



The Scottish Rock Garden Club

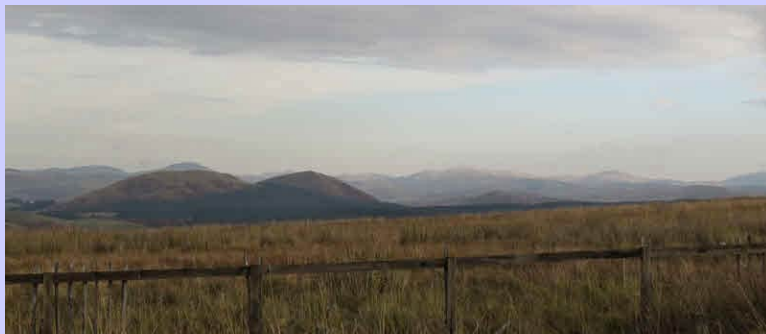
SRGC / AGS Show 2014

Ponteland



Now that I have retired I get up later! I don't see the sunrise very often. On an autumn Saturday morning, the roads are quiet and it was possible to appreciate the beauty of the Border countryside. There was a still softness about the countryside. As the sun rose above the gentle slopes of the rounded hills and the mist in the valleys still occluded the background, bushes and trees were thrown into stark prominence. Autumn colours on some trees were magnificent but since the weather had been quite dry others, especially beech trees, had turned grey - brown and missed out the gold. Local authorities when planting roadside trees seem to have realised how important autumn colour is and their more recent plantings have trees which turn fantastic shades of golden orange and red. The road south from Edinburgh, the A68, is often narrow and twisting but it is often in these places where the road passes through tunnels of trees. Early in the morning there was a carpet of leaves on the roadway. Not so much a Yellow Brick Road as a Golden Leafed Highway! On my journey I kept stopping to take pictures, so it took me longer than usual to reach the Ponteland show. At the Scotland / England border the views were magnificent, in both directions. I liked in particular the view towards the Eildon Hills, near Sir Walter Scott's Abbotsford. You can't miss the border, there are two huge boulders like latter day standing stones marking it.

Part of the route follows the old Roman Road and is a journey through history. You pass below Jedburgh Abbey, which when building started, stood in the ancient Kingdom of Northumbria! In repeated turns, over 500 years from the 12th century, it was magnificent and powerful and laid to waste and ruined. The destructions were mainly by English troops. The first burning was after William Wallace won the Battle of Stirling Bridge and retreating troops pillaged and wrecked the abbey as retribution. Just as well then that on the English side of the border is the site of the 1338 Battle of Otterburn. This time the Scots under the Earl of Douglas defeated Henry 'Hotspur' Percy. The



current Henry de Percy is the Duke of Northumberland of Alnwick Castle. His wife has designed and built the magnificent new gardens at the Castle. Alnwick is on the A1 which I chose as the alternative route home. This takes you close to the sea, past signs for Holy Island and Lindisfarne. Remember Grace Darling? On the horizon you glimpse Bamburgh Castle. Berwick upon Tweed is in England but seems to me to sit mainly in Scotland. Its fortified walls still stand in part. They serve good fish and chips here!

Back on the way to the show on the A68, just over the border is a brown sign which takes you even further back in history to Roman times and Hadrian's Wall. Another thing- the names are different. You are no longer in the land of 'Straths' but have entered the land of 'Vales'. You realise that the pride which Northumbrians have in their land is very similar to that which Scots feel for Scotland. For thousands of years people have followed this route. Today we can make the return journey in comfort and in a very short time. If we had to rely on horses, there would be no show to see. The border shows held by the SRGC and the AGS are excellent friendly days out. We meet friends from all over and can see plants different from those at more northern shows. Not only that, the exhibitors from the south who have hotter, sunnier summers than we do bring mouth watering pans of *Cyclamen graecum* at which we can only marvel. One such marvel won the Farrer Medal [the AGS equivalent of the Forrest Medal] for Bob and Rannveig Wallis from sunny south Wales





When autumn comes. Love 'conkers' all!

Threesomes





BIG CYCLAMEN

There were many magnificent potfuls of Cyclamen, mostly exhibited by Bob and Rannveig Wallis. One of their *Cyclamen graecum anatolicum* [A], was awarded the Farrer Medal. How do you choose between that one and the next [B]?

[C] & [E] are *C. graecum candicum*

[D] & [F] are their fabulous *C. rohlfsianum*. I haven't seen a better flowered specimen of this species. It has to have a hot summer bake as it hails from North Africa. I feel it must need other special sunshine treatment.

[G] is the special form of *C. hederifolium*, 'Lysander' which has thicker leaves than the usual *hederifolium*s



A



B



C



D



E



F



G



Cyclamen cyprium with its well marked distinct leaves



Cyclamen intaminatum often has plain dark green leaves. These plants have nicely defined 'Christmas tree' markings. Most plants you see will be pink flowered but above is a beautiful white flowered form. Note how narrow the flower mouths are and that they have no auricles like hederifolium, africanum and graecum have.



Below are two plants of **Cyclamen mirabile**. The plant is very similar to *C. cilicium* and to *C. intaminatum* but the top edge of its petals are feathered. The plant on the left has well marked leaves. Often mirabile leaves are maroon underneath.







Stan da Prato grows these Copros-
mas very well. With their shiny col-
ourful leaves they look good all year
round. More of a mystery is why his
Cassiope 'Muirhead' should decide to
flower in the autumn rather than its
usual time of spring. Not just a few
flowers either but completely cov-
ered. Quite an achievement!

Below is *Correa puchella* 'Pink Mist'.
Correa is an Australian shrub colloquial-
ly known as Australian Fuchsia because
of the flower habit and the fact that they
flowers are usually bright red. It is in the
same family as *Skimmia* and citrus fruit
- the Rutaceae. Most members of the
family have aromatic leaves.



Saxifraga fortunei rubrifolia in a 12" pot!
Inset :- Sax fort. 'Cherry Pie' in a 6" pot



A



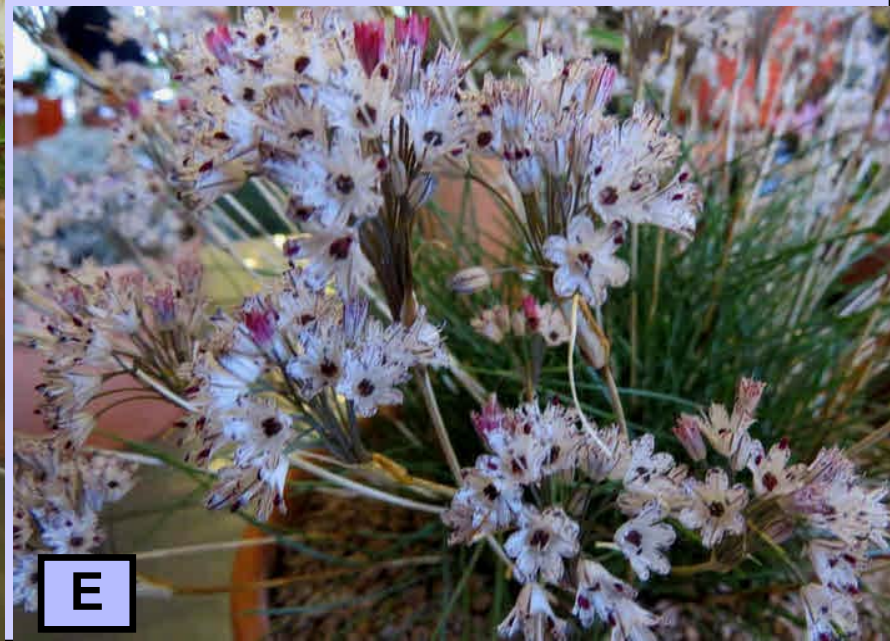
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D



C



E

A. *Galanthus peshmenii*
B. *Allium thunbergii*
C. *Allium thunbergii album*
D. *Hyacinthus ciliolata*
E. *Allium callimischon haemostictum*



A



B

CROCUSES 1

- A. *Crocus banaticus* albus
- B. *Crocus banaticus* 'snowdrift'
- C. *Crocus banaticus* [usual lilac form]

- D. *Crocus kotschyanus* leucopharynx
- E. *Crocus ochroleucus*
- F. *Crocus carwrightianus*
- G. *Crocus gilanicus*
- H. *Crocus niveus*



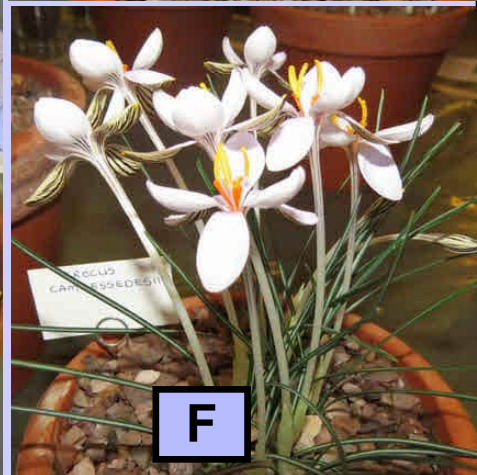
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E



C



F



G



H



A



C



B



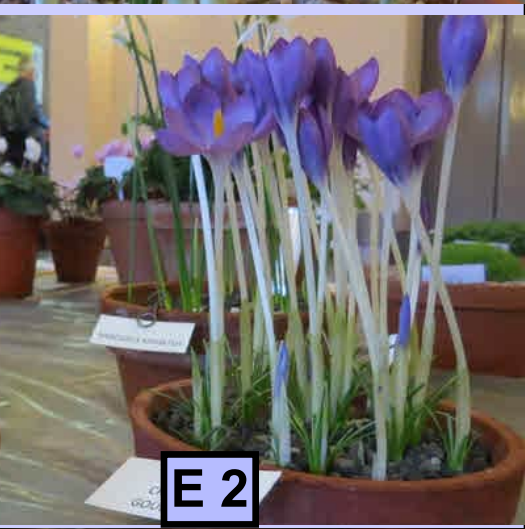
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CROCUSES 2

- A. *Crocus tournefortii*
- B. *Crocus tournefortii* with leaves
- C. *Crocus mathewii*
- D. *Crocus carwrightianus*
- E.1 *Crocus goulymii* white
- E.2 *Crocus goulymii* lilac
- H. *Crocus melantherus*



E1



E2



F

Crocus melantherus (Iridaceae)
 An autumn-flowering relative of *C. biflorus* of which it is often treated as a subspecies, but geographically and ecologically very distinct. Grows in the mountains of Greece. Plopponisos form. Greek anthers are dark black-feathered form.



F



Sorry the picture above is slightly blurred



NEW TO ME; BUT MAYBE YOU KNOW THEM

Ficinia truncata 'Ice Crystal'

Alan Newton of Ponteland had everyone foxed with this wee stunner. *Ficinia truncata* is an ornamental sedge, native to the Cape Province of South Africa, which is said to be tender. Close up you can see that in 'Ice Crystal' each deep green blade has a silvery edge, so that it looks like 'normal' grass with frosted edges. The wild species is a yellower shade of green. It spreads by rhizomes and is clump forming. I read that it can grow to 30 cm! It is covered by plant breeders' rights so don't look for it on a club plant sale. A garden centre inland from Dublin recommends it for containers so it can't be that tender; probably it just likes to be overwintered in an alpine house. Below the plant pic is a view towards The Cape of Good Hope illustrating the habitat of *Ficinia truncata*

Graptopetalum bellum

Carol Kellet of Chorley showed this member of the Crassulaceae. I love its big [3-5 cm across] rosettes. Take time to appreciate its tightly packed, layered triangular segments, each edged in white. It reminded me of a *Dudleya*. It hails from the states of Chihuahua and Sonora in Mexico and it is a newcomer, having been discovered in 1972 by Alfred Lau. It prefers a lightly shaded spot to a very bright sunny one. Grow it in a gritty porous soil. The flowers are Sedum-like and bright pink. These flowers are amongst the biggest I the Crassulacea. Another great show! Thank you to organisers and exhibitors.



Brian Davidson died in the week before the Ponteland show. The picture on the Order of Service, above, was taken at the Glasgow show in 2005 when he won the Forrest Medal with a fine plant of *Paeonia cambessedessii*.

Brian and Ilsa often travelled to many shows. He grew excellent plants and exhibited regularly for many years. He had a somewhat vertical garden in Dumfries and Galloway looking out towards the Solway Firth.

He gave good advice when he was on the SRGC Council. He organised for the SRGC, an excellent early summer weekend break based in the luxurious Cally Palace Hotel. We visited some of the many excellent garden in the South West of Scotland.

I don't know if we can dedicate a show report but I would like to dedicate this one to Brian.

I will miss him and I send my condolences to Ilsa.