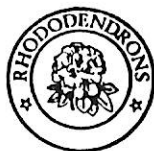


The Rhododendron & Camellia Group



BULLETIN No. 34 - April 1987

Forthcoming Events

April 19 - 4 May	Cornwall Gardens Festival	May 3 - 7	Spring Tour of Sussex
April 25 - 26	County Spring Flower Show, Trelissick, Feock, nr. Truro	May 21	Visit to Bowood, Calne
April 28	Group AGM in London	June 1	Visit to Exbury, nr. Southampton
April 28 - 29	Flower Show	May 19 - 22 May	Chelsea Show
May 2	incl. Rhododendron Competition SW Branch visit to Heligan and Caerhays	June 16 - 17	Early Summer Show
		July 14 - 15	Flower Show

Members' Honours

There will be pride and pleasure in the Group at the high awards made to three of its members in 1986: they are the Victoria Medal of Honour for The Lady Anne Palmer, and for Mr R. A. E. Herbert, President of the RHS, and the Loder Rhododendron Cup for Mr Robert Stephenson Clarke.

Annual General Meeting 1987

The Agenda of the Rhododendron and Camellia Group's Annual General Meeting is given below. The meeting will be held in one of the rooms in the Royal Horticultural Society's New Hall, Greycoat Street, London SW1 at 4pm on Tuesday, 28 April, 1987:

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the previous meeting
3. Matters arising
4. Election of Committee members
5. Chairman's report
6. Secretary's report
7. Any other business
8. Date of next year's meeting.

Under Rule 4(b) of the Constitution three members of the Committee are due to retire annually, but are eligible to stand for re-election. These members are:

Major E. W. M. Magor, and

Mr. J. T. Gallagher

Miss C. E. Perring.

They have indicated their willingness to stand.

In accordance with Rule 10 candidates for election to the Executive Committee shall be proposed and seconded by members of the Group and must sign their nomination papers. These must reach the Returning Officer not less than 14 days before the Annual General Meeting on 28 April 1987.

A Nomination Paper for use by Members appears on Page 4.

Midlands Branch

At the beginning of March, Mr Neil Maybury had still not been succeeded as organiser of the Midlands Branch. New members continue to join the Branch, and Mr Maybury wishes to renew his appeal for a new organiser, originally made in the December issue of the Bulletin. The continuation of the Branch is at stake, yet at three years of age, it is still a new one. Keen satisfaction awaits a new organiser's devotion and seasonal expenditure of time on its affairs.

Camellia japonica 'Yoibijin'

Mr R. P. Wakeford, of Wimbledon, London SW20, writes annually to Walter Magor to report the earliest flowering of a camellia in his garden. He wrote to him on 3rd February to say that he was 'delighted to find one 'Yoibijin' flower which judging from its condition had been flowering for at least a few days'. In view of the brutality of mid-January's weather, this is notable news. Walter comments that "Yoibijin" is a small single pale pink *japonica*, registered by Wada in 1937, included in the 1978 edition of 'Camellia Nomenclature' but dropped from the 1984 edition'.

Visit to Bowood, Calne

The Earl of Shelburne has very kindly consented to conduct a party of members of the Group round the gardens of Bowood House, Calne, Wiltshire, on Thursday, 21 May. The gardens contain a fine collection of rhododendrons and, as a bonus, there are plants for sale!

Will members who are interested in joining the Bowood party please ring or write to the Tours Organiser, Mrs Valerie Archibold, Starveacre, Dalwood, nr. Axminster, East Devon EX13 7HH (tel. (040 488) 221) who will send them full details?

Visit to Exbury Estate

Mr Edmund de Rothschild has very kindly agreed to provide a guided tour of the famous collection at Exbury on Monday, 1 June 1987. Members should assemble at Exbury by 1030 hrs. and either a picnic lunch may be taken, or restaurant facilities are available. Will members wishing to attend please complete and return the attached slip on Page 4, with £2.00 to cover entrance and administration? In order that the number of participants may be advised, will members please return slip and payment by 15 May 1987?

After Exbury, members may wish to visit Mr Peter Chappell's fine garden and nursery at 'Spinners', Boldre, Lymington, Hants., which is within easy reach. It is not proposed to make this an organised visit because the arrival of a large corps at the same time will impose a strain, but if members proceed individually there should be no problem. There is a fine selection of the rarer plants for sale at 'Spinners', and for those interested, a plant list is available from Mr Chappell.

International Rhododendron Conference 1988

The Australian Rhododendron Society's International Rhododendron Conference will take place from October 1 to 5, 1988, at Wollongong, New South Wales, Australia.

A Preliminary Announcement in letter form has been received from Mr J. Clyde Smith, Publicity Officer, who writes:

An International Rhododendron Conference is to be held at the Wollongong University under the auspices of the International Rhododendron Union.

The Conference will be sponsored by the Australian Rhododendron Society as part of the Bicentennial activities celebrating Australia's 200th Anniversary.

The Wollongong City Council and Botanic Gardens, the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney and Sydney University are supporting this Conference and the Illawarra Branch of the Australian Rhododendron Society will be the host organisation.

The major topics of the conference will be the *Azalea* and *Vireya* sections of the genus *Rhododendron*. The programme will include aspects of distribution, cultivation, plant exploration, research and classification.

Time slots will be available for discussion on subjects of general interest.

Complementing the conference session timetable will be visits to local gardens of merit and places of interest in the surrounding countryside, while the last two days of the conference will be devoted to visiting significant major Australian gardens further afield.

Further information will follow later but any immediate enquiries may be addressed to the Rhododendron Conference Organiser, P.O. Box 1988 Wollongong East, 2500, New South Wales, Australia.

Back Numbers of Yearbooks

Mint copies of the following years are still available from our former Treasurer, David Farnes, 'Corton Lodge', 7 Burntwood Avenue, Emerson Park, Hornchurch, Essex RM11 3JD. The prices include second class postage UK and surface rates for overseas.

1978	£1.80
1979-80	£1.80
1980-81	£2.25
1981-82	£3.05
1982-83	£3.55
1983-84	£3.55

A discount of 25p from the total bill may be deducted for an order of four or more books which are ordered at the same time.

At the time of going to press, it was uncertain whether the 1984-85 edition would be available through the Group or from RHS Enterprises and copies of 1985-86 are definitely still obtainable from the RHS. The current edition, 1986-87 is of course supplied to members upon receipt of their annual subscription.

Appeal for plants and information

Mrs Monika Maliye of 145 Astonville Street, London SW18 5AQ, wishes to obtain the Ghent *Azaleas* 'Aurore de Royghem' and 'Graf Alf von Nipping'. Can any member point her to a supplier? These cultivars were once sold by the late Mr Michael Haworth-Booth, Haslemere.

Our General Secretary also wishes to help another enquirer, Mrs R. J. Thirlby, Rock Farm, Seckington, Tamworth, Staffs., BY9 0LA, who has been given two hardy rhododendrons, 'Gertrud Schale' and 'Dr V. H. Rutgers'. Mrs Thirlby wants some cultural details of these plants: they have no entry in Mrs Jackson's reference books. (They do have entries in Salley and Greer, 'Rhododendron Hybrids', p117, 'Gertrud Schale' has 'Translucent scarlet

red flowers', and p82, 'Dr V. H. Rutgers' has 'Flowers bright crimson, fringed. Plant broad, dense; leaves dark green'. They are Hobbie and den Ouden hybrids respectively, and their hardiness is not in doubt. Have other members experience of either plant which can be passed to Mrs Thirlby? Ed.)

'The All-Seasons Garden'

An exciting new book, 'The All-Seasons Garden: how to create colour and interest throughout the year', appears in March 1987. It is by Mr John Kelly, curator of the Abbotsbury Sub-Tropical Garden, co-presenter of 'Gardener's World', and member of the Group. It has 168 pages, illustrated in full colour, and costs £9.95. All members who have heard Mr Kelly's lively erudition at Abbotsbury, or have read him in the Yearbook and the Bulletin, will look forward to queueing patiently and eagerly for their copies now.

A patio in San Sebastian

Jose Almandoz joined the Group in mid-October 1986, our first member in Spain. He is twenty-two years old and his enthusiasm is such that he deserves a wider introduction. He has no garden of his own, and at present all his plants are young ones in containers set out on his patio, where they are protected from salt winds and strong sun. He writes that he has access to his grandmother's and uncle's gardens, where he practises 'true gardening'. Clearly a pioneer of camellia and rhododendron culture in north-west Spain, Sr. Almandoz is devoted to propagation, his hobby, and plans to found a specialised nursery when time and money allow. He has *Clanthus*, *Hydrangea* and *Lapageria* species on his patio, and, last autumn, no fewer than 81 young camellias, including *C. chrysantha*, *oleifera*, *sinensis*, *tsaii*, *Althaeiflora*, *Francie L* and *St Ewe*. In November, he propagated 39 more, including *lutchuensis*, *yuh sienensis* and *yunnanensis*!

Sr. Almandoz has 15 rhododendrons and has used 'Cunningham's White' as a stock for grafts of 50 more, all up-market hybrids whose choice indicates discernment and diligent reading. Any member who has made such a selection as 'China', 'Fulbrook', 'Grosclaude', 'Jack Skilton', 'John Barr Stevenson', 'Queen Elizabeth II' and 'Romany Chal' could reasonably expect to receive coach-parties in his garden this spring! His incipient collection of magnolias (yes, all three of our genera) also shows that he has dived in at the deep end for they are nearly all forms and selections of *Magnolia campbellii*.

Irish Branch Day Tour 1986

On 25 May, 11 members of the Group and their guests met for the annual day tour. This year we visited two gardens in County Dublin, Fernhill and Kilbogget. It was a welcome return visit for those who had participated in the tour of Ireland in 1983. These gardens are described in the Yearbook for that year.

We spent several hours at Fernhill, walking through the rock garden and then on through woodland paths, stopping frequently to admire rhododendrons. There are several large specimens of *Rhododendron arboreum* with pink flowers and leaves with a white indumentum: one has been given the cultivar name 'Fernhill'. There is a fine specimen of *R. keysii*, a 'Barclayi', a *thomsonii* hybrid with large waxen pink blossoms, and a large mound of 'May Day'. As we walked beneath Scots pine we were stopped in our tracks by a stately 'Loderi Titian' in full flower. We continued through the garden and climbed a steep slope to see a specimen of *R. smirnowii*. Unfortunately it was not in flower, but, even so, it was worth seeing the grey-green foliage and the buds with their distinctive leaf scales. When

we retraced our steps we passed notable examples of *augustinii*, *lutescens* and *grande*. Having explored the garden, we visited the nursery run by Robert Walker, where we purchased many interesting plants. We thanked Mrs Walker for a pleasant morning visit to her garden.

From Fernhill we drove across the outskirts of the city to Kilboggett, the home of Mrs Grace Maskell. We were warmly welcomed by Mrs Maskell and invited to ramble round the garden at our leisure. Rhododendrons may have been our main interest and we saw many, but who could resist such unusual plants as the rare conifers *Callitris oblonga*, *Libocedrus plumosa* and *Cupressus cashmiriana*, and the daisy bushes *Olearia chathamica*, *O. cheesemanii* and *O. lacunosa*? My outstanding memory was of an 8-10m tall specimen of *Michelia doltsopa*, clothed in innumerable white flowers. A plant of similar size in the garden where I worked had only three flowers! At the end of the tour we had a welcome cup of tea in the house. We dispersed with pleasant memories of a day's visit to two interesting gardens, with congenial companions. MARY FORREST

South West Branch Rhododendron evening, November 1986

At 1830 on Friday, 28 November, ninety-five Members and their guests assembled at the Edgemoor Hotel, Bovey Tracey, for a Rhododendron evening.

The event opened with a Plant Sale. A huge quantity of plants changed hands at bargain prices, and thanks to our generous donors, £146 was raised for Branch funds.

Half an hour later Kenwyn Clapp and John Bodenham started the Quiz programme, showing a series of forty-eight slides of twenty-four Rhododendron species. Each species was shown twice as the plant, and then the flower, or in some cases a second close-up of the plant, or the reverse of the leaf. Each member was invited to write down his or her identification on a numbered sheet provided, and this gave a further clue as it showed the origin of the slide, ie. Edinburgh BG, Caerhays, Gigha, Inverewe, etc. The majority found it rather difficult but it was very entertaining. The outright winner was our visiting lecturer, Ted Millais, with Walter Magor and Richard Fulcher tied for second place. Each received a nice Rhododendron plant as a prize.

Before the buffet supper Bruce Archibold took the opportunity to tell everyone about the Cornwall Garden Society's Festival. He explained that the Group were mounting a stand at Treliassick on 25 and 26 April, and that volunteers were required to man it, in pairs, for two-hour shifts throughout the weekend. A splendid buffet supper followed, while plant sales continued at the back of the room.

At 2015 Ted Millais began his illustrated talk on the 'Rhododendron of the Sikkim Himalaya and Nepal'. This was the highlight of the evening. The coloured slides of the Himalayan scenery were truly magnificent, with the various species of Rhododendron growing at different levels on the

mountain sides. A lovely dark *R. hodgsonii* below the gleaming snow on the ridge, and the deep divides between the camp sites all conveyed the atmosphere and the grand scale of the Himalayas, the home of so many wonderful species of Rhododendron.

As the talk continued, one or two slides were slipped in of specimen hybrid plants in UK gardens, to illustrate a particular plant. Among notable Americans mentioned were *R. 'Virginia Richards'* and *R. 'Nancy Evans'*, both of multiple parentage. The latter is basically 'Hotei' × 'Lem's Cameo', a brilliant mixture of orange, red and yellow – see p.226 of Salley and Greer, 'Rhododendron Hybrids', for the full pedigree. (This book is indispensable! Ed.) The talk ended with some dramatic travel scenes, one slide showing a very long rope bridge, hanging over a swirling icy torrent, which had to be negotiated by all who pass that way!

Before we dispersed at the end of a very enjoyable evening, diary dates were given of forthcoming events, and briefly they are:

Saturday, 11 April. Visit to Burncoose and Southdown Nurseries, and a visit to Chyverton, Zelah, by kind invitation of Nigel Holman.

Saturday, 2 May. Visit to Heligan, followed by a conducted tour of Caerhays Castle garden, by Julian Williams and Philip Tregunna.

R. A. W. Reynolds

Garden holes and hazards

A lady member has been prompted by the 'forget-me-grot' feature in the December Bulletin to write to Robbie Jack, and explain how she had fallen into a 'tiger-trap pit' in a shrubbery, and had been taken to hospital afterwards. Robbie replied sympathetically, pointing out that his hole had been a 'heffalump'-trap' in the open and plain for all to see. In spite of her mishap, she had been pleased with the article and agreed on how very useful holes in the garden were *if you remember where you put them* – Robbie's italics.

He has resumed cap and bells to write of other garden scares and frustrations. 'In benign moments we can think of those frustrations to our gardening pleasure, like midges in the evening or rain at the weekend, as being a spice which sharpens our appreciation of a sunny day and no midges. Even so, some gardens suffer more rain than others and some again, midges by the million. Friends suffered 137 inches of rain a couple of years ago. Admittedly, it was a wet summer! (Gardeners in a prickly-pear county like Essex will envy them this. Ed.) Again, I know another, this in northern England, where the rhododendron garden is annually abandoned between May and October because of swarms of biting and stinging insects.

These impediments to garden relaxation seemed trivial when recently we received one of those occasional-type newsy letters from an American cousin living in Texas near

the Rio Grande. She complained, 'Gardening was impossible last summer 'cos we had a rattlesnake'. A RATTLESNAKE. Heavens! The mind boggles. Imagine toting a six-shooter while you admire the azaleas. The odd gnat does not rate a mention. Still, some could try to turn even a rattlesnake to advantage. Imagine the scene:

'Darling, you really must mow the lawn. It'll soon be a hayfield'.

'But dear, think of the risk – rattlesnake in the grass – me dead – you a poor widow'.

'Rubbish. You do exaggerate so. Anyway, you could wear wellingtons'.

Robbie Jack

1. 'heffalump' (Scot.) = elephant.

Derek Fox in East Nepal, Autumn 1986

The seed collecting trip to East Nepal (announced in the August 1986 issue of the Bulletin) was, on the whole, highly successful. There were a few unfortunate happenings, but no escapade of this type runs perfectly. One such was when, having reached the tarmac for our internal flight to Biratnagar, we were informed that the plane was unserviceable. This meant a bus journey of over 500 km., all through the night and all next morning. The rough old vehicle, with its spare tyre stuffed in across the back seats, performed its task but took its toll, throwing out weary travellers rather than able trekkers at journey's end, Dhankuta. As a benefit, we saw much of the sub-tropical *terai* and the teeming bird life of the rivers and wetlands. We took another but into the hills to Hille before our trek proper started.

In referring briefly to the rhododendrons, some other Ericaceae and a few relevant shrubs and trees, it may be easier to start at the top and work downhill. We only reached an altitude of 14000 ft. but this was properly in the alpine zone. Although it was bound to be cold at night, snow had arrived some time before us: there was demonstrably little point in pushing further ahead. It was unlikely to achieve much and the time could be better spent a little lower down.

There were four characteristic rhododendrons at this alpine level. The commonest was *R. anthopogon*, then *lepidotum*, and of the true alpine plants there seemed to be only a few *setosum*. All of these were more stunted than at the equivalent level in Sikkim, and were probably in a far drier situation. By comparison, Thangsing seemed constantly awash with snowmelt from the Kanchenjunga range, majestic and beautiful, which we could plainly see from here. The fourth was *R. campanulatum*, which was seen only as the odd plant, there by accident rather than design.

On the way down, *campanulatum* first told us that we had left the alpine zone because there is a clear zone where this plant is dominant. This does not continue, however, for at

about 13000 ft. there is a strong line of *thomsonii* and, surprisingly, this species at the appropriate height, and, presumably, situation, can dominate and virtually exclude all others. As the altitude comes closer to 12000 ft. the rhododendrons become more mixed. *R. campylocarpum*, *cinnabarinum* and *hodgsonii* all jockey for their place, while on exposed sites and rocky headlands *R. anthopogon* and *lepidotum* can still be found. *R. hodgsonii* will grow right to the top of the narrowest exposed ridges, where the leaves may be smaller but the plants still thrive. There is less wind than we are used to in Britain.

The mixture of evergreen and deciduous trees and shrubs covers a large and important zone down to nearly 6000 ft. but at this low level practically all vegetation is outside our notion of hardiness. *Pieris formosa* will be found through much of the hardy zone, and, in a slightly narrower belt, *Enkianthus deflexus*. The former was plentiful, often with gorgeous fresh red foliage as late as November, but seed was very scarce – almost non-existent until a few large specimens were found at about 10000 ft. The *Enkianthus* can have beautiful form besides giving an excellent display of red autumn foliage, exciting in the early morning sunlight. *Lyonia ovalifolia* is another deciduous ericaceous small tree that lives in a broad altitudinal zone. It seems to be little known in gardens. *Camellia kissii* was seen in one area, but there were no flowers, buds or seeds. Every plant was recovering from being cut for fodder, or can the Nepalese make tea with it?

Other rhododendrons indicate a lower altitude. Firstly there is *R. barbatum*, and then on this occasion came a fine batch of *ciliatum* growing out of, and over, a group of rocks on the edge of the descending ridge. One soon returns to the *arboreum* zone. Some of the trees are truly majestic, of considerable age, with trunks of great girth, but still looking healthy and vigorous. Those with the rich cinnamon indumentum are particularly attractive, and I write of them when none are in flower. Below our hardiness zone is the land of epiphytes where everything clings to or clambers on everything else. Here another rhododendron species was spotted both on the way up and again on the way down at about 6500 ft. It was *R. lindleyi*, firstly a well-shaped, well-budded plant without seed, on rocks, and secondly a long and lanky specimen on a tree, and with good fat pods. On the return leg it consorted with *Pleione praecox* in full bloom and *Cymbidium hookerianum* in bud. Good company for one so beautiful and fair. Derek Fox, January 1987

(Mr Fox also submitted his seed list and associated notes. In summary, his list includes these plants which will be of most interest to members of the Group. There is, of course, a large herbaceous component, too, but space does not permit this inclusion.

Rhododendrons anthopogon, arboreum, barbatum, campanulatum, campylocarpum, ciliatum, cinnabarinum, hodgsonii, lepidotum, lindleyi, setosum, thomsonii; Acer caudatum, Castanopsis tribuloides, Holboellia latifolia, Hydrangea heteromalla, Magnolia campbellii, Pieris formosa, Prunus cornuta and Rosa sericea).

THE ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY RHODODENDRON AND CAMELLIA GROUP

Nomination Paper for Candidates for election to the Executive Committee on 28th April 1987.

Name of Candidate Candidate's Signature

Seconded by Signature

Proposer's Signature Date

To: Mrs B. Jackson, Hon. Secretary, The Rhododendron and Camellia Group, 2 Essex Court, Temple, London EC4Y 9AP.

I wish to take part in the visit to Exbury on 1 June, 1987.

I will be accompanied by others and payment of

£ : (at the rate of £2.00 per head) is enclosed.

Please send by 15 May 1987 to: B. Archibold, Esq., 'Starveacre', Dalwood, nr. AXMINSTER, East Devon, EX13 7HH.