

MEMBERS' DAY MEETING 2025
and
CENTENARY OF THE IRISH NATURALISTS'
JOURNAL

The Dublin Naturalists' Field Club (DNFC) Members' Day Meeting was held on the 25th October 2025. DNFC was intimately involved in the birth of both the *Irish Naturalists' Journal* (INJ) and of its predecessor *The Irish Naturalist*. For a period of more 130 years both, in succession, have provided an important outlet for naturalists in Ireland to report their findings. The main focus of the 2025 DNFC Members' Day was to celebrate the centenary of the INJ which was first published in September of 1925. Below is a copy of the programme for the day together with a small number of photographs, brief summaries and vignettes from the presentations.

Acknowledgements: Many thanks to Matthew Jebb, Director of the National Botanic Gardens, and his staff for use of the auditorium and display centre at the gardens. We are also most grateful to all the speakers, exhibitors, photographers and attendees who annually ensure the success of the DNFC Members' Day.



THE DUBLIN NATURALISTS' FIELD CLUB

DNFC Members' Day

Sat. 25th October 2025

National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin

Members' Day ("Annual Conversazione") is an opportunity for all to meet up with fellow members and to provide exhibits on any projects or personal observations, photographs, books etc. which may be of interest to others. The Board hopes that as many members as possible will attend and participate.

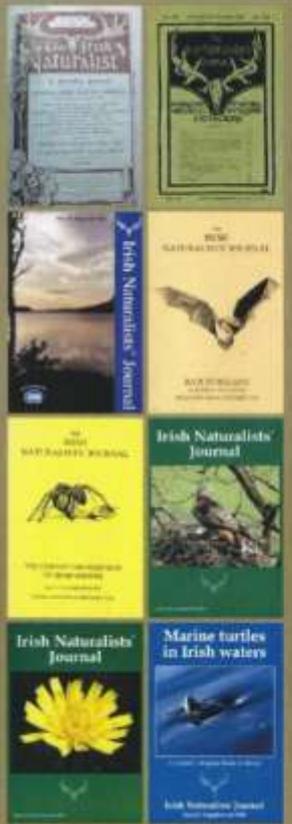
2025 is also the hundredth anniversary of the founding of the *Irish Naturalists' Journal* (INJ). The Field Club is a founding organisation and the major theme for the day's talks is the Journal. Recognising its centenary, the current members of and subscribers to the INJ are invited to attend.

Programme

10.30 a.m.	Set up Exhibits in the Exhibition Hall (upstairs) Members are requested to bring along exhibits: projects, specimens, photographs, posters, books or objects, big or small, all are welcome!
11.00 a.m.	Presentations in the Auditorium: Presidential Address - The Humble Bramble: Some significant by Alexis FitzGerald DNFC milestones and their <i>INJ</i> Links Prof. Patrick Wyse Jackson - <i>The Irish Naturalist</i> : from leaping brambles to geological tables Ciarán Flynn - The Bryophytes of Slieve Gullion, Co. Armagh (<i>INJ</i> -funded research project) Zhuzan Xirao - The Giant Tree-Peony: from Sino-Himalayan gorges to Irish castle gardens
1.00 p.m.	Lunch – Members may bring a packed lunch; or sandwiches, scones, cakes etc. can be purchased in the cafeteria.
2.00 p.m.	Viewing of the Exhibits in the Exhibition Hall, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Irish Naturalists' Journal</i> publications • Natural history books • Photographs of Irish moths • Coniferous cones • Botanical specimens • Additional exhibits by members on the day



Samples of INJ publications display at DNFC Members' Day



IRISH NATURALISTS' JOURNAL

The Irish Naturalists' Journal Ltd. is an all-Ireland organisation, publishing on the natural history of Ireland since 1925

FOR READERS

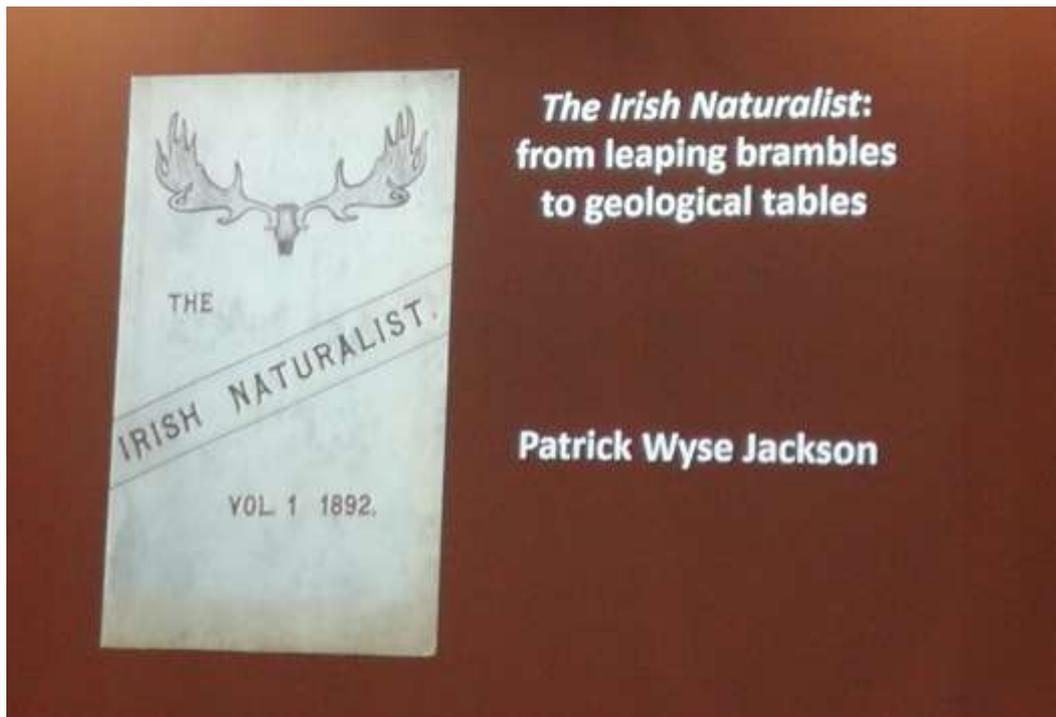
- Want to keep up to date with the natural history of Ireland?
- Want peer-reviewed quality contributions written in a style accessible to all?
- Personal subscription includes access to the full online archive of *Irish Naturalists' Journal* and the *Irish Naturalist* at jstor.org
- Journal subscriptions cover any Occasional Publications published in that year
- Competitive rates are available for students, individuals, and institutions

FOR AUTHORS

- We welcome submissions from anyone, amateur or professional, with a passion for botany, zoology or geology in Ireland
- We publish peer-reviewed papers, notes, records, reviews, and occasional publications
- Your submission joins our full digital archive online
- We do not charge for publication
- Email inj.editor@gmail.com if you are interested

www.irishnaturalistsjournal.org





***The Irish Naturalist:*
from leaping brambles
to geological tables**

Patrick Wyse Jackson

Professor Patrick Wyse Jackson, a former President of DNFC, gave us an overview of the history of *The Irish Naturalist* from its foundation to its replacement by the *Irish Naturalists' Journal* in 1925. *The Irish Naturalist* was an important scientific journal which was first published in April 1892. It owed its establishment to the efforts of several leading Dublin naturalists, notably George Herbert Carpenter (1865-1939) and Richard Manliffe Barrington (1849-1915). It was based loosely on the British monthly the *Zoologist*, and was to be a medium through which naturalists could publish articles and notes about Irish natural history. It drew the majority of its authorship, and no doubt subscribers, from the large band of naturalists that worked in Ireland at the close of the last century both as amateur enthusiasts and professional scientists. It remains today as one of the most important sources for Irish natural history and has considerably influenced present day studies in Ireland.

Irish independence and partition resulted in the breaking of direct links between the museums in Ireland and those in Britain, the retirement of staff, and in particular the loss of opportunities for exchanges of specimens and mobility for staff. The parties interested in Ireland's natural history came to together and the *Irish Naturalists' Journal*, published in Belfast, was born.

Further reading on the history of the INJ and IN

Kertland, M.P.H. (1978) The 50th anniversary of the *Irish Naturalists' Journal*. *Irish Naturalists' Journal* **19**: 137-141.

Wyse Jackson, P.N. and Wyse Jackson, P.S. (1992) *The Irish Naturalist*. 33 years of natural history in Ireland 1892-1924. *Irish Naturalists' Journal* **24**: 95-101.



The 2025 DNFC Members' Day Presidential Address by Alexis FitzGerald traced the development of *Rubus* (bramble) study in Ireland from the pioneering 19th-century explorations of Charles Cardale Babington through the mid-20th-century work of Meikle, Watson, Edees and Newton, and into the modern resurgence led by David Elliston Allen from the late 1980s onward. It highlighted how Allen's collaboration with DNFC members who, over the years, collected and curated specimens and organised fieldwork on his visits, resulted in an unprecedented expansion of expertly determined and curated Irish bramble specimens, culminating in a long series of INJ and BSBI publications and, now, the forthcoming milestone volume Allen's *Brambles of Ireland*. The address also noted recent progress, including 2025 field visits by leading British batologists David P. Earl and Angus Hannah to Ireland, and showcased the diversity of Irish bramble microspecies — from **Suberecti** of raised bog margins to woodland **Glandulosi** taxa — while underscoring the need for a dedicated Irish bramble identification handbook to guide the next generation of Irish recorders.



The results of Ciarán's work on the Bryophytes of Slieve Gullion will be published in the *Irish Naturalists' Journal*.

Zhuzan Xirao: The Giant Tree-Peony: from Sino-Himalayan gorges to Irish castle gardens



Paeonia ludlowii from Tsangpo Gorges, Tibet CN (left) and at Birr Castle (right)

The presentation by Zhuzan Xirao was on the occurrence of the Tree Paeonia (Peony) species *Paeonia ludowii* and *P. delvayi* (*laetia*) in Tibet and the taxon arising from their hybridisation. Members of the Parsons family and their associates collected a variety of plants including *Paeonia* and *Magnolia* in parts of Asia including Tibet and China. The hybrid between the Tree Paeonias *Paeonia ludowii* and *P. delvayi* (*laetia*), named as *Paeonia* “*Anne Rosse*”, was first produced by Michael Parsons at Birr Castle and may also be seen by visitors to the National Botanic Gardens at Glasnevin and Kilmacurragh.

Zhuzan continues to work on Tree Paeonia cytology and morphology and intends to publish his work at a later date. Meanwhile he would be very pleased to hear from anyone who has any observations on *P. ludowii* or *P. delavayi* from other locations in Ireland and in particular detail of growing conditions and reproduction. Additionally information on the associated histories and breeding details would be very valuable to him.