



# THE ALPINE GARDEN SOCIETY CENTRAL SUSSEX GROUP



**NEWSLETTER**

**JANUARY 2007**

## **MEETING 20 JANUARY**

### **PETER ERSKINE – THE SMALLER DAPHNE**

If you look back at the March 2006 AGS Bulletin and Peter's second account of "Gardening on Greensand", you will see that he says (page 70) "I find the smaller daphnes hard to resist; wonderful, sometimes temperamental dwarf shrubs.....".

You will now have the chance to learn much more about these delightful plants from one of the best growers and speakers in the business. As many of you will know, Peter is one of our most long standing and loyal members, speaking to us on many occasions and will be travelling a long distance on the A273 (not a pleasant experience especially at night). So please bring along friends and others to give him an audience that he deserves. Do not miss!

**The Minutes of December's A.G.M. are on the following pages – please read!**

# **CENTRALSUSSEX GROUP OF THE ALPINE GARDEN SOCIETY**

## **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on the 16<sup>th</sup> Dec 2006**

**1) Present** Keith Moorhouse – Chairman, Bob Charman – Treasurer and 13 other members  
Apologies for absence were received from Jean Griffin - Vice Chairman and Ken Balcombe.

**2) Minutes** of the 2005 AGM Meeting were read and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

**3)** There were no matters arising from those minutes.

### **4) Chairman's report to the Group**

In presenting his 3<sup>rd</sup> and Final Report, Keith reminded members of the 4 aims he outlined to them when he came into office in 2003. These were to make the meetings more enjoyable and the group friendlier. He believed those aims had been achieved, but only member's could decide that for themselves. His third aim had been to increase the membership base, and on that had been unsuccessful; we have attracted a few new members but have lost more than we gained. The fourth aim had been to remove the deficit, or at worst, to reduce it. In this respect the aim had been achieved; in the previous year, after taking some unplanned costs of obtaining bank statements into account, we came within £9.00 of breaking even. This year he was pleased to report that in spite of reduced numbers in membership we were in surplus to the sum of £352.54. (A late bill received after the auditing of the accounts relating to hiring of the Hall for a number of meetings in the previous year, had been settled by the Treasurer This had the effect of reducing the true surplus to £260.)

Keith reviewed the losses of members in the 3 year period, three were from deaths, and others were due to infirmity or new caring roles. Other causes of loss had been lack of transport, inability to drive at night, or fear of driving in bad weather. He was particularly saddened to have lost 5 younger and more able bodied members, all active in the field of Showing and Competition, who must have decided the Group was not able to give them what they wanted any more. The last group were the 3 members who decided to resign following the unanimous decision of the Committee not to hold a Local Spring Show in 2007.

Your Committee at its last meeting discussed whether the Group was of a viable size to continue. They were unanimously of the view that we should recommend to the Group that we continue and do all we can to attract new members and increase the size of the Group. With careful management of our financial resources, and with reserves of £2150, we could operate for a further four years.

Keith informed Members that Jean Griffin was willing to be elected as Chairman, David Brown was willing to be elected as Treasurer, and that he was willing to act as both Admin Secretary and Programme Secretary. Bob Charman, Audrey Dart, Edith Moorhouse and Roy Metcalfe were willing to stand for election as Committee Members. These suggestions did not preclude any other volunteers from coming forward to serve the Group.

The Hall, following its redecoration and new lighting, was a much more attractive place in which to meet. We had set out the chairs and tables to operate within a more compact area, which made the total space, seem less threatening. The use of this hall had the major advantages of it being relatively cheap and had good parking, both of which were important considerations.

He reminded members that regular attendance would be crucial if we were to have viable audience sizes at our monthly meetings. So far in this 2006/07 year, audience size has varied from 11-20 and with an average of the 4 meetings to date of 16.

Keith reviewed the Lectures received during the year and elaborated on those to follow after Christmas.

Thanks on behalf of the Group were expressed to Jean Griffin for her steadfast support and active participation. To Bob Charman for acting as Treasurer and Membership Secretary, for budget forecasting, and keeping tight control over income and expenditure during the last 3 years.

To Roy Metcalfe for lecturing to us during the year, for producing the Monthly Newsletter and developing and maintaining the Group's web site throughout the year. To Maureen Balcombe for unlocking the Hall, setting up and putting away the PA equipment at every meeting. To David Brown for acting as Publicity Officer, Show Secretary, and Garden Host with his wife Ruth. David devoted a lot of time and energy into making the 2006 Spring Show a success. He created a new Show Schedule of classes, widened them to include art, and ran the show in a most professional way. To Edith Moorhouse for arranging the Speakers, often feeding them beforehand and writing letters of thanks to them afterwards. To Audrey Dart for her co-option to the Committee, and overseeing the refreshments, not only at monthly meetings, but also at the spring and autumn Shows. To Lionel Reuben, and all members who had assisted him, in running the National AGS Show in Horsham, and for the contribution it had made to the income of this Group. Thanks were expressed to all who had brought plants for display or plants for the raffle table, and to those who had exhibited at the spring and Autumn Show. He thanked all those who had helped him personally during the past three years.

## **5) Treasurer's Report**

In presenting his audited accounts, Bob indicated that financially the Group had had a good year. Income had exceeded expenditure by some £352.54 (adjusted figure £260 as reported above.)

The amount of £183.71 on Stationary in the expenditure side, needed elaboration because in addition to stationary, it included the one off purchase and installation upstairs in the Hall of a Steel Storage cupboard for our equipment, the purchase of rubber safety shields to prevent trips over the projector cable, a heavy duty hasp and lock for the new storage cupboard.

The main reasons for this improved performance, was a receipt of £447.36 being the Groups half share of the 2005 Autumn National Show, £106 from the summer 2006 Fund Raising Open Garden Event, and the reduced contribution of £28.50 from the 2006 Spring Show. He drew members attention to next years surplus being wiped out by the reduction in the net income to the Group from the 2006 National Show by some £317 to £130.

The copy of the accounts circulated, did not bear the signature of Brian MGurk, the Treasurer of the Fritillaria Group who had audited our accounts; the signed audited master document was made available for all to see. Bob explained he had run off the accounts, at no charge to the Group; if he had supplied audited copies they would have incurred a min. of 5p per copy charge.

Bob reported to Members the efforts he had made to try and find a Show Secretary for the 2007 National Autumn Show. Of the people who had the administrative capability, interest and experience of showing at National Shows, he had been unable, so far, to find a volunteer. He had received offers of help with receiving the entries, running the Tombola and running the computerised recording system. He would be willing to do the advertising publicity and act as a treasurer.

Discussion among members revealed this Group's inability to provide a full catering service as they had done in previous years. Many National Shows do not have catering facilities, which we have provided over many years. With less members to draw upon, and as we grow older, it became too big a burden to provide much of the food, and was too hard work for little or no return. Two members said they would rather give a donation to the Group if loss of catering income was the deciding factor. It was suggested it may be better to limit catering to coffee in the morning, and a cup of tea in the afternoon. Enquiries could be made to see if the schools contractors had any staff that may be interested in running the refreshments. Alternatively the judges could be taken out and given a meal in the town. Exhibitors did not need to go hungry; food was available for purchase locally.

It was suggested that if a job description for Show Secretary existed, it should be made available, and may help any uncertain volunteer decide if they could carry out what was required.

## **6) Elections of Officers**

Chairman: Prior to calling for nominations, the following statement from Jean Griffin was

read out in her absence: "Following many conversations in Committee, I have given an undertaking to become Chairman of the group if elected at the AGM. I have, however, reservations! The Group has been diminishing for several reasons, but the main reason to my mind, is the lack of enthusiasm on behalf of the membership. The lack of attendance cannot always be put down to weather conditions or the time of year. One suggestion could be that we hold meetings in the spring and summer months instead of the autumn and winter!!! I am prepared to stand as Chairman until April 2007 and take on the thoughts and wishes of the members, but without some commitment from members, re: attendance at meetings and support at events, the Group will not survive. This gripe is not aimed at the present committee, who support and encourage each other, and give backing to the present hard working Chairman, without whom the group would not be here at this AGM !!"

It was:

Proposed by Keith Moorhouse and seconded by Roy Metcalfe that Jean Griffin be appointed as Chairman. Proposed by Roy Metcalfe and seconded by Olive Gilbert that Keith Moorhouse be elected as Secretary. Proposed by Maureen Balcombe and seconded by Maureen James that David Brown be appointed as Treasurer.

Proposed by John Gilbert and seconded by Paul Ingwersen that the following be appointed to the Committee of the Group: Bob Charman, Audrey Dart, Edith Moorhouse and Roy Metcalfe.

Proposed by Edith Moorhouse and seconded by Alan Drummond that Olive Gilbert be appointed as auditor.

All of the above nominations were elected unanimously.

#### **7) The Programme** planned so far for 2007 was described.

Members were informed that the published event for April had to be changed. Bob Charman may be able to give us his lecture based on his recent travels in Iran; if that were not possible, Jean Griffin may be willing to give her "Travels to gardens on the eastern seaboard of the United States".

Paul Ingwersen had kindly agreed to give a practical demonstration on the planting of Troughs at his Nursery on Saturday afternoon the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June at 4.30pm, as part of our Annual Summer Fund Raising event. He had agreed that we could invite other members of local AGS Groups and local Horticultural Societies to attend.

#### **8) Any Other Business**

In the discussion that followed, members agreed we should not discontinue the Group especially as we were not failing financially. Paul offered to display, in his Packing Shed, any advertising material we produced about the Group. It was suggested we also explore the possibility of getting our publicity material into Wakehurst and into the Alpine House at Wisley. Would the Committee also consider Local and Freebie papers that circulate locally?

Following a discussion as to the best time of year to hold the AGM, it was suggested we try November, and so avoid the pressures associated with Christmas. It could be either at the end of our normal speaker's presentation, or alternatively, combined with a member contribution. Members still wanted to retain the December Social Evening and suggested it be possibly combined with Members showing their slides.

**9)** At the end of the AGM Roy Metcalfe proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman for the excellent way he had run the meetings, and on behalf of those present, expressed their grateful thanks for his great contribution during the last three years.

**Signed...Keith Moorhouse  
Chairman.**