



Alpine Garden Society Hampshire Group



Newsletter: September 2018

Contents:

Page 1	Chairman's message
Page 3	Hampshire AGS Social Media; Group Officers; 2018 Autumn programme
Page 4	AGS Conferences; Garden open at Hursley Road
Page 5	Gardens open at Brandy Mount & Whitenap Lane, Romsey;
Page 6	Rocky Flower Show
Page 7	A Gallon in Two Pint Pots
Page 9	News from the Cévennes National Park
Page 12	My Holiday of a Lifetime
Page 14	Some Summer Thoughts; 50 years ago - an extract from <i>Plant Portrait: Azorella trifurcata</i>

Editor: Janice Bennetts
2 Terriote Close
Chandlers Ford
Eastleigh, SO53 2QF
Tel: 02380 252149
Email: ujbennetts@gmail.com
Deadline for the next edition is
1st January 2019

Chairman's Message

In a similar vein to last year, the weather has dominated the summer months, the heatwave exceeding the warm weather I spoke about this time last year when I commented that the weather broke on the 19 July. Watering has been a daily chore and, despite my best efforts, some of the Saxifrages have either died or are showing large brown patches. Of course other things have thrived, particularly the lilies, and the garden was beautiful when we opened it in early June for Hampshire HPS and several neighbouring AGS groups from Surrey and Sussex. This year's little projects in the garden have seen the demise of one of Ben's vegetable raised beds for 'other purposes'! Also we have developed the area under the little oak at the bottom of the garden, that had never been touched before. That was quite a task and now we are waiting for some sustained damp and cooler weather before planting. It will make a lovely woodland / bulb area.

This year took us to The Peloponnese in April, our first trip to the mountains of Greece where, thanks again to AGS friends, we found excellent plant hunting areas. It is such a joy seeing plants in the wild and comparing these to how we grow them at home. Of particular note and abundance were the Cyclamen and, in the vertical crevices, amazing Campanula. We also found fields of Ranunculus, anemone and tulips, amongst many others. With some very specific guidance, we also found a good selection of orchids, but often it was just the tapestry of colour that was so breath-taking.



This year, given the weather, the consequent need to move plants into the shade and provide water for them, involved as much effort as the trip itself, however, we had a wonderful weekend at Forde Abbey for my daughter's wedding at the end of June. A month later, as members of a group of 12, we took an overnight trip to Devon where on the first day we visited *Wildside* owned by Keith and Ros Wiley and *The Garden House*, and on the second day we took in *RHS Rosemoor*. We managed to squeeze in a couple more peat blocks (Keith has a stock) for our latest



Photos: Paddy Parmee

development at home. The only other trip was to Northern Ireland with a van to relocate my mother, Mavis, to a little flat nearby. Some of you will remember she was an active member of the Group many years ago and, hopefully, she will get along to some meetings now she has returned to Hampshire.

At the Lionel Bacon Lecture evening in March, Steve Lobley won the Margaret Hedges Cup for his photograph of *Phyteuma comosa* and I won the David Benton Rose Bowl jointly for my plants of *Narcissus jonquilla* and *Primula forbessii*.

*Phyteuma comosa*

Photo: Steve Lobley

*Narcissus jonquilla**Primula forbessii*

Photos: Paddy Parmee

Many thanks to Michael Baron and Mike Powell for opening their gardens (see reports later). In addition to our June opening for other groups, we also held our first 'Snowdrop Day' here at Hursley Road. Many thanks to Angela and Steve Lobley, who helped with the teas at both events, enabling Ben and I to circulate, and Mike Powell who helped with plant sales in June. All events are run for the pleasure of the members and, at the same time to raise funds for the Group.

Janice has detailed the first half of the programme later in this newsletter and the full programme is on the website. You will see that we have a fantastic line-up of speakers, starting off with John Massey from Ashwood Nursery to give his enlightening and humorous talk on Hepaticas. The programme contains some recognised names and some that may be new to you and a variety of subject matter; printed copies of the full programme will be available at the September and subsequent meetings. This year the Christmas event will be at Hursley Road where Ben and I will be pleased to host an evening of entertainment. Please let Ben or I know if you are unable to make Group meetings but would like a programme; and we'll pop one in the post.

There are two committee vacancies and, therefore, I would welcome volunteers to fill the posts and join us in driving the Hampshire AGS forward into 2019. We are at record numbers for recent years, demonstrating the vibrancy of the Group and that is very much down to you, the members, thank you.

I am looking forward to seeing you on the 27th September.

Paddy Parmee

Hampshire AGS – Social Media

Thanks to Lesley, who keeps the website up to date, while both our 'Twitter' and 'Facebook' pages continue to encourage lively debates. I am grateful for the support of the administrators, who help keep the Facebook site very much for the benefit of Alpine growers, and to our many regular contributors.

Links are as follows:



Twitter @HampshireAGS (this link will take you there) <https://mobile.twitter.com/account>



Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/hampshireags/>



Website <http://hampshirealpinegardeners.org.uk/>

Paddy Parmee

Group Officers

Chairman	Paddy Parmee	Treasurer, Hon. Group & Membership Secretary	Ben Parmee
Vice-Chairman	Malcolm Calvert		
Newsletter Editor	Janice Bennetts	Teas	Jackie & Mike Gurd
Committee	Lesley Baker	David Hanslow	Vacancy
	Dorothy Searle	Jo Whitfield	Vacancy

2018 Autumn Programme

Dates – all Thursdays	Titles	Speakers
27 th September Annual bulb and seed sale	<i>Hepaticas at Ashwood</i>	John Massey is the owner of Ashwood Nursery, and is well known to Group members as the RHS Chelsea Flower Show Gold Medal and Best in Show winner for his amazing display of Hepaticas.
25 th October The AGS Open Lecture	<i>Branklyn Gardens</i>	Jim Jermyn is the Property Manager for the National Trust for Scotland's Branklyn Garden. He has led many botanical tours to the Dolomites and lectures widely.
22 nd November	<i>Cyclamen in the Wild and in Cultivation</i>	Vic Aspland is a well-known speaker on the AGS circuit and travels widely across Europe in search of Cyclamen and other alpins.
13 th December (2 nd)	<i>In-house entertainment at Paddy & Ben's home</i>	At 179 Hurlsey Road, Chandlers Ford, SO53 1JH <i>Cheese and wine supper will be provided</i>
2019		
24 th January	<i>A Lifetime of Flowers</i>	Bob Gibbons set up Natural History Travel 25 years ago that offers high quality natural history and photography tours and his talk follows his travel experiences.

AGS Conferences 2018

23 September: Autumn Bulb Day at Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, Lower Smite Farm, Smite Lane, Hindlip, Worcester, WR3 8SZ;

17 and 18 November: Autumn Conference and AGM at the Alveston Manor Hotel and Spa in Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 7HP.

Full details are on the main AGS website- <http://www.alpinegardensociety.net/>. As numbers are limited early booking is recommended.

Garden Open at Hursley Road – Ben & Paddy Parmee

Mid-February saw the peak of the snowdrop season and for the first time Paddy decided to run an impromptu 'Snowdrop Day'. The event was open to Hampshire AGS members, but the invite was also extended to Plant Heritage and Hants HPS as there is a great deal of cross-over these days. Paddy has a collection of over 300 varieties of *Galanthus* that show from September, with *G. reginae-olgae* starting the season, through to April with *G. 'April Fool'* and the late *G. nivalis*. The weather was set fair and good numbers from each society turned out to enjoy the flora and cake.



G. Gerald Parker



Photos: Paddy Parmee

In addition to many varieties of Snowdrop, visitors enjoyed *Leucojum vernum*, *Eranthus hyemalis*, various Crocus, *Iris reticulata*, *Ranunculus calandrinoides*, Saxifrage in the tufa, early Narcissus including *N. romieuxii* and *N. cyclamineus*, *Fritillaria michailovskyi*, *Ipheion 'Alberto Castillo'*, Cyclamen, *Adonis amurensis* and *Muscari macrocarpum* amongst others.

The garden openings prove to be popular social events and enable members to meet on a more informal and relaxed basis. We certainly aim run to similar events in future years.

Garden Open at Brandy Mount – Michael Baron

Opening the garden at Brandy Mount House in the last week of February started the season in wonderful style with over three hundred visitors from both the opening for the AGS and Plant Heritage and, a few days later, for the NGS. The snowdrops were in full flower. Thanks to help from the Hillier Gardens, we were able to see that most of the more interesting snowdrops were properly labelled and it was something of a relief to see that the thirty or more small groups, planted the previous year in the new 'crescent' beds, were actually in good form. Efforts to ensure that these beds might retain their interest in the late spring and summer have been reasonably successful. A few shrubs such as the dwarf lilacs do well on our chalky soil and, writing this account in mid July while in the middle of a serious drought, there is still colour from the groups of half hardy plants such as Salvias, Penstemons and orange Siberian wallflowers.



Eranthus hyemalis

Photo: Paddy Parmee



Photo: Paddy Parmee



Photo: Elizabeth Wells

I hope that these notes (see also *Some Summer Thoughts* on page 14) may persuade you to visit the garden during the coming year though I rather think that any openings will be on a much smaller scale than we managed this year. And, finally, I must give a real thank you to all those who have helped to keep the garden going and of course also to those who acquired plants; and I just hope that they thrive.

Garden Open at Whitenap Lane, Romsey – Michael Powell

On 22nd April this year Mike and Rosie Powell, ably assisted by Ben Parmee and his valiant tea urn, opened their garden to raise funds for Hampshire AGS Group. Lured by the prospect of abundant free cake tea and coffee, about forty people turned up. Fortunately, the unseasonable cold weather of February and March had gone and it

was a fine spring day. The visitors were able to see a range of spring bulbs such as tulips, *Narcissus jonquilla*, *N. tazetta* and their hybrids, all of which do well in Mike's very sunny dry garden. There were also a range of spring flowering Cyclamen, Erythroniums and other bulbs, as well as a range of Trilliums, Arisaemas and other woodland plants. The rockery boasted a good display of Gentians.

Possibly the biggest attraction was Mike's collection of orchids, both tropical and hardy. Visitors would have seen a range of *Calanthe* hybrids, *Cypripediums*, *Disas* and Mediterranean terrestrials. All in all, the opening raised a total of £140 for group funds.



Calanthe in 2017

Photo: Janice Bennetts



Iris albicans



Carlesii 'Aurora'

Some plants flowering on Michael's Garden Open Day

Photos: Michael Powell



Nectaroscordum tripedale

Rocky Flower Show

The Rocky Flower Show at the end of May was again a great success with increased numbers of exhibitors and entries; and we sold out of food! I would like to thank the many Hampshire members who supported either setting up on Friday, or manning various stations on the Saturday, or simply coming to the show. Visitor numbers were down a little but this was probably due to the Royal Wedding and FA Cup final! We said a farewell to Bill Squire who has led the team for many years. Ben will take over as Show Secretary from next year.

Ben and I teamed up this year to exhibit jointly at the AGS shows and we have enjoyed great success with my flower arrangements and miniature gardens in the Intermediate and Open sections. It was certainly a busy spring and we covered some miles! Our last show of the year will be Loughborough in a few weeks' time.

Paddy Parmee



Angela & Steve Lobley's display of Primula in the foreground



The Photographic display

Photos: Janice Bennetts

Class winners from Hampshire at the Show included Steve Lobley, Paddy & Ben Parmee, Michael Powell and Anna & Martin Shearer

A Gallon in Two Pint Pots

by Dorothy Searle

For nearly three years, I've been living in a third floor flat in Southampton. I had to move from the bungalow, where I'd expected to spend the rest of my days, because of the deteriorating bus service. The only areas where I felt I could rely on buses don't have bungalows, or indeed many small houses. I was getting despondent, but suddenly realised that the things I really want to grow are tiny and would fit on the large balcony or terrace that a few flats have. My garden now consists of two balconies (both about 17ft by 4ft), one approximately south facing and the other approximately north.

Southampton is mild and near enough to the sea to have high light levels. I'm not going to get ground frost this high up, and prolonged air frost is very unusual. I did lose a few things in March this year when the bitterly cold 'Beast from the East' set in, left for a few days and then returned; then June and July were extremely hot and dry, and I lost a few more. We'd had very unusual weather for the previous twelve months too – too hot, too cold, too wet or too dry for the time of year. On top of that, this year I found early bulb foliage distorted and several primulas killed by tiny beige aphids of a kind I've never seen before.

Before I agreed to buy this flat, I checked with the surveyor that the balconies would take the weight of what I wanted to do: to put containers around the edges, leaving only enough space to tend the plants. He confirmed that, as long as I meant normal plant containers 'not 40-gallon oil drums', there would be no problem. I had outside taps installed on each balcony – the permission to do so from the freeholder of this lease-hold flat costing a lot more than the plumber charged me!

Each balcony is accessed by means of sliding patio doors roughly in the middle of a long side, one end is a blank wall and the other end and long side have painted railings. The floors have quarry tiles and there is a somewhat eccentric drainage system, which will flood the balcony of the flat below if I let too much water go down at once.



South balcony, west trough 24 May 2018

ground level instead of the lower trays. This gives me somewhere to put pots of plants that don't require rain in summer; I have *Sternbergia sicula*, fussy cyclamen (graecum and rholsianum haven't flowered yet, but persicum has), narcissi and crocuses. On the outer boundaries, I have an assortment of ordinary pots – some clay and some plastic but resembling clay. I prefer large pots which will hold several things that come and go at different times of year, and these can be plastic as they hold enough compost to maintain reasonably constant temperatures and humidity.

I grow alpines and roses on the sunny balcony and woodland plants and one hardy fuchsia (for summer colour) on the shady one. I've found that the sunny garden is actually too hot for some things; I've given up on phloxes and am finding most dianthus difficult to establish. *Gypsophila repens* turned up its toes, but asperulas are thriving. I particularly want *Calceolaria uniflora* (I enjoy the muppet-like flowers) and

On each side of the patio doors, against the wall, I have aluminium troughs on legs, two 60 inches by 18 inches on the south balcony and one that size and the other 40 inches by 18 inches (to allow a glazed door in the end wall to open outwards) on the north. They are Two Wests alpine benching, intended for use inside an alpine house, but working well outside with extra drainage drilled in each section. The troughs themselves are six inches deep and the standard version has a second, two inch deep, tray about six inches from the ground. I use standard versions on the north and put sand in the lower trays as a plunge for tiny pots of seeds and cuttings – and for anything I've just acquired or am about to give away. On the south balcony, the troughs are modified by having tie-bars at



Asperula arcadiensis

have tried three different places without success. I hope to obtain seed from the exchange and continue experimenting.

My alpine compost consists of one part J12, one of horticultural sharp sand and one of the same grit as I use for top dressing. My woodland compost is equal parts alpine compost and shredded bark. My general purpose compost is a more variable mixture of J12, some sort of organic matter (depending on what I can get, which is usually peat-free general purpose commercial compost) and either sand or grit to stop it getting too compacted. I always add water-retaining gel to the lower levels of each container, even for the fussiest alpiners, as the troughs are so shallow. I cover the drainage holes of each container with stiff plastic shade netting, cut to size, and put a layer of pea shingle at the bottom for drainage.

While experimenting with feeding; I was surprised at the amount most things seem to need. My present regime is to feed everything with very dilute tomato fertiliser about every ten days from March to August. In addition, also every ten days but throughout the year, I give dilute general purpose liquid fertiliser to all bulbs, cyclamen and gentians that are in active growth at the time. The roses and shrubs get granular rose fertiliser three times: in early March, mid May and early August - I found that the usual two doses weren't enough for container-grown plants. Everything, other than the tiny alpiners, also gets doses of general purpose slow-release granular fertiliser in late March and late July.

My woodland plants get a top-dressing of shredded bark; the alpiners and roses get a grit top-dressing. One alpine trough has a few thin pieces of Purbeck limestone in lines across it so that there are places where roots can be kept cool. The other has a few small pieces of tufa at one end and a miniature crevice bed (using the same Purbeck stone) at the other. The compost for this trough has extra sand and grit.

Since this is such a mild area, I'm growing things outside that are not supposed to be able to cope. I have several pleiones, some have been outside for up to five years; I did lose some this year and had fewer flowers than usual. I'm experimenting with hepaticas and, although they took a while to settle in, they seem to be doing well now. My latest plan is to grow dionysias. '**Bevere**' is doing extremely well in full sun. I tried a few fussier ones in an extension to the crevice bed where the stones lean to the north, making a slight overhang. The overhanging eaves limit the rain that reaches them, and third-floor balconies are windy, so I hoped for the best! But I lost them; I think the sudden hot weather, which began just after planting, was too much for them, and I suspect I didn't give them enough water. I'm going to lower the surface of the compost in the crevices to increase the shade and try watering between the plants with an indoor can with a very narrow spout that I can direct precisely. I shall probably try fewer examples this time, as they're expensive.

I find that my plants stay very well in character, especially those in the crevice bed. *Gypsophila aretioides* is a hard, tight, tiny mound and *Physoplexis comosa* produces leaves and flowers close to the compost. Tiny androsaces and kabschia saxifrages stay compact. I've had to banish a few ferns and harden my heart to most violets and some daffodils because they do too well, and my 25 varieties of snowdrop will have to be divided frequently.



Hepatica nobilis 'Multipetala Group' 2018



Narcissus moschatus 2017



Dionysia 'Bevere' 2018

I've discovered that I can make room for around 300 different plants in my tiny space, no doubt the mix will keep changing as I give up with some things and discover new ones. Perhaps those tiny violas from Patagonia will become available - and you never know, they might work here.



Pleione 'Shantung' 2017



Saxifraga Allendate Elf



Physoplexis comosa 2017

News from the Cévennes National Park

by David Dickenson from Nature Scene

Imagine your alpine rockery is vast. As you wander freely through your garden, you are transported across limestone plateaux, woods and rivers, sometimes encased by breath-taking gorges. It is so vast that it contains just all the conceivable micro-habitats of light and shade, moist and parched, fresh and oh-so-hot. Nature does the gardening for you, selects the plants, and keeps everything in balance, and ensures you have a myriad of species in full colour to marvel at underfoot at any time.



A rock 'dalle'

This is my garden throughout the summer months, the Cévennes National Park in southern France. It is a cross-roads between continental Europe and the Mediterranean, leading to a vast range of species, many of which are very rare endemics. All my rockery is very accessible by foot and car, with altitude varying from 400 to 1800 m. The complex mix of limestone, schist and granite is the bane of the English university geology students who come to study here, but gives us botanists a soil structure that breaks all the rule-books.



Corniche above Florac

The spring in the Cévennes is always an exciting time of year. The year 2018 has been exceptional, with a uniquely wet start followed by a heatwave, and the alpine plants have shown off as never before.

The rounded summit of the granite Mont Lozère woke very gently from its snow-cap to reveal the rarest of pasque flowers, the pale pasque flower (*Anemone vernalis*). It is very ephemeral nestling amongst thousands of *Crocus vernus* and *Narcissus* spp. as the snows retreated.



Anemone vernalis



Crocus vernus

The more familiar pasque flowers of our gardens, *Anemone pulsatilla* subsp. *bogrnhardtiana* and the later flowering *Anemone rubra* subs. *serotina* were abundant on the pastures on the limestone plateaux (the 'causses'), surrounded by daffodils, potentillas and later by rockroses, not to mention an average of 10-15 species of orchid within view, often in their hundreds.

It was my job this year to act as assistant guide for a week for the Société Botanique, to show off our department of Lozère, a life-time opportunity.

Our party of 45, from all over France, alternated our days between the limestone plateaux and the granite and schist massifs such as Mont Lozère and the Margeride. We started with a tour around my favourite spot, a rock-face I have 'adopted'. This **small dolomitic rock** towers over my village of Florac 500 m below. It contains 50

species of top-notch rockery plants, all competing for survival, employing a vast array of different strategies to combat the rude forces of life on high. This magnesium-rich calcium gives rise to dramatic rock shapes, and from a botanist's point of view, a vegetation to die for. The isolation of these causes has led to a multitude of the rarest of species, which are endemic just to us.



Arenaria ligericina



Hormathophylla macrocarpa

I proudly presented the rare endemic Cévenol sandwort (***Arenaria ligericina***) and risked everybody's' lives peering over the ledge to see the large-fruited alison (***Hormathophylla macrocarpa***).

One very rare endemic is the saxifrage of the Cévennes (***Saxifraga cebennensis***), which I have watched slowly die at RHS Wisley. On our list that week was an example of that plant I discovered last year. We couldn't believe our luck (or was it 90 sharp eyes?) when we identified another 4 new sites that week, including one close to 'my' rock, more than doubling its known distribution.



Saxifraga cebennensis



Neottia cordata

Despite our party of 45, which included many of the top professional and amateur botanists in France, it was my wife Mary, during a re-visit of our 5th day with our humble group of Barmy Botanists, who spotted a group of lesser twayblade orchids (***Neottia cordata***) perched on a rock just above head-height. The species was thought to have disappeared from Lozère recently, following 'improvements' to their two known damp woodland sites. We had all missed this red-list species as we scoured these rocks 10 days before.

One of us is not so humble now ...

David Dickenson's email address - david@naturescene.co.uk and website - www.naturescene.net

My Holiday of a Lifetime

by Margaret Crooks

As a long-standing follower of UK and Irish garden tours, I decided that 2018 was to be the year I went long-haul. But where? My personal criteria are that I won't visit a hot country or one where I disagree with the politics which cuts out quite a few places.

I wanted to see gardens that were different from European ideas and designs. My situation in Bishops Waltham is that I garden in a flint walled courtyard. I have a gravel garden with raised beds, sinks and pots. As my garden is small I am happy to borrow the landscape of my neighbour's mature trees. I am very fond of gravel so the prospect of visiting finely raked gardens excited me. I also like topiary so knew I would see amazing structures. And surely, everyone must like cherry blossom ... so the decision was made for Springtime in Japan 28th March to 9th April 2018.

I flew into Osaka to meet up with a group of thirty-one people, mostly Brits but two mother/daughter combos of Americans and Ukrainians. We were all first-timers to Japan apart from our very knowledgeable Scottish guide who was on his fourteenth visit.

Our first coach ride was to Kyoto where we stayed for six nights. Our first garden visit was to The Imperial Palace and gardens. Here we had our first experience of Japanese garden design with iconic bridges, one being a devil's bridge with one side shorter than the other as the devil can only move in a straight line. Here also we had our first sight of ancient trees, which are kept short in height by 'cloud pruning' achieved by removing small leaves out of the tops of the trees to enable light to penetrate. We then had our first sight of multiple cherry trees - a stunning sight and, of course, amazingly fragrant - and all this before getting to the hotel!



Imperial Palace Gardens

While this was an amazing introduction there was a lot more to come. So next day we went to Ginkaku-ji, a UNESCO World Heritage site, a garden both enigmatic and startling with a platform of white sand raked into parallel lines alongside a 6 ft cone of sand with a flat top. Does it represent Mount Fuji, or a mound of rice representing prosperity, or a pile of sand to replenish the garden? There was no grass here, but there were different varieties of moss. I later saw a pack of six different mosses for sale, which is not something you are likely to see in a garden centre in the UK.

The edges of the paths here were made of bamboo and were connected by binding made from bamboo and wound and tied very neatly. Drain covers were concealed very artistically.

Other dry landscape gardens visited were Daisen-in temple, Ryogen-in and Zulho-in. Ryoan-ji temple is the most well known garden where the dry landscape contains fifteen stones but only fourteen can be seen from any viewpoint.

The Kyoto Botanical Gardens gave us the iconic Japanese photograph ... families, usually four generations, celebrating 'Sekora' the Cherry Blossom Festival and picnicking under the cherry trees

The garden of Hase Kannon Temple was very interesting and included several clumps of an orchid with a flower looking like a dragon's head. (name not recorded). There was also a rare shrub of *Edgeworthia chrysantha* which is used to make paper money



Bound bamboos



Families picnicking



Edgeworthia chrysantha



Taraxacum albidum



Respect for an Ancient tree

Koishikawa Korakuan Gardens gave us several gems and to our guide's delight *Taraxacum albidum* (a white dandelion). It was at this garden, and the day before flying home, that we saw wisteria in bloom. So we experienced the full cherry blossom season and caught wisteria.

To sum up. The visit gave me the opportunity to compare my own garden with those which we saw in Japan.

1. How did my gravel garden compare? Well, I'm very happy if a forget-me-not seeds itself or a geranium or two. But such invasions would not be tolerated in Japan;
2. And what of the trees? The mature trees were treated with such dignity. They were there to fill the void of an archway. They were part of the borrowed landscape. They were supported majestically. And they had the respect not to be damaged by new buildings. The recent felling of over 100,000 mature trees in Sheffield and the secretive tree-cutting operations of Network Rail would not be tolerated in Japan.
3. And the moss? Just let it grow, saves mowing. I have discovered three different ones in my garden.

Did I bring home any souvenirs? Indeed, yes: a very beautiful pair of pruners made in Kyoto by a 7th generation member of the family who made swords for the Sumurai warriors. I'm using them to cloud prune a shrub of *Pittosporum tenuifolium* 'Tom Thumb'.

Some Summer Thoughts

by Michael Baron

The last year or two has seen a great surge of interest in rock garden design, crevice gardens and, on a smaller scale, trough gardens and the like. Accordingly, we have begun a total replanting of many of the troughs with fresh compost and our own cuttings or newly acquired plants, mostly from the Rocky Flower Show or one of the many AGS or Plant Heritage shows and displays. These replanted troughs have been a real delight and were a focus for the modest number of visitors during late spring and early summer. But the last few months have been a real trial for plants in the sunnier troughs which got really hot resulting in a few deaths, but most have survived well provided they got frequent watering in the evenings. On the other hand the troughs that were sited (more or less accidentally) under the shade of an apple tree or a very large tree-sized *Osmanthus x burkwoodii* seem to have come through the drought (so far) with literally flying colours.

Through much of the spring and early summer the daphnes along the terrace have been wonderful; some such as 'Cheriton' are now several feet wide and indeed the whole terrace seems to be developing into a solid daphne hedge.

Just as I had developed a conscience over the relics of the snowdrop collection, I felt that the time had come to propagate as many daphnes as possible as so many still seem hard to obtain. In addition, I have recently received excellent material of some new and rarer forms from growers far and wide. I am hoping that quite a range of these rarer forms will be in good shape by mid-summer next year.

Fifty Years Ago (June 1968) – A.G.S. Bulletin Volume 36 No. 152 p.164

Plant Portraits: *Azorella trifurcata* pers. by J D Crosland



Azorella trifurcata – 17 July 2010

Although rarely seen in gardens, *A. trifurcata* has been established at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh some forty years, where it now occupies some three square yards. More recently, in 1960, Mrs Tweedie of North Berwick, sent fresh seed from Patagonia, which germinated freely, thus providing new stock for re-introduction, and the plant was commercially available for a time.

The plant originates from a cold region, where rainfall is low, the annual precipitation being recorded as an average twenty-three inches only.

Provided it is accommodated in a well-drained but moisture retaining scree, the plant gives rise to no special difficulty in cultivation and is fully hardy without any form of protection in Scotland. The tiny yellow flowers, on very short peduncles, barely rising above the leaves, are in simple umbels of three to five and, in Scotland, appear in late June or early July. As a rock garden plant, the special claim to merit lies in the intricate bright green mat of rigid, tricuspidate leaves which it makes, attractive and colourful at all seasons. Slowly extending but not invasive, it does not resent judicious trimming, preferable in Spring, when growth is active.'

I have chosen this piece from the 1968 bulletin as I have grown *Azorella trifurcata* for many years in my rock garden, but this year it has suffered because of our hot dry summer. The article explains, what I had suspected, that excessive heat was the cause. The following are extracts of its range, habitat and growing needs.

Janice Bennetts

J D Crosland wrote: 'An umbellifer of the south western hemisphere, the natural incidence of which is limited to Tierra del Fuego, the Straits of Magellan, Patagonia and Chile, *A. trifurcata* inhabits exposed windswept sites a relatively low altitudes and down to sea level, where it makes wide, tight, evergreen mats several feet in diameter, steadily following the ground contours.'