

The Scottish Rock Garden Club

The Alpine Garden Society

Northumberland Show ; Hexham

28th March 2015



I reckon plants must have to be tough to survive in Hexham. Since it is further South than my home I expect the weather there to be softer. Like my town of Dunblane it sits at an altitude of about 300 feet and is surrounded by hilly moorland. I don't know if the Romans stopped in Dunblane but we do have a Roman Way which leads to the Ardoch Roman fort in Braco. You need quite a good imagination to interpret the humps and hollows of Ardoch as a fort. Hexham though sits just south of the most famous Roman buildings in the whole UK; Hadrian's Wall and its forts.

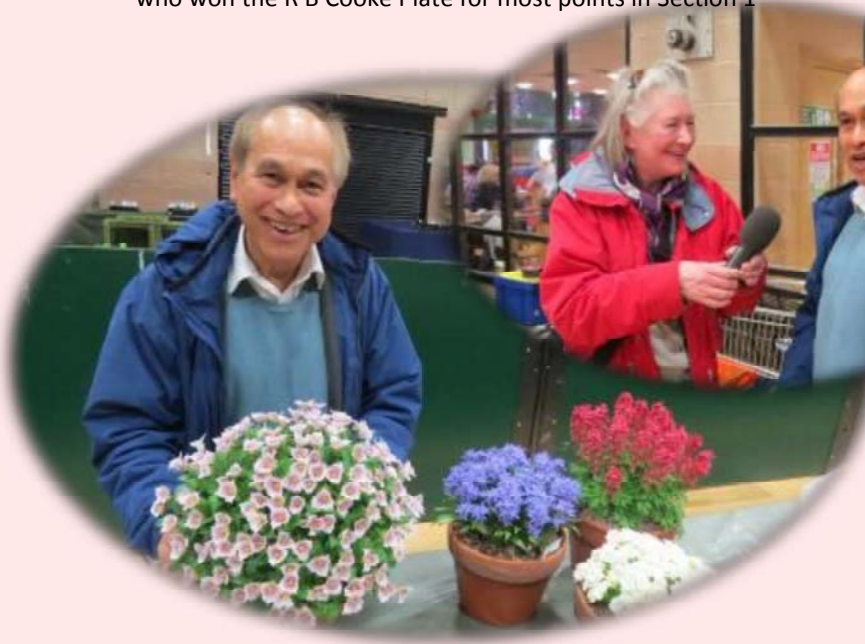
Another visible leftover from Roman times are the roadways. Always keen to march quickly and safely from A to B, the Romans did not believe in corners. The best example of a Roman route is that followed by the A68. If you do go to the Northumberland show it is a vital part of the experience to make part of your journey along this ancient way. Where the view is open you can see a dead straight road stretching out in front or behind you. Uphill, downhill or over a hill just go straight on! Almost every summit, on parts of the route, is a blind summit and only a very bold or foolhardy driver would drive up and over without reducing speed. The road literally disappears at the brow of the hill before plunging down the other side. 'Plunge' is the word for whichever direction you travel the hills are steep. The Romans must have had sturdy legs!

No matter how you get to Hexham the journey is well worth while. It is a beautiful town with an imposing Abbey, good shops and refreshment hostel-



ries. The show is held in the Wentworth Leisure centre and we rock gardeners are in no way the most active folk in the building. There is a ten pin bowling alley. Perhaps one year we could have a friendly match between the SRGC and the AGS.

Cyril with his Farrer medal winning show-stopping Trillium rivale and on the right with Marian Foster and at the far right chatting to Don Peace who won the R B Cooke Plate for most points in Section 1



Even more active is the swimming and when we get there on a Saturday morning it seems to be full of wee lassies in leotards competing at gymnastics. Waitrose next door does a lot of business on Saturdays. If you have a card you can get a free coffee!

The reason I think plants need to be tough to live there is that during the day we experienced all sorts of weather from snow through sleet, hail and rain to bright sunshine and it was even warm for a while. No matter as soon as you entered the hall you got a warm welcome and the chance to buy a raffle ticket. They had lots of good prizes at Hexham.

The Farrer Medal was won by Cyril Lafong with his Trillium rivale 'Purple Heart'. Last week at Stirling the same plant won Cyril his 50th Forrest Medal. This is an unrivalled number of Forrests to have won. Well done Cyril! Thank you for showing the way in showing. Cyril was interviewed for local radio by former Pebble Mill at One and Top Gear presenter Marian Foster. She now hosts BBC Radio Newcastle's Sunday afternoon gardening show.

The standard of plants at Hexham is extraordinarily high, with probably a dozen vying for top place. Never will you see better cushion plants, in flower or out of flower. The top growers grow for the Northumberland show. The view below is of the top of the first table and shows the competition for the 6 pan and 3 pan classes.





Large 6 pan class



Frank and Barbara Hoyle's AGS Medal winning 6 pan entry. I recognised some plants from the Kendal show where their *Dionysia aretiodes* won the Farrer. The *Cyclamen pseudibericum* in the centre won the Farrer last year at Kendal.

Mark Childerhouse was second in the 6 pan class and Stan da Prato third. 18 fantastic plants! When you enter the 6 pan class you feel it is all or nothing. The plants must be excellent so you will put your 6 best plants in this class, This means that you sacrifice the chance to win in 3 or 4 other classes

These 3 entries set the standard for the rest of the show



I want to draw attention to some special saxifrages. They were very good this year, probably because of the low temperatures.

Saxifraga lilacina (of horticulture)

S. Vecerni Hvezda [Evening Star]

S. Harry Smith

S. Coolock Gem

These were all part of Mark's entry. Once again Coolock Gem is the most floriferous by far. No room for any extra flowers on this dome



Large 3 Pan

1st Cyril Lafong

2nd Don Peace

3rd Tony Stanley





Scoliopus bigelovii

Corydalis maracandica

Trillium chloropetalum 'Val Mulvihill'

Pleione 'Tongariro'

Tulipa cretica

Scilla melaina





Anemone aff. *petiolulosa*

Hepatica 'Blue Jewel'

Narcissus bulbocodium conspicuus

Pulsatilla vulgaris 'Budapest Seedling'

Anemone caucasica

Fritillaria carica

The very rare *Primula erosa* from Bhutan captivated members of the Joint Rock Garden Plant Committee who awarded it a Preliminary Certificate. Shown by John Richards.



ALPINE GARDEN SOCIETY
THE SCOTTISH ROCK GARDEN CLUB
North Leith Road, AGS 58019, 2015

CLASS 7
Edward Barnslopp
Bradford

FIRST



Primula allionii 'Mary Berry'
Primula x meridiana Miniera
Primula 'Peggy Wilson'





Ribes laureola





Alpine Garden Society
&
Scottish Rock Garden Club

Class
50

Alpine rock plants, distinct;
not more than two of any one genus.

AGS MEDAL

ALPINE GARDEN SOCIETY



Northumberland Show
AGS Medal

If more than two of any one genus

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Northumberland AGS SHOW 2015

CLASS 50

Tommy Anderson
Kendal

FIRST

CORONILLA
MAY

YDAETS
MAY

SAKIFRAGA
MAY

PRIMULA
MAY

CROCUS
MAY

SAKIFRAGA
MAY

