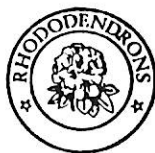


The Rhododendron & Camellia Group



BULLETIN No. 37 - April 1988

Forthcoming Events

1 May, 1988	Irish Branch visit gardens at Carrickmines and Foxrock (near Dublin)	24-27 May, 1988	Chelsea Show
4-5 May, 1988	Main Rhododendron Competition, Vincent Sq.	21-22 June, 1988	Show at Vincent Square (6 classes for rhododendrons)
4 May, 1988	Group Annual General meeting, 4 pm	19-20 July, 1988	Show at Vincent Square (Class for rhododendron in bloom)
7-13 May, 1988	Scottish Tour	20-21 Sept, 1988	Great Autumn Show, Vincent Square
15 May, 1988	Open Day at Woodland Grove, Bovey Tracey, Devon (Item 9)	1-2 Nov, 1988	Late Autumn Show, Vincent Square
21 May, 1988	S.W. Branch visit 3 gardens at Porlock, West Somerset (Item 9)	29-30 Nov, 1988	Show at Vincent Square (Class for rhododendron with decorative foliage)
22 May, 1988	Wessex Branch meet at Village Hall, Elstead, Surrey		

Chairman's Notes and Notice of Group AGM

It is with regret that I report the death just before Christmas of Major-General Eric Harrison, one of our 'elder statesmen' and an Honorary Life Member. A full appreciation of General Harrison by Walter Magor will appear in the yearbook. Walter was a friend and neighbour when the General lived at Tremear.

This year both Sir Giles Loder and David Farnes retire from the Committee in accordance with Rule 4 of the Constitution, but I am pleased to say that both are standing for re-election. Tom Spring-Smyth, at present a co-opted member, will also stand for election at the Annual General Meeting, which will be held this year on a WEDNESDAY, namely Wednesday, 4th May, at 4 pm. Other meetings of the Committee will be at 2 pm on the same day, and on Tuesday, November 1st at 2 pm.

Once again the Group put up a stand at the Cornwall Garden Society's Show on April 9th-10th, (organised by Bruce Archibold and Richard Gilbert), and are doing so at Vincent Square on 4th and 5th May (manned by John Fox). Do drop in, if only for a chat!

B.A.

The Hon. Secretary's New Name and Address

Members will be pleased to read of Betty Jackson's marriage to Mr J. W. French on 2 March 1988. Her new address is: Mrs J. W. French, 67 Chartwell Court, Churchill Square, Brighton, Sussex BN1 2EX.

Honour and Awards to Group members

Members will note with pleasure the Royal Horticultural Society's conferring in 1987 of its Associateship of Honour on Mr A. V. Skinner of Sheffield Park, near Uckfield; the award of the Loder Rhododendron Cup to Mr Edward Millais, and the award of the A. J. Waley Medal to Mr Richard Staples, the Head Gardener at Heaslands near Haywards Heath.

Treasurer's Note

As the membership list last published early in 1986 is out of print and very out of date, I hope to be able to republish an up-to-date list of Group Members towards the autumn.

Each member will receive this list, which is thought to be a great aid to communication between members, especially in areas where local branches have not been established.

To increase its value, the Group's Committee felt that it would be acceptable to indicate on the new list which members have plants for sale or who could provide other horticultural services. I would hope to indicate the scale of the establishment. The following categories seem reasonable as far as nurseries are concerned: Commercial Nursery, Private Nursery, Occasional Surplus plants. Members who would like an entry should write to me, indicating which heading they wish to be listed under, and if they are willing to sell plants by mail order. I do hope for a good response and therefore remind you of my address: Ray Redford, Fairbank, 39 Rectory Road, Farnborough, Hants., GU14 7BT.

The Photographic Competition

The time allowed for submission of entries has been extended to 30 April 1988, so there is still time to send transparencies and prints to the Hon. Yearbook Editor (not the Bulletin Editor), The Lady Cynthia Postan, 84 Barton Road, Cambridge, CB3 9LH. More entries are urgently needed.

The List of New Registrations

Will those who do NOT want the list of new registrations to be sent with their yearbooks please notify Lady Cynthia at the address given above?

Registration Fees

THE ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

International Registration Authority for the genus *Rhododendron*

REGISTRATION FEES

From 1 June, 1988 the R.H.S., as International Registration Authority for cultivar names in the genus *Rhododendron*, will cease to charge a fee for the registration of a new cultivar name. This will also apply to a new group or grex name in this genus.

However, as from the same date, the formal registration Certificate will not be issued automatically for each new

name accepted onto the International Register. Registrants will be required to indicate that they wish to receive a Certificate, for which there will be a charge of £1. This charge must be paid in sterling (or as a sterling cheque) and should accompany the registration form. No other currency will be accepted. Registrants not requiring a Certificate will, of course, receive due acknowledgement that registration has been effected.

Dr. A. C. Leslie
International Registrar

South West Branch Rhododendron Evening

On Friday 27 November, 78 members and their guests assembled at the Edgemoor Hotel, Bovey Tracey, for the Rhododendron Evening. The event opened with a 'bring and buy' sale of rhododendrons and camellias, and members arrived with boxes and trays generously filled with plants ranging from tiny *R. setosum* seedlings to 4-5 ft. *decorums*! All quickly changed hands, raising £121.00 for Branch funds.

The Quiz began at 7 pm. This had been jointly laid on again by John Bodenham and Kenwyn Clapp. John had spent many hours in preparation, and the presentation of the forty species to be identified was a delight to see. Freshly cut foliage, coloured plates, typed clues, even a list of sixty species from which to choose - all were neatly laid out on tables, under spot lights at the end of the room. What a challenge it presented! It was eagerly contested by many members and prizes were won by Barry Starling, Terry Vince, The Lady Anne Palmer, Mr W. F. Santer, Richard Fulcher, Stanley Chapman and Wilf Cosham.

Walter Magor, who was sadly unable to join us, had kindly donated a batch of *R. haematodes* Christmas cards, and 115 were sold. Nigel Wright also kindly donated a copy of Peter Cox's 'Dwarf Rhododendrons' and this made £13.00 at auction, a great help in view of the increasing cost of mounting this type of event at an hotel.

A break was taken for a light meal at the tables arranged round the hall, before Barry Starling entertained us with his excellent talk on Dwarf Rhododendrons. His commentary was light and informative and his slides a joy. He told the story of *R. keiskei* 'Yaku Fairy' and how it had been saved from its precarious situation on Yakushima. He showed other slides of his own fine hybrids of *luteiflorum* × *keiskei* 'Yaku Fairy', *R. 'Volanta'*, 'Sleeping Beauty' and 'Elfin Gold', registered in 1987. Another slide showed a hardy cross of *rhabdotum* (*dalhousiae* var. *rhabdotum*) called 'Striped Beauty' which has the external red stripes of *rhabdotum* and comes through Devon winters without protection. Bruce Archibold thanked Barry warmly for his excellent talk which was loudly applauded.

R. A. W. Reynolds

NB/ Major Reynolds has arranged garden visits by his Branch to:

Sat. 16 April Tredeague, Porthpean, near St Austell (morning); Tregrehan, also near St Austell (afternoon), both jointly with the International Camellia Society.

Sun. 15 May 1400-1730 hrs NGS Open Day at Woodland Grove, Bovey Tracey (Dick's own garden, the home of more than 800 rhododendrons, at the height of the season), and

Sat. 21 May Three gardens, namely Greencombe, ½m W of Porlock, West Somerset; Woodborough, 1m from Greencombe, and the late Norman Haddon's woodland at Porlock Weir (described on p23 of the Rhododendron Yearbook, no. 5, 1950).

Garden Visits by the Irish Branch

The Branch's annual visits will take place on Sunday, 1st May, to the gardens of Mr and Mrs J. Beatty, Carrickmines, and of Mr and Mrs Charles Meredith, Foxrock, both near Dublin. Further details are available from Miss Mary Forrest, the Branch Organiser, at the Department of Horticulture, University College, Belfield, Dublin 4.

R. ponticum banished from RSPB reserve

Readers might recall a short article in the December 1986 issue of the Bulletin about the invasiveness of *ponticum* in the wetter parts of North Wales. An article in 'The Cambrian News' of Friday, 25 December 1987 reports the ceremonious removal of the last plant in the gorge of the Afon Cwm-mynach in the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds' Coed Garth Gell reserve, bordering the Mawddach estuary. This was the culmination of months of effort by teams of estate workers financed by the Community Programme.

Their method had been 'cutting the stems, winching out the roots and burning the brash on some of the oldest and densest stands'. The RSPB warden for Mawddach said that the 'long-term survival of the wood' was assured, the *ponticum* having inhibited regeneration by the indigenous oak and birch. For the future, 'a more gentle programme' has been devised for preventing 'scattered new growth' and the development of 'new seedlings'.

(The editor is indebted to Lady Cynthia Postan for this item. She, too, has lived in the affected parts of North Wales).

Second flowering in *Rhododendron cinnabarinum* ssp. *xanthocodon* *Concatenans* Group

I was interested in Walter Magor's comment ('Late flowering rhododendrons in Cornwall' in the December 1987 Bulletin) about rhododendron flowers throughout the year. I, too, like to have a rhododendron in flower every day of the year, and sometimes achieve it: since I started making notes on flowering in December 1980, I have only missed a few days in December 1983, three weeks in December 1985 and January 1986, and eight weeks during February-April 1986. One of my most reliable 'second flowerers' has been *concatenans* so I was surprised by Walter's surprise. My older plant was one of the first I ever chose, in 1962, before I knew anything about rhododendrons (the two others bought at the same time were *thomsonii* and *impeditum* - not a bad starting trio, would you say?) and I cannot remember when it first produced a second crop of flowers but it has been extremely reliable in this respect for many years now. I bought my second plant, from KW5874, in 1979. I was delighted when it, too, produced second flowers in 1986 and '87. What happens to the pattern of growth? I ought to make some effort to study this. I have not noticed any precocious new growth.

Florence Auckland

Castle Kennedy Gardens

This article first appeared in 'Views and News from the Scottish Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society', no. 13, February 1988, and is reprinted here by the very kind permission of Mrs Rorie Heresen, Secretary of the Scottish Rhododendron Society (a Chapter of the ARS), and of Mr David G. Knott, the author.

Castle Kennedy Gardens extend over 32.5 hectares. The formal gardens were originally created between 1720 and 1750 by the 2nd Earl of Stair, the inspiration being the gardens of the French King at Versailles. The present gardens were restored after some 40 years of neglect by the

8th Earl of Stair after his succession in 1840. Exotic plants were then introduced from the expeditions of William Lobb and Sir Joseph Hooker. Most of the large trees date from this period 1840-1880.

Since the First World War the maintenance and management of large gardens has posed a problem to their owners and managers. Castle Kennedy has many long-term management problems in common with other gardens. Many of the older trees are now reaching maturity and with the influence of maritime gales the possibility of severe windblow is becoming even more likely each year. Long-term management of the woodland shelter along commercial lines including compartment felling and replanting is the answer.

At Castle Kennedy, where to-day a staff of four struggle to achieve the same results as forty in the days of Lloyd George, present standards of maintenance are obviously lower. However, long-term management plans are the key to ensuring cost-effective standards of maintenance. We are currently half way through our first 'five-year management plan', and it has so far allowed us to organise our staff and equipment more effectively to achieve the most effective level of maintenance with the resources at our disposal. It also gives everyone a sense of achievement once a particular goal has been reached. On a practical level, machinery and herbicides are being used increasingly and longer-term decisions on vegetation management have been taken. This applies to grass cutting where changing the height of cut in one particular area has resulted in the appearance of wild orchids for the first time and by delaying the cut until after their seed has ripened, their numbers are increasing yearly.

The Woodland Gardens contain many fine trees and the main collection of rhododendrons. However, woodland gardens can decline in condition quite quickly when individual specimens become oversized or over-mature and when there is no programme of continual renewal and replanting. We are trying to identify, label and propagate existing plants, renovating and replanting where necessary. We have also started to maintain these woodland areas, by removing the woody weeds, brambles, sycamore and *ponticum*, to encourage a more naturalistic ground flora, e.g. ferns and wild flowers. This is done by scrub-cutting the weeds down to a manageable size, then spraying with Garlon 2, taking care to avoid any plants being retained. This chemical on its own has proved particularly effective against sycamore and brambles. With the addition of Mixture B, *ponticum* and ivy can be controlled. The Mixture B is important because without it, the waxy cuticle of *ponticum* and ivy sheds most of the Garlon 2. In high-rainfall areas also, the Mixture B allows the Garlon to be rainfast in two hours.

There is no reason why, with innovations in methods and modern techniques such as grass cutting zones with variable heights, naturalistic ground cover plantings, mulched areas combined with the use of new machinery and chemicals, standards cannot once again be raised.

David G. Knott has provided some supplementary information on the applications used at Castle Kennedy. He writes that 'Garlon 2' and 'Garlon 4' both contain triclopyr as the active ingredient, 'Garlon 4' being exactly twice as strong and therefore twice as expensive! 'Garlon 2' is made by ICI, 'Garlon 4' by Chipman Chemical. 'Mixture B' is made by High Trees Agriculture Ltd., Royal Oak Industrial Estate, Siddeley Way, Daventry, Northants. He had difficulty in locating 'Mixture B' at first, but finds it most useful not only with 'Garlon 2' but also with 'Asulox' and 'Roundup'. Castle Kennedy is near Stranraer, Wigtownshire, SW Scotland, and is the seat of the Earl of Stair. It was visited by members on the spring tour of May 1982.

Harlow Car's rhododendrons introduced

The Northern Horticultural Society and the Royal Horticultural Society now have reciprocal visiting arrangements, so the editor has asked me to write an introduction to Harlow Car Gardens for Group members.

For those without the plan of the Gardens I suggest that you take your bearings thus; make your way from the entrance to the big wrought iron gates between the Sales Area and the Gatehouse, and stand with your back to them at the top of the stone steps, looking westwards, across the garden. In front there is a sweep of lawn, the Broad Walk, sloping to the valley and stream at the bottom. On your right are the Trial Areas (including the International Camellia Society's 1981 Camellia Trial), the Alpine Area with display house, raised beds and troughs, the Foliage Garden and Winter Garden. At lower right is the study centre with Fellows' room and library, and also in that corner but not in our grounds, is the 'Harrogate Arms' (better approached along Crag Lane and down the lane to the hotel as the bottom gate is usually locked).

Still standing at the gates, there are two model suburban gardens to your left, and Tarn Meadows with rock gardens and pools, the newly-planted rose garden and Queen's Meadow beyond, extending to our southern boundary along the B6162 Harrogate-Otley road. A wooded slope rises on the far side of the stream, with the Arboretum at far right.

The main road runs across the middle of the woodland, with more or less the stream's alignment. It can be reached from the streamside path or from the peat beds near and behind the study centre (bottom right, you remember!)

Now having the general plan in mind I suggest that this is a good route for rhododendron enthusiasts:

Leaving your vantage point on the steps go round the little path to your left, turning down the side of the model suburban gardens and then down the hill and between the pools. You will need to take various detours in this area to see such delights as *fastigiatum*, *racemosum*, *succothii*, *aberconwayi*, *canadense*, *flavidum*, *pachytrichum*, *yakushimanum*, *calostrotum* ssp. *keleticum*, *lepidotum* and *russatum*. Lower down are *anthopogon* ssp. *hypenanthum*, *campylogynum* *Myrtilloides* Group, *cephalanthum* ssp. *cephalanthum* *Crebreflorum* Group, 'edgarianum' (*nivale*), *calostrotum*, *forrestii* and *impeditum*.

When you reach the stream, cross and turn right towards the study centre. There are interesting plantings with many rhododendrons on both sides of the path, especially as you near the peat beds on your left, with *albrechtii*, *ambiguum*, *augustinii*, *campanulatum* and its var. *aeruginosum*, *concinnum*, *haematodes*, *insigne*, *mekongense* and *reticulatum*. Try not to miss *Ilex crenata*.

Then go round the study centre past *Geopodeus filiferus*¹ and *Betula ermanii* and start climbing. Keep to the top of the peat beds at first, and look for *stewartianum*, a very early flowerer, unfortunately often frosted. Joining the main ride, go left and shortly on your right you will see the columns, remnant of the classical portico at the entrance to the old Spa Rooms in Harrogate. Have a look here for *beanianum* and *smithii*, which have not done well at Harlow Car, another *stewartianum* on your left when facing the columns, and *cinnabarinum* and *sutchuenense* behind and on the other side. Rejoin the main ride and continue away from the study centre.

You will want to make many detours here on both sides, perhaps to see the group on the right with *campanulatum*, *clementinae*, *sphaeroblastum* and *sutchuenense*, and certainly to see *falconeri*, *rex* ssp. *ficulactaeum*, *souliei* and *thomsonii* on the left. At the end of the ride you will find *cinnabarinum* ssp. *cinnabarinum* *Roylei* Group, *niveum*, *smirnowii* and *wightii*. Ease yourself between *cinnabarinum* and *niveum* and look behind them for

bureavii and, further along, *barbatum* and *uvariifolium*. These can also be approached by leaving the main ride earlier. Turning up the hill at the end of the main ride, work your way back through the woodland, again between plantings of rhododendrons - *auriculatum*, *campanulatum* 'Knaphill', *fulgens*, *rex*, *thomsonii*, *wightii* and others too many to list.

There are several ways down from the main ride to the stream and back up to the exit, but try to allow time to visit the specialised areas mentioned earlier.

I hope I have whetted your appetite - do visit us if you can. Two warning notes remain: 1. the garden is open to the public and labels are sometimes lost or transposed; 2. despite massive recent drainage operations the woodland can be very wet, so wear green boots or stout shoes.

1. In actual fact, a telegraph pole! Ed.

Florence Auckland

Talpa europaea in Lanarkshire policies

Dr Robbie Jack has sent another pawky letter from the Scottish Lowlands to the editor. Readers might recall an earlier one on holes, and the response to it, in the December 1986 and April 1987 issues. Now his theme is *famh*¹, the mole - just as subversive. Readers are assured that his gardening is more successful than he would have you believe, and that one of his successes is *Rhododendron lacteum*.

Dear Patrick,

'Have you ever had a mole in your garden? Not the endearing 'Wind in the Willows' sort but the real earth-moving, big-problem variety.

My experience of moles began in our vegetable garden when I was a boy. Fortunately, it was wintertime. Several molehills had appeared, so, with a spade, I investigated between two of them. Success! There was the tunnel and, a moment later mole himself appeared! Finding himself out of doors, so to speak, instead of in his dug-to-fit tunnel he did the sharpest of U-turns and vanished back down the hole. I opened some more tunnel - no mole. Quickly, another spadeful - still no mole. More quickly still, I set off in pursuit. Can you imagine the scene? The dog came to help, too. In the end I stopped, hot and breathless. The mess was prodigious. The vegetable garden was like a bombed site with humps and hollows everywhere, and somewhere a mole, doubtless still tunnelling furiously. He won. The dog was given a bath and I levelled the mess.

Far more dramatic, however, was the frontal attack policy of a Colonel 'Thunderflash' with an extensive garden. On a fine winter Saturday as he loaded shooting-gear into his car, he noticed a line of fresh molehills across the lawn. He looked closer. Impertinence! The nearest one was in active eruption. He fetched his gun, loaded, and fired both barrels into the molehill. Leaving a gently smoking lawn and a strong smell of cordite he departed for a day's pheasant shooting.

Can you picture his return on finding that the molehills had not gone away, and there were now more than when he had left. The gamekeeper was summoned to help. He did. I don't know whether the hot shot had solved anything, but over the next fortnight the 'keeper gradually restored calm. Peace and a normal blood-pressure returned. For the rest of us, a garden is a place of relaxation and tranquility.

Of course, there are less aggressive ways of dealing with moles than the Colonel's. What I believe is called a 'mole discouragement policy' might involve pouring creosote into mole runs - don't spill any on the lawn - and putting mothballs likewise, and patent smoke-bombs, too. At best these merely seem to wish the problem on someone else; at worst they are so passive as to be rather a waste of time. Then there is the bottle-fortress method. Do you know it?

Empty bottles are buried up to their rims in the soil round the garden perimeter, and are supposed to set up anti-mole vibrations when the wind blows across the open tops. 'Vibes' or no 'vibes', one could by this method so easily earn an undeserved dipsomaniacal reputation among unenlightened friends. They might think the half-buried bottles were only the ones not quite hidden - perhaps just buried in the dark! No, no, better a few molehills.'

Robbie Jack

1. Gaelic for 'mole'.

A rider on moles

When the moles' activity is renewed at Edgemoor, Robbie will do well to use the molehill soil as a planting medium. I have been abroad by day and in the gloaming, with shovel and stout bag, to import for the garden the soil of molehills from the Quantocks in Somerset, from the seaward slopes of the Carneddau in North Wales, and from the red sandstone-derived soils of south-west Worcestershire. The intractable London Clay of south-west Essex has been cast aside in favour of these wholesome, friable, evenly-textured gleanings, which, with the addition of silver sand, peat, ground bark, dried blood and sulphate of iron, have been the medium for a succession of acquisitions from Bodnant, the Garden House, Rosemoor and Stone House Cottage. All have grown like Timperley rhubarb! Camellias, Illiciums and Rhododendrons revel in it. All they need when planted in molehill soil is a generous mulch and foil of ICI Forest Bark.

When some select rhododendrons were lifted and brought here on the sale of the previous garden (to people who, to use one of Hugh Dingle's choice phrases, 'did not know a *Parrotiopsis* from a pianoforte'), I was astounded by the extent and spread of their eager, direct roots. I had grown tired before moving here of the invariable need to sieve all planting soil derived from the local clay before accommodating plants bought on holiday, waiting in their containers on the path. The molehills first suggested themselves as a swift solution in Cwm Graiglwyd, above Penmaenmawr. I recall my elation at the simple efficacy of the idea, and found myself parodying George Herbert by musing, 'This is the famous Mole, that turneth all to loam'.

The big MacGregor of October 1987 which caused havoc in south-east England's hedgerows, parklands and woods, had no effect, apart from a few snapped shoots, on our garden's unstaked young dogwoods. *Cornus* 'Norman Haddon', the tallest, just bowed before it, and recovered its earlier poise. *C. florida* f. *rubra* and *C. nuttallii*, also grown in Topmole, withstood the blast, like the rhododendrons, with equanimity and grace.

Patrick Haworth