

International Rock Gardener



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August 2011



It is rewarding for your Team at IRG that these articles bring notes from you seeking further information for certain items, which we shall bring to you whenever possible. This month we have some photos from Kata and Ferenc Zoltan showing the spring development of two plants seen before in these pages as well as further news of plants from Ali Botush, a place where it seems many of you long to visit. Turkey is another country that holds many fascinations for the rock gardener and the Hascovercs take us further along the Turkish pathways to the mountain flora.

Cover picture: *Physoplexis comosa* by Ferenc Zoltan

---Gardens in the Mountains---

Two Crevice Dwellers in the Same Habitat by [Kata and Ferenc Zoltan](#)

The end of July is Bellflower-time in the European Alps. It was a thrilling experience to see two beautiful members, both fissure-loving, of the Campanulaceae family in the same place in the Dolomites.

As I searched eagerly for [Physoplexis comosa](#) on a very promising rock wall, I was generously rewarded. Besides the devil's claw I suddenly discovered a large blue bell: one open flower of *Campanula morettiana*. Looking more carefully at the higher parts of that huge wall, there were many more. In lower and shadier parts only a few had started to flower but there were countless buds.



Above: the little Campanula flower that caught Kata's eye

Left: the rock wall habitat of the Devil's Claw and the Campanula

It is interesting, that alpinists hunters and books say that *Physoplexis comosa* grows usually on shady, north-facing moist rocks. We found this habitat at an elevation of about 2500m **on a south-facing dolomite wall**, a few hundred metres high with many little pits on it, good niches for the bellflower and its cousin. However, they never shared the same spot. It seemed to me that the [Campanula morettiana](#) perhaps preferred the sunnier, the Physoplexis the more shaded (but not

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shady!) places. But this was not a rule. The lovely compact clumps of both species told about good light and Spartan conditions. The wall was nearly vertical except for these dents and holes which maybe gathered some moisture, dolomite dust and the last years' remnants of the plants – the only growing medium for these two beauties.

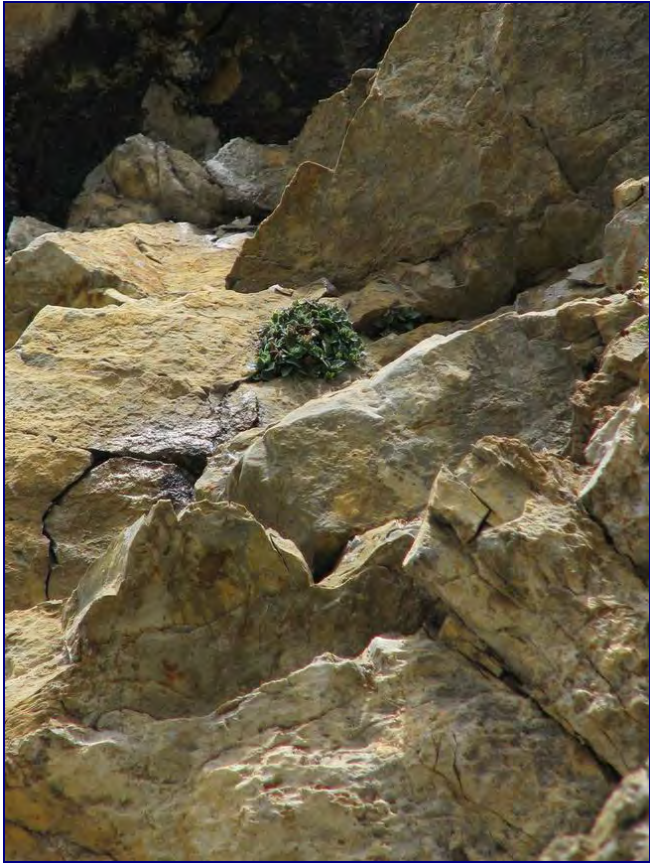


Physoplexis comosa in July



Above: *Physoplexis comosa* and two pictures of *Campanula morettiana* in June

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Campanula morettiana in June (left) and July (right)



More photos of the habitat and growth stages of these plants can be seen in the [SRGC Forum](#).

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Emli Valley in Ala Dag by Cedrik and Štěpánka Haškovek

The [April 2011 issue](#) of the IRG published our contribution on the flowers of the steppe of the Turkish mountain called Ala Dag. In this contribution we would like to go further into the Emli valley, which is the Turkish (Milli) National Park, famous for its rich flora.



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Brown limestone mountain ridges, more than 3000m high, line the valley on both sides. There is a footpath from the bottom of the valley going up onto the mountain. The valley leads into a pass at the end, from where it is possible to cross the main mountain ridge from the west to east. You can meet local people travelling on horses or donkeys on this path. There were pastures at the beginning but there was less and less grass and more and more stones in the higher elevations of the valley.

Also there were many fewer conifers (*Abies cilicica*) as we went on into the mountain. We found several orchids (*Orchis pinetorum*) under the trees and right at the entrance into the valley we could see *Arum conophalloides* (syn. *A. rupicola*) which grows in Turkey and Greece. (left)

Soon we were surprised by a rather large population of small but robust Irises: *Iris sari* very variable in the colour of their flowers - from white to yellow and brown and purple.



Iris sari variations

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The footpath was decorated by plenty of flowers; some of them are shown here. One was the yellow and unknown *Alkanna* cf. *orientalis* (below left).



We met red flowering spiny bushes of *Onobrychis cornuta*, the species that decorates all the limestone mountains of Anatolia (above right).



One of the endemic plants of the Anti-Taurus region is the yellow *Erysimum kotschyanum*. This is a pretty special rock garden plant with short flower stems above looser tufts of foliage (above left).

We photographed *Pedicularis cadmea* (above right) and we found also two species of *Onosma* there.

Left: [*Onosma albo-roseum*](#)

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While *Onosma* is rather rare in Europe and usually has yellow flowers, here we saw white and red *Onosma albo-roseum* and icy blue *Onosma nana* (left).

It was not easy for us to determine this blue flowering *Onosma* and it was a Turkish botanist, specializing in *Onosmas*, who determined it after a short correspondence.

About one hundred species of genus *Onosma* are found in Turkey; fifty of them are endemic there.

Tufts of *Aethionema capitatum* (right) which grows across Eastern Anatolia were very decorative.

The rather narrow footpath finally came into a flat stony and rocky amphitheatre surrounded by enormous walls and full of many plants; just a rock garden paradise.



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Right at the entrance of this huge natural rock garden we met *Ornithogalum nivale* (below left) and a light blue *Muscari coeleste* (below right) which is endemic to Turkey.



But the greatest pleasure provided for us was a dry stony creek bed spangled by a variety of flowers.

There were the showy *Corydalis erdelii* (left)

- and plenty of golden checkerboard bells of *Fritillaria aurea* (below).



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Among the stones of the large screes we could also see a very nice pink *Lamium eriocephalum*.



Lamium eriocephalum



Lamium garganicum subsp. *strictum*

Another *Lamium*, *L. garganicum* subsp. *strictum* (Syn. *L. garganicum* subsp. *pulchrum*), we found on the rock sides of the amphitheatre. Both these *Lamium* species mentioned contain [antibacterial compounds](#); eleven indoid glycosides were isolated from them.

On the side of the plateau we could see the very pretty light blue *Veronica caespitosa* subsp. *caespitosa* which occurs in limestone alpine regions of Turkey and which is now established in many rock gardens. Some forms in cultivation have very pale blue but large flowers. Recent DNA studies suggest that the European *Veronicas* have evolved from *Veronicas* of the Asian steppes and plains.



Left: *Veronica caespitosa* subsp. *caespitosa*
Below: *Eunomia oppositifolia*



Clumps of pink flowers of *Eunomia oppositifolia* (Syn. *Aethionema oppositifolia* (Pers.) Hedge) there reminded us of the *Thlaspi rotundifolium* we saw in the Alps. These and more pictures from Emlı valley can be found [here](#) and an introduction to the Emlı Valley by ZZ is [here](#). It was botanically the richest area we have visited in Turkey and we are looking forward to return to this place in future for a longer visit.

C. and S. H.

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The Land Above Paril

by ZZ pictures by author and Mojmir Pavelka

A newly introduced Bulgarian/Greek *Centaurea*, flowering in my lowland garden, steered me back to Slavyanka ([Ali Botush Mts.](#)), a place that is not yet fully explored. I wrote a full article about the local flora for the AGS Bulletin ('Ali Botush at Last' Issue 322, Vol.78 No. 3, pp.266-277) so now I will focus only on the cultivation of newly introduced plants from this area.



The free flowering dwarf alpine/subalpine is *Centaurea parilica* (above) named after an old, remote [Bulgarian village, Paril](#) or Paril Pass which separates the South Pirin Mts. from Slavyanka Massif at the boundary with Greek Macedonia at the Orvilos Mts.



The perfect portrait of this unknown species was taken at the top of Goljam Carev Vrah (Big Tsarev Peak 2189m) (left), where it grows together with *Sempervivum ciliosum*, *Androsace villosa* and *Petkovia* (*Campanula*) *orphanidea*. The photographer and explorer [Mojmir Pavelka](#) also saw this species at lower elevation, in the montane zone (1700m) and there it was 20cm tall and with lilac-pink flowers. The good news is, that the plant in my garden (raised from a few seeds from the highest ridge in Greece) keeps its dwarf habit in our lowland area. My plant is up to 7cm high (ascending stems with solitary flowers 8cm long) and 18cm across. My plant formed 15 pink-purple flowers, nearly 3cm long and paler in colour towards maturity. The pale green, smooth and narrow leaves are not divided.

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It is a very distinct *Centaurea*;
actually a Czech botanist Holub
described it under new name [*Jacea*](#)
[*parilica*](#).

It is in full sun, in heavier soil, and
without artificial watering, happily
coping with my free style cultivation.

Right: Alpine flowers at Gocev Vrh;
Sempervivum, *Androsace* and
Dianthus.

The purpose of this article is to
inform about the behaviour of plants
from the land above the Paril Saddle
or the Paril Pass 1170m (where
there is a terrible rocky road used by
the army and forestry workers).



Left: *C. suendermannii* in ZZ's garden
I am very happy with performance of my three
seedlings of *Convolvulus suendermannii*.
This is a species (described in 1938) related to
[*C. nitidus*](#) [Boiss.](#) and it looked like a strongly
improved version: leaves are shorter, plants
retain a compact growth and the flowers are
lovely satiny rose pink, with a white centre.

In my garden everybody admires its pewter-
silver pancakes (15-20cm in diameter) which
have showed for the first time, for a short
period, their flowering possibilities.



It is interesting to see a picture from
Prague garden of [Milan Halada](#), where
this species (from unknown origin)
shows greener leaves and better pink
flowers.

Left: *C. suendermannii* in the garden of
Milan Halada.

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Some *Sempervivum ciliosum* var. *ciliosum* rotted in open soil when I was abroad; they need planting in very narrow crevices in baking sun.



Sempervivum ciliosum, *Genista sericea* and *Saxifraga ferdinandi-coburgii*

Only one plant of *Genista sericea* survived summer life in my too hot garden without its Master's supporting presence. From a half dozen planted *Dianthus simulans* seedlings I have today only one tiny plant in a northern crevice. It was clear to me that this alpine Dianthus is designed for cooler gardens.



Dianthus simulans



Anthyllis aurea in habitat at 2000m

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That Master made a great mistake with that divine golden yellow *Anthyllis*. He has had no idea about qualities of local *Anthyllis aurea* so he did not collect its seed, which was offered ripe and in plenty. Now after seeing it and photographing in flower the plant is “a must” to be planted in his garden. Fortunately I have a chance to visit the Slavyanka Mts. and the Falakro Mts. in Greece next month and a hope to see ripe seeds of this spectacular subalpine perennial from the Fabaceae (Leguminosae) family, of course, outside the boundary of the plant reservation.



Anthyllis aurea at Slavyanka



Above: Slavyanka; Viola canyon



Right: Fritz Kummert's lovely rounded *Viola delphinantha*

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The late Joyce Carruthers sowed seed of *Viola delphinantha* directly in her big tufa pot and a few seedlings are prepared to show first flowers next year. Fritz Kummert had good germination from the seed and he reported that this Bulgarian clone has more rounded flowers. "After writing to you I had a further look at the Viola. I raised it from the few grains Joyce sent us; it was apparently collected on Ali Botusch as well. I never saw such a round *V. delphinantha* before. The plant was quite a bushy specimen and I took again 11 cuttings."

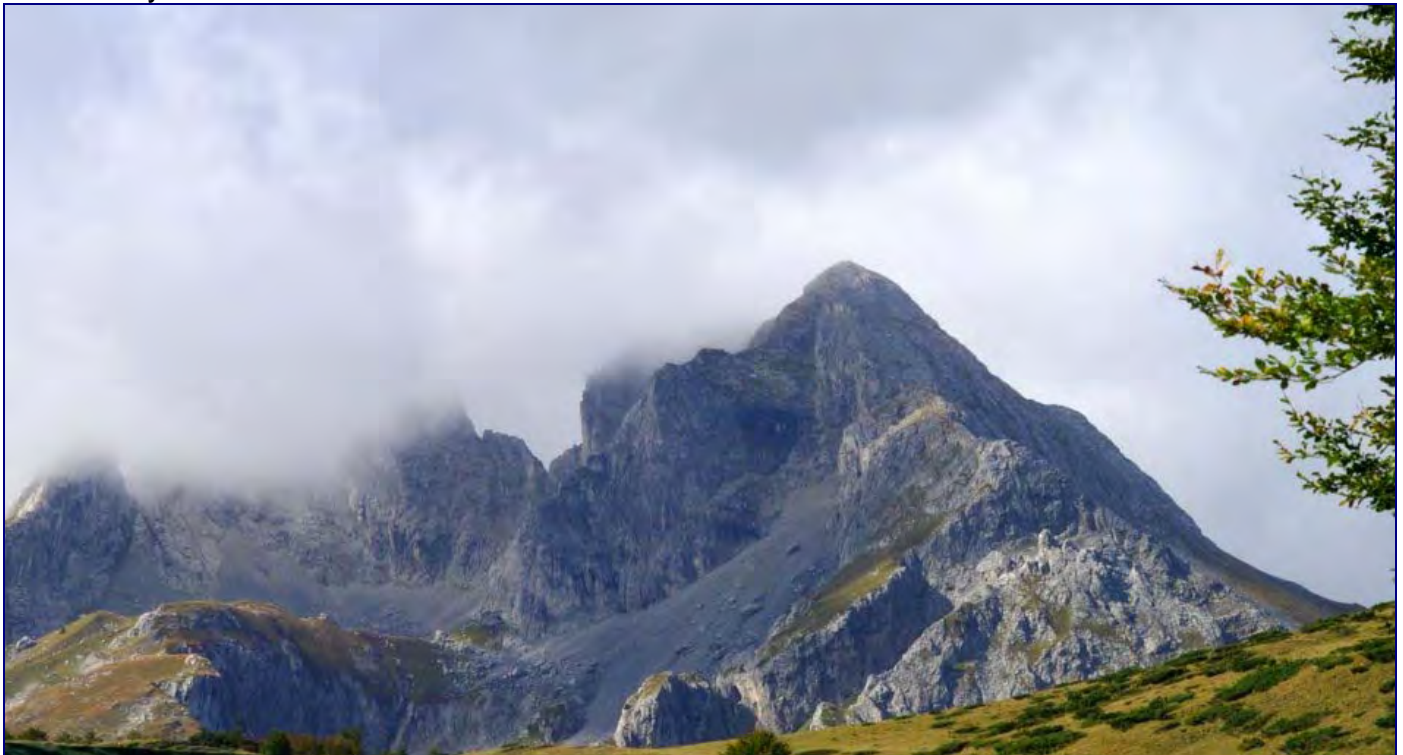
I hope that my friends abroad had better germination and gave proper care to planted seedlings, so there will be more plants in cultivation from this newly opened mountain above Paril. Z.Z.

---Plant Portrait---

White Crows by PEPiPEDIA

Every genus of generally blue flowering species is enriched with species blooming in a white colour form. People love these heroes bravely changing a uniform colour. *Campanula morettiana* forma *alba* and *Gentiana acaulis* forma *alba* are good examples of the sources of our never ending desire for a curiosity. There is little doubt that a white form amongst a sea of blue makes a wonderful counterpoint and serves to highlight the whole scene.

The purpose of this small article is to light a dark corner in our knowledge and to take darkness out of old handbooks dealing with the whites among the blue genus, *Edraianthus*. We are informed about the existence of *Edraianthus serpyllifolius* forma *albus*, which is nowadays practically out of cultivation. We remember one nurseryman selling this rare plant at Prague shows for a few years around 1975. The albino had rather small flowers so it can belong under unnamed *E. serpyllifolius* var. *minor*. This clone, which was sold in flower (due to the charm of the River Elbe's microclimate and the natural magic of cow manure), died the following year with every customer. That clone also died like a good dog immediately after the death of his master, the nurseryman.



Komovi Mts.of Montenegro

We have never seen a white *E. pumilio*, but there existed a slide of Josef Jurášek showing a superb dwarf albino in the Komovi Mts. in Montenegro. Here, relatively near the Albanian border, was recently described the charming *Edraianthus pilosulus* (known as *E. serpyllifolius* subsp.

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pilosulus). It looks like a very dwarf and compact *E. serpyllifolius* with a good size of the flower. The leaves, forming a cushion, are very short (detail, below).



The good explorer [Jurášek](#) and [Vojtěch Holubec](#) found this white rarity among other rarely occurring plants. This species prefers cracks in isolated giant limestone boulders at an elevation of 2000-2400m. It is surely one of the best *Edraianthus* for tufa culture.



Left: *Edraianthus pilosulus*

Right: *Pinus heldreichii* among giant boulders of the Komovi Mts.

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Giant boulder in the Komovi Mts. of Montenegro

Do not always believe what is written in books! Graham Nicholls published among the associated genera of *Campanula* a picture of a white flowering plant named *Edraianthus graminifolius* subsp. *niveus*. The correct name of this perfect plant is *E. graminifolius* subsp. *graminifolius* 'Albus'. The Southern Bohemian Jaroslav Klíma has grown this white clone for many years in field culture, collecting seed for the Seed Company, Jelitto. These grassy white bells are 10 cm high and easy in cultivation. We offer a picture taken in Klíma's field (below).



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Now we must clear the confusing name *E. graminifolius* subsp. *niveus*. The Austrian/Czech aristocratic botanist [G. Beck von Mannagetta](#) described *Edraianthus niveus* (below) from the Dinaric Alps in Central Bosnia.



It is a quite distinct *Edraianthus* with yellow-white flowers but some taxonomists, who only know rare plants that have died in the grave of a herbarium, throw this good species under the umbrella of the grassy bells.

We are very obliged to Moravian pioneer and seedsman [Mojmír Pavelka](#), who visited the habitat of *Edraianthus niveus* Beck and made a portrait of this unusual alpine plant. He travelled to the remote locality with local people who had knowledge where there are minefields, the gift of the Serbian Red Army. The Bosnians knew complicated access to the small [Vranica Mts](#), where near Mt. Trstac, at an elevation of 2000m, the alpine form of *E. niveus* was in flower. This form is 3-10cm high and flowers are nearly 3cm tall, arranged in heads of 1-5. Flowering time is July and August and all plants keep their creamy-yellow-white colour. The species also occurs in a form 15 cm tall, at lower elevation, around 1700m, in two small Bosnian localities.

There is a real hope that this rare white crow will be introduced this year into cultivation.

---The Beauty Slope---



An Appropriate Linum for the Rock Garden by ZZ

Linum is a large family of sun loving annuals, perennials and shrubs. Those appropriate to our rock gardens like any good, well-drained soil and are highly valued and decorative plants. In 2007 four coaches with 120 enthusiasts visited our rock garden and admired one low plant with lilac-pink flowers. Nobody knew the name! It was the Turkish endemic flax *Linum olympicum*, which is, in my opinion, the best of the "blue" flowering species.

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Right: *Linum olympicum*
detail

If you seek for some important information about this species, this is in short supply, inaccurate or missing. Ingwersen's Manual of Alpine Plants (signed for me by author in March 1979) states: "Very dubiously still in cultivation. From the Bithynian Olympus. Prostrate stems and softly hairy pointed leaves and sprays of campanulate lilac-pink flowers veined with deeper colour. For the alpine house if obtainable."



The internet offers few photographs; one being the detail of flowers, which I sent to Rocky Mountain Rare Plants' seed catalogue.

I know two localities in Turkey populated with this rare species. The one from Western Anatolia, [Bithynian Olympus](#) (better known as Ulu Dag Bursa) touches an edge of the northern cauldron (cirque) of the highest peak (Ulu Dag Tepe).



Ulu Dag 2400m

Here it grows in western exposures on sharp slopes with *Saxifraga sempervivum*, *Eunomia oppositifolia*, smaller alpinas and grasses. Grass turf is never dense here. The soil is mineral and alkaline. The altitude is about 2200 m. Plants are very compact at this level.

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Saxifraga sempervivum



Eunomia oppositifolia

The second locality is in Central Anatolia, namely Eastern Bolkar Dag. The best access is from the village of Horoz and the path goes in vicinity of *Cedrus libani*, *Cyclamen cilicium*, *Daphne sericea* and *Campanula boissieri*. *Linum olympicum* forms cushions up to 40 cm in diameter here on a large slope facing north. The soil is again alkaline.



Linum olympicum is a small procumbent semi-woody plant, only an inch or so high without flower stems. Leaves are nicely pointed at the apex, bluish-green, covered with a fine down. Flowers with prominent darker veins are terminal on 6-inch light green stems. Flowering time is in May, but some seedlings are richer in blooming and the flowering period is at least 14 days.

The plants develop very quickly.

My picture shows a one year old plant blooming in perfect condition. I planted 4 seeds directly from the seedpod into crevices: one is superb in size and strength, two are smaller (see the picture with Canon lens cup) and one is very small. My soil is mineral, slightly alkaline. These 4 seedlings survived a bad summer and the following bad winter without damage. Two older plants are planted in open soil on a northern exposed slope; they are 5 years old and they suffered twice with frosts in winters. They lost all foliage but sprouted back later in spring. They look somewhat tired. It seems to me that some winter protection (cover with conifer branches) will be good as a defence against cold drying winter winds. I have no experience with propagation but it seems to me that successful cultivation needs eternally young plants either from seed or cuttings. Z.Z.

Scottish Rock Garden Club: Volunteer Opportunity



Will **you** support these SRGC members and future members ?



Will **you** help keep the club together and maintain the membership?

The Club urgently needs a new **Subscription Secretary** when Graham Bunkall retires in October after five years in office.

This vital job maintains the existing membership list and deals with new memberships. These tasks are essential to the smooth running, the finances and the growth of the club.

The Subscription Secretary is a member of the SRGC Council, plays a crucial role and has some contact with every member. Because the Subscription Secretary handles members' payments, he or she must be UK resident.

Graham and your Council have set up a very efficient system to help you do the job, so all you need is enthusiasm and modest computer competence. **Please help to keep the club in motion by seeking more information about this job from** Graham Bunkall: Phone 01162214883 or email subsec.srgc@ntlworld.com ; President Liz Mills - Liz.saline@hotmail.co.uk ; Secretary Carol Shaw srgc.sec.@googlemail.com



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