

CIRCE'S GARDEN: PATTERNS IN LADY LONDONDERRY'S DESIGN AND  
MANAGEMENT OF MOUNT STEWART NORTHERN IRELAND 1917-1955



*A Report Prepared by*

Stephanie N. Bryan, MLA

*for*

The Royal Oak Foundation,

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and Mount Stewart Gardens

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Finally, I would like to thank my mentors and colleagues at the University of Georgia for helping me cultivate my interests in historic landscape management and garden history. I truly appreciate Dr. Eric MacDonald and Professor Emeritus Ian J. W. Firth for reading early drafts of this document and for their encouragement throughout the process.

## *EXECUTIVE SUMMARY*

The early twentieth-century gardens at Mount Stewart are historically significant because of their association with Edith, Lady Londonderry, a British aristocrat whose fusion of styles produced a truly eclectic and idiosyncratic place. The current significance of the gardens, however, extends beyond its historical associations. For example, in the wake of many global challenges—climate change, a generation of youth disengaged from nature, energy descent, and economic downturns—Mount Stewart, similar to other gardens, provides a place where people can cultivate their relationships with nature and with each other. Thus, it is important for researchers regularly to reexamine sources, such as Lady Londonderry's original garden books, that can reveal information about how to manage and interpret the gardens in ways relevant to the present day.

This report results from extensive research conducted in the Mount Stewart Archives and aims to guide future management and interpretation of the gardens. Following the executive summary, the report contains five parts. Part I is an introductory chapter that discusses the purpose and scope of the report, the research methods and sources, and the nature and character of Lady Londonderry's garden books. Part II provides an historical overview of Mount Stewart and explains the evolution and significance of the gardens. Part II concludes by raising the main research questions regarding what key characteristics originally defined the gardens and what management strategies Lady Londonderry and others employed to respond to changing external circumstances. Parts III and IV address the research questions through a selection of quotes and data collected from the pages of Lady Londonderry's garden books, among other primary resources.

Part III specifically identifies characteristics of the garden during its peak period from 1917 to 1939. These characteristics include (1) an amalgamation of inspirations and influences, (2) personalized mythologies and an imaginative sensibility, (3) a range of talents, (4) an exotic collection, (5) a network of exchange, (6) color, (7) fragrance, (8) season, (9) a labor of love, and (10) a cultivated exuberance. Part IV outlines seven design and management strategies applied to the gardens from 1939 to 1955. The following subsections describe these strategies: (1) A Continuation of Earlier Practices (1939-1940); (2) Responses to Severe Weather Events (1940-1941); (3) Changes in Purpose I: Vegetables for Consumption (1941-1946); (4) Changes in Purpose II: Flowers for Market (1941-1946); (5) Seeking Labor Saving Strategies (1947-1955); (6) Economizing in the Gardens (1947-1955); and (7) Regaining Lost Knowledge (1947-1955). Finally, Part V concludes with a summary of findings, connects past practices to present goals and future challenges, and identifies topics for future research.

## ***PART I: INTRODUCTION***

### ***Purpose and Scope of Research***

The purpose of this research is to identify the aesthetic characteristics, design principles, and adaptive management strategies that defined Lady Londonderry's gardens at Mount Stewart in Northern Ireland from 1917 to 1955. This information will foremost guide the National Trust in its future management and interpretation of the gardens. While the National Trust nominated the gardens during the 1990s as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the author hopes that new areas of significance identified and detailed in this report will assist them in the process of designating Mount Stewart as a place of international esteem.

The history of Mount Stewart dates back to 1744 when Alexander Stewart purchased the manors of Comber and Newtownards, an extensive landholding that included the Templecrone demesne (later named Mount Stewart). Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the estate evolved as it passed through several generations of family members who expanded the house, gardens, and landscape park. It was not until 1915 that Lady Londonderry's husband, Charles Stewart Henry, inherited the property and succeeded to the title of 7th Marquis. Lady Londonderry began creating the gardens around 1917 and developed them with much expense and passion over a span of nearly forty years. As Lady Londonderry aged, the National Trust assumed management of the gardens in 1955.

The scope of this research is thus limited to the period from 1917-1955 when Lady Londonderry created and managed the gardens that survive today. Although she remained heavily involved in the gardens until her death in 1959, the author has not included this brief transition period in the report because the National Trust inevitably would have influenced Lady Londonderry's actions and decisions. During Lady Londonderry's period at Mount Stewart, she also created and maintained gardens at Kinloch, a shooting lodge in Sutherland where she

periodically resided. Because of time constraints, the author was unable to research this garden and determine whether Lady Londonderry might have applied design principles and management strategies similar to Mount Stewart.

Research for this report focused almost entirely on primary documents contained in the Mount Stewart Archives. The author concentrated on Lady Londonderry's nine garden books because no one has thoroughly analyzed the sources as a complete entity. The author also reviewed the National Trust's 2011 "Conservation Management Plan" to understand the significance of the gardens, the management philosophy applied by the National Trust, and challenges presently facing management. While the National Trust has managed the gardens for over fifty years, the author did not attempt to review the extensive period from 1959 through the present to gain a full understanding of how the gardens have evolved into their current state since Lady Londonderry's tenure.

#### ***Research Methods and Sources:***

The author used a variety of research methods and sources to compose this report. Primary sources, such as garden books and published articles by Lady Londonderry, provided great insight into her thought process, and revealed how she managed the gardens over a course of nearly forty years. Additionally, the author reviewed literature that comprised Lady Londonderry's library collection, specifically Arthur T. Bolton's *Gardens of Italy* and various books of the Arts and Crafts Movement. Many of these books contained markers, loose sketches, and notations by Lady Londonderry and thus served as one of her fundamental sources of inspiration.

Historic photographs complemented the aforementioned textual resources by offering a rich visual record of the gardens before World War I. Unfortunately, no photographs have been identified for the critical twenty-year period from the start of World War II in 1939 to the time when the National Trust acquired the gardens in 1955. This gap in photographic documentation forced the author to rely solely on written accounts to understand how the gardens may have changed. It is difficult to determine *why* there are no images from this period and one might question whether this was an intentional choice, or caused by some unknown external circumstance. Lady Londonderry's youngest daughter, Lady Mairi, reportedly captured the gardens on cine film during the 1950s. While these moving pictures would certainly help fill this gap in visual data, the author was unable to examine them because they remain in an obsolete viewing format.

A range of secondary resources also supplemented this research, including the following: (1) *Circe: The Life of Edith, Marchioness of Londonderry* by Anne de Courcy provided a useful biographical account, yet surprisingly contained little mention of the Mount Stewart gardens; (2) Anne Casement's unpublished report "Mount Stewart Garden Archives and Historical Survey 1917-1959" inventoried the plethora of primary resources at hand and included practical chronologies of the estate and its garden features, significant persons associated with the gardens, acquisition of plants, and so forth; (3) pamphlets published by the National Trust and intended to aid the visitor's experience supplied a combination of basic historical information and plant references; (4) the "Mount Stewart Garden Conservation Management Plan 2011" was an indispensable resource that outlines the context and significance of the gardens, and states the management philosophy currently employed by the National Trust; and, finally, (5) several

unpublished articles about the gardens, such as Michael J. Tooley's "Gertrude Jekyll and Mount Stewart" afforded detailed analyses regarding focused topics on the garden's history.

Interviews with key persons associated with the gardens proved to be an invaluable source. Lady Rose kindly shared personal recollections of her grandmother, Lady Londonderry, as well as her experience of growing up on the estate. Members of the National Trust management team, particularly Neil Porteous, Head Gardener, also contributed a wealth of historical and practical knowledge about the gardens and greater region around Strangford Lough. Additionally, informal conversations with visitors revealed much about how the public currently uses and interprets the gardens. Finally, the garden itself proved to be one of the richest resources, enabling the author to compare various recorded and verbal accounts with firsthand observations.

### *The Nature and Character of Lady Londonderry's Garden Books*

For this report, the author meticulously reviewed Lady Londonderry's nine garden books. A careful analysis of the nature and character of these books revealed what types of questions they can and cannot answer. Although garden historian Anne Casement categorized Lady Londonderry's garden books as "diaries,"<sup>1</sup> the author considers this term misleading. A diary connotes a *personal* account and usually one that offers insight into the writer's emotions or values. Moreover, a person usually maintains a diary on a daily or weekly basis, as events spur thoughts and feelings. Because Lady Londonderry's garden books do not contain any personal accounts of her feelings or emotions towards the gardens, the author has avoided using the term diary. Instead, the garden books generally fit within three categories: (1) record books, mostly containing plant orders, instructions, or documentation of design work; (2) scrapbooks,

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<sup>1</sup> Anne Casement, "Mount Stewart Garden Archives and Historical Survey 1917-1969 Part 2," (1999), 93.

predominantly comprised of article clippings, photographs, letters, and random notes; and (3) a combination of the two. *See Appendix A for a detailed description of each garden book.*

It is certainly useful that Lady Londonderry kept thorough records of the plants she procured, including quantities, prices, sources, varieties, and so forth. Unfortunately, it is difficult to infer anything about the values, events, motives, or other factors that spurred the actions documented by these statistics. While the garden books contain much correspondence, these documents also offer little personal insight because acquaintances wrote them *to* Lady Londonderry and therefore only provide one side of the conversation. The author recommends that a future researcher review the personal diaries kept by Lady Londonderry to determine whether they offer insight into how she experienced and felt about her gardens (*e.g.*, whether she predominantly viewed the gardens as a showpiece to her elite circle of friends or if they fulfilled some sort of deeper emotional need in her life).

Despite containing copious notes on plants, Lady Londonderry's garden books thus offer a fragmentary view of how the gardens developed and evolved as a whole entity. Moreover, because their content rarely flows in a consistent or sequential order, it often is difficult to piece together a coherent narrative. The disorganized nature of Lady Londonderry's garden books lends insight into her thought process and suggests that she did not think in a linear fashion. The ways Lady Londonderry experimented with her gardens through plant material and allowed the spaces to evolve organically without a definitive set of plans reflects this nonlinear aspect of her personality.

Behind the front covers, many of the garden books contain indices that Lady Londonderry later added. The subsequent inclusion of these indices further confirms the disorganization of these garden books because it suggests that Lady Londonderry probably

needed the indices to facilitate finding information relating to specific topics. The indices also signify that Lady Londonderry relied on these sources as references during the years after she created them. Likewise, it is only appropriate that we, too, should consistently rely on them to guide us in future management despite their shortcomings.

***PART II: OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORY, EVOLUTION, AND SIGNIFICANCE  
OF THE GARDENS AT MOUNT STEWART***

***Overview of the Gardens during Lady Londonderry's Tenure***

When she later recalled visiting the grounds and house at Mount Stewart during the 1910s, Edith, 7th Marchioness of Londonderry, described the estate as "the dampest, darkest, and saddest place I had ever stayed in, in the winter. Large Ilex trees almost touched the house in some places and sundry other big trees blocked out all light and air."<sup>2</sup> While the grounds at Mount Stewart left a dismal impression on Lady Londonderry, a 1913 account by her mother-in-law Theresa, 6th Marchioness of Londonderry, described a different experience of the place. In "The Garden at Mount Stewart," Theresa wrote: "In January when we gain the shelter of the drive, the brilliant green of the grisileas and the grey green ilexes give a sense of warmth and comfort ... Snowdrops all planted round the stems of the trees and the deciduous trees look like ghosts mixing with the evergreens and the dark glossy leaves of the rhododendrons, with here and there a patch of brilliant colour, the early flowering scarlet which never fails to show buds and flowers in early January."<sup>3</sup>

In 1915, only two years after Theresa wrote about the gardens, her son Charles Stewart Henry, the 7th Marques of Londonderry succeeded to the title and inherited the family estate. During this World War I period, Charles and his wife Edith frequently visited Mount Stewart, which served as a convalescent hospital for soldiers. It was not until 1921, however, when Charles became the Minister for Education in the first Ulster Parliament that he and Edith chose Mount Stewart as their permanent residence. Because the gardens at Mount Stewart suffered neglect during WWI or whether the designs were not of her taste, Lady Londonderry employed

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<sup>2</sup> Edith Marchioness of Londonderry, "Foreword to the Mount Stewart Garden Guide Book," (1956).

<sup>3</sup> For the complete transcribed account, see Anne Casement, "Mount Stewart Garden Archives and Historical Survey 1917-1959 Part One," 13-15.

soldiers left jobless after the war to "make the grounds surrounding the house not only more cheerful and livable, but beautiful as well."<sup>4</sup>

Two key occurrences that shaped Lady Londonderry's life may have instigated this act of renovation. Lady Londonderry became increasingly independent as Lord Londonderry, consumed by both political and personal affairs, remained largely absent from their marriage. Secondly, during WWI, Lady Londonderry established and managed a volunteer force comprised of tens of thousands of women, known as the Women's Legion. This experience gave Lady Londonderry the confidence and organizational skills necessary to overseeing large-scale projects, such as creating a garden.<sup>5</sup> As a member of the aristocracy, Lady Londonderry had long proven herself as a driving force in British society, and the gardens at Mount Stewart became a new vehicle for her to express her power and energy.

Taking advantage of the microclimate<sup>6</sup> that produced relatively mild weather along the nearby Strangford Lough, Lady Londonderry and her head gardener, Thomas Bolas, successfully cultivated tender plants they obtained predominantly from North American, Asiatic, and southern hemispheric regions. Few gardeners attempted to grow such non-native species elsewhere in the United Kingdom because the tender plants rarely survived the region's colder winters. Because of the microclimate, Mount Stewart infrequently experienced the hard frosts that normally would harm tender plants.

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<sup>4</sup> Londonderry, "Foreword to the Mount Stewart Garden Guide Book."

<sup>5</sup> Casement, "Mount Stewart Garden Archives and Historical Survey 1917-1959 Part One," 17.

<sup>6</sup> In 1957, Lady Londonderry described these climatic conditions: "...we are situated on the southern shore of the narrow peninsula of the Ards... The House faces almost due south and is but a stone's throw away from the salt water Lough Strangford... The eastern shore of the Ards is on the Irish Sea and Belfast Lough sweeps right round the northern shore far inland. So narrow is the space between the head of Strangford Lough and that of Belfast Lough that Mount Stewart... experiences island conditions. The climate is sub-tropical ... in hot weather we always have extremely heavy dews at night. We do not have an excessive rainfall... we get all the sun of the east coast with its drier conditions... the Gulf Stream running up the Irish Sea washes the shores all round the promontory." Londonderry, "Foreword to the Mount Stewart Garden Guide Book."

A letter dated 4 June 1929 by Mrs. R. S. Milford from The Nurseries in Chedworth offers some insight into this situation. She exclaimed, "It is heart-breaking to read of all the things that can be grown in Ireland—which we struggle to keep alive in this chilly spot!"<sup>7</sup> A letter dated 13 May 1936 from the National Botanic Gardens in Cape Town, South Africa offers another reaction. Director R. H. Compton wrote, "I have much pleasure in sending seeds of *Psoralea pinnata* herewith ... It was interesting to hear how well this charming shrub grows in Northern Ireland."<sup>8</sup>

An embankment known as the Sea Plantation, which existed between Strangford Lough and the southern edge of Mount Stewart, also enabled Lady Londonderry to grow tender plants at Mount Stewart. This feature protected the gardens from strong winds and salt waters that originated from the lough. Lady Londonderry further sheltered her gardens by enhancing a buffer of trees that grew along the southern border of the property. These unique geographic and topographic features created a situation where many plants at Mount Stewart thrived and reached record proportions in relatively short periods.

During the 1920s and 1930s, Lady Londonderry honed her horticultural skills through self-education and experimentation, and her confidence as a gardener swelled. The gardening successes at Mount Stewart undoubtedly added to a growing sense of awe and delight among Lady Londonderry's circle of family and friends, in addition to those who read romanticized accounts of the gardens in publications such as *Country Life* or *Home and Gardens*. A letter from her gardening mentor, Sir Herbert Maxwell, dated 4 September 1933, confirmed this response, stating, "You certainly fulfill the role of enchantress in all that you touch..." By the 1950s, after only several decades had passed, the garden often deceived visitors by its centuries-old

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<sup>7</sup> Edith Marchioness of Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Gardens 1927-1936," (1927-1936), 36.

<sup>8</sup> Edith Marchioness of Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Gardens 1935," (1935).

appearance. In his article entitled "Rhododendrons at Mount Stewart," Frank Kingdon-Ward explained "In this favoured spot they grow faster than they do anywhere else, thus making nonsense of the collector's reports of their size in the field."<sup>9</sup>

Lady Londonderry was part of a significant movement in the history of horticulture and gardening. Her subscriptions to foreign plant expeditions led to many new discoveries. A vast network of exchange among gardeners, horticulturalists, botanists, explorers, and plant collectors largely characterized this period in horticulture and gardening. Individuals from across the world shared and traded innumerable seeds and cuttings with each other through the mail. Consequently, the gardens at Mount Stewart housed one of the most unusual and diverse private plant collections in the British Isles.

### *Significance of the Gardens Today*

The National Trust considers Lady Londonderry's tenure from 1915 to 1959 to be Mount Stewart's most significant historical period. On its website, the National Trust succinctly explains that "Mount Stewart Gardens, by virtue of their creators, horticulture, plant collection, design and microclimate, are established as an unrivalled example of 20th-Century gardening...."<sup>10</sup> The 2011 Conservation Management Plan provides a more detailed statement of significance, a portion of which reads as follows:

"... The garden is one of the few late compartmentalised Arts and Crafts-like gardens. Mount Stewart is one of the great 20thC "personalised" gardens such as Hidcote and Nymans, which combined a strong artistic theme with an unrivalled plant collection. The basic arrangement is similar: artistically planted formal compartmentalised gardens around the house, surrounded by a more natural woodland garden with semi-natural planting. But Mount Stewart stands apart in Lady Londonderry's use of sculpture and mythology. Sculptures representing the

<sup>9</sup> Edith Marchioness of Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Gardens 1937," (1937), 215.

<sup>10</sup> National Trust, "The Garden Conservation Plan for Mount Stewart," National Trust, <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/home/view-page/item427360/264045/>.

members of the Ark Club- founded by Lady Londonderry during the First World War- populate the garden. Lady Londonderry was an early proponent of the use of cast concrete by local craftsmen to create structure & form in the garden.

Of the great plantsman's gardens from the early twentieth century such as Crarae, Inverewe, Bodnant, Rowallane—none combined their collections with such artistry of design, experimentation in their planting, or achieve such a romantic and spiritual effect. The plant collection established at Mount Stewart (when in its prime) was unique in the British Isles, and may only have been eclipsed by that of Tresco Abbey Garden on the Isle of Scilly. Mount Stewart garden is of great significance, locally within Northern Ireland, nationally and internationally. ... "<sup>11</sup>

Aside from historical significance, the National Trust recognizes that many of its protected sites are crucial to examining current global challenges of both nature and culture. The National Trust explains that "helped by the unique microclimate on the Ards Peninsula, Mount Stewart manages the largest plant collection in the National Trust's ownership."<sup>12</sup> Consequently, the gardens at Mount Stewart are "proving to be a valuable haven for some rare plants threatened by climate change in their native habitats."<sup>13</sup>

In his 1984 "Woody Plant Catalogue for Mount Stewart," Michael Lear claimed Mount Stewart's present collection of Southern Hemisphere plants as its most notable botanical asset. The mild climate at Mount Stewart permits a greater range of "species plants" to survive. Consequently, Lady Londonderry was less interested in filling her collection with cultivars and hybrids. The staff at Mount Stewart recently identified in its collection a shrub known as *Brachyglottis brunonis* (*Senecio centropapus*), which has become rare in its native Tasmanian habitat.<sup>14</sup> The National Trust secured cuttings for its Plant Conservation Centre in Devon with

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<sup>11</sup> Neil Porteous, Mike Buffin, and Phil Rollinson, "Mount Stewart Garden Conservation Management Plan 2011," (2011), 25.

<sup>12</sup> National Trust, "Setting the Example of Sustainability," National Trust, <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/mount-stewart/our-work/>.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> National Trust, "Survey at Mount Stewart Expose Important Plants," National Trust, <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/what-we-do/what-we-protect/gardens-and-parks/projects/view-page/item808960/>.

the intent that propagation "will ensure the survival of this rare specimen at Mount Stewart and in other gardens for decades to come."<sup>15</sup>

Collectively, the National Trust's sites serve as "sensitive barometers registering the pressure of environmental change on our lives, and on the natural world around us."<sup>16</sup> Thus, they are significant places where researchers can examine solutions and ways to adapt to these events. The National Trust is "keen to find ways of reducing the environmental impact of gardening" and aims for their sites to serve as models for the community.<sup>17</sup> For example, Mount Stewart recently installed a new biomass boiler, which efficiently burns locally sourced wood chips to provide heat and hot water to the vast estate. The staff has also reduced their consumption of fossil fuels by adopting "an energy-efficient approach to the working day."<sup>18</sup>

As natural resources have dwindled in the twenty-first century, so has youth engagement with nature.<sup>19</sup> Gardens like Mount Stewart are invaluable to the community because they provide places where children can cultivate relationships with nature and with each other, and lead healthier lives into their adulthood.<sup>20</sup> Additionally, such places provide a major source of tourism in Great Britain and are significant to sustaining local economies.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> National Trust, "Space to Grow: Why People Need Gardens," (2012), 14.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> National Trust, "The Warmth from the Willow," National Trust, <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/home/view-page/item401315/264045/>.

<sup>19</sup> An Independent Research Study for the National Trust released during July 2010 suggests that "Children are spending 60 percent less time in nature than their parents did at the same age." National Trust, "Our Land, For Ever, For Everyone," (2012), 9.

<sup>20</sup> National Trust, "Saves Children's Relationship with the Outdoors," National Trust, <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/what-we-do/news/view-page/item788564/>. Stephen Moss, "Natural Childhood," (National Trust, 2012).

<sup>21</sup> National Trust, "Space to Grow: Why People Need Gardens," 4.

### *Research Questions*

Today, the National Trust faces new challenges in sustaining the internationally significant gardens at Mount Stewart in the wake of global climate change, a generation of youth disengaged from nature, energy descent, and economic downturns, among other events that remain unforeseen. Undoubtedly, parallels exist between past challenges and present ones. For example, the Interwar Period of reabsorbing jobless soldiers into industry is not very different from the National Trust's recent endeavor to initiate a volunteer program that offers temporary relief to unemployed individuals, particularly from the housing sector. While the volunteer program provides a short-term solution to the management of a place that has remained dependent on large numbers of employees and volunteers, it is important to consider a long-term outlook so that management can adapt when circumstances change.

This report addresses the following questions: What characteristics defined the gardens at Mount Stewart during their peak period from 1917-1939? How did Lady Londonderry adapt her original designs to suit changing needs during WWII? After WWII, how did Lady Londonderry attempt to revitalize her gardens before she transferred ownership to the National Trust? Finally, what insight for future management can be gleaned from the aesthetic characteristics, design principles, and adaptive management strategies applied to the gardens from 1917-1955? The knowledge gained from answering these questions will guide long-term management and interpretation of the gardens. This will ultimately assist the National Trust in fulfilling its mission of keeping alive "the Londonderry spirit"<sup>22</sup> while concurrently maintaining the gardens as a powerful source of discovery and delight "for ever and for everyone."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Porteous, Buffin, and Rollinson, "Mount Stewart Garden Conservation Management Plan 2011," 27.

<sup>23</sup> National Trust, "For ever, For everyone Appeal," National Trust, <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/get-involved/donate/current-appeals/for-ever-for-everyone-appeal/>.

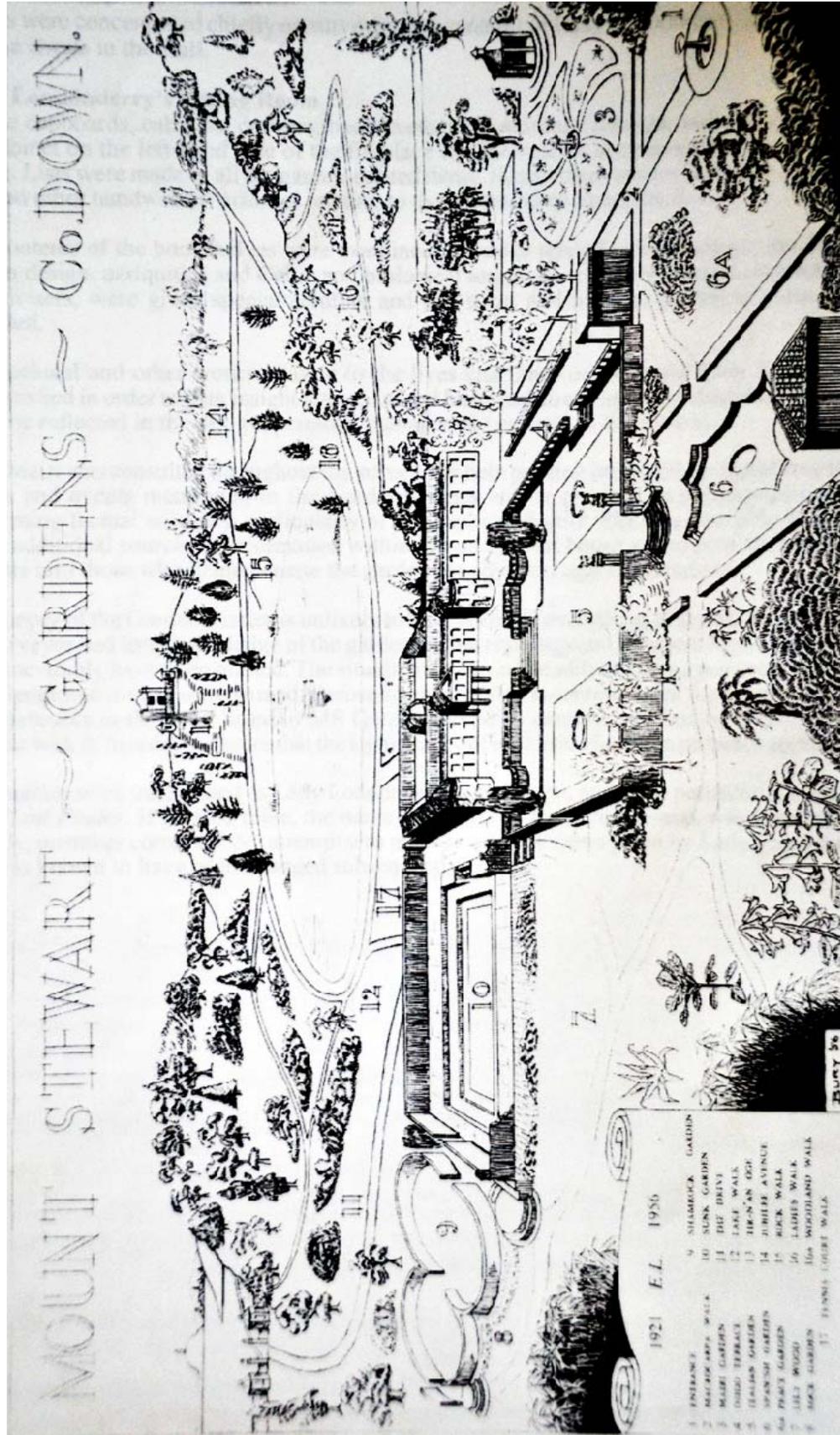


Fig. 1 (above) shows a 1956 plan of the Mount Stewart Gardens, modified by Lady Mauri Bury. The plan shows the various compartmentalized spaces, such as the following: (3) the Mairi Garden; (4) the Dodo Terrace; (5) the Italian Garden; (6) the Spanish Garden; (8) the Rock Garden; (9) the Shamrock Garden; and (10) the Sunk Garden. Several circulation routes comprise transitional spaces, such as (7) the Lily Wood, (12) the Lake Walk; and (15) the Rock Walk, (16) the Ladies Walk, and (16a) the Woodland Walk. Source: *Guide to the Gardens* published by the National Trust.

### ***Part III: AESTHETIC CHARACTERISTICS AND DESIGN PRINCIPLES***

#### ***Introduction***

Lady Londonderry's garden books and correspondence reveal many qualities that fundamentally defined the gardens at Mount Stewart as they reached their pinnacle during the mid- to late-1930s. Since the gardens mostly were laid out and first achieved fame from 1917 through 1939, a full understanding of their historic characteristics requires a close examination of that period.<sup>24</sup> This section of the report identifies important aspects of the gardens, which are grouped into four headings. The first section titled *Sources of Ideas* describes (1A) an amalgamation of inspirations and influences, (1B) personalized mythologies and an imaginative sensibility, and (1C) a range of talents involved in creating the gardens. The second section categorized as *Plant Selections and Introductions* details Lady Londonderry's (2A) exotic collection of plants and her (2B) network of exchange. The third section explains the *Plant Arrangements* at Mount Stewart, including (3A) color, (3B) fragrance, and (3C) season. The fourth and final section discusses *Labor Intensive Practices* through Lady Londonderry's (4A) labor of love and (4B) cultivated exuberance.

#### ***1) Sources of Ideas***

##### **1A) An Amalgamation of Inspirations and Influences:**

In developing the gardens at Mount Stewart, Lady Londonderry referenced many and varied sources. She drew inspiration from prevailing gardening practices, fond childhood memories, travels, literature, and popular publications, among others. As Lady Londonderry

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<sup>24</sup> The purpose of the information contained in the subsequent sections is to provide a basis for understanding and evaluating the significance of changes that occurred in the gardens during and after the Second World War. The characteristics identified are by no means an exhaustive list and certainly many other qualities exist. In addition, some of the characteristics warrant further investigation because they are only briefly described within the report.

assimilated these diverse interests into her gardens, she created a highly personalized place that she could enjoy with her family and friends.

Lady Londonderry's Mediterranean travels, coupled with her well-read copy of the Arthur Thomas Bolton's *The Gardens of Italy*, infused a strong Italian influence into her designs. For example, her plans for an orangery greatly resembled the layout of the Medici Villa Castello with its many potted fruit trees (Figs. 2-3). Terracotta pots filled with orange trees adorned various garden spaces at Mount Stewart and as Lady Londonderry suggested, "On warm evenings their delicious scent almost reminds one of Italy."<sup>25</sup> In her garden book, she explicitly stated that the "idea [for the Italian Garden was] taken from gardens of Italy—Villa Gambariaia (Florence) and adapted to site—also Villa Caprarola."<sup>26</sup> She also wrote that the "rose garden design and lower terrace [was] designed by myself—but after the style of one of the formal gardens of Dunrobin," her childhood home in Scotland. Adding to the mixture of influences, she further explained, "The gateway out of garden ... [was] taken partly from the gateway at Easton Neston, Northamptonshire."<sup>27</sup>

In addition to Italian influences and fond memories, Lady Londonderry drew upon contemporary practices in British gardening, such as through the Arts and Crafts Movement. The library collection in her sitting room included numerous Arts and Crafts publications, many of which contain Lady Londonderry's place markers, notations, and sketches.<sup>28</sup> Lady Londonderry

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<sup>25</sup> Edith Marchioness of Londonderry, "The Gardens at Mount Stewart," *Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society* LX, no. 12 (1935): 522.

<sup>26</sup> Edith Marchioness of Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Garden Book No. 1 1922-1927," (1922-1927), 5.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> This collection includes the following books: *Garden Architecture* by Geoffrey T. Henslow (Dean and Son, London 1926); *Wall and Water Gardens* by Gertrude Jekyll; three copies of *Garden Ornament* by Gertrude Jekyll and Christopher Hussey (Country Life, 1918); *Gardens for Small Country Houses* by Gertrude Jekyll and Sir Lawrence Weaver (Country Life, London, sixth edition, 1927); *Art and Craft of Garden Making* by T.H. and E.P. Mawson (Batsford, London, fifth edition, 1926); and so forth. Casement, "Mount Stewart Garden Archives and Historical Survey 1917-1969 Part 2," 245-51.

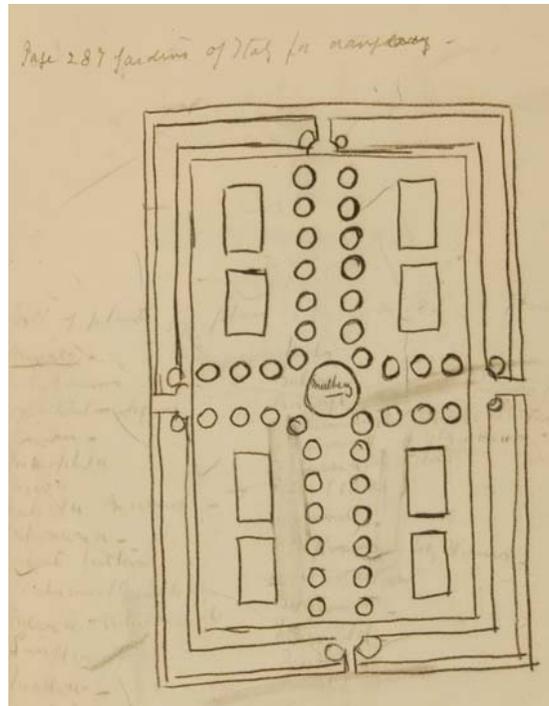


Fig. 2 (above) shows Lady Londonderry's plan for an orangery in the Walled Garden. Her writing above the plan indicates "Page 281 Gardens of Italy" inspired it. Source: Londonderry, Edith, Marchioness of. "Mount Stewart Garden Book No. 2 1922-1927,"7.

Fig. 3 (below) shows the referenced image of Villa Castello. Lady Londonderry's plan bears much resemblance in the quadripartite division of space, the rectangular beds contained within each section, and the many potted plants lining the paths. Source: Bolton, Arthur T. *Gardens of Italy*. England: Country Life Limited, 1919.



owned three copies of *Garden Ornament* written by Gertrude Jekyll and Christopher Hussey, which implies that she highly valued this particular work. The gardens at Mount Stewart contain most types of garden ornaments illustrated within the text, such as gates, seats, stairways, pools, terraces, and courts.

Although the library collection at Mount Stewart confirms that Gertrude Jekyll's ideas and theories greatly influenced Lady Londonderry, correspondence and historic photographs suggest that she did not always follow Jekyll's personal advice. For example, in a letter to Lady Londonderry dated 19 December 1925, Jekyll wrote,

"Many thanks for so kindly letting me see the photographs of the Mount Stewart gardens ... The garden seems to have grown up well ... Looking at the photograph of the house front with the large flight of steps it looks as if the house ought to be relieved of the thick growth of Ivy that smothers the pediment and top of the portico and in fact the whole projection. That facade wants these architectural features unobscured, and to have the natural light and shade of all the part that stands out as intended by the architect. ... I know you will let me make these remarks..."

Historic photographs from the 1930s reveal that for many years Lady Londonderry instead maintained a heavy cover of vines on the south facade of the house (Figs. 5-6).

Aside from correspondence, it is difficult to determine whether Jekyll played a role in any of the planting schemes at Mount Stewart. In 1920, when the gardens were still in their early stages, Jekyll produced a series of plans for the West Garden, the terrace between the West Garden and the house, and the Italian Garden.<sup>29</sup> It is uncertain to what extent Lady Londonderry

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<sup>29</sup> Michael Tooley suggests "a comparison of the planting plans for the walls of the Sunk Garden with the plants that were growing there in August 1983 and the metal labels that have survived *in situ* from the 1920s shows that for the walls, at least, Gertrude Jekyll's planting plans were realised." For more detailed information regarding Tooley's analysis and theories regarding the Jekyll-Londonderry connection, refer to his unpublished paper: Michael J. Tooley, "Gertrude Jekyll and Mount Stewart."

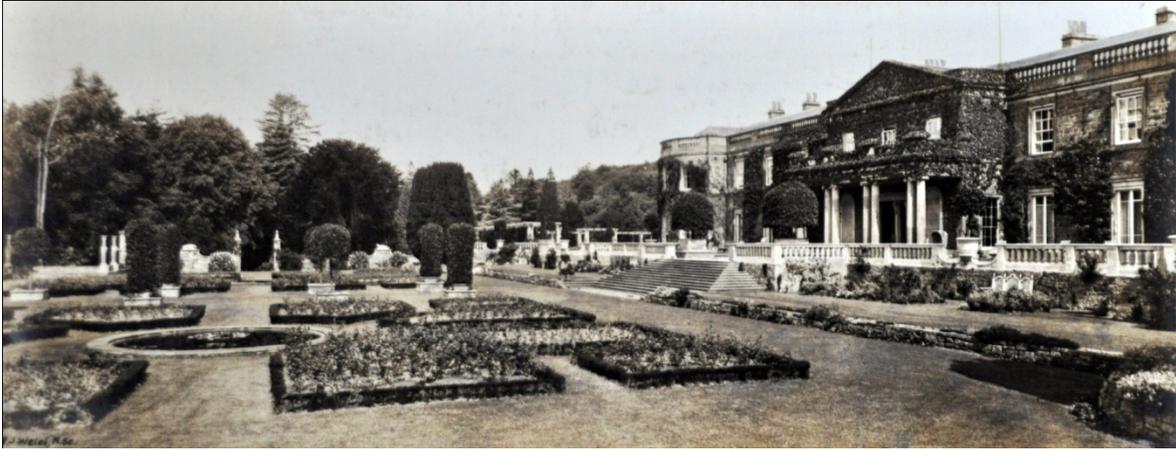


Fig. 5 (above) shows thick ivy on the south facade of the house in 1925, around the same time when Jekyll wrote to Lady Londonderry. Source: Mount Stewart Archives.

Fig. 6 (below) shows an image of the house by R. J. Welch in the 1930s captured from a similar angle. Both pictures reveal a thick cover of ivy maintained on the facade, with columns and windows remaining exposed. Source: Mount Stewart Archives.



may have had input into Jekyll's layout and plant selections. Furthermore, it is hard to determine whether Lady Londonderry ever fully or partially implemented the designs. For example, some of Lady Londonderry's planting records for the West Garden correspond to plants on Jekyll's list, such as veronicas and delphiniums. Lady Londonderry's notes, however, infrequently indicate where she specifically placed plants and most often suggest only a general location within the gardens. Her records also imply that her planting plans varied from year to year. Lady Londonderry wrote that in 1921 "antirrhinums - cherry red - [West Garden] beds first completed."<sup>30</sup> In 1922, she stated, "Anchusa and Delphiniums - from Whiteless - very successful" and by autumn of the same year, she suggested to "Replant beds - using Dahlias ... *Gladiola padavennis* and Primulinus mixed 1000 Liliams - *candidum* - *superbum* and *pardalinum* - 500 *Hyacinthus candicans* - 48 *Aconitum wilsoni* and *fischeri*."<sup>31</sup>

The correspondence confirms, however, that Lady Londonderry purchased plants from Jekyll and that she visited Jekyll's garden at her home, Munstead Wood. In a letter dated 9 November 1927, Jekyll wrote, "That good undershrub that you saw here, that makes good cover (and food) for game, is *Gaultheria shallon*. I could send you almost any quantity. ... I am so glad to know that the plants from here are doing well." While this correspondence does not offer any insight into the personal relationship between Jekyll and Lady Londonderry, it at least verifies they maintained a limited business relationship.

In addition to Arts and Crafts influences, Lady Londonderry called upon her Scottish heritage and upbringing to entwine themes from Celtic folklore into her gardens. For example, she delineated the Shamrock Garden with a trifoliate enclosure of clipped hedges (Fig. 7). Atop

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<sup>30</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Garden Book No. 1 1922-1927," 25.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.



Fig. 7 shows an image by R.J. Welch of the hand-shaped planting bed, which Lady Londonderry would have appropriately filled with red flowered plants. Source: Mount Stewart Archives.

the hedges, topiaries depicted "a complete hunting scene supposed to represent the family of Stewart arriving for the chase...The figures...were taken from Mary 1st of England's Book of Hours."<sup>32</sup> The main feature inside the Shamrock Garden, however, was a "large bed [that formed] ... the left hand, the bloody hand of the McDonnell's, the direct ancestors of Frances Anne, Marchioness of Londonderry."<sup>3334</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Londonderry, "The Gardens at Mount Stewart."

<sup>33</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Garden Book No. 1 1922-1927," 40.

<sup>34</sup> The story relates to when two rival Scottish clans raced from Scotland to Ireland, in the hopes of whoever touched Ireland first would possess the land. As McDonnell saw that he was losing the race, he cut off his left hand, threw it on the shore, and claimed the land.

Celtic themes are evident elsewhere in the gardens, such as in the family burial grounds which Lady Londonderry aptly named Tir N'a nOg—or land of the forever young—and a nearby sculpture of the white stag, who, according to legend, accompanied spirits to Tir N'a nOg.<sup>35</sup> Lady Londonderry's garden books show a preoccupation with these themes, and she often saved articles on topics such as legends and superstitions in the garden.<sup>36</sup> Additionally, she collected books such as Ella Young's *Celtic Wonder Tales* and even composed her own manuscript entitled *Character and Tradition*. While many gardens contain Celtic themes, Classical architecture, or Arts and Crafts ornaments, the amalgamation of these influences distinguishes the gardens at Mount Stewart.

### **1B) Personalized Mythologies and an Imaginative Sensibility:**

Lady Londonderry worked in a long-standing European tradition in which designers wove Classical mythology into garden layout, architecture, and ornament. Similar to other garden designers, Lady Londonderry selected deities and mythologies from the Classical canon as a means to comment on her own personality, life history, accomplishments, values, and politics. Lady Londonderry's practice of selectively incorporating Classical mythology was not unique; however, the result of a garden with mythological elements as biographical commentary on its owner and author is necessarily idiosyncratic and individual.

Some time during 1915, shortly after moving to Mount Stewart, Lady Londonderry and her circle of family and friends known as the "Ark" began to hold weekly meetings over dinner. This ritual offered the members a much-needed reprieve from wartime work and soon became an

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<sup>35</sup> Porteous, Buffin, and Rollinson, "Mount Stewart Garden Conservation Management Plan 2011," 26.

<sup>36</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Gardens 1927-1936," 124-25.

outlet for fun. Although membership in the Ark was by invitation only, the club quickly grew to include an eclectic mix of personalities ranging from poets to politicians.

Members were required to adopt the name of a real or mythological creature, and Edith identified herself with "Circe," the alluring sorceress from Greek mythology.<sup>37</sup> By 1924, Lady Londonderry had commemorated certain members through cast-concrete sculptures of their chosen characters that she placed throughout the gardens. She likely derived the forms for these pieces likely from illustrations in *Queen Mary's Psalter*, a religious book that held special significance to Lady Londonderry. The book also inspired the topiaries surrounding the Shamrock Garden.<sup>38</sup> Lady Londonderry conceived the Dodo Terrace to display many of these sculptures and drew inspiration for the terrace architecture from the Boboli Gardens in Florence (Figs. 8-10).

Lady Londonderry also derived the structure and organization of the herm statues in the Italian Garden at Mount Stewart from Italian influences, particularly the Upper Garden of the Villa Farnese at Caprarola. Lady Londonderry selected imagery for the herms to reflect her persona of Circe.<sup>39</sup> The herms sequentially portrayed scenes from Homer's *Odyssey* in which Circe used magic potions to transform her enemies into swine (Figs. 11-13). For example, the first herm shows a man's face flanked by clusters of grapes and swine's legs. On the second herm, the face changes shape while a pair of hands grasps a cup presumably filled with Circe's potion. Finally, the third herm depicts a fully transformed, devilish swine-like face with four

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<sup>37</sup> Anne de Courcy, *Circe, The Life of Edith, Marchioness of Londonderry* (Great Britain: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1992).

<sup>38</sup> Lady Londonderry obtained a copy of this during Christmas 1912 from her mother. The volume contains various notations and marks by Lady Londonderry and the illustrations more than likely inspired the ark and several of the animal sculptures.

<sup>39</sup> Lady Londonderry seems to have truly identified with this character. Correspondents, such as Lord Charles Dunleath, who wrote personal letters to Lady Londonderry about gardening matters, often addressed her as "My dear Circe."

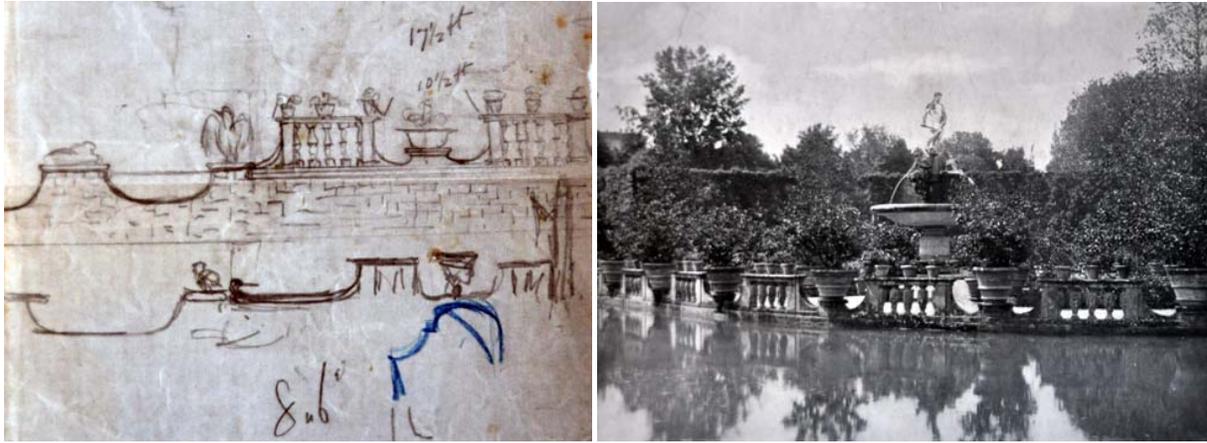


Fig. 8 (above left) shows an undated conceptual sketch for the Dodo Terrace by Lady Londonderry architecturally inspired by the balustrade of the Isolotto from the Boboli Gardens in Florence (Fig. 9, above right). Sources: Sketch found as a bookmark in Lady Londonderry's copy of *Gardens of Italy* 1919 Country Life publication. Source: Bolton, Arthur T. *Gardens of Italy*, 271. England: Country Life Limited, 1919.

Fig.10 (below) depicts the completed Dodo Terrace. The Dodo (as seen to the left of the image perched atop four pillars) represented Lady Londonderry's father, Henry Chaplin, who was often satirized as such for sitting in Parliament for such a long period of time. Charley, Lord Londonderry, was symbolized by the Cheetah (to the right side of the image, in the middle of and below the two griffins mounted on the Loggia), a pun referencing his rampant infidelity to Lady Londonderry. Some of these figures reappear on the wall that delineates the western end of the Italian Garden. Source: Image by R. Welch from 1925 photo album. Mount Stewart Archives.





Figs. 11-13 show the detailing and sequential ordering of the herms located in the Italian Garden at Mount Stewart. Source: Images taken by Stephanie N. Bryan on 15 June 2012.

swine's legs. The significance of the orangutans placed atop each herm is not evident. While the gardens at Mount Stewart often served as a social setting for Lady Londonderry's circle of family and friends, the herms undoubtedly stood as a symbolic gesture of her power and place in society.

Exotic plants augmented the dream-like atmosphere she created at Mount Stewart. Lady Londonderry described the effect such flora had on visitors accustomed to the typical British climate: "Planted at the end of the clearing, but not so as to impede the very beautiful view of the Mourne Mountains which are seen across the water some twenty to thirty miles off, is a group of *Pinus Pinea*. Plants of *Magnolia grandiflora*, Exmouth variety, are growing near the woodland

side; Acacias have made great growth and there are many Cordylines. Arriving from the colder districts in England for Christmas you seem to be in fairyland."<sup>40</sup>

Lady Londonderry intimated her love of mythologies and high level of imagination in her published writings. She described, "There is a feeling of enchantment about the place, and indeed it is not hard to believe that in this most mystical land it is, even now, as much the magic island of gods and initiates, as it was when the sacred fires flashed from its purple heath-covered, honey scented, mountain tops and mysterious round towers on island and hill." A Neolithic tumulus called the "cromlech" located on the Mount Stewart grounds prompted Lady Londonderry to relate her gardening successes to the ancient race that once presided over the landscape. She wrote, "Is it too great a fantasy to think these shades are with us now in this land of Heart's Desire—that they themselves have taken Mount Stewart under their protection and lent a hand in the fashioning of these grounds and glades, and made a garden blossom in the twinkling of an eye, where none was before."<sup>41</sup>

The imaginative sensibility that defined the garden experience was not limited to permanent or tangible features as outdoor events in performing arts certainly enhanced the feeling on special occasions. In an article entitled, "The Gardens at Mount Stewart," dated 3 July 1926, Mrs. T. J. Andrews wrote about a musical performance of Boughton's "Immortal Hour" that occurred in the gardens. The author described the experience with great passion: "... Of the dream and wonder of the singing, and the acting and the perfect setting of the scene, it is difficult to write in any way that might not sound hyperbolic and sensational, but those who were there

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<sup>40</sup> Londonderry, "The Gardens at Mount Stewart," 527.

<sup>41</sup> Edith Marchioness of Londonderry, "Mount Stewart: The Land of Heart's Desire," *Northern Ireland* 1, no. 8 (1926).

will never forget it; and to some it seemed to bring again the golden days of Greece when, in open air theatres, music, and the drama, were brought into the hearts and lives of men."<sup>42</sup>

### **1C) A Range of Talents:**

Bringing Lady Londonderry's elaborate ideas into fruition required a combination of skilled artisans. Her head gardener, Thomas Bolas, undoubtedly played a leading role in the creation of the gardens. In an article, Lady Londonderry explained that Mr. Bolas was "... able and willing to carry out designs from the roughest plans, and together he and I have worked out the designs, whether of buildings, walls or flower-beds, on the actual sites."<sup>43</sup> Thomas Beattie, a stonemason from Newtownards, who produced much of the stonework, garden buildings, sculptures, and gateways, contributed to this local talent.<sup>44</sup> Additionally, Joe Girvan, a stonemason from Greyabbey, erected many of the garden walls,<sup>45</sup> artist Edmund Brock supplied designs for the topiary in the Shamrock Garden, and Robert Burnett, an ironworker from Yorkshire, produced the wire frameworks to support the topiaries (Fig. 14).<sup>46</sup>

The gardens thus became a vehicle for expressing the range of talents possessed by Lady Londonderry and others. While most gardens similarly display a high degree of artistry in their architecture and ornaments, the gardens at Mount Stewart were distinct because they mixed original artworks with many common, often mass-produced items (Figs. 15-16), such as wicker furniture.<sup>47</sup> This assortment added to the overall eclectic nature of the gardens.

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<sup>42</sup>Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Garden Book No. 1 1922-1927," 159.

<sup>43</sup> Londonderry, "The Gardens at Mount Stewart."

<sup>44</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Garden Book No. 1 1922-1927," 54.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 27, 32.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 36-38.

<sup>47</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Gardens 1927-1936," 2.

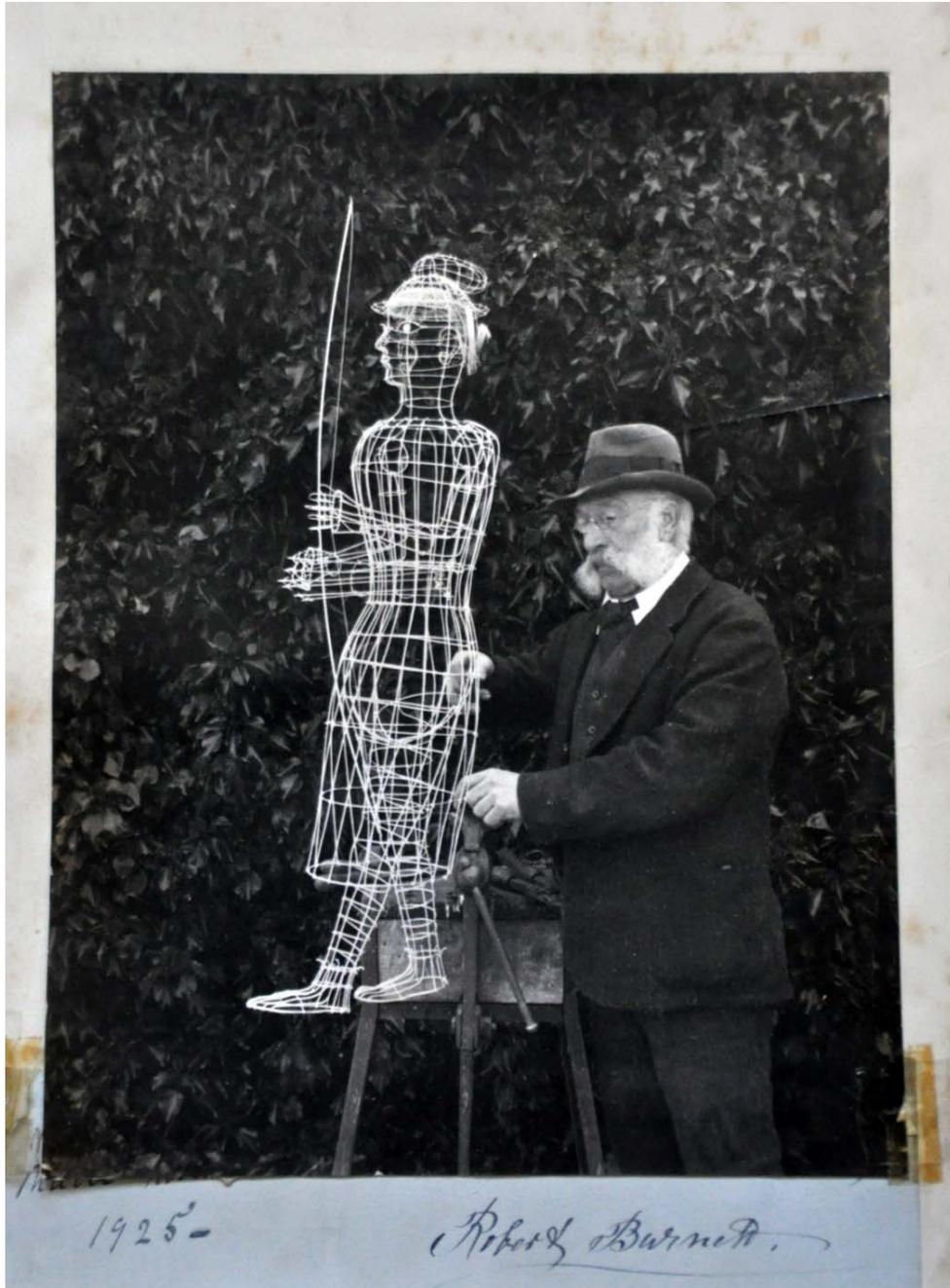


Fig. 14 shows ironworker Robert Burnett from Yorkshire meticulously creating the wire frame used for one of the topiaries that Lady Londonderry placed atop the hedge in the Shamrock Garden. Images always depict Mr. Burnett dressed in a full suit and hat, which indicates the pride he took in his profession as an artisan. Source: Londonderry, Edith, Marchioness of. "Mount Stewart Garden Book No. 1 1922-1927," 37.

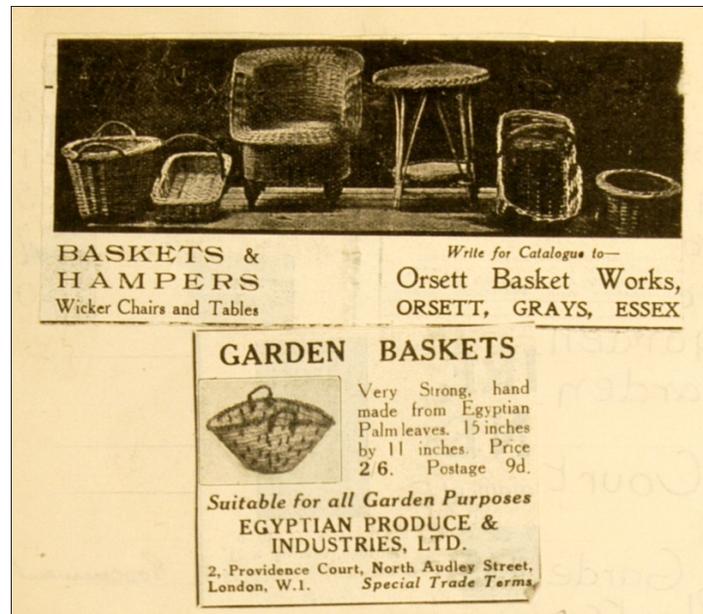


Fig. 15 (above) shows advertisements for common garden ornaments that caught Lady Londonderry's attention. Source: Londonderry, Edith, Marchioness of. "Mount Stewart Gardens 1927-1936," 2.

Fig. 16 (below) shows how Lady Londonderry filled her gardens with common items, such as the wicker chair and table located in the bottom left corner of the image. Source: Mount Stewart Archives.



## 2) *Plant Selections and Introductions*

### 2A) **An Exotic Collection**

Lady Londonderry had an unquenchable thirst for "unusual," "uncommon," and "rare" plants.<sup>48</sup> She filled her gardens with an array of plant types, such as bulbs, vines, shrubs, and trees. On 16 September 1926, Sir Herbert Maxwell wrote to Lady Londonderry that, "The lust for lilies is a contagious disease as deadly as rhododenronitis, from which you suffer incurably already." A visit by Lady Londonderry in 1922 to the gardens at Rostrevor House, which Sir John Ross of Bladensburg had created on the slopes of a sheltered hill overlooking Carlingford Lough in County Down perhaps, triggered this "lust." Lady Londonderry reminisced, "I shall never forget the wonder and amazement of that visit ... in which Sir John initiated me into the many and marvelous trees, shrubs and plants from countries all over the world, that could, with knowledge and skill, be grown by the seaboard of County Down. It is due to Sir John's encouragement and knowledge and the help he gave me, together with countless shrubs of all descriptions, seeds, and cuttings that he sent here, that the gardens at Mount Stewart contain so many tender and beautiful things."<sup>49</sup>

An article about Mount Stewart from the Naturalist Field Club offers insight into the variety of rare and interesting plants that Lady Londonderry had already acquired by 1926. The author described many exotic plant species located around the Pergola and West Garden as follows: "... Eucalyptus trees—*E. globulus*—the Blue Gum of Australia, growing at Mount Stewart to a height of 85 feet; a New Zealand Tree fern—*Dicksonia antarctica*—and the rare Californian shrub *Dendromecon rigidum*, with its big yellow flowers ... The Pergola is planted with twenty species or varieties of Australian and New Zealand Acacias, the Club Palm,

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<sup>48</sup> These terms recur frequently throughout the letters of correspondence, seed lists and plant catalogues, and article clippings collected by Lady Londonderry.

<sup>49</sup> Edith Marchioness of Londonderry, *Retrospect* (London: Frederick Muller Ltd., 1938).

*Cordyline australis*; the Chusan Palm, *Chamaerops humilis*; Ginger Plant, *Hedychium Greenii*; Japanese Banana, *Musa japonica*; Jerusalem Sage, *Phlomis fruticosa*; Chilian Nut, *Guerina avellana*; Cork tree, *Quercus subes*; Bottle brush Tree, *Metrosideros*; Loquat, *Eriobotrya*; *Viburnum rhytidophyllum* from China; *Eucryphia cordifolia* and *Crinodendron Hookeri* from Chile with *Desfontainea spinosa* and some fine lilies, *Lilium auratum*, *L. Henryi*, *L. Pardalinum*..."<sup>50</sup> This quote offers a mere glimpse of the countless species Lady Londonderry introduced to Mount Stewart, from countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Tasmania, Chile, Italy, the United States, India, China, and Japan.

Lady Londonderry not only desired such plants for their exotic qualities, but also because she associated them with special places or stories. For example, in a letter dated 28 January 1938 Arthur Wauchope wrote, "...I am now sending you some of these (Olive seeds from Gethsemane)... I am also sending you a few pods of seeds of the Judas tree which you might like to have, also from the Holy Land."<sup>51</sup> A letter dated 29 January 1932 from Sir Lionel Earle provides further insight. Earle wrote, "Our greatest plant treasure at the moment is *Prostanthera coccinea* from Kangaroo Island. Seeds of this were collected for me by a lady who obtained a permit to visit the Island to paint. The Island is a close preserve for a very rare flora and fauna. This *Prostanthera* is a glorious scarlet flowered shrub requiring a cool greenhouse in this country but eventually it may prove hardy in Ireland, we cannot say yet."<sup>52</sup> The collection of rare, exotic, and often expensive ornamental trees and shrubs at Mount Stewart became conversation pieces in the landscape, replacing the extravagant follies that had characterized the former English landscape gardens.

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<sup>50</sup> Edith Marchioness of Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Garden Book No. 2 1922-1927," (1922-1927), 4.

<sup>51</sup> Edith Marchioness of Londonderry, "Newspaper Clippings, Letters, and Notes " (c. 1950-3), 189.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

While collections of rare and exotic plants also characterized some gardens of Lady Londonderry's day, Mount Stewart stood apart from other contemporary Irish and British gardens, such as Rowallane and Bodnant, because its garden architecture and ornaments also reflected unusual and foreign qualities. This is evident in an article dated 14 April 1930 by R. J. Welch, which describes a group of women from Belfast visiting the gardens at Mount Stewart. Welch wrote, "The models of the long extinct Dodo, that unwieldy bird of the Island of Mauritius, in the Indian Ocean, were new to the visitors, none of whom had ever seen Dodo models before. ...through the Dodo gateway ... the fine tall eucalyptus trees were pointed out; the long strips of bark that they shed periodically were examined with interest. They were told that these big blue gums from Australia or Tasmania were among the tallest trees in the world in their native forests, and that they fruited abundantly at Mount Stewart, which they do not do, we are told, even in the South of England."<sup>53</sup>

## **2B) A Network of Exchange:**

Beyond ample income, the relationships forged between Lady Londonderry and others who possessed shared gardening interests made it possible for Lady Londonderry to procure and cultivate such rarities. Lady Londonderry's network grew over time to include neighbors, nurserymen, gardeners, horticulturalists, botanists, and plant-hunters, many of which Lady Londonderry considered friends. These horticultural experts and friends included many notable gardeners: C. W. James; Lord Aberconway of Bodnant; Hugh Armytage Moore of Rowallane; Lord Digby; Arthur Dorrien-Smith of Tresco Abbey; Lord Dunleath of Ballywalter; Arnold Forster of Zennor; Colonel Grey of Hocker Edge; Lord and Lady Loder of Leonardslee; Lady Linlithgow of Hopetoun; Henry McIlhenny of Glenveagh; Lionel Rothschild of Exbury; Lord

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 88.

Stair of Lochinch; J.B. Stevenson of Tower Court; Guy Wilson of Broughshane; and the staff of the Botanic Gardens at Edinburgh and Hyde Park Gardens. Lady Londonderry's horticultural network also included many nurseries and nurserymen: W. A. Constable; Hillier Nurseries; Ingwersen Nurseries; Olive Murrell of Orpington Nurseries; Perry Nurseries; Reuthe Nurseries; W. and L. Slinger; and Veitch Nurseries. Notable plant-hunters Frank Kingdon-Ward, George Forrest, Clarence Elliot, and Joseph Rock also played a role in this vast community of plant enthusiasts.<sup>54</sup>

A letter dated 1 February 1930 provides a glimpse into the extent of this network of exchange and the types of people involved. In the letter, a Spanish correspondent wrote, "I have the honour to announce the despatch [sic] from Sevilla to Liverpool of forty olive-tree shoots and forty orange tree plants, shipped on January 30 last, on board s.s. "Cervantes"; all ordered by His Grace the Duke of Alba."<sup>55</sup> A letter dated 16 March 1940 from Norman G. Hadden shows the reciprocal nature of this network. He wrote, "Thank you very much indeed for the lovely box of plants which has just arrived from Mount Stewart; it is truly kind of you to send them to me and I am immensely grateful. ...Would a few small seedling of *Leptospermum sericeum* be of use to you? I will be delighted to send them."<sup>56</sup>

Correspondents not only dispersed seeds but horticultural knowledge as well. For example, in a letter dated 6 June 1930, Clarence Elliot wrote, "I have also here an interesting Palm ... its name is *Jubea spectabilis* and is a native of Chile ... It is rapidly becoming exterminated, and the Chilian [sic] people cut the trees down for a sort of honey sap which they extract from the trunk ... It likes a position where its roots can get plenty of moisture."<sup>57</sup> A letter

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<sup>54</sup> Casement, "Mount Stewart Garden Archives and Historical Survey 1917-1959 Part One," 19-20.

<sup>55</sup> Londonderry, "Newspaper Clippings, Letters, and Notes " 3.

<sup>56</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Gardens 1937," 21.

<sup>57</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Gardens 1927-1936," 76-77.

dated 28 June 1933 from Mrs. Maud White provides another example. She explained, "The curator of the Brisbane botanical gardens, Mr. Bick, is sending you a number of seeds to try, and I asked him to send directions with them for growing ... Then a nurseryman called Wood, in Brisbane, is sending you 1 1/2 dozen Comquat [sic] trees, also a scented eucalyptus, a coral flowered eucalyptus, and I think, a brown, scented boronia. The latter grows well in undisturbed ground, in a damp fairly shady place. It grows wild in the forests near Melbourne. It likes the same treatment as Ericas. It has a flower like a little brown hollow berry lined with yellow, and a most enchanting scent."<sup>58</sup>

While most letters regarding plant materials contained instructions from their senders, Lady Londonderry recognized that it required a degree of trial and error to determine suitable growing conditions for individual plants at Mount Stewart. In a letter dated 26 March 1938, she wrote to Sir Mark Collett, "My own experience has been that no-one can say definitely what plants will flourish in any particular garden. I think the site and soil affect the plant as much as the climate ... Every year we make experiments with delicate plants, and our latest success has been with Clivias, which are doing very well at the foot of a low wall right in the open."

### *3) Plant Arrangements*

#### **3A) Color:**

For her gardens, Lady Londonderry preferred plants that displayed hot-colored flowers. Crimson, maroon, wine, orange, fuchsia, magenta, and bronze consistently dominated her rare plant palette. Lady Londonderry was careful not to haphazardly place these selections throughout the landscape; rather she experimented with many color combinations to achieve a dramatic display acceptable to her discerning eye. For example, a summer 1938 garden book

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 120b, 21a, 21b.

entry suggested to "put wine coloured dahlias instead of orange—substitute wine for orange everywhere —much more contrasting,"<sup>59</sup> This selection, however, failed to meet Lady Londonderry's expectations and the following summer she wrote, "revise this garden not enough colour for autumn."<sup>60</sup>

Lady Londonderry's garden books further suggest that she strove to have her color selections reflect seasonal tones. In an autumn 1922 garden book entry, she instructed Thomas Bolas to "replant [the large West Garden] beds using Dahlias Orange King and Insulande [varieties] for autumn effect"<sup>61</sup> By 1924 she suggested there was "too much yellow for Autumn effect—Dahlia Insulande to be removed —Fire Dragon excellent order more."<sup>62</sup> By 1925, she seemed pleased with the results and noted that "from spring to autumn always a succession of bloom."<sup>63</sup> Following a visit to Mount Stewart a decade later, author G. C. Taylor described the dramatic effects of color that Lady Londonderry had achieved with different pairings: "Many uncommon shrubs, such as the lovely *Abutilon vitifolium* (both the blue and white forms), those two handsome Chilian [sic] evergreens, *Tricuspidaria lanceolata* and *Embothrium coccineum*, fuchsias, brooms, cistus, heaths, and *Acacia sauveolens* and other species, provide a permanent furnishing in the beds and are reinforced for the sake of colour effect in the spring by masses of tulips carefully arranged to provide a definite colour scheme."<sup>64</sup>

Lady Londonderry's garden books contain article clippings that give insight into how she applied color theory to landscape design. For example, an undated article from *The Garden* titled "The Use of Scarlet Flowers" suggested that such flowers were effective either paired with ivory

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<sup>59</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Gardens 1935," 38.

<sup>60</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Garden Book No. 1 1922-1927," 39.

<sup>61</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Garden Book No. 2 1922-1927," 19.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>64</sup> G.C. Taylor, "Mount Stewart-II. County Down. A Seat of the Marquess of Londonderry.," *Country Life* (1935): 382.

tones or "grouped fairly boldly in front of a solid dark background, preferably of a yew."<sup>65</sup> The article responded to a previous one called "Scarlet and Grey in the Garden," which instead recommended pairing intense scarlet tones with cloudy blues, purples, and silvery grays.

Both articles influenced Lady Londonderry's use of color. For example, a spring 1925 garden book entry for the Shamrock Garden called for the "borders between yews and paving to be mostly orange and red—the latter to predominate."<sup>66</sup> Additionally, Lady Londonderry noted on a 1925 plan for the eastern parterre in the Italian Garden that there should be "nothing but scarlet, gray, or white in all beds" (Fig. 17). Lady Londonderry later wrote, "On the western half of the garden the colours are intended to shade from blood-red into pinks, pale yellows, mauves and purples, also silvery-greys ... The eastern half is kept for scarlets and orange, with dark prune colours or mulberry and blues ... All the beds have a hedge of white heather."<sup>67</sup>

While Lady Londonderry clearly drew inspiration from periodicals on how to group colors, her library collection surprisingly did *not* contain any books on color theory, such as Gertrude Jekyll's *Color in the Flower Garden*. In a 1923 plan for the roses located within the Walled Garden, Lady Londonderry selected hundreds of "rose," "blush," "red," "orange," "orange pink," "buff," and "white" roses and called for the "dark plants in the center shading outwards."<sup>68</sup> Her other plans for mixed beds of herbaceous plants, vines, shrubs, and trees often repeated this "sunray" pattern with gradations of color.<sup>69</sup> For example, in the eastern parterre of the Italian Garden hot reds and oranges radiated from the center while a touch of complimentary blue color added contrast along the outer rim (Figs. 17-18).

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<sup>65</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Garden Book No. 2 1922-1927," 141.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

<sup>67</sup> Londonderry, "The Gardens at Mount Stewart," 525.

<sup>68</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Garden Book No. 2 1922-1927," 5.

<sup>69</sup> Londonderry, "The Gardens at Mount Stewart," 530.

Lady Londonderry's color choices remained relatively unchanged over time. Her later plans, however, progress toward intermixing complimentary colors (Fig. 18). These plans also reveal an evolution in Lady Londonderry's plant selections and groupings. For example, Lady Londonderry repeated the same planting scheme for each of the eight large beds in her 1925 plan of the eastern parterre in the Italian Garden (Fig. 17). This repetition produced a rather simple and balanced effect. Her 1929 plan, on the other hand, shows increasing complexity and asymmetry as she applied a different planting scheme to each of the eight large beds (Fig. 18). Her later, highly irregular grouping of mixed plant materials was an uncommon way to treat a parterre. This unusual treatment of the planting beds was part of Lady Londonderry's strategy to create a succession of seasonal color. It also reinforces that Lady Londonderry was fascinated with the "magical" qualities of plants, and the gardens truly became a means for her to act as an enchantress and make the Circe myth a reality in her life.

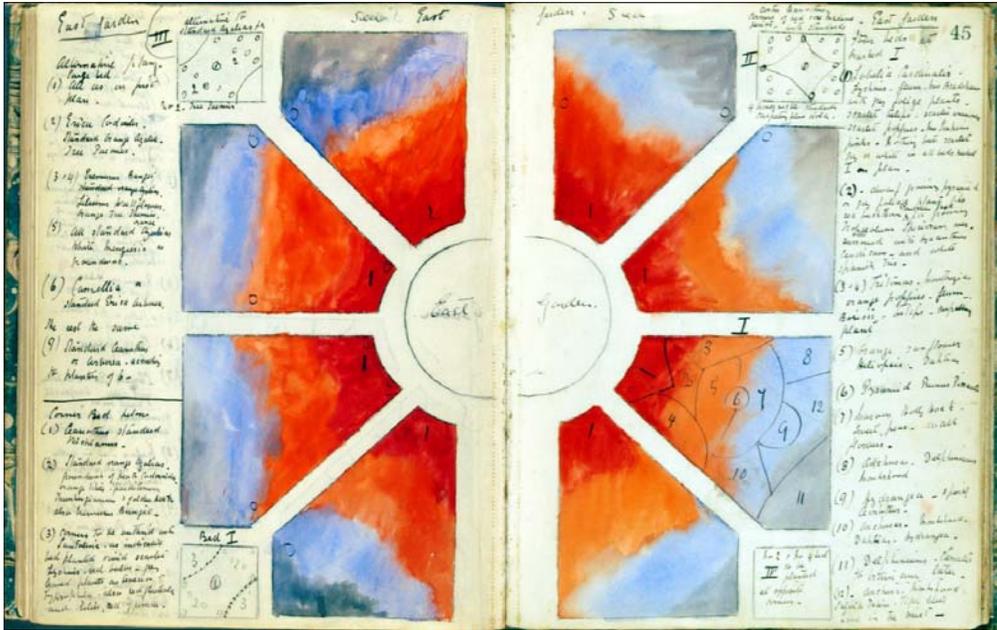
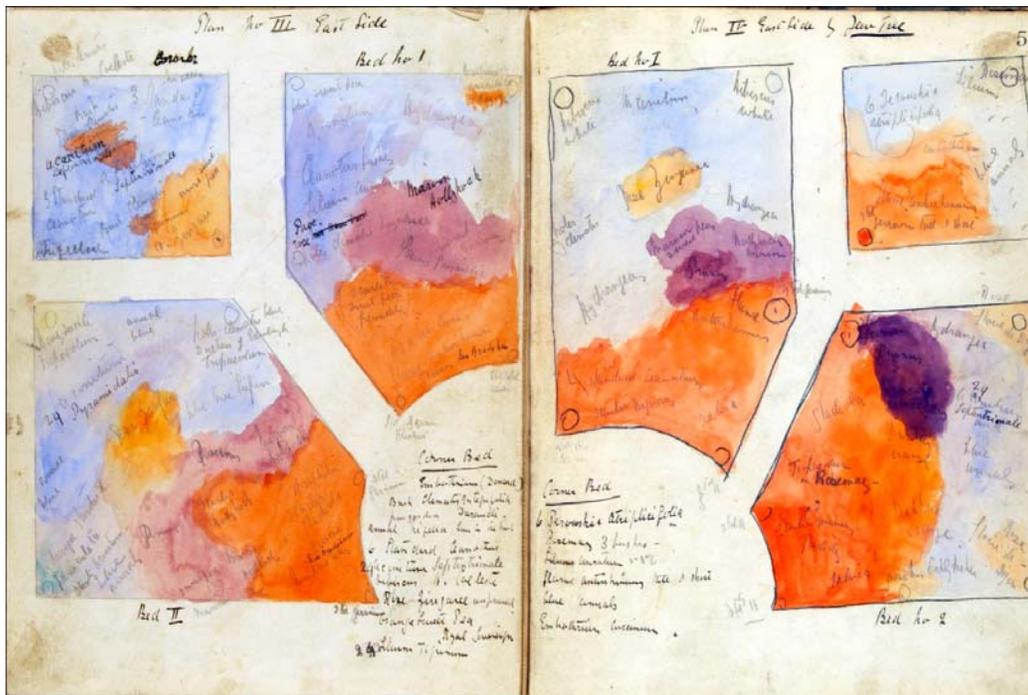


Fig. 17 (above) shows a 1925 design for the eastern bed in the Italian Garden, taken from Lady Londonderry's garden book. For this particular group of flower beds, Lady Londonderry set off the central hot reds and oranges with complimentary blues along the edges. Source: Londonderry, Edith, Marchioness of. "Mount Stewart Garden Book No. 1 1922-1927," 44-45.

Fig. 18 (below) shows a 1929 design for the upper portion of the same planting beds as seen in Fig. 17 (above). While the color choices mostly remained the same, Lady Londonderry intermixed colors and developed schemes that became more complex. Source: Londonderry, Edith, Marchioness of. "Mount Stewart Garden Book No. 1 1922-1927," 50-51.



### 3B) Fragrance:

In addition to color, Lady Londonderry highly valued intense fragrance in the landscape. She aspired to fill her gardens with curiously fragrant plants, such as *Boronia serrulata*, which Stuart Low Co. described in a letter dated 11 April 1940 as having "a haunting scent" and appealing "to people in a quite occult manner."<sup>70</sup> She meticulously recorded how her plants performed, grading them as "deliciously scented," "one of the best," "quite good," "disappointing," and so forth. The gardens at Mount Stewart can thus be characterized as a continual exercise in experimentation and improvement; a place representing the owner's high aesthetic and horticultural aspirations.

In 1925, a new rose was named "Dame Edith Helen" after Lady Londonderry and an article by C. A. Jardine asserted that "There is no better lasting Rose extant, some blooms having kept even ten days, perfuming the room all the time."<sup>71</sup> Lady Rose recalls that her grandmother declared, "No scentless rose would ever find a home at Mount Stewart!"<sup>72</sup> In addition to roses, Lady Londonderry filled her gardens with other fragrant plants such as lilies, eucalyptus, rosemary, honeysuckle, daphne, edgeworthia, rhododendron, and verbena. Lady Londonderry integrated many of these fragrant plants into her formal beds. In one of her garden books, she saved an undated article entitled "A Nosegay Garden" and thus may have applied author F. A. Hampton's idea of "making a permanent scent bouquet in a formal frame."<sup>73</sup>

A letter to Mrs. Grieve dated 17 February 1938 suggests that Lady Londonderry considered other creative ways to bring fragrance into the garden. In the letter, Lady Londonderry explained that the fragrant "... Chamomile I bought from you last year ... is being

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<sup>70</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Gardens 1935."

<sup>71</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Gardens 1927-1936," 52.

<sup>72</sup> From a conversation between Stephanie N. Bryan and Lady Rose Lauritzen on 15 June 2012.

<sup>73</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Gardens 1927-1936," 124.

made into a lovely lawn." By 1940, Lady Londonderry recorded a number of "Uncommon seeds for scents" such as *Escacum affine*, *Maurandia eruchescens*, *Schizopetalon Walkeri*, *Nycterimia capensis*.<sup>74</sup> She also wrote her ideas for "A Scented Border for the evening," which included "tobacco plants, night scented stocks, almond trees, pink daphnes, Mignonette, stocks, Madonna lilies, Salonika, Philadelphus, Vibernum, lavender, Artemesia, Clerodendrum, jasmine var. Honeysuckle, Sweet Briar, *L. auratum*, Hamamelis, [and] sweet scented cyclamen."<sup>75</sup> Lady Londonderry also brought the sweet aromas indoors by filling the house with cuttings and forced bulbs, in addition to her homemade potpourri. An entry in her garden book from summer 1925 noted that she cut "150 roses and 140 roses from the two year old beds—only full blown blooms—for potpourri ... hundreds of roses still left."<sup>76</sup>

### 3C) Season:

Lady Londonderry consistently looked for ways to extend the season of exceptionally fragrant and colorful flowers in her gardens. One strategy included selecting many plant varieties that nursery catalogues categorized as early or late bloomers. This theme dominated the article clippings that Lady Londonderry retained in her garden books. Among these articles were the following titles: "Winter and Summer Irises,"<sup>77</sup> "The Best Late Heaths;"<sup>78</sup> "Winter Flowering Heaths,"<sup>79</sup> "Shrubs that Flower Late Summer,"<sup>80</sup> "Early Bulbs,"<sup>81</sup> "Early Shrubs of Merit,"<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Gardens 1937," 82.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Garden Book No. 1 1922-1927," 11.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>80</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Gardens 1927-1936," 43A.

<sup>81</sup> Edith Marchioness of Londonderry, "Garden 1935," (1935), 78.

<sup>82</sup> Londonderry, "Newspaper Clippings, Letters, and Notes " 63.

and so forth. Her garden books often included her own "suggestions for flowering trees and autumn colour" such as "at back of Rhododendron walk [to] give colour early and late."<sup>83</sup>

In an article for the *Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society*, Lady Londonderry pointed out that she grouped vines with trees and shrubs as another tactic to extend the season and create a succession of blooms. She explained her process: "Clematis grows over and through large bushes of *Erica arborea*, and *Prunus pissartii* is covered with *Tropaeolum speciosum*. Clematis also looks lovely grown through standard trees of Wisteria. The shrubs lend themselves to this dual purpose: not only are they lovely when in bloom themselves in spring and early summer, but they display a mass of colour during the late summer and autumn months."<sup>84</sup> In her garden books, Lady Londonderry often noted species in her plant order lists and saved articles about climbers that would suit this "dual purpose."<sup>85</sup>

As part of the aristocracy, Lord and Lady Londonderry spent much time at their home in London socializing and engaging in political affairs. Yet, such a concern for seasonal effects raises the question as to how much time Lady Londonderry may have resided at Mount Stewart during the year.

#### ***4) Labor Intensive Practices***

##### **4A) A Labor of Love**

Lady Londonderry's ever-growing collection of rare and unusual seeds and cuttings required continual labor from the Mount Stewart staff, which totaled about twenty gardeners after World War I. The staff often had to start seeds and cuttings in the greenhouses located in the Walled Garden and later move the young plants to appropriate locations within the gardens.

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<sup>83</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Garden Book No. 2 1922-1927," 33.

<sup>84</sup> Londonderry, "The Gardens at Mount Stewart," 525.

<sup>85</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Garden Book No. 2 1922-1927," 56, 72.

The process lent itself to a degree of experimentation and, as Lady Londonderry suggested, "a few plants should be kept in [the] reserve garden and not allowed to flower so that sufficient cuttings can be taken for next year stock."<sup>86</sup>

Today, one can perhaps visualize such efforts from an account of *Meconopsis violacea*, a particularly rare plant cultivated from seeds sent from Frank Kingdon-Ward and subsequently established for a period at Mount Stewart. In a letter dated 31 December 1949, head gardener Thomas Bolas recalled, "...it took a horse and four wheeled lorry to remove the stock of plants from the Kitchen Garden into the woods, what a sight those hundreds of first plants really were."

In addition to seeds and cuttings, many fine specimen trees and shrubs found a home in the gardens at Mount Stewart. For example, in June 1923 Lady Londonderry purchased two large bay trees from Mr. Hartmann in Ghent, Belgium, for a total of £43.15.0 (Fig. 19). In a letter, Hartmann described the trees as "about 50 years old" and stated that, "they are the most beautiful and perhaps the largest pair of Bay-trees in cultivation in Europe."<sup>87</sup> It is difficult to visualize the journeys such plants took coming to in Northern Ireland in 1923, but a photograph in Lady Londonderry's garden book, however, shows the two bay trees "on their way to the harbour [from Ghent] to be shipped for their new home at Belfast."<sup>88</sup> The image offers a glimpse of the intense labor required to transport such large specimen plants across land and water.

A letter from plant-hunter Clarence Elliot dated 6 June 1930 provides more insight into the lengthy routes many plants traveled when being shipped from overseas. Elliot explained, "...I have received five more plants [of Pica Lemon], big strong specimens four or five feet high ... My friend got them sent down from Pica, the oasis in North Chile where they are grown. It entailed a long motor journey for them..." In a letter dated 9 March 1926, Sir Herbert Maxwell

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<sup>86</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Garden Book No. 1 1922-1927," 143.

<sup>87</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Garden Book No. 2 1922-1927," 105-06.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

further explained such efforts, emphatically stating, "I saw Mr. Gill ... who described to me his herculean labour in transporting huge rhododendrons from Wembley to Mount Stewart. What you require is faith to remove these mountains, of course free of cost!"

Obtaining the plants was only half the battle. Entries in Lady Londonderry's garden books suggest that her gardening staff initially planted many of the larger acquisitions where the gardens permitted space and the staff later relocated the plants once Lady Londonderry and Thomas Bolas determined permanent positions. In spring 1927 she recorded, "more flowering cherries by lake - near overflow - plant in groups - get crabapples for hill - remove shrubs by laurel walk to permanent positions on hill and elsewhere and new magnolias on bank by lake at tennis court."<sup>89</sup> Around the same time, after Thomas Beattie finished producing pots for the Shamrock Garden, she also noted, "two magnificent *Magnolia grandiflora* were planted in them sent by Sir Philip Sassoon" which required "a most herculean labour getting them into position."<sup>90</sup>

Despite being an aristocrat, Lady Londonderry did not hesitate to take part in the strenuous labor essential to managing her gardens. This attitude perhaps grew from her love of the outdoors and slightly rebellious nature that began during her childhood. From an early age, Lady Londonderry was an avid and fearless horseback rider, often riding astride and even bareback--both highly unacceptable behaviors for a woman at the time.<sup>91</sup> Many years later at Mount Stewart, it was common to find Lady Londonderry pruning branches halfway up a tree or making compost for her plantings.<sup>92</sup> She often called upon houseguests to assist if a tree had fallen in the gardens. If they agreed, she would don her customary khaki gardening boiler suit

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<sup>89</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Gardens 1927-1936," 103.

<sup>90</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Garden Book No. 1 1922-1927," 40.

<sup>91</sup> Londonderry, *Retrospect*: 19.

<sup>92</sup> Porteous, Buffin, and Rollinson, "Mount Stewart Garden Conservation Management Plan 2011," 23.



Fig. 19 (above) shows the two bay trees at the harbor in Ghent. The image offers a glimpse of the labor and money involved to ship and plant such large specimen trees. Source: Londonderry, Edith, Marchioness of. "Mount Stewart Garden Book No. 1 1922-1927," 106.

Fig. 20 (below) "Clearing the Lily Wood 1940" shows Lady Londonderry in her outdoor attire, helping friend "Ned" Fitz-Maurice (who was to become a casualty of WWII) remove trees and brush for firewood. Source: Mount Stewart Archives.



and disappear into the gardens with them for an evening of log sawing.<sup>93</sup> Later, during the war, she helped collect firewood by clearing the site for the Lily Wood (Fig. 20, previous page). This labor of love greatly added to the character of her gardens.

#### **4B) A Cultivated Exuberance**

Although the garden areas nearest the main house contained a variety of formal elements, Lady Londonderry created exuberance by adding an informal quality to the scene. Parterres exuded a strong energy as Lady Londonderry's selection of mixed plantings almost burst forth from the edges and towered over admiring guests (Fig. 21). She also encouraged plants suited to dry conditions to grow within the cracks and crevices that formed part of her design on terraces and in other paved areas within the gardens (Fig. 22). This exuberance spread into the surrounding walls, down the steps, and onto open spaces where daisies often intermingled with lawn.

Lady Londonderry explained, "The plants in the beds ... are encouraged to grow very big, and shrubs are made use of as well."<sup>94</sup> In an article from 3 July 1926 entitled "The Gardens at Mount Stewart," Mrs. T. J. Andrews wrote that "...in the pavement and in the surrounding walls grow all kind of creeping plants, with here and there clumps of bulbous growths, small dainty irises and early gladioli."<sup>95</sup> Achieving this "exuberant" or "natural" appearance with plants in a geometric framework required great proficiency on the part of the gardening staff. For example, the staff likely maintained a well-stocked nursery garden in order to propagate tender plants growing in the parterres at Mount Stewart. This allowed them to hold plants in reserve should an area need a boost of color or foliage as the season progressed. This process kept the

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>94</sup> Londonderry, "The Gardens at Mount Stewart," 525.

<sup>95</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Garden Book No. 1 1922-1927," 159.



Fig. 21 (above): Designers of the Arts and Crafts Movement reacted against the flower bedding prevalent throughout Europe by using herbaceous plants to create informal, natural borders. Lady Londonderry, on the other hand, took an entirely different approach to design by intermixing trees, shrubs, vines, and herbaceous plants to create an informal effect within the formal parterres of her Italian Garden, as seen in the image above. Source: Image by unknown photographer from one of Lady Londonderry's photo albums c. 1934. Mount Stewart Archives.

Fig. 22 (below) of the Shamrock Garden shows how Lady Londonderry used design to add an exuberant quality to the compartmentalized spaces of her garden. Source: Image by unknown photographer from one of Lady Londonderry's photo albums, 1930s. Mount Stewart Archives.



parterres looking full for the greater part of the year. The ability to maintain this effect truly attested to the attention and skill of head gardener Thomas Bolas, who was in charge of orchestrating the gardening team's efforts on a daily basis.

Lady Londonderry created this exuberant aesthetic by introducing non-native flora that displayed colors and textures foreign to the British landscape. Perhaps, exotic species greatly attracted Lady Londonderry because the last Ice Age had left Britain fairly stripped of its native flora, which made it difficult to create an exuberant garden from natural, ecological associations. Additionally, her collection may represent a strong sense of national pride since many of Lady Londonderry's plant selections can be traced to countries associated with the expansion of the British Empire.

Lady Londonderry augmented this exuberant environment by adding exotic fauna to the scene. At one point, Lady Londonderry introduced Stanley cranes from South Africa onto the North Lawn at Mount Stewart. The gardening staff quickly removed the birds because they became aggressive towards family and pets.<sup>96</sup> Following this event, Lady Londonderry acquired ten flamingos as a present from King Fouad, after her 1934 visit to Egypt. The staff clipped the birds' wings upon arrival to Mount Stewart and, although one escaped, the others resided by the lake for almost fifteen years.<sup>97</sup>

Aesthetic considerations may not have been the sole guiding force for Lady Londonderry's design; it appears, however, that she endeavored to construct her own version of a subtropical ecosystem at Mount Stewart. For example, in 1930, photographer R. J. Welch noted that a group of women visiting Mount Stewart was particularly interested in "a number of little

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<sup>96</sup> Porteous, Buffin, and Rollinson, "Mount Stewart Garden Conservation Management Plan 2011," 23.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

tree frogs, hopping about on the leaves of the red tulips..."<sup>98</sup> Welch suggested that aside from adding to the exotic feeling, Lady Londonderry had a practical reason for establishing tree frogs. He explained, "No snail in those flower beds will have much chance of growing beyond the baby-snail stage with those fine scavengers about, nor the insects that harm plants either."<sup>99</sup> Lady Londonderry often consulted zoologists regarding the animal life in her gardens. For example, a letter from scientist L. Haig dated 26 May 1938 confirmed the dispatch of another six dozen tree frogs to Mount Stewart and proposed green terrapins for the small artificial pools in the stone terracing adjoining the house, as well lizards.

It is noteworthy that while the gardens were captured through conventional black and white photography during their early stages, they were photographed in an entirely new manner circa 1934. The method of floodlighting the garden at nighttime produced a theatrical effect, making the gardens appear as though they were a setting for an ancient Greek drama (refer back to Fig. 22). The photography of this period enhanced the exuberance throughout the gardens and suggests the importance of the Circe myth; the viewer cannot help but feel as though they have stumbled upon Circe's realm in the midst of a dense forest on some remote island (note the exotic eucalyptus trees towering in the background of Fig. 22). These photographs indicate that the gardens of this period reached a pinnacle of both creativity and upkeep. The images suggest that Lady Londonderry had fulfilled her intent not only to create a garden that stimulated the senses, but a place that embodied the Circe myth. Lady Londonderry's "magic" did not come easy as her groupings of herbaceous plants with shrubs and trees were in fact intensely managed by her gardening staff to achieve the exuberant effect she imagined.

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<sup>98</sup> Londonderry, "Newspaper Clippings, Letters, and Notes " 88.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

## ***PART IV: MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES DURING 1939-1955***

### ***Introduction***

During the Interwar Period, many key ingredients combined to enable Lady Londonderry to create the gardens at Mount Stewart in an eclectic fashion: establishing the Women's Legion during WWI gave Lady Londonderry the confidence and organizational skills to carry out large undertakings; a visit to the Rostrevor house whetted her appetite for rare plants; the demobilization of the army following WWI provided necessary garden labor; the Londonderry's coal mining interests supplied added income for procuring rare plants and paying laborers; and the employment of the former head gardener provided indispensable local knowledge and horticultural expertise. Around the time of World War II, circumstances began to change and consequently Lady Londonderry had to adapt the management strategies she previously applied to her expansive gardens.

The following seven sections outline a progression of events and adaptive management strategies that characterized the gardens at Mount Stewart from the start of the war in 1939 to the time when Lady Londonderry transferred ownership to the National Trust in 1955. These sections are entitled: (1) A Continuation of Earlier Practices (1939-1940); (2) Responses to Severe Weather Events (1940-1941); (3) Changes in Purpose I: Vegetables for Consumption (1941-1946); (4) Changes in Purpose II: Flowers for Market (1941-1946); (5) Seeking Labor Saving Strategies (1947-1955); (6) Economizing in the Gardens (1947-1955); and (7) Regaining Lost Knowledge (1947-1955).

#### **(1) A Continuation of Earlier Practices (1939--1940)**

Although WWII commenced in 1939, the designed landscape at Mount Stewart continued to expand as it had previously. The clearing of new garden spaces, however, filled

winter and wartime necessities as Lady Londonderry utilized trees and brush for firewood. By November, the gardening staff had begun creating a new glade in an area known as the Sea Plantation, which was comprised of trees that provided a crucial buffer between the gardens and the lough.<sup>100</sup> As usual, Lady Londonderry consulted periodicals to guide her through the process of developing this area.<sup>101</sup> In 1940, she purchased over thirty different "climbers to grow up trees" in the wood walk, including clematis, hydrangea, *jasminum*, *lonicera*, *vitis*, wisteria, and so forth.<sup>102</sup> As she noted, "the site [of the Sea Plantation] is very damp in places," she also selected plants suited to boggy conditions, such as ferns and spirea.<sup>103</sup> She further ordered five hundred *Schizostylis coccinea*, among several daphnes, *Romneya coulteri*, and *Bambusa fastuosa* to fill the Sea Glade.<sup>104</sup>

At the same time, Lady Londonderry created a Wild Garden along the outskirts of her formal garden spaces. She planted this area with a variety of her favorite annuals and perennials, including cyclamen, trillium, zephyranthes, anemones, cyclamen, primulas, anchusas, in addition to many tulip and gladiola bulbs. She also filled the larger expanses with trees and shrubs, including *Rhododendron carneum*, *Cornus kousa*, *Berberis hyemalis*, *Sarcococca hookeri*, and *Vaccinium oratum*, among countless others.<sup>105</sup>

While work progressed on these new extensions of the garden, the established areas around the house apparently flourished. In a published article, Lady Londonderry described the colorful Christmastime scene in the highly imaginative style characteristic of her earlier writings:

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<sup>100</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Gardens 1937," 50.

<sup>101</sup> Articles saved in her garden book include the following: "Plants for the Bog Garden," "Some Carpeting Bog Plants," "By Waterside and in Woodland," "The Woodland Garden," Londonderry, "Newspaper Clippings, Letters, and Notes".

<sup>102</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Gardens 1937," 70, 72.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 42-45, 51-57.

"My eyes first rested on one of the large standard orange trees, planted out for some ten years now. It is laden with fruit ... The oranges shone in the sun like gold. ...next...my eyes caught the rays of the sun shining on a large shrub of *Desfontania spinosa* which had turned the blooms into flaming gold and red ... by the bathing pool, mesembryanthemums were in flower ... Fuchsias are everywhere in bloom ... By far the best winter effect in the garden ... is the view of the small lake set in the midst of the garden, surrounded by fine trees. When the slanting rays of the setting sun light up the *Salix britzensis* which are grouped around the edge with masses of the deep red dogwood and companion shrubs of giant *Griselinia litoralis*, a most vivid green, and large clumps of bamboos, the reflection of these in the still clear waters of a winter's eve reveals a golden world a flame, set with emerald gems."<sup>106</sup>

Unfortunately, this spring-like scene was to be short-lived.

## (2) Responses to Severe Weather Events (1940-1941)

During January 1940, the gardens at Mount Stewart suffered exceptionally severe winter weather. Lady Londonderry wrote, "We had ten days of such frosts as we had never had here before, with a heavy snowfall which crushed the acacia trees to earth; they curtsied most gracefully down but never rose again."<sup>107</sup> Although her garden books listed certain species that the severe winter weather badly damaged or killed, notations suggest that the vast majority of her plantings survived. She recorded that some species such as *Buddleia madagascariensis* and *Cestrum elegans* the cold temperatures "badly cut" or "killed outright," while others like *Abutilon megapotamicum*, *Beschorneria yuccoides*, and *Bougainvillea glabra* were unharmed.<sup>108</sup>

In December 1940, Mount Stewart experienced a "gale of hurricane force, followed by heavy snow," which felled more trees and thus damaged walls and garden ornaments.<sup>109</sup> Lady Londonderry noted the debris would take months of strenuous labor to clear away. The storm created a particularly difficult situation because the garden crew was shorthanded during the war.

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<sup>106</sup> Edith Marchioness of Londonderry, "Christmas in the Garden," *My Garden* (1941).

<sup>107</sup> Edith Marchioness of Londonderry, "Mount Stewart in War-Time," *My Garden* (1942).

<sup>108</sup> Casement, "Mount Stewart Garden Archives and Historical Survey 1917-1969 Part 2."

<sup>109</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart in War-Time."

She responded to such uncontrollable events by suggesting that many of the felled trees could provide a store of fine firewood. In an article for *My Garden*, she explained:

"... it is small compensation for our losses that we are now burning sweet-smelling logs of cedar and eucalyptus, also we have logs of *Crinodendron Hookeri*...and quite fair-sized logs of *Myrtus Luma*, with others coming in of *Eucryphia cordifolia*, to be followed shortly by many large ones from a good old monkey puzzle, the best burning wood imaginable. The prickly fronds make wonderful lighters, cut in pieces, and the prickles removed at one end to make a handle. We are also using eucalyptus twigs and leaves as bundles, even rosemary; they make the perfect kindling wood and no paper is required at all, which we are all enjoined to save."<sup>110</sup>

Lady Londonderry's use of these exotic materials for firewood evidences her ingenuity and adaptive problem-solving skills.

### **(3) Changes in Purpose I: Vegetables for Consumption (1941-1946)**

As Britain became more entrenched in the war, the trial-and-error process of introducing exotic and rare ornamental plants that had previously characterized the gardens shifted focus to meet utilitarian needs. At the time, everyone in Britain was urged to grow as much of their own food as possible because the German U-boat campaign interrupted food imports. While Lady Londonderry had always supplied her Walled Garden with uncommon varieties of vegetables and fruit trees, her garden books indicate a substantial increase in procuring these types of productive plants from 1941 to 1945.<sup>111</sup> Lady Londonderry explained "... as everywhere else in the British Isles ... growing more vegetables was imperative; this was a matter of especial urgency for the winter months."<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Gardens 1937," 100-03, 289-92.

<sup>112</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart in War-Time."

For example, in October 1941 she ordered four three-year-old damson trees, 240 black currents, yellow tomato seeds, and rhubarb.<sup>113</sup> On 22 October 1942, she recorded a purchase for six "Thornless Wonder" blackberries and 1000 "Royal Sovereign" strawberries.<sup>114</sup> An order placed 20 January 1943 from James Carter and Co. listed a large amount of vegetable seeds for broad beans, beet, kale, broccoli, cabbage, savoy, cauliflower, sweet corn, chicory, cucumber, eggplant, lettuce, onion, etc.<sup>115</sup> In 1943, she ordered 24 half-standard "Coxe's Orange Pippin" apple trees to enhance her orchard, along with three "Marjorie" plum tree seedlings, which offered the "dual purpose [of] large oval fruits of a deep purple covered by blue blooms."<sup>116</sup> In 1944, she ordered 100 packets of buckwheat from Alwood Bros,<sup>117</sup> and by 1945 she increased her fruit selections with 1000 "Norfolk Giant" raspberry canes, fifty boysenberries, and 1000 strawberry plants.<sup>118</sup> These lists of fruits and vegetables only provide a glimpse of the myriad productive plants Lady Londonderry purchased during this wartime period.<sup>119</sup>

An article published by Lady Londonderry in "My Garden" offers insight into how the cultivation efforts at Mount Stewart during the war carried on the same experimental nature that had characterized their pre-war efforts of growing rare ornamental plants:

"Several varieties of vegetables not usually grown had to be tried out. One of outstanding innovation in this direction was the cultivation of field peas for drying. This experiment... proved a marked success. The French Roscroft broccoli, normally reserved for culture in the extreme south-west of England, are proving adaptable... Spanish beet for winter use had proved a valuable addition...It was planted in the open and later lifted and placed at the foot of a wall, where it has withstood frost and snow. Much useful experience has been

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<sup>113</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Gardens 1937," 100.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 292.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

<sup>119</sup> Lady Londonderry was clearly influenced by contemporary periodicals regarding the new or unusual varieties of fruits and vegetable she purchased. For example, she saved a 1941 clipping entitled "New Blackberries" by M.B. Crane on page 160. She also underlined many plants in a clipping on page 158 by W.E. Shewell-Cooper called "Unusual Fruits and their Uses." Londonderry, "Newspaper Clippings, Letters, and Notes " 158, 60.

gained in trying out several varieties of Brussels sprouts and cauliflowers for field culture."<sup>120</sup>

Lady Londonderry exhibits a sense of ingenuity in her ability to adapt management so as to maintain the values that had previously characterized her gardens under new and different circumstances. This increase in fruit and vegetable production raises the question as to whether the staff at Mount Stewart supplied part of their yield to a local market, or if their goods mainly served the purposes of feeding the community of people who lived and worked at the estate.

#### **(4) Changes in Purpose II: Flowers for Market (1941-1946)**

Until World War II was well underway, Lady Londonderry continued to order extravagant amounts of rare trees, shrubs, vines, perennials, annuals, bulbs, and so forth to fill her gardens. Nevertheless, as the war continued, she still found ways to fill the beds around the house with colorful and fragrant flowers. A marked shift in the types of plants Lady Londonderry procured from nurseries characterized the wartime period of gardening from 1941 to 1945. Records in her garden books indicate that her orders during this time predominantly consisted of bulbs and other low-maintenance flowers for cutting purposes.<sup>121</sup> Although Lady Londonderry still ordered considerable quantities of these plants, they would have required relatively less labor and time to cultivate.

An entry in her garden book from October 1941 recorded "36 chrysanthemum rubellum for cutting for market-kitchen garden."<sup>122</sup> Another entry from this period stated that a "collection of 72 plants [were] for cutting for market," which included "Pallida odoratissima," "Seraph",

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<sup>120</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart in War-Time."

<sup>121</sup> Lady Londonderry saved articles that she likely consulted regarding these types of plants. For example, her garden book includes clippings on "Bulb Gardens," "Uncommon Bulbs from North America," and "Miniature Bulbs: A Selection to Grow in Pots and Pans." Londonderry, "Newspaper Clippings, Letters, and Notes " 57, 72, 144.

<sup>122</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Gardens 1937," 58.

"Prunella," "Fairy Princess" and "Corrida" varieties of iris.<sup>123</sup> These were "Planted end of August [1942] along South Terrace Border [of the Italian Garden] - in groups."<sup>124</sup> During the same year, she also noted that she "made new cauldron shaped bed by sea for all 500 [bulbs] ... The other 500 by old Macrocarpa Tree [in a] new bed."<sup>125</sup> Additionally, her gardening staff planted two hundred early and late flowering bearded irises in shades of pink, blue, yellow, and mahogany "round the fountains at Mount Stewart."<sup>126</sup> The following year she recorded an order for 1000 "Bulbs for Market ... Tulips from Bath," many of which the staff forced in pots in the Walled Garden.<sup>127</sup>

By 1943, Lady Londonderry's records indicate more variety, such as "100 Nerine Bowdeni ... 36 Nerine Fothergilli ... 36 Notholirion Thomsonianum" placed in the "Beds below upper Terrace" and "3 Sandersonia aurantica ... 100 Tritonia crocata ... 200 Alstroemeria haemantha ... 60 hyacinths, 6 Liliun monadelphum, 12 Liliun Bellingham, 100 Lily of the Valley ..." for the "greenhouse" and the "South Garden on 2nd Terrace."<sup>128</sup> She explicitly noted that others, such as "twenty-four Crocus species ... twelve Eremurus Robustus ... twenty-four Galanthus plicatus," were "NOT for MARKET" and rather her staff should plant them "by sea in wood."<sup>129</sup>

The bulbs and other cut flowers that Lady Londonderry obtained during this period probably totaled tens of thousands. Because this number would have been relatively low in terms of commercial production, Lady Londonderry most likely limited her supply of flowers to local markets. Lady Londonderry's accounts suggest that during 1944 and 1945 she distributed flowers

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 91-92.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

to Alex Dickson and Sons Ltd. in Belfast, Miss Ford, Downshire Shop, Lundy Bros. Collins and Shileds, Mount Stewart Garden Sales, Samuel George, and Smith and McClure, and these sales generated approximately £412.0.6 in income.<sup>130</sup> Her records from 1946 indicate £458.3.9 in total sales to Dicksons, Miss Ford, Downshire Shop, Lundy Bros., Mount Stewart Garden Sales, McBride, Collins and Shields, Samuel George, and Wiltons.<sup>131</sup> Because buying flowers during the war would have been considered somewhat of a luxury, it is difficult to say who may have purchased the flowers and for what reasons.

The shift in types of flowers predominantly grown at Mount Stewart during the war raises additional questions. One might ask to what degree the family's involvement in politics and concern for public relations might have influenced these changes in gardening practices. How difficult was it for nurserymen to ship exotic ornamental trees and shrubs overseas during the war? Might a decrease in gardening staff have instigated this adaptive management strategy? Regardless of the circumstances, Lady Londonderry clearly possessed the creativity to devise a way to maintain her aesthetic values of color and fragrance in the gardens during the war.

##### **(5) Seeking Labor Saving Strategies (1947-55)**

In the years during and after WWII, Mount Stewart experienced critical changes in its gardening labor force. For example, multiple accounts suggest there was a shortage of persons to employ in garden work. Such circumstances directly affected the management and aesthetics of the gardens at Mount Stewart, in addition to many other large estates across Britain that faced similar challenges.

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<sup>130</sup> Casement, "Mount Stewart Garden Archives and Historical Survey 1917-1969 Part 2," 243.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

Published accounts offer some insight into the situation. In an article from 31 July 1954 in *The Gardeners' Chronicle*, Frank Kingdon-Ward wrote that, "Recently I had an opportunity to see the famous Mount Stewart Rhododendrons in Northern Ireland ... Rhododendrons do wonderfully well there, although of course, they suffered horribly during the last war, and also during the particularly brutal spring of 1951. ... Owing to years of neglect they formed a jungle of tropical luxuriance. ... After much thought and immense labour a great deal of replanting has been carried out."<sup>132</sup> By 1955, Lady Londonderry further explained, "It is a miracle how any [lilies] survived in the wood in the dense undergrowth that developed during the years of the war."<sup>133</sup> She further stated, "It was a tragedy all these lovely bulbs arrived just before we were involved in the second World War, when labour and war conditions cut off all but the most urgent garden operations."<sup>134</sup>

Lady Londonderry's garden books, however, do not offer any insight into how many people she employed as gardening staff throughout the years at Mount Stewart or how those numbers may have changed during or after WWII. The aforementioned quotes by Frank Kingdon-Ward and Lady Londonderry describe the scene at Mount Stewart nearly a decade after the war.<sup>135</sup> Thus, it is difficult to discern whether such neglect resulted mostly from diminished labor during the war, the significant loss of skilled management after head gardener Thomas Bolas retired in 1947, or was a combination of these and other factors.

Thomas Bolas had gained extensive horticultural skills after working as head gardener at Mount Stewart for over twenty years. When he moved away, he inevitably took an irreplaceable

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<sup>132</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Gardens 1937," 215.

<sup>133</sup> Edith Marchioness of Londonderry, "Lilies at Mount Stewart Co. Down, Northern Ireland," *Lily Year Book* (1955): 31.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>135</sup> It is important to carefully treat the contents of such writings and place them within a certain context. Because Lady Londonderry and Frank Kingdon-Ward tailored their writings toward specific publications, one must consider the possibility that they contain some degree of embellishment.

knowledge of the gardens with him. It was not until around 1950 that Lady Londonderry replaced him when she hired a man named A. J. Mitchell as the new head gardener. His appointment, however, was short-lived, since he left Mount Stewart after only about a year. George Graham came to Mount Stewart from Castlewellaan Gardens and lasted only a year after Mitchell. Finally, Alexander Steele arrived from Brodick in 1952 and served as head gardener until his death in 1968.<sup>136</sup> Unfortunately, because Lady Londonderry's garden books are not of a personal nature (*e.g.* they do not express any frustration with the situation, as one might expect), it is difficult to surmise exactly what motivated her actions during this period.

However, Lady Londonderry did save article clippings in her garden books that offer some insight into the situation and place Mount Stewart within a broader context. The following excerpt from an article entitled "Private Garden Marketing" published by F. J. Rose in the March 1948 *Gardening Illustrated* magazine explains:

"Previous to the 1914-19 war the gardens of the large estates provided the main features of horticulture in this country. These gardens were superbly organized, discipline was strict, and the hours of work were long. Thus they provided excellent practical training for those young men who were fortunate enough to be employed in them.

Since those days there has been a gradual change, for this is a changing world and it was inevitable that horticulture should be included. Many of those famous old gardens are now no more, others are being used as market gardens, and it is safe to say that none is being run on the lavish scale of pre-1914 days."<sup>137</sup>

This excerpt suggests a distinction: rather than an overall lack of persons to employ there was a lack of *qualified* persons who possessed the skills necessary to oversee and carry out such large and complex gardening operations. Lady Londonderry's records from the 1950s thus indicate a gradual realization of this problem as she collected leaflets regarding new mechanical aids that

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<sup>136</sup> Casement, "Mount Stewart Garden Archives and Historical Survey 1917-1969 Part 2," 22.

<sup>137</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Gardens 1937."

might facilitate garden work.<sup>138</sup> She also saved articles such as "Labour Saving Plants" from the *Gardeners' Chronicle*, which advised, "carefully selected and skillfully placed plants can transform a wilderness into a pleasurable and economical garden."<sup>139</sup>

Mount Stewart, similar to many other British gardens, thus had suffered from losing a generation of skilled head gardeners whose talents they had not passed on to a new generation. One would assume this transition period in management at Mount Stewart from about 1946 to 1954 directly affected Lady Londonderry's attitude toward her gardens. By the early 1950s, Lady Londonderry contemplated transferring ownership of her gardens to the National Trust, partly due to the increasing difficulty she encountered in finding skilled and reliable workers. Certainly, other concerns affected this decision. For example, she later recalled, "The fate of the unique garden at Rostrevor belonging to Sir John Ross of Bladensburg, called so aptly by him 'Fairyland,' was a warning, as to what is likely to happen to Gardens in the future unless safeguarded ..."<sup>140</sup>

#### **(6) Economizing in the Gardens (1947-1955)**

Beyond issues regarding laborers and concerns for what might become of the gardens after Lady Londonderry's lifetime, one must question the status of the Londonderry's finances during this period. For example, Lord Londonderry died in February 1949 and it is likely that the hefty estate taxes imposed by the post-war Labor Government affected the family's finances. Upon Lord Londonderry's death, his only son Robin inherited the property for a brief period.

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<sup>138</sup> Due to time restraints, the author of this report was unable to examine the content of these pamphlets. Rather the author solely relied on Anne Casement's inventory of such items. Casement, "Mount Stewart Garden Archives and Historical Survey 1917-1969 Part 2."

<sup>139</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Gardens 1937," 267.

<sup>140</sup> Londonderry, "Foreword to the Mount Stewart Garden Guide Book."

This situation probably motivated Lady Londonderry to seek new ways to economize in her gardens. For example, a letter dated 26 June 1946 from W. A. Constable mentions the cultivation of lilies at Mount Stewart for commercial purposes and the possibility of supplying him with certain bulbs.<sup>141</sup> Additionally, Lady Londonderry saved a letter dated 19 April 1945 from Frank Reinelt of Vetterle and Reinelt Hybridizing Gardens in California to Guy Wilson of Broughshane regarding daffodil breeding.<sup>142</sup> She also saved flyers on the topic, including one from A. F. Blakeman of Seven Acre Bulb Farm in Abergele North Wales<sup>143</sup> and catalogues from J. Parker Bulb Specialist in Manchester.<sup>144</sup> The article clipping on "Private Garden Marketing" published by F. J. Rose in the March 1948 *Gardening Illustrated* magazine also explained how the situation was not unique to Mount Stewart:

"The need for economy has decided the course of gardening in recent years. ... the owner of a garden which necessitates the employment of several men, finds it necessary to market whatever is possible to help with the expenses. So the question arises--'What can be grown in my garden for market and how can it be sold?' It is impossible for a private garden to pay its way completely unless it is run on strictly commercial lines."<sup>145</sup>

Correspondence reveals that by 1951 Lady Londonderry considered different alternatives for generating income. For example, a letter dated 29 January 1951 from G. Reuthe Ltd. mentions the dispatch of giant bamboo and offers advice on the commercial growing of bamboos.<sup>146</sup> Another letter dated 5 March 1951 from Hillier nurseries, which lists plants shipped to Mount Stewart, also references bamboos for commercial production.<sup>147</sup> Correspondence additionally suggests that Lady Londonderry contemplated selling her potpourri, and had

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<sup>141</sup> Reference catalogue number "T6B9 7." Casement, "Mount Stewart Garden Archives and Historical Survey 1917-1969 Part 2," 281.

<sup>142</sup> Reference catalogue number "T6B9 46." *ibid.*, 282.

<sup>143</sup> Reference catalogue number "T6B9 49." *ibid.*, 283.

<sup>144</sup> Reference catalogue number T6B9 34." *ibid.*, 282.

<sup>145</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Gardens 1937."

<sup>146</sup> Reference catalogue number "KD3 34." Casement, "Mount Stewart Garden Archives and Historical Survey 1917-1969 Part 2," 268.

<sup>147</sup> Reference catalogue number "KH3 34." *ibid.*

purchased equipment to distill essential oils and essences from plants.<sup>148</sup> None of these ventures, however, proved successful which might have been due to the lack of skilled workers essential to carrying out operations on a commercial scale.

The labor and financial situations may have instigated Lady Londonderry's attempts to re-envision her designs in less labor-intensive ways that still upheld her aesthetic values. For example, she redesigned the Shamrock Garden to feature winter and early spring flowering plants in 1950.<sup>149</sup> Lady Londonderry's actions followed trends outlined in the article on "Private Garden Marketing" where author F. J. Rose wrote:

"Nowadays one seldom sees the elaborate system of bedding out that used to be such a features of private gardens in bygone days; instead one sees many more flowering trees and shrubs, hardy bulbs of all kinds, rock and herbaceous plants. ... this phase of gardening [is] more economic ...."<sup>150</sup>

Her new design integrated fifteen varieties of *Prunus*, in addition to various camellias, magnolias, rhododendrons, daphnes, viburnums, mahonias, etc. "at back of hedge."<sup>151</sup> These selections would have been much hardier and less maintenance-intensive than the tender annuals and perennials that dominated her earlier designs.

Lady Londonderry also may have attempted to revitalize her gardens to prepare them for public viewing once the National Trust assumed ownership. In a letter, dated 11 March 1954 an acquaintance from the Royal Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh revealed that, "I was very interested to hear that negotiations with the National Trust are now so far forward."<sup>152</sup> By 1955, Robin passed away only a few years after his father's death and ownership of the gardens subsequently

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<sup>148</sup> p 243 Casement = partial letter transcriptions

<sup>149</sup> Londonderry, "Garden 1935," 42-44.

<sup>150</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Gardens 1937."

<sup>151</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Gardens 1935," 42-44.

<sup>152</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Gardens 1937."

transferred to the National Trust. Lady Londonderry remained actively engaged in decisions related to the gardens until her own death in 1959.

### **(7) Regaining Lost Knowledge (1947-1955)**

An effort to regain lost knowledge, particularly after head gardener Thomas Bolas retired in 1947, also characterized the gardens' post-WWII period. Notes and correspondence in Lady Londonderry's garden books suggest that she not only lost plants to neglect, but was unable to identify the names and locations of many species within her gardens. For example, Lady Londonderry recorded that "oranges and all plants [were] moved from greenhouse [in] June 1949 [because] nearly all [were] suffering from neglect and lack of water - names lost."<sup>153</sup>

From 1955-1956, around the time the National Trust began managing the gardens, Lady Londonderry frequently consulted Thomas Bolas regarding identification of various plants and trees.<sup>154</sup> For example, in a letter dated 1 February 1956, Bolas wrote, "The name of the evergreen climber you send me is *Lardizabala biternata*, and the shrub ... *Hakaea ulicina*. ... I do not know if those hybrid Rhodos [sic] had any special name ... They came from Gil, if you have an old catalogue of his they may be under name there. *Cyathea medullaris* is the name of the Tree Fern. I cannot remember any Maple in the Lily Wood, of course you have the purple leaved *Nothofagus fuscata* in this wood. ... glad to be of some little assistance to your Ladyship." Bolas's ability to recall these plants and their locations nearly nine years after his retirement attests to the vast knowledge he accumulated during his tenure at Mount Stewart. The letters also

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 126.

<sup>154</sup> Anne Casement's survey includes a list of these letters. Refer to catalogue numbers "KB1," "KB2," "KB3," "KB4," "KB5," and "KB6." Casement, "Mount Stewart Garden Archives and Historical Survey 1917-1969 Part 2," 267.

substantiate the difficulty Lady Londonderry encountered in managing her vast plant collection quite some time after replacing Bolas with new head gardeners.

Lady Londonderry also sought assistance from experts such as Constable Nurseries<sup>155</sup> and the National Botanic Gardens.<sup>156</sup> In a letter dated 11 March 1954, a person affiliated with the Royal Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh wrote, "I have been writing an account and trying to unravel the confusion in names which is considerable. For the time being, I think the best plan is to call everything where the leaf has a greyish tin indumentum underneath, *R. magnificum*, and where the leaf is green underneath, *R. giganteum*. Most of the plants I had from you were *R. magnificum*. One was *R. giganteum* ... I am fairly certain that this last plant was not grown from Ward's seed, but must have been a Forrest plant. ..."157

Aside from Lady Londonderry contacting nurseries to identify plants, correspondence particularly from 1949 to 1950 indicates that many nurseries contacted Lady Londonderry regarding seeds lost to *their* collections.<sup>158</sup> Letters of this nature continued for several years after the National Trust became involved in managing the gardens. For example, a note from the director of G. Reuthe Ltd. dated 19 February 1959 stated: "We take the liberty of asking whether Her Ladyship has of any of the 5 following Rhododendrons of which we are greatly in need. We need hardly say that we shall be pleased to let Her Ladyship have something by way of exchange if and when required."<sup>159</sup> This letter reveals a change in the network of exchange that Lady Londonderry and other plant enthusiasts had established before WWII. Private gardens like

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<sup>155</sup> Refer to catalogue numbers "KC5," "KC6," and "KC7." Ibid

<sup>156</sup> Refer to catalogue number "KA18 26." Casement, "Mount Stewart Garden Archives and Historical Survey 1917-1969 Part 2."

<sup>157</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Gardens 1937."

<sup>158</sup> Refer to catalogue numbers "JR9," "JR10," "JTU11," "JTU13," "JTU14," and "JR5." Casement, "Mount Stewart Garden Archives and Historical Survey 1917-1969 Part 2," 266.

<sup>159</sup> Edith Marchioness of Londonderry, "Gardens."

Mount Stewart became a valuable resource for nurseries and botanical gardens to reestablish their public collections.

## *PART VI: CONCLUSION*

### *Summary of Findings*

The gardens at Mount Stewart can best be described as eclectic and idiosyncratic in style—a fusion of ideas, inspirations, and influences that certainly reflect Lady Londonderry's exuberant and highly imaginative personality. Design and management of the gardens during Lady Londonderry's tenure evolved through three distinct phases: (1) Interwar pleasure and indulgence; (2) WWII necessity; and (3) post-WWII attempted revitalization.

The employment of many laborers demobilized from the army and made possible by ample revenue generated by the Londonderry's coal mining interest characterized garden management during the 1920s and 1930s. These factors not only provided an avenue for creating the extensive gardens, but for maintaining a highly managed aesthetic, as well. It seems likely that Lady Londonderry not only saw this as an opportunity to indulge her creative ambition, but felt motivated by a sense of patriotic duty with respect to assisting war veterans. As Lady Londonderry stated, "Every employer in Ulster who could do so undertook to provide work for ex-service men, in addition to the ordinary employees. This, from my point of view, was an opportunity not to be missed."<sup>160</sup>

The gardens at Mount Stewart became a vehicle for expressing the range of talents possessed by Lady Londonderry and others. This mixture of influences contributed to the eclectic feeling that characterizes Mount Stewart today. While many gardens in the United Kingdom contain Celtic themes, Italian-inspired architecture, or Arts and Crafts-style ornaments, Lady Londonderry's amalgamation of these inspirations distinguishes her creation. Similar to other garden designers, Lady Londonderry selected deities and mythologies from the Classical canon as a means of conveying her personality and values. Additionally, Lady Londonderry

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<sup>160</sup> Londonderry, "The Gardens at Mount Stewart," 520.

expressed herself through her exotic plant selections, which often included rare specimens that were intense in both color and fragrance. Consequently, at Mount Stewart, exotic plant collections played an even more important role than in other places of Lady Londonderry's time, such as Bodnant, Hidcote, and Sissinghurst.

While the magical properties of plants and flowers fascinated Lady Londonderry, she never seemed entirely fulfilled by her designs. A frequency of change characterized her gardens. The key to Lady Londonderry's aesthetic may have been her identification with the mythological character of Circe the Sorceress. In contrast to most gardens that are visually inspired, the gardens at Mount Stewart do not emphasize layout and exhibit a mixture of influences without great originality. Hence, the main inspiration of Lady Londonderry's gardens may have been imagined or literary, such as the roles of a magical island. This literary association is perhaps most evident in the exoticism and exuberance of Lady Londonderry's plant collection.

Before WWII, the gardens served as a place of pleasure and indulgence for Lady Londonderry and her family, as well as a social setting for friends. A vast change in purpose defined the period during WWII as the gardens became more utilitarian by mostly producing vegetables for consumption and flowers for local markets. Various efforts to revitalize the gardens defined the period following the war. For example, management shifted toward determining new ways to economize in the garden during a time of financial uncertainty instigated by post-war Labor Government estate taxes. Lady Londonderry sought adaptive management strategies to reduce labor costs and to regain knowledge lost after her long-time head gardener retired.

By 1955, Lady Londonderry negotiated with the National Trust to oversee her gardens in perpetuity. She believed it was important to "ensure that these Gardens should be permanently

preserved and maintained in the future."<sup>161</sup> She further stated, "Gardens are meant to be lived in and enjoyed and I hope they may long continue to be a source of pleasure to those who visit them, as they have been in the past, when the grounds were always open on certain days to the public."<sup>162</sup>

### *Connecting Current Strategies and Future Challenges to Past Practices*

The Mount Stewart Garden Conservation Management Plan (MSGCMP) recognizes the rare and unusual plant collection that Lady Londonderry acquired and designed at Mount Stewart as its most significant asset. The plan divides the gardens and pleasure grounds into twenty-three character areas and focuses management on significant plants and conservation policies for each defined space. In broad terms, the MSGCMP states,

"It is important that the garden and its planting should not reflect a single moment in time ... but instead should be a mixture that encompasses the overall "Londonderry spirit" of vibrant garden creation, plant experimentation and high standards of horticulture while also recognising the most appropriate features and designs of more modern times. To lock the garden into a single restoration period or time would suffocate it, and as this was never a philosophy that Lady Londonderry adhered to ... Instead the garden was and should always be a dynamic living entity ...."<sup>163</sup>

Hence, the overarching management strategy in the MSGCMP is for the National Trust to garden in the "spirit" of Lady Londonderry. This strategy requires the National Trust to maintain a collection of plants that combines species originally selected and favored by Lady Londonderry, such as rhododendrons and lilies, with new cultivars that would align with her aesthetic values if she were alive today. This frequency of change in the plant collection at

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<sup>161</sup> Londonderry, "Foreword to the Mount Stewart Garden Guide Book."

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Porteous, Buffin, and Rollinson, "Mount Stewart Garden Conservation Management Plan 2011," 27.

Mount Stewart correlates with the mindset of Lady Londonderry's adopted persona of "Circe." Additionally, the flexibility of this approach toward maintaining a rare and unusual plant collection that changes over time will enable management to adapt its strategy in response to future economic and environmental factors.

In the MSGCMP, the National Trust acknowledges that it faces new challenges in long-term management of the Mount Stewart gardens as the descent from a period of cheap oil and energy is underway, as many countries recover from a global economic crisis, and as climate change permanently alters weather patterns, among other unforeseen factors. At the same time, the National Trust recognizes that these challenges pose a special opportunity for Mount Stewart not only to serve as a leader in solving these problems, but also to educate the public and inspire citizens to take action.

In response to the descent from a period of cheap oil and energy, management at Mount Stewart has adopted sustainable practices, such as installing a new biomass boiler that efficiently burns locally sourced wood chips to provide heat and hot water to the vast estate.<sup>164</sup> Although the MSGCMP does not detail the energy issue, the National Trust has taken further steps toward sustainability by considering new ways to maintain the rare and unusual plant collection without relying solely on foreign countries to transport seeds and specimens. For example, in 2010, the National Trust signed an agreement to lease a section of the Walled Garden for the provision of new propagation facilities.<sup>165</sup> Although at a much smaller scale than the extravagant Interwar Period, the National Trust now produces a reserve stock of plants for the main gardens and grows additional ones that can generate income from visitor sales. While reinstating this tradition

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<sup>164</sup> National Trust, "The Warmth from the Willow".

<sup>165</sup> Porteous, Buffin, and Rollinson, "Mount Stewart Garden Conservation Management Plan 2011," 24.

requires extended efforts from the garden staff, it pushes Mount Stewart in a more sustainable direction.

In addition to energy concerns, current management practices also have responded to the recent global economic downturn. For example, the National Trust has initiated a volunteer program that offers temporary relief to unemployed individuals, particularly those in the housing sector of the economy. This approach parallels Lady Londonderry's strategy to employ jobless soldiers for garden work. The recent volunteer program has enabled the National Trust to maintain its large collection of rare and unusual plants, which requires intensive labor from a reliable, educated, and skilled staff.

Still, economic downturns challenge managers at Mount Stewart in other ways, such as securing funding for new plant acquisitions. The MSGCMP suggests, "New acquisitions should be a blend of the best and most desirable of new cultivated garden varieties equally mixed with wild collected material from China, Japan, Himalayas, North America and the Mediterranean Zones of the world."<sup>166</sup> While the MSGCMP does not address potential problems related to funding these exotic acquisitions, particularly during economic downturns, management may consider reestablishing connections to acquire plant materials locally through private estates and public botanical gardens. Such a practice would recall Lady Londonderry's Interwar period "network of exchange."<sup>167</sup>

The MSGCMP suggests that managers should replenish the garden "with a rich mixture of botanical treasures and the very best cultivated plants that are adaptable and sustainable in this

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<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>167</sup> The National Trust recognizes how reliable funding remains a concern for all of its properties. Consequently, they have begun a decade-long program to help land managers find new sources of income to support more sustainable land management. They will explore funding through public bodies, new markets for ecosystem services, and through their own commercial activity including product licensing, procurement and corporate partnerships. National Trust, "Our Land, For Ever, For Everyone," 4.

unique microclimate of the Ards peninsula.<sup>168</sup> Still, rising sea levels and potential shifts in prevailing wind patterns threaten the Sea Plantation and shelter-belts at Mount Stewart, which, in turn, will affect the microclimate. Thus, climate change poses another problem for management because it may raise questions about the long-term survival of some introductions from warmer climates in the collection at Mount Stewart.<sup>169</sup> On the other hand, Mount Stewart has become a haven for some plants already threatened in their native environments, such as the *Brachyglottis brunonis* (*Senecio centropappus*) or Brown's daisy tree endemic to Tasmania.<sup>170</sup> Consequently, the exotic and exuberant plant collection at Mount Stewart may become an increasingly significant resource in the near future.

### *Conclusion*

Through extensive research of primary resources at the Mount Stewart Archives, this report has identified three distinct periods of management in the history of the Mount Stewart gardens. Accordingly, future garden managers should consider adapting an approach that characterizes one of those three periods. Present management strategies of the gardens— such as providing work to unemployed persons, propagating plants in the Walled Garden, and maintaining an exotic and exuberant plant collection—correlates closest with approaches that defined Interwar Period. It is likely that the National Trust will hold to the goal of maintaining the aesthetic characteristics and design principles that defined the Mount Stewart gardens during the Interwar Period since that is when the gardens reached their pinnacle. Economic and environmental factors, however, eventually may prompt the National Trust to adapt an approach from a different time in Mount Stewart's history, such as its WWII "period of necessity."

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<sup>168</sup> Porteous, Buffin, and Rollinson, "Mount Stewart Garden Conservation Management Plan 2011," 29.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>170</sup> National Trust, "Survey at Mount Stewart Expose Important Plants".

During WWII, Lady Londonderry discovered less extravagant ways to fill her planting beds and still maintain colorful and fragrant displays of flowers throughout the growing season. She changed her strategy of procuring a wide array of unusual plants from overseas to one of ordering bulbs and other low-maintenance flowers from local nurseries across Britain. Although, Lady Londonderry still purchased considerable quantities of these plants, they would have required relatively less labor and skill to cultivate. The overall purpose of the gardens during this period shifted from indulgence and display to fulfilling utilitarian needs. Because the government urged everyone in Britain to grow as much of their own food as possible during WWII, Lady Londonderry shifted her focus from rare ornamental plants to uncommon varieties of vegetables and fruit trees that could provide sustenance to the local community.

Lady Londonderry exhibited a sense of ingenuity in her ability to adapt management to maintain her established values of color, fragrance, and rarity under external influences. Today the National Trust faces many challenges from global climate change, economic downturns, and the descent of a period of inexpensive energy. Because of these uncontrollable circumstances, the National Trust may find it critical to interpret the WWII period in Mount Stewart's history by shifting to a simpler and more pragmatic scheme for the gardens' planting beds. While this approach would require considerably less funding, energy, and maintenance than current practices, it also would enable the National Trust to maintain the "Londonderry spirit" through changes in design.

In conclusion, the gardens at Mount Stewart are significant on many levels—from its historical association with Lady Londonderry to serving as a place where managers can examine global problems of both nature and culture. Mount Stewart exhibits multiple "functions of land" outlined by the National Trust in their "Our Land, For ever, For everyone" report, including:

production, biodiversity, cultural history, recreation and inspiration.<sup>171</sup> The gardens at Mount Stewart can and should remain a place for children and adults to connect with nature and with each other. As "The Mount Stewart Conservation and Management Plan" suggests "Mount Stewart was above all a family garden, a place for relaxation, enjoyment and entertaining."<sup>172</sup>

In order to achieve this goal, it is important that future managers practice adaptive management by frequently reevaluating their goals and adjusting their strategies as necessary, while at the same time ensuring continuity with the historic character of the gardens. As Lady Londonderry created and managed her gardens at Mount Stewart, she consistently relied on her garden books, among other resources in the Mount Stewart Archives, for education and inspiration. Thus, it is only appropriate that we, too, should consistently rely on these resources to guide us in future management of the gardens.

### *Suggestions for Future Research*

While researching the gardens at Mount Stewart for this report, the author identified several gaps in the landscape's historiography and noted potential sources of information that might further enhance an understanding of the gardens. Outlined below are suggestions for future research.

(1) Full Transcription and Organization of the Garden Books. The section entitled "The Nature and Character of the Garden Books" and Appendix A explains the highly disordered and incoherent nature of Lady Londonderry's garden books, which creates a fragmentary view of how the gardens progressed over time. Anne Casement's study is a useful starting point for

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<sup>171</sup> National Trust, "Our Land, For Ever, For Everyone," 3.

<sup>172</sup> Porteous, Buffin, and Rollinson, "Mount Stewart Garden Conservation Management Plan 2011," 27.

research because it offers partial transcriptions of these documents.<sup>173</sup> When closely examining each garden book, however, it became evident that important Anne Casement's partial transcriptions inevitably omitted significant pieces of information.

Full transcriptions would undoubtedly lend insight into many details that defined the gardens at Mount Stewart and would thus facilitate identifying further patterns of aesthetic characteristics, design principles, and management strategies from this period. After fully transcribing the garden books, the author feels that it would be helpful to reorganize the content in a chronological order. This would be a vast undertaking, yet it would greatly help future scholars understand how the gardens evolved as a whole entity.

2) Examination of Lady Londonderry's Personal Diaries. In the early stages of researching this report, it became evident that Lady Londonderry's garden books are not of a personal nature and instead mostly contain copious records regarding plant orders. Consequently, it is difficult to infer much about the values, events, motives, or other factors that spurred the actions documented by these statistics. Lady Londonderry maintained separate personal diaries, which are now located in the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland. It would be useful to examine these resources and determine whether they could shed further light on Lady Londonderry's personal thoughts and experiences of the gardens.

3) Considering the Other Side of Correspondence. Research for this report included a review of letters from people associated with the gardens at Mount Stewart. Because most of these letters responded to ones sent by Lady Londonderry, they offer only one side of the conversation and make it difficult to understand the full context of the conversation. For example, a letter dated 8

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<sup>173</sup> Casement, "Mount Stewart Garden Archives and Historical Survey 1917-1969 Part 2," 93-121.

July 1936 from Stuart Low Co. states, "Your experiment seems to us very interesting, and it will be a pleasure for one of us to inspect your Garden if we might be allowed on some occasion, when we are in the district."<sup>174</sup> The letter unfortunately does not indicate what type of "experiment" Lady Londonderry proposed. Thus, it may prove worthwhile, if possible, to research various archives associated with individual persons (*e.g.*, Lord Aberconway, Frank Kingdon-Ward, or Gertrude Jekyll), well-known nurseries, or botanic gardens with whom Lady Londonderry regularly corresponded to determine if her original letters still exist.

4) Development of a Post-WWI Context (The Arts and Crafts Movement). It would be useful to research the literature on other gardens of this period to place Mount Stewart within a historical context. Most of the famous examples of Arts and Crafts gardens are associated with the establishment of new gardens by the newly rich—hence "middle class" rather than "aristocratic" persons, such as Lady Londonderry. Most importantly, the Arts and Crafts Movement was only one among several influences for Lady Londonderry, such as admiration for the Italian garden and enthusiasm for collecting plants associated with the twilight of the empire.

Garden historians have yet to determine a good categorization for gardens of this type. For example, in *The National Trust Book of the English Garden*, author Richard Bisgrove titles his chapter on early twentieth-century gardens "The Edwardian and Neo-Georgian Garden" in which he describes a fusion of several ideas and influences. At Mount Stewart, exotic plant collections, however, played a more important role than in most places, such as Hidcote, Bodnant, and Sissinghurst. Jane Brown's book *Gardens of a Golden Afternoon* and Judith Tankard's *Gardens of the Arts and Crafts Movement* would provide a solid starting point to defend the argument that the gardens at Mount Stewart do not fully fit the mould of a typical

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<sup>174</sup> Londonderry, "Mount Stewart Gardens 1927-1936," 120-21.

Arts and Crafts garden. The Circe myth was perhaps the main organizing principle of Lady Londonderry's gardens. Thus understanding the historical context of Mount Stewart may prove that literary inspirations played a stronger role in Lady Londonderry's designs than Arts and Crafts ideals.

5) Comparison with Other Londonderry Residences. Similar to other aristocrats, Lord and Lady Londonderry maintained several residences across Britain. Anne Casement suggested that Lady Londonderry's initial attempts at creating her own garden date to the early 1900s when she and Lord Londonderry acquired their first home, a hunting box at Springfield near Oakham. In addition to Mount Stewart, Lady Londonderry cultivated gardens at Kinloch, a shooting lodge in Sutherland.<sup>175</sup> Correspondence indicated that Lady Londonderry also gardened at her London home, Wynyard Park. The author of this report feels that it is important to research Lady Londonderry's other residential gardens to determine whether or not she might have applied design principles and management strategies similar to Mount Stewart. Determining how Mount Stewart may have differed from these other gardens would provide insight into how Mount Stewart was personally significant to Lady Londonderry.

6) Determining Local Needs Fulfilled by Mount Stewart during WWII. The author encountered numerous references suggesting that during WWII Lady Londonderry supplied flowers to local markets. One would assume that few people considered cut flowers a necessity during this period. It was not evident as to who purchased these flowers and for what reasons. While Mount Stewart also increased production of fruits and vegetables during WWII, the author did not find any references suggesting that the staff at Mount Stewart distributed food produced in the

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<sup>175</sup> Casement, "Mount Stewart Garden Archives and Historical Survey 1917-1959 Part One," 18.

gardens to local markets. This suggests that the products mostly supplied the community of people working and residing at Mount Stewart. It would be useful to research the archives of local newspapers and publications to construct a better understanding of what role Mount Stewart played in providing its garden products to the greater community during the war.

7) Understanding Post-WWII Labor and Finances. During the course of this research, the author encountered numerous published writings by Lady Londonderry and other persons associated with her gardens, which stated Mount Stewart had suffered neglect from diminished labor during and after WWII. Plant order records in Lady Londonderry's garden books, however, indicate a trend of buying large quantities of plants immediately after WWII until the time of her death in 1959 (similar to her pre-WWI purchasing habits). One would assume that if there were a lack of laborers Lady Londonderry would have restricted her orders during this period. Thus, it would be useful to check consensus records at the Public Records Office in Belfast to compare how many gardeners Lady Londonderry employed before and after WWII.

Because Lady Londonderry expended a large amount of money on her gardens after the war, one also would question the status of the Londonderry's finances. Lady Londonderry's husband Charley and son Robin both passed away after the post-war Labor Government had begun imposing hefty death taxes on the aristocracy. It would be helpful to determine to what extent this circumstance affected the Londonderry's finances and how it correlates with Lady Londonderry's decision to transfer the gardens to the National Trust.

8) Reviewing Lady Mairi's Cine Films. Anne Casement's inventory dates the vast majority of Mount Stewart photographs to the years before WWII.<sup>176</sup> Thus, there is a large gap in visual documentation of the gardens during and after the war when many key changes in design and management occurred. Cine films created by Lady Mairi, however, do exist from this critical period and may offer a basis for comparison. Anne Casement stated that the television room at Mount Stewart contains "video transformations" of these cine films.<sup>177</sup> These films would have served as primary resources for this report had they not been in an obsolete viewing format. Should funding become available, it is important that the National Trust have these cine-films updated in format for viewing and analysis.

9) Reconsidering the Role of Thomas Bolas. Throughout the course of this study, it became clear that head gardener, Thomas Bolas, played a significant role in the success of the gardens at Mount Stewart. Mr. Bolas may have maintained diaries or record books during his time at Mount Stewart, as this was a common practice among gardeners of his stature. If such documents existed, it is likely that Mr. Bolas would have taken them with him after he retired. The author contacted descendants of Mr. Bolas, but at the time, they were unable to offer any information regarding this possibility. It may prove worthwhile to determine whether such documents still survive. If so, they would certainly yield crucial information about implementation and management of the gardens from 1921 to 1947, and they may shed new light on Mr. Bolas's working relationship with Lady Londonderry.

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<sup>176</sup> Casement, "Mount Stewart Garden Archives and Historical Survey 1917-1969 Part 2," 255-58.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

10) Placing Lady Londonderry in the Context of 20th Century Plant Expeditions. Lady

Londonderry subscribed to the expeditions of many British plant hunters, such as Frank Kingdon-Ward and Clarence Elliot. For example, Lady Londonderry bought a ten-guinea share of all the rhododendrons collected during Kingdon-Ward's 1938-9 expedition of North Burma.<sup>178</sup> Many of the species discovered on these journeys remain rare today. Other plants, however, have since become widely available through nurseries and are prevalent in home gardens and public landscapes. On a broader scale, it would be beneficial to understand Lady Londonderry's role in these plant introductions.

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<sup>178</sup> National Trust, "Survey at Mount Stewart Expose Important Plants".

***APPENDIX A: DESCRIPTIONS OF THE NATURE AND CHARACTER  
OF EACH GARDEN BOOK***

**(1-2) "Mount Stewart Garden Book No. 1 1922-7" and "Mount Stewart Garden Book No. 2 1922-7:"**

The "Mount Stewart Garden Book No. 1 1922-7" and "Mount Stewart Garden Book No. 2 1922-27" are predominantly record books but contain a few scrapbook elements, such as photographs, article clippings, and letters. Since both books roughly cover the same time and contain slightly different information, each tends to supplement the other. For example, "Mount Stewart Garden Book No. 1 1922-7" emphasizes more documentation on garden architecture and ornaments, whereas "Mount Stewart Garden Book No. 2 1922-27" focuses on plant acquisitions with a few planting designs.

Lady Londonderry organized the content of these books with headings that reflected garden spaces, such as "West Garden Terrace Border" or "Pergola." "Mount Stewart Garden Book No. 1 1922-7" contains some ordered content, with bold headings at the top of most pages. Beneath the headings in the first book, Lady Londonderry noted the annual development of the gardens and referenced sources of ideas and inspirations for particular elements. Some of these entries sway back and forth between years but often maintain the same handwriting and ink, thus suggesting that she retrospectively recorded much of the content. To substantiate this claim further, notes within the first garden book often refer to years that predate the "1922-7" period printed in gold on the front cover.

Both of these early garden books contain many underlined subheadings that reflect (1) the names of nurseries from which Lady Londonderry procured plants and (2) the seasons when

she placed the orders. These types of entries always contain lists of plants, sometimes accompanied by specific numbers, particular varieties, basic growing instructions, and general locations within the gardens. Because Lady Londonderry based her orders off descriptive text (as opposed to today where one could rely on color photography to first see what a plant might look like), she later inserted many commentaries about how specific plants performed and whether they met or exceeded her expectations.

"Mount Stewart Garden Book No. 2 1922-7," on the other hand, contains many planting instructions. Lady Londonderry often wrote these during the planning stage for the upcoming season and recorded notes about performance from the previous year. Of all her garden books, only this second one contains sketched planting plans; whereas the other books are limited to written instructions regarding plant locations. In addition, the planting plans in the second book are predominantly limited to the beds in the Italian Garden. The lack of cohesive planting plans for all other areas of the gardens suggests that Lady Londonderry may have determined the exact placements on site with her head gardener, Thomas Bolas. It is also likely that Lady Londonderry gave her general planting instructions to Bolas and entrusted him to work out many details on the ground on his own.

### **(3) "Mount Stewart Garden Book 1927-1936":**

This garden book is a combination of a record book and scrapbook because it includes the following elements: hand written plant orders and notes; some planting instructions for particular areas; and a variety of photographs, article clippings, letters, and typed plant order receipts, all of which Lady Londonderry attached to pages in the book. Some of this information predates the 1927-1936 period printed in golden text on the cover. For example, the book

contains letters that range in date from 1921-1936 and plant receipts from 1925-1932. These documents, however, rarely appear in chronological order (e.g. a letter dated 1936 might occur several pages before one dated 1933).

The handwritten plant lists also appear out of chronological order. For example, page 84 contains lists of mixed plants for 1930 and 1931, while the list on page 92 refers to 1928. Some lists, however, are organized by type (e.g. roses, tulips, annuals, shrubs, etc.) while others are grouped according to plant nursery names and contain lists of mixed types. These plant lists most often indicate quantities procured and performance, but only occasionally include notes regarding their locations or uses within the gardens.

This garden book is thus highly disorganized, as Lady Londonderry mixed various types of information (*e.g.*, a plant order receipt may follow a typed personal letter). This garden book is particularly challenging to comprehend because there is no correlation in the content of one page to another (e.g. a typed letter on page 24 dated 1926 from Armytage Moore of Rowallane has no obvious connection with page 25, which contains a 1927 lily order from GreenBrae Gardens in Washington, USA). Lastly, the majority of writing in this particular book contains a combination of black ink, red marks, and pencil, which suggests that Lady Londonderry added notes at different times.

#### **(4-5) "Garden 1935" and "Mount Stewart Gardens 1935:"**

The books entitled "Garden 1935" and "Mount Stewart Gardens 1935" both fall under the category of a record book. Each predominately contains Lady Londonderry's handwritten lists of plants and instructions regarding work for staff to complete in the gardens, with letters and plant order receipts occasionally inserted between pages. Lady Londonderry organized "Garden 1935"

more so than her other garden books because the right sides of the pages have labeled tabs that indicate the content of each page. The information contained within the tabbed pages ranges in date from 1931-1941. With regard to the "Mount Stewart Gardens 1935" book, it is interesting to note that none of the content corresponds to the 1935 date imprinted on the cover in gold letters. The content of this particular book is comparatively short and disjointed as it contains some entries from 1936-1939, with the rest dated from 1950 to 1952.

#### **(6) "Mount Stewart Gardens 1937:"**

This garden book is the largest and most complex; it contains over three hundred bound pages in addition to many loose ones. Lady Londonderry added a highly illegible index on the two pages inside the front cover. Each page of the index includes three columns of alphabetized subjects, indicating the vast amount of information contained within this particular book. The front of the book contains supplementary index pages created on loose paper. Lady Londonderry filled the written pages with plant lists and frequently included sources, order dates, quantities, and varieties, with occasional instructions about planting or locations. Lady Londonderry did not organize these records chronologically, and thus information on the pages alternates from year to year.

Lady Londonderry also inserted a large number of articles from *Gardening Illustrated* into this book. While the content of these articles is quite varied, presumably all are significant given Lady Londonderry took the time to remove them from their original publications and save them along with her own records. Lady Londonderry also saved a large amount of correspondence from friends and nurserymen, as well as pamphlets for various gardening products, and pasted the documents within this book. The documents in this book span three

decades, from the 1930s through the 1950s. This book thus falls under the category of a scrapbook because of the varied types of documents that comprise it.

(7) "Article Cuttings, Letters, Notes 1955 and 1941"

This book has a reinforced leather spine and marbled cover with the faded text "Article Cuttings, Letters, Notes 1955 and 1941" along the top edge. The book contains handwritten tabs along the right side. While Lady Londonderry did not alphabetize the information indicated on the tabs, they still add a layer of organization and help direct the reader to information on each page. The topics vary from types of plants (e.g. heaths, blue plants, vegetables, etc.) to garden spaces (e.g. seaside planting and walled garden). This book falls under the scrapbook category as it contains many article clippings from *Gardening Illustrated*, letters, and notes. These documents mostly range in date from the 1930s through the 1940s.

(8) "Gardens"

This large garden book has a brown marbled cover and reinforced spine. The handwritten words "Gardens" appear along the top left of the front cover. As the title suggests, this garden book falls under the category of a scrapbook. Lady Londonderry somewhat organized this book as alphabetized tabs along the right sides of its pages often correspond to types of plants. The book also contains six typed pages that comprise an inventory of rhododendron species in the gardens at Mount Stewart. Additionally, the book includes numerous awards to Lady Londonderry from the Royal Horticultural Society's Rhododendron shows during 1956. At the back of the book, Lady Londonderry kept an envelope filled with various plant lists and correspondence from nurseries.

(9) Untitled/Undated Garden Book

The small untitled and undated garden book has a characteristically pink floral fabric cover. This book mostly contains sketches and design ideas for the gardens, which include: paving and planting patterns inspired by *Medieval Garden Volume II* for the terrace on the southern side of the house; plans for the Shamrock Garden and Tír na nÓg; plant lists for the Italian Garden categorized by colors (blue, maroon, scarlet, orange, white, and red); planting plans for the Italian Garden parterres and the borders along the Pergola Walk, among several others.

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