

Scottish Rock Garden Club, Stirling Group, Session 2011 -2012

Meetings in Dunblane Christian Fellowship Hall, Stirling Road, Dunblane

This year we are introducing two new afternoon talks to help members who don't like travelling in the dark enjoy the local group meetings. I hope everyone will come along to these extra meetings and enjoy our bigger than ever programme. The afternoon meetings will start at 2.00pm. come early for a chat and stay for tea and cake afterwards!

Since its inception, the SRGC has included members with a wide range of interest and experience in all aspects of rock gardening. Some were more adventurous than others in their quest to find out more; in looking for plants and bulbs which we all could enjoy growing. In the last year we have lost one of our modern greats – Musselburgh born, **Jim Archibald**, who with his wife Jenny scoured the temperate regions of the world looking for seeds of good plants which he could introduce to our gardens for inclusion in their excellent seed lists. Jim has spoken to our group and at Discussion Weekends and will be sorely missed. He typified the SRGC. He was interested in plants; where they came from; how and in where they could be cultivated and most importantly he grew a lot of them himself. Most importantly, in his lectures and with his pictures, he could spread his enthusiasm to others. Perhaps one of the longest lasting contributions will be his writings. Although he did not write a book he did fill his seed list with information and short articles [diatribes?] on conservation and the many aspects of rock gardening. Hopefully someone will edit them all together into a compendium. In their way Jim and Jenny followed in the footsteps of the great Scottish Plant hunters like David Douglas and George Sherriff. Others among our SRGC membership travel to interesting places to see plants in the wild. While they may not discover whole swathes of unknown plants, they are certainly filling in the gaps in our knowledge of those which we do grow. Amateur botanists now play an important part in furthering this knowledge and understanding of plants in the wild and in cultivation. Some of these intrepid people will be speaking to our group this coming season. This interest in seeing plants in their

natural habitat adds an extra dimension to the SRGC which is essentially a garden club. 'Garden club' encompasses a wider interest in 'the what and where' we choose to grow than 'gardening club', which seems to be more limited and inclined towards the practical aspects of horticulture. Even societies like the RHS are dumbing down their publications with most subjects being covered a few pages, most of which are filled with pictures. Who is there to expand on the snippets of information offered their monthly magazine? ['The Plantsman'?] The obvious answer is the specialised societies like the Scottish Rock Garden Club, the Alpine Garden Society, the Saxifrage Society and the Cyclamen Society etc. There is considerable overlap in the memberships of the specialist societies so it is important to all, that we maintain the enthusiastic support of our present members and try to encourage others to join us when we can.

To this end, to help you spread the word about the Stirling group meetings, once again I have appended a brief description of each speaker so you can enthuse your friends and neighbours. If you know friends, colleagues or neighbours who also like gardening please invite them to our meetings. **Please give them one of the enclosed invitation cards and place the meeting notices in a local garden centre, library, shop or supermarket. You can easily photocopy the invitation cards and notice.** Over time membership of our Stirling group and attendance at meetings fluctuates. Like all groups, we always need to attract new friends to our meetings. **You can also take a poster form each meeting to display where you stay, to help spread the word.**

SRGC lecturers are keen and expert plants-people. They are usually good growers and excellent photographers, with a keen eye for detail of plants, people and places. No other amateur organisation [or most probably professional as well] in Scotland rivals the SRGC for the sustained high quality of our local group programmes, for talks content and picture quality. Our speakers are mainly enthusiastic amateurs who love rock plants

Sandy Leven, 2, Leighton Court, Dunblane, FK15 0ED

sandy.leven@btinternet.com 01786 824064

and who want to share their enthusiasm with the rest of us. We must never take them for granted and we should consider ourselves lucky that the Scottish Rock Garden Club maintains such high standards.

For the coming season we have excellent lectures covering a wide range of subjects. We will enjoy pictures of distant mountains and of rock plants growing in far flung countries. We look forward to

Don't like night time driving? We have two afternoon meetings this year.

visiting Northern Spain and Italy, as well as the Himalaya and South America. We are however at heart a garden club and it's no use seeing plants growing in the wild if we can't get them or grow them in our own gardens. So to balance our trips abroad we will have experts talking on growing rock plants in general and Auriculas, Cyclamen and Tulips in particular. At the end of the season on a Friday afternoon, we have the extra Travelling Speaker's lecture on Primulas. In November we will have our first Wednesday afternoon meeting for those who do not like night time travelling.

As last year, our **meetings will be held in the Dunblane Christian Fellowship Hall, Stirling Road, Dunblane**, which is just beside the Victoria Hall where our show have been held. The hall is large, warm, comfortable and well equipped, with no steps or stairs. There is ample street parking in the evening. In the afternoon parking is also available across the railway bridge beside Tesco. Remember however that the hall in Dunblane is just opposite the rail station and there are regular trains to Falkirk, Larbert and Stirling. Once again we will hold our 'Pot Luck Supper'. It was very successful last year in spite of the terrible weather. With this in mind please send an e-mail to me at sandy.leven@btinternet.com so that I will have your e-mail address and can contact you if there are any changes to our meetings. If you have time to take a walk beside the Allan Water beside Dunblane Cathedral, you will see how much progress has been made on the Dunblane Rock Garden to which we contributed £500. A

considerable amount of work has gone into this garden and the volunteers hope to plant it up soon. You might like to remember the garden when splitting up clumps in your own rock garden. Telephone or e-mail me for more information.

As usual, please bring along contributions for our Plant Sale at each meeting. There is still plenty time to divide and pot up herbaceous plants or to lift and share a few bulbs. One of the magical things about group plants sales is that you never know what will be donated to the plants sales. Share some of your best plants with others and hope they share theirs with you! Another way to share your plants is to bring some pots along to display at our meetings. Now is the time to pot up some bulbs for the Early Bulb Display in Dunblane on 18th Feb. 2011. Please keep the date free and give some time to help with the catering, serving, plant stall or raffle. One big gap in our programme is that this year we are not holding the usual Spring Flower Show in March. As I said at our meetings last season, it was becoming very difficult to run the show with insufficient volunteers, so soon after the Early Bulb day a month earlier. We have decided to concentrate on one show for this year. Hopefully we will be able to restart the March show in the future. I hope to hold a summer event, combining exhibitions of cut flowers of rock plants as well as plants in pots with photographs and practical talk on gardening from a range of enthusiasts. This will be an inclusive event for all of us to show others what we grow in our own gardens, rather than a competitive event.

Please remember to renew your membership of the Scottish Rock Garden Club. Friends and family can join at www.srgc.org.uk. Remember that only SRGC members get 'The Rock Garden' twice per year as well as the Seed List and free entry to shows. You can also visit our sister groups' meetings in Perth, Glasgow and Edinburgh. I hope the forthcoming programme maintains your enthusiasm for rock garden plants and that you come along to enjoy the lectures and the companionship of fellow members.

Best wishes and good gardening, Sandy



Stirling group speakers for 2011 -2012

Margaret and Henry Taylor [5th Oct] are our number one SRGC growing, showing, propagating, photographing, writing, speaking and entertaining couples. Their knowledge of the European mountains and their plants is unrivalled. They have travelled widely in Europe as well as in the Western Himalaya in pursuit of plants. At the moment they are co-authoring a book on the Picos de Europa and the Pyrenees to be published by the Alpine Garden society. Their garden in Invergowrie has contains many treasures, most of which they have grown from seed. Plan your next holiday round their talk!

John Roy [2nd Nov] was due to talk to us last December but his talk was cancelled because of the heavy snow. Quite ironic that he should be prevented by the Scottish weather as he has also travelled widely in the Himalaya. He lives in Ballachulish where glen Coe meets the sea. He is editor of the Scottish Rhododendron Society's journal. He comes highly recommended as a speaker and travelling companion by our own Willie Campbell and Anne Chambers. He has a fine collection of Rhododendrons as well as an allotment in which he grows potatoes.

Anne Chambers [23rd Nov] lives in Killearn who has travelled to many parts to see mountain plants in their native habitat. She is passionate about Arisaemas and has been a member of several expeditions to see them in Himalayan countries. She is an renowned artist and her paintings of plants are superb. A copy of Anne's painting of *Dryas octopetala*, the SRGC emblem, was sent to all members to celebrate the club's 75th anniversary. Many of you will have bought some of her beautiful cards at our shows. She and her husband Viv usually win any show trophy for Rhododendrons. **NB Wednesday Afternoon Talk**

Liz Mills [23rd Nov] from Saline, is President of the Scottish Rock Garden Club and our own group treasurer. She and Anne Chambers have walked together botanising amongst the Scottish hills. She and our own Jean Wyllie organised the last two SRGC Discussion weekends at Polmont and along with Ian Christie guided the AGS in organising last year's International Conference Alpine Plants in Nottingham. As president Liz is very busy but is still enthusiastic about and has time for our own group events. **NB Wednesday 2.0pm**

Ian Young [7th Dec] followed me as President of the Scottish Rock Garden Club. He and his wife Maggi run the SRGC web site through which they have become the electronic faces of the club. Their garden in Aberdeen is a Mecca for plantoholics. Ian has written a weekly Bulb-log on the web for several years. His enthusiasm is for the genus *Erythronium*. He can be heard regularly giving advice on the BBC's Beechgrove Potting Shed. He grows many bulbs from seed. His talk will cover all aspects of rock gardening and the needs of the plants. This talk is a must for any budding rock gardener. Everyone will learn something.

Graham Butler [11th Jan] is well known to us as the owner of Rumbling Bridge Nursery from which he supplies superbly grown plants to the horticultural trade. He has a love of Auriculas in particular. Once he realised that the established stocks of old Auricula hybrids were in the main virus infected, he set about recreating them. Over many years he has a wonderful collection. Like other great plantsmen, he has released several of his hybrids so that others can share the pleasure of growing them. He is a powerful and enthusiastic speaker. **NB this talk is on the second Wednesday of the month!!**

Brian Allen [1st Feb] lives in Dundee. He is an acknowledged expert on European orchids. He gave us a superb talk on Scottish orchids a few years ago. Along with Patrick Woods he is the joint author 'Wild Orchids of Scotland' published by the RBG Edinburgh with photographs by Sidney Clarke. Along with Sid he has travelled widely through the European mountains to record all the European Primulas. His lecture title is self explanatory, suffice it to say the *Primula palinurii* is very rare and few people have seen it in the wild!

Martyn Denney [18th Feb] from Woking, Surrey, is Chairman of the Cyclamen Society and **Melvyn Jope** from Camberley also in Surrey is its Secretary. Between them they will tell us about Cyclamen in the wild and in cultivation. I expect them to tell us about the Cyclamen Society and the expeditions which it has organised to study wild populations of Cyclamen. They are both very experienced growers and exhibitors at their own and AGS shows. Some of you will have enjoyed their company them at our last Discussion Weekend.

David Haselgrove [7th March] from Hertfordshire, is a Council member of the Royal Horticultural Society. For 25 years he was Publications manager of the Alpine Garden Society. He is a member of the RHS Joint Rock garden Plant Committee as well as the SRGC for many years. He has travelled widely to see alpine plants in the wild including 8 trips to Patagonia and Chile, 4 to S. Africa, 2 to New Zealand. He has also travelled widely in the USA, Turkey, Greece and made trips to Iran, China and Nepal. He is our 'mini tour' speaker for 2011 and will be giving talks in Dundee Monday March 5th and in Perth on Tuesday March 6th.

Mike Hopkins [4th April] is a long time member of the Aberdeen group of the SRGC. He is a well known to SRGC members as a regular exhibitor at our shows and until recently it was his job to collate the points awarded. He is an enthusiastic traveller who has visited many countries in his work and on botanical tours. He has written good articles for 'The Rock Garden' on Tulips, [which are one of his favourite flowers] and Spanish Bulbs. For the last journal he penned '[A botanical tour survival guide](#)'. Read it and act on it before you next go abroad!

YES! 2 talks in one week!

Pam Eveleigh [6th April] from Calgary in Alberta is a world expert on the genus Primula. I first met her 30 years ago the International Conference in Warwick. In 2000 she started the fabulous web site 'Primula World'. She is a founder member of the Calgary Rock and Alpine Society [I love their acronym CRAGS!] and served on the board of directors of the American Primrose society. Pam has travelled widely in China and Tibet, looking at and photographing Primulas. **Her talk is on a different day from our usual meeting so please keep Friday afternoon 6th April free and bring your friends! NB Friday Afternoon Talk at 2.00pm**

Top Ten Must Do List! for Stirling Group members

- 1) Write meeting dates in diary and calendar
- 2) Give invitation card to friends and neighbours
- 3) Put up posters locally
- 4) Come to the SRGC AGM at Perth airport on 12th November
- 5) Propagate plants for plant sales at monthly meeting
- 6) Look out plants for Dunblane Rock Garden
- 7) Pay SRGC Subscription
- 8) Come and enjoy yourself at the monthly meetings
- 9) Support the two afternoon meetings which will be from 2 – 4pm
- 10) Suggest speakers and gardens to visit next season