

Crocus Group Newsletter

Spring 2005

Patron	Brian Mathew	Members	225
Committee	Ray Cobb	Home	164
	Alan Edwards	Overseas	61
Membership	Ann Borrill		
	153 Lime Tree Avenue, Wymondham, Norfolk, NR18 0TG UK		
Hon. Sec.	David Stephens		

Hon. Sec. notes

The *Crocus* Group has no annual subscription and therefore no source of income. This is not a problem as our outlay is minimal and mainly confined to postage costs. When money is needed to top up the kitty we ask the members for a donation of £5. This also serves to cull the membership down to those who still wish to be members and are still with us. The last time we asked for a donation was about five years ago so it's not bad value for money.

Please send £5 to David Stephens, Green Hollow, South Terrace, Dorking, Surrey, RH4 2AQ.

Spring visit 2005

We will visit the garden of **Peter and Rosina Abbiss** on **Sunday 20th February 2005**. Their garden is at **19 West Common Grove, Harpenden, Herts**, arrive about **1100**. Peter and Rosina have been *Crocus* Group members for many years and regularly used to chauffeur Molly Crook, a founder member (who sadly has recently died) to our garden visits. They mainly have garden varieties of *Crocus* but also have fine collections of snowdrops and other plants of interest.

Take the A1081 from St Albans to Harpenden, then take the second turn left (after about 4 miles) and left again into West Common Grove, No 19 is at the end.

If you get lost or want to let Peter and Rosina know you are coming, their phone number is **01582 761966**.

Seed exchange 2005

Just a reminder to hand pollinate your *Crocus* so that you can participate in the seed exchange as a donor.

Rule 1. If you are a donor, send seed to me before 31.7.2005

Rule 2. If you are not a donor but want a seed list, send a SAE to me before 31.7.2005

Obviously, donors always get first choice and very rare seed in short supply invariably goes to them.

However, non-donors always receive a fair proportion of what they ask for and always get a good deal.

David Stephens, Green Hollow, South Terrace, Dorking, Surrey, RH4 2AQ. UK

Crocus biflorus in Anatolia

Helmut Kerndorff and Erich Pasche, two of our German *Crocus* Group members have published (in *The Plantsman* Vol. 3. Pt. 4. December 2004), the second part of their thesis on the status of *Crocus biflorus* in Anatolia (the Asian part of Turkey). This is a statistically based study of the multivariates taxa in this complex, using field measurements of physical characteristics to cluster taxa from different locations into a dendrogramic sequence and deriving relationships from the data. The article is too detailed to summarise, so anyone interested in this fascinating species group should read the article. **S**

Crocus flavus ssp nova

On New Years Day a flower opened here on a plant from a collection Norman Stevens and I made last year in Turkey. At the time of the collection the plant was not in flower and we had concluded from the physical characteristics that it was likely to be *Crocus antalyensis* or something new. As the locality would represent a new site for *Crocus antalyensis* and a much further easterly extension of the known range for this taxon, we collected a few corms for confirmation and voucher specimens. The plant has now flowered as a specimen of *Crocus flavus* in a form similar to the type except that it has bronze stippled exterior segments. The plant was collected in Icel Province of Turkey and is therefore a disjunct population of the species many hundreds of miles south and east of its range which till now was known through most of the Balkans to an easterly limit in NW Turkey. Brian has seen the plant and is arranging for a Turkish botanist to visit the site in a few months, at flowering time. **S**

***Crocus chrysanthus/biflorus* cultivars**

This beautiful range of hybrids and selections was a special interest of Ernest Augustus Bowles the great Victorian and Edwardian doyen of *Crocus* and much more. During the first half of the twentieth century he created many of these cultivars and encouraged others such as Hoog in Holland to do the same. Well over a hundred were named. Some years ago, Prof. Neils Jacobsen of Denmark completed a project to collect together and accurately name as many cultivars as still survived and could be traced. He found about 50 and published a wonderful account of these plants in *The Plantsman* Volume 4 Part 1 March 1997.

Roger Holland, a *Crocus* Group member has started a National Collection of these cultivars and has sent in the following request. **S**

Wanted: *Crocus chrysanthus* cvs

Anyone interested in *Crocus* must know the name of E A Bowles. His book on the subject was the standard work until Brian Mathew produced his monograph. He had a particular interest in *C. chrysanthus* and produced a series of cvs using it and the closely related *C. biflorus*. There is no National Collection of this group and, following a suggestion from David Stephens, the E A Bowles of Myddelton House Society is aiming to rectify the omission.

Unfortunately many of the cvs, including most of those bred by EAB himself, are no longer available commercially. Among others, EAB produced a series named after birds, of which only 'Snow Bunting' is still offered. 'Yellow Hammer', 'Golden Plover', 'Bullfinch', 'Black Backed Gull' and a number of others now seem to be merely names. We should be most grateful if members of the *Crocus* Group who have a stock of any of the cvs could provide us with a corm or two before they (the cvs!) really do join the ranks of the dear departed.

One that we are particularly keen to trace is the eponymous 'E A Bowles'. It was bred by John Hoog in the Netherlands and sent by him to EAB in 1905. The name still appears in one or two catalogues but what is supplied always seems to be 'E P Bowles', a cv produced by EAB himself. Quite when the real article disappeared from commerce is unclear but if anyone has any we would be delighted to hear from them.

If you can help please contact the Society's Chairman

Roger Holland, 45 Gibraltar Lane, Swavesey, Cambridge, CB4 5RR
01954 230077

roger@holland900.freemove.co.uk

Articles required

Would members please put pen to paper and let me have some articles for future bulletins. Just a few paragraphs will suffice if you don't think you can manage a page length. Any type of article will do, as long as it has *Crocus* as a theme. Post to my new address. **S**

David B Stephens, Green Hollow, South Terrace, Dorking, Surrey, RH4 2AQ

or e-mail to thecrocusgroup@hotmail.com.