

Stirling Show 2009

The show was a dazzling success. Although not as big a show as Blackpool, the benches in the Victoria Hall were filled with pans of good alpines and bulbs.

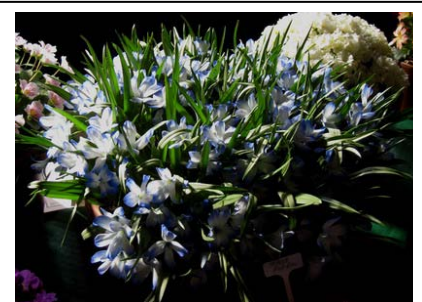
MOST TROPHIES GO TO GLENROTHES

Jimmy Shand was known as the 'King of Fife' now there is new supremo in the Kingdom. Cyril Lafong triumphed by taking most of the trophies in Section 1 which Watt Russell kept from him. Cyril won the Forrest Medal and The Institute of Quarrying Quaich for 'Best non-European Trophy for 'Best European Plant' and The Spiller Trophy for 'Best Primula' with Primula Broadwell Milkmaid. Four top prizes 2 plants! Sitting in the corner Trillium rivale 'Purple Heart' which has previously won 2 Forrests must have wondered what it had done wrong. Answer. Nothing. The other two were just that wee bit better!

MOST POINTS IN SECTION I

Watt Russell was rewarded for his numerous excellent entries by winning The Carnegie Dunfermline Trust Trophy for Most Points in section 1.

Watt's miniature garden won him a first prize and no wonder because it was carefully planted with 19 different alpines including Saxifrages, Sempervivums, Androsaces and Primulas. His 3 pans of Sempervivums also came first and he had strong entries in Primula and Saxifraga classes.





Ian & Carole Bainbridge showed two rarely seen Chinese Saxifrages *S. clivorum* and *S. georgei*. Their green centered white flowers were a cool contrast to the many very bright floriferous hybrids.

Narcissus 'Bette Mae'



Jean Wylie's pan of Narcissus 'Bette Mae' gets bigger every year and we now expect to see it on the bench each year. Jean skillfully cultivates other plants. This time it was her fabulous *Shortia uniflora* which grabbed the attention. Pristine shiny greeny red leaves surrounded by a crown or palest pink flowers.

Shortia uniflora



We often fail to recognise the great contribution conifers and shrubs make to the shows. They provide the backbone of many shows south of the border. Here in Scotland we need more people growing and showing in the shrub, conifer and foliage classes. They provide added interest and allow our eyes a respite from the exuberant flower colours. Here is a view of the 'enchanted forest' at Dunblane. Sometimes when the backbone comprises big exhibits it has to move to a side bench!

Coronilla emerus was an eye catcher from Bob Meaden. What a pity it was up against the Shortia in its class.

Coronilla emerus



My favourite small shrub of the moment [not everyone's favourite I might stress] is *Leucothoe 'Curly Red'*, a plant whose leaves go dark red in winter. Here it is with *Santolina 'Lemon Fizz'* [Santolinas are favoured in gardens because they are silver!] shown by David and Carol Shaw.

Leucothoe 'Curly Red' & Santolina 'Lemon Fizz'



Narcissus provincialis x cyclamineus



The glory of a show is that it brings special plants to your attention and these are not always the big pans. Margaret & Henry Taylor have hybridised Narcissi for many years. This time they brought a stunner, a hybrid between *N. provincialis* and *cyclamineus*. It reminded me of a refined *N. pseudonarcissus* with swept back petals but much shorter in habit

Muscarima moschata is an example of a refined relation in a family of common, some might say weedy, garden plants namely Muscari, which

Muscarima moschata



have star qualities. The flowers of *Muscarima* generally form a more open taller and sturdier spike, often in muted colours. I like the *Muscarimas* a lot. Incidentally the spell checker wants to change the name to Mascara or Macarena!

Muscari chalusicum

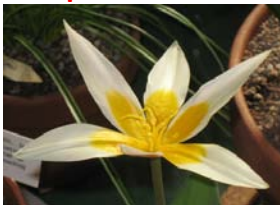


Mind you *Muscari chalusicum* is no shrinking violet nor is a thug in the garden. It is another defined cousin.....and some *Muscari* are *Bellevalias*, this one *Bellevalia pycnantha* surprisingly from North Africa and SW Asia [according to the label] via the RBG, Edinburgh. It was collected by Eric Pasche!

Bellevalia pycnantha



Tulipa berkariense



Tulipa berkariense would appear to be a Janis Ruksans' introduction as I cannot find out much about it. It has huge flowers tho'!

Galanthus platyphyllus



Tulipa sogdiana



Tulipa sogdiana must be one of the smallest tulips in the world. When typing out its name I came up with a picture of a very wet and soggy Princes Diana in my mind. It is a delightful little princess among a clan of garish giants and I commend it to you all. It comes from Central Asia.

Tulipa humilis is a stronger growing plant and we should all try to grow it. There are various colour forms and a collection would be a fine present for a rock gardener with a birthday at planting time in October

Tulipa sogdiana



One of Tony Derby's entries was a small pan of *Galanthus platyphyllus* with wide shiny green leaves and simply marked flowers.

Peter MacGuire won the 6 pan class with a classy entry - Dionysian 'Ewesley Omicron', *Draba rosularis*, *Primulas* 'Broadwell Milkmaid' and 'Mary Berry' and two fine hepaticas, *H. japonica* 'Unabara' and *H. Americana*. 'Ewesley'

reminds us of Past SRGC President Eric Watson who lived in the same neck of the woods [Tyneside] as Peter.





The six pan class commemorates the SRGC Silver Jubilee in 1993 and attracts a diverse range of plants. Amongst them was a fine *Erythronium hendersonii* and *Narcissus atlanticus*, the latter looking



Narcissus atlanticus



like a taller and creamier version of *N. watieri* from Morocco both of which would have appealed to Bulb log guru Past President Ian Young.

You can see the creamy tinge in *Narcissus atlanticus* in this photo where it is set against the white *Primula*.

Primula denticulata alba



In the grown from seed 3 pan class, Margaret & Henry showed *Sarcocapnos enneaphylla* from the Pyrenees and *S. crassifolia* from Andalusia at the other end of the country and just to show how far they travel they completed their entry with *Primula obtusiloba* from the N.W. Himalayas. All were sown in 2007.

Just as beautiful but much easier to grow and find in



Primula marginata



gardens is *Primula denticulata alba*. Several forms of *Primula marginata*, *allionii* and *pubescens* revealed the variation that you can find in a genus.

Primula kewensis



Primula kewensis is a bit more garish but a beauty none the less. Some think it is a bit tender



Primula Pink Aire



Primula 'Pink Aire' is an example of the fabulous plants shown by Tom Green. When I see them I think I will have to reduce my numbers of bulbs and grow Primula hybrids. I just love them - especially when they are grown like this!

The Corydalis classes were perhaps the most colourful in the show. Cyril's superb Corydalis aitchesonii hybrid dominated the class with its yellow flowers. Its daddy is unknown as it is a plunge bed founding. My money would be on C. popovii, not only because it is a pop already. Spell check fancied 'popover' for is word!



Corydalis turtschaninovii



The blue is Corydalis turtschaninovii shown by Scott Cook. A fabulous cool colour and if it were to be renamed Cook's cool Corydalis who would object if the did not have to spell 'urtschaninovii'. There is a hybrid Meconopsis x cookii but it is pink. How apt that a family which gives its name to a pink Mec should have a Scott member who shows a blue corydalis at a time of year when most corydalis are purple, red or pink.

Jim Sutherland of Ardfearn Nursery near Inverness showed a magnificent plant of Ranunculus crythmifolius which was

Ranunculus crythmifolius



awarded a Certificate of Merit. I had never seen one with more than three floers before. Don't all order it at once.

Townsendia spathulata was a wee star which everyone wanted to take home. Each year we seem to get one Townsendia, never enough for a

class but they always surprise me by how early in the years they flower. I think of them as summer plants.

Townsendia spathulata



The judges awarded 2 Gold medals for displays of bulbs. The first was to the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, who's Regius Keeper we thank and congratulate. Here is how we shamelessly placed the RBGE in front of the SRGC boards to let folk think that the RBG belongs to the SRGC!



Thanks also to John Mitchell for bringing the plants through a setting them up. Here is John on the left with James Cobb of Meconopsis and previous Forrest medals at Stirling fame in front of the RBGE Exhibit.



Irid aucheri 'Shooting Star'



Everyone wanted the dark blue Iris in the centre Iris aucheri 'Shooting Star'. I think I would have tried to get Ink into the name in keeping with the deep inky dark flowers. I agree it is a star. I would settle for Fritillaria assyriaca ssp assyriaca

Fritillaria assyriaca



Scoliopus hallii



I admired the plant of Scoliopus hallii with its tiny orange brown flowers. I have grown it for years and it is only a quarter of the size.

The second Gold medal went to show secretary, me for a contribution of hardy bulbs grown in Dunblane.





It can be interesting to do a bit of 'people watching' at shows. Here John Lee is showing Cyril how to do the Hand movements of the Hokey Cokey. I hurried away before they started putting legs or even whole selves in!

Finally here is a plant to keep an eye on for the future. It belongs to Cyril. It gets better each year. It is beautiful. It has a label saying that it is *Pulsatilla vulgaris*. Look at its silken flowers, its crowns of golden

stamens and regal purple stigma. This is a plant that screams QUALITY. It's my bet for a Forrest one day. It's not very vulgar at all

P;ulsatilla vulgaris



And lastly finally at the end here is what a show is about. Colour, Sunshine. Interest. Scottish Rockers. Chat. Variety. Quality. Fabulous well grown plants from all over the world. And remember the date21st March.and it looks like summer.

**See the SRGC - -
See time travel!**

Sandy Leven

