

# The Scottish Rock Garden Club

## David Boyd Event 22nd & 23rd June 2019

### Himalayan Weekend in Lockerbie

The SRGC David Boyd events are designed to fulfil the Club's aims of encouraging gardeners to grow rock garden and woodland garden plants. Thus far, we have held a Beginners Weekend in Grantown on Spey and a weekend studying the plants of the Machair in Benbecula and South Uist in the Outer Hebrides, where we also held a trough workshop for local gardeners. The first of this year's two David Boyd events was held in the market town of Lockerbie in Dumfries and Galloway.

As with the others, this Himalayan Weekend was well attended by club members as well as keen gardeners from the local area. People came from as far south as the Midlands of England and Sutherland in the North of Scotland. The format was simple:- three superb lectures on each day followed by garden visits.

All the lecturers deserved their billing as 'Experts'. Between them they showed us wonderful views of the Himalayan mountains and their forests of the foothills as well as the plants which grow there.



ROYAL  
BOTANIC  
GARDEN  
EDINBURGH



The Caley



The Meconopsis Group

For this event we were joined by our sister societies, *The Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, The Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society, The Scottish Rhododendron Group, The Rhododendron Species Preservation Society, The Meconopsis Group, and The Glorious Gardens of Argyll and Bute*. The societies combined to provide a spectacular sextet of lectures on 'Plants of the Himalaya' and the mainly Scottish plant hunters who braved unimaginable hardship, especially in the early years of discovery, to bring us the wealth of Himalayan treasures which we now enjoy in our gardens. Naturally the Rhododendrons and Meconopsis were prominent but the whole gamut from high alpiners to forest orchids was well covered.

**David Knott** of the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh recalled how the Garden was one of the main driving forces of Himalayan plant collecting by encouraging and supporting the early plant hunters. It was to Edinburgh that many of the botanical specimens and seeds were sent. David started with the earliest days of plant exploration and followed through to the present day. Complementing his talk **David Chamberlain** of the Rhododendron Species Conservation Group used early drawings of plants and places which were made by the pioneers, through prints and transparencies to the most modern digital images. No matter whether you travelled a couple of hundred years ago or yesterday, very steep hills had to be climbed, leeches tolerated amid persistent torrential rainfall accepted. We soon realised that the flowers bloom in the wet season. Seeds are collected in the drier autumn months. Access has always been difficult. There are still few serviceable roads despite the huge increase in population. Luckily modern fabrics moderate the discomfort and tents are much better. Ablutions are and always have been primitive. Those who venture into the heights must acclimatise. The trips must be organised. Everything must be carried either by porters or by yaks.

**Margaret Thorne** of the Meconopsis Group's talk was based on the many trips she and her husband David have made to the Himalaya. She took time to explain the important differences between species, which to the uninitiated look similar. She caused me to look closely at the plants on the Meconopsis Group's display.

**Tim Lever** covered the high alpiners. Like Margaret's his pictures were superb.



**Ian Christie** split his time between an illustrated talk on the Meconopsis, Ericaceae and Cypripediums which he grows in Kirriemuir. The second part was a practical in which he tore apart several Meconopsis and Cypripediums. The resultant 'cuttings' were distributed via the raffle at the end.

**Mike Thornley** started his talk with series of background pictures illustrating Himalayan views of Rhododendrons, misty mountains and conifer woodlands. He then revealed that these Himalayan views were pictures taken in the West of Scotland particularly in Glenarn, the garden which he and his wife Sue have owned and nurtured for 40 years. His tour of Glenarn and other Argyll gardens showed the fabulous range of rhododendrons cultivated here in Scotland. Mike also told us how, like many other members, his interest in the plants in his own garden led him to interests in many areas of gardening. Through their love of plants, members meet at shows and conferences. Their choice of holiday destinations is much influenced by their hobby. A few like Mike reach the heights of the Himalaya but when they do, others like me can enjoy their highlights without the discomfort.

**Mala Janes** lent us her exhibition of pictures taken in David Boyd's garden throughout the seasons. The general views and the plant portraits showed the scope of David's Horticultural skill, the plants he loved and his skill in combining them in the garden to compliment each other. Mala took much care in writing about the plants and the garden. I am certain that had he been with



us, David Boyd would have enjoyed our Lockerbie weekend. His generosity has ensured that many gardeners will benefit from his legacy for many years to come

The SRGC would like to thank all the lecturers and the members of plant hunting expeditions over the past 150 years for the wealth of plant material, seeds, photographs, articles and lectures which have enriched our lives and stimulated gardeners throughout the world to cultivate and care for the plants of the Himalaya.

We hope that some of the non-members who attended will join at least one but hopefully all the organisations represented at Lockerbie. I hope the nurseries made good sales; they certainly had greta many good plants.

Like me many members visited gardens after the talks on the Saturday and Sunday evenings. A big thank-you to the garden owners who opened specially for us:- **Mrs Morley of Glenae, Mrs Wheatcroft of Craigieburn House, Mrs Buckley of Westerhall and Mr & Mrs Clapperton of Westwater Farm.** If you can please visit and enjoy these gardens and others in Dumfries and Galloway when they are open under Scotland's Gardens Yellow Book scheme. Full details of opening dates are in their handbook, "Open Gardens of Scotland". I certainly will.

My personal thanks on behalf of all members go to **Jeanie Jones** who ensured that the event ran so smoothly and who arranged for many Lockerbie people to help in the hall over the weekend. Her contacts with local gardeners and garden clubs combined with her local knowledge was invaluable.

Finally, a big thank you to the staff at Lockerbie Town Hall who did all the heavy lifting and setting out of tables and chairs. I hope we find a reason to hold another SRGC event in Lockerbie.





Saxifraga ilonakhensis from the Himalaya



There was no formal show at Lockerbie but several members brought plants for the display. The backing boards used for the display were first used at Alpines 91 in Warwick. They have come out of storage for this event. The pictures were taken by President Julia on her most recent Himalayan trip. Some plants were submitted to the joint Rock Garden Plant Committee for consideration. There may not have been many but they were interesting and diverse, ranging from a Cactus hybrid to a tall Paris and floriferous candelabra Primula.



Rebutia aylostera hybrid 'Bo Jangles'



Saxifraga 'Reginald Farrer'



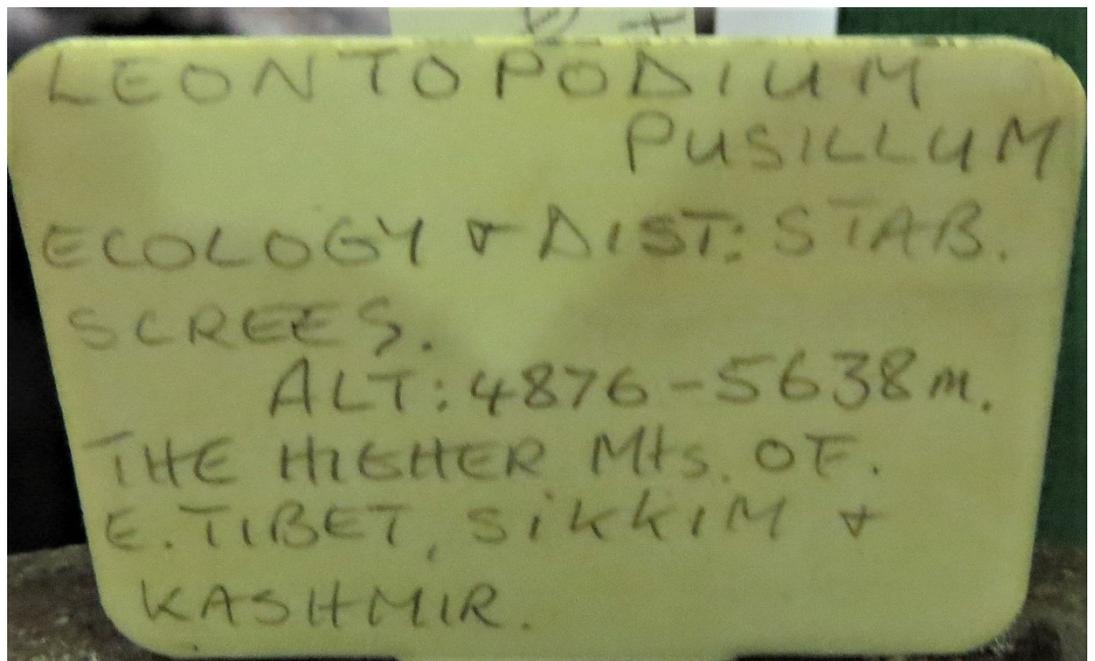
Leptospermum scoparium 'Apple blossom'



Leontopodium pusillum



Resnova megaphylla roosenekal





Physoplexis comosa



Roscoea humeana



Roscoea humeana 'Fred's Pink'



Primula capitata mooreana



*Paris polyphylla* GP 5045





*Primula aurantiaca* 'Harperley Pink'







The memorial window in Lockerbie town hall . It incorporates the flags of the 21 countries that people came from who died in the disaster. It was designed by John Clark of Glasgow.