

# Irish geology rockery opened in Dublin

Nearly two years ago my brother Peter called me from the **National Botanic Gardens** in Glasnevin, Dublin, where he is Director, to tell me that he had discovered something that would interest me. My curiosity aroused, I visited the next day and we walked to an overgrown flowerbed that was due for replanting. There he pointed in one corner to some



**Giant's Causeway basalt**

pieces of the columnar basalt that had come from the Giant's Causeway in Co. Antrim. Looking around I noticed some bored limestone, large flint cobbles and some Old Red Sandstone conglomerate.

Peter had stumbled on an old rockery that clearly contained some interesting rock types. I suspected that the basalt columns had arrived in the Botanic Gardens over 150 years ago when it was under the administration of the Royal Dublin Society. There and then we decided to restore the rockery as an educational resource, using the geological specimens but augmenting them with additional rock types from elsewhere in the Gardens. The pieces selected had to be striking but also

reasonable large so that their distinctive characteristics could be easily seen.

## The restoration

Patrick and Peter Wyse Jackson designed the layout of the new rockery. Patrick supplied text and some images for the explanatory labels that accompany each rock type. Aisling O'Donoghue and the Horticultural Team of the National Botanic Gardens built the rockery.

The centerpiece comprises the shape of Ireland outlined in quartzite and infilled with Mississippian limestone from Stradbally, Co.

Offaly. Surrounding Ireland are ten different rock types placed as close as possible to where they crop out. Thus the four pieces of the Giant's Causeway are situated at the northeast corner of the rockery. Moving from there in a clockwise direction are the following: Flint from the Cretaceous chalk; Gypsum from the Kingscourt, Co. Cavan district; Leinster Granite from Wicklow; Calp limestone and limestone cobbles bored by a marine mollusc, from Co. Dublin; Old Red Sandstone facies conglomerate; Old Red sandstone from the Dingle Peninsula, Co. Kerry; Quartzite; Vein Quartz; and yellow Sandstone from the Mississippian of Co. Donegal. The spaces between the rock types are infilled with Leinster Granite gravel. The rockery has been designed in such a way as to allow the insertion of additional rock types if they become available. It would be useful to add Connemara Marble and Donegal Granite.

This rockery has already been well received by visitors and it is hoped will be a useful addition to the growing number of geological educational resources. The National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin ([www.botanicgardens.ie](http://www.botanicgardens.ie)) is open every day of the week and admission is free (although there is a charge for parking).

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**The Irish Geology Rockery, Glasnevin, Dublin**

## Sad to say

The Belfast Geologists' Society lost two other very valued members earlier this year. They will be sadly missed.

Mary Popper, who died on May 14th, was a member for many years and a frequent attendee at winter meetings. Mary and Tom became something of a Belfast Geologists' Society institution - they were really enthusiastic and regularly came to winter meetings. We offer our sympathy to Tom and their family.

Sue Turner, who died on June 7<sup>th</sup>, had been ill for some time. We send our sympathy to her husband John, who is one of our keenest members, and all their family.



**Carboniferous limestone and bored limestone cobbles**