

The Meconopsis Group

Report of the meeting held on 28th February 2009 at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh Conference Room 10.00am – 3.30 pm

(Compiled by Norma McDowall)

The meeting was opened at 10.30am by the Chairman, John Mitchell, who welcomed the large turnout of members to the meeting and the AGM.

John outlined the programme for the meeting, with minor time changes from the published programme.

10.00 - 10.30	Arrival - Complimentary Teas and Coffees	
10.30 - 11.00	AGM	
11.00 - 11.15	'Plants for naming'	Evelyn Stevens
11.15 - 12.15	'The Call of the Wild' Part I	Margaret Thorne
12.15 - 13.00	Lunch - Complimentary Teas and Coffees	
13.00 - 13.45	'The Call of the Wild' Part II	Margaret Thorne
13.45 - 14.15	' <i>Meconopsis</i> intragenus relationships'	Prof. Adam Curtis
14.15 - 14.45	' <i>Meconopsis sherriffii</i> and others'	Alan Furness
14.45 - 15.15	' <i>Meconopsis</i> : Seed viability testing, seed coat characteristics and phylogenetics relationships'	Alan Elliott
15.15 - 15.30	'Members' Questions.... and answers'	Ian Christie

Announcements

John welcomed a good turnout of members [47 in total] and made a number of short announcements.

Tom Pollard

It is sad to report that Tom Pollard, a vice-president of the Lakeland Horticultural Society, has passed away recently. He was very keen on *Meconopsis* and supported the Group since its foundation. We send our condolences.

Thanks

He thanked the Committee for all their hard work over the past year.

He directed members to the raffle with plants and seeds as prizes [included in the Day Charge], 50/50 Plant Sale and demonstration material on the tables. He also made the usual requests to sign the Attendance Sheet and pay subscriptions due to Norma.

Holehird Garden

Peggy Anderson announced that the Meconopsis Group had arranged a visit to *Meconopsis* - rich gardens in the Lake District on the weekend of 6th and 7th June (Saturday and Sunday). This would include visits to three 'Core' gardens - Dalemain, Holehird (the Garden of the Lakeland Roger Nelson's garden at Brampton where M. 'Lingholm' originated. Pat Murphy from the L.H.S. is kindly helping with the arrangements.

Holehird has been booked for the Saturday morning, with visits to Brampton probably on Sunday.

A Booking Sheet was put on the Reception Table for members to add their names.

Norma gave Peggy some names of members that had been sent to her.

Agenda for 6th AGM to be held on February 28th 2009

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 8th March 2008
3. Matters arising from the Minutes
4. Chairman's Report
5. Secretary's Report
6. Treasurer's report
7. Seed Exchange Manager's Report
8. Web-site Manager's Report

9. Appointment of Office-bearers and Management Committee
10. Appointment of Trials and Assessment Subcommittee
11. Consideration of proposed Alterations to the Constitution
12. Appointment of Auditor
13. Membership Subscription Rates 2010
14. Any Other Business

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence have been received from:-

Ann Armstrong, Bob Armstrong, J.W. Bell, M.Buss, C.Buss, Graeme Butler, Anne Chambers, Cyril Cooper, Anne Cooper, R. Craig, Peter Cunningham, Jim Eddison, Elizabeth Ferro, Keith Folwell, Roz Folwell, Alison S. Goldie, Derek Hosie, Mark Hutson, John C Lawson, Nicola Macnee, Richard Olive, Harvey Shepherd, Marlene Storah, Dianne Sutherland, Peter J. Taylor, Susan Tindall, Terence J. Vince and Jenny Wainwright-Klein.

2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 8th March 2008

The Minutes of last year's AGM had been distributed to Members in April 2008. The Minutes were taken as read and no changes or amendments were proposed. Adoption of the Minutes was proposed by Evelyn Stevens and seconded by Jim Jermyn.

3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Chairman's report

This included the Group Co-ordinator's report and the Web-site Manager's report.

John reported that this last year has been one of the busiest for the Meconopsis Group. Started in September 1998, the tenth anniversary of the Group had been celebrated last year. Over the years there has been a lot of work done on the naming of the Big Blue poppies and the sorting out of the species. We are grateful for all the support given by members.

Gardeners Scotland and Awards to Plants from JRGPC.

In 2008 we staged a display at Gardening Scotland which was well-received by the public. Our thanks go to Geoff Hill and his helpers for his work in setting up/ and dismantling the stand and manning it over the three Show days. Help is needed for this year's Show at Ingliston on 29th/30th/31st May, and esp. for the setting up on Thursday 28th.

There was also for the first time a meeting of the JRGPC at Gardening Scotland. Awards were made to further cultivars of big blue poppies - PCs to *MM*. 'Willie Duncan', 'P.C. Abildgaard', and 'Bobby Masterton'.

In 2009 we plan to stage a display again this year and also submit plants to Joint Rock for consideration of Awards.

Awards of Garden Merit The RHS have agreed to have an official trial of "Perennial blue-flowered cultivars of Meconopsis". This has largely been negotiated by Jim Jermyn. The official trial site is to be Harlow Carr. There are to be 4 other "demonstration beds" – at Wisley, Rosemoor, The Linns and one other.

Brickell Award Evelyn was awarded the National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Garden's Brickell Award for 2008 at Hampton Court Flower Show in June. This award is given annually to a NCCPG National collection holder for "excellence in cultivated plant conservation". Evelyn's collection of big perennial blue poppies was given full National collection status in 2001, and this was raised to Scientific Status in 2006.

Web-site The web-site maintains its position at the top of Google and other search engines for "Meconopsis" (sponsored sites excepted). There has been a further increase in the use of the site. Real visits per day increased from 58 to 72 from October 2007-Oct 2008. The cost until October 2009 will be about £65.

There continues to be progress in adding material to the site, both in the big blue poppy cultivar section and in the species in the wild section. Evelyn would welcome comments on the contents

A link has been put to the complementary website set up by James Cobb in December 2008 at <http://meconopsisworld.co.uk/>

Fact-sheets. Three new Fact-sheets (*MM*. 'Barney's Blue' and 'Jimmy Bayne' - 'Mrs Jebb' and 'Crewdson Hybrid' - and 'Slieve Donard' and 'Bryan Conway' [with a mention of 'Bobby Masterton']) were prepared and

printed and all members should have received a copy. They have also been mounted on the web-site as pdf files for printing.

Book

It is intended to take the information posted on the website and adapt it as a book for publication.

Publications

Article Evelyn Stevens “The Meconopsis Group – 10 years on” in ‘The Rock Garden’

Other articles were put on the demonstration table.

New book ‘Blue Heaven’ by a member, Bill Terry, in Canada. Launch date March 24th 2009.

Herbarium

John has previously mentioned that he intended to check the old herbarium sheets at the RBGE. This has been done and seeds have been extracted from about 20 different plants, including *MM regia*, *napaulensis*, *discigera*, *bella*, *forrestii*, *simplicifolia*, *torquata* and *sherriffii*. He hopes to attempt germination.

5 Secretary’s Report

Membership

At the end of 2008

- 120 renewals (including 43 family memberships)
- 24 new members (3 Canada, 9 England, 1 Germany, 1 Iceland, 1 Norway, 9 Scotland)
- **Paid membership =144**
- 2 free students (Complimentary for a year)
- 25 Complimentary members
- **Total Membership = 171**
- Including Family memberships the final total is now over 200.

In addition 27 previous members still on the ‘list’ had not paid for 2008.

Norma reported that 85 members had renewed their subscription for 2009 before the start of the year.

Mailings

There have been 4 mailings to members, in April and October 2008 and in January and February 2009. Reports of the meetings held in March and November were sent in April, October and January.

In January Norma sent out the newsletter and the Notice of the 6th AGM as well as A4 fact sheets to those who did not get them at the November meeting. This resulted in a massive mailing and emailing.

In February 2009 she sent out Notice of the proposed alterations to the Constitution.

At present about 65 members get reports etc sent by post, the rest (about 130) by email. This has to be divided up into 7 groups. A final plea was made to let us use email if you have it - using an email address rather than using post would save 5 minutes of time and save on costs - it all mounts up.

John thanked Norma for the Secretary’s Report.

6 Treasurer’s Report

Peggy Anderson presented her report for the year 2008 and reminded us that it covered the period from 1st January to 31st December. She said that the books had been examined by our auditor Matt Heasman and have been found to be in order. Figures for 2008 have been compared with those for 2007. She reported that our finances are in a healthy state and that at the end of 2008 we had £4505.79 in the bank. There was a net income of £630.83 in 2008.

Copies of the Financial Statement were available on the Reception Table for inspection.

Income

The main sources of income were subscriptions, plant and seed sales and donations.

Peggy dealt with items under the headings ‘Income’ and ‘expenditure’ in alphabetical order.

Card Sales This refers to the sale of cards by Anne Chambers made at Group meeting. She gives us 10% of her takings. We thank her very much for her generosity.

Donations We assign two types of income to the ‘Donations’ category: first, if it has been given as gifts and secondly when paying their yearly subscription, some members pay more than is due. We put the excess into the ‘donations’ category. Also when subscriptions are paid in dollars or euros there is usually odd money in excess

after conversion into £ sterling and the excess goes into 'donations'. There was a slight fall in the amount of donations received in 2008.

Door and Raffle £97.10 in 2008 as compared to £84 in 2007. This comes from the money taken at the door and for the raffle at our group meetings.

Bank Interest was £56.90 in 2008 and £69.92 in 2007. We have had roughly the same average amount in our bank account throughout 2007 and 2008 and the difference represents changes in the rate of bank interest. In 2007 we were averaging £5.83 interest per month. In 2008, prior to October, we were getting over £4.90 per month, but this has fallen to £1.19 in January 2009 and £1.05 in February. This is likely to get worse as long as the recession bites. We'll be lucky to get £20 total in interest in 2009.

Plant sales were up from £304.00 per annum to £375.00. This is gratifying, so please continue to 'bring and buy' plants.

Seed Sales donation Roger Nelson gave *Meconopsis* 'Lingholm' seeds to Evelyn who packeted them and gave them to the National Trust for Scotland for sales. We got a £100 donation in 2008.

Seeds sales This is the amount that Jim Jermyn made through sales of donated seeds:- £158.26 for 2008 and £174.00 for 2007. This figure is for sales alone, note that in the expenditure column the cost of dispatching seeds has risen significantly. The net profit for 2008 was £82.09 compared to £139 for 2007.

Subscriptions There is a great difference between the income from subscriptions for 2008 and 2007, almost double in 2008. We did not have double the number of members in 2008 that we had in 2007. These figures are for income **received** in that year. Not everyone paying a subscription for 2008 pays in 2008. Some will pay in 2007, some in 2008 and some in 2009.

Expenditure

The main categories of expenditure were the Gardening Scotland stand, Printing, and the Web site.

Gardening Scotland Peggy explained the difference in the expenditure at Gardening Scotland for 2007 and 2008. In 2007 a stand at Gardening Scotland became available at short notice when a stand holder withdrew and we were offered it. We did not have the expense of the stand itself as the withdrawing stand holder had already paid for it and had forfeited the cost. The expenditure of £6.76 was the cost that Geoff Hill incurred in setting up the stand for the *Meconopsis* Group.

In 2008 we again had a stand but this time we paid for the stand, the hiring of a van to transport the plants and for the bits and pieces Geoff Hill needed to construct the stand: hence the difference in costs.

Because of the response of the public to our stands in the past, we will have another one at Gardening Scotland in 2009.

ICRA Expenditure of 313.00 in 2007 was for back copies of 'The Rock Garden'. We had no expense in 2008.

Photocopying, phone/email/internet and postage and printer cartridge are for general running of the Group.

Photocopying is down in 2008 mainly because more material is now being sent by email, so there is less need for hard copies. This had the knock on effect that postage costs were down for 2008 as are stationery costs.

Printing fliers In 2007 we had 1500 fliers advertising the *Meconopsis* Group printed for Gardening Scotland..

On one side was a picture taken by Norma McDowall of *M. 'Slieve Donard'* and with information on the *Meconopsis* Group on the other. They were well received. People picked up lots of them at Gardening Scotland and Group members who have talked at meetings have handed out many. The outcome was that we had none left and had to place another order. We had 3,000 printed and we also had some fact sheets printed in 2008: hence the large expenditure at the printers in 2008.

RBGE donation After every meeting here, we give the RBGE a donation of £70. We give £140 a year. In 2006, Peggy confessed she forgot to pay £70 after one meeting so when she realised her mistake, she paid the shortfall in 2007. Hence, there is expenditure of £210 and not £140. In 2008, we were back to £140.

Stationery The costs in 2008 were lower than in 2007, partly because we send out fewer hard copies and partly because we buy in bulk one year and so don't necessarily have to buy the item in the following year.

Seed packeting and dispatching Costs have increased as already noted. This is due to buying stationery such as envelopes, a supply of glassine envelopes and to increases in postage rates.

Seed trial refers to buying *Meconopsis* seeds from commercial suppliers for trialling by Bill Terry and Evelyn.

Audio tapes were purchased for taping our Group Meetings and Committee Meetings.

Video tapes were for videoing *Meconopsis* growth at the Linns at various times through the year.

Speakers' travel expenses are contributions to speakers for their travel to the meetings here if they come from some distance away. In fact two cheques for the November 2008 meeting have not yet been cashed so they will show up in the 2009 figures.

The Web The expenditure of £216.44 in 2008, (£15.04 in 2007) is made up of web registration for two years and web space for one year (£105.45) and we purchased a hard disk dedicated to the Web and memory sticks that can be transferred between Peter Taylor, our web master, and Evelyn (£110.99).

John thanked Peggy for her Financial Statement.

7 Seed Exchange Manager's Report

Jim introduced his report by thanking members for sending him seed so early, for without seed there can be no Seed Exchange. He thanked Geoff Hill for his assistance with packing up the seed.

He noted that the most popular item was not in fact a *Meconopsis*, but *P. reidii* var. *williamsii*!

The most popular *Meconopsis* included *MM integrifolia*, *lancifolia*, *quintuplinervia* (Farrer's Form) and *M. punicea*. He suggested that the seed of *M. punicea* and *M. quintuplinervia* could be sent out as soon as possible so it could be sown as soon as possible to help with viability but there would be cost implications. He sought the views of members.

Seed was sent to over 50 members - including Europe, Canada and Australia.

8 Web Manager's report This has been given by John in his Chairman's Report.

9 Appointment of Office-bearers and Management Committee

John announced that the present Management Committee was standing down but was willing to stand for re-election for a further year.

Present Management Committee

Chairman	John Mitchell
Vice-chairman	Jim Jermyn
Secretary	Norma McDowall
Treasurer	Peggy Anderson
Group Co-ordinator	Evelyn Stevens
Seed Exchange Manager	Jim Jermyn
Web-site Manager	Peter Taylor
Committee members	Cameron Carmichael, Ian Christie, Geoff Hill, Steve McNamara and Beryl McNaughton

The present Management Committee was elected to serve a further year.

This was proposed by Les Newby and seconded by Tom Shearer.

Nominations were invited for additional members of the Management Committee. There were no nominations.

10. Appointment of Trials and Assessment Subcommittee

John intimated that the present members of the subcommittee, namely John Mitchell, Jim Jermyn, Beryl McNaughton, Ian Christie, Steve McNamara, Cameron Carmichael and Evelyn Stevens were all willing to continue in office, if elected.

The present Trials and Assessment Subcommittee was elected to serve a further year. This was proposed by Jeanie Jones and seconded by David Thorne.

John sought nominations for new members to serve on the above Subcommittee. There were no nominations.

11 Consideration of proposed Alterations to the Constitution

Due Notice had been given to all Members, as under Section 9 of the Constitution, that two motions for alterations to the Constitution had been properly received by the Secretary 21 days before the date of this Annual General Meeting.

Motion 1

It was proposed to amend Section 1. This was proposed by Evelyn Stevens and seconded by Beryl McNaughton.

Existing

Name 'The Group shall be called the 'Meconopsis Group'

Proposed

Name The Group shall be called 'The Meconopsis Group'

Motion 1 was carried.

Motion 2

It was proposed to amend Section 5 b). This was proposed by Evelyn Stevens and seconded by Beryl McNaughton.

Existing

'Members of the Management Committee shall serve for a period of up to 3 years, after which they are eligible for re-election for a further 3 years'.

Proposed

'Members of the Management Committee shall serve for a period of up to three years, after which they are eligible for re-election on an annual basis'.

Motion 2 was carried unanimously.

12 Appointment of auditor

John thanked Matt Heasman for undertaking the job of auditor in 2008. He was asked to continue in this role for 2009 and agreed to do so.

13 Membership Subscription Rates 2010

The Management Committee recommended that the following membership rates for 2010

- £8 for UK members
- £10 (or equivalent in US\$ or euros) for non -UK members
- [euro and \$US amounts to be set by the Management Committee in October 2009 before Subscription renewal notices are sent out - NMCD]
- UK members will pay an additional £2 for seed through the Seed Exchange, but the subscription for non - UK members will include seed if wished. This will help eliminate cheques for very small amounts.

David Rankin asked for clarification of why an increase in the subscription was required.

John explained that this is to take account of recent currency changes, forthcoming increases in postal charges, funding for publication of a book [see Chairman's report] and further fact sheets. There will also be additional costs involved with the RHS Trial.

The rates for 2010 were accepted by Members.

14 Any Other Business

- i. Les Drummond asked about the old Trial Beds at the RBGE. The former Trial Beds in the Nursery are no longer in existence but John explained that all the cultivars given Awards are planted in the Lower Woodland Garden. The actual Plants given Awards last year have been planted there.
- ii. James Cobb thanked the Committee for the Reports. They are considered a valuable resource.
- iii. Evelyn Stevens asked Members to provide germination information about *M. quintuplinervia* and *M. punicea* so she can track viability.
- iv. George Watt asked if wild collected seed could go to members who can try and ensure germination. John supported this and said that expertise is needed from outwith the RBGE with the new seed e.g. from the monocarpics. There are restrictions to whom seed may go, but he will ask the Director if some of the incoming seed can go outwith the RBGE. The RBGE keeps a pool of all seed received from expeditions in its Seed Bank.
- v. Jim Jermyn mentioned that Mike Hirst has managed to germinate *M. paniculata* stored in his fridge long-term. This emphasised the need for good storage of seed.
- vi. Evelyn has put packets of the Gunsa form of *M. Paniculata* into the 'raffle'.

There being no other business John closed the AGM at 11.15am.