

THE ALPINE GARDEN SOCIETY CENTRAL SUSSEX GROUP



NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2008

JOHN HUMPHRIES – CONTEMPORY ALPINES AT CHELSEA 2007

There is much that those who attend Chelsea do not see – much behind the scenes organisation is necessary. A new sponsorship by Clifford Chance LLP made possible an application to stage an exhibit at the 2007 Chelsea flower show. At a meeting on 8 July 2006 matters such as basic design and core players took place, following which plans were submitted to the Royal Horticultural Society and were confirmed on 10 November. Chris Grey-Wilson's basic design on a 20 x 20ft. stand was turned into a working diagram with woodland, marsh, moraine and rock paved area. Needs were defined – suitable multi-stemmed trees, water feature (constructed in a workshop), which nurseries to use for extra plants and materials sources such as polystyrene slabs and boxes, troughs (some pre-planted) and 40 railway sleepers differing in size which had to be sawn on site. From the 4th to 7th May it was base build on a level raised platform which also provided storage space. Paving, rock and tufa were introduced on the 8th and 9th and set out and assembled by the 13th. The following day, balled trees positioned and paving laid and on the 15th the sleepers fitted together. Every night it was essential to clear everything from that had been finished. Delivery of sand, cambark, soil and peat using a JCB was followed by plant deliveries from five locations in different parts of the country on the 17th with planting from the 17th to the 20th all of which had to meticulously cleaned. On the 19th alpines were checked with scissors at the ready and tufa planted up (eg. *Physoplexis comosa*) All required mini conferences (one photo with Chris and Katie Price). On the 19th labels were sorted and the water feature checked to ensure that the flow over the waterfall lip was horizontal. There were last minute discussions on the 20th with final top dressing, plant labels inserted and the job finished by 11pm. The plant list was produced overnight and all was set for Monday's the press day and judging. And what a display. complete with the Society's inscribed headstone! Among the hundreds of plants shown, *Cypripedium x andrewsii*, *Calanthe*, *Asplenium*, *Dionysia*, *Corydalis flexuosa*, *Arisaema*, *Primula*, *Helianthemum*, *Sempervivum* and *Trillium* and a picture of Chris talking to the BBC – 9 takes for 15 words!

So to the last day of the show and the frantic half hour sell off with recognition that red sticks denote 'not for sale'. The evening and ensuing night were more hours of activity, the break down involving a 7 man team – removal of plants, binning up compost, carrying huge 'rocks' as though they were feather weight, artificial ones having been used over the past few years and by 6am. a clearance certificate issued, sixteen days after the start. 2008 should not have happened, but the sponsor was keen to carry on and so the achievement of both the President's Award and another Gold Medal, of which we were shown some of the scenes which graced the display including *Trillium*, *Rhodophyopsis* and a prostrate Chilean Fire Bush *Anarthrophyllum desideratum*.

Unfortunately I have found it impossible to convey the wonderful record of John's engrossing commentary on the photos and the immense effort and activity necessary to stage such an event. There is a small photo gallery of the 2007 show in the June 2007 Alpine News, another in the June 2008 issue of the 2008 show with more to be seen on the AGS website and the article in Bulletin 315/369 (2009 Chelsea) for more on building a Chelsea exhibit and the team players, including John.

RM

Central Sussex Group Of the Alpine Garden Society

Minutes of the Annual General meeting held on the 15th of November, 2008.

1) Present: David Brown ~ Treasurer, Keith Moorhouse ~ Secretary and 15 ordinary members.

2) Apologies for absence were received from: Audrey and Clive Dart, John and Olive Gilbert, Pat Haley, Mary Ingwersen, and Edgar Mathews.

3) Election of Chairman ~ it was agreed David Brown act as Chairman of the Meeting. Minutes of the 2007 Annual General Meeting were read out by the Secretary and signed by the Chairman as being a true record.

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5) Matters arising from the minutes: There were none.

6) Treasurer's Report: David presented to the meeting the audited accounts for the financial year 2007/2008. This year, these had been audited by Paul Ingwersen, and had been 'signed off' by him as being correct.

As Treasurer he had budgeted at the beginning of the year for a financial deficit of £100. The accounts showed we had done slightly better than expected with a deficit of £91.58 which had been met from accumulated reserves.

Total income was £440.67, in the preceding year (£664.60). This difference of £223.93 was made up mainly from the loss of £155.30 to Group funds, being our share of the surplus from the Horsham Show account, a reduction in subscription income of £45, visitor income of £20.50 and a slight reduction in raffle and refreshment income, but a slight increase in interest income of £11.69

Total expenditure was £532.25, in the preceding year (£608.66). The reduction of £76.41 had come about primarily due to Speakers costs being £20.0 lower, and Hall Hiring fees.

At the commencement of the year we had £2244.39 in our current or deposit accounts. By the year end they were £91.05 lower at £2153.34

In concluding his remarks he said that due to the prudence of our forbears our reserves would allow us to continue for some years providing we controlled our costs carefully.

It was proposed by Bob Charman and seconded by Edith Moorhouse that the accounts be adopted. This was agreed.

7) Secretary's Report: Keith reviewed our programme of Monthly events since the last AGM. The lowest monthly attendance was 10 in February, and the highest 22, in March. On average had achieved 18 members at each meeting. This was just meeting the target we had set ourselves of a minimum audience of 18.

The committee had met on two occasions in March when 5 of the 8 members were present and in October when 7 of the 8 were present.

The surplus geo-textile material earlier used as table coverings at our local Show had been handed over to the National Shows Dept for use elsewhere.

The Group had mounted a display at the South of England Agricultural Society Garden &

Leisure Show over the Bank Holiday weekend and had a presence at the World of Alpines event staged at Wisley by the East Surrey and Woking AGS Groups.

Having gained no new members from our activities during the past two years the Committee recommended we do not exhibit at the Spring Garden and Leisure Show in 2009 but would use our time to try a demonstration in two local garden centres if granted such a facility.

We are grateful to John and Olive Gilbert for allowing us to visit their garden in early July, for entertaining us to lunch and providing an opportunity to try our hand at playing croquet. This very pleasant social occasion raised £50 for our Local Group Funds.

He reported on the request of the National AGS Treasurer that Local groups adopt a strategy aimed at reducing the size of any unapplied reserves carried forward from year to year. Keith put before the meeting the following Strategy

The Central Sussex AGS Local Group, would plan progressively to reduce the level of our reserves carried forward from year to year. This situation would occur naturally by absorbing inflationary cost increases, and any reduction in interest from our deposit account and this would lead to an increasing deficit year on year. The process could be accelerated if voluntary effort, provided at no cost to the group, were in future to be charged at cost.

Some speakers from the floor felt it was unreasonable of the Society to ask us to act in this way. The sum had been raised locally in the past and we should have the right to decide how and when we spend it.

On a proposal from Paul Ingwersen and seconded by Celia Jarrett the Strategy as set out above was adopted.

The Secretary concluded his report by thanking all members of the Group for their support and participation in its running.

To David for Chairing the AGM, taking care of the monies collected, paying the bills and producing the annual audited accounts.

To Paul and Mary for supporting our activities in many ways and over many years.

To John and Olive for a splendid lunch and introducing some of us, to the wicked game of croquet.

To all the volunteers who had participated at the SEAS Gardens and Leisure Show and in particular David for anchoring one of the two days.

To Roy for continuing to write up the monthly meetings and maintaining our web site. A facility much appreciated by past and present members who were sometimes prevented from attending by caring duties.

To Audrey and her team of helpers who provide us with refreshments at our meetings and the Christmas Social.

He finally concluded by thanking all who turn up regularly, sell raffle tickets, put out the chairs and equipment and take a very hands on role in running our little Group.

Thanks to Keith: On behalf of all members of the Group, the Chairman thanked Keith for all his hard work carried out in a quiet but efficient way during the year.

8) Elections:

Chairman: it was reported that we had been unable to find anyone with the necessary skills, experience and drive who is willing to accept this position. It was not an ideal situation, but the Committee had demonstrated we could operate satisfactorily by each of the Committee members acting as Chairman on a rotational basis.

Treasurer: David had signified his willingness to continue in office. The proposal from Paul Ingwersen and seconded by Edith Moorhouse was carried.

Secretary: Keith had signified his willingness to continue in office. The proposal from Bob Charman and seconded by Maureen Balcombe was agreed.

Hon Auditor: Paul had signified his willingness to continue in office. The proposal from David brown and seconded by Maureen Balcombe was agreed.

Committee: All the existing Committee members namely; Bob Charman, Audrey Dart, John and Olive Gilbert, Roy Metcalfe, and Edith Moorhouse had signified their willingness to

continue in office. The proposal by Carol Hart and seconded by Paul Ingwersen that they do so was agreed.

9) Format of the Christmas Social Event: The Chairman outlined the decision of the Committee to recommend to the Group that we have a members slides evening. Three Members had volunteered to present 25 of their slides. Did members support that approach? The consensus was that although all present could not attend on the 20th of December we should continue with such an event.

He called on Edith in the absence of Audrey to outline the options open to us for refreshments.

- a) Could at the end of the evening go out for a meal together at the Kingfish restaurant or Izzies Italian Restaurant. This could have an estimated cost of £5.0 - £6.0 per head - £8.0 - £10/head
- b) Alternatively buy in a selection of food, quiches, some salad and deserts and sit down in the Hall to eat it together. Estimated cost £5.0-£6.0 per head.
- c) Continue as in previous years where we all took along some food.

After discussion it was agreed we continue, as in previous years, to each take along some food. Edith, in the absence of Audrey, requested people tell her if they will be attending and what they will be bringing.

10) Visit to Mike and Hazel Brett's garden at Loose, Nr Maidstone. Kent: Edith explained that the Sussex Weald Local Group were planning to visit the garden on Saturday afternoon the 9th of May and it may be possible to include any Central Sussex members. There would be no charge for entrance to the garden but a nominal charge for tea and refreshments which Hazel would provide. More details will be given out in due course.

11) Possibility of having an exhibition table at Plumpton College's Open day in May.

Carol enquired could we use that as a recruiting facility? The day was not known, but providing it did not clash with the visit already planned to the Brett's garden it could be seriously considered.

The meeting ended at 7.55pm

Signed...Keith Moorhouse.....

**MEETING 20 DECEMBER
CHRISTMAS SOCIAL EVENING**

There will be three sets of 25 slides shown including the Dolomites and the Queyras (France).

As agreed at the AGM members are invited to bring along some seasonal refreshment for communal consumption. Should be a very pleasant social gathering – do come!

