

# ROSE LETTER



August 2020 Vol. 44, No.3

TEA ROSE—"GLOIRE DE DIJON"

Nat. size

PL. 74

# ROSE LETTER

## The Heritage Roses Group

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101 Benson Avenue, Vallejo, CA 94590

Publishers: Jeri & Clay Jennings

Vol. 44, No. 3

**[www.theheritagerosesgroup.org](http://www.theheritagerosesgroup.org)**

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**Else's Rival, Fl, 1938**

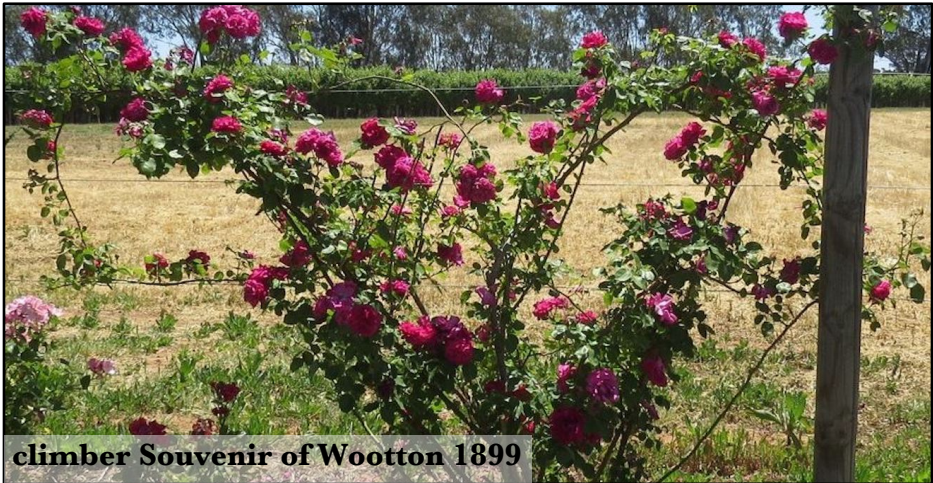
## ***Sic Transit Gloria Mundi: David Ruston's Roses***

### **Margaret Furness**

David Ruston, rosarian par excellence and first president of the World Federation of Rose Societies, died in May 2019. His enormous collection of roses in South Australia was one of a kind, equal to or beyond the broad spectrum of roses found at Mottisfont, Europa Rosarium at Sangerhausen, and Roseraie de l'Hay. His collection in Denmark contained roses found nowhere else, and at the time of his retirement had some 50,000 plants, of 4,000 cultivars and species, grown in the open.

David's father had an 11ha (27 acres) vineyard, and planted more roses each year in the garden begun around the house in 1924. In the late 1940s, while at university, David had what was then called a nervous breakdown and was advised by his doctor to go home and rest. His mother, growing tired of seeing him lying on a couch, threw a book on roses at him and told him to read it; and he found his belonging-place.

He bought roses from Australian and overseas sources, and gradually his father's vines were replaced (sometimes during his father's absence). David felt that part of the property should be planted as a country garden, with dense mixed plantings and a background of trees. The shrubs and trees, as well as supplying floristry material, became windbreaks on the inland plain and a haven for birds. The cut-flower business he built up was a significant employer in a small country town, and the annual Rose Festival he initiated is a major tourist event there.



David's demonstrations of flower-arranging, with their wickedly funny commentary, became unforgettable events at national and international conferences. On his travels he kept an eye out for roses worth growing, and interesting vases. For example, he saw that the brilliant colours of Pedro Dot roses would suit southern Australia's Mediterranean climate.

David's retirement in 2006 came after a long spell of drought in eastern Australia, in which the majority of independent garden shops closed and the number of rose nurseries selling heritage roses was dwindling rapidly. He continued to live in the house he was born in, in the midst of the roses. To give him an occupation in his retirement, members of Heritage Roses in Australia (HRIA) gathered from all around the country what was intended to be a collection of all the known and

unknown Teas, Chinas and Noisettes in Australia. Flood irrigation had been replaced by dripline watering and fertilising, and David's niece Anne, who bought the business, filled the old irrigation channels with soil for us to use as planting beds. We should



**Bloomfield Courage 1925**

have stopped there, as Renmark is too hot for working bees in summer, and the nearest HRIA member at the time lived three hours' drive away. Led by David's enthusiasm, the Collection was extended, especially to Pernetianas and pre-WWII Hybrid Teas, and post-1800 spring-flowerers which public gardens didn't welcome. We had overstepped what we could manage, and as David's health declined, it became evident how much we had depended on him.

Management of the property was modernised by Anne and her partner, since labour costs had become too high; but things went downhill.



**Lady Trent, HT 1940**

Mechanical pruning into old wood reduced the flower crops. Powerful spray machines blew away the pomace mulch which had been an effective weed-suppressant. Like many other large nurseries,



**Marionette, Fl 1943**

the business became dependent for survival on a restaurant on site and hosting weddings, etc.

For some years HRIA had seen the writing on the wall and had been propagating roses from our Collection and seeking public gardens



**Gordon Eddie, HT 1949**

around the country willing to plant them, as backup; but we had more than enough to do without extending the work to older and newer roses. We were caught unaware by some developments.

After some years the property was put up for sale, as Anne had her sights on a career in politics.

For four years the property languished while overseas buyers kept promising to sign the contract “next week.” The weeds thrived on the fertigation regime (fertiliser within irrigation water), and *R. bracteata* invaded some cut-flower rows. The prospective buyers intended to import rose petals for food into China, and so a substantial area of cut-flower beds was replaced by ‘Mr Lincoln’ plants. Unfortunately the area included much of David’s collection of old roses and the Tea rows he



**Misty Gold, Fl 1954**



**Tapestry, HT 1958**

planted in the 1970s. Pat Toolan and Billy West tried to persuade the owners to keep some of the old plants for their aesthetic and historic value, and as education for the students of the proposed international Horticultural University on site, but their pleas fell

on deaf ears. Watering was withdrawn from the area of Old European roses, with a view to replacing them with food plants. Without irrigation, growing in red sand with an average annual rainfall of 250mm (10”) and a superimposed drought, survival was too hard for them. Then the rules were changed for working visas (no

no no, the international students weren’t intended to be cheap labour), and the deal fell through. After ill-health forced David to transfer to a nursing home, c. 2018, his house was let to a tenant who kept a goat tethered in the garden around it. We were glad David didn’t see the worst of the decline.

The property was eventually bought by a businessman, who soon found that it was too hard to manage from a distance of 250km when his health became a problem. Last year it was re-sold to a Renmark quarrying firm. By this stage the later-planted beds of the HRIA Collection had become unsalvageable due to horrendous weed growth,

and the bushes were slashed to ground-level. The owners intend to maintain the original Tea-Noisette-China bed as an asset to tourism. They have had problems too: the local distillery will no longer buy petals for rose vodka, although it sells very well, because the rose scent taints everything else they produce.

Recent subdivisions make very small house blocks, and salesmen boast that they have planted “low-maintenance gardens” – e.g. of Agapanthus, which are declared Weeds of National Significance. In recent

years more nurseries which were major sellers of heritage roses have closed or changed their focus to moderns. In particular, the sudden death of the owner of Mistydowns nursery was a serious blow to sourcing a wide range of heritage roses. As a further blow, we discovered that we had been unduly complacent about the retirement in September 2019 of the owners of Thomas for Roses nursery, which had many 1930s and 40s roses no one else was listing. They were going to keep all their stock plants, and there was a potential buyer in the offing. But in early January 2020 much of their display garden and nursery area was in the path of an unstoppable bushfire.

Droughts and bushfires can only get worse with climate change. HRIA, like most volunteer organisations, consists predominantly of retired people, and membership numbers are declining. The future of heritage roses here is precarious.





What do we have left of David's heritage? Many rarities in various locations, and we will keep trying to find other "safe" places for them. Many photos taken on his property document for helpmefind.com what some rarities – many now gone – looked like in the flesh. Rose books have been written with the late photographer James Young, and *A Life with Roses* written with Sue Zwar. Many memories.

Margaret Furness is current editor of the *Journal of Heritage Roses in Australia*.

(All photos in this article were taken at David's collection in Renmark.)



**David Ruston and his Mermaid**

Books on the rose, written for the climates of France or England, will, in general, greatly mislead the cultivators here.

--Francis Parkman, 1866 USA



## **A SWEET BRIAR TRIO PLUS ONE**

**Darrell g.h. Schramm**

Driving down the long, straight country lane, all gravel and grass, I found myself hedged in on both sides by tall shrubs and deciduous trees. On an old map of Oregon cemeteries, I had found a site listed as King's Valley Pioneer Cemetery. I was determined to find it; perhaps a few old roses grew there still. I nearly missed the small sign and narrow turnoff.

The lane was perhaps a mile long, and when I arrived at the grassy graveyard, I could see it was indeed an old burial ground. Its perimeter was surrounded by trees as though in a clearing of a thick wood. I walked around but saw no roses near any headstone. It was a tidy place. Disappointed, I was strolling back to my car when I spotted a rose a few feet away from some gravestones near the southern edge of the cemetery. It was a wild rose. The scent from its foliage informed me at once that it was the Sweet Briar, also known as *Rosa rubiginosa* and *Rosa eglanteria* or 'Eglantine'. I took a few photos.

Though George Washington ordered many trees and shrubs, we

know of only one rose that he ordered for his Mount Vernon estate: *R. rubiginosa*, the Sweet Briar. But this rose recedes into botanical history much farther than the late 1700s. In John Parkinson's *Paradisi in Sole Paradisus Terrestris* of 1629, he listed 27 roses, two of them the Eglantine, one a single, the Sweet Briar, the other a double of two rows of petals. But as long ago as the 1250s, Albert the Great wrote of the eglantine rose. One wonders how old this rose really is.

Somewhat more recently, in his 1813 catalogue, Andre Du Pont listed nine different forms of *R. rubiginosa*: *vulgaris* and another single with rugose leaves, three semi-double forms, a double, a Persica form, an *aculeatissima* (an ultra-prickly form), and a *R. rubiginosa alterna*, Cels. W. J. Bean tells us that double forms and other hybrids were cultivated since the 17th century, the still available, double white 'Manning's Blush' being one. John Lindley addresses many of the Briar's varieties in his 1820 *Rosarum Monographia*.

Very much a carefree plant, *R. rubiginosa* Linn.'s apple-scented foliage is edible as are its fragrant flowers. The leaves freely release their scent in the spring, especially after a rain and when brushed against. The hips are high in vitamin C. A large, dark green rambling plant that reaches to seven feet or more, it can be restricted by pruning it down to four feet. But it is nasty with countless prickles. The pink flowers are usually borne solitary. It was not until the Sweet Briar was used as a rootstock that Tea roses became popular in England, where the climate had been generally too cool for them. *R. rubiginosa* does well in heavy soil but prefers more calcium than many other species.

I knew that in the mid-1890s the Penzance series of roses bred then were close kin to *R. rubiginosa* and, as a whole, are still sold. But were there others? My memory was kindled. Where had I seen two other roses recently that reminded me of this wild rose? Why yes, the previous year in England, at Mottisfont, the old Graham Thomas rose gardens.

'Fritz Nobis', a 1940 Kordes rose, was growing in the South Garden at Mottisfont. Though it was not one of the two that reminded me of the species, it deserves mention. Its lovely, large, double, pink flowers—a delicate, pale pink—grew in clusters and emitted a discreet clove-like fragrance. The plant formed a mounding, upright shrub, five

## Fritz Nobis



to seven feet, not quite as wide. It has been known to sucker. I was told that for the first two or three years to prune it lightly, after that to cut it back by one-third. Jack Harkness in 1978 thought it “one of the most handsome shrubs in the world.” It is on display in many public gardens, from the Denver

Botanic Garden to the Sakura Rose Garden of Japan. The rose was named for Fritz Nobis (1891-1981), many years the Director of the Plants & Flowers Park in Hamburg and the managing director of the German Rose Society.

‘Hebe’s Lip’ also grows at Mottisfont, though I can’t recall in which garden. It is also on display at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, the Madrid Botanic Garden, Hex Castle in Belgium, and Kassel Wilhelmshöhe in Germany. The rose is milk white, sometimes cream, with a lipstick smudge of pink or cherry red on the very margin of random petals. The petals surround a large boss of bright yellow stamens. Before the rose is entirely open, its shape is like that of an ancient wine cup or chalice. The flowers emerge in small clusters on a 4’ x 3’ or 4’ bush. Like those of *R. rubiginosa*, the canes and stems are quite prickly but unlike the species, the foliage offers no scent.

The rose is said to have been the product of Lee (apparently of the Lee & Kennedy nursery in England) pre-1829. ‘Hebe’s Lip’ has also been called ‘Margin Hip’. In his rose



catalogue of 1829, Prevost describes ‘Margin Hip’ which he states is also known as ‘Emmeline’, “white with lilac edging, an Eglantine with emarginate petals” and again “milk white on the outside with an edging of rose-cerise.” The rose seemed to have disappeared but was re-introduced by renowned nurseryman William Paul of England in 1912.

Who was Hebe? She was the daughter of Zeus and Hera and cupbearer to the gods, later replaced by Zeus with the young man Ganymede, whom Hera of course resented. Hebe was also the goddess of youth, eventually marrying Heracles. The imprint of her lip left upon a rose might suggest the immortality of the flower, renewed and returning spring after youthful spring. ‘Hebe’s Lip’ can be ordered from Greenmantle Nursery of California.



In the Central Garden at Mottisfont, I observed the beautiful ‘Janet’s Pride’. This rose presents itself as a pink bloom with white streaks and mottling, generally semi-double with nine to sixteen petals, dressing up a 5’ x 4’ shrub. Like *R. rubiginosa*, the plant produces scented foliage, but its leaves show some sheen, appear more rounded and deeply serrated. It does not object to shade.

The rose apparently backtracks to about 1810 when the famous Descemet released it as ‘Clementine’. Sometime during the next eighty years or so, the rose was thought to have vanished. Its discovery is the

source of two stories, both which concern a clergyman.

Story One: As a seedling, this rose was found growing in the early 1890s in the garden of a Mr. Whitwell and his wife Janet of Darlington, Durham County, England. It was found either by the

Whitwells or by the Rev. H. D’Ombrain who was visiting them. D’Ombrain, instrumental in forming the National Rose Society, acknowledged it as a new rose and promptly named it for Mrs. Whitwell. Shortly thereafter, he presented a few plants of it to nurseryman George Paul (brother of William mentioned above) who re-introduced the rose in 1892. Another source simply claims, without any details, it was discovered in a rectory garden, somewhat substantiating but also confusing the above story.

Story Two: “On the authority of the Rev. C. Woolley Dod,” according to Ellen Willmott, ‘Janet’s Pride’ was found in a Cheshire country lane. Cheshire is located in the somewhat northwest, in the Liverpool area; Darlington in the northeast. Certainly when Ellen Willmott asked Alfred Parsons to paint the rose as an illustration for her tome *The Genus Rosa*, he did travel to Cheshire where it still grew in the wild. That additional fact would suggest the rose was indeed discovered in the northeast.

A clergyman in each story. Could both stories be correct? Or facets of each one be true? Was the rose discovered in a garden as well as along a country lane? I have twice discovered a mystery seedling in my garden. And rose rustlers and others have found mystery roses in out-of-the-way places. But only one story allows for the name of the rose, that of Janet Whitwell. Why would George Paul have sold the rose as ‘Janet’s Pride’ if the Rev. D’Ombrain hadn’t given him a slip or two of the rose with its new name of someone he knew? And we do have records of two Janet Whitwells of Darlington around this time. It’s a puzzlement.

Fortunately, both Austin and Beales sell it in England, as does Loubert in France. Unfortunately, no one offers it in all America. It can also be viewed in Madrid’s Botanic Garden, at both Sangerhausen and Wilhelmshöhe in Germany, and several other public gardens. It is truly worth seeing—and owning.

Ellen Willmott claimed that it was ‘Janet’s Pride’ that inspired Lord Penzance to develop his many Eglantine hybrid roses, such as ‘Amy Robsart’, ‘Flora McIvor’, ‘Greenmantle’, ‘Meg Merilies’, and of course both ‘Lady’ and ‘Lord Penzance’, all of which remain in commerce. But none, I believe, are quite as handsome as this Sweet

Briar trio, and of them all, surely 'Janet's Pride' is queen.

Another rose likely belongs with the trio to make a quartet, and that is the sumptuous 'La Belle Distinguée'. It is a rose of which we know very little but that, by consensus, is a very old *R. rubiginosa* hybrid. Its first mention occurred in 1820. While the double flower reveals the look of a Gallica in bright crimson, contrasting with its golden stamens not quite as dramatically as 'Tuscany Superb', more like 'Belle Hélène', it is somewhat perfumed and at times gives off some of the Sweetbriar scent in its foliage. Prickly, the compact and upright bush grows to perhaps five feet. It is indeed a lovely, distinguished rose.



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**[e.c.jennings@gmail.com](mailto:e.c.jennings@gmail.com)**



## ROSES IN POTS\*

**Dario Marsch**

Many gardeners grow at least one rose, if not a dozen or more, in containers. Sometimes it's because the rose is easy to move, especially in cold areas where it can be taken indoors for the winter. Sometimes it's because it can add a distinctive spot of color on the patio, porch, or even in the garden itself. Sometimes it's because we have run out of space for another rose

in the garden, so now potted roses grow on the patio, deck, or even driveway.

Potted roses require different care from those in the ground. In choosing a container, allow for the size of the rose when mature, and choose one with a wide base allowing for root development. Good drainage is important. In general, do not place a saucer under the pot—though I have done so for one-gallon pots during a drought; the rapid evaporation from the saucer seems to benefit the rose. Care must be taken, though, not to have so much standing water that it encourages root-rot.

Use a light potting mix for containers but not the kind meant for indoor plants. If you wish to mix your own soil, use about 30-35% screened compost, about 25% perlite or vermiculite, and the rest top soil. Because my garden soil is mostly clay, I often blend some clay with the top soil if I expect to plant the rose into the ground at some future date. It's my way of acclimating the rose to the ground soil.

In watering the rose, be sure the soil does not recede from the edges of the pot. If it does shrink from the sides, the plants are not watered adequately. Generally in summer I irrigate my smaller pots



every other day, the larger ones of seven gallons or more every third or fourth day. If the temperature shoots to 90° Fahrenheit or above, I may irrigate the pots daily. When the last flowering season has passed, diminish the irrigation to perhaps every other week. During the winter months, the roots are generally inactive and may need no water at all. If the rose has outgrown its pot, winter is the time to transplant it to a larger one.

Nutrient loss is inevitable for plants in containers. Unlike plants in the ground, they cannot send out feeder-rootlets very far to search for sustenance or water. Feed these roses regularly with liquid plant food such as fish emulsion or natural kelp liquid. Top dress them lightly with a mulch. Note that coated, dry pellet food (such as Osmocote) will not break down until the soil reaches 70 degrees. Also be aware that

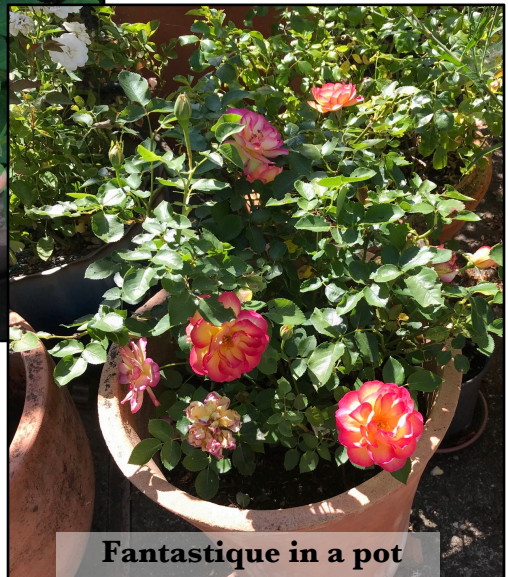
Osmocote will deform the foliage of many roses.

Hose down your rose bushes once a week. If it's spider mite season (in zone 9 where I live that's usually in hot August and September),



**Jean Kennealy in a pot**

hose the underside of your plants every three days for a week to ten days to break their cycle. Spider mites thrive in heat and detest dampness.



**Fantastique in a pot**

When pruning your potted roses, do so much closer than those in the ground. Except for Hybrid Perpetuals and Hybrid Bourbons, prune the canes down to two eyes.

Every three to five years, remove the rose from the pot and refresh its soil. If the roots have wound around, cut about two inches around the sides, leaving the small feeder roots. Four of my roses (large plants) flourish in half wine casks. Rather than remove the whole plant every few years from such a large container, I dig a trough about six inches wide around the edge of the barrel, disposing the old, used soil and adding fresh soil. I then tamp it down and irrigate it immediately, then top it with mulch. Scratching in some feather meal as a nitrogen nutrient is helpful.

Tending potted roses may seem to require considerable effort and attention, but if your passion for roses is such that you no longer have space in the garden, and you simply must have another rose—and another and another—the time spent with these container roses becomes a loving attention and a gardener's delight.

*\* I wish to thank Jolene Adams who gave a talk on this topic several years ago while I took notes. Much but certainly not all of the information here comes from those notes.*



### **THE ROSE ON OUR COVER**

'Gloire de Dijon' is a climbing Tea rose of 1853. The first significant hybrids from China roses were yellowish, and this rose is one of them. Prolific and richly scented, bearing good foliage and a pinkish apricot or even Dijon mustard color, it was the most popular of the Tea-Noisette type for about 100 years. It is one of the few Teas that grows well out-of-doors in England. Graham Thomas asserts, "It is not suitable for pillars or arches." Unfortunately, in

the United States 'Gloire de Dijon' over the years seems to have lost its stamina. (painting from *Favorite Flowers of Garden & Greenhouse*, 1896)



## **THE BOURBON ROSES OF KOSTANJEVICA MONASTERY**

**Darrell g.h. Schramm**

Bourbon roses are named for the Isle of Bourbon which was named for the Royal House of Bourbon in France. The Bourbon dynasty, which lasted—with one interruption—about 220 years, began with King Henri IV in 1589.

Because the first Bourbon rose was discovered on the Isle of Bourbon (Ile de Bourbon), a thumbnail history of the island is in order. The island, about 540 miles east of Madagascar in the Indian Ocean, was first called Saint Apollonia. Under Louis XIII it became French in 1642 and was used to exile mutineers. Under Louis XIV in 1649, its name was changed to Ile de Bourbon and opened for settlement in 1665. With the execution of Louis XVI in 1793, the name was changed to Reunion. During the Napoleonic wars, the English captured it in 1810, holding it for five years and returning its name to Bourbon, the name it held until 1848 with the fall of the Bourbon dynasty, when the island became once again Reunion.

In 1817 a botanist on Ile de Bourbon noticed a different kind of rose growing among the China roses ‘Old Blush and ‘Autumn Damask’, both common as mixed hedges on the island; this different rose was also seen growing in waste places as well as on the adjacent island of Mauritius where the populace called it ‘Rose Edouard’. The botanist sent seeds of the rose to France from which two roses bloomed in 1821. This occurrence marked the beginning of a new class of roses, the Bourbons.



**Walkway in monastery garden**

In general these plants are vigorous, luxuriant, of somewhat leathery foliage, large leaves, if with prickles those are short and strong and slightly curved, the flowers often in small clusters and usually in various shades of pink, some red, a few white, and nearly all of them fragrant. Many display their best bloom in August and September. The earlier ones are mostly once-blooming climbers; the later varieties are usually shrubs that often

re-bloom, even luxuriantly.

If we include the Hybrid Bourbons, at one time about 430 varieties were recorded. The world has lost more than three-quarters of them. But today not quite seventy different Bourbons grow in a garden on the south side of the Kostanjevica Monastery above the town of Nova Gorica (“Gor-ish-ka”), Slovenia, very near Italy’s border. It is the second largest Bourbon collection in Europe, second only to Roseraie du Val de Marne in France. The collection is maintained by the Nova Gorica Society of Rose Lovers.

Comprised of monastery, church, library and the crypt of French Bourbon nobility, the complex was designated in 1985 as a cultural and historical landmark. From the end of April to the end of May, the Bourbon rose garden draws about 10,000 tourists each year. Tourists are also drawn to the town of Nova Gorica during the May Rose Festival, viewing the rose plantings along the streets, the rose parks, and private rose gardens of which the most attractive is awarded a prize. Exhibits, food samplings, lectures and concerts are also part of the festival. But it is in the Kostanjevica Bourbon rose garden where visitors linger.

Among the nearly seventy different Bourbon varieties is the rare

‘Amédée de Langlois’ of 1872, a mauve or purplish-red rose. Though the earlier Bourbons came in various shades of pink, it was the innovative French breeder Jean Laffay’s methods that introduced Hybrid Bourbons while also introducing reds and purples into this class with the roses ‘Brennus’ and ‘Great Western’. This rose, ‘Amédée de Langlois’, was bred by Jacques Vigner on who produced three other Bourbons, as well as 81 other roses. The medium-sized flowers emerge in small clusters on a vigorous plant that blooms in flushes.



The rose was named, apparently, for one of two men.: Amédée Henri Langlois (1853-1925), an artist who painted still lifes, portraits, landscapes, and subjects from history and myth, and exhibited at the Paris Salon. Or was it named for Amédée Jerome Langlois (1819-1902), son of painter Jerome-Martin Langlois, and a member of the National Assembly in the Third Republic?

Another rare Bourbon in the garden is ‘Baron G.B. Gonella’ (sometimes ‘J.B. Gonella’) introduced in 1859. It seems to be named for a man of mystery that, in my searches, no genealogy, newspaper account, or book has addressed. I first saw this lovely rose at the Fredensborg Palace in Denmark, a large, sumptuous, and hardy

rose of pink and lilac shades with some violet, and a small silvery center, unusual in that it often has a bronze cast to it. The flowers grow both solitary and in small clusters. The petals are thick. In some climates, especially if in rich soil I am told, it is a recurrent bloomer.



‘Charles Lawson’, a Hybrid Bourbon with strong suggestions of Centifolia in its ancestry, was apparently a mystery rose found in the United Kingdom in 1853 and named for an Edinburgh nurseryman

(1794-1873). A fragrant rose in pink shades tinted with purple that pales at the circumference, its tightly compact petals show a button eye and are often beautifully quartered. The leaflets are boldly serrate. A peculiarity of this rose is that it will exhibit some canes with prickles and some without. It will grow six to eight feet, throwing out a profusion of arching branches that might be trained to a pillar or fence, or simply allowed to sprawl luxuriantly in its own bed of pink and green. I have found this rose surviving in several pioneer cemeteries on the West Coast. In fact, I obtained my two plants from a pioneer graveyard where, after a first visit, I found it afterward drastically cut to the very ground, but on my hands and knees, I discovered two small nubs of the rose struggling to see the world again. Carefully I dug them up with a pocketknife and brought them home where they now flourish.

‘Comtesse de Rocquigny’ has not always flourished, nearly vanishing at least twice. It seems never to have been well known. The several distinguished editors of *Botanica’s Roses* in 1998 believed the rose “probably” to be “lost forever,” yet today it is sold by two rose nurseries in the United States and two in Western Europe. Introduced by a



**Comtesse de Rocquigny**

Monsieur Vaurin in 1874, the flower is white with a pale flush of rosy salmon on a tall plant. It was named for Marie Donnelly, whose people had emigrated to France from Ireland in the 18th century. She became a countess when she married the Comte Robert de Rocquigny

who was of an ancient family in Normandy.

Like 'Charles Lawson', the rose 'Great Western' is a Hybrid Bourbon, and like the former, it offers a very long blooming season but does not bloom in autumn. Also like the Lawson rose, it produces fat buds in tight clusters (as many as fifteen), so it is best to remove a few in order to provide space for all the roses to open fully. The scented flowers are a red-purple tinted with violet or mauve with a green center. Like the flowers, the leaves are huge, even to nine inches long. The prickly robust canes branch out to six feet. It has been called a "grand" rose. Poor soil and shade do not trouble it at all. It will sucker but not as rampantly as many a Gallica.

Named for the paddlewheel steamboat *Great Western* launched from England in 1838, the rose was put into commerce that same year. Having a wooden hull and affixed with sails, *Great Western* was the largest passenger boat in the world for two years,



**Great Western**

journeying from Bristol to New York and back for eight years, making 45 Atlantic crossings. It then served as a troop ship in the Crimean War and was scrapped in 1856.



**Mme Jeannine Joubert**

reminiscent of the huge lace collars worn by the Elizabethans. It is the only surviving rose by Jules, oldest son of Jacques-Julien Margottin, a rose of 1877. And who was Jeannine Joubert? More than three hours of research online and in books and journals yielded no answer, only a guess, but a guess can lead to misinformation.



**Mme Pierre Oger**

Of the namesake for the Bourbon ‘Mme Pierre Oger’, we have some information. She was the mother of Auguste Oger who, apparently, discovered the rose, a sport of ‘Reine Victoria’. She was also the wife of Pierre Oger (1816-1894), a rose breeder in Caen, Normandy. In all he bred 94 different roses, only one of which survives on the market, the Hybrid Perpetual ‘Triomphe de Caen’. However, nine of



his other roses grow in the public garden of Roseraie Roses de Normandie in Rouen. But it is the discovered sport 'Mme Pierre Oger' for which he is most remembered. This rose, cupped and open in the center like a chalice, is a memorably elegant flower of translucent petals, petals as if sculptured, in creamy pink, softly edged in amaranthine pink which darkens as the heat of the sun intensifies. It emits a sweet fragrance. Virtually without prickles, the plant grows five to six feet tall.

'Kronprinzessin Viktoria' ('von Pruessen' is often added) shows itself graceful and, like its namesake, aristocratic, a rose of 1887. Large, white with lemon shading in the center, it displays a lavish ruff of petals. Floriferous and long-lasting, the flowers do tend to sulk in wet weather. The fragrance, however, is exquisite. The short-branched canes are vigorous and grow to three, sometimes four, feet.

The rose was named for Queen Victoria's oldest child, Victoria Adelaide Mary, the Princess Royal (1840-1901), known to the family as Vicky. She married Frederick III of Germany, but was often homesick and over the



years wrote long letters frequently to her mother. Their oldest child, who was not supportive of his mother when his father died, became Kaiser Wilhelm, he of World War I infamy.

In the garden, facing the beautiful, extravagant, climbing rose 'Martha' and near a bench, grows the lovely bush of 'Souvenir de Mme Auguste Charles'. On healthy foliage, the soft pink rose, large and full, often fashions itself in rosettes and yields a fruity perfume. Reaching from one meter to five and a half feet, it usually flowers until the first frost. A few nurseries in Western Europe still sell it, among them the nurseries of Loubert, Louis Lens, Martin Weingart, and Andre Eve. It is sold by one nursery in the U.S., Rogue Valley Roses of Oregon. The



**Souvenir de Mme Auguste Charles**



**Souvenir de Victor Landeau**

name of the rose may be connected to Rue Auguste Charles in Luxembourg City.

‘Souvenir de Victor Landeau’, a very large, fragrant rose, red with a lavender flush, repeats its bloom. It grows on sturdy, upright canes armed with large prickles. I have found, however, that the plant resents being pruned. A rose of 1890, here again we have a variety of Bourbon whose namesake remains a mystery. Granted, a guillotine executioner named Victor Landeau, in the remote town of Niort in the Deux-Sevres Department, practiced his abrupt and foreshortening art from 1723 to 1731, but I rather doubt the breeder Moreau-Robert thought or even knew of the man 160 years later. On the other hand, is there a connection between the executioner’s name and the rose’s resentment in being foreshortened? I jest.

Massimiliano Lodi bred a number of roses for the nursery of Bonfiglioli & Son in Italy; one of these was ‘Variegata de Bologna’ in 1909. A large cupped Bourbon, ravishingly scented, the white petals parade irregular, purple-red stripes. Its pollen parent having been a sport, also with markings, ‘Variegata’ sometimes reverts to parent and even its grandparent’s solid coloring, a medium red. At first it was thought to be a sport of the Bourbon ‘Victor Emmanuel’, but a 1909 Italian article clarified its parentage as an unnamed seedling x ‘Pride of Reigate’. Often a few blossoms revert at

least partly. A striking rose, it rests on a full bush of five to ten feet tall, but it can be kept at five to six by pruning. In good soil, it will usually provide some later bloom. In dry soil it is prone to fungus. Of the four or five striped or otherwise marked Bourbon roses, 'Variegata di Bologna reverting



Bologna' is the most spectacular. Yet why it is designated a Bourbon when its lineage contains so much of Hybrid Perpetual is unclear.

In addition to the three rare roses mentioned, the garden is also home to eight more rarities: 'Acidalie', 'Anaïse' ('Anais'), 'Baronne de Maynard', 'Celine', 'Mme Charles Detreaux', 'Mme Nobécourt', 'Souvenir d'Anselme', and 'Souvenir de Louis Gaudin'.

More familiar Bourbon roses grow there, of course, such as 'Mme Isaac Pereire', 'Mme Ernest Calvat', 'Louise Odier', 'Coupe d'Hébé', and 'Souvenir de la Malmaison', and others. I have chosen, however, to focus on a few of those less well known.

Nearby, in the church's crypt, several French Bourbon royalty rest. Maria Therese Beatrice Gaetana, wife of Henri V, Count of Chambord, last of the French Bourbons, had the crypt built. She lies next to her husband. Others in the tomb are the Count's sister, Duchess of Parma, and King Charles X who reigned from 1824 to July 1830 when the whole family fled the July Revolution. However, Charles died of cholera seventeen days after arriving in Nova Gorica. Buried there also is the Duke of Angoulême, oldest son of Charles X, and the Duchess of Angoulême, his wife, the daughter of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. All now rest in peace with Bourbon roses at elbow and foot.

## **In Memoriam: Beverly Dobson**

If the name looks familiar to you, you know that Beverly Dobson was co-editor and compiler of the annual *Combined Rose List*, which lists nearly every rose and where it's sold in nurseries throughout the world. Beverly died on 5 January, 2020.

Bev was born in Alameda, CA, in November 1927. For 26 years she grew roses in Westchester County, NY, before returning to her home state in 1994. She began publishing rose information in the 1970s and founded the *Combined Rose List* in 1980. Becoming an ARS judge and Consulting Rosarian, she authored many magazine articles, was Honorary Vice-President of the Royal National Rose Society of the UK, a Secretary-Treasurer of the Rose Hybridizers Association, and a Secretary of the Heritage Roses Group. Bev wrote the forwards to the re-issue of E.A. Bunyard's *Old Garden Roses* and to the American edition of Peter Beales' *Classic Roses*, and contributed to other rose books as well. She also served as an editorial consultant. In 1991 Peter Schneider joined Beverly as co-editor of the *Combined Rose List* and has remained its publisher since.

She had been seriously ill for about nine months and had entered hospice care in September. Hospice and her son Guy kept her comfortable and entertained. She remained clear-headed to the end. Her ashes have been scattered into the Pacific Ocean.

### **CHOOSING CUTTINGS FOR PROPAGATION**

I mentioned that 'Gloire de Dijon' has declined in vigor. That be the result of poor propagation techniques. Selection of the cutting (budwood) must be done with care. The scion (wood) chosen for a cutting should be a shoot that bears or recently has borne a flower *from a mature plant*. And the flower should be or have been optimum in color and form--a "perfect" rose. The middle eyes or buds of a scion are best. Avoid choosing bud-eye stems that are non-blooming. For repeat-blooming roses, autumn is the best time to propagate from cuttings.

## IN MEMORIAM: MILTON NURSE

Milton Nurse, distinguished former editor of UK's *Historic Rose Journal*, died March 26 of this year after a long illness. He was 84. Early in life he came to join family members in England where he worked and traveled for British Steel, also editing the company's publications. Modest, self-effacing, he had "a wonderfully wicked sense of humor," of which this editor was a few times ear to. Milton loved rose history, classical music, and photography, creating a huge archive of rose photos and writing many articles on old roses. He also edited *The Rose Annual* until The Royal National Rose Society folded several years ago, this while also editing the *Historic Rose Journal* from about 2001 to 2011. Even after he resigned from the editorship, he continued designing its layout until 2014. Though he and *Rose Letter's* editor had been in correspondence for a number of years, they finally met in 2018 at the 18th World Rose Convention in Copenhagen, sharing many enjoyable moments of conversation throughout the week. Milton Nurse leaves behind family members in Britain and Australia, his civil partner John, and many friends around the world.

--The Editor with Kathleen Early, editor of *Historic Rose Journal*



Maréchal Niel, Chromatella (Cloth of Gold), and even Gloire de Dijon, do infinitely best grafted on Banksias. The latter flourishing like Ivy, forms stems as thick as one's leg, and runs along 50 feet or more. The Banksia Rose must evidently be a regular lime plant.

Fortune's Yellow grows in this soil with extreme luxuriance, entirely covering rocks, trellises, and Lemon trees, and when in full bloom, as it now is with me, it is a rose of dazzling beauty.

—Henry Bennett, "Roses in Limestone Soil." 1889

*(Remember, he was writing of England, not the United States; it may not pertain.)*

## Letter to Editor:

It is so nice to get the *Rose Letter*, and to see what you've included. I already shared the rose picker's disease info with the Amador County MGs. As always, your research does a lot to fill in legend vs verifiable information.

However, I was surprised that you talked about 'Bloomfield Abundance' without mentioning that most of the roses in commerce under that name are actually 'Spray Cecile Brunner', as confirmed by DNA analysis. Fred Boutin introduced what he believes is the actual 'Bloomfield Abundance' at the Sacramento conference in 2012. Only a few nurseries sell Fred's candidate. I don't know that the confusion will ever be cleared up world-wide but it's probably a good idea to always state that the cultivar widely sold under that name is misidentified.

While it's not been proven that Fred's BA is correct, it's definitely true that the one that Peter Beales widely distributed is incorrect. Interestingly, the BA pictured in *Roses from the Cape of Good Hope* seems to be a match for Fred's rose.

--Anita Clevenger

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*In My Studio* by Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, 1893