



Dublin Historical Society

Dublin, New Hampshire 03444 • Founded 1920

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A HISTORY OF THE GARDEN CLUB OF DUBLIN PART III – CONCLUSION



By the 1960s the Garden Club was in its fourth decade and its membership was moving into a second generation. Neither Dublin's gardens nor the activities of the Garden Club could quite maintain the grandeur of pre-war days.

In her very entertaining 1979 history of the Club, Elizabeth Pool wrote:

"Not long ago, Helen Milbank... remarked to me that we 'seem to have operated on a much bigger scale in the old days.' We did indeed and the answer is not far to seek. It involves a marvelously valuable – and now extinct – species known as SERVANTS. Dublin, once upon a time, was full of them."

No longer did head gardeners – "superintendents" – command squads of underlings. They were replaced, perhaps, by one or two part-time diggers and delvers, so that Garden Club members often had to dig and delve for themselves. This inevitably left less time for the social aspects of club membership.

CHANGING WITH THE TIMES

As earlier noted, active membership under the original 1928 Constitution was limited to local landowners. Further qualifications included "possession of a flower garden, active, personal supervision therein, ...", the operative word being "supervision". The Constitution as amended in 1960 provides only that "Active Members shall... have demonstrated interest in the Club's activities."

Whereas in 1939 there had been only three members with Dublin as a winter address, by 1978 there were 33. As more year-round residents became members, the season for meetings and activities lengthened at both ends. No longer were notices of meetings sent as formal invitations. Postcards were used for several years, but even these were given up in 1985 as an economy measure.

Club mores changed in other ways. For many years only maiden ladies had given names (Miss Agnes Troup), all others being referred to solely by their husband's names (Mrs.



Nancy Perkins and Lucy Shonk performing at the Toulouse-Lautrec Ball, 1958.

Courtesy of Elizabeth Pool.

Otis T. Russell). In 1977, for the first time, members' given names began to appear, cautiously framed in parentheses, on Club lists. Minutes of meetings during the 1980s used a mixture of forms, but by the end of the 90s not only first names but nicknames were in general use (Dottie Cannon).

One thing that never changed was what might be described



Story Wright and Mary Elizabeth McClellan planting shrubs at the Post Office, 1989.

Dublin Historical Society Archives, records of the Garden Club of Dublin.

as "Garden Club prose". Each year the President and one other member attend the annual meeting of the Garden Club of America (GCA), as well as the Zone 1 meeting. These meetings require reports to the membership, reports in which every garden is beautiful, every hostess gracious and no sandwich other than delicious.

REGULAR SUMMER ACTIVITIES

During the second half of the 20th century the club's formal activities followed roughly the same pattern from year to year. GCA rules require six general meetings a year – one each devoted to conservation, horticulture and flower arranging. There were competitions among the members in the last two fields, and great store was placed on an accurate use of Latin names. Most meetings included a talk by an outside speaker on some appropriate topic.

Often the topic was nature conservation – fauna as well as flora – a subject in which the Club has always taken an active interest. For many years the Club provided financial support for nature classes given at the Consolidated School by Elliott and Kay Allison (Honorary Members of the Club) and made annual gifts to send the older students to a week-long nature camp.

Most summers were punctuated by special events, such as hosting the annual meetings of Zone 1 (northern New England) of the GCA in 1949, 1960, 1976 and 1994. Each of these occasions demanded careful organization and much cooperative effort towards the

housing, feeding and entertainment of delegates from eighteen other clubs.

Before 1990 there were two flower shows every summer. Nowadays there is one, and sometimes a year is skipped. Most of these shows are "in-club" and held at members' houses, but still require formal judging of garden produce and flower arrangements, with ribbons and cups for the winners. More elaborate shows, open to the public and sometimes in conjunction with other clubs, were held in 1975, 1984 and 1996.

GOOD WORKS

Continuing its tradition of public service, the Club has carried out a number of projects for the beautification of the Town. In 1950, when the no-longer-used Trinitarian Church was deeded to the Women's Club, the Garden Club took on the maintenance of the surrounding grounds. It also contributed the major portion of the cost of renovating the building, adding a kitchen and creating a comfortable meeting place for the Women's Club, and, incidentally, for itself. Now that the building has become the Dublin Post Office, Club ladies continue to maintain the landscaping around it.

By 1960 Club members were landscaping not only the Women's Club grounds, but around the Library, the Oval and the "Triangle" (the small plot at the western junction of Main Street and Old County Road). Starting in 1962, the Club undertook a major upgrade of the area around the Community Church, including installing the granite pavement in front of the main entrance and caring (while they lasted) for the elms along Route 101. When the elms died, the Club replaced them with the maples which are there now, planted in honor of Herbert and Isabel Pratt.

Among other Club *pro bono* activities have been plantings in the cemetery and at the Library and Archives building. Another major undertaking was stabilizing the shore of Dublin Lake.

In recent years the Garden Club's concern has extended past the shore to the waters of the Lake. In 1983 the Club took on the testing of Dublin Lake water. In the years since, this



President Nell Schwartz relaxes after conducting a propagation workshop, 1996. Behind her are past-Presidents Julie Crocker and Susan Barker.

Dublin Historical Society Archives, records of the Garden Club of Dublin.



*Susan Peters and Elisabeth Langby dressed for attacking milfoil, 2002.
Courtesy of Thomas Atmer.*

project has grown into a regular lay monitoring program, in cooperation with the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services.

In 2001 milfoil, a particularly noxious aquatic weed, was discovered at Cemetery Cove. Some Garden Club members donned wet suits and removed plants from the bottom by hand. This effort, in cooperation with the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, has substantially eradicated milfoil from Dublin Lake in the course of a couple of summers.

FUN AND FUNDRAISING

Financial support for all these projects was contributed, privately and discreetly, by some of the wealthier members. Additional money was raised through various events, of which the most elaborate was a Toulouse-Lautrec Ball held at the James studio in 1958. Subscribers were asked to come in fin-de-siècle costumes and there was a cabaret performance *à la Moulin Rouge*.

In the 1980s funds were raised by a succession of Basket Fairs, which included lunch and the sale of handicrafts and edibles such as jams and baked goods produced and donated by members. Other fundraisers have included garden tours, auctions and, during the 1990s, a very successful series of Appraisal Days, a sort of fore-runner of the Antiques Roadshow.

2004 was the Club's 75th anniversary, celebrated at the Loring Catlin, Sr.'s house, once the home of the Club's first president, Margaret Brewster. Mrs. Brewster's celebrated gardens are gone but her legacy is thriving.

– J.W.H.

The Daffodil Show

1975-2003

The daffodil show was the Garden's Club's child that grew up and left home. The following history is from a note written by Vallie Wells in 1984:

"In 1975, members of the Garden Club of Dublin decided to initiate an 'In Club' Daffodil Show. Because of the late Spring in New Hampshire, our daffodils bloomed too late for neighboring state shows. Our first show in 1975 was held in a member's [Vallie Wells's] playhouse and we proudly displayed 79 blooms. The next year, the Monadnock Garden Club joined us for another 'In Club' show. By the fourth year, we opened it to the public, and we held it on a small scale in the Dublin Town hall.... We next enlisted the cooperation of the Federated Garden Clubs in the area. Five Federated Garden Clubs and three Garden Clubs of America participated, holding meetings to educate the public in growing and showing daffodils. Thus the Dublin Daffodil Show extended its horizon to many parts of New Hampshire...."

"1982 was our first year as an American Daffodil Society Show. It was a huge success, with all the prestigious American Society ribbons being awarded. Entries came from Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont and Rhode Island, as well as New Hampshire."

"1984 saw the organization of our first Junior Class, limited to children under fifteen. We had 37 entries from five different localities. Some of the blooms entered were grown from bulbs given to the students by different Garden Clubs..."

"Who would have thought our 79 blooms in 1975 would grow to over 600 in 1984. Our show is now called the Northern New England Daffodil Show, encompassing all the New England States. We have over 250 visitors to the show which is open to the public at no charge."

By 1996 the Daffodil Show had outgrown the Dublin Town Hall and moved to Peterborough. The last show was held in 2003, with 1631 blooms – quite a contrast with the 79 blooms of 1975.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A SUMMER FUNDRAISER

Friday evening, July 28
at the Tullers' barn, Pierce Road

William Morgan, retired professor of architectural history at Roger Williams University, will recount the story of the nomination of 156 historic Dublin properties to the National Register of Historic Places. The nomination process, which took seven years and required an enormous amount of research by many volunteers, was undertaken by the Conservation Commission in 1976, as part of the Town's recognition of the national bicentennial.

The prime mover was Bill Bauhan, who recruited his friend Will Morgan to provide the necessary expertise in writing the architectural descriptions. The completed nomination, which included two historic districts as well as the 156 individual buildings, was accepted by the U.S. Department of the Interior in 1983. It is quite a story, and unknown to many residents.

ANNUAL MEETING

Friday, August 25

The Annual Meeting will mark two anniversaries. 2006 is the twentieth year since the reawakening of the Dublin Historical Society in 1986. (The Society was founded in 1920, but languished toward the end of World War II.) This year is also the tenth anniversary of the opening of the Archives building.

Our fellow-member, Henry Lee, past President of the Massachusetts Historical Society, will speak on the role of local historical societies in the preservation of American history.

Please mark these dates on your calendar. Reminders will be sent as the dates come closer.

– Russell (Rusty) Bastedo

SOCIETY NEWS

NEWS FROM THE ARCHIVES

It gives us pleasure to record that the Society's Archives occasionally serve a purpose beyond supplying New England ancestors to people in Wisconsin. In November two curators at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., Nancy Anderson and Vern Milligan, spent two days here researching for a projected exhibition, planned for 2008, of works by George deForest Brush,

More recently, we have been asked by Susan Hobbs, a curator at the Freer Gallery (another subset of the Smithsonian) for material on Clara May, one of Abbott Thayer's models. Ms. Hobbs is preparing an exhibition entitled "Pretty Women" about some of the models for paintings at the Freer.

Pamela Peabody, who is working on a documentary film about Abbott Thayer and other Dublin artists, has paid us a number of visits to collect photographs, of which we have been able to supply over one hundred.

RECENT ACCESSIONS

The Directors of **Dark Pond, Inc.** have given us the records of Dark Pond Club, Inc., an organization which existed from 1965 to 1975.

From the trustees of the **Dublin Public Library** we have

received 29 books written or owned by Dublin people, as well as some other miscellaneous historical materials.

The Wardens and Vestry of **Emmanuel Church** have added to the church records a collection of 59 color transparencies and three CDs containing further images recording the restoration of the Crowninshield, Parsons & Smith windows in 2000-2001.

Adding to her previous benefactions, **Rachel Plimpton** has allowed us to make copies of further photographs of the Plimpton and related families.

Money from the **Archives Fund** has enabled us to buy on E-bay a number of small bits of memorabilia, principally postcards.

Other gifts have come from Anne Anable, Karen Bunch, Nancy Campbell, John Harris, John Kraichnan, John Nelson and Sara Timmons. To all of them our thanks.

C R E D I T S

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