

# The Scottish Rock Garden Club

## Autumn Festival & AGM 2017



### What a wonderful day!

For many years the attendance at the SRGC Annual General Meeting has been declining. President David Rankin surmised that changing the format of the day could increase the number of members willing to travel to Scone for the AGM. He was proved correct and members appreciated the chance to hear from two recipients of the Club's Exploration and Aitchison Awards and about July's David Boyd Event in Grantown on Spey. Taking the last first :-

**David Shaw** was to have told us about 'Gardening from the Ground up', the first David Boyd Event which was held in Granton on Spey in July. Owing to his being unable to attend

**Carole Bainbridge** gave his presentation. The event was well advertised locally in Speyside, Highland and Badenoch areas. Susan Band, Ian Christie, Neil Huntly and both Ian and Carole Bainbridge gave talks and presentations. These were all well received by the audience which comprised SRGC members and non-members.

**Peter Edge** took us to the Hengduan mountains in South Western China. The mountains range in height from 500 to 7550 metres; tend to run north-south.; are remote and little visited and most important are home to over 10,000 [ YES! ten thousand ] species of

plants. The trip was led by David and Stella Rankin and naturally they found lots of Primulas but a great deal more as well. I was delighted to see *Paraquilegia grandiflora* and a white form of the red flag poppy, *Meconopsis punicea*. The Primulas included *Pp. viallii*, *beesiana*, *szechuanica*, *amethystina*, *bullata* [*forrestii*] *secundiflora* and *chionantha*. The latter three and the *Nomcharis pardanthina* reminded me of the glory days of Jack Drake's nursery at Inchriach. In many ways the Rankins and Kevock nursery have become the modern day equivalent of Jack Drake's in as far as raising and propagating Himalayan and Chinese plants. Peter's presentation also reminded me of why it is most unlikely that I will see any of these plants in the wild. The reason—drizzle, rain and landslides. The good weather in these parts is autumn when the seeds are ready. I hope Peter will come to talk to our group next season.



**Hannah Wilson** thanked the SRC for enabling her to pursue her career as a Taxonomist. She gained her MSc in Biodiversity and Taxonomy from the RBG Ed. Now this sounds a bit 'dry' but Hannah is an excellent speaker. Her presentation was learned, vivacious and bright as well as informative. Hannah is obviously a rising star in the horticultural firmament. She recalled that her first degree was in Mathematics at Warwick university. The main lesson she learned there was that she did not want to teach mathematics or become an actuary. So, on leaving university she took up a 3 month summer job at The Himalayan Garden and sculpture park in North Yorkshire. There she caught the 'Rhody Bug' as she learned to differentiate and recognise different Rhododendrons. She found the subtle botanical differences fascinating. Just as fascinating as her presentation. Hannah pointed out that while the press continually refer to species loss, until one knows which species are present it is impossible to know whether these are increasing or decreasing, this is the *raison d'être* of the taxonomist. Hannah has - and has to



have - an eye for detail. She showed how she learned to dissect flowers, Salvias I think. Studying specimens under the microscope, pressing specimens, collecting in the wild all came alive for her audience, in the future she intends to study Begonias in Papua New Guinea, what she refers to as a mega-diverse genus on a mega-diverse island. Much if this large island is unexplored, especially botanically. Hannah's mathematical training seems eminently suited to standing her in good stead in her new profession.

These three short presentations at our AGM showed once again that our Club is fulfilling its stated aims to further interest in and the cultivation of Rock Garden Plants. We give grants to help those wanting to study plants either at home or overseas. The club interprets these aims as widely as possible. Many grants have been given up to now and many people have benefited from the club's generosity. Bringing the recipients together to talk and mix with members is a great idea from which all benefit. I hope that next year we will hear from more rising stars. With people like Peter and Hannah guiding the gardeners of the future, our hobby of rock gardening looks pretty secure.

After the business of the AGM we were entertained, educated and enthralled by **Stan da Prato**, who took us through his eclectic tales in the world of plants. Stan seems to have been everywhere worth going, seen all that is worth seeing and grown all that is worth growing both in his own garden and in the Public gardens of North Berwick. He edits the journal of the Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society; provided many of the Gardening Scotland exhibits for the SRGC as well as the Begonia Society. Stan tells a tale like no one else. His talk had us laughing and gasping in amazement. No wonder that Stan da Prato is Plantsman of the Year. He is also Raconteur of the Year!.... But there is no trophy for that! Stan proved that our club shows, as well as our lecturers, as good as ever.

Several of the Medal winners were unable to attend the AGM and I did not get pictures of everyone. Some people moved as I clicked others grimaced and the light in the hall was peculiar, a mixture of orange from above and red from the heaters. Therefore I have had to correct the colours as best as I could. One result is that everyone looks pretty healthy with a nice suntan.

AGS Salver for most first prize points in Section I – Stan da Prato 6840 points – 228 first prize plants



Below  
Margaret Taylor receiving the 16th Gold Bar which she and Henry won for 850 first prizes at our shows

Above  
Barry & Cathy Caudwell receiving their Gold Medal



Merit Medals		Gold Bar	
Gold Medal	Barry & Cathy Caudwell	Gold Bar 1	Tommy Anderson
	Clare Oates	Gold bar 2	David & Carol Shaw
Silver Medal	Robin Pickering	Gold bar 4	Alan Newton
Bronze Medal	Christine Boulby		Don Peace
	Della Kerr	Gold bar 7	Ian Kidman
	Bob Worsley	Gold bars 13/14	Stan Da Prato
		Gold bar 16	Margaret & Henry Taylor



**Peg Crosland Award** for the best article in "The Rock Garden" –  
**David Millward** 'Northwest Turkey in the Spring' (issue 138)



**David Lane Award** for the best photo in "The Rock Garden" –  
**Ian Christie**, *Ranunculus lyallii*, Mount Cook Lily (issue 139) [on the screen behind]



**Williamson Trophy** for the best entry in section 5 (craftwork) of the photographic/arts competition – **Carolyn McNab** - *Rheum nobile*.



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**Carolyn McNab's 'embroidery' of Rheum nobile,**  
as seen in 2011 on Baima Shan, Yunnan



**AGS picture (President's award)** for service to a local group. **Avril and David Walkinshaw**, West of Scotland – committee, discussion weekend (~1995), most for plant stalls. Propagated and gave 1000s of plants – kept group afloat. David died in summer. Awarded to Avril, in recognition of all that was done by both of them.

**Golden Jubilee Salver** for outstanding service to the club - **Carole Bainbridge**: President 3 y, editor, group convener 5 y; joint show secretary, seed exchange particularly packeting, now reception, years on council, group committee – total heading towards 100 y of service!



# Plants on the display tables

Stan da Prato brought the best selection of *Saxifraga fortunei* cultivars, including some new cultivars from Japan, which we have ever seen at an SRGC event. Each plant was clearly labelled and presented in such a way as to illustrate the differences between clones. Stan pointed out that the tall central plant, Wada's Form, most closely resembles the wild species. Here in Scotland they like a leafy compost and light shade. Some small selections are best kept in pots. Experience has taught me that they should be outdoor whenever possible. They are manna from heaven for Vine Weevil if kept indoors in pots.















**Julia Corden** was elected as incoming President; she will take up office in November 2018.

Congratulations to Julia!.

There is no picture because Julia was lecturing in New Zealand.

