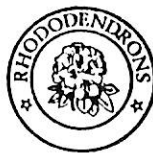


The Rhododendron & Camellia Group



BULLETIN No. 32 - August 1986

Forthcoming Events

August 12-13	RHS Summer Flower Show	October 31-November 2	Group autumn weekend, Westonbirt, Glos.
September 13	IDS Seminar, Heaslands, Haywards Heath	November 25-26	Flower Show (the last for 1986)
September 16-18	Great Autumn Show	November 28	SW Branch Rhododendron Evening, Edgemoor Hotel, Bovey Tracey
October 7-8	Flower Show		
October 28-29	Late Autumn Show		

Executive Committee

The present composition of the Committee is:

Chairman: Mr. B. Archibold, Starveacre, Dalwood, nr. Axminster, Devon, EX13 7HH. Tel: 040 488 221.

Vice-Chairman: Dr. R. H. L. Jack, Edgemoor, Loch Road, Lanark, ML11 9BG.

Hon. Secretary: Mrs. B. Jackson, 2 Essex Court, Temple, London, EC4Y 9AP. Tel: 01 353 1669.

Hon. Treasurer: Mr. R. H. Redford, Fairbank, 39 Rectory Road, Farnborough, Hants., GU14 7BT. Tel: 0252 545 565.

Hon. Minutes Secretary: The Lady Cynthia Postan, 84 Barton Road, Cambridge, CB3 9LH.

Hon. Membership Secretary: Mr. R. H. Redford.

Hon. Tours Secretary: Mrs. B. Archibold.

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

Hon. Bulletin Editor: Mr. P. H. S. Haworth, Tirionfa, 240 Chester Road, Hereward Green, Loughton, Essex, IG10 2LR. Tel: 01 502 3662.

The elected members (for addresses see List of Members) are:

Dr. F. H. Auckland, Mr. D. N. Farnes, Mr. J. E. Fordham, Mr. J. T. Gallagher, Sir Giles Loder, Major E. W. M. Magor, Miss C. E. Perring.

The ex officio members (for addresses see List of Members) are:

Mr. G. A. Hardy, and, in the Branches:

South East: Mr. J. A. Fox and Mr. B. E. Wright;

Wessex: Lady Adam Gordon;

South West: Major R. A. W. Reynolds;

East Anglia: Mr. C. E. Grainger;

Ireland: Miss Mary Forrest;

Midlands: Mr. N. M. Maybury.

From the Chairman

It is not going to be easy to follow such notables as Walter Magor, Alan Hardy and Edward Boscawen, but their knowledge and experience is still available, which is a comforting thought.

Members of the Group may have noticed that, following the Ridley Report, the wind of change is blowing through the RHS and it might be that now is a good time to examine our own house and, if necessary, put it in order. We have been following the same well-trodden corridors for many years now, but are they necessarily the right ones? Are we the sort of Group that we all want? Few attend the Annual General Meeting so do we assume that all is well or just that we suffer silently?

The Executive Committee is there to translate the wishes of members into action as far as is possible but cannot do this if they do not know the wishes of the majority of

members. A few suggestions. Are we satisfied with the contents of Yearbook and Bulletin? If not, what else is required bearing in mind that we do not have unlimited funds? Why not send in articles? The gardeners on a large scale are not the only members who have interesting things to say about their gardens. Reply to 'Rhododendron Notes', revived in the last issue of the yearbook. How many of us belong to and take part in the activities of our local Branches? If there isn't one, why not set one up? The General Secretary will always give help and advice if required. Do you exhibit at shows? If not, would you like advice on how to go about it? The Executive Committee does want to know how the membership sees the Group. How else can it do its job properly?

Vice-Chairman

The Chairman is delighted to announce that Dr. R. H. L. ('Robbie') Jack of Edgemoor, Loch Road, Lanark, Scotland, ML11 9BG has agreed to become Vice-Chairman and takes office immediately.

Treasurer's Note

Please rescue the envelope in which your Bulletin arrived. I hope the fire is not yet alight!

This year as new Treasurer I was faced with 20% of the UK membership with their subscriptions still outstanding six months into the Group's year, despite reminders in the Bulletin. As our expenditure is pressing hard against our subscription income we clearly had a serious problem. We discussed the matter in Committee and I was charged with writing to the appropriate members giving them one further month to pay their subscriptions. This caused me initially to write nearly one hundred letters and, with the inevitable queries requiring an answer, a great deal of work was created. The majority of members who received my letter took the matter in good heart and paid their subscriptions. I unhappily irritated a few and received one offensive reply which, read over breakfast one morning, ruined my day. I had always looked forward to opening Group mail up to then. (Apologies are offered for the inconvenience caused to Mr Derek Fox and other members whose names and addresses should have appeared in the latest List of Members but did not do so. — Ed.)

It therefore appears to me that the main problem lies in absentmindedness. To help here I have included a further line at the bottom of the address label used to mail your Bulletin, which will give you a continuous indication of the state of your subscription — hence the request to recover your envelope. This has the great merit of costing the Group nothing and freeing the Bulletin of my repeated reminders, leaving space for more interesting things.

How to interpret the code:

The code can take two forms — firstly if you have a Banker's Order in favour of the Group it appears thus:—
257 FNOV0185

Your Banker's Order reference number is shown first and indicates that I have recorded an Order as in force (this does not stop the Bank losing it!) Next appears an F or a P. F indicates a 'full' £5.00 subscriber, P appears if you pay £1.50 and are a 'part' subscriber. Next, importantly, is a date, always 1st November followed by a year. This indicates the subscription year up to the END of which the member is fully subscribed, e.g. if NOV0186 appears, then the subscription would have been paid from 1st November '86 up to 31st October '87.

If the member does not have a Banker's Order then the code appears thus:—

F NOV0185

The shortened code is determined as above.

By continuously reminding members I hope not to have a large number of outstanding subscriptions in future years. The extra information will particularly help our Overseas members who often subscribe in advance and can easily lose track of where they stand.

Having said all this the Committee decided that if in future years any members who have not paid their subscription by Christmas will be sent a reminder. This will be a standard printed postcard. If then the subscription is not received by the end of January we will assume that the member is no longer interested in the Group. (An allowance will be made for the speed of the mail for Overseas members). We must do this to contain costs for by careful budgeting the subscription will remain at £5.00 next year and be contained thereafter.

A member honoured

Members will be pleased to note the award of CBE to Mr. F. Julian Williams of Caerhays Castle, near St. Austell, Cornwall, in the Queen's Birthday Honours List.

International Dendrology Society meeting

Members are invited to attend an IDS Discussion Day on the Cataloguing of Living Plant Collections, at Heaselands, Haywards Heath, West Sussex on Saturday, 13 September, 1000 to 1730, by kind permission of Mrs. J. N. Kleinwort. Tickets to include buffet lunch will be issued on receipt of a cheque for £10.00 & SAE please from: Mrs Anne Boscawen, The High Beeches, Handcross, West Sussex, RH17 6HQ. The programme includes talks on the recording of living plants; garden surveys; updating records; a visit to the Heaselands garden, slides by A. Schilling showing the recording of wild-collected plants, and a display of garden labels.

Rhododendron fortunei ssp. discolor

There is a good article by Pat Halliday, the Kew rhododendron expert, on this fragrant rhododendron in the May issue of the 'Kew Magazine'.

Deciduous Rhododendron 'Buzzard'

Mr. Graham Martin, 2 Grosvenor Drive, Hornchurch, Essex, has tried in vain to locate the Knap Hill azalea 'Buzzard'. Can anyone help him with either material or information? The flowers are pale yellow with a darker flare, and edged with pink.

Magnifiers

ordered 14.6.85 £8-95
'Mac' Speed still has a few Tasco microscopes at £8.95 each for those who wish to study the minutiae of rhododendrons or other plants. They have a 30 × illuminated image and reveal floral detail and scales on leaves with startling clarity. Please write to Mr. G. R. Speed, High Trees, Oldhill Wood, Tudham, Bedfordshire, LU6 2NF.

Yearbooks wanted and for sale

Mr. Stephen Fox, 4 Park Lane, Little Hayfield, Stockport,

SK12 5NW, Tel: 0663 44260, would value any help from readers in hunting down the Rhododendron Yearbooks for 1946, 1950-54 incl., 1958 and 1963. He will be pleased to pay the going rate plus postage. The same applies to Mr. John Sanders, address given elsewhere (Tel: 0276 73439), who wishes to buy a copy of the yearbook (no. 6) for 1951-52. He also has two yearbooks for sale, 1981-82 and 1982-83, which will help some members to complete their sets. Please telephone him or send an SAE with their enquiry.

Nepal 1986

Mr. Derek Fox will be trekking in East Nepal during late October and November 1986 and will be collecting seed from a broad spectrum of horticulturally worthy plants over a wide range of altitude. The area to be explored is between the Arun and Tamur valleys and includes the Milke Danda and Jaljale Himal. Many of the plants to be found in this region are discussed in Roy Lancaster's 'Plant Hunting in Nepal' (Croom Helm, 1981). Those interested are asked to subscribe to a share of the seed at £25 each, mentioning their particular interests when writing to 'Volpaia', 54 Woodlands Road, Hockley, Essex, SS5 4PY, England. Members will recall Derek Fox's previous successful trip to Sikkim in 1979 and his article in the Yearbook for 1980-81.

Autumn reunion 1986

There is a new venue for the 'Wroxton weekend' this year. It is planned to visit the National Arboretum, Westonbirt, and possibly also Sir Peter Scott's famous Wildfowl Trust at Slimbridge.

We will stay at the Hare and Hounds Hotel, Westonbirt, near Tetbury, Gloucestershire. Reservations have been made for Friday evening, 31st October until Sunday, 2nd November. This seems the best time for autumn colour. The cost will be around £70 and will not include lunches. Suggestions for lunches will be made when the weekend programme is completed. Will members wishing to join the weekend please send their names and addresses and a deposit of £20 for each person, to the Hon. Tours Secretary, Mrs. V. Archibold, Starveacre, Dalwood, nr. Axminster, Devon, EX13 7HH, Tel: (040 488) 221? Members without cars may be accommodated in other members' cars as in previous years. The nearest station is Kemble.

The diverse programme arranged in October 1985 for the fifth and last Wroxton meeting is detailed in this account by the Chairman. Members who have not attended before are assured of the same blend and degree of interest this year, too.

On Friday 18 October over 30 members of the Group met at the Wroxton House Hotel near Banbury. After dinner, David Farnes gave an interesting talk, illustrated with slides, on the 1984 Spring Tour and on plants seen since then. Stephen Fox next gave an equally interesting discourse, with fine slides, on his visit to Nepal. The evening concluded with a briefing on the 1986 Tour by Betty Jackson in the absence of our Tour Secretary, Valerie Archibold, who unfortunately could not attend.

On Saturday morning David Farnes welcomed everyone and introduced Patrick Haworth, who showed slides taken at Rosemoor and of gardens in the Marches. Rhododendrons at Kew and the Savill Garden were the subject of Keith Blundell's talk after mid-morning coffee. He is Head Gardener at nearby Upton House, our venue that afternoon. Our car boot sale in the car park there was soon over because rhododendrons raised from wild-collected seed were sold for 50p!

We were able to tour the garden through the kindness of Viscount Bearsted, who was in residence. It forms part of the extensive Upton Estate. We entered by the side of the house, passing a good *Liriodendron tulipifera* which was still green, and reaching the back of the house we crossed an immaculate lawn edged by cedars and yews. On leaving the lawn we descended to the Bog Garden where the autumn colour of *Cercidiphyllums* was beginning, and where a

new planting of *Acer* will be well exhibited in a few years' time. A further descent through the rose garden brought us to a large fish pond. We walked along one shore before ascending the steep slope between two classic herbaceous borders where some flowers still sparked bravely amidst general recession. We came to the bed which contains the National Collection of Asters and if memory serves, only 22 varieties are absent. One of the transverse terraces displayed a remarkable avenue of tree poppies, *Romneya coulteri*, and some were still in flower. The end of the terrace has a fine view across the fish pond and valley to undulating farmland beyond, where *Quercus rubra* had begun to glow.

Our second garden of the afternoon was at Brook Cottage, Alkerton, six miles west of Banbury, and the home of Mr. and Mrs. David Hodges. It is a plantsman's garden, orderly and trim as this model Oxfordshire village. Its contents have been studiously selected and carefully disposed. This was apparent in a group of variegated hollies planted for contrast, and another of conifers with a similar theme which included *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* 'Pembury Blue', *C. pisifera* 'Boulevard' and *Cupressus glabra*. It was possible to compare two graceful brambles, *Rubus cockburnianus* and *thibetanus*, across a concave lawn and circular pond. Further instructive comparisons were revealed in group plantings of *Betula*, *Cotoneaster*, *Salix*, *Sorbus*, and shrub and species roses. *Salix melanostachys* and *sachalinensis* were large, and the hips of the roses stippled their part of the garden with cardinal red in a blanc October sun. David Farnes presented the owners with *Hebe salicifolia* on thanking them for their kindness.

Two more members, Dr. Auckland and Dr. Dingle, had been to SW China in May, and had reached Lijiang, unvisited by Europeans for many years. Florence Auckland's slides that evening showed sociological and geographical aspects, and one breathtaking evocation was an ornate rest-house revealed as shreds of cloud dissolved among the trees of afforested foothills after rain. There were disappointments, however: access to the high ground was barred, progress was circumscribed, and no fewer than 16 of the 21 members had the sub-tropical squitters. On Sunday morning Hugh Dingle showed us a selection of Chinese plants which had been allowed to grow freely, including *Cupressus duclouxiana*.

The party was dismayed to find that the rhododendrons are cleared, cut for fuel or grazed so that few are left to attain as much as 4' (1.3m). Hugh was lucky to find some plants which had escaped.

The last illustrated lecture was by Mr. E. G. Millais on rhododendrons in the wild and on the conditions we should afford them in our gardens. He told us how he grows them and listed the ingredients of the planting mixture, and diligent notes were taken. He adds 4oz of gypsum and 2oz of superphosphate to the soil when planting, and advised that Roseplus and Toprose are good general fertilisers for rhododendrons if used before the end of June. They are unsuitable for *R. sanguineum* and its forms, and for *Taliensias*. His splendid slides showed species and hybrids, including some new introductions from the USA.

All present found time during the weekend to pore admiringly over the album of prints compiled by John Bodenham of the spring tour of Devon and Dorset.

Rhododendron 'Wilsoni'

This is a synonym of 'Laetevirens' but is the name preferred by Mr. Wilf Cosham of Plymouth, who has rediscovered this compact and winsome primary cross (*concinnum* × *ferrugineum*). He gardens on a steep north-facing slope above a creek of the River Yealm, with a view across to Newton Ferrers on the farther bank. His plant was acquired as a cutting from an old garden at Ivybridge, S. Devon, and rooted for him by his friend Mr. S. Chapman. Now, seven years later, it is a rounded plant 3' across with many mauve-pink flowers. Wilf showed a spray to Major Magor, who

sent it to Edinburgh where its identity was confirmed by Dr. Cullen as *concinnum* not *carolinianum* × *ferrugineum* as previously listed. Major Reynolds, Bovey Tracey, also has a 'Wilsoni'. Wilf has compared the plants with him and they are the same. Few of the early crosses are so compact and even the slow 'Nobleanum' is eventually large as visitors to Bodnant will know.

Book Review

Rhododendron Hybrids — A Guide to their Origins by Homer E. Salley and Harold E. Greer

391p., 7 appendices, 3 pages of line drawings of flower and leaf shaped and 600 colour illustrations. Batsford, £45.00.

This is a book for the rhododendron hybrid enthusiast which fills a long-felt gap in the literature on hybrids. Started by Harold Greer, a nurseryman with wide experience of the genus, and his father nearly 30 years ago, it was taken over by Homer Salley in 1979 and completed when Mr. Greer found he had insufficient time. Dr. Salley and his wife are well known to members of the Group who attend the annual Tour.

The book sets out alphabetically 4000 named hybrids and, despite the title, includes selected forms of species, giving parentage, name of hybridiser, date of raising/registration and any awards received. The text is supported by excellently reproduced colour plates and for those seeking further information a short bibliography is included.

In all, a highly recommended book which may well come to be regarded as 'the stud book'. If there is a fault it is perhaps that the names of the individual hybrids or species might with advantage have been printed either in heavier type or been underlined.

Rhododendron & Camellia Group Greetings Cards

A stock of Mrs. Jack's *R. haematodes* Greetings Cards is still available for members, in packs of 5 with envelopes, price 15p per card plus postage.

Apply: Major E. W. M. Magor, Lamellen, St. Tudy, Bodmin, Cornwall, PL30 3NR.

South West Branch outings, spring 1986

On Saturday 12 April, 70 members and their guests gathered on the forecourt of Bickton Agricultural College, at East Budleigh in Devon, where we were welcomed by Ralph Budge on behalf of the Governors. A very interesting visit followed. He conducted us round the large grounds, assisted by Richard Fulcher, the Garden Manager. At the end of the tour, Ralph was presented with *R. unguenii* for the College grounds.

After a picnic lunch overlooking the large lake, we drove to Metcombe Brake, Higher Metcombe, SW of Ottery St. Mary, where we were greeted by John and Valerie Fielden. As we assembled in the drive we all admired a fine *Camellia reticulata* 'Captain Rawes' growing against the house. Rain threatened but did not spoil our visit, and we led off through the North Wood with its fine carpet of daffodils. On reaching the south end of the lawn, we saw, beyond a group of *calophyllum* seedlings, a shapely 'Avalanche' with large swelling buds just about to open. Then we dispersed for a stroll up the gently rising lawn, with the woods on either side full of colour. In the South Wood we passed a fine *lutescens*, and crossing stream, reached a stand of 'Loderi'. On return to the house a large *R. 'Nobleanum Venustum'* was flowering well by the lawn. Before leaving, Bruce Archibald presented Valerie Fielden with a *R. bureavii*.

A short drive took all to Fernwood near Ottery, where Bert and Renee Hollinrake, who had accompanied us to the earlier gardens, greeted us at the base of their fine *Camellia* 'Francie L'. Alas, in the late season all the buds were tightly closed. Everyone admired this fine plantsman's garden, so beautifully laid out and immaculately maintained. Afterwards Brian Pridham expressed our warm thanks and presented Bert with one of his choice *R. recurvoides*.

On Saturday 3 May a record attendance of over one hundred members and their guests assembled at Penheale Manor near Launceston to be welcomed by Mrs. Diana Colville. We toured the grounds in two parties, one being led by Rennie Moffat, for many years Head Gardener at Penheale. There was plenty of colour for all to enjoy: Rhododendron 'Penheale Blue' nos. 1 and 2 in dark and light blue, outstanding *racemosum*. 'Caerhays Lawrence', *calophytum* pink form, Magnolia 'Caerhays Surprise', and many camellias were admired in the walled gardens and in the woods. Bruce Archibold presented Mrs. Colville with an *argyrophyllum*, and everyone had a chance to buy choice plants from the nursery.

After a picnic beneath the trees, the drive from Penheale Manor to Werrington was memorable for the VIP treatment afforded us by the Launceston police who provided an escort for our convoy of sixty cars! At Werrington we were joined by Walter Magor, Robbie Jack, and others. Walter kindly volunteered to accompany Roger Bradshaw, the young Head Gardener, who had asked for assistance. Werrington Park is on the Devon-Cornwall border two miles N of Launceston. The highest part of the park to the west is a mature beech-wood. Here the late Mr. J. C. Williams surrounded 7 acres with a deer fence and began to plant his 'Terrace Garden' with original plants grown from seed sent from China by E. H. Wilson and George Forrest. Very many of these plants retain their original lead labels.

On entering the gate into the wood there is a hedge of 'Temple Belle' 15' high and 26 yards long. Nearby is a domed *williamsianum* then a 30 yard hedge of 'Humming Bird', and just below, a very rare conifer, *Pseudotsuga forrestii*, which was only collected once by Forrest in the Mekong valley. A second tree stands 50 yards further east and these were thought to be the only ones in the UK. Walter Magor tells me that there are also others at Edinburgh BG and Leonardslee, Lower Beeding, and that

at the 1930 Conifer Conference, which he attended, it was exhibited from Borde Hill and Headfort, Co. Meath. There is a group of *R. anthosphærum* close by, with startling magenta-purple flowers.

In the central area is a tall double hedge of *neriiflorum* F6780 with glistening scarlet flowers. It seeds itself freely on nearby mossy stumps. There is a vast group of *haematodes* awarded the FCC when shown by the late Commander Williams in 1926, when he gained another FCC for the famous *lacteum*. These are at the west end of the wood and are now very overshadowed, leggy and dying out. Near is a leaning 50' magnolia, *M. campbellii* subsp. *mollicomata* Lanarth Group (syn. *M. campbellii* subsp. *mollicomata* convar. *williamsiana*), and just below tall Scots pines adjacent, an excellent group of *R. meddianum* F15767 in full bright flower. A return along the north edge of the wood revealed a long hedge of 'Endsleigh Pink' (effectively a pink *arboreum*), a group of *hunnewellianum* near the gate, and a big round *dichroanthum*. *R. arizelum* and *calophytum* of great size are standing in impressive parties and seeding the mossy ground close by.

These are some of the fine plants we saw. Many more need to be identified. Truly, this woodland garden holds a unique collection. In the words of Rob Williams, the owner, it is more of a 'living museum' than a garden, and he is keen that it should be preserved. It is to be hoped that more identification, relabelling and propagation will be done before more rarities are lost. At the end of our visit Roger Bradshaw was presented with a large *smirnowii* for Mr. Williams to add to his collection. The members then dispersed through the parkland at the close of a very well-supported, interesting and enjoyable day.

Note: The subject of the talk at the Branch's Rhododendron Evening on Friday, 28 November (see Forthcoming Events) will be 'Rhododendrons of the Sikkim Himalaya and Nepal'.

R. A. W. REYNOLDS