

Susanna Grubb (1820-1911), Botanist and Artist

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ABSTRACT: That Susanna Grubb (1820-1911) was responsible for plant records in the valley of the River Suir (Clonmel area, Co. Tipperary) and elsewhere in Ireland is well attested in the literature, that Susanna Grubb was an accomplished painter of wild flora was not known until recent years. This paper sets out what is known of her life history and lists the artwork donated to the National Herbarium, National Botanic Gardens, Dublin.

INTRODUCTION

The name Susanna Grubb (1820-1911) occurs frequently in the literature relating to plant recording in Ireland in the nineteenth century. She was an active botanist, a subscriber to *Contributions towards a Cybele Hibernica* (Moore & More 1866), but more importantly, she supplied records to the publication, from Ballitore, Carrick-on-Suir, Tramore and her hometown Clonmel. Her name appears frequently in *Cybele Hibernica* for the information she supplied from District 2 – South Tipperary and Waterford. In the introduction to the work she is listed as ‘county recorder’ for Tipperary (South Riding) and for Waterford (in conjunction with Isaac Carroll). Moore and More acknowledge all contributors for their ‘unwearied courtesy with which they replied to close and troublesome enquiries.’ The Grubb records include: *Papaver argemone*, *Rorippa sylvestris*, *Ballota nigra*, *Gymnadenia conopsea*, *Pseudorchis albida* (now a red list species), *Asparagus officinalis* subsp. *prostratus* and others; they are not dated. In the second edition of *Cybele* (Colgan & Scully 1898), the Grubb records and additions are repeated. Praeger (1901) included the *Cybele* records and additions to 1900 where there was an assured (Praeger, 1901 p. v), definite statement (Praeger 1901 p. xcii) for Tipperary South, H7 and Waterford, H6. The name J. Ernest Grubb, nephew of Susanna, also appears in this work. Both are listed in the introduction and are acknowledged with others for ‘willing assistance’.

In Moore and More (1866), under *Bryonia dioica*, there is reference to a dried collection of plants made by Susanna Grubb. Some specimens collected by her are in the herbarium (**DBN**) at Glasnevin. [Examples include:] *Rorippa sylvestris*, by the R. Suir, Clonmel, Aug. 1871; *Oreopteris limbosperma*, mountain at Maam, Co. Galway, 8mo. 1852; *Prunus domestica*, hedge near Clonmel, n.d.; *Oenothera biennis*, near Carrick-on-Suir, 8 mo. 1864 and others. The last two sheets are labelled – ‘ex herb. Th. [Thomas] Chandlee’, which suggests that, at some stage, the Susanna Grubb specimens passed to another. Thomas Chandlee (1824-1907) of Clogheen, Co. Tipperary, a Minister of the Society of Friends, was educated at Ballitore Quaker school as were the brothers and cousins of Susanna (McAuliffe 1984). He botanised about Ballitore and about Fermoy (E. Cork). “An excellent working foundation ... is furnished by the herbarium of Mr. Th. Chandlee” (Johnson, 1891). This collection was originally preserved at the Friend’s institute, and was one of the earliest acquisitions made by the Science and Art Museum Dublin (now **DBN**). In Whitney (1948) there is a reference to “one of the Grubb aunts, she was a passionate botanist, and had made a collection of pressed flowers, beautifully mounted, named and classified ...” It must have been Susanna. Praeger (1949), in a biographical notebook, does not list Susanna Grubb or any member of the Grubb family. Desmond (1994) does not catalogue any Irish person of the name Grubb.

That Susanna Grubb was responsible for plant records in the valley of the River Suir and elsewhere in Ireland is well attested in the literature; that Susanna Grubb was an accomplished painter of wild flora was not known until recent years. This paper seeks to draw attention to, and list, the artwork donated to the National Herbarium, National Botanic Gardens, Dublin in 1988.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Susanna Grubb was born on 4 April 1820 in Clonmel, the daughter of Lydia (née Jacob) (d. 1844) and Joseph Grubb (1768-1844). Her father had a grocery establishment in the town of Clonmel. Susanna was the youngest of four brothers and two sisters (Grubb, 1972). She may have been educated 'at a boarding school for girls similar to that at Ballitore ... founded by Sarah Grubb at Suir Island, Clonmel (McAuliffe, 1984). The family lived in urban Clonmel. She died on 23 September 1911.

The Grubb family were members of the Religious Society of Friends (or Quakers). Grubb (1928) relates "The Grubb's came to Waterford first in 1656, when John Grubb from Nottinghamshire started a 'linen manufactory' at Ferrybank [on the N bank of the R. Suir near the city]. This was not a success so he became a farmer near New Ross, Co. Wexford. One hundred years later his youngest grandson, Benjamin Grubb was a butter merchant and grocer in Clonmel." In the early nineteenth century Clonmel was known as one of the Quaker towns of the south of Ireland. In the area "they monopolised the corn trade ... founded the provision trade ... and were engaged in brewing, in farming and in general shop-keeping" (Grubb 1928). The Grubbs prospered and at one stage owned 17 miles along the River Suir. They took a leading part in charitable and social movements. Watson (1988) reported that during the famine, "in Clonmel ... soup was ladled out to the starving ... The lady members included Mrs. A. Strangman, Susanna Grubb, Elizabeth Green ..."

The history of the Grubb family is lengthy and is but briefly considered here in relation to Susanna Grubb and her flower paintings (Grubb 1972). The brother of Susanna, John Grubb (1818-1870), married Rebecca Strangman (d. 1907) of Waterford. Their son, Ernest Grubb (1843-1927), contributed to Praeger's *Irish Topographical Botany* (1901); their daughter, Anna, married Alfred Southall (1838-1931), a manufacturing chemist of Birmingham. There were nine children of this union. The eldest daughter Geraldine Southall (1865-1941) married Barrow Cadbury (1862-1958), a cocoa and chocolate manufacturer of Birmingham. The Cadbury's had three children Dorothy, Paul and Geraldine. The eldest, Dorothy Adlington Cadbury, published with J.G. Hawkes and R.C. Readett, a computer mapped flora of the county of Warwickshire (Cadbury *et al.*, 1971), she was a Director of the firm Cadbury Bros., and was also a painter of flowers (Copson 1988). Dorothy inherited the Grubb art from her mother, Geraldine Southall Cadbury, who had received it earlier from her uncle Ernest Grubb. On the death of D.A. Cadbury (Hawkes 1988) the art work passed to her sister Geraldine Mary Cadbury. Then in 1988, she with her daughter Catherine Rachel Hickinbotham, decided to donate the paintings to a "museum ... preferably in Ireland" (pers. comm. C.R. Hickinbotham to M.J.P. Scannell). Following a discussion at the University of Leicester with Dr. John Ackroyd and Dr. John Gornall, it was agreed that the paintings should be offered to the herbarium at Glasnevin. As then Head of the Herbarium I welcomed the gift, and advised that the volumes should not be posted but should travel in the custody of one travelling between the two institutes. On the 3 June 1988 the two volumes were handed to me at Glasnevin. The courier was David Webb of Trinity College.

Susanna Grubb was a competent botanist who contributed to the scientific works of her time. With a herbarium and a set of flower paintings she was well equipped for the study of plants. For reference she probably used Mackay's *Flora Hibernica* (1836) and Smith's *English Botany* with Sowerby's illustrations and later Bentham's *Handbook of the British flora* (1858). Susanna Grubb recorded plants in a district minimally worked in the mid-1800s. By her work she made a contribution to knowledge of species distribution in Ireland.

THE ART OF SUSANNA GRUBB

The artwork, comprising 119 watercolour paintings, is contained in two sturdy bound volumes. The two volumes have clearly been bound at different times. Each bears a spine title. [Volume

I.] *Wild Flowers* measures 19 x 24 x 2 cm; the cover is marbled paper with back and corners of leather; the spine is of five panels, each with a design in gilt. The fly-leaf is inscribed, 'Susanna Grubb (b. 4 iv. 1820; d. 23 ix 1911) / Geraldine S. Cadbury / [this is followed by a brief family tree]'. [Volume II.] *Wild flowers of Ireland* measures 19 x 24 x 3 cm; the cover is of brown paper with a textured surface, the back and corners are of leather, the leaf-edges are gilded. The spine is again of five panels, but with a different design of gilt decoration. The fly-leaf is inscribed "Susanna Grubb / J. Ernest Grubb, Carrick-on-Suir, 1911 / Geraldine S. Cadbury / painted by Susanna Grubb of Clonmel, Ireland / Great aunt of Geraldine S. Cadbury".

Most of the art subjects are dated from 1838-1848, except the fern *Ophioglossum vulgatum* which is dated 1886. The dates in feint pencilling are difficult to decipher. The work is on art paper with habitat notes and locations on the facing page; a flimsy protects the painting. None of the subjects are signed. Some pages carry watermarks, as Whatman Turkey Mill with dates 1834, 1835, 1839 and 1846; another as A. Cowan & Son 1852, is accompanied by a figure, an urn with coronet. The plants/flowers were painted in the following counties: Tipperary, Waterford, Dublin, Kildare, Kerry and Mayo. The Susanna Grubb Art is Registration No. 18: 1989 in the National Herbarium at Glasnevin.

The plant paintings of Susanna Grubb are of graceful composition, are pleasing portrayals of the species, and show a good understanding of the underlying structures. Flowers, as in *Hyoscyamus niger*, settle well into position. The flower colour is true and good throughout; leaf colouring is mainly a uniform green, indicating a limited palette. The plant habit is well conveyed and in some cases the root system is included. The paintings of *Erica mediterranea* [= *E. erigena*], *Campanula rotundifolia*, *Veronica scutellata*, are very good; some ferns are depicted, in the case of the filmy ferns, the detail of the indusia are shown in pencil.

The catalogue below assembles the information associated with the paintings in the two volumes. The compiler has numbered the artwork, inserted authorities and brought the names into line with current work. The classification phrases following each entry in the volumes – as Decandria, Monogynia for *Arbutus unedo* for example – have been omitted. The common names are those provided by the artist, and derive probably from publications of the time.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are expressed to the donors Ms. Geraldine Cadbury, Stratford-on-Avon, Warwickshire and Mrs Catherine S. Hickinbotham, Bushby, Leicester; to Dr. John Ackroyd and Dr. John Gornall of Leicester University; to the late Professor David Webb for his care of the material whilst it was in transit to Ireland; to Mr Peter Lamb, Dublin, for providing information on the Grubb family and for general Quaker history in Ireland; to Dr. Matthew Jebb, and Mr. Howard Fox for critical comments on the draft paper, and to the late Ms. Grace Pasley who facilitated my work at the herbarium (DBN).

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VOLUME 1: WILD FLOWERS

Where scientific names have been superseded, these are given in square brackets. Common names as given in the volume. Other additional comments in square brackets.

- 1 *Arbutus unedo* L. Strawberry tree
abundant at Killarney
[in flower and fruit]
- 2 *Drosera rotundifolia* L. Round-leaved Sun-dew
Common in bogs and mountains near Clonmel.
28 ... 1845
- 3 *Hymenophyllum wilsonii* Hook. Wilson's Filmy Fern
On rocks in Morgan's Glen
[in fruit] - mo 1845
- 4 *Hymenophyllum tunbrigense* (L.) Sm. Tunbridge Filmy Fern
On rocks in Morgan's Glen. 1845
- 5 *Linaria elatine* Sharp-pointed Toad-Flax
[=*Kickxia elatine* (L.) Dumort]
Dunmore [in flower]
- 6 *Glaucium luteum* Yellow Horned-Poppy
[= *G. flavum* Crantz]
Sea Shore near Dungarvan. 1844
[flower and fruit]
- 7 *Oxycoccus palustris* Cranberry
[= *Vaccinium oxycoccus* L.]
In a bog near Glennagad
- 8 *Veronica scutellata* L. Narrow-leaved Marsh speedwell
In Rehill bog.
- 9 *Erica mediterranea* Mediterranean heath
[= *E. erigena* R. Ross]
Grows abundantly near Mulranney, Co. Mayo.
- 10 *Arenaria marina* Sea Sandwort
[= *Spergularia marina* (L.) Griseb.]
Very common on the sea coast of Co Waterford.
- 11 *Melampyrum pratense* L. Common Yellow Cow-wheat
Common in woods.
- 12 *Botrychium lunaria* (L.) Swartz. Moon-wort
On the mountains near Clonmel
- 13 *Campanula rotundifolia* L. Round-leaved Bell-flower
Innisfallen
- 14 *Campanula rotundifolia* L. Round-leaved Bell-flower
abundant in some parts of Co Galway and Mayo
- 15 *Viola canina* L. Dog's Violet
very abundant – mo 1844

- 16 *Viola palustris* L. Marsh Violet
Rehill bog. 1845
- 17 *Trichomanes speciosum* Willd. Bristle Fern
Killarney 1846 Fruit and Rhizome
- 18 *Lychnis flos-cuculi* L. Ragged Robin
Frequent in moist meadows
- 19 *Chlora perfoliata* Perfoliate Yellow-centaury
[= *Blackstonia perfoliata* (L.) Hudson]
near Woodstown
- 20 *Rubia peregrina* L. Wild Madder
Cliffs at Tramore 1846
- 21 *Scilla verna* Hudson Vernal Squill
abundant on Dalkey Island and at Howth.
- 22 *Saxifraga hypnoides* L. Mossy saxifrage
near Coumshingaun
- 23 *Ophioglossum vulgatum* L. Adder's Tongue
mountain road
27. 8. 1886
- 24 *Ophrys muscifera* Fly orchid
[= *O. insectifera* L.]
near Ballitore

VOLUME II: WILD FLOWERS OF IRELAND

- 25 *Pinguicula grandiflora* Lam. [Greater Butterwort]
bog near Cork and abundant near Killarney.
5 mo 1848
- 26 *Pinguicula vulgaris* L. Common Butterwort
Found in a bog near Cahir.
5 mo 1843
- 27 *Polygala vulgaris* L. Common Milkwort
- 28 *Convolvulus soldanella* Sea Bindweed
[= *Calystegia soldanella* (L.) R.Br.]
Found in sand hills near Tramore in
abundance. 1842
- 29 *Parnassia palustris* L. Common grass of Parnassus
found in abundance in a lake near Tramore.
1842
- 30 *Lobelia dortmanna* L. Water lobelia
grows in abundance in a lake near Tramore.
1842
- 31 *Scutellaria galericulata* L. Common skull-cap
found near Rehill. 1842

- 32 *Thymus serpyllum* L. Wild thyme
[= *T. praecox* Opiz]
in abundance on the sea coast near Tramore.
1842
- 33 *Geranium columbinum* L. Long-stalked Crane's-bill
Field near Clonmel. 1841
- 34 *Anagallis tenella* (L.) L. Bog pimpernel
bog near Clonmel
31.7.1841
- 35 *Pinguicula lusitanica* L. Pale butterwort
bog near Clonmel. 31.7.1841
- 36 *Ophrys apifera* Huds. Bee Ophrys
found at Ballybrad. 6 mo 1841
- 37 *Euphrasia officinalis* L. Common Eye-bright
1840
- 38 *Agrostemma githago* L. Corn cockle
field near Clonmel, plentiful
6 mo 1841
- 39 *Iris pseud-acorus* L. Yellow Water Iris
bogs near Clonmel, plentiful
- 40 *Asplenium ruta-muraria* L. Wall-rue spleenwort
Common on walls
- 41 *Arum maculatum* L. Cuckoo pint; Wake Robin
hedges near Clonmel. 1840
- 42 *Orchis maculata* Spotted palmate orchid
[=*Dactylorhiza maculata* (L.) Soó]
1839
- 43 *Orchis pyramidalis* Pyramidal orchis
[=*Anacamptis pyramidalis* (L.) Rich.]
6 mo 1841
- 44 *Rhinanthus crista-galli* Common Yellow Rattle
= *R. minor* L. 1839
- 45 *Ranunculus flammula* L. Lesser spear-wort
bog near Clonmel
- 46 *Viola lutea* Hudson Yellow Pansy
Sand hills near Dungarvan
8 mo 1838
- 47 *Comarum palustre* Purple Marsh Cinque-foil
[=*Potentilla palustris* (L.) Scop.]
in a bog near Clonmel. 1839
- 48 *Sagittaria sagittifolia* L. Common Arrow head
In the canal near Dublin

- 49 *Primula vulgaris* Hudson Common Primrose
- 50 *Glechoma hederacea* L. Ground Ivy
- 51 *Lathyrus pratensis* L. Yellow meadow Vetchling
hedge near Clonmel
- 52 *Antirrhinum majus* L. Great Snap-dragon
Found on the top of the tower at Kiltinan
9 mo 1842
- 53 *Lamium purpureum* L. Red Archangel
- 54 *Oxalis acetosella* L. Common Wood-Sorrel
1840
- 55 *Orobus tuberosus* Heath pea
[=*Lathyrus linifolius* (Reichard) Bässler]
4 mo 1841
- 56 *Pyrus malus* Wild Apple tree
[=*Malus sylvestris* (L.) Mill.]
1840
- 57 *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* (L.) Chouard Harebell. Wild Hyacinth
[“not to be seen” – written on the flimsy]
- 58 *Nuphar lutea* (L.) Sm. Common Yellow water-lily
River near Clonmel. 1841
[“not to be seen” – written on the flimsy]
- 59 *Borago officinalis* L. Common Borage
At Tramore. 8 mo 1838
- 60 *Luzula campestris* (L.) DC. Field rush
1840
- 61 *Aquilegia vulgaris* L. Common Columbine
Roadside near Clonmel
5 mo 1841
- 62 *Erica tetralix* L. Cross-leaved Heath
Mountains near Clonmel 1840
- 63 *Erica cinerea* L. Fine-leaved Heath
Mountains near Clonmel 5 mo 1840
- 64 *Caltha palustris* L. Common Marsh Marigold
In bogs near Clonmel. 5 mo 1840
- 65 *Calluna vulgaris* (L.) Hull Common ling
8 mo 1838
- 66 *Statice limonium* Common Sea Lavender
[= *Limonium vulgare* Mill.]
On Newtown Head near Tramore. 8 mo 1840
- 67 *Cardamine pratensis* L. Common Ladies Smock
1840

- 68 *Fumaria officinalis* L. Common Fumitory
1840
- 69 *Verbena officinalis* L. Common Vervain
on the roadsides near the Spa, Clonmel
- 70 *Glaux maritima* L. Sea Milkwort
Got on the sea shore near Dungarvan. 6 mo
1841
- 71 *Polypodium vulgare* L. Common Polypody
Walls and banks frequent near Clonmel. 1840
- 72 *Veronica agrestis* L. Green Procumbent Chickweed
Speedwell
- 73 *Lotus corniculatus* L. Common Bird's-foot trefoil
- 74 *Centaurea cyanus* L. Blue Bottle
In a field near Clonmel. 1840
- 75 *Solanum dulcamara* L. Woody Night-shade
1840
- 76 *Lysimachia nemorum* L. Yellow Pimpernel
- 77 *Rubus fruticosus* L. Common Bramble
- 78 *Tormentilla officinalis* Common Tormentil
[= *Potentilla erecta* (L.) Raeusch.]
- 79 *Geranium robertianum* L. Herb Robert
1839
- 80 *Myosotis palustris* Great Water Scorpion-grass;
[= *Myosotis scorpioides* L.] Forget-me-not
- 81 *Hyoscyamus niger* L. Common Henbane
Old churchyard at Kilsheelan
- 82 *Epilobium montanum* L. Smooth-leaved Willow-herb
1840
- 83 *Veronica officinalis* L. Common Speedwell
Mountain near Clonmel. 1840
- 84 *Ononis arvensis* Common Rest-harrow
[= *O. repens* L.]
In a hedge near Clonmel. 1843
- 85 *Vaccinium myrtillus* L. Black Whortle-berry
Very abundant on mountains and heaths near
Clonmel. 1843
- 86 *Narthecium ossifragum* (L.) Hudson Lancashire Bog-Asphodel
On the mountains near Clonmel. 1840
- 87 *Asplenium marinum* L. Sea spleenwort
In the crevice of rocks at Dunmore
1841

- 88 *Sedum anglicum* Hudson White English Stone-crop
Abundant on walls and banks near Tramore.
1842
- 89 *Genista scoparia* Common broom
[= *Cytisus scoparia* L.]
1841
- 90 *Scutellaria minor* Hudson Less Skull-cap [*sic*]
bog near Redhill. 7 mo 1841
- 91 *Anemone nemorosa* L. Wood Anemone
Mountain near Clonmel. 1841
- 92 *Geranium lucidum* L. Shining Crane's-bill
Wall near Rathronan. 5 mo 1843
- 93 *Sedum acre* L. Biting stone-crop
1841
- 94 *Veronica chamaedrys* L. Germander speedwell
1841
- 95 *Habenaria bifolia* Butterfly Habenaria
[= *Platanthera bifolia* (L.) Rich.] 1841

COMMENTS ON THE LIST

Number 66 is named *Statice limonium* by the artist. This is *Limonium vulgare* in current literature. This species has not been recorded for Ireland; most probably the plant seen at Newtown Head was *Limonium humile* Miller (Lax-flowered Sea Lavender).

The painting listed as Number 46 is named *Viola lutea* Hudson from sand hills Dungarvan, but the species is not recorded in the literature from H6, the plant seen may have been *V. tricolor* L. (wild pansy) which is sometimes found with yellow flowers. In *Cybele Hibernica* (1866) the authors state regarding *V. odorata* L. "Miss S. Grubb also reports as quite wild on a bank bordering a field at Mountmellick, and informs us that it has been found growing on a roadside hedge along the Cork road, about a mile from Clogheen". The work does not include the *V. lutea* record.

Dates supplied in the list, as '8 mo 1838' indicate 'the eight month (i.e. August) 1838.

LOCALITIES NOTED IN THE LIST OF PAINTINGS

Ballybrad in Number 36 in the list is probably Ballybrada; Glennagad, in Number 7 in the list, is probably the same place as Glennagat. Morgan's Glen has not been traced, but this place is probably in the environs of Clonmel, and refers to one of the glens on the south bank of the River Suir, on the north side of the Knockmealdown and Comeragh mountain range.

Ballitore	Kildare	S 7996	H 19
Ballybrada	Tipperary South	S 0620	H 7
Cahir	Tipperary South	S 0525	H 7
Clonmel	Tipperary South	S 1-2-	H 7
Coumshingaun	Waterford	S 3310	H 6
Dalkey Island	Dublin	O 2726	H 21
Dungarvan	Waterford	X 2693	H 6
Dunmore	Waterford	S 6900	H 6
Glennagat	Tipperary South	S 1129	H 7
Howth	Dublin	O 2839	H 21
Inishfallen	Kerry	V 9389	H 2
Killarney	Kerry	V 9690	H 2
Kilsheelan	Tipperary South	S 2822	H 7
Kiltinan	Tipperary South	S 2332	H 7
Mallaranny	Mayo West	L 8297	H 27
Morgan's Glen	? – probably in environs of Clonmel.		
Newtown Head	Waterford	X 5698	H 6
Rathronan	Tipperary South	S 1825	H 7
Rehill	Tipperary South	R 9618	H 7
Tramore	Waterford	S 5801	H 6
Woodstown	Waterford	S 6906	H 6

1 views this week. Susannah Grubb. Born 1820. Biography. Lists. News. Also Viewed. Susannah Grubb. The basics. Quick Facts. Intro. Born 1820. Gender. female. Birth. 1820. Family. Mother "The art of botanical painting continues even in the face of enhanced photographic technology and the digital revolution, for there is simply no substitute for the discerning talents of the artist capturing the essence of plant form." Professor Peter R Crane FRS, Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew - 1999 to 2006. This website uses cookies to improve your experience while you navigate through the website. Out of these cookies, the cookies that are categorized as necessary are stored on your browser as they are essential for the working of basic functionalities of the website. We also use third-party cookies that help us analyze and understand how you use this website. These cookies will be stored in your browser only with your consent. You also have the option to opt-out of these cookies. The Swedish botanist Michael Grubb (af Grubbens) (1728-1808) purchased a large collection of specimens from him and presented it to Professor Peter Jonas Bergius, who made use of it in his only major work *Descriptiones plantarum* which he dedicated to Grubb, speaking of him in glowing terms and naming the genus *Grubbia* in his honor. *bainesii*: for John Thomas Baines (1820-1875), well known English traveller, painter, and explorer of British colonial southern Africa and Australia. As a youth he was an apprentice coachbuilder but rejected this profession to be an artist.