

A 150 Year Celebration

From Birth to Blossom

Rowallane Garden, Saintfield, Co. Down

17TH & 24TH March 2023



Presented by

[Celtic Grace](#)

[Paddy Creedon](#)

[The National Trust Rowallane Garden](#)

Table of Contents

Performance Description	3
Part 1 - Introduction	4
Part 2	4
❖ Stillness	6
Part 3	8
❖ Paws	10
Part 4	12
❖ The Haggard	14
Part 5	16
❖ A Garden For All The Senses	18
Part 6 - Finale	20

From Birth to Blossom

A Birthday Celebration - Two Performances

Poetry and Music

Friday, 17th March 14.00- 16.00 (St. Patrick's Day)

The celebration of Hugh Armytage Moore and blossom continues with a live performance of the poetry of Paddy Creedon set to music. Paddy accompanied by Celtic Grace™ will paint a picture of Rowallane Garden through poetry, taking you on a musical journey arranged on flute and harp.

Join us in the Stable Yard and hear Rowallane Garden come to life as we leave winter behind us and move into spring.

Poetry in the Garden

Friday, 24th March - 11.30- 12.30

In celebration of what would have been Hugh Armytage Moore's 150th birthday, join us for a walk in the garden with published poet Paddy Creedon and listen to a reading of four bespoke poems written about Rowallane Garden.

Walk with us amongst blossoms, blooms and signs of warmer weather and experience these poems in the heart of the setting from which they were inspired.

What others say:

'I love the poetry crafted and spoken by Paddy Creedon as it touches the heart and spirit with messages and meanings that are deeply personal, heartfelt and inspiring' - Frances Black

'Wonderful flute and harp... immense intuition and sensitivity... impeccable' - Conor O'Kane, Senior Partnership Manager, Marie Curie

**Programme for
Friday, 17th March - St. Patrick's Day
14.00 – 16.00**

Part 1 - Introduction

Welcome & Introductions by National Trust (Kyle Lamb)

Introduction Prairie Spring - Celtic Grace™

Spring is always associated with new beginnings. And each plant's new journey begins with the first few precious drops of rain.

In our arrangement of this beautiful tune, called 'Prairie Spring', we invite you to listen for those first precious drops of rain.

And then notice as the plants, one by one, and then all somehow all at once, ease their way out of the soil and reach for the Sun.

Part 2

- Delighted to be here along with Eileen and David from Celtic Grace™.
- So let us take you through our interpretation of the legacy that is Rowallane Garden with music, poetry and storytelling.
- Over the next hour or so we have four poems written especially for the occasion along with some truly delightful music - a mix of flute and harp - intertwined with some storytelling about Rowallane Garden.
- If you feel like humming along to any of the tunes, and I will, please let yourself go and have a ball... It can only add to the occasion.

Rowallane is a magnificent collection of plants, which will appeal to gardeners, but it has also been arranged by a genius who has used the natural advantages of a place to create vistas and combinations of colours everyone can appreciate. The National Trust is proud to have been given the task of preserving Mr Armytage Moore's life work.

So said the then Chairman of the Northern Ireland Committee of the National Trust, The Earl of Antrim, in his foreword to the publication entitled "The National Trust – Rowallane, Co Down, printed by Nicholas & Bass Ltd at Belfast and at a cost of two shillings dated in the mid 1950's.

Not in his wildest dreams perhaps could this genius, with such an environmental vision, have foreseen how the eruption of colour, how the release of scent, and how such an oasis for the heart and spirit would become the Rowallane Garden we know and love in 2023.

The work done by Reverend John, Hugh and continued to the present day by the teams at the National Trust have brought what the Japanese discovered in 1980's and referred to as 'Forest Bathing' to the generations that visit here every day. This wonderful world of Forest Bathing - a mindfulness exercise derived from the Japanese word *shinrin-yoku* (meaning "taking in the forest atmosphere"). The purpose was twofold: to offer an eco-antidote to tech-boom burnout and to inspire residents to reconnect with and protect their country's forests.

Hugh Armytage Moore inherited the property from his uncle, the Reverend John Moore in 1903, and decided to grow plants among the yards and fields making Rowallane a world-class garden instead of a farm.

Music Intermission Celtic Grace - Inisheer

Today we are here retracing Hugh's steps in this delightful hidden gem, close to the city of Belfast in the idyllic 'Mourne' County of Down. At the invitation of Kyle Lamb and Catriona Clarke, two of the dedicated team that keep Rowallane open to the public 363 days every year, I visited Rowallane Garden for the first time on Sunday 22nd January 2023.

I was here too on the recommendation of my two great friends and artistic colleagues Eileen Beamish and David Williams who had suggested I might create some poems to celebrate the 150th birthday of Hugh Armytage Moore (who was born on the 10th March, 1873). I hope to give you my poetic interpretation of Hugh Armytage Moore's legacy, *along with the music mix of harp and flute from Celtic Grace™ (played so beautifully by Eileen and David).*

On that sharp crisp Sunday morning in January, once we had exchanged the initial pleasantries and talked about what was being planned for today, I took a walk around the grounds absorbed by its quietness, broken only by the sounds of running children and some January birdsong. At the water pond at the bottom of the walled garden I was fascinated by the solitary robin that seemed to view me with the suspicion normally kept for a familiar stranger who has strayed uninvited into somebody else's territory.

Later that day, putting pen to paper I tried to capture my first impressions of Rowallane and at the same time let the robins of this world know that I am on their side with the same environmental agenda.

Music Intermission Celtic Grace™ - Inisheer

***'the restful voices have been swept by time
beyond the storybook night sky
where silence
drowns them out totally'
(From Francis of Assisi 1182:1982 by John F Deane)***

Stillness

The soft underbelly of a tranquil stroll gives way
to the Sunday morning mists that seem to stray,
Inside a brooding, spiralling and revolving mind,
Leaving fledgling children zigzagging just behind,
Past me now, entirely oblivious to my hankering,
Looking for a benign corner, playful and playing,
Too young to be overly concerned by billboards
Signposting the marvels of nearby playgrounds.

Solitude and silence at Rowallane are all aglow,
If only visible to the inner self and able to show
nature's kindness, as I begin to feel its wildness,
Approaching from the tops of enormous trees,
To bell-like snowdrops under my muddied feet,
By the playground where living creatures meet.

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Music Intermission Celtic Grace™ - Inisheer

Introduction to Poke Kare Kare Anna - Celtic Grace™

This next tune we have for you, is called Poke Kare Kare Anna. It comes from New Zealand. This was one of the places where Hugh Armitage Moore's plant hunters found many of the highly prized plant specimens. These specimens were packed and transported very carefully. It was a long journey back, and it was done by boat.

Come with us now on board one of those boats, laden with precious exotic plants - the vivid colours, unusual flowers and heady perfumes.

Feel the rolling waves rise and fall beneath you. Hear your oars splash in the water on either side of you, as you make your way out to sea to join the mother ship that is waiting to take your plant passengers on that long journey back to Ireland.

Part 3

Second thoughts can have a more lasting impression and that for me came from the sign that greets you as you come up the driveway - A Cead Mile Failte – a hundred thousand welcomes with a paw-like difference.

It's striking in the way it addresses our four legged friends, with kindness, respect and lots of love: Values I have come to learn more and more from my seven grandchildren who live with their parents and four canine friends in Dublin and Roscommon.

In and around the same time as the O'Neill Clan were signing a covenant passing over the ownership of Rowallane to the Hamilton family, the poet Alexander Pope was busy with his creative works. One of these still catches the eye many centuries later:

“I am his Highness’s dog at Kew; / Pray tell me, sir, whose dog are you?” reads an epigram that Alexander Pope wrote in the 1730s and had engraved on the collar of one of his puppies, whom he gave to Frederick, Prince of Wales. In poetry speak, the epigram form is often referred to as a short poem or phrase that expresses an idea in a clever or humorous way.

Some of Pope’s verses have even entered common parlance (e.g. "[damning with faint praise](#)" or my favourite "[to err is human; to forgive, divine](#)").

The other link between Pope and the legacy that is Rowallane Garden is that Pope created his now-famous [grotto](#) and gardens in his home in 1719, [Twickenham](#) London. The serendipitous discovery of a spring during the excavation of the subterranean retreat enabled it to be filled with the relaxing sound of trickling water, which would quietly echo around the chambers

Kyle Lambe tells me that there are many connections between Rowallane and Kew evidenced by many letters exchanged between Hugh and his counterparts at Kew down the years.

Music Intermission Celtic Grace™ – Down By Sally Gardens

My research for my 2nd poem shows that Alexander Pope was a lover of dogs, particularly large dogs, all of his life. I love this story on how on one occasion Bounce, his much loved and faithful Great Dane is reputed to have saved Alexander Pope’s life. The great Australian poet, A. D. Hope tells this story:

"In the evenings after Pope retired to bed, it was Bounce's habit to remain downstairs in front of the fire, soaking up the heat from the dying embers.

On one particular evening, however, everything changed. Earlier that day, Alexander Pope had hired a new valet. Bounce took an abnormal dislike to the man and, that night, after the valet helped Pope into bed, Bounce abandoned the fireplace, crept up into her master's bedroom, and crawled under the bed to sleep.

Pope was awakened much later by the sound of someone in his room. When he peered out from behind his bed curtains, he saw the dark figure of a man approaching with a knife in his hand. Physically incapable of defending himself, Pope could do nothing but scream for help.

Hearing the cries of her master, Bounce charged out from under the bed and knocked the assailant to the ground. She held him there, barking until the rest of the household was awakened. The armed intruder turned out to be none other than Pope's new valet, who had intended to kill Pope, rob him, and flee into the night before his crime was detected."

Bounce died while in the care of John Boyle, 5th Earl of Orrery and Pope died less than two months later on the 30th of May, 1744.

In more modern times the great American poet Mary Oliver was also a lifelong dog lover. Her take on our relationship with our dogs is captured in the following lines:

"A dog comes to you and lives with you in your own house, but you do not, therefore, own her as you do not own the rain, the trees, or the laws that pertain to them. You don't really own a dog, you live with them".

Music Intermission Celtic Grace™ - Down By Sally Gardens

***I am His Highness's dog at Kew; /Pray tell me, sir, whose dog are you?"
Alexander Pope (1730s)***

Paws

Walk beside me for just awhile,
Take my lead and let's run wild
with optimism into a fresh mile,
Always and ever my night child.

Master, always coming and going,
Dancing prancing inside my head,
Forever here and gently crooning,
Without end, long after I am dead.

Springtime comes, rarely hostile,
Bluebells, azaleas, bulbs popping,
Le Jardin public* arrives in style
Standing by, just eavesdropping.

Slow down, come ramble awhile,
Alongside me to my squashy tarn,
A signature striking splendid smile,
Shrinking away into a nearby barn.

Those precious gold and silver days
Arrive ahead of time, so much more,
Never one that sits, rests and obeys,
You are my priceless timeless folklore.

- *The public garden

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Music Intermission Celtic Grace™ - Down By Sally Gardens

Introduction to 'Hewlett' - Celtic Grace™

This next tune is called "Hewlett". It was written around 350 years ago by Ireland's own Turlough O'Carolan. It's a very happy, bouncy tune. Let it bring to mind happy dogs, eagerly tugging on leads, curious, full of life, wagging their tails, saying hello to their doggy pals. And as the tune slows down at the end, see those happy canines back with their owners... smiling...content... everyone refreshed and renewed.

Part 4

The 'Welcome to Rowallane Garden Map', a must for every visitor and freely available at the entrance hut, takes one's attention to 15 places and spaces that bring immense pleasure, joy and calmness to those who visit this mindfulness oasis.

Place names like the 'Pleasure Garden', 'Trio Hill', the 'Hospital' and the 'Paddock' jump off the page but for me it's No.6 that immediately caught the eye; the image; the memories and much more.

"The Haggard' is a warm word – full of love and care for our environment, our animals and our relationships with nature. In the 1950's / 60's where I grew up, it was not unusual for grandparents on the family farm to send you to The Haggard to pick up some apples. Whilst Haggards had changed their purpose from haystacks to apple trees and the like, the name lives on.

The Shorter Oxford Dictionary, dates "haggard" from 1586, says this word from Old Norse is found only on the island of Ireland and the Isle of Man, and means "a haystack". Generally the word embraces the area near the house where the grain and hay-stacks were built.

On Sunday 19th February, 2023 I was back in Rowallane to soak up the peaceful serenity that comes with each visit. I have identified a few quiet seats of pure tranquillity that are peppered around these stunning grounds. I am happy to share one of these delightful seats of liberation and inspiration.

There is this weather beaten wooden bench facing the water pool at the bottom of the Walled Garden. The February sun shone warmly on my face from my right side whilst at the same time a soft gentle breeze from my left kept coming and going, wafting over my restful mind-set.

Once again the red breasted robin emerges from the undergrowth to check me out. This robin is gaining more trust in my presence and calmly sneaks back into the shadows.

With these words of American poet Jessica Powers let Eileen and David take us on the next steps of our journey:

"Love has its proper soil, its native land:

Its first roots fasten on the near-at-hand"

Music Intermission Celtic Grace™ - South Wind

This seat of my inspiration faces the stone on stone walled enclosure and from where I sit the solitude is momentarily interrupted by couples out for their Sunday afternoon quality time together - some with young children, some with four legged friends on short leads and some with both.

I am still mesmerised by the sight of two young brothers who gather some gravel from the nearby paths and throw them harmlessly into the pond. Parents protest of course but I wonder if this is a boy thing as it brings me back to my own three boys who always did the same thing when we were close to water, whilst their sister never seemed to take part in this unusual activity (or so I seem to remember)!

The minutes roll on as earth, wind, water and sun appear in total harmony with those of us meandering between silent walls and distant bird song. The scent is of wood and nature at its almighty best drawing me closer to The Haggard. This place brings the old Rowallane and the new Rowallane together as one - the farm and the garden alive and living together in perpetuity.

I ease myself very reluctantly out of my wooden seat and if by way of a deep and personal calling, I make my way to the other side of that wall, pass the pottery and the gifted hands of the man who is consumed in his art as I drop in, unnoticed, to say hello.

Music Intermission Celtic Grace™ - South Wind

***“Suddenly a sparrow darts in
Through a door, flits across the hall
And flies out through another one”***

(from the flight of the Sparrow, by James Harpur)

The Haggard

Welcome to our Garden says the man in the hut,
Handing me a map displaying all I need to know,
My fascination meanders towards walled gardens,
Where stone on top of stone got shaped into place,
Finished off meticulously, proportionately sculpted,
How many red-breasted robins have patrolled here?
Long lasting spells of soft rain arriving unannounced,
Loping down those garden walls, onto childrens' faces

Eyes now gliding excitedly over the one-page map,
Shifting towards my destination in the distance
Rain, earth and sky spirits from another world,
Taking me into itself back into Hugh's time,
Where the snowdrops, daffodils and the
Haystacks waltz alone into The Haggard.

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Music Intermission Celtic Grace™ - South Wind

Introduction to the Tune - Mrs Power

We chose this tune to represent the beauty of the garden. Not accidental beauty, but beauty at its natural best.

This again, is one of Turlough O'Carolan's magnificent melodies. O'Carolan composed it for the wedding day of Mrs Frances Power, an heiress and society beauty who was, no doubt, looking her very finest on her wedding day.

Perhaps you'll see the image of women, adorned in elegant gowns, strolling in the garden, as they did, in Hugh Armytage Moore's day, purely for pleasure.

Notice how the beauty of the flowers, in particular, is central to this scene; radiant colours, soft variations of light and shade, and delicate perfumes filling the air.

Part 5

No celebration of the legacy of Hugh Armytage Moore would be complete or accurate without paying due recognition to his beloved uncle Reverend John Moore.

From the mid-1860s Rev John laid out the garden, built a walled garden, created the Pleasure Grounds and planted many trees. Pines, redwoods, firs and beech trees and still today set the quiet mood, the stillness that we referred to earlier

In 1903 the garden passed to his nephew, Hugh Armytage Moore. He began to plan and plant his garden but according to my research he did not live here until 1917.

In the publication Rowallane by the National Trust in the late 1950's (and available in the Linen Hall Library) it hails the work done by Hugh Armytage Moore saying: "In addition to his knowledge he had a gift which set him apart from nearly all his contemporaries. This was a flair for exploiting the natural features of his property which helped him create a garden of exceptional beauty and interest, not surpassed by any other garden in the British Isles."

Immense gratitude is due to Hugh and his wife Jane Mathieson, whom he married in 1910, in that the general public was able to enjoy the beauties of Rowallane from the early 1900's History writes that: "They came each year in their thousands and the horticultural connoisseurs too from much further afield".

It was a long overdue but fitting tribute to the genius of Hugh Armytage Moore when he was awarded the Victoria medal of Honour in horticulture in 1952.

Music Intermission Celtic Grace™ - Ashokan Farewell

On Tuesday 21st February, I met Eileen of Celtic Grace™ (*and responsible for the music today* along with her husband David), to discuss and plan out the programme. Later I dropped into the Linen Hall Library to look again at the beautiful pamphlet published in the 1950s by the National Trust. This time there was an extra piece of very relevant information - Inside the front of the pamphlet, protected by a plastic cover is a perfect original press cutting from an unidentified newspaper dated 19-4-63.

It was a reply, in the letters section, under the heading **“That £62,000 for Rowallane”**. In the letter dated 5th April 1963, a Mr C.S. Archer took issue with the amount given to the National Trust by the Northern Ireland Government and in particular the £62,000 given to the Trust for Rowallane. The then secretary of the Trust, Mr J. E. C. Lewis- Crosby explained that £26,000 went to the Estate of Hugh Armytage Moore for the purchase of the house and garden of 52 acres and £26,000 by way of endowment for their upkeep both paid over in 1955. A further £10,000 was paid in 1958, after it had been found that the income from the endowment fund did not meet expenditure, namely gardener’s wages.

Back to my research again and this is where we learn with some sadness the many financial challenges experienced by Hugh when the cost of living (a bit like now) was an ever increasing issue in the post-war years. Rowallane had already suffered from the world war of 1939-45 with staff numbers reduced from 6 to 2 from 1939 onwards. Consequently, the work had to be reduced significantly; the beautiful garden in all its natural glory could no longer be maintained to the standards that Hugh Armytage Moore had consistently met.

By the early 1950s great concern was felt by all garden lovers about the future of Rowallane.

In 1954 the President of the Royal Horticultural Society Mr Bowen-Lynn, who was also chairman of the Gardens Committee of the National Trust, approached Hugh Armytage Moore to enquire if there was some means whereby Rowallane could be preserved for posterity. And as we say nowadays; ‘the rest is history’, but with a real life fairy-tale ending that is Rowallane Garden today. To have and to hold, open for all, 363 days every year.

A priceless treasure, a living, breathing Monet-like masterpiece for every generation; once we hand it on to the next generation with the same love and care as Hugh handed it to us back in 1954. Hugh Armytage Moore died on 04 Dec 1954.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis

“May your faithful soul sit at the right hand of God”

You have done our planet some service.

Music Intermission Celtic Grace™ - Ashokan Farewell

*I have spread my dreams under your feet;
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.--*
[\(He wishes for the Cloths of Heaven by W.B. Yeats\)](#)

A Garden for all the Senses (In memory of Hugh Armytage Moore)

Each sound of silence comes towards you
unexpectedly, the taste in your body full
of springtime blossom, animated smells
from exotic plants, touched by drifting
past the Himalayan Rhododendrons
Arriving into view for the first time
Nearby Castlewellan and far away
Tasmania seducing your senses.

A first visit carries you into your tomorrow,
A back-to-the future feeling of one-sided joy,
A meaningful coexistence within the inner self,
A heady mix of wild flowers, shrubbery, tall trees
A cascade of colour flowing around in your head
A sense of a new arrival into a mindfulness world

Come back together, come back alone,
Come back again, come tomorrow,
Come back on my birthday,
Come back often,
Come back.

An unfilled prescription for living,
talking laughing walking flirting,
coffeeing alone or with a friend.

My kingdom, your kingdom,
My domain, your domain,

My oasis, your oasis,
My place, your place,

My garden is your garden.

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Music Intermission Celtic Grace™ Ashokan Farewell

We sometimes talk about “my garden” or “your garden” forgetting all the while about the myriad of other creatures, whose home this garden is.

Among the most obvious are the Garden Birds who share their delightful songs with us and lift our spirits.

This is why we have chosen the melody, “The lark in the clear air”, to twin with the final poem.

Feel free to close your eyes, if you wish, and simply bathe in the simplicity and elegance of this musical tribute to the lark. And, as a song of the same name goes, let your soul soar enchanted...

Thank you for listening and enjoy!

Tune ‘The Lark in the Clear air’ - Celtic Grace™

NATIONAL TRUST CLOSING REMARKS - KYLE LAMB

Interestingly also, the Earl of Antrim finished his foreword back in the 1950's with the following:

If you enjoy your visit, may I appeal to you to join the National Trust? We need members, not only for the subscriptions, although they are important, but because we are encouraged in our work in the knowledge that we are supported by large and increasing numbers of people.

How true is that statement today – even more so.

Part 6 - Finale

CONCLUDING MUSIC - CELTIC GRACE™

- Lord Inchiquin
- O'Carolan's Receipt
- Fort of the Fairy Queen