

# The Scottish Rock Garden Club

## Discussion Weekend Show

### Peebles 13-15/10/17

**What a dreich afternoon for a drive across central Scotland!** The route from my home, past Linlithgow to Bathgate and Whitburn takes you down into the Avon Gorge and hopefully up the other side. It is a good road on which many drivers travel much too quickly which makes it dangerous. South of Whitburn the route becomes more scenic as the countryside becomes more



bleak. My first and only peat garden was constructed of peat 'hewn' from these hills. When the mist falls over the hills all colour is bleached away and no one could imagine just how beautiful and productive are the wooded lands to north and south. Once you leave the M8 corridor the road climbs up into a landscape of seemingly endless rolling hills. Soon you are up and down over a series of switchbacks.... Great fun, a bit like the A68 to Hexham. The M8 Corridor seems to have gained an overwhelming sense of importance just because it joins or separates Edinburgh and Glasgow. Trains compete to see just how quickly they can travel through the corridor! Does no one want to spend time here? Many fewer people live in the southern part of what was Lanarkshire but it is actually a lot prettier than much of the Central Belt. Anyone looking

for a house in the country could do a lot worse than search around South Lanarkshire.

As the road from Carstairs approaches Peebles you pass through rich farmland and beautiful woodland. This autumn the leaves were nearing the peak of their autumn colour. Peebles itself is a traditional Scottish burgh with



strongly built stone houses. The wide main street adds to its attraction as a tourist resort. One of the attractions of the SRGC Discussion Weekend is that it moves around the country giving us a chance to appreciate different towns and cities. This year as I neared the Cardrona Hotel the weather brightened and the hotel looked very welcoming, sitting as it does by its golf course on the banks of the Tweed. Inside friends were sitting chatting or busy putting plants on the show bench. After a long drive it was time to enjoy the best of camaraderie.

Despite there being many fine plants in the show, none seemed to possess that magical Forrest Medal quality so the judges decided against awarding a medal at this show. Some may have been disappointed but no one complained. Exhibitors understand judging decisions.. Usually! *Many of the exhibitors at the discussion weekend show had been to Ponteland the previous week so some of the prize winners here have been written about in the previous report.*



Like many other plantaholics when looking at the entries in one of the SRGC shows, I often ask myself "Which plant would I like to take home?" at the Discussion Weekend show this year it was easy, both to decide and take the plant home! Nesta Jolliff of Jacques Amand International had entered some Colchicums in the show. All of these she later gave to be auctioned in the Saturday evening raffle, which raises money to help fund the weekend. Even better, those folk who were unsuccessful in the bidding could buy bulbs of their favourite Colchicum from Jacques Amand's stand. My favourite was **Colchicum byzantinum 'Innocence'** [left top], a white flower with violet tips to the petals. Innocent with just a hint of scandal! Nesta's generosity helped to raise a total of just over £1000 for the SRGC.



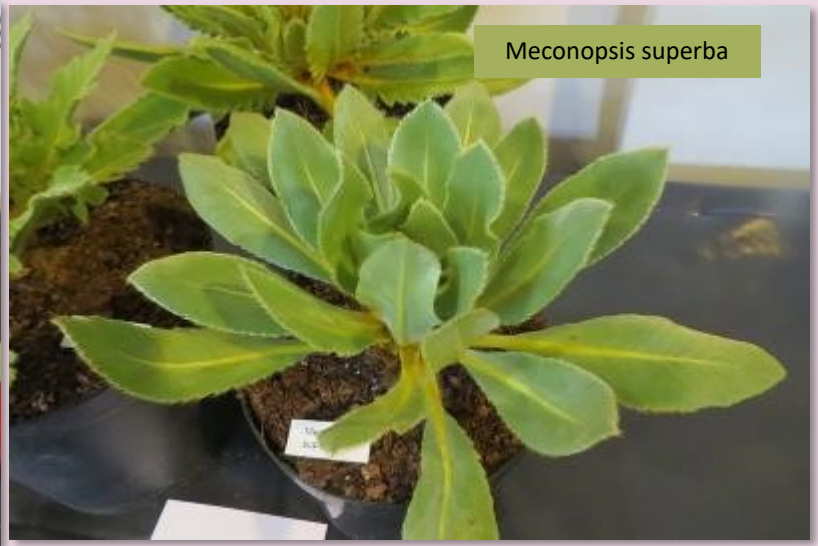


The six pan Class was won by Stan da Prato, who supported the show with his usual enthusiasm, despite his sore back. This entry helped Stan to win the Mary Bowe Trophy for most points in Section 1. His 3 Saxifrages were pink Sax. fortunei 'Ben Kirin', white S.f. 'Moe' and Red S.f. 'Eiga'. The gentians were 'The Caley' and 'Berrybank Sky' both bred by Ian McNaughton and available from MacPlants.



It is rare for Meconopsis to feature in one of our shows and even rarer that I have the opportunity to write them. Even the computer dictionary did not know the Genus name. I wanted to call them Mucinosia! The latter is a rare skin disease. The Meconopsis were shown as 3 pans rock plant distinct. So here were three big rosettes of plants which undoubtedly come from the high mountains but which to a casual observer might look 'just the same'. The joy of our show benches is that we get to look closely at the plants and while these three share many similarities there are major differences as well. Judge for yourself. Colour of the leaves and hairs thereon, leaf margin and definition of the central leaf rib. I just wonder if, when they flower, David and Stella will be able to bring them to another show. Unless the show hall has a high ceiling the Meconopsis might have to sit on the floor.

Meconopsis x complexa as its name suggests is a complex hybrid formerly known as M. x napaulensis



Meconopsis superba



Meconopsis x complexa



Meconopsis paniculata



Stan da Prato won the Peel Trophy with Gentians sino-ornata, G. Blue Silk and G. 'Strathmore'. I like the way the red sticks lend a Chinese feel to the picture

**Primulas from David & Stella**

- P. siminensis
- P. capitata
- P. mairei



*Primula reidii*  
*Primula reidii* comes from Nepal, and is known for its rosettes of hairy leaves and beautifully scented flowers. This is a Chris Chadwell collection (CC7341) and it lacks the dense hairs. The notes say "W Tibet", which suggests that a line was crossed! Is it a distinct variant, or is it just worn down by the long, wet season?  
 It is grown in a shady place, covered in winter, in a humus-rich compost, and never allowed to dry out. The species is ways short-lived, but sets plenty of seed.



*Primula blinii*  
 The taxonomy of the species in this section, Soule, is confused, but this is believed to be *Primula blinii*, which is widespread and variable. It is notable for flowering repeatedly, at any time except in the depths of winter. This plant has a stem from flowering in spring, and is having a second go well into autumn.  
 In the wild it grows in shady places, but the shade may be from nothing more than low, heath-like shrubs or other herbs. In cultivation we grow it in humus-rich compost in partial shade, never allowing it to dry out, but not too wet in winter.



*Castilleja latifolia*

This is a species from coastal dunes in central California, where summer temperatures are not so high as elsewhere in the state, but very cold weather in winter is rare.

It is perennial, but here are three plants, each flowering for the first time as a single stem. Seed came from Alpains in 2016, sown in January in a gritty compost, and plants have been kept in a polytunnel since then, so they are quite dry in winter.



David & Stella won with their excellent *Castilleja latifolia*. Quite a feat to flower a plant which some say is impossible in cultivation.

Alan & Jane Thomson's *Nerine bowdenii alba* ?

[I am not sure about the name]

The well flowered *Oxalis massoniana* won for Cath Rimmer. She says it just does its stuff. I find it a bit miffy. I must do better.

The *colchicum speciosum atropurpureum* won for Nesta



This *Pinus mugo* mops midget won Best Conifer for Stan and took the J.L. Mowat Trophy. Mr Mowat was keeper of St Andrews Botanic Gardens and was a former Editor of the SRGC Journal



*Chielanthes wootonii*

*Polypodium pulchellum*

*Polystichum setiferum congestum*

*Dryopteris affinis crisa gracilis congesta*



*ASPIIDIUM  
VIRIDE*







**Going for Silver**

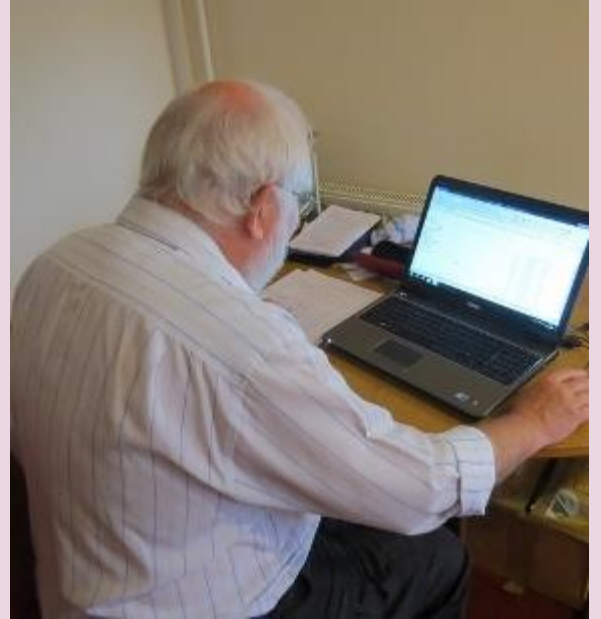
Celmisia spedenii  
 Primula sinensis  
 Celmisia discolor  
 Celmisia munroi



This cheery show helper is Petra Palkova - from Edinburgh, where she works in the Alpine Dept. of RBGE.











**Next year we meet in .....Pitlochry**