

# The Scottish Rock Garden Club & The Alpine Garden Society Hexham Show 30 3 19



**Fabulous!**





## A FAVOURITE MEETING PLACE

Hexham, like Kendal is a good place for the meeting of kindred spirits. The Romans built Hadrian's wall to protect their empire but to see it, is now one of the main reasons Scots travel to this part of England.

When the 2019 show schedules came out and I saw that the Hexham show was moving to the Hexham Auction Market, I thought, "that will be a bit draughty and cold". I had visions of concrete floors, block concrete walls and metal pens. My thoughts were coloured by memories of the dog shows held in the old Perth auction market, which I attended with my father. He used to show cocker spaniels and Irish setters. The Dundee dog show was in similar premises. Where have all the drill halls gone?

Hexham farmers are used to fine things. The Hexham show was held in a modern comfortable warm building with plenty seating, a bright show hall, an excellent area for the trades stands and its own restaurant. Staff were on duty from opening to closing. They provided rolls, sandwiches, teas and coffees as well as full meals. To cap it all there was a huge car park with no charges. Local people flocked to the show. The local group estimated at least 500 paid to see the show. Lets hope many of them were so captivated that they will join the local groups, the SRGC and the AGS. At the end of the show, nurserymen were carrying out many empty trays having sold so much of their stock. Windows stretched the length of one side of the show hall enhanced by good lighting from spotlights along the ceiling. There was plenty room for people to study the classes along side and between the double row of show benches. Even groups of chattering rock gardeners rarely impeded progress.

This was of course a joint show held in alternate years under SRGC and AGS rules and Either a Forrest or a Farrer Medal is presented to the winning plant. This year it was held under AGS rules.



The Farrer Medal was awarded to Cliff Booker's *Shortia uniflora*

On the right is Peter Hood's winning 3 pan: *Primula elatior*, *P. henrici* ex PBC 3035 and *P. 'Broadwell Milkmaid'*.







Stan da Prato's winning 6 Pan Class entry included *Saxifraga* 'Allendale Goblin' and *S.* 'Cranbourne', *Geranium* sp., *Tulipa turkestanica*, and *Rhododendrons* 'Cream Crest' and 'Pintail'.

Stan's colourful winning entry met you as soon as you entered the show hall. It well deserved its AGS medal



Don Peace won the large 3 pan class and an AGS medal with this fabulously colour matched entry. *Pleione Ueli Wakernagel*, *Primula petelotii* and *Callianthemum anemonoides*.

I was very taken with the *Pleione*, a genus which I have loved for many years. 'Ueli Wakernagel' is the grex, a cross between *P. aurita* and *P. formosana*. The colour of flowers in the grex varies and there are many paler clones. The late Jan Berg from Holland made the cross. Don's form takes after *P. aurita* in flower shape and colour.







All these plants are in the Primulaceae family.

Primula elatior ssp.pallasii, P. palinuri, P.elatior meyeri [White form ex Turkey], Androsace laevigata, Soldanella carpatica and Cyclamen repandum. While many in this Family flower in spring there are individuals in flower most months of the year. Some are easy garden plants others are fiendishly difficult to please.



**VARIETY** These plants were in the first few classes. The term 'rock plant' covers such a wide diversity of plants.



George Young's *Draba* 'Buttermilk' is a hybrid between *D. longisiliqua* and *D. ossetica racemosa*. It is nice soft primrose yellow, quite a contrast to the citron yellow of most *Drabas*. Its colour has been modified by the white from *D. ossetica*.

From Japan, *Hepatica* Ho Ho Beni [some names make you smile!]; an American daisy, *Townsendia rothrockii*; a Russian beauty, *Corydalis solida* Penza Strain; *Helleborus lividus*, from Majorca; another American, *Hymenoxis torreyana* and with beautiful pink flowers, a fine plant of *Pulsatilla grandis striata*.





[Below Left; Left to Right] Saxifraga 'Mirko Webr' (shown as 'Marco Webr'),  
Saxifraga 'Bridget'- pink, Muckdenia rossii (behind) Saxifraga federici-augusti

Saxifraga 'Eric Bacci'







Tulipa cretica



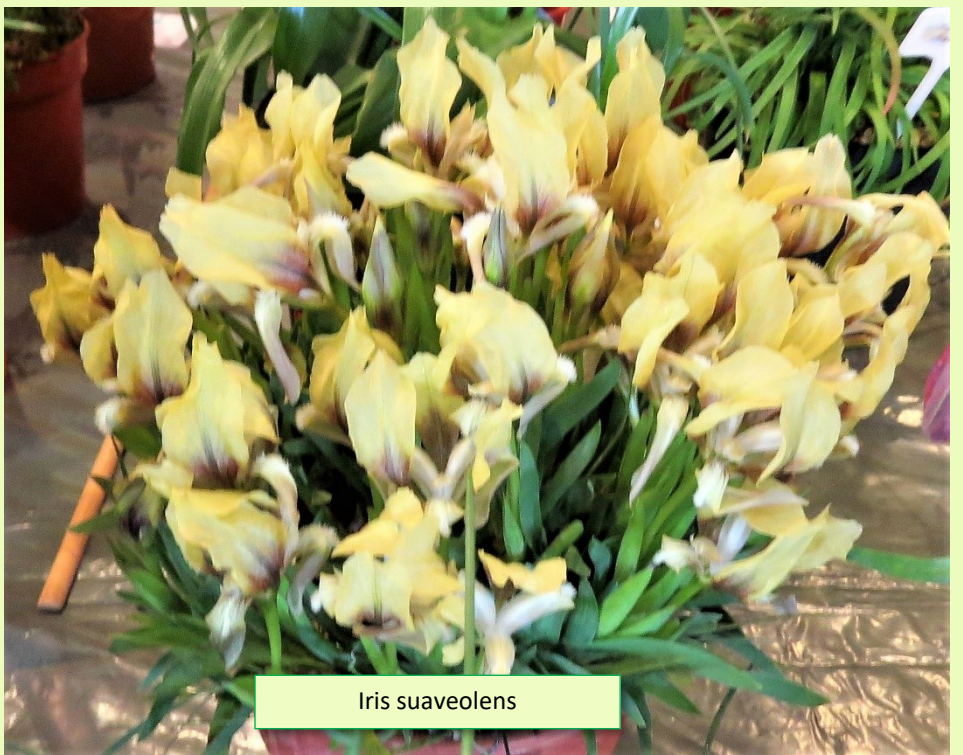
Muscari macbeathianum



Narcissus 'Sennoke'



Scilla reverchonii



Iris suaveolens



Tulipa iliensis

Here is a selection of the bulbous plants [including Pleione which contributed to the diversity of plants on the benches. I used a bigger picture of the Iris suaveolens because I have never seen so many flowers on such a small plant of the species. Muscari mcbeathianum has a charm which most other Muscari lack. Perhaps it inherits its charm from Ron.

Lemon yellow Tulipa iliensis is new to me but available from Pottertons and Kevock among

other suppliers. It is native to Kazakhstan where it grows in grassy or gravelly slopes in semideserts. It was shown by Clare Oates of Scunthorpe. I will consider Scunthorpe for my next sunshine holiday! Tulipa cretica never looked so good in Crete. We saw it growing there in the Akrotiri peninsula as single flowers never in clumps.







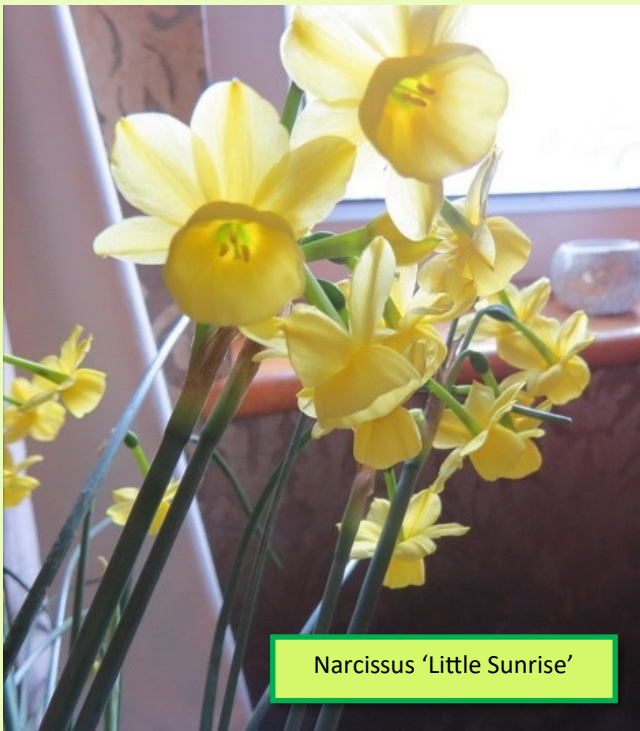
This was a very interesting and clever entry. Three pans of *Primula* [*bracteata*] *henrici*, each from a different collection. The species is native to Tibet. These three from Peter Hood were first in the Class for 3 pans of any one genus.



David Rankin and Pam Eveleigh have published the results of their studies of *Primula bullata* and its subspecies. Since it is named for Scottish hero plant hunter, George Forrest it is my favourite. I feel it is a pity that it has been reduced to a subspecies. This is nice compact plant. Contrasting in heritage and colour are two purple *Primulas*. The top is labelled 'marginata hyacinthina' and the lower 'Mylene'







Narcissus 'Little Sunrise'



Tulipa ulophylla: Wendelbo  
 Liliaceae family  
 Rare tulip from the Olang Pass in the Elbrus mountains East of Tehran. Grows in rocky soil at 2200m on steep cliffs. Difficult in the garden and grown in gritty bulb compost in a pot. Repotted in early December with plenty of light when growth appears. During dormancy bulbs dried off and kept dry until repotting.



Tulipa humilis albocaerulea is my favourite tulip













Fritillaria reuteri



Fritillaria alfredae glaucoviridis



Fritillaria aurea x pinardii



Fritillaria elwesii





Fritillaria grandiflora was a spectacular sight



Fritillaria eduardii



Fritillaria meleagris alba









Our shows are much more than horticultural competitions. They are, primarily, social events at which old friends from all over the country, gather in town halls, schools and community centres, to see and to discuss their favourite kinds of plant; to compliment or criticise the judging; to remember plants which they had once grown themselves; to ask about friends; to remember characters from earlier days. They wonder where the years have gone; first things first, get a bacon roll and a cup of tea or coffee. Later they will enjoy soup and sandwiches followed by delicious home made cakes. If you are early you might snaffle a meringue!

No matter how many shows one has been to, there are always new plants or varieties of old favourites to hold your attention. Just because you don't remember all the names, does not mean that you are succumbing to dementia. It may be because those terrible non-horticulturalists called botanists are apt to change well known names from time to time. In recent years there have been wholesale upsets in the Plant Families to which various Genera belong. What was at one time a huge family, the Liliaceae has been much reduced in its constituent families. The Asparagaceae on the other hand now holds its head high amongst the large Families. Who knows offhand that Trillium is now in the Melanthiaceae? Luckily Primulaceae, Compositae and Ericaceae remain almost unaltered. However Dodcatheons and Mathiola may now be Primulas.

'Plus ca change, c'est time for another cup of tea'.

Good company, interesting people, wonderful plants, good food and tea; if these are part of your ideal afternoon, then you too should join us in the Scottish Rock Garden Club. You too should strike up conversations with the like minded but never closed minded enthusiasts at our shows. We want to share our love of wee plants and bulbs with you and invite you to join us at any of our meetings. Details of shows, displays, group meetings and conferences can be found on our web site [srgc.net](http://srgc.net)







The RBGE and Mala Janes staged excellent exhibitions

