



# THE CALEDONIAN GARDENER 2019

Journal of the Royal Caledonian  
Horticultural Society

  
The Caley

# THE CALEDONIAN GARDENER 2019

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# Contents

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Foreword - <i>David Knott</i>   | 5   |
| Saughton Park and the Caley - <i>Pam Whittle</i>  | 6   |
| Branklyn Garden: the legacy of John and Dorothy Renton - <i>Jim Jermyn</i>                                  | 12  |
| A Garden of Pleasure and Delight: the history and restoration of Cowden Japanese Garden - <i>Kate White</i> | 24  |
| Redcroft: a garden in Edinburgh - <i>Anna Buxton</i>  | 32  |
| The Backhouse heritage daffodils at Rossie Estate - <i>Caroline Thomson</i>                                 | 38  |
| Twenty years of Take a Pride in Perth and Kinross: a celebration - <i>Bill Ronald</i>                       | 47  |
| Unusual containers for public displays - <i>Keith Jackson, Bill Ronald &amp; Stan da Prato</i>              | 53  |
| One woman's gardening journey - <i>Margaret Young</i>   | 59  |
| Midlothian Community Hospital Garden 'A haven of peace and tranquillity' - <i>Ian Gilchrist</i>             | 66  |
| Gardens at the heart of wellbeing - <i>Karen Laing</i>  | 72  |
| Victims of their success: the effects of invasive non-native plants - <i>David Knott</i>                    | 78  |
| A celebration of botanical art: BISCOT 2018 - <i>Coral Prosser</i>  | 86  |
| Highlights of 2018 - <i>The Editors</i>   | 90  |
| Caley awards 2018   | 106 |
| <b>Book Reviews</b>   |     |
| Woodland Gardening with Rhododendrons, Magnolias, Camellias and Acid Loving Plants - <i>Simon Jones</i>     | 111 |

*Cover: Cowden Castle Garden. © C. Davies*

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## Foreword

At a time of significant political and economic change many people find solace in cultivating plants or enjoying gardens at so many different levels. This can range from growing fruit and vegetables in your garden or allotment to specialists growing demanding plants such as alpines or orchids or simply enjoying the fine parks and gardens we are fortunate to still have in Scotland.

The importance and benefits of working with plants is perhaps best exemplified by our Grow and Learn programme and all the hard work that our Development Officer Jean Gavin and so many others have contributed over the years. We are always actively seeking funding to allow us to meet and expand our commitment to Grow and Learn so it was fantastic news that in January the Caley was awarded £21,600 over two years from the R S Macdonald Charitable Trust for the Grow and Learn Programme. An excellent start to the year!



*Beryl McNaughton received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Caley president at Gardening Scotland 2018. © Pam Whittle*

The Caley is very fortunate to have a large number of volunteers without whom we would simply not exist. Their, and I mean your, help, time, expertise and organisational skills allows the Caley to run a wide range of events including the winter lecture programme, the demonstration allotment, the children's flower show, the main spring show, provide stewarding and a presence at Gardening Scotland and this year a presence at the Dundee Flower & Food Festival.

Early this year we finished upgrading the Caley website. Thanks go to Rona McDowell, Julie Muir, Neil Woodcock and Pam Whittle for all their time and effort in getting the website live. It includes a revised members' area so if you have not already done so please log on to the site and follow the instructions to log onto the members' area.

It is always inspiring to recognise the efforts individuals have contributed to their local communities and Scottish Horticulture at our annual awards evening, in 2018 we had representation across Scotland from southern Scotland to the Orkney Islands. It was particularly fitting that Caley Gardener editor, Beautiful Scotland judge and North Berwick in Bloom stalwart Stan da Prato received the Andrew Duncan Medal.

Perhaps the most exciting news for the Caley in 2018 has been the progress at Saughton Park and we very much look forward to moving in during 2019. From our new permanent base we plan to develop a programme of events and activities to meet our current and future aspirations. Exciting times ahead for the Caley and Scottish Horticulture!

*David Knott, President*



All photos © P. Whittle except where stated.

## Saughton Park and the Caley

Pam Whittle

Saughton Park has a long and very colourful history but also a history that links to the Caley. Some members will know about the period in the 1980s when, after our society invested in the restoration of Saughton's old glasshouse to create a winter garden, the Caley had a small office and store there. Others will remember the plant sales that were held on site and some will remember the temporary portakabin we had until the start of building works in 2017. What some may not know is that there is another link through a past president of the society - John McHattie.

### A most able official

John McHattie was the superintendent of Edinburgh Parks at the time the Saughton estate was acquired by the City of Edinburgh Council in 1905. John originally came from Morayshire and, like many other professional Scottish gardeners of the time, after



John McHattie in 1912.



*The house and rock garden. All photos © Jim Jermyn*

## Branklyn Garden: the legacy of John and Dorothy Renton

Jim Jermyn

As visitors enjoy a walk around the garden at Branklyn today it would be hard for them to have any concept of the remarkable vision of its two original owners. The garden was left to the National Trust for Scotland in 1967 by John and Dorothy Renton. The current head gardener and his team, led by Alistair Chalmers with up to 50 volunteers, endeavour to encapsulate the spirit of the Rentons. How is that possible given that none of us knew the original owners? Fortunately we have a delightful video created by the Rentons, many photographic images and articles dating back to their heyday, as well as accurate records of all the plants grown here from the early 1920s. So we do feel that we understand exactly how Mr. and Mrs. Renton would have planted each crucial bed, allowing for the change in fashions!

### Design

The Rentons, on acquiring the ground from the neighbouring Orchardbank Nursery in 1922, built themselves a house in the Arts and Crafts style. The garden followed with much of the design carried out by John, while the planting and propagation was overseen by Dorothy. The aim of the garden design was to create a multi-faceted garden that would accommodate a wide range of trees and shrubs providing an aesthetic feature at the same time as offering essential shelter from both wind and direct sunlight. The garden would become well known for its Sino-Himalayan plant collection, together with a unique collection of alpine plants, laid out in a natural setting of rock gardens. The Regius Keeper of the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh once described the garden as ‘the



*A view across the garden. © C.Davies*

## A Garden of Pleasure and Delight: the history and restoration of Cowden Japanese Garden

Kate White

The protagonist of our story, Ella Christie, was born in 1861 in Midlothian. In the same year her family bought, and moved to, Cowden Castle in Clackmannanshire. The spot was chosen by Ella's father, John, for its favourable climate for tree growing, and he planted many trees around the estate. The gardens around the castle were typical of the time; kitchen garden, shrubberies, formal bedding and wider woodland walks.

As children, Ella and her younger sister Alice travelled widely in Europe, with their parents. Following her father's death, in 1904 Ella embarked on a decade of travels in the Far East. Accompanied by her ladies maid, Humphries, Ella explored countries as far flung as India, Tibet, Borneo, and Russia. It was her trip in 1906–7 which included a visit to Japan that inspired Ella to recreate a piece of the Orient at Cowden.

The wider context for Ella Christie's personal interest was the opening of Japan to the West in the 1850s, and the passion for Japanese art and culture that followed. The creation of Japanese gardens in large estates and public parks was one popular result of this trend. By the time of Ella's trip, the British cultural love-affair with Japan was approaching its peak.

### **Marshy park**

While still on her travels, Ella had decided on the spot the garden was to occupy at Cowden. She chose a 'marshy park' at the western extent of the Cowden Castle estate. On her return home in 1907 Ella commissioned a dam to be built to create a large artificial lake, around which the garden would be built. Then, through a series of personal connections made in Japan, Ella contacted a Japanese lady, Taki Handa, to layout the garden. At that time Taki Handa was studying



*Erythronium dens-canis* in spring. All photos © A Buxton

## Redcroft: a garden in Edinburgh

Anna Buxton

I often read articles which try and explain why we garden, or what gardens mean, or why we enjoy looking at gardens, but I can rarely relate them to our garden, or our efforts at gardening. In this article I take a personal view of some of the interesting aspects of this very mature garden. Chance plays a big part in how plants grow and in how they blend together, and even in how they catch the light. This is not a carefully designed garden but one that has evolved gradually over a long period. As far as choosing what to plant is concerned, it is usually a case of fitting in something we have available, or moving a shrub which has become congested to a new home. Sometimes we have ambitious projects to replant areas and then I get help from a designer, but mostly changes are small and incremental.

When Jasmin Cann, a professional designer well known to many Caley members, saw the garden for the first time the other day, her first words were 'It's huge!' I was a bit taken aback as it does not seem big to me. The garden surrounds the house which was built in 1911 in

the Arts and Crafts style. It is a square walled garden on the very busy Murrayfield Road on the west side of the city, and the plot is in total under an acre. You don't at first see where the garden ends and quite a few of the trees we can see are in neighbouring gardens, and could be described as borrowed landscape.

Others often remark on how much work it must entail. But I don't see it like that either, probably because I have always had the help of very good gardeners, and only occasionally do I feel anxious that it is getting out of control.

### Disorder

Writing in October, I am looking out on the huge horse chestnut which could easily date back to before the house was built. Its golden leaves catch the sun first thing, and again in the afternoon, suffusing the place with golden light. There is no sign yet of the diseases affecting horse chestnuts, but who knows what is in store.

I like this period of disorder in the garden when the leaves litter the lawn and elsewhere,



*The house and garden in spring. All photos © Jason Ingram except where stated*

## The Backhouse heritage daffodils at Rossie Estate

Caroline Thomson

The National Heritage Collection of Narcissus Backhouse cvs. was accredited by Plant Heritage in 2016 and became the catalyst for Scotland's National Daffodil Festival, cementing the legacy of our talented daffodil hybridizing ancestors and developing opportunities for Fife and Scotland, known in past and present times around the world for its first-class daffodil growing conditions.

### Horticulture over arches politics

Parliamentary Motion 1147 was passed with cross party support in Westminster to congratulate Backhouse Rossie Estate on hosting Scotland's first annual Daffodil Festival in April 2017. The Festival creates a venue for all aspects of the daffodil industry to network and showcase the fantastic work they do in increasingly challenging markets. Stephen Gethins SNP MP for NE Fife launched the Festival. William Rennie MSP Leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats opened the Backhouse Heritage and

Education Centre at Rossie. TV gardener and Caley Hon President George Anderson kindly cut the ribbon to open the Festival with Lady Georgina Buchan-Hepburn's scissors.

### Family history

We are direct descendants of the Backhouse family and three generations of my Quaker forebears introduced 956 daffodil cultivars from the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s. However, the *RHS Plant Finder 2015* shows only thirteen Backhouse-bred daffodil cultivars remaining. It was my mother, Lady Georgina Buchan-Hepburn, who had first raised conservation concerns, during the renovation of our walled garden at the Rossie Estate in Fife

*N. 'Dick Wellband' 2W-O pre 1921; N. 'C.J. Backhouse' 2Y-O pre 1969; N. 'Lord Kitchener' 2 W-Y 1905.*

*N. 'Glowing Phoenix' 4 Y-O 1930; N. 'Empress' 1 W-Y pre 1869; N. 'Little Witch' 6 Y-Y pre 1921.*

*N. 'Conspicuous' 3Y-YYO pre 1969; N. 'Sunstar' 3W-O pre 1921; N. 'Emperor' 1 Y-Y pre 1869.*



*Achterarder. All photos © Take a Pride in Perthshire and Kinross*

## Twenty years of Take a Pride in Perth and Kinross: a celebration

Bill Ronald

In celebration of our twentieth anniversary, a garden party was held at Scone Racecourse on Friday 1 June 2018. Past and present members of the 48 Bloom groups currently operating across Perth and Kinross turned out in their finery to enjoy the afternoon and we were honoured to be joined by Provost Dennis Malloy, past chairpersons and past and present trustees of the association.

Everything was perfectly planned - but this being Scotland, the weather didn't cooperate! Not long after the formalities began a thunderstorm hit, with rain in the proverbial biblical proportions. The lightning blew out the power in our marquee so our carefully laid plans had to be swiftly revised but Bloomers are made of hardy stuff, so our community spirit came to the fore and a great time was had by all.

### How and when did the Bloom Campaign begin in Perth & Kinross?

The Perth and Kinross area lies at the very heart of Scotland, covering more than 2,000 square miles of diverse landscapes rich in natural beauty, fertile farmland, vibrant communities and fascinating history. The area has some of Scotland's most stunning scenery, making it a truly lovely place in which to live and work and visit as a tourist.

Our association is the umbrella organisation for the local voluntary In Bloom groups in Perth and Kinross. It was born in 1998 out of the already successful Take a Pride in Perthshire campaign which had been established by the local authority in 1993. The campaign was initiated to encourage and support local communities to establish properly constituted groups which would carry out environmental



*Perennial planting in a boat welcomes visitors to North Berwick station. © Rosemary Oberlander*

## Unusual containers for public displays

Keith Jackson, Bill Ronald & Stan da Prato

Many of the voluntary groups who now enhance their local environment make use of articles that reflect the area's heritage as containers for their floral displays. Farming communities may use old implements such as carts, coal hutches can be seen in former mining villages while boats are an obvious things to use if you live by the sea or a river. Most examples in this short photo feature are from Fife, Perth & Kinross or East Lothian. It is no coincidence that these local authority areas all contain high achieving local groups.

For anyone thinking of planting such a display in their own community, and we hope this article will encourage them, there are some practical points to bear in mind. Containers in public places need to be stable, stand up to being sat on and the occasional collision, not to mention the attention of those who indulge in anti-social behaviour. So before even thinking of planting make sure your container is robust,

weatherproof and fit for its new purpose. Any of these containers are basically oversized plant pots so need drainage holes something they probably did not have in their original life. Boats do not float well with holes in the bottom. It may also need support depending on its shape - a few brackets or slabs may be all you need. It will be very heavy when it is full. This usually means putting it in place empty then adding the growing medium. It is often wise to part fill the container with light weight filling such as plastic or polystyrene trash as if you fill it entirely with soil or compost it may eventually split open.

*Pages 54–58 photos © Beautiful Fife, Brighter Bervie, East Wemyss Environment Group, Inellan, Lauder, North Berwick in Bloom, Take Pride in Perth & Kinross, Woodside, Alison Anderson, Ron Buckley, Adrian Miles, Keith Jackson, Bill Ronald, Liz Stewart.*



*Growing interesting plants in an informal setting is the basis of our garden. All photos © Ian Young*

## One woman's gardening journey

Margaret Young

I started growing alpines with my husband Ian in the earliest days of our marriage in 1972. In the early days we were not even Scottish Rock Garden Club members - we were passed the journals from a neighbour instead - but we always attended the annual alpine flower show in Aberdeen in those days held in the Music Hall. The plants we saw there such as *Cassiope* and Asiatic primulas fascinated us - the combination of colourful flowers on such small plants which grew in such challenging conditions high on the mountains of the world was irresistible and we wanted to grow them ourselves. We eventually did become members of the Scottish Rock Garden Club and began to exhibit plants at SRGC shows around the country. We were mentored by the famous grower Harold Esslemont, who gave us plants and advice in equal measure! We had great success in our showing career; at one time we had in our house nearly every trophy to be

won at any of the Club's events! The only ones we didn't have were those for members specific to a local area outside our own. The editor of *The Caledonian Gardener* - who happens to be the current holder - tells me that we won the plantsman of the year salver for most first prizes for seven years.

One of the very positive features of the SRGC is that judges can still enter at our shows. We achieve this by working in teams of three and when a judge has a plant in a class a reserve judge takes over. We do not have prize money at any of the 13 shows and displays we have around the country starting in February in Dunblane and finishing in October at our discussion weekend which in 2018 was in Pitlochry. Ian and I duly served as judges in our turn and as Show Secretaries at the Aberdeen Show for over twenty years though latterly we had stopped showing our own plants.



*All photos © Ian Gilchrist.*

## Midlothian Community Hospital Garden 'A haven of peace and tranquillity'

Ian Gilchrist

Midlothian Community Hospital Garden (MCHG) is a partnership between NHS Lothian and Cyrenians, a pioneering Scottish social welfare and environmental charity founded in 1968 to address the problem of homelessness in Scotland's capital city.

Work on the garden started in 2012, following the success of a community garden established within the hospital grounds at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital two years earlier. The initial impetus came from the chairman of NHS Lothian Health Board, Dr. Charles Winstanley, who was keen to pilot opportunities for community gardening on NHS land as a means of promoting exercise, healthy eating and the therapeutic benefits that derive from gardening, outdoor exercise and volunteering opportunities. Cyrenians were contracted to manage both projects. Over the last six years, almost three hectares of land

have been transformed into an attractive garden, with flower beds, shrubs, vegetable plots and fruit trees. The garden brings together a diverse range of volunteers of all ages, abilities and social backgrounds who share a love of nature, growing food, making new friends and working together.

### **The early days**

When the first volunteers came on to the site in July 2012, only the most rudimentary network of paths had been created. They were faced with a huge task of creating a garden out of a very rough grass field, inhabited by scores of rabbits. The first task was to install 400 metres of rabbit-proof fencing; a back-breaking job. Next came the creation of 24 raised beds, constructed over a period of wet, cold weather when the footprint of many beds filled with water and froze. By the spring of 2013, however, most of the beds were ready



*Welcoming summer colour in the Edinburgh Maggie's garden. All photos © Karen Laing*

## Gardens at the heart of wellbeing

Karen Laing

To me gardens have always been a fundamental necessity for health, happiness and wellbeing.

In my childhood naivety it never occurred to me that people didn't have gardens, that their world might not be filled with earth and plants and trees. All that intrigue and excitement of accessible nature, the space to run and dig and play, to create kingdoms and jungles and tiny sanctuaries, to engage with life, feel grass below bare feet, mud encrusted nails, concoct perfumed water from rose petals, shriek at wriggling worms and games of hide and seek, pull rhubarb from the ground thrashing about with the leaves then dipping the stems in eggcups of sugar. My fillings shriek at the very thought now. Our family garden was elemental to a happy childhood.

Aged eight, on a play date to a friend's home, I remember the strangeness of visiting a new

world, a concrete tower block in a concrete landscape. From her home we went out to play, via a strip lit corridor of identical doors. We watched illuminated numbers mark the lift's slow arrival to transport us equally slowly to the lobby. Then out through gridded glass doors, across concrete paving, then down precast concrete steps to the small tarmac play park. I hasten to add we did have fun.

### Connections

What does it teach of our connection with the natural world when planners and developers have progressively stripped away our contact with green spaces in favour of concrete and tarmac? How does it imprint on those who inhabit such environments? Better I'm sure with muddy knees than bleeding ones. Children are resilient; they'll play where they can in war zones or woodlands but what an unforgiving environment to create when



*Rhododendron ponticum* invading a woodland. © Lorne Gill/SNH

## Victims of their success: the effects of invasive non-native plants

David Knott

Invasive non-native species (INNS) are now one of the greatest threats to our biodiversity. Unfortunately plants are one of the biggest groups of INNS with gardeners directly and indirectly responsible for dispersing some of the most invasive species. We are now in the Anthropocene era where our human impact is the greatest single force in determining the spread of INNS. We are aiding the dispersal of INNS through fragmenting habitats and creating new niches into which INNS can more easily spread and colonise.

In May 2008, when the *Great Britain Strategy for Invasive Non-Native Species* (INNS) was published, later reviewed in 2013, it recognised the need to prevent the introduction and spread of potential INNS. There are nearly 2,000 non-native species

established in Britain, most of which are terrestrial (c.1, 800) with smaller numbers in the marine and freshwater environments (c.80 in each). More ominously the total number of new arrivals is increasing with 10–12 new ones becoming established every year. This trend is mirrored across the world and, if not addressed, is expected to continue increasing for the foreseeable future. The report also lists potential, new, invasive, non-native plant species in Great Britain using existing information on INNS. These might be species that are already here but are not established, or species that are yet to arrive. Of 599 non-native plants assessed, 92 are ranked as critical (in terms of requiring more-detailed risk assessment as a priority), 55 as urgent, 72 as moderate risk and 380 as low risk.



*Hideko Kamoshita.*

## A celebration of botanical art: BISCOT 2018

### Coral Prosser

Once again BISCOT (Botanical Images Scotia) has shown botanical artworks of world-class standard at Gardening Scotland. Following the emergence of BISCOT in 2005, formed because there were so few opportunities for artists to show their botanical illustrations in Scotland and with support for the Caley, there has been a proliferation of several home-grown organisations and societies which now allow Scottish botanical artists to exhibit at a variety of venues within Scotland. A similar expansion of show opportunities has occurred across the U.K., notably within the RHS organisation. This proliferation has undoubtedly had an effect on numbers but not on the quality of artists exhibiting at Gardening Scotland. This year was remarkable for the variety of exhibits within the botanical illustration genre, together with a staggering level of interesting subject matter and technical excellence.

#### *Hideko Kamoshita - Cirsium (Asteraceae)*

Hideko presented a set of fine studies of the thistle family which were of exceptional quality. At a glance most observers would

come to the hasty conclusion that ‘all thistles look the same’ but Hideko proved that this is not so. Her minutely observed and finely executed details within the paintings showed excellent drawing technique and sensitive variations in colour. Each closely related subject had its own personality and the studies of cross-sections and root details were remarkable feats of observation and painting technique. They thoroughly deserved the Gold Award given by the judges.

One painting, *Cirsium vulgare* was voted best in show.

#### *Sarah Howard - a Norfolk arboretum*

Sarah has shown at BISCOT successfully in the past and has done so again. Her latest exhibit was based on paintings of a selection of trees at a private estate in Norfolk. They consisted of studies of branches of various trees showing fruits and leaves in different seasons. These were beautifully drawn and painted with good three-dimensional qualities and excellent colour. Graphite sketches appear in the backgrounds showing the



*In January 2018 Sir Muir Russell, chairman of the Royal Botanic Garden trustees, presented long service certificates to Constance Gilleghan and Sally Heron, both also well-known for their work for the Caley, as well as Sylvia Cunningham. © RBGE*

## Highlights of 2018

December 2017 was marked by a very cold settled spell in many parts of Scotland. More westerly weather in the early months of 2018 brought wind and rain. March was colder than average due to prolonged and damaging easterly winds bringing snow showers even to low levels - promptly named the Beast from the East by the media. Spring was late then the weather changed in May to usher in one of the warmest and driest summers for years. More typical weather patterns resumed in autumn with sunny dry spells alternating with wetter windier spells including several gales. As usual there were differences between parts of the country but in general the west had rather too much rain at times whereas the east was significantly drier.

The Caley Spring Flower Show was held on 2nd and 3rd April, in the Fletcher Building of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. The long winter proved extremely challenging but 50 exhibitors, including several from outwith the Lothians, put on a very good show which

filled the benches with 527 entries. The schools competition, which had tentatively been extended to cub scouts, was held in the John Hope Gateway the previous weekend. The Caley show is one of the five which together contribute to the Jim Davidson daffodil trophy this year won by Doug Martin from Keith. Leading up to these shows the society had again organised an autumn bulb planting workshop and George Anderson's advice through the growing season was avidly followed by many on the website.

There was no study tour in 2018 but a series of five visits to eight gardens starting with Macplants nursery in East Lothian in April and ending in Lanarkshire in August. This was the last year when Sally Heron organised the visits for the society, something she has been doing with great success since 2006.

Scottish horticulture's annual showpiece Gardening Scotland was held in favourable weather. In 2018 the Caley again contributed

## Scottish Horticultural Medal



**Bill Ronald** was born in Elgin where he first worked at a market garden. An apprenticeship at the National Trust for Scotland gardens at Crathes Castle was followed by two years at the Trust's gardening college at Threave. Jack Drake's Alpine Nursery near Aviemore was next and he completed his formal training at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh between 1969 and 1972. He joined Aberdeen City Council and was involved in the multi-award winning Bloom campaigns in the city. In 1975 he moved to Edinburgh City Council, designing floral displays using carpet bedding, including the famous Floral Clock in Princes Street Gardens, and also project managing environmental improvements. Bill moved to Perth and Kinross in 1978 where he steadily climbed the career ladder to become Head of Outdoor and Support Services. He was a founder member of the multi-award winning Perth in Bloom Group; he volunteered for 16 years with the group and the successful take a Pride in Perthshire Association. On retirement, Bill joined his local bloom group, Coupar Angus Pride of Place, who has achieved gold medals in Scotland and Britain in Bloom. He is an RHS Britain in Bloom finals judge and received an RHS Community Champion award in 2015.

## Dr Patrick Neill Memorial Medal

**Henry Noltie** graduated from Oxford University in 1978 and gained a Graduate Certificate in Museum Studies in 1985. In 2001 he received a Ph.D. from the University of Edinburgh. Before retirement, Henry was the Historic Collections Researcher at the Royal



Botanic Garden Edinburgh. He continues his love of research as a Research Associate. Henry's work for the last 15 years has focussed on the historical aspects of the herbarium and archive collections at RBGE. He has done more than anyone to highlight the link between Scotland and India during the 19th Century through the Scottish botanist surgeons of the East India Company. Henry's monocot taxonomic work for the Flora of Bhutan is an invaluable resource for the Himalayan flora. Smaller in scope, Henry's Flora of Angus is still widely used. Henry has participated in 10 collecting trips to the Himalaya, China and Tibet and has contributed at least 3232 specimens to the herbarium at RBGE and 1029 accessions of living plants. He has authored or co-authored 72 botanical species and varieties; published 65 papers, 18 books, and contributed 21 chapters to other works. He has spoken at 32 conferences/workshops and seminars and has curated or contributed to 25 exhibitions at Inverleith House.

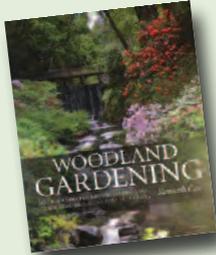
## Dr Andrew Duncan Medal



**Stan da Prato** grew up in North Berwick and still lives in East Lothian. He learned horticulture from his father, a professional gardener, before working in education. He is a former secretary of the Scottish Begonia Society and a Council member and former Vice President of The Caley. He has been Editor of the Caley's journal *The Caledonian Gardener* since 2005. An honorary member of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club he also edits the journal

## Book Reviews

**Woodland Gardening with Rhododendrons, Magnolias, Camellias and Acid Loving Plants.** Kenneth Cox. Glendoick Publishing. 2018. ISBN: 978 1 5272 1787 4. 394 pages. £47.45 or £40 plus postage from Glendoick.



As can be gleaned from the title, this is a book about woodland gardening written for the keen amateur to enjoy and add to their knowledge of garden design and history.

However it also serves as a reference book for the professional as long as you are not expecting lists of plants for particular situations. The author does deliver lists but they are embodied within the text and there are references to gardens known to the author. Within this wide context the author delivers the book in five parts: History, Design, Practical, Plants and examples of the greatest woodland gardens.

The introduction whets the appetite as Kenneth Cox gives some insight into his own family's horticultural heritage and its part in the Scottish plant hunting expeditions that resulted in the creation of Glendoick Nursery by Kenneth's father, Peter. There is a nostalgic feel to Kenneth's writing, with a sense of gratitude to the many plant hunters such as Farrer, E. Cox, Forrest and Wilson for, without their efforts, coupled with support from nurseries such as James Veitch and Sons then Kenneth would not have had the horticultural life he has lived thus far. This horticultural knowledge, in my opinion, is what separates Kenneth Cox's books from others, plus his forthright opinions on a range of gardening issues, from peat use and plant choice, to the people and organisations who garden.

The second part of the book is a 70 page history lesson on woodland plants, people and notable gardens. It makes a worthwhile

and interesting read before settling down to the real business part of the book which lays out how to get started with some suggestions, although a rather flippant comment is made about 'guerrilla woodland gardening'. We all must be mindful of the potentially devastating effects of casually introducing plants into the wider landscape. Nor can all gardeners choose a piece of landscape with 'spectacular natural features'. However the author backs up every comment with stunning images of superb quality that entice the reader to visit the gardens.

Reading on and into the 'Practical Stuff', on page 151 the reader will enjoy many good tips on rejuvenation, light levels and, perhaps most importantly why we should not let the garden become too overgrown. The author gives valuable insights into the do's and don'ts when selecting species based on plant biology and ecological reasoning. There is great wisdom given to the reader when considering that 'garden longevity requires a regular programme of renewal and succession planting; without replacement of plants, a garden is destined to terminal decline' words for any gardener in any situation to heed. Many plants are suggested within this section of the book, all given USDA hardiness rating zones, indicating that the intended market for the book is global. Moving on the reader will enjoy some very useful information centred on soils and structure delivered with the author's usual flair plus an opinion on the use of peat. On page 196 I was pleased to see some bullet point references for planting as I feel the book needed some balance to serve as a reference book for the gardener who might not want always to read a whole chapter. The information on spacing and pruning is superb and should give the reader confidence to forge ahead backed up with information on dead heading, moving/transplanting and irrigation. The information on pests and diseases is up to date, relevant to the garden type in question and focusses on the real issues facing many woodland gardens of scale insects and fungal infections. Additional



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