

The Scottish Rock Garden Club

STIRLING GROUP

MEETINGS & EVENTS—2019—2020

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Please share this news letter and the syllabus with other gardeners

Dear fellow group member,

It seems no time at all since I sent out last year's syllabus. By now you should have received your copy of 'The Rock Garden' 143, the most recent journal of the SRGC with the picture of Paris quadrifolia on its cover. The picture was taken at the Perth show. This issue included a contribution from me, in which I told the story of how we built our garden in Dunblane. I mentioned some of the plants which we grow and the people who gave me plants and ideas. Unlike all the other articles in the June issue, my piece has no photographs. 'The Rock Garden' is, however packed with beautiful pictures illustrating the other articles. As you read your way through the journal, you are taken to distant parts of the world :- South Africa, Russia and China. There is a special article on American Clematis suitable for growing in our gardens. Each issue expands our horizons and makes us want to grow interesting new plants. Over the years, our journals build up into an encyclopaedia of plants which we can or might like to grow in Scotland, even if we cannot travel to see them in their natural habitat. One of the great advantages of being in the SRGC is the contacts and friends you make through membership. Our members are linked by our love of plants.

Each year The Scottish Rock Garden Club puts on a full programme of events spread over the year. Our group hosts three of these:- the Early Bulb Display and talks in February; our Flower Show in March and The Summer Event in August. I hope you can volunteer to help at one or more of these to help ease the work of those who already do. As well as physical help, please publicise our events in your own area. You can put a piece in the local paper or a poster in shops. Please also copy the group meetings programme notice and put it up locally. You can see that we in the Stirling Group are well served with talks delivered locally by excellent speakers, on an unrivalled range of interesting subjects.

Over the past year several prominent members of our group have died :- former Group Convenor, Garth Broomfield; former group convenor, Evelyn Stevens; Claude Wilson; David Milne and Ron Bezzant. Over many years I have been guided by each of them. When I joined our group in 1976, David and Claude were already well established members. David served on our Committee and helped at every show for decades, usually as cashier in the tea room. Claude and his late wife Betty had almost perfect attendance. Claude was also a committee member and could be relied on to contribute to members' nights. Evelyn was SRGC Secretary for several years. She was also a successful exhibitor at SRGC shows. Evelyn and Lewis hosted practical days up at Sherrifmuir and of course she was a founder member and guiding light of The Meconopsis Group; Garth has made a long lasting contribution to Bridge of Allan—his public rock garden at the road-side at the roundabout, where Henderson Street joins Keir Street, near the university. He talked about his garden at a recent member's day and hosted visits to his unique garden in Fisher's Green. Ron helped our group even before he and Lynn moved from Bearsden to Port of Monteith. He was for many years the man who recorded the points at our Spring show, right back to Albert Hall days. He decided how much prize money each winner got and who won which trophy. He and Lynn encouraged my interest in the Club and Bulbs in particular. Without them there would be no Early Bulb Day or Late Bulb Day. We will miss all of them. I send my condolences to their families.

Since our last Group meeting several of us met in Lockerbie at the David Boyd Event to learn more about the Himalaya and the plants which grow there. As well as talks there were visits to special gardens. Before Lockerbie we went to SRGC Flower Shows in Aberdeen and Glasgow. In August our Group hosted the Summer Event in The Victoria Hall where Christophe Ruby from the Hof Botanic Garden in Bavaria lectured on the garden and on Trilliums. For the coming season, we have an exciting programme.



Past SRGC President Peter Semple is a member of the RHS Joint Rock Garden Plant Committee and a member of the Glasgow Group. Peter's plants consistently win top awards at our shows. He will talk about re-invigorating his garden in Buchlyvie, to which he moved after 30 years in Jordanhill. I well remember the advice he gave when talking about his Jordanhill garden, "Do the heavy work before you are 40!" Different gardens—different problems—different solutions.



Petra Palkova and Graham Gunn are both SRGC young bloods. Petra was born in Czechia. She received two Diana Aitchison Awards to help in her studies in Scotland as well as an SRGC Exploration Grant to study in Gothenburg Botanic Garden. Petra is now employed full time in The Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh looking after the alpines and bulbs. She has stewarded at SRGC shows and is one of the team from the RBGE who stage their wonderful plant displays at our shows. She will tell us about her adventures in horticulture.

Graham Gunn is Nursery manager at Kevock Nursery in Lasswade, near Edinburgh. He received an SRGC Exploration grant for a trip to China to study the flora especially rare Primulas. He was part of an expedition led by David and Stella and Pam Eveleigh. I enjoyed an excellent talk he gave to other 'young' SRGC members in Rosslyn. It was based on his China trip. Graham is part of the team which mounts gold medal winning exhibits at Gardening



Scotland, Chelsea and other main flower shows for Kevock. In 2018 Graham received the Roy Lancaster Award, for an individual under 35 who has achieved an exceptional contribution to the practice, science or promotion of horticulture.



Caroline Thompson is a scion of the Backhouse family whose members were famous breeders of Daffodils. She and her husband Andrew formed the Backhouse Rossie Heritage and Education Centre at Rossie Estate near Collessie in Fife in 2005 to preserve and care for their family's horticultural history and associated ephemera in a focused collection. They have restored the walled garden at Rossie and its grounds. The Backhouse Rossie Estate is an RHS Partner Garden and opens under Scotland's Garden Scheme. The garden holds the National Collection for *Narcissus* Backhouse cultivars awarded by Plant Heritage. There is a good view of Falkland Hill from the garden.



Dawa Sherpa is the head gardener at **Janet Wheatcroft's** Craigieburn Garden near Moffat. The visit to her garden was a highlight of the SRGC Lockerbie weekend. Dawa has developed it into a Himalayan paradise in Scotland, complete with prayer wheel and flags. There are vistas outward from the garden over the Dumfriesshire hills but within the garden they have designed intimate borders with wonderful combinations of foliage textures and flower colours. The 'piece de resistance' is its Himalayan Glen.



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David Millward is the guest speaker at the Early Bulb Day in February. David is a geologist by profession. He has travelled widely looking at bulbs in their natural habitat. In his talks we will learn about Turkish plants and bulbs which grow in both spring and autumn. I expect it is pretty dry even for bulbs in the summer. You will recall his excellent recent talk to our group. He is a keen exhibitor at our shows and has won an impressive number of Forrest medals. A member of the RHS Joint Rock Garden Plant Committee, he is Chairman of the SRGC Show Secretaries Committee.



Vojtech Holubec from Czechia is a senior researcher in the Crop Research Institute in Prague. He is a founder of the crevice gardens construction method of rock gardening. Recently he jointly authored of the magnificently illustrated 2018 publication on 'The Tien Shan and its Flowers'. This is the subject of his talks at the Summer Event. He loves mountains and travels extensively to photograph plants and wild habitats, recently mainly to China and Central Asia. He is a past President of the Czech Rock Garden Society.

I hope you will tell your friends and bring them along to some or all of our meetings

Good gardening
Sandy