

# The Scottish Rock Garden Club Dunblane Early Bulb Display 21st February 2015



**D**espite a run of wet and windy days interspersed with hard frosts, we woke to find that the Bulb Day would be bright and sunny. Parking regulations had changed since last year and members had to contribute £1.10 to Stirling Council for the privilege of parking or 4 hours outside the hall. Who decided that the 10p was necessary. That just means finding two coins instead of one! An unnecessary inconvenience and irritation at the start of the day. Not only that, the notice stated that cars had to be moved after 4 hours. The other choice was to park for nothing up on the main road or over our new rail bridge in that car-park. From the comments I got one might have thought that I was parking supremo for Dunblane. Jill and Tony Lee were OK. Their unusual 'disabled Space' was still available for their smart sporty roadster!

Star of the day was our lecturer, Kit Strange, Alpine Horticulturist at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. Her talk on 'Cultivation of Bulbs at Kew' was encyclopaedic on its coverage and delivered with the assurance and humour of the expert hands-on

gardener. During lunch I received many compliments on the choice of speaker. ....reflected glory felt great! One member who had travelled quite a distance told me that he. 'could listen to my speaker all day!' in the afternoon Kit talked about her travels botanising on Northern Spain, Turkey and several 'Stans'. Her pictures were excellent with a nice balance of close ups, habitat shots and views. As we went from place to place she left us wanting just a bit more of each. Thank you Kit for giving us such excellent presentations.

Thanks also to John and Helen Amand who drove Kit up from London. John also caused a stir when he unveiled a selection of Alan McMurtrie's *Iris reticulata* hybrids. Alan lives in Toronto and has been hybridising reticulate Irises since 1989. His first crosses were with *I. histrioides* ssp *sophensis* and *I. danfordiae*. Over the years he has introduced other reticulate species into his programme. The results are fabulous, with flowers in a wide range of colours and combinations. Truly 'something for everyone'. John had several clones for sale and had several other in the Flower display. These were later presented to the Joint Rock Garden Plant committee for consideration as Award plants. John's sister Nesta also put several of Alan's hybrids to the London Meeting of the committee on the Friday before our show. The results of both meetings will soon be known.



Some of Alan  
McMurtrie's Irises



1 Iris Spot -on

3 Sunshine

5 Vivacious Beginnings

2 Storm

4 Sea Green<sub>2</sub>

6 un-named brown



Older Iris hybrids and selections held their own against the new introductions. Old favourites like wonderful Sheila-Ann Germaney & Katharine Hodgkin and Harmony are quite distinct. Alan's hybrids extend the spectrum of colours be possible in iris reticulata. You don't have to like them all and all colour combinations to realise the great potential of these little gems.



One danger ,in growing irises is that of viruses. Katharine Hodgkin in particular seems to be prone to iris mosaic virus which is spread by aphids. It shows as yellow streaks in the leaves and inky dark blue 'splashes' on the flowers. Infected plants and bulbs should be destroyed.

**'Check your reticulatas regularly'** would be sound advice. Grow new ones away from your current collection till you are sure they are healthy.





Perhaps there were fewer Narcissus than in previous years but I was surprised to see such a large pan of *N. romieuxii* in full flower, as mine had past their best and equally surprised to see *N. Betty Mae*, which usually waits till the Stirling show. I should have waited till later in the day to photograph *Narcissus albidus* as its white flowers were bleached out by the flash. In the afternoon the show room would be lit by sunlight. There again ,I might have forgotten to take the picture. The purple of the trough may appear garish but it did provide a big splash of colour. The idea of the trough was to show that it is quite easy to plant up a spring trough using bulbs from a garden centre. The *N. tete-a-tete* are easy to acquire and sit nicely beside the *Muscari armenicum*. Similar 'troughs' were planted with small pots-full of snowdrops. The individual flowers were easy to examine and the differences easier to appreciate..







There were more than 30 different snowdrops to look at. I meant to write down all the names but time ran out. Godfrey Owen was one star as were 'green-outered', Trymning & Trumps, the diminutive, Cinderella, the giant George Elwes & Alexander the Great and G. woronowii with its bright green leaves. Angelsey Abbey is a fine poculiform snowdrop. South Hayes on the left was one of the first available with bold green markings on the outer petals. Green Arrow is a taller, more slender plant with smaller flowers with an elfin charm and green outer markings. Little Ben is of the Mighty atom complex and has huge flowers compared to the length of its stems. Edwin is a sturdy plant whose flowers open in cooler weather conditions than do some others, thus making it a garden worthy plant.





Galanthus Jonathan



Galanthus Sophie North



Galanthus Alison Hilary



Galanthus x sandersii  
The Whins



*Gymnospermium albertii*



*Ranunculus calandrinoides*



*Scilla mischtschenkoana*



*Helleborus thibetanus*

*Primula whitei* Arduaine Form







Crocus dalmaticus



Crocus corsicus



Crocus biflorus weldenii



Crocus fuscotinctus



Crocus 'Saturnus'



Crocus etruscus



Crocus korolkowii



Crocus sieberi tricolor



Crocus vernus



Crocus tomassinianus  
Eric Smith



Crocus cvijici



The tray of *Leucojum vernum* which Alan Thompson lifted in the autumn to keep safe while he worked in their part of the garden.



*Colchicum hungaricum*





Over many years the SRGC library has grown and grown. A recent review showed that many of the books were 'doublers'. treblers or even higher '...ers'. The resulting collection is proving increasingly difficult to house. Council decided to reduce the number by selling off the 'surplus' i.e. the above doublers etc and titles no longer deemed appropriate. No!

Not that kind of internet type inappropriate!.. but those which concentrated of aspects of gardening focused well away from rock gardens. Julia brought several boxes of these ex library books and found a willing market for many of them. The sale will be repeated at other shows. The fact that so many books were bought shows just how eclectic are our members tastes. Two lucky members managed to snap up their own copy of Alf Evans' 'The Peat Garden'. Anyone interested in becoming the new SRGC Librarian should contact the SRGC secretary, Carol Shaw.



**A time to renew acquaintances and make new friends!**

SRGC President Carole, helps Margaret fill in the forms so that her plants can be assessed by the RHS Joint Rock Garden Plant Committee. Star workers of the day were those who toiled all day long in the kitchen and who served food, tidied up and washed dishes. Many thanks to all of you and to those who brought the food

