



THE ALPINE GARDEN SOCIETY CENTRAL SUSSEX GROUP



NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2006

Mr. DAVID LANG CHILE – A LONG THIN COUNTRY

Hemmed in for the most part between the Andes and the Pacific, its length of 2050 miles and width on average 250 miles, it is indeed a long thin country, with David's five week visit confined to central and particularly the southern 450 miles of Patagonia. Following an initial inauspicious incident when he was swept downstream in a glacial river, he got on well with his knowledgeable 26 year old guide and their inadequacies of each other's language did not prove to be a problem.

In very dry forest of the Andean foothills around Santiago the first plant shown was the yellow flowered large cactus *Austrocactus hibernus* from which a humming bird was enjoying its nectar. Sheets of white centred mauve plants in black volcanic soil were the lilaceous *Leucocoryne coquimbensis* together with *Placea arzae* (ornata) an amaryllid with deeply lobed, red striped flowers and white *Loasa pallida* whose spiny hairs if touched produce something like a 20,000 volt shock – some of you may recall the “Do not touch” label when it appeared on the show benches a few years ago!, *Schizanthus grahamei*, a yellow cone on fairly tall stems, *Nothoscordum graminum* with grassy foliage and onion-like white starry flowers, *Calceolaria corymbosa* one of the many species whose identification is not easy to sort out, *Tropaeolum tricolor* with small crimson sepals and yellow petals and scarlet flowered *Phycella ignea*. A quite big and chunky Red Fox appeared to be quite friendly. West of Santiago in a diabolical trekking forested area of the Cerro la Comigane, there was not much of interest, apart from a *Chaetanthera*, *Alstomeria* ? *ligtu* (257/317), two orchids - a deep golden-yellow *Chlorea chrysantha*



Chlorea ?magellanica



Puya bertroniana

and delicately scented *Gavilia leucantha* with a tri-lobed lip of yellow or orange. *Chlorea*s are a large genus whose forward projecting petals form a lip which is spotted or streaked like cats' whiskers, but most could not be keyed out to allow identification apart from white flowered *C. multiflora*. The Amaryllid *Rhodophiala 'advenum'* (now *moelleri*) with yellow centred scarlet flowers was growing in baked soil. Eight 6 to 7ft. tall *Puya bertroniana* on a very steep bank, is a spiky, very sinister looking Bromeliad which may extinct in 50 years. In forest with *Araucaria araucana* and *Nothofagus*, nine species of quite tall and very attractive *Chlorea* were seen. With their straight trunks, Monkey Puzzles are prized for their timber especially by the Japanese and are much threatened. *Calandrinia caespitosa* (257/261) is a very variable species with mats of the orange flowered form most attractive. With rich yellow flowers and brown guide lines, *Viola maculata* (257/328) is found in many habitats and has distinctive crenate to serrate foliage. Always growing close to or in running water, is

rhizomatous *Ourisia poeppigii*, the tiered racemes carrying nodding, scarlet flowers.

After a brief look Pacific coast beaches at Purto Montt near Chiloe Island, a Turkey Vulture and Snowy Egrets, we were taken southwards to Punta Arenas on an isthmus overlooking the Magallanes Strait which joins the Atlantic and Pacific. Here Lesser Rhoas, a Two Banded Plover, Magellanic Penguins and very tame Crested Ducks and ducklings. In the dunes, very hard mats with *Cotula coronopifolia* and *Oxalis enneaphylla* (257/293-4,273/345) From here a six hour bus journey northwards to Puento Natales and the Torres del Paine National Park. An intended ten day circular tour had to be modified because of a landslide, but most was completed by approaching the obstacle from each direction. (There are two excellent maps available online - see web pages below, but too large to show the detail here). The accomodation at a Rifugio (presumably Guardería Laguna Amarga) was spotlessly clean and the three course meals better than hotels previously used. The route there lay north from Lake Sarmiento to Lake Azul (where there is another Guarderia) and then on good, but rough and crumbly tracks. On the way, foot tall *Anemone multifida* (*magellanica*) with usually white or creamy flowers; *Calceolaria uniflora* (*darwinii*) (257/307) seen in splendid close up, its pouch white banded and red at the base; the taller *C. biflora* (257/308) (although it can have between 2 and 8 flowers) , rich yellow, sometimes red spotted around the throat; *Baccharis nivalis* a small composite with solitary florets, the male ones with overlapping white or purplish stars; *Lathyrus nervosus* (*magellanicus*), a bushy violet-flowered pea; *Ourisia ruelloides* (257/298) by a small waterfall like a dwarfer *O. poeppigii*; 3"tall *Gunnera magellanica*, some of its foliage edged red and with dark red female flowers; bushy *Pernettya mucronata* and much smaller mat forming pretty *P. pumila* with white or pink flowers; *Bolax gummifera*, its umbels greenish-white; and a scattering of tufted, yellow flowered *Naussauvia ?magellanica*, foliage yet to come. There were terrific views towards the granite pillars of the Torres del Paine and southwards to Lake Sarmiento whenever the clouds parted for a few minutes and the tracks of a puma which are known to find humans a tasty dish. The camellid Guanaco (with a head surprisingly like that of a kangaroo) in rut can be objectionable, but not the geese and red backed Cascoraba Swans. *Oxalis squamata-radicosa* (257/295) carries umbels of deep pink to lilac pink flowers, cream forms with crimson or violet veining, the leaflets markedly undulate. Views of a inquisitive Grey Fox and less friendly, but harmless (to humans anyway!) Condors with 13 to 14ft. wingspans gathering on a carcass.

The southerly route skirts westwards past Lake Nordenskjol, then northwards along Lake Grey and its glacier close by a rifugio. where one party of trekkers lost five boots to foxes - a long way to go for replacements! On the way red stemmed, white flowered orchids and *Codonopsis lessonii* (257/278). The glacier is huge and was shown in early morning, the ice wall and the icefield. In the vicinity and only on rock faces, minute *Calceolaria tenella* (257/308), flowering stems bearing clear yellow blooms. There were two very different Saxifrages, one with very divided leaves and Magellanic Woodpeckers with scarlet heads. One evening a pleasing view of lenticular clouds above the mountains beyond the lake. Back southwards to Lake Pehoe where in nearby tussocky terrain, six orchid species were seen within a space of 400 yards, among them *Chloraea magellanica*, their buds pointing up, the downward pointing dull green flowers heavily pencilled with darker veins and *Gavilleas*. From Pehoe a view of the Torres y Cuernos (Towers and Horns) and of Upland Geese. Back along Lake Nordenskjol and a turning northwards into the Valle Bader. Here a view of the Cuerna Este and a difficult but gorgeous narrow gorge with *Embothrium coccinea* and in the torrent of the very windy Valle de Frances, black and white streaked Torrent Ducks playing in a waterfall. Here too, views of white granitoid rock with black sediments above and below (not basalt as related).



Valle de Frances Torres y Cuenos

Finally, a visit to 40 x 15 miles Navarino Island in the Chilean part of Tierra del Fuego, access to which is possible only by flying from Punta Arenas (maybe now from Ushuaia in Argentina), crossing the Beagle Channel in a 16 seater Cessna to Puerto Williams (the world's southernmost town). From here there is a circular trek into the lake strewn Dientes mountainous core at over 2000ft. On the way up there are splendid views back across the Beagle Channel. The lower slopes are covered with *Nothofagus pumilio* and *N. betuloides* while the summit vegetation is boggy tundra with *Bolax gumminifera*, *Hamadryas magellanica*, a member of the *Ranunculaceae* with yellow petals and allied to it,



Top Lake, Navarino Island

mat to cushion forming *Caltha appendiculata* with pale yellow to creamy-green solitary flowers. Two more orchids were seen – *Gavilea littoralis* and *G. australis*, 560 miles south of where previously recorded.. There were also flightless Steamer Ducks, too heavy to fly.

A spellbinding talk with much adventure during which 132 bird and 250 plant species were recorded. We enjoyed it without the effort!

Web pages

<http://www.austral-adventures.com/map%20of%20Chiloe.htm>

<http://www.questconnect.org/images/mapa-patagonia-ing.gif> (General location map S. Patagonia)

http://www.patagoniaadventures.com/southern_patagonia_map.htm&h=437&w=442&sz=200&tbnid=RCOk2YvQ0RQJ:&tbnh=121&tbnw=123&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dpatagonia%2Bmap%26hl%3Den%26lr%3D&start=3&sa=X&oi=images&ct=image&cd=3 (South Patagonia)

<http://www.intangibility.com/Photography/Travel/Patagonia01/Flowers.html>

<http://www.questconnect.org/images/mapaTDP.jpg> (Torres del Paine)

http://www.patagoniaexpress.com/flora_fauna.htm (Local and botanic names)

<http://www.planetmountain.com/english/Trekking/samerica/Patagonia/03.html> No. 1 describes the southern route from Guardería Laguna Amarga – Torres del Paine Lookout, but there are many other descriptions (and compaines anxious to take your money!) if you google “trekking Torres del Paine – solo walking is not permitted).

Maps

Monte Fitz Roy & Cerro Torre Trekking Map 1:50000 - Zagier & Urruty, 1998 (available locally)

Torres del Paine, N° 13 Trekking Map - "JLM Mapas".

<http://www.questconnect.org/images/mapaTDP.jpg> (circular route Torres del Paine)

<http://www.torresdelpaine.com/ingles/secciones/02/a/mapas.asp> (maps and general info from menu)

<http://gosouthamerica.about.com/od/sportstrek/ss/TorresGrCircuit.htm>

<http://escalando.cl/maps/mapserv.htm> (details of JLM and Aoneker map series & includes sample map of western part of the Torres National Park)

Bulletins

Although mainly north of David's activity, you may like to be reminded of John Watson's pioneering Andean adventures of 1971 and 1972 in numbers 176-187 inclusive. Also the Special South American Issue in 257, and 261/225, 263/111, 273/345.

Books

Footprint Chile - Author: Toby Green & Janak Jani 4th Edition ISBN:1 903471 76 1 Published Dec 2003

592 Pages, 20 pages in colour 8 colour maps 78 B/W maps. (Includes adjoining parts of southern Argentina and Easter Island)

Lonely Planet Chile & Easter Island 6th Edition Carolyn Hubbard, Brigitte Barta, Jeff Davis Published May 2003 ISBN: 174059116X 464 pp / 16 pp colour / 64 maps. (Includes adjoining parts of southern Argentina.)

Lonely Plant Trekking in the Patagonian Andes 3rd Edition Clem Lindenmayer, Nick Tapp Published November 2003 ISBN: 186450059X 296 pp / 12 pp colour / 36 maps (Detailed descriptions of 31 treks in Chile and Argentina, including bonus side trips and alternative routes and clear two-colour contour maps for every trek

Trekking En Chalten & Lago del Desierto – Zagier & Urruty, (Argentinian Tierra del Fuego in Spanish and English)

LOCAL SHOW 22 APRIL 2006

Our thanks to David Brown who so ably handled the day as Show Secretary and to the ladies that kept all well nourished.

Lee and Julie Martin gained the highest aggregate of points and won a best plant award and David Brown gained both the Central Sussex Trophy for the highest aggregate score in the novice and artistic sections and an AGS Certificate for the highest aggregate score in the artistic section. Although the show looked good, it was disappointing that less than half the membership exhibited. 12 members showed 90 plants and there were 16 artistic entries. With just four members accounting for 70% of the exhibits (one or more of whom may not be showing on another occasion), the Committee has reluctantly decided that it would be unwise to risk a show next year and has therefore cancelled the booking. If you have any comments, please offer your thoughts to a member of the Committee.

Thanks to Bob Rimmington, a selection of some of the exhibits with apologies for not making a note of some of the exhibitors.



View of the hall



Some of the exhibits



Best plant in the show -
Rosemary Hillyar's
Androscae villosa
barbulata



Best plant by C. Sussex
member - Julie and Lee
Martin's 3 pan group of
Fritillaria affinis v.
tristulis, *Tulipa clusiana* v.
chrysantha and *Narcissus*
bulbocodium v. *obesus*



Narcissus bulbocodium
'obesus'



Clive Dart's Aeonium



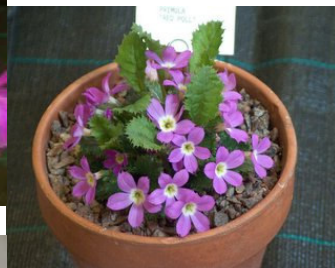
Chamaecyparis obtusa
'Ramhi'



John and Joan Goodman's
Daphne cneorum v.
pygmaea alba



Pleione 'Tolima'



John and Joan's *Primula* 'Red
Poll'



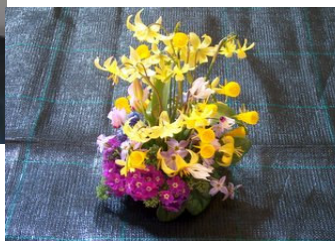
David Brown's *Saxifraga*
griesbachii



Julie and Lee Martin's
Tanacetum leontopodium



Miniature rock garden



Maureen Balcombe's flower
arrangement



Chairman Keith in happy
mood



Keith's *Anemone coronaria*

GARDEN VISIT SATURDAY 20 MAY

A reminder of the visit to David and Ruth Brown's garden next Saturday from 2.30 to 5.30 at Byway House, 31 Hurst Road, Hassocks. This is west of the Stonepound Crossroads (A273/B2116) on the left hand side nearly at the top of the rise up from the crossroads – will be signed. A large garden on free-draining Lower Greensand with a greenhouse, rock garden, herbaceous plants and some uncommon trees and shrubs. £2.50 per person including refreshments. There should be a demo. light-weight trough to see and plants and other items for sale. Please come along and support the Group.

NORMAN YOUNG

It is with regret, that we have learnt of the death of Norman, who had been a loyal member of the Group for over 30 years, on Committee, as auditor, exhibitor and contributing his knowledge of growing dwarf conifers and bulbs (especially Calochortus) in Newsletter articles. He will be sadly missed as will the presence of his wife Maureen, who was always a great help in the kitchen.

PROGRAMME 2006-07

Thanks to Edith Moorhouse, our next session's indoor programme is now complete:

September 16	Primulas and Polyanthus	Geoffrey Yates
October 14	Growing and propagating Saxifrages	David Hoare
November 18	Wild flowers of the Pacific	Ian Rumley-Dawson
December 16	Annual General Meeting and Christmas Social Evening	
January 20	The Smaller Daphnes	Peter Erskine
February 17	Picos de Europa & Western Pyrenees	Colin Kitchener
March 17	AGS Lecture: Hellebores - species & hybrids	Adrian Orchard
April 21	Practical demonstration of Planting miniature gardens in pans, sinks and tufa	Paul Ingwersen

Be back with us in September – all this for just £7.50!