



the Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia group

THE ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Mike Robinson

Chairman's Report to the AGM

16th June 2009

The Group membership numbers have fallen in the last year, but currently stand at 803, a healthy enough figure considering the current economic conditions. A number of people chose not to renew, the commonest reason being quoted as the recession together with the high cost of the RHS subscription on top of which the Group subscription has to be paid. There was no discernable pattern to the losses which were equally distributed between those in the UK and those living abroad.

There was a small surplus this year, assisted by the lack of items of unusual expenditure, of which there were many in 2006-7, and the considerable profit on seed sales. The reserves are in a healthy condition, approaching £30,000. In view of the likely change to the status of the group I propose that the subscription should remain unchanged for the next financial year.

The 2009 yearbook is, once again, professional in approach, appearance and content, and is considerably better than that of similar societies. Articles continue to range from those suitable for the beginner to those containing a great deal of scientific detail, and the authors also range from amateurs to senior academics. Pam Hayward has done a wonderful job, and has managed to keep costs at a very reasonable level.

The content of the Bulletin has also been very interesting, with more members contributing for the first time, and lively debate appearing from time to time. The experiment of including reports on the shows seems to have been well received, but has contributed

to the increased cost of printing and distribution. In the first year of this option being made available, 33

members have elected to receive the Bulletin by email. We hope that more will do so, producing appreciable savings.

The Group web-site has had an excellent year, with more photographs beginning to appear, though there is always room for more. This was certainly aided by the photographic competition, which produced a considerable number of entries, and will be run again in the coming year.

Sales of publications continue to generate a most satisfactory profit, again being of the same order as those from the seed exchange. Profits from the sale of seed were excellent. The Group purchased a share of seed from Keith Rushforth's 2008 expedition to Arunachal Pradesh: this produced large amounts of viable seed, and the profit reflects its popularity. Hand pollinated seed of hybrids and species is always popular and we need more members to contribute in this way, thus gaining priority when ordering seed. We are once more most grateful to all those who have donated seed, especially Arboretum Wespelaar, Belgium and the Camellia Forest Nursery, USA. Both the Dixons are again to be thanked for their painstaking work packeting up orders and



R. fulvum, shown at the Early Rhododendron Show, Class 12, by Exbury

Photo Sally Hayward

covering the onerous paperwork. However we continue to search for an experienced plantsman who would collect exclusively for the Group.

Once again Judy Hallett is to be thanked for organising excellent tours. The autumn tour to the Lake District was very popular with 22 participants, and, with only one very wet day,

was enjoyed by all who took part.

The spring tour to South Wales attracted 13-14 full time members, it being especially gratifying to see members who were joining a Group

tour for the first time. 10 people joined each day for most of the visits: such participation is always welcomed. The hospitality we received from garden owners was generous beyond the call of duty, and the experience and detailed local knowledge of Ivor Stokes made the tour really special. The recession limited the numbers somewhat, resulting in the books only just balancing. Plans to visit Dresden next spring are in hand.

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The Group continues to offer and deliver services beyond its immediate membership, providing expertise to both major gardens and to the general public

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The relationship between the Group, the RHS and the RHS Rhododendron and Camellia Committee (now a subcommittee of the Woody Plants Committee) is at last in the process of being rationalised. The Society appointed a staff member to take responsibility for relations with the Plant Committees early in 2009, and at a meeting on 29th May, a model was agreed that will be submitted to the RHS Council early in July. If accepted, this would require a change to the group's constitution, so I have placed this as a separate item on the AGM agenda. In the meantime all committee meetings of the Group are now held jointly with the RHS Subcommittee, an arrangement that is proving entirely excellent.

In late March representatives of both committees visited Caerhays Castle, Tregothnan and Tregrehan in Cornwall. A considerable number of outstanding plants were seen, and awards made or recommended to more than a few. It is intended that such visits will form a considerable part of the committees' business in the future.

The main RHS rhododendron competition was again held at Rosemoor in April. Thanks to the weather and the amount of work done by local members, ably headed by Colin Brown, Alun Edwards and John Marston, with magnificent displays once again from Marwood Hill and Sherwood, the show was outstanding; a full report will be published. The competition will be held at Rosemoor for one final year in 2010. Thereafter it may move to RHS Harlow Carr, but discussions with the RHS shows department are still in progress.

John Harsant's work in establishing links between Bodnant and Duchy College, Cornwall, in order to micro-propagate the rarer hybrids from that garden, continues to be successful. The propagation facilities at the college, developed by Ros Smith, have been shown to produce propagules true to form, and with a very high percentage of success. Such work is especially important at present when garden plants are threatened with extinction because of the increasing detection of pathogens such as Phytophthora. The Group will be seeking to support this work in the future.

The Group is maintaining good relations with the Scottish and Lakeland Rhododendron Societies, and has established connections with the Rhododendron Species Conservation Group in Scotland. The work of the latter is at an early stage, but the intention of establishing a reference collection of species in the UK is one that we can heartily support. Assistance has also been promised to prevent the closure of Arduaine Garden by the Scottish National Trust, though it seems likely that David Chamberlain's indefatigable efforts may well produce the required result without help from us or the RHS.

The Edinburgh PhD is in its final year, and the Group has contributed its last annual payment of £2000. The research has reached the stage where sufficient raw data has been assembled and the techniques of amplifying the DNA samples have been successfully developed. What remains appears to be the identification of relevant and simple DNA markers to allow the distinction between species and hybrids to be identified. As is common with such work it is almost certain that the PhD will run into a fourth year, but the Group has received no request for additional financial support. If such is received it will be considered sympathetically, as would any request to support a Masters course in rhododendron studies. There is, however, no intention of launching a further appeal to members to support this area. In one sense the Group has achieved its objective of maintaining the continuity of rhododendron studies at Edinburgh, and of raising the profile of rhododendron cultivation at the RBGE's garden.

The Group continues to offer and deliver services beyond its immediate membership, providing expertise to both major gardens and to the general public. In fact the commonest request we get through contacts and via the website is for identification of rhododendrons in gardens old and new, large and small. Much of my time is spent explaining just how difficult this is in the case of old hybrids, particularly when only a photograph is provided! Occasionally, however, a unique plant is rediscovered. Last month I found a 20 foot high *R. praevernum* in a Dorset pinetum. The species is said to grow only to 15 feet, and this plant must be a champion tree. In February a workshop on early flowering rhododendrons was held, and will be repeated next year and written up in 'The Plantsman.'

At the Rosemoor show, the Group distributed large numbers of an educational leaflet, written by Pam Hayward, aimed at furthering the general public's understanding and enjoyment of rhododendron shows. This proved a worthwhile innovation, as were the colourful educational display panels designed to introduce the public to the basics of our three genera.

Of course, thanks are due to all our committee members, branch chairmen and all those working within the branches. Although it is often invidious to pick out one person, on this occasion I have to say how delighted we all are that the hard work of our Group Secretary, Pat Bucknell, was so richly rewarded by her outstanding success in winning two of the four cups at the Rosemoor competition. Finally I must thank Brian Wright, who has recently retired from the Group committee. He has been an important contributor to rhododendron and camellia competitions and has given selflessly of his time for many years.

M.L.A. Robinson May 2009

EDITOR'S NOTES

John Rawling

We congratulate

The German Rhododendron Society

Who are celebrating their **75th Anniversary**

With an **International Symposium**,
Talks (in English) Plus guided tours and visits

On 18th to 20th May 2010.

In Bremen, Germany.

For full information, contact:
www.rhodo.org - info@rhodod.org
(see advert on back page of this bulletin)

We also congratulate

The Australian Rhododendron Society

Who are celebrating their **Golden Jubilee**

With a **Conference** in the Dandenong Ranges
which is one of Victoria's top tourist attractions.
with both International and National Speakers
On 17th to 29th October 2010

World Class Rhododendron Garden with 15,000
rhododendrons. Plus visits to extensive public
and private gardens

For more information, see www.vicrhodo.org.au
Or email: mnbegg@gmail.com

We offer our hearty congratulations to David Millais for winning a **Gold Medal** for his display at the **Chelsea Flower Show**.



David Millais with his Chelsea exhibit. Photo.

Gold Medal for Millais Nurseries at RHS Chelsea Flower Show

David Millais writes: "We were delighted to gain our first Gold medal from the Royal Horticultural Society for our exhibit of Rhododendrons and Azaleas."

Preparations for the Chelsea exhibit started long before Christmas, and were a particular challenge. "After a cold winter we thought all the flowers would be late, but the exceptional warmth and light levels of April encouraged the blooms to flower up to 4 weeks early. Fortunately our friends at Blackmoor Fruit Nursery helped us out with cold storage. Most of our plants were held back at 3 degrees Centigrade waiting for their time to shine!" said David Millais.

A member has drawn my attention to a report in the 22nd May edition of *'Horticulture Week'*, "Research matters... **impact of withholding water.**"

A report by Dr Ken Cockshull:

"There is controversy about whether drought can trigger flower initiation, as relatively little information exists on the subject. The experiments outlined here were designed to test whether the withholding of water would promote flowering in rhododendrons.

Plants of Rhododendron 'Hatsu-giri' were supplied with either one-half or one-quarter of the water they were expected to lose each day due to evapotranspiration (regulated deficit irrigation or RDI). Flowers were found earlier than on well watered plants but fewer plants formed flowers. In another experiment, 2.5 and 3.5-year old plants of Rhododendron yakushimanum ('Hoppy' and 'Scintillation') were grown with RDI, as previously described, and partial rootzone drying (PRD). With PRD, the full amount of water was applied to one side of the root ball while the other side remained dry. The water was applied by a dripper which was moved to the other side of the pot every 3 weeks. This treatment produced more flowers per bud on 2.5-year old plants of both cultivars. Both RDI and PRD treatment caused flowers before those on the well-watered controls. Furthermore, if the treatments were continued after flower initiation, precocious flowering of the RDI-treated plants occurred in the autumn."

Most of our plants were held back at 3 degrees Centigrade waiting for their time to shine!

The exhibit featured an island bed showing larger growing hybrids cascading down in size through interesting wild collected foliage species, deciduous azaleas and *yakushimanum* hybrids, with evergreen azaleas and dwarf varieties forming the front of the exhibit. A particular feature of the display was the wonderful foliage of many rare species, planted to simulate a gushing stream running through a Himalayan mountainside. The judges were particularly impressed with the use of the species plants that formed the striking effect of the mountain. Of particular note was the wonderful dwarf *Rhododendron campylogynum* Myrtilloides with its plum purple thimble shaped flowers which attracted lots of attention from collectors and the general public.

Much admired were Keith Rushforth's collection of *R. kesangiae* with wonderful bronze tinted foliage. It was impossible for anyone to pass the exhibit without commenting on the wonderful scent of the large deciduous azaleas. Ted Millais's Azalea 'Silverwood', white with a prominent yellow blotch, and his deep red, Azalea 'Crosswater Red', were amazing plants.

Rhododendron 'Pink Sunset' was launched at the Show. It was originally bred at Exbury Gardens and was supplied to a rhododendron collector in Hampshire who admired it for many years until offering it to David Millais for propagation. The large pink flowers have attractive deep burgundy markings on the upper lobes. It is a late flowering plant for May and early June, reaching 150-180cm in 10 years.

This was Millais Nurseries third exhibit at Chelsea, and they were the only specialist rhododendron grower at the Show. All their plants are British grown using a wide range of organic practices wherever possible to produce high quality healthy plants.

*Millais Nurseries trials garden and plant centre:
Crosswater Lane, Churt, Farnham, Surrey. 01252 792698
www.rhododendrons.co.uk*

(Further information: see 'Water deficits promote flowering in rhododendron via regulation of pre- and post-initiation development' by Sharp, Else, Cameron and Davies (2009). *Scientia Horticulturae* 120(4):511-517. Abstracts of papers are provided at elsivier.com/locate/scihorti.)

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

I need your letters, reports from branches, articles, future events etc, to keep the members up to date!

So, please send me your letters and copy
**for the November 2009 Bulletin
by 7th October 2009.**

Please send to: John Rawling, Hon. Bulletin Editor,
The Spinney, Station Road, Woldingham, Surrey, CR3 7DD.
E-mail: jr.eye@virgin.net or Tel. (&Fax) 01883 653341

You will already have noticed that I have tried a new design and layout for this special **100th issue of the Bulletin.**

Please send me your views on this layout and how you might like to see future issues. Some further changes are likely to be necessary if and when the Group become more deeply integrated into the RHS organisation.

I would also welcome suggestions for topics and articles that may particularly interest you. Please contact me using my details above.

JOINT AUTUMN GET-TOGETHER TOUR

15th -18th October 2009

**The International Camellia Society with
the Rhododendron Camellia and Magnolia Group.**

**Autumn tour to France to visit the
Autumn Plant Fair at Courson, near Paris**

I hear from Pat Short that there may still be a few places available if you contact her soon. So, contact Pat as soon as possible if you would like to join this interesting trip,
by email: patricia_short@btconnect.com
or 41 Galveston Road, London SW15 2RZ
or telephone 020-8870 6884.

**Rhododendrons of Eastern Germany –
Pillnitz and the Gardens of Dresden**

**A Group Tour to visit
Eastern Germany – 11th to 15th May 2010**

All details are listed in the enclosed leaflet.

Please note that Judy Hallett tells me, that two more gardens have been added into this tour, on the recommendation of Wolfgang Spethmann: On Wed 12 May: Zuschendorf Gardens, and on Thurs 13 May: Findlingspark Nochten.

If you have any queries contact Arena Travel – 01473 660800

TOUR REPORT

South West Wales 2009

This was, once again, a very successful tour, organised by Judy Hallett, and well supported by members of the Group. The tour started with members collecting at the Ivy Bush Royal Hotel in Carmarthen, with the visits starting the next day.

Saturday 18 April / Picton Castle

This is a forty acre woodland garden, gently sloping down towards the river Cleddau. Our guide, head gardener Roddy Milne informed us that the garden originally dates from the 1840s but most of the planting has been done during the last fifty years.

The Magnolias were looking spectacular: we saw a fine specimen of *M. stellata*, *M. loebneri* full of small white fragrant flowers and *M. soulangeana lennei* with enormous goblet-like flowers, rose pink in colour.

The garden boasts an excellent form of *Rhododendron augustinii*, a stunning blue colour, and fine specimens of *R. 'Cornish Cross'*, *R. macabeum* and *R. schlippenbachii*. All the plants enjoyed the canopy of magnificent trees including *Picea omirika* with beautiful drooping branches curving upwards at the tips, and a large hundred year old European Silver Fir. Huge hedges of Portugese Laurel helped to shelter the plants from strong winds.

We marvelled at the underplanting of *trilliums* (probably *chloropetalem*), *corydalis* and *uvularia perfoliata* with its clusters of pendant bell shaped pale yellow flowers.

Derek Faulkner.

(Derek, like many of the tour participants makes reference to our good fortune in having had Ivor Stokes with us throughout the tour. His enthusiasm and extensive botanical knowledge ensured that we all learned a great deal during the tour. Judy Hallett)

Colby Woodland Garden

Having dragged ourselves away from Picton, and particularly the plant sales area, we made our way to the National Trust garden at Colby.

The garden is undergoing major changes while the garden team try to eliminate phytophthora damage. Much of the planting was done at the beginning of the 20thC and now with hindsight it can be seen that plants are too close together. The downside of this is that phytophthora can spread quickly and easily through the rhododendrons and pieris and large areas have already been cleared. It was interesting to note that the deciduous azaleas were not affected. Nevertheless there are some fine trees and over 700 plant species and some particularly interesting large-leaved *rhododendron macabeum* and *rhododendron sinogrande* around the hillside pond. A fine *cryptomeria* at 130ft is said to be the tallest in the U K.

After our tour of the woodland area we returned to the estate yard to have our footwear disinfected before proceeding to the walled garden. Since 1986 this separate garden has been rescued and maintained by Mr and Mrs Scourfield-Lewis having been established by Mr and Mrs Chance. Thanks to them we were able to see a splendid *drimys winteri*. A delightful octagonal summerhouse was built in the mid Seventies and in the early 90's the Scourfield-Lewis family completed an interesting rill and adjacent alpine area.

Andy Hallett

Sunday 19 April / Penrice Castle

The park and gardens of Penrice Castle date from the 1770's. At that time Thomas Mansel Talbot commissioned the architect Anthony Keck to design a Georgian villa. From the house there are views over the landscaped park to Oxwich Bay and the north Devon Coast. William Emes developed the landscaped park for Talbot, consisting of a chain of lakes, groups of trees, Beech, Sweet Chestnut and Horse Chestnut, and shrubberies. Some of these trees remain on the original entrance avenue, where they have attained a great size. In the 1790's Lady Mary Talbot planted American introductions which were new to horticulture at that time. Her planting lists of 1798 are extant. In the 1820's the pleasure grounds were further developed to include a rock garden and archway. A very large *Cornus capitata* planted in the 1830's sets seed.

By the late 19th century the nursery company Veitch were supplying trees and shrubs for the gardens. In the 1890's a formal terraced garden was laid out to the south of the house by Emily Charlotte Talbot and further expanded with stone paths and ponds by her niece Lady Blythswood. In the 1970's, a wing of the house was demolished and a formal Rose garden was planted. The walls of this garden are lined with climbers providing interest in succession, *Clematis armandii*, *Wisteria sinensis* and *Pileostegia viburnoides*.

Further on a shrubbery, planted in the 1960's by Christopher Methuen-Campbell, included *Laurus nobilis*, *Pittisporum tenuifolium* 'Silver Queen' and *Magnolia x loebneri*. He also planted a selection of Camellias, near the Orangery which were in full flower when the Group visited. In this area the present owner Thomas Methuen-Campbell has planted a selection of unusual oak species for example *Quercus rhysophylla*; as well as species of *Schefflera*, more commonly grown indoors and species of the Spring flowering genus, *Stachyurus salicifolius*, and *S. himalaicus*. By the Orangery, *Magnolia campbellii* 'Charles Raffil' is proving to be fast growing with a tall upright habit. Of interest to the Group were uncommon Magnolias, *Magnolia dealbata*, a Mexican species, *Magnolia* 'Silver Cloud' *Magnolia laevifolia*, and

Rhododendron pingianum KR 184. It will be interesting to see how these recently introduced shrubs develop in time. Nearby a magnificent large *Liriodendron tulipifera* and nearer the walled garden a mature *Quercus rubra* must be close to 200 years old.

Our hosts Mr. Thomas Methuen-Campbell and Mrs Judith Methuen-Campbell treated us to morning coffee on the terrace and a lunch in their dining room with views over the Park.

Dr Mary Forrest

Clyne Castle Gardens

Arriving at Clyne Castle Gardens, I was on the lookout for part of the national collection of *Enkianthus* which required some discipline on my part as the large leafed *Rhododendron* species were so stunning that my head was permanently turned upwards looking through monolithic red trunks at exquisite flowers.

The *Enkianthus* however spoke for themselves, instantly recognizable at eye level, the brightest of green leaves breaking out of delicate tracery of vertical twigs and branches with little dangling racemes of flower buds at the unfurling stage. There was promise of delicate bell shaped flowers to come. I counted three very good examples of *Enkianthus campanulatus* close to the main paths, all heavy with flower bud. This variety can grow to 12 feet in due course, becoming a small tree rather than a shrub.

At the **National Botanic Garden of Wales** later that week we saw that the *Enkianthus campanulatus* specimens in the border beds (including *E campanulatus* var *palinii* unfortunately not in flower) had their vertical growths cut back in order to maintain a shrub-like appearance. However the naked vertical/erect branches topped by whorls of leaf and flower are a striking characteristic of some of the *Enkianthus* species; it seems a pity to distort their natural growth habit for what could be described as a less attractive one.

I was then delighted to find an *Enkianthus perulatus* with urn like white flower buds just opening. This *Enkianthus* has the most vivid scarlet autumn leaves of all the species, and this specimen was strong growing with some modest but strong branching growth and may easily reach a mature rounded shape of 6 to 7 ft high, as the clump of three at Westonbirt arboretum.

Cheryl Sapcote



Enkianthus campanulatus – (possibly 'Albiflorus group') ready to flower



Enkianthus perulatus



Enkianthus campanulatus aspiring for tree status

Photos by Cheryl Sapcote

Monday 20 April / Pant -Yr -Holiad

This is an extraordinary garden, a transformation from unusable hillside agricultural land to a garden full of rhododendrons, camellias and magnolias. As the coach arrived we looked across towards their hillside where C. 'Donation' was flowering in profusion. Geoff Taylor, the owner and our host, encouraged and supported by his wife Brenda, has spent the last half century hybridising rhododendrons to produce many noteworthy hybrids.

We were whisked around Geoff's treasures at speed: sadly we had limited time here with two more gardens to see on the same day. I was impressed by *R. morii* (Collingwood Ingram form) which presented a fine display for us, early in the season. In the Cwm garden are Luteum seedlings, that have been blown on the easterly wind and are now well established. Seed acquired from Saville Garden has resulted in an interesting form of *R. aberconwayi* named *R. 'Earl Lloyd George'* (read more about this in the 2008 Year Book).

Geoff's first crossing was of *R. augustinii* with *R. ambiguum*, the results of which remain in the garden today; only one seedling turned out to be of good colour but they all offer good windbreak and nesting sites for birds. In parts of the garden where the soil is deeper Geoff grows magnolias, some from Maurice Foster's seed, and we saw a good specimen of *M. 'Susan'*.

As we approached the end of our tour we were treated to the vivid colour of the flowers and strong indumentum of *R. beanianum*.

Judy Hallett

Monday 20 April contd / Old Cilgwyn

The second visit of the day was to Old Cilgwyn, the home of Edward Fitzwilliams. The entrance drive is lined with large rhododendrons, mainly deep red *R. 'Cynthia'* but with a sprinkling of species and several camellias. We parked close to a large barn which we later told was a fortified barn, dating from more lawless times; it featured long narrow slits in the walls to enable defenders to fire out at the attackers.

Well kept borders led to the house where we were greeted by Mr & Mrs Fitzwilliams. Around the house, plants of interest were a cornus, described as the wedding cake tree (*Cornus controversa variegata*), a *Magnolia xsoulangiana* and several embotriums just coming into flower.

From the house there are extensive views across the garden and parkland of the estate. Mr Fitzwilliams explained that an ancestor of his had had a village removed to create this view.

This is a wonderful garden with three ornamental ponds and an unusual bridge, designed and built by Mr Fitzwilliams' grandfather in 1932. The bridge is shaped rather like the legs of the Isle of Man crest and gives an unique aspect to the garden with a good show of native wild flowers around. Mr Fitzwilliams led us onward to what he described as 'the railway', and we descended into a depression lined with old railway sleepers, hence the name. This track was through tangled masses of rhododendrons and laurels out onto the parkland with excellent views of the house and garden.

Peter Ratcliffe.

Ffynone

We approached the magnificent house, built by John Nash in 1783 with later additions, down a woodland drive lined with large rhododendrons (probably *R. 'Cornish Red'*).

Earl Lloyd George then led us through mature woodland trees along well constructed paths under planted with wildflowers in colourful drifts. Between the well laid paths were a huge collection of interesting rhododendrons including *R. 'Taurus'*, a brilliant red and *R. 'Merganser'*, an excellent Cox lepidote hybrid with funnel shaped greenish yellow flowers.

We walked through many highly scented viburnums and noted Magnolias in abundance: *M. 'Loebneri'*, *M. 'Merryl'*, a deep pink *M. 'Susan'* (lilliflora 'Nigra' x stellata 'Rosea') and *M. 'Apollo'* with its star shaped deep violet flowers.

Tea was enjoyed looking out across the lawn towards the millenium avenue of Tilia.

Tuesday 21st April / Stradey Castle

We were welcomed at Stradey by Lady Mary Mansel Lewis and guided by Vince who is the forester for the estate. The impressive mid 19th century mansion has extensive woodland richly planted with camellias, rhododendrons and magnolias. On the way into the woods we passed an *Hydrangea villosa* that had been cut back very hard following winter frost damage but still stood 7 feet tall and was shooting vigorously. The woodland floor had carpets of *Allium triquitum*; pretty but clearly a bit of a 'thug'. We saw many fine camellias amongst which there was a particularly striking example of *C. 'R.L.Wheeler'*. There were a number of white camellias, mostly un-named, but in contrast to other gardens they were all, even the formal doubles, virtually free of weather induced blemishes. My particular favourite was the single *C. 'Charlotte de Rothschild'* of which there were several fine examples.

One of the first rhododendrons that we came across was the beautiful primrose yellow *R. burmanicum*, There was also a group of three *rhododendron rex* with *ssp rex*, *fictolacteum* and *arizelum*. A group of us spent an informative ten minutes gathered around Ivor Stokes, learning how, with the aid of Ivor's pocket lens and his encyclopaedic knowledge, we could differentiate between them.

We also saw the species *rhododendrons spinuliferum*, *johnstonianum* and *thomsonii* in flower along with the hybrid *R. 'Bow Bells'*, and 'Blue Diamond', several fine examples of different 'Loderi' and of 'Horizon Monarch'. The latter drew some sniffs of disapproval from the purists amongst us although I thought that it was quite striking.

There were several fine magnolias in full bloom including examples of two of the soulangeana hybrids, *M. 'Leonard Messel'*, 'Susan' and a very fine 'Apollo'. In the "Wilderness" garden there was a striking group of *rhododendron macabeum* and an unnamed eucalyptus. This unusual combination was, I thought, very original. Other plants that caught my eye included a 20ft+ *crinodendron hookerianum*, a 155 year old *wellingtonia* and a very graceful clump of a *phyllostachys* which was I think *aureosulcata*.

Lady Mary hosted an excellent lunch and before leaving we presented her with a *Rhododendron maddenii* *ssp crassum* and *R. thomsonii*. Pleasingly she confirmed that the latter is her favourite species.

Roger Newton.

Llyshendy

The home of Ivor and Jane Stokes. A beautiful ancient dwelling in the Towy valley looking out to Llandiloe over flats snaked by the meandering river. A house with a garden on the human scale, packed with interest at every turn and more to come, judging by the seedlings in the greenhouse.

A fine *Acacia pravissima* against the house was in full bloom and showing no sign of the March freeze-up - a brilliant yellow in the Spring sunshine. Other plants included the Tasmanian *Eucalyptus globulus*, *Euchryphia xnymansensis*, 'Rostrevor' and *lucida* 'Pink Cloud' (the Tasmanian Leather Wood), several *Enkianthus*, the rare Triflora *R. siderophyllum* and a good bluey-mauve *R. concinnum* in flower. A vigorous *Rosa sericea pteracantha* (introduced by Wilson under the name *omeiensis*) was not yet showing the young large red translucent prickles.

It was a pleasure to see a variety of little treasures on the ground such as *Chrysosplenium davidianum*, *Anemonopsis machrophylla* and much more. Many of us came away with plants for our gardens thanks to a generous host, We denuded a group of seedlings of *Lonicera tartarica*, a soft red, which I had seen in the sadly dilapidated Botanical Garden in Tashkent.

Ivor was with us at all the other gardens we visited and with his wide knowledge contributed greatly to our appreciation of them so it was a privilege to see his and Jane's garden and to enjoy their sumptuous tea.

John Clemes

Wednesday 22nd April / Aberglasney

At Aberglasney Gardens, great strides have been made over ten years in developing the formal parts of the gardens. More recently, under the hand of Graham Rankin, the head gardener, extensive planting of a mixed kind has developed the fairly steep banks to the side of the walled garden and still higher at the east

end of the house. As Graham conducted the party around the garden he indicated that this part was primarily planted using genera of Asiatic origin. Scattered through this area of mixed herbaceous material, bulbs and shrubs were some interesting rhododendrons, such as *R. crassum* and *R. reticulatum*, together with some camellias. But prominent amongst the larger plants was a collection of semi-mature magnolias, mostly grafted specimens, previously brought on by Graham Rankin elsewhere. Many were not in flower, but with leaves emerging and overall growth of 12 to 14 feet, a number of them displayed varied elegant forms. In flower, but partially over, was *M.* 'Harold Hillier' bearing large, rather loose, deliciously clean white flowers, with some scent, set on spreading branches at about 8 to 10 feet. *M.* 'Elizabeth' was looking striking with a full spread of fine, well formed soft yellow blooms against the sky. Nearer the top of this marked slope was fine specimen of *M.* 'Black Tulip' shown off to great advantage, with a even spread of rich dark purple flowers, ranging in shape from cup-like to clearly tulip form, the overall pattern of growth resembling a candelabra. Amongst those not in flower were *M.* 'Daphne', *M.* 'Philip Tregunna', and the spectacular *M.* 'Albatross'. There were several different named forms of *M. stellata* type such as 'Pirouette' and 'Centennial'.

Two *Michelia* shrubs, including *M. doltsopa*, had been defoliated by frost, even in sheltered corners, but they were expected to recover. Although it has not yet flowered, Graham pointed out a new cross of *Michelia figo* with the otherwise insignificant scented yellow *Magnolia* 'Miss Honeybee' to create a so-called 'Yuchelia'.

At the lower part of the garden a woodland dell had a few large leaved rhododendrons, not yet very big. And below the wall bordering the pond was strategically sited a specimen of *M.* 'Felix Jury', bearing a few pink flowers which will in due time make a good show above the wall, nicely visible from above.

Ranging up the bank, the fine group of magnolias planted here offers great promise for the future, contributing to the spring flowering in years to come as the trees mature, and it will certainly be more than ever worth a visit.

Dr David Ives

The National Botanic Garden of Wales

The NBGW stretches to more than 500 acres. We saw many endangered plant species in the garden, including *Sorbus leyana* which is reputed to be Britain's rarest tree and is found only in Wales. The Great Glasshouse, the largest in the world, provided a vast, attractive indoor environment for endangered plants from across the globe, including a spectacular *Cistus x verguinii*.

While the NBGW is not home to vast numbers of rhododendrons, camellias or magnolias we found plenty of interest: a plant of *R. racemosum* with intensely dark flowers, *R. vaysei* just about to bloom and a delightful form of *R. davidsonianum* 'Ruth Lyons'. There are two good areas of young magnolias where we identified *Magnolias* 'Susan', *kobus*, *denudata* and 'Yellow Bird'. This last was underplanted with *Arisaemas* (the magnolias create an environment that is not overly wet for these plants).

Finally we came upon a superb specimen of *Acer griseum*: twenty feet tall and voted by some of our group to be the star plant of the week! (A donation of rhododendrons was made by Edmund de Rothschild to the NBGW.)

RHODODENDRONS

From a contact in the ARS, Pam Hayward has received this delightful *Rhododendron* Note.

Humming Birds on the Rhododendrons - Harbinger of spring in Vancouver, USA.

The harbinger of spring in my yard is a large bush of *Rhododendron* 'Airy Fairy', a cross of *R. lutescens* with *R. mucronulatum* 'Cornell Pink'. This plant blooms sometime between mid-February and mid-March depending on the year's climate and usually gets frozen out on a cold night after only a week's flowering.

I've noticed a hummingbird high in the bare tree tops around the time of the 'Airy Fairy' blooming for several years now. The rhododendron is now ten feet tall and blooms directly in front of the kitchen window. There are a few other rhodies in bloom in the yard but no major competition to this plant.

I was greatly surprised this year to notice three hummingbirds chasing each other through the flowers outside the window. Occasionally one would stop long enough to get a drink of nectar from a flower before another came buzzing past and chased it away. Sometimes one would sit for a while on a branch, on the side of the bush and away from the window, of course!

The hummingbirds in these pictures are Annas. Two Rufus hummingbirds also came to the rhody several days later, though not at the same time as the Annas.



Humming Bird on *R.* 'Airy Fairy'

If the number of bees visiting a rhody are an indicator, the *R. augustinii* hybrids that bloom several weeks later should provide richer food sources than the 'Airy Fairy', but none of them, nor any of the other rhododendrons in the yard, ever seem to attract hummingbirds.

NOTE: The shots were taken through two layers of glass so a little Photoshop color and saturation adjustment was a necessity. Also, since the bush was up against the house, it was rather dark and the forced high ISO on the camera created an offensive amount of digital noise.

Luurt Nieuwenhuis, Vancouver, Washington, USA.

In 1984, I started to assess the amount of sunshine received each day by recording, for morning and afternoon, whether it was sunny, half sunny or cloudy. By this means it was possible to obtain the number of sunny days for each month and to calculate averages for the fifteen year period. In a well furnished weather station the number of hours of sunshine per day is measured, but I do not have the equipment to do this. Nevertheless, the final averages showed a quite smooth month-to-month gradation, so the approximate method has worked quite well enough.

The results indicate that the amount of sunshine correlates with temperature. This is most evident in the month-to-month variation, as shown in figure 1, which compares the average number of sunny days per month with average temperatures.

Given the complex nature of the earth's atmosphere, the connection indicated by figure 1 is surprisingly well regulated.

Measurements of average temperature in this location, reported in the previous issue of the Bulletin, showed a general increase during the 1990 to 2008 period. This increase was primarily due to a rise in winter temperatures; summers became only marginally warmer. It follows that sunshine should have increased substantially more in winter than in summer. Figures 2 and 3, for winter and summer respectively, show that such was indeed the case. These diagrams show lines which indicate the trend which best represents the data concerned. They show that from 1994 to 2008 winter sunshine increased by 43%, whilst for summer the increase was only 11%. There is, of course, a good deal of scatter in figures for individual years.

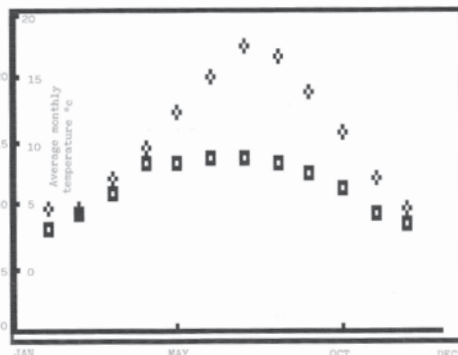


Figure 1.

The record for 2008 was a particularly dismal one: the average number of sunny days per month during the summer was exactly the same as that for the previous winter.

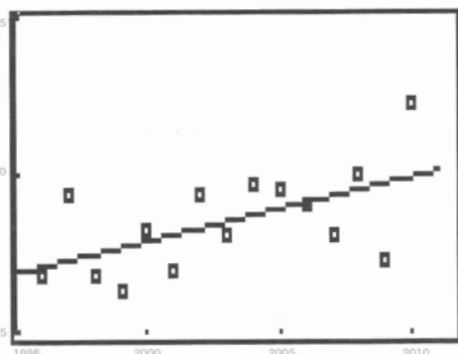


Figure 2.

Tastes differ. In particular, not all living things are devoted to sunny days. Two factors have a major influence on the quality of the flowering of rhododendrons: the availability of an adequate supply of water during early summer of the previous year, and the severity or otherwise of the winter. On these counts 2009 and

pale green background

the winter of 2008/9 rated well in this area, and the flowering here in 2009 has been quite spectacular.

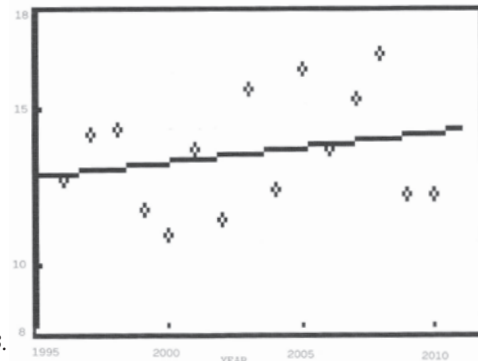


Figure 3.

Experience in this garden indicates that dry weather during the growing period may result in no flowering at all in the following year and, in extreme cases, no flowering for several years.

Rainfall is therefore a most important factor, particularly here in southeast England, where the general average is only just sufficient. It is probable that the summer rainfall is the most significant. The relevant data follow the same pattern as for annual figures. The average monthly figure is cyclic, with a frequency of 6-7 years, a mean of 56 mm/month and a range of 12-90 mm/month. Figure 4 shows the period from 2003 to 2008.

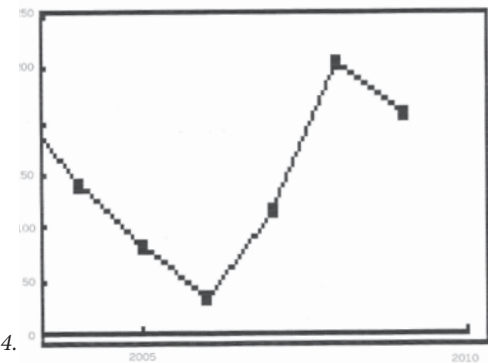


Figure 4.

The Figure suggests that rhododendrons are likely to flower exceptionally well at or near the peak of the rainfall cycle. If this is the case, we can expect another good show in 2016. In the meantime we may enjoy our sunny winters.



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Dear Editor

In the latest bulletin, No.99, on p.7, under camellias, it is suggested the name St Ewe may have come from St Hugh of Lincoln. Here is what P. C. Bartrum, *A Welsh Classical Dictionary*, p. 260, says:

The saint of St Ewe in Cornwall, 4½ miles south-west of St Austell. She is also called Sancta Ewa (1281, 1395), and the church is called Ecclesia Sancte Euwe (1310) and Ecclesia Sancte Ewe (1366). She is quite distinct from St Ywi or Iwy, an English saint. The name occurs as *Euai* in a tenth-century list of Cornish parochial saints found in the Vatican codex Reginensis Latinus 191. Other early forms are Sancte Ewe (1291), Sanctam Ywam (1297), but vernacular Saynthuwa (1303), St Tew alias Ewe alias Ewa (1650). See B.L.Olson and O.J.Padel in *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Miscellany* 12 (1986), p. 61.

Although it is called *A Welsh Classical Dictionary* it deals with many names of saints and rulers of other celtic countries including Cornwall and Brittany.

Michael Siddons

Dear Editor

I read with interest comments made in Bulletin 99 by both Mike Robinson and Maurice Foster on how the severe winter has affected (or not) some of the newer evergreen types of Magnolia.

Living in South Devon on the north side of the River Teign estuary (app 200ft) we have been used to very mild winters of late. The one just gone was the coldest I can remember for say 10-15 years. The small pond in the back garden had approached half inch of ice - so probably -4ishC.

Reporting on how the winter has affected my magnolias, *Magnolias (Michelias) ernestii, dianica, compressa, figo* and *insignis* seem to have weathered it very well.

As regards Doltsopa (and Silver Cloud), a certain amount of leaf loss but the weather seems to have had a severe effect on flower buds.

Doltsopa itself has been blooming now for well over 15 years and has always been very reliable (blooming as early as 8th January, one year). As usual it was covered with bud but one by one they (apart from a handful still left (27 March)) have all fallen to the ground.

The one or two left may bloom later. I would be interested to know how other members have got on this time round.

Nigel Edwards, Teignmouth

(Of two *Michelia velvina* plants in my garden in large pots, one, kept under tree cover has defoliated and died (at 800 ft. and -8C recorded last winter) The other, brought into an outhouse, against the house but no heating, has survived unaffected.)

I also have had a report that one plant of this species grown in the open in South London has partially defoliated but probably survived. Ed.)

Dear Sir

In your March Bulletin under 'Members Notes', John Lancaster reports interesting temperature statistics over almost 20 years, as a result of which he concludes that "the carbon dioxide theory of global warming is wrong." He appears to have a mistaken idea of the effect of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. It does not in any way "somehow enhance the

effects of the sun's rays": it is in fact transparent in the visible and near ultraviolet regions where the sun's radiation energy peaks. It does, however, absorb infrared radiation in the region where radiation from the earth (at a relatively low temperature) peaks. It therefore acts as an insulating blanket, inhibiting night time cooling but transparent to most of the sunlight. This effect seems to be completely consistent with John Lancaster's measurements.

Anne Thorne, West Hoathly, West Sussex.

A question for Jennifer Trehane and others, please?

Dear Editor

I have a number of varieties of camellias in my garden, all of which make an excellent showing each year and are currently giving a great performance in brilliant colours (March 2009), with the exception of the sasanquas; none of which have a single flower bud between four or five of them.

This has been the case now for the past three years and I have received advice from a number of quarters, varying from pruning to feeding and including the application of gibberellic acid to leaf buds, none of which have proved effective.

The soil in the garden is obviously suitable for the other varieties of camellia and I am wondering whether the sasanquas require special conditions or treatment and any advice you can offer would be greatly appreciated.

Peter Fox, Millhouses, Sheffield, S7 2LL.

(This is a relatively common complaint, I find. Ed.)

Dear Editor

Kew Review, June 2009

As non-committee members of the Rhododendron, Camellia and Magnolia Group of the RHS, we would like to congratulate the Committee on arranging such an interesting and enjoyable day based around the AGM held this year at Kew Gardens.

The walk-about with Tony Kirkham was a highlight enjoyed by everyone and even the most experienced of us was able to increase their knowledge as we followed him around. In our particular case it was to discover that we had been planting our trees and shrubs incorrectly for nearly fifty years! This explains why we have had so many failures.

Compost heaps are not usually the most interesting of subjects but with Tony's enthusiasm, Kew's compost heap became a riveting issue and it was fascinating to learn of the various statistics regarding the setting up of the 'heap' and the amazing saving to Kew of approximately £750,000 per annum.

For us, this day is one of the highlights of the garden year and not to be missed. It is a real mystery to us why so few of the membership support it. They are really missing an opportunity to meet and talk personally with of the country's leading experts. In the last three years they have included Colin Crosbie of Wisley, Mark Flanagan of the Crown Estate, Saville Garden and, this year, Kew's Tony Kirkham.

David & Pamela Coombes, Radlett, Hertfordshire.

(I am sorry that I was unable to publish precise details of this visit and timing etc. in the last Bulletin, but these were not available at the time of going to print for the March issue. Ed.)

As in 2008, the July Issue of the *BULLETIN* features the Reports from the Shows and Competitions.

THE EARLY CAMELLIA COMPETITION

13th March 2009 held at Wisley

In view of the change of venue from Westminster to Wisley, the support received was good, even if the awards in some classes were a little dominated by one entrant. However, the numbers of the public viewing was disappointing, in spite of good signage in the garden – perhaps a little more advertising in The Garden would have been beneficial.

Report of prizes awarded.

Division 1 - Camellia Sprays Displayed in Vases.

Class 1 Any *Camellia Japonica*.

- 1st** Mrs D. Choa, Queens Gardens, London, with Onetia Holland.
2nd Mrs B Griffiths, Thames Ditton, Surrey, with Magnoliaeflora.
3rd Mrs B Griffiths, Thames Ditton, Surrey, with Bernice Boddy.

Class 2 Any *Camellia xwilliamsii* Cultivar.

- 1st** Mrs B Griffiths, Thames Ditton, Surrey, with Mary Christian.
2nd Mrs B Griffiths, Thames Ditton, Surrey, with J C Williams.
3rd (Not awarded)

Class 3 Any Hybrid or Species Not Eligible for Classes 1 and 2 above.

- 1st** (not awarded)
2nd Mrs B Griffiths, Thames Ditton, Surrey, with Cornish Snow

Division 2 - Blooms. Cultivars of *Camellia japonica*

Class 10 Any three single Flowered Cultivars. One bloom of each.

- 1st** The Duke of Devonshire. Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, with Alba Simplex, Siebold, 'Name Unknown'.
2nd Mr Nick Creek, Ardingly, Sussex, with Brown creek's Simplicity, Duckyl's Belle, Alba Simplex.
3rd Mrs Jill Totty, Fordingbridge, Hampshire, with Spencer's Pink, Bright Buoy and Midnight Serenade.

Class 11 Any Single Flowered Cultivar.

- 1st** The Duke of Devonshire. Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, with 'Name Unknown'.
2nd The Duke of Devonshire. Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, showing Jupiter.
3rd Mr Nick Creek, Ardingly, Sussex, with Apple Blossom.

Class 12 Any 3 Semi-Double Flowered Cultivars.

- 1st** The Duke of Devonshire. Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, exhibiting Ice Queen, Flame, China Clay.
2nd The Duke of Devonshire. Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, with Dr Tinsley, Bernice Boddy, Latifolia.
3rd Mr Nick Creek, Ardingly, Sussex showing Drama Girl, Finlandia Variegated, Adolph Audusson.

Class 13 Any Semi-Double Flowered Cultivar.

- 1st** The Duke of Devonshire. Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, with Billie McFarland
2nd The Duke of Devonshire. Chatsworth House, Derbyshire with Tricolor
3rd Mrs B Griffiths, Thames Ditton, Surrey, showing Magnoliaeflora.
4th Mrs Jill Totty, Fordingbridge, Hampshire, with San Dimas.

Class 14 Any 3 Anemone or Peony-formed Cultivars.

- 1st** The Duke of Devonshire. Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, showing Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Jean Clere and Mark Alan.
2nd The Duke of Devonshire. Chatsworth House, Derbyshire with Dona Herzilia de Freitas Magalhaes, Nuccios Jewel and Dixie Night.
3rd Mrs Jill Totty, Fordingbridge, Hampshire, showing Tinker Toy, Preston Rose and Little Bit.

Class 15 Any Anemone or Peony Formed Cultivar.

- 1st** Mr Nick Creek, Ardingly, Sussex, with Just Sue.
2nd The Duke of Devonshire. Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, with Jean Clere.
3rd The Duke of Devonshire. Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, with General Lamorcieri.
4th Mrs Dennise Choa, Queens Gardens, London, with Onetia Holland

Class 16 Any three Rose Formed or Formal Double Cultivars.

- 1st** The Duke of Devonshire. Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, showing Alba Plena, Desire and Madame Le Bois.
2nd Mr Nick Creek, Ardingly, Sussex, with K Sawada, Hikaru Genji and Joshua E Youtz.
3rd (Not awarded)

Class 17 Any Rose Formed or Formal Double Cultivar.

- 1st** The Duke of Devonshire. Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, with Alba Plena
2nd The Duke of Devonshire. Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, with Grand Sultan
3rd The Duke of Devonshire. Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, with Madame Le Bois

Mixed types of *Camellia Japonica*

Class 18 Any six Cultivars of *Camellia Japonica*, One Bloom of Each.

- 1st** The Duke of Devonshire. Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, showing R L Wheeler, Drama Girl, Elegans, Guilio Nuccio, Mrs D W Davis and Love Light.
2nd Mrs Jill Totty, Fordingbridge, Hampshire with Spencers Pink, San Dimas, Bright Buoy, Cecile Brunazzi, Daikagura and Nobilissima.
3rd Mr Nick Creek, Ardingly, Sussex, showing Ballet Dancer, Blushing Bride, Elegans, Akashigata, Kick Off and San Dimas.

Class 19 Any three Cultivars of *Camellia Japonica*, One Bloom of Each.

- 1st** The Duke of Devonshire. Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, with Tricolor, Lily Pons and , China Clay.
2nd Mr Nick Creek, Ardingly, Sussex, with Debutante, Aspasia Macarthur, Dona Herzilia de Freitas Magalhaes.
3rd Mrs Jill Totty, Fordingbridge, Hampshire, showing Tinker Toy, Little Bit, and San Dimas.

Class 20 Any 3 Hybrids, 1 Bloom of Each.

- 1st** The Duke of Devonshire. Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, with Francie 'L', Royalty, and Harold L Paige.
2nd The Duke of Devonshire. Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, with Debbie, Wilbur Foss, El Dorado.
3rd Mr Nick Creek, Ardingly, Sussex, with Paradise Illumination, E G Waterhouse and Leonard Messel.

Class 21 Any Hybrid of *Camellia Reticulata* crossed with *Camellia xwilliamsii* or *Camellia Saluenensis*, One Bloom.

- 1st** The Duke of Devonshire. Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, with Francie 'L'

2nd The Duke of Devonshire. Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, with Leonard Messel.
3rd Mrs Jill Totty, Fordingbridge, Hampshire, with Inspiration

Class 22 Any Hybrid of *Camellia Reticulata*, 1 Bloom.

1st The Duke of Devonshire. Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, with Harold L Paige

2nd The Duke of Devonshire. Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, showing Captain Rawes.

3rd Mrs Jill Totty, Fordingbridge, Hampshire, with Valley Knudsen

Class 23 Any 3 *Camellia xwilliamsii*, 1 Bloom of Each.

1st The Duke of Devonshire. Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, showing Water Lilly, Ballet Queen, and Charity.

2nd Mrs Jill Totty, Fordingbridge, Hampshire, with J C Williams, Donation, Elizabeth Anderson.

3rd The Duke of Devonshire. Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, showing Wilber Foss, Daintiness and Brigadoon.

4th Mr Nick Creek, Ardingly, Sussex, with Monica Dance, Paradise Illumination and Glenn's Orbit.

Class 24 Any Single Formed *Camellia xwilliamsii*, One Bloom.

1st Mr Nick Creek, Ardingly, Sussex with Golden Spangles.

2nd The Duke of Devonshire. Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, with Ruby Bells.

3rd Mrs Jill Totty, Fordingbridge, Hampshire, showing St Ewe

Class 25 Any Semi-Double Formed C. *Xwilliamsii*.

1st The Duke of Devonshire. Chatsworth House, Derbyshire. With Daintiness

2nd Mr Nick Creek, Ardingly, Sussex, with Margaret Waterhouse

3rd The Duke of Devonshire. Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, showing Brigadoon

Class 26 Any Peony or Anemone formed *Camellia. xWilliamsii*.

1st The Duke of Devonshire. Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, with Debbie.

2nd Mrs Jill Totty, Fordingbridge, Hampshire, also with Debbie.

3rd Mr Nick Creek, Ardingly, Sussex, with Debbie.

Class 27 Any Hybrid other than that of *Camellia Reticulata* or *Camellia Williamsii*.

1st Mr Nick Creek, Ardingly, Sussex., Bonnie Marie.

2nd (Not awarded).

3rd Mrs M A Pelton, Salisbury, Wiltshire, with Cornish Snow

Miscellaneous Classes.

Class 28 Any Cultivar with Yellow as its Dominating Colour.

1st The Duke of Devonshire. Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, with Jury's Yellow

2nd Mr Nick Creek, Ardingly, Sussex, with Brushfields Yellow.

3rd (Not awarded)

Class 29 Any *Camellia* Species, One Bloom.

1st Mr Nick Creek, Ardingly, Sussex, showing Vernalis

2nd Mrs Jill Totty, Fordingbridge, Hampshire, exhibiting *Camellia transnokoensis*.

3rd (Not awarded).

Class 30 Novice Exhibitors Class.

No prizes awarded.

THE EARLY RHODODENDRON COMPETITION

Westminster March 31st & April 1st 2009 – Vincent Square

Class 1 Any 3 species, one truss of each.

2 entries from Exbury:

1st *R. thomsonii*, *R. irroratum* 'Polka Dot', *R. niveum*

2nd *R. traillianum*, *R. arboreum*, *R. coeloneuron*

Class 2 Any species, one spray or branch.

1 entry, from Exbury.

1st *R. racemosum* 'Rock Rose'

Class 3 Any species, one truss.

1 entry, from Exbury.

2nd *R. wightii*.

Class 4 Subsect Arborea or Argyrophylla, one truss.

2 entries – Exbury and Dr. R. Jack

1st Exbury, *R. arboretum*.

Class 5 Subsect Barbata, Glischra or Maculifera, one truss.

1 entry from Exbury.

HC *R. barbatum*.

Class 6 Subsect Falconera or Grandia, one truss.

1 entry from Exbury

1st *R. macabeanum*

Class 7. Subsect Fortunea, one truss.

1 entry from Exbury.

1st. *R. oreodoxa* var. *fargesii*.

Class 8. Subsect Neriiflora, one spray.

1 entry from Exbury.

2nd. *R. neriiflorum*.

Class 9 Subsect Campylocarpa, Selensia, Thomsonia or Williamsiana, one spray.

1 entry from Dr. R. Jack.

1st *R. selense* ssp. *dasycladum*

Class 10 Subsect Afghanica, Boothia, Campylogyna, Fragariiflora, Genestieriana, Glauca, Helirolepida, Lapponica, Monantha, Moupinensia, Rhodorastra, Saluensia, Scabrifolia, Tephropepla, Triflora or Virgata, one spray.

1 entry from Exbury.

1st *R. heliolepis* var. *fumidum*

Class 11 Any species of subgen Hymenanthes not included in any subsection mentioned in the above classes, one truss.

1 entry from Dr. R. Jack.

1st *R. lanatum*.

Class 12 Any species of subgen Hymenanthes not included in any subsection mentioned in the foregoing classes, one spray.

1 entry from Exbury.

1st *R. fulvum*.

Class 13 Three hybrids, one truss of each.

2 entries from Exbury.

1st 'Carex', 'Janet', 'Dicharb'.

2nd 'Red Argenteum', 'Avalanche', 'Edgar Stead.'

Class 14 Any hybrid, one spray.

No entries.

Class 15 Any hybrid, one truss.

1 entry from Exbury.

1st 'Fortune'.

Andy Simons

Class 16 Any hybrid of which one parent is a species of subsect Arborea, Argyrophylla, Barbata, Campylocarpa, Glischra, Maculifera, Selensia, Thomsonia or Williamsiana, one truss.
1 entry from Exbury.

2nd 'Werei'.

Class 17 Any hybrid of which one parent is a species of subsect Fortunea, one truss.

1 entry from Exbury.

2nd 'Janet'

Class 18 Any subgen Hymenanthes hybrid of which neither parent is a species of subsect Arborea, Argyrophylla, Barbata, Campylocarpa, Fortunea, Glischra, Maculifera, Selensia, Thomsonia or Williamsiana, one truss.

1 entry from Exbury.

1st 'Churchill'.

Class 19 Any hybrid not catered for above, one truss.

2 entries from Exbury.

None placed.

Class 20 Any hybrid not catered for above, one spray.

1 entry from Exbury.

1st 'Johnson's Impeditum'.

Class 21 Any tender species or hybrid, one truss,

1 entry from Exbury,

2nd *R. ciliicalyx* aff.

Class 22 Any tender species or hybrid, one spray

No entries

The **Alan Hardy Challenge Salver** for the most points awarded at the Early Rhododendron Competition:

Mr. John Anderson, Exbury Gardens

MAIN RHS CAMELLIA COMPETITION

31st March – 1st April 2009

Report of Prizes Awarded

Class 3 Any *Camellia japonica* cultivar.

1st Mrs D Choa, Queens Gardens, London with Nuccios Gem.

Class 4 Any *Camellia xwilliamsii* cultivar.

1st J. Anderson, Exbury Gardens, Hampshire, with Debbie.

Class 10 Any 12 cultivars, one blooms of each.

1st David Davis, Warwickshire, with Wildfire, Guilio Nuccio, Midnight Magic, Nuccios Pearl, Royalty, Francie L, Vulcan, Twilight, Valentines Day, Mrs D W Davis, Nuccios Ruby, and LASCA Beauty.

2nd Andrew Simons, Ampthill, Bedfordshire, with Nuccios Gem, Interval, Augusto Pinto, Nuccios Cameo, Blissful Dawn, Applause, Mouchang, Bravo, Valentines Day, LASCA Beauty, Hulyn Smith, and Raspberry Glow.

3rd Nick Creek, Ardingly, Sussex, with Francis Hanger, E G Waterhouse, Alba Simplex, Ballet Queen (Variegated), Hana Fuki, Debbie, Akashi Gata, Guilio Nuccio, Elegans, Onetia Holland, Brigadoon, K Sawada.

4th Nick Creek, Ardingly, Sussex, with Jurys Yellow, An unnamed Seedling, Black Tie, ETR Carlyon, Cheryl Lynn, Les Jury, Anticipation, Dr Burnside, Innovation, Leonard Messel, Monte Carlo, San Dimas.

Class 11 Any six cultivars, one bloom of each.

1st J Anderson, Exbury Gardens, Hampshire, with Ville de Nantes, 2 un-named varieties, Royalty, Professor Sargeant, Haku Raku Ten.

2nd Nick Creek, Ardingly, Sussex, with Duckyl's Belle, Carters Sunburst, Mathotiana Supreme, Coral Queen, BrownCreeks Fury. Margaret Waterhouse.

3rd Andrew Simons, Ampthill, Bedfordshire, with Cupcake, Crimson Candles, An unnamed Seedling, Christmas Daffodil, an unknown variety, Takanini.

Class 12 Any three single-flowered cultivars, one bloom of each.

1st Nick Creek, Ardingly, Sussex with Brown Creeks Innocense, BrownCreeks Simplicity, and Alba Simplex.

2nd Mrs Jill Totty, Fordingbridge, Hampshire, with Midnight Serenade, (Label missing) and Bright Buoy.

3rd Nick Creek, Ardingly, Sussex, with Beni Hassaku, Duckyl's Belle and Jupiter.

Class 13 Any single flowered cultivar.

1st Mrs Jill Totty, Fordingbridge, Hampshire, with Spencers Pink.

2nd Roger Philips, Eccleston Square, London, with Grace Bunton.

3rd Andrew Simons, Ampthill, Bedfordshire, with Unknown Variety.

Class 14 Any three semi-double cultivars.

1st David Davis, Leek Wootton, Warwickshire, with Vulcan, Guilio Nuccio and Mrs D W Davis.

2nd Mrs Jill Totty, Fordingbridge, Hampshire with Berenice Boddy, Ruddigore and Drama Girl.

3rd Nick Creek, Ardingly, Sussex with Hana Fuki, San Dimas and Guilio Nuccio.

Class 15 Any semi-double cultivar.

1st Roger Philips, Eccleston Square, London with Yours Truly.

2nd Mrs Jill Totty, Fordingbridge, Hampshire with San Dimas.

3rd David Davis, Leek Wootton, Warwickshire, with Mrs D W Davis.

Class 16 Any three anemone-formed or Peony-formed cultivars.

1st Mr Nick Creek, Ardingly, Sussex with Aarons Ruby, Dr Burnside and Onetia Holland.

2nd Andrew Simons, Ampthill, Bedfordshire with Aarons Ruby, Mark Allan and An Unknown Variety.

3rd Mrs Jill Totty, Fordingbridge, Hampshire with Dr Burnside, Cecille Brunazzi and Extravaganza.

Class 17 Any Anemone or Peony-formed cultivar.

1st D Choa, Queens Gardens, London, with Onetia Holland.

2nd David Davis, Leek Wootton, Warwickshire, with Midnight Magic.

3rd David Davis, Leek Wootton, Warwickshire with Mary Costa.

Class 18 Any three rose-formed or formal double cultivars.

1st Nick Creek, Ardingly, Sussex, with Comte de Gomer, Carters Sunburst and Lavinia Maggi.

2nd David Davis, Leek Wootton, Warwickshire with Fimbriator, Nuccios Pearl and Opal Princess.

3rd Mrs Jill Totty, Fordingbridge, Hampshire with Wilamina, Ave Maria and Lavinia Maggi.

Andy Simons

THE MAIN RHODODENDRON COMPETITION - ROSEMOOR 2009

Rosemoor 25th – 26th April

It will surprise no-one that this was one of the best displays of rhododendrons seen at an RHS show for many years; the SW branch's exhibits of camellias and magnolias were similarly outstanding. The amount of flower bud set last year, coupled with the cold winter turning into spring rapidly without any late frosts resulted in superb flower quality and quantity.

Among many outstanding exhibits the *R. x'Loderi'* was supreme. These hybrids are usually only just beginning to flower when the competition is held, so that one sees only a couple of emerging trusses on the show bench: this year the space allocated to the class had to be enlarged more than once to fit in 17 entries, almost all of which would have won prizes in a normal year. The display gave the lie to the view that Loderi clones produce overblown floppy trusses. Those on display were well filled, well held enormous blooms of elegance and, of course, they were all intensely fragrant. Whether all the cultivars were correctly named was very doubtful. Growers of Loderi (including those in the nursery trade) really should refer to Everard Daniel's unique analysis of Loderi flowers in the 2003 yearbook. At present far too many clones are said to be 'King George' or 'Gamechick'. The worthy winner was a lovely tight truss of 'Gamechick' (perhaps!) entered by Yvonne Colman.

The species classes contained many firm favourites of the first quality and some entries that were that were noteworthy and new. Among the former category was *R. arboreum* ssp. *arboreum* 'Rubiayat' from Exbury – perhaps the finest red arboreum for general cultivation, a fair number of entries of different clones of *R. pingianum* – a wonderful garden plant, and some very nice specimens of *R. argyrophyllum* ssp. *nankingense* that, were not, for once, 'Chinese Silver' but from Guiz 125 and another recent collection. For connoisseurs there was the very rare *R. adenosum* from one of the original 1929 introductions by Rock.

How wonderful to see *R. sinofalconeri* in flower on the show bench (or anywhere!) – a very promising newly introduced species with a clearer colour than *R. falconeri*. *R. pubicostatum* from Keith Rushforth in the Taliensia Class 11 was a nice specimen fitting the recent description in 'The Flora of China', though it may be a natural hybrid (of *R. bureavii*) as the indumentum was confined to the leaf midrib.

Among the lepidotes *R. parryae*, which should be better known, was outstanding in form and fragrance, and there was yet another superb *R. lindleyi* from Alun Edwards. It was good to see a National Trust garden from the South West (Knightshayes) winning the *R. augustinii* class. The Ledum subsection *R. tomentosum* from Barry Starling was an exquisite miniature.

If it were conscious, then *R. searsiae* would have been delighted to win the Roza Stevenson Challenge cup for Exbury. This species is not highly regarded and not popular in cultivation. The spray exhibited was so good as to rival *R. augustinii* and should radically change its reputation.

The hybrid classes produced many recent taxa, some of which are becoming classics of the show bench, many old favourites, and some very good new crosses.

The first group included *R. 'Horizon Monarch'*, well formed trusses of that great big American yellow (which appears to be imperfectly described in the Register), *R. 'Mindy's Love'*,

another American large truss of a good 'daffodil' yellow which does not fade even in full sun, the paler yellow *R. 'Phyllis Korn'*, the best truss of which was in a novice class, and the glorious New Zealand red *R. 'Rubicon'* which has great foliage as well as good flower. Much less well known were *R. 'Dexter's Pink Satin'* – a good pink and, what's more, scented *R. 'Berg's Yellow'*, and the lovely *R. 'Yellow Saucer'*, a *R. aberconwayi* hybrid, and both shown by Pam Hayward.

The older British hybrids stand up well against transatlantic competition, and have the indefinable refinement of hybrids close to their species origins. *R. 'Katherine Fortescue'* (*R. 'Hawk'* Group x *R. griffithianum*) is a well known at the Rosemoor show, and anyone seeing the many plants at Lukesland, Ivybridge will know that it is also a superb garden plant. My own favourite remains *R. 'Roza Stevenson'* – so much better a plant than the ubiquitous *R. 'Crest'*.

R. 'Calfort', given an FCC at this show, is a lovely scented hybrid complementing the better known *R. 'Avalanche'*. *R. 'Gwilt King'* is as good as its parentage (*R. griersonianum* x *R. arboreum* ssp. *zeylanicum*) would lead one to believe. *R. 'Veryan Bay'* remains one of the very best hybrids of *R. williamsianum*, and *R. 'Saffron Queen'* from the same Caerhays stable is a superb lepidote yellow.

Best of all though, were the newly raised hybrids from local growers. *R. 'Brimble'* (*R. griffithianum* x *R. 'Hotei'*), an excellent yellow raised by Alexander Craig Mooney was awarded AM at the show, and appears to be an outstanding garden plant. Alexander's other hybrids gave Exbury a run for their money in class 36 for hybrids raised in the garden of the exhibitor. Barry Starling's *R. insigne* x *R. bureavii* (1st in Class 44) is full of promise from both a flower and foliage viewpoint. Finally *R. 'Mandalay'*, a polished hybrid between *R. haematodes* and *R. venator* with large hanging bright orange-red flowers, is worthy of being much more widely planted.

There were two problems at the show.

The first was the frustrating lack of sufficient small vases – difficult to rectify when the supply was from the RHS at Vincent Square, though members of the South West Branch of the Group rustled up quite a few extras. Some exhibitors, however, had to use bottles and old coffee jars, and although the judges marked no exhibits down because of this it must have left a bad impression of the RHS in the eyes of the public. We are still awaiting an explanation.

The second was the many entries that were mislabelled or not labelled fully. For example, at a national rhododendron show the label '*R. arboreum*' simply will not do. The subspecies must be included. It was doubly depressing that few entrants bothered to change their labels even after corrections made by the stewards and after prompting. Next year the judges will be asked to disregard any exhibits incompletely or wrongly labelled.

Mike Robinson

Report of Main Prizes Awarded

The show was particularly notable for the huge number of entries, and the quality of the blooms, particularly in the Hybrid classes.

Class 1 Any six species, one truss of each. (5 entries)
1st Exbury, with *niveum*, *wiltonii*, *orbiculare*, *argyrophyllum*, *faberi? prattii* and *degronianum*, *ssp. heptamerum*.

And wins **The Lionel de Rothschild Challenge Cup**.

Class 2 Any three species, one truss of each. (4 entries)
1st Barry Starling, with *pingianum* KR184, *vernicosum*, and *arboreum cinnamomeum*.

Class 3 Any species, one spray. (8 entries)
1st and **The McClaren Challenge Cup** – Pat Bucknell showing *argyrophyllum ssp nankingense*.



Pat Bucknell with the McClaren Challenge Cup and the Loder Challenge Cup, in front of her entry in Class 33. Photo The Editor.

Class 4 Any species, one spray. (7 entries)
1st and **The Roza Stevenson Challenge Cup** – Exbury showing *searsiae*.

Class 5 (8 entries).
1st Pat Bucknell, with *argyrophyllum ssp nankingense*.

Class 6 (4 entries). **1st** Terry Vince, with *pseudochrysanthum*.

Class 7 (2 entries). **1st** Exbury showing *campanulatum*.

Class 8 (4 entries). **1st** Alex Hill with *sinofalconeri*.

Class 9 (8 entries). **1st** Terry Vince showing *orbiculare*.

Class 10 (3 entries). **1st** Exbury, with *irroratum*.

Class 11 (3 entries). **1st** Keith Rushforth, with *pubicostatum*.

Class 12 (1 entry). **1st** Pam Hayward, with *haematodes*.

Class 13 (2 entries).
1st Exbury, showing *degronianum ssp heptamerum*.

Class 14 (1 entry). **1st** Terry Vince showing *thomsonii*.

Class 15 (2 entries).
1st Barry Starling with *williamsianum* 'Exbury White'

Class 16 (2 entries). **2nd** Pam Hayward showing *venator*.

Class 17 (2 entries). **1st** Exbury with *parryae*.

Class 18 (10 entries). **1st** Alun Edwards showing *lindleyi*.

Class 19 (12 entries). **1st** Exbury with *searsiae*.

Class 20 (9 entries). **1st** Knightshayes showing *R. augustinii*.

Class 21 (3 entries). **1st** Exbury with *cinnabarinum ssp xanthocodon* Concatenans Group. (3 entries).

Class 22 (5 entries).
1st. Russell Beeson with *glaucophyllum ssp tubiforme*.

Class 23 (4 entries). **1st** Pam Hayward for *hippophaeoides*

Class 24 (No entries)

Class 25 (2 entries). **1st** Barry Starling with *spinuliferum*.

Class 26 (4 entries). **1st** Knightshayes with *trichostomum*.

Class 27 (2 entries). **1st** Barry Starling with *tomentosum*.

Class 28 (3 entries). **1st** Exbury with *jasminiflorum*.

Class 26 (4 entries). **1st** Knightshayes with *trichostomum*.

Class 27. (2 entries). **1st**. Barry Starling for *tomentosum*.

Class 28 (3 entries). **1st** Exbury for *jasminiflorum*.

Class 29 (4 entries). **1st** Exbury for *quinquefolium* 'Five Arrows'.

Class 30 (3 entries).
1st Russell Beeson for *stenopetalum var linearifolium*.

Class 31 (6 entries). **1st** Pat Bucknell with an outstanding exhibit of 'Hon Jean Montague,' 'Susan,' 'Phyllis Korn,' 'Mindys Love,' 'Dexter's Pink Satin,' and 'Roza Stevenson.'

Class 32 (12 entries).
1st Exbury, for 'Helen Paul,' 'Gibraltar' and 'Jancio.'

Class 33 (An outstanding number of 25 entries).
1st Pat Bucknell showing 'Horizon Monarch,' and winning **The Loder Challenge Cup**.

Class 34 (9 entries). **1st** Exbury with 'Carita' Group.

Class 35 (4 entries). **1st** Exbury, for 'Gibraltar,' 'Hawk Crest' and 'Naomi,' and who win **The Crosfield Challenge Cup**.



John Anderson from Exbury receiving The Crosfield Challenge Cup from the Chairman of the Rhododendron & Camellia Subcommittee

Photo Liz Tirard

Class 36 (17 entries). **1st** Yvonne Colman for 'Loderi Game Chick'

Class 37 (12 entries). **1st** Yvonne Colman with 'Beauty of Littleworth'

Class 38 (8 entries). **1st** Barry Starling with 'Veryan Bay'.

Class 39 (10 entries). **1st** John Bodenham with 'Phyllis Korn'.

Class 40 (9 entries). **1st** Pam Hayward with 'Mandalay'

Class 41 (3 entries). **1st** Exbury with 'Lady Montague'.

Class 42 (2 entries). **1st** Exbury – Falconeri hybrid.

Class 43 (7 entries). **1st** Exbury – 'Matador'.

Class 44 (6 entries). **1st** Barry Starling with *insigne x bureavii*

Class 45 (8 entries). **1st** Exbury with *yakushmanum x makinoi*.

Class 46 (5 entries). **1st** Pam Hayward for 'Rubicon'.

Class 47 (4 entries). **1st** Marwood Hill with 'Biskra'.

Class 48 (13 entries). **1st** Pam Hayward with 'Dora Amateis'

Class 49 (10 entries). **1st** Barry Starling with 'Crane'.

Class 50 (4 entries). **2nd** Russell Beeson for 'Curlew'.

Class 51 (6 entries). **1st** Pat Bucknell for 'Berg's Yellow'.

Class 52 (1 entry). **1st** Pam Hayward for 'Enborne'.

Class 53 (4 entries). **1st** Russell Beeson for 'Popcorn'.

Class 54 (2 entries). **2nd** Marwood Hill with Lady Alice Fitzwilliam

Class 55 (10 entries). **1st** Caerhays with 'Hino-de-Giri'.

Class 56 (2 entries). **1st** For an unknown hybrid azalea.

Class 57 (1 entry) No award given.

Class 58 (8 entries). **1st** Robin Whiting for 'Phyllis Korn'.

Class 59 (1 entry). **2nd** Terry Vince for *fictolacteum*.

Class 60 (entries). **1st** Russell Beeson with 'Dora Amateis'.

A very successful and enjoyable visit to Arley Arboretum 26 April 2009. Some 20 members joined us on a fine day at Arley Arboretum, set above the River Severn just north of Kidderminster. Our guide was Head Gardner, Michael Darvil.

Our gathering point was around two huge alpine beds, created by filling in the remaining brick bases of old greenhouses, a very creative and effective idea. From here we entered the Italian Garden, with a mass of tulips and surrounded by pleached *Tilia tomentosa* (Silver Lime). A varied, and un-named collection of *Camellia* were planted around the walls - any future visitors are very welcome to try and add names!

With the oldest trees in the garden now approaching 200 years some magnificent specimens were seen including:

- *Fagus sylvatica*, a widely spreading layered Beech tree thought possibly to be a French Weeping Beech.
- *Pinus nigra caramanica*, Crimean Pine, one in excess of 140 feet tall.
- Lucombe Oak, the Cork/Turkey cross.
- *Cedrus libani*, Cedar of Lebanon.

The champion status of some of the trees has recently been downgraded following a re-measuring but that doesn't affect their magnificence!

Amongst development work at the Arboretum, a view across the Severn Valley has been opened up giving a great view of the steam trains passing by on the other side of the river. Much new planting of a wide variety of trees has taken place and a pond dug. The most recent addition is a Beech Maze, planted this spring.

A highlight of the visit was the Magnolia Garden, with a wide ranging collection including *soulangeana*, *hypoleuca*, *tripetala*, and very many more un-named, which caused much discussion. Michael Darvil will welcome subsequent visits to add to the identification of these plants.

We will certainly be back.

We are delighted to welcome the new members listed below, and hope they will enjoy the many benefits of membership.

**RHODODENDRON, CAMELLIA and MAGNOLIA GROUP
of the RHS**

**Minutes of ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING held on Tuesday
16th June 2009**

At 2.30 p.m. at Kew Garden, London

Present: Chairman, Dr. MLA Robinson,

Mr E Annal, Mr CTH Brown, Mrs PA Bucknell, Mr DJ Coombes, Mrs P Coombes, Mr RLC Eley, Dr. D Edwards, Mr. P Evans, Mr MDC Gates, Mrs M Gunn, Mr BA Haseltine, Mr JG Hillier, Mrs H Lyus, Mr JA Rawling, Mrs C Sapcote, Mr A Simons, Mr A Stevenson, Mrs E Tirard.

Apologies: Mr EJ Brabin, Mrs. J Hallett, Mr JD Harsant, Dr D Ives, Mr. S Lyus, Mr G Mills, Mr IT Stokes

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting particularly the five Group Members not on the Committee. He thanked Tony Kirkham for his hospitality and for such an interesting and informative tour of Kew Gardens.

1. The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2008 held on 17th June and published in Bulletin No. 97 July 2008 were agreed to be a true record and were signed by the Chairman.

2. Matters Arising: There were no matters arising.

3. Chairman's Report:

See Chairman's Notes on the front page of this Bulletin.

4. Treasurer's Report: The income and expenditure account, and the balance sheet for the year ended October 31st 2008 were tabled by the treasurer Alastair Stevenson. At the time of the meeting the accounts had not been audited.

Overall the Group had a surplus for the year of just over £1,000 with reserves standing at just below £30,000.

Significant items that should be highlighted include:

i) Sale of seed and publications made a very valuable contribution to income, almost £3,500 in total.

ii) Bulletin costs at £6,300 represent the cost of the three editions. The previous year only two editions were included.

iii) This is the final year of the Group's contribution to the RBG PhD project, so this cost is not expected to be repeated.

Costs for the Group are otherwise expected to remain similar in the 2008/09 year though Bank Interest will decline significantly and subscription levels will be down. I would expect overall that the Group will remain in surplus in 2008/09.

My thanks to Martin Gates for a smooth handover in the summer and his help in preparing the Year End accounts.

It was noted that the cost of postage for the three editions of the Bulletin had risen to approximately £1,800. It was hoped that more people would elect to receive their copy by email.

5. Election of Auditors: John Harsant was in the process of auditing the accounts. Alastair Stevenson expressed his thanks and proposed that he be asked to do the audit again next year. This was unanimously agreed.

6. Announcement of Postal Votes: The Secretary had received 29 postal votes confirming all officers in post.

7. Co-option of Thomas Methuen-Campbell: Due to the retirement of Brian Wright there was a vacancy on the committee. Thomas Methuen-Campbell, a member of the Rhododendron & Camellia Sub-Committee and a very experienced plantsman, was unanimously welcomed to the Committee. He was proposed by Dr. Mike Robinson and seconded by Mr. Rupert Eley.

8. Report on the proposed change of the Group's status relative to the RHS:

A report by Kylie McKenna would be submitted to the RHS Council in the near future for consideration. It was not possible to discuss any outcome until a decision is made on the status of the Group. Any suggested changes would be reported to members and their views sought.

9. Any Other Business:

a. Membership. Rupert Eley reported that membership had dropped during the current year to 805 from 840 at the AGM in 2008. This reduction was evenly distributed between U.K. and overseas members. No common reason was given for cancelling membership but it was thought the economic downturn had some effect.

The Chairman expressed his thanks to both Rupert Eley and Pam Hayward for their considerable effort in collecting subscriptions.

b. A Gold Medal had been awarded to David Millais at Chelsea for his display of Rhododendrons. A letter of congratulation would be sent to him.

c. It is unlikely that the South East Branch Show and the I.C.S. Camellia Show will be held at Borde Hill in 2010. The I.C.S. hope to hold their Show at Exbury. Arrangements for the South East Show will be discussed at the next Committee Meeting in October.

d. Philip Evans proposed a vote of thanks to Mike Robinson for his commitment and hard work for the Group. This was unanimously endorsed.

10. Date of Next Annual General Meeting. It is proposed to hold this on Tuesday 15th June 2010 at RHS Garden Wisley at 2.30 p.m.

It was suggested that the AGM should be more widely publicised, to encourage more members to attend.

It was also suggested that a workshop on late flowering rhododendrons could precede the meeting rather than a garden walk.

Members' suggestions on a format for the day would be welcomed.

Date of Next Annual General Meeting. This will take place on Tuesday 16th June 2009 at Kew Garden at 2.30 p.m.

The group's web site continues to grow with the addition of more high definition photographs of plants in our three genera. This year we have loaded a number of new magnolia photos as a result of the kind provision of a CD by Koen Camelbeke from Wespelaar Arboretum in Belgium. We will be continuing to add further photographs particularly of Magnolias during the remainder of the year.

Members' Photographs. Last year the Members' Photographs section created quite a lot of interest and provided us with 107 beautiful pictures for our web site. The winning photos are displayed on our web site's home page.

We are trying to provide at least one picture for every plant in our dictionaries, so if you can provide us with any that we are missing, that would be both useful to the membership and give you a chance of winning one of the prizes. There must be lots of good pictures of magnolias and rhododendrons that have been taken this year. Further details of the competition and how to send photographs are given on the web site.

Links. Members may not be aware that we now have a substantial number of links to the web sites of gardens that specialise in our genera. This Link page can be found under the Services grouping. The gardens are now organised into the geographical areas of the UK as well as wider afield. You never know, they could give you ideas of new places to visit in your area, or remind you of old favourites! If there are additional features that you would like to see added to the site then please contact: webmaster@rhodogroup-rhs.org

The following publications are offered to Group Members exclusively and are sold in support of the Group. Previously advertised titles not featured here may still be available – please enquire.

EXTENDED OFFER (expires 31st August 2009)

Pocket Guide to RHODODENDRON SPECIES

John McQuire & Mike Robinson

704pp RBG Kew 2009

Full Price: **£59** Member's Price: **£35**

(£42 from 1st September 2009)

Postage: UK **£5.50**, Europe **£8.50**

Rest of World **£15.50**



SPECIAL OFFER (expires 31st August 2009)

NEW TREES John Grimshaw, Ross Bayton & Hazel Wilks 992pp RBG Kew 2009

Approximately 1,000 species are described and illustrated. Each species account provides a botanical description and discussion of the tree in the wild, and its performance and cultivation in the garden.

Full Price: **£99** Member's Price: **£68**

Postage: UK **£8** Outside UK: please enquire.

SEEDS OF ADVENTURE Peter Cox & Peter Hutchison

Full Price: **£35** Member's Price: **£27**

Postage: UK **£4**, Europe **£6**, Rest of World **£10**

CAMELLIAS: The Gardener's Encyclopedia Jennifer Trehane

Full price: **£35** Member's Price: **£23.50**

Postage: UK **£5.50**, Europe **£10**, Rest of World **£19**

Please make cheques (Sterling) payable to: *The Rhododendron, Camellia and Magnolia Group*. Payment may also be made by *Mastercard* or *Visa* or via *PayPal* to rcmgpaypal@woodtown.net

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Tel/Fax: +44 (0)1822 852122 Email: rcmgpublications@woodtown.net

PUBLICATIONS

The grounds of the University of Exeter are considered to be amongst the most beautiful and botanically interesting of UK universities. Having a generally mild climate and a soil on the acid side of neutral enables a wide range of ericaceous shrubs to be grown and to flower well, wonderfully in good years.

Camellias have been planted as part of the general landscaping from the 1950s to date. There are 98 different camellia varieties spread through 300 locations on the Exeter campuses most of which are *Camellia japonica*, but they also include *C. reticulata*, *C. x williamsii* and the autumn flowering *C. sasanqua*. The well established varieties have grown to 10-12 feet in some areas, forming floral arches across pathways and routes around the campus. Varieties of all flowering camellias can be found in shades of white, cream, pink and red, from autumn/winter through until May. The majority of the varieties are hybrids of *C. japonica*, the original shrubs introduced in the 18th century from Japan and China, e.g. *C. japonica* 'Alba Plena' and *C.* 'Elegans'.

The campus also boasts varieties of *C. reticulata*, based on the original wild plant collected by George Forrest in Western China, and includes *C. reticulata* 'Captain Rawes' introduced to cultivation in the UK by Robert Fortune during the 19th century. The sympathetic climate of the south west has also permitted extensive planting of *C. sasanqua*, which flower consistently through the winter. *C.* 'Narumigata' seems to perform particularly well alongside the Tea Plant *C. sinensis*, where compact growth is a desirable requirement.

Magnolias have been widely planted since the Second World War to date and there are now around 54 varieties in the grounds of the university. Particularly spectacular are *Magnolia campbellii* selections and hybrids planted during the 1960s and 1970s. These giant Himalayan 'Pink Tulip Trees' pepper the campus skyline in February and March, announcing the arrival of spring against the contrast of their dormant neighbours.

The high content of clay in the soil makes our site particularly suitable for magnolias. There are many impressive *M. grandiflora* varieties, grown as wall shrubs against the more traditional buildings in the University's grounds, such as Lopes Hall, Reed Hall and on St. Luke's campus. Their citrus scent and large flowers bring pleasure in late summer/early autumn.

During the 1990s a Magnolia Collection was planted by what is now the XFi Building, featuring species such as *M. x veitchii*, *M. liliiflora* and *M. x soulangeana* with some of their offspring hybrids and selections so that their relationship can easily be seen, in addition to creating a lovely floral display. The head of the Taddiforde Valley was planted with 1,000 *M. stellata* as a Millennium project funded by public donations. Rooted cuttings were purchased and grown on by the University Nursery. In late March, from a distance, the valley slope seems to be covered with snow, due to the volume of massed magnolia blooms.

Rhododendron and azaleas have been planted from the 1860s when Hardy Hybrids were used by the firm of Veitch in the landscaping of Reed Hall gardens. From the 1950s, as the campus expanded, rhododendron and azalea species and named hybrids were used as part of the landscaping of the new University campus. The Hybridisation programme included 'Kurume' and 'Vuykiana' azaleas, hardy varieties of rhododendron such as *Rhododendron luteum* and less hardy varieties such as *R. tephropeplum* from Burma and south east Tibet.



During the 1980s a Rhododendron and Azalea project was conceived and implemented, largely funded by financial Gifts to the Estate. This included sourcing rooted rhododendron cuttings from Holland and the purchase of azalea seed, both of which were grown on to planting size shrubs by the University Nursery. The slopes above the Higher Hoopern Valley stream and ponds were planted with named Hardy Hybrid Rhododendrons, complementing those planted by the Reed Hall gardens by Veitch in the 1860s. The bank above the XFi Building was planted with 2,000 Royal F1 hybrid deciduous Azaleas which give a truly stunning display in May. Around 2,000 Exbury hybrid deciduous azaleas, 1,000 evergreen hybrid azaleas and Hardy Hybrid Azaleas and Rhododendrons were used for general estate planting, including the Reed Hall area, to add colour to the campus in general.



Camellias, magnolias, rhododendrons and azaleas continue to be used in the landscaping and developing the University campus for the delight of students, staff and visitors. The 153 Ha of grounds on both St Luke's and the main Streatham Campus of the University of Exeter are free for the public to visit and a self guided tour booklet is available to visitors for a modest cost.

Virtual tours and more details on the plants, trees and National Collections can be found by visiting the website www.exeter.ac.uk.

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PLUS
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forthcoming events

OCTOBER / 2009

15-18
Autumn Tour

Joint Autumn Tour to France and the Courson Plant Fair

ICS & Group
Pat Short
020 8870 6884



NOVEMBER / 2009

31
Rosemoor

Competition, Lecture and Plant Sale

SW Branch
Colin Brown
01647 277 268



14
Sir Harold Hillier Gardens

Lecture on the Yunnan Group Tour 2008

New Forest Branch
Martin Gates
023 8025 2843



Your local branch will have a number of activities in course of arrangement. Contact your Branch Chairman for details

You are cordially invited to join the 75th Anniversary of the German Rhododendron Society

International Rhododendron Symposium
May 18-20 2010

&
Anniversary Annual Meeting
May 20-23 2010

&
Post-Excursion
May 24-25 2010

International Rhododendron-Symposium May 18-20, 2010:

- Talks (in English) of rhododendron experts from Scotland, England, USA, France, Sweden, Australia, Canada, Germany etc., three Rhododendron sessions:
 - Rhododendrons in Europe: preservation, promotion, presentation
 - Rhododendrons on the "other side of the world": cultivation, collections, challenges
 - Rhododendrons in their native habitats: expeditions, evolution, endangerment
- Symposium dinner and lecture

The Anniversary Annual Meeting includes:

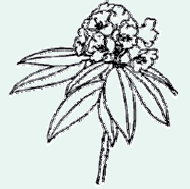
- Reception in the main town hall (UNESCO world heritage site) & Gala dinner
- Guided tours and specials events in the Rhododendron-Park Bremen
- Visit of the "RHODO 2010" in Westerstede
- Excursions to rhododendron parks and nurseries in north-western Germany

The Post Excursion includes:

- Historic rhododendron parks in Oldenburg and East-Frisia
- Hachmann Rhododendron Nursery in Schleswig-Holstein
- Rhododendron Garden „pflanzen en bloemen" and Sightseeing tour in Hamburg

Registration will start appr. in October 2009
Watch out for details: www.rhodo.org/2010

Deutsche Rhododendron-Gesellschaft e.V.
Marcusallee 60 - 28359 Bremen - Germany
www.rhodo.org - info@rhodo.org



PHOTOGRAPHS

Roger Newton

MEMORIES of the Group Tour to S. W. Wales.



R. burmanicum at Stradey Castle



R. 'Cornish Cross' at Picton Castle



Striking unknown red at Stradey Castle



Members visiting Ffynone beside *R. 'Cornish Red'*