

Dryas



News from your Club July 2020

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HELLO FROM THE NEWS EDITOR

It has probably been quite some time since gardens have made such an important contribution to our collective wellbeing. With the COVID-19 restrictions keeping us at home, many (no doubt SRGC members in particular) have found consolation in their gardens. This has certainly been my experience. Over the last few months, I've needed to spend much of the day looking after my four-year-old son Robin, and our garden has been a place of adventure, a classroom, and a sanctuary. We've plucked the threads of webs to lure spiders out of hiding places, conducted earthworm surveys and setup pitfall traps, built bee hotels and mini-ponds, and much more. Excitingly, I've also for the first time had modest success involving Robin in the gardening. The trick is a swift rotation of activities like weeding, watering and picking strawberries, which keeps him interested. The one activity he never gets bored of, however, is pruning, and he will quite happily prune a poor shrub to an inch of its life!

As well as the impact on ourselves, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant disruption to SRGC activities. This issue of *Dryas* is a little slimmer than usual, as many of the usual events in the SRGC calendar have been cancelled. It does however provide an important update on the status of activities such as the Seed Exchange and the SRGC Annual General Meeting, and outlines plans being drawn up to get the show back on the road. We're all hoping for a return to normality by next year, but in the meantime let's keep on enjoying our gardens.

News Editor

Ed SHAW, 01522 529663, edwardalanshaw@googlemail.com

TWICE-YEARLY PHOTOGRAPHIC AND ART COMPETITION

The competition results for the twice-yearly photographic and art competition were included in the *Dryas* for January 2020 and since then, sadly, owing to COVID-19, and cancellation of the Stirling and other shows we do not have any new results to announce. We are hoping to hold the competitions next year at the usual times. At least the pandemic has made more time for us to spend on photography or art! Entrants - please keep your fantastic creations for the next competition!

Photographic Competition Manager

Cathy CAUDWELL, 01828 686709, c.m.caudwell@fireflyuk.net

GOLDEN JUBILEE SALVER

The Salver is presented annually to an individual member for outstanding service to the Club. All nominations are considered by the Awarding Committee, which consists of previous winners of this prestigious award.

Nominations for the 2020 recipient should be sent to the Secretary no later than 15th August 2020. It would be helpful if a short account of the nominee's services to the Club and also the names of other supporters were included. You may submit your nomination again in subsequent years if initially unsuccessful.

The names of all previous winners are recorded in the Golden Jubilee Salver Book which is available for inspection at the AGM or on our website. In 2019 the recipient was David MILLWARD.

Surviving recipients are: Sandy LEVEN, Elizabeth IVEY, Ron McBEATH, Jean WYLLIE, Lyn BEZZANT, Glassford SPRUNT, Jackie THOMLINSON, Margaret TAYLOR, Henry TAYLOR, Ian YOUNG, Ann CHAMBERS, Ian BAINBRIDGE, Ian CHRISTIE, Jim SUTHERLAND, Julia CORDEN, Liz MILLS, Alan NEWTON, Ann CHRISTIE, Carole BAINBRIDGE, John LEE, David MILLWARD.

Secretary

Hannah WILSON, 07545 871304, secretary@srgc.net

EXPLORATION AWARDS - SPRING 2020

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak and the subsequent lockdown the committee didn't feel able to make any awards in April. The two applications we received will be considered at our November meeting.

The next deadline for receipt of applications for Exploration Awards is Sunday 15th November 2020. Application form and awards criteria can be downloaded from srgc.net/site/index.php/extensions/grants or by contacting the **Fund Secretary:** Carol SHAW, 01309 641405, findhorncarol@icloud.com.

Donations for awards are always welcome. Contributions should be sent to the **Treasurer:** Richard GREEN, Cedar Cottage, Balfron Station, Glasgow, G63 OSQ, 01360 440701, treasurer@srgc.net.

AWARD FOR IAN YOUNG

The SRGC President Julia Corden is delighted to inform the members that Ian Young was awarded the Veitch Memorial Medal from The Royal Horticultural Society for all his many years promoting and working with alpinists and bulbs. Congratulations Ian!

DEATHS

The Club has received intimation of the deaths of the following members: Vivien CLOWES, Stockbridge; B ANDERSON, Newton Mearns; Ian AITCHISON, Formby; Sheila BRINKLEY, Newtyle; Barbara HENDERSON, Tighnabruaich; Janet FIELDEN, Appleby-in-Westmorland; Lee MARTIN, Westham; Andrew McNAB, Borgue; Fred HUNT, Blairgowrie; Geert THIERS, Brasschaat, Belgium; E FOLEY, Waddington.

We extend our sympathies to the friends and families of the deceased.

DIANA AITCHISON FUND

This fund, in memory of nurserywoman Diana Aitchison, awards grants and bursaries to support younger people who wish to pursue or further a career in horticulture and can demonstrate an interest in furthering their knowledge of alpine and rock garden plants. **The DA Fund is still accepting and determining applications for activity that can be undertaken at a future date when COVID-19 restrictions will permit, or for activity which can take place whilst restrictions are in place, so applicants should continue to apply.**

For application forms and awards criteria please go to: srgc.net/site/index.php/extensions/grants or contact the **Fund Administrator:** Matthew TOPSFIELD, 07775 812036, mtopsfield@icloud.com.

HIDDEN TALENTS

It is the members of our Club who make it work. The Council of Trustees is responsible, but we don't know more than a fraction of our members. In particular, we don't know what talents and skills you have. Some of you have retired, but could your previous role be valuable to the Club? Others are working, and some of you are new to the Club; you will have abilities that can also be applied.

There are often positions to fill, and council members can only ask people who they know are relevant. Or we ask for volunteers – and most of you are far too shy or uncertain to respond! So, we would like to know more of you and about you.

What can you do? Do you have administrative experience? Are you familiar with specific aspects of technology, particularly computing? Maybe you have social skills and can make people feel welcome. Or you can cook. Or write. Or edit. Or organise.

Some jobs can be done by one person, at home, quite likely anywhere in the world. Some may involve one or a few meetings a year with a small group of other people. Some are one-offs, others on-going. There is something to suit all tastes.

If we have some idea of who can do what, it will make it much easier to ask suitable people if they can fill vacancies – or even start something new. At present the seed exchange needs new people for tasks that are suitable for groups or for individuals; people at present acting as Seed Exchange Manager and organising seed packeting need replacements. Further, our long-serving Subscription Secretary will retire in 2021.

Whatever you can do, and like doing, we would like to know about it. Please contact our **Secretary**: Hannah WILSON, Flat 3, 24 Warriston Road, Edinburgh, EH7 4HN, 07545 871304, secretary@srgc.net, and tell her about yourself. You may end up doing something interesting, useful, and rewarding for the Club.

Ed: Hannah was very pleased that the January issue of this appeal resulted in a new volunteer, but was astonished that only a single member felt they had any hidden talents, and has asked me to ensure that members know they are free to contact her (no strings attached!) to discuss ways they may be able to help their club.

VACANCIES

SUBSCRIPTION SECRETARY

Christine BOULBY retires as Subscription Secretary in 2021 and we are looking for someone to take on this work from spring 2021. The **Subscription Secretary** is an important member of the Club and on Council. They talk to many new and existing members to ensure that their payments and membership renewals go through smoothly. It is an interesting job needing some computer experience, but mainly a helpful and welcoming approach with people. We have an efficient computer system which holds the database and this is being improved and simplified to minimise the administrative time required. The post is only open to those living anywhere in the UK as it requires access to members' own personal information. There will be the possibility for the work to be split in future, so members wishing to assist but not able to afford much time can still get involved, so that the responsibilities can be split between more than one person. To talk without any obligation, please contact Christine BOULBY on subsec@srgc.org.uk, or the **Treasurer** Richard GREEN on treasurer@srgc.net.

SEED ORDER RECEPTION MANAGER & SEED TREASURER

The task of seed order **Reception Manager and Seed Treasurer** is primarily to receive seed orders by post with payments from our members. You will need to account for the funds received and eventually deposit them in the bank. These orders will ultimately go to our team for the next stage in the process. The task can be done at your own pace without stress wherever you live (UK) and can be a fulfilling and valued occupation in the cold of December and January when your garden is mostly out of bounds. By mid-January the seed exchange closes and, barring some follow up enquires, is the end of your involvement. If anyone is interested in this position, please feel free to contact the current **Seed Order Reception Manager & Seed Treasurer**: Neil McNULTY, 6 Main Road, Crookedholm, Kilmarnock, KA3 6JT, 01563 526351, neil.mcnulty@uwclub.net.

DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

The Club is recognised as a charity by HM Revenue & Customs, and so both it and donors can benefit from a number of tax reliefs. Subscriptions and other donations by income tax payers under Gift Aid allow us to claim back income tax paid by the donor. In addition, such donations by higher-rate income taxpayers allow the donor themselves to claim back higher rate income tax relief on their tax return.

Leaving a legacy to the Club in your will allows us to do things which would otherwise be beyond our means. It is also tax-efficient and can reduce the liability of the donor's estate to inheritance tax. Previous gifts have helped us in many ways over the years.

The **Treasurer** Richard GREEN is always available to discuss possible donations, gifts and legacies with donors or their representatives in advance. He can provide relevant wording and more information to ensure that they are put to the very best use. Such discussions can of course be in confidence if requested.

SEED EXCHANGE NEWS

NO SRGC SEED EXCHANGE IN 2020-2021

We are very sorry to have to announce that there will be no SRGC Seed Exchange in 2020-2021. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to all sorts of restrictions this year, and after much discussion, the teams responsible for the three elements of the seed exchange have reached the conclusion that it will not be possible to carry out the seed exchange in circumstances which are likely to require social distancing, and may well place limitations on groups of folk gathering indoors. We also recognise that many of the volunteers key to the running of the exchange are

among the higher risk segments of the population, and may be reluctant to volunteer in the usual way. So, please accept our apologies, bear with us until 2021, and read on to find out what we are proposing to do.

NEW EU PLANT AND SEED IMPORT REGULATIONS

In December 2019, the EU implemented new plant and seed import regulations, which apply to the UK as much as any other EU member state. Defra have confirmed that these mean that any seed being sent into the EU from other parts of the world now requires a phytosanitary certificate, with no exceptions. This obviously will affect all of those members who are kind enough to donate seed to us from outside the EU, and we will take the opportunity that the 2020-21 cancellation gives us to try to work out ways in which key donations from other parts of the world might continue to be made to us.

As we write, we are also unclear as to what will happen after the UK transition period ends on December 31st and we finally leave the EU. We do not know whether this will mean that from January 2021 we will need to obtain phytosanitary certificates for all seed we send to our members in the EU. Again, we will be keeping in touch with developments and looking for ways in which we can continue to operate the seed exchange in future. We will update you all with more information on these developments when it becomes available.

2019-2020 REMAINING SEED - OFFER TO UK MEMBERS

After the seed distribution is completed each year, we have some seed left over which normally goes on tour with the SRGC Spring Shows for members to buy. This represents the last 5-10% of the seed, and Ian and Carole BAINBRIDGE have two trays with around 3000 packets of seed sitting unused this year. If any UK member would like some seed, you can email seed@srgc.org.uk, or write to Ian and Carole, address below, with a list of genera you would like, or list large blocks of numbers from the 2019-20 seed list, and your postal address.

Ian and Carole have agreed they will post out packs of up to 50 packets of seed. In return, members will be asked to make a donation on the SRGC website. Please pay a donation of at least 20p per packet plus postage costs, using a credit or debit card by clicking on the "Donate" button on the top right-hand corner of the srgc.net home page. After entering your payment amount, please then use the "Note" space to type "Seed" so our treasurer can allocate your donation correctly.

We are sorry that this offer is only being made to UK members, but we are not in a position to deal with import permits, customs lists or overseas postage in the current circumstances. In normal years, this seed is only available to UK members at shows, of course.

Email requests to seed@srgc.org.uk are preferred, but you may post requests to: Ian & Carole BAINBRIDGE, SRGC Seed Offer, Luckie Harg's, Anwoth, Gatehouse of Fleet, Dumfries and Galloway, DG7 2EF.

COLLECTION OF SEED FOR 2021 SHOWS

Even though we will not be running a main exchange in 2020-21, we have been thinking of the ways in which seed might be made available to members. We are therefore seeking volunteers who might collect some seed to be available for the SRGC shows that we hope will be able to take place in spring 2021. If you are a UK member, you could help us in the following way:

- Collect seed of a few choice or unusual plants – no more than five types.
- Check that these taxa were on the 2019-20 seed list; we will use the same numbers as last year.
- Email seed@srgc.org.uk with a note of your five items and your postal address, so we can send you labels, glassine envelopes and instructions on packeting and returning seed.
- Make up ten packets of each of your five items and send the seed back in to us for collation.

If around 70 members help with this, we can have the normal volume of seed available for the shows in 2021. If we reach this point, the seed collection will then be closed. Neil and Sheila McNULTY have offered to manage this process on our behalf; many thanks to them. We realise that if it is not possible to hold the shows, the seed may never be used, but we think it worthwhile trying.

Ian & Carole BAINBRIDGE on behalf of the SRGC Seed team.

SEED EXCHANGE 2019

Last year's seed exchange got off to a somewhat late start as the General Election delayed the printing of our Seed List. I had expected the UK Government to delay the election until our lists had gone out – but no. However, seed orders began to arrive by early December. It is always exciting to see how much our members enjoy the thrill of ordering seeds and makes the hard work really worthwhile. I get a lot of favourable comments and encouragement from our members around the world.

This year the number of seed orders by post was down on previous years but I am glad to say that this has marked a movement to an increased number of members ordering online using our new system which is easier and simpler to use than ever before.

Seed Order Reception Manager & Seed Treasurer: Neil McNULTY, 6 Main Road, Crookedholm, Kilmarnock, KA3 6JT, 01563 526351, neil.mculty@uwclub.net.

SEED DISTRIBUTION 2020

This was the sixth and final year for the SW Scotland Rock Garden Group. We were delighted to welcome members of the West of Scotland group who came to view the operation and consider whether or not to follow in our footsteps. Hopefully the smooth system now in place and the enthusiasm of members for a winter get together will have convinced them. A new problem this year was the naming of some seeds, as both USA and Australian customs use their own particular plant lists and SRGC follows what it considers to be the most up to date one. We received several returned seed requests and relabelled a number of packets so that they could be resent and accepted by customs successfully.

I would like to thank all members of SWSRGG and their friends who contributed to the success and fun of the distribution and NTS Threave Gardens for the use of the visitor centre restaurant. Special mention should be given to Carolyn (the other one, McHALE) for packeting extra seeds to demand and her husband David for his computer wizardry, Liz (MUIR) for assisting Carolyn and her husband Ross for tackling the USA paperwork so skilfully; Carole and Iain BAINBRIDGE for help in all areas and for a seed training module for Threave horticultural students; and my (late) husband Andy for his patience and mastery of the franking machine for envelopes for whatever country and for whatever weight.

Seed Distribution Manager

Carolyn McNAB

YOUR IDEAS FOR FUTURE DAVID BOYD EVENTS

The David Boyd Events are focused on outreach; intended to take our enthusiasm and expertise on rock gardening to remote or overlooked areas for the benefit of members and non-members alike. Previous events have been popular and successful, providing talks, workshops and tours to members, allowing the Club to engage with fellow plant enthusiasts who had not previously heard of the SRGC, and enabling fruitful collaboration with other plant societies.

We are looking for suggestions for future locations of David Boyd Events, and would also love to hear your ideas for topics and content of these events. All thoughts welcome. Additionally, if you already have an idea for an outreach event and would like help transforming it from an idea to reality, please do get in touch. Contact the **Secretary**: Hannah WILSON, 07545 871304, secretary@srgc.net.

INTERNATIONAL ALPINE CONFERENCE 2021

Due to COVID-19 and after discussions with the SRGC Conference Committee, the SRGC Council and the AGS, we have taken the unanimous decision to cancel the Alpines 2021 Conference.

We hope you understand this was not an easy decision, but it is our belief that we will be in the grips of this virus for some considerable time so cancellation is in the best interest of everyone's health. International travel which is an essential part of any international conference is also likely to be curtailed through next year at least.

The Czech Conference Committee hope to hold their 4th conference in 2022 or 2023.

President

Julia Corden

AUTUMN SHOWS AND LATE BULB EVENT 2020

Though restrictions in place because of COVID-19 are gradually being eased, considerable uncertainty remains about when indoor events might be able to restart. In view of this we are sorry to announce that the Hexham Autumn and Discussion Weekend shows, and the Late Bulb event in Aberdeen are cancelled

AUTUMN FESTIVAL CANCELLATION AND AGM MEETING POSTPONEMENT TO THE EARLY BULB SHOW

We have decided to cancel the Autumn Festival and move the AGM to the afternoon of the Early Bulb Show in Dunblane next year on Saturday 20th February 2021. Our belief is that it is unlikely that we shall obtain a quorum if we hold the AGM in November; as many of our members are shielding or vulnerable. We have considered the possibility of holding an electronic meeting, but we consider this impracticable. However, we look forward with optimism(!) to the position having improved by next February so we can obtain a good turnout for this combined event. The January *Dryas* will include the notice for the AGM, and calls for nominations to Council. We should point out that delay of the AGM is strictly against our Constitution, but the Office of the Scottish Charities Regulator has said publicly that they will take a light touch regarding such infringements in view of the current crisis. Current officials will stay in their existing posts until the new AGM date. Anyone with any concerns is welcome to contact the **Secretary** Hannah Wilson for more details.

DUNBLANE EARLY BULB DAY & SRGC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

10 AM to 4 PM SATURDAY 20TH FEBRUARY 2021

Venue: Victoria Hall, Station Road, Dunblane, Perthshire, FK15 9EX.

Speaker: Talks at 11 am and 2 pm by John GRIMSHAW, Director of The Yorkshire Arboretum, North Yorkshire, with responsibility for the 120 acre arboretum and 20 acre Ray Wood on the Castle Howard estate. John is the co-author of *Snowdrops: A Monograph of Cultivated Galanthus*, and a member of the RHS woody plant committee. Staging will occur at 9-10 am.

Annual General Meeting: The rearranged SRGC AGM will begin at 3.15 pm.

50:50 Plant Sales: Please contribute to the 50:50 Club plant sales table.

Bulb Exchange: Since there will no Discussion Weekend this year and no Bulb Exchange please pot up your bulbils and cormlets this autumn and bring them for other members to grow on. Donors will get three free choices from the donated pots of bulbils.

The usual nurseries will be there so bring your wallets and buy lots of plants to show your support for their businesses.

Please note that while these arrangements have been made, whether or not the event takes place will depend on government advice in relation to the COVID-19 virus regulations.

Further information will be in the 2021 Show Schedule or by contacting sandy.leven@btinternet.com.

NOMINATIONS TO COUNCIL

Nominations are invited for membership of the council of the SRGC.

- Nominations must be received by the **Secretary** at least 30 days before the Annual General Meeting, **which will now be held Saturday 20th February 2021 at the Early Bulb Day**. Therefore, the deadline is Friday 22nd January.
- Nominations must be in writing from the proposer – on paper or by email.
- Each nomination must state the names of one or more seconders.
- Each nomination must state that the candidate has agreed to stand for election.

The Secretary, Treasurer, Subscription Secretary, Web Manager, Publicity Manager and Editor retire annually, but are eligible for re-election. Nominations are required as described above. Ordinary members of council serve for three years; four are elected each year.

Secretary

Hannah WILSON, Flat 3, 24 Warriston Road, Edinburgh, EH7 4HN, 07545 871304
secretary@srgc.net.

DISCUSSION WEEKEND BURSARY 2021

An annual bursary is offered to any member of the SRGC who has never been to a discussion weekend, covering the cost of the weekend. All other expenses such as travel or extra nights at the hotel must be met by the recipient.

Group conveners as well as the forum administrators are asked to canvas interest within their group/forum and to select one individual to be nominated for the bursary. Members who are neither part of a group nor the forum should make their submissions directly to the secretary.

The closing date is **Saturday 27th March 2021**. The successful name will be drawn on **Saturday 17th April 2021**.

PROVISIONAL 2021 SHOW & EVENT DATES

20 th February:	Early Bulb Display (in Dunblane)
13 th March:	Kendal Show (Joint AGS/SRGC)
20 th March:	Stirling Show (in Dunblane)
27 th March:	Hexham Show (Joint AGS/SRGC)
10 th April:	Edinburgh and the Lothians Show
17 th April:	Perth Show
24 th April:	Highland Show (in Nairn)
1 st May:	Glasgow Show
15 th May:	Aberdeen Show
21 st August:	Summer Event (in Dunblane)
2 nd October:	Hexham Autumn Show (Joint AGS/SRGC)
8 th – 10 th October:	Discussion weekend and Show (in Granttown-on-Spey)