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the newsletter

Worcestershire Group

Issue 56 – Autumn 2022



From the Editor

Welcome to the 56th issue of the Worcestershire group's newsletter. I'm very grateful to the outgoing editor, Pam Norrington, for her help during the hand-over of the role and to Mick Dunstan for his assistance with the technical side of getting the newsletter published.

As well as the usual business information, including the minutes of our AGM and an advert for the role of Members' representative, this issue includes a number of articles about this summer's group coach trip to Ireland, a visit to Thornton Clematis & Climbers at their new home near Evesham, and an interview with local garden designer and author Carol Smith about her new book, "Gardening on a Gradient".

Please do let me have your contributions for the next newsletter, whether it's about your own garden or one you have visited, a favourite plant or anything else that you think might be of interest to members.

Mike Bentley

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Hemerocallis 'Stafford' by Mick Dunstan.
Other pictures in this issue are by: ??????????
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From the Chair

This newsletter celebrates the Worcestershire group tour to Ireland in June. I hope you enjoy reading about some of the lovely gardens we visited and seeing some of the photographs that were taken. We welcome Mike Bentley as our new Newsletter Editor.

The NHS are closing the Vaccination centre at SPBC so we should not have any problems with parking from now on. Some re-decoration will take place in the Lower hall and we may be able to use it next year.

We will begin 2023 with the long awaited visit by Chris Beardshaw in January please note that the Celebrity Lecture will take place on a Thursday afternoon; tickets will be on sale later this Autumn through a ticket agency.

Our new Speaker Secretary, Petra Sturgeon, has made some useful contacts through her work with a landscape design company and she is putting together an exciting programme of speakers for 2023. We will be interested in speakers who can address the challenges we face as gardeners due to climate change. I took particular notice of the plants in my garden that coped with the recent drought in August and resolved to adapt my planting to reflect the lack of reliable rainfall going forward.

In 2018 we conducted a Members' Survey to consult members about what the Worcestershire group offered. Claire Constantine, our programme Secretary will be conducting a mini survey this Autumn to find out which local activities and trips you would be interested in joining next year. Please participate as it will help the committee plan future activities for you.

Despite my intention to stand down as group Chairman at the AGM next Spring; having served for three years, the Committee have persuaded me to stand for re-election for one further year, in the interests of providing stability and continuity for our group, as we recover from the disruption we have faced during the pandemic. I am pleased to say that after the AGM in 2023 the Committee will have a full complement of Officers; Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary for the first time in two years.

Lyn Maile

From the Treasurer

Our budget and spending this year is going much as predicted in our budget projections. Now that we have finally been able to 'take up residence' in our intended Lower Hall, room hire is a little less costly, mainly because of the difference in audio visual technology compared with the Upper Hall.

What is quickly becoming evident to us is the incredible increase in speaker costs for next year and beyond. We are in a strong position to take this in our stride and maintain the quality (hence costly) speaker programme we have been accustomed to, but strong performances in our traditional money making efforts and hopefully some new will ensure this position is maintained.

An enjoyable and successful Annual Plant Sale, the first in our new venue, raised just over £600 after all costs such as room hire and advertising. This was a tremendous effort considering such a long absence due to Covid lockdowns, a new location and many still being wary and nervous about mixing with others unnecessarily. Those deserving thanks and congratulations for their help are too numerous to mention... you know who you are and we could not hold the Plant Sale without you.

Not too numerous to thank though, on behalf of all Members, is our tremendous team of (monthly) Plant Sale stalwarts, Wendy Richards, Sarah Charlton and Selwyn Lane. They not only organise and run the plant sale table each month for us, but between them they provide most of the plants they sell. A respectable sum has been raised each month and this really is one of the money raising activities that will make a difference to the speaker budget we can allocate. We all really must do better to support them please - I keep saying that every month and am determined to start taking a plant next month!

Ange Burnet

Treasurer and Membership Secretary

Our 2023 line-up



JANUARY 26, 2023 AT 2PM

Chris Beardshaw

Painting With Plants

Join us at our long-awaited Celebrity Lecture 2023 for an afternoon with celebrated designer, plantsman and broadcaster Chris Beardshaw.

It will be an illustrated talk looking at creating floral rewilds with less effort. Inspired by traditional English borders but with the aim of reducing the inputs and looking for a new style. It uses examples from Chris' own schemes, including Ness Botanic Gardens.

Chris has immersed himself in horticulture for over 35 years when a childhood passion for plants and work at his local nursery led to formal study at

Pershore College and the beginning of a lifelong career in horticulture encompassing planting design, garden design and landscape architecture.

Chris is recognised as one of the leading lights in the world of gardening; he is the author of four books, a regular presenter on BBC television and panellist on BBC Radio 4's *Gardeners' Question Time*, and designer of public realm spaces and private estates.

Chris is a veteran of the RHS Chelsea Flower Show and has won 36 medals including 14 RHS Gold Medals. He has received the People's Choice Award a record four times and is six-times winner of the Best In Show Award.

Tickets are on sale exclusively via our TicketSource page: www.ticketsource.co.uk/hpsworcestershires priced at £10 for Worcestershire HPS members or £15 for visitors / non-members, including complimentary tea/coffee. Please note that TicketSource apply a booking fee per ticket of 7% plus VAT; £1.26 for a £15 visitor ticket and £0.84 for a £10 Worcestershire HPS member ticket. There is no additional card charge. Your e-tickets will be emailed instantly to you. Please remember to bring proof of purchase with you on your phone or you can print at home and bring a paper copy with you

FEBRUARY 11, 2023

Stephen Anderton

Christopher Lloyd; His Life at Great Dixter

In 2005, Stephen Anderton was commissioned by Christopher Lloyd to write his biography. This lecture tells the story of the man behind Britain's most remarkable



house and garden.

Intrinsic to the narrative of the garden at Great Dixter is Christo's upbringing in his extraordinary and often dysfunctional family. Based on his book, published by Chatto in 2010 Stephen will share the details of the life of the man as best-selling author, international lecturer, lovable eccentric, incurable writer of letters and in his later years, the grand old man of English gardening.

Stephen Anderton is an award-winning garden writer for *The Times*, a magazine journalist, author, lecturer, broadcaster, television presenter and specialist garden holiday tour leader.

Before his writing career Stephen worked in the care of historic gardens, latterly as National Gardens Manager for English

Heritage and was responsible for several major restoration projects in the North. His books have been translated into several languages and include *Discovering Welsh Gardens* (Graffeg), the biography *Christopher Lloyd, His Life at Great Dixter* (Chatto), *Lives of the Great Gardeners* (2016) and *Stourhead* (2019). He lives and gardens near Abergavenny in the Black Mountains and when not gardening writes music for the theatre.

A Patron of the Professional Gardener's Guild's Traineeship Appeal Stephen has been the Guild's Vice-Chairman North, as well as Vice-Chairman of the Garden Writer's Guild, Chairman of a Plant Heritage North East Group and a committee member for the Royal Horticultural Society and Garden History Society.

MARCH 11, 2023

Timothy Walker

Probably The Best Garden Plants In The World

Nobody really needs to be convinced of the supremacy of spurge as garden plants for every situation. This talk examines some of the natural history and botany of Euphorbias followed by details of the most desirable species and cultivars with suggestions of planting associations.

Timothy Walker is a former Director of the University of Oxford Botanic Garden. During his time he was responsible for one of the National Collections of Euphorbias. Since 2014 he has been a tutor in plant biology at Somerville College Oxford and still grows many Euphorbias and uses them regularly in his teaching.





Hamzah-Adam Desai

Drought Tolerant Planting

Founder of Tone & Manner Garden & Planting Design, Hamzah is an RHS medal-winning garden designer renowned for his exquisite planting combinations.

After a successful career in Graphic Design, Hamzah retrained to be a Garden Designer at Capel Manor College. He was responsible for restoring and reviving community gardens at Gloucester Square and in 2021 was awarded The Gardeners Company Prize in 2021 by The Worshipful Company Of Gardeners.

Hamzah followed up his 2021 People's Choice Belvoir Castle Flower Show win with



an RHS Silver Medal at Hampton Court Palace Garden Festival in 2022. His Turfed Out design was a sustainable, cost effective, low-maintenance garden designed with new-to-gardening first time home owners in mind. The design eschewed the traditional lawn in favour of climate-friendly planting that requires minimal watering and which attracts a broad range of pollinators

MAY 13, 2022

Sandra Lawrence

Miss Willmott's Ghosts

Author, freelance writer, gardener, allotmenteer and garden history Masters student Sandra is a regular



contributor to The Times, Telegraph, The English Garden, LandScape, Homes & Gardens, Garden News, Modern Gardens, Country Life, Britain and British Heritage. She also writes a blog, The Event Gardener

which records the vegetables she has grown for brief, memorable moments rather than as bulk staples.

Sandra's 16th book is a new biography of Edwardian plantswoman Ellen Willmott. In her talk Sandra will share the incredible stories and mementos she discovered which didn't make it into print

OCTOBER 14, 2023

Josh Egan-Wyer

The Very Best Plants For ... Future Proof Gardens

Continuing our theme of climate change. Using fresh plant material Josh will give his recommendations of how we can prepare for warmer, wetter winters, hotter, drier summers and how to create more shade in our gardens. Josh will bring a selection of plants for sale from the Pershore Garden Centre.

Josh Egan-Wyer is Garden Centre & Nurseries Manager



at Pershore College (part of WCG).

Josh graduated from Pershore College with a BSc in Horticulture in 2013. He is extremely enthusiastic about plants and enjoys sharing his passion with anybody who takes an interest.

NOVEMBER 11, 2023

Carol Smith

Title to be confirmed

Garden designer, lecturer and author Carol has run her own garden design business for the past 22 years. She has designed medal winning show gardens at Chelsea, BBC Gardeners World Show

and Malvern Spring Garden Show. In 2009 'The Tree of Life Garden' designed by Carol was re-built at St. Richards hospice, to be used by staff, patients and their relatives. In 2010 she worked with St. Peters Garden Centre and BBC Radio Hereford & Worcester, to design a showcase garden for the Love Lives On appeal - Noahs' Ark Trust.

Whilst lecturing at Pershore College, Carol was commissioned to write a book on her specialist subject; Planting Design. Designing Gardens with Plant Shapes was published in 2011 and her latest book, Gardening On A Gradient was published in 2022.



Committee vacancy

You will be pleased to know that we have a volunteer to take over as Secretary from Lyn Maile. Ruth Jenkinson who has served as our Membership Representative is willing to take up the role following the AGM in 2023.

Committee Vacancy Member's Representative

The main duties:

- Attend committee meetings and contribute to planning.
- Together with other committee members assist in setting up prior to meetings.
- Assist with raffles
- Generally, assist with committee tasks e.g. Plant sale, socials etc.

Worcestershire Group of the Hardy Plant Society Nominations form for Committee Member/Secretary

I wish to nominate: _____

To stand for election as a member of the above Group's Committee at the meeting on 11th March 2023

Proposed by: _____

Nominee's signature: _____

Seconded by: _____

(If putting oneself Forward)

This role would be an ideal way of gaining insight into how our group is organised and the different roles of committee members. A great way of getting to know members particularly if you are new to the group, or if you are an

established member it's a chance to be involved in planning without undertaking a more involved role.

If you would like to know more, please contact Ruth Jenkinson the present Member's representative or Lyn Maile.

HPS Worcestershire minutes of the AGM on Saturday 12th March 2022 at St Peter's B/C Worcester

Apologies for absence were received from: Stella Sullivan, Liz Demaison, Claire Constantine, Jenny Field, Jane Stanley, Adrian Gurney, James & Mollie McPherson

1) To receive and adopt the Minutes of the AGM held on 18th March 2021 via Zoom

Proposed by Ange Burnet
Seconded by Marilyn Wrightson
Passed

2) Matters Arising. None

3) The Chairman read her report; a copy is filed with these Minutes

5) To receive and adopt the accounts for the financial year ending 31st December 2021; the accounts were circulated to members via email before the meeting to save paper/printing costs. A copy of the accounts is filed with these minutes

Proposed by Mick Dunstan
Seconded by Jacqueline Davies
Passed

6) To transact any other business of which 21 notice had been given

Mick Dunstan raised his concerns about the increase in the membership subscription and the impact it had on some members who have now left the group. Stephanie Reader seconded his concerns.

7) Election of Officers- The following have offered to serve on the Committee for the next twelve months;

Lyn Maile having served for two years offers herself for re-election as Chairman.

Proposed by Ange Burnet
Seconded by Mick Dunstan
Passed

Ange Burnet having served for two years offers herself for re-election as Treasurer
Proposed by Lyn Maile
Seconded by Jacqueline Davies
Passed

The role of Group Secretary is temporarily covered by Lyn Maile until a new Officer can be found to fill the vacancy.

8) Election of the Committee

Speaker Secretary – Petra Sturgeon having served for three years as Publicity Secretary offers herself for election as Speaker Secretary; she will combine the two roles from now on.

Proposed by Selwyn Lane
Seconded by Ruth Jenkinson
Passed

Claire Constantine having served for three years offers herself for re-election as Programme Secretary.
Proposed by Petra Sturgeon
Seconded by Sue Horsnell
Passed

Petra Sturgeon having served for three years offers herself for re-election as Publicity Secretary.
Proposed by Lyn Maile
Seconded by Sarah Charlton
Passed

Mike Bentley offers himself as the new Newsletter Editor
Proposed by Mick Dunstan
Seconded by Pamela Norrington
Passed

Ruth Jenkinson offers herself as the Members Representative for the next twelve months
Proposed by Pamela Norrington
Seconded by Ann Sheppard

9) Elect an independent examiner of Accounts- Jonathan Davies

Proposed by Ange Burnet
Seconded by Jenny Constant
Passed

The Chairman thanked Stephanie Reader and Pam Norrington for their valuable contribution to the Committee.

We are also grateful to Ann Bard who served as Members Representative until recently.

The next AGM will be held on 11th March 2023

Worcester-based author and garden designer Carol Smith talks to Mike Bentley about her new book...

How to make the best of your slopes

Hello Carol, thanks for agreeing to see me, and congratulations on the publication of your new book *Gardening on a Gradient*. How did that come about?

I'd written a garden design book back in 2011 and, as a project during lock-down, approached my Publishers at Crowood Press with an idea for a new book. They weren't that keen on my initial suggestion, but asked me if I could write a book about gardening on slopes; they're publishing a series of gardening books in their *Gardener's Guide* series and felt that this would be a useful addition.

So at what level of gardener is the book aimed?

Gardening on a Gradient is written for people who are keen gardeners, as well as for degree students and newly qualified professionals that don't necessarily have an in-depth understanding of garden design and the construction of hard landscaping, especially when working on a sloping site. I explain how to survey changes of level and analyse a garden site, then make more informed choices for developing it. The book

includes how to develop slopes that either slope towards or away from your house, soil stabilisation using shrubs and ground cover planting (which may be replaced later), and how hard landscaping (walls, steps etc.) should be constructed. My aim was to make the owners of a sloping garden feel that it is manageable and to help them get the best out of their site.

Given that this article is for the local HPS, does the book include much about plants?

Of course! The book includes a plant library and lots of plant photos that I've taken over my years as a garden designer. All the garden photos in the book are of my own work.

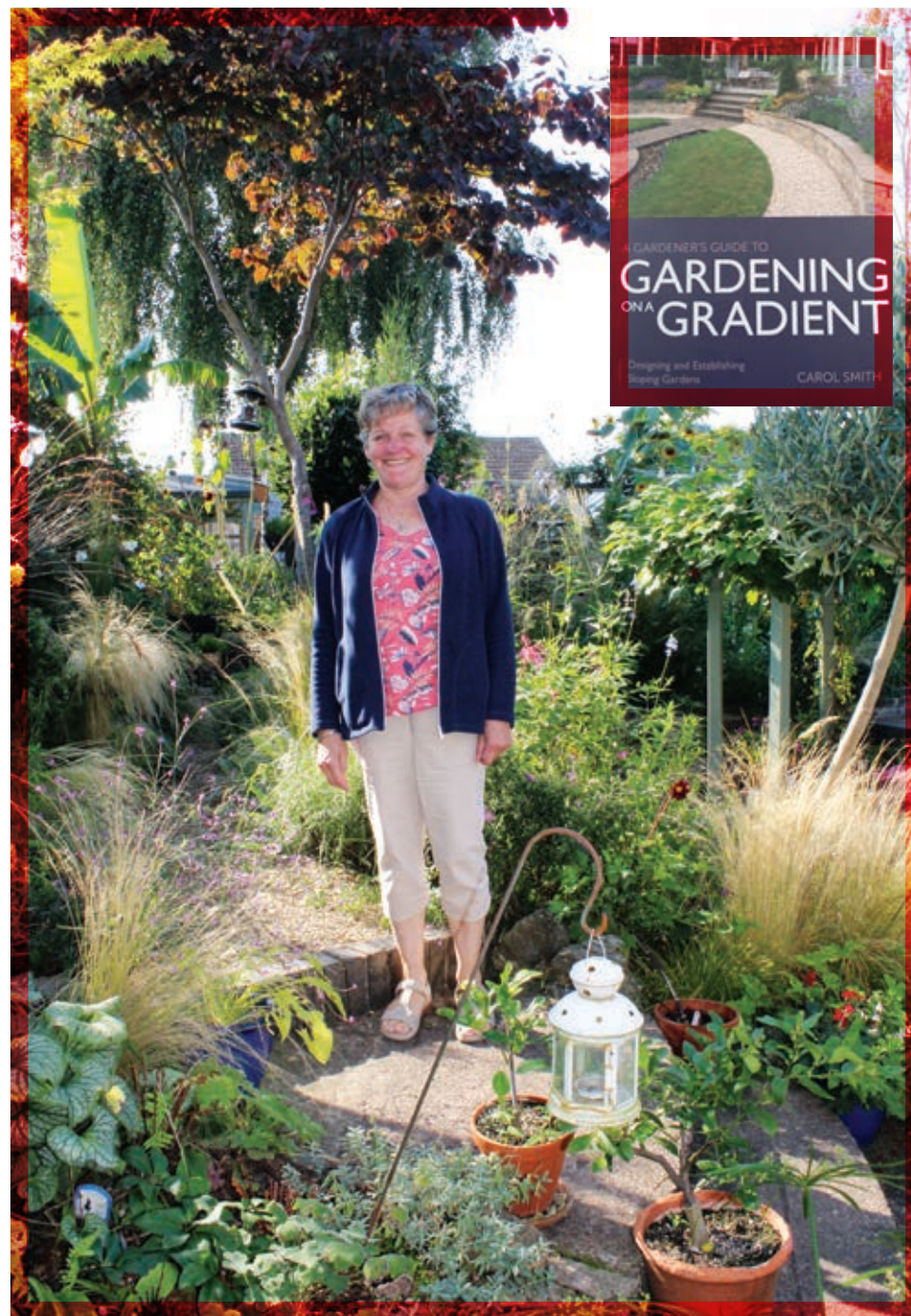
How did you get into gardening to start with?

My Mum worked at Smith's Nurseries, which used to be off Bransford Road in St Johns, and at the age of three she took me in with her and sat me under the potting bench where I was given plants to pot up. This is my earliest memory! I became really interested in gardening when my hubby and I got our first house and my grandfather (a keen grower of vegetables and show Chrysanthemums) helped me. After 20-odd years of looking after my own gardens I studied garden design at Pershore College, followed by a degree at the University of Gloucester some years later. That was 24 years ago and I've run my garden design business since then, and as well as writing the books, articles for magazines, including *The English Garden*, and lecturing at Pershore College.

Thanks you for meeting with me Carol; would you be up for coming to talk at one of our local HPS meetings?

I'd love to!

(Editor's note : Carol has been provisionally booked for late 2023: keep an eye on our list of forthcoming speakers).



Open for business

With a dozen RHS Chelsea Gold Medals to their name, Thorncroft Clematis and Climbers are one of the UK's best known Clematis suppliers, writes Mike Bentley. They've been growing Clematis for more than 40 years, starting as a hobby in the back garden of the current owner's grandparents.

While the owner and Director Peter Skeggs-Gooch still lives in Lincolnshire, the company has recently moved to at Rails End Nursery, at Ashton-Under-Hill in Worcestershire. Their website was advertising an open day, so on a wet October Friday Kathryn and I set out to find them.

The nursery is situated in a narrow lane below Bredon Hill, between the A46 Evesham-Cheltenham road and the village of Ashton. When we arrived the place was pretty quiet, with only a couple of other visitors. We were really impressed with the knowledge of the nursery team, led by Heather who were able to suggest Clematis for different soils aspects and flowering times. Peter told me that the plants are propagated by a partner business a couple of miles away, New Leaf Plants, which was chosen for the quality of their plants that they were able to produce for Thorncroft. The Clematis on display certainly looked excellent and a surprising variety were in full flower.

Thorncroft is mainly a mail-order business, with the nursery only open to the public on three or four days of the year. In addition to this they have recently started a "click and collect" service (at present on Fridays only). Details of the open days can be found on their website <https://thorncroftclematis.co.uk/>. Peter also gives Clematis talks and we hope to be able to book him as a guest speaker!



The nursery team: Mary-Anne, Heather the manager, Peter the Owner/Director and Gertie



Clematis 'Dancing Queen' 'Zodaque'



Clematis 'Princess Kate' 'Zobrika'



Clematis 'Sea Breeze' 'Zo09063'

Six days and 11 Irish gardens...

● Three years ago, Worcestershire HPS celebrated its silver anniversary and to mark the occasion it was agreed to organise a garden tour to County Wicklow, just south of Dublin.

● Former chairman Mick Dunstan went to do a recce of possible gardens to include on the itinerary in August 2019 – and in following months 44 people from the group and the HPS nationally booked their places.

● But in March 2020, just weeks before the intended date of departure, Covid kicked in and then it took another three years before the tour became possible again, in June this year.

● In that period, one garden – that of Irish doyenne Helen Dillon – had to be removed because of her ill health, which was a huge disappointment to the 40 people who finally joined the trip. Eleven other gardens kept us distracted during our visit – including the magnificent Ardàn, from the Irish for 'A high place', in the town of Howth on the peninsula north of Dublin.

● What follows in this issue are views of some of the gardens we visited by some of the people who visited them.



Strolling through the wildflower meadow at Hunting Brook

Hunting Brook

Fifteen miles south of Dublin city centre, there's a 20-acre garden nestling snugly in the perfect setting of the foothills of the Wicklow Hills.

And Jimi Blake's Hunting Brook magnificent estate was our first stop on the six-day Worcestershire HPS tour of Ireland.

Fifteen of those acres are woodland and valley with around five acres of contemporary, colourful and occasionally exotically planted gardens around Jimi's house.

The man himself was there to offer a warm welcome at 10am that June morning – and then spent an hour or more showing us round the gardens as well. He said he had often been slightly intimidated by the knowledge base of Hardy Plant Society members!

There's a gradual slope from the car park up to his house lined either side with the most colourful, multi-layered planting that stopped many of our party in their tracks. And once through we'd struggled through every single detail of the planting, the colours, the layout and the setting, we were free to walk as much of the other 15 acres as we could manage in what was left of our three and a half hours there. Surprises there were around every corner. Plants we'd never seen before. Lots of *Aralia* and *Schefflera*, the odd *Pseudopanax* and foliage of every shape and hue.

A wonderful lunch, laid on by the local café recommended by Jimi, gave a chance to just settle down in this magnificent setting – which is quite clearly Jimi's Field of Dreams. The schedule then forced us to move on too soon to his sister June's gorgeous garden 10 minutes down the road.

One small point: in the flower gardens there were a single strain of lupin used repeatedly to add a little height throughout the borders, *Lupinus* 'Masterpiece'. It wasn't the only masterpiece we saw that day. If you've not been yet, I can only recommend that you add Hunting Brook to your gardens to visit list – and get there just as soon as you can! It's breathtakingly beautiful.

Mick Dunstan



Memories of Hunting Brook and, below, Jimi's fond farewell to our members



Ardán

This is a coastal, hillside garden, set within a pleasant residential area, which keeps what it contains rather hidden until you pass through the front entrance and enter half an acre of horticultural delights. Nuala Doherty and Conall O'Caoimh began to develop the garden in 2003. Conall is a sculptor and Nuala a designer, and their garden is very much a product of their combined skills and creativity.

There is considerable variety in this modest-sized garden, which is divided up into very distinct areas but which sit comfortably alongside each other. As the garden was quite exposed, the initial design needed to ensure windbreaks were put in place and the rather rugged terrain effectively tamed with much rock excavation. Over the years, the garden has evolved – and keeps evolving – but the overall structure ensures coherence as well as the opportunity for experimentation.

Conall modestly says that their creation of a garden which is now part of the UNESCO Dublin Bay Biosphere was rather accidental. For example, the development of a small rill in one part of the garden, and how the water to this is both fed and drained, has unexpectedly enabled newts to breed for the first time in this part of the region. Conall speaks of the “terrasphere” – that what is within the soil is the key to horticultural health in the garden. Lots of topsoil was required initially and compost continues to be made and added to the garden. The garden uses organic and “no dig” principles and any problem areas are tackled with an analysis as to why the plants are not as healthy as they could be and how that can be addressed, primarily via the soil.

The large propagating greenhouse has the formula for photosynthesis concreted into the base – there is a serious scientific basis to this very artistic and creative garden.

The sculpture dotted around provides an eclectic and often humorous touch, but there is no doubt that Conall and Nuala are thoughtful and considered in planning and developing their garden.

The separate areas begin in front of the house with a small forest of *Echium* (which self-seeds) as well as other coastal type planting. As you go through the side gate, the garden opens up in stages. Each area has dense, colourful planting – sometimes with high impact effects, like the sea of white hydrangeas surrounding one of Conall's sculptures. From the hot, tropical garden with cannas and lush planting, through to the quiet contemplative woodland glade with underplanting of white *Astrantia*, *Polygonatum*, and *Francoa sonchifolia*, through to the copper-rimmed raised vegetable beds and the rocky outcrop near the house with succulents crammed into crevices, it takes quite a while to take in everything the garden has to offer. One effective feature is to plant tall plants such as *Cephalaria gigantea* at the front of a border and to remove the lower leaves, so that the colours and textures beyond can be seen without the more typical “tiered” border arrangement.

The word that comes to mind when visiting Ardán is the atmosphere – in fact, the garden itself really welcomes you in and then invites you to linger. It is partly down to the distinctive moods of the different areas, partly down to the variety and creativity of the planting, and partly down to the personalities of Nuala and Conall themselves. It was a visit which I think we will all remember with great fondness.

Ruth Jenkinson



Conall and Nuala and some of the planting in their Howth garden

Botanic Gardens

Tucked away in a distant corner of Dublin's National Botanic Garden, beyond the superb ancient glasshouses, what a treat this rose garden was. A bridge of climbing specimens led to a perfectly manicured 'ring of roses'; understated, to say the least.

One plant of each of dozens of different Shrub, Hybrid Tea and Floribunda roses were planted in a perfect ring in lawned surroundings. For me what set this rose garden apart from many others was the total absence of disease (including black spot), aphids, and weeds. The plants were perfectly shaped with no deadheading needed, many with a gorgeous fragrance.

If I had to choose favourites, for colour it would have to be Rosa 'Avocet' with its sharp orange blooms.

For fragrance Rosa 'Fragrant Delight' F. Deep pink blooms with a sherbet fragrance. 'Chandos Beauty (Harmisty)' would be up there too, with its

perfect pale pink blooms and classic 'Turkish delight' rose fragrance.

Even non-rose lovers could not fail to be at least a little impressed by this display I'm sure.

Ange Burnet



Powerscourt

Inspired by his visits to Versailles and Schonbrunn Palaces, the 7th Viscount Powerscourt set about building a new garden. Starting in 1860 and taking 20 years to complete, he created The Walled Gardens, The Italian Garden, The Dolphin Pond, The Japanese Gardens, Pets Cemetery and Pepperpot Tower.

In 2014 National Geographic magazine chose Powerscourt No.3 in the world – high praise indeed.

The Powerscourt family were forced to sell the estate in 1961 to the Slazengers – of Wimbledon fame – only to marry into the Slazenger family in 1962 and later inherit it back again. The clever little Powerscourts....

As to the gardens, the highlight for me was probably the Walled garden. Originally the kitchen garden it now contains the largest herbaceous borders in Ireland.

The centre piece of this 'walk' is a circular fountain fringed by an alternating planting of Nepeta 'Walker's Low' and Geranium 'Ann Folkard', which work well together, the grey green foliage of the Nepeta highlighting the lime green of the geranium but the two flowers – magenta and mauve – complementing each other. Dotted through the borders were a selection of peonies, including 'Northern Glory', 'Best Man' and 'Bowl of Plenty'.

Alex Slazenger, the Head Gardener, said: "As a child growing up at Powerscourt, I had a wonderful time exploring one of the most magical and exciting gardens in the world! Soon my playground became my passion and life's work. I and the other gardeners feel very privileged to manage and further develop these gardens for future generations to enjoy."

Pete Burnet



Other gardens



Patthana

