

# The Scottish Rock Garden Club

## Glasgow Show

4 5 19





**THE LARGE 6 PAN CLASS. 1st Stella & David Rankin 2nd Stan da Prato**





In the 3 & 6 pan classes the following plants sparked my interest. The first was *Ptilotrichum lapeyrouseanum* was formerly known as an *Alyssum*, a plant related to the familiar pink *Ptilotrichum spinosum* which many of us grow in raised beds. This white flowered cousin, shown by Stella and David, hails from the Valencia region of Eastern Spain. It has the feel of a cushion *Draba dedeana* which has decided to be a wee shrub.



I was delighted to see their plant of *Primula bullata forrestii*, a fine reminder of George Forrest. Will it win a Forrest medal one day?

Stan had *Primula petolaris* 'Sherriff's form' as the focal point of his display and quite right too! Beside it was a nice dwarf *Rhododendron obtusum* 'Anouk'. Stan must have a arboretum of dwarf rhodies! Anouk is a Japanese azalea.



I planted a small *Rhododendron* 'Yaku Fairy' after Kath Dryden won the joint Forrest / Farrer medal at the Alpines 81 in Nottingham. I was a steward at the show and was dazzled by the huge entry. It was probably the biggest show of Rock garden plants I have seen. So I was delighted to see Yaku Fairy on the bench. My plant is about 3 feet across now but still only 6 inches tall. This year it flowered well.

My other choice is *Trollius europeus*. This is the first time I have seen it on the show bench, although it is one of my favourite garden plants and evokes views of the north coast of Scotland and the Alpine meadows.





**The Small 6 pan Class 1** was well supported with 5 entries. Sue Simpson claimed victory with Jim Watson second and Stella & David Rankin taking third place. There was an eclectic mix of plants among the 30 plants entered. Something for everyone; cushions, shrubs, bulbs, herbaceous perennials. It must have been difficult to choose the winning sextet. Sue's included *Daphne petraea* 'Corna Blanca' and *Dionysia involucreta*.

Jim Watson had the 'difficult to show in a pot' *Sarcocapnos enneaphylla*, which I remember seeing in south western Spain growing on the walls of an ancient Roman fort, in which one of Hannibal's children was born. At one time it was thought to be a *Corydalis* because of its similar flowers. He also included a fine magenta *Primula sieboldii* and *Iberis taurica*.

Among Stella & David's were the southern African 'Night Phlox' *Zaluzianskya ovata* and two plants of *Lewisia Brynhfyrd*, one pink and the other Apricot. They have included these in their prize winning exhibits at Gardening Scotland. They are very floriferous hybrids. I wondered if 'Brynhfyrd' was Welsh for 'Hybrid from Bryn' but it turns out to be a village near Swansea. It looks like a nice place.





As usual the Glasgow show was well supported by exhibitors and by visitors. It has for many years been one of the main events on the Milngavie social scene, a bit like the Chelsea Flower Show is to London. As well as the show plants, the Glasgow show's attraction to the gardening public is its wonderful members plant stall. Several tables stretching the width of the show hall are needed for the contributions. In our garden in Dunblane we grow many plants which started as small purchases from the Glasgow 50:50 stand. As well as enriching our gardens, the sale of members' plants helps to meet the expenses incurred in holding the show. The eclectic mix of plants on sale is enhanced by treasures brought by the Nurseries. This year the stalls of Ardfearn, Hartside, Rumbling Bridge and Kevock nurseries were crowded for much of the day.

Graeme Butler of Rumbling Bridge and Stella and David Rankin of Kevock also support the show by entering plants in the competitive classes. Graeme went further by staging a colourful exhibit of Auriculas. *Graeme is pictured on the right with his grand-daughter Arwen.* As you see his display was awarded a well deserved Gold Medal. His choice of plants covered the range from Border Auriculas, Double Auriculas to Show and Alpine Auriculas. That these widely varied flowers all trace their roots back to the wild *Primula auricula* of the European Alps is nothing short of remarkable. I have long been a fan of these jewels of Victorian horticultural plant breeding. It is easy to see the attraction of these variable flowerer to early plant breeders. I tend to think of these people as being miners from the north of England. After a hard day in the dark and dangerous coal mines, toiling and sweating hewing coal, they could return to their miners' row house and after a wash [if they are lucky] and a meal, they could relax in the small back garden tending their Auriculas.

Their hobby gave them interest all year round. In winter they sowed seed collected from their plants in autumn; in spring the plants came into growth and began to flower and they would prepare their plants for the local show; late spring was peak flowering and show time; selected flowers would be selected and crossed in the



A view across the bench fronted by 3 plants of *Saxifraga pubescens* 'Snowcap', David Millward's Forrest Medal winning plant is on the extreme right. It is in a 3 pan Class on the other side of the bench.



Above is Graeme Butler and his grand-daughter Arwen holding the SRGC Gold Medal card. Below are some of his auriculas



hope of getting even more varieties in the coming years; early summer cuttings were rooted and grown on and seedlings transplanted; in high summer the plants were tended and cared for, pests like greenfly removed [probably with liquid soap], kept cool and watered; in autumn seed was collected and shared with other growers. The plants were tidied up and prepared for winter. I imagine repotting was done after flowering. I wonder if they had vine weevils in Victorian Times or have they been spread by garden centres using peat based compost? One feature of an Auricula show is that the plants were kept to having only a single flowering stem, rather than the multi-stemmed plants we see in our SRGC shows. The advantage of the single stems is that the properties and qualities of the flowers themselves are more easily distinguished. A large collection could be grown in quite a small area. This dedication to a single group of plants was not restricted to Auriculas; others grew tulips, pansies, roses and vegetables notably leeks and carrots. These hobbies are the basis for our modern day flower shows. Some of the earlier enthusiasms may have given way to Gladioli, Dahlias and Chrysanthemums which need much more ground but the essence of all of them is the variety which occurs within the genus. Clubs like the Scottish Rock Garden Club and the Alpine Garden Society came along much later in horticultural history. The SRGC was formed in 1933. Instead of focussing on a single genus of plants, we focus on a diverse range of hardy or nearly hardy plants of restricted height and size 'suitable for the rock garden'. Within our definition we grow an unrivalled spectrum of treasures. Whichever route a gardener takes, the focus is on diversity, cultivation and relaxation. Combined, these make gardeners one of the healthiest groups in society. They are also nice people to mix with. Over the years long-lasting friendships are formed and stories passed down generations. The stories are brought to mind by the names on plant labels. You probably did not meet George Forrest but through his plant collections and generations of growers, you are a beneficiary of his travels and collecting.

For many years up until the mid seventies it seemed to be accepted that gardeners and travellers could dig up and bring home plants from the world's mountains, a bit like your granny sneaking a geranium cutting from a garden in her holiday hotel. Since then increasing numbers of governments have introduced legislation to safeguard their flora and fauna. It is therefore extremely important that all of us strive to maintain in cultivation, the plants we already have. It is a widely accepted principle that one of the best ways to maintain your plants is to propagate them and give them away to friends. If your plant subsequently dies, you can then ask for a piece back. The SRGC seed exchange is another important legal means of distributing plants across international borders. To help in understanding how plants grow in the Himalaya and their needs in cultivation the SRGC is organising with sister societies, our **Himalayan Weekend in Lockerbie on June 22nd and 23rd. PLEASE COME AND JOIN IN!**



Further along the bench it was the Arisaemas which took front stage. Anne Chambers Arisaema griffithii at the back right won the class. They are best described as 'Plants for the Connoisseur'. Below is part of the RBGE display.





Brimeura fastigiata



Tulbaghia leucantha



Primula verticillata



Podophyllum pleianthum



Cyrtanthus flanaganii



Cypripedium tibeticum

There were several 'unusual' plants which grabbed my attention in the Gold Medal winning Display from the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. Several different *Lewisia* species filled the centre giving a pink eye to the display. On either side yellow, from *Primulas* and a wonderful *Cyrtanthus flanaganii*, was the dominant colour. There seemed to be plants from all continents. The *Lewisias* come from different parts of America. The *Brimeura fastigiata* is from the Balearic Islands, Sardinia and Corsica. The Chinese *Podophyllum pleianthum* with its modest flower hanging beneath its leaves and the bold purple *Cypripedium tibeticum* as well as several *Primulas* are Asian. The *Cyrtanthus* is from South Africa's Eastern Cape while the *Tulbaghia leucantha* is from the Drakensberg. Perhaps there were no Australasians?



**GOLD MEDAL FOR ALEX'S SOUTH AMERICAN EXHIBIT**

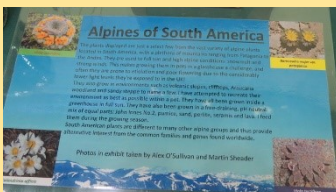
Alex O'Sullivan is an alpine trainee at the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh. He has travelled in South America with expert, Martin Sheader. His fascinating table top display of young South American plants was awarded a Gold Medal. While there were few flowers on the exhibits, he managed to convey the variety and unusual character of the Patagonian vegetation. The first plant hunters must have had a difficult time classifying the Patagonian and Chilean vegetation. Alex is holding a small pan of Nassauvia lagascae ssp. lagascae which is in the Compositae, ie a daisy.



Alex drew attention to its cobwebby indumentum on the underside of the leaves and compared its flowers to wee cauliflowers. Below is the picture I took at the Edinburgh show of the Nassauvia. I had admired the pan at the Edinburgh show, without realising its significance. I did think it had along name for such a wee plant. To me the pan seems to be sprouting eyes on stalks and you expect that there is a bigger bit below ground, like an iceberg. It won a first prize both there and at Glasgow.



Maihuenia poeppigii hails from volcanic ash-fields in Chile and Argentina. It forms huge compact mats of spiny rosettes. It is a member of the Cactaceae and hardy in an Alpine house. I know this because I bid successfully for one at a Discussion Weekend many years ago - it was expensive because that great Irish plants-woman Molly Sanderson also wanted the plant. At later shows, she would ask how it was whenever she met me. I was denied the trophy for best foliage plant at a Morecambe show because the judges after much discussion decided that it had no foliage, only spines and stems! I liked the way Alex used black crushed lava to top-dress his pots. It reminded me of volcanic areas of Oregon and of Mount Etna. The pots were accompanied by photographs of the plants in flower in the wild. A lot of work goes in to win an SRGC Gold Medal. Well done!







### MORE FROM SOUTH AMERICA

I am delighted to see that several members are having success in growing plants Patagonia and the Andes. Perhaps this is because more people are able to travel there to see the plants and maybe because more, viable seed is being introduced.

Benthamiella patagonica, [Certificate of Merit], Petunia patagonica and Junellia coralloides were shown by Sue Simpson. The Petunia is not fully in flower but promises great things. The Junellia has already won a Forest Medal.

Oxalis adenophylla and O. enneaphylla and O. laciniata have been favourites for much longer. It is nice to see the great plantsman Harold McBride, from Lisburn, has an Oxalis named for him. For many years his selection O. laciniata 'Gwen McBride' has been a favourite of connoisseurs.



## SOME PLANTS FROM SECTION II

[top to bottom on the left]

Iris reichenbachii from Dai Davis

A fine bright Tulipa sp. from Richard Green

Sarmienta repens shown by Shiela McNulty

Meconopsis racemosa from Ben Willet





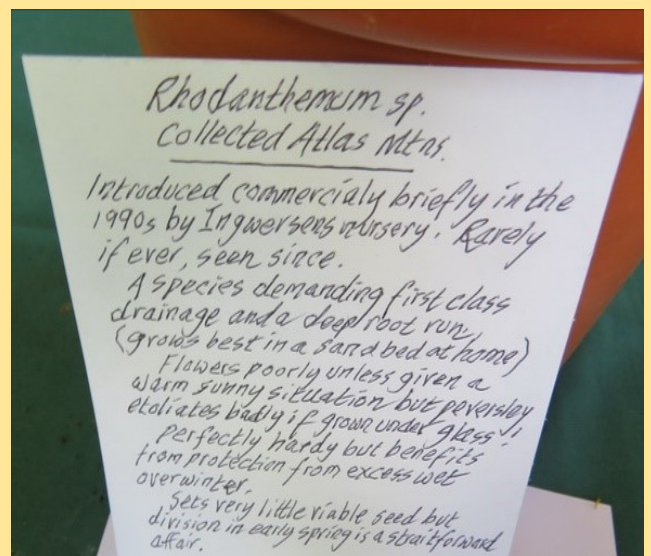
## A NEW FLEABANE

George Young showed large pan of a wonderful American daisy, **Erigeron scopulinus**, another plant which I had not seen before. It has flowers exactly like our own lawn daisies but it had exceptional foliage. The plant was in superb condition, all those leaves and none were brown!

I looked it up online and found this piece from my good friend Panayoti Kelaidis from Denver. He was writing on the forum of our sister club The North American Rock Garden Society.....

*I can't think of a better Erigeron to launch this discussion than E. scopulinus, which is still relatively new both to science and cultivation in the broadest sense. This is not only one of the toughest, one of the daintiest and most beautiful of tiny mat formers, it is very rare in nature--only known from a few spots on the Mogollon rim of New Mexico and Arizona. It was introduced to cultivation by Sonia Lowzow, a remarkable woman and grower who lived in Showlow Arizona (Lowzow from Showlow was quite the tongue twister). I visited her in April of 1983 and was enchanted with the remarkable area she lived in: she could grow Meconopsis superbly, but lived not far from where Agave parryi has its northernmost colonies--truly an amazing place. She gave me my first E. scopulinus, and I know she shared it widely through her mail order operation. I doubt if the plant has ever been recollected since she first obtained a tiny piece. Interestingly enough, I do not know of anyone obtaining viable seed from it: I believe most Erigerons are self fertile, or even apomictic. I would be curious if any of you have ever grown it from seed...*

The bottom picture is of Rhodanthemum species from the Atlas mountains. To me it resembles a miniature version of Rhodanthemum hosmariense from the Moroccan Atlas. It





Watt Russell's Paris quadrifolia was best Scottish native. I would like to see a plant of this growing in the wild but so far I haven't. Where does it grow?

Another Scottish native rarely seen on our show benches is Saxifraga cernua, the nodding or bulblet Saxifrage, which is a circum-polar plant found in Arctic Norway, Iceland, Siberia and Alaska as well as in the Alps and here. In Scotland it is recorded on Ben Lawers where it grows in crevices beneath overhangs, where the snow lies late and the humidity is high. Apparently in Scotland it reproduces only by bulbils and not by seed. This surely does not bode well for its future. It is pretty but again I doubt if I will ever be able to visit it on Ben Lawers.

There were two different forms of hybrid Scottish willows, in the show. One form of Salix x sadleri was more compact

than the other. The hybrids occur on the hills around the Angus glens. Salix x sadleri is a hybrid between S. herbacea and S. lanata. It was found by John Sadler in the 1950s. I hope some nursery propagates these for sale as hardy plants for troughs.



Sue Simpson showed Silene acaulis 'Frances' in the 2 pan cushion plant class. It was found by Dr William Boyd in Glen Fiagh near Glen Clova in Angus in Victorian times.

This was not the same William Boyd who thrilled school-boys in the 1950's playing Hopalong Cassidy, the cowboy who rode to the rescue in every episode of his TV series, on his horse Topper. He was apparently named 'hopalong' because he had a 'gimpy leg'. He wore black because although he wore blue clothes in his first films they appeared black because the film was in black and white, so people expected him to wear black every time.

Tom Green won the 2 pan Primula class with *Primula petiolata* and a white flowered *Primula mathioli*, which was formerly *Cortusa mathioli*, the genus now having been subsumed into *Primula*. It is a woodland plant which hails from the foothills of the southern Alps and Carpathians. *Primula aureata* was shown by Ian Kidman and both *P. sieboldii* by David & Stella.



PRIMULACEAE



Androsace studiosorum 'Doska' [white] and 'Salmon's variety' [pink]





The **Ranunculaceae** family provide us with a diverse range of exceptional garden plants, ranging from the ubiquitous Celandine through Columbines to exquisite mountain buttercups. Tom Green well deserved his first prize with *Ranunculus seguieri*, the famed white star of the highest scree in the Alps. I had thought it was almost impossible to grow in cultivation but Tom's plant is wonderfully dwarf and in character. Tom paired it with the American blue *Clematis tenuifolia*.

Two interesting plants were the *Ranunculus parnassifolius* hybrids raised by Margaret and Henry Taylor. They introduced a pink form from Nuria in the Spanish Pyrenees many years ago. They have distributed and maintained in cultivation, it and its offspring. At Glasgow they showed two variants. Note the pink on the left hand flower!

One of Ian Christie's favourite plants is the attractive form of *Anemone obtusiloba*, *Anemone x Pradesh*. Unbelievably, the flowers open white and slowly turn blue. Its partner was the lovely white *Pulsatilla alba*.

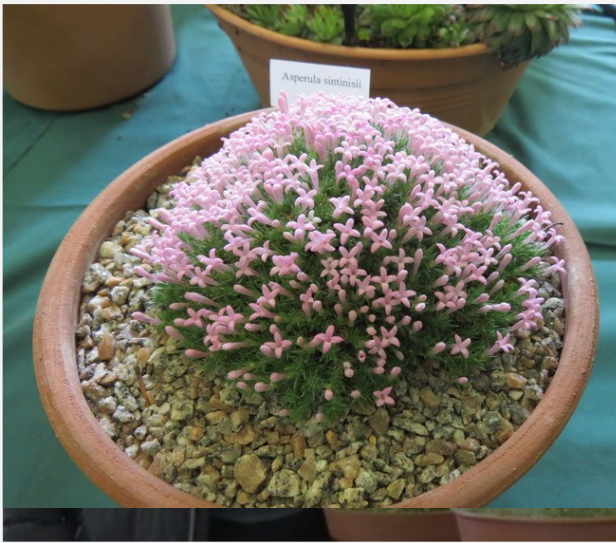




<i>Ornithogalum reverchonii</i>	<i>Tulipa linifolia</i>
<i>Tulipa batalinii</i> 'Bright Gem'	<i>Tulipa</i> 'Little Princess'
<i>Arisaema ringens</i> [bottom left]	<i>Arisaema griffithii</i> [bottom right]









One of my favourite plants in the show was this *Armeria trojana*. It is smaller than our native thrift and as you can see it is a bright magenta colour rather than pink. I think it was shown by George Young when I saw it at the Joint Rock Garden Plant Committee I thought it should be named 'Psychedelic Hedgehog'. No doubt the stems elongate in time. It has been introduced from Kaz Dag mountain in Turkey. Franz Hadacek, who lives in Vienna, commends it for a sunny trough. Franz is a member of the SRGC He has travelled widely and his web site [ [franz-alpines](http://franz-alpines) ] is packed with wonderful pictures of plants in the wild and in his garden.

