

The Scottish Rock Garden Club & The Alpine Garden Society Northumberland Show : Hexham

1st April 2017



For many years the Northumberland show has been held in the spacious Wentworth Leisure Centre on the edge of Hexham. This is a very busy venue and car park spaces are at a premium. I have now mastered the system which probably will now be changed. Seasoned rock gardeners mix in the café with mothers of young gymnasts and tenpin bowlers. I think it is very appropriate that our hobby is catered for in the town's leisure centre. Rock gardening is a leisure activity as is visiting our flower shows. The Perth show is also held in a sports centre. Perhaps we should extend an invitation to other users of the facilities and perhaps some may join in our hobby. It is only as we get older that I have come to realise that gardening is a strenuous activity. As we get older we get weaker and tasks which once we could accomplish easily, now take more time. At least gardening keeps us active.

Beside the Wentworth centre there is a big Waitrose. Free coffee and a free newspaper for members who make some purchases. The coffee is good! I see that in Hexham Waitrose provides another service, namely they sell excellent flowering shrubs. These Clematis resemble Clematis cartmannii 'Joe' which was raised by Margaret & Henry Taylor from Invergowrie. It was a natural hybrid found in a pan of C. marmoraria seedlings. Several other hybrids have been raised since Margaret & Henry introduced 'Joe', named after New Zealand gardener Joe Cartman. Waitrose was selling plants of this selection, perhaps the selection 'Avalanche' for £20 a pot. Buy it and enter it! That would save a lot of carrying. Oh! You must own the plant for at least 6 months or you cannot enter the classes. Still they did look nice outside Waitrose. Entering main show hall of the leisure centre was like entering a horticultural Aladdin's cave. The benches were weighed down with wonderful plants, friendly faces and plenty plants to buy. What to

do first? Buy some plants? Chat to friends? See the show? Or just have a wee seat, look around and take it all in?always decisions!



Stan da Prato won the AGS medal for his entry in the large 6 pan class with *Rhododendron* 'Drakes mountain hybrid', *Trillium chloropetalum* [?], *Rh.* 'Pintail', *Primula* 'Pink Ice', *Cassiope* 'Muirhead' and *P.* 'Clarence Elliott'. All of these except perhaps 'Pink Ice' grow well in a garden. Below is a snap of Stan snapping his snappy entry! Well done Stan!



Don Peace's 3 pan winning entry of *Frit.* 'Lentune Slate', *Corydalis* 'White Knight' and *Primula* 'Netta Dennis'.



Ian Kidman had to settle for second place to Don's winning trio. Ian's fabulous entry *Cyclamen pseudibericum*, *Ranunculus alpestris* and a very fine pink *Phyllodoce* whose label I could not find!



John Richards won the 3 pan Primulaceae class with *Primula pedemontana*, *P.* 'David Valentine' & *P. elatior cordifolia*.
Tom Green was second with *P. hirsuta* 'Lockey's Red', *P.* 'Gordon' and *P. denticulata*



First in the class for 1 pan rock plant in flower was Keith & Rachel Lever's *Sebaea thomasi* 'Bychan'. This excellent plant set the standard for the whole class. Taking second was Edward Barraclough's yellow *Primula* 'Coy' which he helpfully explained is a hybrid between *P. auricula* and *P. allionii alba*. Taking 3rd place was David Millward's fine pan of *P.* 'Mauve Mist'. It looked to be more white mist than mauve! On many occasions David could have expected a first prize with 'Mauve Mist' but sometimes a good plant gets beaten just because other even better plants get entered in the same class. I feel sorry for Peter Farkasch whose marvellous purple flowered *P.* 'Rick Lupp' was not even placed. This is not a criticism of the judging just an observation that sometimes you enter a class with strong opposition!



Best in Show & **Farrer medal** went to the superb pan of *Sebaea tomasii* 'Bychan' shown by Keith & Rachel Lever of Aberconway Nurseries in north Wales.

Certificates of Merit were awarded to

Ian Kidman's *Ranunculus alpestris*,

Geoff Rollinson's *Primula henricii*,

Billy Moore's *Trillium chloropetalum* 'Bob Gordon'

and Don Peace's *Fritillaria* 'Lentune Slate'.



Soldanella is part of the Primulaceae. However they only seem to win when in classes excluding Primulas, Androsaces and Dionysias. These last are very showy genera. That may be why demure Soldanellas are few and far between on the benches these days. Perhaps they always were? I think they are difficult plants to show as the flowers are small and the stems must be straight. Sometimes they flower so well that some flowers are dying while others are just opening. The leaves too need to be dressed and any brown or damaged ones removed.

Claire Oates from Scunthorpe exhibited this fine prize winning *Soldanella villosa*. I like the way the fringed flowers look out in every direction like wee radar detectors. The leaves are nicely tiered.

Trevor Harding from Ferryhill took firsts with both of his Soldanellas. In Class 54 S. 'Sudden Spring' was part of his entry in 3 pan Primulaceae. *S. alpina alba* [bottom left] won Class 55. Second was another white Soldanella, *S. carpatica alba* [below] shown by Barry Winter of Stockton on Tees.





Jim McGregor won the class for large pans of bulbs with a wonderful pan of *Narcissi*, labelled *N. obesus* Lee Martin form. This appears to be different from David Millward's pan which won the Forrest at Kin-cardine. Perhaps the form shown by Bill Robinson is different after all?



Tim Lever took 2nd with this big pan of *Iris lutescens*. Hard to imagine that any more flower stems would fit into the pot.

Every bloom perfect. Quite a feat this with such transient blooms. I also liked the diminutive *Iris suaveolens rubromarginata*. I am not sure which edges of this purple iris are red [rubro].

Intercontinental champion, George Young chose 3 American plants to win the Bill MacKenzie Trophy for 3 from one continent class. Fronting two *Townsendias*, *T. spathulata* 'Cotton Balls' and *T. tomentosa*, was a nice pink flowered *Trillium rivale*. It looked like *T.r.* 'Purple Heart' but had pinker petals with similar purple spots. *Townsendia* Cotton Balls looks just as it says when out of flower in the autumn.



'intercontinental'? George also had the best plant from Aus-

tralia, *Ozothamnus* [formerly *Hellichrysum coralloides*]. It was a fine old plant in top condition. This used to be seen on the benches more often than it is these days. George beat Trevor Harding's immaculate *Celmisia semi-cordata* into 2nd place

There was a big entry in the class for 1 pan from the Americas, which must have been difficult to judge. Carole & Ian Bainbridge won with *Erythronium helenae*. Cyril Lafong's *Tecophilaea cyanocrocus leichtlinii* was second. [see pic below]





On close inspection, Alan Newton's *Kelseya uniflora* was wonderful. It was placed third in the American class but this did not reflect its beauty. *Kelseya* is a tiny shrub. It is difficult to cultivate and to flower in the UK. The non-flowering rosettes were maybe a bit vigorous but it was the tiny flowers, clustered in the centre, which were the main interest. This tiny plant grows amongst other places, on Limestone canyon wall in the Bighorn Mountains of Colorado. I well remember clambering up steep scree slopes on a roasting hot day to look for it. We found *Petrophytum caespitosum* and *Telesonix* [*Boykinia*] *jamesii* but not the *Kelseya*! I was delighted to see it doing so well in Northumberland.



Chris Lilley had the best entry in one pan from Asia. His *Pusatilla ambigua* was a delicate shade of pink. It looks just like a good form of *P. vulgaris* but has a much more upmarket ancestry. It is native to Genghis Khan country, namely Western China, Mongolia and Eastern Russia where, if you ever get there, it can be found in grassy places and at forest edges. Its leaves are like ferns.





JOINT ROCK GARDEN PLANT COMMITTEE

Pteris aquilina

Pteris aquilina is a subspecies of *Pteris aquilina*. It comes from central and eastern Canada 3000 feet among well shaded rocks in humid regions. 2000 feet. It is similar to other Canadian ferns *P. caudata* and sometimes *P. aquilina* but the leaves and flowers are different.

According to the book "Pteris" by John Richard, *Pteris aquilina* has flowers 10,000 to 20,000 ft. tall. It has 3-4 inch long leaves to 200-300 inches tall. *Pteris aquilina* has flowers 3-4 inch long leaves to 200-300 inches tall. It has 3-4 inch long leaves to 200-300 inches tall.



The RHS Joint Rock Garden Plant Committee is made up of members from the SRGC, AGS and RHS. In fact most of those on the Joint rock are members of all three organisations. The J.R. meetings are held at various shows throughout the country. David Haselgrove [centre right] is current chairman. John Mitchell [near right] is Vice Chairman and chairs the meetings in Scotland. The committee is a source of expertise and advice for the RHS. Committee members contribute to the judging of plant exhibits at RHS shows and of plant trials. The committee is responsible for selecting plants for the Award of Garden Merit. At our shows they are responsible for advising the RHS on awards to plants for exhibition. They can award a Preliminary Commendation [PC], to a new plant of promise for exhibition; an Award of Merit [AM] to plants of great merit for exhibition and an First Class Certificate [FCC] to plants of outstanding excellence for exhibition. Anyone may submit a plant for consideration by the committee all that is needed is that the exhibitor fill in a simple form to the committee secretary. The Show secretary will usually be able to advise the exhibitor. If you have a plant which you would consider worthy of an award why not submit it to the Joint Rock at a show in the future?

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Edward Barraclough from Bradford won with the beautiful old hybrid Saxifraga 'Bridget', its multi-flowered stems vying for space in the huge pot. The messed up stems at the front look to have been caused by over-enthusiastic members of the public looking at the name label. It is always difficult to place the label in such a large well flowered panful. Tommy Anderson from Kendal came second with a selection which was new to me namely Sax. 'Mirco Webr'. I and the spellchecker wanted to change the name. Did I mean 'microweber, a kind of wee person who scans the internet. Marco? Modern day reincarnation of Marco Polo? Webr.... You can't really have these letters in this order! It is Czech plant, one of Karel Lang's hybrids. [S. aretioides and S. cinerea.] It looks much nicer than its parents, then so do many children.

IAN Kidman won the <19cm class for Saxifrages with a well flowered and large flowered S.dinnikii . It put me in mind of a imperial version of saxifrage oppositifolia.

It is always good to recognise that saxifrages come in many forms.

This Sax. porophylla can hold its own with the cushions

Tommy Anderson used Saxifraga 'Allandale Bonny' in his 3 pan entry in Class 51



Don Peace is a master of growing and showing bulbs. He excels with Fritillaria. His fabulous *Fritillaria pinardii* won the Sandhoe Trophy for best plant in a <19cm pot. Pictured right and immediately below. Note the wonderful colour when the flowers are viewed from underneath. At the bottom of the page from the upper left anticlockwise are :- *Fritillaria 'Lentune Slate'*, *Fritillaria reiseri*, *Fritillaria kurdica*, *Fritillaria aurea x pinardii*





ORCHIDS FOR ALL

Calanthe brevicornu won first for Carole & Ian Bainbridge. This fine orchid stays in good condition for many weeks and is therefore a good plant for exhibition. Don Peace won the Pleione class with a beautifully presented pan of Pleione 'Locking Stump'. [above]. Stunning tho' Locking Stump is, I admired the fresh purity of Alan Newton's 'Pleione Snow Bunting'. [left] There were more wonderful Pleiones in the next Section [for pans < 19cm.]

Pleione names seem to be getting weirder!

Pleione Bandi San grex 'Fireglow', [centre below] & Clockwise from below

Pl. yunnanensis, Pl. Rakata, Pl. 'Ivoid' or Pl 'Noid'?

Pl. 'Ueli Wackernagel',





Cassiope make good subjects for growing in troughs. Care is needed with watering and protection from wind to stop the leaves dying and the stems browning. Members of the heather family, they are circumpolar plants. Whether using plants from North America , Norway, the Himalaya or Japan, British gardeners have been at the forefront in hybridising the species. Many excellent garden plants are now available.

Alan Furness won the class with his fabulous plant Cassiope 'Muirhead' [wardii x lycopodioides]. Cassiope 'Arctic Fox' is another wardii hybrid but which retains the upright habit and hairiness of C. wardii. C. 'Beatrice Lilley' is a selection of C. lycopodioides. Frank & Barbara Hoyle entered and won their C. lycopodioides in the Class for 1 pan native to China or Japan



Cassiope x Muirhead



Cassiope x Arctic Fox



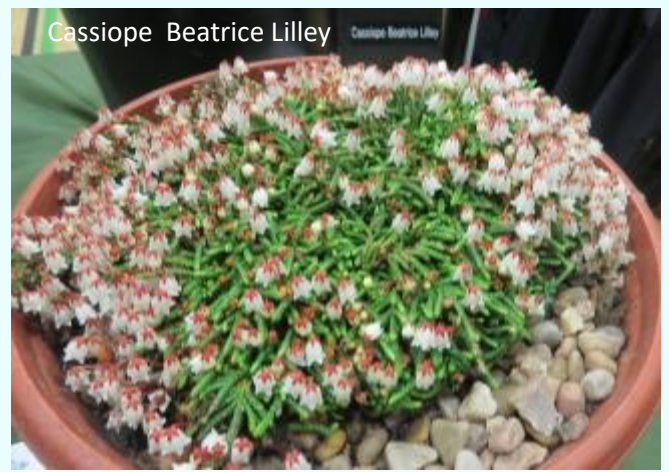
Cassiope lycopodioides



ALPINE GARDEN SOCIETY
SCOTTISH ROCK GARDEN CLUB
Northumberland AGS 5800W 2017

CLASS 30
Frank & Barbara Hoyle
Chipping

FIRST



Cassiope Beatrice Lilley



Congratulation to Ron & Hilary Price who won their foliage class with 3 good garden plants....nothing 'fancy'. Maybe not 'fancy' but very well prepared. I thought their *Toffieldia coccinea* was remarkable, just a perfect green hairy wig. It is a perfect dome with no brown leaves at all! Quite a feat. The species recalls the travails of early explorers. It was first recorded in 1823 by Admiral John Franklin on one of his early voyages to find the fabled North West Passage through arctic Canada. Although Franklin's last expedition vanished in 1845, with the loss of all members and he failed to find the N.W. Passage he is perennially associated with it. The Orcadian explorer John Rae was awarded £10,000 for solving the mystery of Franklin's disappearance. However he reported that there were signs of cannibalism. Franklin's widow with the connivance and support of Charles Dickens refused to believe Rae and he was vilified in London society. He remains the greatest of all explorers of arctic Canada but he was never accorded proper recognition for his discoveries. Maybe not in London but he is recognised in his native Orkney, where he is buried in the churchyard of St Magnus cathedral. Inside the cathedral there is a memorial fit for a king. There, beneath stained glass windows, the marble effigy of John Rae, dressed in his arctic furs, reclines on a cold sarcophagus. His house still stands, part ruin, overlooking Scapa Flow.

Ron and Hilary complemented it with black *Ophiopogon planiscapus nigrescens* and Hebe 'James Stirling'. You gather that I liked their entry!









CORYDALIS Brexit
form
This rare grows in distinctive red, white and blue shades with cultural requirements peculiar to Britain and will not tolerate Continental conditions. It is regarded by some as superior to the European form. It remains to be seen if it takes root North of the Border.



Date of Show

1st April 2017

