



P *People make shows* was the gist of past president Colin Crosbie's thoughts after he was presented with the Caley's (Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society) Scottish Horticultural Medal in Perth. Although the honour is usually presented at the Caley AGM in Edinburgh Botanic Gardens, at that time Colin had been abroad leading a botanical tour. The medal, awarded for 'outstanding contribution to horticulture in Scotland', is limited to a maximum of fifty at any one time so the presence of other SRGC holders Ian Christie and Stan da Prato says a great deal about the impact our club has; Beryl McNaughton and Billy Carruthers had already left so are not in the photo.

Cyril Lafong's 70th Forrest medal winner: *Polygala calcarea* 'Czech Sky'



Certainly, the Perth group is a dynamic bunch, evidenced by the numbers of people attracted to the well-stocked club plant stand—and seven commercial nurseries—as well as the food stand that was regularly topped up with delicious home baking. In the show hall our congratulations went to Cyril Lafong for his 70th Forrest medal, this time for a large pot covered by a blue sheet of *Polygala calcarea* (chalk milkwort – native to Britain but only in the south) with several folk commenting that his very first Forrest was for a form of this species, *Polygala* 'Lillet', named for the Spanish town near where it was found. The *Polygala* has won a Forrest medal before, as has Cyril's large pot of *Cypripedium* 'Ursel', which this time received a certificate of merit.

Cyril's *Primula henrici* took the Bobby Masterton trophy for best Asiatic primula; the name commemorates the Perthshire vet who created that fine primula garden at Cluny, although he would not at that time have known this species, which was introduced in 1994 by the Alpine Garden Society Expedition to China (ACE) as *P. bracteata*. More recently, the Henry & Margaret Taylor award has been instituted for the best plant rare or new in cultivation. It went to Cyril for *Berneuxia thibetica* which, as its name implies, comes from high altitudes from the eastern Indian Ocean northward through the Himalayas into Tibet, and is one of many plants that don't like our warmer, drier summers.

Cyril Lafong's *Primula henrici*





Calluna 'Spring Torch' in the six-pan winner from Stan da Prato

Local geography is important in understanding the Perth schedule, where trophies include: the Perth salver for most points by a local group member, won by Alan Weepers; the Perth trophy for most points in section 2, won by Jim & Jill Cole-Hamilton (who also won a bronze medal); and the Major-General Murray-Lyon trophy for the best plant in the former Tayside region, won by Robert Holmes with a very well flowered *Draba longisiliqua*. Robert also won the Dundas quaich for three pots from different genera, all cushion types: *D. longisiliqua*, *Sebaea thomasi* 'Bychan' and *Benthamiella patagonica*.

The furthest-travelled competitor was Anne Vale who hails from Braintree in Essex. Her very large and well-proportioned *Mammillaria hahniana* from Mexico, sometimes called *the old lady cactus*, received a certificate of merit.

Other awards commemorate individuals, including the John Duff memorial for best plant in section 2, won by a very good pot of *Lathyrus vernus* from local grower Alex Samokhin. The exhibit also received the Joyce Halley award for best seed-raised plant in show. The E H M Cox award for best rhododendron went to your correspondent for a

Primula scotica from Catriona & Charles Lowe





R. obtusum cv, as did the Alexander Caird for six large pots: comprising two forms of *Andromeda polifolia*, a *Calluna* 'Spring Torch' with red-coloured foliage, two pots of miniature *Narcissus* and a bird-proof—so long lasting—red-berried *Skimmia*. By bringing rather a lot of plants I won the L C Middleton trophy for most points.

A couple, Catriona & Charles Lowe, won the award for a new exhibitor, with a nice pot of *Primula scotica*, while their daughter Charlotte took the Georgina Blackwood trophy for a young exhibitor with her *Fritillaria pallidiflora*. Another *F. pallidiflora* won the bulb trophy for our current club president Richard Green.

Alison Hogg tells me that 26 exhibitors (including eight new to Perth) staged a total of 211 entries from 282 pots, the highest number since she has been show secretary. With 51 entries Section 2 was encouragingly full this year. By adding classes for cut blooms, mainly daffodils and tulips, more local members became involved. An attractive bowl of native wildflowers from Barry & Cathy Cauldwell was much admired. A non-competitive exhibit of *Pleione* from Sheila McNulty also attracted favourable attention. Some of the eighteen plants in the non-competitive section 5 were so good that they would have won coloured stickers in the main show.

Stan da Prato

Photos: Liz Cole

Our report and this issue of *The Rock Garden* conclude with some of the other exhibits of the Perth show. The variety and perfection of these plants and blooms are a tribute to the efforts of all growers and showers in this and other shows, whom it is so delightful to see returning to the show benches after the awkward years during and following covid. (Ed.)

Morisia monanthos





Fritillaria recurva
Tulipa 'Flames Mystery'



Fritillaria affinis





Andromeda polifolia compacta



Narcissus 'Tiny Bubbles'
Primula darialica ssp. *farinifolia*





Cypridedium 'Ursel'
Anemonella thalictroides

