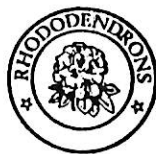


The Rhododendron, Camellia & Magnolia Group



BULLETIN No. 41 - August 1989

Forthcoming Events

September 26	RHS Out of London lecture 'Rhododendrons for Small Gardens' by Patricia Cox at Edinburgh RBG.	October 31 - November 1	Late Autumn Show, Vincent Square
October 10-11	Great Autumn Show, Vincent Sq.	November 9	RHS Out of London lecture 'Travels of a Plant Hunter' by Roy Lancaster at Chapter House, Truro
October 13-15	Group Autumn Weekend at the Manor House Hotel, Moreton-in-Marsh	November 17	Wessex Branch Members Slide Show, Elstead
October 20	Wessex Branch. Talk on Peat Gardens by Mr Phil Knox at Elstead Village Hall	November 24	South West Branch Autumn Meeting, Bovey Tracey. Talk on Rhododendrons and Camellias by Frank Lavin
October 31	Group Executive Committee meeting, RHS New Hall		

Rhododendron, Camellia and Magnolia Group List of Officers, 1988

Chairman: B. Archibold, Starveacre, Dalwood, East Devon, EX13 7HH, tel. 040 488 221

Hon. Secretary: Mrs. J. W. French, 67 Chartwell Court, Churchill Sq., Brighton, Sussex, BN1 2EX, tel. 0273 26817

(from 1 Nov. '89) **Treasurer:** P. A. Reynolds, Woodland Grove, Bovey Tracey, Devon, TQ13 9LG, tel. 0626 823336

Membership Secretary: R. H. Redford, Fairbank, 39 Rectory Road, Farnborough, Hants. GU14 7BT, tel. 0252 523005

Tours Secretary: Mrs. V. M. Archibold, Starveacre, Dalwood, East Devon, EX13 7HH, tel. 040 488 221

Yearbook Editor: Lady Cynthia Postan, 84 Barton Road, Cambridge, CB3 9LH, tel. 0223 353314

Bulletin Editor: Geoff H. Taylor (from 1 Nov. '89) Pant-yr-Holiad Garden, Rhydlewis, Llandysul, Dyfed, SA44 5ST, tel. 023975 493

Seed Exchange Organiser: David Clulow, Tilgates, Bletchingley, Surrey, RH1 4QF, tel. 0883 843219

Branch Organisers:

East Anglia: C. E. Grainger, The Gables, Finborough Road, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 1PY, tel. 0449 615138

Ireland: Miss M. Forrest, Department of Horticulture, University College, Belfield, Dublin 4

South East: J. A. Fox, Holmwood House, Glenmore Road, Crowborough, E. Sussex, TN6 1TN

South West: Major R. A. W. Reynolds, Woodland Grove, Bovey Tracey, Devon, TQ13 9LG, tel. 0626 823 336

South West Wales: Geoff Taylor, Pant-yr-Holiad Garden, Rhydlewis, Llandysul, Dyfed, SA44 5ST, tel. 023975 493

Wessex: Lady Adam Gordon, Hethersett, Littleworth Cross, Seale, Farnham, Surrey, GU10 1JL, tel. 025 18 2054

Chairman's Notes

As we go into another year following the Annual General Meeting on the 3rd May there have been changes in the Committee and, sadly, we have lost the great knowledge and experience of Sir Giles Loder who will be sorely missed.

The Seed Exchange proved to be very successful and, apart from making available to members seed from reliable sources, has provided a welcome boost to Group funds. Preparations for an even more extensive list for this year are in hand.

The Group, at the invitation of the Cornwall Garden Society, staged an exhibit of rhododendrons and a history of the great collectors at the Society's Annual Show at Carlyon Bay in May. The result was shown on Television South West gardening programme "Gardens for All".

The Annual Tour took place in Cornwall and a full report of the success of this event will appear in the Yearbook.

After the current issue of the Bulletin, which is being produced by Walter Magor, the Editorship will be taken over by Geoff

Taylor, the Organiser of the S. W. Wales Branch who would greatly appreciate any contributions from members be they experts or beginners!!

We still have a vacancy for a Midlands Branch organiser and if anyone feels that they would like to take this on please get in touch with me.

B.A.

THE GROUP'S EXHIBIT AT THE CORNWALL GARDEN SOCIETY'S ANNUAL SHOW AT CARLYON BAY

This year, at the kind invitation of the Cornwall Garden Society, the Group mounted an exhibition of rhododendrons at the Cornwall Coliseum at the Society's Annual Show, on the 6th and 7th May.

The exhibit was in two parts being a large display, mainly of hybrids, on a central pyramid-shaped stand and a history of some of the great collectors with their pictures and coloured photographs of rhododendrons in the wild supplemented with a show of live species material.

The pyramid was expertly arranged by Jo White and Valerie Archibold, using material most generously donated by many of the gardens in Cornwall, and the historical exhibit owed much to the help and expert advice of Neil Treseder, whilst most of the species material came from the Valley Gardens at Windsor.

The Chairman would like to express his very appreciative thanks not only for the help and encouragement received in the staging of the exhibit but also for the kindness of the garden owners who donated material and of the head gardeners and others who so helpfully delivered it!

Mr. H. G. Ayling

Sadly, I have to report that George Ayling died as a result of a heart attack in the early hours of Sunday, 22nd January, aged 81. Born in London in October 1907, he spent his youth at East Meon in Hampshire, winning his first prize at the age of 13 for gladioli, and following this up with prizes for carnations and delphiniums. He and Dorothy were married in 1935, and set up home in Middlesex. Visiting the Ideal Home Exhibition in 1937, they were smitten with the beauty of camellias and, after the war, they acquired their first camellia in 1948, 'J. C. Williams'. 'Adolphe Audusson' followed and a meeting with Geoffrey Wakefield encouraged the association, and led to George importing varieties from the U.S.A., which were grown on under glass, and planted out when they became too large for the greenhouse.

On retirement, they moved to the village of Westhorpe, near Stowmarket in Suffolk, bringing many containerised plants with them, for which three greenhouses were built, one very large. He particularly went in for *C. japonica* cultivars, especially the white forms, and 'Mathothiana Alba' was a particular favourite.

Through his association with David Trehane, he regularly

assisted at the Trehane stand at the R.H.S. shows, and acted as a steward at the Camellia Competitions; he also judged the camellia classes several times at the Cornwall Garden Society shows. His article 'Devotions and Heresies - Camelliawise' in the 1974 yearbook is still of considerable interest, and for several years thereafter he wrote up the Camellia Competitions for the yearbook. He is greatly missed, and this year's RHS camellia competitions were not the same without him.

C.E.G.

The Treasurer

With the move of the executive of the International Camellia Society to the U.S.A., we have been very fortunate to obtain the services of their Treasurer, Peter Reynolds, to succeed Ray Redford, who had asked to be relieved, but will continue as Membership Secretary assisted by Alastair Stevenson. Peter is being married on the 31st October, and takes over next day as Treasurer of the Group. Congratulations and Best Wishes.

The Autumn Weekend will again meet at the Manor House Hotel, Moreton-in-Marsh; the date is earlier this year, owing to the hotel already being booked for the following two weekends. Members interested in joining the meeting are invited to write to the Tours Secretary for details, enclosing a s.a.e., please. The gardens it is proposed to visit are Hidcote Manor near Chipping Campden and Sudeley Castle at Winchcombe.

V.M.A.

Day Visit to Two Gardens near Devizes

After several days of rain Tuesday 18th April dawned warm and sunny and using John Phillips' excellent map twenty one members of the Group met at Home Covert, Roundway, near Devizes in Wiltshire. We had a warm reception from Mr and Mrs Phillips who very kindly gave us all coffee and biscuits in their lovely house, after which Mr Phillips gave us a short history of the garden and we set off for our tour round the 33 acres. We were soon aware that Mrs Phillips played an equal part in the design and maintenance of the garden, and that this was full of the most interesting and unusual plants.

We took about an hour to cover the gardens and the first thing we noticed — after passing a beautiful tree peony by the house — was an extensive stretch of unbroken lawn, an outstanding feature of the top garden. From this, one had a wide spread and lovely view of the surrounding hills and lower woodland. The house is set high, and as we progressed, admiring many outstanding trees too numerous to name, we gradually dropped down to the lower reaches of the woods. Here we found a fast flowing stream on the banks of which grew candelabra primulas and hostas in profusion. An interesting and attractive feature of the garden was the use of geraniums and other herbaceous plants as ground cover; it was very effective.

Eventually reaching the top of the garden again we passed a section planted out with numerous shrub roses by Mrs Phillips to give colour in the summer months. Finally we reached two large greenhouses filled with tender plants including rhododendrons and a lemon tree with ripe lemons. This concluded a delightful hour or two and the garden will always remain a memorable one for us. As a token of our thanks we presented Mr and Mrs Phillips with two plants, *Halesia vestita* and *Styrax obassia* before we reluctantly left for lunch.

At 2.30 p.m. we all collected again at Lady Anne Cowdray's lovely garden at Broadleas. Planting here goes back to 1946 when Lady Anne bought the house and garden. *Magnolia sargentianum* 'Robusta' and *Magnolia campbellii* planted at that time we saw on our way through the garden as now splendid trees.

Led by Lady Anne we first came to the Rose Garden, and here the roses are underplanted with a variety of herbaceous plants, in particular the wild strawberry. We saw the unusual China rose *turkestanica*, whose single flowers open creamy yellow, then turn pink and finally become deep crimson.

Outside the rose garden we came to a white and grey garden, its uniformity broken at intervals by plants with coloured leaves, such as some varieties of Clematis. After a rock garden we came to the 'Secret Garden' the low hedge sheltering a collection of small but precious plants, including *Euonymus nanus*. Broadleas

has the National Reference Collection of *Euonymus*, which are however, scattered all over the garden, and not together in one place. Next Lady Anne led us down the Dell, a narrow green-sand valley of an area of 4 acres. A large flowering cherry we saw provided shelter for a variety of rhododendrons. The valley is thickly planted with magnolias, acers, sorbus, hydrangeas and many other plants. We saw masses of bluebells and primroses as well as a large planting of the rather rare *Primula whitei*, the pale blue flowers having a white centre.

We took a top route on our return towards the house, and from that vantage point we could see the many beautiful trees which flourish down the sides of the valley. On reaching the top Lady Anne's well-stocked nursery was a cause of some excitement as there were many unusual and lovely plants for sale.

After a refreshing cup of tea in the house we thanked Lady Anne for a wonderful afternoon and had great pleasure in presenting her with a plant of her choice, *Pterostyrax hispida*, before regretfully leaving for our way home.

New and Forthcoming Publications

'Magnolias. Their Care and Maintenance', by J. M. Gardiner, Curator of the R.H.S. garden at Wisley. Cassells Illustrated Monograph series.

'Nurserymen to the World', by E. J. Willson, an account of the Nursery Gardens of Woking and N.W. Surrey, and plants introduced by them. £6 plus 50p p&p from Miss E. J. Willson, 56 Palewell Park, London, SW14 8JH.

'Himalayan Enchantment', an anthology of the writings of Frank Kingdon Ward, edited by John Whitehead. Autumn publication by Serindia Publications, 10 Parkfields, Putney, London, SW15 6NH.

'Biography of Frank Kingdon Ward' by Charles Lyte. Autumn Publication by John Murray.

'Rhododendrons in the British Isles — An Irreverent Approach', by Dan E. Mayers. Obtainable free of charge and post free, from Dan E. Mayers, Loth Lorian, Wadhurst, Sussex, TN5 6PN.

Who was Furnivall's Daughter?

A neighbour of mine, very pleased with his plant of Rhododendron 'Furnivall's Daughter', F.C.C., flowering while still quite small, asked me about it, and I explained that, as it has *R. caucasicum* in its parentage, it was unlikely to grow very large. The F.C.C. was awarded in 1961 after trial at Wisley, and it is recorded as probably a seedling from the same cross as 'Mrs Furnival', another plant awarded an F.C.C. after trial, in this case at Exbury in 1948, and recorded as a *caucasicum* hybrid × *griffithianum*, made by Anthony Waterer at Knap Hill.

My friend however was not interested so much in the parentage of his rhododendron, as in who the Furnivalls were, and how they spelt their name. For this information, I had recourse to my friend Mr Donald Waterer, late of Knap Hill, who now lives in Somerset. He tells me that Anthony Waterer senior of Knap Hill, who died in 1896, had two daughters, of whom the elder was named Anne (1850-1928), known in the family as Nancy, and it was for her that Azalea 'Nancy Waterer' was named. Rather late in life, she married Charles John Furnivall, but there were no children of the marriage. This hybrid was named after her about 1920 by her brother, the younger Anthony Waterer, who had made the cross.

While clearing scrub at Knap Hill soon after the Second World War, Donald Waterer, came across several plants which appeared to have come out of the same seedpod as 'Mrs Furnival' and 'Chintz'. One of these was 'Feretith', and another was given the name 'Furnivall's Daughter' by the late Mr Henry Goude, managing director of Knap Hill Nursery Ltd at that time.

When, a few years later, 'Furnivall's Daughter' was included in the Knap Hill group at Chelsea as a novelty, the label had only one 'l', and Mr Waterer was attacked by a stern and rather irate female, who declared "Two 'l's' in Furnivall if you please." She was apparently a close relative of Charles John Furnivall, so Mr Waterer had the record corrected, and both the F.C.C. hybrids should be spelt with two 'll's'.

W.M.

Annual Subscriptions of £7 are due on the 1st November, and should be sent to the Membership Secretary. Every year some (usually new) members forget to pay, and those who do not already pay by banker's order, are urged to complete one now. One of the Branch Organisers has pointed out that new members so often join during Garden Tours or Garden Openings, and has suggested that, as a standard practice, they should be asked to complete banker's orders when they join.

Isobyl la Croix, 'author of 'Rhododendrons and Azaleas', published by David & Charles in 1973, who donated her drawing of *R. fargesii* for use on the new form of application for membership, gardened near Dorking in Surrey for several years, and used to come on the Group's tours and was a contributor to the yearbook. Then she and her husband went off to Malawi to work at the Bvumbwe Research Station.

Now they are back in Britain and have acquired 8 acres of peat bog and rocky desolation at Port Henderson on Loch Gairloch in Wester Ross. The land is now being drained and fenced, and windbreak planted. For those of us who live long enough, we may expect to see a rival to the nearby Inverewe there in time. Meanwhile, Mrs la Croix is anxious to pick up the threads of the Rhododendron Group, and would love to see any members of the Group who may be passing.

In her spare time, Isobyl is writing up the Orchidaceae for the 'Flora Zambesiaca' for Kew, and also the African and Madagascar orchids for the R.H.S. Dictionary. Evidently, never a dull moment.

Reports from the Branches

East Anglia. Three consecutive nights of hard frost in March caused the abandonment of the garden visits arranged for the spring of 1989. In 1988 however, the following gardens were visited.

BRAXTED PARK, near Witham in Essex, by kind invitation of Mr Michael Clarke, Deputy Managing Director of Plessey, a 2000 acre estate with 27 acres of garden. Stephen Coghill, the Gardens' Manager, showed the party round, and species grown from Darjeeling seed were particularly noted.

THE MAGNOLIAS, Brentwood, Essex by kind invitation from Mr & Mrs Roger Hammond, a ½-acre garden crammed with treasures, particularly magnolias and *R. johnstoneanum* hybrids.

BULLWOOD NURSERIES, Hockley, Essex by kind invitation of Mr & Mrs Derek Fox, former members of the Group. Large Yunnan magnolias and large-leaved rhododendrons, mostly grown from seed collected in the wild.

HYDE HALL, Rettendon, nr Chelmsford, Essex, by kind invitation of Mr & Mrs R. H. M. Robinson. National reference collections of *Malus* and *Viburnum*, and some notable magnolias and rhododendrons. The plant stall was much appreciated.

BLUE CEDAR, North Fambridge, near Chelmsford, by kind invitation of Mr & Mrs Roy Carter. A 2-acre garden in an early stage of development.

MORRIS FARM at Stow Maries in Essex, by kind invitation of Mr & Mrs Lionel Brown. Three acres of garden featuring a beautiful water scene, with a terraced waterfall and a natural hollow planted with pines and deciduous azaleas of high quality.

Ireland. The annual visit of the Irish Branch took place on May 28th when fifteen members and friends met at the garden of Dr. and Mrs. Robert Simpson, at Ballymena, Co. Antrim. The Simpsons began laying out their garden some 34 years ago and it now extends to four and a half acres. The layout is informal with lawn, island beds and sweeping borders. There is a wide selection of plants from alpine and herbaceous through to shrubs and trees. In the early years many plants were purchased at Slieve Donard Nursery Co. Down, Mulroy Co. Donegal and from Rowallane Co. Down, now the National Trust garden. There are many fine rhododendrons including *Rhododendron rex* subsp. *arizelum*, *R. glaucophyllum*, *R. hookeri* and *R. lutescens*. Several *R. soulei* which had been received as seedlings from Mulroy were in flower. Some of the *R. yunnanense* and *R. davidsonianum* had a 'touch' of *R. cinnabarinum* and this had extended their flowering season. Among the hybrids were *R. 'Yellow Hammer'*, *R. 'Betty Wormald'*, *R. 'May Day'*, *R. 'Lady Chamberlain'* and *R. 'Fabia'*. The deciduous azaleas were coming into their own. *R. luteum*, *R. 'Persil'* and other lemon and orange flowered plants providing colour and scent. There were

two very fine specimens of *Prunus serrula tibetica* and *Betula pendula* 'Dalecarlica'. Throughout the garden judiciously placed querns, pump and feeding troughs were filled with plants or used in conjunction with old fashioned water pumps. The sound of trickling water was to be heard as one walked around the garden or sat on one of the well placed seats.

In recent years a two acre arboretum has been planted with a selection of *Quercus*, *Acer*, *Tilia* and *Pinus* and other genera.

Having spent several hours in the garden we thanked our hosts who not only had shared their garden with us, but had also given us a delicious lunch. We were all the more grateful when we realised that we were the first group ever to have visited the garden. As a token of our gratitude we presented them with plants of *Camellia* 'J. C. Williams', *Rhododendron* 'Hotei', *Kalmia latifolia* and *Hydrangea aspera*.

South East. The South East Branch visited Mrs. Kleinwort's garden at HEASELANDS, Haywards Heath on the 27th May. In the autumn, Ian Sinclair is giving a talk with slides on the famous Benmore gardens in Argyll, and next year John Basford from Brodick is giving a talk.

The South West Branch Garden Visits. At 10.30 a.m. on Saturday 22 April seventy members of the Branch assembled on the private lawn at MARWOOD HILL, near Barnstaple, Devon for a conducted tour by Dr. Jimmy Smart of his magnificent garden. It was a cool and cloudy day but remained dry. After a few words of welcome we followed him down the hill, and around the top lake to a point where a bright red dome of *R. Elizabeth* reflects in the water. From here there is a magnificent vista across the water to where the house stands, on the hill side opposite, framed in Cherry blossom. We climbed up the side of the valley past a very fine plant of *R. Avalanche* Alpine Glow, which sadly was just over; but towering just above it was a fine *R. macabeanum* in full flower, a mountain of yellow blossom. Nearby was an interesting conifer *Picea likiangensis* with red upright cones. Passing around the foot of the lakes we returned via the bog garden with its stepped waterfalls, giving the constant sound of flowing water, to the upper walled garden. Here *R. Johnnie Johnstone* had a sheltered spot, and was covered with lovely double pink flowers. Finally on the private lawn again, and before dispersing into the plant sales area, Michael Latham thanked Dr. Smart for his most interesting tour and hospitality, and presented him with a plant of *R. Yaku Queen*.

After a picnic lunch we were greeted by Lady Anne Palmer V.M.H. at R.H.S. Rosemoor. Here our visit coincided with that of the council of the R.H.S., and on arrival some of the members became mixed up with the Council and found themselves being addressed in rather august company! We had hastily to extract them before we could begin our tour of the garden! Lady Anne then led us around the garden she had created, but has now donated to the R.H.S., and pointed out their plans for future development. She said she would like to see the hillside immediately above her Arboretum planted up with Rhododendrons. Many interesting plants were seen, including *R. tsariense*, *Prunus Taoyama Zakura* a very pretty Cherry, that the late Collingwood Ingram said was his favourite, and *Aesculus neglecta erythroblastos*, a Horse Chestnut with brilliant shrimp pink young foliage. Those members of the Group who were at Broadleas, Devizes the previous Tuesday, also saw it there. Lady Anne Palmer has planted it in association with *Acer Brilliantissimum* a stunning combination. At the end of the visit Peter Reynolds presented Lady Anne with a large plant of *R. macabeanum*, which she said would pass on to the R.H.S. for planting at Rosemoor.

On 13 May the Pukeiti Rhododendron Trust from New Zealand, on their world tour, visited WOODLAND GROVE at Bovey Tracey. Graham Smith their Curator, and leader, was full of praise for the display of rhododendrons in the woodland, and after a tour of the woods they all enjoyed a cup of coffee, on the lawn, before departing for Cornwall.

The following day was an N.G.S. Open Day at WOODLAND GROVE. Over ninety Branch members attended, amongst a huge attendance of the public. All enjoyed the spectacular colour of the Yakushimanum hybrids, and the fragrance of the Loderis. A record sum was raised for the N.G.S. and the Army Benevolent Fund.

On Saturday 20 May seventy-five members and guests

gathered at WYLMINGTON HAYES to see the 10 acres of rhododendrons and azaleas planted by Mr. Halswell in 1911. The present owners, Phil and Wendy Saunders, have done a fine job in restoring the garden after a period of neglect. One glade with species, their lead labels still attached, had a fine selection of *R. mallotum*, *R. thomsonii*, and unusual *R. sperabile*. *R. Pilgrim (fortunei* × Gill's Triumph) more familiar as a parent, with *R. yakushimanum*, of *R. Lady Bowes-Lyon*. It is a large sprawling plant with fine foliage, and slightly fragrant Loderi-like trusses of soft pink and white, identified for us by Dr. Richard Scrivenor.

During my recce, prior to the garden visit, Phil Saunders told me he had discovered a lead label, in the undergrowth, for *R. General Sir John Du Cane (discolor* × *thomsonii*) Rothschild 1935, but no sign of the plant. This solved the problem for the presentation! A fine specimen was ordered from Exbury to match the label, and was much appreciated when presented on our departure.

After lunch we reassembled at BURROW FARM GARDENS, the home of John and Mary Benger. Here the garden has been created by Mary Benger out of farm land surrounding a damp dell. She has achieved spectacular results with contrasting foliage effects, vistas, and a delightful bog garden. In the more formal part of the garden is a superb pergola walk, swimming pool, and a most tastefully designed stone built tea room. Here, after Wilf Cosham had presented Mary with a fine plant of *R. Combe Royal*, our visit ended with a cream tea and a visit to the plant sales area.

We then dispersed until our Autumn meeting, when we look forward to Frank Lavin's talk on "Rhododendrons and Camellias", illustrated with his outstanding slides, on Friday 24 November, 1989.

South West Wales Branch. Meeting informally on 22nd April at PANT-YR-HOLIAD GARDEN, home of the organiser, members toured the garden, seeing many of the earlier flowering rhododendrons in bloom. *R. trichocladum*, *R. carolinianum*, *R. imperator* and several others made a show, while the colour of opening blossoms on some cinnabarinum hybrids created discussion, alongside some constructive argument concerning the correct identity of one or two species.

While the recently completed long herbaceous border was devoid of colour so early in the year, members were interested in the overall scheme of raised beds seated into the hillside. Near the house, *Ceanothus thyrsiflorus repens* made a striking display, while in the herb garden the double flowered bloodroot, *Sanguinaria canadense* 'flore pleno' was in full flower.

The next venue was Clyne Castle Gardens where on April 29th, many of the large-leaved rhododendrons were still in bloom, especially those later flowering crosses produced by Admiral Walker-Heneage-Vivian and we were left to conjecture the parentage of those for which no records exist. Among the many rhododendrons seen at Clyne, *R. johnstoneanum* earned high praise for both colour and scent. Mature camellias bloomed alongside the flowers of *R. amoenum* — a result of this early season. Regrettably, the huge camellia bushes are devoid of name tags and again one was left to wonder. The attractive foliage of a recently introduced Buddleia, *B. agathroma* evoked praise, while a large-flowered Clyne selection of *Viburnum laurustinus* was admired.

Before proceeding to nearby Singleton Abbey Garden, the Branch presented a plant of *R. fortunei* to Clyne where, although the species is not in the collection, it is represented by a cross with *R. orbiculare*; possibly one of a grex registered as 'Fortorb' about fifty years ago.

The Abbey Garden proved to be much smaller than Clyne, but packed with interesting plants including a fine selection of rhododendrons. A large *R. thomsonii* was in full dress, while *R. giganteum* was among the treetops and the borders below were alive with brilliant splashes of colour from both azaleas and smaller rhododendron species.

Thanks are due to the City of Swansea and to the dedicated curators of these gardens for maintaining and augmenting the outstanding collections, so rarely seen in places freely open to the public.

On the 13th of May, the Branch assembled at Brynhyfryd, Corris, where we were met by the creator of this fascinating garden hewn out of a rocky mountainside. Late frosts had played havoc with many of the blooms and we were denied the spectacle of *R. augustinii* flowering hundreds of feet above our heads, while those interesting large-leaved chance crosses were in mourning. However, there was plenty for us to see; not least in the construction of the garden, where pockets had been literally cut out of the hard granite, filled with soil hauled up from way below and planted with a very representative collection of rhododendrons, all revelling in the continuous moisture trickling down the rocks from a spring above. *R. cerasinum* was covered in bloom, 'Mayday' (*griersonianum* × *haematodes*) made a splash of colour and *R. dichroanthum* was very fine, but the show was stolen by a seedling of *R. wardii* with large trusses of almost lime green flowers with faint rose spotting — this would not have disgraced a show vase.

After two and a half hours in this garden of only four acres, the party was coaxed away to the home of a member who had kindly arranged to give us tea and sight of another interesting garden. With *Smilacina* welcoming us at the gate, a fairy-tale vista of water bubbling over rocks, old hybrid rhododendrons in full bloom and many other interesting plants, we strolled about, cup in hand. Shafts of sunlight dancing on the foliage of holly cultivars and the simple beauty of London Pride (*Sarcifraga umbrosa*) hugging a natural outcrop of rock are just two happy memories of this garden.

Finally, we drove to the adjacent GLANDYFI CASTLE where the owner had invited us to see the old rhododendron hybrids growing alongside a lengthy drive. In addition, we found a typical garden of Victorian times with masses of 'Pink Pearl', possibly 'Lee's Dark Purple' and many others. There were beautiful apricot-flowered azaleas probably of mollis extraction and fine old trees above, including one pine boasting epiphytes of a rhododendron seedling and a birch with well coloured bark. After too little time in this enticing garden we left the heady perfume of massed *R. luteum* — it was nearly 7 o'clock!

Our last meeting was at Colby Lodge, where on May 20th we saw the progress of those areas replanted after gales had wrecked much of the garden earlier in the decade. Removal of tree roots and consequent ground disturbance had caused problems, but heavy mulching with occasional lifting and replanting had worked wonders. In the new plantings, *R. occidentale* reminded us of the beauty of North American azaleas while in the older part of the garden, *R. falconeri* was still bedecked with flowers and we walked beneath the branches of old Japanese azaleas!

Later on, we repaired to the walled garden, now under private care and saw the changes since extensive wall renovation had meant the cutting-back of so many valuable plants, but *Fremontia californica* was flowering well as was *Abutilon* 'Ashford Red', while new plantings in the beds were growing well and the old shrub roses were once again a feature.

After three hours of walking in the warm sun, the sight of comfortable chairs and teacups was too much and we succumbed to temptation. As we relaxed on the Lodge lawn with classical fountain playing and gazed across the renovated ha-ha to where sunlight was shimmering between old firs on to the highlights of hybrid rhododendrons below, it was with some reluctance that we turned homewards.

Wessex Branch. The Branch were invited to visit two gardens at the end of April. First by Mr. Graham Ferguson, at CHITHURST near Rogate and secondly by Mr. R. G. Beard at FYNING TWITTEN also near Rogate. Both gardens were full of interesting plants and the visits were much enjoyed by those members able to attend.

In early May, the Branch held its annual competition. This year it was held at Hydon Nurseries by kind invitation of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur George. There were plenty of entries in all the classes, which were judged by Mr. John Bond; The Challenge Cup was awarded to Mr. R. G. Beard for his magnificent *R. rex* ssp. *fictolacteum*.