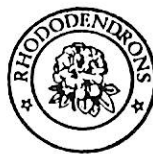


The Rhododendron & Camellia Group



BULLETIN No. 33 - December 1986

Forthcoming Events

February 24 RHS Annual General Meeting
March 17-18 Camellia & Rhododendron Competitions
Magnolia and Ornamental Plant Competitions

April 25-26 Cornwall Garden Society Spring Flower Show
April 28-29 Rhododendron, Camellia and Daffodil Shows
May 3-7 Rhododendron & Camellia Group Sussex Tour

Congratulations

Members will be pleased to note this excerpt from the October issue of the Irish Garden Plant Society Newsletter about Miss Mary Forrest, organiser of the Group's Irish branch:

'Congratulations. The society wishes Mary Forrest every success on her recent appointment as lecturer in the Department of Horticulture, University College, Dublin'.

Many members, especially those who have been on the spring tours of 1980 and onwards, will be very pleased to read of Mrs Jane David's engagement, and marriage in December, to Dr Ross Hayter, a fellow member of the International Dendrology Society. They will live at Ross's home at Yackandandah, Victoria, Australia.

Mr John A. Slocock

It is announced with regret that Mr John A. Slocock, of Tilford, Farnham, Surrey, died on 21 July 1986.

'The Rhododendron Leaf' by Dr J. M. Cowan

Mr John Sanders has a mint photostat copy of this important work that he is willing to exchange (not to sell), for a copy in good condition of 'The Rhododendron Yearbook, no. 6, 1951-52'. Those who are interested are invited to telephone him (0276 73479) or write to him at Badger Cottage, Guildford Road, Bagshot, Surrey GU19 5AS.

Copy for 'Rhododendrons 1987-88'

Mr John Sanders, editor of the yearbook, appeals for copy for the next issue, to arrive not later than 30 April 1987. He is especially anxious to have a larger response to 'Rhododendron, Magnolia and Camellia Notes'. It need be no more than a paragraph or two on an observation made amongst these genera during the season, and it is a chance to report any opinion, problem or triumph which will interest other devotees. Mr J. F. McQuire will not be reporting on the Rhododendron species classes at the RHS Rhododendron Competition and Show in 1987, so John Sanders urgently requires another member to succeed Mr McQuire to comment on and record the entries for the species classes at these events.

News from the Branches

The Hon. Bulletin editor receives newsletters giving details of forthcoming meetings and visits from the South West and Wessex Branches. He wishes to be apprised of events in the East Anglia, Ireland, Midlands and South East Branches, too, and would be pleased if their organisers would send their newsletters regularly to: Patrick Haworth, Tirionfa, 240 Chester Road, Hereward Green, Loughton, Essex IG10 2LR.

Cornwall Gardens Festival 1987. Exhibition of plants originating in Cornwall — Rhododendrons

At the Flower Show at Trelissick on 25 and 26 April there will be an exhibition of plants raised in Cornwall which have received awards from the Royal Horticultural Society, notably camellias, daffodils, magnolias and rhodo-dendrons.

Some of the earliest rhododendron hybrids were raised by

Richard Gill, working at Tremough for the Shilson family, and by Samuel Smith, working at Penjerrick for the Fox family. As these two collections are no longer maintained, difficulty is being experienced in obtaining exhibits of some of the important early rhododendron hybrids, and these are listed below:

Gill (Tremough):

'Beauty of Tremough', FCC 1902
'Delight', AM 1929
'Duke of Cornwall', AM 1907
'Ernest Gill', AM 1918
'Fireball', AM 1925
'Gill's Gloriosa', AM 1925
'Gill's Triumph', AM 1906
'Shilsonii', AM 1900
'Trelawny', AM 1936
'William Watson', AM 1925

Smith (Penjerrick):

'Barclayi Robert Fox',
cl., AM 1921
'Cornish Cross',
AM 1925
'Cornubia', AM 1912
'Glory of Penjerrick',
AM 1904
'Penjerrick', AM 1923
'Werei', AM 1921

If any member has a plant of any of these old hybrids, and would be willing to supply material for a vase of it, or alternatively has a good photograph (preferably a transparency) which they would be willing to lend, would they very kindly contact Walter Magor, at Lamellen, St Tudy, Bodmin, Cornwall PL30 3NR, tel. 0208 850207.

Rhododendron ponticum in North Wales

Anyone who disbelieves the extent of colonisation by Rhododendron ponticum's dilute form in North Wales should study the woodland seen from the narrow-gauge Ffestiniog Railway between Minffordd and Tan-y-Bwlch or Dduallt. A high humidity, a generous rainfall of 45-60 inches a year, and up to almost twice the upper limit at c2900', and, in many parts, the canopy of the indigenous sessile oaks, are all conducive to its rampancy. It is even tolerant of some alkalinity, seeding itself on the piles of slate waste above Blaenau Ffestiniog.

The Nature Conservancy Council, the Snowdonia National Park authority, ecologists, farmers and foresters are perturbed by the advance of bracken and 'Rhododendron Ponticum' in North West Wales. This year there have been articles on both invaders in 'New Scientist', a television programme, 'Groundswell', and a radio discussion of colonisation by ponticum.

In short, burning and the use of scrub killers have had no lasting effect, and the alarming suggestion was made in the radio programme that a disease lethal to Rhododendron should be introduced and applied to ponticum to halt its spread. The implication for select species and choice hybrids in Welsh gardens prompted Mr John Bond of the Savill and Valley Gardens in Windsor Great Park to write to the Chairman of the Group. The Chairman has written to agrochemical firms to enquire whether there is, or shortly will be, a chemical to suppress ponticum. No disease is known which will specifically destroy large expanses of ponticum, and there is no assurance that an exotic disease would not harm cultivated rhododendrons, too.

Bruce Archibold wishes to hear from members who have destroyed ponticum by other means than grubbing.

Rhododendrons in Czechoslovakia

A pleasant surprise of the International Dendrology Society tour

of Czechoslovakia in June 1985 was the discovery that the wholly hardy hybrid rhododendrons are highly valued in Central Europe. Continental horticulturalists are constantly aware of their indebtedness to the pioneer hybridists who strove to produce the indestructibly hardy rhododendrons dismissed as coarse or dull by fortunate growers of sensitive species and H3 crosses.

The most cold-resistant rhododendrons are prized not only for their free flowering in a land where winter is profound and prolonged, but also as a resource for future breeding programmes to produce very hardy plants with some of the aesthetically pleasing characters of the Sino-Himalayan species successful in the British Isles.

The old hardy hybrids are typically present 'en masse' beneath the fine collection of trees in the Schloss park at Pruhonice near Prague. The park was planted in the English manner by Graf Silva-Tarouca in the late nineteenth century. At the time of our visit in June it was too late to see them at their peak.

Dr Karel Hieke at the nearby Institute of Ornamental Gardening endeavours to satisfy the obviously keen local demand for new resilient hybrids. His meticulous ten-year research programme based on over 600 large-flowered rhododendrons is in progress. The Arboretum Nový Dvůr at Opava, a branch of the Silesian Museum, is another place where rhododendron hybridisation is pursued, and at both Institute and Arboretum some exciting developments are taking place.

Cynthia Postan

Magnolias by the Severn

The airy hosts of white and pink magnolia flowers seen on a showery day in a Worcestershire garden provided the most vivid recollection of this year's late spring. Mr Roger Turner has housed his magnolias in an oblong, enclosed garden within the Arboretum at Arley House, Upper Arley, near Bewdley, and such a display as theirs is rarely seen outside Cornwall. The garden at Arley House was open on 4 May, and it will be open again on a similar date in 1987 — details will appear in the National Garden Scheme's 'Yellow Book'. Members who have a special affection for magnolias, and those who have not yet seen the effect of a bevy of them, are urged to make an entry in pencil in their new diaries now.

When the visitor sees the garden now, it is hard to imagine what was there before. The Arboretum is part of the Arley Estate and when Mr Turner bought the estate 28 years ago, the Arboretum had been neglected for 30 years. He first removed 120 moribund and suppressed trees, and then devoted two years to clearing the undergrowth. The area where the magnolias are now was a defunct orchard, and the ground was covered by a knee-deep accretion of the pulp of decomposing fruit. The present yew arbour or summer-house is on the site of a pigsty whose occupants had long been in their porcine purgatory. The fruit trees were cleared away, and the area was initially planted with *Acer japonicum* and *palmatum* cultivars. They proved languid so Mr Turner dispensed with them, too, and made a tentative planting of magnolias. Their early response was auspicious, and Mr Turner was encouraged to devote this part of the garden to them. Most of the magnolias are now fifteen years old, shapely and floriferous young trees.

His policy has been to plant in quantity the trees and shrubs that do best in this attractive part of Worcestershire, and the magnolia collection is neither a botanical one nor comprehensive. It contains *Magnolia acuminata*, *denudata*, *grandiflora*, *kobus*, *liliflora* 'Nigra', × *loebneri* 'Leonard Messel', *officinalis*, *salicifolia*, *sinensis*, × *soulangiana*, *stellata*, *stellata* 'Rosea', *tripetala*, × *watsonii* and *wilsonii*. The garden is bounded on its longest sides by a high old red brick wall, and by a dense square-cut hedge of revived yew, which had earlier been unkempt trees thirty feet high. The beds of magnolias are seen from closely mown paths or rides, and some of the paths are paved. A cultural experiment which is proving successful is the progressive mulching of the beds with an ample depth of coarse wood peelings from the estate's forestry operation. The peelings are produced in large quantities, have a pleasing appearance, drain freely, and suppress weeds. Such mulches have so far been associated with gardens in the USA rather than the British Isles. The sawdust from British sawmills is not coarse enough to drain as freely as North American sawdust and the Arley peelings. These will eventually cover all of the magnolia beds there.

Each bed is edged by a hedge of step-over height of what we call 'box' for now, and the garden's perspectives can be seen from arches in the yew hedge and from a doorway in the wall. The better trees of the old arboretum have been retained, and provide a protective background for the magnolia garden. The whole is a model of trim presentation, and the magnolias' flowers astound and elate the visitor to this Midlands garden.

Patrick Haworth

The Westbirt Weekend, 31 October — 2 November

Candle-lit pumpkins grinned vacuously at the thirty-six members who assembled in the dining room of the Hare and Hounds, Westonbirt, on Hallowe'en. Witches and warlocks were soon dispelled as old friendships were renewed and new ones made.

On the morning of 1st November we went less than a mile to Westonbirt Arboretum, and were soon lost to view amidst the vast extent of the national collection of trees. The auspicious gleam of an early sun was doused before it had cleared the limes on The Downs and the day became damp and grey. Such is the content of the arboretum that we were largely oblivious of this and acutely aware of the displays made by *Acer cappadocicum*, *Parrotia persica* and *Sorbus sargentiana*. There are large numbers of rare trees with one or few representatives, and a small number with many examples such as *Acer cappadocicum*, *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* and *Tsuga heterophylla*. The keenest pleasure offered by this place is that it contains, for example, four paulownias other than *P. tomentosa*, and *Liquidambar styraciflua* in quantity but *L. acalycina* and *L. formosana*, too, and all can be compared.

Every visit to a large garden or collection could be enhanced by a published inventory for reference on the spot, and the presence of 'A list of trees and shrubs at Westonbirt Arboretum' in the Visitor Centre was as happy a discovery as *Acer cappadocicum* var. *sinicum* or *Cotoneaster foveolatus*. A small group of us put the computer print-out of locations, and its associated maps to the test, and having jubilantly found a young hornbeam, *Carpinus turczaninowii*, one of four at Westonbirt, devoted a raw afternoon to Silk Wood's cork trees, hickories and oaks. *Quercus* is one of the more diverse and compelling genera, and on this round it was extraordinary to find all three of the collection's *Quercus pyrenaica* and one of two *Q. p.* 'Pendula' for good measure. When we reached the Waste Gate it was too dark for photography, and time for a restorative cup of tea at the hotel.

That evening Lady Cynthia Postan showed her slides of Galician gardens and their camellias, seen on an International Dendrology Society visit to north west Spain. Patrick Haworth then showed a selection from ten gardens seen during the previous year, including the Arley House magnolias described elsewhere, and Borde Hill and Wakehurst Place, which whetted interest in the 1987 tour's Sussex itinerary.

On our way to the Wildfowl Trust at Slimbridge on a memorably brilliant Sunday morning, it was pleasant to wind and swing our way down the western scarp of the Cotswolds through shimmering beech hangers in russet and grey to Dursley and Cam, attractive by general acclaim. The Slimbridge wetlands and their context of the estuarine Severn are best seen from the viewing tower there, where the visitor can study the Forest of Dean in the vicinity of Blakeney on the farther shore. The geese were numerous on the Trust's pathways, and our arrival prompted much staccato anserine comment and many a sardonic glance. The red-breasted geese have a striking pattern of red-brown, black and white, and the mandarin ducks successfully blend the flamboyant with the comical. Canvasbacks from the north west USA resemble the pochard of the British Isles, and they shared a pool with mottled puna teal, which have surprising metallic blue legs and bills. We learnt that the vivid pinkness of flamingoes is caused by xanthocanthin, a component of their diet, and this is supplied to the Slimbridge flocks seen from the restaurant from which we reluctantly dispersed after an educative and convivial Gloucestershire weekend.

RHS Rhododendron and Camellia Group Tour of Sussex Gardens, 3-7 May 1987

An earlier date has been chosen for 1987 because the only hotel which could accommodate sufficient numbers was already fully booked for the later dates. The hotel is the Roebuck at Wych Cross, south of Forest Row near East Grinstead, a 3-star hotel with a good reputation. As the hotel is central for the gardens we

will visit - all within a radius of 10-15 miles, we will be able to stay at one hotel for the duration of the tour.

At present it is planned to visit the last two gardens on 7 May, the last day of the tour, so accommodation will be held for the night of the 7th for any members who do not wish to make the journey home on the same day. The accommodation will be optional, and the official length of the tour is four days and four nights, meeting on the night of the 4th and dispersing in the later afternoon of the 7th.

The gardens' nearness to each other obviates the hire of a coach but members will probably prefer to 'double up' using their own car. Members without cars can be accommodated by others in the party as in previous years.

The gardens to be visited include Borde Hill, Heaselands, Nymans, Sheffield Park, Wakehurst Place and others, with one or two private gardens. The cost will be approximately £130.00 per person for the four days, not including lunches. If you wish to join the Group send the completed form below, with a deposit of £20.00 to the Hon. Tours Secretary, Mrs V. M. Archibold, Starveacre, Dalwood, nr. Axminster, East Devon, EX13 7HH.

New Rhododendron reference work published

RHODODENDRON HYBRIDS — A COMPENDIUM BY PARENT by Dr Lansing W. Bulgin is now available. The compendium satisfies two-fold need for the hybridiser and the interested student of rhododendron hybrids: 1) it is an updating of the Royal Horticultural Society Rhododendron Handbook, Part II, known as the Stud Book, last published in 1969; and 2) it provides a comprehensive listing of American and Canadian hybrids registered since the inception of the American Rhododendron Society Plant Registry in 1956. For the most part American and Canadian registrations were excluded from the RHS work.

The compilation consists of three sections: first, a listing by parent of each hybrid and the year of registration. There are over 3700 entries in this section including registrations from the United Kingdom, Europe, Australia and New Zealand, as well as those from North America. Section two consists of hybrids whose parentage is unknown. Section three is an alphabetical list of hybrids included in the first section, providing a cross reference to registered hybrids and their parents. The 200-page work has an easily read large typeface and an 8½ × 11" format with -plastic comb binding to ease its use as a practical reference book.

The author is a rhododendron propagator, hybridiser and nurseryman. He is past president of the ARS Portland Chapter and holder of the ARS Bronze Medal.

The compendium may be obtained directly from the author at a cost of \$13.50 (US) + \$1.50 for handling and posting within the United States. For Canadian and overseas shipments (surface), add \$2.50 for shipping. Orders, with remittance, should be addressed to Ellanhurst Gardens, Route 3, Box 223-B, Sherwood, Oregon 97140.

The forget-me-grot, or an excursion into hypogeal gardening in the Scottish Lowlands

Some levity is in order as Christmas approaches. This sample came to the editor in the form of a chatty letter from Robbie Jack at Holehird, or rather Edgemoor, and he confirms that it conforms to the Disposal of *Myosotis* (Scotland) Regulations 1927.

'I have just discovered how useful a hole is. Yes, a hole — in the garden. Simple as that. Every garden should have one. I can't understand why no single gardening authority has ever been heard to say so. Mine? — well, yes. Large? — of course, and deep, too, about the size of an elephant trap. Seriously, it's as big as that. I needed soil for the new border and there was some good soft sandy stuff going to waste in the line of a proposed new garden path.

Pick-axe, navy-shovel, wheelbarrow, much effort and perspiration — yes, mine actually, and I had the new border and this vast hole. The idea of filling it with unwanted gravel and stones has been suspended for the time being. The summer climax of waste greenery, cuttings, mowings, prunings — everything disappears from sight. Even noxious weeds — those unmentionable with creeping stems and indestructible roots can safely be consigned to the depths. They will be exhausted to the point of dissolution long before they can resurface.

The whole issue has become fundamental to good gardening. In fact, so indispensable that I can't think how I managed in the past. Actually, I do know how, but it was definitely more tedious and difficult.

The grot had been made and was fully into stride when I came to clear up the forget-me-not and honesty (*Lunaria rediviva*) after flowering. The former especially has to be watched closely once it fades. Admire it in flower when it follows the early spring bulbs, but forget about it afterwards at risk. At least, that is true here. Perhaps it is the particular strain or condition — the sandy soil and moist, cool spring weather. It thrives and is enchanting and ours, incidentally, is a lovely sky-blue. Each plant makes a cushion up to a foot across, so you see we don't need many plants to make a display. We have it in informal patches here and there, a bright blue ground cover. If I tell you that we have never ever sown a single seed of forget-me-not you will understand the point of having a hole to bury the spent plants before they add yet more seeds to the fully adequate dormant reserve in the soil. The garden became inoculated with forget-me-not, with some plants coming from my grandmother's garden fifty years ago. All we do is hoe down the annual surplus and keep a few. *Myosotis*.

You think it sounds delightful? Well, it is — in moderation. You would like a plant or two? Of course, you can have some, but do remember to dig a hole for the spent flowers next spring. Indispensable! I don't know how anyone can manage without one.'

Robbie Jack

(A healthy and carefully lifted and tied batch was handed to me at one of the autumn shows in Vincent Square. I was surprised, having forgotten about them. They were planted at the beginning of November, and I can tell by the disposition of the leaves that the plants are poised to advance across our garden, too, under the impression that they have not departed Edgemoor. Ed.)

Autumn visit to Blackhills by Alan J. B. Anderson

This account first appeared in 'The Scottish Rhododendron Society — Views and News from the Scottish Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society', no. 9, November 1986, and is reprinted here by the very kind permission of Mr Edmund Wright, Hon. Secretary-Treasurer of the Scottish Rhododendron Society.

Saturday 27 September dawned sunny in the North-East of Scotland, but dampness in the air was demonstrated by glistening dew on the croquet lawn in front of Blackhills House as 16 members of the Society assembled under a grand old beech. Amid the usual banter, those of us from Aberdeen were able to smile smugly at tales of early rising from our Western friends as wellingtons were donned and we were warmly welcomed by our host, Mr John Christie. The name "Blackhills" is mentioned with a certain awe in rhododendron circles partly because it has not often been open to the public and, indeed, only two of our number had seen the collection before. The map and species lists lent us by Mr Christie were eagerly scanned as he led us off along the well-kept grass paths (maintained only by volunteer assistance).

Even fanatical rhododendron lovers recognise the beauties of other genera and a tall floriferous *Eucryphia* won immediate praise as did a *Desfontainea spinosa*; a few moments later, magnificent *Davidia involucrata* initiated a debate on the possibility of its being var. *vilmoriniana*; and the sun flashing

through the fluttering leaves of a red oak really set the cameras clicking.

Of course, it was the collection of rhododendrons that we had mainly come to see and leaf shapes were soon being admired, indumentum examined and Mervyn Kessell was seen disappearing into the undergrowth clutching knife and plastic bags; Mr Christie's permission for such forays had been obtained, I hasten to add. As usual, nomenclature worries came to the fore — "We've not brought our chemistry sets" was the dry comment of one well-known personage — and, despite assurances on the quality of Blackhills records, Ed Wright was soon querying the identification labels on plants, particularly a *R. vialii* (not in cultivation?).

Blackhills is essentially a species garden; from about 1922 onwards seeds from the major collections were sown or young plants obtained and the resulting specimens now show the majesty of maturity. The micro-climate of the area is ideally free of wind but the early plantings on the north side of the valley have always been prone to drying out. Nevertheless, there can be found *R. basilicum*, *coriaceum*, *delavayi* (?KW3948), *diaprepes* F27727, *eriogynum*, *fulvum* F24110, *griffithianum*, *houlstonii*, *kyawii* F24680, *lukiangense*, and *praestans* R11008, amongst the other "commoner" species. Across to the south side of the upper pond, we could see perfectly reflected in its still waters the massed plantings that benefit from less exposure to the sun and which we were to explore after lunch.

The party insisted on a detour round the lower pond (constructed about 20 years ago by Sylvester Christie) even though there are no rhododendrons in that area. Then we followed tracks through the "Warren" (a number of wayward members got lost here!) past the remains of a 250-year old curling pond long since abandoned as such once the surrounding tree growth inhibited regular ice formation. We came across a birch said to be 170 years old and with bark fissured like a pine, but the main trees are hemlocks (seeding everywhere), *Picea omorika*, *Abies pindrow*, and the elegant *Abies concolor lowiana*. A large number of *thomsonii* were admired here together with some *sinogrande*, *basilicum*, *alutaceum* F19567 (this collection is listed as *iodes* — now *alutaceum* var. *iodes* — in the Rhododendron Handbook 1980, ed.), and some of the SBEC *lacteum* which Mr Christie felt benefited from proximity to very acid alder stumps. We were finally stopped in our tracks by *calvescens* F25636 (not in cultivation?). After this find, we made our way under the largest *Chrysolepis chrysophylla* in the country to a comfortable outhouse where tables were set out for our picnic lunch.

We had only an hour after lunch to press through densely seeded growth of the scented *Impatiens balsamina* to explore the south side of the upper pond with its mass plantings of Forrest, Rock and Kingdon Ward treasures. Though the plants are straggling upwards somewhat due to over-dense plantings, an amazing list of species names was soon being called out as members spread around — *araiophyllum* F26445, *basilicum* F24139, *beesianum* R10896 and R10908, *catacosmum* F20078, *cerasinum* KW5830, *clementinae* F25917, *coriaceum* F25622, *crassum* F20118, *facetum* F24592, *hookeri*, *hunnewellianum*, *johnstoneanum* KW7732, *magnificum*, *meddianum*, *montroseanum* KW6261, *rex* R11207, *roxieanum* R11123 and *sphaeroblastum* F21405.

By 3 o'clock, rain was threatening and we were welcomed into the House to a warm fire and slide projector. Some of the pictures had been taken by Mr Christie's great-uncle who purchased the estate and was a pioneer of colour photography so that we were able to see the grounds when only a few hardy hybrids held sway. Later slides, some taken on a previous visit by Mr and Mrs Scott, showed breathtaking cascades of springtime blossom. Mr

Christie, in responding to our very sincere "Thank you", expressed the hope that we would soon return during the flowering season. With such happy memories of a very pleasant visit, I am sure that we will.

Midland Branch news and appeal

The autumn meeting on 7 November was attended by about twenty members, when Ken Hulme of Ness Gardens gave an extremely interesting illustrated talk. A members' plant sale followed and many unusual species and hybrid rhododendrons were available. The Branch organiser, Neil Maybury, announced at the meeting that it was hoped to arrange a garden visit in May 1987, and there was a possibility that a party from the Branch could visit Lady Adam Gordon's garden, Hethersett. However, volunteers were urgently required to organise this event, and if they were not forthcoming, sadly the event would not take place.

Neil Maybury explained that the Branch had now been going for over three years, and he felt that it was essential that a new organising committee took over. He asked for volunteers and indicated that if none were forthcoming sadly the Branch would cease.

(Mr Maybury reports that there have been no responses since the meeting, and, obviously, he feels discouraged. He will not have time in 1987 to organise the Branch, and his able past helpers all face the same difficulty).

Books wanted

Michael Thornley, a Group member, notes that it appears that one of the few 'perks' of being an editor is to advertise for his own library, strictly for editorial research, of course. In his capacity as Editor of the Newsletter of the Scottish Rhododendron Society he is following John Sanders' lead and is looking for copies of the following Year Books: Nos. 1, 5, 6, 7 and 8 and years 1969, 1970, 1971, 1976 and 1977. He would be very pleased to pay the going rate for any copies. He also has one spare copy each of nos. 14, 16, 17 and 18, and in passing wonders if any member has a copy to spare of H. R. Fletcher's 'A Quest of Flowers': the plant exploration of Frank Ludlow and George Sherriff, Edinburgh University Press. If any member can help, please contact Michael Thornley at Glenarn, Glenarn Road, Rhu, Dunbartonshire GB4 8LL (0436 820 493) where, incidentally, Group members are very welcome.

The Cornwall Gardens Festival, a rare opportunity

The festival, organised by the Cornwall Garden Society to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the County Flower Show, offers the chance of a lifetime to see 45 Cornish gardens, including the County Demonstration Garden and Arboretum, and the Rosewarne Experimental Horticulture station. Many of the gardens referred to in the delightful 'Shrubs for the milder counties' by W. Arnold Foster will be open, and rhododendrons and camellias are present in them all. The festival spans a little more than a fortnight, from Easter Sunday, 19 April to Bank Holiday Monday, 4 May, and the festival guide is now available from the Secretary, the Cornwall Garden Society (Dr V. Challinor Davies, Chysbryn, Bareppa, Mawnan Smith, nr. Falmouth, Cornwall TR11 5EG, tel. 0326 250356), for £1.00. The guide is worth having *per se*, and it gives the back-ground and the personalities of Cornish gardening as well as the scope and brief history of all the gardens which will be open. The gardens open on any one day are not far from one another, having been carefully grouped to avoid long journeys between dispersed places. The choice of accommodation in the county is vast and capable of absorbing all members who respond to the strident call of Cornish wood-land and coastal gardens.