



THE ALPINE GARDEN SOCIETY
ULSTER GROUP

Newsletter No.1 August 2002

AGS Ulster Group Newsletter No.1

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Editorial

After many years of sending out a simple newsheet with the agenda for the AGM, the committee decided the time had come to be more ambitious so this is our first newsletter. There are quite a lot of new members in the Ulster Group and hopefully this will give everyone more information about both the local group and the A.G.S.

As this is a beginner's newsletter there is bound to be room for improvement in the future and this is where all our members can help. All ideas and constructive criticism for future editions will be gratefully received and not only for the newsletter.

To continue to make our meetings interesting and welcoming everyone is asked to contribute in anyway they can. From plant showing to tea making there is a niche for each member and sharing the duties brings all the members closer and increases the enjoyment of all.

So welcome to the Ulster Group's first Newsletter and we wish all our members, both old and new, a year of enjoyable meetings, good gardening and healthy growth in the Alpine Gardening Society.

Introduction to The Alpine Garden Society

The A.G.S. was founded in 1929 and has grown to become one of the largest specialist garden societies in the world with its aim to promote an interest in alpine plants in cultivation and in their wild habitats.

There are significant benefits to be gained from joining the AGS so if you do not already belong to the Parent Society, ask the secretary, Joan McCaughey, for further information.

Introduction to the Ulster Group by John McWhirter

Organisation

The Ulster Group is run by a small committee composed of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Programme Secretary, Treasurer, Show Secretary, and five committee members including the past Chairman. The Chairman and the committee members serve for two years, with two members being elected each year, and further members can be co-opted if necessary. All must belong to the A.G.S. The committee meets three times a year and tries to ensure the smooth running of the Group. An effort is made to try to let all our members serve on the committee so that they are familiar with all aspects of our activities.

As well as the committee the Group is also indebted to the contributions of a small band of hard working members. These include plant sellers, tea makers, ticket sellers, slide projectionist, those who open their gardens etc: in other words we need the help of all our members. We will always need those wonderful Doers and Thinkers to keep the Group running smoothly and we can never have too many. Our sincere thanks to those who do contribute so much and if you think you can help in any way please contact the secretary. The hard work always brings its own rewards!

Group Finances

The Group finances are in the capable hands of the Hon. Treasurer, Mrs. Margaret Glynn, who with the help of an expert accountant's advice, keeps us in the black! The income comes from subscriptions, plant sales, raffles etc; while expenses include lecture room hire, speakers expenses and fees, capital expenditure etc. The income and expenditure accounts are presented at the AGM.

Group Subscriptions

Local current subscriptions rates are £5.00 single, £6.00 family. To help our treasurer, **please put your subscription into the envelope provided with your name, title,**

address, postal code, and telephone number and email (if wished), clearly written on the outside. Give this or post it to Mrs. Margaret Glynn, Hon. Treasurer.

This subscription is for the local Group only and subscriptions to The Alpine Garden Society must be sent direct.

Visitors are welcome to our lectures for the small fee of £1.00 and feel free to invite anyone who might be interested in joining, especially to the Society Lecture which is open and free to all.

Group Meetings Format

For new members meetings can appear very busy and bustling affairs so this is a short section to describe what happens at our average meeting.

While the lecture theatre is being set up, members can buy plants at the plant stall or books at the book stall or generally chat.

The lecture usually lasts between an hour and an hour and a quarter, illustrated with slides, and usually four lectures in the year are given by invited speakers outside the Province. There is a short time for questions, new members often asking the best questions. The Chairman then thanks the speaker and brings us back to earth with the Group notices.

We all next have a very welcome cup of tea and biscuit with more time to buy plants or books and exchange topics. The following gives a little more detail on some of our meetings throughout the year.

A.G.M. and Plant Sale

The AGM is the work meeting of the year when the Reports and Accounts for the year are presented and the Officers and Committee are elected or re-elected. Any changes or future proposals are also discussed.

After the business is finished there is an extra special plant sale as this is our first meeting after the summer break.

Dr. Molly Sanderson Memorial Lecture.



Dr. Mary Elizabeth (Molly) Sanderson 1913-1995, was President of the Ulster Group A.G.S. from 19 to 1995. In the book “In an Irish Garden” by Sybil Connolly and Helen Dillon she describes how she attended a lecture in Belfast given by Will Ingersen which inspired her to become a *real* gardener and how the A.G.S held her loyalty and affection. To ensure that the Ulster members would

continue to have a high standard of lecturers, she left a bequest to the Group for a lecture in her memory. Although in poor health she was able to attend the first lecture given in 1995 by Helen Dillon. A high standard has been maintained since then and the lecture is always well attended including members of her family. Dr. Sanderson will always be remembered not only for her plants and as a great Irish gardener but also for her generosity in sharing her plants with everyone.

The Society Lecture

To encourage an interest in alpine and rock plants and also to increase membership, the A.G.S. have recently undertaken to help sponsor a lecture each year which is free and open to anyone to attend. All members are asked to bring all their gardening friends along.

Back to Basics

This meeting is run by our own members and takes various forms all intended to give knowledge to both beginners and more experienced alpine gardeners. It ranges from seed sowing, taking cuttings to plant profiles, understanding plant names and any questions.

The Annual Luncheon

The January meeting takes the form of the Annual Luncheon which is held in different hotels in the Province. After lunch everyone is entertained by a speaker and slide show and there is time to relax and chat after Christmas. Tickets for the Luncheon are sold at the November and December meetings.

Plant Stall

Before and after each meeting there is a plant stall ,where everyone can buy plants and bring plants to sell. At present Pat and George Gordon have worked tirelessly to run an excellent stall and as this is a major source of income we need everyone to contribute. If you can help in any way it will be appreciated especially at Show time and Pat and George will be only too pleased to help and advise on suitable plants both to bring or buy. At Christmas this stall takes the form of a Christmas Fayre.

Book Stall

Operated by Professor Amyan Macfadyen , the bookstall has a comprehensive range of publications and A.G.S. books can be ordered. There are also secondhand books and back issues of the AGS bulletins. Please give it every support and help to carry the books would also be appreciated.

Tea

After every lecture there is a very welcome cup of tea or coffee, thanks to the service of two of our members, at present Helen Burch and Renee Norwood. There is a rota for bringing biscuits and traybakes