



# THE ALPINE GARDEN SOCIETY CENTRAL SUSSEX GROUP



NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2005

Mr. KEITH MOORHOUSE  
EUROPEAN FLORA

Keith began his European journey with two contrasting photographs; of the treeless Arctic alpine tundra in the Jotenheimen Mountains of Norway and a Mediterranean scrub terrain in the south of France.

And so to the Picos de Europa mountains of northern Spain's Cantabria, beginning with hot, dry, bare limestone and big screes above the Fuente De cable car lift. Low cloud and mist below provides relief from solar radiation and the area is subject to afternoon thunderstorms. Large clumps of low growing *Genista hispanica* grow on the bare rock and in a jumble of large rocks, long spurred, violet and yellowed flowered *Scutellaria alpina*. Rooted in a cooler crevice, *Gypsophila repens* and there were a narrow leafed *Dianthus*, prostrate *Potentilla fruticosa* and *Erinus alpinus* in a shady crevice.

Moving north east into France and the Massif Central we had a view of a rolling landscape of fields and trees and the mountains in the distance. One of the most distinctive plants of its alpine meadows is the tall, yellow flowered *Gentiana lutea* whose dried roots are used for bitter digestifs. *Pulsatilla alpina* ssp. *apiifolia* was seen in masses, but only on north facing slopes. In quite long grass was white flowered, yellow eyed *Narcissus poeticus*, a delight against blue skies and in prostrate wide mats *Thymus serpyllum*.

Inland from the Mediterranean in tallish scrub, *Daphne gnidium*, creamy flowers on long stems; some seed was hanging on and germinated. Then north again to the Piedmont Alps and a more truly alpine environment with a view of a small lake in a glaciated landscape with mountains beyond. Here *Soldanella alpina* with what looked like a double row of petals growing in deep shade between two rocks. Then the Moon Daisy *Leucanthemopsis alpinum* on limestone, a quite tall *Phyteuma hemisphericum* and on rocky ground, *Doronicum*, *Erigeron alpinus* and on granitic rock, *Ranunculus aconitifolius* in seeps and stream sides, sometimes accompanied by *Saxifraga stellaris*. In the sun, although usually a woodland edge plant, *Adenostyles alliariae* with Mt. Blanc in the background. With narrow wings and white centred dark blue flowers, *Gentiana brachyphylla* and *G. purpurea* with opposite leaves and clusters of closed, dark reddish-purple flowers which provide a warmer environment for pollination. On the edge of a metamorphic rock, loosely tufted mats of *Saxifraga androsacea*. With its flowers at the edge of the plant, *Oxytropis gaudinii* is a silvery-haired, lilac-blue flowered milk-vetch confined to the south west and west central Alps. Here *Androsace chamaejasme* carries its umbels of white or pale pink flowers on longish stems above flattish tufts. Pale pink flowered *Saxifraga stellaris* ssp. *alpigena* is more loosely tufted than the species. On the lower slopes of Mt. Blanc *Campanula persifolia* is quite a tall species with half nodding flowers in contrast to the slender, creeping *C. cochlearifolia* the south-west Alps endemic, *C. stenocodon* and pale yellow flowered *C. thyrsoidea*.

Now into Switzerland and on the road between lakes Geneva and Thun, views of Rougemont church and the Vidamanett and up its mountain's ridge to the summit. With a fringe of hairs, *Campanula barbata* flowers from the top down. There was a very pleasing form of *Gentianella campestris*, *Saxifraga bryoides* a showy cushion species with orange-red dotted yellow flowers and yellow stamens, as is *Potentilla aurea* with 5-partite toothed leaves and golden-yellow overlapping flowers, usually found on acid soils. There were dwarf clumps of prostrate *Globularia cordifolia* and a red flowered *Nigritella* species, one of the Vanilla Orchid complex on which the experts cannot agree!. Further east, a view of high alpine terrain on the Nuffenen Pass which lies to the south of the upper Rhone valley. Here *Gentiana verna* (which we were assured can be grown), *Silene acaulis* and in a damp spot, *Ranunculus alpestris*. White-eyed *Primula hirsuta* is normally

calcifuge and prefers damp stony areas. There were views towards the Aletsch Glacier from Friederalp and further south, the Mattmakalp moraine at Saas Grund, a dirty mixture of rock and finer material. The first plant was *Androsace alpina* in its habitat and we were shown close ups in both white and pink forms. On acid soils, the long spurred Alpine Toadflax *Linaria alpina* with blue to violet flowers and an orange splash on the lower lip. We left Switzerland with another view of Rougemont on a fête day with cows carrying huge bells, hand milking, floral cartwheels and flower decorated barns.

Eastwards into Austria and some rich flower meadows, wooded hills in the background. From newly emerging snow melt grass, *Soldanella alpina*. Then the Oxlip *Primula elatior*, with one-sided clusters of pale yellow flowers. In dampish places *P. farinosa* and in boggy ones, *Trollius europaeus* and the Bogbean pink and white-flowered *Menyanthes trifoliata*.

And finally to Norway, much loved by Keith, beginning with a view of Leirdalen. The slides of *Ranunculus glacialis* showed the purple stained sepals through the yellow and green centred white flowers. The Creeping Azalaea *Loiseleuria procumbens* spreads itself prostrately by vegetative propagation, its tiny flowers, red in bud, opening pink.. With thick leaves which turn bright red in autumn, red stems and drooping, urn-shaped greenish-white to pink flowers, *Arctostaphylos alpinus*, unlike the more common *A. uva-ursi*, is deciduous and has black instead of red berries. Deep pink flowered *Phyllodoce caerulea* carries its pinched, drooping bells at the top of the shoots. The symmetrical flowers of the Heartsease Pansy *Viola tricolor* are often bicoloured, grading from purple on the upper two lobes to yellow on the lower one. A Jotenheimen form of *Campanula rotundifolia* carries blue flowers on its short, erect wiry stems. *Saxifraga caespitosa* is a tufted species mainly confined to Scandinavia as is *S. nivalis* whose unspotted flowers are carried in a congested head. Sub-Arctic and Arctic peat loving, prostrate, moss-like and mat forming *Cassiope hypnoides* carries creamy-white bells with crimson calyces. *Dryas octopetala* is one of those plants whose flowers follow the sun. *Rhodiola (Sedum) rosea* has spirally arranged thick succulent leaves and orange-yellow flowers. There was a view of 6666ft. Kyrkja from Gravidalen and of the fluffy Arctic Cotton-grass *Eriophorum scheuchzeri* and *Saxifraga stellaris* in wet places. *S. aizoides* was seen in its orange form. *Cerastium arcticum* is a pleasant Mouse-ear. The Bog Rosemary *Andromeda polifolia* is a low shrub with white or pink, fattish, urn-shaped flowers in terminal clusters and as its common name suggests, a lover of bogs and lake edges, a habitat also of *Viola palustris* with large kidney-shaped leaves and small purple veined, lilac flowers

To a wide valley in in the Rondane National Park with eroded hills above. A *Saxifraga oppositifolia* with deep pink flowers, the louseworts *Pedicularis oederi* and *P. lapponica*, the latter taller and with paler yellow flowers. Confined to Norway and Sweden, on limy rocks, entirely farinaceous *Primula scandinavica* has purplish-violet flowers with a yellow eye. *Pulsatilla vernalis* is a lovely species with flowers white inside, violet or pink outside. A creeping low Dogwood, *Cornus succica* has umbels of four white petal-like bracts, the flowers within purplish-black. A Scandinavian, *Ranunculus nivalis* has rich yellow petals with shaggy-brown sepals and can be found well within the Arctic Circle. A view towards the Lofoten Islands and *Parnassia palustris* growing at sea level on Andoya as was *Saxifraga cotyledon*. Finally a lovely splash of colour provided by the Fireweed *Epilobium angustiolium* at Fjord level in Tromso and of the Teesdale Violet, *Viola arvensis*.

Thanks to Keith, we were shown some of the vast variety of plants that grow in Europe, both in their habitats and in close up, and if more familiar, equal in splendour to those those farther afield and not so far to see them!

RM

## MEETING SEPTEMBER 17

Mrs Irene Palmer from Orpington speaking on a very broad based subject of archaeology, mythology and flowers of the Peloponnese.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

Please note new local subs – now due at £7.50/person.

## CHAIRMAN'S NEWS

We are about to start another year of interesting lectures on Saturday the 17<sup>th</sup> of September at 6.30. Our speaker is Mrs Irene Palmer from Orpington speaking on a very broad based subject of Archaeology, mythology and flowers of the Peloponnese. In October we again have the husband and wife team of superb and well travelled photographers Phil and Gwen Philips from Grimsby speaking on Sarracenia to Trillium. On Saturday the 15<sup>th</sup> of October it is the Sussex Show at Tandridge House School, Horsham. An opportunity to have an enjoyable day out, exhibiting your plants, attending as a spectator, purchasing plants from the nurseries present or from the members sales table, and merchandise and books on offer nationally from the AGS. In November we are fortunate to have Bob Charman give the lecture he had to cancel in the spring, describing the flora seen on his trips to Poland and Turkey. Poland will be a new geographic area for many of us which has not been covered before. December will be slightly different this year, the AGM has been moved forward a month. After the conclusion of the formal part of the meeting we can then socialise and enjoy ourselves in the lead up to Christmas.

A visit to Alaska will get us off to a good start in the New Year with Roger Facer from Hampshire. Another interesting geographic area in which grow plants many of us never seen and another area we have not covered in recent years. February sees the return of Ian Rumley Dawson from Battle and his two projector extravaganza on the sub-arctic wildflowers of the North Pacific as seen on Kuril Island and Kamchatka in the Russian Far East and some of the smaller islands in the Bering Sea. As befits the spring, March will be devoted to Primroses and Polyanthus from Elizabethan times to Gertrude Jekyll with Geoffrey Yates from Godalming in Surrey. April will be Plants and their Alpine Environments given by our own hard working 'scribe' Roy Metcalfe. A thoughtful and informative talk based on his extensive travels and devoted to our main love of alpine plants in the wild which will lead us to having a better understanding of their needs. We finish off the winter programme with our own local Spring Show on Saturday the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April in Hassocks. An opportunity to compete on a friendly basis between ourselves, admire the plants grown by our members, go home with goodies from the sales table or trade stands and have an enjoyable day out. Your committee hope to be able to offer you as a fund raiser, a member's garden to visit and have afternoon tea in a local garden along the lines of our successful afternoon this spring in Audrey Dart's garden.

Keith Moorhouse

### **CENTRAL SUSSEX GROUP 31st LOCAL SHOW**

**Adastra Hall, Hassocks, East Sussex**

**on Saturday 9th April 2004**

**Awards - Congratulations to:-**

Joan and John Goodman for Highest Points in Show and the Central Sussex Trophy

Lee and Julie Martin for 2nd Highest Points in Show

Maureen Balcombe for Highest Points in Section B

Keith Moorhouse for Highest Points in Section C

Lee and Julie Martin for Best Plant by Central Sussex Member (Steingarten Plate) for Cassiope  
'Beatrice Lilley' (227/51)

Rosemary Hillyer for Best Plant in Section B for Androsace villosa barbulata (238/342)

Audrey Dart for Best Plant in Section B for Primula edelbergii

Selection of 12 photos (thanks to Bob Rimmington) from Show next pages



*Anchusa caespitosa*  
Class 1 Bob Charrman



*Androsace pyrenaica*  
Class 2 Derek & Peggy Monk



*Corydalis schanginii* ssp. *ainii*.  
Class 4 Martin Pollard



*Primula auricula*  
Class 6 John & Joan Goodman



*Cyclamen persicum*  
Class 7 Lee & Julie Martin



*Townsendia florifer*  
Class 9 Lee & Julie Martin





Narcissus 'Hawera'  
Class 14 John & Joan Goodman



Primula edelbergii  
Class 33 Audrey Dart



Cassiope 'Beatrice Lilley'  
Class 11 Lee & Julie Martin  
Best Plant in Show



Androsace villosa barbulata  
Class 38 Rosmany Hillyer  
Best Plant in Section B



Paul sells a special  
to Julie



Derek & Joan keep an eye  
on the AGS plant sales