



THE ALPINE GARDEN SOCIETY CENTRAL SUSSEX GROUP



NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2005

Mr. BOB CHARMAN POLAND TO TURKEY

In spite of the title, Bob began his journey in England with a view of one of our few remaining floriferous meadows and on Scottish sand dunes, the tall Lizard Orchid *Himantoglossum hircinum*, its massive spike carrying up to 80 grey-green flowers, its extraordinary uncoiling labellum red spotted and the Southern Marsh Orchid *Dactylorhiza praetermissa* equally large, but with a more compact, spotted pink to red spike and on Box Hill the more dainty Autumn Lady's Tresses *Spiranthes spiralis* with spirally arranged white flowers.- all three are Sussex natives. The Bog Asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum* is a delicate looking plant with narrow iris shaped leaves and orange flowers. loves a hot spot and is a good show plant. Seen in Yorkshire, the purplish to brownish-red flowers of *Epipactis atrorubens* widely spaced in the inflorescence.

So to a brief look at Poland just after mid-summer with ice still on mountain ridges and a warning to take extra clothing when at altitudes of around 3000m. emphasised with the photo. of *Soldanella alpina* (299/5) encased in ice. On a narrow ridge the Dog Violet, *Viola riviana*. Just coming into flower, *Campanula alpina* and typically in turf *Silene acaulis*. At the lower edge of woodland, the Lesser and Greater Butterfly Orchids, sweetly scented white flowered *Platanthera bifolia* and *P. chlorantha* (two more Sussex natives), the latter's long spur curving downwards rather than almost horizontal in the former; often conditions dictate their size.

To the more familiar Dolomites and pink-fringed *Dianthus superbus*, spotted pink *Traunsteinera globosa* with often spotted petals. In scant turf the hairless and prostrate *Daphne striata* and *Campanula barbata* with white hairy beard on the inside of the pale blue flowers, a plant not now very popular, perhaps because it is not long lived and may even be monocarpic..If meadows are not cut too early, the gorgeous orange *Lilium bulbiferum* may be seen. In turf, long-tubed yellow-eyed *Primula halleri* and in damper conditions, dwarf, white-eyed and deeply notched pink flowered *P. minima*. *Saxifraga oppositifolia* is one of the most colourful of the genus, but difficult in cultivation. *Soldanella minima* carries solitary conical bells which are only shallowly fringed. *Gentiana kochiana* is the common trumpet gentian on acid rocks. The Early Purple Orchid *Orchis mascula* appears to have more dissected labellums in Turkey than the species here and a white form seen was 3ft. high! The Louseworts with their semi-parasitic nature, are notoriously difficult to cultivate, but are attractive plants with fern-like foliage; with leaves in whorls and crimson to purplish-red flower spikes, *Pedicularis verticillata* is one of the most distinctive. Not commonly seen, the Burnt Orchid *Orchis ustulata* is also distinctive in that its unopened buds at the top of the cylindrical spike are reddish-brown, contrasting with the crimson-spotted white open flowers below. *Papaver rhaeoticum* is the most widely seen flower of limestone screes which are well watered in spring. The Vanilla Orchid *Nigritella nigra* is a fairly common species of poor pastures on neutral to slightly acid soils, its almost spherical flowers varying from white, through pink and red, to almost black.. The Coral Root *Corallorhiza trifida* is in a transition stage towards parasitism, but the presence of green colouration in stem and flowers indicates that some chlorophyll is present.

With dark storm clouds arising above Dolomite peaks, we moved on to the Pindus Mountains (281/362) of northern Greece. Here in rocky scree, yellow flowered *Ranunculus brevifolius* (236/120) is not unlike a Winter Aconite in habit. By melting snow, lavender-blue flowered *Crocus valuchensis*

(250/412, 254/423, 281/329) and on north facing cliffs between rocks with wide open white flowers, *Saxifraga marginata*. In the Vikos Gorge, Fritillaries and on its the cliffs, Junipers.. In warmer areas, *Ophrys helenae* with green perianth segments and deep red inflated lip. In another (?) limestone gorge with vertical walls and very cold water in its stream, *Daphne oleoides* (210/267, 269) and all along its rocky ledges, lilac flowered *Ramonda serbica* well watered from water dripping from above. On sunny sides, snakes like to warm themselves on ledges and *Aubrieta scardica*. (281/393) grows in crevices. We saw a white form of the Early Purple Orchid *Orchis mascula* with huge flowers and on a south facing slope *Orchis pallens* with pale yellow flowers and large leaves arising from a rosette. *Fritillaria pontica* ssp. *ionica* in woodland, more on north sides than the south. In scree *Saxifraga porophylla* and under pine, mauve flowered *Limodorum arbotivum*, chlorophyll virtually absent. On north slopes, *Viola albanica* (281/90) with long spurred violet to pink flowers and the yellow form of the Elder Flowered Orchid *Dactylorhiza sambucina*. Back up to the screes and a bear cub having difficulty in crossing a snow patch until mother's snout persuaded it to move. On a woodland edge *Cephalanthera rubra* and the Lady Orchid *Orchis purpurea* with almost flat flowers, its lip deeply spotted red.

Off to Crete (231/46), a view towards the White Mountains and *Fritillaria messamensis* ssp. *messamensis* with green striped petals, *Ophrys cretica* (290/456) its lip with twin diamond-shaped pattern. Here, *Iris unguicularis* is a deep violet form which contrasts well with the orange stripe on the falls. In the Monkey Orchid *Orchis simia*, the ends of the arms and legs are red. A Cretan endemic *Cyclamen creticum*, the white flowers narrow and standing vertical and grows in semi-shade in dampish spots. Around field margins *Tulipa bakeri* (235/41) may be found with rich purple-pink flowers, yellow at the base of each tepal. *Orchis lactea* has whitish-pink sepals suffused with green, and a lip heavily spotted red. A view at the head of the Samaria Gorge, dangerous to trek at times when flash floods occur, its slopes scrub covered. With a short season, *Crocus sieberi* ssp. *sieberi* has channelled foliage, its white flowers with reddish-purple markings and prominent orange-yellow throats. *Gagea graeca* is a little species with white trumpet shaped flowers which are nodding in bud; it shows in a pot quite well. The Naked Man Orchid *Orchis italica* (262/392, 280/245, 294/323), its almost globose head densely flowered, its long arms and legs heavily spotted. Endemic *Paeonia clusii* (284/198) is quite a small plant with usually white flowers which can be badly marked when sand blows up from the south. *Hermodyctylis tuberosus*, the Snake's Head or Widow Iris is a pretty plant with a green to bronze background to the flowers and reflexed velvet brownish-violet blades to the falls; it grows well in the garden, but needs a very sunny position to flower well. *Orchis morio* (285/382) (now *Anacamptis morio*) was seen in a deep pink form with green lined wings. A Cretan endemic, *Arum idaeum* is a small species with large spotted foliage and an unscented white spathe and purple spadix

To Rhodes and a view of sea and rocks. *Fritillaria rhodia* has narrowly campanulate flowers, flared at the mouth, green outside, yellowish inside. Like the Cretan *Paeonia clusii*, *P. rhodia* also has white flowers and are about the same size and shape. *Anacamptis pyramidalis* has densely packed pink flowers with unspotted lips. A nice form of the Bug Orchid *Orchis coriophora* was spotted red. With pink to purple flowers, *Orchis papilionacea* usually carries a broad, frilly-edged lip with a white background which is lined with the colour of the sepals and petals; it can form a bigeneric hybrid with *Serapias*. *Ophrys rhodia* is a very pretty species with green petals and sepals and a well-marked speculum. *O.heldreichii* (287/21) is similar apart the petals and sepals which are pink. Although not without charm with its strongly blotched stem, deeply divided leaves, reddish-purple spathe and maroon-black spadix, remember that *Dranunculus vulgaris* has appalling smell, although only when in flower; there is a white spathed form.

To the end of our journey and Turkey. In the north-east (262/411) a view of the landscape with broken rocky mountains, a glacier and swirling clouds – not a place to get lost or suffer an injury. But there are some wonderful plants. *Gentiana pyrenaica* (284/236) may be more prolific here than in the Pyrenees and *G. verna* shines in this unspoilt landscape. *Daphne glomerata* (262/415), 277/216) is a lovely dwarf shrub, its creamy-white, sweetly-scented flowers crammed into tight heads. On the edge of a shanty town, the night sky quite wonderful, mat-forming *Androsace villosa* (279/38-9) with yellow-eyed white flowers and across an ice-covered lake at the foot of snow-bound black cliffs, *Fritillaria latifolia* (277/217, 279/102), its fat, tessellated dark-purplish flowers only just above the ground. Most attractive is the tufted and mat-forming *Lamium armenum* which has crisped foliage and white to icing-pink flowers. A form of the Oxlip, *Primula elatior* ssp. *meyrii* is always blue or purple flowered. *Androsace*

albana carries its white or pale pink flowers in rounded umbels on quite tall stems. *Eranthis cilicicus* was flowering around snow melt (it grows on the southern edge of the lake below the house at Wakehurst). In the high meadows cows are kept below the level of the bulls, one large black one becoming over friendly towards humans! Along stream sides, *Primula longpipes* is the most westerly of the Asian nivalids and carries three whorls of lavender to purple flat-faced flowers on tall stems. In similar situations is *P. auriculata*, here with long upright foliage and tight heads of flat-faced flowers. Southwards to the Taurus Mountains where on limestone there is *Iris danfordiae* (277/3095, 279/51) which in cultivation has the unfortunate habit of flowering in year 1, not flowering in year 2 and disappearing in year 3. At one location a meadow covered with white flowered *Colchicum szovitsii* and *Crocus biflorus* had disappeared under roadstone the following year. Lower down *Corydalis densiflora* was seen, its tubers running between rocks. In the middle of two streams a whole island only 18 to 24" above the water, was covered with *Daphne mezereum*. Yellow *Scutellaria orientales* (277/295) with deeply crenate leaves, is a nice mat forming species and *Hyancithus orientalis* has a very pleasant scent. Dogs with iron spiked collars as a protection against wolves have their ears chopped off (partially it is hoped!). There are blue and white forms of *Crocus chrysanthus* (273/358) and *Colchicum byzantinum* (or flowering at the wrong time was it another species?). *Iris persica* has only short stems, but carries large flowers usually with an element of grey in them and the falls purple or purple-brown. Of similar habit in bare soil, pale mauve and deep blue flowered *I. stenophylla* ssp. *stenophylla*. (274/450) Locals go in for much hand shaking, even if their hands are covered with lambs blood! The rose pink to carmine flowers of *Cyclamen pseudibericum* grows in both deep litter of deciduous woodland or amongst rocks. *Ophrys mammosa* is a sturdy plant with green flowers, in part suffused with purple, the speculum carrying two light coloured parallel ones, a contrast to the blackish background. *Wulfenia orientalis* (258/418) has mainly basal leaves crenately lobed and violet to blue flowers. At the base of a large oak tree, *Fritillaria amana* (273/270) and by a track pale blue flowered *Scilla monanthos* and *S. melaina*, its flowers in a loose raceme. *Anemone blanda* (279/56) can be found everywhere in all colour forms. *Fritillaria glaucoviridis* is quite a stout plant with green, unchecked narrow bells, while *Fritillaria pinardii* (284/225) occurs in various forms, its bulbs deeply buried and *Fritillaria crassifolia* ssp. *crassifolia* (273/255, 284/230) with fat green bells can be found on the steepest scree. *Paeonia turcica* (284/202) its deep rose to almost crimson early flowering quite close to snow. White flowered *Campanula troegerae* (279/103) has its home in wall crevices. On one walk a family with two daughters charmingly offered a bunch of *Anemone coronaria*, but only one being taken; it was later found that all members of the party also were given a single one. The Woodcock Orchid *Ophrys scolopax* (288/156) with very small lateral petals is particularly varied in form. A blue flowered *Acantholimon* with little sharp spikes looks a very desirable prostrate plant. There was a prostrate yellow flowered *Aristolochia* and the deep yellow flowered *Crocus ancyrensis*. At the side of a road, about 4ft. high, *Lilium kesselringianum* (262/416, 273/388, 279/106) with pale cream to straw coloured flowers of recurved campanulate shape, grows towards the eastern end of the Black Sea coast and the tufted *Campanula hagiella* with racemes of blue to violet-blue flowers is found on limestone cliffs. *Orchis sancta* is part of the *O. coriophora* group but has unspotted flowers. *Paeonia mascula* (251/90, 284/199) was seen with its red seed pods. In deep pine needles, long spurred pure white to creamy-white *Cephalanthera epipactoides*. A look at a number of Fritillaries with which, of course, Bob takes a particular interest. *Fritillaria acmopetala* (273/271) has greenish-yellow flowers marked with reddish-brown is a Taurus species; from southern Turkey *F. whittallii* (206/303, 246/413) with brown tessellated green flowers and *F. latakiensis* (218/316) with tubular green-striped dark purple flowers; *F. carica* (251/88, 299/74) with yellow, bell-shaped flowers from western Turkey; yellow *F. forbesii* (214/332) from the south west on serpentine; and with reddish stripes, yellowish *F. alpina*. The last plant a deep red flowered *Tulipa armena* v. *lycica* with undulate foliage and hairy bulbs. A final three views – Bob's wife enjoying the scenery in Poland, a lake with the sun just setting in Scotland and a red sky over mountains.

A panoply of plants from the well known to the esoteric – something for all to have enjoyed. Unfortunately the write-up does not justify Bob's excellent commentary which added so much to the photographs. Sorry no images this time – run out of time and space!

RM

RONALD FRANK

Members will be very sorry to learn that Ronald died in hospital on Friday 2nd December. Our thoughts are with Erna and Ronald's family, with whom some of us are in touch.

An appreciation will appear in the next Newsletter.

CHAIRMAN'S NEWS

I hope I shall see as many of our Members as possible at our **next meeting on Saturday the 10th of December, which is our Annual General Meeting, followed by a social get together.** I will give you my report for the year, and Bob Charman, our Treasurer, will present the accounts for the financial year which closed at the end of August 2005. He will explain what income we have received, and what our expenses have been. Bob has indicated that he wants to stand down, but will continue as Treasurer until August 2006, which is the end of the next financial year. It is imperative that we replace him, ideally by electing his successor in December 2005. I should be grateful for a willing volunteer to take on this task. If you want to know more about what is involved, give me a call on 01273-890201, or phone Bob on 0208-6607459

You will also have the opportunity of voting for up to 6 members on to the Committee to run the affairs of your Local Group for the following twelve month period. Don't be shy; signify your willingness to get more involved. It isn't too onerous a task. We normally have 2 Committee Meetings a year, to plan the Programme, and events like the Local Show, and Garden Visits we want to stage on behalf of the Group.

Please use the "Any Other Business" item on the agenda to air your views, tell us what you liked, or disliked, and any suggestions you may have for making the Group meetings more enjoyable for everybody.

We will get through the AGM Business as quickly as we can, and then we can get on to the Christmas Social Evening. This is a marvellous opportunity for us all to meet and talk with each other more informally, and to learn a little more about each other, where we garden, what our interests are, what we are growing, the facilities we have for growing rock garden plants, and what may be surplus which could be made available to other members.

We hope you will bring a raffle prize to help make the raffle a bumper one and attractive to members. The raffle serves two functions. It enables individuals to take home plants or items they would not otherwise have. The income from the raffle is income which we need to have, to pay for the hall and speakers costs etc.

Audrey Dart will be coordinating the refreshments again, and if she has not spoken with you already on what you would like to bring, please give her a call on 01273-492807. In that way she will be reassured to learn that we are going to have sufficient food to enjoy as part of the social event.

January 2006 Lecture will be given by Roger Facer, from Hambledon in Hampshire, on the Flora of Alaska. I cannot remember our Group having had a lecture on the flora of this geographic region, within the last twenty years or so. His list of slides is quite exciting, and includes a number of sub species only found in Alaska. For those of us who have not been able to visit Alaska, seeing slides of the native flora is the next best thing.

Finally, may I wish you all a Happy Christmas and all good wishes for the New Year.

Keith Moorhouse.

