

The Meconopsis Group

Report of the meeting held on March 5th 2011 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 [43 in total], to the meeting and the AGM. He welcomed our four speakers, Peter Cox, Janet Watson, Sharon Bradley and Paul Egan.

Programme for the meeting

10.00 - 10.30	Arrival - Complimentary Teas and Coffees	
10.30 - 11.00	8 th AGM	
11.00 - 11.10	'Plants for naming'	Jim Jermyn
11.10 - 12.10	'My experiences of <i>Meconopsis</i> in the wild and in cultivation'	Peter Cox
12.10 - 12.30	'Species from seed' #1	Geoff Hill
12.30 - 13.30	<i>Bring your own picnic Lunch - Complimentary Teas and Coffees</i>	
13.30 - 14.30	' <i>Meconopsis</i> and botanical illustration'	Janet Watson and Sharon Bradley
14.30 - 15.00	'Introducing two newly described species of <i>Meconopsis</i> '	Paul Egan
15.00 - 15.30	Members Discussion	

Announcements

John reported that Finn Haugli was in hospital and asked members to sign a card for him.

John also reported that seed from the SRGC was available at the excellent price of £1 for six packets.

John then asked non members to leave, but invited them to return after the end of the AGM for the lectures.

Agenda for 8th AGM

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 6th March 2010
3. Matters arising
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. Appointment of Auditor
12. Membership Subscription Rates 2012
13. Any Other Business

Minutes of the meeting held on March 5th 2011

1. Apologies

Apologies have been received from the following members:-

J.W Bell, Anthony Bracegirdle, Ray Brown, Anne M.Chambers, Scott Cook, Cyril & Anne Cooper, Prof. Adam Curtis, Avril M. & J. Leslie Drummond, Alan Elliott, Jim & Jean Elliott, Elizabeth Ferro, Keith and Roz Folwell, Martyn Furzer, John Greenham, John Hawgood, Keith, Rachel & Tim Lever, Nicola MacNee, John D. Main, Steve McNamara, Monica Meenaghan, Robert Murray, Richard Oliver, Bob Pierce, Sue Simpson, Peter J.Taylor, Alan Tomlinson, Terence J.Vince and Celia Wright.

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Report of 8th AGM

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2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on March 6th 2010

The Minutes of last year's AGM had been distributed to Members in January 2011. The Minutes were taken as read and no changes or amendments were proposed. Adoption of the Minutes was proposed by Tom Shearer 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.

John said that the last year has been very good with a lot happening.

Branklyn Garden has now been awarded a National Collection for *Meconopsis*. Congratulations were accorded to Steve (MacNamara).

The AGM Trials at Harlow Carr is on going. There will be the first meeting in the next couple of months to look at the *Meconopsis*. There is also a Joint Rock Committee planned to look at them and then to head up to Gardening Scotland, and from there to the gardens of Evelyn and Ian Christie and back to Holehird Garden (at Windermere). It will take 2-3 years to study the plants and make Awards.

The Fourth International Perennial Plant Conference of the International Hardy Plant Union took place in February 2011 in Grünberg, Germany. Dr Evelyn Stevens was invited to speak on *Meconopsis* at this prestigious event. Her title was 'The genus *Meconopsis*'. Evelyn concentrated on *Meconopsis* in the wild and in cultivation, with emphasis on the Big Blue Poppies.

Toshio Yoshida came to Scotland from Japan last year and gave 2 excellent talks in the Lecture Theatre here at the RBGE. These were the first lectures Toshio had given in Scotland so was great kudos for the RBGE and The Meconopsis Group.

The Meconopsis Group has also had lots of new introductions by members of the Group:-

Toshio Yoshida named *M. heterandra* and *M. pulchella*. David Rankin introduced the new species *M. wilsonii* subsp. *orientalis* and we have also had new species named by Paul Egan, namely *M. autumnalis* and *M. manasluensis* Paul is going to talk about them later.

John thanked Geoff Hill and his team of helpers for once again setting a very successful show at Gardening Scotland. The sale of seeds this time has helped to raise considerable funds for The Meconopsis Group.

5 Secretary's Report

Sadly Norma reported that two long standing members of The Meconopsis Group passed away last year - Lady Catherine Henderson of Hensel and John Lawson.

Membership

At the end of 2010

- 126 renewals - including 6 by PayPal paid in Nov/Dec 2010 (including 27 family memberships)
- 26 new members (12 Scotland, 9 England, 3 Canada, 1 Denmark, 1 Switzerland)
- **Paid membership =152**
- 1 student (Complimentary for a year)
- 22 Complimentary members
- **Total Membership = 175**
- Including Family memberships the final total remains over 200.

By comparison at the end of 2009

Membership

At the end of 2009

- 132 renewals (including 34 family memberships)

- 15 new members (5 England, 1 Germany, 1 Netherlands, 6 Scotland, 2 USA)
- 1 rejoined
- **Paid membership =148**
- 5 free students (Complimentary for a year)
- 25 Complimentary members
- **Total Membership = 178**

4 members indicated they did not wish to renew their membership and a further 17 members did not pay their subscription for 2010, despite several invitations to do so throughout the year, and were deleted from the membership list.

2011

Norma reported that 72 members had renewed their subscription for 2011 (72 by cheque or cash and 35 by PayPal) by the end of February (the official date) with a further 8 before the start of the meeting. There are also 6 new members (2 by cheque and 4 by PayPal).

Mailings

There have been 3 mailings to members, in May and September 2010 and in January 2011. The latest mailing included the Minutes of the Group AGM held in February 2010.

Reports from speakers were sent following the meetings in February and November, as well as the special lectures given by Toshio Yoshida in May 2010.

The January mailing comprised the newsletter and the Notice of the 8th AGM and program for today's meeting. There have also been several emails about meetings and events throughout the year.

At present about 121 members, several overseas Complimentary members and some UK Complimentary members get reports etc sent by email, other UK Complimentary members and members without email by post. Major mailings have now to be divided up into 9 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 increasing costs - it all mounts up.

6 Treasurer's Report

Peggy prepared the following statement for inclusion in the Minutes:-

1. The Meconopsis Group finances for 2010 have been audited by Mat Heasman and he has found them to be in order.
2. There a few hard copies are available. If there are not enough, give me your name and address and I'll see that you are sent a copy.
3. The take-home message with respect to the 2010 finances is that they are in a healthy state.

To all intents and purposes we have money in three places:

- i. A general account which we have had since the Group was founded.
- ii. An account that we opened in 2009 for income and expenditure for PayPal payments
- iii. In PayPal itself.

Table 1 compares income and expenditure in 2009 and 2010 in the General Account. Items have been arranged a little differently from usual in order that comparisons are easier.

Expenditure

The first set of figure deal with general running of the club. You'll notice that some items vary between the years and this is normal.

Seed sales The costs in sending out seeds in 2010 was greater, reflecting the increase in postage prices and the need to purchase glassine envelopes.

Gardening Scotland The costs of setting up the Group's stand come from transporting plants to the site and setting up the stand. The costs in 2010 were less than in 2009 because Geoff was able to re-use some of the material from 2009. This saved £113.73.

Look at the income we got from selling spare seeds at Gardening Scotland £610.40. The sale of seeds more than paid for the costs of setting up our stand. Selling seeds was a great success and we will repeat the exercise in 2011.

Toshio Yoshido's talk Expenditure here was towards his travel costs. From ticket sales we made £357.50

Speaker's costs The figures here are a function of the number of speakers and who get a 'gift' and their travel costs. Some years the costs are higher and sometimes lower.

Mulch is a new category. The committee agreed to pay Evelyn Stevens £250 for mulch as a contribution to her trialling Meconopsis.

Some categories of income and expenditure don't occur every year. So the figures on the lower part of the table deal only with 2009, so I'm not going to discuss them further (£909.50).

Income

i) **Donations** are up by from 2009 by some £140. We are fortunate to have such generous donors.

We acknowledge gratefully a donation of 1st class stamps worth £30.42p which didn't go through the bank.

ii) **Subscriptions** The amount paid in subscriptions in 2010 is £675.55 greater than in 2009. This doesn't mean that we had far more members in 2010. It just depends if people pay their subscriptions before or after December. So, the figures shown are for the amount paid in that year, which is not necessarily the same as subscriptions due for that year.

iii) **Plant sales** at meetings were up on 2009 and helped by the fact that in 2010 we had plants on sale at a third meeting at Toshio Yoshido's talk.

iv) **Seed sales** were up on 2009. This was helped by a donation of proceeds of members' seeds at a meeting.

v) **Subscriptions** The amount paid in subscriptions in 2010 is £675.55 greater than in 2009. This doesn't mean that we had far more members in 2010. It just depends if people pay their subscriptions before or after December. So, the figures shown are for the amount paid in that year, which is not necessarily the same as subscriptions due for that year.

vi) **Ticket sales** We have already dealt with the ticket sales at Toshio Yoshido's talk.

In summary, income exceeded expenditure by £1180.76 and we have a healthy £4,468 in the bank. Note that there is an uncashed cheque dating from the November meeting. So please cash your cheques timeously. I don't like carrying over uncashed cheques from one financial year to the next.

5. New Bank Account

In the account we set up for PayPal income and expenditure, the only action was for Bank interest amounting to 32p.

6. PayPal account

In November 2010 we set up a PayPal account so that members could pay their subscriptions easily. This is especially useful for overseas members in that they avoid the horrendous bank charges they are incurred when paying through the bank. Up to the end of December, 20 people had paid their subscriptions via PayPal bringing in income of £210 which is in PayPal.

John thanked Peggy for the Treasurer's Report.

Copies were made available.. There were no questions.

The accounts were accepted by the meeting - Proposer- Evelyn Stevens Seconder -Frank McGavigan

7 Seed Exchange Manager's Report

Jim thanked members for sending him seed, for without seed there can be no Seed Exchange. He thanked Geoff Hill for his assistance with packing up the seed. Overseas members were particularly generous.

8 Web Manager's report

This has been given to John by Peter Taylor who sends his apologies. One major change was the inclusion of a Paypal account on the website. This was not easy to do., but is well used.

The Password for members accessing the Members' Area was simplified, which will change on a yearly basis.

Usage

Over the past four months, the average number of *unique* visitors each month was 1350. This should not be confused with the average number of 'hits' which is 45,000. The site continues to be in first position (excluding commercially paid-for links) with the major search engines (Google, Yahoo, MSN, Bing) when the keyword "Meconopsis" is used.

Development

The site continues to be developed. The addition of 'Plant Portraits' continues.

Cost Web hosting for the year to March 2011 is £30 including VAT.

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, Scott Cook, Geoff Hill, Steve McNamara and Beryl McNaughton

The present Management Committee was elected to serve a further year. This was proposed by Jeanie Jones and seconded by Matt Heasman.

In addition, Willie Campbell, was elected to serve on the Management Committee for up to three years. This was proposed by Evelyn Stevens and seconded by Geoff Hill.

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 Jim Sutherland and seconded by Peggy Anderson.

11 Appointment of auditor

John thanked Matt Heasman for undertaking the job of auditor in 2010.. He was asked to continue in this role for 2011 and agreed to do so. This was proposed by Willie Campbell and seconded by George Watt.

12 Membership Subscription Rates 2012

The Management Committee recommended that the membership rates for 2012 remained the same as for 2011.

- £8 for UK members
- £10 (or US\$20 or 15 euros) for non -UK members

The rates for 2012 were accepted by Members.

13 Any Other Business

Evelyn Stevens wished to thank Peter Taylor for setting up PayPal. Norma replied that both Peter and Peggy had spent a lot of time on this. It was being well supported, especially by our non UK members.

There being no other business John closed the AGM at 11.00a.m.