

Meeting 7th March 2015

The meeting commenced at 10.30 with the Chairman John Mitchell making some preliminary announcements reminding members to sign in, tell Sharon of any e-mail address or postal address changes, to pay any remaining subscriptions, and to return the name badges at the end of the meeting.

The glasshouses had been closed due to the strong winds in the morning. An announcement would be made at the end of the morning session if the gardens are open.

Bob Mitchell has a new book published on the History of St, Andrews Botanic Garden. This will be available at lunchtime. The cost is £10 with all money going to the Friends of the Garden.

John welcomed two members from Yunnan to the meeting. He would be giving them a tour of the garden on Tuesday.

AGM

- i) In the newsletter there were subscription, seed exchange and web reports. When we come to these sections please make comments, if not we will just propose and second them.
- ii) The list of members who could not attend the meeting was not read out but is shown below.

Apologies were received from:

Sue Thornley, Rick Nelson, Peter & Ann Elliot, Nicola MacNee, Alice Bremner, Bruce & Pam Sherriff, Terry Vince, Carla Bailey, Erika Zemte, Svetlana Voronina, John O'Keefe, Ann Chambers, John Hawgood, James W Bell, Adam Curtis, Norma Brandt, Tim, Keith & Rachael Lever, Simon Milne, Susan Simpson, Anna Orme, Nick Downham, Ian McNaughton and Margaret and Henry Taylor.

A total of 42 members were present at the meeting.

- iii) The minutes of the last AGM had also been passed round. The meeting was asked for any corrections and amendments. Norma McDowell had a query concerning the previous AGM's minutes which was answered by Sharon.

The minutes were then accepted.

Proposer: Peggy Anderson

Secunder: Matt Heasman

Chairman's Report.

John began his report by saying that it had been a very good year this year.

- i) Chris Grey-Wilson's monograph on Meconopsis had been published.. This is a huge piece of work which will benefit horticulturalists and botanists in the coming years
- ii) There was a Gold Medal for the Meconopsis Group at Gardening Scotland. Congratulations to Sharon and her team.
- iii) (John also intended to congratulate Kevock Nursery on their Gold Medal at Chelsea).
- iv) Some sad news, Mrs Ann Cooper from Newcastle Under Lyne, a regular visitor to Edrom Nursery and Ian Christie, had passed away. Her husband will continue to be a member. Condolences had been sent to him and his family.
- v) Changes to the Constitution Section Seven concerning Honorary and Complimentary Members.

Members who have rendered exceptional service to the Meconopsis Group by botanical research or by furthering the objectives of the Group in other ways shall be eligible for appointment as either Honorary or Complimentary Members.

The Meconopsis Group Committee have reviewed this and have nominated the following as Honorary Members:

Dr Chris Brickell, James Cobb, Finn Haugli, Chris Grey-Wilson, John Mitchell, Dr Evelyn Stevens and Toshio Yoshida.

Those nominated as Complimentary Members are:

Carole Bainbridge, Colin Crosby, Roger Nelson, Professor Anton Edwards, Helen Kessel, Peter Taylor, Simon Milne Regius Keeper at Edinburgh, Hugh McAllister of Ness Botanic Gardens, Jenny Wainwright-Klein, Norma McDowell, the Secretary of the Lakeland Horticultural Society, and the Curator at Harlow Carr.

The nominations were accepted by a show of hands.

Norma McDowell stated that she thought that last year, Jim Jermyn had nominated her as an Honorary Member. Ian Scott supported this since Complimentary Membership was for those with links to Botanic Gardens. Evelyn Stevens agreed that Jim Jermyn had proposed that Norma be made

an Honorary member for her tremendous work as Secretary over the years. This change was accepted by the meeting.

- vi) John reported that Evelyn was standing down as Group Co-ordinator after seventeen years in this post. She had been instrumental in taking the group forward as well as being a founder member. He thanked her for all the help she had given the Group over the years and was pleased to report that she would still be a member of the Group Committee
- vii) He also thanked Beryl MacNaughton, who will be retiring from the Committee this year, for all of her contributions and keeping us in line over the various committee meetings..

Treasurer's Report. Peggy Anderson

The verbal report is shown below.

Peggy began by saying that the finances are being audited by Willie Campbell. Unfortunately he is ill and has the books so that they are not available at this meeting.

The Meconopsis Group Financial Statement 2014 (presented to members at the AGM, 9th March 2015)

1. The accounts of The Meconopsis Group for 2014 are being audited by Willie Campbell. Unfortunately Willie is unwell and can not be at the AGM. I am confident that the accounts are in order.
2. Willie has the books, but there are few hard copies of the slides I am going to show and you are welcome to examine them at your leisure.
3. The Group has money in three accounts:
 - i. The General Account which is used for the day to day running of the Group.
 - ii. A PayPal account into which members can pay their subscriptions. This was opened so that people, especially from abroad, could pay subscriptions and donations without excessive bank charges. It is used by both UK and overseas members
 - iii. The nominated account for PayPal which I call the second account. This is an account into which we can transfer money to and from PayPal. It acts as a buffer account between PayPal and the General account so that if PayPal were to be hacked into, the hacker would not get into our main account which contains more money.

The take-home message with respect to the 2014 finances of The Meconopsis Group is that they are in a healthy state.

Slide 1 Summary of the money in all 3 accounts at end of financial year

Members like to compare the figures for one year with those of the previous year. I have done this for all the accounts, but don't put too much weight on the comparisons as they are not necessarily like for like as I'll explain as we go along.

4. PayPal Account

Slide 2

In 2014 as in 2013 all the income into PayPal came from subscriptions. Income figures are for gross subscriptions. However, we have to pay a fee on every payment.

We don't like having too much money in our PayPal account so we periodically move some into the nominated account. PayPal has a security system that limits the amount of money you can move out of the account until certain verification steps have been completed. In 2013 these verification steps had not been completed and that is why there was a large amount of money in the account at the end of the year.

In 2014 we completed these steps and transferred £1,500 into the 2nd account such that there was only £231.86 left in the PayPal account.

5 2nd Bank Account

Slide 3

This account was set up as the nominated bank account for transferring money to and from PayPal.

I want to focus firstly on the income of 1 penny.

As part of the verification process for being able to transfer money from PayPal, PayPal pays a small amount of money into the nominated account and provides a code in the narrative. You have to go to the bank, find out how much has been transferred and what the code is. You then inform PayPal what these figures are. In our case 1 penny was transferred. When we passed the verification test I moved £1,500 into the 2nd account.

The money does not stay in the 2nd account for long and it is transferred to the General Account.

6. General Account

Slide 4

Because of time constraints, I am only going to highlight those items shown in purple.

Income

- 6.1 **Donations** Donations are up on 2013 and include a very generous donation of £100 in memory of Sue Sym after whom the Meconopsis 'Susan's Reward' is named.
- 6.2 **Subscriptions** Subscriptions are down by about half on the previous year. Don't think that we have lost a lot of members. If a subscription is paid by the middle of December it will fall into one financial year, whereas if it is paid on 1st January or after, it will fall into the next financial year. So the income from subscriptions varies from year to year and I don't think we should be worried.
- 6.3 **Seed Sales** These are for the sale of the seeds that are distributed by Ian Scott: The total in 2014 is well up on that on 2013, however the figures are not actually comparable. The income in 2013 came from the distribution of 2012-13 and was paid into the account in January 2013. Part of the income in 2014 came from the distribution of 2013-14 and was paid into the account in January 2014. The 2014 figure also includes that amount of money for 2014-15 seed sales that had been paid by the middle of December 2014. So in summary, the 2013 seed sales figure is for a single distribution, whereas the 2014 figure is for 1½ distributions.
- 6.4 **Gardening Scotland:** The general public has an insatiable appetite for Meconopsis seed. The income from seed sales at Gardening Scotland 2014 was well up on 2013. So Gardening Scotland 2014 was very successful and in addition we got a gold medal which is good for our status.
- 6.5 **Book Sales** At the last Group meeting, two titles of books were available for purchase. These were Chris Grey-Wilson's monograph on Meconopsis and 'The Fathers of Botany: The Discovery of Chinese Plants by European Missionaries' by Jane Kilpatrick. The books were sent up by Kew and were sold at a considerable discount. The total sales came to £2,650.

The total income in the General Account is skewed by the book sales. Taking this into account, income is up by £100 from 2013.

Expenditure

- 6.6 **Speakers' Travel and Gifts:** The figures here are a function of the number of speakers and their travel costs. Some years the costs are higher and sometimes lower.
- 6.7 **Donation for room use:** We are not billed for using this room for our group meetings and unfortunately I forgot to make donations for using the room twice in 2013! This was rectified in 2014 and I made donations for 4 x £70 in 2014 instead of 2 x.
This explains why there was expenditure of £280 in 2014 in nothing in 2013.
- 6.8 **Travel to committee meetings:** In 2013 we instituted paying committee members for travel expenses to committee meetings. The figures are a function of how many people come to the meetings and what their travel costs are.
- 6.9 **Seed packaging and dispatch:** The expenses in both years were mainly for postage and printer cartridges. In 2013 there was the additional purchase of glassine envelopes. As in 2013, income exceeded costs by quite a margin.
- We gave Ian a float of £75 to make administration of the seed sales easier. At the end of the year he still had £41.21 in hand.
- 6.10 **Gardening Scotland** The expenditure on Gardening Scotland is greater in 2014 than in 2013. Expenditure in both years includes the costs of the stand. In 2013, Sharon was able to use materials left over from Geoff Hill's time in charge of staging our exhibit. However these materials had run out by 2014 and more supplies had to be purchased.
- The income from seed sales at Gardening Scotland 2014 more than covers the cost of setting up our exhibit.
- 6.11 **Book sales** The £2,650 from the sale of books at the last Group Meeting was sent on to Kew.
- 6.12 **Computer (Under the Administration heading)** We do not have expenditure every year for purchasing domain name extensions. We used to purchase two-years worth of extensions at a time and so there was no expenditure in 2013. In 2014 we purchased domain name extensions for 5 years because in the long run this was to be a cheaper option. We also renewed the hosting package.
- 6.13 There is a difference of about £158 in expenditure on photocopying and printing between 2013 and 2014. This is because we printed fact sheets costing £138 in 2013, but none in 2014.

Summary

In summary, the totals of both income and expenditure for 2014 are skewed by the book purchases and sales. However, when this is taken into account, both income and expenditure are higher in 2014 than in 2013.

- 6.14 **Transfer from 2nd account** This is the £1,500 that came from PayPal via the 2nd account.

In summary at the end of 2014, there was £9,647.97 in the General Account.

Finally

Slide 5

This shows the same information as slide 1 with the addition of the unspent £41.21 float from plant sales. It can be seen that our finances are in a healthy state.

Questions: None

Acceptance of report: Proposed by Matt Heasman
Seconded by Ian Wright

Willie Campbell has agreed to be the auditor for next year.

Proposed by Matt Heasman
Seconded by Peggy Anderson

Reports.

There were no questions on the reports. Acceptance of the reports

Proposed by Jeannie Jones
Seconded by Mala Jones

Committee for 2015 to 2016

Chairman – John Mitchell, Treasurer – Peggy Anderson,
Subscription Secretary – Sharon Bradley, Minute Secretary – Pat Murphy,
Seed Exchange Manager - Ian Scott, Matt Heasman – Web Manager

David Rankin, David Thorne, Margaret Thorne, Steve MacNamara and Evelyn Stevens are all willing to stand again.

Proposer: Ian Wright
Seconder: Jim Jermyn

There are two nominations for new members of the committee.
Alice Bremner – Reports Co-ordinator and Alan Elliott

Proposer: Matt Heasman
Seconder: Jeanie Jones

AOB

There were no matters arising.