



SRGC

Bulb Log Diary

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This second part of my photo essay brings more reflections from the Czech International Conference, some literally. Both the cover and the picture above show the water surface acting as a mirror allowing me to include the tree canopy in the picture - one of the many reasons to have a pool in your garden.



Looking across the beautiful landscaped well-tended grounds towards the Hotel Floret and conference centre, part of the Castle estate in Průhonice, where we were accommodated.

You enter through the archway to the right, entering into a large open courtyard with more grass and trees off which you accessed the hotel, conference and dining rooms - also the plants sale took place within the quadrangle.



Last week I showed the gardens we visited so this week I will summarise some of the other events. The first of the plant sales took place on the Friday in the quadrangle where all delegates could bring plants for sale.

The plants were laid out for viewing but selling could only begin at the designated time and like bees round a honey pot people clustered around the tables where the plants they most desired were offered. I was fascinated how so many were gathered around the smallest of the tables as they awaited the start of the sale.



This competition was for a few plants of *Rhodothamnus chamaecistus* and other treasures.



We were once again treated to a concert by the wonderful [Marika Singers](#): check out the link for more information and CD's or search YouTube where you will find a number of videos.

Last week as part of the Czech International Rock Garden Conference in Průhonice we, some 140 Delegates from 17 countries, were treated to an all too short 30min recital by the Marika Singers.

From the very first notes the hairs on my neck stood up, shivers went down my back and tears of joy flowed from my eyes as the beautiful notes and chords created by the choir echoed through the vaulted hall. The dancing and gesticulations of the vivacious conductor Marika Divišová perfectly enhanced the atmosphere as she drew the very best from the voices of the choristers.

Listening to the CD's as I am writing this message, with shivers still going down my spine, those fond memories flow back making me long to experience yet another live performance.

Thanks to all singers, musicians, sound engineers, back up team and, of course, Marika for this magical experience.





Sincere thanks also must go to the organising committee who worked tirelessly to ensure everything ran smoothly and our needs were fulfilled – you did a great job.



On the morning of the last day we boarded the coaches once more to be transported to the Prague Rock Garden Club's May Show which takes place in church grounds in Charles Square.



Entrance to the show



View towards the Show gardens.

The Czech style of show is very different to our UK shows, where the plants grown in pots and displayed on benches in halls: here the show plants are planted out into a rock garden where the structural rock work is permanent along with some conifers and other specimen plants allowing the public to view the plants in a garden setting.

I must say I like this idea and think it could do more to attract people to take up rock gardening than our shows do, where dedicated growers display plants grown to perfection in alpine houses.



A group of Lewisia which formed part of the exhibit received an award which is indicated by an engraved Perspex trophy placed in the ground.

The number on the label identifies the grower.









Simple plants create a dramatic contrast.



I like the use of pines and grasses in the rock garden - grasses in particular could bring natural effects.





The shadow cast by the large trees changes during the day, moving plants in and out of shade but one corner, below, under a large tree is mostly in shade providing the perfect place to create a woodland style garden.





Here there is good use of another reflecting pool which is part of a small circulating stream and some very clever use of large rocks shows how crevice style rock work using larger rocks can be interpreted into a woodland setting.



Groups of large rocks with clearings in between give this area an impression of a natural woodland.



The Perspex tag means this Cypripedium has also been given an award by the judges.





Large troughs, which are also planted up with some show plants, line the wide walkway.



The garden had a very tranquil atmosphere despite all the traffic noise from the busy centre of Prague which fades into the background while sunshine, colour and birdsong come to the fore. There was a constant flow of people enjoying the garden also the large plant sale which was so popular with the Conference Delegates. Numbers into the sales area were restricted with people queuing to gain entry when others exited, clutching their purchases.



Even the shed roof displays another way that you can create a rock garden.



On reflection I visited some wonderful gardens on this trip but would I swap any of them for our own?

No; gardens are part of you, they are your creation reflecting your tastes, creativity and character where the style and choice of plants is heavily influenced by your climate.

Few of the Czech gardens could be repeated in

Aberdeen, neither could our garden be repeated in their climate but there were features that inspired me which I will interpret and work into our garden.



Click the link to join me on my walk round the garden on arriving back from a week in the Czech Republic.

[Bulb Log Video Diary Supplement](#).....