



## The Rhododendron & Camellia Group

BULLETIN No. 29 - August 1985

### Forthcoming Events, 1985

16/17 September  
8/9 October

Great Autumn Show  
R.H.S. Flower Show and Fruit  
and Vegetable Show

18/20 October  
29/30 October  
26/27 November

Wroxton Weekend  
R.H.S. Flower Show  
R.H.S. Flower Show

### Group Officers

*Chairman:* Hon. H. E. Boscawen, The High Beeches, Handcross, Sussex, RH17 6HO.

*Vice Chairman and Chairman Elect:* Mr. Bruce Archibold, "Starveacre", Dalwood, E. Devon, EX13 7HH.

*Hon. General Secretary:* Mrs. B. Jackson, 2 Essex Court, Temple, London, EC4Y 9AP.

*Hon. Tours Secretary:* Mrs. V. M. Archibold, "Starveacre", Dalwood, E. Devon, EX13 7HH.

*Hon. Treasurer Elect and Membership Secretary:* Mr. R. H. Redford, Fairbanks, 39 Rectory Road, Farnborough, Hants.

*Hon. Treasurer (until 31st October):* Mr. D. N. Farnes, Corton Lodge, 7 Burntwood Avenue, Hornchurch, Essex, RM11 3JD.

*Hon. Year Book Editor:* Mr. J. Sanders, Badger Cottage, 101 Guildford Road, Bagshot, Surrey, GU19 5NS.

### Bulletin Editorship

The Hon. Bulletin Editor will be assuming new responsibilities after the next Annual General meeting, and feels that in order that he may devote his full attention to his new office, he must relinquish the editorship. If any member would like to take on what can honestly be said to be a fascinating task and one from which is made a goodly number of firm friendships, then perhaps that member would write or phone (Stockland 221), when the present Editor would be pleased to explain what is involved.

### South East Branch

The South East Branch, in some force, visited Borde Hill at the invitation of Mr. Robert Stephenson-Clarke. The weather was not co-operative - a steady drizzle passed into continuous rain, while the light was so gloomy that even K. J. W. L. (renowned for 'available light' photography, a not untypical example being *R. lacteum* by moonlight, 5 seconds at f1.8, hand-held) did not attempt to bring his camera into use. But the interest generated by the number and quality of the rhododendrons to be seen sustained the party throughout a long and comprehensive tour undeterred by the elements. This interest was greatly heightened by Mr. Clarke's commentary as he led the party around; he displayed an extraordinary recall of the plants in his collection - names under both new and old classifications, and never (hardly ever?) stumped! This long-established garden supported the classic expeditions, so that many of the plants are originals, and we had the collectors' names as well, with Forrest, Kingdon Ward, Rock & Hu well to the fore.

At Gore's Wood, in addition to viewing the many fine mature plants, we were the first visitors to observe the progress of the recent clearances (the lowland variety, whereby the former inhabitants are dispossessed in favour of yet more and choicer rhododendrons). The results were most impressive; a host of good young plants, sensibly placed

out, and clearly thriving despite the worst winter that most of us could remember, thus supporting Gore's Wood reputation as an especially favoured site.

Back to the main gardens, where the North Park garden, full of bloom - fine forms and many rarities - was very thoroughly explored by the party. On to what might be described as 'holding beds'; young plants of the best modern selections, some already showing their promise with blooms, awaiting their eventual transfer to permanent sites. These excited much interest and some envy. The rest of the gardens were traversed, but at an increasing clip, as by this time the rain was not merely getting in at necks, but was emerging at ankles. A quick look at the greenhouses, and the propagating house where it was apparent that Mr. Vass still plied his craft to great effect, completed our tour.

The party then repaired to the Borde Hill restaurant where after the disposal of wet garments, they received liquid fortification in celebration of Mr. Clarke's birthday (not, we understand, his twenty-first).

Here was laid out a competition of the utmost severity, compiled with diabolical ingenuity. A row of specimens dimly lit (and with a red bulb at that!) awaited identification. Well, not identification for the first, obviously *montroseanum* - that required its collector's number. Next, by a process of elimination, a hybrid - but its parentage and name? A plant in a pot - very small, three leaves, four at the most, no flowers - eventually revealed as *R. afghanicum*. And so on, to the last - a small yellow-flowered job which proved to be *R. wongii* ('Q' in the Handbook; 'species uncertainly known' in Cullen). All this proved too much for the South East Branch, but not to their shame, for their guests. First and second to Wessex Branch and third to the Hon. Treasurer, who deservedly carried off our host's prizes.

The evening was concluded with a slide presentation by Kenneth Lowes who produced a series of very high quality transparencies of rhododendrons, chosen for their rarity, beauty or special interest. This was a great success, with a high degree of audience participation in comment and reminiscence.

Any attempt to list the rhododendron species on view at this fine garden was abandoned, indeed, any endeavour of that sort would need to start in the reverse direction - what cultivated species are not present? One suspects that it would be a relatively short list. And quantity is matched by quality; familiar clonal names abounded, either known as A.M.s & F.C.C.s from the pages of the Handbook, or as past prizewinners from the Society's shows. It was very apparent that every effort is being made to ensure that these standards will be continued into the next century. We were all most grateful to our host for an entertaining and illuminating visit, and (may we say it?) we hope that we may be invited back on a future occasion.



### Wessex Branch

*Diary dates:* Friday, 4 October, 1985 at Farnham Maltings (Miss Judy Medhurst on NYMANS).

Thursday, 7 November, 1985 at Farnham Maltings (Mr Millais on his visit to the Seattle Rhododendron Conference).

Our visit to Abbotsbury on 28 April was very successful, 22 members enjoying a mild and sunny day and Mr Kelly's discourse as we went round the Gardens. Much new planting had been done, especially of rhododendrons; many of these are tiny as yet, but it should make Abbotsbury an even more exciting place to visit in the years to come as they grow to maturity.

### Ghent Azalea Day

The joint meeting of the Wessex and South East Branches on the 1st June proved a large success. Members will recall that the object was to bring Ghent Azaleas to the meeting in the hope that they could either be named or provide samples of reliably named plants. Edward and Anne Boscawen made the combined groups very welcome and The High Beeches provided a delightful setting. A large number of cuttings were on display and came from many sources including the Savill and Valley Gardens and the Hillier Arboretum. Among the experts were Denny Pratt, Archie Skinner and Renaud de Kerchove from Belgium. The last-named brought with him a very comprehensive folder of coloured photographs which was of great use. In the afternoon the party assembled at Sheffield Park where Archie Skinner very kindly exhibited the National Collection so that more comparisons could take place. To finish up a day where the weather had really shown what Summer can be Mrs Skinner gave everyone a superb tea.

Given below is a list of Ghent Azaleas with notes of their locations. If anyone knows of the location of any more RELIABLY NAMED plants, will they please get in touch with Archie Skinner at Sheffield Park so that the National Collection maybe rendered as complete as possible.

Source	Hybrid
EDGAR L.A.	UNIQUE
GERMAINES LTD.	ALTA CLARENSE
	COCCINEA SPECIOSA
	DAVIESII
LADY ADAM GORDON	AIDA
	BARTHOLO LAZZARI
	COCCINEA SPECIOSA
	CORNEILLE
	DAVIESII
	FANNY
	GLORIA MUNDI
	IGNEA NOVA
	NARCISSIFLORA
	NORMA
	PALLAS
HEASELANDS	RAPHAEL DE SMET
	COCCINEA SPECIOSA
	DAVIESII
	GRAF ALFRED VON NIEPPERG
HILLIERS	NARCISSIFLORA
	ESMERALDA
	GENERAL TRAUFF
	GLORIA MUNDI
	GUELDER ROSE
	JOSEPHINE KLINGER
	MADAME MOSER
	MARIE VERSCHAFFELT
	MINERVA
	NANCY WATERER
	PALLAS
	RAPHAEL DE SMET
	SANG DE GENTBRUGGE
	VICTORIA
LANCASTER J.F.	PHIDIAS
HIGH BEECHES	BARTHOLO LAZZARI
	FREYA
	PALLAS
SQUERRIES COURT	FANNY
	(VG1) COCCINEA SPECIOSA
CROWN ESTATES	(SGE) IGNEA NOVA
	(SGC) NANCY WATERER

SG = SAVILL GARDENS  
VG = VALLEY GARDENS

(SDG) PALLAS  
(VG3) PUCELLA (Syn. FANNY)  
(SG1) SULLY  
(SGD) VERSICOLOR  
AIDA  
GLOWING EMBERS  
GRANDEUR TRIOMPHANTE  
MYRA VON HOOF  
PALLAS  
PHIDIAS

SOURCE UNCERTAIN

LABELLED AK

NATIONAL COLLECTION - SHEFFIELD PARK

Aida	Josephine Klinger
Altaclarens	Milton
Bouquet de Flore	Nancy Waterer
Cardinal	Narcissiflora
Charlemagne	Norma
Coccinea Major	Pallas
Coccinea Speciosa	Phidias
Corneille	Phoenica
Daviesii	Prince Henri de Pays Bas
Decus Hortorum	Pucella (Fanny)
Emile	Queen of England
Freya	Raphael de Smet
Gloria Mundi	Sang de Gentbrugge
Grandeur Triomphante	Sully
Heroine Plena	Unique
Homebush	Versicolor
Ignea Nova	

### South West Branch

On Saturday 27 April, 43 members gathered on the lawn at Trebah, in brilliant sunshine, to enjoy coffee and the breathtaking view of the garden of our hosts Major and Mrs Tony Hibbert. The party then divided into two groups to be expertly guided around the 20 acre garden, by Dick and Janet Challinor Davies.

In the foreground of the wonderful valley garden was a huge deep pink R. Glory of Penjerrick, backed by a spire of pink *arboreum*, and several giant trees of R. Trebah Gem. The whole valley garden was a blaze of colour. It is a great credit to the present owners who have spent so much time and effort in clearing up the storm damage of the past, re-establishing the shelter belt, and replanting with new varieties. A large greenhouse promises much new propagation to come. After lunch, which we enjoyed on the lawn, we presented Major & Mrs Hibbert with a plant of *R. calophytum*.

In the afternoon we again had the expert guidance of Dick and Janet Challinor Davies, as we moved slowly amongst the magnificent plants of nearby Penjerrick. The garden was developed by members of the Fox family, (as was Trebah) who have been served well there over the years by head gardeners Samuel Smith 1889-1935 and Bert Evans, who retired in 1970 after 55 years service. The former was responsible for the famous R. Penjerrick (*R. griffithianum* × *campylocarpum*) and the deep blood red 'Barclayi' carrying the well known clonal names of Robert and Helen, after members of the Fox family. In the garden large old 'nursery beds' of 'seedlings' of Barclayi, and unnamed Penjerricks, were seen planted closely together, and standing 30 feet high, providing a fine show of colour, as did R. Bert's Own (*R. bullatum* × Lady Alice Fitzwilliam) a tribute to that other hard working head gardener. A plant of *R. hookeri* was later presented to Mrs Morin for kindly allowing us to visit her beautiful garden.

On Saturday 18 May, another gloriously sunny day, we were welcomed at Lincarffe by Richard and Kirsten Gilbert with a cup of coffee, and taken on an enjoyable conducted tour of their garden. Very many interesting rhododendrons have been planted and a beautifully secluded lawn and pond surrounded by a high stone wall with arched entrance, created in the past 30 years, was much admired by all. A plant of R. Gladys Rose was presented before we all departed for Lanhydrock and lunch.

At 2 p.m. Peter Borlase, the head gardener of this famous National Trust property took us on a conducted tour of the beautifully maintained garden. Some very fine



rhododendrons had been planted in groups to give a most effective show, and some superb vistas were enjoyed in this outstanding garden. Afterwards Ralph Budge presented Peter with R. Fairylight and thanked him for giving up his Saturday afternoon to conduct us around with such patience and enthusiasm.

A lecture by Richard Fulcher on "THE RHODODENDRONS OF INVEREWE" will be given at the EDGE MOOR HOTEL, BOVEY TRACEY at 8.15 p.m. on Friday 29 November 1985. Richard, who joined us for part of the recent Group tour, is the new head gardener of KILLERTON, and former head gardener of INVEREWE. He has some outstanding coloured slides, which I know we shall all enjoy. The talk will be preceded by a buffet supper. Full details by letter to Branch members in September.

#### East Anglia Branch

Hyde Hall, Rettendon, near Chelmsford. 6/5/84 - by kind permission of Dr. & Mrs Robinson.

Hyde Hall is set upon an exposed upland. The subsoil is heavy London clay and the garden has only been able to develop as the shelter belts became functional. Development commenced in 1959 and in 1984 the garden around the hall had expanded to 8 acres plus an area of 12 acres which has been planted with trees and doubles up as a car park on open days. A further 4 acres are being incorporated into the planted areas and will house the National collections of *Viburnum* and *Malus*. The surrounding land is farmland. Since 1976 the garden has been in the hands of a charitable trust.

As you would imagine from the fore-going this is a very well organised and efficiently administered garden (looking for a weed could cause eye-strain). The variety of plants grown is extremely diverse, despite the hostile soil and site. As a consequence it seems unfair to restrict this article to the subject matter of the Group but this is what I must do. The majority of the rhododendrons were planted in prepared beds within watering distance of the Hall. Here we found a good number of "Stonefield" seedlings which kept us guessing as to the bees' flight path. All of these seedlings were of quality (as you would expect) and we suspected the parentage to be of species origin. Several were of the large-leaved type and some showed *R. grande* to be a parent. There were also several *R. macabeum* in full flower and rhododendrons *niveum* and *augustinii* for contrast. One *R. augustinii*, an Exbury form, was particularly choice. Another harmonious pairing was *R. sutchuenense* and the Caerhays' hybrid R. 'Blue Tit'. Nearby was an *R. thomsonii*, in total contrast *R. mallotum* was also much admired with its striking indumentum. The Cornish hybrid R. Alison Johnstone looked very pretty and the dwarf hybrid R. 'Humming Bird' was appreciated for its charm. The *triflorum*s were also represented by *R. yunnanense* and *R. davidsonianum*. The subtle colours of *R. keiskei* and *R. Blue Diamond* were admired as was the relatively large flower of *R. Jock* (pink form). Here too was a *R. arboreum*, the Caerhays' *R. campanulatum* hybrid *R. Susan* and the Bodnant hybrids *R. Elizabeth* and *R. Choremia*. Exbury's *R. Cornish Cross* was here too but could not be compared with the "Forty Acre" form. *R. Crest's* clear sulphur yellow flowers in fine upstanding trusses were, as ever, greatly appreciated as, indeed, was the rarity of *R. baileyi*. Camellias were well represented, particularly the *williamsii* hybrids J. C. Williams, Glen's Orbit, Citation. Camellia 'Muskoka' surprised us all (we had not seen it before). It is not unlike C. Donation. C. Mercury still seems little bettered by the newer selections for both colour and form. Species *Magnolias* were represented by *M. sprengeri*, *M. stellata* and the related *M. × loebneri*. The soulangiana hybrids were extensively planted. *M. lennei* was greatly admired as was the newer *M. Sundew*. Owing to the lateness of our visit the subtle differences in the soulangiana selections were not so noticeable as in the earlier stages of their flowering but a number of Mr Pickard's selections looked to be of good quality.

Mention must also be made of *Ceanothus* 'Trewithen Blue', which was doing particularly well. It is especially enjoyable to see this fine plant so far from Cornwall and performing so vigorously. The National *Malus* collection was also much admired particularly the variety M. 'Katherine', a very choice tree which should be suitable for many gardens. *Erythronium* 'Pagoda' caused much coveting. The greenhouse contained a variety of fine things (too numerous to mention) but the *C. reticulata* must be singled out.

This, necessarily, very brief account of the garden cannot possibly do it justice. This is a plantsman's garden of distinction and one to be remembered. The main feature is variety and the standard is of the highest degree.

At the end of our tour Dr and Mrs Robinson very kindly treated us to a magnificent spread. Their hospitality was most generous, very welcome and greatly appreciated.

Forty Acre Plantation, near Billericay. 6/5/84 by kind invitation of Danbury Fencing Ltd.

This 'plantation' once formed part of the Ransden Hall Estate and was planted out by Squire Bacon commencing in the 1880s. The squire was an enthusiastic botanist and keen amateur gardener. He moved to Devon in 1938. The gardener was Monty Picket. Much of the area is now coppiced woodland but well away from the local roads we came across a mass of old *ponticum* seedlings which had sprawled and layered themselves into thickets. Beyond this we discovered entangled thickets of old hardy hybrids and brambles.

Many of these were familiar enough but their names were not easy to recall. Further into the wooded area we started to find some more choice specimens of similar parentage to *R. 'Beauty of Littleworth'*. Here also was what we took to be *R. 'Sir Charles Lemon'*. Despite years of total neglect the plants were in very fine condition. Their growth, however, was entangled and many detours had to be experienced. The origin of these plants was a mystery to us and therefore their parentage uncertain. Many of them, however, were not too far removed from their species ancestry.

Suddenly we came upon the most remarkable form of *R. Cornish Cross* we had ever seen. This was a very large specimen with typical leaves and flowers except they were not quite so loosely held as is sometimes seen. The enormous trusses were splendidly formed and cameras clicked away to capture their beauty. (One of our members was so inspired by the plant that whilst clambering into a prime position to take a photograph he fell rather badly, but fortunately did himself no permanent damage).

Then came the most exciting part of our visit. Totally unexpectedly whilst scurrying up a ridge beyond the *R. Cornish Cross* we came upon a superb *R. arboreum*, absolutely true, with very fine picotee flowers, blood red around the edges paling to white inside with first class trusses. Those of us who had seen the F.C.C. form named 'Tony Schilling' thought this to be just as fine. The leaves were silvery underneath. As we recovered from our surprise we started to notice that we had stumbled into a grove of *R. arboreum*. They were each of them tree-like and reached up into the sky. They were flowering profusely and clearly in the best of condition. Some had rose-coloured flowers, a few were picotee and a few pale pink to blush. None appeared to be of hybrid origin. We just could not believe our eyes. These plants really had no right to be flowering in this part of the country let alone thriving. In fact taking account of the awful drought years of both 1975 and 1976, then the recent bad winter of 1981/82, these plants were lucky to be alive! Clearly their shelter belts were very adequate and despite being planted upon a ridge of high ground, their water requirements were being met. All of them were worthy of preservation but some of them were so good that it would be a crime if they were not preserved. (Arrangements are currently in hand to this end). The trip would have been worthwhile if we had seen only this grove. Beyond the ridge the land fell away and the brambles asserted their domi-



nance. However we saw some good white rhododendrons which bore the mark of *R. decorum* in one of its very many forms and what appeared to be close to *R. campanulatum*, although none of these were particularly good forms.

Soon after we made our way back to our cars and finally rid ourselves of the tenacious brambles whereupon we made for Rettendon, via the local inn.

"Olivers" - near Colchester, Essex. 29/4/84 by kind invitation of Mr & Mrs Edwards.

This garden extends to 20 acres. It features three lakes in tranquil settings and mixed woodland underplanted with rhododendrons. The delightful 18th century house looks out into a large expanse of lawn and a long vista looking down to "Roman River". To the east of the lawns the white trunks of birches with their delicate tracery of branches are reflected in the stillness of the lakes. Behind these the woodland commences and includes a fine *Acer japonicum* and a mature *R. 'Dame Nellie Melba'* a choice Loder hybrid between *R. arboreum* and the *griffithianum* hybrid *R. Standishi*. This fine hybrid is far more reliable than the primary cross *R. arboreum* × *R. griffithianum* but, unlike most of the offspring of that cross, *R. 'Dame Nellie Melba'* has thick, leathery leaves; a feature often indicative of hardiness. This hybrid was in full flower and was much admired. Also in this area of light woodland stood a sizeable *R. fictolactum*, a 10 foot *R. falconeri*, a 15 foot *R. rex* and a 12 foot *R. 'Gladys Rose'*.

Further on we encountered the old red *R. Bibiani*, some 10 ft × 10ft, the old white *arboreum* hybrid *R. Boddaertianum* and the Dutch hybrid *R. 'Betty Wormald'*, a very good example of *Acer capillipes* and the pretty *R. williamsianum* × *R. houlstonii* hybrid *R. 'Arthur J. Ivens'*.

The track led down a slight incline following the banks of a stream where we debated an 8ft specimen which bore some resemblance to *R. auriculatum* but the leaves did not have the almost characteristically yellowish undertone of that species. Mrs Edwards thought that the plant once bore the label *R. 'Argosy'* (*R. discolor* × *R. auriculatum*) and this satisfied our curiosity. Close by was a 12ft *Acer vitifolium* and good quantities of wood anemones (*Anemone nemorosa*). Unfortunately the lower elevation of this area had not helped the less cold-hardy rhododendrons and as a consequence there were several dead specimens here.

At a higher elevation we passed through light woodland carpeted with bluebells to view fine plants of *R. falconeri*, a *R. wardii* hybrid, *R. Azor*, *R. calophytum*, *R. discolor* and *R. Polar Bear*. Further on in this section of woodland we admired a *R. sutchuenense* var. *geraldii* 6ft × 8ft wide, a *R. fortunei* 8ft × 10ft wide, and a *R. oreotrephes* 8ft high. Here also was a very large *R. bureavii*, drawn up by the shade and as a consequence not identified at first by those of us more accustomed to seeing it 3ft - 4ft high. As we approached the fringe of the woodland our attention was captured by *R. 'Barbara'* (*R. campylocarpum* elatum × *R. Loderi*) only 4ft tall but 7ft wide and in full flower. The pale yellow flowers were flushed with rose at the edges of the lobes and the calyx was reddish. My own plant of *R. 'Barbara'* which Messrs. Reuthe supplied, is quite different, being more upright and having waxy, less open flowers with beautiful veining and a distinct lemon undertone. The leaves, however, are very similar. There is, I believe, more than one clone in commerce and both of these are well worth having. Close by was a *R. Jalisco* standing 8ft × 5ft and the ubiquitous *R. Elizabeth*. We then made our way back to the house where Mrs. Edwards very kindly provided refreshments and related some of the history of the house and garden, much of which was understood to have been planted out by Miles Park.

#### Wentworth Castle

The article that follows was originally printed in the Spring 1985 Issue of The Northern Gardener and was written by a member of the Group by whose kind permission and that of

the Editor of The Northern Gardener it is reproduced here.

WENTWORTH CASTLE  
Reclamation of the Gardens  
Derek Rogers

Wentworth Castle is perched near the top of a hill 500 feet high facing squarely to the east and overlooking Barnsley, three miles to the north. Due to this easterly aspect the gardens are exposed to bitterly cold and violent weather in the inclement seasons. Fortunately, however, when the Baroque wing of the castle was built in 1710-20, oak, beech and yew were planted and now these mature trees provide a shelter from the worst of the elements for the fauna and flora and the gardening staff.

After many titled owners and alterations (it was built by the first Earl of Stafford), the formal gardens became, during the latter half of the 19th century, basically a 38 acre collection of hardy hybrid rhododendrons and exotic trees growing behind and above an 18th century mansion, with another 35 acres of open parkland below. Since early this century the standard of maintenance of the gardens has diminished as the owners lived mostly elsewhere - a larger estate in Scotland, a home in the south- and by the end of 1945, after occupation by the army, the gardens were completely derelict. Impenetrably congested by self-sown indigenous trees, especially ash, holly and sycamore with some oak, and the lawns and rides and other open spaces invaded by suckering a self-layering ponticum understock, this habitat provided a paradise for rabbits, but little else. They browsed off the remaining lawn grass that dared to grow and soured the soil.

Six years ago, when the Northern College obtained the lease of Wentworth Castle with the responsibility of the grounds it was decided to reinstate the historical gardens as near as possible to the original 1725 plants while keeping the best of the hardy hybrid rhododendrons collection.

It was then I started with a small M.S.C. team to clear the wilderness, and restore the framework of the landscape design; the paths and rides with their sight lines and vistas. The bonfires burned non-stop for three years and we began to see a garden emerge from the dereliction. Rhododendrons that had lived in perpetual darkness for decades in the depths of the design blocks once again saw the sun and felt the wind and blossomed again in all their former glory. Grasses on the surviving area of lawn were identified, seed bought and sowed on large, newly cultivated areas where shortly before huge invasive ponticum rhododendrons had established themselves.

The M.S.C. team grew over the years from 6 to 30, with a proportional increase in the project costs by the M.S.C. for tools, materials and plants. So began the purchase of a large number of species rhododendrons and modern hybrids, magnolias, sorbus and seeds of meconopsis, asiatic primulas and lilies; also a varied collection of old roses including damask, gallica's, moss, hybrid musk, rugosa, bourbon, hybrid perpetual. To date 136 different rhododendron species and 176 different hybrids have been purchased to complement and make more comprehensive the existing collection. Seventy more are due next spring. Many species of H3 and H3-4 hardiness have happily survived two or three winters, including *arboreum*, *cinnamomeum*, *arizelum*, *aberconwayi*, *barbatum*, *bureavii*, *cinnabarinum*, *eximium*, *falconeri*, *fulgens*, *niveum*, *mallotum*, *macabeum*, *sinogrande*, *zaleucum* and many more, all looking the picture of health and - I hope with fingers tightly crossed-set to stay. The varieties of Loderi seem perfectly hardy when well sheltered from the coldest winds and most of the following have already bloomed here: 'Venus', 'Julie', 'King George', 'Sir Joseph Hooker', 'Gamechick', 'White Diamond', 'Fairylane', and 'Titan'. Among other hybrids that have survived well are 'Albatross', 'Matador', 'Vanessa', 'Q.E.II', 'Moonshine Bright', 'Theale', 'Honey', 'Margaret Findlay', 'Robert Keir' and a host of others. Some have set flower buds this year. The idea with



the new rhododendrons is to extend the flowering season from early January, when our aged Nobleanum begins to open the first of its three flushes of flower, through to August ending with *auriculatum*. As well as the large tree species I grow dwarf species and hybrid rhododendrons on a rock garden, originally a bank of willow herb, and also among a bed of dwarf conifers and heather, this being previously a hen run. I especially like the *yakushmanum* hybrids.

Now that large areas of cleared woodland are requiring replanting, the propagation of rhododendrons was begun last year on a modest scale. A cold frame with 50/50 mix of grit-sand and peat base 12 inches deep, houses 200 cuttings and in an old eccentric mist propagator we have success with 150 annually plus conifers, heathers, fuchsias, etc. Those rhododendrons that are reluctant to root, I wedge graft during the winter in a frost-free greenhouse. This is done on vigorous seedlings, pencil thick, found under hardy hybrid rhododendrons and potted into five inch plastic pots and grafted approximately six weeks later. The completed work then goes in a clear polythene bag, tied at the top, two split canes in the corners holding the bag clear of the plant. This method has proved successful with most subjects so far tried.

Pleasantly lost in the midst of an evergreen ocean of rhododendrons, conifers and hollies, is our secret garden, a lovely oasis that one stumbles on suddenly and unexpectedly. By 1979 this also was partially swamped by the invasive ponticum which was removed and a rabbit fence sunk round the perimeter. This hidden garden is laid out to an astronomical pattern. A star-shaped bed in the centre represents the sun, (there is a large, decorative iron bowl on a stone plinth in the centre of this), and circling this star are four crescent shaped beds forming the seasons of the moon. Beyond these, round beds become the stars. Two circular red gravel paths ring the sun, and planted between these are shrub roses that have an affinity with the romantic and historical past of the buildings and grounds. To mention a few would be to include 'Mouselline', 'Comte de Chambord', 'Penelope', 'Buff Beauty', 'Agnes', 'Robert le Diable', 'La Reine Victoria', 'Louise Odier', 'Rosa Mundi' and a hundred more such, the most heavily scented probably being the hybrid perpetual 'Souvenir du Dr. Jamain'. Filipines 'Kiftgate' has begun to climb into a shadowy yew while no doubt on its way to the sheltering hornbeams above it is a truly beautiful sight when in full flower, a falling cascade of creamy white, heavily fragrant, and alive with bees. 'Nevada' and 'Marguerite Hilling' complement each other, surrounded by 'Mme Hardy', 'Golden Wings', 'Ferinand Pichard', 'Constance Spry', 'Boule de Neige', 'Nymphenburg', 'Cerise Bouquet' and a host of others - a gorgeous palette of restrained colour. The earliest roses to bloom are *Rosa Cantabrigiensis*, 'Canary Bird' and 'Golden Chersonese' which flower along with the primrose, cowslip, polyantha and daffodil that are planted beneath them. These are followed by meconopsis, asiatic primula and lilies. Unfortunately, we have a misanthropic cock pheasant who in winter searches out the lily bulbs and eats them. After years of growing lily bulbs to flowering size from New Zealand Lily Society seed, I have lost patience with our feathered friend's gastronomic indulgences and I'm afraid that if he starts his campaign again this year he'll finish a Christmas dinner!

All good things come to an end. The M.S.C. deemed in 1983 that the restoration of the gardens was complete, and that it was thereafter a question of maintenance which they could not legally fund. Now the full complement of staff is two full time and five half-time with three Y.T.S. trainees, and the mountain of work grows larger. Any voluntary assistance would be received with gratitude! Now the good news. Next year, beginning in mid-May, we are going to introduce free conducted tours of the grounds. Notice will be published of the final arrangements. Light refreshments will be available in the College's cellar bar. Arrangements

can be made for any interested groups, however, that previously enquire to show them round at other times in the week Monday-Friday. We also open Spring Bank Holiday. Starting Monday 6th May, ending 26th September, free conducted tours will be given on Mondays and Thursdays from 11.00 a.m. Bus service No. 384 leaves Barnsley at 10.25 a.m. for Steeple Lodge.

The Fieldfares and Redwings are now back bringing the wet, raw shortening days of winter with them. The fallen leaves of deciduous trees have woven a tapestry of golds, yellow, reds and browns on the woodland floor, shafts of light from a low, weak sun slants through the pines, and in a cathedral of silent solitude and tranquility, only a robin sings. As I look back over the gardening year I recall the continuity of natural things and wonder if, in a hundred years from now, someone else will stand under these forest trees and look in awe at a towering *Rhododendron fictolac-teum* or *rex* not knowing that the longterm unemployed youth of our time had done so much to create this splendid beauty.

**Editor's Note:** There are original and historic garden features and monuments in the grounds. One of the first built mock ruined castles, c.1730, an obelisk to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu of 1739, a monument to Queen Anne of 1734, a Corinthian column of 1743, a temple of similar date and a ruined circular mausoleum.

#### Trelean Notes

Flaming June perhaps, but here in the deep South West of Cornwall there is something to be said for the peat fire of Caithness, that never went out in the farmhouse below the Castle of Mey. Since Xmas the wind has spent itself rotating between North and East, the longest day is nigh, with a monsoon on the Solstice! Gardening definitely is hazardous the older you get! Nevertheless the mid-season Rhododendrons have burst forth slap on schedule, first the Loderis, King George and Pink Diamond, with that almost unknown yellow Loderi named Julie, with smaller flowers nicely scented, followed by my old flame Vanessa looking across at John Galsworthy, just about as dark as the true Cornish folk are. Then we have the gold of Tortoiseshell Champagne and Jalisco Janet bubbling over into the orange-red of Medusa and Francis Hanger. We now pause to admire, amongst this galaxy of upstarts, that old, yet superb "ironclad" Gomer Waterer, with its pale mauve tight truss, as distinctive as its bud formation, together with its architectural symmetry well shown in a specimen plant, almost one of the first to receive the A.M. accolade. Then another of yesteryear, Harvest Moon, very similar to another *campylocarpum* hybrid created on the other side of the Helford River at Penjerrick, way back when "manners maketh man" and hooligans were seen but not heard.

Who was Faggetter? All we know is that his favourite was fortune's child of mid-season, a floriferous strawberry pink, similar but lacking the distinctive appearance of that plumber's mate Mrs G. W. Leak.

One of the first of the lates, Amor, created by that renowned hybridiser, J. B. Stevenson, a neat white stained pink, flower that catches the eye, and due perhaps to its *thayerianum* breeding appears to have the affinity for forming a natural standard with a closely cropped head. Remarkable too at this moment of time, are the bayonets of *rex*, its new growths pointing skywards, covered with khaki coloured indumentum, as are its bracts, an arresting picture, very similar to the "blight of rust" on *eximium*, the metallic lustre of the spears of *macabeum* glinting in the sunlight, reminds me of the fabric of that ill-fated airship the R 101.

Just as *yakushmanum* is Chelsea, *Buddleia alternifolia* is Wimbledon with its pendulous branches wreathed in delicate pale blue, small, fragrant, lilac flowers. Do you recall that superb specimen at Wisley, some thirty years back, near to that striking cinnamon bole of *Arbutus menziesii*, the Madrona of California, which after fifty years at the



game is still the most difficult evergreen to transplant?

Lest we get carried away by our presumptuous verbosity into further realms of being above ourselves, we note the small meat at our feet, those shining examples of good deeds in this naughty world, a couple of, Oh-Be-Joyfuls, *Limnanthes douglasii* scrambled eggs on toast, and the other, Corn Marigolds, both almost lost from Cottage borders, but now surely re-born, like the good ship Mary Rose.

#### Report from Ness Botanic Gardens, The University of Liverpool

Ken Hulme, the Director of the Gardens, whose immense enthusiasm and kindness shown to those members of the Group who were on the 1984 tour will long be remembered, has sent the following notes on the progress of the rhododendrons during and following the last winter. Hopefully we shall hear more in future Bulletins.

The winter 1984/85 began with a prolonged mild spell, the first frost we recorded was on Boxing Day. Two sharp snaps occurred later, one in January and the other in February, on the twelfth of the month, when the temperature fell to  $-9.8^{\circ}\text{C}$ . Some plants suffered severe damage but most escaped. Rhododendrons in general came through pretty well unscathed. Young plants of *Rhododendron veitchianum* we are trying outdoors showed considerable browning of the leaves but almost all other Rhododendron plants are completely fresh and green.

Seedlings and young vegetative propagules of a range of large leaf species are all growing well and these are intended to replace the stock of *R. falconeri*, *R. sinogrande*, *R. macabeum* and *R. basilicum* which were decimated in this region in 1981-82.

The season is a little on the late side and a range of species and hybrids are only just coming into flower in mid-April. Imagine observing developing flower buds on *R. mucronulatum* dwarf form on the 15th April. *R. x praecox* is at the same time in full flower along with *R. lutescens*, *R. barbatum* and *R. lanigerum*.

It would seem that, granted a frost free period, we shall see quite a splendid display, with colour showing in the bud of all the 'Blues' from *R. Bluebird*, *R. Blue Diamond*, *R. Bluestone* and *R. Blue Tit*. The rich mauve of *R. russatum* promise to complement the blues and contrast with *R. flavidum*, *R. Yellow Hammer* and *R. ambiguum*. The rose red flowers of *R. Humming Bird* are opening on the more advanced plants. The bright pink buds on *R. pemakoense* are about to expand fully, in some years they are in full flower in early March, certainly five weeks sooner than in the present season.

We moved a plant of *R. proteoides* in the spring of 1984 and it has rewarded us in typical fashion by producing a good crop of flower buds. The *R. griersonianum* hybrids are about to open in sequence, *R. 'Elizabeth'* being the first, but followed this season quite quickly by *R. 'W.F.H.'*, *R. 'Siren'* and *R. 'May Day'*. Although more prone to damage in severe winters, we rate *R. 'W.F.H.'* very highly. My main disappointment is that I find it difficult to record its splendid qualities on colour film. *R. 'May Day'* similarly is rarely flattered on colour film and I assume the rather luminous quality of the corolla in some way distorts the light meter readings. On the other hand, *R. 'Elizabeth'* is easily captured in full glory and is bound to be seen well represented at meetings.

There are some plants showing a resilience that are perhaps worth noting, e.g. the forms of *R. cinnabarinum* were badly damaged in 1981-1982 and the straggly remains of once fine bushes were ridiculed. "Why don't you remove the lot and start afresh" is a reasonable paraphrase of attitudes. Surviving plants of *R. johnstoneanum* were similarly criticised. Now the same critics are admitting that the revival of these plants is much more complete and impressive than they ever contemplated.

Propagation of as many species and hybrids proceeds. The hybrids are generally more readily propagated from

cuttings than the species. Old-fashioned garden layering using stone to weight the layers is proving a useful means of increasing a number of species.

Here we ought to pay tribute to the generosity of many establishments holding stocks of Rhododendron. We have been on cutting collecting forays in all parts of Britain from Brodick to Windsor. We are delighted to see a young plant of *R. macabeum*, given to us from Mr. & Mrs. R. Baldwin's garden, Penn, Alderley Edge, flowering well. It represents to us a phoenix over the dead remains of large leaved species which perished just 3 seasons ago.

#### Report from Ireland

The following report has been received from Mary Forrest and it is hoped that this will, in future, be a regular feature!! Since 1983, Irish participants in the Rhododendron and Camellia tour to Ireland, have met for an annual outing. Last year we visited Glenveagh National Park and Mulroy in Co. Donegal. The venue for this year's gathering was Rowallane and Mount Stewart, Co. Down. Both properties are administered by the National Trust for Northern Ireland. At Rowallane we were shown around the garden by Mike Snowden, the Head Gardener. In early May, the rhododendron collection was at its best, with a wide range of species in flower. We admired many plants, including *R. barbatum*, *R. baileyi*, *R. glaucophyllum* and many members of the section Triflora. But most attention was given to a fine specimen of the hybrid Crest which was clothed in yellow flowers.

After a picnic lunch we proceeded to Mount Stewart - a garden with a wide range of trees and shrubs. The large stand of *R. macabeum* had gone out of flower, but the young foliage looked spectacular. Several tender rhododendrons *R. lindleyi*, *R. burmanicum* and *R. edgeworthii* were in flower. In an area known as Tir na n-Og, a specimen of *R. arboreum* with blood red flowers held in tight trusses and leaves with silver undersurface, was judged our "Plant of the Day".

#### Camellias - Notes from Putney

The next article received from Mrs Marigold Assinder who is a member living in Putney raises a number of very interesting and cogent matters. The Hon. Editor opens the columns of the Bulletin to the "powers that be" and, indeed to anybody else who would like to express their opinions. Last Autumn, owing to lack of space in the garden, I started growing camellias in containers. I worried about them: firstly (and more importantly) about the danger of frozen roots and subsequent death in cold weather, and secondly, about the Camellia Show in April - were they genuinely grown 'in the open'? Could I in honesty show blooms from them?

How absurd these qualms seemed when I arrived at the Camellia Competition in March and was asked "What do you think?" "What do I think about what?" "That the Camellia Show is open to exhibits grown under glass or in the open." I reeled. I had had the Schedule but had not read it carefully. Now I did: Regulation 5 - *Exhibits grown in the open or under glass*, - At both the Competition (March 12/13) and Show (April 10/11) exhibits may have been grown under glass or in the open.

Perhaps it is difficult for gardeners not dedicated to showing camellias from the open to realise the stunning implications of this new Regulation. Hitherto camellias grown under glass had been precluded from showing in the Show; their stamping ground had been the Competition, where on the whole they ruled supreme as it was held too early for the outdoor camellias to be any sort of threat. Historically there had been deep - and sometimes unfounded - suspicion about large and unusually shaped blooms being exhibited in the Show; whispers of gardens being visited to make sure they had not been grown under glass. Now, in a flash, they were legitimate. Other exhibitors were equally disturbed. We agreed among ourselves that protest must be made and



letters written; it certainly brought us together as nothing else could have done. What was so extraordinary about the decision is that it came out of a clear sky; we had suffered through all the long frosts of January and February when, if it was practical, we could have at least tried to get our plants indoors to avoid the worst of it. But we did not, because we wished to exhibit in the Show. I wrote to Chris Brickell and, after the Show, to Mr Cowell, the Show Secretary. I had a charming reply from Mr Brickell, in which he told me it had been done because of falling entries but that the Judges would know the difference and, it was implied, make allowances. The hope that entries to the Show would improve did not happen and as it turned out the differences were very obvious and the 'allowances' not so apparent. The camellias grown under glass were superb: it was a joy to see them - enormous compared to their outdoor relations and in magnificent condition. Inevitably they won all the major prizes. Incidentally, were camellias grown under glass eligible for the Leonardslee Bowl under the terms of the original gift?

Well, why *are* camellia entries dropping? I think there are several reasons - some, ironically, peculiar to this year. The first is the very Regulation brought in to increase them - in protest some very well-known and successful exhibitors over many years refused to exhibit at all. The second is inertia. Exhibiting camellias involves a lot of nervous energy, hard work and fore-thought, money if you live some way from London, and, above all, time. Unless you are really hooked on it, it is hard to see why people should bother. Pity, as there are so many fine camellias in and around London - and it is such fun. Thirdly, the spring was a real brute - if you were growing camellias out of doors. It must be fearfully difficult to decide when the Show should take place, but there is no question that this year it was held too early, especially for growers in Kent and Sussex. Fourthly it was held in the same week (but earlier) as the Cornwall Spring Flower Show. This was an odd decision for two reasons: one because Cornwall is about three weeks ahead of us and two, because holding it in the same week meant that West-country exhibitors did not exhibit in London this year (they had the previous year).

After the dust had settled one was left wondering why the Camellia Schedule Committee had not realised there would be this appalled reaction from the outdoor exhibitors: suddenly it was hardly worthwhile showing at all. One speculated whether they had ever shown themselves. More worrying, they had not taken account of the false impressions which would be received by the general public. I believe the Monthly RHS Shows have a didactic purpose: they should in effect be saying "Here are beautiful plants you can grow in your garden." If, however, it is not made plain whether the plants are grown under glass or not the public are being

deceived and may be very disappointed when they try camellias seen in the Shows in their gardens. I also feel it is important for the Judges to correct - not penalise - any mistakes in nomenclature in the camellia classes if they are reasonably obvious as in the case of a bloom in the Leonardslee Bowl class which had been named Debutante incorrectly. In this context, of helping the public, would it not be a good idea to bring the International Camellia Society stand down from the stage to somewhere near the camellia show benches so that they could help potential camellia enthusiasts with friendly advice?

In the months that have passed since the Show I imagine that note has been taken of the disquiet of exhibitors and changes are being made. Personally I would be happy to see camellias grown under glass in the Show but in separate classes and *clearly marked* in the future. I also would like to see the Schedule revised and would be interested to see the names of the Judges in it - as happens in the Cornwall Spring Flower Show Schedule. I hope that either the Leonardslee Bowl will revert to the outdoor camellias again - or alternatively that another trophy be presented for the twelve best outdoor blooms.

An Autumn meeting between the Committee, Judges and exhibitors - who are, after all, the *raison d'être* of both the Camellia Shows - might be very fruitful and illuminating.

And now I must go and feed the camellias in the hope that they might grow up to be a little like those fabulous blooms shown by the Strausses. Unfortunately no space or money for a greenhouse...

#### Greetings Cards

Mrs Joyce Jack has very generously donated another of her lovely rhododendron water colours as a Greetings Card for the Group, and has offered to meet half the initial cost of production. This time it is *R. haematodes*, and cards will shortly be available at 15p per card in packets of 5, including envelopes.

There is also available a small stock of the *R. thomsonii* cards, now reduced to 10p per card, also in packets of 5, including envelopes.

Applications should be sent to Major E. W. M. Magor, at Lamellen, St. Tudy, Bodmin, Cornwall, PL30 3NR, with a cheque in his favour, to include 2nd class inland postage, at the following rates:

10 cards for 28p  
20 cards for 40p  
50 cards for 98p  
100 cards for £1.70 (1st cl.)

Overseas postage rates of course are higher, and Overseas members should kindly say whether they wish their cards to be sent by air or surface mail.



## Books

### THE YEAR BOOK

The Hon. Editor of the Year Book is still doing his best to locate copies of the 1951/52 (No. 6) Year Book and the 1958 (No. 12) issue to complete his own reference collection. He is willing to pay the going rate. He has available for sale mint copies of the 1948 (No. 3) and 1966 (No. 20) Year Books. If any member is interested in sale or purchase please write to John Sanders at the address on Page 1.

### YEAR BOOK 1986/87

The Hon. Editor of the Year Book is very anxious to locate a member who would be willing to write up reports of the *Hybrid Sections* for both the Rhododendron Competition and the Rhododendron Show for the next Year Book. He is fortunate in having the services of John McQuire to write up the Species Section for both occasions but would be delighted to hear from anybody who would be willing to cover the Hybrids. A look at any of the Year Books would give an indication of the sort of thing required although the current format does not necessarily have to be followed and the writer would certainly be encouraged to 'do his own thing'!

Anyone interested or requiring further information please write direct to John Sanders.

Members will receive with the Bulletin a leaflet from Batsfords offering to Group members copies of Peter Cox's latest book "The Smaller Rhododendrons" at a special reduced price of £15 per copy as opposed to the issue price of £17.50. It should be noted that the offer closes on 31st August 1985.

### Bulletin No. 30

Last date for receipt of material for inclusion in this issue is 10th November, 1985.

All correspondence concerning matters reported in the Bulletin, except where otherwise indicated, should be sent to The Hon. Bulletin Editor - Bruce Archibold, "Starveacre", Dalwood, East Devon, EX13 7HH.

### IMPORTANT NOTICE FROM HON. TREASURER

As indicated in an earlier bulletin, the treasurership will be

changing hands in September of this year. David Farnes will be completing the annual accounts to 31st August, 1985 and very soon afterwards will hand over all membership records and the financial details of the Group to Roy Redford in readiness for the start of the Group's new year on 1st November, 1985.

There are still many members, whose subscriptions are overdue for the current year and these have recently been sent individual reminders, requesting payment BEFORE 31st AUGUST.

If any member has doubts or a query about the state of their subscription, they are invited (most welcome!) to telephone David Farnes - Hornchurch (04024) 40536 - available most evenings after 6.30 p.m. or at weekends. Complete records are essential as at 31st August.

**TO FACILITATE THE SMOOTH CHANGEOVER AND EASE THE BURDEN FOR THE NEW TREASURER - PLEASE ACT NOW.**

### WROXTON WEEKEND - OCTOBER 18th-20th, 1985

WROXTON V is planned along similar lines and at the same venue as in previous years, from Friday 18th October at evening dinner until after lunch on Sunday 20th October. A programme of lectures, slide shows and garden visits is arranged and an innovation this year will be a "car boot sale" of members' surplus plants. Accommodation is available in the village of Wroxton for about 35 persons and later applicants can be accommodated in Banbury (3 miles away). The cost will be £65 per person inclusive but a reduction of £5 to £60 for those members occupying rooms without a bath (few only).

Members living within easy reach of Wroxton may wish to do as some did last year and attend as day visitors - they will be most welcome to join the party for meals, garden visits and the lectures, which will include an account of this year's visit to China by several members of the Group.

Will members wishing to attend this weekend please write to Mr D. N. Farnes as soon as possible, by completing the proforma below and sending a stamped addressed envelope, please.

✂

To: Mr D. N. Farnes, 'Corton Lodge', 7 Burntwood Avenue, Emerson Park, Hornchurch, Essex, RM11 3JD.

I/We wish to attend the 'Wroxton' weekend meeting on October 18-20th, 1985.

Name .....

Address .....

Evening Telephone No: .....

NB Stamped/addressed envelope please.

Do not send any money yet, thank you.