needed to do this so as to provide a little variety in a talk that would otherwise have featured daffodils alone. It was unnecessary.

We started in Galicia where *N. cyclamineus*, my favourite daffodil, is prolific. It is always found by water and is variable: some plants have fringed ends to their trumpets, while others, the 'stovepipe' forms, don't. The variability in the different species kept coming up in Brian's talk; for example, *N. bulbocodium* '*akersianus*' grows up to 90cm tall.

There are eight species in the Picos de Europa, the most familiar being *N. asturiensis*, *N. triandrus* and *N. bulbocodium*. Brian referred to this area as "Europe's best kept secret" because of the richness of its flora and the splendor of its scenery. Among the genera represented are gentians, anemones, fritillaries, erythroniums, violas, primulas, aquilegias, ranunculus, hepaticas, corydalis as well as ferns and orchids.



From the east and west Pyrenees we saw *N. assoanus*, *N. poeticus*, *N. pseudonarcissus* amongst others.

Highlights from Portugal were the lovely *N. bulbocodium* subsp. *obesus* as well as *N. scaberulus* (see Brian's photo above), scarce in cultivation, and *N. triandrus concolor*. Growing north of Madrid were *N. rupicola*, a great plant for the show bench, but not easy to keep going, *N. bulbocodium graellsii* and *N. confusus*.

South and east of Madrid we find *N. hispanicus*, always near water and brambles; hybrids between *bulbocodium* and *triandrus (fosteri)*; *N. fernandesii*, *N. hedraenthus*, *N. longispathus*; and *N. alcaracensis*, growing in water.

Notable species in southeastern Spain were *N. gaditanus*, *N. papyraceus*, *N. cordubensis*, very early in the garden, and *N. cuatrecasasii*.

In Andalucía is found the all green *N. viridiflorus*, difficult in cultivation, as well as various forms of *N. miniatus*.

I can't imagine that anyone could better this account of the genus in the wild. Brian's passion for daffodils is infectious and his knowledge prodigious. His self-deprecating, humorous style belied the erudition of his presentation and kept his audience riveted to the end.

Ron McBeath

Ron's started his alpine career in Jack Drake's Nursery; then spent twenty years working in Edinburgh RBG, during which time he did a lot of plant hunting on behalf of the gardens, particularly in the Himalaya. After his retirement, with his wife Susan, who was with him in Termonfeckin, he ran Lambertson Nursery until it closed in 2011. Ron had spoken at Termonfeckin in the past, so a good number of his audience knew what to expect and were not disappointed. The photos in this section are Ron's.

His first talk was 'Plant hunting in Nepal'. He told us that he had been to Nepal "quite often" collecting plants and herbarium material for Edinburgh RBG. We got a good insight into how these trips were organized; the travel arrangements; the deployment of Sherpas and porters; and the hard work of managing the collection, cataloguing and drying of the specimens.



He started with rhododendrons, of which there are some fifteen species in the country, showing a huge specimen of *R. arboreum*. There are thirty different species of meconopsis in Nepal alone. *M. grandis* is very variable and Ron noted that *M. paniculata* can be grown for its foliage as well as its flowers. The lovely *M. aculeata* and *M. bella* appear in the drier areas. Primulas are also well represented. *P. sikkimensis*, which likes water and is widespread; *P. gracilipes* also likes a lot of moisture and high

humidity. *P. capitata* is easy in the garden but is short-lived, whereas *P. megalocarpa* is beautiful but has resisted all attempts to cultivate it so far. *P. wigramiana* is highly scented and short-lived as is *P. reidii*. The familiar and beautiful *P. aureata* grows under rocky overhangs.

Lilium nepalense benefits from rich feeding. *Paris polyphylla* is lovely in flower and in fruit. I was particularly taken by *Cranfordia speciosa*, a climbing gentian relative, pictured above, but Ron says it is not now in cultivation. *Gaultheria trichophylla* produces impressive blue berries. Ron showed a very dark leaved form of *Podophyllum hexandrum* and a gorgeous, but rather sinister specimen of *Arisaema griffithii*. *Saussurea laniceps*, looking rather like a sun surrounded by rays, was appealing. Less so was the only trillium species in the Himalaya, *T. govanianum*. The very

desirable *Stellera chamaejasme* grows in drier areas; there is a fifty-year-old specimen in RBG Edinburgh.

Nepal has a number of androsaces; *A. lanuginosa* is an easy garden plant. It has lots of potentillas; *P. cuneata* is nicer than *P. eriocarpa*. There are many different cremanthodiums all of which are a real challenge. They are very prone to attack from aphids with fatal results. *Anenome demissa* with its white pink edged flowers is a delight. Himalayan saxifrages, such as *S. Georgei*, like plenty of moisture. The tiny grey-leaved *Corydalis crassissima* is very difficult to find, growing as it does among similarly coloured rocks. The final plant, thriving in a barren windy area was the beautiful *Androsace zambalensis*.

Like Ger, Ron showed many fine landscape shots, providing a real sense of the terrain in which these wonderful plants grow. His deep knowledge and love of the plants and their habitat was manifest throughout this enjoyable talk.

Ron's second talk was entitled 'Favourite alpine plants' and it was a delight, coming from such a knowledgeable and experienced plantsman. He selected ninety plants, dividing them into those for the woodland/peat garden, troughs/raised beds, the rock garden and the alpine house. Many of his selection are readily available, easily grown plants, but some are rare and challenging. Obviously in a short report I cannot mention all the plants discussed, so I propose to select a few from each category. For those members who were not at the weekend I think we should put the full list on the website.

Starting in the woodland/peat garden, *Cassiope* 'Beatrice Lilley' is a great choice for gardens with an acid soil. Ron emphasized that cassiopes need good light. *Rhododendron primuliflorum cephalanthoides* and *Phyllodoce nipponica* would do well in similar conditions. The former has pink daphne-like flowers and the phyllodoce, white. Shortias are not easy, certainly in the Dublin region. Ron favours growing them in Swedish type peat blocks; they need liquid feeding. Ron finds that some pleiones do well outside in a shaded peat bed. *Lilium mackliniae* is lovely and easy, while *nomocharis* species are easy also, but short-lived. *Trillium grandiflorum* is indispensable. All trilliums should be divided early in

spring, taking care not to damage the crowns. *Meconopsis* grow well in Scotland but are a challenge in these parts. Ron's favourite is *M.* 'Slieve Donard', but he also favours the white-flowered monocarpic, *M. superba* because it takes four to five years to flower and the rosette is very decorative. *Roscoea humeana alba* is beautiful and easy.

For troughs *Polygala calcarea* 'Lillet' is a super plant, but I was relieved to hear Ron say that he finds it difficult because I have never been able to keep it going. Judging from Ron's photo below, however, he has clearly



managed to please it. *Physoplexis comosa* grows outside in Edinburgh and seeds around, but slugs are a threat. I would have always treated it as an alpine house plant. *Calceolaria* 'Walter Shrimpton' is fine outside but aphids can be fatal. *Armeria juniperifolia* 'Spiny Dwarf Form' has sessile pink flowers. Ron cautioned against the use of shrubs in troughs: the roots can very quickly invade all the compost, adversely affecting the other plants.



Among his recommendations for the rock garden were *Gentiana septemfida latifolia*, valuable for summer flowering; *Sempervivum* ‘Mrs Giuseppe’ – grow in really lean soil for best colour; *Campanula pulla*; *Allium beesianum* – small, blue flowers in September; *Polygala chaemaebuxus* ‘Grandiflora’ – “should be in every garden”; *Crassula sarcocaulis* (above) – quite hardy, butterfly optional; *Crocus banaticus* – autumn flowering; *Cyclamen coum*; *Corydalis bracteata*; and *Iris* ‘Katherine Hodgkin’.

For the alpine house Ron recommended the usual suspects, such as, *Lewisia tweedyi* and *L. brachycalyx*, *Daphne petraea* ‘Grandiflora’, *Dionysia tapetodes*, *Pleione forrestii*, but among the more unusual recommendations were *Raoulia* ‘Margaret Pringle’ which likes a lot of water, *Narcissus cantabricus petunioides* and *Gentiana georgei*.

Ron’s contribution to the weekend was immense and he and Susan enjoyed it so much that they are planning to come as delegates next year. The Discussion Forum on Sunday morning was lively with delegates having the opportunity to put questions to the expert panel.

So there you have it, another successful weekend in 2013. This year’s weekend speakers will be Colin Crosbie of Wisley, Harold McBride and

Henrik Zetterlund of Gothenburg Botanic Garden. What a line-up; I would go just to hear Harold talk about his forty years of growing alpines.

Billy Moore

Christmas Miscellany

Harold McBride was one of the first to respond to Jamie's request for slides for this, our last meeting of 2013. And lovely slides they were, opening with a trough of *Gentiana verna* of different colours. A snowdrop of his own raising, *Galanthus* 'Irish Colleen', was much admired. Jamie had assembled a mélange of images from our Latvian trip, which gave a nice overview of a successful visit to Janis Ruksans' nursery. Frank Lavery then showed us a series of shots of thriving alpines in his garden with a 30cm across specimen of *Morisia monanthos* being possibly the highlight. Frank has made great progress with his alpines in a very short time and extended an invitation to members to visit. Barbara O'Callaghan showed a series of garden related photos taken through the year including a new cold frame and crevice bed in her own garden. A shot of the rhododendrons in Kilmacurragh was especially appealing. Koraley Northen is a talented photographer and showed some super images from Mount Usher and NBG, Glasnevin. Ornamental grasses lit by autumn sunshine were impressive, as was her picture of an hydrangea in Mount Usher with startling, metallic blue flowers. Finally we enjoyed some extracts from two TV programmes, one from 1986, featuring Brian Duncan with an appearance from Janis Ruksans; and the other from 1995, on our AGS Show from that year, with the focus on Liam Byrne. These had been resurrected by Val Keegan and can be made available to any member who would like them. The very pleasant evening closed with excellent mulled wine (non-alcoholic) and mince pies, thanks to Ian and Val Keegan and Mary Glennon.

Billy Moore

FIXTURES

Thursday, 16 January, 8.00 pm. AGM, followed by **Paddy Tobin**, 'Snowdrops – the delight of an Irish garden'. St Brigid's Parish Centre, Stillorgan.

Saturday, 8 February, 12.30 for 1.00 pm. Annual Lunch, followed by **June Blake**, 'All gardening is landscape painting'. The Royal St George Yacht Club, Dun Laoghaire.

Thursday, 20 February, 8.00 pm. Show Workshop, **Liam Byrne, Val Keegan, Billy Moore and George Sevastopulo**. St Brigid's Parish Centre, Stillorgan.

Saturday, 8 March, 2.00 pm. Local Show, Workshop and Members' Plant Sale, St Brigid's Parish Centre, Stillorgan.

Thursday, 20 March, 8.00 pm. Diane Clement, 'A year in the life of an alpine gardener'. St Patrick's Parish Centre, Monkstown, Co. Dublin.

Saturday, 5 April, Ulster Group 75th Anniversary AGS Show. Greenmount College, Antrim.

Thursday, 10 April, 8.00 pm. Hester Forde, 'Creative gardening with containers'. **Joint with IGPS**. NBG, Glasnevin.

Saturday, 26 April, 1.30 – 4.00 pm. Dublin Group AGS Show. Cabinteely Community School, Dublin.

Thursday, 15 May, 8.00 pm. Cliff Booker, 'Cream of alpines'. NBG, Glasnevin.

Thursday 29 May to 2 June, BLOOM 2014 – AGS Postcard Garden, Phoenix Park, Dublin.

Saturday, 7 June, 2.30 pm. Garden Visit to **The Dillon Garden**, 45 Sandford Road, Ranelagh, Dublin 6.

Thursday, 16 October, 8.00 pm. John Dower,
‘Why not make a miniature garden?’ **Joint with IGPS**, NBG, Glasnevin.

Thursday, 6 November, 8.00 pm. Brian Wood,
‘Downsizing my garden’. St Brigid’s Parish Centre, Stillorgan.

14 to 16 November, 31st Alpine Weekend, An Grianán,
Termonfeckin, Co. Louth. Speakers: **Colin Crosbie, Harold McBride**
and **Henrik Zetterlund.**

Thursday 11 December, 8.00 pm. Christmas Miscellany.
St Brigid’s Parish Centre, Stillorgan.

More details about the fixtures can be found on p. 6.

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NOTES



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