





Above: Some of the “Wilson 50” azaleas at Tremeer

Below: Matt getting close up and personal with the Countess of Haddington



Scottish Rhododendron Society

Autumn Review 2015

Editorial.....	2
President's Column.....	3
Secretary's Notes.....	7
Minutes of the Thirty Second Annual General Meeting of the Scottish Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society.....	9
Scottish National Rhododendron Show.....	14
Bronze Medal Awards.....	17
Tour of Gardens of Cornwall.....	22
News from Colintrave Grace Morris.....	42
Rhododendrons as Presents Oliver Miller.....	44
Seed Success Katrina Clow.....	44
Tours Questions Answered David Starck.....	45
Committee Members.....	47

Cover Pictures at Tremeer by Dick Fulcher

Front: *Rhododendron tsariense*

Back: *Rhododendron cinnabarinum* ssp *xanthocodon* Concatenans
Group

Editorial

Welcome to your Autumn Review. In the same way that your Spring Review arrived well into summer, it is probably well into winter when you receive this edition. I shall endeavor to get back on track for future publications.

Your society enjoyed a wonderful tour of mainly Cornish gardens in April. The final day was spent in Devon. Flowering was absolutely magnificent. We could not have hit it at a better time. Weather started fine and sunny, but did deteriorate as the tour progressed. Our thanks to the Tours Team for their good organisation. Full write ups are included in this Review.

The cool weather and night frosts threatened the substance of the Scottish National Rhododendron Show in early May. If I had not cut my exhibits on the Thursday prior to coming to help set up on the Friday, then the frost would have wiped out many of my flowers. Once again, however, the Show was a great success and we welcomed a coach of rhododendron enthusiasts from Sweden who were touring Scottish gardens.

Our Autumn Conferences have in recent years been joint affairs with the Rhododendron Species Conservation Group. This autumn was no exception, and delegates had the pleasure of a wonderful venue in Ardkinglas House at the top end of Loch Fyne. Full reports will be published first in the RSCG Winter/Spring Newsletter.

I was sorry to hear that James Rowe of Kildarden, Rosneath passed away. Many condolences to his family, especially wife Carol who is an active member. Also Heather Bayston, daughter of member Cyril Godfrey wrote to me: "I unfortunately have to write to you to cancel my father's membership as he has recently passed away. My mum does not want to continue the membership as it was really my father's passion although she loved looking at them. Looking at the lovely photos of the rhododendrons in his garden gave him great comfort in his last days in hospital."

A wee reminder to post on our Facebook Page: Login details are Username scottishrhodos@btinternet.com Password s1n0grande. We now have well over 200 "likes".

John Roy

President's Column

One lunch-time in late-June I got a wake-up call when Margaret happened to remark, "Did you know that someone has died in Scotland from Legionnaires Disease they contracted from a sack of garden compost they purchased down at their local garden centre?" It justified coverage in the form of a passing mention on TV in a midday BBC News slot, however, things had moved-on by the 6.00pm and 10.00pm News and the item didn't re-appear. Nevertheless, this spurred me into action as I use a significant amount of compost for propagation work. Over the past couple of years this column has dealt with some of the problems and concerns relating to sacks of commercially produced composts (Autumn Review No.77 2013) and commercially produced bark (Autumn Review No.79 2014) for the retail market. In many instances the sack contents do not equate with what is printed and depicted on the outside of the sack, the information relating to the ingredients in the compost is insufficiently detailed to enable the purchaser to establish what the mixture contains, whilst there are concerns as to whether the contents of the sacks are fit for purpose and safe to use.

At the outset I need to make it clear that there has been virtually no coverage in the mainstream news media in England in connection with members of the wider U.K. public contracting Legionnaires Disease from sacks of compost purchased in the retail trade, except for passing mention in a short column in a few morning newspapers in October 2013, which I failed to notice at the time. So, it came as a complete surprise that, according to reports in the Scottish news media there have been 15 cases of Legionnaires Disease in Scotland, which have resulted in 3 deaths. According to *Horticulture Week*, 12th June 2015 issue, 'Between 2008 and 2013, a total of 16 people in Scotland contracted legionnaire's disease from compost made from green waste. Two of them died.' To date my researches have not found any recent reports in the news media 'South of the Border' arising from the use of compost.

So, what is Legionnaires Disease, and how is it contracted? *Legionella longbeachae* is one species of the Legionellaceae family, sometimes referred to as Pontiac Fever and, as the name implies, it was first isolated at Long Beach in California. However, there have been occurrences of the disease in Northern California, Oregon and Washington State, where spring and summer temperatures often reach around 38C (100F). It is predominately found in soil, potting compost, compost heaps and composted animal manures. Older gardeners are most vulnerable, particularly those with a suppressed immune system, and it can lead to a respiratory disease.

Another species is the more common *Legionella pneumophila*, which leads to a type of pneumonia known as Legionnaires Disease; this form occurs naturally at low levels in water courses, but can multiply in standing water to potentially harmful levels when the water temperature is between 20C to 45C. This is the type of disease commonly found in systems employing hot water such as air-conditioning cooling towers, hot and cold water taps and showers. It leads to a type of pneumonia with symptoms including high fever, muscle pain, chills, persistent cough, chest pains and breathing difficulties, and in rare cases can be fatal.

Research conducted by the University of Strathclyde in 2013, led by Dr. Tara Beattie, who noted in a press release, ‘Disease causing micro-organisms are widespread in the environment, and therefore it is not too surprising that species of *Legionella* that can cause human disease are present in compost. Any environment where you have pathogenic bacteria could be a source of infection, and we already know that compost has been linked to human *Legionella* infection in countries such as Australia and New Zealand. Within the UK and across Europe composts have traditionally been composed of peat, whereas sawdust and bark are more often used to produce compost in Australia and New Zealand where legionellosis associated with compost is more common. It may be that the change in composition of composts in the UK, moving away from peat based products, could be resulting in species such as *Legionella longbeachae* being present in compost and therefore more cases of infection could occur.’

The University of Strathclyde 2013 study into 22 different compost brands sold in the UK found that 14 of them contained a variety of *Legionella* species. Four contained *Legionella longbeachae*. In 2008 Andrew Murphy, from Lanarkshire, was the first person in Scotland to contract the infection. Andrew wasn’t a gardening enthusiast, he purchased a bag of J. Arthur Bower’s compost from his local garden centre to try his hand at growing tomatoes, and planted the tomatoes in his conservatory; two days later he was admitted to hospital and spent 50 days in intensive care. Tests confirmed he had contracted Legionnaires Disease from the compost and, whilst he survived the initial infection, his immune system was weakened and he died from leukaemia in 2014. No details have emerged as to why a cluster of the disease has developed over a number of years in Scotland.

Compost packaging in Australia and New Zealand carries a *Legionella longbeachea* hygiene warning and, as a result of the University of Strathclyde study, it has been recommended that compost packing in the UK should carry a similar labelling,

whereas the horticultural Trade Bodies contend this approach would be alarmist and unnecessary. It would appear that the Scottish Government does not currently have the power to force manufacturers to change their labels. Simon McArdie, Marketing Director at William Sinclair Horticulture, which produces the J. Arthur Bower's compost brand, said in *Horticulture Week* that Sinclair has 'damaged its reputation' by substituting peat with 'not retail-ready products that had not been processed as long as they should be' supplied in 2013-14 following a peat shortage. Presumably, these comments relate to the tests carried out by the University of Strathclyde.

In conclusion: There is an increased risk of contamination with *Legionella longbeachea* if you are near to dripping hanging baskets or you are eating and drinking after gardening without washing your hands. Hanging baskets that are placed at, or close to, head height, together with other plant containers positioned in the direct sun, can contain standing water that can readily reach the 20C to 45C temperatures that enable harmful levels of the disease to occur.

There is a stark contrast between warnings given on sacks in the retail trade in the UK and those in Australia and New Zealand where most compost comes with these warnings:

- Wear a face mask when handling soil, mulches, compost or growing media indoors or in windy conditions.
- Open a bag using a blade with care to avoid inhaling airborne growing media, i.e., slowly and away from the face.
- Moisten the contents of the bag on opening, by making a small opening and inserting a garden hose to dampen the growth media.
- Avoid potting-up plants in unventilated areas, such as enclosed greenhouses or sheds.
- Wear gloves.
- Avoid transferring growing media from hand to mouth (e.g. rubbing face with a soiled hand or glove).
- Always wash hands after handling growing media, even if gloves have been worn, as Legionella bacteria can remain on hands contaminated by growing media.
- Store growing media in a cool place, away from the sun.
- Avoid raising soil near evaporative coolers.
- Water gardens and composts gently, using a low pressure hose.
- When handling bulk quantities of growing media or other soil products, follow procedures that minimise dust generation.

Whilst the UK climatic conditions are different to those in Australia and New Zealand, the extremes of temperature that have regularly occurred this Spring and Summer in the south of England come well within the 20C to 45C range. Many of the above warnings are common sense precautions and I find it inexplicable that there has been a reticence to publish these, together with details of the incidence of the disease, in gardening publications. One wonders what other problematic issues have been quietly suppressed by establishment and commercial interests involved in the on-going changeover from peat-based to non-peat-based composts.

Were you aware that late last year William Sinclair Horticulture, which manufactures the majority of retail brands of growing media, opened a new 20ha (50acre) facility at Ellesmere Port in Cheshire that has been seven years in development at a cost of £30m, and is producing up to 60,480 50-litre bags of growing media (806 pallets) every 24 hours, as well as hundreds of large capacity bulk bags in the same timeframe, for retail and commercial customers? The computerised production line requires relatively few staff and can be switched quickly from one product to another. There is on-site storage for 165,000 pallets and has the capability of handling over a hundred outbound loads a day, enabling the company to fulfil all orders within seven days. The company has invested seven years and £5m into researching and developing its new SuperFyba peat substitute which is made from composted oversize wood produced at Sinclair's own composting facility at Wroot in Lincolnshire. At Ellesmere Port, the woody material is screened, washed and fiberized to produce a new growing medium, which Sinclair claims to outperform peat in company and external trials. Unfortunately, following poor trading, whilst running dual sites during the moving the principle operations to Ellesmere Port, together with an over-spend incurred during the move, William Sinclair ran out of cash and went into receivership in late-June. KPMG, joint administrators of the business, sold the company in a 'pre-pack' deal encompassing the entire business, wiping out the shareholders and outstanding suppliers invoices, to Irish rival Westland Horticulture in late-July, saving over 280 jobs.

Be sure to take care when working with compost and, above all, enjoy your garden.

John M. Hammond

Secretary's Notes

At last in Mid-September, we are enjoying a longish spell of dry, sunny weather and the chance to catch up with grass cutting and garden work and begin Autumn planting while there is some warmth in the ground.

Willie Campbell's September sale of surplus stock at Gargunock Walled Garden made a great shopping spree, an amazing range of seed grown rhododendrons, magnolias, primulas and meconopsis as well as herbaceous plants could be purchased and we both agreed that there can be no better way to spend your pocket money.

The other week of good weather in the West of Scotland and Northern England coincided with the excellent SRS tour of Cornish gardens (reports in this issue). A cold snap was forecast on 26th April, the day of our return and we arrived back with just sufficient time to survey the wondrous growth and emerging flower buds and throw covers over the odd treasure. The next morning, all was devastation and the low temperatures continued for another week.

A volley of despairing e-mails followed from prospective exhibitors who, with less than a week to go before the Scottish National Rhododendron Show, had seen their treasured blooms destroyed. It is very heartening then to report that this year's display, in our new venue, at the Gibson Hall, Garelochhead was as good as ever. There were exhibits in most of the classes and all the cups were awarded with a rather wider spread than usual.

Setting up in a new location was testing to say the least but there is good parking, a large hall, extra accommodation for the AGM and good catering facilities. SRS is very grateful for the support we received from Mary Gray, our member in Garelochhead who did a great deal to publicise the event locally, as did Sue Thornley, who with 'Glorious Gardens of Argyll' were staging the first ever 'Festival of Rhododendrons'.

We were delighted to welcome a good number of visitors, (including a bus party from Sweden) who were able to buy plants from Gargunock House, Alan Clark and the SRS table which had plants donated by some of our generous members. Plant sales, a successful raffle, selling tickets to visitors as they paid a very modest entry fee, helped us to raise funds to cover the cost of the show.

The Committee agreed that the show had been very successful and it will be held again in the Gibson Hall, Garelochhead, in 2016. The date is Saturday 30th April 2016. If you have plants to donate or enticing prizes for the raffle e.g. compost, whisky, plants, please bring them along on the day and help SRS funding. Most important, come and see the exhibits, bring your friends and enjoy the spectacular show of blooms. This is the premier rhododendron show in Scotland.

Four weeks later, the shows Committee was on duty again at ‘Gardening Scotland’ at Ingliston. This is always a cheery, friendly event. Recruiting new members is increasingly difficult as there are so many plant groups vying for few potential customers, but we are delighted that 3 new members joined at the event. Over the 3 days of the show, the stewards answer every type of question and endeavour to promote growing rhododendrons whenever and wherever possible.

Some excellent specimen rhododendrons on the stand, supplied by Kenneth Cox were much admired.

A warm welcome to these new members:

Timothy Mack, Houston, Renfrewshire

Christopher Booth, Crieff

Marion Kinns, Clynder, Helensburgh

Edward Peter-Hoblyn, London

Katrina Clow

Minutes of the Thirty Second Annual General Meeting of the Scottish Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society
Held in the Gibson Hall, Garelochhead, Argyll on Saturday, 2nd May 2015

President, John Hammond in the chair. 28 members in attendance.

The President welcomed members to the 32nd AGM and noted the success of the show in its new venue.

Apologies:

Apologies for absence were received from Scott Cook, Peter Cox, Sir Peter Hutchison, Helen Kessell and Rick Potter.

Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting:

The Minutes of the Thirty-First Annual General Meeting held at Community Centre, Gargunnoch, Stirling on Saturday, 3rd May, 2014 were printed in the summer “Review” and taken as read. Acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Mr Ian Douglas, seconded by Ms Gloria Starck and unanimously agreed. There were no matters arising.

President’s Remarks:

The President noted the very successful show taking place that day in the new venue, the Gibson Hall, and applauded those who had exhibited under difficult circumstances. Especial thanks were due to Mary Gray for her help with organising the new venue and for a great deal of local publicity, and to Sue Thornley who had advertised the show as part of the Rhododendron Festival held in liaison with Gardens of Argyll & Bute and Visit Scotland. The President also thanked the Judges and Stewards and the Shows Sub-Committee for their input in making the Show a very successful event.

The President then thanked the SRS Committee for their assistance over the past year, particularly David & Gloria Starck for their work with organising the Tour of the Gardens of Cornwall, being the first tour they had arranged as a ‘team’.

The President reminded the meeting of four Bronze Medal Awards made at the last AGM and announced a further four presentations of Bronze Medals Awards, the highest award given by a Chapter to members of the American Rhododendron Society for outstanding service. These were presented to William J. Campbell, Matthew

T. Heasman, Sir Peter Hutchison and Peter A. Cox, with much applause from the members.

Both Willie Campbell and Matt Heasman accepted their awards in person, but as Sir Peter Hutchison and Peter Cox were unable to be present, the President proposed that he would personally deliver their awards.

Hon. Secretary's Report:

Katrina Clow reported a busy year for SRS, beginning with a very successful National Rhododendron Show at Gargunnoch, in early May. The Society was represented as usual at Scotland's Gardening Show at the beginning of June. The stand was awarded a bronze certificate. No new members were recruited but the committee are aware of the importance of meeting the general public and advertising the Society and its aims at a very popular event.

Tours and events bring members together and the two study weekends, organised jointly with RSCG, based at Portpatrick and Arisaig, both attracted 50 delegates. A week-long tour of Cornish gardens, many not normally open to the public, had just returned and was a great success. Our thanks are due to the tour organisers for the enormous amount of planning and organising put into these events.

Thanks also to the tenacity and persuasive powers of the editor, John Roy, events and tours are all written up in the two issues of the Society's "Review" and the "Yearbook" which also includes excellent, carefully researched articles on all aspects of rhododendrons. For some members, this is the only contact they have with SRS and its activities. The Society continues to actively pursue its aims to promote rhododendron conservation, educate, recruit and fundraise in addition to providing stimulating events for members. The Secretary thanked the President and Willie Campbell for their support in her first year in office.

Hon Treasurer's Report:

The accounts for October 2013 to September 2014 had been circulated and were tabled.

The Treasurer, Colin Whitehead presented the Year End Report:

General Account—Income £6320. Expenditure £7071. Loss of £751.

Opening Balance (30/09/13) £9192

Less deficit £ 669

Closing Balance (30/09/14) £8523

The Treasurer noted the slight fall in membership income (highlighted in previous year) and two exceptional items of expenditure; a donation of £250 towards the search for Jamie Taggart and £399 for publicity items purchased for the SRS stand

at Scotland's Gardening Show, May 2014. These had contributed to the deficit. The overpayment/underpayment of the subscriptions to ARS appeared to have balanced out.

The accounts had been audited and signed by Phillip Rankin. The Treasurer reported that Mr Rankin was happy to undertake the 2014-15 audit the meeting gratefully accepted. The adoption of the Accounts was proposed by Ian Sinclair and seconded by Ian Douglas and unanimously agreed.

Membership Report:

Matthew Heasman reported for Helen Kessell. The Society currently has 157 members, had gained 9 new members with two resignations in the past year. Helen thanked the membership for payment and for alerting her when bank transfers occurred.

Election of Committee and Office Bearers:

The President had circulated a listing of the Officers and Committee Members whose three year term would expire in 2015, 2016 and 2017. In 2015 those who would complete their three year term were Colin Whitehead (Hon. Treasurer), Helen Kessell (Membership Secretary), John Roy (Hon. Editor), Matthew Heasman (Publications Manager), Gloria Starck (Tours Co-ordinator) and Philip Rankin (Director). The President noted the resignation of Scott Cook due to poor health and he will contact Scott to thank him for his term on the Committee. Excluding Scott Cook, as all had indicated their willingness to continue for a further three-year term, the President proposed that nominations for the Committee be re-elected en bloc. Acceptance of this approach was proposed by Michael Thornley, seconded by Matt Heasman and unanimously agreed.

Tours and Conferences Report (tabled):

David Stark noted very positive comments about the tour to Cornwall, 18-26th April-just returned.

The Sunday post show Tour (May 3rd) had been much jeopardised by adverse weather conditions; Kilbryde Castle had cancelled because most of garden frosted. He reported alternative arrangements and a refund of £5 to those who had booked.

The Autumn meeting in 2015 is to be centred around Ardkinglas & Loch Fyne and planning was underway for the Spring 2016 Tour of Gardens in Cheshire, Shropshire and Staffs. The post 2016 Show tour will be based in Fife.

It was asked if the spring tour might be by coach, as the Cornwall tour had involved driving long distances and many individual cars. David replied that coach transport is probably preferable if the tour is abroad and organised by a company e.g., Brightwater,

which would also deal with holiday insurance. At present, he is booking the hotels on British tours and can request information on members special needs.

Other suggestions for 'away' tours: Oregon and Washington; New Zealand in late Autumn

Matt Heasman noted that SRS would be present at Gardening Scotland (May 29th to 31st) and asked for any volunteers willing to steward on the stand to contact him so that rota could be arranged.

Editors Report:

John Roy reported a busy year. Two *Reviews* and the *2015 Yearbook* had been produced, generally of good quality with colour pages. The interior is printed in house using the SRS printer; the cover is produced professionally. John pointed out the importance of the *Review* and *Yearbook* as about half of our members do not attend conferences or tours, and the publications are the only connection they have with the Society. Editor is happy to continue, but is always appealing for copy, please.

Publications Manager's Report:

Matt Heasman reported that the newsletter was now available on line to all members. Postage to overseas members incurs a significant charge, and the aim is to make the publications available in digital form, to be downloaded by overseas members. The website is being updated.

Seed Exchange:

Willie Campbell's Report was tabled.

He thanked the contributors for the variety of seed sent in but also noted the fall in applications for seed, only 18, and that nearly half of the applicants were from Overseas. He also reported that no wild collected seed had been accepted in 2014 because of the current legislation on selling it (Nagoya Protocol). President reported that the RHS Rhododendron and Camellia Society seed lists contained fully recorded details of wild collected seed for sale. The SRS approach is much more cautious and probably more ethical. Dr Chamberlain is monitoring the situation and will keep Society informed of developments. Matt Heasman reported that a mention in the RHS Yearbook registered concern about Nagoya.

Technical Report:

No Report received from Scott Cook who had recently resigned. On behalf of the Committee, Philip Rankin had had attended a Plant Health Workshop held Dec. 2014 in Edinburgh. He reported that the Ministry would be more proactive when dealing

with disease outbreaks in plants and intend to do regular monitoring of marker plants and apply preventive measures where necessary.

Arduaine Garden:

Maurice Wilkins reported that Ed Wright, the surviving Wright brother, is now in a nursing home at Ardrishaig and unlikely to return home.

A.O.B.:

Willie Campbell proposed that SRS consider setting up a scheme to support a young gardener/ research student with a grant. He mentioned Hannah Wilson, who works at 'The Himalayan Garden'. There was some discussion about the viability of the scheme and the amount that SRS could provide which might be quite modest in terms of student expenses but could help a student obtain other grants. It was agreed to discuss the proposal at the next SRS Committee meeting in September, 2015

The next Annual General Meeting was scheduled to be held at the Gibson Hall, Garelochhead on Saturday, 30th April, 2016

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 3.30pm with thanks to the Chair.

John Hammond, President
Katrina Clow, Hon Secretary

Scottish National Rhododendron Show Saturday 2nd May 2015 Gibson Hall, Gairlochhead

Gloria Starck

Show time again! As has been the case in the past, the weather was causing a good deal of concern prior to the Show as we had had some seriously bad weather – lots of frost.

I arrived early at The Gibson Hall on the 2nd May, and was surprised to find an enormous number of entries already on display. The place was a hive of activity with new entries arriving on the display benches all the time. Needn't have worried about the weather after all. I think a number of people entering try to psyche out the competition by professing to have nothing to show because of the inclement weather.

The Gibson Hall was a new venue for 2015, but it proved to be a great success with a large number of local entries as well as the usual competitors, and some new ones from some distance away.

At 10.00 the Hall was cleared ready for the judging to start. The judges this year were: David Chamberlain, Alan Clark and Richard Baines. The judging can take up to 2 hours, but this year we got through in a little less.

The competition was fierce in some Classes, causing some lively debate between the judges. In addition to the usual 1st, 2nd and 3rd places, there were a large number 'Highly Commended' entries. This is an indication of the high calibre of the entries. Some species that were particularly commented on were: *R. siderophyllum*, *R. sinofalconeri*, *R. dalhousiae*, *R. primuliflorum* and *R. alutaceum*.

Following judging the marks are all added up and awards sorted out. This is my role. Not sure if it is an honour or a punishment! It takes a while and a cup of tea is essential to get my grey cells working. The trophy winners this year are as follows:



- The Kildarden Trophy** – For the winner of Class 1 **Glendoick**
- The George Sherriff Cup** – For the most points in Section 1 **Himalayan Garden**
- The Sir John Stirling Maxwell Trophy** – For the best species in the show grown in the open **Himalayan Garden**
R. alutaceum var. *iodes*
- The Harry Fairburn Cup** – For the most points in restricted Classes 38 – 41 **Carole Rowe**
- The David Stuart Cup** – For the best species or hybrid exhibited in Classes 38 – 41 **Carole Rowe**
R. xanthostephanum
- The John Hammond Cup** – For the most points in the species and hybrid Azalea Classes (25, 34, 35) **John Hammond**
- The Argyll & Bute Trophy** – For the most points in all Classes grown in an Argyll & Bute garden **Glenarn**
- The Scottish Rhododendron Society Cup** – For the best hybrid in the Show **Brodict Castle**
R. ‘Fortune’
- The Keyline Cup** – For the most points in all Classes grown in a garden of up to an acre **Philip Rankin**
- The Marlene Storah Cup** – For the most points in all classes for gardens not open to the public more than once a year. **John Roy**
- The Mervyn Kessell Cup** – For the most points in Classes 42 and 43 **Philip Rankin**
- The Stephen Fox Picture** – For the best species of wild collected origin grown from the ARS/SRS seed exchange. (A catalogue/collectors number must be clearly marked on class card to be considered for this award). **John Hammond**
- The Wild Argyll Cup** – For the best photographic print in the Show **John Roy**

Last year I gave some advice on how to display entries in the Show. This year I want to emphasise how important it is to make sure entrants enter exhibits in the correct class. Some classes ask for a truss, i.e. a flower head consisting of a group of flowers on a single stalk. Other classes ask for a spray, which is a small branch of the plant showing many small individual flowers or groups of flowers. These sprays are limited to a certain height from the top of the vase, depending on the class. Exhibits also look best in an appropriately sized vase with the top of the vase covered with moss.

Well, that's the lot for this year. I look forward to seeing you all in 2016 at The Gibson Hall, Gairlochhead, Saturday 30th April.



**Left: Jens Neilson taking trophies to "The Hutts Himalayan Garden"
Photo by John Roy**

**Right: Some intense judging.
Photo by John Roy**

**Page 15: Panorama of the show.
Photo by Ian Sinclair**



The following awards were made at the AGM on the day of the Show by our President John Hammond

Bronze Medal Award

You are a long-time Member of the Scottish Chapter and have unstintingly given of your time and supported its activities in many ways. As an ardent plantsman you have been on many expeditions to Bhutan, have supported the Bhutan Society, and have entertained our members with presentations of your adventures.

As a Committee Member of the Scottish Chapter, some years ago you willingly stepped-up and took on the role of Editor & Publisher of the Society's Newsletter and Yearbook, which at the time was major learning curve in terms of handling early versions of publications software. More recently you took-up the role of Publications Manager and helped a new Editor to get started in the role. Over the years you have continued to make changes that have significantly enhanced the quality and content of these publications. More recently you have taken on-board the role of the Web-Master and are gradually constructing a comprehensive Website for the Society.

You are an active member of the Shows Sub-committee, having found a home for the vases and other equipment needed for staging the Society's National Rhododendron Show, and have consistently helped other members to set-up their competitive entries. You are a key organiser of the small group who set-up and man the S.R.S. display stand at Scotland's Gardening Show held annually at Ingliston in Edinburgh.

You have consistently supported the activities of the Chapter over many years and have freely shared your knowledge, enthusiasm and plant material from which we all benefit.

The Directors are delighted to present

Matthew T. Heasman

with the Scottish Rhododendron's Society's highest award, the Bronze Medal of the American Rhododendron Society, our parent body. Given at Garelochhead, Argyll, this day 2nd May, 2015.

John M. Hammond
President

Bronze Medal Award

You have been an active member of the Scottish Chapter for around fifteen years and have supported its activities in many ways. As a relatively new Committee Member of the Scottish Chapter at the time, you willingly stepped-up and took on the role of Secretary & Treasurer for around ten years, which initially was a major learning curve in terms of organising Committee Meetings, Annual General Meetings, together with generating the Society's accounts and interfacing with the Charities Section of the Inland Revenue.

You are an active member of the Shows Sub-committee and have been the key organiser of the S.R.S. National Rhododendron Show, held at the Community Hall in Gargunnoch Village, for the past five years, and have consistently supported our Shows with competitive entries. You have also provided the liaison between the Society and the 'Gardening Scotland Show', held each year at the Royal Highland Centre at Ingliston in Edinburgh, where the Chapter has provided a display and information stand since the event was originally founded.

You have a wide experience as a professional horticulturalist on the Gargunnoch Estate where you care for a collection of rhododendrons, as well as many other specimen plants and trees. You have arranged for Gargunnoch Garden to be opened for the benefit of members on many occasions, and you freely share your knowledge, expertise and enthusiasm. You have been plant-hunting in the Himalayas, raised plants from wild-collected seed, and have been Chair of the Seed Exchange for several years.

The Directors are delighted to present

William J. Campbell

with the Scottish Rhododendron's Society's highest award, the Bronze Medal of the American Rhododendron Society, our parent body. Given at Garelochhead, Argyll, this day 2nd May, 2015.

John M. Hammond
President

Bronze Medal Award

You are a long-time Member of the Scottish Chapter and have supported its activities in many ways. As an intrepid plant-hunter you have been on many expeditions to the Himalayas, being the ‘other half’ of the ‘Two Peter’s’ and your escapades with Peter Cox grace the pages of the widely read ‘Seeds of Adventure’, published in 2008.

Over the past forty-three years on the shores of West Loch, Tarbert, in partnership with Peter Cox and Cpt. Lorne & Gillian Mackie-Campbell, you have created an historic botanic garden, known to many as Baravalla Secret Garden, which you have opened on many occasions for S.R.S. & A.R.S. members to enjoy.

As a Committee Member of the Scottish Chapter you willingly stepped-up and took on the role of preliminary Tours Manager for the 1996 A.R.S. Annual National Convention held in Oban, Scotland. You took forward some difficult negotiations with Parks of Hamilton and Caledonian MacBrayne that enabled a record total of 42 garden tours to be run during the week-long event, which is still fondly remembered by A.R.S. members all over the World.

You have opened your garden at Broich on many occasions over the years and led conducted tours to enable our members to see the progress of plants raised from your many expeditions to the Himalayas, together with the restoration work and replanting being taken forward, particularly in regard to the Walled Garden that has undergone major changes in recent years. You have consistently supported our Shows with competitive entries that help to upkeep the standard of the Society’s National Rhododendron Show; and freely shared your knowledge, wise-counsel, and wild-collected plant material, from which we all benefit.

The Directors are delighted to present

Sir Peter Hutchison

with the Scottish Rhododendron’s Society’s highest award, the Bronze Medal of the American Rhododendron Society, our parent body. Given at Garelochhead, Argyll, this day 2nd May, 2015.

John M. Hammond
President

Bronze Medal Award

You are Internationally renowned as a second-generation nurseryman, author, plant-hunter and hybridiser residing at the famous Glendoick Gardens. You are a long-time Member of the A.R.S., having as long ago as 1971 considered the Pacific Northwest as a 'second home', and in many, many ways have supported the activities of Scottish Chapter since its founding in 1983.

You have been a Committee Member since the early days of the Chapter, and the S.R.S. rightly put aside the complications arising from your having been made an A.R.S. Life Member by the Seattle Chapter in Washington State, prior to the founding of the Scottish Chapter. This was eventually resolved to everyone's satisfaction at our A.G.M. in 2001 when you became an Honorary Vice-President of the Scottish Rhododendron Society.

You were relatively young when you came under the spell of the Himalaya and became an intrepid plant-hunter following in your Father's footsteps. You have been on many expeditions to the Himalayas, often accompanied by Sir Peter Hutchison, a duo perhaps better known as the 'Two Peter's' and whose escapades grace the pages of the widelyread publication, 'Seeds of Adventure'. Over the past forty-three years, in partnership with Sir Peter Hutchison and Cpt. Lorne & Gillian Mackie-Campbell, you have created on the shores of West Loch, Tarbert, an historic botanic garden, known to many as the Baravalla Secret Garden. Set in natural woodland, edged by a glen with a fast-running burn, you have opened the garden on many occasions for members to visit.

You have been an active member of the Tours Sub-committee since its formation, and have consistently supported our Shows with competitive entries that ensure the standard of the Society's National Rhododendron Shows is up-kept. You have freely shared your wise counsel, knowledge, enthusiasm, and plant material raised from wild-collected seed, from which we all benefit.

The Directors are delighted to present

Peter A. Cox

with the Scottish Rhododendron's Society's highest award, the Bronze Medal of the American Rhododendron Society, our parent body. Given at Garelochhead, Argyll, this day 2nd May, 2015.

John M. Hammond
President



**Left: Matthew Heasman
receiving the Bronze Medal
from John Hammond at
Garelochhead**



**Right: William Campbell
receiving the Bronze Medal
from John Hammond at
Garelochhead**



**Left: Sir Peter Hutchison
receiving the Bronze Medal
from John Hammond at
Glendoick**



**Right: Peter Cox
receiving the Bronze Medal
from John Hammond at
Glendoick**

Top two photos by John Roy

**Bottom two photos by John
Hammond**

Tour of Cornwall 21st-26th April 2015

Werrington Park

Grace Morris



After negotiating our first taste of narrow Cornish roads and lanes, sometimes with perplexing signs, we arrived safely and on time at Werrington Park. We all parked outside the large white house by a huge old *Wisteria* growing against the courtyard wall full of bursting lilac buds above a bed of large

Above:
Magnolias tower
over
rhododendrons
at Werrington

Right:
Identification
with Matt

**Photos by John
Roy**



Bergenia. Looking over the lawn we saw distant views of large *Magnolia* in flower.

The garden was in two parts. First where an old church was taken down in the 1700s shifted and reconstructed elsewhere, there were mainly trees and hybrid rhododendrons from original seed. This area led into the Arboretum section to the back of the house. It was a really informal planting. A magnificent 40 year old *Magnolia* 'Elizabeth' was bordered by long rows of hybrid *Camellia* in full red bloom. Many of the trees we "ohhed" and "ahhed" at included an original *Betula albosinensis* with a beautiful trunk of peeling, shredding bark; many *Eucalyptus*; *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*, the seed of which came from the Arnold Arboretum near Boston. Also many youngish *Betula* with stunning bark colours, a large *Acer pseudoplatanus* 'Brilliantissimum', *Magnolia* 'Star Wars' from Mark Jury, New Zealand.

Quercus suber, (cork oak) which I had never seen before, was the first in a small collection, which included *Q. variabilis* (like a cork oak), and *Q. myrsinifolia*. Other notable trees and bushes were *Podocarpus*, a very young *Paulownia*, *Malus hupehensis* in pink flower (again from original seed), *Aesculus indica*, *Acer griseum*, *Acer palmatum* 'Atropurpureum', *Cornus* 'Eddie's White Wonder', *Rhododendron racemosum* with small pink flowers, *Nothofagus fusca*, *Castanea sativa*, *Eucryphia x nymansensis* 'Nymansay'. This whole area was deer fenced using wall of flat piled slates to a height of about 6-8 feet.

The second part of the garden was at a distance from the house on the hillside where we had noticed the large flowering magnolias on arrival. This area was about 8 acres and was planted by the owner's great grandfather in the 1800s and early 1900s with original seeds, some collected by Wilson and Forrest, which were on grown in the estate greenhouses. Initially the plants were sent to Caerhays to be grown on before being brought back for planting out on the terraces.

We were transported from the House to the hill terraces in a covered trailer pulled by a large tractor. The two magnolias we had seen in the distance were huge up close; one being *Magnolia x veitchii* 'Peter Veitch', covered with deep pink flowers, the other being *Magnolia x veitchii* 'Isca' covered in thousands of large white flowers.

These towered over rows of rhododendrons, planted like a nursery layout. The rhododendrons included: *R. brachyanthum* with peeling bark, *R. Spinulosum* Group 'Old Kew' a hybrid with very small pink bells, *R. lacteum* in flower - a specimen of this also went to Larachmhor and Caerhays from original seed collected by George

Forrest in 1914, *R. dichroanthum* ssp. *scyphocalyx* with orange bells - of 1906 origin. In all about 100 species were planted in this area 100 years ago.

Some huge trees occurred in this area. Worth noting was *Pseudotsuga forrestii*, said to be a variety of *Pseudotsuga sinensis*.

After the tour we all collected in and around the conservatory for coffee and biscuits. A visit to the loo was compulsory to see the wash hand basin with no outlet - it had to be tipped over to empty!

On leaving we wondered how a second garden was going to better this one.

Tremeer

Dick Fulcher

On arrival at Tremeer we were met by Bradley Newton head gardener, under a clear blue sky on a sunny afternoon. Bradley had been on the plant hunting trip to West China organised by Ken Cox and Willie Campbell, this had been a great inspiration to him and the garden reflected his interest in plants. Bradley guided us to the house where we were introduced to the owner Lady George. On the way I stopped to photograph a healthy young specimen of *Rhododendron cinnabarinum* ssp. *xanthocodon* Concatenans Group beside the drive.

My first impression of Tremeer was of a tidy well polished garden with a nice mixture of trees, shrubs and herbaceous perennials. It is not an extensive garden, about 5 acres in all, with a good plant collection, first laid out by General Harrison in 1945 who had good contacts with other large garden owners and plant collections in Cornwall including Walter Magor of Lamellen who must have been a great encourager. As we moved around to the front of the house we were invited to wander off across the large lawn dispersing in all directions to seek out those plants of interest.

I last visited the garden many years ago and remembered a fine specimen of *Rhododendron tsariense* beside the lawn so I was not disappointed to find it in flower this time and certainly much increased in size, though it is not a large growing species. Nearby some water features added much interest. The garden is well maintained with various beds and borders including all sorts of herbaceous perennials, but looking

particularly good was a collection of some of the “Wilson Fifty” azaleas running along the sunny side of the terrace wall below the house front. Another group of rhododendrons for which the garden is well known are the smaller blue hybrids: *R. augustinii* crosses with some of the dwarf blue species. These included the better known *R. ‘St Tudy’* just coming into flower.

This garden was such a contrast from that at Werrington. What it lacked in size, it more than made up for in its attention to detail and good maintenance. Most of the pathways, obscure corners and attractive glasshouse were explored by tea time after which some plants were purchased and finally a vote of thanks was expressed to our host before departing after a memorable and enjoyable visit.

Duchy College, Rosewarne, Camborne

Katrina Clow

Ros Smith, who runs the micropropagation unit at Duchy College, is known to some of our members, as she gave a presentation on her invaluable work at the Rhododendron Red List Conference held in Edinburgh in 2010.

The unit has developed a technique for raising plants, especially endangered rhododendrons, from very small amounts of tissue supplied from the buds of parent plants. DNA in buds should be genetically identical to the parent plant.

Ros met us in the main laboratory of the micropropagation unit and explained with great clarity the fascinating process involved in producing genetically identical stock from a small piece of rhododendron tissue. The whole process, until the plantlets are transferred to a soil based growing medium, is conducted under sterile conditions.

The flower is dissected out of the bud and put into a pot of gel medium containing nutrients and auxin hormone, which promotes shoot growth. The pots (same size as small yoghurt pots) are kept at 22° C with 16 hours light and 8 hours dark . When shoots develop, the pieces (up to 50) are transferred to a new medium which promotes root growth. This process can take up to two years, when miraculously and provided no contamination, miniature rhododendron plantlets have developed.

This very simplified account skips the enormous amount of research and trial and error involved in getting the appropriate balance of ingredients in the gels and the scrupulous regime maintained to ensure sterile material and conditions which, nevertheless, uses the most basic of household ingredients: bleach and dishwashing liquid!

We were taken over to the polytunnels and it was astonishing to see good sized rhododendron plants, many in bloom, all grown from a tiny piece of bud tissue and ready to be returned to their original gardens or to other keen growers. Surplus plants are sold to help funding.

This is such a vital and impressive service and we wish Ros and her team continued success in reclaiming plants which might otherwise be lost to cultivation. It is sad that funding from Defra has now been withdrawn but it is to be hoped that public and private garden owners will supply enough material to sustain the unit.

Burncoose

Marlene Storah

Burncoose is on a hill and doesn't benefit from the gentle Cornwall microclimate. The estate was purchased by the Williams family, mine owners and metal smelters, in 1715, over a hundred years before they purchased Caerhays Castle. The 30 acre garden didn't take shape until the 19th and early 20th century. It developed alongside the garden at Caerhays with many Williams hybrids developed at Caerhays and the great wealth of plants grown from wild collected seed.

In more recent times the main changes happened in the gale of 1979 with many large trees blown down, it was 5 years before the last of the wood was removed. Until 1984 the garden was private, but then the nursery opened. The nursery is in the old walled garden and offers over 4500 different trees shrubs and plants; some of our group left with wallets a good deal lighter.

The garden is long and narrow on either side of the main drive running north to south for quarter of a mile, acting as a shop window for the nursery. The garden has a very informal feel with many wild flowers. We walked down past *Rhododendron williamsianum* and there among a carpet of bluebells and wild flowers we admired



Magnolia sargentiana standing over 80 ft high the tallest magnolia in the garden. There are two 25 year old *Michelia (Magnolia) doltsopa* and the lovely *M. 'Kew Surprise'* a magnolia raised at Caerhays. We found too many others magnolias to name. The rhododendrons were at their best, both species and hybrids; *R. 'Red Admiral'*, a glowing scarlet Caerhays hybrid and a lovely yellow *R. macabeanum* stood out. We walked down towards the house were extensive refurbishing work was being carried out. On the

left below the house is a wetter area and pond where tree ferns, *Dicksonia antarctica* grow. The many camellias had finished flowering; they must have made a fantastic show. There are 20 different species of bamboo in the garden and 2 large monkey puzzle trees. With many *Hydrangea* and *Eucryphia* to bloom later in the year, the garden offers a long season of delights.



Above: Young micropropagated seedlings at Duchy College

Right: *Trachycarpus fortunei* dwarfs *Rhododendron 'Cornish Red'* at Bosahan

Photos by John Roy

Right:
Osmunda regalis
by the lake at
Penheale



Above: *Rhododendron genestrianum* and
Right: Spotty *R. irroratum* both at
Lancarffe



Photos by John Roy

Bosahan

Ian Douglas

This was a garden of which I had no previous knowledge. It is situated across the bay from Falmouth and overlooks the Helford River to the north. We assembled in the farm-square car park where we were welcomed by the owner, Richard Graham-Vivian.

Richard led us towards the garden along a path high above the lawns surrounding the house with a view of the bay in the background. The house in its current reincarnation is an attractive but plain granite structure with pleasing proportions. Moving down into the garden proper, the first impression was of an all pervading sweet perfume. This arose from two six feet tall plants of honey spurge *Euphorbia mellifera*, a native of Madeira. Very appropriately, these were set alongside a group of *Echium candicans* also from Madeira.

For a tree lover, looking from this point the view down into the garden was stunning with mature well spaced trees both broad leaf and conifer. The first to catch my attention was a fine specimen of *Luma apiculata* with its glowing cinnamon bark, followed almost immediately by a large *Michelia doltsopa* (now *Magnolia*).

Moving down the path we next came to two superb old podocarps, *Podocarpus salignus* and *P. totara* with trunks two plus feet in diameter. *P. salignus*, from Chile was introduced in 1853 and I suspect this specimen to be close to that date. The date of introduction of *P. totara* from New Zealand is not known.

Passing a large *Drimys winteri* we arrived at the pond with, alongside, the finest rhododendron in the garden: *R. arboreum* var. *album*, about thirty feet high and covered from top to bottom in flower. Appropriately here were also mature swamp cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) and dawn redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*). The two can sometimes be difficult to tell apart.

From here the path passed through groves of Douglas fir and coast redwood, underplanted with rhododendrons and Chusan palm (*Trachycarpus fortunei*) which not only grows here well, but self seeds itself.

The path continued down to a small bay where a certain nameless lady insisted on going for a paddle. She emerged to find that the fairies had hidden her shoes!

A fascinating, little known garden but well worth another visit. Our thanks to Richard for permitting us to enjoy it.

Caerhays Castle Gardens

Matt Heasman

I had heard about the fantastic gardens of Cornwall, but always managed to miss previous SRS tours to the area. Well this year I made it (despite some vehicle troubles, another story). Stories from people who had previously visited had only fuelled the fire. One garden in particular that I wanted to see was Caerhays, home of the Williams family and of *Camellia* fame.

We were blessed with the weather and apart from a sharp frost that had hit the whole UK about two weeks before, there had been no cold spells worth bothering about.

Unusually, I had arrived about 20 minutes before the rest of the party. My trusty iPhone maps app had guided me down some back road that ended up missing the busy morning traffic. Slowly we all gathered at the plant sales area that was just below the castle. Above our heads was a massive magnolia in full flower. I later learned that it was an original 1912 white form of *M. x veitchii*. We were lucky enough to be met by owner Charles Williams who was going to give us a personal tour around the estate, or at least what we could manage of the vast grounds in the time allotted.

The grounds extend to about 110 acres. The first plantings were situated on the scrub hill at the back of the house in around 1902. These included an early batch of hybrids done by J. C. Williams. Things grow fast in the 60" rainfall area as a large *Rhododendron kawakamii* that was planted 1976 proved to us. *R. 'Harry Tagg'*, a tender hybrid for most was also doing well in an area that was cleared some years ago in a mini whirlwind. In 1999, another hurricane took all the *Nothofagus* out so the garden is not without its challenges. Following the path along we came to *Camellia 'Captain Raws'*, a lovely pink *C. reticulata* hybrid that is proving difficult to propagate. They can't be cut back as they don't shoot again. An evergreen *Stewartia pteropetiolata* was new to me and looked a very attractive small tree. Looking at a

R. aberconwayii I didn't realise how variable it is in its leaves and flowers, I hardly recognised it.

Climbing up the hill we came to a large area that had mature *Magnolia* in the distance. Charles explained that they were old trees, of pink *M. campbellii*, still with a few flowers and *M. x veitchii*, and that they may not stand for much longer so replacements are already being planted for the future.

An interesting small tree was the only cross known between *Michelia* and *Magnolia*: *Magnolia acuminata* 'Miss Honeybee' x *Michelia figu* with pink outside of the petals and cream on the inside. (Since *Michelia* is now included in *Magnolia* maybe more crosses will be tried)

We were told that the spring weather had elongated the flowering season. *Magnolia* 'Star Wars' was having very long flowering period. Charles explained that they found *M. campbellii* 'Darjeeling' very tender, a better plant for colder gardens is *M. campbellii* 'Betty Jessel'. It came from the same seed pod as 'Darjeeling' but flowers later. *M. 'Daphne'* was past its best, but as a 3rd generation hybrid it is an excellent yellow magnolia.

Next we saw 3 original Wilson collections of *Acer palmatum* 'Senkaki'. Charles said he laughs every time he looks at them as it is said to be a good pot plant!! These were about 50ft high. The garden is continually developing and we were taken to a new area at the top of the hill that was planted about 8yrs ago. Mistakes had been made, planting specimen trees too early and without shelter had caused some heavy losses. Now the area has a sacrificial *Cupressus x leylandii* hedge and things are much better. The field is mild, but it gets too hot up here on the hill in the summer and irrigation is needed, hopefully in time as the trees mature that should sort itself. Then just to remind us how mild the garden is we found a large *Rhododendron moulmainsense*, with a few pink flowers, but the lovely new bronzy growth was way ahead of most things. Noted for its smooth bark as well.

Next we were taken through an area that was full of exotics and rarities. A very rare *Symplocos dryophila*, that had a little like a laurel like flower. *Michelia foveolata* was in perfect condition and full of flower with a bonus of super scent. *Quercus lamellosa* that I had seen as a massive tree in Bhutan. *Sorbus* and many others exciting plants were seen and remain to be seen next time.

One of my favourites is *Michelia doltsopa* and Charles explained that the best form was 'Silver Cloud', a New Zealand clone with a more cinnamon scent, yet he says it has still to be really tested in cold. Our host then decided to test us out by showing us the largest clump of an original Forrest rhododendron and if we could name it we could get a seedling. Alas nobody could name it (seemingly we were close) and I never did find out what it was; something to go back for. As we walked towards the courtyard for tea we saw the true *Camellia saluenensis* that was used for the Williams crosses.

A fascinating garden and I was surprised we managed to see as much as we did in the morning available. I am sure there is the same to see again so I am looking forward to my next visit already. A special thanks on behalf of the society goes to Charles for taking the time to take us around.

Tregrehan

Brian Moss

Tregrehan has been home to the Carlyon family since 1565 and the surrounding gardens have been stocked with plants collected from all over the world. They include plants introduced by Joseph Hooker in the mid 19th century and a fascinating collection of plants, including many rare species, have been added by succeeding members of the family.

Although well stocked with rhododendrons, the garden boasts a fine collection of trees, including numerous conifers, many of these planted by Jovey Carlyon in the late 1880s. They include the largest tree in the garden, a Sitka Spruce, situated in the valley floor, which must be more than 40 metres tall. Close to Tregrehan House can be seen more examples of Jovey Carlyon's work, namely a very large Cork Oak (*Quercus suber*) and possibly the largest Monterey Cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa*) I have ever seen. Elsewhere are huge plants of *Podocarpus totara* and *P. salignus* not to mention the *Davidia involucrata* nearby. When living in St. Austell recently, I recall seeing the *Davidia* festooned with thousands of its 'handkerchiefs' - a splendid sight.

On our arrival at the garden, we were met by the present owner, Tom Hudson, who inherited the property 25 years ago. Tom has made frequent plant hunting expeditions



to South East Asia and has introduced into the garden many new species, some from Vietnam, indeed he is in the process of developing a garden with a strong Vietnam theme. Sadly, however, his Vietnam garden is located elsewhere in the estate and time would not allow us to visit that as well - perhaps he will invite us back another time! Tom took us on a

fascinating tour of the main valley garden, en route passing through a large walled garden with an avenue of dogwoods (*Cornus kousa*) and some very hard pruned *Camellia* (throughout the week we saw many examples of old camellias which had been cut almost to ground level with very vigorous regrowth).



Top: Vista of colour at Caerhays

Above: *Michelia (Magnolia) doltsopa*

Right: *Magnolia* 'Elizabeth' hiding our host and members at Caerhays

Photos by Matt Heasman





Proceeding beyond the walled garden, mention was made of a large red flowered *Rhododendron arboreum* ssp. *delavayi*. Before descending into the valley garden, Tom pointed out *R. kyawii*, a very tender species from Northern Burma. We all know that *R. edgeworthii*,

being an epiphytic species, grows well on old tree stumps - Tom has a fine example so located and in perfect health. Opposite the *R. edgeworthii*, was an enormous Douglas fir which must have been planted by Jovey Carlyon. On reaching the valley floor we came to a pond whereupon our sudden appearance was clearly not appreciated by a female mallard who hastily guided her brood to the safety

Above: Matt Heasman and Ian Douglas helping owner Tom Hudson with identification at Tregrehan

Right: Fred Trott admiring an enormous Douglas Fir

Photos by John Roy



of the opposite bank.

Further on, past a lovely plant of *Rhododendron macabe anum*, with its huge leaves, Tom showed us an excellent form of *R. arizelum* which was produced from a layer of the late Edward Needham's plant at Tregye. Another fine *R. edgeworthii* was spotted, this time growing near the top of a steep bank, which is also an ideal location for this epiphytic species, requiring good drainage. Several members spotted nearby a small plant with lovely indumentum; this we discovered was *R. flinckii*. Tom led us back up towards the walled garden pausing to show us two *R. davidii* in full flower, grown from seeds collected by him in Western China.

On entering the walled garden we were invited to walk through the huge Victorian lean-to greenhouse. This impressive structure was home to some interesting tender species, including *Rhododendron lindleyi* and *R. nuttallii*. A fine wall trained peach was also pointed out.

We all returned to the entranceway discussing amongst ourselves what treasures we had seen. John Hammond, on behalf of the members, warmly thanked Tom for taking us on a memorable journey around his garden. Not surprisingly, there followed a round of applause from all present.

Trelissick

Oliver Miller

Trelissick is a National Trust garden of around 30 acres set on a promontory which juts into the estuary of the River Fal. We met up by the estate buildings - now the gift shop and café - where Tom Clark the Head Gardener gave us a brief history and told us of future plans. A new Himalayan area is being developed and a nursery has been built. Apparently the National Trust is investing heavily in this garden.

Then to the big house which had sea views and consequent wind problems, so they have had significant losses of mature trees in recent years. There were numerous huge specimens of *Rhododendron* 'Cornish Red' which may be a cross between *R. arboreum* and *R. ponticum*. This would account for the various shades of red seen in different plants. This part of the garden is relatively flat and park like with glimpses of the river below and wonderful trees. The holm oaks, *Quercus ilex* were notable. There were drifts of bulbs in particular *Scilla lilio-hyacinthus*, which is a bit like a

mauve bluebell on steroids.

We headed down towards the dell, densely planted with exotics: tree ferns (seeding like weeds) *Trachycarpus* palms, *Schefflera* and *Rhododendron magnificum* with stunning new foliage. Tom said this area could be fairly cold but that was relative to Lamorran, a nearby garden which had not had a frost in the last 7 years. Onwards and upwards to a large lawned area surrounded by hot borders, with banana plants and mimosas, then through to the propagation/shade houses full of mainly rhododendrons. Tom explained they had difficulties establishing bought in rhododendrons so they were keen propagators.

This is a historic yet evolving garden full of choice plants. That it is beautifully maintained by just 3 full time staff truly is a credit to them.

A Very Secret Private Garden in Cornwall

Fred Trott

On our last trip to Cornwall the group had the privilege of visiting this garden and it was like entering a forgotten paradise. Sadly the creator of this garden has now died but its future has been secured by being in the ownership of someone who has a background in horticulture and wishes to continue to protect it.

The creator of the garden travelled in the footsteps of previous plant hunters to acquire seed and plant material from their original source which meant he could be sure the plants were authentic. The garden is laid out on the side of a gradual slope leading down to a small stream which marks the boundary of one edge of the plot and once one moves down towards the stream you are lost in a world of plants and unaware of houses nearby.

It is primarily a rhododendron garden, accompanied by many other trees, shrubs and understory plants which are often found with rhododendrons in the wild or planted together when in cultivation. The visit focussed on the rhododendrons which I found disappointing as we were not made aware of many of the other rare specimens in the garden and meant that we had to rush around later in the visit to get a feel for the whole garden, its plants and layout, which I prefer to do.

Of the rhododendrons, which were almost all species, most of them were very special and not often found in cultivation, many of which I had never heard of, but they are obviously of great interest to dedicated rhododendron enthusiasts.

In the 12 years since the last visit it was interesting to see how the garden has developed, particularly how much everything had grown and filled the available space. It is obviously an ideal location as everything was healthy and well protected from severe weather.

Editor's note: we were specifically asked by the owner not to name this garden or post pictures, so the description has been kept to a minimum.

Carclew

John Roy

Carclew mansion had originally been owned by the Lemon family of *Rhododendron* 'Sir Charles Lemon' fame. The mansion, situated approximately three miles north of Falmouth was one of the greatest in Cornwall in its day. In 1934 when the mansion was owned by Captain Charles H. Tremayne, a descendant of Sir Charles Lemon by marriage, there was a fire that totally destroyed the building. Luckily no-one was injured.

Part of the estate is now owned by John and Sally Williams, bought approximately five years ago. With help and advice from ex head gardener at Trellisick, Barry Champion, John has been clearing and planting the area around the present Carclew House.

There are fine terraces and a sundial Grade 2 listed. From the original plantings a huge *Acer palmatum* remains. Smaller acers have been planted around this, along with rhododendrons and primulas. Huge bed of primroses are naturalising.

At the foot of the garden we went through a gate to an area not owned by John and Sally with a pond and the daddy *Rhododendron* 'Sir Charles Lemon' in the corner. Through another gate was the sad sight of the shell of the once splendid mansion.

Then Daphne from the house next door very kindly provided us with tea and scones.

Lancarffe

Gretchen Henderson

Near the house, the drive passes a line of up to 20 mature *Acer palmatum* grown from seed a previous owner brought back from Japan, before the Gilberts took ownership in 1956. The house and its adjacent buildings are solid and harmonious in the local grey stone, and the replacement of some slates revealed the original oak pegs dating from 1680 are still in good condition. The house is set on a slope, and earthworks in the past have created grassed terraces stepped across the gradient, giving some formality to the immediate surrounds.

The group's main interest was the extensive planting above and to the rear in the 4.5 acre garden. Under a wide variety of trees, a sample of the shrubs we found included *Zenobia*, gold stemmed and glaucous in leaf, a large *Rhododendron* 'Yvonne' planted in 1957, *R. lanatum* with brown indumentum and tiny dark leaves, a good-sized *Trochodendron*, and a very dotted form of *R. irroratum*. *R. thomsonii* was in full flower featuring eucalyptus-like bark, and the *R.* 'Shilsonii' (*R. thomsonii* x *R. barbatum*) flowering nearby had attractive red trunks. *Camellia* 'White Nun' was noteworthy for the size of its very large flowers, and *R. quinquefolium*, *R. schlippenbachii* and *R. baileyi* gave a cloud of delicate flower several metres high, as did *R. spiciferum*.

Most impressive on the day were a large and very healthy *Rhododendron makinoi*, a 25 year-old *Magnolia* 'Star Wars' flowering near the dark purple *R. niveum*, and the majestic *Paulownia* in full bud (which could well lay claim to being a British Champion). The *R. genestrianum*, about 3m high and 2m wide, was much admired, and so was the large *R. arboreum* var. 'Album' which Richard Gilbert proudly remembers buying for 2 shillings and sixpence.

The focus in a walled garden with a formal pool is a tall plinth with a 15th century Lenten Cross, a reminder of an earlier time when this property was part of the Bodmin Priory land holdings. Another pool in the garden had at its centre a perfectly round ball of horizontal slates, trickling water. Returning past a formally positioned seat with a very wide groundcover *Salix apoda*, and backed by a *Pyrus salicifolia* 'Pendula', we came to a special double flowered form of *Chaenomeles* 'Green Ice' on the house wall. This was a garden of mature treasures.

Penheale Manor

Penny Murch

This is the cherished home of James and Fiona Colville. The estate was bought in 1920 by James' father Norman and since then has been continually developed and maintained.

As we arrived there was a beautiful military style stable block sitting high above a grassed area. We went through a gate house (1620s) into a courtyard with a medieval atmosphere. The door in the house ahead had 1686 carved into the lintel over it and the walls were hung with climbing plants, among them a rampant *Rosa banksiae* rose about to burst into flower. At the base of one wall was *Rhododendron forestii* var. *repens* being used as ground cover. Here we went up into the original 17th century garden then through to the formal garden laid out by Gertrude Jekyll. In a shaded corner a beautiful *Rhododendron* 'Penheale Spring' was covered in its large fragrant flowers. It is a *R. edgeworthii* cross. Clothing the walls, camellias had been pruned back and tied in. It must have been a laborious job but gave a lovely soft effect.

There is nothing like a door opening into a beautiful spot to make you draw breath. There sat a pond with an island in the middle planted with a magnolia that was ringed by a bright blue rhododendron. *Enkianthus* hung over the pond at the back, *Gunnera* at the side, and to one side the clear pink of a mature bed of *R. 'Hino Mayo'* (Japanese azaleas).

We looked at the Lutyens addition to the original house and heard the problems of the building absorbing water. In the corner of the walled garden was a beautiful gazebo from earlier times, allegedly squabbled over by earlier owners.

As we moved into the garden we passed a hybrid rhododendron made by Rennie Moffit the original gardener who helped James' father lay out the woodland garden. He had named it *R. 'Granny Moffit'*. Then to my delight I spotted a small leafy plant that I had first seen at Lancarffe garden in the morning. It is called 'the mousetail plant' (*Arisarum proboscideum*) which describes it well.

Round the corner we came to more water, too big for a pond, too small for a lake, too wide for a canal and at its head a clump of *Osmunda regalis* just starting to push

up. An inviting gateway stood behind, of which later. The water was still and calm, reflecting the trees around it and teeming with tadpoles.

From here we looked down onto the woodland garden refreshed with some new planting to give autumn colour, I remember *Cornus* and a carpet of bluebells. The lake above had been leaking, and as we went down we heard about the major works that had closed the garden for a couple of years. I spotted a characteristically neat tree of *Rhododendron auriculatum* and a curious plant clinging to a tree trunk. Luckily it was labelled: *Hydrangea seemanii*. Up the hill we exercised our brains on a bit of satisfactory Latin: *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*, and popped out into a newly established wild flower meadow. This had had the top soil removed and now is mowed in September, laid in swaths to allow the seed to drop, baled and removed. It is working well.

This is a garden that contains plants that are not only rare and interesting, but is brightened up by colourful rhododendron hybrids such as *R.* 'Elizabeth'. There were Peter Cox's bird series, an 8 foot *R.* Phalarope normally sold as a dwarf, and *R.* Curlew making an attractive bush. *R.* Carmen was spotted with its deep red waxy flowers. We walked under a *Pieris* walk with the flowers hanging over our heads and past a drift of *Camassia* in the grass. The head gardener, Richard Oldacer had planted a southern hemisphere bed. Then there was the *Cornus* 'Eddy's White Wonder', a name so awful that you cannot forget it! The deep purple flowers of *R. nivale* ssp. *boreale* were out. Throughout the garden were plants of *R.* 'Penheale Blue', performing well. James' father, Norman had a *R. calophytum* x *R. arizelum* named after him and his mother Diana had a *R. yunnanense* cross to her name. James' plant, organised by his wife was a *R. arizelum* x *R. macabeianum* and it was in flower. Fiona's plant was a *Camellia*, a sport of *C.* 'Donation'.

Now up the semi circular steps and through the gates to the amazing secret yew hedges. The gates were a 50th birthday present to James and made by a craftsman in his 80s with little oak leaves in the decoration. But what was behind the hedges? I felt I had to ask before I looked. Inside, in the middle nestled a perfect flower bed and tree, surrounded by immaculately cut grass. It was as if I had taken the lid off a box and found a beautiful jewel inside it. We saw a second room, maybe there were more, and in high summer you could enjoy an herbaceous border that ran the length of the hedge at the bottom overlooking the woodland garden.

After this varied and inspiring tour we were given tea and the most delicious cake.

The Chine

Albert Heasman

The sky was overcast, the air damp and cold as we drove into the steep wooded valley to the Devonshire home and seven acre garden of Pam and Barry Starling. At an elevation of 900 feet, the garden had a distinctively Himalayan feel about it. Our spirits were quickly uplifted as walking up the drive, we were welcomed by Pam's pet alpacas. There were many mature trees to provide a windbreak and shelter for the shrubs but also many cleared areas where the planting could develop naturally.

The first rhododendron we passed was *R.* 'Alison Johnston' in full bloom. Passing many more hybrids in bud we came across a clearing carpeted with daffodils and a beautiful *Camellia* 'Silver Anniversary' laden with beautiful white flowers. For me this was an outstanding example of specimen shrubs, skilfully displayed with companion groups of trilliums, erythroniums, hostas, arums, hellebores, anemones, cyclamen and many other bulbs, corms and perennials. Among the many rhododendron hybrids were some of Barry's own crosses. A fine *R. schlippenbachii* was grouped with *R.* 'Grace Seabrook' with scarlet trusses and a purple flowered *R. cinnabarinum* Roylei Group. A further grouping included *R. dicroanthum* ssp. *apodectum* x *R. pachysanthum* with *R.* 'Queen of Hearts'. We crossed to a steep lower garden to admire *R.* 'Elfin Gold' and a bank of smaller rhododendrons including evergreen azalea *R. rufohirtum* and *R.* 'Nosutchianum' an unusual intergeneric cross with attractive small white sterile flowers. Nearer the house were stone troughs of alpines and in the small rear garden were several fine conifers, a beautiful *Magnolia* x *soulangeana* in full bloom and a *R. hanceanum*.

I was sorry to leave this truly wonderful garden that demonstrated the artistry and cultivation skills of a dedicated plantsman.

Pine Cottage Plants

John Roy

This small plant nursery was started by Dick Fulcher in 1996. He started as a general nursery, but soon started to specialise in *Agapanthus*. Now Dick has reverted to being a general nursery again, with a huge selection of plants. However he still holds the National Collection of *Agapanthus* with an impressive choice of plants for sale.

18 months previously, Dick bought a 4 acre woodland some distance from his home and nursery. Here he has cleared areas and planted rhododendrons from wild collected seed. This is his own personal rhododendron conservation scheme. Dick kindly gave Matt Heasman and myself a guided tour.

News from Colintraive

Grace Morris

It has been the wettest, windiest, cold autumn, winter and spring we can remember at Colintraive. It became necessary to make lists of things to do; urgent, necessary and have to do while trees are dormant.

Urgent was due to the storm winds blowing down huge trees some of which fell on other trees and plants so had to be chainsawed and removed.

Necessary was to split plants which had become too large, replanting in a variety of other places. Also weeding.

Then, one of the most important, to plant young trees which had been repotted for a couple of years and were ready to plant out in their final resting places while they were dormant; there is a fine time-line to get this done.

However as time went on so did the rain, sometimes torrential and sometimes a constant drizzle. This ensured that the ground became waterlogged in many places and at best like porridge. Eventually we decided that if we didn't make a start we

would have to wait another year. It had to get better! But it didn't!!

The envisaged buttercup slaughter ended up with me, fed up kneeling in deep mud, prising out large spreading weeds which had become like matting between the plants in the primula garden. I persevered section by section throughout the seasons but by July gave up, still waiting for a dry spell.

Greg made a start to sawing and I dragged big branches away and piled them into bonfires for burning in the early summer when they would be drier. Each day we started early morning and by lunch we were soaked through. The dogs were happy since we paid little attention to them chasing the deer that had become trapped in the garden. Then back out in dry clothes only to end up soaked again by teatime.

We could not postpone the transplanting and made a start with the magnolias first as they were beginning to get pot bound. The sites were chosen with care, the holes dug and supports at the ready. The first few gave no problems as the soil was nice and crumbly. After spreading bone meal and heeling in, we felt quite happy. Then in a different area we dug the requisite holes only to find water in most of them, despite being on hilly ground, not usually waterlogged. I have to say that the whole garden has been ditched, so this situation was not expected. However I planted on but later went back and replanted the ones in the worst waterholes to give them the best chance of survival.

Then came the big leaved rhododendrons which we knew survived well in wet ground, so they were easy. These were followed by *Stewartia*, *Cornus*, *Sorbus* and *Betula* dug straight out of the nursery and into their sites. Lastly shrubs bedded out, still in a miserably wet garden. As for the summer, it didn't arrive either and gardening has not been a relaxing, peaceful pastime so far, but we have had some laughs when one of us fell over having been sucked into the "Grimpen Mire". We are still having more wet, windy days than warm sunny days, and have only managed 2 meals on the terrace.

Despite the weather (yet more large Oak branches blown down in June) all the rhododendrons have flowered well (but short lived due to the rain and wind). *Magnolia*, *Stewartia*, *Cornus* and *Sorbus* have also been spectacular. The meconopsis, primulas, hydrangeas and lilies too. So it has been a colourful year in our garden so long as we did not blink too often!!

Rhododendrons as Presents

Oliver Miller

When I was a mere youth my Aunt Jane gave me a gift of two rhododendrons. She had them in her garden for several years but they had “overstayed their welcome”. I was summoned to come and dig up *R.* ‘Pink Pearl’ and *R.* ‘Brittania’ and give them a new home which I did. One was rather leggy and the other always looked chlorotic but they were gifts. This came to mind when visiting a SRS member’s garden recently and noticing they had a variegated rhododendron. Apparently it had been a gift from a sibling so had to be given a prominent place.

When I turned 65 my ex colleagues took me out to lunch and presented me with a rhododendron in a large box all the way from all the way from Millais Nurseries. I was thinking “is this a variegated Pink Pearl?” but I am glad to say it was one called *R.* ‘Whidbey Island’ which does have large leaves, silvery new growth and tan indumentum. Apparently it’s a cross between *R. niveum* and *R. rex*. So I am happy to give *R.* ‘Whidbey Island’ a prominent place.

Seed Success

Katrina Clow

I am delighted to report great germination from this years’ seed exchange. Most notably, the magnolia hybrid seed supplied by Tim Thornton germinates like cress, but unlike cress, the seed leaves are huge and pricking out and potting on is a doddle. The seedlings were close packed in the pots but the fleshy roots pull apart very easily.

I chose *Magnolia* ‘Woodpecker’, *M.* ‘Cuckoo’ and *M.* ‘Kittiwake’, all described as with large or very large flowers and the pink *M.* ‘Manchu Fan’ seedling. If I had known how easily they germinate, I would have ordered more but have to be sensible and consider my age and available space!

Michelia yunnanense (now *Magnolia*) has germinated too. After seeing several tree sized specimens in full glorious bloom on the tour of Cornish gardens, who would not want to grow this beautiful plant, but of course, it is a pipe dream here in the wet

west of Scotland with our seemingly shorter and shorter growing season. I shall grow it on as far as I can, though.

The two azaleas supplied by Peter Cox have germinated, though sparsely, and 3 of 5 species of *Sorbus*, and *Magnolia wilsonii* from the companion plant seed sent by Ian Douglas are up.

I have had better success germinating rhododendron seed this year but find the next stage of pricking out and potting on very tricky and would value advice. Matt Heasman suggests sowing rhododendron seed on minced up sphagnum moss which makes it easier to lift the seedlings out but this advice came too late for my 2015 trials.

My thanks to all those dedicated growers who provide us with seed and to Willie Campbell who runs the seed exchange so efficiently and raises funds for the SRS in the process. It is very satisfying to produce your own plants from a tiny speck of organic material and also help to keep species in cultivation.

But only ten UK members applied for seed this year! If we don't support the seed exchange it will disappear.

Tours Questions Answered

David N. Starck

I should like to take this opportunity to answer a couple of questions that you may have regarding Spring Tours organized by the Ordha Coille team.

You may have wondered why we ask for bookings so far in advance of the event. This is simply because we are operating in a similar way as a "Package Tour" is run. In order to obtain the best room rate at the Tour Hotel we need to make a booking anything up to a year in advance and whilst we make a provisional booking for 25 places which is the usual group size, we need to have, within a couple of months of then, a more precise number, this then reduces financial risk to the Society.

The pricing structure is set up so that your deposit guarantees your place on the tour and we offer the option to pay the full cost at the time of booking so that you do not

forget to pay the balance at a later date. If however you wish to pay your balance by the due date this is perfectly acceptable. Should you be forced to cancel your place, we will offer it to anyone on the waiting list. This will enable a maximum possible refund. Failing that, and time is on our side, we can cancel your hotel booking, though we will be unable to refund any prepaid garden visit fees. Any later cancellation may be subject to our contract with the hotel though we will endeavor to recover something on your behalf, but I would recommend that you take out some form of travel insurance.

I apologise if I appear to be coming on “heavy”, though my doctor assures me that I am losing weight, but each tour takes us up to eighteen months from start to finish and your help, as participants, during the marketing stage is much appreciated. We intend to use this method of working, subject to the requirements of the hotels involved, in the future.

Now for something different; we have been asked on several occasions whether it would be possible to organise the tour using a small coach. We have thought about using a coach and whilst I think that it is an essential for overseas visits, Ireland, mainland Europe or dare I say Scandinavia, North America or New Zealand, for the visits to gardens in mainland Britain it is perhaps not a viable option. Having said that please be assured that the possibility is always considered during planning.

Finally, if you have never been on a SRS tour before, please consider doing so. No don't just think about it, next time there is an Interest Form enclosed with your copy of the Review, fill it in and send it to us, there is no obligation at that stage, and if you have any questions please email or phone us.

david@lochlorien.free-online.co.uk or 01880 770257.

Committee Members

Our Office Bearers are:

President: John Hammond

Vice President: Ian Sinclair

Hon. Vice Presidents: George Argent, Sir Ilay Campbell, David Chamberlain, Peter Cox

Hon. Secretary: Katrina Clow

Treasurer: Colin Whitehead

Tours & Visits Manager: David Starck

Other Committee Members:

Past President: David Starck

Hon. Publications Editor: John Roy

Publications Manager: Matt Heasman

Shows Manager: Ian Sinclair

Membership Secretary: Helen Kessell

Tours & Meetings Co-ordinator: Gloria Starck

Advertising Manager: Philip Rankin

Directors:

Rick Potter

Ian Douglas

William Campbell

President: John Hammond, The Three Chimneys, 12 Cockey Moor Road, Starling, Bury, Lancashire, BL8 2HB.

Tel: 0161 764 1116

Email: hammondsrhodies@supanet.com

Hon. Secretary: Katrina Clow, Townend of Kirkwood, Stewarton, Ayrshire, KA3 3EW.

Tel: 01560 483926

Email: katrina@kclow.fsnet.co.uk

Treasurer: Colin Whitehead, 21 Laverockdale Park, Edinburgh, EH13 0QE.

Tel: 0131 4415036

Email: colin.whitehead21@gmail.com

Hon. Publications Editor: John Roy, Brecklet House, Ballachulish, Argyll, PH49 4JG.

Tel: 01855 811465

Email: john.roy2@btopenworld.com

Publications Manager: Matt Heasman, 9 Dunbeath Grove, Blantyre, G72 0GL.

Tel: 01698 711089

Email: matthew.heasman@virgin.net

Tours & Visits Manager: David Starck, Ordha Coille, Kilberry, Argyll, PA29 6YD.

Tel: 01880 770257

Email: david@lochlorien.free-online.co.uk

Advertising Manager: Philip Rankin, 7 Hillview Terrace, Edinburgh, EH12 8RA.

Tel: 0131 334 4213

Email: philiprankin@hotmail.com

The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the SRS committee. The committee, however, support the right to freedom of speech.

© SRS 2015



Above: *Rhododendron davidii* attract attention at Tregrehan

Below: Look at my big truss says Brian



