



# Alpine Garden Society Hampshire Group Newsletter: September 2019



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**Deadline for the next edition is**  
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## Chairman's Message

It seems to have become customary, and of course very British, to start with a comment on yet another hot dry summer with record temperatures again expected today (25 July), and with the stream in the garden just a mere trickle. Undoubtedly, I fear climate change is here to stay. That said, it is amazing how resilient many plants are. Although the pots are our main concern, especially Ben and my show plants which we try and tuck away in any shady space we can find.

This year we again opened for Snowdrops in mid-February - for Hampshire AGS members, our friends from Plant Heritage, and Hampshire Hardy Plant Society - as there is a great deal of cross-over these days. The snowdrop collection probably exceeds over 300 varieties of *Galanthus* that show from September, with the reginae-olgae starting the season through to April with 'April Fool' and the late nivalis. We were again lucky with the weather and good numbers from each society turned out to enjoy the flora and cake. 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.



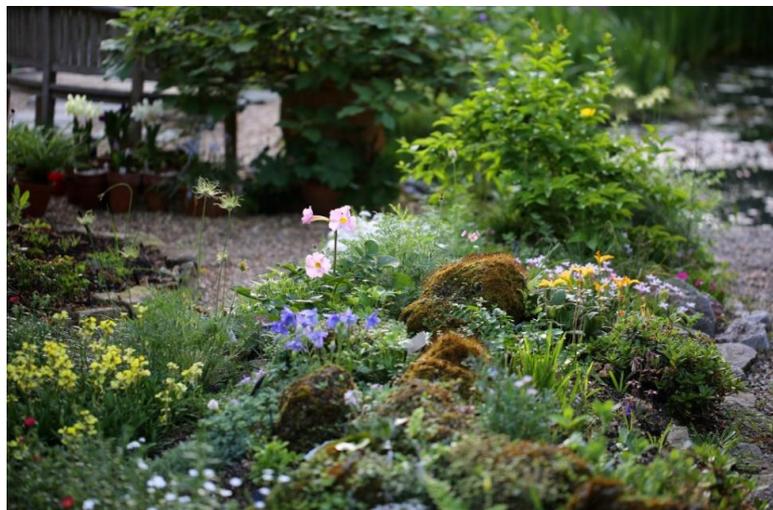
*Galanthus* 'Rosemary Burnham'.



A bowl of snowdrops

My thanks also to Michael Baron for opening his garden at snowdrop time which again was a very successful occasion.

As well as our Group members having made more visits to our garden, we have welcomed Oxford AGS Group; plus by request, during the summer, a couple of other small groups. Our main garden opening was in the middle of May, just as the iris, candelabra primula and meconopsis were starting to bloom together with many of the later alpinas, too numerous to mention. At this point, I must thank Angela and Steve Loble, who once again took all the pressure off the day by serving the refreshments; we couldn't do it without you. The garden openings prove to be popular social events, enabling members to meet on a more informal and relaxed basis, and we certainly aim to run similar events in future years.



The tufa bed



Candelabra primula & *Lilium mackliniae*

Photos: Paddy Parmee

I always comment on projects in the garden. This year: I saw the demise of Ben's last vegetable patch, having gained an Access frame from Tony Stanley; and the last area of the garden, that had not previously been tackled, was finally developed into an extension of our meconopsis bed alongside the damp ditch. Ben, being a numbers man, counted 25 'big blue' meconopsis blooms on a single day; they have really thrived this year.

Our holidays this year saw us stay in the UK with a whistle stop tour of Scotland in late March and early April. This is something I have always wanted to do, and 1500 miles and five crates of plants later, we arrived home with loads of planting to do! Our first stop was actually in the northern Pennines at Hartside Nursery, where we dropped in on Neil Huntley and his wife Susan. This was en route to Perth where we stayed for a couple of nights. Here we visited Branklyn Gardens, where Jim Jermyn gave us a tour of this fantastic site, which you will recall was the subject of his talk last year. It was also a lovely opportunity to meet his wife Alison. We also managed to visit Cluny Gardens, that has been described as resembling a Himalayan hillside, where there were swathes of erythronium and primula. Whilst the meconopsis were only in leaf, the vision for later in the year must be truly remarkable. The following day was spent with Ian and Margaret Young in Aberdeen, admiring their amazing suburban garden which features in Ian's bulb log on You-Tube. We then headed south and west via Rumbling Bridge Nursery, where we managed to pick up some special plants from Graeme Butler, ending at Cally Gardens which Kevin Hughes bought last year. What Kevin is doing at Cally is inspirational; with the years of planting and plant hunting by the late Michael Wickenden as a base. Kevin is transforming this wonderful walled garden; which should be on everyones itinerary. Lastly, with snow on the peaks of the Lake District, we called in on Pat Murphy at Holehird Gardens near Windermere. Not bad for six days!!

The autumn programme is on the next page, and the full programme is on the website. You will see that again we have a fantastic line-up of speakers, starting off with Joe Sharman from Monksilver Nursery. Joe is a snowdrop man and yes, September is the start of the snowdrop season! This year, our programme also has a Scottish theme with no less than three speakers coming from north of the border. The Christmas event will be at Hursley Road, where Ben and I will be pleased to host an evening of entertainment. The rest of the programme contains some recognised names and some that may be new to you, with a variety of subject matter. Printed copies of the full programme will be available at the September and subsequent meetings. Please let Ben or me 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 this recent era, 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 26th September.

**Paddy Parmee**

## Hampshire AGS – Social Media

This year our website has changed and we now utilise our Group's page on the new National AGS site. The new link is noted below. Our 'Twitter' and 'Facebook' pages continue to encourage lively debate. We are 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** <https://www.alpinegardensociety.net/local-groups/hampshire/>

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## Farewell, but not Goodbye to Two Committee Members

During the last twelve months the Group has lost two Committee members. As already mentioned, last year Kevin Hughes bought and moved to Cally Gardens in Scotland. He has been a great supporter of the Group for many years: some may remember that in the early 1990s he managed the projector when most speakers used slides for their presentations; more recently, standing in when speakers cancelled; and always offering help and advice. Kevin will return next year to talk on Cally Gardens, and he will welcome any visitors if heading to Scotland.

Secondly, and more recently, Lesley Baker, probably our longest standing committee member of the current group, has moved to be with her family in rural Devon. Lesley has looked after our plant sales table and the annual plant sale at Group meetings for many years. In addition, her experience on committee has been invaluable given her vast plant knowledge and of all things AGS. However, Lesley does hope to visit the group periodically and we look forward to seeing her.

Thank you both for your services to the Group; we wish you well. As mentioned, we have a hole in our committee and hope to receive nominations before the AGM in September.

**Paddy Parmee**

## Group Officers

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

## 2019 Autumn Programme

Dates – all Thursdays	Titles	Speakers/Venue
26 <sup>th</sup> September AGM	<i>Snowdrops</i>	Joe Sharman
24 <sup>th</sup> October The AGS Open Lecture	<i>Highland Gathering</i>	Ian Young
28 <sup>th</sup> November	<i>Romanian Mountain Plants</i>	Razvan Chisu
12 <sup>th</sup> December Supper - Cheese & wine will be provided	<i>In-house seasonal entertainment</i>	<i>Paddy &amp; Ben Parmee's home</i> 179 Hursley Road, Chandlers Ford, SO53 1JH

## Our March 2019 Group Competitions

There was a lovely array of plants and photographs at our March meeting. Three entries are permitted into each competition and are voted for by members present. The results:

### David Benton Memorial Trophy – Plant competition

1. Paddy Parmee
2. Ben Parmee
3. Frank Rhodes

### Margaret Hedges Memorial Trophy – Photographic competition

1. Paddy Parmee
2. John McCarthy
3. = Steve Lobley = John McCarthy = John McCarthy



*Trillium rivale*



Wild poppies

Photos: Paddy Parmee

## The Rocky Flower Show (RFS) / Wimborne Show

The AGS does not recognise the name *Rocky Flower Show*, so it is referred to as the Wimborne Show in the competition result tables. Both names refer to the same show.



Vases of flowers at the Rocky Flower Show



Floral display

Photos: Paddy Parmee

Ben took over the role of Show Secretary for the RFS in mid-May, supported by a dedicated committee drawn from both the Hampshire and Dorset Groups. It was again a great success with record numbers of exhibitors and entries, and we sold out of food again! Last year's dip in visitor numbers was reversed with good numbers of the general public coming through the door. I would like to thank the many Hampshire members who helped to set up the stands on the Friday, manned the various stations on the Saturday, or simply came to the show. It was also a financial success which ultimately helps Group funds. Later in the newsletter there is an update on the show successes by Group members, both locally at the RFS but also at national shows.



Members enjoying the Show

Photo: John McCarthy

## The Rocky Flower Show Photographic Competition

This photographic competition is now run as a local event, kindly arranged by David and Christine Hughes. Hampshire members had a clean sweep of placements in three of the four categories, and for his entry in Class 2, John McCarthy won the Best in Show. Each entry in classes 1 – 3 consist of a panel of three photographs. Full results are as follows:

### Class 1 – Alpine Plants in the Wild

1. John McCarthy
2. Christine Hughes (Hants and Dorset member)
3. David Hughes (Hants and Dorset member)

### Class 3 – Alpine Plants in Close-up

1. Paddy Parmee (Hants and Dorset member)
2. Steve Loblely
3. Victor Humphrey

### Class 2 – Alpine Plants in Cultivation

1. John McCarthy – Best in Show
2. Ben Parmee (Hants and Dorset member)
3. Paddy Parmee (Hants and Dorset member)

### Class 4 – Single photograph of an Alpine Plant

1. Christine Chappell (Dorset member)



*Pulsatilla vulgaris*  
Class 2 – 1<sup>st</sup> (1 of 3)

**Best in Show**

Photos: John McCarthy



*Crocus speciosus*  
Class 2 – 1<sup>st</sup> (1 of 3)



Class 3 – 1st (1 of 3)  
*Erythronium multiscapideum*, Cliftonii Group  
 Photo: Paddy Parmee



Class 3 – 2nd (1 of 3)  
*Meconopsis* 'Barney Blue'  
 Photo: Steve Lobley

## AGS Shows News

Hampshire members have also been very active and successful at the national AGS shows. The following, give a flavour of some of their successes:

Martin and Anna Sheader won the Farrer Medal at the Wimborne Show for their *Daphne petraea* 'Persebee', and at the Midland Show the Blackthorn Trophy for three pans of Daphnes.



*Daphne petraea* 'Persebee'  
 Farrer Memorial Medal for the Sheaders



*Sarmienta repens*  
 John Blanchard Cup & Downland Trophy for the Lobleys  
 Photos: John McCarthy

Robin White, won the Midland Challenge Cup at the Midland Show for his *Daphne modesta* and a Certificate of Merit with *Daphne juliae* f. *alba*.

Paddy and Ben are heading towards winning the Byng Trophy for the second year, for the national winner of the Intermediate Section aggregate, along the way winning seven Intermediate show aggregate trophies and four awards at shows for the Best Plant in the Intermediate Section. After their success at the East Anglia Show, and having secured their 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Silver Bars this year, they are now exhibiting in the Open Section.

Other Open Section winners include Dot Sample and Sue White with her lovely Flower Arrangement at the Midland Show.

Michael Dyer regularly exhibits at shows around the country with wide success in the Intermediate Section, winning the New Forest Trophy at the Wimborne Show for the Best Plant in the Intermediate Section.

It was great to see a good number of other members exhibiting and succeeding at the Wimborne Show with Steve and Angela Lobley winning both the John Blanchard Cup for the Novice Section aggregate and the Downland Trophy for the Best Plant in the same section. Congratulations also to other Hampshire members for their success at Wimborne, including Christine Hughes, Mike Powell and Nick Fry. Frank Rhodes also exhibited and was placed at a show earlier in the season.

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## AGS Conferences

### 22nd September 2019

The **AGS Autumn Bulb Day** is a wonderful day-out for gardeners, both amateurs and experts alike. There are lots to see and do, including interesting lectures and plant sales. The venue this year will be at the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, Lower Smite Farm, Hindlip, Worcestershire, WR3 8SZ.

### 16-17 November 2019

This year's **AGS conference**, which runs alongside our **Annual General Meeting**, will take place on 16-17 November. The theme will be 'Celebrating 90 Years of Alpine Gardening' to mark the start of our 90th anniversary year. The venue for 2019 is the four star Stratford Manor Hotel. Set in 22 acres of stunning grounds, the hotel is just minutes from historic and picturesque Stratford-upon-Avon. This year's E.B. Anderson Memorial Lecture at the AGM will be given by Robert Rolfe.

### 1<sup>st</sup> February 2020

**Snowdrop Day** 2020 is on 1st February. The annual Snowdrop Day is an exciting day in the AGS calendar. It's the perfect opportunity for Galanthophiles to gather together, share their love of these beautiful plants and pick up a few to take home. It will again be held at Ford Hall, Lilleshall National Conferencing Centre, Newport, Shropshire, TF10 9AT.

Booking for all these events are via the AGS website or by post to the AGS Centre.

**Paddy Parmee**

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## Dorset & Hampshire Groups' Visit to Exbury Gardens on 23rd March 2019

An invitation for the Dorset and Hampshire AGS members to visit Exbury Gardens in the spring for the Lachenalia exhibition, and the Nerine one in the autumn is not to be missed. As well as having free entries to the exhibitions and gardens; teas and coffee are provided on arrival; before a visit behind the scenes in the propagating greenhouses with Theo; and usually a welcome by Nicholas de Rothschild. In both seasons, the gardens have much to offer as well as having the ever changing delightful views of the Beaulieu River. This year was particularly memorable as it is their centenary year with an opening of a new centenary garden designed by Marie-Louise Agius, the great grand-daughter of Lionel de Rothschild, the founder of Exbury. The new garden was officially opened by HRH Prince Charles on the 10th July, who also planted the customary commemorative tree, a drought resistant ornamental beech, *Fagus orientalis*. During the previous autumn, 100,000 bulbs had been planted in time for the opening of this season.



1. Nicholas de Rothschild (grey sweater) welcoming our Groups



2. Orchid display at the exhibition



3. Lachnalia display



4. Bulbs & the River Beaulieu



5. A 'river' of bulbs



6. New Centenary Garden



7. *Magnolia* sp. in the garden

Photos: John McCarthy (1,2,4,7& 8),  
Janice (3,6) & Trevor (5) Bennetts



8. *Rhododendron* sp. in the garden

## Visit to Tromsø Arctic-Alpine Botanic Garden

by Micheal Dyer

In June 2018, a dozen members of the Saxifrage Society went to Tromsø to see the Arctic-Alpine Botanic Garden.

The garden lies approximately 2 km to the north of Tromsø, on the site of an old farm. While the original house no longer existed on the site when the University of Tromsø moved in, the foundation remained, enabling an old house from Tromsø, dated to c.1850, to be relocated in the same position. This is known as *Hansine Hansen's house*. It contains the Museum Shop, and a small café where staff serve coffee and lovely waffles.

The first thing that strikes you about the botanic garden is that it is unfenced. You can come and go as you please and there is no entrance fee. The second thing is that it is very compact. Even though it occupies a small area, it is full of delightful collections. Some are for specific genera like the Saxifrage family; others have a geographical focus, such as the North American collection. Each collection has a prominently placed description which identifies which collection it is. Individual plants are labelled with details of their origin.



Saxifraga x sospelensis 'Sospel'



Saxifraga longifolia

Overall there is an abundance of large rocks, readily available in this area of northern Norway. At the time of our visit the background consisted of snowcapped mountains. Here one sees combinations of flowers which from the UK, one is not expecting, as early bulbous spring flowers are in bloom at the same time as the rhododendrons and meconopsis. These conditions reflect the compactness of the seasons, and there can still be a covering of snow in late April.



Tulipa iliensis



Boykinia richardsonii

There are also surprises. Experienced members of the Saxifrage Society were fascinated by plants of the genus *Micranthes* (Saxifragaceae) which they had never previously seen in the UK. These have miniature flowers with prominent anthers. \* However, recent DNA evidence showed, the members of what is now *Micranthes* are more closely related to *Boykinia* and *Heuchera* than to other members of the genus *Saxifraga*.

\*Editor's note: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Micranthes>, & *The Alpine Gardener*, Volume 86 No. 4 December 2018 p.475



The garden has a web page which identifies the subjects of particular interest at the time of checking - [https://en.uit.no/tmu/aktuelt?p\\_document\\_id=631830](https://en.uit.no/tmu/aktuelt?p_document_id=631830) This is also available on the garden's facebook page.

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## Highnam Court Rock Garden

by Janice Bennetts

Gloucestershire has many fine gardens, of which Highnam Court is one. It is registered Grade II\* on the Historic England Register of Parks and Gardens, and is certainly well worth a visit, though the gardens are normally only open for the National Gardens Scheme. It is around 4 km north-west of Gloucester, on rising ground above the River Severn floodplain, 2 km to the east. It is privately owned by Roger Head, a local businessman, and is supported by volunteers from the Pied Piper Appeal who managed us on the day we visited, serving coffee and providing lunch in the Orangery. The funds they raise go to make a difference to sick and disabled children in the county.

The house, grade 1 listed, was built in the Commonwealth period, 1658, for William Cooke MP and designed by Ernest Carter, a pupil of Inigo Jones. However, landscaping in the garden did not take place until the late 18th century, when the owner, John Guise, created the lakes very much in the Brownian style. Further alterations were carried out in the early 19th century when the lake was enlarged. It was not until 1838, when Thomas Gambier Parry took ownership, that the transformation took place. You may be more familiar with Thomas's son, Hubert, who was a composer, and is best known for his choral song *Jerusalem*. At Highnam, his father employed the 2nd James Pulham to create a series of outcrops, caves, grottos and meandering streams to the west of the house, as well as to make the pillars along the Broad walk to the area. As you will know, the Pulhams had perfected a method of manufacturing rocks using bricks, clicker, cement and small pebbles, now known as *Pulhamite*, which looked very natural. The advantage of *Pulhamite* is that it is very much lighter in weight than the many thousands of tons of Yorkshire stone that were also purchased to create this masterpiece. Like many estates, the splitting up of the estate in 1977, changes of use, and neglect of the gardens took its toll, and it was not until the 1990s, when the current owner acquired the property, that its restoration took place.



Highnam Court



However, what I am concentrating on, and will be of interest to our readers, is the *Pulhamite* rock garden, Claude Hitchings in his book on *Rock Landscapes, the Pulham Legacy*, states that James Pulham 2 created his first rock garden in 1845 for John Warner at 'Woodlands' in Hoddesdon, followed by another at Bayfordbury, on the outskirts of Hertford, for William Robert Baker, who at that time, was one of the wealthiest business men in the country. Baker was Thomas Gambier Parry's brother-in-law, and as a family of keen gardeners, they no doubt corresponded and visited. Consequently, James 2 was invited to create a rock garden at Highnam Court, his third, and now the earliest surviving complete example of a Pulham rock garden, which is in excellent condition.

The Rock Garden - the stream, and an island middle left  
 Around 1902, Ernest Gambier Parry, son of Thomas, recalls that the rock garden was created: '... partly out of a wood, partly a large pond, and partly out of orchard. The pond was drained, and water was fed through a brick-cemented trench – from a lake about half a mile away – into a course of *Pulhamite* and Yorkstone rocks and islands. It was wooded with native trees from the old Forest of Dean, and newly introduced species – all carefully positioned and nurtured into splendid growth in a very secluded area. Many thousands of tons of York stone were used to supplement the artificial material, all of which remains basically as it was built'. Not only did James 2 use *Pulhamite* for the rock garden, it was also used for the pillars that line the Ladies Walk that runs outside the south wall of the walled garden to the fernery and rock garden. These have a 'dimpled' finish. At the far end of the walk is the 'Owl Cave' grotto, which Hitchings observes must be one of the best preserved of all Pulham's grottoes.



Ladies Walk with dimpled pillars



Owl grotto at the end of the ladies walk, fernery in the foreground

Around the corner from the grotto is a massive rock outcrop that looks perfectly naturally, except when you look on the other side where a brick wall has been built to support the structure.



Large rock outcrop



Brick supports for the large outcrops

Opposite the large outcrop, at the bottom of the bank of the stream that runs through the gorge, is the lower grotto. From here there is a view of the Japanese-style bridge that spans the main watercourse.



Lower grotto



Japanese style bridge

Photos: Janice Bennetts

There was no time to look closely at the planting, and no gardener around to explain if any of the 'newly introduced species' that Ernest Gambier Parry mentioned had survived. From a quick observation, we could see pines, acers, rhododendrons, ferns, ivies, primulas and plants that enjoy shady and moist conditions.

#### Sources

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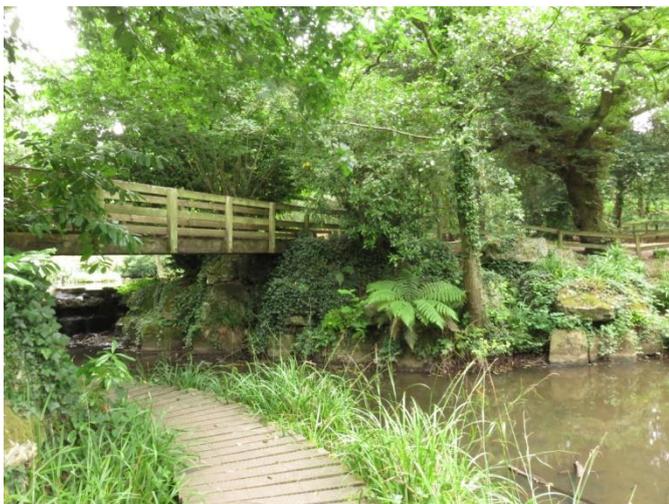
Hitchings, Claude, *Rock Landscapes, The Pulham Legacy, Rock Gardens, Grottoes, Ferneries, Follies, Fountains and Garden Ornaments*, Garden Art Press 2012

Highnam Court website <https://www.highnamcourt.co.uk/gardens.html>

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## Researching Parks & Gardens & the Hampshire Gardens Trust

by Janice Bennetts



Holly Hill Woodland Garden, Fareham

around the lake are of *Pulhamite*; Steventon Manor, a private property that has the remains of a *Pulhamite* fernery; and Swanmore Park House, where the rock garden has long been buried. Six sites are listed if *alpine* is entered in the search box.

As you may gather from the previous article, I am interested in the history of gardens as well as alpines, and have been researching Hampshire parks and gardens for many years with members of the Hampshire Gardens Trust's Research Group. The Group manages *Hampshire's Register of Historic Parks and Gardens* for the County Council, and has a separate website <http://research.hgt.org.uk/> that shows a map of Hampshire divided into the various local authorities (there is also a link from the main website – see below). If you click on an area, a list of parks and gardens in that authority are shown, and if research has been carried out, more details may be obtained by clicking on the name. There is also a search facility and if you enter *Pulhamite* in the search box, 3 sites will be shown: Holly Hill Woodland Park at Fareham, that is open to the public, where the rocks by the stream and



Hampshire Gardens Trust

The Trust is the only voluntary organisation in the county to identify the needs and opportunities to conserve, protect and enhance the county's rich heritage of parks, gardens and designed green spaces, and that does include public parks and other open spaces. The Trust offers expert, free advice and appropriate project grants to raise awareness of the value of these special places. For more information on the Trust, search its website - <http://www.hgt.org.uk/>.

If you are interested in finding out more, please contact the Administrator at the Trust, details maybe found on the main website noted above.

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**Fifty Years Ago (Volume 37, No. 2 June 1969) – A.G.S. Bulletin No. 156 p.162**

## Tufa Rocks

On page 2 there is a photograph, taken by our Chairman, of the tufa bed in her and Ben's garden that gave me the idea of including the following information from the above bulletin. It is a small piece taken from *Clarence Elliott, VMH - Tribute to an Alpine Plantsman* by F H Fisher with the following sketch.



Sketch by D B Lowe based on a contemporary photograph

'... in about 1932 – he [Clarence Elliott] made a chance discovery the eventual importance of which he was not to appreciate for a long time. In his own words, he was making

“a small limestone scree, into which was built about half a ton of tufa rocks. None of these rocks was larger than could be lifted single-handed, and they were sunk into the scree, comfortably and rather deeply, some in groups and some as isolated specimens. Holes were bored deep into the tufa with chisel and hammer, and in these holes alpine plants were planted. Small specimens only could be used, for the holes were less than an inch in diameter. The chief kinds used were a wide selection of *Kabschia* and other saxifrages, *Myosotis rupicola*, *Wahlenbergia pumilio* and *W. serphyllifolia*, various dianthus, *Draba intricata*, *Erinus alpinus* and several species of androsace. The little experiment convinced me tufa is the ideal rock for the cultivation of innumerable saxatile plants”.

Once again years passed before the full value of this form of growing many alpine plants was appreciated. Today the demand for tufa far outweighs the supply, and prices have soared’.

Things have not changed!