# Newsletter of the service of the ser



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RHS Lily Group members Christopher Ryan (left), Kurt Vickery (centre), Christopher Gardner (guide) and Joanne Everson (right), admire a superb specimen of Lilium kesselringianum, at 1600 m altitude in North East Turkey during this year's Lily Group 10 day tour in June. Also seen on the trip (clockwise from top left) Lilium akkusianum, L. szovitsianum, L. ponticum artviense, L. ciliatum, L. monadelphum and L. kesselringianum. (For the full report see pp. 6-7)

# RHS Lily Group Publications DVD 1932-2014

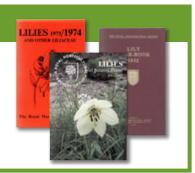
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Dr Nuala Sterling, Vermont House, Withers Lane, EAST BOLDRE, SO42 7WX, UK

Telephone: +44 (0)1590 612378 Email: chairman@rhslilygroup.org



# **Editorial**

# Pontus Wallstén

Welcome to this autumn 2015 Lily Group newsletter.

Yes, after one of the warmest summers on record since 135 years in most parts of Europe, autumn is now settling in slowly here in Switzerland. However, the lily season is far from finished! On the first day of October the gorgeous yellow and purple flowers of *Lilium primulinum burmanicum* opened in my nursery show garden<sup>1</sup>, there are eight buds dangling on long pedicels on the strongest stem. A glorious sight! *Lilium speciosum album* is still in bud, a great season extender, proving that if you choose the right species, you can have lilies in bloom in your garden from about the end of May until well into October!

The warm summer has been good for pollinators, and seed production for the coming seed list promises to be good. (See p. 5 for details about the upcoming

seed list from George Battle).

If you have had particular success raising any rare or unusual *Lilium* sp. (or other plants) from the LG seed list, it would be a delight to hear from you and your success seedling stories for the spring 2016 newsletter.

Diving into this newsletter will be like embarking on a "lily cruise", with ports of call in North East Turkey, (pp. 6-7), Scotland, (pp. 8-9) and finally China, on p. 10, reminding us again that this wonderful genus that we all love so much has one of the widest geographical distributions of any plant!

E-mail: <a href="mailto:pontus.wallsten@bluewin.ch">pontus.wallsten@bluewin.ch</a> (for most welcome articles!)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> http://pontuswallstenplants.smugmug.com/



Lilium primulinum burmanicum

# Chairman's letter

# **Nuala Sterling**

I am delighted to welcome three new committee members whose appointment will be confirmed at the Annual Meeting and Bulb Auction at Pershore College on 7 November; Nataliya Cuttell (from Russia) whose financial experience will be invaluable, Tony Dixon who will co-ordinate the Pollen Project and Pontus Wallstén (Swedish from Switzerland) our new Newsletter Editor. Cynthia Young becomes a friend, Tim Whiteley will be elevated to Honorary Membership.

Our weekend visit to Perth visiting five gardens of different significance with enthusiastic Scottish members of the Lily Group is reported by Nataliya on pp. 8-9. We are grateful to Steve McNamara who guided us round **Branklyn Garden**, Julia.corden@explorersgarden.com in Pitlochry, Madeleine Tinson at **Parkhead Gardens**, Perth who holds the National Collection of Mylnefield hybrids created by Chris North who enchanted us on Saturday.

Alan Mitchell (Editor of *Lilies and Related Plants*) gave us lunch on Sunday showing us a range of beautiful *Lilium* species in his **Star of Markinch** garden and Susan Band <a href="mailto:susan@pitcairnalpines.co.uk">susan@pitcairnalpines.co.uk</a> who demonstrated how she grows her species seedlings. Enjoying their company gave us an opportunity for exchanging experience on growing Lilies from seed and on how the committee can maintain contact with our members throughout the world. The debate was sufficient to stir me into acquiring some polyester fish boxes on my French holiday!

We appreciate the members who watching over their developing seed heads are preparing to dry and sort seed to send to Pat Huff for distribution. Send a copy of your list to George Battle. See p. 5 for details.

Newsletter correspondence from Göte Svanholm in 1994 praising the LG seed list as a mechanism for contributing to the group is as true today as then: Rare and interesting Lily seed, reliably named, good germination and interesting non-liliaceous seed difficult to find elsewhere.

George has spread his net for distribution of any spare seed to Botanical and Horticultural Institutions. Some is reserved for meetings introducing new members to the challenge and delight of growing Lily bulbs from seed. David Leung of the School of Biological Sciences University of Christchurch is involved in a tissue culture project intended for earthquake replacement



of Lily species at NZLS Botanic Garden.

The 2015 Lyttel Cup award is made to Gene Mirro of Washington State USA in recognition of his expertise and longstanding contribution to the Lily Group.

We contributed to three July visits to Fullers Mill Garden, Suffolk where Bernard Tickner with Annie Dellbridge, Head Gardener and Heather gave us enthusiastic support.

Firstly, 12 members of the RHS Bulb Committee demonstrating autumn flowering bulbs gave horticultural advice to 170 visitors. This supported Perennial, the Gardeners Benevolent Society to whom Bernard has donated his Garden. The Wakefield and North of England Tulip Society, displayed English Florist Tulips.

Next Annie, Heather and I hosted an interactive Study Day with enjoyable participation from the Suffolk Branch of Plant Heritage-now adept at scaling and seeding Lilies!

Last the Lily Group stand was replicated at the Suffolk Nurseries Plant Fair.

Those members fortunate enough to go on the 11-day Lily Group Tour to North East Turkey guided by Christopher Gardner and Nursel İkinci had a fantastic reward – see Duncan Coombs' report on pp. 6-7.

The Annual Meeting and Lily Bulb Auction will held at **Pershore College, Worcestershire WR10 3JP** on Saturday 7 November 2015. (Detail p. 4)

Members seeking advice on **pest control** might like to consult the RHS Advisory Service 'Pesticides for Home Gardeners 2015' <a href="www.rhs.org.uk">www.rhs.org.uk</a> website or <a href="www.pesticides.gov.uk/guidance/industries/pesticides/user-areas/garden-home">www.pesticides.gov.uk/guidance/industries/pesticides/user-areas/garden-home</a> for information.

My thanks for all the committee's contribution and the members for their involvement.

Nuala Sterling

Email: chairman@rhslilygroup.org

# Lily Group Programme of events 2015-2016

# **Bulb Auction & AGM**

# Saturday 7 November 2015

The 2015 Bulb Auction and AGM will take place in the Conference and Meeting Room at: **Pershore College, Avonbank, Pershore, Worcestershire WR10 3JP** 

11.00 am Bulb set up and coffee

**12-12.30** Sandwich buffet lunch (a small contribution would be welcome)

**12.30** AGM

Followed by a short video of the June 2015 Lily Group visit to Turkey by Pontus Wallstén

**1.30** Bulb Auction

### Volunteers for Auctioneers needed

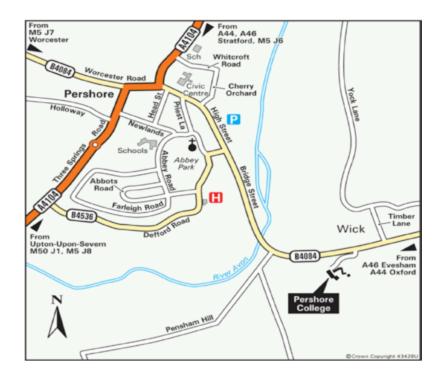
Tea and payment settlement when finished.

### **DIRECTIONS**

Pershore College, Garden and Plant Centre and the AGS office are 1 mile outside the village/town of Pershore on the B4084 road to Evesham.

Travelling north on the M5 take exit No 9 to A46 and follow signs. Travelling south on the M5 take exit No 6 and A44 and follow signs. There is plentiful parking. Pershore rail station is at Pinvin village 1 mile to the North. Taxi to the college.

Please let Nuala know if you are coming. Email or Telephone 01590 612378



### Bulbs maybe brought or sent to:

Nuala Sterling, Vermont House, Withers Lane, East Boldre, Brockenhurst, Hants SO42 7WX.

Or can be sent to Pershore College as long as clearly marked for the RHS Lily bulb Auction on Saturday 7 November.

The information desk and display will be manned by members of the committee. The Youngs will meet and greet visitors. We need some Auctioneer volunteers as Harris is unable to come.

# Visit to Spetchley Park

# Saturday 4 June 2016

With head Gardener Mike Peach in the morning and then in the afternoon we visit Colonel John and Mrs Leslie Bryant's garden in Stoulton, Worcestershire.

Details on the Lily Group's website and in the forthcoming Spring 2016 Lily Group Newsletter.

# **Seed List Mailing**

# 2016 Timetable

# George Battle

This timetable is intended to give an idea of when Lily Group members might expect to receive the 2016 Seed List. Please help Pat Huff, email: <a href="mailto:lilygroupseeds@gmail.com">lilygroupseeds@gmail.com</a> and myself by sending seed well before the 1 December 2015 deadline: Seed should sent to Pat Huff, not to me.

All members will be sent the PDF version of the List. If any UK non-donor would like a paper copy, he or she will need to send a First Class stamp to me at the address below.

George Battle Oaklands, Gorst Hill, Rock, Kidderminster, DY14 9YR

Your generosity is what will make this list – do please send us what you can! – George Battle

Please treat these guidelines as targets.

By end of second full week in January post to Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Canada, USA

By end of third full week in January post to European and UK donors

By approximately 19 January email PDF List to all donors

By first week of February post to UK non-donors

By approximately 5 February email PDF List to all non-donors

If you have not received your Seed List a week or more after these guideline dates, please email me as soon as possible at: <a href="mailto:gbattle7@btinternet.com">gbattle7@btinternet.com</a>

# Lilies and Related Plants

One of the species lilies that is much admired is *Lilium* speciosum var. gloriosoides (see Facebook currently).

It is generally agreed to be the most beautiful form of *L. speciosum*, but as with most beautiful lilies it can be difficult to please and flowers quite late, at least in Scotland where I live.

Perhaps there are lily growers out there who have grown this species, or a similarly prized species, and would like to share their experience with the readers of *Lilies and Related Plants*.

Should this be the case, please contact me by Email at: <a href="massmitch@tiscali.co.uk"><u>massmitch@tiscali.co.uk</u></a> or Telephone: 01592 759255.

### Alan Mitchell

Editor, Lilies and Related Plants



Lilium speciosum var. gloriosoides



20 June saw eight intrepid members of the Lily Group setting off for Turkey. On this trip I saw many plants that were completely new to me and our guides Chris Gardener and Nursel Ikinci soon demonstrated their excellent knowledge of the local flora.

n 22 June we headed up into the Canik Mountains and later to the Akkus valley. On the mountains we found an open forest of mainly Fagus orientalis in which Mespilus germanica (the medlar) was common. Our first lily, the recently discovered Lilium akkusianum, was found growing amongst Pteridium aquilinum (bracken) in acidic soil containing much organic matter that had developed over a reddish limestone. This yellow turkscap flowered lily with orange/red pollen is sweetly scented and the leaves, plus growth pattern is similar to Lilium monadelphum. Lilium akkusianum appears to compete successfully with bracken, having the ability to grow strongly and flower virtually in full sun before the bracken uncurls, extends and develops a frond canopy above the lily. So far as I am aware this new species is not yet in cultivation. Moving over the mountains we descended to 700 m where, in a rain shadow area, there was a remarkable Mediterranean enclave flora with Arbutus andrachne the beautiful Grecian strawberry tree with cinnamon-brown flaking bark and Cedrus libani

(Cedar of Lebanon). Once down onto the Akkus valley much of the ground was covered by an *Eryngium* sp., but in one spot there was *Iris xanthospuria* in flower.

The next day, 23 June we travelled out from Ordu and headed into the Asku Valley where at 1075 m we found our first *Lilium monadelphum* var. *armenium* in flower in lush grassland together with *Heracleum* sp., *Securigera varia* (syn. *Coronilla varia*) and *Echium vulgare*.

Higher at 1605 m we found our first *Lilium ciliatum* growing on a very steeply sloping site. There were hundreds of stems arising out of lush vegetation. The plants looked almost threatening, the dark centres of the otherwise yellow Turk's cap flowers appearing to stare out at one. It might help the would be cultivator of this lily to note that the bulbs were growing in clearly fertile soil, with good drainage, this insured by the very steepness of the slope they chose to grow on and with plenty of soil moisture due to the normal high rainfall at this time of flowering.

On 24 June we set out from Ordu again, but this time



Morina persica with its spiky leaves topped by fragrant flowers

travelling up the Altinere valley to the famous Sumela Monastery. On the way up to and at the monastery we found *Campanula betulifolia* growing in small crevices in the rock. The plants had the characteristic birch-like foliage and were white flowered.

For the next two nights we stayed in very pleasant chalets around a main hotel building, the whole complex being just outside Trabzon, in a wildflower meadow- ideal for plant seekers! Walking locally from the hotel we found a host of wonderful plants including *Lilium ciliatum* 

growing with Lilium monadelphum, plus Geranium psilostemon, Stachys macrantha, Rhododendron luteum, Silene alba and Lonicera caucasica. We moved steadily on to the Zigana Pass. The south facing side was very hot and dry at this time of year. We found a wide range of plants of which perhaps the most visually exciting were Digitalis lamarckii with spires of distinctive brown and white foxglove flowers and Morina persica with tiers of white colouring to pink trumpet shaped flowers emerging from vertical stems arising from basal whorls of spiny leaves.

The following day saw us again going up into the mountains. *Lilium ponticum* was present, but this population was notable for variation in flower colour some individuals being the typical light yellow whilst others were very much darker in colour.

Higher, at 1875 m, the bright yellow flowers of *Anthemis tinctoria* announced its presence together with more *Lilium ponticum* and *Dactylorhiza saccifera* (Wedge-Lipped Orchid).

At just below 2000 m we encountered small Turkish villages, whilst picturesque they looked poor and our guides told us life for these farmers had become extremely tough with most unable to make a living. The decrepitude associated with active depopulation was sadly evident. The yellow flowered *Rhododendron luteum* was still in bloom and very prominent on the valley sides.

Up to 2000 m *Pinus sylvestris* (Scots pine) was the dominant tree with there being dark patches of dense

woodland and thinner more open woodland with *Rhododendron luteum* forming a colourful shrub layer and yet other spots where the Rhododendron formed a mono culture of its own. Walking through the open patches with the masses of yellow flowers and all pervasive sweet scent from the rhododendron was a very pleasant experience.

At almost exactly 2000 m there was a clear tree line running along the sides of the valleys above which the vegetation changed abruptly to a short turf, containing within it a high population of Frog Orchids.

Despite this being late June on north facing slopes snow patches still remained and the air temperature was low. Chilled by both the low temperature and then rain we retreated to the warmth of our hotel!

Unfortunately I had to leave the tour at this point since work beckoned me back to the UK, but they continued for a further two days with the same extensive range of plants being seen.

I left with a strong memory of a very enjoyable, rich and varied experience. The Turkish people were open and friendly with a cuisine that was new to us all and attractive. The flora had been found to be diverse exciting and in many places unique. Nowhere else will one find *Lilium akkusianum*.



# RHS Lily Group visit Perth, Scotland

# 11-12 July 2015

Nataliya Cuttell

Not having previously been to Scotland, a visit to Perth was a perfect opportunity not only to see this wonderful part of Britain, but also to meet new people and exchange experiences in growing lilies in different climatic conditions.

Our program started with a visit to a Branklyn Garden Situated on two acres of private land, the garden contains a vast collection of rhododendrons, alpine and herbaceous plants and it was a perfect time to see the Himalayan blue poppy in its full glory. We were lucky to have Steve McNamara, Head Gardener and Property Manager, to guide us round the garden: <a href="http://www.nts.org.uk/BranklynGarden">http://www.nts.org.uk/BranklynGarden</a>

As you can never predict with the seasons and flowers, it was a bit disappointing that not many lilies were in flower, but that was compensated by other gorgeous species. I think you can only truly appreciate the garden after you have visited it several times and during different seasons as there are so many hidden gems in such a small garden.

Hidden pathways take you from one level of the garden to another, so you can have a different view of the garden and make it look bigger than it is. For an amateur gardener like me, it was impossible to remember all the names of the plants we managed to see that day, so I was just happily taking pictures of everything I liked. After Branklyn Garden we went to Explorers Garden in Pitlochry. Situated on six acres of woodland, the garden is dedicated to Scottish Plant hunters. Divided into zones, the areas represent parts of the world from where plants originated. It tells stories of men, who risked their lives in search for new plants for cultivation or commercial growing.

The last garden for the day was Madeleine Tinson's private garden in Perth, it was truly a highlight of the day. Finally, we have a garden full of flowering lilies, not just any lilies, but Mylnefield Lilies. It's amazing to meet people so passionate about what they do. You can listen to Madeleine for hours and get inspired. But flowers speak for themselves and you see that they are happy in the care of such a dedicated person.



RHS Lily Group members being shown around Branklyn by Steve MacNamara (left) and inset, Lilium ledebourii.

My favourite was **North Lily 'Theseus'** (shown right) and I hope I will be able to grow it one day. Or hopefully, Maddy will bring some spare bulbs for the auction in November.

The next day we went to visit Alan Mitchell's private garden in Fife. I will not tell you the story of people getting lost, but it set a funny/happy mood for the day and at the end we all made it to the required destination. The weather was holding up. We are grateful to Alan for opening up his garden and sharing his world and love for lilies with us. Refueled by lunch and drinks at Alan's, we made our way to Pitcairn alpines nursery run by Susan Band.

I hope Susan will write one day a dedicated article on her method of growing species lilies from seed for *Lilies and Related Plants*, but for now we are happy with the knowledge she shared with us and that you should not be afraid to experiment and challenge what experts tell you.



Lilium rubescens



North Lily 'Theseus'

Two days passed very quickly and it was sad to leave Perth. I am very grateful to Nuala and Graham Sterling for carting me around and I hope to be back one day as there are so many other places I would love to visit. I also hope that more members will try to make an effort to take part in Lily group meetings. We are here not only to learn and share knowledge, but also to meet new friends and help each other with a bit of kindness we, like all other gardeners, have in our hearts in this complicated world.



It was interesting to see that seedlings are moved on as soon as they are deemed viable to fish boxes and grown on till harvest time (two year old bulbs). I wonder how many of us started looking up fish boxes on their return from Perth? And my tip for the day will also be the fact that you don't have to constantly fight with weeds in your lily beds. Lilies are quite happy as they are.

RHS Lily Group Newsletter AUTUMN 2015

# Richard Dadd Obituary

The Lily Group and particularly those of us who served on committee with Richard Dadd were extremely saddened to hear of his passing; Richard Dadd served on the Lily Group committee for many years along with his wife Ann, who was the Groups secretary. Ann also served on the committee for many years.

Richard was a leading authority on the genus *Allium* and in 1982 his knowledge of the subject was evident in the Lily Group's annual publication. Unusually it was entitled *The RHS Lily Group Bulletin 1982*. Previously and since that date the Groups Publications have been known as the Yearbook. However, Richards article 'The Genus *Allium* in British Gardens' takes pride of place in the Bulletin and was to form part of a book on alliums that Richard was preparing for publication.

During his time on committee Richard was a good friend and supporter of the then Lily Group Chairman Dee Martin Simmonds. He took a major role in helping with numerous garden visits that the Group arranged,

# Harris Howland

and he was also instrumental in assisting with the lily displays in the Royal Horticultural Shows at the Westminster Halls. This was particularly so with the two shows that featured displays of alliums in 1980



Allium rosenbachianum

and 1986. The 1988/9 Yearbook features an article by Richard on that years allium display. From this article one can get the measure of Richard's extensive knowledge of the genus *Allium*.

Richard served on the Lily Group Committee until the mid-nineteen nineties; those of us who served with him on committee will remember him with fondness and admiration.

# The rare gem *Lilium souliei* in China

**Duncan Coombs** 

*Lilium souliei* was a particularly exciting find on a trip to China in 2004 growing at approximately 2500 m round the banks of Lake Tianchi above the Zhongdian Plateau.

The peaty soil was acidic and normally very wet. The stems of the lily were 35 to 40 cm tall and the brown/red flowers difficult to spot amongst the low growing vegetation of *Rhododendron* subspecies. This area, justly famous for its plants, revealed beautiful drifts of thousands of *Primula sikkimensis* and *Primula secundiflora*, plus impressive plants of *Rheum alexandrae* flowering around the wet edge of the lake.

Recent years of severe drought in large parts of Yunnan previously very wet created a worrying situation when I returned to Lake Tianchi in 2012.

The forests around the lake were in steep decline, many trees being dead or clearly dying. Few plants of *Rheum alexandrae* were present, those remaining being small and non-flowering. Of *Lilium souliei* not a trace was found. Is this further evidence of climate change?



Lilium souliei

# Subscriptions 2016

### **MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION**

### Dear Lily Group Members,

As you know the annual subscription was increased to £15 from 1 January 2015, the first rise in 14 years. The majority of members have modified their standing order instructions by phone or letter to their banks but some who have not are still in arrears of £5.

Members who have not paid their subscriptions for the coming 1, 2 or 3 years option renewal for 2015 please complete the form and return it to me or consider a standing order to your bank. It would be a pity if this were your last opportunity to receive the Newsletter.

If your mailing label is shown as: 2014/\*\*-\*\*/\*\* or is preceded with SO 2014/\*\* for standing order it confirms you are in arrears. Those who receive their Newsletter electronically will have had a personal reminder from the Chairman. The mailing label shown as 2015/\*\*-/\*\* or preceded with SO indicates you are due to pay £15/ £30/ £45 as of your choice of 1-3 years.

The preferred method of payment for UK bank account holders is Standing Order (form available on request from me). Alternatively, cheques should be made payable to **the Lily Group** and posted to me.

Please keep me up to date on your contact details.

Best wishes.

Rose Voelcker, Membership Secretary

email: rvlanjique@wanadoo.fr

# Lily Group contact details

### Nuala Sterling, Chairman

E.: <a href="mailto:chairman@rhslilygroup.org">chairman@rhslilygroup.org</a> T.: +44 (0) 1590 612 378 Vermont House, East Boldre, Hampshire SO42 7WX, UK

### Caroline Boisset, Secretary

E.: secretary@rhslilygroup.org T.: +44 (0) 1225 864 808 St Olaves, 19 Woolley Street, Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire BA15 1AD, UK

# George Battle, **Seed List Compiler**

E.: gbattle7@btinternet.com The Oaklands, Gorst Hill, Rock, Kidderminster, Worcestershire DY14 9YR, UK

### **Other Committee Members**

# Pat Huff,

# **Seed Distribution Manager**

E.: <a href="mailto:lilygroupseeds@gmail.com">lilygroupseeds@gmail.com</a> T.: +44 (0) 1480 891 740 (Eve.) T.: +44 (0) 207 402 1401 (Day) Castle House, Leighton Bromswold, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE28 5AX, UK

# Rose Voelcker, **Membership Secretary**

E.: rvlanjique@wanadoo.fr T.: +33 (0) 5 62 66 43 76 Lanjique, 32380 St Léonard. Gers, France

### Colin Pope, Treasurer

E.: treasurer@rhslilygroup.org T.: +44 (0) 1707 320 917

Alisdair Aird, Vice Chairman Chris Brickell

**Duncan Coombs** 

### Alan Mitchell, Editor Lilies and Related Plants

E.: massmitch@tiscali.co.uk T.: +44 (0)1592 759 255

# Pontus Wallstén, Editor Lily Group Newsletter

E.: pontus.wallsten@bluewin.ch

# **Tony Dixon Pollen Coordinator**

E.: tonydixon@zoho.com

### Alan Pryke, Webmaster

E.: webmaster@rhslilygroup.org

Nataliya Cuttell Irene Hopton-Scott Harris Howland

Richard Hyde Tim Whiteley

# Newsletter photo credits

pp. 1-3, 5-7 (Pontus Wallstén); pp. 8, 9 (Nataliya Cuttell); pp. 10 (Christine Skelmersdale, Duncan Coombs)

# Royal Horticultural Society Lily Group

# **ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION 2016**

Please send your completed form to the Lily Group Membership Secretary:

Mrs Rose Voelcker, Lanjique, 32380 ST LEONARD, Gers, France Telephone: +33 5 62 66 43 76

# **MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL**

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