

# The Meconopsis Group

Co-ordinator; Dr. Evelyn Stevens, The Linns Sheriffmuir, Dunblane, Perthshire FK15 0LP

Tel. 01786 822295 email; [evelyn@thelinn.org.uk](mailto:evelyn@thelinn.org.uk)

## NEWSLETTER FEBUARY 2015

Dear Member

### Arrangements for AGM to be held on Saturday March 7<sup>th</sup> 2015

**Venue;** Conference Room, Royal Botanic Garden, 20 Inverleith Row, Edinburgh EH3 5LR

Tel 0131 248 2909     **Directions** available at [www.rbge.org.uk](http://www.rbge.org.uk)

**Meeting Charge** There will be a nominal charge of £1 to attend the meeting and this will include a lucky numbered ticket.

**50:50 Plant Sale** Please bring plants for a 50:50 plant sale (two labels per pot, one for your name and the price, the other for the plant name) This is an important part of the day as the sales of plants will help to distribute the plants more widely amongst members and will boost the groups funds. Both *Meconopsis* and other plants are welcome.

**Picnic Lunch** Please bring your own lunch to the meeting. Tea and coffee will be provided at 10am and again at lunchtime.

**Guests.** Guests will be made very welcome at the meeting.

**New Members** Please contact Sharon if you have any difficulty making arrangements [bigbluepoppies@btinternet.com](mailto:bigbluepoppies@btinternet.com) or 07910 274906

### Agenda for meeting

10.00-10.30    Arrival teas and coffees

10.30-10.50    AGM

10.50-11.50    Ron McBeath. Travels and plants at RBGE.

11.50-12.30    Alan Elliot. Trip to Nepal.

12.30-1.30     Lunch

1.30-2.00     Sharon Bradley. Gardening Scotland

2.00- 2.45     James Cobb. Between Three Gardens

2.45-3.15     Margaret Thorne. The direction of the Group.

3.15-3.30     Question time

## Meconopsis Group Seed Exchange Report 2014

My thanks to the many donors who generously provide the seed for the exchange year after year. Without their efforts, the seed exchange could not offer such a wonderful range of plants to choose from.

In the autumn of 2014 we e-mailed all members to offer seed from a perennial form of *M. punicea* (MGS#5) for autumn sowing. Some seed was retained for postal members in the Main Seed Exchange.

The pre-ordering of fresh seed of *M. delavayi*, *M. punicea*, and *M. quintuplinervia* for an autumn sowing seems to be working well. Only 5 members had to wait for seed of *M. delavayi* which was then distributed with the Main Seed Exchange.

There were some notable donations to the Main Seed Exchange including the true form of *M. napaulensis*, *M. grandis* 'Astral Blue', *M. paniculata* BVH 42, and authenticated *M. simplicifolia* from Gothenburg Botanic Garden and the Schachen. In addition, we purchased *M. henrici* which had been gathered in 3 different locations in China.

We were also given small quantities of seed of *M. speciosa* and *M. tibetica*. Nobody is perfect, and somehow I managed to miss them out when compiling the Seed List. Although unintentional, in some ways this was fortunate. There were only 6 packets of *M. tibetica* and not much more of *M. speciosa*, and consequently I asked certain members to try growing these species on behalf of the Meconopsis Group. Those asked are spread throughout Britain, two in Norway and one in Switzerland. They have a wide range of experience from seasoned grower to enthusiastic beginner. We wish them success.

There are about 20 members who can only be contacted by post, and have been asked to provide a stamped SAE if they desired a seed list. This year there was only one response. There are some notable growers in that group including Leslie Drummond and Henry and Margaret Taylor, and it occurred to me that they might be unaware of what items were on offer. Consequently I posted out a seed list to each one, and had seed requests from over half of them. Two members also enclosed a stamped SAE for the 2015 seed list.

In 2014 the number of Meconopsis items on offer was 52 compared to 39 in 2013. Only one (*M. dhwojii*) was seed from the previous year. There was a good supply of *M. pseudointegrifolia*, but very little *M. integrifolia*. Also, it did not appear in the SRGC seed list. Does this indicate that the latter is more difficult to grow? We certainly need to focus on this one. Others that need attention are *M. quituplinervia* 'Farrer's form', *M. aculeata* and *M. x beamishii*.

84 batches of seed were sent out to UK members (58 in 2013), and 29 batches to non-UK members (20 in 2013). So 65% of the membership used the seed exchange this year

New members who join after the Seed Exchange closes will be sent a selection of packet from the remaining stock to encourage them.

In March 2014 the cost of postage went up again, but we have managed to generate a small surplus once again. Some of this is used to pay for the postage of seed to non-UK members. These members pay a higher rate of annual fee, but the nominal £5 is not shown in the Seed Exchange Accounts. Some of the surplus is used to cover the cost of packeting seed for sale at Gardening Scotland. This generates a substantial profit for the Meconopsis Group. In addition some of the surplus will be used to purchase seed collected in the Himalaya for the 2015 seed exchange.

In 2015 it would be very useful if members would look closely at plants belonging to the 'horridula complex'. With the publication of the new *Meconopsis* monograph we should be able to identify the different members. It has been suggested that most of the seed circulating in the various seed exchanges is a hybridised mixture of horridula, prattii, rudis, and racemosa. However, there may be gardeners who have maintained a pure species.

The 'companion seed' (i.e. not *Meconopsis*) will continue to be listed as a separate page on the seed list, but will not expand beyond the single page. Last year there was a high demand for some very desirable species.

Last year's record by Ian Christie, of returning his desiderata in less than an hour was easily eclipsed by a member, who will remain anonymous. She returned my e-mail in less than 10 minutes! I was still sending out the Seed List for members with surnames S to Z. This isn't a competition – there are no prizes.

Ian D. Scott  
31<sup>st</sup> January 2015

## Subscriptions secretary's Report

Total paid up membership at December 2014 was 165 members compared to 174 in 2013. Of those, payments were made up from; 73 by PayPal, 55 by cheque, 5 by cash and the remaining 32 were paid as a two year instalment or overlap from 2013. Payments by PayPal are steadily rising and are easy to process and administrate and hopefully it is an easy process for members as well. Members do not actually require a PayPal account to make a payment as there is also a facility within the PayPal section to use a credit card to make the payment.

Members come from

Scotland	70	Norway	7	Netherlands	3	Canada	6	Hong Kong	1	
England	53	Sweden	1	France	2	USA	7	Japan	2	
Wales	1	Denmark	1	Belgium	1					
Ireland	5			Switzerland	1					
Jersey	1			Germany	2					
				Russia	1					
	130		9		10	13		3		<b>165</b>

Although members make payments throughout the year, membership can really only be recorded as exact at the end of the year to compare to the same time the previous year. Renewals for the next year cannot be included as they will be in the following year's figures. Some members pay subscriptions later in the year and others may pay for two years at a time or pay late in the year for the following year subscriptions.

Some members may also lapse for several years but come back to the group at some point so although recorded as new they are actually returners but to look back over previous years records to check is not really productive.

It would really be beneficial for the administration of the Group if members could pay subscriptions at the start of the year when the reminders come out. This would mean that the administration could all be done at the one point instead of having to carry out the

administration over many times in the year. All subscriptions require to be paid or access to the years seed exchange would not be available when due.

In 2014 there were 35 new members. Of that 21 were male, 5 were family and 9 were female.

These were made up from

Scotland	5	Russia	1	USA	1	Norway	5
England	17	Hong Kong	1	Netherlands	1	Denmark	1
Ireland	1	Japan	1			Sweden	1

At the present time there are 20 complimentary members and no student members.

As at 8.2.15, 85 Members have paid their subscriptions for 2015.

Members will also be able to pay their subscriptions at the AGM on 7<sup>th</sup> March.

Sharon Bradley February 2015

### **Reports of talks at meetings**

Reports on the talks at our meetings is an important part of our activities which we have undertaken since the inauguration of The Meconopsis Group in 1998. Many members cannot attend our meetings and the reports enable members to keep up with what we have done and are doing. The material is also kept in our archive on the web-site so is available to go back to if needed. Members have commented on how they like to receive our reports. Initially the reports were written on behalf of the speakers. In more recent years, speakers have kindly undertaken to submit written reports themselves.

With the growth in members in the Group over the last 15 years it has become extremely time consuming to include these reports in with the Newsletters which are sent by email and by normal post. The length of some reports are at time very large and images may have had to be excluded to allow for email attachments and printing and this sometimes does not give the best representation of some talks that members may not have been able to attend.

An increased number of new members both in UK and overseas means that it has become prohibitive to email attachments containing large files. The calibre of speakers that the Group is attracting and the use of images to support talks means that these reports are very informative and contain many images which means that attachments are very large.

Changes to the committee over the past year and this increase in administration means that the committee has had some lengthy discussions about the situation. It has now been decided to do **a trial** to place these reports in the Members section on the website rather than emailing or posting them out. This will allow for many more images to be included with the reports and members will be able to go in at any time to view them. This is now so much more possible and worthwhile with advances in computer technology and digital photography since the inception of the Group.

This trial will run for one year and Newsletters will still come out as normal and will advise that reports are now in the Members section on the Website. Details of meeting dates, agenda and all news will still be included in the newsletter.

We appreciate that this may cause some difficulty for members who do not have access to a computer at home and who do not communicate via email and this is why it will be trialled for a year. It is hoped that perhaps those members may be able to gain access via family member's computers or at their local library. Given that there are reports for the last 15 years that have been archived and that members may not have been in the Group for that long it may actually be very useful to be able to go and look at the history of the Group since then.

Another thing to consider is that members may now have an email address and not yet advised the secretary of their contact details. If this is the case and you are happy to use email to communicate can you please advise us of that address? It may also be that a direct family member may be happy to receive emails on your behalf so if you may be in a position to ask them we could include that email and hopefully your family member would then be able to take you to the member's area to look at the reports. It is expected that the first of the reports to be included are by Kit Grey Wilson talking about his Monograph, David and Margaret Thorne on their trips to Bhutan and David Rankin on his trip to China. Please watch out for these in the news section on the website to let you know they have been posted.

**Being a trial we would welcome thoughts and feedback from our members.**

## **Secretarial role**

With the changes that have happened within the committee in the last year and again due at the 2015 AGM the committee are still looking for a member who can take on the role of coordinating the reports that come in from the different administrative roles. This role would require someone with basic computer knowledge and the ability to travel to two committee meetings per year which are held at the Botanic Garden in Edinburgh. If this is of interest to you, or you may like some more information, please contact Sharon by email at [bigbluepoppies@btinternet.com](mailto:bigbluepoppies@btinternet.com) or on 07910 274906 or speak to any committee member at the AGM.

Volunteers are also needed to add to our list of people to help out at meetings. The 50:50 plant stall and the Tea table can always use some extra help on the day or to perhaps cover holidays so again if you are able to help out please contact any of the committee members.

It's the volunteers that keep the Group going and all Groups like ours benefit from this help from members.

## **Gardening Scotland 2015**

The Meconopsis Group will be represented at Gardening Scotland 2015. It is always an extremely busy weekend and is an excellent showcase to promote the Group and to sell the surplus seed from the seed exchange. The theme this year will be *Meconopsis* Species and it is hoped that additional support from Group members could help keep the continuity of an excellent and popular stand. This could be anything from volunteering to do a stint on the stand at the show or assisting to set up or take down the display. All members who have helped out before always seem to enjoy themselves. Those who do help out for a few hours on any of the open days receive a complimentary ticket to allow them access to the show for the rest of the day.

It could also be very useful if any member growing any species plants this year could perhaps grow one in a big black pot. If they consider it was looking particularly good it could always be used on the stand. Recognition would be given to any member who may be able to do this. The quality and timing of the plants is always down to climate and this can be so different from one

side of the country to the other so we want to make sure that the stand will always have the best quality of plants on display.

If you feel you would like to be involved with Gardening Scotland please contact Sharon Bradley at [bigbluepoppies@btinternet.com](mailto:bigbluepoppies@btinternet.com) or write to her at 5 Colliehill Road BIGGAR South Lanarkshire ML12 6PN or speak to her at the AGM.

### **Website Update.**

The Website is constantly being updated and is looking really well. Many changes have been made and the pages are now suited to viewing on Tablets and Mobile Phones. Matt reports that many of Toshio Yoshida's photos of *Meconopsis* species taken in the wild are now being put on the website and would be available to view, probably by the end of the month. It was possible to get enlargements of each photo, but the technology underlying the website was old and this sometimes leads to problems. Gradually this will be resolved.

The photos are credited to Toshio and show copyright information.

### **Autumn meeting**

The conference room at The Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh has been provisionally booked for the meeting and this will be on **17<sup>th</sup> October 2015**.

I have included a copy of the **AGM agenda on the 7<sup>th</sup> of March** and a tear off slip on a separate page so you can print it off and bring it with you. I would appreciate that you let us know if you are able or unable to attend the meeting.

Regards to everyone and I look forward to seeing you at the meeting if you can make it.

*Sharon*

Subscriptions secretary.

**Meconopsis Group Meeting**  
**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2015**  
**Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh 20 Inverleith Row Edinburgh**

**Agenda for meeting**

- 10.00-10.30 Arrival teas and coffees
- 10.30-10.50 AGM
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- 2.45-3.15 Margaret Thorne. The direction of the Group.
- 3.15-3.30 Question time

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I shall be **able** to attend the meeting on **March 7<sup>th</sup> 2015** at RBGEdinburgh.

Name.....

I will be **unable** to attend the meeting on **March 7<sup>th</sup> 2015** at RBGEdinburgh

Name.....

Can you please return the tear of section to let us know if you can attend the meeting.

To;

Sharon Bradley 5 Collichill Road BIGGAR South Lanarkshire M112 6PN or

Email [bigbluepoppies@btinternet.com](mailto:bigbluepoppies@btinternet.com) to let us know if you can come or

Telephone 01899 221896 and leave a message or send a text to 07910 274906