

SRGC / AGS Show

Kendal

March 12th 2016



Over the years this show has changed its location and name from Morecambe to Lancaster to Blackpool and now it is Kendal. For Scots such as I, when it moved from Lancaster south to Blackpool it meant a longer drive and earlier start. Now that it is in Cumbria I can sleep for nearly one hour longer. Still an early start but less driving and a shorter day. The other difference is that this is no longer a seaside show but one held in the most mountainous part of England. Instead of being in the company of plastic hatted revellers celebrating forthcoming nuptials under or up the Blackpool tower and along the famed Golden Mile, in Kendal you meet hundreds of rucksacked walkers with ski poles. They travel in packs just like their belongings. Both Kendal and Blackpool have atrocious traffic systems, designed to show you as much of their town centre as possible. **One Way! No Way! Certainly not that way! Which way!** The easiest way to find the Blackpool hall was from the north but for Kendal the southern approach is easier to explain. From the north you must drive through the town.

In Blackpool if the weather is bad or the tide is out, you can't see the sea. In Kendal when the mist is down you can't see the hills; and it was misty this year on show day! Much of the rest of the country had sunshine but this area in the centre of the Lake District was cloudy. From my home in Dunblane this show wherever it was being held was easy to get to as the route is Motorway almost all the way. For Kendal you leave the M6 at Junction 39 [Blackpool 33 or 32] and follow the A6 into town. When I was young there were no motorways and the route south from Scotland was along the A6. The drive south from Shap summit was 'interesting'. The old road is well built and a delight to drive on. It is fascinating as it dips and rises, twists and turns following the natural contours of the land. In places it will cling to a hillside and at others race downhill towards a narrow bridge. The valleys disappear behind veils of mist creating a creepy haunted feeling. This is the route which the stagecoaches took. It is easy to see how old time villains could disappear after a highway robbery.

This country is almost ideal for rock gardeners. The air is clean; there are lots of open spaces; you can usually see the hills; the natural stone cleaves into flat pieces which are easily stacked up to build walls. On their sides they will make a good crevice

garden. The damp weather may predispose to moss but Scots are used to moss.

The Lake District seems to be more densely populated than the Scottish countryside. There are lots of houses with outbuildings, small farms all along the route with plenty rock and stone. Kendal with its mixture of modern shopping plazas and old fashioned twisty streets is just down the road. Carlisle is not too far north for those who want city things. On a cold misty morning you have the road to yourself. In mid summer it is a bit busier. It is hard to explain why but England is different from Scotland. When you cross the border the countryside changes: the buildings are different; the pubs and hotels seem more interesting and inviting; towns are bigger than you expect. There are fewer wind turbines visible in England. The M74 in Dumfries and Galloway passes through rolling hills and fertile wide valleys. Once you cross the River Esk [how many of these are there?] which flows into the Solway Firth and along to Carlisle the route is almost uphill all the way to Shap. Here you are on the edge of England's mountains. Here you can enjoy the narrow roads, steep sided dykes [hedges] and dry stone walls. It is possible to admire the views towards the snow-capped peaks and vistas over shimmering lakes. No views this morning but the thick mist did provide a wonderful curtain against which trees and walls were silhouetted. Since Roman times and before then, the border counties were places of strife which had to be defended now the border country is the land in which Scots and English holiday and enjoy themselves. If Hadrian's wall were still the border, Scotland would be a lot bigger. The Romans built a big hilltop fort just west of Hardknott Pass, about 35 miles west of Kendal either to get a good view of Ireland or to defend against attacks from the sea. I would not want to negotiate Hardknott Pass on my way to Kendal show on a misty morning. It must be the steepest road in the UK and its very narrow and twisty. This is probably why you want to stop and take pictures all the time. You must have gathered that I like the Lake District. In some years the daffodils would be blooming at the road-sides but 2016 is a late season —no dafs. David Mowle who knew these hills very well as a boy, told me that the Beatrix Potter drawings in the Peter Rabbit books depict places which still exist and have hardly changed in a hundred years. Flocks of her favourite Herdwick sheep still graze in fields walled by stones (which we would covet) on hill farms in steep sided valleys. They are still protected by the terms of her will, her instructions carried out by the National Trust. So if you missed the Kendal show this year make time for it in your calendar next spring. Spend a few days and return refreshed.

Below is Holy Trinity Church, Kendal dating from the 1400's





Members arrived in Kendal from a' the airts. John Lee greeted me with a cheery, 'Good Morning' and we were joined by Brian Smethurst who was also his normal happy self. This was even before he knew that his plant had been judged Best in Show and had won the Farrer Medal. I suspect that smiling Mary Ridley, below left already knew who had won but was not telling!



Liam, Paddy, Billy and George arrived from Dublin via the Holyhead ferry and tho' there is no photo Wales was also well represented.





Congratulations to George and Sue.
After my happy chatting outside, I thought I should go inside and see the plants in the show. Almost the first people I met inside were happier even than I. I admired George's new camera. 'Just got it' he said. 'It was a wedding present' Now! How casual can you get when telling friends that you have just got married?

They were married on 5th March and it looks like they are honeymooning in Kendal.

Pictures of their wedding and wedding cake are on the SRGC Forum.



Rock gardening is good for you!

It was great to see Lillian Greenwood again. Here she is talking to Kath Rimmer. Were they discussing plants? No! Ages! Suffice it to say that when Brian Russ joined them they represented more than 250 years of horticultural excellence



....and now the plants!



With 145 classes divided into groupings for exhibitors of all experience, the Kendal show like other north of England shows has a different format from those run by the SRGC north of the border. There is considerable merit in the AGS sections idea. It means that novice exhibitors can compete with one another for a much longer time before they are plunged into the Open Section. The SRGC approached the problem by allowing members to exhibit in section II till they won 50 first prizes. The AGS also divide the sections into pan sizes. The result is that many members can enter several pans of the same plant in different classes. One thing which is true, there is a good mixture of plants on the benches. There are also many classes for non-flowering plants, like ferns, conifers and foliage. Bearing

ing this in mind we should look at the top table. These classes are open to all members. They allow the biggest pans. In the main they contain exhibits from members who have won their gold merit medal.

Shelagh & Brian Smethurst's Farrer Medal winning *Hepatica japonica* 'Gyousei' and Tommy Anderson's *Eranthis* 'Guinea Gold' shone like

flower with their perfect large dome of *Dionysia aretiodes*. Second was the highly desirable *Calanthe sieboldii* x *hancockii*



stars on the bench. Tommy won the 3 pans rock plant distinct with another 'Guinea Gold', *Galanthus nivalis* and *Narcissus cyclamineus*. Frank and Barbara Hoyle had first in the prestigious 1 rock plant in



Primula Arduaine shown by Don Peace
 Primula 'Soup Plate' by Stella & David Rankin
 Primula megasaefolia
 Primula allionii 'Anna Griffith' from Edward Spence
 Geoff Rawlinson's 3 pan Primula allionii was 1st
 Don Peace's P. allionii Lismore 87/3/2
 Frank & Barbara's P. allionii 'Fritz Kumert'
 Primula 'Soup Plate' from John Richards



Barry Winter of Stockton on Tees showed a nice pan of *Draba sphaerallia coccinea* (?) which is new to me. It forms a nice open cushion or mound of bright green spiky rosettes, similar to those of *D. dedeana*. It has typical four petalled brassica flowers on stems about 4 inches [9cm long]. The flower petals themselves seem to be quite narrow. It an interesting name as it conjures up a plant of the American South West *Sphaeralcea coccinea*, a low growing red flowered Mallow. If anyone can help please email me.



There was a time when the benches at the early shows were laden with pans different coloured *Corydalis solida*. While the choicest solidas still appear we were more likely to encounter lesser known species of *Corydalis*. Don Peace had three well balanced plants in Class 15 [3 *Papaveraceae* or 3 *Ranunculaceae*]. The other trio were three *Hepaticas* shown by Brian and Shelagh. This time Don won! That the two genera are eligible for the same class is something of an anomaly as they look nothing like one another but both genera belong to the Order *Ranunculales*. I rarely delve so deeply into a plant's background.

Don's *Corydalis* were

- C. kusnetzowii* x *solida* [sown 22 4 09]
- C. oppositifolia*
- C. mararcandica*

Below is John Richards' *C. solida* 'Beth Evans'



Hepaticas are becoming increasingly popular on the benches, despite the fact that they take a while to build up into showable plants and that many are expensive. These three showed a good range of features which draw devotees to these wee Japanese flowers

Hepatica Ryougetsu, *H. Blue Sandan* and an unnamed *H. japonica*. From the simple pink flowers of *Ryougetsu* you can see how the stamens change and become more petaloid. Together they show some of the variety possible in Japanese *hepaticas*. Beware—some are smaller than you would like.





Ipheon uniflorum 'Rolf Fiedler'



Peter Hood's *Corydalis sewerzowii* gained a Certificate of Merit



Lionel Clarkson's *Saxifraga* 'Tycho Brae' will in condition for weeks



Diane Clement's fabulous *Colchicum hungaricum*



Colchicum szovitsii



Galanthus 'David Shackleton'



Jean Wyllie's New Zealand bred *Narcissus* 'Betty Mae'



Diane Clement's *Ypsilandra thibetica* is much hardier than it looks



Trillium chloropetalum 'Val Mulvihill' is a very strong grower



'Alan Furness' well presented Corydalis solida... fabulous!



A well deserved Certificate of Merit on its way to Stockton on Tees for Barry Winter's Trillium nivale





Ivor Betteridge combined three excellent foliage plants with three bulbous plants to win the unique class 36
Stan da Prato came second with a quite different selection of plants





Ron & Hillary Price won the 3 pan foliage class

Stan Da Prato's trio were second



Best Foliage Plant and winner of the Kirby Cup was Alan Furness' *Celmisia semicordata*



Ivor Betteridge's *Cyclamen rohlfianum* is a wonderful plant and it was beautifully presented to show off its superb markings. Perhaps he has more one pan of *rohlfianum* but he has entered this class at various shows, spring and autumn, and has won nearly every time. Ivor certainly keeps it in perfect condition from Autumn to spring. Just how many firsts and trophies has he won with *C. rohlfianum*?

Below A STUDY IN STUDYING! This couple are weighing up the merits of Don Peace's AGS Medal winning 6 pan entry. He also won with his 3 pans of Asiatic Primulas. Don was awarded the **Hollet Trophy** as he was the overall winner with most first points in the Open Section



Tommy Anderson won the Ivor Barton Memorial Trophy for 6 pans of monocotyledons with this seasonal entry. It is well balanced for colour and species.





TROPHIES

David Mowle Trophy to *Narcissus bulbocodium* from David & Liz Livermore

Michael Roberts Memorial Trophy [most points in intermediate section] to Lawrence Peet

Reginald Kay Trophy [most 1st points in Novice section] to David Morris



WHAT DO I WANT FOR MY BIRTHDAY?



**BOTH
AVAILABLE
FROM
EDROM
PLANTS!**

**Adonis amurensis
Hakuju**

**Adonis amurensis
Beni Nadeshiko**

