

The Discussion Weekend

4th – 6th October 2013

After two splendid years with the Reivers, the new organizing team invites you to Grantown-on-Spey for Highland hospitality to celebrate the 80th birthday of the Scottish Rock Garden Club. Grantown is a 'planned' town built in 1766 by Sir James Grant. It features a broad high street with the town square at its northern end and is perhaps unique amongst Scottish towns in that it has no chain stores, but just a range of independent shops, cafes and bars. The town is small and, having suffered little from modern housing developments, still enjoys a peaceful woodland location alongside the River Spey.

The Grant Arms Hotel, part of the original town, sits in the middle of the square and has recently been refurbished to a very high standard. As well as being guests of the Grant Arms we will also be guests of the Bird Watchers and Wildlife Club (BWWC, www.bwwc.co.uk), and their facilities will be available to delegates. The hotel is cosy, with forty-eight rooms, two of which suit disabled guests, while six are available as single rooms. When all rooms in the Grant Arms have been filled, delegates will be placed in the equally agreeable eighteen bedroom Garth Hotel just a hundred metres away across the square.

Delegates arriving by car will leave the A9 at Aviemore, simply following the A95 to Grantown. If you are coming by public transport we recommend the scenic train journey through the Grampian mountains to Aviemore and onwards by the frequent bus service to Grantown square.

Saturday morning is, as usual, free time for delegates and organizers to enjoy some arranged visits. At Grantown we have a problem – there is just so much to recommend! Firstly, the Grant Arms is the base for Bird Watchers and Wildlife Club and they will provide guides to take you on a wildlife walk in the neighbouring Anagach Woods and by the River Spey; both long and short walks are planned. Did you know that there is a native plant garden to be found at 600 metres on Cairngorm mountain? The gardener will be waiting at Cairngorm to tell you all about his garden, after which you might like to ride the funicular to the Ptarmigan station to see the views and enjoy their world famous hot chocolate. A distillery tour is always popular and we are arranging one at the Glenlivet Distillery for you.

Actually, we suggest that Grantown is a place to come for a longer break, with the Discussion Weekend as the 'jewel in the crown'; there is just so much to see and do. Are you interested in fishing? We can arrange a day's fishing on the River Spey - but remember that the season ends on 30 September. Is golf your or your partner's secret vice? Grantown has its own magnificent eighteen-hole course; or you can drive up to Nairn to try the two links courses, or even the new home of the Scottish Open at Castle Stuart.

Provisional Programme

Friday 4th October

- 1500 Registration
- 1945 President's welcome
- 2000 ***The Jim Archibald Lecture*** - Elsa Pooley: Bulbs of South Africa
- 2100 The small bulb exchange

Saturday 5th October

- 0800 Plant staging
- 0930 Local woodland walks, excursions and visits
- 1030 Show, plant sales (open to the public)
- 1345 **Clint Callens:** The quiet charm of Paris and Podophyllum
- 1445 **Alan Furness:** Growing celmisias in a Northumberland garden
- 1600 ***The Harold Esslemont Lecture*** - Martin Sheader:
Exploring for plants in Patagonia
- 1830 Drinks reception, conference dinner and plant auction

Sunday 6th October

- 0915 Elsa Pooley: Plants of the Drakensberg
- 1100 ***The William Buchanan Lecture*** - Chris Brickell: Cultivating daphnes
- 1200 Show and plant sales open
- 1330 **Malcolm McGregor:** A world full of saxifrages?
- 1440 ***The John Duff Lecture*** - John Mitchell:
Rock gardening developments at the RBGE
- 1530 Closing comments and show presentations

We are delighted to have been able to retain the cost of the weekend at under £198 per person for the weekend for two persons sharing (see the Secretary's pages for full price details and order form). The preceding Thursday night or following Sunday nights are both available at £65 ppn DB&B. Outside this period the Grant Arms will welcome your company at the normal rate.

If you have any further queries please contact Carol Shaw at: (srcsec@googlemail.com). We look forward to seeing you all in October.

