



Cyclamen africanum by Jean Wilson

SRGC / AGS Newcastle [Ponteland] 2013



Like the Hexham and Blackpool shows, the Newcastle show, held in Ponteland just to the west of Newcastle, is a Joint show held by the Scottish Rock Garden Club and the Alpine Garden Society. The result is a friendly mixing of exhibitors, judges and members of both clubs. Most keen rock and alpine gardeners are members of both. Members bring plants from all over so that there is always a chance to see something new and unusual with which you might struggle and someone else succeeds beyond expectations. The main flower power comes from Cyclamen and Gentians with other bulbs and shrubs providing scatterings of colour on the benches. The strength of the AGS shows is in the number of fern, Crassulaceae, foliage, cushion, conifer and shrub exhibits, many of which travel from show to show. When combined into single and 3 pan classes there can be whole swathes of related but nearly always different plants. If Aladdin were a gardener he would feel at home in this floral cavern where wee jewels and great big stottin' jewels vied for your attention. These plants are credit to their owners because it is not easy to keep them in show condition all year round. Sun scorch, mildew, weeds, beasties and other plants with long stems: all these contrive to harm the perfection of show plants. Just imagine the weight of some of the big pans. Just as well that gardening keeps you young and strong.



15 Cushions
A dozen Ferns
14 Crassulaceae





My own enthusiasm for Cyclamen started when I attended the plant auction held at by Jim Archibald when he decided to concentrate on seed collecting and not on growing and selling plants. At the time, I was keen on *Primula allionii*. I met Mary Randall [Ridley] at the auction and well remember that she bid for many pans of small plants which she later shared with her local AGS group. Very public spirited, I thought and still do think. Mary was soon AGS Director of Shows and I became Chairman of the SRGC's Show Secretary's Committee. We worked well together to harmonise many points in judging and showing between the SRGC and AGS. I will always be grateful to her and later to Kath Dryden for inviting me to be an AGS judge on several occasions and for including me in their judges days held usually in Birmingham.

While at Jim's plant auction I successfully bid for an corm of *Cyclamen africanum* which came from Algeria. It was in a big pot but showed no signs of growth. I had to buy blind and believe him that there was indeed something in the pot. What a great purchase that was. My [or really Jim's] *Cyclamen africanum* won several Forrest medals, even trouncing a fabulous pan of *C. cilicium* which Jim himself showed at a Discussion Weekend show at Airth Castle, near Stirling.

This purchase, along with some plants of *C. cilicium* with a Peter Davis number gave me the 'cyclamen bug' and I wanted to grow more Cyclamen. Glassford Sprunt showed me how, especially with *C. graecum*, the secret of which is 'never to let the roots dry out completely'. The picture shows Glassford in his element beside this row of fabulous cyclamen. His other love is for Crocus, with which he has smitten Jean Wylie.

Credit for many of the huge pans of Cyclamen at Ponteland goes to Rannveig and Bob Wallis who triumphed in many classes for these and for bulbs. One of their *Cyclamen graecum* forma *grae-cum* was awarded the George Forrest Memorial Medal. They had so many. How did the judges choose the winner?



Above right :Bob and Rannveig Wallis Growers to look up to!



Some of
Bob and Rannveig's plants,
 photographed in class
 order from **Class 1**

1. *Hyacinthoides lingulata*
2. *Cyclamen graecum anatolicum*
3. *C. graecum* subsp *graecum* forma *album*
4. Another *C. graecum anatolicum*
5. Yet another *C. graecum anatolicum*
6. *C. confusum*
7. *C. rohlfsianum*
8. *C. rohlfsianum* [close up]
9. *Empodium flexile*
10. *Galanthus peshmenii*
11. *Allium thunbergii*
12. *C. graecum graecum* - Forrest Medal
13. *Colchicum cupanii cupanii*





A wonderful meadow of Autumn flowered gentians! Mala Janes comes from Ponteland, so it is gratifying that her blue streaked white flowered *Gentiana sino-ornata* hybrid won first prize



Stan da Prato's 3-some won [above right] its class. I especially like the large pan of *G. 'The Caley'* at the front. This hybrid was raised by the eminent hybridiser Dr Ian McNaughton of Pencaitland near Edinburgh. The white pan in the centre is *G. 'Purity'*
 Above is Stan's winning entry in Class 48 '3 pans rock plant distinct'. Stan's plants and the 3 Saxifrages above them illustrate the meaning of 'distinct' which can confuse new exhibitors. The plants in an entry need only to be different from one another. Sometimes the class asks for 'different genera' and then you would need say 1 Gentian, 1 Saxifrage and another say a crocus.



Ivor Betteridge's *Cyclamen rohlfsianum* has taken the prize for 'Best Foliage Plant' on several occasions. It has the best markings of any *rohlfsianum* I have seen and it will still look good in springtime



Peter Farkasch of Sandbach's excellent pan of the desirable *Nerine filifolia*: its natural home is in acid grasslands in the Eastern Cape of South Africa. It can be evergreen in cultivation but is winter dormant in the wild - right



Ian Instone form Leeds has mastered *Allium callimischon*. I have found myself cutting off this year's flower stems when I thought I was cutting off last year's dead stems!

1 Pan Native to Asia

If you read the schedule carefully you can find several classes for your favourite species. This fabulous *C. graecum* subsp. *anatolicum* while being truly fabulous was not Rannveig and Bob's best *Cyclamen*



Jings and Crivvens! Help ma'Boab!



RIGHT
Top to bottom
 Carex firma variegata
 Cotyledon orbiculare
 Celmisia allennii
 Celmisia seedling from
 George Young
 Sebaea thomasii
LEFT
Top to bottom
 Luma 'Glanleam Gold'
 Cyclamen shown for foliage
 effect
 Autumn foliage



Members of the 2013 Forrest Medal Club



Sisters with different coloured berries.

Gaultheria mucronata - shiny red

Gaultheria 'Pearls' - pink

Gaultheria nummularia - black

Gaultheria crassa 'JohnSaxton' - dull red

At the bottom are 3 views of my favourite berryed plant **Coprosma petrei**. To get these translucent blue berries you need a male plant to pollinate your female. I met Graham Hutchins, late owner of County Park Nursery in east London and he sold me plants in the ratio of 1 male to 3 =female but I still got no berries. Perhaps it needs more heat than Dunblane can give it. Congratulations to Trevor and Angie Jones for growing and berrying such a great specimen





The small 6 pan class won by Rannveig and Bob included
Narcissus minata
Colchicum cupanii
 subsp *glossophyllum*
 and *Crocus nudiflorus*



Don Peace's excellent *Galanthus reginae-olgae*
 Alan Newton's *Petrocosmea cryptica*
 Brian & Shelagh Smethurst Sax.
Fortunei 'Cherry Pie'



Aeschynanthus buxifolius KR9877

Although it does not look like an African Violet or even a Petrocosmea this wee shrub is a Gesneriad. I first saw this at the SRGC Discussion Weekend in 2010 at Polmont and it still fascinates me. As you might guess when faced with a peculiar jewel of a plant, this fellow is Chinese, from Yunnan, Guangxi and SW Guizhou where it is epiphytic on trees and rocks. It also grows in Vietnam.
This time a winner for Barry Winter



Correa 'Pink Mist'



Dicentra scandens cut flower



There was lots of interest in Section II



**Mr & Mrs Fairburn
the King and
Queen of
Primulas
and Saxifrages.**

If you grow plants
with the prefix
'Allendale' then
they were raised by
Ray.

Neil Huntley of
Hartside Nursery
told me he is building
up a collection
of Ray's Allendale
saxifrages.



Oxalis massoniana





Primula sherriffii

How rare do you want your plants?

Grown by Tim Lever of Aberconwy Nursery, seed, was sown 20 11 12. The plant was first found by Major George Sherriff, who was born at Caronvale house near Labert, Stirlingshire, in 1898. He died at Ascreavie near Kirriemuir, Angus, in 1967. Along with Frank Ludlow he collected more than 2000 specimens in the Himalayas in the 1930's. He named it for his mother. P.sherriffii is hardly recorded on the web,



reflecting its near mythical status. It is a member of the soldanelloides section of the genus Primula, which contains P. flaccida, cawdoriana, reidii. They do have kind of similar leaves but the flower shape of P. sherriffii is unique. To quote John Richards *'it has an extraordinarily long and slender cylindrical tube which abruptly expands at the end into a flat slightly cup shaped limb'*. Unusually for Primulas it is homo-

stylous and is often self fertile. You would think this would make it a common plant but the main stock until recently has been grown at the RBG Edinburgh where it was lost in the bad winter of 1990 but was retrieved from a seed bank and is still grown there. You must read John's fascinating account of its discovery in his book 'PRIMULA' first published in 1993 by Batsford.

'Well done, Tim' as they used to call out at Wimbledon but this time we really mean it Seed sown and flowered!

Or do I mean
Game Set & Match!





Jean Wilson is well known in the Alpine Garden Society for her exquisite embroidery portraits of flowers. Until this show I had never been lucky enough to see them. Jean provided her own fabulous flower show. Both sides of the display boards were covered with her works. Jean's display was awarded a Gold Medal. Thank you Jean for all the hours of hard work you have put into giving us this rare floral treat.

