NORTHERN IRELAND HERITAGE GARDENS COMMITTEE
Conference Programme 2006 Narrow Water Castle

SHRUBS AND SHRUBBERIES:PAST TO PRESENT

Friday 13th October

from 5.30pm Registration, Reception and Refreshments
c.7.30pm Welcome by the Chairman, David Gilliland
Charles Nelson: *Shrubberies Made Beautiful - Ireland's Contribution*

Saturday 14th October

9.30am Christopher Dingwall: *Reflections on the History and Purpose of Shrubberies*
10.15am tea/coffee
10.45am Kath Clark: *The Use of Shrubs in the 18th century, with Reference to the Restoration of Painshill Park*
11.30am Virginia Hinze: *Regency Shrubberies & the Gardens at the Royal Pavilion, Brighton*
12.15pm Reg Maxwell: *J.C.Loudon on Shrubs and Shrubberies*
1.00pm lunch
2.00pm depart for Patrick & Lady Anthea Forde's garden at Seaforde
7.30pm for 8.00pm dinner
Mike Snowden: *A Gardener's Experience in the Shrubbery*

Sunday 15th October

9.30am John Lanyon: *Shrubs at Knightshayes: the Heart of One of Britain's Finest Gardens*
10.15am tea/coffee
10.45am Séan O'Gaoithín: *The Glenveagh Woody Plant Collection & Its Creators*
11.30am Mark Flannigan: *Planting the Woodlands: the Development of the Savill & Valley Gardens*
12.15pm Stephen Butler: *Bringing the Shrubbery to Life at Dublin Zoo*
1.00pm lunch
2.00pm depart for Charles & Eithne Carroll's garden at Killineer House

SHRUBS AND SHRUBBERIES – PAST TO PRESENT

SELECTED EXTRACTS FROM HISTORICAL TEXTS

JOHN REID ~ The Scots Gard'ner (1683)

HOW TO MAKE THE PLEASURE GARDEN &C. ~ Pleasure-Gardens useth to be divided into walks and plots, with a border round each plot, and at the corner of each, may be a holly or some such train'd up. Some pyramidal. Others spherical, the trees and shrubs at the wall well plyed and prun'd. OF SOME SHRUBS ~ Roses of many sorts … Jasmines, Honisuckles, Pipe-trees, Mezerion … Box, Savin, Arbor Vitae, Tamerisk, Privite, Cherrie-bay. There is also Laurustinus, Philyrea, Alaternus (I love not Pyracantha), Juniper (I care not for evergreen oak and cypress) … Indian and Spanish Jasmines, Mirtles, Oleanders and Oreng-tree yet tenderer.

JOSEPH ADDISON ~ 'On The Pleasure of the Imagination' from *The Spectator* (1712)

25 June 1712 ~ But why may not a whole estate be thrown into a kind of garden by frequent plantations … Fields of corn make a pleasant prospect, and if the walks were a little taken care of that lie between them, if the natural embroidery of the meadows were helped and improved by some small additions of art, and the several rows of hedges set off by trees and flowers, that the soil was capable of receiving, a man might make a pretty landscape of his own possessions.

BATTY LANGLEY ~ New Principles of Gardening (1728)

GENERAL DIRECTIONS &c. ~ That shady walks be planted from the end-views of a house, and terminate in those open groves that enclose the sides of the plain parterre, that thereby you may enter into immediate shade, as soon as out of the house, without being heated by the scorching rays of the sun.. That the all the trees of your shady walks and groves be planted with Sweet Brier, Jessamine, and Honeysuckles, environed with a small circle of Dwarf stock, Candy Turf and Pinks. That the walks of the Wilderness be so placed as to respect the best views of the country. That in those serpentine meanders be placed, at proper distances, large openings, which you surprisingly come to … Observe at proper distances to place publick and private cabinets, which should always be encompass'd with a hedge of evergreens, and flowering shrubs next behind them, before the forest trees that are standards … In the planting of groves you must observe a regular irregularity ; not planting them according to the common method like an orchard, with their trees in straight lines ranging every way, but in a rural manner, as if they had receiv'd their situation from Nature itself.

THOMAS HAMILTON, 6TH EARL OF HADDINGTON ~ A Treatise on Forest Trees (1733)

OF WILDERNESS ~ As this is only laid out for shade and ornament, nothing certain can be said about it, nor any rules given. Some have them large, and some less. When they were introduced into this country, they were generally formed with a centre and straight walks from it, with the best views that could be found. These walks were for ordinary hedged, as were the serpentine walks that run through the whole, from one straight walk to another, and trees of different kinds set in the angles betwixt the hedges ; but I hear that they are now weary of that way, and everyone lays out his wilderness as he pleases. Were I to plant a new one, there should be nothing in it but evergreens, flowering-shrubs, and trees that carry fine blossoms … the evergreens have a cheerful look in the melancholy season of the year, and the flowering-trees make a fine variety in summer ; but as all this depends on the fancy of the owner, let every one do as he likes best.

WILLIAM SHENSTONE ~ in Correspondence (1748)

TO LADY LUXBOROUGH AT BARRELS ~ I have sent your Ladyship a book of gardening which I borrowed, about five years ago, of a neighbour. If it will be of any service to you in modelling the crooked walks in your shrubbery, I shall be glad ; and you may return it at your leisure, as I do … [the book being] written at a time when the present natural taste began to dawn.

HENRY HOME, LORD KAMES ~ Elements of Criticism (1761)

ON GARDENING AND ARCHITECTURE ~ In the manner of planting a wood or thicket, much art may be displayed. A common centre of walks, termed a star, from whence are seen remarkable objects, appears too

rtificial, and consequently too stiff and formal to be agreeable … Abandoning therefore, the star, let us try to substitute some form more natural, that will display all the remarkable objects in the neighbourhood. This may be done by various apertures in the wood, purposely contrived to lay open successively every such object ; sometimes a single object, sometimes a plurality in a line, and sometimes a rapid succession of them. The mind at intervals is roused and cheered by agreeable objects ; and by surprise on viewing objects of which it had no expectation. In Chinese gardens another artifice is to obscure some capital part by trees, or other interposed objects ; our curiosity is raised to know what lies beyond ; and by surprise on viewing objects of which it had no expectation.

THOMAS WHATLEY ~ **Observations on Modern Gardening** (1770)

A DESCRIPTION OF WOBURN FARM, SURREY ~ [The house] is shut out from the country by a thick and lofty hedge-row, which is enriched with woodbine, jessamine and every odoriferous plant whose tendrils will entwine with the thicket. A path, generally of sand or gravel, is conducted in a waving line, sometimes close under the hedge, sometimes at a little distance from it ; and the turf on either hand is diversified with little groups of shrubs, of firs, or of the smallest trees, and often with beds of flowers [which last] hurt the eye by their littlenesses ; but then they replenish the air with their perfumes, and every gale is full of fragrancy.

HORACE WALPOLE ~ **The History of the Modern Taste in Gardening** (1782)

Where the united plumage of an ancient wood extended wide its undulating canopy [William] Kent thinned the foremost ranks and left but so many detached and scattered trees as softened the approach of gloom and blended a chequered light with the thus lengthened shadows of the remaining columns. Succeeding artists have added new master strokes to these touches ; perhaps improved or brought to perfection some that I have named. The introduction of foreign trees and plants, which we owe principally to Archibald Duke of Argyle [at Whitton] contributed essentially to the richness of colouring so peculiar to our modern landscape. The mixture of various greens, the contrast of forms between our forest trees and the northern and West Indian [i.e. North American] firs or pines, are improvements more recent than Kent, or but little known to him. The weeping willow and every florid shrub, each tree of delicate or bold leaf, are new tints in the composition of our gardens.

SIR UVEDALE PRICE ~ **On the Picturesque** (1794)

The notion that a lawn, or any meadow or pasture-ground near the house ought to be kept quite open and clear from any kind of thickets, has been one very principal cause of the bareness I have so often had cause to censure … If larger trees add loftiness and grandeur, while the frequent changes from thickets to trees and bushes, either single or in groups, no less produces variety – what is the objection to making such scenes principal objects of study and imitation, where similar effects are meant to be created, and where they certainly would be admired ? Should it happen, for example, that in parts of the rising ground of a lawn intended to be highly dressed, groups of thorns and hollies were mixed with the oaks and beeches, is there any one with the least taste for natural beauties who would totally extirpate them, and clear round all the larger trees ? – Is there any one who would not delight in such a mixture – who would not show it as one of the most pleasing objects in that part of his place ?

JOHN CLAUDIUS LOUDON ~ **A Treatise on Country Residences** (1806)

ON THE SUBJECT OF ORNAMENTAL GARDENING : SHRUBBERIES ~ This term is properly applied to a narrow belt or strip of shrubs and flowers, which is sometimes the chief ornament of a small seat. The idea of such a thing is good ; and if executed according to the principles of nature and good taste, it would produce an effect both interesting and pleasing. But, as the reverse has constantly been the case, Mr. Knight justly reprobates their tawdry insipidity … They are generally made for the sake of obtaining a walk, which may either conduct to some particular place or scene, as the kitchen garden, farm, wood etc. or it may lead merely through the shrubbery for its own sake, and such views of external objects as can be obtained from it, or as deserve attention. This being kept in view in designing and forming shrubberies, these three things require particular attention : First the arrangement and grouping of the trees, which ought to be that of general nature ; Secondly, the intermixture of glades and pasture, which in most cases is an essential requisite ; Thirdly, the judicious introduction of views of more distant scenery … Shrubs form a class of materials no less interesting than flowers. They require less care in cultivation, and their beauties, consisting chiefly in the general form and appearance, are less fleeting with the seasons, and more striking at a distance … [Some] are cultivated chiefly for the beauty of their flowers, others for their smell, others for the beauty of their leaves, others for their fruit , still others for the beauty of the whole plant , but most of all for all of these properties together.

WALTER NICOL ~ **The Gardener's Kalendar** (1810)

We are greatly indebted to shrubs for much of the pleasure and delight we enjoy in our gardens. Though they produce no eatable fruits, nor afford us any sort of nourishment, yet they are particularly conducive to our comfort. In winter they shelter us in our walks ; in summer they shade us from the sun. They afford us a great variety of flowers, a varied foliage, and are standard ornaments that give us no great trouble. They are particularly useful in the character of screens, whether against the weather, or to hide disagreeable objects, in which case they may be planted nearer to the house than forest trees. When planted in masses at a distance, they become agreeable objects, and often improve the scenery of a place. The shrubbery is often a matter of utility, as well as of ornament, in which case it gives the highest satisfaction. When formed for the purposes of shutting out the offices or the kitchen garden from the view of the house, for sheltering the latter part of the garden, or for connecting the house with the garden and the orchard, the shrubbery becomes useful and interesting.

WILLIAM SAWREY GILPIN ~ **Practical Hints upon Landscape Gardening** (1832)

DRESS GROUND ~ The groups of larger trees will usually be accompanied by shrubs of various size and character, to connect them with the lawn : rhododendrons, savine [juniper], and other of the pendent evergreens, are very useful for such purpose, when the turf being carried under them, leaves no cutting line of the border. Shrubs, in my opinion, should not be accompanied in the same bed, by such flowers as require digging ; the line of the border above-mentioned destroying that repose and variety of form which ought to characterise the former ... If the situation to be planted be of small dimensions, one mass of tolerable size may be better than dividing it : but, if the ground admit of it, a variety of masses is preferable, as producing more intricacy and greater appearance of extent. In this case, the masses of shrubs will be so disposed as to show portions of lawn intersecting them in glades of different size and form. The general inclination of these masses of shrubs should tend, though in different degrees, towards the most interesting parts of the scene, either within or without the dress ground, as circumstances may be. ... Though there will be a variety in the forms of the plantations, there should be a general harmony of outline between them when they approach each other ; the more swelling parts of one opposing itself to the recess of the other. The nearer masses should generally be of lower material than the more remote, that the one may occasionally be seen over the other.

CHARLES MCINTOSH ~ **The Book of the Garden** (1855)

THE SHRUBBERY ~ The shrubbery, properly speaking, is the department of the grounds in a domain dedicated to the cultivation of shrubs valued for their beauty, variety or fragrance ; and when entering into combination with ornamental trees, particularly those of exotic origin, it produces scenes of the most agreeable character. In its too ordinary acceptation, it means exactly what it represents – a jungle of shrubs and trees, planted with little regard to effect, seldom attended to after planting, the strong being allowed to overgrow the weak, which are often the most valuable ... An error of very frequent occurrence is also fallen into – namely planting herbaceous plants and florists' flowers around the margins of shrubberies. Than this nothing can be in worse taste ... [Shrubs] of the most diminutive growth should be planted so as to unite the taller ones with the grassy margin of the walk. When the walk runs between two distinct shrubberies, or is made to cut through any portion of one, then broad margins of grass should be employed, running back as portions of the shrubbery recede, and narrowing as they advance closer to the walk, to give variety and breadth of effect ... The great mistake committed in the planting of all shrubberies is planting too thick, and never thinking afterwards of the necessity of thinning. To produce what is called immediate effect, in inexperienced hands, leads to evils seldom if ever afterwards corrected.

THE AMERICAN GARDEN ~ This is understood to be a department in large gardens or in extensive grounds, as the American Ground is in nurseries, for the culture of plants, comprising many different species, which so far only have an affinity with each other as to require a peculiar soil, without which few of them can be successfully cultivated. There seems, however, to be some incongruity in the term, as a great majority of the plants and trees found in such a department are in reality not of an American origin, but from most extra-tropical quarters of the globe ; though the types of some of the most important of them are found in America, as Azalea, Rhododendron, Magnolia &c., individuals of these genera are also natives of China, India &c. The term is, however, sanctioned both by long custom and also by cultivators ... An Amercian garden upon a large scale would be happily situated in a ravine or rocky glen, in which large patches of peaty soil naturally exist ... a meandering rill should run through the bottom of such a ravine, bordered with rocky or grassy banks, along which also the principal walks should be carried, with branch walks of a less important character winding by easy gradients, or occasionally furnished with stone steps, and leading through the

groups of shrubs in such lines as would show here and there the whole, or such parts as possess any particular feature, or even individual groups or single specimens of more than ordinary interest. Such we consider the *beau ideal* of an American Garden.

EDWARD KEMP ~ How to Lay Out a Garden (1858)

In the old-fashioned systems of gardening, it is usual to place all the dwarf growing plants at the front of the bed and border, and those of greater height behind them, reserving the taller and more stately forms for the centre or back … [which] is utterly subversive of all variety, and has the most perfectly artificial appearance that can be imagined … In nature the very opposite of this is observable. Bushes and trees, herbs and bushes blend together in the freest and most indiscriminate manner. And while the edges of her groups are commonly rounded off with exquisite finish, spiry forms sometimes also jut forth from them, and beget a charming diversity. And thus should it be with masses of plants produced by art. They should have a roundness of outline, and yet be in the strongest sense irregular ; the tallest plants being brought near the fronts at some of the most prominent parts, and interspersed through the groups at various intervals ; being backed up by those of the next size, and the interspaces filled with smaller and middle-sized plants. Ordinarily, the boldest swells in the groups should have the boldest plants in them, and the smaller projections be furnished with plants a size or two lower ; while the retiring and narrow parts may be made up with low or second-sized shrubs alone.

WILLIAM ROBINSON ~ The Wild Garden (1870)

Shrubbery, Plantation and Wood ~ It must not be thought that the wild garden can be formed only in places where there is some extent of rough pleasure ground. Pretty results may be had from it in even small gardens, on the fringes of shrubberies and plantations, and on open spaces between shrubs, where we may have plant-beauty instead of garden graveyards – the dug shrubbery borders seen in gardens, public or private. Every shrubbery that is so needlessly dug over every winter may be full of beauty. The custom of digging shrubbery borders prevails now in almost every garden, and there is no worse custom. When winter is once come, every gardener, with the best intentions, prepares to make war upon the roots of everything in his shrubbery. The practice is to trim and mutilate the shrubs and to dig all over the ground that is full of feeding roots. Choice shrubs are disturbed, herbaceous plants are disrooted, bulbs are injured, the roots as well as the tops of the shrubs are mutilated, and a miserable aspect is given to the borders … While such evil practice is the rule, we cannot have a fresh carpet of living things in a plantation. What secrets one might have in the hidden parts of these now dug shrubberies – in the half-shady spots where little colonies of rare exotic wildings might thrive. All the labour that produces these ugly dug borders is worse than thrown away, and the shrubs would do even better if left alone. .

THOMAS MAWSON ~ The Art and Craft of Garden Making (1926)

PLANTING FOR LANDSCAPE EFFECT ~ It is when we come to planting ornamental shrubs near the house, and fringing the lawns, that our chief difficulties arise. In choosing the shrubs and trees for the purely ornamental plantations, we must remember that they are not like the wild plants, all natives of one country, and harmonious by association or by some natural law. They come from many countries and are not naturally conditioned to ours, and unless arranged with care, look incongruous together … The garden owner finds that the naturalistic theory fails him. He cannot imitate nature in the arrangement of plants that have their native homes in different countries, and may never have made each other's acquaintance until they met in his garden. If he attempts no arrangement at all, he will find that he has produced a chaos as ugly as the mixed shrubbery of the suburban garden …

Deciduous shrubs in the shrubbery border appear to be nothing more than failures or dead in the winter months. Rhododendrons are no better friends ; their coarse thick leaves are not in harmony with our foliage, yet no client will tolerate their absence. The only place where they can be said to be at home is in a clearing in a wood. They are the unsociables of shrubland, and for this reason are best planted in drifts or glades by themselves … In designing a shrubbery border, having determined its extent, its outlines and the general silhouette, fix upon some well furnished hardy shrub, apportioning it in good masses [and] against this plan the effects of gay-leaved or flowering shrubs, deciduous or evergreen as the case may be, in groups mostly, with here and there an accident or surprise … Remember in the case of a garden that it is a design ; and pattern and rhythm are the soul of design. We wish for instance for some contrast between two plants of different character. That contrast will be insignificant if there is only one example. We must either repeat it at intervals along the border, or emphasise it by the use of a good many plants of the two contrasting kinds arranged together.

CHRISTOPHER DINGWALL ~ GUIDELINES : OCTOBER 2006

Some Occurrences of Shrubs and Shrubberies in Poetry

John Milton (1667)

… the roof
Of thickest covert was interwoven shade,
Laurel and myrtle, and what higher grew
Of firm and fragrant leaf ; on either side
Acanthus, and each odorous bushy shrub
Fenced up the verdant wall; each beauteous flower,
Iris all hues, roses and jessamine
Reared high their flourished heads …

Sir John Clerk of Penicuik (1730)

Whatever charms in rural life are known,
Those most conspicuous are in woods and groves,
Where solitude no bold intruder finds.
Then thro' the bushy trees and lonesome shades,
Nature in all her several windings trace ;
Search out the beautys which unfinished lye
And let assisting Art compleat the scene.

Anon. to Lord Viscount Irwin (1767)

And truest elegance in planting's shown,
When trees around are negligently thrown,
In numbers not too many or too few,
Grouped as in Nature's sweetest scenes we view ...
Let flowering shrubs in blooming beauty rise,
Of pleasing scents and variegated dies ;
The Sumach, Tutzan and Acacia soft,
The Tulip-tree that bears its flowers aloft ;
The red Mezerion and Syringa white,
The dusky Bay, the Laurustinus bright ;
The pale Laburnam, grac'd with yellow plumes,
The purple Lilacs fill'd with mild perfumes '
Th'Althea, Opulus, and Virgin's bower,
Th'Hypericum, and Cistus' spotted flower,
The double Almond, Bramble, Cherry, Thorn,
The blushing peach as ruddy as the morn.
Th'Jasmins, Roses, and the Woodbines sweet,
With nameless sorts the fragrant list complete.
But in gradation let their shades appear,
The bright, the dark, the dusky and the clear,
Dispers'd around with sweet inchanting air,
Wildly romantic ! Elegantly fair !

William Mason (c.1780)

… His taste will best conceive
The new arrangement, whose footsteps, used
To forest haunts, have pierc'd their opening dells,
Where frequent tufts of sweetbrier, box or thorn
Steal on the grass sward, but admit fair space
For many a mossy maze to wind between.
So here did Art arrange her flow'ry groups
Irregular, yet not in patches quaint,
But interpos'd between the wandering lines
Of shaven turf which twisted to the path.

Richard Payne Knight (1798)

Curse on the shrubbery's insipid scenes !
Of tawdry fringe encircling vapid greens ;
Where incongruities so well unite,
That nothing can by accident be right ;
Thickets that neither shade nor shelter yield ;
Yet from the cooling breeze the senses shield :
Prim gravel walks, through which we winding go,
In endless serpentines that nothing show ...
O waft me hence to some neglected vale ;
Where, shelter'd, I may court the western gale ;
And 'midst the gloom which native thickets shed,
Hide from the noontide beam my aching head.

James Alves (1800)

The prospect opens beautifully new.
How varied what the sylvan scene supplies.
Trees, shrubs and herbage of unnumbered dies,
Fanes, mansions, castles, all the prospect yields,
Fair scattered hamlets, and prolific fields …

Alexander Laing (1819)

There ancient Brackley on a height is seen
Crush'd to the ground, bards mourn the tragic scene;
The flow'ry walks with noxious weeds o'ergrown,
The garden reft, and every sweet has flown.
No more the belles on promenades are found,
The pointed ploughshare tears the flow'ry ground :
No trace remains where pomp and beauty reigned.
Pale desolation in the hall lies chain'd.
Each tree and shrub in hollow accents mourn[s]
The listless plain and ruined walls forlorn.

John Malcolm [on *Père la Chaise*] (1828)

Oft through that wide and calm sepulchral grove
At dewy eve I've found it bliss to rove ;
For oh ! its sacred solitude might seem
A scene for lover's walk or poet's dream ;
Where, fenced with odorous shrubs and gay parterre
A bower of beauty bloomed each sepulchre.

Reginald Arkell (1942)

She stood beneath the trees and smiled :
"Darling of course, we'll keep it wild.
It would be wrong to interfere.
Nature must still be mistress here.
Darling, I've *always* had in mind
A wilderness, where we shall find
The first wild blossoms of the spring -
Darling, we mustn't touch a *thing*.
Whereat she donned her gardening kit,
And, when we'd "…cleared things up a bit",
Our wilderness is grown so tame,
That foxgloves hang their heads in shame.