



The Scottish Rock Garden Club

SHOW REPORTS

DUNBLANE EARLY BULB DISPLAY

2012



"During Friday night snow will spread southeastwards over Scotland, mainly on the hills but by morning roads in Perthshire may become hazardous ". This was typical of the reports on TV and Radio on the day before this year's Early Bulb Day. Motorway signs pronounced doom and gloom in the forms of 'Danger, Snow and Ice'. I began to wonder if it was worth setting up the halls for the display and lectures! Rock gardeners, however, are made of sterner stuff and the lecturers were on their way north from Woking and Camberley, travelling by train. Melvyn Jope and Martyn Denney had to get up very early, travel into London to catch the Edinburgh train. These days just getting into London seems to be a journey in itself!. A short wait at Waverley to acclimatise them to the plunging Scottish temperatures before catching Scotrail for Dunblane. No peace for them on arrival. They crossed from the station in Dunblane to the Victoria Hall to set up their beautiful display of Photographs and publications to promote the Cyclamen Society. Martyn had carried a suitcase full of heavy brochures and booklets, while Melvyn brought the case holding the photo boards. Along with cases of personal belongings for the weekend they would have incurred huge extra costs if they had come by budget airline. After an excellent evening of 'planty conversations' over a fine home cooked meal we established that we had several mutual acquaintances and swapped tales of shows, plants and holidays. Their adventures outclassed mine in scope and adventure. Tired after their long journey and perhaps relaxed by some wine they retired to bed. On Saturday morning snow flurried outside their windows, dusting frosty cars in the



**Faster than fairies; faster than witches'
the train to Dunblane
pulled in with no hitches!**

**The speakers arrived before any snow fell
and the Early Bulb Day went very well**

With apologies to

Robert Louis Stevenson and William McGonagall



Melvyn Jope and Martyn Denney

car park. They couldn't even see the Perthshire and Stirlingshire, mountains on the horizon. As soon as we got to the hall we were confronted by busy nurserymen and SRGC exhibitors carrying crates of plants into the hall. Since Martyn had all



the Cyclamen Society display in place both lecturers were surrounded by enthusiasts asking questions and other who stood to admire the pictures.

THE CYCLAMEN SOCIETY

One corner of our SRGC hall was given over to our sister Society. Cooperation between clubs like the SRGC and Cyclamen Society [C.S.] benefit both organisations. There is a natural overlap in interest and in the plants we all grow. I have been a member of the Cyclamen society for many years. I was enthused at our shows by the terrific plants Ray Johnston showed in the 1980,s and 90s. Roma Fiddes showed a Cyclamen hederifolium with arrow shaped leaves which I thought were superb and do you remember her wonderful pans of *C. rohlfsianum*? I eventually bought some arrow leaved hederifolium from Ian Christie at a Glasgow Discussion Weekend but have never come close to equalling the flower power on her rohlfsianums. Ian Aitchison, our former SRGC treasurer, encouraged me to visit AGS shows in the Wirral, where super



Cyclamen coum grown by Tony Willis? Note the wonderful leaf markings as well as the fabulous flowers.



More Cyclamen coum forms



forms of *Cyclamen graecum* could be bought on the Club plant stall. I found out later that many of these had been donated by Bob and Rannweig Wallis. Glassford Sprunt encouraged me with his collection of marvellous Cyclamen, showing what could be grown locally. I bought a wonderful Cycla-

Cyclamen pseudibericum



Cyclamen alpinum



men africanum from Jim Archibald when he decided to sell the plants from his nursery to concentrate on seed collecting. This plant is one of my prized possessions. Years after buying it I was able to give Jim a nice daughter plant because he himself had lost that particular strain. I had long ago realised that to get a good selection of leaf forms you should raise your Cyclamen from seed. As Melvyn said on Saturday both the C.S. and SRGC are sources of good dependable seed. If you want special forms then the C.S. should have the edge! In generous fashion, they were handing out seed to us all on Saturday.

LECTURES

Melvyn concentrated on Greek species and Martin gave us an overview of all Cyclamen species, especially those from Turkey. They talked about the expeditions mounted by the C.S to study Cyclamen in the wild. They need Cites permission, local permits to collect herbarium specimens as well as live plants for study and permits to bring the collected material into the UK. The C.S. expeditions collect surprisingly few plants, however the plants are grown on in the UK for study and their seed eventually made available to members of the Society. DNA analysis is used to clarify identification and the relationships between species. Melvyn posed the question , '**Confused about**

Cyclamen confusum?', and proceeded to explain the relationship between Cyclamen hederifolium and C. confusum. From the lectures and pictures it was evident that although Cyclamen tend to grow in nice places, studying them means visits at inclement times of the year. It is not all blue skies and sunshine by any means. The packed audience of Scottish Rockers enjoyed the super talks and now appreciate that one of the things that makes the Cyclamen Society special is the scientific research side of their work, which has led to the description of new species and subspecies in the genus. Long-term study alongside careful selection of plants with good leaf patterns has led to the wonderfully diverse range of leaf and flower forms of the many species in cultivation today. I hope many SRGC members joined the C.S. On Saturday just as Martyn joined the SRGC. Melvyn has been an SRGC member for many years. An additional reason for their enjoying this visit was that they were able to chat face to face with many people from the SRGC forum.

PLANT DISPLAY

The other aspect of the day is the scintillating selection of startling bulbs and alpines in the display. We had a good selection of several species of Cyclamen



in the show. While they may not have yet reached the size of some of those in Martyn's photographs they did show that many SRGC members do grow Cyclamen. The most spectacular on the bench were two pans of C. coum and a C. pseudibericum. Others were several pans of C. alpinum and C. parviflorum.

Excellent Cyclamen for sale on Rumbling Bridge Nursery stand

The plant of the moment *is **Galanthus woronowii 'Elizabeth Harrison'**. The large pan of this beautiful



Galanthus in the display was the hub of attention all day long. Galanthophiles the world over owe a debt of gratitude to the gardener who spotted the single yellow flowered plant in a colony of *G. woronowii* which all had normal green markings. The species itself is not particularly common in gardens and yellow marked snowdrops are rare anyway, so this selection is extra special. It is robust with mid to dark green leaves typical of the species, unlike many other species of snowdrops which have glaucous leaves. The ovaries and pedicel are yellow and there is a little yellow mark on either side of the notch at the apex of the inner petals. The pedicels are sufficiently long to allow each flower to dangle freely as if at the end of a rod. An individual flower is beautiful and a whole clump is magical. Let's hope that the clone finds its way into general cultivation as soon as possible.



Galanthus woronowii 'Elizabeth Harrison' was exhibited before the RHS Joint Rock Garden Plant Committee which met at the show and was recommended for an Award of Merit. We are told that repeated flash photography can fade an art work. If that applies to plants, by Saturday evening this pan of 'Elizabeth Harrison' should be pure white, such was the number of pictures taken. A gem to be treasured for its beauty!

* a single bulb of this clone sold for £725.10 on E-bay



Ian Christie's pan of *Galanthus nivalis sandersii* was also much admired. Sparkling in the morning sunshine, the dainty flowers seemed



to have absorbed the sun's warmth before radiating it out again into the room. This clone has been recommended for a PC and will be given a clonal name. Ian reckons that of the many clones of 'sandersii' in cultivation this is the best do'er. Most of these yellow *nivalis* originate in Northumberland. I wonder where they occur in the wild? It would be nice to see several yellow snowdrops together, so if you have any bring them along next year for comparison. I can't promise you £725 but there will be a lot of interest.

After the show I looked at the SRGC forum and there found a new classification of snowdrops, apparently devised by Maggi Young but recognised by Paddy Tobin.

It runs as follows:

Assorted 'drops
Sunny window 'drops
More 'drops
Prettiest broad leaved 'drops
Wide leaved 'drops
Yellow 'drops
Yellow again 'drops

This was followed by a post from johnw
Then, of course, there is the most basic classification which would be -

cheap drops,
expensive drops and
pass the bottle drops.

Another of Ian's snowdrops this time with good markings on the outer petals



Ian Christie showed several pans of the plicatus x nivalis hybrid Galanthus from **Brechin Castle**. Most have numbers. My favourite is G. 'Lady Lorna' which has huge flowers on short stocky stems. [below left]. Above right is a flavescent hybrid and below right is one which I call G. 'Look at these Leaves', because it has excellent mid green leaves which light up when the sun shines through them. The flowers have a good solid olive green which is easily visible as soon as the paddle shaped petals separate.



Two view of Galanthus elwesii monostictus 'Alexander the Great', open wide in the warm hall





A nice double snowdrop

Rod Begbie with his wonderful selection of snowdrops to choose from at www.galanthus.co.uk



CROCUS

Crocus gargaricus from a collection by Pasche and Taubenheim in N.W. Turkey had narrower petals than Jean Wyllie's form. Both were sparklers, light reflecting off the shiny inner surfaces of the petals. All parents of the flower are the same bright orange. For those who want something different, the hybrid *C. biflorus* ssp *pulchricolor* x *C. chrysanthus* had red stamens, orange anthers, orange inner petals and outer petals suffused with purple at the tips. I seem to remember Glassford producing a similarly coloured hybrid of *C. cvijicii*.

One of the advantages of the bulb display as opposed to a show is that we can see many smaller pots of bulbs and compare species, sub-species and hybrids.

On left are

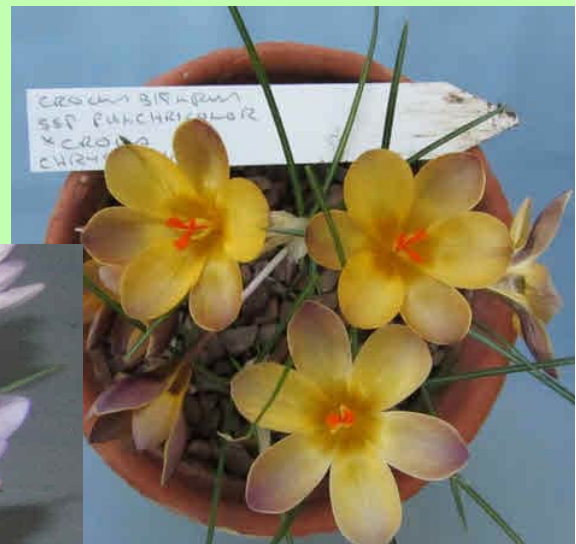
Cr. chrysanthus albus

Cr. biflorus tauri

C. biflorus biflorus

and below right

Cr. biflorus adami





IRIS



Everyone should plant some *Iris reticulata* every year. Along with their hybrids they are available in many shades and combinations of shades of blue, purple with yellow and white markings.

I. winogradowii is pale yellow (centre) and there are pure white forms advertised.

Most forms are relatively inexpensive to purchase. A good source is at the SRGC Discussion Weekend. There John Amand brings along a few of the most recent Dutch introductions. Feed them before and after flowering and they will reward you by increasing well. Two similar Hybrids are *I. 'Katharine Hodgkin'* and *I. 'Sheila Ann Germaney'*, the latter is a clearer colour of blue with yellow markings.

Narcissus on bench



NARCISSUS



Narcissus 'BettyMae' x asturiensis



Narcissus cyclamineus x asturiensis



Narcissus cantabricus



Narcissus eugeniae RW 4663





FIRST CLASS

Jackie Thomlinson, past secretary of the SRGC, supported the show by 'just going out to the garden to dig something up!' What she dug up was a wonderful pan of the petiolarid *Primula x bhutanica* 'Arduaine'. Several years ago there were lots of Petiolarids in the shows but recently far fewer have appeared. Once known under the specific of 'P. whitei' and then as a hybrid 'whitei x bhutanica' thought has been given to the subject and whitei and bhutanica are con-specific at the moment. What a pity that the name 'whitei' is in abeyance at present. Anyway all that aside Jackie's superb plant was seen by the Joint Rock Plant Committee whose recommendation was that it receive an FCC. [First Class Certificate!]

Discussion about the disappearance of Petiolarids started on weather conditions;- the fact that a few years ago Scotland had some hot dry summers.

Petiolarid Primulas need a buoyant moisture fill atmosphere to flourish. Simply watering them does not do. They are subject to vine weevil attack. And thirdly but maybe most pertinent is that they can no longer be bought from many of the nurseries which used to supply them e.g. Jack Drake. They were often to be found on club plant stalls. Some growers in the north of England still produce wonderful Petiolarids at the Hexham and Blackpool shows, so maybe we need a rekindling of interest up in Scotland.

..& the SRGC Members

