

# WEST YORKSHIRE AGS GROUP

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## NEWSLETTER NO. 61 AUGUST 2015

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*Crocus banaticus and Cyclamen hederifolium*

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## NOTES FROM THE COMMITTEE

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Oooops!! This Geographer has a very red face!

After the quiz, I found I couldn't sleep thinking about Europe and its boundaries. Checking in the atlas I realised that I was wrong (sorry everyone!). The Urals do indeed form the eastern boundary of Europe, but the southern boundary? It is, of course, the Caucasus Mountain range which runs between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, so leaving Turkey to the south, firmly in Asia. As I say, oooops!

Later in this Newsletter is the new programme, with a minor change from that published on the website (now changed). John Good cannot make it this September so he and Norma have done a swap. John will come in September 2016 and Norma will be here in a few weeks.

A few weeks ago I was faced by a puzzle in the garden. Overnight something had eaten off all the flowers and leaves of my large plants of *Ramonda myconi*.

I have a remote camera which I placed strategically to catch the culprit. That night at about 10.30pm half of a large, in flower, variegated aubrieta vanished. Within an hour the rest had gone. A hedgehog was present at the time! I am now sure that it was building a nest as each night she (I presume) appears from behind some ferns. The Ramonda is slowly showing rosettes of leaves again rather than stalks, and the neatly pruned aubrieta is growing new leaves. The back garden suddenly seems to have fewer slugs and snails, too.

That gives me hope! Installing solar panels involves scaffolding. Scaffolders do not see plants at all unless they are significantly tall. I asked them to be careful .... Hmmmm. Today was spent rescuing broken plants, including a daphne and the single remaining stalk of an osteospermum and gathering the straw from broken and squashed *Allium christophii*, *Nigella*, Californian poppies, pulsatillas, lilies and *Ornithogalum narbonense*. Of course they will grow back, perhaps even better. In the meantime I await the baby hedgehogs making their first forays.

UPDATE: The hedgehog raised 3 young. At first little prickly balls running round the garden like clockwork toys. Later following Mum out on foraging trips. Now I get, presumably, assorted ones coming to the food.

Rosemary Cox

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## *Local sources ...*

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**1. Keith Singleton's John Innes** from Swincar Nurseries, Guisley. Tel. 01943 874614.

There was a Scottish Rock Garden Club forum thread a year or so ago highly praising Keith Singleton John Innes compost. It isn't widely available. I have just bought some from Swincar Nursery and it does seem very promising stuff. The nursery normally only stocks J12 from Jan-May but has J13 through the year. I hit lucky with a phone call to Swincar and the owner spoke to Keith Singleton and added 3 bags of J12 for me to the order he was due to have delivered the following week. The owner gave fabulous service with updates etc. The price is £4.95 per 33 litre bag. I bought 3 bags and paid £4.25 per bag. The nursery is about 5 mins drive from the Otley Chevin car park by the Royalty pub so a nursery visit could be combined with a nice walk.

(ED - I've been using this compost this year and it is excellent stuff, well worth searching out and leagues above any of the other brands available in garden centres etc.)

## 2. Grit sand

a) River sand/grit sand from GH Brooks, Harrogate. Tel. 01423 503110. Very good grit sand as used by RHS Harlow Car. £2.24 per 25 kg bag.

b) Grit sand from Mone Bros., Bramhope, Leeds. Tel. 0113 267 4386.

£14.40 per tonne for this local golden yellow Bramley Fall sandstone grit sand. They will sell fractions of this at the same equivalent cost. This is the 'self-service' price – drive onto the weigh plate, fill your own bags (spade needed), drive onto the weigh plates again and pay. A car should carry a quarter tonne (250 kg/10 bags) as it is equivalent to about 3 people.

**3. Plastic shade mesh** for shading or covering drainage holes in pots - by the metre from Homebase (certainly at Moor Allerton, Leeds).

Matthew Childs

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## ***YORKSHIRE - THE DARK SIDE***

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I first heard of Yorkshire nearly seventy years ago when my young cousin Jim, whose mother was in a sanatorium with TB for two years, returned to Middlesex with a 'funny' accent, having been cared for during that time by his father's relatives in Yorkshire. I had no idea where it was. Later, in the second year of grammar school, a new girl (who became my best friend) started mid term, her family having lived in Leeds since she was tiny. I found out that Leeds was in Yorkshire but other than it was 'up North', still had no idea where it was. This was before our family had television and geography lessons had nothing to do with the British Isles.. Then, when our youngest daughter, Gemma, decided the only college that offered the course she wanted to do for her HND in spatial design was Batley & Dewsbury, I finally found out exactly where Yorkshire was and that it was a long way from Devon where we then lived. When she graduated, decided to stay in Yorkshire, and second daughter, Lindy, also moved up, we managed a couple of trips a year. The girls eventually both married Yorkshiremen and later became 'geriatric' mothers giving us four much wanted grandchildren. I wasn't happy seeing these lovely

little people only about four times a year so we decided to move up too. That prompted our eldest daughter, Nicky, to do the same and she actually beat us to it, moving to Beverley in 2013.

After living in East Devon for forty-seven years, we moved to the East Riding mid January 2014 and were very lucky with the weather. Twelve months previously, we were snowed in and according to our new neighbours, they were too! The cottage needed minimum work so apart from deciding where everything should go, we concentrated on the garden. The most important thing to do was to order 'his' and 'her' sheds and mine was the first to arrive so, with the help of Gemma and husband Patrick, that was constructed to house all the gardening tools, etc. and the grandchildren's outdoor toys. After Bob's was finished, he filled it with bird food, moth traps and various other hobby associated items. Our drive goes down the left side of the cottage to the double garage just behind and this had to be made into a workshop. That was very time consuming, especially as Bob was still recovering from the effects of a double heart by-pass and not supposed to lift anything heavy. Luckily, he didn't need my help all the time so I was able to be in the garden as much as weather permitted.



In Devon, I'd had thirty eight troughs, half comprising two moulded concrete, many Belfast sinks covered with hypertufa and a huge concrete drainage ring,

all of which, regrettably, had to be left behind. The remaining seventeen, mostly polystyrene boxes covered with chicken wire and hypertufa, we brought up in twos and threes every time we visited the girls over two years and they kindly stored them in their gardens. We placed them in the shade and told children to ignore them, except to water if there was a really dry spell. We decided to put thirteen of these in an area of the front garden to the left of the drive and over the next few months, they were gradually retrieved from the girls. Most had fared pretty well and although a number of plants had died and would need replacing, the first job was to weed them. Luckily I'm one of those strange people who actually enjoy weeding. We raised the troughs by placing them on blocks and I've planted around them, this whole area being a sort of scree garden.



About four years ago, we saw advertised at a very reasonable price, a moulded pond which we subsequently bought but never found the time to 'install' in our Devon garden. The 'soil' there was clay and flint and we would have needed pickaxes to make a hole big enough. Here, as we could keep the grandchildren safe behind the gate to the back garden, we decided to put the pond in the front garden and again, the family helped dig the hole and put in the pond. We had a pond in Devon and in digging that had acquired a huge amount of rocks, some quite large which became a rockeries at the two ends. We hardly

come across any stones in our present garden, let alone rocks, so the soil was heaped up on one side. Over the years in Devon we'd bought tufa which I'd mainly incorporated in troughs, so I removed all the tufa from the troughs we left behind and used them to make a low wall in front of the mound. As Spring made an appearance, so did mare's tail, mainly in the mound which by now was planted up! We'd brought many pots of plants up with us (not as many as Paul Wade!) and I wanted to get them in as soon as possible. We know it is pointless trying to dig out mare's tail so used weed killer from the start and will be doing so for a few years I suspect. I've top dressed the area around the pond with 12mm stones, including the mound which has become a rockery with the addition of a few rocks I've come across elsewhere from time to time.



The previous owners had a large conifer cut down the year before we moved in and the trunk, cut into large logs, was piled up by the stump. This gave me the idea of combining a stumpery with a raised bed to house my ericaceous plants by using the logs as edging. This is on the far right of the front garden, by a willow tree. My ericaceous trough is to the left of this bed.

We put the sheds at the side of the house, on the left of our drive and we also have a small bed there which I made around a contorted hazel already in situ.

A neighbours' driveway goes down the left side of our property leading to the theirs behind and they have large trees along this driveway on the other side of our fence. This greatly benefits the birds, which we entice into our garden with a feeding station between the two sheds.

The back garden is small but L shaped as it goes from behind the house and then widens to include an area behind the garage. Here, on the left-hand side, there is a greenhouse which we are converting to an alpine house. Behind it is a small area we are using for pots of seedlings. In the far back right-hand corner of the back garden is a triangular area of decking which had bushes, mainly snowball, between the two shorter sides and the fence. We took these out and replaced them with 'trenches' lined with horticultural material and filled with compost in which we have put plants to attract wildlife.

The area immediately behind the house, which is shady most of the time, is to be a mini 'woodland' garden, probably more of a shrubbery as it is so small. This will be for our shade-loving plants and is my next job when the weather improves.

My childhood house had Wisteria around the front door so we also planted one by the front doors of the two houses in which we lived in Devon. This property has one growing up the garage and has several other beautiful plants which we are very happy to keep. Our previous garden was much larger and over the last few years had become impossible to keep in check so we are very happy to now have one of a controllable size and I envisage spending many more happy hours in it.

Di Dark

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## ***Garden Visit***

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Earlier this year some of us were able to take up an invitation to visit the garden of our Editor, Anne Wright and her husband Barry. Those of you who were unable to go to York missed a wonderful treat. Several greenhouses were filled with a spectacle of colour from snowdrops, narcissus, crocus and hepaticas. Some were beginning to fade, others were beginning to show their colours to us and others, as Goldilocks might say, were just right. Cold frames had similar displays of plants in various degrees of development.

A walk round the garden gave us even more treats. Hellebores of different size and colour planted around the winding footpath with more beds of various

plants and spring bulbs. Trees and shrubs just beginning to come to life in the early spring sunshine, even though it was a cold day.

The part of the garden I was most interested in was the Stegosaurus. So called by Anne as she feels her crevice bed looks like a dinosaur resting in her garden. This is something Ian and I would like to create in our garden so we wanted some idea on how to go about it. Anne's crevice bed is quite young but it was good to see the plants which have survived the early stages and have begun to settle in quite nicely. It gave us an idea on the area needed to make a reasonable sized crevice bed and we have an area we would like to transform. We might try for a Diplodocus but definitely not a T Rex. Unfortunately we didn't have the camera with us so have no pictures of our time at Anne's just some lovely memories.

Thank you Anne and Barry for the lovely few hours we spent in your garden.

Georgina Instone



Anne's Crevice bed

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## Show Business

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### Local Group Show 9 May 2015

#### Award Winners

Local Group Shield (most points open section) Ian Instone

H C Crook Tankard (best plant in show) Trevor Whitaker - *Eriogonum umbellatum ssp haussknechtii*

Hemingway Trophy (best bulbous plant) Fred & Pat Bundy - *Calochortus monophyllus*

Daphne Kent Trophy (one plant in flower 19cm) Ian Instone - *Rhodohypoxis 'Albrighton'*

Lovat plaque (most points in section C) Chris Weavers

Local Group Bronze Medal (best plant novice section) No entries

#### Plant Profiles



*Eriogonum umbellatum ssp haussknechtii*. (Sulfer-Yellow Buckwheat)

Best plant in show, grown from Northwest Native seed by the exhibitor and sown 20/8/08 Col Mt Hood 6800 ft, native to the Cascades of southern Washington to northern California, it inhabits open rocky areas at high elevations in the

mountains. The following week Trevor gained a first prize red sticker and a certificate of merit at the National Alpine Garden Society show at Southport.

This year it was pleasing to see many fine plants exhibited at our local show with the best judged plant a worthy winner.



Eric Rainford

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### \*\*\**Editor's Note*\*\*\*

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**Many thanks** to all the contributors to *this* newsletter.

**The editor, Anne Wright is VERY keen to receive articles, news items, tips etc., for inclusion in future issues.**

All it takes is a paragraph, or a photograph, or both. Have you visited an interesting place or nursery?

Have you grown an unusual plant - or one which you particularly like and want to recommend? How did you grow it?

Have you got a tip to share? News about an upcoming event or open garden?

Are you looking for a plant you can't find anywhere?

You don't have to be a literary genius, or even to be able to spell (because I can..)

This is not just the committee's newsletter! Have your say too! **PLEASE** give your contributions to Anne at the meetings or post to Mrs A. Wright, 130, Prince Rupert Drive, Tockwith, York, YO26 7PU, **to arrive before end DECEMBER 2015** (e-mail attachments or CDs preferred but not essential). Articles via E-mail to be sent to [anneswright@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:anneswright@hotmail.co.uk) Most formats accepted, e.g., Microsoft Word/Works and graphic formats like BMP, TIF, JPG.

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## **PROGRAMME NOTES**

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### **12 September - Norma Pagdin - Iceland**

Show Secretary of the Cleveland Show for many years and enthusiastic AGS member, Norma has travelled widely in Europe and her talks are always illustrated by excellent photographs. This talk will take us to Iceland and we look forward to seeing many Arctic Flowers.

### **10 October - Kit Strange - Travels in Armenia**

Kit looks after Kew's extensive alpine bulb collection, repotting the bulbous collections annually, sowing bulb seed and growing on germinated seedlings to adult stage. She supports the MSB by taking part in seed collecting expeditions, growing and developing horticultural protocols for plants from the Falkland Islands and South Georgia, and producing plants for display at Kew and DNA collection. She lectures widely.

### **14 November - Alan Wilson - It all started with a walk in the Dales**

A member of our own group Alan has given interesting short talks and now takes us through the journey to becoming an Alpine Enthusiast.

### **12 December - Members' slides**

A good social occasion with a variety of short talks by members sharing their favourite plants and experiences. (And mince pies!)

# CALENDAR

12 SEP	<b>Local Group Meeting, St Chad's</b> - Norma Pagdin - Iceland <b>***LOCAL SHOW***</b>
26 SEP	Kent Autumn Show
3 OCT	Loughborough Autumn Show
10 OCT	<b>Local Group Meeting, St Chad's</b> - Kit Strange - Travels in Armenia
10 OCT	Newcastle Show
17 OCT	<b>HARLOW CARR SHOW</b>
7 NOV	AGS AGM
14 NOV	<b>Local Group Meeting, St Chad's</b> - Alan Wilson - It all started with a walk in the Dales
12 DEC	<b>Local Group Meeting, St Chad's</b> - Member's Slides
<b>2016</b>	
9 JAN	<b>Local Group Meeting, St Chad's</b> - Dr John Grimshaw - Choice bulbs for the woodland garden
13 FEB	<b>Local Group Meeting, St Chad's</b> - Diane Clement - A Seedy Business
12 MAR	<b>Local Group Meeting, St Chad's</b> - Vic Aspland - Valleys of Andorra
9 APR	<b>Local Group Meeting, St Chad's</b> - Jean Vincent - Flora of Madagascar
7 MAY	<b>Local Group Meeting, St Chad's</b> - AGM , <b>***LOCAL SHOW***</b> , quiz and cake.

***PLEASE support our local shows - just one plant will help - we need entries, not just winners!***

***P S - Did I mention I need articles for the next newsletter?***