The purpose of this Society is to bring the people interested in Primula together in an organization to increase the general knowledge of and interest in the collecting, growing, breeding, showing and using in the landscape and garden of the genus Primula in all its forms and to serve as a clearing house for collecting and disseminating information about Primula.

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Front Cover: In this issue we feature photographs from Trevor Cole. This candelabra, Primula ‘Inverewe’ was taken at Harlow Carr Garden in 1979.
Back Cover: One of Richard Austin’s fabulous new double auriculas ‘Chocolate Teapot.’ Check out photos of all his plants at www.doubleauriculas.com

Primroses
The Quarterly of the American Primrose Society

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Primroses

The quarterly of the American Primrose Society

President’s Message

ALAN LAWRENCE

The annual Seed Exchange is in full swing! We are all grateful to the New England Chapter for their hard work in managing this activity and for the great seed collection which they have assembled. I was particularly pleased to see a good selection from the North American section Parryi.

I have also received some Primula seeds from Chris Chadwell’s 2011 collecting expedition. Chris was the featured speaker at last year’s Annual Show at Tower Hill Botanic Gardens in Massachusetts. I was delighted to receive some seeds of P. reidii from this collection. It seems to have become quite scarce here, and it is a fairly difficult species to grow. A few years ago I grew it and did manage to get it to flower, but lost it to some extreme summer heat. I hope to do better this time.

The collecting of wild seed is a difficult subject, especially for species under threat, and in the US it is illegal in most circumstances. But in some cases the collection of seed may be the only way to ensure species survival. Consider the numbers; each pollinated flower produces, say, 10 seeds, and each plant produces about, say, 5 flowers. So a pollinated plant will produce 50 seeds. At this rate the world should be covered in primulas - so where do all these seeds go? Unfortunately few of them will get to become new plants. The majority will either be eaten by seed predators, or not be fortunate enough to end up in the required niche for successful germination. If one seed of the 50 grows into a new plant, it is probably a successful year. The reality of global warming has put most alpine environments under threat, and one solution to ensure the survival of alpine species is well organized seed collection activity. Some of this collection should be stored in seed
banks, but dedicated specialist growers should be entrusted with raising plants for continued seed production and raising plants for placement in suitable environments.

This year’s National Show is in Oregon at the Portland Expo Center on April 6, 7 and 8th in conjunction with the Oregon Hardy Plant Society Spring Sale of 70+ vendors. Registration includes four talks as well as the Auricula Round-Table Discussion on Sunday. Guest speaker is Bob Taylor, premier grower of all kinds of Primula, from Yorkshire, England.

All the latest news, including registration forms and online payment, will be on the website. Hope to see you there.

Central Minnesota Tough
KAREN SCHELLINGER

One spring, as I was placing my Primula polyanthus plants on the sales tables for our Minnesota Arboretum’s large spring plant sale, a woman working there commented, “Isn’t it too bad they come out of a greenhouse.” I told her, no, these were plants I grew in the ground over the winter and then I potted them up for the spring sale. The only time they saw a greenhouse was when I planted them as seeds in my small 10x12-foot greenhouse in November to bloom in the following May. My first primrose seed was planted in the fall of 1987 - 24 years ago. My, how time flies when you’re having fun!

Many people are amazed when I tell them I can grow many kinds of Primula in Minnesota and have done so for 24 or more years. We are blessed with very good soil that retains the moisture but yet is well-drained, the result of hundreds of years of deciduous tree leaves left to decay beneath the trees. I have never added anything to the soil except for bone meal and wood ashes occasionally.

I garden in a protected area with a hill to the northwest which slopes south to my Primula and hosta, with maple and basswood trees overhead which can make for heavy shade in the middle of my garden. When we get a heavy downpour, the water flows down the hillside into my gardens as it has done for hundreds of years, but the garden continues to be well-drained.

I allow the fallen leaves to remain in the garden. I used to rake them up in the spring because I liked to see the soil between my plants. I have since decided that it is better to leave them as Mother Nature intended with the primroses growing up through the leaf cover in the spring. The worms have the leaves removed by fall, adding to the richness of the soil. The new fall leaves are good for winter protection if we don’t get much snow cover. I have some slugs and use pet-friendly slug bait around special plants like orchids in spring. The Primula don’t seem to suffer too much from the slugs.

We live in central Minnesota where the winter temperatures can get to 30 below zero, but it is most often around 20 below. I do remember, however, one winter when I had to drive to the Twin Cities for a Master Gardener course, it got to 40 below. But that is very rare, thank heaven.

In winter, the most dangerous time is in February and March if we don’t have enough snow. The plants must not be exposed to the sun, as the roots will be partially frozen and break at night when the temperatures plunge. So I make sure the plants are covered with leaves to stay frozen. Usually, in the fall, Mother Nature covers them well and the...
rains make the leaves adhere to the plants. We can have strong winds in the month of November, so I keep an eye on the leaf cover over the primroses then.

My success with primroses is due to “thinking like a primrose.” What do these plants need to live happily in my garden? The number one answer is water. These plants must never be dry at any time during the growing season. Their leaves will tell you quickly if they are thirsty. They will be limp and light in color. Don’t let them get to this point!

I think primroses do better with high shade, so trimming off some of the lower tree branches is helpful. Morning sun seems to agree with them. Many of the primroses are in bloom before the leaves appear on the trees.

I do not plant primroses in my garden after August 30, and actually, I feel safer if they are in the ground by the end of July. One October I planted 200 healthy-sized seedlings in my garden and lost every one of them to that winter, even with snow cover.

I plant primroses with or without their flowers when digging them. If I am dividing a plant into several plants, I remove their flower stalks. If it is one I am not going to divide but just move, then I leave the flowers on with a good amount of soil around the roots.

Water them well! An inch a week is not too much, and some of the japonica primroses can take more water. They actually demand it when moving them. The japonicas can take less water after they are established but will do better if attention to their watering is given regularly, as will all primroses.

I have tried many kinds of primroses in the past, a ‘past’ when I was still learning about these wonderful plants. The first I became aware of was Primula denticulata which was growing in a friend’s garden. The balls of bloom were so interesting to me. So I started some from seed and planted them in my garden. I did not keep an eye on them when I got busy with other things and lost them that summer. So I learned my lesson about watering and now have lots of them in my garden.

I received Doretta Klaber’s book, Primroses and Spring, from a friend, and I have to say that was what made me fall in love with Primulas. Also, some friends in the Minnesota Rock Garden Society were growing some Primula in their gardens in the Twin Cities, some 60 miles south of me, so I felt I just had to try again.

I joined the American Primrose Society and used their seed exchange to get more seed, and an addict was born! I also made a friend of Ann Lunn and used the APS slide library to see what these Primula looked like and to gain more knowledge.

I have had success with Primula and have forgotten partial success with some difficult ones, the petiolaris group especially. It’s just too cold here for them.

Primula veris, polyanthus and acaulis seed from Barnhaven Seeds have done well for me with my soil and climate conditions. Primula polyanthus Gold-Lace, Hose-in-Hose, Jack-in-the-Green and Jackanapes are survivors. P acaulis is more short-lived, but I suspect it is because I didn’t divide them often enough, perhaps 3-4 years as with the polyanthus which starts to go down in the amount of bloom. Also, you have to pay attention to the plant’s crown when planting them - not exposed and not too deep.

Primula saxitilis, farinosa, frondosa and modesta are other welcome plants with a more dainty growth pattern. They are a “must” to create a beautiful spring garden. I also love Primula kisoana in both the pink and white forms that creep with big, fuzzy leaves and nice-size flowers. Primula polyneura looks a lot like P. kisoana but doesn’t creep.

Primula elatior is a delightful plant which I don’t pay much attention to dividing, and it doesn’t seem to mind. I love how its clusters of soft yellow blooms greet me. It is one of the first to bloom in my garden.

I have several plantings of x julianas which were bought as plants from nurseries I have visited here and there, but I am not sure which is which anymore. We had banty chickens during those times, and they saw to it that labels didn’t remain safely “planted” for very long.

I also tried a large number of different x julianas from seed from a firm in England whose name I have forgotten. They lasted only one year, but I got to see some of them bloom. The nursery had a very large, colored catalog. I am tempted to try them again as my first juliana try was early on in my Primula growing experience.

One of the most successful Primulas for me has been my Primula sieboldii, all of which I started from seed from Barnhaven and APS seed exchanges. I have now moved them around in my gardens from the nursery beds they had grown in for 4 or 5 years. They just creep in growth patterns of mats of color, and I do so enjoy them.

I first became interested in them when my elderly, sassy gardener friend, Georgie, showed them to me. She was very proud of them, and so we shared primroses which she loved long before I even knew what they were. I do miss her. She greets me every spring when plants she gave me bloom.

My rock garden is home to Primula auricula and P. marginata. I started the auriculas from seed, but for some reason, I can’t get the marginatas to germinate. I got rooted cuttings of marginatas from Ann Lunn which are doing well. I have two plants of Primula wulfeniana in the garden now. So far, no blooms.
I have a lot of deer and get nervous in the spring, so I spray the *Primula* with Liquid Fence and the plants are good for 3-4 weeks. I don’t spray them regularly after they’re done blooming and don’t seem to have a problem. I don’t know why, as friends in the Twin Cities 60 miles south of me have all their *Primula* eaten by them. I know there are deer in my garden area as their droppings are there, and they eat other perennials in my perennial beds if I am tardy in spraying.

In fact neglect can sometimes be a good thing. We lost a lot of double primrose divisions this year, despite having divided at our normal time, probably because we had extremely hot weather afterwards, always difficult. A whole bench of doubles that I hadn’t had time to touch were divided much later and have all survived. We have some large clay pots of auriculas that we use for display and every year we say, “We really must re-pot those.” They are now crammed-full and overflowing. They must have been there for years but every year they just get better and better.

My predecessor Angela Bradford was always telling me not always to follow perceived wisdom — don’t always listen to the experts in fact. In primula cultivation I’ve come to the conclusion that there are lots of “right” ways to do things. We encourage people to plant in such or such a position and then customers will say they’ve done exactly the opposite and the plants are thriving. Sowing *Primula* seed is another example; I’ve heard of so many different methods. At Barnhaven we sow in trays, don’t cover the seed, protect with another seed tray until germination and place outside. It works for us, but it’s certainly not the only way.

I think what I’d like to pass on to any new members of the society particularly, is not to worry about doing things the right way, just have a try, and if the seedlings fail, try another way. The APS seed exchange is an excellent way of trying to grow new-to-you *primulas* at very little cost. There’s lots of advice around, but not always infallible, and if they fail try again next year. If they grow, such a reward! Just have a go.

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Frank Cabot

One of the long-time members of the American Primrose Society has passed away. Frank always had the best interest of the society at heart, and was a strong supporter throughout the years he was a member. There is a detailed biography on Wikipedia, for your reference. Some of the highlights of Frank’s life, mentioned there include:

His gardens: He established a garden called Stonecrop in Cold Spring, New York, which was opened to the public in 1992; and Cabot’s private garden in the Charlevoix region of Quebec covers more than 20 acres and is called Les Quatre Vents.

His book: In 2001, he wrote the book *The Greater Perfection: The Story of the Gardens at Les Quatre Vents*, which was the recipient of the 2003 Annual Literature Award of the Council on Botanical and Horticultural Libraries and which the *Oxford Companion to Gardens* referred to as “one of the best books ever written about the making of a garden by its creator.”

Recognition: In 2005, he was made an honorary Member of the Order of Canada. In 2000, he was made a Chevalier of the National Order of Quebec.

He will be sadly missed by fellow members of the APS.
Meet Trevor Cole
RHONDDA PORTER

Last year, Trevor Cole kindly donated his collection of slides of Primula to the APS. He has travelled extensively and everywhere he went, he took pictures of plants. His slides of Primula include photos of seldom-seen species, as well as familiar favorites. A few of the photos from his amazing collection appear in the color pages of this issue.

Trevor Cole has been a member of APS for three or four decades now. Quietly, over all these years, he has amassed a substantial collection of slides of Primula. This past summer he generously offered them to the APS. Some of them have already been scanned, with more to come. A photo gallery of his primula pictures will appear on the APS website in the coming year.

Trevor Cole was trained in horticulture in his native England. He graduated from the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, in 1960, and after several years spent gaining gardening experience, he emigrated to Canada in 1967.

He started working for the Department of Agriculture in Ottawa as a horticultural technician engaged in the evaluation of native plants for cultivation. He later became Assistant Curator in charge of alpine and herbaceous plants, and was appointed Curator of the Dominion Arboretum in 1972. Trevor retired from this post in 1995.

He has written a number of valuable books on gardening both for Agriculture Canada and for commercial publishers. Trevor is a past president of the Ottawa Horticultural Society, where he has served as both secretary and then president. He has also served as a director of the Rhododendron Society of Canada.

He was a long-time regular contributor to the Ottawa Citizen newspaper and a prolific author. He also wrote an article for the APS Quarterly entitled “The Lure of Challenge.” Among his most notable books are Perennials in your Garden (1983), and The Ontario Gardener (1991), which was subsequently revised as The New Ontario Gardener (2001). This has become a standard reference book for Ontario gardeners. Another of his books is Gardening with Trees and Shrubs in Ontario, Quebec and the Northeastern U.S. (1996). He was also editor-in-chief of The Great Canadian Plant Guide (2003) and What Grows Where in Canadian Gardens (2004). Ontario gardeners especially look to his publications as standard reference works for their area.

Trevor has also acted as a consultant and editor for a number of standard horticultural works. Over the years he has worked as an editor for a number of Reader’s Digest gardening publications. He was the editor for both the Canadian and US editions of The Illustrated Guide to Green Gardening (2008).

Photo Gallery on the APS Website
MAEDYTHE MARTIN

As mentioned above, the slides from Trevor Cole will appear on the APS website Photo Gallery sometime in the near future. Then you can view the whole of his slide collection and admire the many fine pictures of Primula. However, it is worth your while to look at the Photo Gallery now to see some very pretty pictures.

In the pictures from the National Shows for the past few years you can see entries on the bench from West Coast and East Coast shows. There is John Gibson, judging at the 2002 show in Vancouver – John, one of the premier growers and a judge in the North of England, is a member of the National Auricula and Primula Society. It was a great thing that he was able to come over here and encourage growers at the West Coast and instruct us in growing and showing.

There is a very spring-like picture of P. sibthorpii in the photos from the section showing the annual photo contest from 2006 to the past year. Other photos give you glimpses of members’ gardens, and how primulas grow in their settings. Keep a look-out for a splendid blue Cowichan polyanthus. Not often seen, but definitely to be admired when their jewel-toned petals appear in a photo, these Cowichans, a North American introduction to the world of primula, inspire us to get out there and grow some!

And the Gallery contains another great collection of photographs from the collection of Jules Fouarges. Jules, a Frenchman, has a tufa wall full of splendid P. allionii plants. These early spring plants are seldom seen on the show benches, as they have come and gone by April, so these photos, taken of these plants in situ and in pots over many years, are bound to inspire your admiration and interest.

If you have any photos that would fit into one of the categories which you will see listed in the Photo Gallery, please let the Webmaster know. There is always room for more, and where else can you go and look at all these plants we so admire on a wintry day in January?
The New Forest Auriculas

JUDITH SELLERS

In a small structure in the garden of his home near the New Forest, Richard Austin grows and develops new auriculas: many doubles, some fancy or alpine, still others “odd,” but all eagerly anticipated by fellow Primula enthusiasts.

On a spring day in the early ’90’s, Richard and his wife (who wanted an herb garden) followed road signs to a small nursery where they were greeted with enthusiasm. Pauline found her herbs, but Richard was attracted to something different in the poly tunnel. A plant bearing a cluster of bright yellow flowers, each with a circle of pure white in the middle, was bought, taken home and planted in the rock garden. This one plant signaled the onset of a serious auricula addiction.

The yellow self bloomed well the following spring, but succumbed to a lack of expertise (or to blackbirds or slugs) within a couple of years and required replacement. The second trip to the nursery (Pops Plants incidentally, one of the best known UK specialty nurseries for auriculas) resulted in another warm welcome and Richard’s purchase of a complete mix of auricula plants. There followed the usual building of a small greenhouse (eventually abandoned as being too hot for these alpines to inhabit happily), the joining of Societies, and a natural ambition to create the perfect auricula.

Richard found breeding good plants was not a simple process. The first few tries resulted in “complete rubbish” but encouragement to persevere came from Lesley and Gil at Pops and from fellow NAPS Member Martin Sheader. Lasting inspiration came from the example set by the late Ken Whorton, who bred and shared his excellent plants for over 20 years. Eventually Richard realized that each sort of auricula has its own requirements. Green-edges need to be treated differently from alpines or doubles, and specialization would be the answer. He decided to just grow double auriculas (which resemble another favorite flower, the camellia) for his own pleasure.

He was proud of a few of the plants which resulted from his crosses, but shy about putting anything on the show bench until Lesley Roberts, taking some Pops plants to a show and giving Richard a lift, pointed to two of his plants and said, “Take those.” Beginner’s luck may have had something to do with it, but the gold-colored border seedling won the Premier award, and a fully double auricula seedling, to be named ‘Forest Amber’, earned a first. There would be no stopping him now!

There are as many different technique sets for growing Primulas as there are gardeners, but Richard doesn’t try too many radical methods. He finds the conditions (light, moisture, air flow, temperature, fertilization and growing location) are more important than the mix in which the plants are grown. He sows into multi-purpose compost towards the end of January, transplants into cells containing the same mix with John Innes #2 and some grit added when the plants are about an inch tall, and pots them into 3-inch plastic by the end of August. The plants are always watered from below to avoid causing any rot where drops collect in the crown. To prevent disease around the flower-stem scars from killing plants that bloom in late fall, he removes the entire stem and treats the cut joint with sulphur. Plants are wintered in a covered space with removable poly panels to keep out the worst wind and wet, where they have plenty of light and air but no heat. They are given a high potash fertilizer at half strength a couple of times when new growth shows in January, then given plain water through the growing season. Bud formation for the next year is encouraged with use of the same half strength fertilizer applied several times from August to November.

One of the joys of breeding doubles is that one works with many genetic possibilities in plants that have been manipulated for several hundred years. Any color, form or habit might appear, and waiting each spring for the first flowers on young plants is exciting. Many double flowers are sterile, as their stamens and pistils have transmuted into petals, but delving into the second row of petals with a magnifying glass may reveal a bit of pollen on an anther of one plant to place on the stigma of another. One can plan which plants to cross, but much of the actual outcome depends on having the right ones in bloom at the same time. Richard uses both line- and cross-breeding patterns to obtain desired characteristics of color and form in the resulting seedlings. Since doubles often do not demonstrate their full potential
until the second or third time they bloom, Richard has to be careful about which seedlings are kept for another year and which are discarded as hopeless after their maiden flowering.

Because names are easier to keep track of than coded seedling numbers, Richard places the seedlings either into the ‘Forest’ series, for his proximity to the New Forest, or into the ‘War’ series, with names from another of his interests, heroic battles in France. There are also some odd ones, such as ‘Fred’, a new yellow and green fancy which usually produces twelve to fifteen pips, and ‘Susie,’ a rich golden-yellow double with graceful petals. Richard has over 50 new varieties growing, and receives an increasing number of requests for his plants each year. Growers in Europe and North America are eager to obtain some of the new doubles which are more often found in the UK.

His earliest website was called ‘Primulas Just for Pleasure’ and featured photographs of plants he owned and some grown from his own seeds along with cultural information. The website he currently manages is called www.doubleauricula.com, with galleries of wonderful photos of doubles, fancies, and “others” from his own breeding program, named auriculas, and Primulas “grown and shown in the UK.”

I was pleased to receive a few double auricula plants from Richard in the spring of 2010, which bloomed well that year. I am growing them on in hopes of obtaining some strong offsets to share with APS growers on this side of the Atlantic. Richard says the greatest pleasure he derives from developing these new plants is seeing the faces of people with whom he shares them, so I will have to take some photos.

Progress is being made by many auricula breeders, and Richard is confident that good double stripes, stable bi-colors, and that ever-elusive “good blue double” will be achieved soon, but in the meantime, he is relishing the satisfaction of growing his own plants, and looking to the future when he says, “The best one I have grown hasn’t been sown yet.”
See page 12 for article on Richard Austin’s doubles
Trevor Cole’s Photos

Top: *P. capitata* taken at the University of British Columbia 1985
Left: *P. × venusta* 1984
Right: *P. validifolia*

Top: *P. florindae* hybrid, 1997
Bottom: *P. alpicola*, 1989
Both taken by Trevor Cole in the Devonian Botanical Gardens in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

See page 10 for article on Trevor Cole
Minnesota Primulas

Gold-laced Polyanthus and *Primula veris*
Photos of plants grown from seed in Karen Schellinger’s Minnesota garden. See page 5 for article.

Frank Cabot’s Primroses

Left: *Primula candelabra* hybrids at Quatre Vents, Frank Cabot’s Quebec garden, taken by Trevor Cole in 2001.
Right: *P. veris* at Stonecrop, Frank Cabot’s garden at Cold Springs, New York, 1991, also taken by Trevor Cole.
Reginald Farrer, Renowned Alpine and Primula Grower, a Review

PRESENTATION BY IAN GILLAM AT THE B.C. PRIMULA GROUP MEETING, NOVEMBER 13, 2011. NOTES BY MAEDY THE MARTIN.

Reginald Farrer is a big name in the world of alpine plants, and *Primula*. Why is he special? There are a few reasons.

First, he is known for his writing through the books he published. Perhaps the most well known is *The English Rock Garden*, a 2 volume set. It covered most of the known alpine plants in cultivation at the time and they are presented in his somewhat poetical language – perhaps the first garden writer to provide subjective comments rather than just factual descriptions. He became well known for his acerbic yet lyrical comments on plants. And this book was a best seller, being reprinted and reprinted over the next three decades!

Farrer also wrote articles in the *Gardeners' Chronicle* paper, an English gardening magazine of the day, as well as writing about his various expeditions. He travelled extensively throughout his life, starting with a number of trips to the Dolomites with his family in his early years. One of his gardening friends was E.A. Bowles, well known for his writing on small bulbs: the two of them also travelled around in the Alps and Farrer recounts his findings on their travels and the plants they found there from these trips in *The Dolomites* which was published in 1913. Farrer really loved the mountains and mountain flowers and this comes across in his writing. Other trips included visits to Ceylon and Japan. At the turn of the century Japan was a very fashionable place to visit and was a great influence on European art and culture of the time. Other great expeditions took Farrer to China and Tibet from 1912 onwards. One of his travelogues, the *Rainbow Bridge* has been reprinted recently and recounts his first years in Western China. This was perhaps his most successful collecting trip. He travelled to Kansu (now written Gansu) in Western China, still the wild western frontier of China at that time. The Republic of China was only established in 1911 and Farrer was there in 1912. The times were unsettled and because of an uprising by a rebel/brigand called the White Wolf, Farrer had to leave the area. Missionaries who did not were captured and killed.

The first year of his first trip to China is recounted in his book *On the Eaves of the World* and I don’t believe this has been reprinted recently. These accounts are interesting in their own right, but also reveal an historical window on travel at that time. This body of work establishes him firmly in the gardening world as a writer of note.
Farrer himself was born in 1880 in London, during the time of Queen Victoria. England was at the height of its power with a world-wide Empire, and to set the cultural context, this was the time of Sherlock Holmes and Gilbert and Sullivan. Farrer was born into a family of landowners in the Clapham area of Yorkshire, and the family estate was called Ingleborough. Ingleborough Mountain could be seen from the estate, one of the 3 major peaks in that region of England. An impressive mountain made of limestone, it is full of cracks and crevices and caves. A perfect place to explore! The estate was extensive and had its own cave –this is still open today as a tourist attraction. Despite being born into a family of priviledge and wealth, Farrer had some personal struggles all his life. He was born with a cleft palate, and had numerous surgeries in his childhood. Farrer was of short stature and had a high pitched and hard-to-understand voice. Because of his afflictions he was educated at home and loved to get out and wander in the mountain nearby. He came to know the plants there, and made an amazing find in his teens. He had read the recently published flora of Bentham and Hooker documenting a tiny flowering alpine plant called *Arenaria gothica*, and by chance Farrer, then 14 years old, found the only other known site. He also discovered *Saxifraga farreri*, a natural hybrid, and had it named.

When Farrer was of an age to go to University, his family sent him to Oxford and he actually liked being there. He met other notable young men at his College, one of whom was Aubrey Herbert, a serious person and a good scholar. Farrer wanted to become a novelist and write books and plays and poems but in fact they were not acclaimed. However, his friend’s mother, Lady Carnarvon, lobbied for her son to be sent to the Embassy in Japan and Farrer went to visit him there. Farrer recounted his experiences in Japan in his book, *The Garden of Asia: Impressions from Japan*. Farrer’s father had supplied him with an allowance for the trip to Japan, and Farrer took full advantage and bought many Japanese mementos, much to his father’s shocked dismay. After this episode, Farrer was kept on a tight allowance for his trips.

Farrer set up a nursery at his family home, calling it the Cravens Nursery (the area around Ingleborough is called Craven) and sold plants from there for some years. He was a huge collector, and many of his finds went into the nursery. Then he decided he wanted to go to China. Forrest and Kingdon Ward, intrepid botanical explorers of the time who had also been to China, had gone with the sponsorship of botanical gardens. In fact, the directors rather didn’t want Farrer trespassing on what they thought of as their domain. Farrer did need a sponsor: he wanted to go to Kansu, further north than the other explorers, an area about at the latitude of Los Angeles, but up at 10,000 feet, a continental climate, definitely not near the ocean. Finally Farrer found sponsors by selling shares in the expedition. A. K. Bulley (hence *Primula bulleyana*) from Liverpool was one of these. Farrer spoke no Chinese, so he needed a helper. William Purdom, son of the head gardener, and trained at Kew, had been to Kansu and collected plants for Veitch. He spoke some Chinese and had the experience of the earlier expedition. Farrer owed Purdom a lot – he manged the staff, booked the passage and directed the expedition. They set off in 1912 and were gone a couple of years. Then World War I broke out and it became a problem to get back to England. Farrer finally travelled west through St. Petersburg, looking at herbarium collections there as he travelled, and arrived home safely. Farrer was recruited in the war effort by John Buchan (later Lord Tweedsmuir and Governor General of Canada), a senior civil servant as well as a noted author, and one of those running the propaganda center. Many eminent writers of the day were working there, and Farrer met them during this time.

After the war, Farrer wanted to go back to China, but it wasn’t until 1919, very shortly after the end of the war, that he was able to organize another trip. Purdom had stayed in China and was already employed by the government so not available. Farrer was accompanied for a time by the earl of Cawdor (*Primula cawdoriana* was named after him) and also E.H.M. Cox of Rhododendron fame (grandfather of Peter). In fact Cox wrote about Farrer’s last trip to China. He travelled with Farrer, but was not willing to be Farrer’s butler, so he travelled onwards on his own. Then Farrer got sick and died in Burma in 1920. His servants brought his body back to civilization, along with his belongings, but left behind the seeds he had collected.
As we have noted, Farrer was renowned for his writings, and then for his plant collecting. There are many plants named after him. *Viburnum fragrans* is now named *Viburnum farreri*. Though it was in cultivation, no one knew where it originated until Farrer found it at a site in China. Very few of the plants named after him were actually successfully introduced by him as wartime presented impossible conditions for getting material back to Britain. Nothing from his second expedition got back. But others that followed him introduced the material he found. There is a list of the *Primula* species he and Purdom collected in the appendix of the *English Rock Garden* – a list of about 26 or 27 species. On this expedition Farrer collected herbarium specimen and seeds of some of these *Primula* species, and the list is annotated with Farrer’s own words. For example, he notes in one entry: Sp. No 8 (F116) “Purdom originally collected it (for Veitch).” P. No. 8 (*P. woodwardii*) “is a joy to collect…. Despite forebodings, grows very easily and vigorously and permanently with us…. It is one of the best *Primulas* from China.”

If you can look up the list and want to find pictures to go with the names, look on the PrimulaWorld website.

Along with his notoriety for his writing and his plant collecting, the third notable factor about Farrer is that he wrote about species. If he had written about garden varieties of plants, his work would now be out of date. But describing the species and its habitat, Farrer’s writing from many decades ago is still pertinent today.

Our presenter, Ian Gillam, mentioned that he, himself, had been to Ingleborough and there is a small plaque set in the wall as a memorial to Farrer. The present Farrer incumbent returned from Australia upon inheriting but the Hall itself is now a community outdoor education centre. And while Ian was in the area, he was able to attend a local AGS meeting one evening, to hear Dr. Farrer speaking on Reginald Farrer!

Farrer’s descriptions of plants was sometimes fascinating, sometimes cruel. Under *Primula marginata*, there are notes about which valley to go to in order to find the plants, and directions to a the home of a gentleman “who will show you the plants,” says Farrer. In fact, when Farrer was there, this gentleman rebuffed him and sent him on his way, and Farrer’s revenge was to make this note in his book and send other hapless souls to pester the gentleman!

We were able to see Farrer set in his time, in the presentation Ian Gillam gave, and gather an insight into his importance to the plant world and *Primula* fanciers. Thank-you, Ian.

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**2012 American Primrose Society National Show**

April 6, 7 and 8, 2012 (Friday, Saturday and Sunday)

**Venue:** Portland Expo Center; held in conjunction with the Oregon Hardy Plant Society Spring Sale (70+ vendors) APS show is on display tables at the front of the sale hall.

**Set-up time:** Friday, April 6, set-up 8 am, benching plants, 9 – 12.

**Show open:** (same time as the sale) 10 am to 4 pm Saturday, 11 to 3 on Sunday

**Hotel** with block of rooms held for the American Primrose Society: Best Western Inn on the Meadows 1215 N. Hayden Meadows Dr. Portland, Oregon 97217-7559 Telephone for registration is 1-800-528-1234 Website: www.bestwestern.com/inmatthemeadows email: guest services@inmatthemeadows.com Price for APS members approx. $75. Ask specifically and mention APS.

Hotel has a shuttle bus to and from the airport, and to and from the Expo Center. Banquet will be held here on Saturday night.

**Garden Tours**

No formal garden tours are planned, but some self-guided trips are possible. There are some public gardens in the area, and a list with directions could be made. If there is interest, we may be able to arrange a visit to a private garden with a tufa wall, and there is the possibility for a post-conference excursion with Jay Lunn to view some local wild flowers.

**Registration Fee:** $80, add $30 for the banquet. Extra banquet only tickets available.

Included in registration fee: 4 talks and the Auricula Round-Table Discussion on Sunday. Guest speaker is Bob Taylor, premier grower of all kinds of Primula from Yorkshire, England.

Registration will be available online with payment by Paypal, but is not yet in place. Registrar is Julia Haldorson.

Show Chairman: Maedythe Martin
Show Steward: Bryce Fradley
‘Brown Bess’ to be Auctioned

SUE MOSS

Just received this information from Sue Moss of the Northwest Perennial Alliance. It may be that some of you will remember the very talented artist and APS member from the 1980s. Here is a chance to own one of his paintings - of an auricula!

If owning a Kevin Nicolay painting is not in your future, you will at least want to attend this lecture presented in his honor to see and enjoy the work of this much celebrated botanical artist and founding member of NPA. A generous supporter of NPA has donated this painting as a fundraiser for the organization. All in attendance will enjoy seeing Nicolay’s exquisite work. One lucky person will take it home. Mark your calendar. You won’t want to miss the 2012 Kevin Nicolay Lecture and art auction, March 18, 2012, at the Center for Urban Horticulture, 3501 NE 41st Street, Seattle! See http://northwestperennialalliance.org/ for more details.

Nicolay, a renowned plantsman, introduced hundreds of plants to American gardens. In addition, he was one of the best contemporary American botanical illustrators of his time, whose work is still admired and collected today. He was a self-taught artist, who developed his famed technique from studying medieval flower paintings. His minutely-detailed drawings and watercolors appeared in museums and art galleries, and were a regular feature in the pages of Horticulture magazine. He taught occasional classes at the Center for Urban Horticulture and returned to New York annually to teach classes at the New York Botanical Garden. Nicolay gave a few of his black and white illustrations to NPA, and they are still in use today.

Many of the plants Nicolay drew were taken from his own garden on Queen Anne Hill, which featured masses of old rambler roses, rare perennials and small flowering shrubs. The late Rosemary Verey, the famous British gardener and writer, called it “the best small garden I’ve seen in America.” She dedicated her book, The American Man’s Garden, to him.

Kevin Nicolay was an Ohio native who also lived in New York, London and Victoria before settling in Seattle in 1983. His extraordinary life was cut short in 1990, when he died of complications from AIDS. He was 33. The NPA holds the annual Kevin Nicolay Memorial Lecture to honor this extraordinary plantsman and artist. Watch for further information in upcoming NPA emails. You may view the painting in advance at the Miller Library beginning on March 1st, 2012.

Chapter Reports

New England Group

January is the beginning of the Primula year for us in frozen New England: certainly in spirit if not in fact, so our Chapter members celebrated on January 15th at the home of Matt Mattus and Joe Phillip in Worcester, Mass.

There were no primroses in bloom, but a set of tiny vases holding fresh camellia flowers brightened the table.

Show planning, seed starting discussions, and a tour of the greenhouse and snow-filled garden preceded the main event – lunch. Matt started us off with croque monsieur sandwiches broiled to perfection. These, with the carrot, ginger and apple soup would have thrilled us all, but next he torched the meringue on a Baked Alaska!

Yes, perhaps we spent more time exclaiming over food than plants, but it WAS January, and we had already clarified some details for the upcoming show.

The 2011 APS National Show was held at Tower Hill Botanic Garden near Boston on the last day of April and first and second of May. A garden party on Friday evening followed a day of visiting unique private gardens around Petersham, MA.

Saturday gave us plant sales (if we were quick enough to snap up the wonderful bargains), benches filled with Primulas in bloom and, for the first time, an ‘Auricula Theatre’. Our special visitor, Chris Chadwell, informed and entertained us with his ‘Primula hunting in Little Tibet’ presentation after our group lunch in the Old Farmhouse.
Saturday evening’s banquet was filled with hilarity in a space far too dark and narrow for dining, but the food was fine, and the award ceremony and auction of plants and ‘primulabilia’ were most entertaining.

We enjoyed a relaxed and edifying Round Table discussion on Sunday, and had plenty of time in the afternoon to revisit the plants on display, chat with friends, tour Tower Hill’s gardens, or get ready to dismantle another fine show.

Our June meeting was a special tour of the garden of NEAPS members Dr. Nick Nickou and Carol Hanby in Connecticut which was recently featured in the book, Private Gardens of New England. We were really pleased to be able to view it just as the rhododendrons were at their best, and enjoyed Nick and Carol’s warm hospitality.

September was a wonderful time to visit Berkshire Botanic Garden and plant some additional primroses along the Primula Walk. Our meeting that day also involved a plant sale, lunch, and planning for next year’s Show. Our Chapter President has already contacted a special speaker from the UK and we are checking out gardens to tour. We hope our banquet dessert will be Frozen Bailey’s Irish Cream Pie! The New England Chapter Show will be held May 4, 5, and 6 at Tower Hill Botanic Garden, with speaker Jim Almond. Check the website or write to Judith Sellers at 2297 Co.Hwy. 18, South New Berlin, NY 13843 for more information.

**B.C. Primula Group**

The B.C. Primula Group meeting in March was very successful, with a presentation by Rhondda Porter on *Primula allionii*. Rhondda not only presented cultivation directions, but brought a number of plants to demonstrate her techniques. This was an open meeting at the Alpine Garden Club of B.C. Show and we had our own members and many other people attending the show present.

We met again in September with a program devoted to a review of the recent book on the history of the auricula: *Auriculas through the Ages* by Patricia Connolly Peck. We started to plan the APS National Show, which will be held in Portland April 6, 7 and 8, 2012 in conjunction with the Oregon Hardy Plant Society.

The November meeting program was a presentation by Ian Gillam on Reginald Farrer and his connection to *Primula* (see page 23 for the article.) A draft budget for the National Show was presented and approved.

The Group meets every other month, September through May at Mandeville Gardens on S. E. Marine Drive in Vancouver, BC.

**Doretta Klaber Chapter**

The chapter did not meet this past year, but the acting chair does keep in touch with APS and the Chapter supported the quarterly with a donation.

**Juneau Chapter**

The Juneau Chapter had a quiet year in 2011. It did make a donation to support the quarterly and plans to meet in 2012.

**Tacoma Chapter**

The Tacoma Chapter, at present, is a combination primrose/rock garden chapter and is very small. We get together 4-6 times a year depending on everyone’s schedule. Julia Galloway is the coordinator (I’m not sure we have a president) and we meet at her house at 5615 East M Street, Tacoma 98404.
The meeting was held online. It opened at 6:05 pm, Eastern Time.

Board members present: Ed Buyarski (President, Juneau Chapter), Cheri Fluck (Director), Jon Kawaguchi (APS Treasurer), Marianne Kuchel (APS Vice-President), Alan Lawrence (APS President), Amy Olmsted (Director), Michael Plumb (APS Secretary), Susan Schnare (Director)

Regrets: Rodney Barker (Director), Mark Dyen (President, New England Chapter), Julia Haldorson (Director, Membership Secretary), Maedythe Martin (Editorial Committee, President of BC Group), Rhondas Porter (Director)

A. Approval of the Agenda (Cheri/Amy), with the addition of the Dorothy Dickson Award (Medals) under New Business

B. The Minutes of July 31st, 2011 – Accepted as presented (Ed/Cheri)

C. Treasurer's Report (Emailed before the meeting)

1. The new printing arrangements are saving the society approximately 25% of the cost of producing and mailing the *Primroses Quarterly*.
2. Income less expenses January 1st, 2011 to September 30th, 2011: ($739.50)
3. Income less expenses July 1st, 2011 to September 30th, 2011: ($1,424.05)
4. Total liabilities and equity as of September 30th, 2011: $25,928.11

5. MOTION (Cheri/Ed): to accept the report - carried.
6. The board thanked Alan for making the new printing arrangements.

D. Committee Reports

1. Seed Exchange
   a) Amy reported that seed donations were currently down on last year.
   b) MOTION (Amy/Marianne): to maintain last year’s prices and quantities (reversing the vote carried at the previous meeting on July 31st). Carried, one opposed. The argument in favor was that the Seed Exchange is primarily a benefit to members, that it actually does make a small profit each year, and that members would need much greater notice of any price increase.
   c) Amy said that more members should be encouraged to donate seed. If there were more donations, we would not have to purchase as much from commercial suppliers, which would lead in turn to increased profit.
   d) Michael said it was vital that all involved in the Exchange should meet after the Exchange is finished to discuss how to make improvements.
   e) There was then a counter MOTION (Cheri/Ed) to raise prices to $1.00 per pack, which was defeated (two for, three against, one abstention). One argument for was that prices had remained the same for about ten years.
   f) MOTION (Michael/Marianne) to revisit all Seed Exchange policies (pricing and quantities) at the AGM in spring 2012. Carried. We should have a better idea what to do at that time, following the coming Seed Exchange.

2. Editorial Committee
   a) Maedythe had sent a report to the board by email.
   b) The board expressed their appreciation for Maedythe’s and Jane’s editorial work.
   c) Michael pointed out that now a Seed Exchange order form could be inserted in the Q with no further ado. He added that the ballot [for the election of two directors, VP and treasurer] could be sent out with the Winter Quarterly as more nominations were expected.
   d) MOTION (Michael/Ed) to accept the editorial report. Carried.
   3. Website

E. Chapter Reports

1. The BC Group reported that preparations for the 2012 National Show in Portland were going well. The hall and main speaker have been arranged.
2. The Juneau Chapter reported that recent activity had been minimal as they had lost several members to retirement while some had moved south to the “Lower 48”. The chapter President, Ed Buyarski, had told individual Juneau Chapter members about the plans for the National Show in Portland and mentioned the possibility of financial and physical support. However, the date of the show makes it doubtful that Juneau will be able to bring many of their plants to the Show. The Juneau Chapter currently holds $4,581 in funds.

3. Membership
   a) Membership numbers are holding steady over last year, which is good considering the current financial climate.
   b) MOTION (Michael/Marianne): to accept the Membership Report. Carried.

4. Judging Committee
   No report, as work on revising the standards has not yet begun.

F. New Business:

1. The Dorothy Dickson Award
   MOTION (Amy/Ed): to approve the refurbishment of the Dorothy Dickson Award medals by Cheri Fluck at her own expense. Carried. The board thanked Cheri for offering this service.

2. Nominations: Michael reminded the board that there is as yet no one offering to stand for VP. He asked the board members to canvass their chapters.

G. Adjournment (Ed) at 7:45 pm Eastern Time.

Next meeting: Provisional date January 29th, at 6:00 pm Eastern.
Join the National Auricula & Primula Society

Midland & West Section

www.auriculaandprimula.org.uk

£10.00 Overseas Membership.

to: The Honorary Treasurer, Roger Woods,
44 Tansey Crescent, Stoney Stanton,
Leicestershire, LE9 4BT United Kingdom.

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American Primrose Society Winter 2012

New Members from August 1, 2011 - January 21, 2012

Expiry Name Address
2014 John Baxendale 6 Burbeary Road, Lockwood, Huddersfield, Yorks HD1 3UN UK
2014 Vincent Clark 207 Ashbourne Road, Woodward, Vic 3442 Australia
2014 Nicholas Day 1846 - 21st Drive, Astoria, New York 11105-3936 USA
2012 Louis De Nobile 1481 Leprohon, Montreal, Quebec H4E 1P1 Canada
2012 Ruth and Gianni Ferreri 30 Surrey Drive, Northford, Connecticut 06472 USA
2012 Suzanne Forster 1020 P Street, Anchorage, Alaska 99501 USA
2012 Fritz’s Linden Hill Gardens 8230 Easton Road, PO Box 10, Ottsville, Pennsylvania 18942 USA
2012 Gloria J. Gerritz 4032 Floyd Hwy South, Floyd, Virginia 24091 USA
2012 Carol Hanby 107 Sunset Hill Road, Branford, Connecticut 06405-6149 USA
2012 William Havens 3518 - 96th Street East, Tacoma, Washington 98446 USA
2012 Joseph H. Lackey 34848 North Fork Road, Anchor Point, Alaska 99556 USA
2012 Ian and Beth Michel 39 Ashbrook Drive, Coventry, Connecticut 06238 USA
2012 Annette Peck 11402 - 40th Avenue East, Tacoma, Washington 98446 USA
2012 Gregory Peterson 9252 - 7th Avenue Northwest, Seattle, Washington 98117 USA
2012 Jane Potter 1142 - 36th Avenue, Forest Grove, Oregon 97116 USA
2014 William Staub 4216 Birchwood Avenue, Seal Beach, California 90740-2811 USA

Applications for membership of the N.A.P.S. Southern Section should be made to:
The Honorary Secretary, Lawrence Wigley,
67 Wanshaw Court Road, Carshalton Beeches,
Surrey, SM5 3ND.