

The Scottish Rock Garden Club

David Boyd Event 22nd & 23rd June 2019

Garden Visits on Himalayan Weekend in Lockerbie

CRAIGIEBURN HOUSE part 1

On behalf of the SRGC I would like to thank all the garden owners and gardeners for allowing us to visit. I was only able to visit two of the gardens and am disappointed that I could not visit the other two. By the time I reached Langholm on the Sunday evening I was too late. Along with President Julia and Past President Ian, I enjoyed the Glenae Garden and Craigieburn House. These are two quite different gardens, each reflecting the enthusiasms of their creators. All four gardens are open under Scotland's Gardens Scheme. Check the Yellow Book or scotlandsgardens.org. Craigieburn is open most days

Glenae Garden, Amisfield, Dumfries, DG1 3NZ [Mrs V Morley]

Craigieburn House & Garden, Selkirk Road, Moffat DG10 9LE [Mrs Janet Wheatcroft & Dawa Sherpa]

Westerhall, Bentpath, Langholm DG13 0NQ [Mrs Mary Buckley]

Westwater Farm, Langholm, DG12 0LU [Mr & Mrs Clapperton]





Craigieburn House Garden is open by courtesy of Mrs Janet Wheatcroft and Dawa Sherpa. This is 'a charming woodland garden, hidden away in the Selkirk Hills', just east of Moffat.

One minute you are driving along a narrow, twisting hillside road and just by turning off at a sharp bend you are transported to Nepal. You park the car in the entrance lane, under ancient beech trees. Above you the approach to the property is festooned with Nepalese Prayer flags. These prayer flags carry messages to the gods. The lower garden and nursery are reached via short flight of steps. Craigieburn Garden has a long history dating back to the 18th Century and even before then! The modern layout is basically in two parts, one open with views to the hills and the other woodland where your interest is concentrated on the plants.

Many of the plants in the garden have been propagated and can be bought from the on-site nursery, which offers an exceptional range of home propagated plants. What a change from modern garden centres and many 'big' gardens, where the plants have been grown elsewhere and bought in for sale. Since these plants are those which the owner likes, you feel that the selection process is more than 50% done for you. The only decision to make is, "How many plants do I buy?" I bought a fine dark Siberian Iris and a Nepalese Strawberry, *Fragaria daltoniana*.

The lower part comprises the nursery and several herbaceous borders backed by hedges, as well as productive vegetable plots. Much care had been taken in selecting and positioning the plants in the herbaceous borders. There were many examples where the same flower or foliage colours were repeated and reflected a short distance away, enhancing their effect. Twisting paths lead you uphill [and back downhill] under the ancient trees which have been planted with an interesting understory of ground-covering herbaceous plants. The upper more wooded part culminates in the deep gorge with waterfall and stream which Dawa has transformed into the Nepalese garden, complete with a prayer wheel and more prayer flags. This is a wonderfully unique garden.

President Julia chose a can of delicious pink lemonade to refresh her in the hot Scottish sunshine.



Janet Wheatcroft among the Thalictrums with the Dumfries-shire hill in the background.



Dawa Sherpa with me after showing me plants in the nursery including his famous Nepalese Strawberries.





Fragaria daltoniana



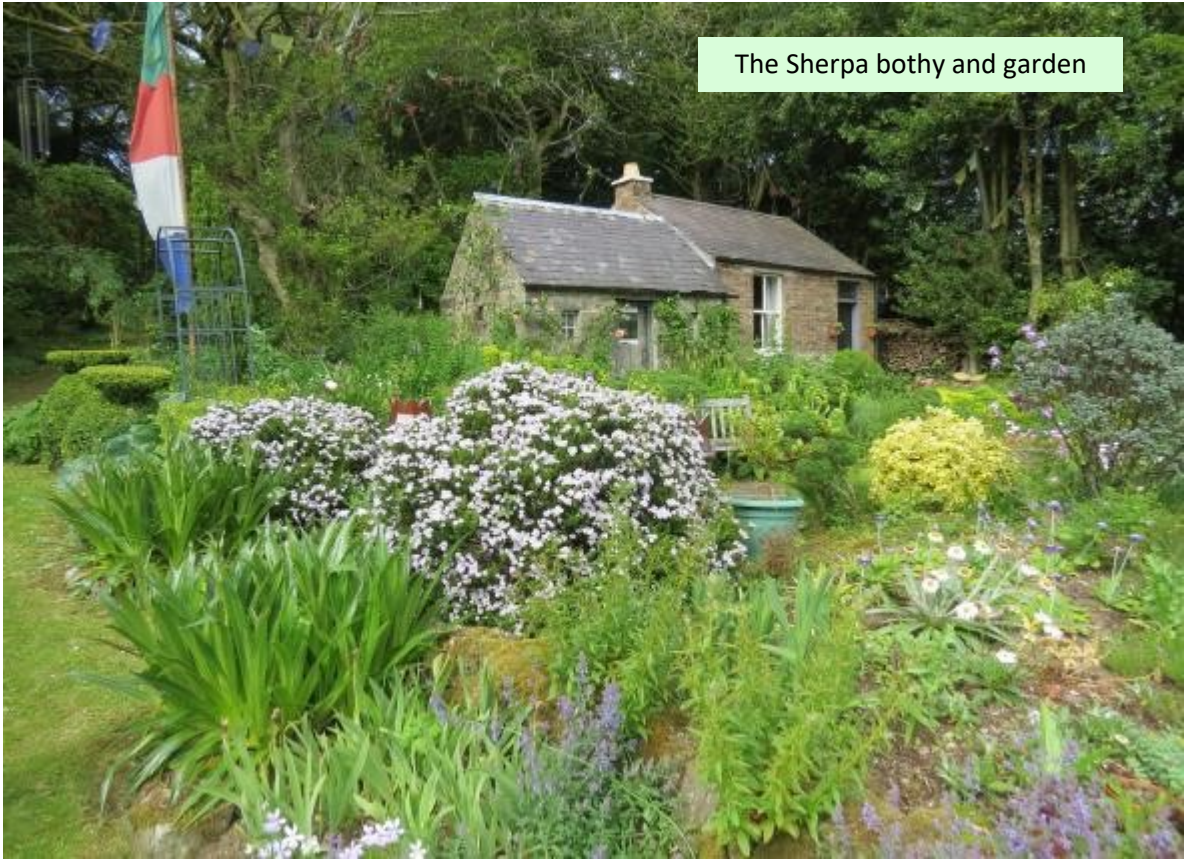
A selection of Irises
at Criagieburn







London Pride, *Saxifraga x urbium*
beside the path



The Sherpa bothy and garden



Dazzling Helianthemums



A well flowered Hebe



Honesty, Lunaria annua



Phlomis russeliana



A view over the central garden



Salix x boydii



Shuttlecock ferns [*Matteuccia struthiopteris*] in a glade



Arisaema corner



Cardiocrinum giganteum?



Crinodendron hookerianum from Chile



Meconopsis betonicifolia thrives in the cool beside *Cardiocrinums*





A fabulous stand of *Dactylorhiza ?maculata*





Primula prolifera [helodoxa]



Primula pulverulenta





The Himalayan gorge lies behind Craigieburn House



Meconopsis napaulensis



Here is a quote from the Daily Telegraph article about Craigieburn house and Garden

I could not describe the creation of the garden in the gorge in any other way after I had read the article. It is a magical place. I was only able to see it from the top path as I did not trust my old knees to get me down the path into the gorge [and back up!]

“The steep sided gorge that cuts through one side of the garden created a microclimate almost identical to that of Dawa’s home village of Kharikhola. A brook runs through the gorge; the water flow is reduced to a gentle stream in summer but in winter, or after heavy rainfall, it rushes through the valley, crashing over the boulders that form the sides of the gorge. The atomised water creates the perfect moisture-laden atmosphere in which Himalayan plants thrive.

The gorge became the site for what is now known as Dawa’s “Sherpa garden”. Cleared of sapling trees and undergrowth, the soil was dug over and improved using nothing but what Dawa refers to as his “sherpa power” — his own muscles and tenacity. In just four months it was made ready for planting. Dawa describes his career as a gardener as his “fourth life”. He spent time as a camp cook and trail guide, trained as a Buddhist monk and then worked as a sherpa. In this role he summited Everest twice, so the challenges of the gorge at Craigieburn — and the persistent attentions of the small yet incredibly irritating biting midges that are a feature of this part of Scotland in summer — must have seemed like small beer. And as he points out, growing the vegetables you need to stay alive on the side of a mountain has a far greater urgency than making an ornamental garden”.



Dawa Sherpa above. The only man whom I have met who has climbed Everest twice!

Top right. Rodgersia aesculifolia. The chestnut leafed Rodgersia is a member of the Saxifrage family.

Below right. a patch of petiolarid primulas thriving in the cool moist atmosphere of a small side stream, beside the prayer wheel.







This is the most perfect placing of *Gunnera manicata* that I have seen. Although it is native to Brazil it is perfect towering above the path. This way you can appreciate its spikey stems and leaf veins.









**Who would imagine that this wonderful garden lies a few miles west of the busy M74? Next time you are passing why not drop in?
Gardeners every where will be inspired by the work of Janet Wheatcroft & Dawa Sherpa**